

ANALYSIS 7
MIGHTY CHALLENGES
IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE**MONEY 8**
MARKETS MAINTAIN
RECORD RUN**SPORTS 11**
VIRAT KOHLI TO QUIT
AST20 CAPTAIN

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



the pioneer



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

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ACTIVIST HARSH MANDER RAIDED BY ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE IN DELHI

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

MAJOR SUCCESS: FRENCH TROOPS KILL ISIS HEAD IN GREATER SAHARA

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

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

Residents of a village in Bihar's Katihar rushed to ATMs and banks to check their account statement. The reason? Two schoolchildren suddenly found their accounts laden with crores of rupees overnight, and the villagers hoping for a similar luck made a dash to the banks. The two boys have accounts in Uttar Bihar Gramin Bank. They were expecting to get some money under a government scheme to buy school uniform. Along with their parents, they went to a public internet centre at the village to check whether the money had come when they found that they were over Rs 900 crore richer.

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

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

AP Cabinet clears scheme for loans of housing beneficiaries

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet on Thursday took several key decisions, including approving a One-Time Settlement scheme, 'YSR Asara' programme and providing an additional loan of Rs 35,000 to SHG women for housing.

Briefing media after the Cabinet meeting that was chaired by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, Information and Public Relations Minister Perni Venkataramaiah said that One Time Settlement (OTS) scheme for loanees of Andhra Pradesh Housing Corporation Limited, who has taken loans from 1983 to August 15, 2011 was approved.

The amount fixed for one time settlement is Rs 10,000 in rural areas, Rs 15,000 in municipalities and Rs 20,000 in corporations. The loanees can avail OTS scheme by paying the prescribed amount till December 15 and the revenue department officials will register the land to the OTS scheme beneficiaries on December 21, 2021, he said.

"Those who have bought a house from people who had taken a loan from AP Housing Corporation, constructed the house and sold it due to any personal emergency, can get the land registered, provided that the buyer is also poor and doesn't own a house," Nani said, adding that the amount for OTS in such cases in Rs 20,000 in rural areas, Rs 30,000 in urban areas and Rs 40,000 in corporations.

He said for those who had taken land from the government and constructed the house on their own, the government would register their houses for free.

The Minister said the Cabinet approved providing an additional Rs 35,000 loan to housing scheme beneficiaries who are also part of Self Help Groups at 3 percent interest rate.

The Cabinet also approved the release of the second instalment of YSR Asara programme.



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy chairs the meeting of the State Cabinet in the Secretariat at Velagapudi on Thursday.

Proposal to name schools, hospitals after donors cleared

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

I&PR Minister Perni Venkataramaiah said the Cabinet has approved the proposal to name schools and hospitals after donors.

For this, the donation amount should be at least Rs 50 lakh for satellite foundation schools, Rs 1 crore for primary schools and Rs 3 crore for high schools, Rs 1 crore for PHCs, Rs 5 crore for Community health centres and Rs 10 crore for Area Hospitals.

LG Polymers to be told to shift plant from Vizag

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State Cabinet is said to have taken a decision to direct LG Polymers to shift its current unit at RR Venkatapuram village in Vizag to some other notified industrial area and use the current location to start any non-polluting white or green category industry.

Sources indicated that the Cabinet has taken the decision based on the recommendation of a High-Power Committee.

Cabinet accepts SECI offer for solar power

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday decided to take the Solar Energy Corporation of India's offer of supplying 9,000 MW of solar power to meet the needs of the agriculture sector for the next 30 years.

The State Cabinet, which met here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, approved a proposal put forth by the SECI, Information and Public Relations Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) said.

Tie-up with Microsoft approved

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Software giant Microsoft, in conjunction with the Higher Education Department of Andhra Pradesh, will soon launch a skilling project to train 1.62 lakh in 40 certification courses under-graduate and post-graduate students and unemployed youth in future-ready technologies.

This is the first-of-its-kind project to be implemented by Microsoft in India, with the add-on benefit of learning Azure and LinkedIn courses to improve employability.

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, which met here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, gave its approval for the project on which

the State government would spend Rs 30.79 crore a year.

The project will be implemented through 300-plus colleges and skill development centres across the state, at the end of which the students will be awarded the certificates upon qualifying in the final examination, official sources said.

HC clears path for completion of MPTC, ZPTC poll process

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Thursday cleared the way for counting of votes polled in the Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad elections held on April 8.

A division bench of the High Court headed by Chief Justice Arup Kumar Goswami set aside a single judge's order of May 21 cancelling the April 1 notification related to the polls.

With the division bench's order, the path has now been cleared for the counting of votes and declaration of results for Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituencies and Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies, the second and the third tiers of the Panchayat Raj system.

State Election Commissioner (SEC) Nilam Sawhney is said to have called for a meeting on Friday during which she is likely to take a decision on the date of counting of votes.

With the counting of the votes for MPTCs and ZPTCS, the path will also be cleared to fill at least eight vacancies under local bodies quota in the Legislative Council.

Sajjala welcomes HC verdict

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Thursday welcomed the nod by a division bench of the High Court for counting of votes cast for the ZPTC and MPTC elections and permission to announce the results.

Speaking at a press conference here on Thursday, Ramakrishna Reddy said that the verdict has brought respite from the uncertainty over the results of Parishad polls.

He accused the Opposition parties of conspiring to obstruct democracy and attempting to go against the people's mandate.

The senior YSRCP leader said that ZPTC and MPTC polls were to be held during N Chandrababu Naidu's rule between 2018 and 19, but the TDP supreme had postponed the counting fearing defeat.

However, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy initiated



steps to conduct polls soon after forming the government, but it was postponed over the issue of reservations due to the Opposition's conspiracy, Ramakrishna Reddy said.

Recalling the earlier happenings, he expressed outrage that the elections were unilaterally postponed by former State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar in March 2020 citing Covid-19 with only six days left to complete the polling process.

POLL POSITION

PK team expertise for YSRCP in 2024 too, hints Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is believed to have asked his Cabinet colleagues to get into election mode a good two-and-a-half years before the 2024 polls.

After the Cabinet meeting on Thursday, Jagan in a chat with his Cabinet colleagues also reportedly hinted that the teams of IPAC, founded by poll strategist Prashant Kishor, will hit the ground in the State and start assessing the ground situation and would start working for the ruling YSRCP.

Kishor's IPAC had been hired by Jagan to help his party in the run-

up to the 2019 General Elections. Campaign strategies by IPAC were among the factors that helped YSRCP secure a landslide victory

– a whopping 151 of the 174 Assembly seats in 2019 polls – dealing a body blow to TDP that suffered the worst defeat in its history.

After the 2019 polls, TDP supreme N Chandrababu Naidu too looked at ways to revive his party and hired another poll strategist Robbin Sharma.

Incidentally, Sharma is a former associate and member of the core team of Prashant Kishor.

Sharma had started his own poll consulting firm called Showtime Consulting.

Annaram temple to be developed under PRASAD scheme

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The Union government has selected the hill shrine Annaram Satyanarayana Swamy temple for development under the National Mission on "Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)" scheme.

Temple Executive Officer Vendra Trinatha Rao received information that the Union government has included the temple for development under the PRASAD scheme and would announce the quantum of funds to be released for the purpose soon, said official sources.

"Proposals for the development works to be taken up in the temple under the PRASAD scheme should be sent to the Union government," Endowments Deputy Director Medepalli Vijaya Raju told this correspondent.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Bhadrapada & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam

Tithi : Ekadashi 08:07

Nakshatram : Shravana 27:35

Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam : 10:39 am - 12:10 pm

Yamagandam : 3:11 pm - 4:42 pm

Varjyam : 8:03 am - 9:37 am

Gulika : 7:38 am - 9:09 am

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 5:26 pm - 6:59 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:46 am - 12:34 pm

VIJAYAWADA
WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 33/26

Humidity: 77%

Sunrise: 6:04 am

Sunset: 06:16 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 5:00 PM

HC stays Kanagaraj appointment as APSPCA chairman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Thursday issued an interim order suspending the GO issued by the State government appointing retired Madras High Court judge Justice V Kanagaraj as chairman of AP State Police Complaints Authority (APSPCA).

The court posted the matter after six weeks for further hearing.

This is the second time that Justice Kanagaraj's appointment by the State government has been set aside by the High Court. In an earlier instance, the High Court had set aside his appointment as State Election Commissioner (SEC).

High Court advocate Para Kishore had last week filed a petition challenging Justice Kanagaraj's appointment to the APSPCA.

Indraneel Babu, counsel for the petitioner, argued that Justice Kanagaraj's appointment was against the spirit of Supreme Court judgement in Prakash Singh case.

He said that though there are clear norms that only a person up to the age of 65 years can serve as chairman of the APSPCA, the government appointed Justice Kanagaraj, who is 78 years old.

The AP State Police Complaints Authority was set up in accordance with the judgment of the Supreme Court in a writ petition on September 22, 2006. The State government relaxed the Rule 4(a) of the AP State/District Level Police Complaints Authority (Administration and Procedure) Rules, 2020 to accommodate Justice Kanagaraj to the APSPCA, Indraneel Babu argued.

52 'special invitees' too make it to TTD Board

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has constituted a 'jumbo' 81-member Board for the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, nominating 52 'special invitees' on an unprecedented scale along with 24 regular and four ex-officio members, besides the Chairman.

The government issued three separate orders to this effect around midnight on Wednesday claiming that the jumbo Board was constituted to "preserve the social, economic, religious and environmental character" of the TTD and to abide by the principles of welfare for pilgrims, devotees and the public at large.

Taking the numerous recommendations from many quarters across the country and many other equations into consideration, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy named 24 regular members and 50 Special Invitees - an unprecedented decision.

The GO said that the scope of TTD's administration spans across fields of development works, engi-



neering, finance and accounting, marketing, media and publication, forestry, water supply and human resources management and the scale and scope of these activities necessitates inclusion of special invitees who are experts from various fields.

"Moreover, it is the objective of the government to position the state as a preferred tourism destination nationally and globally," said the GO issued by Endowments

Principal Secretary G Vani Mohan. The GO also said that the special invitees are given privileges on par with members of the TTD Trust Board regarding darshan and their tenure is coterminous with the TTD Board.

Tirupati attracts over 36 million worshippers annually and the TTD would vastly benefit with the addition of eminent personalities as special invitees, it added.

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mendations from many quarters across the country and many other equations into consideration, the Chief Minister named 24 regular members and 50 Special Invitees - an unprecedented decision.

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AP logs 1,367 new Covid cases, 14 deaths

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Covid-19 caseload in Andhra Pradesh increased to 20,34,786 as 1,367 were added afresh on Thursday.

In the 24 hours ending 9 am today, 1,248 infected persons got cured while 14 succumbed, leaving 14,708 active cases, the latest bulletin said. The total recoveries increased to 20,06,034 and deaths to 14,044, the bulletin said.

East Godavari district reported 288 fresh infections and Chittoor 217 while six other districts added between 100 and 160 each. While Visakhapatnam registered 55, the remaining four districts logged less than 20 new cases each.

Chittoor and Guntur districts saw three fresh Covid-19 deaths, Krishna, Prakasam and West Godavari two each, SPS Nellore and Visakhapatnam one each in a day.

Cabinet accepts SECI offer for solar power...

Continued from Page 1

The SECI had written a letter to the State government requesting the latter to avail of the entire 9,000 MW of solar capacity to be set up in the years 2024, 2025 and 2026 in tranches of 3,000 MW each, at the rate of Rs 2.49 per unit.

The SECI had awarded contracts for 12,000 MW of solar power projects in tranches of 3,000 MW each, with the first tranche commercial operation expected to begin in September 2023.

The AP Green Energy Corporation Limited proposed to take up 10,000 MW of solar power generation in collaboration with private producers to meet the energy requirements of the farm sector.

It initially called bids for 6,400 MW plants and finalised bids for 5,800 MW in February this year. However, the project could not move ahead as it was stuck in a legal tangle.

Against this backdrop, the SECI came up with the offer to supply 9,000 MW of solar power that would be an apt and befitting alternative to the state's tender and achieve all the objectives, including costs, and also be cheaper.

PK team expertise for YSRCP in 2024 too...

Continued from Page 1

Jagan is said to have hinted about changes to the Cabinet as stated by him in the beginning of the term. At the time of taking charge as Chief Minister, Jagan had said that he would change all the Ministers in the second half of his five year term. This would be sometime in November.

It's learnt that the Ministers who will be dropped from the Cabinet will be entrusted with party posts and would be asked to work in coordination with the IPAC team to ensure the party retains power in 2024, with a bigger mandate than that of 2019.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹243
Without Skin	₹243
Broiler at Farm	₹134

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	441
HYDERABAD	398
VISAKHAPATNAM	425
RETAIL PRICE (IN VIJAYAWADA)	₹4.41

AP seeks action on TS for 'misleading' NGT on RLIS

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

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

The charges and their counters by the two Telugu States regarding RLIS and contempt of court petition against AP came up for hearing before the NGT's Chennai Bench on Thursday.

It may be mentioned here that the Telangana government filed a contempt of court petition in the NGT that the Andhra Pradesh government was constructing the



RLIS without any approvals or water allocation.

After two futile attempts to visit the site in Andhra Pradesh, the Krishna River Management Board team sub-

mitted a report to the NGT after visiting the RLIS site in the second week of August.

It mentioned in its report that no work was going on at the time of its visit. The team

however mentioned in its report that it appeared that the AP government had taken up works beyond what was required for the preparation of the Detailed Project Report.

In its arguments before the Tribunal on Thursday, Andhra Pradesh maintained its earlier stand that it had only taken up works required for DPR and other related works, and appealed to the Tribunal to understand the works were of public importance.

Andhra Pradesh alleged that Telangana gave misleading photographs to the Tribunal and criminal proceedings ought to be initiated against it for the wrong photos.

Telangana will present its arguments on September 21.

LG Polymers to be told to shift plant from Vizag...

Continued from Page 1

The High-Power Committee was constituted by the State government to look into last year's styrene leak from LG Polymers unit in Vizag.

It was headed by senior IAS officer Neerabh Kumar Prasad.

The styrene gas leak from the LG Polymers chemical plant on May 7 killed 11 persons. Preliminary investigations concluded that the accident was likely the result of insufficient maintenance of units storing the styrene monomer, improper storage, and operation errors.

ZPTC elections, as it had not followed the mandatory four-week model code of conduct to be in force between the date of announcement of schedule and the conduct of the elections, as per the Supreme Court directions.

The division bench agreed with the contention of the SEC that the Supreme Court rule for following a four-week model code of conduct cannot be applicable to the local body elections.

Niranjan Reddy, counsel for the SEC, argued that according to Article 142 of the Constitution, the four-week code is not applicable for all the elections uniformly in the country.

The High Court bench agreed with the argument that the four-week rule was not followed for municipal elections and gram panchayat elections. For municipal elections, there was a gap of only 22 days and for panchayat elections, it was only 26 days.

Tie-up with Microsoft approved

Continued from Page 1

Microsoft will provide end-to-end holistic scalable skilling solutions, beginning with learning content and curriculum, training, experiential learning through Azure labs and certification. The trainees will be prepared for employment through highly-customised LinkedIn courses, a note on the project said.

Microsoft Learn (MS Learn), the main platform of the project, will provide self-paced, digital learning resources to build skills and understand technologies.

Microsoft will provide O365 A1 (academic edition), a top productivity software for conducting online course delivery sessions, recordings of the course lectures, identity and

access management to the Higher Education Department.

This is a secured collaboration platform containing various MS tools, Teams, SharePoint online, OneDrive and video portal Streams. This will be used for conducting the sessions and sharing of content, the note said.

Also, Microsoft will provide Azure for Students, for building apps, exploring Artificial Intelligence and big data with access to over 25 free services, 14 developer tools and free learning paths.

Each registered student will get a USD 100 Azure credit, valid for a year, to access various services for preparing and learning for certification, it added.

Each student will have to

take many mock tests in the run-up to the final certification test, which will be tough. Thereafter, the student can access 20 free LinkedIn courses to learn the latest and in-demand technologies and soft skills, a top official of the Higher Education Department said.

He said the State government was highly focused on skill development and Microsoft has come up with a holistic package customised as per our requirements.

The Microsoft and LinkedIn certifications carry a high value and will help our students improve their employability as they will be well-equipped with the latest technological skills. "We want to make this project a role model in the country," the official added.

HC clears path for completion of...

Continued from Page 1

By mid-June, seven TDP MLCs and one YSRCP Member had completed their term in the Council.

These vacancies under the local bodies' category are yet to be filled due to the case being heard on MPCTs and ZPTCs elections in the High Court.

The election process began back in March 2020 before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic but was put off following the spread of the infection.

Subsequent legal battles further delayed the process and the elections were finally completed on April 8 this year after the State Election Commission issued a fresh notification for resumption of the stalled poll process.

Elections for 515 ZPTCs and 7,220 MPCTs were held on April 8, within a week of Nilam Sawhney taking over as the SEC. The results were to be declared on April 10 and further delayed due to petitions



filed in the High Court.

For the record, the TDP boycotted the election but technically it remained in the contest as the ballot papers were printed before it announced its decision.

The ruling YSR Congress had bagged 2,271 MPCT and 126 ZPTC seats unopposed in March 2020. The TDP had also won 100 MPCTs unanimously.

On May 21, Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy set aside the State Election Commission's April 1 notification over the conduct of elections to Mandal and Zilla Parishad Territorial

Constituencies, calling it "illegal, arbitrary and violative of the direction issued by the Supreme Court."

The SEC challenged the single judge's order before the High Court division bench that heard the arguments and reserved judgment on August 5.

On Thursday, the division bench gave the green signal for completion of the poll process, bringing the curtains down on the battle that stretched for 18 months with many twists and turns.

The single judge had directed the SEC to reissue notification to conduct MPCT and

Backed by Union Ministers, Krishna finds place on TTD Board

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Appointment of Guduru Radha Krishna, a young entrepreneur having roots in Guntur and settled in Chennai, to the TTD Trust Board as Special Invitee has raised many eyebrows in political circles.

It is learnt that Krishna, who has high profile connections in Delhi was recommended by at least nine Union Ministers.

It was speculated that a section of local BJP leaders were not happy with the Union Ministers recommending Krishna's name and Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy may not include his name in the list.

However, to everyone's surprise Krishna's name found mention in the list of 50 special invitees nominated by the government for which a GO has been issued late on Wednesday night.

Interestingly he was also TTD's Local Area Committee's vice president at Chennai nominated by the then TDP government in 2017.

52 'special invitees' too make it ...

Continued from Page 1

Membership in the TTD Board that manages the affairs of the world famous Tirumala temple of Lord Venkateswara is considered prestigious and always has heavy demand with recommendations coming from far away power corridors across the country whenever a new Board is constituted every two years.

The Board membership has always been a sought after coveted post due to the many privileges attached to it, including darshan of the presiding deity.

Apart from Andhra Pradesh as expected and reported in these columns the new TTD Board has members and special invitees from Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry and

Maharashtra. The remaining members would be from Andhra Pradesh.

From Telangana, chairman of the My Home Group Jupalli Rameshwar Rao, Hetero Drugs MD Bandi Parthasarathy Reddy, Muramsetti Ramulu, YSRCP Rajya Sabha Member Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy's wife Vemireddy Prashanti Reddy, Rajesh Sharma and India Cements chairman N Srinivasan have been re-nominated to the Board.

Others in the list include industrialist Tanguturu Maruthi Prasad, auditor from Tamil Nadu Pachipala Sanath Kumar, MSS Labs Managing Director Manne Jeevan Reddy and Bora Saurabh.

Interestingly, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's close confidante

and Shiv Sena Secretary Milind Narvekar also found a place on the Board.

Other members include former minister from Pudukcherry Malladi Krishna Rao, Pokala Ashok Kumar, Burra Madhusudan Yadav, Boodati Lakshmi Narayana, MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy, Rajesh Sharma, Kalwakurthi Vidyasagar Rao, MLAs AP Nanda Kumar, S R Viswanath Reddy and MN Sashidar from Karnataka.

Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy and AP Brahmin Welfare Corporation Chairman Sudhakar have also been appointed as special invitees without any voting right.

On August 8, the State government renominated YV Subba Reddy as Chairman of the Board for a second term.

BHEL commissions largest floating solar plant in AP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned BHEL on Thursday announced the commissioning of India's largest floating solar photovoltaic plant in Andhra Pradesh.

Located at NTPC Simhadri in Andhra Pradesh, the 25-megawatt floating SPV project covers an area of 100 acres, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) said without disclosing the project cost.

"BHEL has successfully commissioned India's largest Floating Solar PV plant. Notably, with its unique state-of-the-art design, the project is an engineering marvel, created by BHEL," the company said in a statement.

BHEL said its scope of work in the project included design, engineering, procurement and construction of the solar project, which has been



executed by the company's recently formed Solar Business Division.

The project will help saving valuable land resources and conserving water by reducing evaporation, it said.

It further said this complex module array has been designed for the first time in India to withstand gusts of wind up to 180 km/hr.

Given the coastal location of the project site that leads to severe corrosion, all the platform structures and other equipment have been made

corrosion resistant, it added.

The engineering firm is the leading EPC player in the solar industry in India, with an overall portfolio of more than 1.2 Gigawatts.

Its portfolio of floating solar PV projects is also the largest in the country, with more than 45 MW projects commissioned and around 107 MW under execution.

The company offers EPC solutions for both grid-interactive and off-grid, ground-mounted, rooftop, floating and canal top solar plants.

AP Cabinet clears scheme for loans of...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister said that financial assistance of Rs 6,470.76 crore will be given to women in 8,00,042 Self Help Groups.

Nani said the eligible beneficiaries who failed to get the first instalment of YSR Aasara scheme will receive the financial assistance of two instalments in the second term.

He said the State Cabinet also approved further action with the Solar Energy Corporation of India to implement a 10,000 MW solar power project to supply 9 hour day time free power to farmers on a sustainable basis for the next 30 years, at a rate of Rs 2.49 per unit.

The Minister said the Cabinet has approved the implementation of a Sub-Plan for minorities on par with SC, ST and BCs for the welfare of minorities across the State.

Sajjala welcomes HC verdict

Continued from Page 1

"Each time the government expressed readiness to conduct the polls, an attempt was made by the Opposition TDP to obstruct it as it knew it could not defeat the YSRCP," Ramakrishna Reddy said.

He said that TDP made moves with the support of Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar and brought sarpanch elections to the forefront rather than allow the parishad polls process and further tried to obstruct unanimous elections.

Ramakrishna Reddy expressed confidence that YSRCP would win any election with 80 to 85 percent positive vote, as people were on its side

since they were happy with the good governance of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. Ramakrishna Reddy slammed Chandrababu Naidu stating that he was the culprit who murdered the election process which is a part of democracy and has been implemented since Independence.

"By exploiting the loopholes in the system, Naidu obstructed the public mandate of parishad polls for almost over six months," he said.

Ramakrishna Reddy also flayed TTD leader Nara Lokesh for burning copies of the Disha Bill and said that he had no respect or concern for the

safety and security of women. Ramakrishna Reddy said that the Disha Bill was brought for the safety of women, where more than 53 lakh people have downloaded Disha App.

He said that the crime rate has come down in the State and people are coming forward to lodge complaints about their problems, which was not seen during the previous government.

"Though the Disha Bill has not become a law, it has increased the confidence among the women in regard to their safety and instead of providing suggestions, it is outrageous to hold back such a novel initiative," he added.

Annaram temple to be developed...

Continued from Page 1

So far two hill shrines - Dwaraka Tirumala Venkateswara Swamy temple in West Godavari district and Simhachalam Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Visakhapatnam district - have been included in the PRASAD scheme for development to provide more



amenities to the devotees". Endowments Deputy Director Medepalli Vijaya Raju told this correspondent.

The National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive or "PRASAD" was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the objective of holistic development of identified pilgrimage destinations.



GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
DIRECTORATE OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY A.P. VIJAYAWADA

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No. 42022/71/2021/11, Date: 16.09.2021
e-Procurement tenders are invited for supply of Fodder Seed to Animal Husbandry Department, Andhra Pradesh for distribution to the eligible farmers for a Period of Two Years as per the terms and conditions laid down in the RFP for details log on to <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in>. For any information contact: Assistant Director (RBK) Or Directorate of Animal Husbandry, Vijayawada, Phone No: 8247609621.
DIPR H.O. No.: 1644/CL/ADVT/11/2021-22 Dt:16/09/2021 DIRECTOR

2-day trade expo to showcase AP's export potential: Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Industries minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy on Thursday released the logo of state-level export summit "Vanijya Utsavam" going to be held in Vijayawada on September 21 and 22.

As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', a celebration to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence, the Department of Commerce is organising 'Vanijya Saptah' from September 20 to 25 with a focus on economic growth, especially promotion of exports from India. Various events are being planned to showcase India's exports and its potential during this week.

As part of the Saptah, the AP government has planned the Vanijya Utsav and also an 'Exporter's Conclave' at district headquarters from September 24 to 26.

Talking to reporters, Goutham Reddy said Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy will be the chief guest for the Vanijya Utsavam, and will inaugurate the two-day trade carnival at SS Convention, Vijayawada.

The event will see participa-



tion from embassies, policymakers, industry associations, leading and potential exporters, export promotion councils expecting a footfall of over 1000 exporters from various sectors.

As part of Vanijya Saptah, the Plastics Export Promotion Council (PLEXCONCIL) has been allotted to the State for organising a two-day physical event with full Covid protocol as per the guidelines of respective State authorities at the State capital or major city.

With the expo, the Minister said that the existing and prospective exporters will have

an experience of the intrinsic value of the export trade. The event will act as a curtain-raiser to achieve the target of doubling the exports by 2030 and the Indian Missions abroad will get firsthand knowledge of the efforts made by the government of Andhra Pradesh to promote trade and commerce.

He said that Andhra Pradesh currently is ranked No. 4 with merchandise export value of USD 16 Billion in 2020-21.

"The State is active in realising export targets of the Centre and aims to double the exports by 2030. Top industrialists

along with MSMEs that are contributing to the export basket of AP have been invited to display the type of commodities being exported from the State," Goutham Reddy said.

Budding entrepreneurs and potential exporters can grab this opportunity to understand the export processes, opportunities abroad and also can get IEC created on-spot under DGFT guidance, he added.

"The event aims to create a platform that facilitates cordial meetings of exporters / potential exporters with policymakers, industry players and export facilitators. The export carnival is planned with activities that guide exporters with international opportunities for the local produce, interventions being taken by the government for the benefit of traders, meet and share success stories of leading manufacturers and virtual connect with foreign embassies," the Minister added.

On the day of the event, exporters/entrepreneurs/MSMEs contributing to growth rates of AP GSDP will be recognised and awarded from the hands of Chief Minister, Goutham Reddy added.

TDP slams govt over rising crime rate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP spokesman Pilli Manikya Rao on Thursday demanded the YSRCP government to explain why Andhra Pradesh has climbed to third place in crime rate in the country when tough laws like Disha were being implemented in the State.

Manikya Rao asked the government to do some 'soul searching' about the latest reports of the National Crime

Records Bureau (NCRB) which indicated a steady rise in crime and atrocities in AP. "It was shameful that the DGP was making political statements instead of talking about the action to be taken regarding 500 atrocities that took place in the past two and half years in the state," he said.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP spokesperson said that law and order was deteriorating so rapidly that AP was going to stand in first place in

the country in crime rate very soon. "Nara Lokesh visited families of victims and tried to highlight the problems being faced by women, girls and all sections. But, the government and the police had only tried to create hurdles for his visits, rather than taking the required steps to prevent the crimes," he said.

Manikya Rao recalled how Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy reacted very sharply and came out with the Disha law when Priyanka Reddy was

gang-raped and murdered in Telangana.

"Jagan saluted the Telangana Chief Minister and Minister at that time when the culprits in Disha murder were encountered with a forewarning. It was high time that Jagan should explain why he was failing to give a similar response with regard to murders of weaker sections' girls in AP. He also did not respond to the latest ghastly killing of a tribal girl in Telangana," he said.

Govt 'harassment' is driving leaders, common man to suicide, alleges Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday accused the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government of 'abetting' suicides of political adversaries as well as the common public by pursuing the 'cruel policies of persecution and harassment'.

Naidu termed the suicide of former Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao as a 'Government murder' that would go down in history as an unpardonable crime committed by the oppressive rulers. "Vicious police force was used to mentally torture Kodela by levelling baseless allegations about misuse of furniture," the former chief minister alleged.

A senior leader, who served as Speaker, Minister, MLA and became known as 'Palnati Puli', eventually got mentally upset and fatally depressed, he said.

The TDP supremo paid tributes to Kodela Siva Prasada Rao on his second death anniversary at a programme held at the party office here. Speaking on the occasion, the former chief minister said that the unchecked harassment and rising number of suicides in AP began with the suicide of a respectable leader like Kodela.

"Normally, no value would be put on furniture used by dignitaries in high positions after four to five years of use due to depreciation. But, the YSRCP government went after him, hunted him down and abetted his suicide," Naidu alleged.

He recalled how all four members of Abdul Salaam family ended their lives in Nandyal, allegedly unable to bear harassment by the police and leaders of the ruling party. "Abdul Salaam was afraid that his wife would be harassed even more after his death. Then he thought about the future of his children. Eventually, Abdul Salaam and



TDP leaders accuse YSRCP of harassing Kodela to suicide

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party leaders on Thursday alleged that the "anarchic rule" of the YSRCP government cost the life of former Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao.

Marking the second death anniversary of Kodela Siva Prasada Rao, TDP leaders including Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, Ch Ayyannapratrudu, Nakka Ananda Babu, Alapati Raja and GV Anjaneyulu unveiled a statue of the late leader at Kandlagunta village in Nekarikallu mandal on Thursday. The TDP leaders garlanded the statue and paid tributes.

Later a huge rally led by

Kodela Siva Prasada Rao's son Kodela Shiva Ram was taken out.

Addressing the gathering, the TDP leaders came down heavily on the YSRCP government, alleging that harassment by the government led to the untimely death of Kodela Siva Prasada. The TDP leaders recalled the development in his constituency and construction of toilets for the poor that was monitored by the former Assembly Speaker.

Senior leaders Nannapaneni Rajakumari, Chadalavada Aravinda Babu, N Rama Naidu, Chalamareddy and Nazir were among those who participated.

farmers and others are committing suicide in order to bring pressure on the Government. A 'male animal' asked a girl to sleep with another person in Nellore district. The video was alarming. Such incidents would not even take place in Afghanistan," he stated.

Condemning the government's ruthless attitude, Naidu said that ultimately, perpetrators of crimes and abettors of suicides would not go unpunished. "God would give them punishment. Kodela Siva Prasada Rao rendered never-failing services for the public and his role was memorable in making the Basavatarakam Hospital a reality," Naidu said.

He said that the former Assembly Speaker developed and turned Kotappa Konda temple into a popular destination for devotees and pilgrims. "He also got involved in modernising cremation grounds. Toilets were built for every woman in every house in his constituency," Naidu added.

The TDP chief asserted that job creation could be taken forward like a movement only when efforts would be made for large-scale wealth creation in the state. He said that ever since the YSRCP came to power in Andhra Pradesh, all sections of society including unemployed youth, farmers and women were feeling unsafe and insecure about their prospects. "The educated youth are not getting jobs. The poorer sections were not finding work opportunities. Attacks and atrocities were rising on women and girls," he said.

Addressing a meeting held with leaders of AP Udyoga Porata Samithi here, the TDP chief said that he had worked for a long time as a Chief Minister and as an Opposition leader. In his long career, he had never seen a leader who had behaved so irresponsibly like Jagan, Naidu said.

TS IT POLICY TARGET

TS targets Rs 3 lakh-crore exports, 10L IT jobs by 2026

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State, in its new ICT Policy, has set a target of increasing total direct employment in the IT sector to 10 lakh jobs and doubling annual IT/ITES sector exports to Rs 3 lakh crore by 2026.

Minister for Industries and IT K.T. Rama Rao, along with Rekha Menon, Chairperson of NASSCOM and Chairperson and Senior MD Accenture -- India, unveiled Telangana's 2nd ICT Policy.

In his address on the occasion, KTR said, "Our primary objective with regard to the 2nd ICT Policy is to empower and enable the citizens of the state, belonging to all backgrounds, take advantage of the growing digital world. From being able to use basic smart phone applications to be able to work on advanced technologies, we will enable citizens to live a better digital life".

The first ICT Policy was announced in 2016 as a set of guiding principles for the ITE&C Department. KTR said that the ITE&C Department had been successful at meeting the goals set out in the ICT Policy 2016 and in some cases even performing beyond the set targets.

Chief Guest Rekha Menon



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

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, ITE&C Department, presented the features of the new ICT Policy. He said, "The second ICT Policy might not seem very different from the previous one. This is because the first one has done exceedingly well and as the saying goes, why fix something that is not broken. The key aspect of this policy is that we want citizens to be at the centre-stage. Our focus will be on having our citizens as the biggest achievement of the government and the state."

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

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

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

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Collector Pravin Kumar on Thursday directed irrigation officials to ensure that all agriculture lands get water.

The Collector was reviewing the irrigation water supply to agriculture lands at his camp office on Thursday.

Addressing the irrigation officials, Pravin Kumar said that Prakasam district was allocated 52 tmc ft of water from the Krishna river which would reach the district in phased manner.

The Collector asked the officials to take steps to ensure that the irrigated dry crops would not be affected due to shortage of water.

He asked the officials to take steps to fill up all irrigation tanks and directed the water resources, revenue, agriculture and police officials to work in a coordinated manner in this regard.

The Collector asked the officials to ensure that even the tail-end fields receive water. The officials briefed the Collector that Krishna River Water Management Board has ordered release of water for irrigated dry crops that were raised in 4,34,330 acres in the district.

The Collector told them that water would be supplied to 225 drinking water tanks and 6 summer storage tanks in 25



mandals in seven Assembly constituencies. The Collector directed the officials to take steps to ensure that the water in the drinking water tanks would not be used for agriculture purposes.

Pravin Kumar also laid the foundation stone for construction of houses at Martur in Purchur constituency on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he

said that foundation stone laid for the construction of 277 houses. He said that 31 lakh poor were given house pattas in the district and efforts were on for the construction of 25,000 houses in the district.

He said that CC roads, drinking water, electricity and drainage system were being constructed in the Jagananna colonies.

The Collector assured bene-

ficiaries that shortage of sand used for construction of houses would not be a problem. Later the Collector made surprise inspection to Valavaparla, Yuddanapudi and Gannavaram secretaries. He asked the secretariat staff to expedite the process of Covid vaccination.

DCMS chairman Ravi Padmavati, Tahsildars Venkata Reddy and Venkataratnam accompanied the Collector.



Spl officers to oversee schemes in 62 mandals

PNS ■ KAKINADA

District Collector C Hari Kiran on Thursday said that special officers have been appointed to 62 rural mandals specifically to monitor implementation of welfare schemes.

The Collector here on Thursday said that in order to ensure benefits of welfare schemes being implemented under the YSRCP government's flagship Navaratnalu schemes for the eligible poor reach the beneficiaries, special officers were appointed to 62 rural mandals.

The special officers would ensure that the fruits of welfare schemes reach all the eligible poor. The special officers would also monitor the development works being carried out under MPLADS, CSR and CMDF. He said special officers were already appointed at Assembly constituency level to coordinate between government departments.



Boat gutted in fire mishap

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A fishing boat gutted in fish accident on Wednesday night at Upputeri in Jagannathapuram.

Fishermen anchor their boats at the shore at Upputeri and late on Wednesday, a fire

erupted in one of the boats. The flames engulfed the boat within minutes, leaving the vessel gutted. Fire tenders rushed to the spot and extinguished the flames.

Fortunately, no one was hurt in the mishap.

GVMC's pet dog theme park plans draw howls of protest

VKL GAYATRI
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation has proposed to develop a pet dog theme park to ensure the animals get ample physical exercise.

A model pet dog theme park would come up in an extent of one acre at Ratnagiri, near Chinamushidiwada close to Pendurthi in the city.

The model pet dog theme park also aims to provide a place for morning and evening walks for senior citizens and a playing area for children.

However, there is stiff oppo-

sition regarding the proposal of a pet dog theme park. Several corporators are opposing the park, saying that though there are several emergency civic works yet to be carried out, the GVMC is needlessly investing money in theme parks.

Meanwhile, the designs for the proposed pet dog theme park are under process.

At several residential areas, there are a number of pet dogs being maintained by the residents who take the animals out for a walk on the roads. In order to provide a hassle-free area, the pet dog theme park has been proposed, GVMC

officials say.

The park would be developed to provide walking tracks for senior citizens and also play areas for the children, M Damodar, Assistant Director, Horticulture, GVMC told *The Pioneer*.

If indeed work on the theme park goes ahead, it is estimated to set the GVMC back by around Rs 2 crore, including civil works.

Later, the corporation would develop similar pet dog theme parks based on the demand at other places, including Seethammadhara and Kirlampudi Layout etc, Damodar added.

"Though there are several

emergency civic works that need to be attended to, leaving aside the priority works, the GVMC is investing public money on useless works," CPM Floor Leader and 78 ward corporator Dr B Ganga Rao pointed out.

"Almost all the roads in the city have been severely damaged and at several places, the GVMC is not yet properly maintaining the sanitation. Leaving aside all such priority works, the Corporation is proposing to develop theme parks not only as pet dog parks and also parks in several other places at a cost of Rs 15 crore," said Dr Ganga Rao.



Maoist camp busted near AOB, ammunition seized

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Security personnel in Odisha busted a Maoist camp following a gunfight with Naxals along the Malkangiri-Koraput border in the State and seized arms and ammunition from the area, a senior police officer said on Thursday.

A top Andhra Pradesh-based Maoist leader Suresh Surana, who was camping in the region, however, managed to flee, he said.

Acting on intelligence inputs, a team of jawans from district voluntary forces, special operations group and the BSF launched a search operation on Wednesday at Badili hill, where the Naxals were camping, Malkangiri SP



Prahalad Meena told reporters during a press meet.

The Maoists, on seeing the security personnel approaching them, opened fire, leading to a gun battle between the two sides which lasted for around two hours.

"Suresh Surana, a top CPI(Maoist) leader from Andhra Pradesh, managed to escape the area along with his accomplices. They are suspected to have fled to the neighbouring State," he said. One gun, six live cartridges,

four detonators, two walkie-talkies, uniforms and posters were recovered from the Maoist camp during the operation. "We have intensified search operations in Malkangiri along the Andhra border," the SP added.

SP asks police officers to be proactive in controlling crime

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police Malika Garg has asked all police officers to be proactive and committed in controlling crime and maintaining law and order.

The SP held a review meeting virtually with police officers in the district and gave some key suggestions and advice.

DSPs, CIs and SCs in all sub-divisions of the district from the district police office were present. During the meeting, the SP directed the officers to focus on livelihood, place of residence and movements of the accused after their release from jail. The SP told them to conduct counselling for persons who misbehave and troublemakers within their police station limits.

The SP also directed officers to take strict action against such persons who disturb the peace and security. She also told them to enforce pending NBWs at police stations and produce the accused in the courts.

The SP took the stock of the cases registered on road accidents in the last two weeks, the places where accidents take



place and instructed the officers on the adoption of road safety measures to prevent road accidents.

She asked them to identify the accident-prone areas and mark them as black spot areas on Google Map and identify the areas where most accidents happen on the roads (black spots) and set up cautionary boards on both sides of them.

Malika Garg asked the police officers to put more efforts to resolve every case registered under the SC/ST Atrocities Act. She directed the authorities to complete the investigations in the missing cases and suspicious death cases expeditiously without showing any negligence and gave them various instructions.

The SP also advised them to reduce the pending DUI cases. The SP also enquired about the

investigation of snatching cases, the arrest of the accused and told officers to keep a special vigil on those who commit such crimes.

She directed the police officers to increase surveillance on old offenders to control thefts, utilise the services of women police to learn about their lifestyles, identify areas where crime is likely to occur and make changes in night beats to patrol those areas.

The SP stressed the need of maintaining transparency, dedication and impartiality in police duties as they would help to increase public trust in the police system.

ASP B Ravi Chandra, OSD K Chowdeswari, Ongole Traffic DSP P Mallikarjuna Rao, DCRB DSP AV Ramana, CIs Balamurali, Anjineya Reddy, DCRB SIs and other staff participated.

Afghan students protest for peace in their country

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Appealing to nations across the world to intervene and restore peace in their country, students from Afghanistan who are pursuing their higher studies at Andhra University, staged a silent protest at the university main gate on Thursday.

As many as 130 Afghan students gathered at the spot and hoisted the country's national flag. They appealed to countries across the world to notice the pathetic situation of their people under the Taliban regime and to restore peace and freedom in their country.

As a part of cultural transformation, Indian Council for Cultural Research, New Delhi, has been offering higher education facilities to youth from Afghanistan since 2009.

At present, 130 students are pursuing education in university of whom about 40 percent are staying in private accommodation. The students are in Law, English, Physics and many other courses.

MP: Construction of toilets, growing greenery on NH will be given priority

PNS ■ ELURU

Construction of toilets and planting greenery along National Highways would be given priority, Rajahmundry MP Margani Bharat said on Thursday.

He was addressing a meeting of the Road Safety Committee held here.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP said that 56 toilets would be constructed from Gundugolanu to Kovvuru. The locations for construction of these toilets have been identified, he said, adding that the toilets would be constructed near bus stops and the maintenance would be given to the Sulabh international. It was also decided to grow greenery on both sides of the highway and maintain it properly, the MP said.



The MP underlined the need of proper maintenance of National Highway to minimise road accidents. He asked the highway maintenance officials why high mast lamps were not erected at Kalaparru, ASHRAM hospital.

The officials said that the poles were erected and electric works were going on. The MP suggested that a flyover be constructed on the National Highway at Bhimavaram.

Collector Kartikeya Misha asked officials to provide one more ambulance service on the Siddantham route. The officials said that the widening of Kalaparru to Gundugolanu Highway would be completed by March 2022.

Later, some farmers met Margani Bharat and informed him that they had to give their lands for the construction of Greenfield Highway but they were being offered lower com-

pensation than the prevailing market price for their lands.

The MP assured the farmers that he would strive to ensure that they are paid Rs 23 lakh per acre for their lands.

SP Rahul Dev Sharma, Joint Collectors Dr BR Ambedkar, Himanshu Shukla, P Padmavati, sub-collector C Vishnu, MLC K Moshe Raju and NHA regional officer RK Singh were among those present.

Congress, BJP prepare to show strength in Telangana

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

All is set for a show of strength by the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party on Friday at different venues. While the Congress party is holding its public meeting at Gajwel -- the Assembly home constituency of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, the BJP is conducting its public meeting at Nirmal in erstwhile Adilabad district. Both the parties are trying hard to establish their credentials as an 'alternative' to the 'Telangana Rashtira Samiti in the state.

The Congress has predicted the downfall of the TRS government. Given that Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to address the Gajwel meeting, the BJP state unit is hopeful that Shah would "clear the doubts of the people of Telangana and as well as party cadre" and assert that the BJP and TRS would never have alliance and that "TRS remains their main political enemy".

Of late, due to the ease with which Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao could meet Prime Minister



Narendra Modi as well as some central ministers, state BJP leaders think that there is a doubt in the minds of people whether BJP and TRS are friendly parties. Besides, several Union ministers have praised the state government's schemes. So, the BJP brass in Telangana want Shah to put the record straight about TRS-BJP ties. The Telangana BJP leaders are of the view that the Nirmal public meeting would send a clear message that the saffron party is an alternative to the TRS in the state and that in the next Assembly elections that their party would come to power in Telangana.

The state BJP leaders are upbeat that Shah's speech at the Nirmal public meeting would help lubricate the party machinery to stand united and fight the TRS "without

any compromise" to bring the saffron party to power in the state in next Assembly elections.

The Telangana Congress leaders are hopeful that the Gajwel public meeting would galvanize the party cadre to fight with the TRS and bring the grand old party to power in the next Assembly elections.

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

Gupta takes charge as ADRM, Waltair

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Sudhir Kumar Gupta, IRSE, 1997 batch, assumed charge as Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure) of Waltair Railway Division on Thursday.

Sudhir Kumar Gupta joined railways in 2000 as Assistant Divisional Engineer/ Mysore Division.

He has varied experience over 24 years in Railways and served in various positions over South Central Railway, South Western Railway, East Central Railway South Eastern Railway and East Coast Railway in open line as well as in construction in various capacities.

He also worked in general administration as secretary to General Manager South Western Railway. Prior to his posting as ADRM, Waltair, he was chief project manager-II of East Coast Railway.



After 'encounter' warning, accused in minor girl's rape, murder found dead

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

The girl was allegedly raped and murdered in a neighbour's house at Saidabad on the evening of September 9.

On Thursday, a senior police officer said the accused P Raju, aged around 30, was found walking on the track by gangmen, who asked him to move aside from the track, but he did not and was hit by a passenger train at around 8.45 AM.

"This looks to be a clear case of suicide as of now," Warangal Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi said.

Police after being informed, reached the spot and after verification established the identity of the deceased, based on the tattoos on his hands and some other marks to be that of the accused wanted in the case of rape and murder of the minor girl, the Commissioner said.

The family members also identified the body, he said.

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

Officials took details from them on Wednesday and let them off in the night. When

asked if he was caught, they replied in the negative, she said.

The body was shifted to MGM government hospital in Warangal for post-mortem.

Earlier, Telangana DGP M Mahendar Reddy tweeted: "The accused of 'Child Sexual Molestation and murder @ Singareni Colony, found dead on the railway track, in the limits of Station Ghanpur Police Station. Declared after the verification of identification marks on deceased body."

Telangana IT Minister KT Rama Rao also tweeted: "Just been informed by @Telangana DGP Garu that the beast who raped the child has been traced & found dead on a railway track at Station Ghanpur."

Telugu film star and former Union Minister K Chiranjeevi tweeted: "Let's not allow such dastardly acts to recur and let's do whatever it takes towards this goal!" The incident last week triggered protests by residents of the locality who had raised slogans and demanded justice and quick arrest of the culprit.

Police had then said the accused had allegedly kidnapped the girl after she came out of her house and took her to his room and sexually assaulted her and later killed her. The accused had gone absconding and the girl's body was later found in the house.

Police had intensified search operations after forming several teams to nab the accused even as Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar on Tuesday declared a reward of Rs 10 lakh to any person who gave information / clue leading to his arrest.

Police earlier said the man was used to taking alcohol and sleeping at pavements and bus stands.



Raju's kin allege encounter

PNS ■ WARANGAL

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

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

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

Awareness key to fight crimes against women

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Women's Commission Chairperson V Sunita Laxma Reddy on Thursday said the Commission would conduct awareness programmes for school children as part of measures to prevent crimes against

girls and women. The Commission would conduct programmes to promote awareness among school children so that they can differentiate between a good and bad touch, she said. The School Education Department and police would also be involved in the awareness programmes,

she said. Responding to the death of the accused in the alleged rape and murder of a six-year old girl here, Sunita Laxma Reddy tweeted: "What the girl's mother wanted has happened. The girl's soul has got peace. Homage to the girl child with the death of the evildoer."

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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

victim's parents that all steps will be taken to ensure that the guilty get stringent punishment. Some local residents lodged their protest over the manner the ministers visited the victim's family without any prior information. Leaders of Seva Lal Banjara Sangham tried to disrupt the ministers' visit but were stopped by the police. Later, the victim's family members said they will return the cheque to the government as they only want justice. The girl's father told reporters that the ministers left the cheque in their house. "We don't want the cheque. We want justice," he said. The six-year-old was sexually assaulted and murdered by Raju, who happened to be her neighbor, on September 9. The

incident triggered public outrage. The state government had come under criticism from the opposition for its handling of the case. The opposition leaders who visited the victim's house, found fault with Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and his cabinet colleagues for not visiting the family. A massive manhunt was launched for the fugitive and Hyderabad police had announced Rs 10 lakh reward for any information leading to his arrest. The accused was found dead on railway track in Jangaon district. Police claimed that he committed suicide by throwing himself under a train. The body was identified with tattoo marks on hands.

Cops foil Sharmila's sit-in dharna

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad police foiled a protest march by YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) leader YS Sharmila, who was staging a sit-in demanding justice to the family of six-year-old girl raped and murdered last week. Police forcibly ended Sharmila's protest in the early hours of Thursday and shifted her to her residence in Jubilee Hills just hours before it revealed that the body of the accused was recovered from railway tracks. The daughter of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy was staging sit-in near the victim's residence

in Singareni Colony in Saidabad area since Wednesday evening. Police swung into action after midnight and dispersed YSRTP workers staging sit-in along with Sharmila. Policewomen forcibly shifted Sharmila to a police vehicle and she was later dropped at her residence. After calling on the family of the victim, Sharmila sat on protest. She vowed to continue the fast till justice is done to the family. She demanded a compensation of Rs 10 crore to the victim's family. She expressed concern over the crime rate in the state and said that sexual assaults on women had increased during the TRS rule. Sharmila's mother and

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) honorary president YS Vijayamma also called on the victim's family. She stated that there is an urgent need to stop heinous incidents of rape of minor girls. Vijayamma claimed that when Rajasekhara Reddy was the chief minister such incidents never happened. She recalled that when there was an acid attack in Warangal, the culprits were taken to task. The YSRCP leader sought to know why no leader from the ruling TRS had not visited the victim's family to express solidarity while almost all the opposition leaders are paying a visit to console the family.

INDIA
CORNER

Stalin to personally monitor implementation of govt schemes

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



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

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



NIF announces longlist of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Book Prize

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



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

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

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

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

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

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

BJP leader Surendran quizzed in poll bribery case

PNS ■ KASARAGOD (KERALA)

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



PM inaugurates new defence office complexes, slams critics

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Centre allows prematurely retired NCLAT chairperson to continue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

Pinarayi warns those indulging in 'poisonous campaign'

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

PNS ■ FIROZABAD

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

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



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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

Terror and hunger

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

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



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

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

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

PICTALK



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

PTI

AAP eyeing UP

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

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



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

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

Pornography is the theory, rape practice

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Petitioner's counsel Vijay Panjwani argued that "criminal



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

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

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

strongly object to the word 'Talibanisation'."

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SANSAD TV GOES ON AIR

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

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

Dimple | kanpur

RAHUL'S 'FAKE HINDU' JIBE

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

The use of religion, a centre of devo-

Telcos get a respite



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

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

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

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

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

G David Milton | Maruthancode

PLANET EARTH IS HEATING UP

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

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

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

Venu GS | Kollam

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

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



Delhi Deputy CM
—Manish Sisodia

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

Pakistan Prime Minister
—Imran Khan

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

Actor
—Jacqueline Fernandez

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

KKR captain
—Eoin Morgan


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

Haryana Chief Minister
—Manohar Lal Khattar

FIRST COLUMN

BUILDING BLOCKS OF DEVELOPMENT

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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



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

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


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

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

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

As NaMo turns 71, the world turns to him

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



JASIM MOHAMMAD

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

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

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



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

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

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

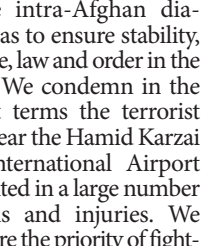
There are many reasons why Modi has achieved globally what many other Indian



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

Mighty challenges in Indian agriculture

India has all the means to become an agricultural power in the world but we are currently tapping only a fraction of our strength and letting the rest slide

Current focus of public discourse in agriculture is on marketing system in the backdrop of the three contentious farm laws enacted last year. Early this year, the Supreme Court ordered a temporary stay on their implementation and appointed an expert committee whose report is lying unactioned since March. The Government's offer to seek suggestions on specific changes in the law have fallen on deaf ears and the protests seeking outright scrapping of laws have now turned distinctly political.

This focus on marketing has eclipsed attention on important issues of growing water deficit, soil erosion and environmental degradation - particularly nitrogen pollution or air and water - caused by current farming practices. Here is a brief explainer of issues and concerns.

In a pandemic-stricken world, time-bound eradication of hunger and malnutrition by 2030 in an environmentally sustainable manner is an international priority and commitment under United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Food Systems Summit is due to be convened soon to review global preparedness. Action is required to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; shift to sustainable consumption patterns; boost nature-positive production; advance equitable livelihoods; and build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

India has offered to use its over-flowing granaries to tackle extreme hunger but India can do much more and be an agricultural power but we are presently tapping only a fraction of our strength. Here are some suggestions to achieve this mission.

By the mid-1960s, hit by back-to-back droughts, India was a "ship to mouth" economy waiting for PL480 wheat imports from USA. Today, India is the largest exporter of rice and the second-largest producer of both wheat and rice, after China. Except for oilseeds and pulses, the country is now self-sufficient in foodgrain production.

This feat has been achieved by ushering 'Green Revolution' in the 1960s. One of the important fallouts of Green Revolution was increased use of chemical fertilisers, mainly urea for nitrogen and others to provide potassium and phosphorus.

Textbook science tells us that bacteria in the roots of leguminous plants (pulses) help in 'nitrogen fixation', conversion of atmospheric nitrogen into nitrogenous compounds that serve as fertilisers. These plants therefore naturally increase the nitrogen content of soil. Traditional agriculture practice of 'crop rotation' was to sow the legumes in between other crops to restore depleted nitrogen content of soil.

Green Revolution changed many of these practices. It boosted production with three major failings. First, its impact was confined to a few cereal crops - mainly wheat and rice - and to water surplus regions of Punjab, Haryana and parts of UP. These are no more water surplus and the water table has gone very deep. Further, the



THEN THERE IS THE ISSUE OF POLLUTION CAUSED BY CHEMICAL FERTILISERS AND PESTICIDES. SCIENTISTS FOUND THAT CROPS GENERALLY USE UP ONLY 30 PER CENT OF NITROGEN FERTILISERS SPRINKLED IN THE FIELDS; THE REST SEEPS INTO THE ENVIRONMENT, HARMING HEALTH AND ADDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GOI. The views expressed are personal.)



new varieties require chemical fertilisers and pesticides and there is a risk of the chemicals seeping into air and water.

Three crops (rice, wheat and sugarcane) corner 75 to 80 per cent of irrigated water. Diversification of cropping patterns towards millets, pulses, oilseeds, horticulture is needed for more equitable distribution of water, improving sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture and most important of all, addressing the problem of nutrition deficit. Too much of cereals and sugarcane at the cost of pulses, fruits and vegetables is not good for health.

At a time when some misguided environmentalists have aligned with misguided farmers in perpetuating over-production of cereals in an environmentally unsustainable manner, it is apt to recall the report released by UN agencies (FAO, IFAD, WHO, UNICEF, WFP) on State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World on July 13, 2020.

The UN Report has estimated that if last five years' trends persist, the number of undernourished people will exceed 84 crore by 2030 whereas the goal is to reduce it to zero under SDGs.

Then there is the issue of pollution caused by chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Nitrogen pollution has implications for global warming as well.

The farmers were initially impressed by four-to-ten-fold increase in productivity of wheat and rice. They kept on increasing fertiliser use, particularly of cheaper urea. The soil kept losing its natural health and became 'addicted' to urea. With the fertiliser use efficiency on the decline, farmers used more fertiliser (than minimum

required) in the hope of raising yield. Scientists found that crops generally use up only 30 per cent of nitrogen fertilisers sprinkled in the fields; the rest seeps into the environment, harming health and adding to climate change.

The "nitrogen use efficiency" of the global food system integrating crop and livestock production systems is very low, just about 15 per cent. This means that 85 per cent of nitrogenous chemicals used are lost to air, groundwater or surface runoff, threatening the quality of air, soils, and fresh waters, driving climate change, and thereby endangering ecosystems and human health (2013 Study).

Nitrous oxide is a particularly potent greenhouse gas as it is over 300 times more effective at trapping heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Agriculture leads to about 70 per cent of nitrous oxide emissions in India. Of this, 77 per cent is contributed by fertilisers, mostly urea, according to the Indian Nitrogen Assessment published in 2017.

Cereals consume over 69 per cent of nitrogen fertilisers in India and fertilizer consumption shows a continuously growing trend, with a yearly increase of about six per cent since 1970.

Concerned about excessive use of urea and its adverse effect on environment, a major policy intervention has been introduction of neem-coated urea - coating of *Neem* on urea granules means the urea does not readily dissolve in water and the soil gets additional natural insecticide.

This should help but eventually we need to gradually return to chemical-free agriculture.

Obviously, we cannot proceed like Sri Lanka which banned import of chemical fertilisers in the face of a serious shortage of dollars with them. It has affected food production and supply leading to imposition of emergency.

Chemical-free farming or organic farming or zero budget natural farming is yet to pick up in a big way. Currently, 38 lakh hectares of cultivable area is organically farmed by 30 lakh farmers with an export and domestic demand of Rs.7,000 crore and Rs.4,400 crore, respectively. The domestic market is growing at 17 per cent and the projected demand of organic food market is likely to cross Rs. 87.1 crore by 2021 from Rs. 53.3 crore in 2016. The export market size of organic products has increased by 42 per cent during 2021 compared to last year and the volume of organic products exported from April 2020 to February 2021 was 819,250 MT with value of \$948 million.

'Sresta Natural Bioproducts' is a sustainable livelihood venture that has enabled 45,000 farmers turn to practicing organic farming across the country. The company has converted two lakh acres of land across 15 states. Over 200 products are sold in 10,000 stores and exported to 50 countries under the brand name 24 Mantra. A 'jaivik kheti' web portal in fact connects farmers to consumers for better prices. These are encouraging but still baby steps. Organic farming, perceived as a fad of the rich and expensive, cannot become a mass movement unless organic products are verifiable and affordable.

When shall we see a 'mahapanchayat' discussing these challenges before Indian agriculture?



SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THEY (THE BJP) ARE FAKE HINDUS. THEY USE RELIGION, THEY ARE BROKERS OF RELIGION, BUT THEY ARE NOT HINDUS. —CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



RAHUL GANDHI SHOULD NOT MAKE THESE STATEMENTS. HE IS TOTALLY DISCONNECTED FROM THE GROUND AND HAS NO INFORMATION. —BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY ARUN SINGH

COMPATIBILITY OVER COMPROMISE

K RAMYA SREE

Bridging the much-needed gap between the meaningless high turnover of hook-up/dating sites and the impersonal touch of marriage apps and services, and of course, the actual arranged marriage set up, sister duo Tanisha Ghura Kanani and Priyanka Ghura Kuka launched 'Not So Arranged.' The essence of the Not So Arranged Compatibility Quiz is to help one gain clarity and get to know someone before making a commitment. "Priyanka and I did a lot of research. We found similar options but not identical to what we planned. The whole concept is that we wanted to add an extra layer of science or psychology to help find an individual a match who will actually be on the same wavelength. Compatibility to some extent is based on how two people connect. We started speaking to psychiatrists to explore this further," shares Tanisha. Post their discussion with a couple of psychologists who guided them quite well with an affirmation of there being a way to go about this and there really being a need for something like this, the sister duo found their perfect match in Panna Kamaljit, who is a clinical psychologist with years of experience in relationship counselling, premarital assessment and behavioral research. What's their USP? They say, "The USP of this site is the Compatibility Quotient (CQ) quiz and an in-person interview. The approach is about matching personalities and compatibility, not profiles." "With this mission in mind



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

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

and views about life," they tell us. The quiz is straightforward, to the point, non-intrusive and won't take much of your time. The best part about the quiz is that there are

absolutely no right or wrong answers. When asked what made them to start off something like this, Priyanka shares it is because of a personal experience Tanisha had. "When I had reached a certain point in my life and hadn't met anyone yet I realized that there weren't many avenues to connect with like-minded people for a serious relationship. The arranged marriage process was very overwhelming. Looking back at this time in my life, Priyanka and I realised that there has to be a better way to do this. This is how the idea of Not So Arranged came about," shares Tanisha. How do they tackle people who are specific about religion and caste? Priyanka shares, "We do ask questions on which caste or religion they want to connect with and we only connect them accordingly. While we encourage you to be open and meet all kinds of people, we also understand that there are limitations in terms of belief and community. At the end of the day, we are looking at serious dating to settle down into." They also conduct a Get-To-Know-You session once you sign up, either in-person or on the video, to help understand better in terms of personality, lifestyle and habits, to curate a match that will actually compliment you. As of now, 80 per cent of their matches continue the conversation beyond the first date.

Mobile gaming trumps computers, consoles

AMITHA GHATTI

The moment a child picks up his or her senses, they are introduced to games! Initially, there were outdoor games, however, as times passed by, online gaming has taken over, and how! Gaming is no longer a boy's arena. Even girls are unfathomably attracted towards it giving their best shots at online gaming. There was a time when people were adamant about having the latest PlayStation at their places, where they can sit with a group of friends and chill. How ever, after the increased usage of mobile phones, the craze for PlayStation and X-box has significantly come down, especially in India with as many as 7.3 billion downloads of gaming apps. Wondering why mobile games are growing popular over PlayStation and other games? According to many studies, it is mainly because of its affordability, better quality, free installation, and portability! Mobile gaming industries have been booming ever since people began choosing them over computer games. According to a survey by an ad tech firm 'InMobi', the lasting impact of Covid-19 meant that people not only spent more time on

mobile gaming, but they also experimented with a lot of different apps. On average, time spent on gaming apps surged through the day with 40 percent. And according to a KPMG report, India had the highest game downloads in the casual mobile gaming sub-segment in the world in 2020 — downloads standing at 7.3 billion, accounting for 17 percent of the global mobile game downloads! Ban or no ban, PUBG remained the trending game in the country. We've seen teenagers going crazy over the game, to the extent that youngsters have reportedly borrowed heavy money from their parents, just so that they can cross on to the next level in the game! What made mobile games a winner over games on a computer? We're told parents are always prone to focus more on the repercussions of playing games on the PC, and are unwelcoming to look at the other side of the coin! But what is the other side of the coin? The *Pioneer* got in touch with a YouTuber and a gamer named 'KrixkroS' aka Prem, who shared his opinion on the same. He shares, "PC gamers in India play indie, rpg, open-world games as a pastime or to relax. I personally think they are better than mobile gamers always. Mobile

pared to games on a computer or console. Building a PC for playing games is too expensive, and Indian parents are unprogressive in the field of video games, even though it has become a profession now. Some parents don't care if their children spend time playing video games on their mobile phones, but have an issue if it's on the PC! Indian parents are hidebound about video games or eSports, hence they don't allow their children to spend time playing games on their PCs." YouTuber Kamal, known as 'Gauntlet Gaming', believes, "It's been eight years since I started a YouTube channel, and I started playing games since my fifth class. My favourite game is the 'Assassins Creed' series". Kamal was all pragmatic about the topic, he continues to say that it helped him build accuracy, reflexes become faster! "Mobile phones are cheap and the middle-class strata can afford only mobile phones while PlayStation nearly costs 22,000 rupees. PC assembling can go anywhere from 22,000 to 6 lakh rupees. Not everyone can afford that," he concludes. It is not just children or youngsters who are addicted to mobile games. Even adults are glued to these, to relieve their stress. While gaming, to an extent, can be your stress buster, reports suggest that mobile gaming leaves a lot of negative effects as well. Playing games on your mobile phones not only affects one's health but also makes them socially less active. With multiple options available, people, especially children, are lacking concentration and attention to detail in real life. So mobile or computer, unhealthy screentime will always be a cause for worry.



Stress? It's affecting your diabetes too!

Diabetes management is a life-long process that needs constant awareness, and this can add stress to one's daily life. Stress can be a major barrier to effective glucose control. Stress hormones in a body may directly affect glucose levels. If one experiences stress or feeling threatened, the body reacts. This is called the fight-or-flight response. The body directs blood to the muscles and limbs, allowing that person to fight the situation. The body may not be able to process the glucose released by firing nerve cells if the person has diabetes. If the body fails to convert the glucose into energy, it builds up in the bloodstream. This causes the blood glucose levels to experience a rise, making stress a potential contributor to chronic hyperglycaemia in diabetes. Keenly noticing and keeping track of the action, such as the date and what you were experiencing or any particular activity or a pattern that is being responsible for stress, may help the patient determine specific triggers. One can figure out if this is happening with similar action points by capturing the stress

and glucose levels. Constant stress from long-term problems with blood glucose can also wear you down mentally and physically. This may make managing diabetes difficult. Sometimes, the symptoms of stress are subtle and it may get unnoticed. But, it may affect mental and emotional well-being along with physical health. Some of the common yet not so common symptoms are headache, hypersomnia, fatigue, anxious and dehydration. One needs to set a regular timetable to deal with such stress. A good time slot management with the things to do helps in managing such issues. Things such as keeping your blood sugar levels within the range recommended by your doctor acts as a major contributor to manage diabetes. The liquid content in the body with the right kind of electrolytes helps in minimising the effect of a lot of co-morbidities sometimes. Choosing zero sugar hydrators that have no carbohydrates or calories benefit in keeping the mind stress-free and keeps up with the desired

liquid content in the body. Here are some ways to keep diabetes-led stress under control: **Carbohydrate counting and portion controls:** Portion controlling and carb intakes act as a really good diabetes management plan. For people taking mealtime insulin, it's important to be aware of the amount of carbohydrates in your food. **Plan a well-balanced meal:** Every meal must have a good mix of starches, fruits and vegetables, proteins, and fats, choose foods that are low in carbs and

have fibre that helps keep blood sugar levels more stable. **Coordinate meals and medications:** Too little food in proportion to diabetes medications, especially insulin, may result in dangerously low blood sugar. Too much food may cause your blood sugar level to climb too high. Talk to a diabetes health care team and best coordinate meal and medication schedules can result in good reports. **Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages:** Such beverages tend to be high in calories and offer little nutrition. One should switch to sugar-free electrolytes which act as a refresher as well as keeps the glucose levels in control. (The writer, Dr Jayarami Reddy, is a Consultant Physician and Diabetologist in Hyderabad.)



Making homemakers' dreams a reality

A recent survey suggested that 62% of homemakers aspire to start up a business of their own. A good 53% of homemakers say contributing to the family financially is one of the primary drivers to start up. The nationwide survey — Indian Homemakers' Entrepreneurship Report 2021 — amongst homemakers was done to study barriers, triggers, and enablers to embracing entrepreneurship. The survey further found that 73% of homemakers cited lack of time from home responsibilities, 53% cited lack of guidance and 50% cited insufficient funds as the main barriers that prevent women from starting up. It also revealed that over 77% of homemakers who desire to start up, claimed technology can aid them in this journey, as it can enhance their knowledge and know-how of how to run a business. On learning this, Britannia launched the Marie Gold My Startup Season 3.0 to democ-



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

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

and communication technology (ICT), along with micro-entrepreneurial skills for social and economic self-reliance. In its Season 3, the Britannia Marie Gold My Startup campaign has been broadened to help homemakers leverage the internet to grow their businesses. According to the survey conducted by Britannia and Momspresso, some of the popular businesses of interest are running a boutique, home tutoring, re-selling of apparel, jewelry, running a beauty parlor, among others. Starting a business of their own, would make these homemakers feel more self-confident, empowered, and feel more respected in society. Vinay Subramanyam, Vice-President, Marketing, Britannia Industries Limited said, "We laud them for being the emotional anchor and an all-time go-to person in every family. We firmly believe that the progress the country has made sits on the bedrock of contributions and sacrifices."



PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We have a clear roadmap for

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

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

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

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

SOURCE: PTI

I have no idea about change in leadership: Babar



PTI ■ KARACHI

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

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

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

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

India's ODI tour of NZ postponed to 2022

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ ESPOO (FINLAND)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ GENEVA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Indian Premier League 2021

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

CSK Chennai Super Kings	DC Delhi Capitals	KKR Kolkata Knight Riders	MI Mumbai Indians
PKS Punjab Kings	RR Rajasthan Royals	RCB Royal Challengers Bangalore	SRH Sunrisers Hyderabad

Points Table

As on May 2, 2021

	Played	Won	Lost	Tied	Run rate	Points
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0	0.547	12
Chennai Super Kings	7	5	2	0	1.263	10
Royal Challengers Bangalore	7	5	2	0	-0.171	10
Mumbai Indians	7	4	3	0	0.062	8
Rajasthan Royals	7	3	4	0	-0.190	6
Punjab Kings	8	3	5	0	-0.368	6
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	2	5	0	-0.494	4
Sunrisers Hyderabad	7	1	6	0	-0.623	2

Schedule

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

Qualifier 1 (1st placed team vs 2nd placed team) Dubai	Oct 11 Eliminator (3rd placed team vs 4th placed team) Sharjah	Oct 13 Qualifier 2 (Loser of Qualifier 1 vs winner of Eliminator) Sharjah	Oct 15 Final (Winner of Qualifier 1 vs winner of Qualifier 2) Dubai
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Timings: 7:30 pm (IST) for single match away;
8:30 pm and 7:30 pm (IST) for slope having two matches.

KKK SportsGraphic

Messi and PSG held by Brugge

AP ■ GENEVA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the storied venue that thrives on European nights.

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

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

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

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

AIFF president Patel meets Sports Minister Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Deepak eases into second round as SSCB boxers dominate at Nationals

PTI ■ BELLART

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

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

Golden sweep for Indian girls in Tunis



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Delhi Capitals retain Rishabh Pant as captain



PTI ■ DUBAI

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

of the IPL beginning September 19.

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

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

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

Advani manages to defend Asian title

PTI ■ DOHA

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

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

Advani had won the title in 2019 before the 2020 edition

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

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



Abhiram Daggubati to fight B'wood actor?

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

Variety of mix at the box office this weekend

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



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

Nabha Natesh in a prominent role.



Gully Rowdy
Actor Sundeeep Kishan's *Gully Rowdy* is a comedy entertainer that releases on Friday on the big screens. Starring Sundeeep Kishan in the title role, the film is directed by G Nageshwar Reddy. Kona Venkat is presenting it. Neha Shetty will be seen playing the female lead. *Gully Rowdy* has generated interest with its funny promos and aggressive promotions. The film also has actors Rajendra Prasad, Vennela Kishore, Posani, and Viva Harsha in important roles. The cast definitely promises a laughter riot. **Annabelle Sethupathi**
Vijay Sethupathi's most awaited film *Annabelle Sethupathi* too, is all set to release on Disney+Hotstar on Friday. The horror-comedy drama, apart from Tamil, will also be dubbed

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



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

titled *Unheard*, that is to release on Friday. It is about a series of six conversations, each of which is structured over opposing philosophies during a pivotal period in India's history such as the Chauri Chaura incident, non-cooperation movement, Hyderabad's Nizam's failed effort to join Pakistan post-independence, and many more. Produced by Radhika Lavu of Ellanar Films, it is directed by Aditya KV. The ensemble cast includes actors Srinivas Avasara, Baladitya, Chandani Chowdary, Priyadarshi, and Ajay. The music is composed by Naresh Kumar, sung by Kaala Bhairava, and the lyrics are penned by Krishna Kanth (KK). **Ichata Vahanamulu Nilupa Radu**
The film, which was earlier supposed to release in theatres, will now be releasing on the Telugu streaming platform Aha Video. This romantic action drama stars actor Sushanth as an architect whose life is all good with a loving mother and girlfriend. He once parks his bike in a 'No Parking' zone and this leads him on a roller coaster ride full of lies and deceit. Meenakshi Chaudhary co-stars in the lead role. Other notable releases this weekend include Plan B, Vijaya Raghavan, Bell Bottom, and Honey Trap.

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

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

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

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



Haathi Mere Saathi all set to stream on TV

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

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

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

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

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



Nani comes 'live' through a poster

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

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

