

**ANALYSIS 7**  
ROLE OF COOPERATIVES IN  
INDIAN ECONOMY**MONEY 8**  
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958 POINTS**SPORTS 11**  
RCB SEEK RETURN TO WINNING  
WAYS AGAINST RESILIENT CSK

VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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PRAGYA OPENS  
UP ABOUT HER  
LOOK IN  
AKHANDA  
Page 12**EU BACKS SINGLE PLUG TO CHARGE ALL PHONES, APPLE MAY PLAY SPOILSPORT**

The European Union unveiled plans Thursday that would require smartphone makers to adopt a single charging method for mobile devices. The EU Commission proposed legislation Thursday that would mandate USB-C cables for charging, technology that many device makers have already adopted. The main holdout is Apple, which has resisted the bloc's efforts for a unified standard. iPhones come with the company's own Lightning charging port, though the newest models come with cables that can be plugged into a USB-C socket.

**MAHA TEEN GANG-RAPED MULTIPLE TIMES, 24 ARRESTED, 2 BOYS DETAINED**

Over 30 people have been accused of gang-raping a 15-year-old girl multiple times over a period of nine months near Mumbai, in a case that has left Maharashtra shaken to the core. The girl has named 33 attackers, of which 24 have been arrested. Two minors have also been detained. The tragic story began in January when the girl's friend allegedly raped her and filmed the crime. He used the video to blackmail her and rape her again. He allegedly shared the video with many others - friends and acquaintances - and they all used it to blackmail the teen.

**DHANBAD JUDGE INTENTIONALLY HIT BY AUTO-RICKSHAW, CBI TELLS HC**

The CBI, which is probing the death case of Dhanbad judge Uttam Anand, told the Jharkhand High Court on Thursday that the auto-rickshaw driver, who has been apprehended in this connection, intentionally hit him with his three-wheeler. The CBI, during the hearing of the case on a virtual platform, said a probe is underway to find out who all are involved in the conspiracy. The 49-year-old district judge was allegedly mowed down by a heavy auto-rickshaw while he was out jogging near Randhir Verma Chowk in Dhanbad on the morning of July 28.

**HC TOLD PM CARES FUND NOT OF GOVT; 3RD PARTY INFO CAN'T BE DISCLOSED**

The PM CARES Fund is not a government fund as donations to it do not go to the Consolidated Fund of India and no third party information can be parted with irrespective of its status under the Constitution and the Right to Information (RTI) Act, the Delhi High Court has been informed. An affidavit filed by an Under Secretary at the PMO said the trust functions with transparency and its funds are audited by an auditor -- a chartered accountant drawn from the panel prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

**Defence Ministry places order for 118 tanks**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry on Thursday sealed a contract to procure 118 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) Arjun for the Indian Army at a cost of Rs 7,523 crore, in a major move to boost its combat capabilities.

The defence ministry placed the order for the Arjun Mk-1A tanks with the Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF), Avadi, Chennai.

The MBT Mk-1A is a new variant of Arjun Tank designed to enhance fire power, mobility and survivability, infused with 72 new features and more indigenous content from the Mk-1 variant.

"The Ministry of Defence (MoD) placed an order with Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF), Avadi, Chennai for supply of 118 Main Battle Tanks (MBTs) Arjun Mk-1A for the Indian Army on September 23," the Ministry said in a statement.

"The order, worth Rs 7,523 crore, will provide further boost to the 'Make in India' initiative in defence sector and is a big step towards achieving 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'," it said.

**SC says expert panel will look into Pegasus**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant development, the Supreme Court Thursday observed orally that it will set up a technical expert committee to inquire into the Pegasus snooping matter and pass an interim order next week on a batch of pleas seeking an independent probe into the entire issue.

The apex court's observations on constituting the committee assume significance in view of the Centre's statement that it would set up an expert panel on its own to look into the grievances of the alleged surveillance of certain eminent Indians by hacking their phones using Israeli firm NSO's spyware, Pegasus.

A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana, which was to hear some other matter, addressed senior lawyer CU Singh, one of the counsels in the pleas, that the order will be pronounced next week.

"We wanted to pass an order this week," the CJI said, adding that it had to be deferred as some members of the technical committee, which the court had in mind, expressed personal difficulties in



becoming part of it.

"That is why it is taking time to constitute the committee," the CJI said, adding, "We will be able to finalise the members of the technical expert team by next week and then pronounce our orders."

The CJI told Singh that he was conveying this to him as senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who had argued for senior journalists N Ram and Shashi Kumar, has not been seen in courts for the last few days.

"I will inform Sibal," Singh told the bench which then proceeded with the hearing in other cases.

The apex court, while reserving

its interim order on September 13, had said that it will be pronouncing an order in a few days and had asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to mention the case if the government has a re-think about filing a detailed affidavit.

The bench had said that it only wants to know from the Centre whether Pegasus was used to allegedly spy on individuals and if it was done lawfully after the latter expressed its unwillingness to file a detailed affidavit citing national security.

**DGP flays bid to mislead people over heroin seizure in Gujarat**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Police Gautam D Sawang on Thursday made it clear that there is no connection between Andhra Pradesh and Vijayawada with the illegal heroin trade.

Talking to reporters here on Thursday, he reminded that heroin originating from Afghanistan was seized at Mundra port in Gujarat and not in Andhra Pradesh.

The DGP said that some political leaders were creating fear among people by giving statements linking heroin to AP. "It does not make sense to make statements that repeatedly distort the facts about the heroin seizure at Mundra port and try to link the seizure to Vijayawada and AP," Sawang said.

The DGP said that making such allegations not only creates doubts among the people but also leaves them feeling insecure.

"It's a well-known fact that DRI officials seized the huge amount of



heroin at Mundra Port in Gujarat and not in Andhra Pradesh," Sawang said. He reminded that Vijayawada Police Commissioner B Srinivasulu already clarified that there was no connection to Vijayawada with the case.

Sawang also said that several media reports have made it clear that the drugs seizure and arrests were related to Delhi, Noida,

**CM tells SEB sleuths to focus on curbing menace of drugs**

Chennai and Mundra.

"A senior politician was creating doubts among people by linking the heroin case to Vijayawada and AP despite the DRI, central agencies and the press confirming that the drugs never reached the shores of the State. The only link to the case was an address of Aashi Trading Company, in Vijayawada, and that too was fake and the company's activities are non-existent here. This has been confirmed by DRI officials and central agencies," Sawang said.

**HC suspends imprisonment order on IAS officers**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A Andhra Pradesh High Court division bench of Chief Justice AK Goswami on Thursday suspended the orders of the single judge of September 2 sentencing five senior IAS officers.

Contempt appeals filed by Manmohan Singh IAS, Revu Muthyala Raju, MV Seshagiri Babu and KVN Chakradhar Babu were admitted by the division bench.

As the land compensation was already paid to the petitioner and orders are complied with, the division bench passed fresh orders.

The court also found that the official respondents have made all bona-fide efforts to implement the orders of the court during their tenure.

**Kin of Covid positive suicide victim to get ex-gratia: Centre**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Family members of people who committed suicide within 30 days of being diagnosed with Covid-19 will be entitled to Rs 50,000 ex-gratia assistance as per the guidelines, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Thursday.

Deaths occurring within 30 days from the date of testing or from the date of being clinically determined as a Covid case will be treated as deaths due to Covid-19, even if the death takes place outside the hospital/ inpatient facility, the government clarified.

A bench of Justices MR Shah and A S Bopanna was informed by the Centre that a Covid-19 case, admitted to the hospital/in-patient facility, and who continued to be admitted beyond 30 days but died, will also be treated as a Covid-19 death.

**Vangaveeti Radha prepares to take on 'best friend' Nani**SNV SUDHIR  
■ VIJAYAWADA

Kapu strongman Vangaveeti Mohan Ranga's son Radha Krishna, who has had a chequered career in politics thus far, is believed to be getting ready to train his guns on his best friend and Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswar Rao (Nani).

Being Vangaveeti Ranga's son means that every move of Radha evokes interest across the State and is keenly watched, especially by Kapus, a dominant vote bank in Andhra Pradesh.

Several years after his death, Vangaveeti Ranga remains an iconic figure and commands respect among Kapus in Krishna, Guntur and the two Godavari districts.

If reports from several quarters are to be believed, Radha is said to be contemplating to contest from Gudivada Assembly constituency on a TDP ticket in 2024. Gudivada was

once considered a TDP stronghold. Radha's frequent trips from Vijayawada to Gudivada in recent times to attend even a small programme has sparked speculations that he is preparing the ground to take on Nani, who has been winning the Assembly segment without break since 2004.

Nani won from Gudivada in 2004 and 2009 on a TDP ticket and then in 2014 and 2019 as the YSRCP candidate. After YSRCP stormed to power, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy rewarded Nani by taking him into his Cabinet.

Since then the Minister has been the Kamma face in YSRCP that has huge patronage from the Reddy community. YSRCP central leadership always ropes in Nani whenever it wants to attack TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu.

**American Corner in Vizag inaugurated**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy inaugurates the first American Corner in the State at Visakhapatnam through virtual mode on Thursday. This is the third American Corner in the country.

While launching the facility, the Chief Minister opined that the young people of Andhra Pradesh would have access to a global knowledge hub in the form of the American Corner.

"The American Corner would soon emerge as one of the best facilities in the world. Youngsters would benefit from these resources, contribute to the prosperity of the State, and strengthen US-India ties," Jagan said.

While expressing his gratitude to the US Consulate General for setting up the facility in Visakhapatnam, he said that he was confident the facility would build high-level coordination between AP and the United States.

Speaking on the occasion, US Consul-General Joel Reifman said



US Consul-General Joel Reifman releases a brochure of a university during the inauguration of the American Corner by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy virtually, on Thursday.

that both governments are committed to providing young people, especially women with increased opportunities in education and employment sectors.

The new facility would play a pivotal role in making those opportunities into reality, he said.

The American Corner in Visakhapatnam offers space for public gathering and focuses on the development of English language,

women empowerment, provides the latest information on US education and basically helps bridge the gap between the USA and Andhra Pradesh, Reifman said.

Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy presided over the programme.

Mission Director, US Agency for International Development (USAID) Veena Reddy said that a space like American Corner takes a

**The American Corner also serves to discuss pressing development challenges, elevate the development objectives, and jointly make progress together.**

great vision and strong purpose towards development.

The facility also serves to discuss pressing development challenges, elevate the development objectives, and jointly make progress together.

Introducing herself, Veena said that it was her privilege to participate in the function as belongs from Kadapa district in the State.

The facility is located on the first floor of the Andhra University Science College.

The Centre would provide information about American culture, values, and opportunities in higher education in America, skills in English, books, and education.

Visakhapatnam Collector Dr A Mallikharjuna proposed the vote of thanks.



# Jagan tells SEB to focus on curbing menace of drugs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Thursday directed officials of the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) to lay special focus on curbing drug menace and conducting awareness programmes in universities and colleges against drugs.

Chairing a review meeting on the performance of the SEB at his camp office, the Chief Minister said that there should be constant supervision over universities and colleges on abuse of drugs.

He instructed the SEB authorities to prepare an action plan that could be implemented across the State and asked them to take stringent action. "Curb cultivation and transportation of marijuana by carrying out regular raids," Jagan told the SEB sleuths.

With regard to liquor consumption, he said that the



State government had increased the prices of liquor to control consumption, while closing down almost one-third of the outlets and removing belt shops and permit rooms across the State.

"With the measures taken by the government, liquor sales have dropped from 34 lakh cases per month to 21 lakh cases and beer sales have fallen from 17 lakh cases per month to 7 lakh," the Chief Minister said. He directed the officials to take stringent action against those responsible for

illegal liquor trafficking.

Reviewing the supply of sand, the Chief Minister said that action should be taken if sand is sold at more than the prescribed rates. He said that the toll-free phone number of SEB should be well publicised so that people can report the issue.

The Chief Minister directed the authorities to take immediate action against the culprits based on the complaints and advised them to run a campaign in each district, clearly mentioning the prices in that particular district. He also asked the officials to increase the number of reaches and sand depots.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that so far, 1,20,822 cases of alcohol smuggling and illegal manufacturing have been registered and 1,25,202 persons arrested. In 2020, this number was 63,310 cases and in 2021, nearly

57,512 cases were registered.

While the SEB registered 74,311 cases, Police registered another 46,511, the officials said.

Similarly, 8,30,910 litres of illicit liquor, 8,07,644 litres of country-made liquor, 2,30,48,401 litres of jaggery wash were seized and destroyed. Also, 29,491 vehicles were seized, they said.

With regard to sand smuggling, 2,211 cases are registered, 5,72,372 tonnes of sand and 16,365 vehicles seized and 22,769 culprits arrested.

Also, 18,686 kg of ganja was seized by registering 220 cases and 384 people involved were arrested, they said.

Between March 20 and 31, 2021 under operation new Savera, 69 cases were registered and 174 people were arrested, besides 2176 kg of marijuana and 3,065 MDM being seized. Officials said that 330 awareness camps were organised.

## 1,171 fresh cases and 11 Covid deaths in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The cumulative Covid-19 cases in Andhra Pradesh climbed to 20,43,244 as 1,171 were added afresh in 24 hours ending 9 am on Thursday.

The total recoveries increased to 20,15,387 with 1,207 more getting cured of the infection, the latest bulletin said. The overall toll touched 14,108 with 11 fresh fatalities in a day.

The number of active cases in the state stood at 13,749.

East Godavari reported 255 fresh cases, Chittoor 158, Krishna 147, SPS Nellore 145, Prakasam 141 and Guntur 101. West Godavari logged 94 while the remaining six districts added less than 50 new cases each.

Chittoor and SPS Nellore reported three more coronavirus deaths each, Krishna two, Prakasam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari one each in a day.

## Defence Ministry places order for 118 tanks...

Continued from Page 1

The Ministry said the tanks would ensure effortless mobility in all terrains, besides precise target engagement during day and night.

It has been designed and developed by the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) by incorporating numerous upgrades on Arjun MBT, the in-service main battle tank with the Indian Army.

"The MK-1A is equipped with accurate and superior firepower, all-terrain mobility and an invincible multi-layered protection provided by an array of advanced technology systems. It can take on the enemy during day and night conditions and in both static and dynamic modes," the Ministry said.

It said the production order to Heavy Vehicles Factory will open up a large avenue in defence manufacturing for over 200 Indian vendors including MSMEs, with



employment opportunities to around 8,000 people.

"This will be a flagship project showcasing the indigenous capability in cutting edge defence technologies," the Ministry said.

It said the MBT Arjun Mk-1A has been designed and developed by Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (CVRDE), along with other laboratories of DRDO within two years (2010-12).

"The development activi-

ties commenced from June 2010 and the tank was fielded for user trials in June 2012. It took only two years to develop and field the MBT Arjun Mk-1A for user trials from the user requirement," the Ministry said.

"Extensive trial evaluation was conducted in various phases covering 7000 plus kms (both in DRDO and user trials) of automotive and substantial firing of various ammunition during 2012-2015," it said.

## No country managed to do what...

Continued from Page 1

It said that compensation will also be given to the family of those who died of the virus and were involved in COVID-19 relief operations or activities associated with the preparedness for dealing with the pandemic.

The government said that NDMA has issued the guidelines on September 11 following the directions of the top court given on June 30 wherein it had directed the authority to recommend guidelines for the financial assistance.

The assistance will not be limited to families affected by COVID-19 deaths in the first and second wave of the pandemic but will continue in future phases of the pandemic as well, the authority said.

## Differently-abled...

Continued from Page 1

However, they added, 62.73 percent of total infections reported last week were from Kerala alone, which is also the only State with over 1 lakh active Covid cases.

Thirty-three districts in the country are now reporting over 10 percent weekly positivity rate, while 23 are recording between 5-10 percent, the officials said.

Under Covid guidelines for the upcoming festival season, mass gatherings have to be avoided in containment zones and in districts with over 5 percent positivity rate, they said.

On the ongoing vaccination drive, they said that 66 percent of the country's adult population has been given at least one jab while 23 percent is fully vaccinated.

They also said that 63.7 percent doses of Covid-19

vaccine have been administered at centres in rural areas and 35.4 percent in urban areas.

A total of 68.2 lakh doses (approximately 0.95 percent) has been administered at Covid vaccination centres not tagged as rural or urban, they said.

On the UK rule of 10-day quarantine for those vaccinated in India, the Ministry officials said it was a discriminatory practice.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said both the countries are in dialogue on the matter.

"We believe that the dispensation that is proposed to be implemented from October 4 is a discriminatory practice. Both the sides are in dialogue and we believe a resolution will be found. We do reserve the right to reciprocate in a similar manner," Bhushan said.

## Guidelines for treatment...

Continued from Page 1

In medical parlance, sequelae refer to a condition caused by a previous disease or injury.

The minister said it is important to tackle the perceptions related to post-Covid situation such as fears and mental health issues, according to a Health Ministry statement.

He said that proactive and comprehensive treatment of Covid-19 is required to ensure minimum side-effects and no negative effect of the treatment.

"We have witnessed the consequences of post-Covid effect in patients due to taking higher doses of steroids like cases of Mucormycosis. It is important to take medicines, with less or negligible side effects. If we are alert beforehand, it will be fruitful in tackling the future consequences of Covid," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

"The perceptions related to post-Covid that are perpetuating in our society like fears, mental health issues resulting

due to Covid are important to be tackled. So, it's important to understand these post-Covid issues and resolve them," Mandaviya stated.

Efforts have been made by the resource persons across the country for the management of these post-Covid-19 complications to prepare the sequelae modules, he said. "They are specialised modules prepared keeping in mind various fields of healthcare professionals."

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar emphasised on the need to tackle mental health issues and to reach the last mile, the statement said.

"This pandemic has put an unprecedented challenge on our health and healthcare system. Mental health care is a big challenge for a country with such a large population. We need to build our capacity to tackle this challenge of mental health," Pawar was quoted as saying in the statement.

If the frontline workers are equipped with proper knowledge and training, they can become a valuable resource in the fight against these post-Covid-19 challenges, she said.

"When we are trying to equip ourselves to fight against post-Covid consequences, it's also important to take these to the last mile. The training modules for mental health and other issues have been prepared based on the needs expressed by state health experts," she said, adding that all should work together to ensure that Covid-19 becomes the last human pandemic.

India added 31,923 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 3,35,63,421, while the active cases declined to 3,01,640, the lowest in 187 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. The death toll climbed to 4,46,050 with 282 fresh fatalities, according to the data updated at 8 am.

## Kin of Covid positive...

Continued from Page 1

"It is respectfully submitted that suitable directions in this regard may be passed by this Court, whereby, the family members of people committing suicide within 30 days from being diagnosed as Covid-19 positive as per MoH&F/ICMR guidelines will also be entitled to avail financial help as granted under SDRF in accordance with the Guidelines dated September 11, 2021 issued by NDMA under Section 12 (iii) of Disaster Management Act," said the affidavit filed by the Centre.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas filed by advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal and some interveners represented by advocate Sumeer Sodhi, who have lost their family members to Covid-19, seeking ex-gratia assistance to the kin of those who lost their lives to the deadly virus.

Covid-19 cases which are not resolved and those who died either in hospitals or at home, and where a Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) in Form 4 and 4 A has been issued to the registering authority, as required under Section 10 of the Registration of Birth and Death (RBD) Act, 1969, will be treated as a Covid-19 death.

"Further, under the guidelines any certificate of death issued by hospitals/ government authority prior to coming into force of the guidelines dated September 3, 2021, can be reviewed and rectified and consequently freshly issued," the government said.

It added that the next of kin of the deceased can raise a grievance before the concerned District Level Committee, as envisaged in guidelines issued on September 3, that the cause of death of his/her kin was Covid related as per the parameters prescribed, however, the death certificate issued do not recognises it as death due to Covid-

19' and mentions some other incidental cause in the death certificate.

The affidavit said that when such application is being made to the district committee it would examine the contemporaneous medical records of the deceased patient and if it panel comes to the conclusion that the case of the applicant indeed falls within the parameters then it would issue a fresh or corrected certificate for the deceased, certifying his death to be Covid related death, eligible for financial/other assistance as provided by the Central Government/SDRF.

Further, the district level committee proposed in the guidelines shall also consider any dispute between the hospital and the family regarding the cause of death, it said.

The government said that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has further clarified that death certificate indicating Covid-19 deaths either already issued prior to coming into force of September 3 guidelines or as rectified by the District level committee shall be treated as the valid document for considering any death as death due to Covid-19'.

It said that the timeline for setting up of the district level Committee by the States will be prescribed as 30 days for which suitable instruction will be issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

This court may also pass a mandamus directing all state governments/UTs to constitute the said committee within 30 days in the interest of justice, it said, adding that the court may also issue directions to all the states to comply with the guidelines scrupulously.

The affidavit was taken on record by the bench, which said it will necessary orders on October 4, in the matter keeping all aspects in mind.

## HC suspends imprisonment...

Continued from Page 1

The single judge of the High Court had sentenced the five IAS officers to imprisonment and fined them Rs 1 lakh each. The HC also suspended the sentence for one month so that the IAS officers could appeal against the order.

The High Court has become serious over the non-payment of compensation over land acquisition to one Tallapakka Sai Brahma of Nellore district.

Outraged with the injustice, Sai Brahma approached the court. Former IAS officer Manmohan Singh was sentenced to one month in jail and was also fined Rs 1 lakh.

The then Nellore Collector GV Seshagiri Babu was sentenced to 2 weeks in jail and fined. Another IAS officer SS Rawat was also sentenced to one month in jail, fined Rs 1,000, while another officer Revu Mutyala Raju was sentenced to two weeks in jail, and A Md Imtiaz was sentenced to two weeks in jail and fined.

The High Court had directed that the money be collected from the officials and given to the petitioner.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹254
Without Skin	₹274
Broiler at Farm	₹141

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	438
HYDERABAD	426
VISAKHAPATNAM	437
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.38

## Vangaveeti Radha prepares...

Continued from Page 1

Nani is known for his 'no holds barred' verbal attack on Naidu.

It's reliably learnt that TDP now wants Radha to contest against Nani as Gudivada is the birthplace of party founder NT Rama Rao as it wants to wrest back the constituency from YSRCP.

Interestingly, Radha and Nani started their respective political careers in 2004 in different political parties but have been best friends, along with Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi, Kodali Nani and Vangaveeti Radha, irrespective of their political affiliations.

Though Kammas are fewer in number, Nani has been able

to win Gudivada either due to the presence of Dalits in large numbers or the lack of a strong opponent.

It appears that Naidu now wants Radha to focus on Gudivada and also take the help of Kapus who are in considerable numbers in Gudivada compared to Kammas.

He wants Radha to take advantage of the Kamma and Kapu combination in Gudivada along with other caste equations and considerations.

Rough estimates suggest that there are around 44,000 SCs, 9,000 Kammas, 15,000 Reddys, 20,000 Kapus, 30,000 BCs, 15,000 Vysyas and 20,000 Muslims in Gudivada Assembly constituency.

"Not sure about his next

move, but he has been visiting Gudivada often. He has been maintaining a low profile ever since the 2019 polls. Should not be surprised if he contests from Gudivada," said a senior TDP leader.

Radha had first entered the Assembly on a Congress ticket in 2004 from Vijayawada Central constituency when he was just 26 years old. He later joined the PRP and contested as its candidate in 2009 from the same constituency but lost.

After PRP was merged into Congress, he joined YSRCP and shifted to Vijayawada East in 2014 but lost.

Since then party leadership had asked Radha to focus and start working in Vijayawada Central segment.

## SC says expert...

Continued from Page 1

Observing that concerns have been raised by journalists and others over violation of privacy in the Pegasus row, the top court had said it will pass an interim order on their pleas, reiterating it was not interested in knowing issues related to national security.

The Centre had said that it did not wish to file a detailed affidavit on whether a particular software is used or not as it was not a matter for public discussion and will not be in the "larger national interest".

The law officer had contended that the disclosure whether the country is using a particular software or not may cause harm and alert all potential targets, including terror groups.

"We had to have your affidavit to understand your stand. We do not want to say anything further," the court had told Mehta, adding that if a spyware is used by the government then it has to be as per the procedure established by the law.

The law officer had said the government has nothing to hide and that is why the Centre has on its own said it will constitute a committee of domain experts who will look into the allegations and report to the court.

"I am not averse to certain individuals claiming invasion of privacy. This is serious and must be gotten into. The question is whether it is Pegasus or something.

## Modi invites top US CEOs to invest in India

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met a group of five top American corporate leaders on a one-on-one basis from a range of diverse sectors ranging from drones to 5G, semiconductor, and solar and encouraged them to step up their investments by highlighting the vast opportunities in India. "Talking technology...", the Prime Minister's Office said in a Twitter post after Modi's meeting with Qualcomm CEO Cristiano Amon and First Solar CEO Mark Widmar. They had a productive interaction, it said.

"PM Modi highlighted the vast opportunities India offers. Mr Amon expressed keenness to work with India in areas such as 5G and other Digital India efforts," it added.

Qualcomm, which started its operations in 1996, has operations specialising in wireless



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with Stephen Schwarzman, Chief Executive Officer of Blackstone, as part of his visit to the USA, on Thursday.

modem and multimedia software, Digital Signal Processing and embedded applications, and digital media networking solutions. In India, Qualcomm Ventures has invested in companies that address key domestic issues from dairy, transportation to defence.

"Toward making India a global innovation hub!" Ministry of External Affairs

spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted. The Prime Minister had a conversation with Amon on investment opportunities in hi-tech sectors in India.

"Discussed recent electronics and telecom manufacturing PLI schemes; and measures to strengthen innovation ecosystem," he added.

They discussed investment opportunities offered in India's

telecommunications and electronics sector. This included the recently launched Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing as well as developments in the semiconductor supply chain in India, the MEA said in a release.

"Strategies for building the local innovation ecosystem in India were also discussed, the ministry added.

"Powering India's Solar Potential!" Bagchi said after Modi's meeting with Widmar. They discussed India's renewable energy landscape.

Widmar shared plans to use the PLI scheme for manufacturing solar power equipment with unique thin-film technology; and integrating India into global supply chains, Bagchi said in a tweet.

First Solar has successfully commissioned 150 MW of Utility-Scale Solar Power to the Grid in India and has installed

1.8 GW of solar capacity in the country. Early this year, it announced its intention to set up a new 3.3 GW Facility in India. As such First Solar is contributing to India's plans to ramp up solar power generation to 100 GW by 2022.

In his meeting with Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, Prime Minister Modi discussed Adobe's ongoing activities in India and future investment plans, according to Bagchi.

"Ideas to leverage Digital India flagship programme in sectors like health, education and R&D were also discussed, he said. "Deepening Knowledge Partnerships!" he tweeted.

Modi also met Vivek Lal, chief executive of General Atomics, and Stephen A. Schwarzman from Blackstone.

## 14 Maoist militia members surrender

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Fourteen people who worked for the banned CPI (Maoist) party surrendered before the police in Bhadradi Kothagudem district on Thursday.

Among the 14, three are minors, which includes a girl, who had worked as militia members for the banned CPI (Maoist) party, police said.

Though they were not will-

ing to work for the party, they were forced to join it and attend training, a senior police official said.

"The banned CPI (Maoist) Party forced them to attend meetings, collect ration and essential commodities from the villagers. They were vexed with the attitude of Maoist party cadre and turned themselves in to join the mainstream," Bhadradi Kothagudem SP Sunil Dutt said.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
**ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT, A.P., VIJAYAWADA**  
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**COMMISSIONER, ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT, A.P., VIJAYAWADA**



# 51 Village Sectts to turn into Sub-Registrar offices

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary for Revenue Rajat Bhargava has asked the officers of the Department of Stamps and Registrations to take steps to notify 51 village secretariats as Sub-Registrar offices and to appoint Panchayat Secretaries to perform the duties of Sub-Registrar.

On Thursday, he reviewed the programme for delivery of registration services at 51 village secretariats as per directions of chief minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to bringing transparency to the registration process.

The government has taken a number of steps to fulfil the avowed objectives of provision of various government services at the doorsteps of citizens and enable the convergence of all line departments to achieve the said objective.

As a step in this direction, proper implementation and institutionalisation of the concept of Navaratnalu should be taken up as the core theme of governance. To achieve this objective, the government has established Village and Ward Secretariats in the State accom-



plishing transparency and accountability in the delivery of government services to the citizens and by ensuring convergence amongst various departments providing services at the village level.

Registration of documents is one of the important activities of the government and its decentralisation would go a long way in ensuring speedy and hassle-free services directly to the citizens of the state at their doorstep, said Bhargava.

Therefore, in order to facilitate speedy and hassle-free delivery of services relating to the registration department, the government has taken a citizen-centric decision to start registration services at the village level.

Accordingly, a GO has been

issued declaring the office of village secretariat at Thakkellapadu Village in Jaggaiahpet mandal of Krishna District as the office of the Sub-Registrar and Panchayat Secretary to perform the duties of the Sub-Registrar as a pilot project.

Subsequently, instructions were issued to start registration services at 51 centres of GSWs of villages against villages covered under resurvey project Phase-I for necessary infrastructure and other requirements at respective ward and village secretariats.

He instructed officers to impart necessary training to Panchayat Secretaries to execute the functions of sub-registrar and put up proper evolution procedures in the public interest.

# TDP asks YSRCP govt to clarify on ganja smuggling

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) State general secretary Buddha Venkanna on Thursday demanded that the Jaganmohan Reddy government explain to the people about the reports of unchecked smuggling of heroin, cocaine and ganja in Andhra Pradesh in the past two and half years.

Venkanna asked why the government and the police officials were not responding when over Rs 21,000 crore worth heroin was caught. The tainted firm was registered in Vijayawada and ganja sale was going on in the vicinity of the Chief Minister's house itself. The sale of drugs was rampant in tea stalls and pan shops. Import and use of drugs became an alarming issue in the face of an inactive intelligence wing, he said.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said that the state police were solely busy filing fabricated cases and making false arrests of the TDP leaders without any focus on the law and order. Crime rate has increased and now, the threat of drug abuse has been growing alarmingly all over the State. The orders of the big boss were responsible for the failure of the police force. In an unprecedented manner, the



government itself was actively involved in the import and sale of the drugs.

Venkanna termed it as unfortunate that drugs were being used more in place of eggs in the state. The young generation was falling victim to drug abuse and they were indulging in anti-social activities under the influence of drugs. It was a million dollar question why the ruling YSRCP leaders were keeping very silent on the role of the Vijayawada firm in the Rs 21,000 crore heroin smuggling. Heroin was caught in the Gujarat port. One Sudhakar was caught in connection with this massive smuggling and he was a beneficiary of a YSRCP leader belonging to Kakinada, he added.

The TDP leader deplored that the YSRCP leaders themselves were getting involved in the import and sale of drugs.

# TDP plea for mike to Atchanna, Nimmala in House

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Repalle MLA and TDP leader Anagani Satya Prasad on Thursday strongly objected to the decision taken by the Assembly Privileges Committee to deny the mike to the TDLP Deputy Leaders K Atchannaidu and Nimmala Ramanaidu to speak in the House.

Satya Prasad wrote separate letters to the Privileges Committee Chairman and the Assembly Secretary, saying that they should reconsider their decision with regard to the Opposition leaders. It was not correct to prevent the Opposition leaders from speaking on the people's issues in the Assembly.

In fact, the Opposition had the responsibility to raise and bring people's problems to the notice of the Government. In democracy, the Opposition had a duty to question the policies

of the Government at every step.

The TDP MLA said that the decision on banning the TDLP deputy leaders from speaking was taken unilaterally. Nobody would accept or approve the policy to look at the Opposition members as enemies. The ruling party would always take the opinion of the Opposition if it was really committed to the well being of the people. Any criticism would be taken in a constructive way. Suggestions and advice would be sought from the Opposition all the time. It was not correct to treat it as a crime if the TDP members questioned the Government on policies and people's issues, he said.

Satya Prasad recalled how the YSRCP members behaved in the Assembly when they were in the Opposition during the TDP rule. They went and stormed the Speaker's podium and created a ruckus. Keeping in

view all such past incidents, the decision on denying the mike to the TDLP deputy leaders should be reconsidered. Denial of the opportunity to speak in the Legislative bodies would amount to undermining of the freedom of expression as provided by the constitution.

The TDP MLA pointed out that the respect of the people's representatives should be protected in the legislative bodies which were considered 'temples of democracy'. It would not be correct to treat it as an offence when the Opposition members would raise people's woes in the House.

Satya Prasad said that a chance should be given to Atchannaidu and Ramanaidu to give their explanation to the Privileges Committee. The TDLP deputy leaders should be given another chance and thereby the respect of the House could be protected.



# Union Minister to review VPT activities

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Union Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shantanu Thakur, arrived in the port city on Thursday for a two-day visit. Chairman of Visakhapatnam Port Trust K Rama Mohana Rao accorded a warm welcome to the Minister.

The Minister would conduct a review meeting with officials of VPT on the ongoing developmental activities and also would lay foundation stones for several developmental programmes in VPT on Friday.

# NBW against IAS officer for failing to appear in court

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A CBI court on Thursday issued a non-bailable warrant against Y Srilakshmi, who is working as Special Chief Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

She is facing charges in the case of allotting mines against the rules during the rule of former chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy.

As per the schedule, Srilakshmi had to attend court on Thursday, but she failed to do so. Treating the matter as serious, the court issued a non-bailable warrant against her and directed officials to implement it before September 30.

Generally, if an accused is unable to attend court, advocates appear on his or her behalf and submit the reason for the absence to the court.

However, in this case, even advocates representing the IAS officer failed to appear in court, which led to this non-bailable warrant.

As per sources, Srilakshmi plans to file an excuse petition on this non-bailable warrant.

Retired IAS Venkatarama Reddy, who faced a similar situation, appeared before the court in the case of Penna Cements on Thursday. The court then cancelled the non-bailable warrant issued against him.

MP Mopidevi Venkata Ramana, retired IAS officer Brahmananda Reddy too failed to appear before the court, but they were represented by their lawyers.

The court then asked the advocates to ensure that the accused are present at the next date of hearing.

# AP suffering due to 3 capitals decision, says TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP senior leader and Legislative Council former chairman MA Sharif on Thursday expressed concern that Andhra Pradesh was suffering very badly due to the capitals decision of the YSRCP regime while neighbouring states were flourishing with their ever growing metro cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai.

Sharif said that former Chief

Minister N Chandrababu Naidu used his wide experience and exceptional vision to build a new Capital that would become a huge asset for the newly created AP State. Believing in his grand plan and previous track record, the farmers came forward and gave 34,000 acres of ancestral lands. But, the sudden disruption in this big project under the Jaganmohan Reddy regime came as a big blow to the aspirations and dreams of the

people.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader asked the ruling YSRCP leaders to admit the fact that one single Hyderabad was generating 60 percent of the income for the Telangana state now. The neighbouring State capital had come to get such a huge potential thanks to the development of IT and other infrastructure in that city during the Chandrababu Naidu regime. The Hi-Tech

City has completed 23 years now. In this backdrop, one should recall and admit the outstanding work that Naidu had put to transform Hyderabad.

Sharif pointed out that after the Chandrababu Naidu regime constructed HiTech City, the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad had turned into a tri-city hub. It was with such a similar vision that Amaravati Capital City was planned. This would

have connected Vijayawada, Guntur and other towns and municipalities in this area by now. However, the YSRCP regime had announced Capitals and, in the past two and half years, they had left AP with no Capital of its own. Consequently, all development came to a standstill and the young generation had no jobs. Job seekers and professionals along with companies were going to other places, he added.

# APCCIF asks Piyush Goyal to ease container shortage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Representatives of AP Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (APCCIF) have urged Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal to intervene in the issue of non-availability of containers that has become a huge problem to the exporters in Andhra Pradesh.

The Chambers highlighted the issues faced by exporters at major ports and gave some inputs to overcome the issue such as encouraging local manufacturing of containers and other options.

APCCIF president Pyda Krishna Prasad said that exports from Andhra Pradesh are now facing a risk of slowing down due to the shortage of containers and a subsequent hike in freight rates. The export industry is already feeling the heat of high container rates amid shortage and the matter has been already flagged to various authorities.

The container charges have increased to record levels in the past 10-15 days. The charges for availing a container to or from



India have increased to \$7,000-\$10,000, compared to \$3,000-\$4,000 a few months ago.

The final cost further increases based on the distance covered. As exporters are not able to meet their delivery schedules, they also face the risk of losing customers owing to customer dissatisfaction.

The global container shortage is a result of congestions at Chinese ports that have been closed or operating at lower capacity after the nation announced fresh restrictions due to COVID-19. The high demand for containers in the United States and Europe has also led to a surge in container rates.

"We understand that approximately 25,000-30,000 containers are lying at different ports in the

country. These containers have not been unloaded due to disputes with Customs and other departments. We urge the Commerce Ministry to intervene in the matter and request you to ensure that they are made available to exporters and allot around 2000 containers out of it to be available for exports from Andhra Pradesh. If this is not done immediately, Andhra Pradesh will lose out on key exports ahead of the upcoming holiday season in the West," said Krishna Prasad in a representation to the Union minister.

He also added that some low-value export items that are exported in high volumes have been impacted the most. The export items from AP which include granite tiles, cotton yarn, tobacco, rice, fruit pulp, spices, etc have been hit. In addition to this, higher exchange rates are being charged by the Freight Agents/Shipping Lines at the time of the release of B/Ls. Exporters are being asked to pay additional amounts to get bookings in the current vessels.

# Withdraw charges, or face legal action, Heritage to Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu family-owned Heritage Foods on Thursday sought Transport Minister, Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani), to withdraw his statement regarding an old case of smuggling red sanders in a vehicle not belonging to the company.

Heritage Foods president, M Sambasiva Rao, said that a statement of Perni Venkataramaiah appeared on the social media alleging that red sanders was transported by Heritage vehicles to Japan through Krishnapatnam Port, which is false and misleading.

He said that the red sanders smuggling incident was reported in July 2017 by 'Sakshi' daily, alleging Heritage Foods involvement.

In this smuggling case, the AP State police arrested the culprits and declared that the smugglers painted the vehicle with Heritage brand to hoodwink the police. That vehicle was never owned or hired by Heritage Foods or any one of its distributors, Rao said.

These findings of the State police were also reported by several newspapers during July 2017 itself.

"This politically motivated statement made by the minister which appeared in YouTube & Twitter on September 22 damages the reputation of our brand and company. In this background, we appeal to Perni Venkataramaiah, to publicly withdraw the allegation made against Heritage within seven days as the matter is sub judice, failing which the company will take recourse to appropriate legal remedies," Sambasiva Rao said.



# Mayor, hubby ask SP for protection

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Kakinada Mayor Sunkara Pavani and her husband Tirumala Kumar complained to Superintendent of Police M Ravindranath Babu that they were facing life threat and urged security.

The Mayor couple met the SP here on Thursday and submitted a memorandum urging him to provide security to them.

The couple told the SP that 15 followers of a ruling party MLA created a chaotic scene at their residence. She told the



SP that she had been the Mayor of Kakinada city for the last four years and she had no enemies.

However, she feared a threat to life because of the MLA, she told the SP and appealed to him to provide security.

# NS project full, four gates lifted

Projects brimming with water in Krishna and Godavari basins

ML MELLY MAITREY  
■ HYDERABAD

Thanks to continuous inflows from upstream projects due to heavy rains, all the projects and reservoirs in the Krishna and Godavari basins are full and the authorities have lifted four gates of Nagarjuna Sagar due to continuous inflows from the Srisailem project.

The Nagarjuna Sagar project reached its full reservoir level of 590 feet and full storage capacity of 312.05 tmc ft with instant inflow of 95,733 cusecs and outflow at 95,733 cusecs at 6 pm on Thursday.

The water level in the Srisailem reservoir is 883 ft as against its FRL of 885 ft and the present storage is at 204.35 tmc as against the full storage of 215.81 tmc with inflows at 52,468 cusecs and outflow at 72,023 cusecs.

Upstream, the Jurala project



has almost reached its full level of 1043.90 ft as against FRL of 1,045 ft.

In the Godavari basin too, Singur project reached FRL of 1717 ft with 29.89 tmc of stor-

age, which is 99 per cent of its total storage capacity. The project authorities lifted three gates to release the water and the people along the river course have been put on alert.

Same is the case with the Nizam Sagar, Sri Ram Sagar, Mid Manair, Lower Manair, Kaddam and Sripada Yallampally with water levels reaching almost the FRL.

# SP reviews online exams for women cops

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district SP Malika Garg on Thursday inspected the online exams conducted for policewomen on probation.

The SP said that an online test to declare probation for 980 women police personnel working in the district was conducted for two days on September 22 and 23 at various colleges in the five sub-divisions.

The SP stated that project work required for women police to work effectively at the field level was carried out for a week.

The project involved training on Disha app, measures to be taken for protection of women, mapping vulnerable areas, setting up women friendly teams, gathering information, social media impact on youth, how to address security issues, and conducting various programmes to eradicate social evils in the society.

# Take risks, grab opportunities, Nobel Laureate tells students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nobel laureate Dr. M Stanley Whittingham has exhorted the students to travel around the world, take advantage of every opportunity, take risks, and always connect with their mentors.

He was the chief guest of the Virtual Convocation of VIT-AP University from the US on Thursday and said it is the first step to the next part of students' life experience.

"Travel around the world, take advantage of every opportunity, take risks and always connect with your mentors. Grab the opportunity, have dreams and be patient. The research will take time. Maybe one of you will have my experience of what you can anticipate. Science is international. It has no boundaries. Science can solve pandemics be it Covid or global warming. India is encouraging young scientists. You all should think of a clean,



Dr. M Stanley Whittingham

safe and healthy environment. This is time to move on with your life. Remember, money is not everything," he added.

Microsoft India's Customer Experience & Success director Mayurika Singh, who was the guest of honour praised the students' spectacular achievements and said, "Be very proud that you are graduating from a top-class institution VIT-AP".

She shared her graduation and

first job experience. "Don't sweat for small things, take chances and learn to work on a blank canvas. Do the right things for the right results. You are the lucky ones who rewrite history. Your generation can work and live," she said.

Mayurika asked the students to build skills and have a growth mindset apart from learning from every experience. "Hard work has no substitute," she said.

VIT-AP University conducted a virtual convocation for the Class of 2021. Out of 460 students, the University presented 10 gold medals, two Ph. Ds and rank holders from Bachelor, Master, and Ph.D. degrees in Engineering and BBA.

The virtual convocation followed all ceremonial aspects of the regular convocation with the welcome address by the Vice-Chancellor, conferment of degrees by the Chancellor, and the Chancellor's address followed by the convocation address by the chief guest.



# Administration perks up as Covid cases rise in Chittoor

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Chittoor district has reported a spurt in new cases of Corona virus during the last 48 hours. While total new cases reported on Thursday was 158, Wednesday saw 212 persons testing positive for Covid-19. Significantly, the district had been witnessing only around 121-190 cases per day in the past one week. The uptick with 212 cases on Wednesday has led to anxiety within people and among medical and health authorities.

Leaving Tirupati urban and Tirupati rural areas on peak with a daily average of 100-120 positive cases on average, the number of cases has never gone below 100 even on a single day during the past six months. Under the limits of two PHCs in Tirupati, the positivity rate is above 7 per cent and out of the total 66 mandals, the positivity rate has been high in 27 mandals of which Pileru, Chandragiri, B Kothakota, Pakala, Srikalahasti and Sodumand Puthalapattu mandals were having more than 5 percent positivity rate as confirmed officially in DM&HO daily reports. Covid positive cases are being reported in all mandals of the district while in some areas the positivity rate was even touching 10



Passengers wait at the Tirupati railway station, mostly without a mask.

per cent. Out of 42 PHC limits, positive cases are seen under the purview of 674 village secretariats whereas 13 of them had more than 30 cases. On many occasions, the district topped the list of daily Covid cases while on some other days it stood second only to East Godavari. Since the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, the district so far reported 2,42,681 positive cases while it has 2,002 active cases as of now. Almost for the last one year, the death toll was highest in Chittoor with 1,894 deaths so far followed by Krishna district with 1,363 deaths. More number of cases is being witnessed at several places in the district, especially in Tirupati urban region, which continues to record the highest number of cases in Chittoor district because of being the most busy pilgrim center. Devotees are queuing up

at almost all temples and Tirumala, Kanipakam, Srikalahasti and other temples around Tirupathi were experiencing huge rush. In Tirumala, the number of pilgrims visiting the temple has reached around 30,000 now and the TTD has been planning to increase the number further. All temple managements have conveniently ignored controlling the pilgrims to maintain physical distance and have been conducting all rituals as before. The devotees coming to Tirumala from different parts of the country are not following any Covid guidelines and are not even wearing masks. Without safety measures, people of all age groups were seen pushing each other in the queue lines at the darshan token issue counters and in the temple too. However, the TTD has realised the dangers involved in it and took a deci-

sion not to issue offline tokens from September 26 and will make them available only online and even made vaccination certificates compulsory for darshan.

"I see most of the people wandering without masks and spitting on roads, some sleeping on the pavements waiting for darshan tokens in front of Srinivasam complex, the roads are crowded with pilgrims especially near railway station and in the station waiting for the trains, the restaurants in the station road and stall in the street witnessed a huge rush with people without masks and the announcements of Covid precautions were also stopped in the crowded areas. I am worried about the increase in positive cases in the city and request the authorities to take steps for not spreading the virus," says an official of the Medical department.

Commercial establishments including hotels and restaurants in Tirupati are ignoring the Covid rules. They are eventually turning into hot spots for the spread of Coronavirus and the results may be experienced sooner than later. It is high time the district administration kept a close watch on commercial establishments and major temples to ensure everyone followed Covid protocols.

## Consumption of liquor in public to be checked

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Director General of Police (DGP) Gautam Sawang has said that the consumption of liquor publicly will be contained firmly.

'Madya Vimochana Prachara Committee' (MVPC) State Chairman Vallamreddy Lakshman Reddy met DGP Gautam Sawang in his office at Tadepalli on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the DGP said that he would take steps to check the consumption of liquor publicly and other crimes.

Lakshman Reddy told the DGP that the consumption of liquor in public had gone up which led to assaults on women, murders, robbers and other heinous crimes, and urged him to take stringent steps to check the menace.



## Compensation promised to Veligonda oustees soon

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar has assured that the evacuees of the Veligonda project will be given compensation.

The Collector visited the Veligonda project submergence areas including Kakarla, Krishnanagar, Lakshimpuram villages in Ardhaveedu mandal on Thursday.

He interacted with the villagers and enquired about their problems and accepted memorandums from them. He promised to do justice to the evacuees by taking steps to disburse the compensation at the earliest. Talking to the media, the Collector made it clear that the Krishna water would enter Prakasam district

only after the evacuation of people from submergence areas was completed. He said that out of 12,000 acres, compensation had been disbursed to 3000 acres in the Kakarla village limits so far. Steps are being taken to resolve the issue of 600 acres assigned on the request of farmers. Steps were taken to expedite the R&R package for the people of submergence areas, he said.

"Steps were taken to do away the interference of mediators in extending disbursement of compensation to evacuees. Stringent action will be taken if anybody tries to interfere in the disbursement of compensation. There is no question of releasing water without completing evacuation from the submergence areas.

The survey processes for the R&R colonies were completed," the Collector said.

Pravin Kumar said that he would visit the Veligonda project areas every month. He said that would also visit the submergence areas once every two weeks and be available to the people to resolve their grievances. The list of evacuees would be made available in the village secretariats.

Meanwhile, the villagers urged the Collector for compensation to the houses which were damaged in the digging of canals and other works.

RDO K Lakshmi Shiva Jyothi, Lank Acquisition Special Collector S Sarala Vandanam, and sub-collector Gloria were among those who accompanied the Collector.



## Govt tackled pandemic effectively: Adimulapu

PNS ■ KADAPA

Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh has claimed that the government has tackled the Covid pandemic while implementing all the welfare schemes in the State.

Addressing a review meeting here on Thursday, the minister said that the State government had efficiently tackled the biggest threat of Covid-19. At the same time, the government implemented all the welfare schemes for the poor.

"Let us all strive hard to implement the prestigious programmes and achieve development. It is our responsibility to ensure that the fruits of welfare schemes should reach all eligible. Transparency should be maintained in all government activities," he told the officials.

Deputy Chief Minister S B Amzath Basha said that accountability and transparency should be maintained by the officials.

Collector V Vijay Rama Raju said that 23.9 percent of rainfall was registered in the district during the season. All the irrigation tanks and reservoirs are brim-full and there is no water scarcity in any part of the district now.

Later, the Collector gave a PowerPoint presentation on the achievement of progress in the district.

Chief Whip G Srikanth Reddy, Whip K Srinivasulu, MP Y S Avinash Reddy, MLCs C Ramachandraiah, C Shivanath Reddy, M Jakiya Khanam, MLAs P Ravindranath Reddy, Meda Mallikharjuna Reddy, S Raghurami Reddy, M Sudhir Reddy and Mayor Suresh Babu attended the meeting.

## TDP misleading people on Kopparu incident: Sucharita

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharita has alleged that the Opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is misleading people on the Kopparu violence incident by spreading falsehoods. In fact, YSRCP activists have suffered injuries in the incident, she said.

The Home Minister visited some of the injured YSRCP activists in the village on Thursday.

Talking to the media, she said that the TDP activists attacked the YSRCP activists with sticks and stones at Kopparu village in Pedanandipadu mandal but they were spreading falsehoods about the incident. As many as 10 YSRCP activists suffered injuries in the attack. The TDP activists deliberately picked up an altercation with the YSRCP activists when they were going to immerse Ganesh idols at the village, she claimed.

She said that YSRCP leader Enturi Hanumanth Rao suffered serious injuries in the incident. When questioned, the TDP activists attacked Hanumanth Rao's son Enturi Srikanth. He was dragged into the house of a TDP former



ZPTC member and thrashed him with sticks and stones. In the melee, a sofa in the house of the TDP leader was set on fire. She said that the injured YSRCP leaders and activists were shifted to a hospital in an ambulance.

"Those who attacked and injured the YSRCP activists filed cases against the victims. The TDP leaders made a false campaign on the incident stating that the YSRCP activists

attacked the TDP leader's house," she said.

"I am visiting the Kopparu village today to inform the media and the people on the violent incidents. The TDP leaders created violence in the peaceful Kopparu village," she slammed.

The Home Minister directed the police officials to take stringent action against those who were involved in the violent incident.

## Minister: Benefits of govt schemes reaching eligible

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Minister for BC Welfare Ch Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna reiterated that the government is aiming to take the fruits of welfare schemes to every eligible household irrespective of party affiliations.

The minister participated in the Meet-the-Press programme organised by the Press Club here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy is keen on implementing the Navaratnalu welfare schemes with an objective of helping the poor and eradication of poverty. The government is implementing disbursement of social security pensions, door delivery of ration rice and other schemes precisely for the uplift of the poor.

The government, with an aim of containing the sale of spurious seeds, is distributing seeds through Rythu Bharosa Kendras. Many benefits of farmers are being delivered through the RBKs, the minister claimed.

He said that he is reaching out to people through the 'Breakfast with the Minister' programme. In the programme, he said, he could know the problems of people directly and take steps to resolve them.

## Collector asks officials to expedite Covid vaccination

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar has directed the health workers and other officials to expedite the vaccination process to complete the target of administering vaccines and work in coordination with other departments in this regard.

The Collector held a review meeting in Bestavaripeta MPDO office with the health officials of Giddalur, Yerragondapalem and Markapuram constituencies on Thursday. He reviewed with the officials the vaccination process and preparedness to face the predicted third phase of Coronavirus here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he asked the officials to work in a coordinated manner. He said that if the prediction of the third wave came true it would be difficult to face the threat.

The Collector said that administering of eight lakh vac-

cine doses was planned in their areas and asked the health officials and health workers to achieve the target. "Getting vaccinated is the only solution to contain the spread of Coronavirus. The mandal task force should work constantly to enforce the Covid restrictions," the Collector said.

Pravin Kumar said that 100 percent vaccination should be achieved in the backward mandals. He said that 1.04 lakh people were targeted to be vaccinated in the Markapuram constituency but over 28,000 people were yet to be vaccinated in the constituency.

The Collector directed the officials concerned to take steps to check the outbreak of seasonal diseases like malaria, chikungunya, and other contagious diseases.

Markapuram RDO K Lakshmi Siva Jyothi and other officials accompanied the Collector.



## Jakkampudi-Margani rivalry flares up

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The hostility between YSRCP MP Margani Bharat Ram and MLA Jakkampudi Raja further escalated on Thursday as a follower of the MLA alleged that the MP resorted to corrupt practices in some development works.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, YSRCP leader and MLA Raja's close associate Dr. Lanka Satyanarayana alleged that the MP failed in developing Rajahmundry city. He said that the MLA's father Jakkampudi Rammohan Rao constructed the foundation for the YSRCP and the MP is now enjoying it. He claimed that the SC/ST/BC/ and Minorities are extending their



support to MLA Raja.

Satyanarayana said that the YSRCP fared poorly in the ZP/MP polls in the Rajahmundry Parliamentary constituency because of the inefficiency of the MP. The MP is resorting to misuse of funds in

the name of development of Devi Chowk and Pushkar Ghat, he alleged.

"We have the details of the corrupt deeds of the MP. We will disclose them at an appropriate time," the MLA's follower said, and warned the MP of dire conse-

quences if he did not change his attitude. The MLA's follower demanded that the YSRCP high command resolve the issue immediately.

It may be mentioned here that the ruling YSRCP MP Margani Bharat Ram and MLA Jakkampudi Raja have been at loggerheads for the past few months criticising each other openly. Their hostility has become a hot topic in the YSRCP in the district.

The MLA's followers, relatives, and admirers including N Gopala Krishna, KNL Reddy, YKS Narsimha Rao, N Babu Rao, B Bhavani Shankar, B Srinivas, K Raghu, and D Sudharani were present at the press meet.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> NIRF ranking for Vishnu Dental College

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Vishnu Dental College has stood 23rd at the national level for the year 2021 in the NIRF rankings announced by the Government of India.

The institution is accredited by NAAC and is playing a key role in the creation of a healthy society through innovative teaching by experienced faculty and providing dental treatment at an affordable cost in line with the aspirations of Dr. B V Raju, under the dynamic and able guidance of KV Vishnu Raju, Chairman of Sri Vishnu Educational Society. The college has started 29



dental satellite clinics at various villages across the State, thereby making quality dental treatment accessible to all. State-of-the-art sterilization procedure has been adopted in the college which plays a key

role in the quality of the treatment.

The hospital is in the service of patients from 8 a.m to 8 p.m every day. The college had developed a new software by the name 'Vaidyo' in which all

treatment-related information of the patients is being stored and further research on this is being done by the students and staff to redefine the dental procedures.

Along with the BDS, MDS, and Ph.D. courses, the institute has also introduced Diploma in Dental Mechanics courses. The institute has entered into an MoU with the University of Bolton in the UK under which the students of Vishnu Dental College can pursue their higher studies at Bolton University. The institute has MoUs with Tufts University, USA & Missouri University, Missouri.

## Gutka worth Rs 5.5 L seized, two arrested

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The police arrested two persons and seized the banned gutka sachets and cigarettes worth Rs 5.52 lakh.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, OSD Chodeswari said that Circle Inspector Samiullah, under the supervision of SEB officials, arrested Malluri Venkata Shiva Charan when he was moving suspiciously at Umamaheshwar Junior College at Umamaheshwar Nagar.

The accused was selling the banned gutka and cigarettes to the students. When questioned, the accused Shiva Charan told the police that he was buying the banned gutka and cigarettes from a wholesale shop owned by Koppavarapu Manikhantha, located in the same area.

The police conducted a raid on the wholesale shop and seized a huge quantity of banned tobacco products and cigarettes worth Rs 5,52,459, a motorcycle and arrested the shop owner.

The OSD said that the accused got the students addicted to the intoxicants by selling the banned tobacco products. She said that the police teams would keep a constant vigil and take stringent action if anybody tries to sell the banned intoxicated substances.

SDO U Nagaraju, CI K V Subhashini and SI Mukkanti were present at the press meet. SP Malika Garg appreciated the police officials for seizing the banned products, the OSD said.

## Two more TTD member trustees take oath

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Two new member trustees appointed to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) trust board were administered oath inside the Tirumala temple on Friday.

Kaliveti Sanjeevaiah, MLA of Sullurpeta and Pokala Ashok Kumar first offered prayers to Lord Venkateswara inside the sanctum sanctorum and reached the Ranganayakula Mandapam

where TTD Additional EO Dharma Reddy administered the oath to the two new member trustees nominated by the State government of Andhra Pradesh to the coveted TTD Trust Board.

After the oath, they were rendered Vedasirvachanam by Vedic Pundits and presented with Theertha Prasadam, laminated photo of Srivaru, and coffee table book on TTD. Meanwhile, the TTD was pushed into an embarrassing

situation with the members taking oath in turns, much to the inconvenience of the pilgrims and the temple staff. Though for a brief period, the darshan lines were interrupted every time a new member was administered the oath.

Deputy CM Narayanaswamy congratulated both the Board members.

CVSO Gopinath Jatti, Deputy EOs Ramesh Babu, Sudharani, Lokanatham and other officials were present.





## INDIA CORNER

### Sufi Sajjadanashin Council chief condemns attack on Pak Hindu family

All India Sufi Sajjadanashin Council chairman Syed Nasruddin Chishty Thursday condemned an incident in Pakistan in which a Hindu family was allegedly held hostage and tortured for fetching drinking water from a mosque. Chishty said such acts are unpardonable and against the very essence of Islam. "The attack on a Hindu family in Pakistan is highly condemnable and unpardonable. Pakistan calls itself an Islamic country but such cowardly actions of violence in the name of religion is against the very essence of Islam and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad," Chishty said in a statement on Thursday. He is also the successor of the present spiritual head of Ajmer Dargah. Chishty's reaction came days after the Hindu family of poor farmers were allegedly held hostage and tortured for fetching drinking water from a mosque in the Punjab province of Pakistan, according to reports on Monday. Alam Ram Bheel, a resident of Punjab's Rahimyar Khan city, was picking raw cotton along with his other family members, including his wife, in a field. Bheel said when the family went outside a nearby mosque to fetch drinking water from a tap, some local landlords beat them up. The Dawn newspaper had reported.



### NCW asks Delhi Police to probe restaurant denying entry to saree-clad woman

The National Commission for Women on Thursday asked the Delhi Police commissioner to probe the incident wherein a woman was allegedly denied entry in a city restaurant for wearing a saree, and take necessary action in the matter. The National Commission for Women (NCW), in a statement, said it has also written to the marketing and public relations director of the restaurant to appear before the Commission on September 28 along with supporting documents and explanation. It said it came across a social media post wherein the restaurant allegedly denied entry to the woman because she was wearing saree. "Reportedly, the restaurant's dress code policy for guests allows only smart casuals and according to the eatery, saree does not fall under smart casuals. 'Saree is a part of Indian culture and women in India majorly wear saree, therefore denying any woman entry to a restaurant on the basis of her attire is a violation of her right to live with dignity,' the statement said. 'The Commission condemns the arbitrary and bizarre behaviour of the restaurant staff and its policies,'" it added.



### SC to recall its order on extending limitation period for filing court cases due to Covid

Taking note of the improved pandemic situation, the Supreme Court Thursday observed that it will recall its April 27 order by which it had extended the operation of an earlier direction under which the limitation period for filing court cases has ceased to run statutorily against litigants since March 15, 2020, due to Covid. In the wake of the onset of the second COVID wave, the court had on April 27, 2021 relaxed the statutory period for filing petitions, including the election petitions. The bench, also comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and Surya Kant, said that the suo motu extension of limitation period will be withdrawn on October one and after that, the usual limitation period of 90 days for filing cases in courts will come into effect once again. "We will pass orders," the bench said while reserving the order. The bench termed as "pessimistic" the submission that the limitation period be extended till the year-end as there was an apprehension of a third COVID wave in the country. Attorney General K K Venugopal said that the Covid situation has improved and presently there was no containment zone in the country and hence the order relaxing the limitation period can be recalled.



# Governors in non-BJP states 'trampling democracy': Sena

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena on Thursday accused the governors in non-BJP-ruled states, including Maharashtra, of acting like rogue elephants and trampling under their feet democratic constitution, laws and political culture.

Without taking the name of Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, the party, in an editorial in its mouthpiece 'Saamana' also alleged that the Centre was using governors to destabilise those states that are being ruled by non-BJP parties.

The Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government shares an uneasy relationship with governor Koshyari. Among other issues, Koshyari has been under fire from the state government over the delay in approving the appointment of 12 MLAs from his quota.

"The governors in non-BJP-ruled states are like rogue elephants and their mahouts (handlers) are sitting in New Delhi. Such elephants trample democratic processes, laws, political culture under their feet and set new precedence," the Sena said.

How appropriate is it that the



governors are using all their power to destabilise the state government because it is formed by non-BJP parties, the party asked. Such efforts are affecting the unity of the country. It is like playing with fire. But one should remember that in doing so, one's own hands may get burnt. The use of governor's post for such work is demolishing the constitutional structure, it added.

"If some people think that Indian democracy will sustain and flourish by constructing a new parliament complex in the national capital, then they should also pay attention to the screams

of the federal governments that have been trampled. The states are not allowed to function properly and the agents of the party in power are given free hand to create chaos in the states," the Sena alleged.

"Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has expressed his concerns over the safety of women and the law and order situation in the state. But why such concern is not expressed by the governors of Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh. The BJP women MLAs in Maharashtra have raised the same issue. But how come the BJP women legis-

lators from other states are not expressing similar concerns for MP and UP?" it asked.

Why they are creating so much noise over the issue in Maharashtra? Because the BJP is not in power here, while it rules those in two other states. The suspicious death of a seer or attacks on women in UP and MP seems to be purposefully ignored, the Sena said.

The Uddhav Thackeray-led party also targeted the Union government over providing police protection to those BJP leaders who indulge in "mud-slinging" against the non-BJP-ruled states. It was apparently referring to former MP from Mumbai Kirit Somaiya, who was recently given Z category security.

"Union Home Minister Amit Shah has called for a meeting of chief ministers in various states to discuss ways to tackle growing Naxal activities. However, hundreds of CRPF jawans are deployed in protecting some people who indulge in mud-slinging against some state governments. It is necessary to use such forces (CRPF) against Naxals rather than wasting them on protecting some persons," the Sena said.

### Govt committed to ensuring top quality, affordable healthcare: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said it is the government's commitment to ensure top quality and affordable healthcare for citizens.

His comments came as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, also known as Ayushman Bharat scheme, completed three years.

"The importance of healthcare has been even more clearly understood in the year gone by. It is our commitment to ensure top quality and affordable healthcare for our citizens. Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY is key to realising this vision," he said.

The scheme provides health insurance of up to Rs 5 lakh to the poor households.

Modi will also be launching nationwide rollout of Pradhan Mantri Digital Health Mission on Monday.

Under this, a unique digital health ID will be provided to people which will contain all their health records, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said.

# Moily says Prashant Kishor's entry process into Cong 'on'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Former Union Minister Veerappa Moily on Thursday welcomed the possible entry of election strategist Prashant Kishor into the Congress saying that he was okay even if he takes an important position.

"Prashant Kishor, an election strategist with 99 per cent success rate, has volunteered himself to cooperate with us. The process (of Kishor's entry) is on," Moily told reporters on the sidelines of an event here.

He dubbed the entry of Kishor and other internal reforms in the party as the resurgence of the Congress.

To a question whether he will be okay if he takes up a major role in the party, Moily said, "I am perfectly alright. I am constantly in touch with him."

Regarding the sudden change of guard in Punjab, Moily said the party handled the situation very well.

He also hailed Captain Amarinder Singh, who stepped down as Chief Minister of Punjab paving way for Charanjit Singh Channi to take the reins of the state.

### Congress hopes Amarinder takes back comments

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Thursday termed former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh's outburst against Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as one out of anger and hoped he would reconsider his words as they do not suit his stature. The party also refused to comment on whether Singh would leave the party after his "unceremonious" exit as the chief minister of Punjab, and said "if someone wants to leave, we have no comment to offer." Singh had on Wednesday called Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra "inexperienced" and also threatened to pit a strong candidate against Punjab party unit chief Navjot Singh Sidhu in the coming assembly polls. Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said Amarinder Singh is an elder and may have stated things out of anger. "He is our elder and the elderly often get angry and say a lot of things. We respect his anger, age and experience," she said.

### Is there space for 'humiliation', asks Amarinder

**CHANDIGARH,** Congress veteran Amarinder Singh on Thursday referred to his "humiliation" by the party and asked if he is treated like this, what would be the fate of common workers. Amarinder Singh was reacting to remarks by Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete, who said in Delhi on Thursday that there was no room for anger in the party. Shrinete said this referring to Amarinder Singh's remarks against Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, whom he had called "inexperienced" on Wednesday, days after he resigned as the Punjab CM following a power tussle with state party chief Navjot Singh Sidhu. Reacting to the spokesperson's comment, the former CM said, "Yes, there's no space for anger in politics. But is there space for humiliation & insult in a grand old party like @INCIndia?" "If a senior party leader like me can be treated like this, I wonder what the workers must go through!", he said.

# Centre to convene a meeting of church heads: MP

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A day after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan rejected the opposition suggestion for calling an all-party meeting to discuss the controversial 'narcotic jihad' remark by a Catholic bishop, Rajya Sabha MP Suresh Gopi on Thursday said the Centre would soon convene a meeting of church

heads in the state to discuss their concerns. The actor-turned-politician said such a meeting was planned much earlier but it would be expedited in the current situation in the state.

Reiterating his support to Pala Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt, whose 'narcotic and love jihad' remarks had triggered a widespread controversy in the south-

ern state, Gopi said the bishop had not spoken ill of any community.

"The Centre will surely give a chance to the affected community (in the issue) to appraise their concerns. A two-day long programme, comprising meetings of church heads and seminars, was decided to be conducted in 2019 itself," he told reporters

here. When pointed out to the Chief Minister's statement that there was no factual basis for the propaganda regarding 'narcotic jihad', the Rajya Sabha member said no former DGPs, who had expressed concerns about the presence of extremist forces in the state, had so far rejected the matter raised by the Catholic priest.

# RS bypoll: Maha Cong leaders meet Fadnavis

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole and state Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat met Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday to urge the opposition BJP to withdraw its candidate and ensure the Congress nominee gets elected unopposed in the next

month's bypoll to a Rajya Sabha seat from the state.

The by-election was necessitated due to the death of sitting Congress MP Rajiv Satav in May this year.

The Congress, which shares power with the Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra, has fielded Rajni Patil, while the BJP has nominated Sanjay Upadhyay for the

bypoll, to be held on October 4. Thorat and Patole met Fadnavis to persuade the BJP to withdraw its candidate and facilitate unopposed win of the Congress candidate," a Congress source said.

Scrutiny of papers will be done on Thursday and the last date of withdrawal is September 27. Voting, if necessary, will be on

October 4 and counting of votes will be done the same day.

The 288-member Maharashtra Assembly forms the electoral college for the poll.

The BJP has the highest 106 MLAs in the House, followed by Shiv Sena (56), NCP (53), Congress (43), Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (3), and the remaining seats are held by others.

### BJP back to communal politics: BSP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BSP president Mayawati on Thursday alleged the BJP has returned to its narrow communal agenda ahead of the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections with its tall claims on development getting exposed. "The BJP has returned to its narrow agenda before the upcoming UP assembly elections with its tall claims on development being proved to be hollow," Mayawati said in a tweet in Hindi.

"Now the party has returned to playing with religious sentiments and Hindu-Muslim division, etc., but people will not be deceived again, which is clear from their mood," she said.

# SP workers 'purify' places visited by UP CM Adityanath in Sambhal

PNS ■ SAMBHAL (UP)

Samajwadi Party youth workers undertook a "purification" exercise of the places visited by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Sambhal district by sprinkling 'Gangajal'.

A video of the purification exercise on Wednesday has gone viral.

A case was lodged against Samajwadi Party Yuvjan Sabha state president Bhavesh Yadav and 8-10 others, Superintendent of Police Chakresh Misra said on Thursday. Yadav has been arrested, he added.

The chief minister had inaugurated and laid foundations of projects worth Rs 275 crore and addressed a public meeting at



Kaila Devi in Sambhal district on Tuesday.

A day later, Yadav and SP Yuvjan Sabha workers undertook the 'shuddhikaran' (purification) exercise of the venue of the chief minister's public meeting and helpaid by sprinkling waters from the Ganga river.

Talking to the media during the exercise, Yadav claimed he conducted the purification drive as Adityanath has "insulted" Maa Kaila Devi by not visiting the temple when he was here.

A resident of Sambhal filed a complaint at the Bahjoi police state alleging that Yadav's action has upset followers of Adityanath who is also a religious leader.

The case was registered under IPC sections 153A (promoting disharmony, enmity or feelings of hatred), 295A (deliberate and malicious intention of outraging religious feelings) and 505 (intent to incite, or which is likely to incite, any class or community of persons to commit any offence against any other class or community).

# Jungle raj prevailing in UP, alleges Dalit leader

PNS ■ ALIGARH

Azad Samaj Party leader Chandrashekhar Azad on Thursday said 'jungle raj' is prevailing in Uttar Pradesh and women are not safe, days after the body of an eight-year-old Dalit girl was found in a village here.

Azad was in Aligarh to meet the family members of the school girl whose body was recovered from a field near Kishanghar village on Monday, and said the incident is a "shocking pointer to the breakdown of law and order in the state".

"As far as security of women

is concerned, jungle raj prevails in Uttar Pradesh," he told reporters while claiming that similar incidents took place recently in a different part of Aligarh and Bijnor which was a cause of "serious concern".

According to police, the girl had left for school at around 8 am on Monday morning. Shortly before noon her school bag was spotted by some passers-by who raised an alarm.

When it was found that the girl had not reached school, her family started searching for her and found her body in the field.



# ASI recovers over 1,000 plastic bottles at Daulatabad fort trench

PNS ■ AURANGABAD

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has recovered more than 1,000 plastic bottles from the trench at Daulatabad (Devigiri) fort in Maharashtra's Aurangabad, an official said on Thursday.

The fort, located nearly 12 km away from Aurangabad city, is famous for the man-made trench surrounding it, which had made it impregnable to invaders.

Tourists leave behind plastic bottles in the premises of the fort and due to wind and flow of water, these bottles come down to the trench, littering the water, the official said.

"Empty bottles come down with the wind and flowing water, due to the slope on the fort. We

fished out nearly 1,500 bottles from the trench recently, making it plastic free," conservation assistant of the fort Sanjay Rohankar told PTI.

The ASI is now trying out a new measure to prevent tourists from leaving behind plastic bottles at the fort, he said.

"We are placing stickers on plastic bottles and taking a deposit of Rs 20 per bottle from visitors. Tourists get the deposit back when they show their bottle while exiting the premises," the official said.

At least 17,200 tourists have paid the deposit since the measure was implemented in January, he said, adding that the move will help reduce littering inside the premises.

# Defence ministry promulgates framework in utilisation of all types of simulators

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The defence ministry on Thursday said it promulgated existing norms to ensure synergy in utilisation of all types of simulators by the armed forces and it will also entail maintenance of the equipment by Indian companies.

It said a detailed "action plan" with assigned responsibilities to all the constituents of the ministry and industrial associations will be followed to revitalise the exploitation of simulators by the armed forces with an aim of achieving a cost effective, efficient and smart training process.

The ministry said the framework for "increased utilisation" of simulators by the three Services and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) lays emphasis on indigenous design and development as well as outsourcing of operation and maintenance of the simulators to Indian companies.

The three services use a range of simulators to train its personnel to operate various military systems and platforms



including fighter jets, transport aircraft and helicopters.

"Avenues of application of simulation technology will be constantly

explored to achieve a high-level of operational preparedness while reducing expenditure on training and preserving the life of equipment," the ministry said in a statement.

It said the policy will be applicable to all types of existing simulators as well as those

be procured in the future by the armed forces.

"The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has promulgated the framework for enhanced and synergised utilisation of simulators by the three Services and the Indian Coast Guard," the statement said.

"The overarching vision is to transform to simulation-based training across all military domains for combatants, leaders, maintainers, administrators, life science experts, procurement and financial agencies and thus achieve cost effective, efficient, safe, fast-paced and smart training," it said.



The Delhi High Court Thursday agreed to hear a plea by Internet giant Google protesting against alleged leak of information to media relating to an ongoing investigation by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) into Google's Android smartphone agreements.

The petition was mentioned before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh for an urgent listing and the court allowed it for hearing on Friday.

Google in a statement said that on September 18, 2021, a confidential interim fact-finding report submitted by the Director General's office to the CCI relating to an ongoing investigation into Google's Android smartphone agreements, was leaked to the media.

It said Google has not yet received or reviewed this confidential report.

The company said it has filed the petition in the court seeking redress in this matter, specifically protesting against the breach of confidence which impairs Google's ability to defend itself and harms it and its partners.

A Google spokesperson said, "We are deeply concerned that the Director General's report, which contains our confidential information in an ongoing case, was leaked to the media while in

the CCI's custody. Protecting confidential information is fundamental to any governmental investigation, and we are pursuing our legal right to seek redress and prevent any further unlawful disclosures.

"We cooperated fully and maintained confidentiality throughout the investigative process, and we hope and expect the same level of confidentiality from the institutions we engage with."

DG's findings do not reflect the final decision of the CCI and the submission of the investiga-

tion report is an interim procedural step, it said, adding that Google has not yet had the opportunity to review them, much less submit its defence of any allegations.

According to reports, the CCI probe has found Google allegedly abusing its dominant position with respect to mobile operating system Android.

On this, Google has said that Android has led to more competition and innovation.

The reports said it has been found that Google indulged in unfair business practices in relation to Android.



## Breathing death

WHO's revised air quality levels are in tune with the times. India must implement these quickly

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has revised air quality levels for six pollutants, including the particulate matter (PM). Coming after 2005, they cut down the existing acceptable threshold limits by half, prodding countries like India to improve their air quality without losing time. Pollution in Indian cities is far above even the existing limits at present. The new rules render the situation worse. Of particular interest are the PM guidelines. The average PM 2.5 (respirable pollution particles) concentration cannot be higher than five micrograms per cubic metre. However, the existing level is 10. For PM10, the threshold is brought down from 20 to 15. The world organisation said the revision was necessary as pollution is growing in developing countries engaged in large-scale urbanisation and economic development. The guidelines are welcome and need to be implemented. Recent studies show air pollution is reducing life expectancy in Indian cities by six to 10 years. It is time for India to implement big-ticket anti-pollution reforms. A national pollution survey is called for, to assess the meteorological and geographical changes impacting pollution levels. In cities situated in valleys, emissions tend to stay longer, adding to pollution problems. In cities like Delhi with flat terrains, the meteorology impacts in dispersing air pollution. Studies of air movement over urban areas help authorities know about pollution patterns necessary for anti-pollution planning. In the time since 2005, Delhi, for example, grew from being a city to the

National Capital Region of Delhi, covering an area of over 55,000 square km. Townships, satellite centres and industrial zones have come up with IT and industrial clusters. The population and number of vehicles have grown several times. Adding to the city's pollution is the new element of trans-boundary pollution with emissions originating outside the city by way of traffic from Gurgaon and Noida. Industries in the north-east and northwest sectors contribute to the problem. The expansion of Delhi has increased demand for energy from domestic, industrial and transport sectors. Air pollution emissions naturally increased along with those of sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. Over one-third of Delhi suffers from respiratory problems. The last time was 1998 when Delhi implemented low-emission reforms. The public transport vehicles switched to CNG and that alone made a difference. Hundreds of heavy industries were either shut down or relocated, their energy systems upgraded. India's national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), revised last in 2009, are up for another revision in 2022. The study being conducted for updating the standards should take into account the latest WHO thresholds. Common sense measures are also called for. Vote bank politics cannot encourage stubble burning by farmers in Punjab and western Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, motorists should be made to realise that apart from exhaust fumes, brake dust also causes pollution.



Clouds hover over the Old City area in Delhi

## Marching on

The SC insists that females be given the chance in Nov itself to take the NDA entrance exam

The National Defence Academy (NDA), the cradle for grooming boys to become officers in the three Services since 1954, will for the first time welcome women cadets. The Supreme Court has prodded the Government to allow female candidates to appear for the NDA exam in November this year. The Government had told the apex court that women can take the examination in May next year. However, the court, saying women's hopes cannot be belied, ordered that they be allowed to take the test in November. Determined to have gender parity, the only tri-Services training institute in the world, the NDA, was engaged in creating suitable infrastructure for women cadets since early this year. While there is no issue with academic curriculum, the authorities are taking meticulous care in finalising the outdoor training and physical fitness parameters for the females. Physical training includes basic combat drills besides endurance, so far customised for only male cadets. Then there is the issue of fixing standards for physical and medical criteria for females. The male candidates who clear the written exam and interview have to pass the medical test to become eligible for joining the NDA. The test also comprises specified weight and height.

Aiming to induct women cadets in a short time, the NDA is working overtime to fix these standards regarding outdoor training and medical exam. The effort is to ensure that training standards remain top class while formulating parameters for them. The Government had submitted in the apex court that any dilution of physical training and service subjects of firing, endurance, field craft and living off the land for women cadets would impact the battle worthiness of the armed forces. The three Services chiefs had visited the NDA in August to review the infra creation progress. With changing times, female officers are serving with distinction in various wings of the IAF, Navy and Army. In fact, at least four women IAF officers are currently undergoing the final stage of their fighter jet flying training. Similarly, women officers are flying helicopters and transport planes. The Navy has also allowed women to serve on warships when they are seaward-bound. It means they will sail like their male colleagues for months together. Of course, the Navy has created suitable living bunks and other related infrastructure on the warships.



# US probing Pak's role in Afghanistan

Ever since it became a sovereign nation, Pakistan has been ostensibly 'helping' the US to actually further its own interests in the region

The US is keenly looking into the role Pakistan played in Afghanistan after its war against Taliban and terrorism following the attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon on September 11, 2001. This was revealed by US Secretary of State Tony Blinken to angry US lawmakers who were protesting against Pakistan's "duplicious" role in Afghanistan. Among others, Congressman Bill Keating, Chair, House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, said that apart from the ISI's strong ties with the Haqqani network, Pakistan created the Taliban and helped it regroup in 2010. He bemoaned that the Pakistan PM celebrated the Taliban's takeover of Kabul.

Pakistan started following a duplicious policy towards the US soon after it came into existence in August 1947. In 1952, when the West was engaged in its efforts to contain Communism, Pakistan opted for the American bloc (and arms) purportedly to fight the expansion of Communism but actually to strengthen its muscle against India. Some years later, then Pakistan President Gen Ayub Khan said that the arms were "not to be kept wrapped". These were actually used against India in the 1965 and 1971 wars even though given only to fight the expansion of Communism, if the need arose.

The erstwhile Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 had added to Pakistan's strategic importance. It exploited the development dexterously to continue its special relationship with the US despite clear signs of duplicity and formal breakup of the Soviet Union in 1993. The US had turned Pakistan into a ground for Mujahideen fighting against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and a conduit for arms and funds to equip them with weaponry. Pakistan diverted a part of these arms to perpetrate terror in Kashmir and to train, equip and indoctrinate Pashtun students from Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The radicalisation programme started under then Pakistan President Gen Zia-ul-Haq and was meant to address the ethnic divide because of which Pakistan had failed to



have full sway in Afghanistan. Apart from fomenting terror in Kashmir, Pakistan's main aim was to create Taliban Islamic Movement to acquire leverage in Afghanistan and to establish a commanding position, especially vis-a-vis India. But despite clear indications, the US appeared to connive with Pakistan's ulterior motives to foster its own geopolitical and other interests.

The Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 and the US too faded from the scene after ensuring that Pakistan had established its influence on the Mujahideen. After Soviet withdrawal, a civil war ensued in Afghanistan. Interspersed by its army, Pakistan introduced the Taliban militia in this civil war in November 1994. After wreaking havoc on hapless Afghans, the militia gained power in September 1996. With Saudi fugitive Osama bin Laden already present there and declaring jihad against the West, Afghanistan turned into a bastion of terrorism. Pakistan, with calculated use of terrorism as a tool of its State policy, had already become the epicentre of terrorism. India continued to caution the world, both in the

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APART FROM FOMENTING TERROR IN KASHMIR, PAKISTAN'S MAIN AIM WAS TO CREATE THE TALIBAN ISLAMIC MOVEMENT TO ACQUIRE LEVERAGE IN AFGHANISTAN AND TO ESTABLISH A COMMANDING POSITION, ESPECIALLY VIS-A-VIS INDIA

UN and outside, about these dangers to world peace. In an article on October 2, 1999, titled "International Drive To Fight Terrorism", the writer criticised the narrow American approach towards the Pak-Taliban nexus but the US did not heed the warning. Obviously, the ground had been laid for the September 11, 2001, terror attacks.

Following the horrifying attacks, the US waged a war against the Taliban. The public opinion in Pakistan was that its Government shouldn't join this effort. When criticised for aligning with the West, then Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf reportedly stated that had he not done so, America might have taken action against Pakistan, too. He was aware that their duplicity had begun to be noticed. The Taliban was soon removed from power. But, years later, Pakistan resumed helping the Taliban regroup. It turned into a haven for terror attacks on Afghanistan. Pakistan's duplicious attitude prompted former US President Donald Trump to say in 2019: "The US has foolishly given Pakistan more than \$33 bn in aid over the last 15 years and they have given us

nothing but lies and deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools."

Obviously, now the inevitable has happened. Despite a positive sign or two, the Taliban's resurgence poses a serious threat to peace. Radicalisation has been the main factor behind the Taliban's rise. The challenge can be met by promotion of liberal Islam and Sufism. Though this section is a minuscule minority, Sufism has an eternal appeal and, with the passage of time and through encouragement, it can turn into a potential challenge to radicalism and extremism. As mentioned by this writer on October 8, 2016, in the article, "Islamic Radicalism and Sufi Islam", Russia, like India, too was hit hard by Jihadist terrorism in Chechnya. But after dealing with the situation strongly, it encouraged liberal and Sufi Islam to root out the remnants of Jihadist terrorism. If Russia could do it, the rest of the world can also do it. For survival and the betterment of mankind, the world powers must desist from turning terrorism into a geopolitical issue. (The writer is a journalist, former IIS officer and producer. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ARMY 'BIRD' GOES DOWN

Sir — The fatal crash of a *Cheetah* helicopter has highlighted the urgency to focus on re-examining the safety of these helicopters, which are being operated by the Indian armed forces. These choppers need to be grounded immediately till a comprehensive safety audit is completed about airworthiness. Two young pilots from Army Aviation corps, Major Rohit Kumar (35) and Major Anuj Rajput (28) who lost their lives in this crash, were on training sorties and were extremely passionate about joining the armed forces and serving the nation.

The Hindustan Aeronautical Ltd (HAL) should go into an in-depth investigation to see if there is any design flaw in the *Cheetah* helicopter and take corrective measures. If this helicopter had crashed in a civilian area, casualties could have been way more. Therefore, any fault or technical glitch must be investigated at the earliest to avoid any such future crashes. It would be unjust to neglect the safety of those who protect us at all times. Major Kumar and Major Rajput were brave officers who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. Tragically, they leave behind their grieving parents. The nation will always remain indebted to them. Our hearts go out to the family members of these young pilots.

Ramesh Jethwani | Bengaluru

### NOT JUST ANOTHER SHEET OF CLOTH

Sir — Who believes that saree is not a smart outfit? A restaurant in the Capital seems to have a perverted view and pointed out that saree does not qualify as a smart dress and it is a lopsided view. In the fashion world, saree has assumed a prominent place with the womenfolk preferring the six-yard wonder as the best dress for all seasons. It is worth mentioning here that the women in Pakistan prefer sarees, too. By draping the saree around your body with a proper matching blouse, you get the feeling of security and the posh look.

The symbolism of saree goes a long way in developing the personality of a

### 'Narcotics jihad' busted



Now that Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has exposed the falsehood of the claim of Pala Bishop Mar Joseph Kallarangatt that there is the phenomenon of 'narcotics jihad' in the State, the Bishop should show the basic decency to admit to having made a mistake and withdraw his remark. The remark made by the Bishop of Syro-Malabar Church with an intent to malign a particular community was unworthy of a spiritual leader. It led us to have a down on him. The false narrative that Christian girls

are befriended and lured by Muslim men into marriage in order to rope them into religious wars should end here and now.

Women, irrespective of their religions, cannot be denied autonomy in their lives. They are entirely free to choose their partners; they don't need a Bishop's nod. Putting religion above humanity should be anathema to educated people in its true sense. The Vatican should take a serious note of the utterances of the likes of Pala Bishop to drive a wedge between religious communities and discipline them to watch their language and behave properly and responsibly in a multi-religious society in which people of different faiths live cheek by jowl. The laity or congregation must also raise their voice against Bishops who by word or deed do harm or hurt a sense of wider secular community and neighbourliness they all cherish and share.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

woman in the office as a professional. It is a wrap worth wearing with all glamour and style. There is nothing like a saree to make you look most elegant all the time. Saree not only has cultural significance in India but, over the years, has also been seen a touch of modern fashion. In recent times, actors like Vidya Balan are diehard saree lovers and their success on the big screen is counted based on the saree culture. The present generation go for pattu and chiffon of different colours and designs. Thus, by far, the saree is the most flexible garment available in the fashion world.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

### KOHLI LEFT ON A HIGH NOTE

Sir — Even if the team lifts the upcoming T20 World Cup at the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the crown of success will most probably be laid at the door of MS Dhoni. Ironically, Kohli had a stupendous success rate as captain in the shortest format of the game. He has led India to victory in the last five T20 series

though not a World Cup trophy as yet. At the same time, the presence of Dhoni at the T20 world cup can be a blessing in disguise for Kohli who can solely concentrate on batting, knowing well that the calming presence of Dhoni is more than enough for the team's prospects.

Kohli's record as the ODI captain is mixed, so is Test skipper's. But there is no denying that he has provided a new dimension to India's test match-winning ability abroad. The recent win in the truncated series against England is an example. Most international players enjoy captaining their sides in white ball cricket. Kohli is one captain who seems to relish guiding his men in the traditional form of cricket — the Tests. Therefore, it looks just a matter of time before the star batsman relinquishes the captain's responsibilities in one-day internationals, too.

Ganapathi Bhat | Nagpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

The need of the hour is to initiate actions that return the economy to a high-growth track and create gainful jobs by 2030.



Vice-President  
— M Venkaiah Naidu

I express gratitude for the warm welcome Canada has shown Tibetan refugees since the time your (Justin Trudeau) late father was the Prime Minister.

Tibetan spiritual leader  
— Dalai Lama

If the youth, in any way, can create or propagate an inclusive space by working with the deaf community, please do.



Actor  
— Ranveer Singh

Started off my time with a wonderful afternoon with @abhinav\_bindra Sir and his family. Was able to introduce my medal to its elder sibling from Beijing.

Olympics gold medalist  
— Neeraj Chopra

I personally believe that *Ramayana* is an imaginary book and I don't think Rama was a great person or that he was alive.



Former Bihar Chief Minister  
— Jitan Ram Manjhi



FIRST COLUMN

QUAD SUMMIT AND MODI-BIDEN TALKS

India has a range of bilateral discussions lined up on current issues of interest



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The United States is hosting the first in-person summit of QUAD leaders in Washington and perhaps beginning of a new era of cooperation on what the White House termed as “demonstration of the priority of engaging in the Indo-Pacific, including through new multilateral configurations designed to focus on 21st century challenges”. The centrality is the realigning of the partners’ foreign policiesto Indo-Pacific coordination on shared targets. This roughly translates into keeping a sharp eye on Chinawhich is trying to defy international legal orders; therefore, a global consensus on the South China Sea is emerging. India’s focus during the QUAD summit will be tackling the Covid-19 pandemic and future cooperation, climate change issues,and an open Indo-Pacific region that allows equal and fair access for nations to prosper. During the first, virtual meeting of the QUAD leaders in March, 2021, a commitment of one billion vaccines by 2022 was made. The leaders may also talk about additional relief and assistance measures for poor countries as a goodwill

gesture. On the QUAD sidelines, a working group of senior representatives from member countries will focus on cyber security,secure supply chains infrastructure,and work towards finding a common language on emerging technologies including artificial intelligence. The global pandemic has ensured all digital economies around the globe, not to mention the QUAD members, need to find a common thread on defining paradigms for next-generation technology growth and collateral threats. The world industry facing acute shortage of semiconductor chips and other critical digital hardware components understand the importance of working with reliable trusted partners. United States, Australia, Japan and India are critical levers of the huge digital engine driving this technology towards a prosperity dream. One of the best outcomes from the QUAD summit could be for the leaders to come out with a paper on destinations and targets for this digital highway. This in itself could be one the key success stories for QUAD.

The last aspect on which most of the countries from the quadrilateral can make announcements would be on securing clean targets and achieving goals on climate change. The US envoy on climate John Kerry’s visitto India a few days back was a firm commitment towards achieving time bound targets. The US offered assistanceto India for quickly reaching its renewable energy targets of 450 GW by 2030. Currently India’s environment and climate change portfolio is held by ruling party heavy weight Bhopendra Yadav, who enjoys the blessings of the senior leadership. The only challenge for India on this green path could be about assuming more green responsibilities at international forums while trying to attract investments. That is where the will of the domestic government and the organizational skills of the current minister will come for test. Finally on the sidelines of QUAD, Prime Minister Modi and his external affairs minister will hold a whole range of bilateral talks on current issues of interest. The India-US discussions and theoutcome notes would the most watched as this would be first in-person meeting between the President of the US and the Indian Prime Minister. Narendra Modi shared a visible sense of bonhomie with Joe Biden’s predecessor Donald Trump. The same optics may not be repeated but Biden is unlikely to disappoint his counterpart. Afghanistan’s safety, security and upholding of human rights in central Asia would definitely feature as key topics during the bilateral. The hurried exit of the US from Afghanistan has placed many fringe players such as India in a spot in the Central Asian theatre. Every major player in the region including China, Russia and Iranis trying to recalibrate its position with regard to Afghanistan.


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

The misuse of law — a challenge to Indian judiciary

Public Interest Litigations have ensured against derailment of the rule of law and benefited the socially vulnerable sections

Efficient implementation of law is a pre-requisite for a stable and peaceful society and democracy is the torch bearer for a vibrant people-centric governance. The democratic fabric of a nation compliments the jurisprudence in ensuring the lawful governance. Over the years judicial activism through the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has ensured that the derailment of the rule of law is prevented and the socially vulnerable sections of the society have immensely benefited.

The PIL concept was introduced by Justice PN Bhagwati. It refers to litigation undertaken to secure public interest and created an opportunity of justice to socially-disadvantaged



VK BAHUGUNA


*(The writer is Chairman of Centre for Resource Management and Environment. The views expressed are personal.)*

groups and provided relaxation on the traditional rule of locus standi. Ever since its enunciation in 1980s, the judiciary has used it for the course correction of executive's functions and several landmark judgements have provided reliefs to affected citizens.

However, in India of late a serious problem of misuse of law is cropping up and threatening the jurisprudence. This writer has been a witness to such misuse of law both by the common citizens as well as people in power. He has recently written a book "Quest for Civility-an insight into Indian Babudom" on the misuse of power by people in authority.

The trigger for this article came from a newspaper report about challenging the appointment of Rakesh Asthana as the Delhi Police Commissioner under a PIL filed by a few non- government organizations opposed to the present dispensation at the Centre. Asthana has challenged it as misuse of law.

Now let us discuss it how his appointment was made and under what rule. The AllIndia Service officers IAS, IPS and IFS (forests) are recruited by the Union



Government and it is up to the sweet will of the government to utilize them anywhere in the country or abroad in public interest. They can be granted extension in service or transferred from one cadre to the other if need be, depending upon their service records and the opinion of the government. Such action of the Central is absolutely within its power and cannot be challenged. The government will have its reasons for the appointment. Some officers may have their reasons to be disappointed with the decision. If affected officers had gone to the Central Administrative Tribunal it would have been justified and the case could have been decided on merit. However, how could an unaffected party challenge the power of the government? If the country allows such wastage of time on things based purely on ulterior motives or at the instigation of political leaders to regularly bring such matters in courts it would put the entire country's administration as well as security to peril.

There are many other instances of misuse of powers, however, which need the attention of Supreme Court, High Courts and lower courts as well as legislatures. Crimes against women are attracting the attention of the judiciary with stringent provisions but surveys had shown that most of the provisions of section 354 of IPC and the Dowry Prevention Law (Section 498A/ 406 of IPC) are the most misused provisions of law in India and yet no modifications seem to have been made in it. The provision, enacted to protect the dignity of a woman, has become a widely misused weapon by them and is used to harass and blackmail their husband and his family. Once an FIR is filed under 498A/406 (IPC) it becomes a tool in the hands of the police to harass the husband and all his relatives named in the FIR without even preliminary investigation.

According to a survey conducted by Fight against Misuse of Dowry law, 98 per cent of the cases filed under section 498A are false. One senior officer of Ladakh is facing a false dowry case and his father, a retired senior officer of 71 years, is running from pillar to post. Similarly, section 354 is routinely used to harass men deliberately to settle property and other disputes. More than half of such cases ultimately prove false and no real punitive action is taken against the complainant.

The country needs to bring in a law to prevent misuse of law. If a case is dismissed, the complainant and others involved in the investigation and tendering of false witnesses must be punished. Only then the country's judiciary as well as the police and other agencies would be spared such wastage of time and at the same time the law protecting citizens would be implemented well.



# Sensex skyrockets 958 points

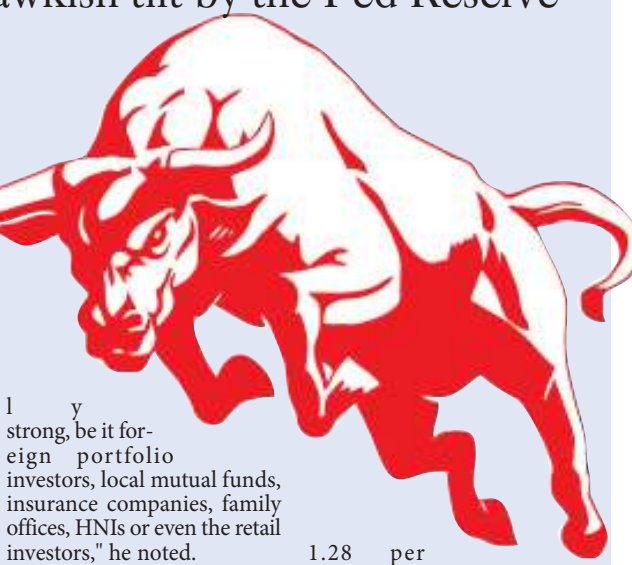
Global markets tempered optimism despite hawkish tilt by the Fed Reserve

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex vaulted 958 points to scale a fresh lifetime high on Thursday, propelled by across-the-board buying amid a positive trend in global equities despite hawkish comments from the US Fed. Robust gains in the rupee further buoyed sentiment, traders said. Reversing the previous session's lethargy, the 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 958.03 points or 1.63 per cent to end at an all-time high of 59,885.36. It scaled a new peak of 59,957.25 during the day. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty soared 276.30 points or 1.57 per cent to its new closing high of 17,822.95, after touching an intra-day record of 17,843.90. Bajaj Finserv topped the Sensex gainers' chart, climbing 5.15 per cent, followed by L&T, HDFC, Axis Bank, SBI, Reliance Industries (RIL) and IndusInd Bank.

Index heavyweights RIL and HDFC twins accounted for nearly half of the benchmark's gains. Only five counters closed in the red -- Dr Reddy's, ITC, Nestle India, HUL and Bharti Airtel, skidding up to 1.07 per cent. "Amidst a strong start, bulls showed no signs of weakness to soar higher, boosted by strong global cues and broad-based buying led by realty, metal and banking stocks. Global markets tempered optimism despite a slightly hawkish tilt by the Fed Reserve intimating that the US central bank will begin reducing its asset purchases in November and conclude the tapering process around mid-2022. "However, investors continue to remain on the edge awaiting clarity on the Chinese economy. The domestic realty sector continued its rally sparked by demand revival in the property space," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at

Geojit Financial Services. Devang Mehta, Head - Equity Advis-ory, Centrum Broking, said the market took the US Fed statement of starting tapering as soon as November in its stride. "...the rally today was symbolic of the prevailing strong sentiment locally on the back of reduction in COVID cases and the strong vaccination numbers. With improvement in economic activity and the optimism around the capex cycle revival, the earnings trajectory for India Inc will naturally get a big boost. "Most of the companies which are market leaders in their respective domains have seen operating efficiencies and productivity improve and also been able to reduce debt with prominent gain in market share as well." Liquidity remains extreme-



ly strong, be it foreign portfolio investors, local mutual funds, insurance companies, family offices, HNIs or even the retail investors," he noted. Sector-wise, BSE realty, bankex, energy, finance, capital goods and industrials indices rallied up to 8.71 per cent, while FMCG closed in the red. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap gauges followed the benchmarks, surging up to

1.28 per cent.

World stocks maintained their upward trajectory even after US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said the central bank will likely begin reducing its asset purchases as early as November, and also hinted at rate hikes from next year.

## E-comm cos to log 23% rise in gross GMV at over \$9 bln

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce platforms are expected to potentially clock over USD 9 billion gross GMV (Gross Merchandise Value) during the festive season this year as against USD 7.4 billion last year - a growth of 23 per cent, consulting firm RedSeer said on Thursday. For the full year, the overall online gross GMV is expected to touch USD 49-52 billion, which is around 37 per cent higher than last year (USD 38.2 billion), primarily driven by strong consumer funnel expansion and the high adoption of online shopping post-COVID across the categories, RedSeer said in its eCommerce Festive Season Report. During the first week of the festive season, online platforms are expected to register 30 per cent year-on-year growth in gross GMV to USD 4.8 billion, it added. Gross GMV refers to total value of goods sold on platform prior to subtracting cancellation or return.



"The growth will be mostly driven by the accelerated online adoption which has been witnessed as an effect of COVID. Secondly, tier-II cities and beyond will continue to drive growth as they are 55-60 per cent of the total shopper base this year, similar or higher than 57 per cent in 2020 festive days," Mrigank Gutgutia, Associate Partner at RedSeer, told reporters. On the other hand, as offline retail and mobility is recovering almost upto pre-COVID levels, this will impact the online festive sale as customers may opt for offline shopping as well, he

added. In terms of categories, mobile will continue to dominate - driven by new launches - and account for 11 per cent of the gross GMV (USD 4.8 billion) in the first week of festive sale. Electronics and Appliances category will continue to grow (from 14 per cent share festive sale last year to 16 per cent this year), driven by ever-expanding selection and reach, and consumers holding back their purchases (earlier in the year) in anticipation of new launches and attractive pricing (as per RedSeer survey), RedSeer said.

## MONEY MATTERS

### E&P, ethanol-blended fuel to help in self-reliance goals

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said the Centre is focusing on exploration and production of oil and natural gas to make India a self-reliant country in energy requirement, and the work on meeting the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol by 2025 is on track. Puri, the minister for petroleum and natural gas, said nine per cent ethanol blending in fuel has already been achieved. "Exploration and production of natural gas is the top priority for the government to attract foreign and domestic investment and enhance output," he said. Augmenting ethanol blending in fuel is critical for the energy security of the country, the minister said. India imports almost 85 per cent of its liquid hydrocarbon requirement and spends over Rs 12 lakh crore. The Centre is targeting to have 20 per cent ethanol-blended fuel by 2025. Earlier, it had planned to achieve the goal by 2030. Allaying fears of large scale farming of the bio-fuel raw material impacting food security, Puri said, "We are looking at agricultural waste and even bamboo in the north-east region for ethanol. So, this should not be a problem."



### NCL joins hands with NTPC to instal solar project in MP

State-owned CIL on Thursday said its subsidiary Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) has joined hands with power major NTPC to install a 50 MW solar power project in Madhya Pradesh. This is the first ground mounted solar project of NCL for which project consultant NTPC has invited bids with a pre-bid date set on October 7 and tender opening date on October 22, Coal India (CIL) said in a statement. "In a bid to promote green energy, Coal India Limited arm Northern Coalfields Limited has joined hands with NTPC to install a 50 MW solar power project at Nigahi coal mines of NCL in Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh," the statement said. CIL NTPC Urja Pvt Ltd (CNUPL), a joint venture of Coal India Ltd and NTPC, which will co-ordinate for this entire project, is confident that the project would be completed within the stipulated timeframe of one year. As a project consultant, NTPC will help NCL get successful bidder for this project and then NCL will get the project executed through the successful bidder.



### Jubilant acquires 25% stake in nutrition company Wellversed

Jubilant Foodworks Ltd (JFL), a quick service restaurants operator and master franchise of brands such as Domino's Pizza and Dunkin' Donuts, on Thursday said it has acquired 25 per cent stake in Gurugram-based nutrition company Wellversed Health. The company would invest Rs 10 crore in Wellversed in two tranches, said JFL in a regulatory update. The first tranche of Rs 6.5 crore would be invested on the closing date as defined in the share subscription agreement and the second one of Rs 3.5 crore would be done nine months from the disbursement of the first tranche. "This will be an investment by the company in Wellversed - a nutrition company offering a variety of food products tailored for specific nutrition and dietary needs including keto, gluten-free, vegan, high-protein, diabetic and immunity," said JFL.



### Google selects KSUM's Koco Games for 2021 programme

Technology giant Google has selected city-based Koco Games for its distinguished 'Indie Games Accelerator 2021', enabling the company supported by Kerala Startup Mission to compete at the annual global program. Koco Games, which is a three-year-old independent game developer and publisher, is one of the two Indian startups selected for the accelerator program slated to be held across four months starting October. The participating team gets exclusive access to the Google team, its mentors and products, a company statement said here. The program begins with a demo day where the companies get the opportunity to muster funds by presenting themselves in front of investors. Founded in 2018 by Mohammed Aboobacker, Ajmal Jamal and Kapil P, the core team of Koco Games has over eight years of experience in the game industry. Aboobacker is San Francisco-based YCombinator alumnus, having participated in YCombinator 2017 batch that is considered as the world's best business incubator program.



### Jio, Airtel add subscribers in July, VIL loses 14.3 L users

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio added mobile subscribers at a scorching pace in July, and Airtel also spruced up its user tally, even as Vodafone Idea lost 14.3 lakh customers, according to the latest data from regulator Trianet. Reliance Jio gained 65.1 lakh subscribers in July cementing its market lead, while Bharti Airtel added 19.42 lakh customers during the month. Riding on the massive subscriber gains, the wireless user base of Jio swelled to 44.32 crore in July, according to monthly subscriber data released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai). Airtel's subscriber count rose to 35.40 crore in July. Vodafone Idea lost 14.3 lakh wireless users during July, as its subscriber count slipped to 27.19 crore.



## Entitlement under SEIS for services exports capped

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday said it has imposed a limit on the total entitlement under services export incentive scheme SEIS for shipments made during 2019-20, at Rs 5 crore per exporter. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has notified a list of eligible services and rates under the

Services Exports from India Scheme (SEIS) for exports made during 2019-20 is being notified. "A limit of total entitlement under SEIS has been imposed for service exports rendered in the period April 1, 2019, to March 31, 2020, and capped at Rs 5 crore IEC (import-export code)," the DGFT said in a notification. Further, it has been notified that the facility to

claim benefits under SEIS on payments in Indian rupees would not be available for services rendered in 2019-20. The deadline for submission of SEIS for 2019-20 will be December 31, 2021, and SEIS applications for 2019-20 will become time-barred after December 31 this year. Services Export Promotion Council of India (SEPC) Chairman Maneek

Davar said the move will benefit small and medium enterprises in the sector. "SEPC is also committed to guide and advise all exporters on obtaining SEIS benefits. It has also written to DGFT to extend the date of filing for 2019-20 to March 31, 2022," he said. Depending on the nature of services, the government gives duty credit scrips or certificates.

## COMPENSATION STRUCTURE FOR FORD DEALERS

# FADA seeks government support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile dealers' body FADA has urged the government to formulate a task force to monitor the compensation structure being worked out by Ford India for its dealer partners across the country. In a letter to Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey, FADA President Vinakesh Gulati also requested the government to instruct Ford India to keep the industry body in the loop regarding the compensation structure for the dealerships. "We humbly request your Ministry's intervention... Create a task force which takes day-to-day updates from Ford India to monitor the compen-



sation plan for automobile dealers and dealership employees," Gulati said in the letter. Also, instruct Ford India to keep FADA in the loop for dealership related issues and compensation structure, he noted. Besides, Gulati also requested the ministry to make sure that Ford India indemni-

fies dealers from various consumer and civil cases, both under pendency and against any future cases that may arise directly or indirectly out of the automaker's restructuring announcement. "Ford India is forcing its dealers to first sign Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) latest by September

## PG Electroplast applies to avail PLIS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

PG Electroplast, a contract manufacturer of electronic goods, on Thursday said it has applied for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme and committed to investing Rs 300 crore to manufacture air conditioner components. Through its wholly-owned subsidiary PG Technoplast, it has committed a capital expenditure (capex) of Rs 300 crore over the next five years for manufacturing AC components, according to a

statement. The company has already started the first phase of its planned investment, said PG Electroplast adding that it is also building up its design and R&D (research and development) capabilities for the AC segment. PG Electroplast Managing Director (Operations) Vikas Gupta said, "We want to create a strong domestic component ecosystem in the nation. With this, we will be able to help India turn into a world-wide manufacturing powerhouse." Earlier this month on

September 16, the government had said as many as 31 companies, including Voltas, Daikin, Panasonic, Hitachi, Blue Star and Havells, have applied for availing PLIs for manufacturing of components, proposing an investment of around Rs 4,995 crore. The selection of applicants will be done within 60 days from the date of closure of the application window or by November 15, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had said.



## Vizhinjam port to be operational in Dec '23

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Minister for Ports Ahamed Devarkovil and the Adani group on Thursday said the Vizhinjam port, part of a multi-crore International Deep water Multipurpose Seaport project, would be operational by December 2023. However, the entire Rs 7,525 crore project, including providing national highway connectivity to the port and carrying out land acquisitions, would be completed by December 2024, an Adani official said. The joint announcement was made to the media after a meeting of the Adani Group with the

minister with regard to completion of the project which was scheduled to be finished by 2021. The minister told reporters that the Adani officials have said the work got delayed due to various natural calamities since 2018 and thereafter, the Covid outbreak from 2020. He said these were genuine issues raised by the company and the same can be addressed. The minister further said that the meeting and the subsequent announcement was made in the wake of some news reports which created confusion regarding completion of the project -- the state's first-ever deep water container transshipment port.

# Upper middle class to revive consumption cycle again soon

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With higher consumer confidence following the rise in vaccination levels and sitting on already-built-up-savings through the pandemic months, the top 20 per cent of upper-income consumers will help recover the near-term consumption demand, as per a report. These consumers account for the bulk of the rural and urban demand. While the economy fared the worst last year, contracting a record 7.3 per cent due to the pandemic, the problem with the economy had begun much earlier in FY16 when consumption demand began to disappear from the economy. The pandemic only added to the contraction. The top 20 per cent of the consumer universe control 59 per cent of the discretionary consumption in rural areas and a much higher 66 per cent in urban areas, according to UBS Securities India.



The upper-income households have built up forced/precautionary savings during the pandemic period as their spending on discretionary

items and services fell due to mobility restrictions. However, now these upper-income consumers have the opportunity to spend with the

progressive reopening of the economy post-second wave, given the improvement in demand indicators such as demand for vehicles, property,

and homes; also for personal care, consumer durable items etc. The top 20 per cent of the population account for the bulk of discretionary consumption. We expect the near-term consumption demand for goods as well as high contact intensive services, to recover in the second half beginning next month as more people are vaccinated and consumer confidence improves. Tanvee Gupta Jain, the chief economist at UBS Securities India said quoting their in-house UBS Evidence Lab survey findings. The number of the fully-vaccinated people as of September 21 stood at 15.5 per cent or 21.2 crore, and those given the first shot is 42.2 per cent and the total doses given so far to 82.7 crore. The post-pandemic consumption outlook survey was conducted online between July and August 2021 among 1,500 upper-middle-class consumers. The survey indicates these

consumers largely saw income continuity since the pandemic began last year. While 42 per cent of them saw a decline in income during this period, 54 per cent saw stable or increasing income. The survey also found that the formal sector has gained market share during the pandemic, but the informal economy has suffered (mostly workers employed in the non-agricultural sector in rural areas and high contact services sector in urban areas), which may not have been adequately captured by the survey results. Nearly two-thirds of respondents anticipate income to increase in 2022. Across age groups, income expectations diverged with the middle-aged (35-44 years) being more optimistic. The optimism about income growth and a better financial situation is a key metric to track a swift normalisation of consumption trends, the report said.



The purpose of a detox plan is to ease the function of major organs like the heart, kidneys, and liver in order to help them recuperate and perform better. Ayurveda recommends constantly detoxing the body with the changing season to reap good benefits. Ayurvedic detox diets are said to bring about positive changes in the body and mind, enhancing physical health and increasing mental focus and clarity. Regular detox is known to improve blood circulation, boost immunity, increase energy and flush out toxins.



# DETOX YOUR BODY AYURVEDIC WAY

## DETOX KAADHA FOR EARLY MORNINGS & EVENINGS:

- What you need:**
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
  - Coriander seeds: 1 tsp
  - Fennel seeds: 1 tsp
  - Water: 1 litre
  - Honey to proportion

**How to make:**

- Bring the water to boil, add the seeds and let it boil for 10 more minutes on a low flame.
- Turn off the heat and simmer for 5 more minutes.
- Strain, add honey and serve hot.



## MOONG STEW:

- What you need:**
- Green whole moong: 1 cup
  - Finely chopped green vegetables of your choice: 1 cup
  - Water: 2 cups
  - Finely chopped garlic: 6 cloves
  - Finely chopped onion: 1
  - Tomato paste: 5 tbsp
  - Cold-pressed sesame oil
  - Salt
  - Mustard seeds
  - Pepper
  - Turmeric powder: 1 tsp
  - Coriander-Cumin powder: 2tsp
  - Finely chopped coriander leaves
  - Juice of 1 lemon



**How to make:**

Pressure cook the Moong with some salt and turmeric until soft. In a pan, add sesame oil and once hot, add some mustard seeds. Once they start to

sputter, add the finely chopped garlic and the veggies. Cover and allow to cook for 10 minutes. Once tender, add the tomato paste and the boiled Moong. Add coriander-cumin powder, salt and pepper and let it all blend well. Allow cooking on a low flame for 15 more minutes. Switch off the flame, squeeze the juice of a lemon and garnish with fresh coriander leaves. Apart from this, remember to follow these basic rules to help you with your detox routine, drink warm lemon water half an hour before every meal to open up blocked intestinal channels. Eat more natural, raw and fresh breakfast, lunch and dinner. Steamed vegetables, quinoa, porridge, and fresh seasonal fruits are great options. Avoid snacking and if you're still hungry between meals, eat a fruit or some nuts and seeds.

## GOLDEN MILK:



- What you need:**
- Coconut milk: 200 ml
  - Ghee: 1 tsp
  - Organic turmeric powder: 1 tsp
  - A pinch of black pepper
  - A pinch of ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg or cardamom
  - Honey to proportion

**How to make:**

Heat the ghee in a pan, add the turmeric powder and black pepper and let it form a paste. Now add the coconut milk and mix well. Allow it to come to a boil while continuously stirring. Let simmer on low-medium heat for 5 minutes. Add the additional spices, add honey and serve hot.

# Get screened every six months after your Covid recovery

Covid-19 led to complications and health risks manifold for patients with non-communicable diseases. Almost 75-80 percent of the Covid patients don't require hospitalisation and can recover at home with teleconsultation, but Covid-19 infections can leave the patient with long-term side effects. There are many instances where symptoms of Covid-19 have persisted for several months. Apart from damaging the lungs, the virus can also cause acute myocardial injury and chronic damage to the cardiovascular system. According to research published in the European Heart Journal, Covid-19 patients who suffer cardiac arrest have a higher possibility of dying as compared to those who are not infected with it, and especially women are at an increased risk of death for the same reason. The virus may directly breach the ACE2 receptor cells, within the myocardium tissue and cause direct viral harm. Covid-19 can result in inflammation of the heart muscles which is known as myocarditis and it can lead to heart failure over time, if not taken care of. People with a pre-existing heart problem need to be extra cautious. A significant number of patients have suffered cardiac arrest during the recovery period, often resulting in death. Expert suggests that even

though the Covid virus wanes, the immune response continues to be hyper-active and that often ends up attacking other organs. It has been observed that almost 80 per cent of these patients have had cardiac arrests 2-3 weeks after testing Covid positive. We tend to ignore some of the warning signs and due to lack of awareness, sometimes, we fail to prevent certain cardiovascular issues during Covid-19 or even after recovering from Covid-19. After someone has had Covid-19, if that patient is experiencing a rapid heartbeat or palpitations, it is recommended to contact the doctor immediately because even a temporary increase in heart rate can signal a lot of different things, including the aftermath of being very ill, prolonged inactivity and spending weeks convalescing in bed and even dehydration. It is necessary to make sure that the patient is drinking enough fluids, especially if the fever persists. Sometimes, people who are recovering from Covid-19 may show symptoms of a condition known as POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome). However, the link between the development of POTS and Covid-19 is yet to be established. Although, POTS is a neurologic problem, and it is not directly a cardiac issue. It affects the part of the nervous system and may

hamper the heart rate and blood flow. The syndrome can also cause rapid heartbeats while standing. Some of the symptoms of a rapid or irregular heart rhythm may include: Feeling of a rapid or irregular heartbeat in the chest (palpitations) Shortness of breath Feeling lightheaded or dizzy, especially upon standing Brain fog Fatigue Chest pain Rapid ups and downs in the pulse rate Several instances of cardiac arrests post Covid recovery has emphasised the importance of frequent monitoring of heart health. As per experts, cardiac tests like ECG, X-Ray Chest, and lipid profile should be repeated every six months in high-risk individuals with pre-existing conditions like diabetes and hypertension in order to understand whether there is any damage to the heart. Apart from regular monitoring, post-Covid patients must stick to a healthy diet consisting of all the essential nutrients and spicy, oily, canned, artificial sweeteners and processed flavours, or junk food should be strictly avoided. Taking out time for physical exercise, cutting down on alcohol and smoking is necessary. Even the smallest of the symptoms should be taken into consideration and should be immediately addressed by an expert doctor.



## FUN

### ARCHIE



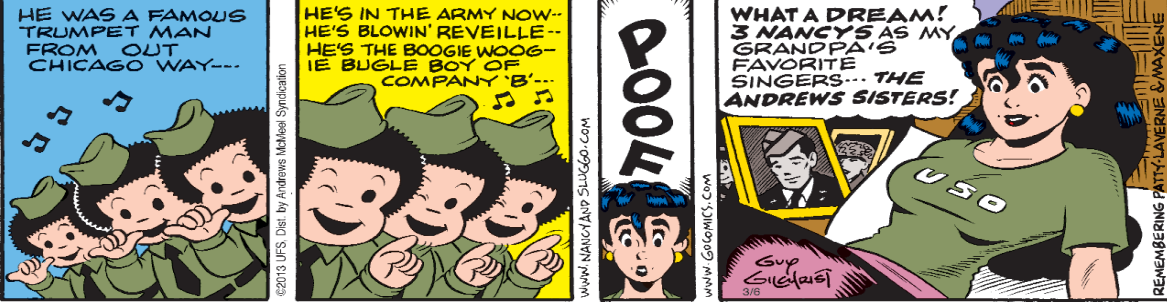
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



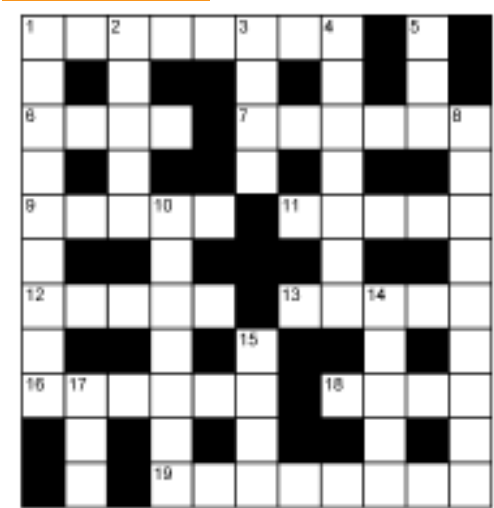
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

- 1 A large extinct animal
- 2 Do this in water
- 3 Me
- 4 A person from Moscow
- 5 Unwell
- 6 Someone who catches fish
- 7 Houses for horses
- 8 Wide awake and watchful
- 9 A friendly word for a cat
- 10 Doing nothing, lazy
- 11 Feathered creatures
- 12 The same in value
- 13 This animal has no legs
- 14 A bird that hunts at night
- 15 Turned over and over on the ground
- 16 A group of players on one side in a game
- 17 All the bones in your body

**DOWN**

- 1 Vanish
- 2 Hit these in with a hammer
- 3 A large number of soldiers

**SOLUTION:**

N	T	D	G	W
L	O	G	I	V
A	L	I	G	H
H	I	G	H	A
H	E	V	S	D
T	O	N	E	N
T	O	N	E	N
T	U	R	N	D



# PAINTING HIS PASSION

YAMINIKRISHNA  
BANDLAMUDI

Making art is not just a mere expression of inner feelings, it also implies that the artist has a sensitive eye to every detail around him/her. Such a nature actually differentiates an artist from the rest of the world. This holds true in the case of Giridhar Arasavelli, 45, a passionate painter from Vijayawada who has received international recognition for his work. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, he talks about his art-work and his long journey in the field for the last 25 years.

Giridhar needs no introduction to the writers and poets of Vijayawada city. He is always caught busy in the same old tiny office room since 1997 at Durgapuram Road, working on paintings and designing a variety of cover pages for poetry books or novels of reputed personalities and writers. "As I used to help my father with designing catalogues and jewellery, I picked up the work culture and techniques of doing it myself. Earlier, I used to do manual artwork but thanks to digital printing, things are much easier now," he says.

Though he has been designing cover pages for books of reputed writers and poets like Yandamoori, Devi Priya, Malathi Chandoor, Prasad Murthy and many other famous personalities, his passion for painting has never stopped.

About his work, he shares, "I take natural shots of people of different backgrounds and try to sketch using pencil, acrylics, watercolours, and oil paintings. My paintings are usually loaded with simple ordinary sights like flower sellers, working labourers, rural women, frolicking children, or some natural meadows in my surroundings. Be it watercolour, or oil paints or acrylics, the mode of painting is mainly based on the situation, sight, and occupation of the people I come across."



Giridhar has exhibited his paintings at several art exhibitions in Vijayawada and Hyderabad, and has participated in group exhibitions held by the Amaravathi cultural department of Vijayawada. He also received appreciation from several art associations and poets for the extraordinary expressions of his art.

He tells us that he worked for a few Telugu movies, he designed the appearance of main characters, one of them being the recent release *Uppena*. "I've sketched portraits of hundreds of artists, politicians, movie stars, and many writers using watercolours and digital software."



The sketch I did of Leo Tolstoy with watercolours in 2018 is one among the 137 shortlisted Indian paintings, out of 1200 entries, by the International Watercolour Society of Shillong. The painting received appreciation from international artists, which I personally consider a huge milestone.

"In the past 25 years, I designed cover pages for more than 8000 books all over from Andhra Pradesh, majorly for famous publications like Navasahiti, Sahiti Mitralu, Navaratna, and Sri Sri Printers of Vijayawada. The recent edition from Sri Sri Printers, *Mahaprasthanama*, a bound volume of the legendary poet

Sri Sri in multicolour, was designed by me through a digital medium that took almost a year to finish, and that feels like an achievement of a lifetime to me.

It

was well received by the number of lyricists, directors, and artists of the Telugu film industry.

Giridhar is the one who introduced plain art in watercolours to Vijayawada, which was previously only being done in foreign countries. Every weekend, he does

outdoor painting and makes it a habit to have all of his team of painters of the city choose a spot in the villages nearby and draw the live scenes that are right in front of them.

"Though I experienced the joy of experimenting with acrylics and watercolours before, oil painting seems to have a unique charm that always entices me. My dream is to master it and have my paintings exhibited at more prestigious Indian and international art exhibitions," concludes the passionate painter.

SHIKHA  
DUGGAL

As domestic travel in India begins its recovery following the second Covid-19 spike, new research has found that quarantine and testing remain a key concern for travellers in relation to international travel. Through comparing data collected from a total of 18,500 travellers in pre-pandemic times to travellers during the pandemic, the findings reveal that while physical wellbeing has been at the forefront of discussions, travellers are now just as worried about their mental wellbeing as they are about their physical wellbeing!

Societal awareness of the importance of mental health has increased sharply over the past few years, including the impact of travel on our mental wellbeing.

When asked what travel brands could do to help the situation, 24% of Hyderabad travellers said they value propositions that show there's consideration for their mental health on their journeys.

The findings also showed that travellers are specifically looking for visible

## Post pandemic shift in travellers' priorities

health and hygiene measures when they travel, such as hand sanitisers throughout the airport, and socially distanced spaces in which to de-stress and relax away from the crowds. With 38% of the respondents saying that they would pay for lounge access to better protect their well-being at the airport, we got in touch with Roshini Jaiswal, CEO of Swanrose, and says, "The pandemic has turned the health care system upside down and challenged consumers' sense of well-being. In many ways, consumers are taking charge of their health more than ever before. For many people, the uncertainty surrounding Coronavirus is the hardest thing to handle. We don't know how

important, which indicates that Covid-19 testing has now crossed the line from being just a government pre-requisite for travel to some destinations, to an element that people want to see in order to give them the confidence to take to the skies once more.

"While there are increasingly positive signs for a travel recovery, the only way to make it a success is to understand how traveller needs and fears have been changed by their experiences through the pandemic," said David Evans, Joint CEO at Collinson, which conducted the survey. He adds, "It's so important the travel industry recovers, and it's even more important the industry is able to do so in a collaborative and informed way. What this research lays out is how to go about

reason they gave was that they were worried they would need to quarantine either on arrival or return! Wanting to avoid long quarantine periods is likely a reason why Indian passengers see testing on arrival as an important component to their travel experience. But interestingly, a similar 48% of respondents said that pre-departure testing was also



exactly we'll be impacted or how bad things might get. And that makes it all too easy to spiral out into overwhelming dread and panic. A pandemic of this magnitude has made people realise the importance of personal hygiene, truly! Things such as hand sanitisers, face masks, and surface disinfectants are now an essential part of our lives. Personal hygiene habits such as using hand sanitisers have become new normal in 2021 as brushing teeth used to be in the past. Also, they are of the view that the improvement in the quality of hygiene will boost the overall economic and social growth of the country."

When asked why some of the explorers might be hesitant to travel in light of Covid-19, the top



Roshini Jaiswal



Priyanka Lakhani

rebuilding traveller confidence, by focusing on mental as well as physical health, and understanding the factors causing stress. By working together on the issues highlighted in this study, the travel industry has yet more information to ensure travel thrives again in the future."

"Despite many of us planning holidays to relax and recharge, the pandemic is resulting in the travel section of our trips being viewed as more stressful than before. Many travellers are now paying more attention to their mental well-being while travelling, and not just their physical. This is an important insight, as by understanding what travellers need, to feel more comfortable and confident, brands within the travel ecosystem can implement required practices and in turn, help expedite the recovery of the industry," says Priyanka Lakhani, Commercial Director Middle East, and Africa and Director South Asia, Collinson.

and for providing services by understanding the consumers' past behaviour and transactions. In this competitive world of e-commerce, commercial enterprises are scrambling to be ahead of rivals, and thus to provide the 'best' experience to consumers, profiling is happening on an unimaginable scale. In this spirit of competition, the right to informational privacy of individuals is being compromised. This is against principles laid down in Puttaswamy-I and the Information Technology Act 2000".

Published by Thomson Reuters, the book is set to have a pan India virtual launch on October 6, 2021.

tone by highlighting the contours and significance of Informational Privacy as the Internet continues to invade every aspect of citizens' lives. The second chapter sparks a debate on whether the Aadhaar card will prove to be a nemesis for the privacy of citizens or the most valuable instrument for the delivery of social welfare benefits. Sood has highlighted the dissenting judgement of Justice Chandrachud in the Aadhaar case that has gone unnoticed.

Chapter 3 highlights the privacy policies of social media and e-commerce platforms and the resulting virtual profiling of customers. In this context, the author has shared his point of view on the way forward. The fourth chapter elaborates on the Toolkit and Pegasus controversies. The Data Protection Bill, which is currently under consideration in the parliament, has been touched upon and broadly analysed in Chapter 5. The concluding Chapter 6 throws light on the implications of the fundamental right to privacy



and how it's ushering transformational changes in society. The Right to consume alcohol in privacy in prohibition States, the rights of LGBT couples to live with dignity, and the right to privacy of live-in couples have been delved into by the author.

Referring to the section on how privacy is being compromised/jeopardised by the digital footprints of customers, the author opined, "Massive profiling of individuals is taking place in the virtual world by commercial enterprises for targeted advertising

## Vivek Sood's Right to Privacy sparks debate on informational privacy

Vivek Sood, a senior counsel and author of *The Fundamental Right to Internet, Cyber Laws Simplified, and Cyber Crimes, Electronic Evidence & Investigation (Legal Issues)*, authored his fifth book titled *Right to Privacy: Arguing for the People*. He comes with close to three decades of litigation experience in criminal law, constitutional law, and cyber disputes.

The book, as the name gives it away, is about the recognition of the Right to Privacy by the Supreme Court in Puttaswamy's case and its impact on the lives of Indian citizens. The book avoids legal jargon and commentaries, and has been written keeping in view the general readers and common public as well as people from the media, corporate, and IT sectors. In the book, Vivek Sood has covered topics of extensive depth and diversity like views on Aadhaar, the significance of informational policy, social media, adult entertainment, data protection, LGBT rights, and many more. The foreword has been penned by Shashi Tharoor!

"Through the chapters, the book highlights interesting and thought-provoking issues such as informational privacy of citizens that is vulnerable to being compromised by law enforcement agencies of the State and non-State entities," shares author Vivek Sood.

*Right to Privacy: Arguing for the People* has 6 chapters. The first chapter sets the

## How a feeding tube can make life easy

Feeding Tube, what is that? Rahul Tyagi from Porvoo Transition Care explains exclusively to *The Pioneer* that it is a medical device used to provide nutrition to patients incapable of doing so through the mouth or have issues in swallowing.

However, does it have multi-purposes attached to it? He replies in the affirmative. A feeding tube can be also used to provide food and fluids to patients, in administering medication when the situation demands or in situations where the stomach of the patient is unable to process its contents, the tube can also be used for drawing out fluids present in the stomach. He states there are multiple types of feeding tubes that can be used for patients, it is as follows:

**Gastric tube:** This tube is directly inserted into the stomach by performing an incision in the abdomen thereby resulting in the nutrients directly reaching the stomach without involving the process of swallowing. **Jejunostomy tube:** A Jejunostomy tube is inserted directly into the jejunum. However, the incision site for the insertion of this tube is slightly lower than that of the gastric tube. Due to its narrow nature, only thin liq-



uids and powdered medications can pass through this tube. **Nasogastric tube:** This tube runs from the nose of the patient through the throat and oesophagus and into the stomach. It is not a long-term feeding tube and has to be changed or removed after 4-6 weeks. **Orogastric tube:** It is similar to a nasogastric tube but it can only be used for a period of 2 weeks after which it needs to be

removed or changed with a long-term feeding tube. "One of the most common types of feeding tube used is the Ryle's Tube or Nasogastric Tube. A nasogastric tube, as the name suggests is a narrow tube passing through the patient's nose to the stomach. Silicon or polyurethane nasogastric tubes are not affected by gastric acid and hence can be inserted and kept in the stomach for a longer duration of time, unlike a Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) tube which needs to be replaced every fortnight," shares Rahul.

Here are some central pointers to be kept in mind for Ryle's tube and its care:

1. Keep it clean while administering continuous feeding, the tube should be flushed every 4 hours
2. Dispense all medications as a liquid and flush before and after with at

least 5 ml of water, if possible

3. Clamp the tube when it is not being used. This helps in maintaining a closed system

4. Keep the skin around the tube clean and dry. Clamp the tube when you aren't using it. Keep the skin around the tube clean and dry

Well, everything has its consequences too. A worrying aspect of the tube experience is the environmental tube it creates. From formula cartons to syringes, all of the associated products should be made from biodegradable materials to decrease their toxic impact on our world. We have already witnessed how medical equipment takes its toll on the Earth. Currently, tube extensions are made of polyurethane or silicone and need to be replaced every six months. These materials are then destined for a landfill. Hence, if a smart feeding tube had an extension like a rubber straw that only required replacement once or twice every several years, we could cut down on waste. A smart feeding tube may sound far-fetched, but plenty of people spend their lives with a pace-maker or inspire device which is used to treat sleep apnea inside their bodies. A robust smart tube should be made simply because it will improve thousands of people's quality of life!



# RCB seek return to winning ways against resilient CSK

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore would look to shrug off the crushing defeat in the previous outing and get their mojo back when they take on Mahendra Singh Dhoni's resilient Chennai Super Kings in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match, here on Friday.

While RCB will look to start afresh, CSK got a confidence-boosting 20-run win against defending champions Mumbai Indians on Sunday night. It is imperative for RCB to improve upon their batting as they seek to keep their place in the top half of the points table. It will be important that the openers -- Devdutt Padikkal (217 runs) and skipper Virat Kohli (203 runs) -- provide a solid start. But the opening duo would also need support from the middle-order, which crumbled against Kolkata Knight Riders.

The likes of Glenn Maxwell (233 runs) and AB de Villiers (207 runs) will have to perform in unison against a strong CSK attack. Australian Maxwell did justify his high price tag during the first leg, becoming the side's top scorer. He would be raring to go once again as will the ever-reliant De Villiers.

CSK could have suffered the reversal in their tie against Mumbai had it not been for youngster Ruturaj Gaikwad's mature unbeaten knock of 88 off 58 balls.

The team's leading run-getter Faf du Plessis (320 runs), Moeen



Ali were out for ducks while Ambati Rayudu was retired hurt on nought. Veterans Suresh Raina and Dhoni also failed to reach double digit scores and the side was reeling at 24 for 4. But Gaikwad was not ruffled and kept

his calm, steering the three-time champions to a respectable 156 for 6. He stitched crucial partnerships with all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Dwayne Bravo, who smashed 23 runs off eight deliveries, taking the team over the 150-run mark.

Defending a modest total, CSK showed immense resilience as the bowlers led by pacer Deepak Chahar and Dwayne Bravo handed the "Yellow Army" their sixth win of the season.

A win on Friday will take

them back to the top of the table. CSK will also have the option to choose young England all-rounder Sam Curran, who had been one of the breakout stars of last year's IPL, shining with both the bat and the ball.

# I respect team's decision to let Pant stay as captain: Iyer

PTI ■ DUBAI

Shreyas Iyer says he relished captaining the Delhi Capitals in the IPL but completely respects the team management's decision to let Rishabh Pant stay as leader of the pack till the end of the 2021 season.

Iyer had led the Capitals to the summit clash of the 2020 season but he missed the first phase of this year's season due to a shoulder injury and the management asked Pant to captain the side.

The 26-year-old returned to the side before IPL's resumption after the COVID-19 forced break but the Capitals chose not to change the leader again, keeping Pant in the captain's chair.

The young Mumbai batsman, who hit a blistering 47 in team's win on Wednesday night, said he understands team's policy and has no complaints.

"When I was given the captaincy, I was in a different frame of mind and my decision-making and temperament level was very good and I benefited from it in the last two years," Iyer said at the post-match press conference.

"This is part of the decision-making from the franchise or whatever decision they took, I respect the fact and Rishabh is leading the side well from the start of the season and they thought that he should be continued till the season end and I completely respect the decision," he added.

The 26-year-old said he continues to enjoy the pressure situation as he thrives in such circumstances.



"And no drastic change has come that my focus has increased in batting. When I was captain, I like to soak in the pressure, when there is pressure, there are more challenges and, in such situations, I perform, that is my mind-set."

"Even today (Wednesday) when I went in, there was pressure to win the game. The wicket was playing uneven, so the mind-set is the same that being a main part of the team, you have to finish the match and whenever I play, my mindset is that I play till the last ball and see to it that I make the team win."

The aggressive batsman it is a "really good feeling" to contribute in team's win in his first match post comeback.

"I wouldn't say that I'm satisfied because the hunger has just gone up and the appetite keeps on increasing every match you play, so yeah, not satisfied or not contained," he said after DC demolished Sunrisers Hyderabad by eight wickets.

## You have to be best on that day: Rohit on match against KKR



FIANS ■ ABU DHABI

"They (KKR) are a good opposition. They play cricket really well as a team and they will be obviously coming off from some confidence after their last win. So, it's not going to be a cakewalk for us. I know we've had a very handy record against them. But it's important we turn up really well on that particular day and do the job," added Sharma.

Sharma missed Mumbai's first match of the UAE leg of IPL 2021, the 20-run defeat to Chennai Super Kings in Dubai on Sunday. Chasing 157, Mumbai were hurt by lack of partnerships by their batsmen.

"When you are chasing a score like 157, you need to build those partnerships. Small partnerships and make sure that you are keeping yourself in the game as long as possible," observed Sharma.

The 34-year-old praised New Zealand pacer Adam Milne, who took two wickets for 21 runs in the match against Chennai. "Adam Milne, especially, is coming from a very good tournament in UK. He's a good bowler, bowls really fast. It's all about getting that confidence and he got the confidence in the first game. So, I just hope that he builds on it."

Sharma concluded by saying that the defending champions are capable of making a fightback in the tournament. "We just have to come back and comeback really strong and tick those small boxes. I think, if you look at the potential in this squad, we have got all bases covered."

## Army Red withdraws from quarterfinal due to Covid

FIANS ■ KOLKATA

The Durand Cup quarter-final match between Army Red and FC Bengaluru United (FCBU), scheduled for Friday at the Kalyani stadium, has been called off after a Army Red player tested positive for Covid-19 virus on Thursday.

As the player had come into contact with other teammates during Thursday's training session, the Army Red squad decided to withdraw from the tournament as a result and



FCBU received a bye into the semi-finals.

All decisions have been taken, keeping in mind the health and safety of players and officials primarily and the continuity and success of the tournament, the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) of 130th Durand Cup informed in a release on Thursday.

It is learned that one player of Army Red tested positive in the mandatory Rapid Antigen Test conducted in the morning. He was asymptomatic while the

other players have tested negative.

The organising committee has decided to go ahead with other matches as they are being held at other venues and there has not been any contact between the players since the last Covid test which had come negative for the said player.

Meanwhile, the LOC has also decided to shift the quarter-final match between FC Goa and Delhi FC from the Mohun Bagan ground to the Kalyani Stadium because of heavy rains in Kolkata.

## Odisha to host Men's Junior Hockey WC

FIANS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha will host the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) Men's Junior Hockey World Cup from November 24 to December 5 at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced on Thursday.

Addressing a special event organised here for this purpose, Patnaik said that recently the Hockey India had approached the state government to support it for the Men's Junior Hockey World Cup, which is to be held in two months' time.

"It is a short notice for making arrangements for such an event, especially during the pandemic period. But since the country's prestige is at stake, we readily agreed to support," he



said. Stating that the junior India team had won the last hockey World Cup, he said, "As a defending champion, I am sure that our team will emerge victorious again on home turf." The Chief Minister further said that hockey has a special place in the minds of the people of Odisha and hockey players from the state have led the country in many international tournaments.

## Paralympics bronze winner Sharad diagnosed with heart inflammation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tokyo Paralympics bronze medal-winning high jumper Sharad Kumar has been diagnosed with heart inflammation and has undergone a few more tests, reports of which are still awaited.

Kumar, who won a bronze in the T-42 high jump event in the Tokyo Paralympics on August 31, was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) after experiencing chest congestion last week.

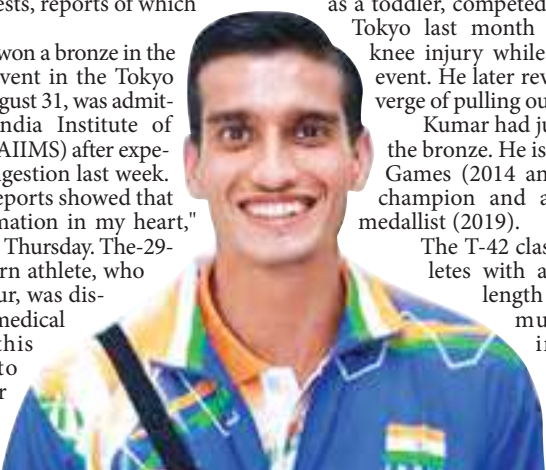
"The earlier reports showed that I have an inflammation in my heart," Kumar told PTI on Thursday. The 29-year-old Patna-born athlete, who stays in Chhatrapur, was discharged from the medical facility earlier this week but had to come back for some more tests.

"I have come

back here for more tests. Since I live just 10 minutes away, I had asked the hospital authorities to allow me to go home," he added.

Kumar, whose left leg was paralysed after he was administered a spurious polio vaccine as a toddler, competed in the T-42 final in Tokyo last month despite suffering a knee injury while training before his event. He later revealed he was on the verge of pulling out of the competition. Kumar had jumped 1.83m to win the bronze. He is a double Asian Para Games (2014 and 2018) high jump champion and also a world silver medallist (2019).

The T-42 classification is for athletes with a leg deficiency, leg length difference, impaired muscle power or impaired passive range of movement in the legs. The athletes compete in a standing position.



## HC asks Centre to conduct inquiry into allegations against TT body

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday stayed the Table Tennis Federation of India's mandate on compulsory attendance at the National Coaching Camp in order to be selected for any upcoming international event and asked the Centre to conduct an inquiry into



Manika Batra's complaint against the sports body. Justice Rekha Palli further said that if warranted, the Union Sports Ministry may look into the affairs of the TTFI as well. Justice Palli was hearing a plea by Batra who was left out of the Indian contingent for the upcoming Asian Table Tennis Championships and has alleged that the national coach Soumyadeep Roy "pressurized" her to "throw away" an Olympic qualifier match in favour of one of his personal trainees.

The judge said the rule mandating compulsory attendance at the national camp has been enforced "at a point when there was a complaint pending against the national coach" and the same "does not inspire confidence". "They are overreaching the court. I will issue a notice of contempt. I pass an order and you appoint a new person. This is shocking... I am expressing my anguish," the judge stated. "I am of the view that the operation of the rule is required to the stayed till the next date of hearing. Respondent no. 2 (Sports Ministry)...Is itself inclined to hold an inquiry into the serious allegations by the petitioner. There is no reason why respondent no 1 (federation) should continue with its rule," she ordered.

## La Liga: Asensio, Benzema star as Real beat Mallorca 6-1

FIANS ■ MADRID

Marco Asensio scored a hat-trick and Karim Benzema struck a brace of goals as Real Madrid soared on their goal-scoring prowess to thrash Mallorca 6-1 and rose to the top of the table in the Spanish La Liga.

Asensio scored in the 24th, 29th, and 55th minute while Benzema struck in the third and 78th minute as Real Madrid produced another goal-fest for the Santiago Bernabeu faithful. Isco scored the sixth goal in the 82nd minute while Lee Kang-In got the

lone goal for Mallorca in the 25th minute.

The game was a lively affair and played at a high intensity throughout. The Real got off to an electrifying start when Benzema latched onto a missed controlled ball by Gaya and fired it past goalkeeper Manolo Reina to net his seventh goal of the league campaign after with just three minutes on the clock. In the 7th minute, the hosts almost doubled their lead when Marco Asensio's in-swinging corner kick was cleared off the line by the defence.

The visiting goalkeeper Reina was once again beaten in the 229th minute. Rodrygo picked up the ball inside the box with his back to goal, turned, and crossed. The ball deflected off both Valjent and Reina falling kindly for Asensio who slammed in the rebound for his first goal of the evening.

Mallorca's response was immediate, as Lee Kang-In produced a fine piece of individual skills before curling the ball superbly past Thibaut Courtois.

Real took control after Mallorca reduced the margin.



The game was an end-to-end affair, Benzema linked up with Asensio after 29 minutes, his superb control and finish saw him dispatch the ball expertly past

Reina. The Balearic midfielder doubled his tally and could have made it three seven minutes later. Vinicius Jr. delivered to the far post, Benzema got on the end of it and headed towards the penalty spot where Valjent was on hand to clear Asensio's effort off the line as the team went for half-time with Real leading 3-1.

The intensity did not let up after the break and Real Madrid came close to the fourth goal on two separate occasions. Firstly, Benzema played the ball into the path of Vinicius Jr but his spectacular left-footed cut-back to his

marker in the 48th minute was kept out by Reina. Rodrygo then picked up the ball in his own half, raced past Battaglia, and delivered a perfect ball for Benzema to head home. However, the goal was ruled out by the referee after he spotted a foul by the striker.

Real could not be denied for long and the Los Blancos' fourth goal came in the 55th minute courtesy of a superb effort by Asensio, who received the ball on the edge of the area before firing in a left-footed shot that Reina could do nothing about.

## Natarajan's positive COVID-19 test did not impact game: Bayliss

PTI ■ DUBAI

Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Trevor Bayliss has asserted that their pacer T Natarajan's positive COVID-19 result did not impact their performance against Delhi Capitals on Wednesday since all the players are used to last-minute setbacks.

The game went ahead after other members of SRH squad tested negative but Delhi Capitals cruised to an eight-wicket win with 13 balls to spare.

"I don't think that would have



affected the result of the match. They played way too well for us tonight. It was a little bit of an upset," Bayliss said at the post-match press conference.

"Natarajan was going to play, but these guys are professional players. Every now and then, there's an injury just before play and you have got to make a late replacement. So, I am sure all of the players are, in a way, used to that. But we hope Nattu (Natarajan) gets over it pretty quickly and we can move on," added Bayliss.

The Sunrisers Hyderabad coach said Delhi Capitals' world-class tall pacers used the wicket pretty well and deserve the credit for scripting their team's victory.

"Give Delhi the credit. They bowled particularly well. They have got some world-class bowlers and upfront some world-class very fast bowlers, so they had a good day. We didn't have such a good day and that's the game of cricket,"

"Their bowlers upfront bowled exceedingly well. A lot of pace and used the wicket well with cutters, with the ball just holding in the wicket little bit and jumping up a little-bit, those tall fast bowlers took full advantage of it."

## Women's European Championship cash doubles, vast gender gulf

AP ■ NYON

UEFA has doubled prize money for the Women's European Championship while maintaining vast disparities with the cash distributed for men's tournaments. The 16 teams in the women's competition next year will share 16 million euros (\$19 million), while 4.5 million euros (\$5 million) will go to clubs who release their players. The 24 teams at the men's European

Championship shared 371 million euros (\$435 million) in UEFA prize money this year, but clubs were also guaranteed at least 200 million euros (\$235 million) for the release of players. UEFA said it was "ensuring that more money than ever before is distributed across the women's game."

The Women's European Championship is being hosted by England next July after being delayed by a year due to the pandemic.



# PRAGYA OPENS UP ABOUT HER LOOK IN *AKHANDA*

**K**anche fame Pragya Jaiswal is pairing up with actor Balakrishna for the first time and the actress' excitement for the project is so much that she cannot stop thinking about the film and her role.

In *Akhanda*, directed by Boyapati Srinu, the actress dons a look that audiences haven't seen before.

It is learnt that the director meticulously designed her character and look.

About her look and her character, the actress shares, "My look in the film is very different. The director, Boyapati sir, went through my looks from every single previous film of mine, and he made sure that I did something different and unique in this film while sticking to the character that I am playing. So that was a huge challenge for him but he wanted to give a complete changeover and freshness to my character."

Pragya says he had worked very hard and gone into every single detail

to design this look for her and that she is really looking forward to the film's release.

She adds, "I can't wait for the audience to see our labour of love. It's Boyapati sir's film, so you know it's going to be a theatre movie and there is going to be a lot of action, drama and fun. It's a super exciting story."

The track *Adiga Adiga* from the film released recently and Pragya is completely in love with her look and the song.

"I am excited that the first song from my film has finally released. *Adiga Adiga* is my favourite song, which I think is a very beautiful song. The voices of singers SP Charan and Shruti are the sweetest and do complete justice. The song has been shot beautifully and I think I look my most beautiful self in this," she says. While the release date of *Akhanda* has not been announced, it is inclined to be a theatrical one.



**T**he film *Ram vs. Ravan*, starring Solomon Judson, Raj Bala,

Manochitra, and Ananya Mani in lead roles, went on floors on Thursday. Actor Saptagiri will be seen playing a key role in this film that has K Shukran is helming the project. The film is being bankrolled by Dr. AS Judson under the

## Ram vs Ravan goes on floors

banner of Shana Productions. The opening ceremony of the film was held at Ramanaidu Studios, Hyderabad. Director Maruti, fight masters

Ram Laxman, and producer Sindhu Puvvu Krishnareddy were present at the pooja ceremony and gave the team their best wishes.

On the occasion, director K Shukran, shared, "The story of the film is set in a village and shows how two young men fought for the good of the village. Entertainment accompanies the story along with the action."

Other technical crew of the film include: cinematography by Rajamathi, music by Vikas Badisha, stunts by Ram Laxman, and BJ Sridhar.



## Jr NTR pays shells out Rs 17 lakh for car number



**W**e know how Junior NTR adores his swanky Lamborghini Urus Graphite Capsule car. We now hear that the actor bought a fancy registration number '9999' by spending a whopping Rs 17 lakh during an auction for his car at the Regional Transport Authority (RTA), Khairatabad. According to officials, the actor bid for the number TS09 FS 9999. We're told that the transport authority earned over Rs 45 lakhs in the bidding of the fancy numbers on Wednesday, with NTR alone contributing Rs 17 lakh to this sum.

## VISHNU ANNOUNCES HIS PANEL FOR MAA ELECTIONS

**T**he controversial MAA elections is the news of the hour for Tollywood artistes. While actor Prakash Raj

announced his panel some-time back, on Thursday, actor Vishnu Manchu announced his panel for the upcoming elections to Movie Artists Association (MAA), the apex body of Tollywood.

"For my MAA, our privilege and honour," tweeted the actor while posting the names of his panel members who will be contesting for various posts.

Vishnu will take on well-known actor Prakash Raj for the post of president in the elections scheduled to be held on October 10.

The elections are likely to see a triangular contest as character artiste C.V.L. Narasimha Rao has also announced his plans to contest. He is yet to announce his panel.

From Vishnu's panel, actor Raghu Babu will be contesting for general secretary, veteran actor and former minister Babu Mohan for executive vice-president, actor-producer Madhala Ravi and comedian Prithviraj Bali Reddy for vice-presidents, actor Siva Balaji for the post of treasurer, and character artist Karate Kalyani and comedian Gautham Raju for joint secretary.

Vishnu also named 18 candidates for the posts of executive members: Archana (Veda),

Ashok Kumar, Geeta Singh, Harinath Babu, Jayavani, Malakpeta Shailaja, Manik, Poojitha, Rajeshwari Reddy, Rekha, Sampurnesh Babu, Shashank, Sivannarayana, Swapna Madhu, Vishnu Bopanna and M. R. C. Vadlapatla.

Prakash Raj has already announced his panel and is actively campaigning. He also received support from actors Jeevitha Rajasekhar and Hema, who dropped their plans to contest against him and joined his panel.

Jeevitha will be contesting for the post of general secretary while Hema is in the race for vice-president's post.

Actor Meka Srikanth is contesting for the post of executive vice-president, Banerjee for vice-president's post, while actors Uttej and Anitha Chowdary are the candidates for the post of joint secretaries, senior character artiste Nagineedu is in the race for the treasurer's post.

"I came here to serve the film industry. I want to serve my fellow artistes and industry people," Prakash Raj had said while announcing his panel.

Tollywood sources say Prakash Raj has considerably bright chances of winning the election as MAA president. He enjoys the backing of Megastar Chiranjeevi.

In 2019, actor-producer Naresh was elected as MAA president, defeating Shivaji Raja, who was contesting for a second consecutive term.

On Naresh's panel, Jeevitha Rajasekhar was elected as general secretary while her husband actor Rajasekhar was elected as executive vice-president.



## Shalini can't keep calm about Bollywood debut

**A**rjun Reddy actress Shalini Pandey, who is all set to make her Bollywood debut in the Ranveer Singh starrer *Jayeshbhai Jordaar*, says she has been looking forward to the film's release for more than a year now. Shalini, who turned a year older on Thursday, said: "I've been crazily looking forward to the release for more than a year now and I can't wait for audiences to see the film. I know it's a good film and I also know it's a very special film which we made with so much love and dedication."

For Shalini, the experience of working in this film has been emotional as it is her first Hindi film debut. "I can't wait for the film to release because I know people are going to love the film and the characters. Also, I can't wait for theatres to open, because I want people to go to theatres, even I want to go

back to theatres and watch the film there on the big screen as this film has its own journey, and I want people to experience it as soon as possible. I literally can't wait, it's so special and I get excited every time when I think about the film releasing," an elated Shalini shared.

The talented actress has landed a three-film contract from Aditya Chopra, who is mentoring her to be an actress.

She said, "Working with YRF with a three-film contract is a big deal, it's a big launchpad for sure. It is a dream come true, I've grown up watching Yash Raj Films, and I always wanted to be a YRF heroine."

The actress says her parents are happy because they have been watching a lot of movies. "I couldn't have imagined it, to be very honest, it happened all of a sudden, with *Jayeshbhai*, and it has started with a very special film," she said.



## Ram Charan celebrates 43 years OF CHIRANJEEVI'S ACTING



**A**ctor Ram Charan on Thursday celebrated 43 years of acting career of his father Megastar

Chiranjeevi with a photo on social media. Sharing a photo collage of Chiranjeevi from his first release *Punadhiraalu* and *Acharya*, he wrote, "43 years and still counting! My Appa @KChiruTweets." Chiranjeevi started his acting career with *Punadhiraalu* in 1978. However, his *Pranam Khareedu* released first on September 22, 1978 in theatres.

In his four decades of cinematic journey, Chiranjeevi has starred in more than 150 movies and is continuing to rule the box office as Megastar. Remembering his acting

debut, Chiranjeevi tweeted: "While 22 August is my birthday, September 22 is my birthday as an actor. It is the day the art form took birth in me and introduced me as an actor with the blessings of you all. An unforgettable day of mine. Feel humbled & grateful for the invaluable of lakhs of my bros & sisters made this day possible (sic)."

Chiranjeevi completed the 150th mark in his movies with *Khaidi No.150* and currently has a bunch of films in the pipeline. While his *Acharya* is in the last leg of its production, he commenced the second schedule of the *Godfather* movie in Ooty on Wednesday.

Chiranjeevi also has *Bholaa Shankar* and an untitled project with director Bobby in the works.