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HPC's record loss of Rs 10,196 cr on petrol, diesel price freeze



'CAT achieved 91% disposal rate in 5 years, better UPA record'



43 Commonwealth countries, 19 bodies join hands

In brief

27 get life term for killing 4 from Scheduled Caste people

A Special Court for trial of cases under SC/ST (POA) Act has awarded life sentence to 27 people for killing 4 SC men at Kachanatham village in the district over a dispute in 2018 on not providing temple honour to caste Hindus. Totally, 33 people were involved in the crime and 29 of them were adults and 4 juveniles in conflict with law. The final case was filed before the fast track court against the 29. Proceedings against the juveniles were pending before the Juvenile Justice Board, Sivaganga. Two had died during the trial which commenced on November 6, 2019. The trial concluded on July 7 this year. Today, the Special Court found the 27 guilty under various sections of the IPC and SC/ST Act.

US singer Mary Millben to attend Independence Day celebrations in India

African American singer Mary Milben, known for her moving rendition of Om Jai Jagadish Hare' and Jana Gana Mana', is travelling to India to attend and perform at the celebrations related to the country's 75th anniversary of Independence. Following in the footsteps of Dr Martin Luther King Jr and his pilgrimage to India in 1959, I am honoured to represent the United States as a cultural ambassador for the 75th Anniversary celebration of India's Independence. Millben said in a statement ahead of her trip at the invitation of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

Gukesh sizzles as India 'B' shocks USA in Olympiad

Teenaged Grandmaster D Gukesh shocked world number 5 Fabiano Caruana as India 'B' pulled off a superb 3-1 win over number 2 seeds USA in the eighth round of the Open section of the 44th Chess Olympiad here on Saturday. Gukesh is enjoying a purple patch and his victory over Caruana was his eighth on the trot in the tournament and helped improve his live ratings. He moved up to second behind the legendary Viswanathan Anand in live ratings. His splendid run has been the key behind the success of the India 'B' team, seen by many as the darkhorse of the championship.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Aug 07 02:11 AM to Aug 07 11:51 PM
Dashami: Aug 07 11:51 PM to Aug 08 09:00 PM
Ekdashi:

Nakshatram: Aug 06 05:51 PM to Aug 07 04:30 PM
Anuradha:

Jyeshtha: Aug 07 04:30 PM to Aug 08 02:37 PM

Rahukalam: 5:07 PM to 6:43 PM

Yamagandam: 12:21 PM to 1:57 PM

Varjyam: 09:40 PM to 11:08 PM

Gulika: 3:32 PM to 5:07 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorms
Temp: 26°C
Humidity: 93%
Sunrise: 5:57 AM
Sunset: 6:47 PM

Updated: AUGUST 6, 2022 5:00 PM

OBTUSE ANGLE



'NITI Aayog a Bhajana Mandali'

CM KCR boycotts meeting, writes open letter to PM Modi

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

KCR has written an open letter to Prime Minister Modi giving reasons for boycotting the 7th Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog scheduled for Sunday. "I do not find it useful to attend the 7th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog scheduled for August 7, 2022, and I am staying away from it as a mark of protest against the Central policy to discriminate against states and not treating them as equal partners in our effort to make India a strong and developed country," KCR said. "NITI Aayog has become a namesake institution. It has become a Bhajana Mandali for a few meetings of the PM and has become a joke. NITI Aayog meetings are all about eating peanuts, talking for four minutes and sitting for four hours. So if I protest at least the country will discuss it. The PM might be angry with me, but this is democracy and it's my right to protest. There is no use in attending the meeting," KCR said. "After seven years of functioning,

it is now clear that this explicit objective was observed more in the breach. The Centre's actions show that the initiative has gone astray as states are not included as equal partners in the national development agenda. States have not been co-opted in preparing the agenda of NITI Aayog meetings," KCR added. "I find the Centre micro-managing schemes, giving the go-by to state-specific needs which are best left to individual states.

KCR ASKS 'FRIEND MODI' TO 'CHANGE HIS ATTITUDE'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said that Prime Minister Modi is his friend but he has to change his attitude. During a press meet on Saturday KCR said, "Modi is my friend. I don't have any personal animosity. But for the sake of the people, we will raise our voices. As long as I am alive, I will fight. If needed, I will take up a strong movement across the country. This is my



warning to the PM if he goes against the people and takes decisions against them." "When the 2G spectrum came the BJP claimed that it was a big scam. Now the 5G spectrum auction came to Rs 1.2 lakh crore. What will you say now?" the CM said. Stating that the Modi government is dictatorial KCR said, "Please change your policies.

"I do not find it useful to attend the 7th Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog scheduled for August 7, 2022, and I am staying away from it as a mark of protest against the Central policy to discriminate against states and not treating them as equal partners in our effort to make India a strong and developed country,"

Allegations incorrect: NITI Aayog

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hours after KCR's press meet, NITI Aayog responded stating that despite requests by NITI Aayog for a meeting the Chief Minister did not respond. In a statement, NITI Aayog said

that the allegation of the CM that states were not co-opted in preparing the agenda is wrong. The statement said, "NITI Aayog was set up as an institution to promote cooperative federalism based on the assumption that strong states make a strong nation. Many meas-

ures have been put in place to work closely with states. Last year alone around 30 meetings were held with Chief Ministers by the Vice Chairman/ Members of NITI Aayog.

Irrelevant political reply

TS govt on NITI response

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After the immediate response of NITI Aayog regarding KCR's protest, the TRS said that NITI Aayog was engaging in politics. Finance Minister Harish Rao said that NITI Aayog recommended to the Centre to give a credit of Rs 24,000 crore to Telangana for Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya. KCR spoke about the Union Government dishonouring NITI Aayog recommendations. "Unfortunately NITI Aayog could not get Telangana what it recommended but it chose to give an irrelevant political reply," he said. State Planning Commission Vice



Chairman Boinapally Vinod Kumar demanded NITI Aayog to give straight, clear answers. Vinod Kumar asked questions about NITI Aayog's response to the press conference held by Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao on Saturday. He said, "For Mission Bhagiratha Rs 19,250 crore, and Mission Kakatiya Rs 5,000 crore and a total of Rs 24,25,000 crore was recommended by NITI Aayog to the Central Government about five years ago, but the Centre has not released a single paisa to the state, is this not true.?" Vinod Kumar demanded that NITI Aayog gives a straightforward answer.

TSPICCC will be a panopticon over Hyderabad, warn activists

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City civil rights activists have voiced concerns over the new Telangana State Police Integrated Command and Control Centre (TSPICCC). They said that the facility will prove to be a panopticon (a structure on the premises of jails which enables jailers to see what each prisoner is doing without the inmates seeing them), not just for the people of Hyderabad but for Telangana as a whole. Hyderabad's Command and Control Centre can be used for constant monitoring of the public and the ones being observed will never know that they are being watched. "Policing is done with warrants,



but these days neither the court nor the people ask for warrants. These are the powers which the Hyderabad City Police have assumed without any due process. Now they are assuming the same kind of power for surveillance. The police say that

the command and control centre will be used for surveillance with around six lakh cameras in the city and eight lakh cameras in the state. The data from the cameras will be processed using algorithms. The problem here is that they can also access the CCTV cameras which have been installed in business houses and apartments. The police have also been conducting facial recognition checks on people. Today it is with their handheld camera, tomorrow it will be done with drone cameras. This will not harm the people in power but will harm commoners," said Srinivas Kodali, a researcher from Hyderabad.

Google launches 'India Ki Udaan' to mark 75 years of Independence

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Which party will gain from the developments in the Telangana unit of the Congress? The raids conducted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are bringing opposition parties closer. Till Friday, the top leaders of both the Congress and the TRS had ruled out an alliance between the two. But developments in the state and at the national level indicate that one cannot rule out an alliance between the TRS and the Congress during the next Assembly elections. Political circles are now discussing which party will gain in case the TRS and the Congress have an alliance.



FRIENDS AGAIN?

TDP supremo meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday before the national committee meeting on the 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav'. The Prime Minister had a six-minute discussion with Naidu on the occasion.

SC/ST Act misused to harass political opponents: Pawan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan alleged that the AP government is misusing the SC/ST Atrocities (Prevention) Act to harass political opponents and announced that the JSP would take the issue to the HRC. In a video message on Saturday, Pawan Kalyan said that a boy Jaswant at Veppanapalli in the Puthalapattu constituency questioned the local YSRCP MLA during the 'Gadapa GadapaKu' programme about why he was not given free reimbursement. The police booked the boy under the SC/ST Act.



Dhankhar elected 14th Vice President of India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Democratic Alliance candidate Jagdeep Dhankhar was elected as the 14th Vice President of India on Saturday as he defeated the Opposition's candidate Margaret Alva. Dhankhar, a former governor of West Bengal, secured 528 votes against Alva's 182. His victory margin was the highest since 1997. Wishes poured in from various quarters after the election result was announced with President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Alva congratulating Dhankhar. The nation will benefit from Dhankhar's long and rich experience in public life, the president tweeted. Dhankhar, 71, will take oath as the vice president on August 11, a day after incumbent M Venkaiah Naidu's tenure ends. He will be the second vice pres-

ident from Rajasthan after Bhairon Singh Shekhawat who held the office between 2002 and 2007. With Dhankhar's election, the presiding officers of both Houses of Parliament will be from Rajasthan. The vice president is the chairperson of Rajya Sabha. Currently, Om Birla who was elected to Lok Sabha from Rajasthan's Kota is the Lok Sabha speaker.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Vice President-elect Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday evening to congratulate him on his win. JP president J P Nadda also met Dhankhar at the residence of Union minister Pralhad Joshi here. The meetings came soon after Dhankhar was declared winner in the vice presidential election with 528 votes in his favour against 182 bagged by joint opposition candidate Margaret Alva.

Three films on Razakars in pipeline

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At least three movies are in the pipeline on Razakars, the paramilitary volunteer force of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) party in Nizam's Hyderabad. What started as a passing remark by Sanjay that the film 'Razakar Files' will be made is being realised. Sources said that three films with the same storyline are in the pipeline and one is by Rajya

Sabha MP Vijayendra Prasad, the father of film director S.S. Rajamouli. The producer of 'Kashmir Files', Abhishek Agarwal, is likely to make a movie on the atrocities committed by Razakars. Sources said that another film is being made by a prominent BJP leader. Sources said that recently during a meeting with Sanjay and Vijayendra Prasad, a discussion on making 'Razakar Files' came up. BJP sources said that the atroc-

ities unleashed by the Razakars were more horrifying than the ones depicted in 'Kashmir Files.' They said that whenever the movies are released it will be promoted like 'Kashmir Files' with special screening and other additional benefits. In April, the BJP State President had said that he will make the movie 'Razakar Files' to expose KCR and his son KTR.



IF RESIGNATION IS NOT ACCEPTED Rajagopal to stage sit-in before Speaker's house

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy said that he will stage a sit-in before Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy's house in case he refuses to accept his resignation. He said that he will submit his resignation from his MLA post on August 8.

Speaking to the media after meeting Nadda on Saturday in New Delhi along with BJP National Executive Committee member Vivek Venkata Swamy, Rajagopal said that many leaders who were insulted by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and the Congress are ready to join the BJP.

He said that the TRS and the Congress would be washed away if early elections are

held in the state.

Rajagopal said that TPCC President Revanth Reddy has been speaking against the Komatireddy brothers as his dream to become the Chief Minister of TS would not be fulfilled due to the Komatireddy brothers.

"My brother Venkat will take the right decision at an appropriate time.

Revanth Reddy CM means... Chandrababu Muddubidda (CM)," he said. Reacting to the speech delivered by Revanth at the Chanduru meeting held on Friday night, Rajagopal said that nobody reacted when 12 Congress MLAs joined the TRS and no disciplinary action was taken against them. "I extended my cooperation to the CLP leader as a Congress MLA.

Centre must help textile & handloom sector: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao sought Central support for the state's textile and handloom sector.

KTR sent a letter to Union Minister of Textiles Piyush Goyal on the steps the Centre has to take to help the textile sector.

KTR said that the Centre has not done anything for the textile and handloom sector of Telangana.

Accusing the Centre of not extending any help to the textile industry, KTR said the Modi government's disdain for the textile sector, which provides employment to the largest number of people in the country after agriculture, is

KTR said that the Centre has not done anything for the textile and handloom sector of Telangana.



unfortunate.

The Centre has not provided any additional financial assistance to the state's textile and handloom workers. Instead of giving false statements about the Centre's help to the Telangana Textile and Handloom sector, the Prime Minister should sincerely try to help the state's weavers, KTR added. KTR said the textile sector is in the doldrums due to

the lopsided policies of the BJP-led Union Government.

In his letter, KTR included the details regarding the support the state is seeking from the Centre for helping the textile and handloom sector.

Among the demands put forth by KTR in his letter to the Union Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal are cutting the GST on textiles, scrapping all taxes on handloom products, funding

the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park, establishing a Handloom Export Promotion Council and the National Textile Research Institute in Hyderabad, setting up the Institute of Handloom Technology, providing funds for upgrading power looms, establishing 15 block-level handloom clusters and a mega power loom cluster in Sircilla.

"The TRS government has always given utmost importance to the weaving community and has taken many proactive measures to strengthen the sector. However, the Centre's apathy towards the textile and handloom sector is weakening it. The BJP government imposed GST on handloom products," KTR said.

KCR seeing himself as Telangana's 'Nizam': BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has started seeing himself as a "Nizam" of his state who has no interest in solving its people's problems, the BJP alleged on Saturday, attacking the TRS leader for his boycott of a NITI Aayog meeting.

Union minister Piyush Goyal termed as "unfortunate" Rao's decision not to attend the Sunday meeting and alleged that it had exposed his political thought of having no interest in the country's and the state's development agenda.

Hitting out at Rao, Goyal said he considers himself "so big" that he does not have any interest in such an important meeting related to Prime Minister Modi's agenda of making the country

and states prosperous.

The TRS leader, he noted, had also not attended a meeting of the prime minister with chief ministers on the COVID-19 situation and did not receive Modi during his visits to Telangana in breach of protocol.

The BJP leader asked him to reconsider his decision and asserted that the government under Modi is committed towards the Centre and states working together for the country's development.

He noted that the Telangana government failed to withdraw the amount allocated to it by the Jal Shakti ministry.

The Niti Aayog has said Rs 3982 crore was allocated to the state in the last four years under the Jal Jeevan Mission, but it chose to draw only Rs 200 crore.

Venkatreddy may also join BJP, says Damodar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lashing out at the Komatireddy brothers, TPCC Senior Vice-President R. Damodar Reddy said that elder brother Komatireddy Venkat Reddy may also join the BJP. He said his doubts arose from the fact that both the brothers had met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the same day. Speaking to the media on Saturday, Damodar said that the Congress had given many opportunities to the Komatireddy family and they had held many posts in the party. He asked Komatireddy Venkat to explain why he had met Amit Shah. He said the Congress respects everyone but Venkat should not discriminate

between seniors and juniors and must go along with all. Damodar said the Komatireddy brothers speak one word in the morning and another word at night. He said that Praja

Shanthi Party President AK Paul of Andhra Pradesh and Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy of Telangana were the same and that they themselves don't know what they speak.

ADDANKI DAYAKAR APOLOGISES

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC official spokesperson Addanki Dayakar has apologised to TPCC Star Campaigner Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy. Addanki Dayakar said that he did not use abusive words intentionally against Venkat.

"However, I am apologising so that the party does not

get affected. The words are part of general usage. However, there were objections to using such words. So I am withdrawing my words," he said.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Addanki Dayakar said that he had received a show-cause notice regarding the language he had used against Venkat.

Focus on testing, vaccination

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a rise in coronavirus infections in some parts of the country, the central government has asked Delhi and six states to ensure adequate testing, promote Covid-appropriate behaviour and increase the pace of vaccination to contain the surge. In a letter to Delhi, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said upcoming festivals and mass congregations in different parts of the country may potentially facilitate transmission of infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

It is critical to ensure adequate testing is undertaken in all the districts of the state while maintaining the recommended share of RT-PCR and antigen tests. The state must also closely monitor districts reporting higher cases, positiv-

ity rates and clusters to prevent further spread of infection and effective case management, he stressed in the letter dated August 5. In his letter to Delhi, Bhushan said the national capital has been reporting high average daily new cases (811 cases) for the past month with a high of 2,202 new cases reported on August 5. Delhi has contributed 8.2 per cent of India's weekly new cases in the week ending August 5 and has also recorded 1.86 times increase in average daily new cases from 802 in the week ending July 29 to 1,492 in the week ending August 5. An increase in the weekly positivity rate was also reported in Delhi -- from 5.90 per cent in the week ending July 29 to 9.86 per cent in the week ending August 5. Bhushan said Kerala reported 2,347 average cases per day in the past month and Maharashtra 2,135 cases. He also cited district-wise spread of infection.

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR'S JOURNEY

From a village to Uparashtrapati Bhavan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Once a "reluctant politician", Jagdeep Dhankhar's reemergence in the political scene in 2019 as West Bengal governor surprised many, so has his rise to the office of the Vice President of India.

Dhankhar, 71, was declared elected as the Vice President on Saturday after he bagged 528 votes against his rival candidate Margaret Alva's 182.

A man of many interests, his long legal career at the Rajasthan High Court and the Supreme Court and a brief stint as the junior parliamentary affairs minister at the Centre will come in handy as he presides over the Rajya Sabha as its Chairman.

Dhankhar, who had been associated with the Janata Dal and the Congress, joined the BJP only in 2008 after a hiatus of nearly a decade.

'Govt website promoting Sabharwal's foundation'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Government of Telangana website on handlooms and textiles has links to Smitam Hitam foundation. A foundation run in the name of IAS officer Smita Sabharwal, Chief Minister's Secretary.

The website <http://hand-text.telangana.gov.in/Default.aspx> gives links to social media handles of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. All of them are redirected to the pages of SmitamHitam organisation's twitter, Facebook and Instagram handles.

BJP twitter incharge Sagar Goud pointed, "This is the level of work the Information Technology Minister KTR does in Telangana.

Allegations incorrect...

Continued from page 1

These meetings resolved a number of issues pertaining to states with Central Ministries and paved the way for greater collaboration between NITI Aayog and states." A delegation led by the Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog met the Chief Minister in Hyderabad on January 21, 2021, to discuss the state's development issues.

"The Government of India through all its Ministries as well as the office of Prime Minister, have been interacting with States/ UTs on all issues of national importance. Specifically, in preparation for the August 7, 2022, Governing Council meeting, detailed consultations were held between the Centre and all States, including Telangana, resulting in the first national Chief Secretaries Conference held in Dharmashala in June 2022. The conference was the culmination

of six-month long deliberations in which all States/ UTs including the TS Chief Secretary participated," NITI said. Referring to the water sector in the last four years, the Centre had allocated Rs 3,982 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission for Telangana. However, the state used only Rs 200 crore. In addition, Rs 1,195 crore was released to Telangana under PMKSY-AIBP-CADWM from 2014-2015 to 2021-2022. "The Centre has been consistently supporting states in financial matters including for flagship schemes/ programmes of national importance. The overall allocation under Centrally Sponsored Schemes increased from Rs 2,03,740 crore in 2015-16 to Rs 4,42,781 crore in 2022-23, that is, more than double during this period, in addition to the substantial hike in awards as per the Fourteenth Finance Commission from 32 per cent to 42 per cent.

'NITI Aayog a Bhajana...

Continued from page 1

It is not just in the case of such schemes, but the Centre has also turned a Nelson's eye even regarding the recommendations of NITI Aayog itself," KCR said in his letter.

The CM recalled that in 2016, NITI Aayog had recommended a grant of Rs 5,000 crore for Mission Kakatiya to restore minor irrigation tanks in Telangana. Another recommendation of NITI Aayog was to provide Central assistance of Rs 19,205 crore (out of the total project cost of Rs 42,850 crore) for Mission Bhagiratha, a pioneering scheme in the country, which has been completed in Telangana, to provide drinking water to every household in the State.

"The Centre had not only ignored these recommendations but did not release any

money for the schemes. The Centre had unabashedly issued statements taking credit for the achievements of Telangana by claiming that Telangana is one of the States which provides drinking water to every household under the Jal Jeevan Mission, a Central scheme," KCR said.

KCR's letter was not limited to Centre-state relations. He also slammed the Modi gov-

ernment on the economy, cess, GST, and bulldozers.

"The irresponsible statements of some leaders in high positions on the use of bulldozers, encounter killings, 80:20 ratios and references with religious undertones are disruptive communal harmony and the social fabric of the nation, besides inviting international criticism. But the Centre did not take any action to control

the situation," KCR said.

KCR cited the one-sided decision to bring new farm laws which were repealed after a year-long protest by farmers and said that federalism is being deliberately ignored.

He said that India can develop only when states develop. Strong and economically vibrant states alone can make India a strong country, he added.

KCR ASKS 'FRIEND MODI' TO 'CHANGE HIS ATTITUDE'

Continued from page 1

Remove the GST on milk products, beedis, handlooms and textiles." He said that except air there is GST on everything in this country including Garba. "Modi is saying stop freebies. What is a freebie? Is giving pensions a freebie? Are Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bhima freebies? Why are you giving NPA, let the Centre explain. The NPAs in 2004-05 amounted to Rs 1.90 lakh

crore but now it is Rs 27 lakh crore. It's danda to take trillions as commission. They gave Rs 12 lakh crore so far. It is a scam. The Centre should answer. The net result of NITI and Modi brain is the NPA increasing 10 fold. Is this development?" KCR asked. KCR said that in the last financial year TS spent Rs 1.90 lakh crore, but the Centre did not give anything. Through Centrally sponsored schemes only Rs 5,000 crore was given to the state.

Cong may end up as the big...

Continued from page 1

The Congress leadership wants to prevent the BJP from retaining power at the Centre in the next LS general elections. The TRS aim is also the same. If the BJP comes to power in Telangana before the next LS elections the TRS and the Congress will face a crisis.

If the BJP comes to power in Telangana, it will be an advantage for it in the LS general elections. The main aim of the

TRS and the Congress is to prevent the BJP from coming to power in Telangana to avoid this. So if the Congress high command decides to have an alliance with the TRS it will not be a surprise. But the Congress leaders in Telangana who are fighting the TRS will not agree to an alliance with the TRS.

If the Congress high command decides to go for an alliance with the TRS, many Congress leaders in TS may join the BJP. Moreover, if the TRS

and the Congress have an alliance anti-incumbency votes may go to the BJP. It will improve the BJP's chances of coming to power. The TRS leadership may not have any objection to having an alliance with the Congress if the Congress leadership comes forward for it. It is not an easy task for the TRS to retain power like in the past. The TRS may go for an alliance with the Congress to retain power and to prevent the BJP from coming to power.

KCR asks CS to file plea in SC on journalists' house sites

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has directed the Chief Secretary to file a petition in the Supreme Court seeking an early hearing in the journalists' housing sites case. He asked officials to convey the government's viewpoint that any new policy decision on this

matter would be implemented with prospective effect only.

The government in its plea to the SC will urge the delinking of the present case from the national policy guidelines suggested by the Attorney General.

KCR was sympathetic to journalists' problems and reiterated his assurance to resolve them.

TSPICCC will be a panopticon over...

Continued from page 1

It looks like fancy process today but tomorrow when there is a change in the government it will become easy for the new government to access the data and violate citizens' fundamental rights, he added.

SQ Masood, a social activist based in Hyderabad, said that in April 2021 when he was returning home from the

Chatta Bazaar area of the Old City, some policemen stopped him and instead of asking him to show his driver's license and other documents, the policemen took his photograph.

After this, he had sent a legal notice to the Hyderabad Police Commissioner to which there was no response. In December 2021 Masood filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Telangana High Court

challenging the use of facial recognition technology by the Hyderabad City Police. The matter is pending and will probably come to the bench on August 29.

"This needs to be raised in public for as the police are still carrying out such operations in some areas of the city, but they will never do the same in localities like Jubilee Hills or Banjara Hills," he added.

SC/ST Act misused to harass political...

Continued from page 1

When 9 JSP activists extended their support to Jaswan they were also booked under the SC/ST Act. The Putalapattu Judge also contended that cases were registered against them under the SC/ST Act in an unjust manner and the judge freed them. However, the police were trying to register cases again

invoking more stringent sections, which he flayed. People have the right of questioning the people's representatives and they should clarify, he stated. "I appeal to the leaders of Chittoor to extend support to those against whom the SC/ST Atrocities cases were registered unjustly", Pawan Kalyan said. "The SC/ST atrocities Act is being misused as they like. The SC/ST Act is there to

protect the SCs and STs but not to harass the people of other castes. An in-depth study is needed in this regard and the JSP will do it. The JSP will take the misuse of SC/ST Atrocities Act to the notice of Human Rights Council", Pawan Kalyan made clear.

Misusing the SC/ST Atrocities Act is against the ideology of Ambedkar, he added.

Three films...

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Addressing a public meeting at Narayanpet during his Praja Sangrama Yatra, the Karimnagar MP had said, "Instead of the film 'Adipurush' on Lord Rama, should we make movies on the Kalvakuntla scion? Next 'Razakar Files' will be made to expose KCR and KTR."



Pensions for dialysis patients ‘Orphans are State children’

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao said that Telangana is the only State which is giving pensions to filariasis patients and single women

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday said that Telangana government has decided to give Aasara pensions specially to dialysis patients.

He also said that more facilities are being provided to dialysis patients as per the recommendation of the State Health Minister. He said, 'We are already giving them bus passes, we are providing free dialysis services and recently we have also increased the number of dialysis centres. He said that it has come to their attention that there are 10,000-12,000 dialysis patients in the State and it has been decided to give them new 'Aasara' cards along with the services pro-



Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao addressing a media conference in Hyderabad on Saturday

vided till now. The Chief Minister said that they would get financial assistance of Rs 2,016 per month. Telangana is the only State in the country which is giving pensions to filariasis patients and single women like nowhere else in the country. The Telangana government, he said, would be supporting

the beedi workers in all 16 States. Also, on the occasion of 75 years of independence of the country, orders have been issued to release 75 prisoners with good behaviour. This is the policy of their government. KCR said that it has been decided to declare the orphans as 'State Children' and the Cabinet

Sub-Committee has also given recommendations on this and he would receive those reports this evening. Apart from this, he said that he wants to support orphanages and establish special schools from KG to PG for those children. It has been decided to educate the orphans and give them some

reservation in jobs as well as increase the grants. KCR said that this decision has been taken considering the humane aspect that the government should stand by the underprivileged. 'Now, in the view of the central government, do all these also come under freebies?', KCR asked.

Freshly recruited doctors to get posting at place of their choice

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Medical and Health Department has decided to give postings to medical officers to be recruited fresh at the places of their choice.

A higher official of the department wishing to remain anonymous said that postings would be given to them according to priority of options exercised by them. It may be recalled that the health department issued a notification to fill 751 civil assistant surgeon posts, 211 general duty medical officer posts and many other posts. The department seeks to fill 969 posts. So far, over 1600 applied for the post. When the last date expires at 5 pm on Aug 14, 3000 applications are expected at the rate of three persons competing for each post.

The Health Department officials rule out any scope for extending the last date. The officials feel that the response to the notification is not along the expected lines as the applicants feel that there is no scope for indulging in private practice. By chance, if any



The Health Department officials rule out any scope for extending the last date. The officials feel that the response to the notification is not along the expected lines as the applicants feel that there is no scope for indulging in private practice

medical leave till three years. Once joining duty as medical officer, if any candidate gets selected for PG course through NEET, the person would have no chance except giving up his PG seat. Because of this reason, many candidates are apparently in no mood to apply to the job.

The recruitment board is likely to declare results by September second week. It will shortlist the candidates according to parameters like the rule of reservation, service rules, experience, outsourcing or contract weightage and so on.

applicant gets job in the current recruitment notification, he is unlikely to sanctioned

Gurukul Schools achieving excellent results: Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Social Welfare Koppula Eshwar Saturday said the State government had set up a large number of Gurukul institutions to provide quality education to students in the State. The State government has been providing quality education and nutritious food to as many as 6 lakh students in 985 Gurukul Schools through five societies, he said. He was taking part in function at Minority Gurukul Educational Society office here. The Minister distributed certificates of appreciation and mementoes to students who achieved excellent results.

DOST-2022 Phase-1 results announced

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Results of Degree Online Services Telangana (DOST) Phase-1 seat allotment were announced on Saturday. A total of 1, 12,683 candidates were allotted seats in this phase. Out of the total, the highest allotments were for Commerce (42,313) followed by Life Sciences (26,539), Physical Science (23,059), Arts (14,825), D Pharmacy (336) and Others (5611).

The total registered candidates were 1, 44,300 out of which 1, 18,898 gave web options for phase-1. The total number of candidates who exercised web options but

could not get seat allotment because of their limited choice of web option is 6215. The English medium candidates were 1, 02,418 (90.89%), Telugu Medium were 9304 (8.26%), Urdu Medium were 951 (0.84%) and Hindi Medium were 10 (0.008%).

The male candidates were 45,743 (40.59%) while female candidates were 66,940 (59.41%). The total number of candidates allotted under the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) quota was 338. There are 978 colleges on DOST which also include residential degree colleges. The total seat intake for the year 2022 is 4, 20,318.

Man arrested for cheating friend



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Petbasheerabad police arrested a man from Andhra Pradesh on charges of cheating his friend to the tune of Rs 20 lakh promising high returns on crypto currency investments here on Saturday. The suspect identified as 27-year-old P Ravi Teja. The police said he hailed from Vijayawada.

TS govt earmarks Rs 1,479 cr for 8 new medical colleges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government on Saturday accorded administrative sanction of Rs.1,479 crore to establish eight more medical colleges and upgrade attached government general hospitals in Telangana.

The eight districts where medical colleges will be established and the government general hospitals to be upgraded are Rajanna Sircilla, Vikarabad, Khammam, Kamareddy, Karimnagar, Jayashankar



Bhupalpally, Asifabad and Jangaon. Each medical college will be developed with a

capacity to offer 100 MBBS seats and the attached government hospital will be

upgraded commensurate with the number of medical seats. The State government has identified the Roads and Buildings (R&B) department for constructing the eight new medical colleges while the upgradation works of the eight medical colleges, procurement of medical infrastructure, diagnostic and hospital equipment and furniture will be taken up by Telangana State Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (TSMSIDC).

City police create green channel for transportation of live organs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad and Cyberabad traffic police facilitated the transportation of a human organ by arranging a green channel for an ambulance on Saturday. An ambulance carrying a pair of lungs started from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad

and reached the KIMS Hospital in Secunderabad covering a distance of 36.8 km in 31 minutes. The efforts of the Hyderabad and Cyberabad Traffic Police in the transportation of the live organ were applauded by the management of KIMS Hospital. This year, the traffic police have so far facilitated organ transport 24 times.



Forensic doctors find Uma Maheswari's death as suicide

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Forensic doctors of Osmania General Hospital on Saturday delivered the post-mortem report on the death of Andhra Pradesh former chief minister N T Rama Rao's daughter K Uma Maheswari. The doctors expressed the opinion that Maheswari had died by suicide. In the autopsy report sent to the Jubilee Hills police, the OGH



doctors said that Maheswari 'died by suicide by hanging.' The report further said Uma Maheswari had a laryngo-tracheal separation (larynx damage) in the throat, which resulted in her death. The Jubilee Hills police, who are investigating, said preliminary investigation indicated it to be a suicide case. The police, however, said that investigation would continue until the exact case for death is found.

Police raid hookah parlour, arrest two

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (North) raided a hookah parlour at Abid Road and caught two degree students who were operating the parlour on Friday. The police claimed to have seized a large quantity of hookah pots, flavours and over Rs 47,000.

Acting on a tip off, the team raided the Chill on Hill Lounge parlour at Sanali Mall. Mohd Badruddin (24), a degree student and organising manager of the hookah parlour along Mohd Shoeb (19), also a degree student, were arrested. Another suspect is still at large.



SERP inks MoU with WBIE to market self-help group products

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Saturday said that several reputed companies came forward to market the products made by self-help groups in the State. Participating as chief guest at a function in which the Society of for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with White Bird Imports and Exports Company (WBIE) to market the self-help groups' products. SERP Chief Executive Office Sandeep Kumar Sutanua and company managing director Jyotsna were present. Speaking on the

occasion, the Minister said several reputed international companies came forward to produce being turned out by self-help groups. The quality products turned out by the self-help groups attracted the attention of several companies, he said.

SERP Chief Executive Officer and Panchayat Raj Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sutanua said that there was no paucity of funds to empower the self-help groups financially. The products made by the self-help groups are market online. The agreement between the company and SERP would further promote the products made by the self-help groups.

Traffic curbs for inaugural function diamond jubilee fete

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of the inaugural function of the Independence Day Celebrations Swatantra Bhartha Vajrotsavam by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Monday at the Hyderabad International Convention Center (HICC), heavy traffic movement is expected on the roads around the venue and surrounding areas.

Cyberabad Traffic Police have made extensive arrangements to ensure smooth traffic flow. Heavy traffic is expected on the several routes on Monday, such as Neeru's junction-cyber towers junction-google junction-kothaguda junction. Metal



Charminar junction-khanamet junction-Hiteh. JNTU-Cyber Towers-Bio Diversity junction. Gachibowli junction-botanical garden junction-kothaguda-kondapur. Hence, the

commuters are advised to use alternative routes to avoid traffic congestion. Traffic from Neeru's towards Gachibowli may take diversion at COD (Ayyappa Society) towards durgam cheruvu-Inrobit-ITC

Kohinoor-IKEA-BioDiversity-Gachibowli and vice versa. Traffic from Miyapur, Kothaguda, Hafeezpet towards Hitech city-Jubilee Hills may use AIG Hospital-IKEA-Durgam Cheruvu and avoid Cyber Towers junction. Traffic from RC Puram, Chandanagar areas towards Madhapur, Gachibowli areas may use BHEL-Nallagandla-HCU-IIIT and avoid Alwyn-Kondapur road.

Heavy vehicles are restricted at JNTU towards Cyber Towers, Miyapur towards Kothaguda, Kavuri Hills towards Kothaguda, Biodiversity towards Cyber Towers, Narayanamma college towards Gachibowli.

Rich tributes paid to Prof Jayashankar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rich tributes were paid to Telangana ideologue prof K Jayashankar on the occasion of his birth anniversary. Celebrations were held at Telangana Bhavan and the offices of Telangana State Institute of Rural Development (TSIRD), the office of the Director General of Police, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and others. Minister for Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao recalled the role played by Prof Jayashankar for separate Statehood for Telangana. As a researcher and academician,

Jayashankar always supported Telangana. Jayashankar's role in highlighting the importance of a separate Telangana State from the village to national level helped achieve statehood for Telangana, the Minister said. Prof Jayashankar, supported the Chief Minister K Chandra shekar Rao during the movement. At GHMC office, Commissioner D S Lokesh Kumar called upon the staff to strive to fulfil the aspirations of Jayashankar and said several books written by Jayashankar helped the people to know the importance of carving out a Telangana State.

GHMC focuses on property tax collections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Special schemes to ensure remittance of property tax have been raking up the moolah for the GHMC. In an unprecedented development, the GHMC collected Rs 1,000 crore in the first four months of the current fiscal year against the target for collection of Rs 2000 crore towards property tax during 2022-23.

The early bird scheme introduced by the civic body helped it net Rs 740 crore in April and May this year. Afterwards, the scheme became rather slow.

The one-time settlement scheme helped net the GHMC Rs 17 crore. Out of the total tax receipts of Rs 1,000 crore real-



ized as on Aug 3, the early bid scheme and one-time settlement scheme helped the GHMC earn Rs 757 crore.

Till two months ago, the GHMC financial position was at its worse as it was not in a position to pay salaries to its

employees. There were instances of employees not receiving wages till 15th of a month. So, the GHMC commissioner and other employees focused on property tax collection. Commissioner Lokesh Kumar has been holding tele

conference almost on daily basis issuing instructions to zonal commissioners and the deputy commissioners. Additional Commissioner Finance has made it clear to the bill collectors that the finance department would forfeit paying salaries to the bill collectors who have failed to recover the property tax dues.

Besides Rs 757 crore collected through two schemes, regular remittances of property tax increased the revenue flow to the GHMC to Rs 1,000 crore. The total amount realized from April 1 to Jul 31 this year was put at Rs 994 crore. The GHMC earned another Rs 6 crore in the first three days of August. Going by the current trend, the GHMC

officials are exuding confidence of record collection of property tax during the current year as still eight months are there in the current fiscal year.

The GHMC is not getting any fund allocation from the government. Moreover, property tax payable by the government for the government buildings is also long overdue, according to officials.

Therefore, the GHMC officials focused on property tax collection.

The GHMC commissioner held tele conference on property tax collection, but criticized for not holding tele conference with the civic body officials on the incessant rains that lashed the city for over 20 days.

Cyberabad Police Commissioner pays tributes Prof Jayashankar

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Cyberabad Police Commissioner Stephen Raveendra on Saturday paid floral tributes to the portrait of Prof Jayashankar on the occasion of his birth anniversary. The Cyberabad Police Commissioner staff also paid tributes to Prof Jayashankar. Speaking on the occasion, Stephen Raveendra recalled the services rendered by Prof Jayashankar. He said that future generations would remember great contributions to society. Prof Jayashankar fought for separate Telangana selflessly. He urged the young gsters, scientists, and researchers to take inspiration



from Prof Jayashankar for the betterment of the farmers in the State. Joint Police Commissioner Avinash Mohanty, Cyberabad DC

of Police (crimes) Kalmeshwar, Cyberabad DC of Police (Traffic) Srinivas Rao, Estate Officer Mattiah, and staff were present.

Both BJP, Cong criticise KCR for boycotting NITI Aayog meet

K. VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Both the Congress as well as the BJP have criticised Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao for announcing that he is boycotting the NITI Aayog meeting being held on Sunday. Both the parties said that KCR too did not listen to suggestions of opposition parties in the State.

The BJP floor leader in the Telangana Assembly, T. Raja Singh, said that it is shameful on the part of the Chief Minister to say that he is boycotting the NITI Aayog meeting as it is a loss for the people of Telangana.

In a statement, Raja Singh wondered why KCR was criticising NITI Aayog as has not even minimum knowledge about solving problems through discussions in a

democracy. NITI Aayog is a constitutional body. Boycotting the meeting conducted by the NITI Aayog is nothing but insulting the Constitution and the people, he pointed out.

It is ridiculous on the part of KCR to say that they are not giving adequate time to speak in the NITI Aayog meeting. 29 Chief Ministers are attending the meeting and KCR is one of them. KCR has to remember the fact that time will be allocated equally to all CMs, he said.

Raja Singh said that it is shameful on the part of KCR, who makes the Speaker to stop the speech of opposition MLAs when they speak on public issues in the Assembly by ringing the bell, to say that at NITI Aayog meetings officials are obstructing his speech by ringing the bell.



Raja Singh said that it has been proved once again that KCR concentrates only on money and commissions but not people's interests.

He asked KCR, who had said that the Planning Commission set up by Jawaharlal Nehru was a great one, to explain why the poverty still exists in the country? Why are people put in trouble for not having certain facilities, he asked. KCR's remarks are the best proof of the colluded poli-

itics of the Congress and the TRS. The people are watching the TRS-Congress colluded politics and would teach both parties a lesson, he said.

Finding fault with Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao for stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not minding the suggestions of opposition parties, TPCC President Revanth Reddy asked whether KCR had ever listened to the suggestions of opposition parties.

As the president of an opposition party and as an MP from the State I suggest that the Chief Minister should attend the NITI Aayog meeting being held on Sunday, Sanjay said.

He said that KCR should not misuse the opportunity to question the PM's assurances on the AP Division Act, flood loss, 4,000 MW power project, the Kazipet Coach Factory and other issues.

The people of Telangana would benefit if KCR attends the meeting. The people would believe KCR only if he shoots questions at the Prime Minister face to face. Otherwise, people would think that KCR had surrendered to the Centre, he said.

Revanth said that the BJP and the TRS are using government agencies to weaken the opposition and harass their leaders.

Dasoju joining the BJP is just a trailer, says Chugh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congratulating Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy for joining the BJP, BJP President JP Nadda suggested that Rajagopal should work hard to bring the BJP to power.

On Saturday, Rajagopal met Nadda in New Delhi along with the BJP's National Executive Committee member Vivek Venkat Swamy.

Nadda enquired about the Munugode by-poll and the leaders going to join the BJP. Rajagopal invited Nadda to attend the meeting being held on August 21 in which Rajagopal would join the BJP.

Meanwhile, former AICC official spokesperson Dr Dasoju Sravan and Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar met Telangana BJP Affairs-in-charge Tarun Chugh in New Delhi. Chugh felicitated Dr Dasoju and offered him a shawl. Later, speaking to the



media, Chugh said that he was happy to meet former ABVP leader Dr Dasoju after a long time.

Chugh said that the KCR government has been looting Telangana and that he had discussed many issues with Sanjay. Chugh showered praises on Sanjay saying that his Praja Sangrama Yatra, as well as motorcycle yatras, were very effective in taking the BJP's message to the masses. Chugh said that the TRS

government has disappointed the people and they will bid goodbye to the KCR government soon. KCR's intelligence wing has also said the same, he observed.

He said that the leaders now joining the BJP is only a trailer and that the real picture will get revealed in the future.

He said that there will be a large number of inductions into the BJP soon.

Sanjay said that the BJP's culture is not to induct leaders by giving them money. One can understand why leaders like Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy and Dr Dasoju, who played an important role in the Telangana movement, are joining the BJP.

He said that leaders who criticised AICC Chief Sonia Gandhi have become Congress presidents and that the people of Telangana hate the KCR family and the vulgar language they use.

Police pay tribute to Telangana ideologue in Warangal

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Police officers and men paid glowing tributes to Telangana ideologue Prof Jayashankar in connection with his 88th birth anniversary at a programme held at city police commissionerate here on Saturday.

City Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi garlanded the portrait of Jayashankar and paid tributes to him.

"The state will never forget the untiring efforts and his resolve to achieve statehood to Telangana," he said.

He observed, 'Prof Jayashankar lives in the hearts of people forever as an ideologue and also as a fighter for the statehood to Telangana.'



Warangal Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi paying tributes to portrait of Prof Jayashankar in Warangal on Saturday

Central Zone DCP Ashok Kumar, Additional DCPs Vaibhav Gaekwad, Sanjeev

Suresh, ACPs, RIs and other police personnel were present on the occasion.

Glowing tributes paid to Prof Jayashankar on his 88th birth anniversary

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Additional Collector S Motilal paid glowing tributes to Telangana ideologue Prof Jayashankar on Saturday on the occasion of his 88th birth anniversary and hailed him as a great leader who kindled the spirit of Telangana among the people of the region. "He worked untiringly to propagate the Telangana ideology among the people and was a great ideologue," he said hailing Prof Jayashankar.

Earlier, he garlanded the portrait of Prof Jayashankar and lighted a lamp and paid rich tributes to Jayashankar at a programme held at Collectorate under the aegis of the BC Welfare Department.

Minister stresses need to rekindle spirit of freedom struggle

PNS ■ WANAPARTHI

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy on Saturday stressed the need to rekindle the spirit of freedom struggle and the spirit of patriotism among the people.

Speaking at a meeting, shortly after paying floral tributes to Prof Jayashankar on the occasion of his birth anniversary, the Minister said that freedom was achieved as many freedom fighters sacrificed their lives. The youth must value the sacrifices of freedom fighters, he observed. Niranjan Reddy called upon people to organise diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence Day on a grand scale. Later, the Minister held a teleconference



Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy paying floral tributes to the portrait of Prof Jayashankar in Wanaparthy on Saturday

with Collectors and Municipal Chairpersons of Wanaparthy, Nagarkurnool and Jogulamba Gadwal.

Speaking on the occasion, he said it was important that everyone must abide by the Constitution. He took objec-

tion to derogatory words being used by some people against Mahatma Gandhi.

It is not a good development.

It is important to protect democracy and freedom of expression of the citizens.

Jayashankar kept alive Telangana sentiment among people

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

District Collector Prashant Jeevan Patil, ZP Chairperson Veleeti Raja Radhakrishna Sarma and Municipal chairperson Manjula Rajnars on Saturday paid tributes to Telangana ideologue Prof Jayashankar after garlanding his statue at Mustabadd Cross roads here. The District Collector described him as a great fighter who fought for Telangana. Prof Jayashankar made it as his life goal to achieve statehood to the region.

He provided inspiration to the people for the second phase of the movement for Telangana by holding meetings with intelligentsia, academicians, youth and people after the failure of the first phase of the movement.



TRS Medak district unit president Padma Devender Reddy speaking at a media conference in Medak on Saturday

TRS suspends Narasapur civic chief from party

PNS ■ MEDAK

The TRS party on Saturday suspended Narasapur Municipal Chairman A Murali Yadav from the party for indulging in anti-party activities, according to Medak MLA and party district unit president Padma Devender Reddy.

Announcing the party decision to suspend Murali Yadav from the party at a media conference here, Padma Devender Reddy came down heavily on the Municipal Chairman for making 'unsavoury remarks' against the TRS party leader-

ship. She pointed out that the party had given importance to him and made him Narasapur Municipal Chairman. She recalled that the party had given the post of Zilla Parishad chairperson to Murali Yadav's wife in the undivided district. The party also made him the president for undivided district party president, she said. She made it clear that it was not good on the part of Murali Yadav to criticise the party leadership. There could be a hidden agenda on the part of him to speak out against the party, she felt.

Officials told to ensure participation of people in diamond jubilee fete

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

District Collector Prashanth Jeevan Patil on Saturday directed the officials to make arrangements for organising diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence Day on a grand scale. Holding a video conference with officials from his chambers, the Collector stressed the need to rekindle the spirit of patriotism among the people. He asked the officials to organise celebrations on a grand scale in the district

between August 8 and 20. He said the government has decided to organise celebrations to rekindle the spirit of freedom struggle and the spirit of patriotism on the occasion of 75th year of Independence. He urged officials to ensure that students, government employees and people participate in the celebrations in a big way.

Prashanth Jeevan Patil said the celebrations would begin on Monday with Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao presiding over a meeting

in Hyderabad. Distribution of the national flag would begin from the next day. Various programmes would be held, he said. The Collector directed the officials to distribute the national flag to every household in the district. As plastic items were banned, flags made of plastic should not be used, he said.

Mandal Paarishad Development Officers, Municipal Commissioners and Revenue officials attended the meeting.



Siddipet Collector Prashanth Jeevan Patil addressing officials via video conference in Siddipet on Saturday

Sanjay's padayatra successful in Bhuvanagiri, says Gudur

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior BJP leader Gudur Narayana Reddy said the padayatra of BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar was successful in the Bhuvanagiri Assembly constituency and had provided the much-needed fillip to the party in the constituency.

In a media statement on Saturday, he said that the padayatra, Praja Sangrama Yatra, has created a lot of enthusiasm among the people. Thousands of BJP workers and commoners participated in the yatra, Gudur said.

He said that hundreds of youths walked along with Sanjay for 44 km in the constituency. Sanjay's padayatra began in Yadadri on August 2.

Gudur said the padayatra will enter Munugodu Assembly constituency on Sunday after Sanjay crosses Jiblakpally. He said that Sanjay will tour the Choutuppal Mandal of Munugodu from Sunday.

He said that on National

Handloom Day Sanjay would address a meeting of handloom weavers and other artisans at Bhudan Pochampalli on Sunday.

He said that in the last four days Sanjay had met thousands of people in Bhuvanagiri Assembly constituency and had interacted with commoners.

"Wherever Sanjay spoke people poured out their problems. At Baswapur, land losers described their misery due to the government's apathy. They said the government had failed to fulfil promises on rehabilitation and resettlement," he said.

He said that employees, youth and others described their problems to Sanjay and the BJP leader heard them.

Gudur said the BJP has been gaining strength in the state as many senior politicians would be joining it soon. He said the joining spree would continue and the BJP's network will soon reach each and every corner of the state.



Police crack advocate's murder case, arrest four

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Police on Saturday cracked the mystery behind the murder of advocate Mulagaund Mall Reddy and arrested four persons. The police claimed that a dispute over land was the motive behind the murder. The arrested are Gonela Ravinder Mudiraj of Narsampet, Pindi Ravi Yadav, former Sarpanch of Mallampally, Vancha Rammohan Reddy of Kodishalakunta, and Tadaka Ramesh, an RMP doctor and a part-time reporter of Narakkapet village under Nallabelli mandal in Warangal district. Malla Reddy (59), who hailed from Balasamudram in Hanamkonda, was hacked to death at the Pandikunta crossroads on NH-163 a week ago.

Need for career guidance for BC students stressed

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Telangana State Backward Classes Study Circle director K Alok Kumar has directed Backward Classes Welfare Hostel Wardens to give guidance to the hostel students right from SSC to choose a right so that they will make suitable plans to achieve dizzying heights.

He paid a surprise visit to the BC Welfare Girls' Hostel at Timmajipet here on Saturday and inspected the playground, kitchen, water sump, drainages, kitchen shed, storeroom and other facilities in the hostel. He asked the kitchen staff to provide filtered water to the students and also in the kitchen. He made it clear that the hostel premises should always be kept tidy. The storeroom should also be maintained in



State BC Study Circle director K Alok Kumar interacting with students in Nagarkurnool on Saturday

hygienic surroundings. He advised the hostel authorities to accept the rice bags only if the quality is up to the mark.

He advised them to bring the

problems of hostels to the notice of the district authorities. Further, he told them to serve food to students by sticking to the menu. He advocated pre-

cautions to prevent students contracting seasonal diseases. He appreciated District BC Welfare Officer for providing gloves, caps and aprons to

He paid a surprise visit to the BC Welfare Girls' Hostel at Timmajipet here on Saturday and inspected the playground, kitchen, water sump, drainages, kitchen shed, storeroom and other facilities in the hostel

cooks for use while cooking food and serving it to the students. Later, he planted saplings on the premises of the hostel.

Speaking to the students, he said that they would be sensitised from SSC onwards on how to get good marks and later pursue higher education of their choice.

He advised students to make good use of their time. He asked the hostel wardens to give NEET question papers to students and educate them on the

entrance test.

He assured the hostel wardens that additional rooms would be sanctioned for the hostel by taking the issue to the notice of higher authorities. He expressed satisfaction over the maintenance of the hostel.

District BC Welfare Officer Anil Prakash, Mahabubnagar District BC Welfare Officer Indira, Assistant BC Welfare officer Sridhar G, Wardens Hemalata, Ramesh and Narendar Reddy were present.

Dalit family get power bill for Rs 1,75,706 for two months

Electricity Department delivered a shock treatment to two houses by slapping a bill for August Rs 1,75,706. The two incidents came to the fore in Chintapalli mandal headquarters of the district. The meter-reading staff noted that inmates of house owner Pullaiah consumed a total of 8672 units from July 16 to August 5 and gave Pullaiah a bill for Rs 87,338. Afterwards, they went to the house of Nallavelli Niranjan and recorded that his household consumed 8793 units of power for 20 days and served him a bill for Rs 88,368. The house owners have been questioning the electricity department officials about the hefty bills served on them stating that they did not have any other electrical appliances except two bulbs and a fan.

INDIA CORNER

Irregularities in recruitment; DoE sacks 72 teachers

The Directorate of Education (DoE) has sent termination notices to 72 government school teachers here after finding a "mismatch" between their biometrics and photographs submitted during the recruitment exam, according to officials. The action was taken against them after a DoE committee concluded that the candidates had sent proxies for the examination conducted by the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB) in 2018. "The candidates were nominated to various posts and allocated schools, following the completion of all formalities. After DSSSB verified their biometrics in early 2021, the committee submitted a report detailing the mismatches to DoE," a senior directorate official said. The 72 teachers -- both men and women -- have been working in different Delhi schools on probation, he said.



Senior citizen loses Rs 2.20 lakh online after call from imposter

A senior citizen lost Rs 2.20 lakh in an online fraud allegedly perpetrated by a man falsely claiming to be a Reserve Bank of India staffer, a Nagpur police official said on Saturday. Neelam Singh (62) got a call on his mobile phone on July 21 informing that he had won a cash reward of Rs 7,280, the official said. "The called identified himself as an RBI staffer of the non-existent reward distribution division and asked Singh to download a link sent on his mobile phone in order to claim the amount," the MIDC police station official said. After Singh clicked on the link, the accused managed to carry out online transactions worth Rs 2.2 lakh using the former's credit card, the official added. A case of cheating and other offences under the Indian Penal Code and Information Technology Act has been registered and efforts are on to nab the culprit, he said.



Madras HC quashes proceedings against law students

The Madras High Court has set aside the criminal proceedings pending against 11 Law college students pending before a Magistrate Court in George Town here. Justice N Satish Kumar quashed the proceedings while allowing a criminal original petition from Aravinth and 10 others, recently. The charge against the students was that they, along with their friends without obtaining permission, had gathered opposite to Ambedkar Government Law College and raised slogans against the Sri Lankan government, demanding their 'Tamil Eelam issues' and blocked the road. Granting the relief, the judge noted the petitioners had not unlawfully assembled to commit any offence. Of course, they had democratically raised protest for the inaction on the part of the police for not taking action and such gathering cannot be said to be unlawful assembly. At any event, mere gathering of more than five persons would not amount to any offence, unless the action of such persons fit into any of the provisions found in Section 141 to constitute such assembly as unlawful one.



'CAT achieved 91% disposal rate in 5 years, betters UPA record'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Saturday said the Central Administrative Tribunal, which adjudicates government employees service matters, has achieved a disposal rate of over 91 per cent in five years.

He said the higher disposal rate was achieved from 2015 to 2019 under the Narendra Modi government, while it was around 89 per cent from 2010 to 2014 during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime.

Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) achieved a disposal rate of around 91 per cent in five years and there continues to be a steady rise in the disposal of cases, said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

He said the Modi government is committed to transparency and justice for all, and



the people-friendly reforms taken in the last eight years have benefitted the entire country.

The minister was speaking during a meeting with newly appointed chairman of CAT, Justice Ranjit Vasant Rao More, who had called on Singh and

discussed the modalities to achieve most zero pendency of cases as mandated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to a statement by the Personnel Ministry.

The minister said despite the crippling effects of COVID-19, CAT benches tried their best to

dispose of cases through online mechanisms. During the pandemic situation in 2020 and 2021, a total of 55,567 cases were instituted. Despite the adverse situation, about 30,011 cases were disposed of, with a disposal percentage of 54, the statement said. In 2021, the dis-

posal rate was 58.6 per cent and this was despite the fact that around 18,845 old pending cases of Jammu and Kashmir High Court were transferred to the Jammu bench of CAT, it said. On measures to strengthen CAT, Singh said recommendations of the search-cum-selection committee (SCSC) have been received in respect of 33 members and a proposal in this regard has been submitted for seeking the approval of the competent authority.

CAT has 19 regular benches, 17 of which operate at the principal seats of high courts and the remaining two at Jaipur and Lucknow. CAT has a sanctioned strength of 70 members, including chairman (35 judicial and 35 administrative members).

According to the Tribunal Rules, 2021, the chairman can be either judicial member or administrative member.

Samyukt Kisan Morcha drive against Agnipath today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella organisation of farm unions, on Saturday said it will launch a nationwide campaign against the Centre's Agnipath scheme for military recruitment on August 7.

It said the scheme is a "serious setback" to farming families whose youths have been part of the armed forces.

The campaign will be launched in collaboration with the United Front of ex-Servicemen and various youth organisations. The Agnipath scheme, announced on June 14, seeks to recruit youths in the age bracket of 17-and-half and 21 for only four years with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them for 15 more years. For 2022, the upper age limit has been extended to 23 years. Several parts of India witnessed violent protests against the scheme in June with the agitators demanding its rollback as the new model does not provide a job guaran-



tee to 75 per cent of the recruits. The Agnipath scheme has "put to an end the tried and tested method of regular, permanent recruitment to the armed forces. It would mean a drastic reduction in the size of the armed forces from the present sanctioned strength of 14 lakh to merely seven lakh," the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said in a statement on Saturday.

"This is a serious setback to farming families who have contributed to the nation by sending their youths to the

armed forces. "The proposed 'all India, all class recruitment' would severely reduce the share of regions like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Uttarakhand, western UP and eastern Rajasthan that have contributed to the armed forces for generations, besides affecting the morale of the regiments," it said.

The recruitment on an "all India, all class" basis is set to change the composition of some regiments that recruit youths from specific regions as well as castes.

BSF seizes two Pak fishing boats in Gujarat's Kutch



PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Border Security Force (BSF) on Saturday seized two Pakistani fishing boats from a creek area close to the Indo-Pak border in Gujarat's Kutch district.

With this, the BSF has seized nine boats and apprehended a Pakistani fisherman in the last three days, an official release said.

On Saturday morning, BSF's Bhuj patrol team party observed the movement of some Pakistani fishing boats and fishermen in the general area of the Harami Nalla creek, it said, adding that nothing suspicious was found on these boats.

"The patrol party immediately rushed to the spot and seized two Pakistani fishing boats (engine fitted). On seeing a BSF patrol party approaching them, Pakistani fishermen abandoned the boats and fled towards Pakistan close to the International border," the BSF said. The BSF found 20-25 kg

With this, the BSF has seized nine boats and apprehended a Pakistani fisherman in the last three days, an official release said

of fish, two fishing nets, an ice box, and other items on the boats. A day earlier, a Pakistani fisherman was apprehended along with five boats from the same area. Earlier, two more Pakistani fishing boats were found abandoned in the creek area on Thursday.

The BSF had last month apprehended four Pakistani fishermen and seized ten boats from the creek area.

While Indian fishermen are barred from entering the creek due to security reasons, those from Pakistan enter the Indian waters in search of a better catch many times.

Maha govt not affected by delay in cabinet expansion: CM Shinde

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Saturday said the functioning of the state government has not been affected in any way due to the delay in the expansion of the council of ministers and that more ministers will be inducted soon.

Shinde made the remarks in response to questions about the delay in expansion of the Maharashtra council of ministers since the change of guard in the state on June 30.

Shinde assumed office on June 30 after the resignation of Uddhav Thackeray in the face of a rebellion in the Shiv Sena ranks. BJP leader Devendra Fadnis was sworn in as

deputy chief minister of the BJP-backed government headed by Shinde, who led the rebellion in the Shiv Sena ranks. "The work of the government has not been affected in any way. The decision making process has not been affected. I and the deputy chief minister have been taking decisions and there is no impact on the working of the government, Shinde told reporters here.

Shinde is in the national capital to attend a meeting of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav National Committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday evening and the NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting on Sunday.

CUET mess-up is story of every youth of country: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday targeted the government over glitches in the conduct of the common university entrance test (CUET), and alleged the dictatorship of four people is leaving no stone unturned to ruin the country.

His attack came after technical glitches marred the CUET for admission to undergraduate courses in central universities. "New education policy of 'Amritkal': Before the exam 'discussion on the exam'. 'No paper, no discussion' during the exam. Future in darkness after the exam. What is happening with the students of #CUET is the story of every youth of the country today," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "The dictator-



"New education policy of 'Amritkal': Before the exam 'discussion on the exam'. 'No paper, no discussion' during the exam

ship of 4 people is leaving no stone unturned to ruin the country," he also said. He, however, did not name the four people. Technical glitches marred the second day of the CUET-Undergraduate on Friday, forcing the National Testing Agency (NTA) to postpone the exam at 50 centres across the country.

Some students also claimed to have received communication from the NTA late night, telling them that their exam scheduled for Saturday has been postponed due to administrative and logistical reasons. On Thursday, the exam was cancelled at a few centres across 17 states in the first shift, while the

second shift exam was cancelled at all 489 centres. Several students complained that they waited for two hours only to be informed that the exams scheduled for the day had been called off. Candidates also seemed to be in panic as the agency did not issue the admit cards for Sunday.

Google launches 'India Ki Udaan' to mark 75 years of Independence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capturing the milestones India has achieved in its journey of 75 years since Independence, software giant Google on Friday unveiled a vibrant online project drawing from rich archives and featuring artistic illustrations to tell the story of the country.

Named 'India Ki Udaan', the project executed by Google Arts & Culture celebrates the country's achievements and is "themed on the unwavering and undying spirit of India over these past 75 years". The project was officially launched at a glittering event held at the Sunder

HPCL's record loss of Rs 10,196 cr on petrol, diesel price freeze

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) on Saturday reported its highest ever quarterly net loss of Rs 10,196.94 crore in the June quarter as a freeze on petrol and diesel price revision wiped away record refining margins. A standalone net loss of Rs 10,196.94 crore during April-June compares with a net profit of Rs 1,795 crore in the same period a year back, according to a company's filing with the stock exchanges.

During the quarter, HPCL and other state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) did not revise petrol and diesel prices in line with rising costs to help the government contain runaway inflation.

The basket of crude oil India imports averaged USD 109 per barrel but the retail pump rates were aligned to about USD 85-86 a barrel cost.

Because of the freeze, IOC too reported a net loss of Rs 1,992.53 crore for the June quarter.



During the quarter, HPCL and other state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) did not revise petrol and diesel prices in line with rising costs to help the government contain runaway inflation.

Loss for IOC, which is nearly double the size of HPCL, was smaller as it had vast oil refining and petrochemical businesses to offset some of the losses on fuel marketing. HPCL on the other hand sells more fuel than it produces. To meet nearly one-fourth of the market that it controls, it has to buy petrol, diesel and LPG from refineries, who would sell the fuel at market price and not subsidised rates.

HPCL revenue from the sale of products soared to Rs 1.21 lakh crore in the first quarter

of the current fiscal year that began on April 1 from Rs 77,308.53 crore a year back. This is mostly because of higher international oil prices.

This is the biggest quarterly loss that HPCL has ever incurred. These losses negated record refining margins. HPCL earned USD 16.69 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel at the refinery gate as opposed to a gross refining margin (GRM) of USD 3.31 per barrel in April-June 2021.

"During the current quarter, due to erosion in the market-

ing margins on motor fuels and LPG, the profitability is adversely impacted," the firm said in notes to its accounts.

HPCL also incurred a Rs 945.40 crore foreign exchange loss due to fluctuations in the exchange rate.

While the government has maintained that oil companies are free to revise retail prices, the three state-owned firms haven't explained the reasons for freezing the rates.

Typically, oil companies calculate a refinery gate price based on import parity rates.

UP's women self-help groups adding to sugarcane output, empowering

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) engaged by the Uttar Pradesh government for growing sugarcane seeds for the past two years have expanded to become a 60,000-member club now.

These SHGs spread across the cane growing rural pockets of the state have not only become an essential source of seeds of improved cane varieties for farmers but are also empowering the women members by providing them a source of income.

Additional Chief Secretary (Excise) and cane commissioner of Uttar Pradesh Sanjay Bhooresddy said, "The decision to involve women SHGs with growing of cane seed was taken during first wave of Covid-19 in the state. This has grown into major enabler of sugarcane farming in the state and is contributing towards its success."

Under the initiative, so far

ELECTRICITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2022 AIPEF seeks PM intervention to ensure wider consultation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) has sought the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for referring the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, to the Parliamentary standing committee to ensure wider consultations on the proposed law.

After the announcement of Union Power Minister R K Singh to place and pass Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, on August 8 in Parliament, AIPEF Chairman Shailendra Dubey in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sought his intervention in the matter and has appealed him that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee of Parliament for detailed discussion with all stakeholders, an AIPEF statement said. According to the statement, the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees & Engineers (NCCOE) and the AIPEF have already served a notice to the Ministry of Power that as and when the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2022 is placed in Parliament, all power employees and engineers across the country shall



be forced to cease the work and hold demonstrations throughout the day to register their protest.

The bill seeks to create competition in the power distribution (retail) segment. It proposes that a discom can use other power distribution licensee's network. The bill also seeks to strengthen payment security mechanism and give more powers to regulators.

"It has become necessary to strengthen the regulatory mechanism, adjudicatory mechanism in the Act and to

bring administrative reforms through improved corporate governance of distribution licensees," states the bill.

The bill also states that "the continuing as well as new challenges of sustainability of the power sector, contract enforcement, payment security mechanism, energy transition and the need to provide choice (of multiple service providers) to consumers in order to promote competition and the like, it has become necessary to make certain amendments in the Electricity Act".

Haryana announces onetime settlement scheme

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has announced a one time settlement scheme for indebted farmers or members of the District Agriculture and Land Development Bank.

The state's Cooperation Minister Banwari Lal said here on Friday that under the scheme announced for the loanee members, 100 per cent rebate on the overdue interest will be provided mainly in the loan accounts of deceased borrowers till March 31, 2022.

For this, 100 per cent waiver of overdue interest will be provided to the heirs of deceased borrowers on depositing the entire principal amount in the loan account. Penalty interest and other expenses will also be waived, he said. "The total number of dead loan holders of the bank is 17,863 whose total amount is Rs 445.29 crore including



principal amount of Rs 174.38 crore and interest of Rs 241.45 crore and penal interest of Rs 29.46 crore," he said.

This scheme will be applicable on all types of loans of the bank. According to the scheme, if the loan holder could not pay his loan due to

any reason and was declared a defaulter by the bank till March 31, 2022, he can take advantage of this scheme.

The cooperation minister further said this scheme is for a limited time, so consumers can take advantage of it on 'first come-first serve' basis.

He said even before this, interest waiver scheme was implemented by the government in 2019, under which Rs 605.22 crore was recovered by the bank. Under this scheme, interest of Rs 181.88 crore was waived of 21,881 loanee members.

Japan Airlines increases flight frequency between Bengaluru and Tokyo

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Japan Airlines (JAL) on Saturday said it has now increased the flight frequency between Bengaluru and Tokyo from twice to thrice a week.

JAL currently operates the only non-stop air service connecting the two cities.

This additional flight is another convenient option for people travelling to and from Japan and for passengers connecting to and from the United States and Canada, a release said.

The airline's latest flight schedule operates three weekly roundtrip flights, it said, adding that JAL is working towards the original plan of operating one flight daily.

To celebrate the progress in the direct flight from Bengaluru to Tokyo (Narita), JAL and Bengaluru International Airport Limited



(BIAL) organised a lamp-lighting ceremony at the check-in counter for flight JL754, and a gate ceremony before departure on Friday.

Karnataka Industries Minister Murugesh Nirani and Commissioner of Department of Industries and Commerce Gunjan Krishna attended the ceremony and travelled to Japan on the flight.

We are very excited to make this progress in serving the

community better in Bengaluru with more convenient flights to Japan, and hence also providing greater options to connect to North America," Shinya Naruse, vice-president & regional manager (India) of Japan Airlines, said. JAL operates the route with a Boeing 787-8 aircraft equipped with 30 business class and 156 economy class award-winning seats, the airlines said.

Anil Agarwal pitches for corporatisation of defence factories

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mining baron Anil Agarwal on Saturday made a pitch for corporatisation of defence manufacturing factories, as was done for public sector units in the civil sector decades back, saying it will unleash the true potential of these companies. Agarwal, who built a fortune by acquiring state-owned companies and turning them around, also stated that the push for domestic manufacturing of semiconductors and other electronic items has potential to create another Silicon Valley in India in two years.

"We should also look into corporatisation of the defence manufacturing factories which are operating at 10 per cent capacity to unleash the true potential of these companies," he said in an address at IIM Bangalore. According to a copy of his speech released by his group here, he said corporatisation will help in creating

thousands of jobs and improve the performance of these companies drastically.

"Global markets do not want India to produce. They just want India to be a market," he noted. Corporatisation is the act of reorganising a government-owned entity into a legal entity with the corporate structure found in publicly traded firms.

The main goal of corporatisation is to allow the government to retain ownership of the company while allowing the firm to run as efficiently as its private counterparts.

Last year, the government restructured the over 200-year-old Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), which manufactures everything from tanks and armoured vehicles to rifles, ammunition and clothing for the armed forces, into seven state-owned corporate entities to improve its accountability, efficiency and competitiveness.

MGL net falls 9% on higher gas cost

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahanagar Gas Ltd, which retails CNG and piped cooking gas in Mumbai and other cities, on Saturday reported a 9 per cent drop in its June quarter net profit as higher gas cost negated a rise in sales. Net profit of Rs 185.20 crore in April-June compared with Rs 204.08 crore in the same period a year back, according to a company's stock exchange filing.

Revenue from operations soared more than twofold to Rs 1,613.19 crore. Cost of natural gas, which is converted into CNG for sale to automobiles and piped natural gas for sale to households for cooking, jumped to Rs 1,004.53 crore from Rs 191.04 crore last year.

This is because global energy prices soared after Russia invaded Ukraine.

Jagran Prakashan Q1 net profit at Rs 40.5 cr; revenue up 68 pc to Rs 454 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jagran Prakashan Ltd, the publisher of Hindi daily Dainik Jagran, on Saturday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 40.49 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2022.

The company had posted a net loss of Rs 7.05 crore during the April-June period a year ago, Jagran Prakashan Ltd (JPL) said in a BSE filing.

Its revenue from operations jumped 68.11 per cent to Rs 454.46 crore during the quarter under review, as against Rs 270.32 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Startup Mission to conduct free workshop for HNIs

PNS ■ KOCHI

The Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) is conducting a free workshop here on August 13 for HNIs (high net-worth individuals) aspiring to be angel investors as an additional asset.

The event, to be led by experienced venture capitalists and successful investors, will be held at Startup Mission's integrated startup complex in Kalamassery near here in association with Headstart Network Foundation.

The event will be led by investor Nidhi Saraf, who is co-founder and CEO of advisory fund-raising firm Key Ventures which has expertise in raising pre-series A to series D capital for early and growth-



stage startups, KSUM said.

"Permitting only invitees, prospective participants can apply through <https://bit.ly/HNI2022>. The

workshop, which aims to answer various questions and doubts of prospective angel investors, can help build a culture around startup invest-

ments in Kerala," organisers said in a release.

The event is being conducted as part of a larger conference 'Startup Saturday -

Funding and Investments', where 250 founders, entrepreneurs, and eco system enablers are expected to come together to know more about funding and investments.

Headstart is a not-for-profit organisation with 15 years of supporting early-stage entrepreneurs and startups from across the country.

It works with government organisations such as Startup India, StartupTN, Kerala Startup Mission, Niti Aayog and BIF, besides other corporate organisations like AWS and Meta to enable startup ecosystems.

KSUM is the nodal agency of the government of Kerala for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities in the State.

MONEY MATTERS

Black income of 'over Rs 200cr' detected in I-T raids on TN



The income-tax department has detected "undisclosed" income of more than Rs 200 crore after it recently raided some film producers, distributors and financiers in Tamil Nadu, the CBDT said on Saturday. The searches were launched on August 2 and about 40 premises of the entities, which have not been identified, were covered in Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore and Vellore. The

department claimed to have seized Rs 26 crore "undisclosed" cash and gold jewellery of more than Rs 3 crore during the raids. So far, the search operation has resulted in the detection of undisclosed income of more than Rs 200 crore, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement. It said that the department seized a number of documents, digital devices relating to "unaccounted" cash transactions and investments even as "secret and hidden" premises have been unearthed. In the case of film production houses, tax evasion has been found as the actual amounts realised from the release of the films are much more than the amounts shown in the regular books of account, it said. The unaccounted income so generated by them is deployed for undisclosed investments as well as for various undisclosed payments," the CBDT said. The Board is the administrative authority for the department.

Basmati rice exports up 26 pc in Q1 to US\$ 1.15 bn




Exports of basmati rice increased by 25.54 per cent in April-June 2022-23 to USD 1.15 billion, the commerce ministry said on Saturday. The exports stood at USD 922 million in the year-ago period. Non-basmati rice exports too increased by 5 per cent in June quarter to USD 1.56 billion, it said.

Exports of agricultural and processed food products rose by 31 per cent in the quarter to USD 7.4 billion. For financial year 2022-23, an export target of USD 23.56 billion has been fixed by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) for the agricultural and processed food products basket, it said. Among these products, sectors which recorded growth during the period under review include fresh fruits and vegetables, and cereals. The export of meat, dairy and poultry products increased by 9.5 per cent. Dairy products alone recorded a growth of 67.15 per cent as its export rose to USD 191 million in the first three months of the current fiscal," the ministry said. M Angamuthu, Chairman, APEDA, said by creating a necessary ecosystem of exports along with collaboration with key stakeholders in the agri-exports value chains, "we are aiming to sustain the growth in India's agricultural and processed food exports in the current fiscal as well".

SBI net profit drops 7 pc to Rs 6,068 cr in Q1

The country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Saturday posted a 7 per cent decline in standalone net profit at Rs 6,068 crore for the first quarter of the current financial year due to fall in income. The bank had reported a net profit of Rs 6,504 crore in the April-June quarter of 2021-22. Its standalone total income declined to Rs 74,998.57 crore in the first quarter of 2022-23, as against Rs 77,347.17 crore in the same period a year ago, SBI said in a regulatory filing. The operating profit of the bank slipped by 33 per cent to Rs 12,753 crore from Rs 18,975 crore in the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal, impacted by Mark to Market (MTM) losses on its investment book.

		GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA	
Panchayat Raj Engineering Department		Office of the Regional Officer, Regional Office PR Nalgonda	
e-Procurement Tender Notice			
e.Proc.T.N.No.PR/82/2022-23,		Dt.06.08.2022	
No. of works (01) Name of the Work R/R Mogilipaka to Saravally via Thethabai in Vaigonda (M) Yadadri Bhoinr Dist in undersigned Total EC.V.			
200.00 Lakhs Tenders Download Start End Dt.08.08.2022 to 19.08.2022			
Every NIT/Bid will be having (7) clear working days time from the date of publishing for further details "e" Procurement Market place i.e.			
www.eprocurement.gov.in			
www.bipr.org		BIPR R.O. No. 30-36-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2022-23 54th Regional Office, PR Nalgonda	

“Your regrets aren’t
what you did, but what
you didn’t do. So take
every opportunity”
— Cameron Diaz



India’s telecom auction process has a long history associated with politics, corruption, and legal cases, writes J GOPIKRISHNAN

FROM 2G TO 5G AUCTION

THE GREAT
INDIAN
TELECOM SAGA

The 5G spectrum auction has reaped a whopping sum of ₹1,50,173 crore for the public exchequer. This massive figure is the highest value collected in India through not only spectrum auctions but also from any kind of bidding process, be it coal or power, or land auctions. As expected, the country’s leading telecom operator Mukesh Ambani-headed Reliance Jio made the highest bid for 5G waves in all 22 circles as well as for other frequencies and paid ₹88,078 crore. Jio was followed by India’s first private telecom operator Sunil Mittal’s Bharti Airtel, which made a successful bid of ₹43,084 crore by competing in all 22 telecom circles. Cash-strapped Vodafone Idea headed by Aditya Birla Group, which continues to struggle with financial woes despite Government’s grand bailout packages, bid only in 17 circles and bought spectrum for ₹18,799 crore only.

Adani Group also bid for 5G to operate their private network installed in airports, sea ports, and power stations by paying ₹212 crores for 400 MHz.

As per the convention, Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) BSNL and MTNL did not attend the auction. They will be allotted 5G spectrum at the highest price reached in auction at each circle. Sadly, these two PSUs have not yet optimized the service and even in the usage of 4G. It has to be seen how much time they take to activate 5G on their networks.

Interestingly, the 5G auction turned out to be the only auction where Chinese telecom giants have been kept out from supplying gears, machinery, etc., ringing in cheers for European telecom equipment giants like Nokia, Ericson, and Korean behemoth Samsung.

India’s auction process has a long history associated with politics, corruption, and legal cases. The government decided to conduct the auction for the first time in the telecom sector in 2001. Then India had only four million mobile phone users, and through pan Indian (all the 22 telecom circles) auction, telecom license fee with spectrum allotment arrived at a handsome figure of ₹1651 crore. Undivided Reliance and Tata Group entered the telecom sector through this process. Earlier, players like Airtel and BPL were cajoled by the Government to enter the sector in 1994 at a very low price. Those were the days when the incoming call rate was Rs Eight and outgoing ₹16 per minute on a minuscule customer base.

While the ruling BJP rejoiced over the final figures of the 5G auction that came out on August 1 after four days of bidding, 2G Scam-hit former Telecom Minister A. Raja got his chance to take a jibe at the NDA government. Raja called for a probe into the auction asserting that the 5G spectrum should have been sold for ₹5 lakh crores. Raja compared the 5G spectrum amount of ₹1.5 lakh crore with the notional loss of ₹1.76 lakh crore in the 2G auction during his tenure as calculated by the CAG and said that 5G has more spectrum, it should have fetched more for the government.

“When I recommended only 30 MHz of spectrum to TRAI, the regulatory authority, the then CAG Vinod Rai said ? ₹1.76 lakh crore loss to the Government. But now 5G only for ₹1.5 lakh crore?” Raja asked.

Raja and several other Opposition leaders vented their anger against the then CAG Vinod Rai for “sabotaging the UPA regime” and providing a platform for the rise of the BJP by alleging a scam in the 2G auction. These allegations are laughable given the gross procedural irregularities in the allotment of the spectrum during Raja’s regime.

**AUCTION OF SPECTRUM,
COAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The Government was forced to conduct a 3G and BWA spectrum auction in April 2010, when the 2G Scam of 2008 made headlines. The scam-hit UPA Government formed a Group of Ministers headed by then Finance Minister



THE MERIT OF THE AUCTION CAN BE SEEN IN THE RISE OF RATES FROM 2014 ONWARDS. IN FEBRUARY 2014, THE SPECTRUM AUCTION BAGGED ₹62,162 CRORE TO THE PUBLIC EXCHEQUER AND THE RATES WERE HIGHER THAN THE 2010 3G AUCTION, JUSTIFYING THE CAG’S LOSS FIGURE BASED ON THE 3G AUCTION RATES. IN MARCH 2015, THE SPECTRUM AUCTION FETCHED THE GOVERNMENT ₹1,10,000 CRORE, AND IN DECEMBER 2016 THE SPECTRUM AUCTION BROUGHT IN ₹65,789 CRORE TO THE PUBLIC EXCHEQUER. AGAIN IN MARCH 2021, THE SPECTRUM AUCTION GAVE ₹77, 814 CRORES WHEREAS THE RECENT 5G AUCTION PROVIDED THE HIGHEST FIGURE ₹1,50, 173 CRORES, TOTALING AROUND ₹5.9 LAKH CRORES TO THE PUBLIC EXCHEQUER BY AUCTION



Pranab Mukherjee, sidelining Telecom Minister A. Raja and the public exchequer got a huge sum of ₹1,06, 200 crores. This figure ignited the anti-corruption wave and opposition demanding the removal of Telecom Minister A Raja who allotted 2G Spectrum and 122 licenses to many companies, most of them from real estate sectors, at a throwaway price of just ₹9, 200 crores.

Raja gave telecom licenses and spectrum without auction in 2008 at a price arrived in 2001. In 2001, the pan-Indian license (total 22 licenses) value was ₹1651 crore when India had just four million mobile phone users. But in 2008, India’s number of mobile phone users crossed 300 million, and the Minister, ignoring Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s direction, gave away licenses and spectrum at a seven-year-old fixed rate. Among the 122 licenses, around 86 licenses, did not get clearance from the Regulator TRAI to start a telecom business.

By that time BJP leader Subramanian Swamy and lawyer Prashant Bhushan approached the Supreme Court demanding the cancellation of all 122 tainted licenses granted by Raja and conducting fresh auction. The CBI in its FIR in 2009 on the 2G Scam pegged the loss to the public exchequer at 30,000 cr. Things got murkier when the beneficiary companies started selling their shares to multinational companies for huge premiums. For example, Swan Telecom sold around half of its shares to UAE telecom giant Etisalat for more than ₹4,500 crore.

**HOW CAG ARRIVED AT THE LOSS
FIGURE OF ₹1.76 LAKH CRORE?**

In November 2010, the CAG submitted a report to Parliament outlining the illegalities in the 2G Scam allotment and claiming a notional loss of ₹1.76 lakh crore in the auction. For this, CAG Vinod Rai was maligned and bullied by

Congress and DMK MPs in JPC and PAC and in the public domain. How the auditors finalised the loss figure is a matter of record in the CAG’s depositions before JPC and PAC. The auditors had derived around 10 types of rates for calculating the expected loss to the public exchequer.

The figures were based on the sale of shares to multinationals by the beneficiary companies in the 2G scam and the companies reaping the benefit of Dual Policy (Anil Ambani’s Reliance, Tata, and Shyam Telecom). Somehow probes against the Dual Policy, the fountainhead of 2G Scam fizzled out. The lowest loss figure arrived at was a ₹60,000 crore loss based on the sale of shares of Swan Telecom to Etisalat. The highest loss figure arrived at was ₹4.25 lakh crore based on the sale of Tata shares to Japanese firm DoCoMo. As this price was based on the brand value of Tata, the auditors did not consider it.

At last CAG auditors after deliberations decided to stick to the rates of the 3G and BWA auction of April 2010, and based on these rates the 2G Scam loss was estimated at ₹1.76 lakh crore. Interestingly, the BWA spectrum was later conveniently termed the 4G spectrum. This was seen as a real Indian Jugad. In February 2012, Supreme Court cancelled all 122 licenses allotted by Raja and ordered an immediate auction and also called for an auction of all natural resources, later leading to the cancellation of all coal blocks. The Government went for Presidential Reference in the Supreme Court, which justified its decision to auction all natural resources in place of arbitrary allocations.

Many of the operators and the authorities resorted to every possible trick to sabotage the first auction in November 2012 after the Supreme Court verdict of Justices GS Singhvi and AK Ganguly. Airtel’s Sunil Mittal even said the auction would not last a day. But just 19 licenses were

sold at ₹9400 crore, while in 2G Scam 122 licenses were given away arbitrarily for just ₹9,200 crore.

The merit of the auction can be seen in the rise of rates from 2014 onwards. In February 2014, the spectrum auction bagged ₹62,162 crore to the public exchequer and the rates were higher than the 2010 3G auction, justifying the CAG’s loss figure based on the 3G auction rates. In March 2015, the spectrum auction fetched the government ₹1,10,000 crore, and in December 2016 the spectrum auction brought in ₹65,789 crore to the public exchequer.

Again in March 2021, the spectrum auction gave ₹77, 814 crores whereas the recent 5G auction provided the highest figure ₹1,50, 173 crores, totaling around ₹5.9 lakh crores to the public exchequer by auction.

**WHEN WILL 5G SERVICE WILL BE
AVAILABLE IN BSNL AND MTNL?**

The full optimization of 5G technology will be reached only when the country’s BSNL and MTNL are equipped with the 5G technology. It is high time for the merger of BSNL and MTNL by delisting MTNL from stock exchanges. Sadly, BSNL and MTNL are not yet fully equipped with 4G. The Narendra Modi Government has come out with a huge package to revive these two strategic PSU telecom companies. If the plans work out, then only the 5G technology could reach most of the users across the country.

Incidentally, all the private operators only roll out their technology in Metros Cities and urban areas based on commercial viability. Since only BSNL can reach out to the entire country, hence 5G and all technologies must be made available to the public sector telecom firm for the benefit of the entire Indian population.

(The writer is a Special Correspondent of The Pioneer)

CLARIFICATION

The Uttar Pradesh Government has dismissed as “baseless” the report “Money spinner transfer industry” published in the agenda section of the Pioneer dated. July 31, 2022. Additional Chief Secretary , Information department, Navneet Sehgal has issued a strongly-worded rebuttal to the report and said it is not based on fact .

The Pioneer would like to clarify it has no intention to cast aspersion on the functioning of the state government and has even highlighted the stern steps taken by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to curb corruption. The story talks at length about how the Chief Minister has taken administrative action against over 1,000 officials to weed out corruption in the government departments. The transfer rates mentioned in the story were hearsay without corroborating the facts and were unintentional and regrettable.

LONELINESS—A SILENT KILLER

Loneliness can affect anybody. Experts define it as a “distressing feeling that accompanies the perception that one’s social needs are not being met by the quantity or especially the quality of one’s social relationships.” Covid-19-induced restrictions have just added to the woes. The experts tell ARCHANA JYOTI that everyone who may be feeling lonely, or isolated should reach out to someone, and if they know someone who they feel might be lonely, or isolated to get in touch.

Seventy years old Kamlesh Patel (name changed) who retired as a senior bureaucrat, is a lonely man now. With his wife passing away two years ago, both the children settled abroad, and no close friends and relatives around, he is leading a secluded life in his 3-BHK apartment in a posh locality in the national capital. When in job, Patel failed to balance his personal/professional and social life. So, he is now rejected by those who really mattered in his life then. Now, he cannot blame anyone but himself for this situation that led him to loneliness.

“Thirty-five years old Sanjay Rastogi is surrounded by so many people, but he is still leading a lonely life. It’s all because of an inferiority complex, he developed when he failed to convert his dream of becoming an IAS into reality. A brilliant student, Rastogi couldn’t accept any job lower than an IAS officer. Now, he avoids social contact and is in a kind of confinement because of low self-esteem, sadness, and fear of being repulsed/rebuffed.

These two cases are just the tip of the iceberg. As per the findings of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) released in 2017, over 12 per cent of Indian youth reported feeling depressed often, and 8 per cent reported feeling lonely quite frequently.

A study “What causes loneliness among household heads: a study based in a primary setting in Mumbai, India” found that around 7 per cent of respondents often felt lonely, while 21 per cent sometimes experienced loneliness in the last seven days preceding the survey date.

“Household heads with two or more chronic diseases had higher odds of loneliness than household heads without any chronic disease. The odds of loneliness were almost 3 times higher among females as compared to males. Household heads living alone (single) had higher odds to suffer from loneliness than those living in a joint family,” it said.

The study conducted by Vidya Yadav, Assistant Professor P.G. Department of Geography, College of Commerce, Arts & Science, Patna, Patliputra University, Patna, Shekhar Chauhan and Ratna Patel, Department of Public Health and Mortality Studies, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai has been published in the BMJ Public Health.

They researchers noted that lifestyle of urban dwellers adversely affects their health not only physically but mentally too. In this context, loneliness rapidly emerged as a public health concern in the urban part.



“Furthermore, many identified the risk factors of loneliness that could be avoided if timely preventive measures could be taken along with adequate care. Improvement in the aesthetic design of future slum rehabilitation projects can promote a socially cohesive environment,” they found.

Situation is not encouraging elsewhere. A study in 2020 by Cigna found that 61 per cent of Americans reported being lonely in 2019, up from 54 per cent in 2018. Some figures suggest loneliness affects the well-being of as many as 3 in 10 people. Similarly, yet another study same year but conducted by the University of Edinburgh suggests that the causes of loneliness differ depending on the age of the individual.

For example, older adults experience loneliness more frequently as a result of living alone, while middle-aged individuals aren’t as likely to report living alone as a cause of their loneliness.



JR Gupta, President of Senior Citizens Council of Delhi avers saying that “Older individuals are more likely to have lost friends and family members, and they are more likely to experience medical or physical limitations that restrict their opportunities for activities and socializing.”

Recently released Longitudinal Ageing Study of India too says that approximately 23% of the elderly stay

alone, without children. While loneliness can have an impact across ages and be relevant irrespective of whether you stay alone or in a full house, it is most common among those above 60 and affects almost everyone at some point in time.

Gupta says that on their part they have been organising various tours and get together events so that their elder members do not feel that they are alone in their travail. “Sharing reduces the pain of loneliness,” he asserts.



Dr. RK Dhamija, Director of Delhi-based Institute of Behaviour Human Allied Sciences (IBHAS) emphasizes that loneliness is both a cause and consequence of mental health disorders. Sometimes though, “loneliness may result in lifestyle modifications such as joining fitness classes, seeking outdoor adventure.”

Although loneliness and being alone are commonly confused, being alone doesn’t necessarily mean someone is lonely. “Loneliness is a feeling while being alone is a situation or state of being, which is not inherently negative,” says Nina Vasani, psychiatrist and professor at Stanford University School of Medicine and chief medical officer at Real, an online mental wellness membership site.

“You can feel lonely even when you’re surrounded by other people—such as a partner, family, co-workers or friends,” Dr. Vasani says.

Tips to Manage that Feeling

But there is light at the end of tunnel. RABYA KHATOON, Delhi-based clinical psychologist talks about how to beat loneliness.



Take control of your time: When you feel lonely. It means time for yourself to make a list of your goals and try to accomplish them. · **Self-care:** It tends to improve mood, quality of life, and physical and mental health · **Manage your leisure time with your skills:** You allow doing your skills like painting, cooking, dancing and some other activities. · **Join a social group:** Join dance class, club, swimming, and some other social groups help to reduce your loneliness and it also helps to increase your physical and mental energy. · **Give priority to close relationships:** Relationship matters in loneliness. Keep in touch with your loved one whether you touch it online or offline. · **Self-love:** Be your own

best friend and gives value to your own work. It helps to improve your self-esteem which supports physical and psychological growth. · **Enjoy your own company:** Connect with your own pleasant memories. · **Active lifestyle:** You can beat your loneliness with your active lifestyle. Make activity schedule include your sleep 6-7hour, healthy foods, exercise, fun, and traveling. · **Enjoy the little moment:** Celebrate little moments like birthdays, organize a small party for fun, reading books that help to improve mental and physical health. · **Count blessings:** Count your achievements and do appreciate them. It develops a positive approach toward your life.

Nations Gear up to Tackle Loneliness



Delhi Government has started ‘Happiness Curriculum’ to teach students how to keep the stress and loneliness at bay

Various Governments across the world are gradually waking up to this silent killer. If the UK appointed a designated loneliness minister in 2018 to reach out to its older people, Japan last year took similar step after it felt that loneliness is afflicting across different age groups, including children, young people, women and older people. Rising cases of suicide was immediate trigger.

In India, Delhi Government has started ‘Happiness Classes’ while a few years ago, Madhya Pradesh set up a ‘Happiness Department’, with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan saying it will work to ensure ‘happiness in the lives of the common people’ along the lines of the neighboring country Bhutan.

Since 2008, Bhutan has

established the Ministry of Happiness to measure the happiness of its citizens. In the population census form, there is a column to fill in the information about citizens’ level of life satisfaction. This information is acquired using a holistic approach to measuring citizens’ happiness and well-being that also provides guidelines to design evidence-based policies.

Happiness classes have brought a pathbreaking change in the student’s mindset, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia says explaining that the “curriculum has changed students’ learning experience for the better and how to tackle stress. Students’ focus on studies (is) increasing. Children are staying stress-free.”

Dr Dhamija agrees as he cautioned that solitude and loneliness should not be explained in similar ways. Solitude is enjoyed by people and it leads to creativity, and self-realization, and is totally an approach to developing one own individual space.

Loneliness is basically of three types - Emotional, Social, and Situational. Situational loneliness is when we lose someone close to our heart (bereavement), get bullied, physically/mentally abused, have chronic disease, and post-retirement fear of loss of Income, elaborates **Dr Smita Deshpande, a professor of psychiatry at St. John’s Research Institute, St. John’s National Academy of Health Sciences in Bangalore.**



Secondly, our egoistic attitude, underestimating/avoiding people for not being of our standard creates hatred for us, and people gradually start leaving us. And our high ambition to see our children get good jobs and earn a lot of money takes them away from us. They run after money leaving us behind and getting detached from us due to their busy/hectic work schedule, she points out.

Rajeev Kumar, Official on Special Duty (OSD) in Delhi Government’s Education Department who has gone through isolation stage as a Covid patient feels that people do not have time to talk to each other in this net-savvy world. New concept that “it’s no use of telling or advising anybody” is fast catching up. This also lead to loneliness even you when you have friends. Sometimes even when living in the same house they talk through Whatsapp or phone calls from their rooms. This is leading to decline in verbal communication, he says matter-of-factly.

Dr Dhamija concludes with the warning that, “Chronic feelings of loneliness can have huge adverse impact on anybody’s quality of life. If left untreated, these feelings can lead to more serious issues such as depression or other mental health conditions.

“These can be Cognitive decline/Depression/Heart disease/High blood pressure (hypertension)/Obesity/Weakened immune system /Alzheimer’s disease. Hence, it is important to reach out to a mental health professional, if you are feeling lonely.”



Modi to inaugurate 2,400-bed Amrita Hospital in Faridabad on August 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will inaugurate Amrita Hospital, Sector 88 in Faridabad, Haryana on August 24, 2022.

After making its mark in South India, Amrita Hospital is being started to cater to the patients in North India under the auspices of the Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MAM), a world-renowned humanitarian and spiritual leader who will also grace the occasion. State Governor Bandarua Dattatreya and State Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, will also attend the function along with other dignitaries.

The 2,400-bed healthcare institution will be India’s largest private sector hospital. This is the second large-scale Amrita Hospital in India after the iconic 1,200-bed Amrita Hospital, Kochi, that was established 25 years ago by the Mata Amritanandamayi Math.

Dr. Sanjeev K Singh, Resident Medical Director of Amrita Hospital, Faridabad said that cutting-edge medical research will be a strong thrust area. “The hospital will have a dedicated research block spread across a seven-floor building that totals three lakh sq. ft. with exclusive Grade A to D GMP labs. There will be a focus on identifying newer diagnostic markers, AI, ML, Bioinformatics, etc. We are in the process of entering into research collaborations with some of the world’s biggest names in medical science,” he said.

“The comprehensive transplant program offered by the hospital will be among the biggest in the country,” Dr. Sanjeev K Singh said.

Dr Prashant Mehta, Senior Consultant and Asst Professor, Department of Hematology/Medical Oncology and BMT at the Hospital added that the institute will be one-of-its kind in the country, trying to reach out to the poor and needy.

“There will be a special focus on indigenous research and innovation so as to develop therapies and solutions relevant to our country and our specific health related issues.

HARYANA GOVERNOR BANDARUA DATTATREYA AND CHIEF MINISTER MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR WILL ATTEND THE FUNCTION ALONG WITH OTHER DIGNITARIES

“This indigenous innovation is an important step towards reducing the cost of healthcare in India more importantly for major illnesses like cancer, severe heart, kidney and liver ailments, solid organ and bone marrow transplants, and multi drug resistant infections,” he said.

The hospital’s benefits will go beyond providing access to the latest in healthcare technology and high-quality patient care in the Delhi-NCR. Once fully operational, the hospital will have around 10,000 staff and more than 800 doctors.

As part of its community initiatives, Amrita Hospitals has already started medical outreach programs at various residents welfare associations in and around Faridabad. These include awareness programs for the elderly with a focus on those suffering from neurological ailments, health talks for school children, general health checkups, and many more.

The Hospital is considered one of the country’s largest green-building healthcare projects with a very low carbon footprint, and it is an end-to-end paperless facility with zero waste discharge.

Amrita Hospital at Kochi has many firsts in its credit. For instance, in 2015, South Asia’s first ever successful Bilateral Hand Transplant Surgery was done at the Hospital. The same year, it won the British Medical Journal Award for the Best Surgical Team in South Asia after also completing the region’s second successful double hand transplant.

That Incomparable Born Again Feeling After Dying A Million Deaths

There are bad days and there are horrific days. Even in the ‘best’ of malignancies, one cannot predict which way it will go. You have to tread the slow and painful path to reach the other side, DR NITA RADHAKRISHNAN, a child cancer specialist, shares her experience about how important it is to make sure those patients, most of whom come from the poor strata, are taken care of in every necessary aspect, from diagnosis to survivorship.

Yesterday, one more kid passed the golden hoop of 5 years to reach the other side of cancer care. The team that stood with her heaved a collective sigh of relief as she got the ‘survivor’ label. We hope and pray that she lives a full life without any side effects of cancer or its treatment. She hails from Uttarakhand and was diagnosed in 2016 with lymphoblastic lymphoma. The entire treatment over 2 years needed a lot of patience and perseverance from both sides; the family and the hospital. There were bad days and there were horrific days. Even in the ‘best’ of malignancies, one cannot predict which way it will go. You have to tread the slow and painful path to reach the other side. Every blood test, every hospital visit and every admission is a hurdle you have to jump to reach the finish line.

As a person working with sick children, I have realised that health undoubtedly is the biggest luxury for all of us.



DR NITA RADHAKRISHNAN Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Pediatric Hematology-Oncology, Post-Graduate Institute of Child Health, Noida.

We did not have any control over who gets a disease or who doesn’t. In most cases, we don’t even know why someone gets a disease in the first place. We also don’t have much control over who will make it and who will not. Many children whom we think will never survive, come out beautifully.

Cancer indeed is a great leveller. Although gaps do exist between high and low-

Cancer indeed is a great leveller. Although gaps do exist between high and low-income countries and between affluent and poor families, most of those are superficial or cosmetic. The biological probability of responding to treatment remains uniform



A doctor-patient interaction is held on the last Friday of each month to boost the courage of the families at the Noida Hospital

income countries and between affluent and poor families, most of those are superficial or cosmetic. The biological probability of responding to

treatment remains uniform. Things may not go as hoped for in the best of countries and the best of centres; often there are horrible infections that

don’t give you time to react. Often there are dreadful cancers that don’t respond to anything.

When we start treatment

for cancer, this is what most doctors tell their patients. That there is a process to it and timelines to follow. I often draw a mountain and tell them we are at the beginning of this trek uphill. We need to work together to reach the top. Everyone in the team should speak the language of hope and comfort. We need to continue the trek. The family has to put their life on hold for the duration of treatment; festivals, weddings and parties will be there next year also. We try to compensate for lost childhood and replicate life’s little joys in our hospital wards.

It can be overwhelming for the hospital team as well. We go through this rite of passage of analysing each and every child who did not do well. Abandoning treatment is perhaps the biggest tragedy of pediatric cancer care in our country. It is understandable if we lose a child to an aggressive disease. But to lose a child with a “perfectly curable” dis-

ease due to the ignorance of parents or relatives is unacceptable. A small part of you dies with each difficult patient. You are never the same as you were yesterday; you are warrior in each situation, richer in experience, calmer as a person and more restrained in your response.

As Gibran said, “the river cannot go back”. One has to keep going, with faith in a higher power, in yourself and in humanity and a promise to yourself to do your best. Each decision is vital; every child and every outcome stays with you. Happiness and sadness become parts of the same continuum. We learn to accept both; we pray. As doctors, we also realize that our profession is one of the biggest customer satisfaction portals. That at every age and stage of our lives, we are “rateable”. Most of them understand and stand with you in fighting the bigger battle of the disease. Many of them continue with you as your extended family.

Indian foreign policy comes of age

"India has been invited to G-7 underscoring the country's growing geostrategic role in the world...As the world enters this dangerous new era, India could be the deciding factor, so no matter where you are in the world, the choices made in New Delhi mattered."

— DW News (German news channel)

Post-Independence India was known for its idealistic foreign policy: The famous "non-alignment". Did it best serve the Indian interest at the time? Did India receive the support of the international community on Kashmir, and China or Pakistan wars? Under Indira Gandhi, India's diplomacy turned realistic; if the Indian help in the Independence of Bangladesh was a smashing success, alienating the US was the cost.

Afterwards, hitherto foreign policy can be defined more by its passivity, accomplishments rather erratic; marked by the lack of a long driven, well-planned, sharply strategised, clear eyed, crisply defined policy. The advantages India accrued had more to do with its geo-strategic and economic position and lesser with astute diplomatic haggle. Outcome: India could never punch above its weight in the geopolitical arena, and thus spoke from a position of weakness, feigned helplessness towards its two hostile neighbours, and consoled itself as a "soft power".

Post the surgical strikes in Pakistan, Galwan clashes and standing up to the Western pressure over trade with Russia, every single world capital knows that India is no longer just a "soft power". With missions like Vande Bharat and Operation Ganga, India has proved its capability and commitment to safeguarding every

one of its citizens abroad. From dealing with Taliban to handling Sri Lankan economic collapse, India's diplomacy has proved that it is nimble-footed and ready for any challenge. India is a major strategic player in the fast-changing, unpredictable and turbulent geopolitical landscape of our times, courted and respected by all. Even in its difficult neighbourhood, India has been able to bring about a sense of stability in its relations with smaller neighbours, which are being seduced by Beijing to no end; emerging as a reliable and most dominant player.

It took the Modi Government's advent at the helm to replace the "non-alignment" with "multi-alignment" or "strategic autonomy", what that has broadly translated into is a wider alignment with Washington, and adoption of its China containment Indo-Pacific policy, without surrendering autonomy over other issues, like relationship with Russia; and creating strategic issue-based convergences with different nations, including China. Today, the Indian foreign policy is one of the sharpest, clearly, boldly and assertively driven by its own national interest, capable of withstanding big power pressure tactics.

Modi-Jaishankar foreign policy construct

"In this world of all against all, India's goal should be to move closer towards the strategic sweet spot," said S Jaishankar in his book *"The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World"*.

The present foreign policy couldn't exist without either of its two main pillars: Prime Minister Modi and Foreign Minister S Jaishankar — the dexterous ball jugglers, the risk-takers, the realists —



whose personal qualities, coherent ideological moorings and shared ambitious vision of India's place in the world, have been essential for the effective construct and execution of the present policy. The main objectives of the foreign policy today are: Changing India's image in the world, creation of partnerships on equal terms with generosity towards smaller nations, proactively shaping the global agenda and big issues, actively exploring and leveraging foreign relationships for domestic development, creating people-centric foreign policy and use of Indian culture and thoughts in influencing international initiatives and discourses.

The priorities to be achieved through foreign policy are national security, economic development and national progress. Geographically, India's focus

areas are: India's neighbourhood and extended neighbourhood (South East Asia, West Asia, Central Asia and Indian Ocean region), big powers (US, Europe, Japan, Russia), developing larger footprints, more relationships and more visibility (when it comes to strategically located nations).

Deft balancing of nations and alliances hostile to each other is one of the greatest accomplishments of the Indian diplomacy. Engaging influentially in QUAD, BRICS and G-7 summits and developing understanding of Indian position on Ukraine by all of India's partners; India today is a singular nation that buys S-400 missiles and oil from Moscow while maintaining historically closest ties with the Washington and other QUAD partners. Even to the envy of US, India has cultivated intimate relations with the Gulf

nations (especially UAE) and Israel while preserving good terms with Tehran.

The proactiveness of Indian foreign policy is visible in conducting first-ever summits of: International Solar Alliance, Summit with Central Asian nations, Summit with Pacific Island nations and India-Nordic Summit. India is shouldering global responsibilities by supplying vaccines and medicines to the world amid pandemic, providing humanitarian help to Ukraine and supplying wheat to needy nations.

The quintessential Modi style of diplomacy is to have a great personal rapport with the leaders of other nations, which paid off dividends when he rang up Putin and Zelensky, rescuing Indian students stuck in Ukraine's crossfire.

Successfully standing up to Western moral supremacy is

another significant development in the Indian diplomacy: For the first time the Indian foreign policy establishment has alluded, that no nation is entitled to sit as a judge over others when it comes to human rights. Samantha Power, administrator USAID, on her recent visit to India, spoke of the divisive forces in "US and India".

Partnerships and alliances

The Ukraine war is a reminder of the lesson that success in a conflict depends not just on economic and military power of a nation but also the number of its friends. Between India and China, that could be a deciding factor. While China is out losing friends and credibility, India's actively building and strengthening alliances and deepening bilateral engagements. Apart from joining QUAD, I2U2 and Indo

Pacific Economic Framework, India is also reinvigorating BIMSTEC.

The alliances are not just for hedging security concerns for future, but are actively pursued to serve national interest at present, like setting up of "integrated food parks" and renewable energy projects in India by I2U2 partners, supply chain resilience initiative with Japan and Australia, signing critical defence technology transfer pact with US, receiving US investment and technology in crucial areas, selling missiles to Vietnam and Philippines, signing FTAs with UAE and Australia, Japanese partnership in infrastructure, technology, innovation and startups and undertaking projects in collaboration in third countries in South Asia and Africa, exponential increase in Indian-Israel defence cooperation and collaboration in developing next generation technologies, France's active collaboration in "Atmanirbhar Bharat" in defence projects.

Investment by UAE in J&K, India's plans of holding the G-20 summit in 2023 there, passing the torch relay for the 44th Chess Olympiad through Srinagar, is how India is utilising foreign engagements for furthering its security and territorial sovereignty goals.

In the words of Jaishankar, "India is reclaiming its space in the world today as a civilization", "as a power that can bridge divides". Utilising this effective foreign policy for economic progress, would require systemic transformation of economic ecosystem. Does India possess the capability and discipline to become a global power and not just a regional one, resolve global disputes and create global narratives? Only time will tell.

(The author is a foreign policy expert and a lawyer)

Post the surgical strikes in Pakistan, Galwan clashes and standing up to the Western pressure over trade with Russia, every single world capital knows that India is no longer just a "soft power". Today, the Indian foreign policy is one of the sharpest, clearly, boldly and assertively driven by its own national interest, capable of withstanding big power pressure tactics



SONAL SHUKLA

PERSPECTIVE

US economy growing but still slowing

US employers added an astonishing 5,28,000 jobs last month despite flashing warning signs of an economic downturn. Economists had expected only 2,50,000 new jobs in America last month, in a drop-off from June's revised 3,98,000. Instead, July proved to be the best month since February. Unemployment dropped another notch, from 3.6 per cent to 3.5 per cent, matching the more than 50-year low reached just before the pandemic took hold. All the confounding numbers only make the long-term outlook for the economy more muddled

Whether the US economy is heading for a recession got more difficult to answer on Friday, when a report showed employers hired hundreds of thousands more workers last month than expected. American employers added an astonishing 5,28,000 jobs last month despite flashing warning signs of an economic downturn, easing fears of a recession and handing President Joe Biden some good news heading into the midterm elections. Economists had expected only 2,50,000 new jobs in America last month, in a drop-off from June's revised 3,98,000. Instead, July proved to be the best month since February. Unemployment dropped another notch, from 3.6 per cent to 3.5 per cent, matching the more than 50-year low reached just before the pandemic took hold.

The stunning strength made clear that a linchpin of the economy remains solid. That's even though inflation is running at its worst pace in 40 years, the economy's output shrunk through the first half of the year and rising interest rates are dragging on housing and other industries. All the confounding numbers only make the long-term outlook for the economy more muddled.

On one hand, two straight quarters of economic contraction is a long-held, though informal, definition of a recession. It would mark a quick turnaround barely two years after the official end of the pandemic recession. Yet can a recession really occur when so many people still have jobs and are making more money?

It's the latest head-scratcher regarding an economy that has confounded Federal Reserve policymakers and many economists since growth screeched to a halt in March 2020 as Covid-19 struck and 20 million Americans were suddenly thrown out of work.

While most economists — and Fed Chair Jerome Powell — have said they don't think the US economy is currently in a recession, with Friday's data cementing the case for many, expectations are still high for an economic downturn to begin later this year or next.

Friday's strong jobs report may actually increase the chances of a recession because it could embolden the Federal Reserve to stay aggressive in hiking interest rates in order to beat back inflation. Higher rates slow the economy by making purchases of homes, cars and things bought on credit cards more expensive, and the Fed is jacking up rates at the fastest pace since the early 1980s.

Perhaps even more important than whether a recession occurs is whether workers' paychecks catch up with inflation. So far, gains in average wages have not, and the pain is disproportionately hitting lower-income and Black and Hispanic households. As a result, Americans have increasingly soured on the economy.

That may be what moves more people in November's midterm elections than whether or not a recession has officially begun.

So how, exactly, do we know when an economy is in recession? Here are some answers to such questions:

Who decides when a recession has started?

Recessions are officially declared by the obscure-sounding National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), a group of economists whose Business Cycle Dating Committee defines a recession as "a significant decline in economic activity that is spread across the economy and lasts more than a few months."

The committee considers trends in hiring as a key measure in determining recessions.



A sign advertises for help The Golden Rod, a popular restaurant and candy shop on June 1, 2022, in York Beach, Maine. AP

It also assesses many other data points, including gauges of income, employment, inflation-adjusted spending, retail sales and factory output. It puts heavy weight on jobs and a gauge of inflation-adjusted income that excludes Government support payments such as Social Security.

Yet the NBER typically doesn't declare a recession until well after one has begun, sometimes for up to a year. Economists consider a half-point rise in the unemployment rate, averaged over several months, as the most historically reliable sign of a downturn. On Friday, the latest jobs report showed the unemployment rate matched its lowest level in more than 50 years.

Do two straight quarters of economic contraction equal a recession?

That's a common rule of thumb, but it isn't an official definition. Still, in the past, it has been a useful measure. Michael Strain, an economist at the right-leaning American

Enterprise Institute, notes that in each of the past 10 times that the economy shrank for two consecutive quarters, a recession has resulted.

Still, even Strain isn't sure we're in recession now. Like many economists, he notes that the underlying drivers of the economy — consumer spending, business investment, home purchases — all grew in the first quarter.

Overall gross domestic product — the broadest measure of the nation's output — declined at a 1.6 per cent annual rate from January through March because of one-off factors, including a sharp jump in imports and a post-holiday season drop in businesses' inventories. Many economists expect that when US GDP is revised later this year, the first quarter may even turn out to be positive.

"The basic story is that the economy is growing but still slowing, and that slowdown really accelerated in the second quarter," Strain said.

Don't a lot of Americans

think a recession is coming?

Yes, because many people now feel more financially burdened. With wage gains trailing inflation for most people, higher prices for such essentials as gas, food, and rent have eroded Americans' spending power.

Walmart recently reported that higher gas and food costs have forced its shoppers to reduce their purchases of discretionary spending such as new clothing, a clear sign that consumer spending, a key driver of the economy, is weakening. The nation's largest retailer, Walmart reduced its profit outlook and said it will have to discount more items like furniture and electronics.

And the Fed's rate hikes have caused average mortgage rates to nearly double to 4.99 per cent, causing a sharp fall in home sales and construction.

Higher rates will also likely weigh on businesses' willingness to invest in new buildings, machinery and other equipment. If companies reduce spending and investment, they'll also start to slow

hiring. Rising caution among companies about spending freely could lead eventually to layoffs. If the economy were to grow more fearful, consumers would further reduce spending.

The Fed's rapid rate hikes have raised the likelihood of recession in the next two years to nearly 50 per cent, Goldman Sachs economists have said. And Bank of America economists now forecast a "mild" recession later this year, while Deutsche Bank expects a recession early next year.

What are some signs of an impending recession?

The clearest signal that a recession is under way, economists say, would be a steady rise in job losses and a surge in unemployment. In the past, an increase in the unemployment rate of three-tenths of a percentage point, on average over the previous three months, has meant that a recession will soon follow.

Many economists monitor the number of people who seek unemployment benefits each week, which indicates whether layoffs are worsening. Weekly applications for jobless aid, averaged over the past four weeks, have been rising recently and have topped 250,000. While that is a potentially concerning sign, it is still a low level historically.

Any other signals to watch for?

Many economists also monitor changes in the interest payments, or yields, on different bonds for a recession signal known as an "inverted yield curve." This occurs when the yield on the 10-year Treasury falls below the yield on a short-term Treasury, such as the 3-month T-bill. That is unusual. Normally, longer-term bonds pay investors a richer yield in exchange for tying up their money for a

longer period.

Inverted yield curves generally mean that investors foresee a recession that will compel the Fed to slash rates. Inverted curves often predate recessions. Still, it can take 18 to 24 months for a downturn to arrive after the yield curve inverts.

For weeks, the yield on the two-year Treasury has exceeded the 10-year yield, suggesting that markets expect a recession soon. Many analysts say, though, that comparing the 3-month yield to the 10-year has a better recession-forecasting track record. Those rates are not inverted now, though the gap has narrowed.

Will the fed keep raising rates even as economy slows?

The economy's flashing signals — slowing growth with strong hiring — have put the Fed in a tough spot. Chair Jerome Powell is aiming for a "soft landing" in which the economy weakens enough to slow hiring and wage growth without causing a recession and brings inflation back to the Fed's 2 per cent target.

But Powell has acknowledged that such an outcome has grown more difficult to achieve. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's Covid-19 lockdowns have driven up prices for energy food, and many manufactured parts in the US.

Powell has also indicated that if necessary, the Fed will keep raising rates even amid a weak economy if that's what's needed to tame inflation.

"Is there a risk that we would go too far?" Powell asked last month. "Certainly there's a risk, but I wouldn't agree that's the biggest risk to the economy. The biggest mistake to make... would be to fail to restore price stability."

(Courtesy: AP)

43 Commonwealth countries, 19 bodies join hands

Increasing organ donation, tackling health inequalities

As part of the Commonwealth Games legacy, 43 Commonwealth countries and 19 national and international organisations have come together to share expertise in organ donation and transplantation to save more lives globally.

The 'Commonwealth Tribute to Life Project', led by NHS Blood and Transplant, is the culmination of three years' work and provides a framework for the sharing of knowledge and expertise to increase ethical organ donation and transplantation. It seeks to further health equality for the benefit of all Commonwealth citizens.

"We are delighted after three years of work, to see so many of the organ donation and transplant community from around the world coming together in a shared commitment to improve organ

donation rates and save more lives," said Dr Satya Sharma MBE, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands who has Chaired the project.

"This Memorandum of Understanding unites us all in one shared vision for the future of organ donation and transplantation and has the ability to help us tackle the global issue of health inequalities," he said.

An official legacy project of

Birmingham 2022

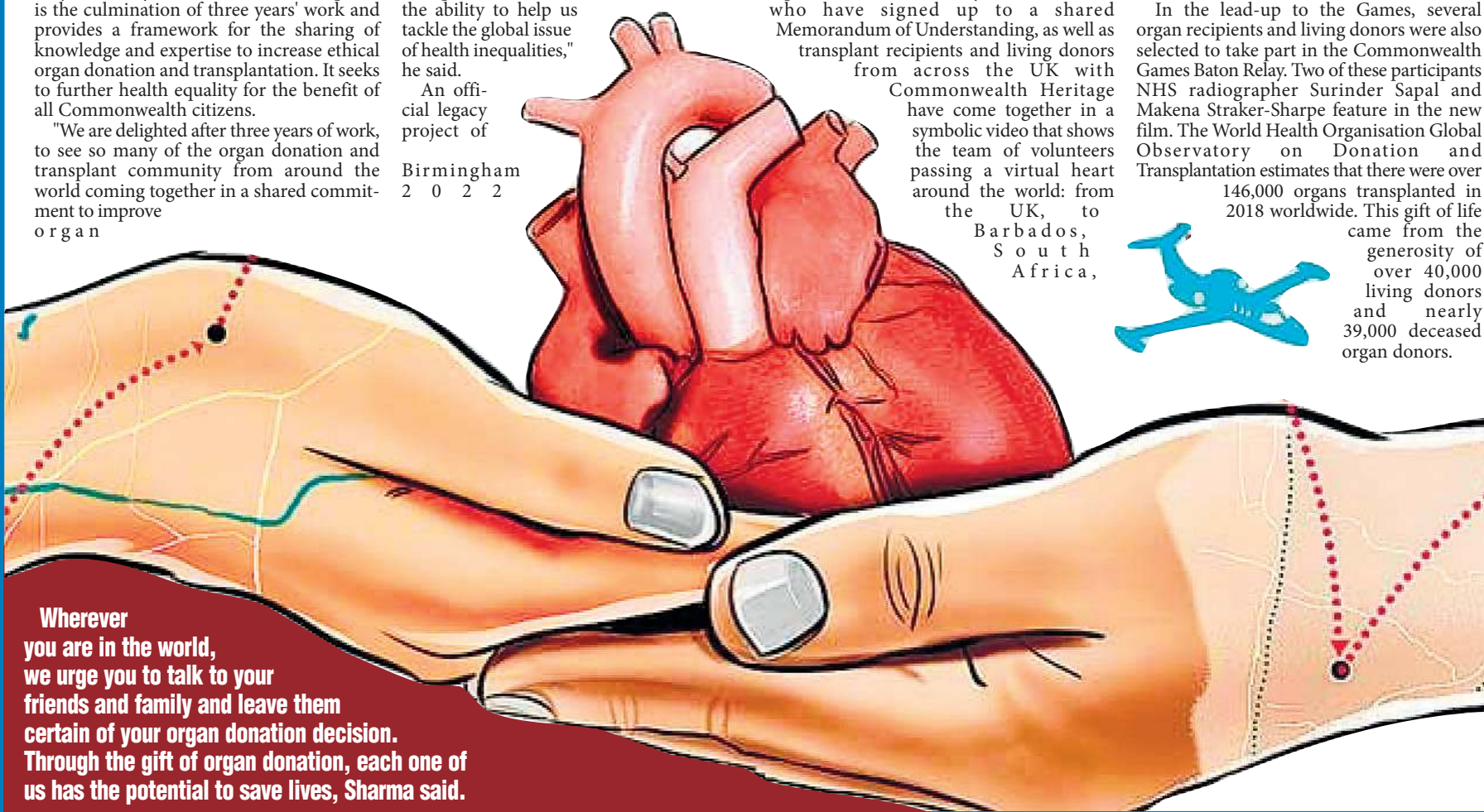
Commonwealth Games and part of the Games United By Birmingham 2022' community programme, the project presents a unique opportunity to increase levels of organ and tissue donation and transplantation globally.

To celebrate this occasion, organ donation representatives from many of the countries who have signed up to a shared Memorandum of Understanding, as well as transplant recipients and living donors from across the UK with Commonwealth Heritage have come together in a symbolic video that shows the team of volunteers passing a virtual heart around the world: from the UK, to Barbados, South Africa,

Canada, Bangladesh and Australia among others.

Wherever you are in the world, we urge you to talk to your friends and family and leave them certain of your organ donation decision. Through the gift of organ donation, each one of us has the potential to save lives, Sharma said.

In the lead-up to the Games, several organ recipients and living donors were also selected to take part in the Commonwealth Games Baton Relay. Two of these participants NHS radiographer Surinder Sapal and Makena Straker-Sharpe feature in the new film. The World Health Organisation Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation estimates that there were over 146,000 organs transplanted in 2018 worldwide. This gift of life came from the generosity of over 40,000 living donors and nearly 39,000 deceased organ donors.



Wherever you are in the world, we urge you to talk to your friends and family and leave them certain of your organ donation decision. Through the gift of organ donation, each one of us has the potential to save lives, Sharma said.

Amsterdam Pride's canal parade



The farmers' boat was decorated with flags saying Proud of the Farmers and No farmer, no food.

Hundreds of thousands of spectators lined Amsterdam's historic canals Saturday to celebrate Canal Parade, a flotilla of 80 brightly decorated boats packed with partying and singing people waving rainbow flags, balloons and umbrellas. The boats representing rights groups, bars, clothing brands and even the Dutch military made their way slowly through the waterways in a resumption of the hugely popular LGBTQ Pride event after two years cancelled amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We are looking forward to a special edition where being who you are and loving who you want is the norm and the struggle for equal rights is the message, Amsterdam Pride director Lucien Spee de Castillo Ruiz said.

Spectators were packed several people deep along canals and on bridges to watch the 25th version of the parade that was the highlight of a nine-day pride event in the Dutch capital.

Early in the event, police

stopped a boat supporting farmers who have for weeks protested government plans to slash nitrogen emissions. Only 80 boats were allowed to take part in the event, and they had to register ahead of time.

The farmers' boat was decorated with flags saying Proud of the Farmers and No farmer, no food. On board was a person in a cow costume and others wearing pink clogs and pink cowboy hats.

Man who destroyed vast forest wins legal battle over demise of park

In a move that shocked environmentalists, the government of Brazil's third-largest state has given up a legal fight over protecting a state park in one of the Amazon's most biodiverse areas. The upshot of that decision is that a man responsible for the deforestation of huge swaths of protected land wins with finality a lawsuit against the government. The park will cease to exist.

Antonio Jos Rossi Junqueira Vilela has been fined millions of dollars for deforestation in Brazil and for stealing thousands of hectares (acres) of the Amazon rainforest. Yet it was a company linked to him that filed a lawsuit against the state of Mato Grosso, alleging it had improperly set the borders of the Cristalino II State Park.

The park stretches for 118,000 hectares (292,000 acres), larger than New York City, and lies in the transition zone between the Amazon and drier Cerrado biomes. It is home to the endemic white-fronted spider monkey (Ateles marginatus), a species endangered due to habitat loss.

In a 3-2 decision, Mato Grosso's upper court ruled that the government's creation of the park in 2001 was illegal because it took place without public consultation.

The state government did not appeal that decision, leaving it to become final. Now the park will be officially dissolved,

the government press office confirmed to The Associated Press.

The loss of the park is a measure of how bad things are today for the Amazon. Not only are environmental laws going unenforced, now a court has invalidated a major protected area. Scientists say not only are ecosystems being lost, but massive deforestation is damaging the forest's ability to absorb carbon dioxide, a crucial role it plays for the planet.

Before he challenged the validity of Cristalino II park, Vilela's presence was already well known there. In 2005, he was fined USD 27 million for destroying 11,000 hectares (27,000 acres) of forest inside the protected area, according to local press reports at the time.

In 2016, the Vilela family made headlines in Brazil for being at the center of a landmark enforcement operation against deforestation in the Amazon, known as the Flying Rivers Operation, carried out by the Brazilian environment agency, Ibama, the federal police and the attorney general.

Vilela was also indicted for deforesting 30,000 hectares (74,000 acres) of public forests in Par state, the equivalent of five Manhattans. Brazil's attorney general called Vilela the worst per-



petrator of deforestation the Amazon had ever seen.

Legal proceedings often stretch for many years in Brazil. If convicted in the Par case, Vilela could be sentenced to more than 200 years in prison. He could be fined more than USD 60 million.

Attorney Renato Maurício Lopes, who has represented both Vilela and an affiliate company, did not respond to messages left by The Associated Press Wednesday and Thursday.

According to researcher Mauricio Torres, a geographer from Par Federal University, Vilela's family follows the classic script of land grabbing in the Amazon.

The way to steal land in Brazil is to deforest it and then claim it, he said. It is through deforestation that the land-robbers concretely mark their owner-

ship of the land and are recognized as 'owners' by other gangs, he wrote to the AP.

According to official data, as of March 2022, Cristalino II had lost some 22,000 hectares (54,000 acres) to deforestation, even though it is a fully protected area. The area destroyed makes up almost 20% of the park.

Mato Grosso, Brazil's largest soybean-producing state, is run by governor Mauro Mendes, a pro-agribusiness politician and ally of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who has repeatedly said Brazil has too many protected areas and vowed not to create more of them.

Mendes' state secretary of the environment is Mauren Lazzaretti, a lawyer who made a career defending loggers against criminal charges related to the environment.

Amnesty Int'l report sparks furore, resignation

The head of Amnesty International's Ukraine chapter has resigned, saying the human rights organisation shot down her opposition to publishing a report that claimed Ukrainian forces had exposed civilians to Russian attacks by basing themselves in populated areas.

In a statement posted Friday night on Facebook, Oksana Pokalchuk accused her former employer of disregarding Ukraine's wartime realities and the concerns of local staff members who had pushed for the report to be reworked.

The report, released Thursday, drew angry denunciations from top Ukrainian officials and criticism from Western diplomats, who accused the authors of making vague claims that appeared to equate the Ukrainian military's defensive actions to the tactics of the invading Russians. It is painful to admit, but I and the leader-



ship of Amnesty International have split over values, Pokalchuk wrote. I believe that any work done for the good of society should take into account the local context, and think through consequences."

Russia has repeatedly justified attacks on civilian areas by

alleging that Ukrainian fighters had set up firing positions at the targeted locations. Pokalchuk said her office had asked the organization's leadership to give the Ukrainian Defense Ministry adequate time to respond to the report's findings and argued that its

failure to do so would further Kremlin misinformation and propaganda efforts. "I am convinced that our surveys should be done thoroughly, bearing in mind the people whose lives often depend directly on the words and actions of international organizations, she said.

In a news release that accompanied the report's publication, Amnesty International Secretary-general Agnes Callamard said the organization had documented a pattern of Ukrainian forces putting civilians at risk and violating the laws of war when they operate in populated areas.

Being in a defensive position does not exempt the Ukrainian military from respecting international humanitarian law," she said Thursday.

Russian state-sponsored media quoted the report to support Moscow's claim that Russia has only launched strikes on military targets during the war. The spokesperson for Russia's Foreign Ministry cited the Amnesty International assertions as proof that Ukraine was using civilians as human shields.

Multiple Western scholars of international and military law went on social media to reject the human shield claim.

HOME DELIVERY OF LIQUOR Retired IAS officer duped of around Rs 2 lakh

A retired woman IAS officer was allegedly duped of around Rs 2 lakh on the pretext of home delivery of liquor, the order for which she had given online.

According to Sushant Lok resident Zohra Chatterji, she was busy making arrangements for a party on July 23 when she around 6 pm gave the order on website: jagdish-wineshopgurgaon.com.

"I got a call on my mobile phone. Due to in a hurry as it was the time of the arrival of guests and trusting the caller, I shared my credit card number and even the one-time password (OTP)," she said.

"I got an SMS that Rs 630 was debited through my credit card but later I found a transaction of Rs 1,92,477.50 from my credit card," she said in her



complaint. Police said several other people have also been duped through the website in the past.

On August 1, the Gurugram police had nabbed three members of a gang who duped a man of over Rs 1 lakh by promising to deliver liquor at his home.

"We have put the mobile number used in the fraud on

surveillance and investigating. The accused will be nabbed at the earliest," said cyber crime police station (east) SHO Bijender Kumar on the retired IAS officer's complaint. Police have lodged the case under Sections 419 (cheating by impersonation) and 420 (cheating) of the IPC and Section 66-D of the Information Technology Act.