



## INDIAN ENVOY FLAGS 'HAR GHAR TIRANGA' CAMPAIGN FOR DIASPORA IN UK

The Indian diaspora in the UK, estimated over 1.5 million, has been called upon to join the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign this weekend in the lead up to India's Independence Day celebrations on Monday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the campaign recently as part of the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' commemorating the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence from colonial rule. As part of the campaign, Indians are invited to fly the tricolour in their homes and on their social media platforms to deepen their connect with the national flag.

## INTERNATIONAL JEWELLERY SHOW TO GENERATE RS 50,000 CRORE BIZ

The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council on Thursday said its flagship IJES (India International Jewellery Show) Premiere is expected to generate business worth Rs 50,000 crore in the coming 4-6 months. IJES was held from August 4-8 this year. "We estimate that Rs 50,000 crore worth of business will be generated in the next 4-6 months from the 5-day IJES Premiere held from August 4. It has brought cheer to not just its participants, but also indicated that the festive and wedding season will drive jewellery sales at the retail end," GJEPC chairman Colin Shah said in a statement.

## DEPARTMENT OF POSTS SELLS OVER 1 CRORE NATIONAL FLAG IN 10 DAYS

The Department of Posts has sold more than 1 crore national flag in 10 days through its 1.5 lakh post offices spread across the country, an official statement said on Thursday. The postal department is selling flags for Rs 25 apiece. "Department of Posts (DoP) with its omnipresent network of 1.5 lakh post offices, has taken 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme to every citizen of the country. Within a short span of 10 days, India Post has sold more than 1 crore national flags, through post offices as well as online, to citizens," the statement said. In his 'Mann Ki Baat' PM Modi had noted that under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' programme to mark the 75th anniversary of India's Independence.

## 15 OF 20 MAHA MINISTERS FACE CRIMINAL CASES

Seventy-five per cent of the Maharashtra ministers have declared criminal cases against themselves, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). Maharashtra now has 20 ministers, including the chief minister, after the council of ministers was expanded on August 9 with the induction of 18 members. After the cabinet expansion, the Association for Democratic Reforms and the Maharashtra Election Watch analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all ministers submitted during the assembly polls in 2019.

## SINGLE NODAL AGENCY ACCOUNT DELAYING CENTRAL FUNDS TO STATES

# TS Cabinet picks holes in procedure

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

There is an abnormal delay in the transfer of Central funds to States due to the newly introduced system of operating a Single Nodal Agency Account (SNA), the Telangana Cabinet placed on record on Thursday.

A new procedure for the flow of funds to the state governments was introduced with effect from July 1, 2021 under which each state must notify a Single Nodal Agency (SNA) for each Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) and open a bank account of each SNA.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes are those that are implemented by state governments, but funded largely by the Union Government with a defined State government share. They include schemes under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana etc.

CSS funds flow from the Centre to the consolidated fund of the respective state and further to the bank account of SNA. Recently Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman said that the new procedure had brought more transparency to the availability of CSS funds in state



treasuries and bank account of SNAs and had led to better monitoring of the utilisation of funds and availability of funds with SNAs for CSS implementation.

The State Cabinet, which met on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, held a comprehensive discussion on the state's economic situa-

**CSS funds flow from the Centre to the consolidated fund of the respective state and further to the bank account of SNA.**

tion.

Officials informed the cabinet that the state registered 15.3 per cent growth rate in revenues this financial year. The Chief Minister observed it was noteworthy that the state had registered growth, though the funds due to the state from the Centre under CSS and various

schemes decreased by (minus) -12.9 per cent. "Delay in the release of central funds to the states is taking place due to the introduction of new system of Single Nodal Account (SNA) accounts. Not only this, the FRMB limits are not being finalized in time and they are enforcing cuts in the limits", the Chief Minister said.

KCR said that the state revenues would have increased further registering a 22 per cent growth rate had there been no cuts in the FRMB limits. The State Finance Department has explained that the state had received Rs 47,312 crore funds under CSS over the last eight years.

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## Boost for medical infra

tioned 10 specialist doctors for ENT hospital.

The Cabinet also proposed the construction of new Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital with modern facilities. It decided to prepare a proposal for construction of a new modern hospital building at the State Medical and Health Department office premises in Koti, apart from filling 5,111 vacant Anganwadi

teacher posts and Ayaa vacancies soon.

The state cabinet meeting was held at Pragati Bhavan on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao. The cabinet met for about 5 hours and took many decisions.

The Cabinet approved sanctioning of 10 lakh new Aasara pensions from August 15. It decided to give



10 lakh new pensions, in addition to 36 lakh pensions already being provided to the eligible poor.

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## BJP MLA Raja Singh threatens to attack comedian Farooqui

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP MLA representing Goshamahall, T. Raja Singh, has warned stand-up comedian Munavar Farooqui that he will beat up Munavar Farooqui and burn down the premises where Munavar Farooqui conducts his show. "I will definitely beat up back Munavar Farooqui and send him back. I will also burn down the place where he conducts his show... That is my challenge," said Raja Singh in a video statement released on Thursday. He appealed to the Telangana government and the police department not to give permission to Munavar Farooqui's show scheduled for August 20. He warned that there will be serious consequences if anyone helps Munavar Farooqui to hold his show. Raja Singh asked KTR not to invite Munavar Farooqui to TS. He warned that Hindus will not remain silent if Munavar Farooqui, who insulted Hindu deities through his show comes to Hyderabad. Munavar Farooqui's organisers are making arrangements to organise his show on August 20 named 'Dongri to Nowhere'.

## ECI bans BJP's countdown clock

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has given a shocker to the BJP. The ECI has not given permission to the BJP to display countdown clock flexes named 'Saalu Dora-Selavu Dora' against Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao.

The Election Commission has categorically said that it would not allow derogatory posters, photos and slogans against political leaders. The ECI also refused to give media certification to the BJP's 'Saalu Dora-Selavu Dora' campaign.

The BJP had applied to the ECI to run a 'Saalu Dora-Selavu Dora' campaign and had sought permission from its Media Certification Committee. But the ECI dismissed the BJP's request.



It may be recalled that the BJP had placed electronic countdown clock flexes named 'Saalu Dora-Selavu Dora' in front of the BJP state office in Hyderabad. The countdown clock had become a contentious issue and the TRS had objected to it.

2

## 'Fidayeen' attack on army camp

3 soldiers killed

PNS ■ JAMMU

Two terrorists carried out a 'fidayeen' attack on an Army camp in Jammu's Rajouri district in the early hours of Thursday, killing three soldiers. Both attackers were gunned down in the four-hour fire-fight that followed. "In the early hours on Thursday, alert sentries of the Indian Army post at Parghal, in Rajouri district detected suspicious persons approaching their post taking advantage of the inclement weather and dense foliage," PRO (defence) Jammu Lt Col Devender Anand said.

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## Cong sharpening Munugode strategy

To face the by-poll with united force

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress is thinking of adopting a different strategy in the Munugode by-poll and for that, the Munugode by-poll Strategy and Campaign Committee held a meeting on Thursday at the Gandhi Bhavan with senior leaders.

Speaking to the media, the Munugode by-poll Strategy and Campaign Committee Convener, Madhu Yashki Goud, said that the Congress will not win if it contests elections like it did in the past.

"We will consider every election as the semi-final. AICC Chief Sonia Gandhi is supervising the

The Congress is powerful in Nalgonda and Munugode. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy is in the party although his brother Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy has left it. Venkat is a senior leader compared to Rajagopal.



Munugode by-poll campaign. The Munugode by-poll is different from the four earlier by-polls," Goud said.

The Congress is powerful in Nalgonda and Munugode. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy is in the party although his brother Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy has

left it. Venkat is a senior leader compared to Rajagopal. Venkat's cadres are also with the Congress, he added. "We will chalk out strategies to counter Rajagopal. The comments against Venkat at the Chanduru meeting were painful.

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## BJP wary of an electoral alliance with TDP

SNCHN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

The BJP is scared to forge an alliance with the TDP in Telangana. BJP leaders think that if they have an alliance with the TDP, the TRS may exploit that and there will be a danger of the 2018 Assembly elections result repeating.

After TDP President Chandrababu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the TDP has started a campaign saying that the BJP and the TDP will have an alliance in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

TDP leaders are claiming that in Telangana, the BJP needs the help of the TDP to defeat the TRS and in Andhra Pradesh, the TDP needs the help of the BJP to defeat the YSR



Congress.

TDP leaders say that in around 40 Assembly constituencies in TS the votes of AP settlers are crucial and if the BJP has an alliance with the TDP in Telangana the votes of AP settlers will go to the alliance.

But Telangana BJP leaders think differently. In the 2018 Assembly elections, everyone thought the Mahakutami led by the Congress will win. But when TDP President

TDP leaders are claiming that in Telangana, the BJP needs the help of the TDP to defeat the TRS and in Andhra Pradesh, the TDP needs the help of the BJP to defeat the YSR Congress.

Chandrababu became active in Telangana the TRS suddenly changed its strategy and started igniting the Telangana sentiment once again.

This changed the political scenario in the Assembly elections and the TRS retained power with more seats than in the 2014 elections.

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## BJP, TRS lock horns over cleaning Ganga, Musi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP and the TRS are engaged in a battle over polluted rivers.

Five days after BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that the polluted water of the Musi should be sent to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao who failed to clean the river, the TRS sent a bottle of polluted Ganga water to the Prime Minister.

TSMDC Chairperson Krishank Manne went to Varanasi and at the



confluence of the Assi River took a sample of the polluted Ganga water and couriered it to Prime Minister Modi.

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## Accused cannot be convicted on ground of suspicion: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An accused cannot be convicted on the ground of suspicion, no matter how strong it is, the Supreme Court said on Thursday, while acquitting a man in a murder case.

A bench of Justices B R Gai and P S Narasimha said an accused is presumed to be innocent unless proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

It is settled law that the suspicion, however strong it may be, cannot take the place of proof beyond reasonable doubt. An accused cannot



be convicted on the ground of suspicion, no matter how strong it is, the bench said.

The apex court said in the present case, the prosecution has utterly failed to establish the chain of events which can be said to exclusively lead to the guilt of the accused.

In that view of the matter, we find that the judgment and order of the learned sessions judge and that of the high court are not sustainable, the bench said.

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## POLITICAL HAPPENINGS

## 'Middle class' silence will hurt future generations'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The middle-class has mostly remained silent on political developments in the country and future generations would blame us for this silence, said experts at Acharya Kothapalli Jayashankar's birth anniversary.

A distinguished lecture to commemorate Acharya Kothapalli Jayashankar's birth anniversary on Centre-State Relations and the Future of Federalism was held on Thursday. Professor G. Haragopal, a visiting professor at the National Law School of India University of



Bengaluru (NLSIU), urged people to realise things happening around us and to be conscious of divisive forces. "The middle class has largely remained silent on political developments in the country and the future generations will blame us for this. In this context, we need to consider policies that empower the

federal system. The state's autonomy plays a vital role in development," Professor G. Haragopal said.

B. Vinod Kumar, the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board, said in his opening remarks that at present there is a lot of friction between the Centre and the States, especially in states ruled by

regional parties.

"In recent times not only political issues but financial issues too have become a bone of contention between the Centre and States. The Fifteenth Finance Commission had categorically said that the Centre should constitute a Committee to review the FRBM Act which recommended an increase in the percentage of FRBM limits, borrowings from the open market and so on. Unfortunately the Centre has chosen only a few recommendations as stated by the Finance Minister in Parliament, that is, those which suited them and not others.

# Freebie culture elevated to level of art: Centre to SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The "freebie culture" has been elevated to the level of art for fighting elections and will lead to disaster if some political parties understand this is the only way to deliver public welfare measures, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Thursday.

In a response to the August 3 order, the Centre, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, said till the time either the legislature or the poll panel steps in, the top court must lay down "dos and don'ts" for political parties in the larger national interest."

The government submitted its recommendations to the bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana on setting up an expert panel to go into the issue of populist promises of freebies made by political parties during polls.

Mehta said, Distribution of freebies has been elevated to



the level of an art by some parties recently. Elections are fought only on this plank. It is unfortunate that in the country's election spectrum some parties understand that distribution of free things is the only way of welfare measures' for the society. This understanding is completely unscientific and will lead to an economic disaster."

The government suggested the Union Finance Secretary, Finance Secretaries of states, one representative each from recognised National Political

Parties, Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission, a representative of Reserve Bank of India, the CEO of NITI Aayog can be made part of the proposed panel.

It also said a representative from a national taxpayers' organisation or a retired Comptroller and Auditor General of India may be included in the proposed panel to represent those opposed to such freebies.

Representative from the leading commercial organisations - Federation of Indian

Chambers of Commerce & Industry or Confederation of Indian Industry and representatives from identified stressed sectors [such as Discoms in the Power Sector] can also be made part of the panel, the law officer said.

"Please look at certain stressed sectors. Many electricity generating companies and distribution companies, most of which are government companies, are severely stressed financially, he said, in an obvious reference to governments waiving electricity bills in fulfilment of their pre-election promise.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, which opposes the practice of political parties promising freebies during elections and seeks the Election Commission to invoke its powers to freeze their election symbols and cancel their registration.

## ‘Youth must play key role in the progress of nation’



TTD Member Pokala Ashok and IIIT- Ongole Dean D Mastanamma addressing the 'Sawatantra Spoorthi', a programme organised under the aegis of the Swatantra TV news channel) on the SVP CET campus at Puttur on Thursday.



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Member Pokala Ashok has recalled the freedom struggle and the sacrifices of freedom fighters in achieving Independence for the country. He was addressing the gathering during the 'Swatantra Spoorthi' programme organised under the aegis of the Swatantra TV news channel at Sri Venkatesa Perumal College of Engineering and Technology (SVP CET) at Puttur on Thursday.

Ashok said that India had achieved a lot of progress in the last 75 years but that is not enough. More progress should be achieved and the youth should play a vital role in it, he added.

IIIT-Ongole Dean D Mastanamma, who also attended the function, exhorted the students to draw inspiration from the freedom fighters and play a vital role in the development of the country.

Mastanamma said that all Indians celebrate Independence Day irrespective of caste and

religion. She exhorted the students to make use of the opportunities to achieve their goals and reach heights in life.

SVP CET College Dean Dr Rama Ganesh, Vice-Principal Jilan, Viswam Schools Chairman Viswanath Reddy and IMA former national president Dr Srihari also participated.

The Swatantra TV news channel is organising the 'Swatantra Spoorthi' programmes at various colleges in the State as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit' programme.

## Govt to honour Commonwealth medallists on 22<sup>nd</sup>

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said that sportspersons who won medals at the Commonwealth games will be felicitated during the conclusion programme of Swatantra Bharata Vajrotsavam celebrations on August 22 at the LB Stadium.

The CM congratulated Sports Minister V. Srinivas Goud for achieving success and the important role played by the sports persons from Telangana at the Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham in England.

KCR said that it is a proud moment for Telangana as it stood second in the country in winning medals. The achievements of sportspersons prove the success of the sports policies adopted by the government. KCR said that the achievements were possible due to the strict implementation of the government's policies in the sports sector by Sports Minister V. Srinivas Goud, SAT Chairman A. Venkateshwar Reddy and other top officials.

## TRS, Cong seek Left support in Munugode by-poll

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress and the TRS have requested the Left to support them in the Munugode by-poll.

The Congress has already appealed to the Left formally in this regard. It is learnt that the TRS leadership is also holding talks with the Left. However, the Left parties, that is, the CPI and CPM, have not yet decided on whether to contest the by-poll or to support the TRS or the Congress.

The Telangana CPI leadership is still not clear on whether it will field a candidate or not. The CPI is holding a meeting of its Munugode constituency leaders on August 12. It will take the opinion of the constituency's local party leadership.

The party would also discuss the Munugode by-poll at its meeting being held in Nalgonda town on Friday.

Speaking to 'he Pioneer,' CPI Telangana State Assistant

Secretary Palla Venkat Reddy said the party will decide after taking the views of party activists and leaders in Munugode.

The party's meeting will be held on Friday in Munugode. "We will take the opinion of our activists in Munugode as well as the opinion of the CPM before taking a final decision," he said.

CPM state secretary Thammineni Veerabhadram said on Wednesday after a meeting of Munugode CPM Mandal secretaries that the Left will decide who will win in Munugode. "There is a need to stop the BJP. We will move ahead to defeat the BJP in Munugode," he said.

Veerabhadram's statement clearly indicates that the Left is not going to field a candidate in Munugode. Both the Left parties may support either the TRS or the Congress.

The Communists, the Congress and the TRS had worked together in the recent

presidential elections as well as the vice-president elections. Now the question is whether the Left will support the TRS or the Congress to defeat the BJP in Munugode.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer,' Munugode by-poll Strategy and Campaign Committee Convener Madhu Yashki Goud said that he had formally requested the CPI and the CPM to support the Congress candidate. He said that they will discuss it further while meeting the leadership of both the Left parties.

One CPI activist from Munugode said the Left must field its own candidate instead of supporting the Congress or the TRS to protect the party as otherwise, party cadres will disappear. "Our leadership has to field our candidate and ask for the support of the TRS and the Congress. Our candidate will win easily if that happens. If our party adopts this strategy stopping the BJP is possible," he said.

## Jagan's importance increases after JD (U) exit

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

After the recent political developments in Bihar, the importance of YSR Congress President Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has increased at the Centre. The BJP leadership has to depend on the YSR Congress to take crucial decisions in Parliament. The decision of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to break his alliance with the BJP has led to Jagan's importance increasing at the Centre.

If the Centre wants to pass any crucial Bill the BJP must have a majority in both the Houses. But with the breakup of the alliance with the Janata Dal (United) led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar the BJP-led NDAs majority in the Rajya Sabha has gone down and it has to depend on parties like the YSR Congress and the Biju Janata Dal.

In the Rajya Sabha, the Janata Dal (U) has five Members and the YSR Congress has nine

members. The current strength of the Rajya Sabha is 237. There are eight vacancies and the majority mark is 119. The strength of the NDA in the Rajya Sabha was 114 and after the JD (U) left, the NDA's strength in the Rajya Sabha decreased to 109. If the YSR Congress supports directly or indirectly the strength of the NDA will reach 118 and even then it will be short of one Member to reach the majority mark. There are three nominated Members in the total vacancies of eight seats. Once the nominated Members are named the strength of the NDA in the Rajya Sabha will reach 121 including Members of the YSR Congress. So the support of the YSR Congress is very crucial for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha to pass important Bills. The TDP has only one Member in the Rajya Sabha. In spite of the alliance between the BJP and the YSRC, the TDP may support the BJP in the Rajya Sabha as it had during the presidential and vice presidential elections.

## An acid test...

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It is learnt that SK submitted a survey report on Munugode by-poll to Telangana Congress Affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore on Wednesday night. Former BJP MLC N. Ramchander Rao said that the BJP doesn't need any strategist as it believes in the people. The people have already decided to ensure the victory of the BJP in Munugode and so the strategies of PK and SK will not work there, he added.

## ECI bans BJP's...

Continued from page 1

The TRS had also filed a complaint with the police. Reacting to the complaint by TRS leaders, the police removed the countdown clock. The BJP then approached the ECI. Hyderabad had also witnessed anonymous flexes against the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the BJP's National Executive Committee meeting held here but the police did not remove them.

## Sanjay challenges Communists to contest in Munugode

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar has challenged Communists to contest the Munugode by-poll if they have the guts to do so.

He described the Left as a cheap group who waits for the crumbs thrown by the ruling party. Instead of saying that Nalgonda is a centre for Communists, the Left must contest elections, Sanjay said.

Addressing a Rachabanda gathering on Dalit issues in



Munipampala village on Thursday during his Praja Sangrama Yatra, Sanjay said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has been deceiving the people.

He asked people to take the money being distributed by the TRS and added that there is a need for the BJP to come to power to solve people's problems.

He said the saffron flag exists for the sake of the poor and hence no Communist will stop the BJP.

## ‘Provide 12 pc quota for STs’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao has asked Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao to provide 12 per cent reservation for STs.

Participating in a dharna organised by the Tribal Reservations Porata Samithi at

Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, VH asked KCR to implement his promise mentioned in the TRS election manifesto.

Tribal Reservations Porata Samithi President Ramulu Naik also demanded that the state and the Centre should implement reservations for STs immediately in Telangana.

## ‘Fidayeen’ attack on army...

Continued from page 1

He said the sentries challenged the two terrorists who lobbed grenades while attempting to gain entry inside the post. However, alert troops cordoned the area and engaged them in a firefight thereby pinning them, he said.

Anand further said in the ensuing gunfight, the two terrorists were neutralised. Six soldiers of Indian Army were injured in the operation and of them, three bravehearts succumbed to injuries while repulsing the suicide attack, he said.

The army personnel killed were subedar Rajendra Prasad (of Maligoven village in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district), rifleman Lakshmanan D (of T Pudupatti village in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu) and rifleman Manoj Kumar (of Shahjahanpur village in Haryana's Faridabad), he said.

The Indian Army salutes the bravehearts for their supreme sacrifice in line of

duty, upholding the highest tradition of the force. The nation will always remain indebted to them for their supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty, he said.

According to officials and eyewitnesses, the first gunshot was heard around 2 am when the terrorists attempted to breach the external fence of the camp located at Paragal, 185 km from here.

The attack, which came four days ahead of Independence Day, marks the return of 'fidayeen' (suicide attackers) to the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir after more than three years.

The last such attack took place on February 14, 2019 at Lethpora in Pulwama district of south Kashmir, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed. In Thursday's attack, the two 'fidayeen', believed to be from the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed, tried to sneak into the camp but were neutralised, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh told PTI.

## TS Cabinet picks...

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The officials of state finance wing explained that under the Rythu Bandhu scheme alone, Rs 58,024 crore crop investment assistance had been provided to the farmers.

"In the last financial year, the state government spent Rs. 1. 84 lakh crore; of which only Rs. 5,200 crore was received under CSS schemes. It means that less than 3 per cent of the total expenditure of the state has received funds under the central schemes", an official press note said.

KCR opined that the state's growth rate had been affected due to the lopsided policies adopted by the Union government. Had the central government achieved progress equal to that of Telangana State, the state's GSDP would have increased by another Rs 3 lakh crore and the total would have been Rs 14.50 lakh crore. Telangana State contributed

5 per cent of the country's income, though the state accounted for only 2. 5 per cent in the country's population, he said.

Officials informed the Cabinet that Telangana stood number one in the country with 11.5 per cent growth in state own tax revenue.

State finance officials

## Boost for medical infra

Continued from page 1

In connection with the Swatantra Bharat Vajrotsavalu, the cabinet decided to the release 75 prisoners. The special Assembly session and the local bodies' meeting scheduled for August 21 in connection with Vajrotsavalu have been cancelled. This follows requests from people's representatives that August 21 is the last auspicious day for marriages and other programmes.

informed the Cabinet that the income of the Telangana State in 2014-15 -- the first year of formation of Telangana state -- was Rs 62, 000 crore and the figure increased to Rs 1. 84 lakh crore last year. In a just seven years, the state registered 3 times growth and stood number one in the country.

As part of Vajrotsavalu, the Cabinet decided to hold mass singing of national Anthem at 11:30 am on August 16. The Cabinet instructed the Chief Secretary to speed up the distribution of pattas to the poor under GO 58 and 59. It decided to resolve the problems being faced by people to construct houses in Gramakantams permanently. An official committee will prepare a report in 15 days' time in this regard.

## Accused cannot be convicted on ground...

Continued from page 1

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by a man challenging an order passed by the High Court of Punjab & Haryana convicting him for the offences punishable under Section 302 (murder) and Section 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and sentencing him to rigorous imprisonment for life.

Advocate Rishi Malhotra,

appearing for the man, submitted that from the perusal of the postmortem report, it is clear that it is not proved beyond reasonable doubt that the dead body on which the post-mortem was conducted was of deceased. The additional advocate general for the state on the contrary, submitted that the high court and trial court have concurrently found the accused to be guilty of the offences charged with.

The top court said there has

to be a chain of evidence to complete so as not to leave any reasonable ground for a conclusion consistent with the innocence of the accused and must show that in all human probability the act must have been done by the accused.

It has been held that the circumstances should be of a conclusive nature and tendency. This court has held that the circumstances should exclude every possible hypothesis except the one to be proved.

## BJP wary of an electoral...

Continued from page 1

Telangana BJP leaders fear that the same thing will repeat if they have an alliance with the TDP. Senior Telangana BJP leader Nallu Indrasena Reddy said on Wednesday that there is no question of an alliance with the TDP. Recently, the YSR Congress and BJP leaders criticised each other and Chandrababu's meeting with Modi strengthened speculations about a TDP, BJP

alliance. In national parties, electoral alliances are decided by the Central leadership and not by regional party units. National parties will give preference to retaining power at the Centre than in the states.

Telangana BJP leaders hope that the BJP's national leadership will not accept the TDP's alliance offer considering the past. The BJP leadership had also said several times that Chandrababu is not a reliable ally in politics.

# Women should tie *rakhi* to KCR's photo on festival: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister K T Rama Rao called upon the women to tie rakhi to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's photo on Rakhi festival. 'KCR has been helping women in many ways. Tie Rakhi to KCR's photo and cutout in every constituency and make sure women tie. Show to the nation the contribution of KCR for women welfare and do programmes in district. Legislators, ZPTC, MPTC and everyone should take part.' He said that the Chief Minister is confident that every woman in the State will have a bright future. KTR spoke to the women beneficiaries of various government schemes in 33 districts through zoom call on occasion of Rakhi festival. KTR said that the pension has increased tenfold during the tenure of CM KCR, and they are giving pension to 14



**KTR said that the pension has increased tenfold during the tenure of CM KCR, and they are giving pension to 14 lakh single and widow women as well as 4lakh women beedi workers**

lakh single and widow women as well as 4lakh women beedi workers. He said that they are going to give pensions at the rate of 2,016 rupees to another 10 lakh new entrants who are eligible from August 15. KTR said that the government believes that the progress of the society is possible only

with the welfare of women. He said that Telangana is the only State which is implementing many development and welfare schemes for women like nowhere else in the country. He said that we are working for the welfare of the women who have been with us since the movement, giving the

highest priority to the health, education and social security of the women. We are proud to say that we stand by every woman from babies to the elderly and are partners in their development and welfare. He said that he is the only government that has arranged 300 ambulances specially for pregnant women as part of Amma Odi scheme. KTR said that so far 10.85lakh pregnant women in the state have benefited from the Amma Odi scheme. So far, 13.30 lakh infants have been given KCR kits worth two thousand rupees. He said that in view of the financial difficulties after childbirth, women are given 13000 rupees for the birth of a girl child and 12 thousand rupees for the birth of a male child. He said deliveries have increased by 30 percent to 50 percent in government hospitals with KCR kits.

## KCR to inaugurate Vikarabad Collectorate, TRS office

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao will inaugurate the Collector's office and the TRS office in Vikarabad on August 16. Minister Sabita Indra Reddy and Vikarabad District MLAs met the CM and TRS Working President KT Rama Rao at the Pragathi Bhavan in connection with the inauguration on Thursday. They spoke about the agenda for August 16, the inauguration of the new Collector's office, and the TRS office. KCR will also lay the foundation stone for the construction of the medical college building. The CM will reach Vikarabad at 2 pm. Metuku Anand, Rohit Reddy, Patnam Narendar Reddy, Kale Yadaya, and Koppula Mahesh Reddy were among those who met the CM and KTR.

## CybHER III trains 100 students as cyber ambassadors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Around 100 students and 50 teachers from every TS district were trained to become cyber ambassadors through 80 virtual training sessions using a standardised Learning Management System (LMS). The training sessions were on cyberbullying, financial fraud, online gaming and other cyber safety and security measures to improve their knowledge of prevention and redressal mechanisms so that they can address cybercrimes. The Cyber Ambassadors will be acting as catalysts and agents of change by promoting women's safety in cyberspace with the help of She Teams in their schools and in the community. The programme was part of CybHER III, the phase three programme under the Cyber Congress initiative of the Women Safety Wing of the Telangana Police which concluded its 10-month-long programme. The programme

ended with a spectacular grand finale titled 'Cyberathon' on Thursday. Around 3,300 cyber ambassadors, 1,650 mentor-teachers, volunteer mentors, headmasters and other stakeholders from the 33 districts of Telangana participated in the project's implementation. The grand finale was attended by Swati Lakra, IPS, the Addl. DG in charge of Women's Safety and Bharosa, Sumathi Badugula, IPS, the DIG of WSW & CID, Devasena, IAS, the Director of School Education, G. Ramesh,

the Director of Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, Cyber Security Expert Rakshit Tandon, and others. Around 2,000 students, teachers and other stakeholders were present in the city. The stakeholders involved in the project are the Department of School Education Samagra Siksha, NGO and implementation partner Youngistaan Foundation, Rakshit Tandon as knowledge partner and trainers Sailaja Vadlamudi, Sai Satish, sponsored by Continental Coffee and Innoright Solutions as technology partner.

## Job fair for women candidates on Aug 18

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Osmania University Employment office has announced that a job fair for women candidates will be held on August 18. The fair is for Reliance Insurance Company, which has over 20 vacancies. The candidate must be in the age group of 29 and 45. They must have education in diploma or degree and PG. The selected candidate would be offered Rs 15,000 salary a month.



## RUNNING WITH TRICOLOUR



Hyderabad citizens in larger numbers taking part in Freedom Run to rekindle the spirit of freedom struggle on the occasion of diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence. The Telangana State government is organising diamond jubilee celebration in a big way across the State. A huge number of national flags have been distributed to people in the State

## Sabita flags off Freedom Run in city

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy hoisted the national flag at Saroornagar Stadium as part of diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence. Later, the Minister flagged off the freedom run. The freedom run started at Saroornagar Stadium to LB Nagar crossroad. The Minister participated in the freedom run holding the national flag. On the occasion, Sabita Indra Reddy said that on the auspicious occasion of the 75th anniversary of India's freedom, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao directed the officials to hold celebrations for 15 days to rekindle the spirit of patriotism among people. The Minister said that freedom run is being successfully organised in villages and towns. The freedom run was



Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy participating in freedom run in Hyderabad on Thursday

aimed at inculcating the spirit of freedom among people and remembering the sacrifices made by freedom fighters. She said that Gandhi movie is being screened for students. LB Nagar MLA Sudhir Reddy, Kalwakurti MLA Jaipal Yadav, MLCs Dayanand

and Egge Mallesham, District Collector Amoy Kumar, Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat, State Library Corporation chairman Ayachitam Sridhar, a large number of people and students and others were present.

## Cybercriminals cheat businessman of Rs 1 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cybercriminals have cheated a business from Mehidiptnam of Rs 1 crore by enticing him into investing in cryptocurrency trade, according to police on Thursday. The businessman's mobile number, the police said, had been added to a WhatsApp group. The group included several business people. After going through the group conversations, the businessman posted a message in the group which was projected as belonging to an investment firm. The executives asked him to download two mobile apps for trading that, after downloading the app, he made initial investments in small sums and earned profits.

## Youth wave Indian flag at Heartfulness Institute

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At least 275 youths from across the world joined the national Tiranaga campaign at the Kanha Shanti Vanam, the headquarters of 'Heartfulness' in Hyderabad. Each of the individuals carried an Indian national flag cheering for India in front of the world's largest meditation centre at Kanha Shanti Vanam. The youths arrived at the Heartfulness headquarters for the International Rising with Kindness Summit which is slated for August 12-14.

"We are very happy to be here as part of Heartfulness Arising With Kindness Youth Summit which coincides with India's 75th Independence Day. It's a great joy to take part in these celebrations at the Kanha Shanti Vanam along with 275 youths in front of this meditation centre which is the world's largest," a participant said. Another international participant said, "For us, the Heartfulness centre and India are like home. There are many magnificent things in this country and the Heartfulness Meditation has to

offer to us. While we are here to take part in Heartfulness Rising with Kindness Youth Summit, being part of India's Independence celebrations brings joy to us. It was an exhilarating experience to wave the Indian flag along with the other youths here for the summit. The diversity, culture and feeling of being always welcome in this country is something that one cannot miss." Heartfulness has been organising campaigns to help youth cultivate compassion and treat everyone equally.



Youth participating in freedom run at Heartfulness Institute in Hyderabad on Thursday

## Flag code violations mark the stitching of the national flags

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Flag code violations marked the stitching of national tricolor distributed among the people of the state for hoisting on their rooftops on Aug 15. The violations include not conforming to the prescribed sizes of each colour on the flag, poor quality in dyeing of the flags leading to emergence of white stripes between the colours of the flag, position of Ashoka Chakra that is supposed to be at the middle moving aside and graffiti on the flags among others. Many people who have received the poor quality flags were shocked at the sorry state of affairs. At some places, details of flags stock are written on the flags in utter violation of the code. The size of the flag, colours on it and its design should conform to the code while making them. The flags should be in rectangular shape with the length to breadth ratio being 2:3. The flags should be stitched in the prescribed nine sizes only.

The colours of saffron, white and green should be in equal proportion. The Ashoka Chakra should be in the middle of the white band on the flag. There should be no other graffiti written on the flags. But, in respect of some flags the flag code is apparently violated to a toss. Some people have expressed their displeasure over receiving sub-standard quality flags. They criticize the state government machinery for the goof-up. To distribute flags to each and every house free of cost, TESCO ordered manufacture of the 1.2 crore flags from weavers of Siricilla. It fixed the price of each flag at Rs 23. It purchased 98 per cent of the cloth needed to stitch the flags. It placed the order to stitch 60 lakh flags with Siricilla weavers, while SHG groups in Hyderabad were given the order to stitch 30 lakh flags and the SHGs in Khammam and Miryalaguda were given the order to stitch the rest of the flags.

## Teenage girl dies in hit-and-run accident

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

A 17-year-old girl, who was riding pillion on a moped, died on the spot in a hit-and-run accident at Inapur on NH 65 on Thursday. The deceased was identified as 17-year-old Reshma Begum. She hailed from Patancheru. The accident happened when she was riding pillion on a moped being driven by her father Mohammad Jaffer. The police registered a case.



Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat felicitating Deputy Commissioner of Police Sreebala B and constable D Sanjeev Kumar in Hyderabad

## Bhagwat felicitates World Police & Fire Game winners

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Deputy Commissioner of Police (Road Safety) Sreebala B and Armed Reserve Police Constable D Sanjeev Kumar were felicitated on Thursday by Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat on winning medals in the World Police and Fire Games 2022 held at Rotterdam

in Netherlands. Participants from across the world took part in 63 sports events. While Sreebala, who participated in the Women's Singles Table Tennis, won a silver and bronze medals, Sanjeev Kumar won the bronze in the Taekwondo event. The Commissioner congratulated and motivated them to win more medals in the future.

## Free entry to Buddhavanam on August 15

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation has announced that entry will be free to Buddhavanam on August 15. Buddhavanam is a Buddhist Heritage Theme Park developed by the Government of Telangana in Nagarjunasagar. Mallepalli

Laxmaiah, the Special Officer of the Buddhavanam Project, said that entry will be free on August 15 as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations to mark the 75th year of India's Independence. He said that both tourists and locals can visit various areas of Buddhavanam on August 15 free of cost.



## Chevella banyan trees get Aadhaar numbers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

For years Aadhaar was meant for identifying humans. The environmental activists of Hyderabad have been protesting against the imminent felling of some banyan trees along the Chevella-Vikarabad Road. As part of this an interactive map that shows the geo location and status of all the 914 banyan trees on this stretch was released on Thursday. The members of the civic group said that issuing Aadhaars for banyan trees means that we can locate the trees, their dimensions and the extent of the damage. The trees planted during the Nizam's government and estimated to be at least 100 years old, tower along a 46-km stretch of the Chevella-



Vikarabad Road. The database is the outcome of a transgenerational citizen science initiative, by members of the Nature Lovers of Hyderabad, in collaboration

with the Hyderabad Urban Lab. Geotagging volunteers from the NLH ranged in age from 12 to 68. Twenty volunteers worked for over four days to meticulously record the

latitude and longitude of the trees and other data, including measurements of girth and root length. They also photographed the 914 endangered banyan trees. After this massive



exercise, the volunteers collated all the information and partnered with the Hyderabad Urban Lab to develop story maps, timelines and other techniques to analyse and communicate the condition of the trees. Usha Raman opened by giving the background of the project. Natasha Ramarathnam, a development professional, who led the geo-

tagging exercise, described both the process and the reasons behind it. Tejah Balantrapu, a communications professional, offered some background information regarding the legal appeal the group has filed with the National Green Tribunal and also spoke about the road-widening project that the group is challenging.

# ‘Moral vacuum in BJP’

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Minister for Finance T Harish Rao on Thursday accused the BJP of being fraught with a moral vacuum and trying every gimmick to mislead the people. As far as the Congress party is concerned, it has remained lost in reverie, he pointed out.

Several leaders and activities from the Congress and the BJP migrated to the TRS in the presence of Harish Rao here. Speaking on the occasion, the two national parties - the Congress and BJP - are all talk and no action. The TRS, however, is a party of action, he observed.

The welfare measures being implemented in Telangana State under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has ushered in a golden age of prosperity for the poor. Telangana has achieved all-round development and become a role



Minister for Finance T Harish Rao with the leaders and activists, who migrated to the TRS from the Congress and BJP, at Siddipet on Thursday

model for the country, he said.

The Congress party has vanished into thin air in Telangana State, Harish Rao said, and added that the BJP government at the Centre was copying the TRS schemes and projecting them as if they were their own schemes.

While the Congress rules had meted out injustice to the

people in Telangana in the united Andhra Pradesh, the BJP leaders, who hailed from the State, had been deceiving people by peddling lies, he pointed out.

He cautioned people against the BJP spreading falsehood through social media. Harish Rao said the trains would chug into Siddipet soon. The

Siddipet district would soon get irrigation water and potable water.

Several leaders from the Congress and BJP in Nanganur joined the TRS in the presence of Harish Rao. He promised to ensure that all the 30 Congress and BJP leaders who migrated to the TRS, would be given importance in the party.

No helmet, no petrol for bike riders in Warangal tri-cities

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Warangal police on Thursday issued an order to the petrol filling stations not to sell petrol to two-wheeler riders who are not wearing helmets with effect from August 15. The order will apply in Warangal, Hanamkonda and Kazipet. The police took the decision to see that the two-wheeler riders who are not wearing crash helmets are denied fuel in the backdrop of a series of fatal accidents, according to Warangal Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi.

The police handed over flexis and banners to the petrol filling stations. The banners will be displayed at the petrol filling stations.

The police said there were 426 fatal accidents under the Warangal Police Commissionerate limits last year. While 426 died, 1,110 suffered injuries.

# Minister for rekindling spirit of freedom struggle

PNS ■ WANAPARTHI

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy has said supreme sacrifices made by ancestors to make the country secular and democratic. He stressed the need to rekindle the freedoms struggle.

Flagging off the freedom run up to the Eco Park from the Government Polytechnic College here on Thursday in connection with the diamond jubilee of the Independence, he said that the 150-year-long struggle for independence freed the country from the colonial rule on Aug 15, 1947. The value of the independence and sacrifices made by eminent men and women to achieve independence should be propagated far and wide for the benefit of the present generation as well as the posterity, he said. That is why, the diamond jubilee celebra-



Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy taking part in freedom run in Wanaparthi on Thursday

tions are being held for 15 days, he said. Going nostalgic of the freedom struggle, he observed that Azad Hind Fauj

was started by Subhash Chandra Bose. Sardar Bhagat Singh sacrificed his life for the sake of the country.

# Grand finale of Cyber Congress programme held

PNS ■ JAGTIAL

District Collector Ravi has expressed concern over the growing cyber crime with the use of modern technology and wanted the students who have undergone training in Cyber Congress should sensitise the common man on cyber crimes and insisted that the education department and women safety wing of the Telangana police and all the concerned departments should work with coordination to produce more Cyber Ambassadors.

He was participating as the chief guest along with District SP Sindhu Sarma in the grand finale of the Cyber Congress training programme. They lighted the lamp marking the commencement of the grand finale here on Thursday.

He said that the Telangana police is occupying the top position in maintaining the law and order in the country and extolled the performance of the SHE teams and women Safety wing of the police depart-

ment in the district.

He said that the use of the Internet has increased manifold during the pandemic situation due to the online classes. He asked the students to use Internet only up to the optimum level. Sindhu Sarma said that 3300 students drawn from 1650 government schools in 33 districts across the state were identified and imparted training on cyber security under the joint aegis of the Women's Safety Wing of the Telangana Police, School Education Department and civil society organization called Youngistan. The objective of the Cyber Congress is to sensitise the people on cyber crimes through students. Over 100 students from various government schools and 50 teachers were picked up from the district for the purpose of imparting training. They were trained for about 10 months on cyber crimes and how to prevent them, she said asking the parents to speak openly with their wards to know their problems from time to time.

# Rain-drenched paddy to be converted into fortified rice

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government has decided to convert the rain-drenched 4.94-lakh tonnes of paddy out of the 50.39 lakh tonnes into fortified rice. The government ruled out converting the paddy into boiled rice. A good number of rice mills in the State have installed blending machines to produce fortified rice out of paddy.

The Civil Supplies Department has issued orders to this effect. In lieu of the boiled rice, the Centre has agreed to procure fortified rice for the Central pool. Since fortified rice is being distributed among the ration card holders in Kurnool, Bheem, Bhupalapally, Kothagudem and Mulugu districts, the State government has decided to use the paddy soaked in the recent rains to be converted into fortified rice.



In all, 90.95 lakh tonnes of paddy has been shifted to the rice mills for custom milling of rice during the past three agricultural seasons.

The State government has decided to produce 5 lakh tonnes of parboiled fortified rice by milling the paddy. In fact, 7.35 lakh tonnes of paddy is required to mill 5 lakh tonnes of parboiled rice. The Civil Supplies Department directed the rice millers to produce the

required quantity of parboiled rice by milling 4.94 lakh tonnes of rain-drenched paddy and an additional 3 lakh tonnes of paddy procured in 2020-21 rabi season and in 2021-22 Vanakalam season.

The State government urged the Centre to take 20 lakh tonnes of fortified rice towards the State's contribution to the Central pool in view of the special conditions prevailing in the state.

# Debt burden drives teacher to suicide

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Entrapped in distress and debt, a government school teacher, Godesi Narendrababu, committed suicide by hanging himself at his house on Thursday. The tragedy happened at Sri Sri Nagar in Suryapet town. He worked in a government school. According to Narendrababu's son, the teacher had been experiencing severe distress as he ran up huge debts. The moneylenders had started exerting pressure on him to repay loans. Unable to face the pressure from the moneylenders, the teacher committed suicide, his son alleged.

According to his family members, Narendrababu went to his bedroom on Wednesday night. He was found hanging from a ceiling fan on Thursday morning. After confirming that he was dead, information was given to the police.

# Student injured in head on RGKUT campus

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technologies (RGKUT)-Basar is again in the news for the wrong reasons.

The students at the RGKUT were once again up in arms on Thursday as a student suffered head injury at Manjeera Boys hostel. The student, identified as Deemath, was studying PUC 1, when a fragment of roof fell on his head. A head

He was standing beside the mirror and suddenly a fragment of the roof fell on his head. We took him to hospital and he had four stitches in his head,' a student said.

The students said the Vice-Chancellor was conspicuously absent on the campus. The hostels are in pathetic condition.

'We requested Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao to visit the campus. The VC must stay on campus and all posts should be filled,' stu-



dents said.

The injured was rushed to the Navipet hospital. He was declared out of danger. It may be recalled that nearly 100 students fell ill on August 3 after eating food in the hostel. Ten of them were admitted to hospitals while others were treated on the campus. They had developed symptoms of food poisoning.

Recently, in the first week of August, a video clip of two workers taking a bath inside the kitchen of one of the messes went viral. Some mess workers were allegedly using the kitchen for bathing and washing their clothes.

# CP stresses need to inculcate patriotism among children

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

District Collector Prashant Jeevan Patil, city Police Commissioner N Sweta and ZP Chairperson Roja Radhakrishna Sarma on Thursday flagged off the freedom run, organised in connection with the diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence from Ambedkar Circle here to the Open air auditorium near Komati Cheruvu. The Collector and Police Commissioner stressed the need to inculcate patriotism in children.

Police officers and citizens took part in the event wearing T-shirts that sported the Tricolour and served as the main attraction at the event.

District Collector and the Police Commissioner also took part in the programme. The participants raised slogans like 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai,' and 'Jai Hind.'

Addressing the participants at the open air auditorium, Police Commissioner Sweta said that Freedom Run was



Zilla Parishad Chairman Roja Radhakrishna Sarma flagging off freedom run in Siddipet on Thursday

organised on Thursday as per the directions from the State government during the diamond jubilee celebrations. She thanked the personnel and officers of the police department and others for taking part in the event.

It is everyone's responsibility to give broad publicity to the greatness of the country, the results of the freedom struggle and the significance of independence. Several great persons have sacrificed their lives to free the country from foreign rule, she said, asking

the people to read the biographical sketches of the freedom fighters and follow in their footsteps. The freedom that we enjoy today is due to the valuable sacrifices made by eminent people, she said.

The Gandhi film is being screened for the benefit of children, she said.

She appealed to the officials of the department and elected people's representatives to take part in the diamond jubilee celebrations to be held till Aug 22 and make the event a grand success.

# Uttam asks Communists to support Congress in Munugode

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that he was proud of belonging to the Congress which fought for India's independence and made magnificent contributions to the development of India, social justice, and the development of democratic institutions.

He praised the role of Communist parties in combined Nalgonda district and appealed to them to support the Congress candidate in the Munugode by-election to defeat the BJP and the TRS.

He expressed deep concern over the erosion of democratic traditions and conventions in the country under BJP's rule during the 75th year of India's independence.

He was speaking to the media during the Azadi Ki Gaurav Yatra in the Munagala Mandal of Suryapet district on Thursday.

Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with former MLA N. Padmavathi, DCC President Venkanna Yadav, District Mahila President Anuradha Rao, MPP Narender, Vice MPP Papaiah Yadav, Mandal



President Jaipal, Sarpanches, MPTCs, and hundreds of Congress leaders and workers participated in the pooja at the famous 1,000 years Repala temple. He also felicitated 92-year-old freedom fighter Unnam Venkaiah and launched the 12-km Azadi Ki Gaurav Yatra in Munagala Mandal.

Uttam said that the present and future generations must remember the sacrifices of freedom fighters during India's struggle for freedom.

He said the Congress made a huge contribution to India's independence movement. Many stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Netaji

Subhash Chandra Bose and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad belonged to the Congress at one point in time or the other.

'It is a great honour to carry forward the legacy of patriotism and social service, social justice and sacrifice. Today India is emerging as a superpower in many areas mainly because of the contributions of the Congress. The Congress has made a magnificent contribution by building democratic institutions, ensuring social justice and growth in modern India,' he said.

'I feel sad that in the 75th year of independence, people are witnessing the steady degradation of democratic institu-

**He praised the role of Communist parties in combined Nalgonda district and appealed to them to support the Congress candidate in the Munugode by-election to defeat the BJP and the TRS.**

tions and the eroding of parliamentary traditions in the country by parties and individuals holding high posts, both in New Delhi and in Hyderabad. Soon after independence, after India became a republic, the Parliament used to meet for 120 days a year. Now, under the BJP government, Parliament is meeting only for about 60 days in a year, and the BJP has started a practice of adjourning both the houses of Parliament much before schedule,' he said.

Uttam said that he was personally pained when the recent monsoon session of Parliament was adjourned sine die as the government wanted to run off from its responsibility and accountability to the people. 'After serving as an MLA for

five consecutive terms, when I got elected as an MP I had great expectations. But unfortunately, under BJP rule, the value of Parliament, Parliamentary Committees and other institutions is getting destroyed,' he said.

Uttam said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has undermined democratic institutions in Telangana. He said that democracy was murdered when KCR purchased Congress MLAs.

The Congress MP said he was happy to be a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Energy to which the Electricity Act 2022 has been referred. He said he would take an active part in discussions about the Act.

# Telangana State making rapid strides toward development

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Organising the diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence at a time when the Telangana State ranked number one in the country in terms of developmental activities is a matter of great happiness, observed Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud.

He flagged off the Freedom Run in the town from ZP Grounds to DIET College waving the national flag. Students, employees and retired employees and high and mighty of the town took part in the event in large numbers.

He observed, 'The Freedom Run symbolises the rapid strides that Telangana is making in development.'

Addressing the participants

at the DIET College, where the Freedom Run culminated into a public meeting, he observed that the Telangana is running on the high road to development under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. He stressed the need to draw inspiration from sacrifices made by several eminent persons to liberate the country from foreign rule. It is matter of great joy, he observed.

In the Commonwealth Games medals tally, Telangana ranked number two which stands as a testimony to the development achieved by the state. Srinivas Goud, who is also the minister for sports, felt that he is very proud to note that the sportsmen and women from the state brought laurels to the country.

Once, Telangana region achieved the lowest every literacy rate, people of the state used to get drinking water once in 14 days, lands in the state go parched for want of assured irrigation facility, people used to migrate to other places in search of green pastures, he said adding that the picture was now totally transformed.

Currently, people get Mission Bhagiradha drinking water daily, they have access to 24x7 power to farm sector, farmers get benefit under Rythu Bandhu agriculture input subsidy scheme and also under Rythu Beema. As a result, the state ranked number one in the country. It is a matter of pride for the state, he said.

The backward district of Mahabubnagar in the country

achieved good progress in all sectors, he said feeling glad for it.

In spite of Telangana achieved good progress, caste and religious inequalities are proving to be a hindrance to development, he said.

The starvation deaths should go, inequalities should vanish, development should get precedence over other narrow considerations like caste, he said. Development should not confine to mere giving of slogans, he said suggesting that the people should feel that all equal. The fruits of development should reach all. People should get employment locally checking immigration problem forever, he said.

District Collector S Venkat Rao, SP Venkateswarly, Additional Collectors Tejas



Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud at the freedom run in Mahabubnagar on Thursday

Nandlal Pawar and Sitarama Rao, Municipal chairman KC Narsimhulu, MUDA chairman Ganji Venkanna, vice-chairman Ganesh, municipal com-

missioner Pradeep Kumar, district officials, municipal councilors, elected people's representatives and people of the town took part in the event.

INDIA CORNER

## Disfigured' national flags hoisted in Bihar; BJP protests

Senior BJP leader Ram Surat Rai on Thursday alleged that disrespect was shown to the national flag in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar, as disfigured tricolours were hoisted. The former minister also linked the alleged incident to the formation of a new government in the state, comprising parties like the RJD, JD(U), Congress and the Left. A video has gone viral on social media of disfigured tricolours, one tied to the branch of a tree and another hoisted atop a house, which local BJP leaders claim to be of Aurai, the constituency of Rai. "Just the day before you were sworn in as the chief minister of a new government and today an activist of your alliance partner replaced the Asoka Chakra with a crescent and star, in a disrespect to the national flag which BJP will not tolerate," Rai said without referring to any particular party.



## Himachal facing debt burden of Rs 64,904 crore: CM

Himachal Pradesh is currently facing a debt of Rs 64,904 crore, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur informed the state assembly on Thursday. He gave the information during a debate on a no-confidence motion against his government on the second day of the ongoing monsoon session. The CM rose from his seat and gave the figure, correcting Congress legislator Jagat Singh Negi, who during the debate claimed that the hill state owes Rs 80,000 crore. Thakur said that one Congress legislator says the state is facing a debt burden of Rs 70,000 crore, the other says Rs 75,000 and yet another says Rs 80,000 crore, none of which was true. The CM said that the growth of loans during the previous Congress government was 67 per cent, whereas it is just 35 per cent during the current government despite the COVID-19 pandemic hitting the economy so badly.



## Modi celebrates Raksha Bandhan with daughters of PMO staff members

Prime Minister Narendra Modi celebrated Raksha Bandhan on Thursday with the daughters of his office staffers tying rakhis on his wrist. He gave them a national flag each for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme. "A very special Raksha Bandhan with these youngsters," the prime minister tweeted and posted pictures from the event. Officials said the daughters of sweepers, peons, gardeners, drivers and other such members of the Prime Minister's Office staff tied rakhis on Modi's wrist. They also shared a video of the celebration and the prime minister's interaction with them. The prime minister was seen handing them national flags to hoist at their houses. His government has urged people to hoist or display the national flag during August 13-15 as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign to mark the 75th anniversary of India's independence.



# No-confidence motion against HP govt defeated by voice vote

PNS ■ SHIMLA

A no-confidence motion moved by the Congress and the CPI-M against the Jai Ram Thakur government in Himachal Pradesh was defeated by voice vote in the state Assembly on Thursday.

The opposition MLAs walked out of the House during Chief Minister Thakur's reply to the debate on the motion.

The House witnessed a stormy debate as the opposition members targeted the BJP government over law and order, unemployment, price rise and other issues.

The ruling BJP rejected the charges claiming the opposition has failed to come up with any concrete issue. The opposition parties moved the motion, just four months before the state is going to the Assembly polls.

Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri, Congress MLAs Jagat Singh Negi, Ram Lal Thakur, Harshwardhan Chauhan, Sukhvinder Sukhu and lone CPI-M legislator Rakesh Singha spoke in sup-



port of the motion. Chief Minister Thakur, his Cabinet colleagues Rakesh Pathania, Bikram Singh Thakur, Sukh Ram Chaudhary and BJP MLA Rajeev Bindal spoke for the government.

Starting the debate at 11 am, Mukesh Agnihotri said the law and order situation in the state has deteriorated under the BJP government.

He said 354 murders, 1,574 rapes and 7,406 sexual harassment cases have so far been reported in the state under the Thakur-led government. He

said an assistant town and country planner, Shail Bala, was shot dead in broad daylight while a Supreme Court-mandated drive to demolish illegal structures in 13 hotels of Solan district was being carried out in 2018.

Agnihotri said the probe into a paper leak during the recruitment of constables was not handed over to Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) despite the CM's announcement. Congress legislator Jagat Singh Negi said the CM has gained the reputation of a

"helicopter waale mukhyamantri" and "hoardings waale Mukhyamantri" for excessive use of choppers and hoardings by him.

Congress MLA Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said it should be made public why the state government removed chief secretary Anil Kumar Khachi from his post.

He said the police officials involved in the constables' recruitment paper leak are being shielded by the BJP government. The lone CPI-M MLA, Rakesh Singha, said he

knew that the motion will be defeated but he signed the notice for it to raise issues like the old-pension scheme (OPS).

Replying to the debate, Chief Minister Thakur said he has already raised the pension issue with the Centre. "Let us see what happens," he said urging the opposition not to politicise it. Thakur said the Congress should not mislead state employees on the issue as it was their government that started the new pension scheme.

The reality is that it is very difficult for the Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh to implement the old pension scheme without getting help from the Centre, he added.

On the paper leak, Thakur said the state government decided to hand over the probe to the CBI but it could not pressure agency to take over it.

He also appreciated the probe done by the special investigation team (SIT) of the state police in this case and said the process for the recruitment of the constables has almost been completed after the written test was reconducted.

## China backing for JeM dy chief 'politically motivated'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

China blocking a proposal at the UN Security Council to designate Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) deputy chief Abdul Rauf Azhar as a global terrorist is "politically motivated" and exposes its "doublepeak and double standards" in fighting terrorism, government sources said on Thursday.

Abdul Rauf, the younger brother of JeM chief Masood Azhar, has been involved in planning and executing numerous terror strikes in India including the hijacking of Indian Airlines aircraft IC814 in 1999, the attack on the Parliament in 2001 and the targeting of the IAF base in Pathankot in 2016.

Sources said such "politically motivated" actions by China in nearly every listing case of Pakistan-based terrorists reflected "undermining" of the entire sanctity of the working of the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committees.

The designation of Abdul Rauf would have resulted in a global travel ban on him as well as requiring Pakistan to freeze his assets and to cut off



his access to weapons and related materials. China on Wednesday put a 'technical hold' on a joint proposal at the UN Security Council by India and the US to blacklist him. All other 14 member states of the top UN body supported the move.

The latest action came less than a month after China blocked a similar joint proposal by India and the US to blacklist Pakistan-based deputy leader of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba Abdul Rehman Makki. Makki too has been involved in raising funds, recruiting and radicalising youths to resort to violence and planning and executing attacks in India, including the Mumbai terror strikes. The

proposal to designate Abdul Rauf was moved in the UN Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee and the documents related to it were circulated among all the member nations.

There has been "incontrovertible evidence" for both these listing proposals, sources said. Both the terrorists have already been sanctioned by the US under its domestic legislation. "It is unfortunate that the sanctions committee has been prevented from playing its role due to political considerations. China's actions expose its double speak and double standards when it comes to the international community's shared battle against terrorism," said a source.

## Assam to digitise birth, death registrations



PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Thursday decided to completely digitise the issuance of birth and death certificates. The government also decided on putting a thrust on routine immunisation, organ transplant, and blood donation. The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Health and Family Welfare department, chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The chief minister in a tweet said that birth and death registrations will be made completely digital. The meeting, which was attended by Health minister Keshab Mahanta, also decided that massive routine immunisation drives would be undertaken from October 2022 to March 2023. "A robust organ transplant network system to be developed as there are many cases of brain-dead patients," Sarma wrote on the micro-blogging site.

## Odisha, ocean tech institute to protect coastline

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Institute of Ocean Technology for protection of its coasts. The MoU was signed between Water Resources Department Engineer in Chief B K Mishra and Dr. G A Ramdass, Director, NIOT, Chennai, on Wednesday. The state government is taking all possible measures for disaster



mitigation and focusing on zero casualties, said Water Resources Minister Tukuni Sahu, who was present on the occasion. National Institute of Ocean

Technology, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is a premier institute in the country specialising in the field of ocean engineering and coastline protection.

## CVC brings down pendency of disciplinary matters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Vigilance Commission has drastically brought down the pendency of disciplinary matters against central government employees and carried out an exercise to review pending cases so as to ensure that all cases reach a logical end within a reasonable time.

This was conveyed by Central Vigilance Commissioner Suresh N Patel and vigilance commissioners Arvind Kumar and Praveen Kumar Srivastava



when they called on Union Minister for Personnel Jitendra Singh on Thursday. Citing figures, Patel informed Singh that the pendency of 2,099 discipli-

nary matters for the period prior to December 2018 had been reduced to 227 by June 30, 2022 due to a special campaign initiated by the commission in

2020, an official release said. Similarly, overall outstanding disciplinary matters which on an average as on December 2019 used to be around 5,000 at a given point of time has come down drastically in the range of 1,700 now due to cooperation of the authorities at different levels, it said. The minister has been conveyed that the commission had started an exercise in 2020 to review pending cases of disciplinary matters so as to ensure that all cases reach a logical end within a reasonable period of time.

## Your energy is infectious: PM to Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lauded former Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu for his commitment to ideology, which drove him to join a political party that had little presence in his state of Andhra Pradesh, saying his "energy is infectious".

In a three-page farewell letter to Naidu, whose term as the vice president ended on Wednesday, the prime minister said, "Your energy is infectious. It can be seen in your wit and wisdom. Your one-liners are widely admired. Articulation has always been



among your greatest strengths." Recalling Naidu's strengths, Modi said from the small lanes of Nellore to the vice-presidency, yours has been an outstand-

ing and inspiring journey. "Whenever any challenge or setback came, it only strengthened your resolve to go about your work with even more

courage," Modi said. Referring to his chairmanship of Rajya Sabha, Modi said Naidu has always been a "stickler for parliamentary discipline and traditions".

"I know of your personal anguish and discomfort whenever there were unseemly disruptions or the dignity of the Parliament was lowered in any manner. Whenever you spoke about it, there was deep pain in your voice, conveying your worry for the long-term future of our nation and the vibrancy of the Parliament," Modi wrote in the letter addressed to Naidu as Venkaiah 'garu' (honorific suffix).

## Banda: Four drowned, several missing after boat capsizes in Yamuna

PNS ■ BANDA

At least four people drowned and several others went missing on Thursday when a boat capsized in the Yamuna in Banda district's Marka area, police said.

The incident took place when the boat was travelling from Marka to Jarauli Ghat in Fatehpur district, they said.

Superintendent of Police Abhinandan said the boat was carrying 30-35 people. Help of divers is being taken



to trace the missing, the SP said. Additional SP Lakshmi Niwas Mishra said seven to eight people swammed to

safety and many are feared drowned. Four bodies have been recovered so far, a senior official said.

## Himachal Pradesh rain havoc: Shops and vehicles washed away, roads blocked

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Heavy rains wreaked havoc in parts of Himachal Pradesh on Thursday with two people being buried alive under debris following a landslide in Kullu district, while shops and vehicles were washed away and highways blocked by flash floods in other places.

In Kullu, Chavelu Devi (55) and Kritika (17) died when their house at Khadel village in Sheel gram panchayat of Anni tehsil was hit by debris following the landslide around 9 am, Director of state disaster



management department Sudesh Mokhta said. In another incident in the district, 10 shops and three vehicles were washed away after a cloudburst hit the Deuthi gram panchayat in Anni tehsil around 7.30

am, he added. An old bus stand and a panchayat building at Deuthi are also facing the risk of being washed away, and revenue department officials have reached the spot to assess the situation, he added.

## CSC, UN body to help migrant workers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-managed CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Organization for Migration-United Nations' India Mission to establish Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Tamil Nadu.

The agreement between the two organisations is aimed at helping migrant workers in accessing e-governance and migration assistance services in rural areas, CSC (Common Service Centres) said in statement. "CSC VLEs (Village Level Entrepreneurs), which



operate around 5 lakh CSCs across India, are fully equipped to offer various e-enabled services being offered by the Union government as well as

state governments. In Tamil Nadu CSC VLEs will help migrant workers in accessing e-governance and migration assistance services in rural

areas," CSC managing director Dinesh Tyagi said in the statement.

He said that CSC is in talks with the authorities and soon

CSC will be offering this service in other states also.

"Since Tamil Nadu hosts significant number of inter-state migrants, it is important to connect migrant workers with the digital platforms for getting support in banking services, Aadhaar services, tele-law assistance, accessing welfare and telemedicine services, and being informed about their rights and benefits," the statement said.

CSC e-Governance Services, a special purpose vehicle under the ministry of electronics and IT, will help in achieving the objective, the statement said.

## Confusion over freebies

The Election Commission seems to be steering clear of the mess of freebies our politicians have created

The Election Commission of India's (ECI's) views over freebies are not very helpful in evolving any consensus over the issue. In its affidavit in the Supreme Court, the poll panel said, "Freebies can have a different impact on society, economy, equity depending on the situation... For instance, during natural disasters/pandemic, providing life-saving medicine, food, funds, etc., may be a life and economic saviour but in normal times, they could be termed 'freebies'." Perhaps the constitutional body doesn't want to wade into the mess politicians have created in the political arena and is, thus, deliberately evasive; it is, however, indubitable that its remarks don't add anything towards the resolution of the issue. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, on the other hand, believes in a disingenuous strategy: If you don't want to solve a problem, philosophise it; and if you still want to be seen as serious, politicise it as well. Soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi berated against what he called the "revdi culture" on July 16, Kejriwal began defending by offering the strangest of arguments. For instance,



he asked whether free education and healthcare be called as freebies. The Prime Minister had rightly said freebies are "very dangerous" for economic development. But nobody seems to be interested in addressing the issue in a proper manner—not even the Bharatiya Janata Party. Nothing else explains BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay's petition in the Supreme Court in which he sought restrictions on parties on distributing "irrational freebies" before elections.

But shouldn't people move court only after they have failed to resolve some issue among themselves? There is nothing in the public domain to suggest that Upadhyay or any other BJP leader discussed the matter on a party platform, let alone try

to evolve a consensus among all parties. After all, the problem of freebies is a political one, so the solution too has to be political in nature. For the truth is that the freebie culture, which is unbridled populism, is something all political parties, including the BJP, promote. In fact, all of them vie with each other in the game of competitive populism. But just because everyone does something improper doesn't mean that it has become proper. But Kejriwal, who is also the Aam Aadmi Party boss, doesn't want any restrictions on or distinctions between various freebies. He is of the opinion that free electricity or free public transport for women in the national capital is not a freebie; this is just a state government discharging its "constitutional responsibilities" to create an equitable society. This is incorrect, for no reading of the Constitution or its preamble suggests that the founding fathers of our republic wanted the government to distribute free goods and services. Nor was our freedom struggle about freebies; it was about free India and free Indians. We hope that the Supreme Court drills these simple facts into the heads of our political masters.

### PICTALK



Hindu boys perform rituals for 'Janeu' or 'Yajnopavit' samskar inside a temple on Raksha Bandhan festival

PTI

## Market to decide airfares

The decision to do away with the airfare band is timely and would give relief to the struggling airlines

The government's decision to blow away the fare cap would be music to the aviation industry. It has been decided that the cap on airfares for airlines would be done away with from August 31. It was introduced to airlines more than two years ago in 2020 at the peak of Covid when limited flights were operating. The government feared that the airline operators could jack up the prices to make good the Covid losses. Now after more than two years when this pricing was introduced it did not make sense as now the flights have resumed their routine operations and Covid seat restrictions are also gone. Besides, the number of flyers has also increased pushing up the demand. In fact, it could have come to a couple of months earlier and would have meant a big relief for the aviation industry. In the wake of a complete lockdown to stall the spread of corona, all flights were suspended for more than two months. Even after their resumption in May they were not allowed to function at full capacity. To ensure and protect the flyers and airlines a price band was introduced which didn't allow prices to go beyond it in either direction.

The fare band was a good idea but now it had outlived its rationale. Since both, the factors which determine the price of airfares - fuel prices and the demand and supply interplay are now in the normal range so it is a timely and reasonable decision that perhaps could have been taken a few months back as it would have given more stability to the aviation industry. The downside is that a few airlines could be in a hurry to make good their losses and push their prices up in certain sectors where demand is rather high leading to cartelization of prices. This is what the ministry would have to keep an eye on. Though it is very unlikely chances of higher airfare are there especially in the festive season when demand is high. The airline industry was badly hit by the pandemic and many of the airlines in India and abroad are struggling to remain afloat. The industry has welcomed this decision and aviation experts believe that it would be good for the aviation industry even if prices remain volatile for a while but would eventually settle. The decision to remove the fare cap must be followed by a number of other measures which could give a fillip to the aviation industry and provide momentum in terms of growth and scalability.



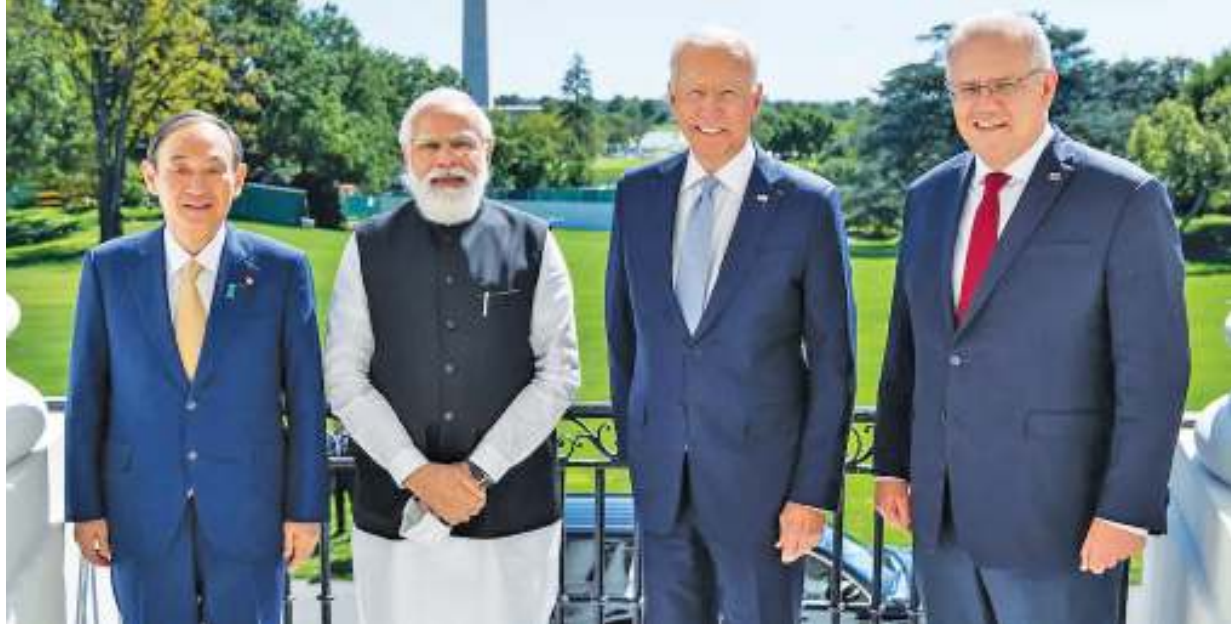
# India as a major world player at 75

India has emerged as one of the key players in the international arena without compromising its basic premise

This year marks 75 years of India's independence and a moment that is being cherished and celebrated. But then, like with all celebrations, we must look back and take stock of the journey traveled so far and also chart our future course of action. Foreign policy is one of those areas that usually see continuity over long periods of time, the political changes notwithstanding. The Indian story is similar in the sense that one sees continuity for a long period since 1947, for instance, India's commitment to a non-aligned status, among others. But with the political scenario changing in the last decade or so, the contours of foreign policy have also seen some major changes. A few have been bold while others have been more of a subtle nature.

The biggest change is probably a change in attitude where one sees a more confident India engaging with the world. We have also seen the emergence of late of a number of regional and other informal groupings where India occupies a place of global significance. The Indo Pacific Quad and the West Asia Quad or the I2U2, are recent instances where India is a member along with the United States, of groupings that influence the Indo Pacific and the Middle East. It would also be significant to note here that this would not have been possible without India having done the groundwork in the first place by building strong bilateral ties with member states as diverse as Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on the one hand, and with countries like Japan and Australia on the other hand.

At the same time, we have to acknowledge the challenges ahead and accept that there are a few headaches that are not going to be easy to resolve. The biggest one of course remains China. While India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has pushed more aggressively for a solution to the Chinese problem, an outcome remains elusive. 2020 saw the worst fighting between India and China since 1962, and while



India stood its ground, the Chinese have also dug in their heels. To the world, it is evident that China is a power that intends to increase its hold over territory by military and nonmilitary means. Tibet is one example and the tensions we see in Taiwan today post the visit of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is another. China looks at itself as the next hegemony on the global stage and with an economy and a military rapidly gaining strength, it remains a headache not just for India but for the world. For India, the additional worry is that China sits on its borders, always threatening and provoking.

Another major shift one sees in recent years has been that of India and its ties with Pakistan. Since 1947, despite the wars and the terrorist attacks from across the border, the general consensus stayed that India must stay engaged with Pakistan. After all, geography is not a matter of choice and the fact that Pakistan is a neighbour will never change, so talk we must. That has undergone a dramatic and bold change. In recent years, India has not shied away from pointing the finger at Pakistan

“THE BIGGEST CHANGE IS PROBABLY A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE WHERE ONE SEES A MORE CONFIDENT INDIA ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD”

for many of the terrorist attacks in India, bilaterally and globally. India has also gone a step further and now refuses to indulge in talks where the trust deficit is so huge that Indo-Pak talks have been reduced to photo-ops with near zero movements on crucial issues. Since 2019 when terrorist groups based in Pakistan launched attacks in the former Jammu and Kashmir state, India retaliated decisively and since then it is also worth noting that there have been no major terrorist attacks against India from Pakistani soil.

There has of course been a great change in dynamics when it comes to balancing the great old powers, namely Russia and the US. India has traditionally been always closer to Russia but recent years point to a shift. The Indo-US bilateral relationship has grown in strength, which has also attracted criticism that India might be investing just too heavily in this relationship. The Russia ties remain strong but the growing Russia - China axis, post-Ukraine crisis, poses a major policy challenge for India. Wheels within wheels

and China and Pakistan already share a cozy relationship with some today even referring to Pakistan as nothing more than a satellite state of China. For India the challenge remains to maintain a delicate balance, keeping old friends happy while new friendships are formed.

In the last 75 years, the world has changed and so has India. The world has seen the end of the Cold War and a world shifting from bipolar to unipolar and also stages of a multipolar one. India has shed its old skin too and is ready to embrace the world in a more confident fashion, cognisant of its position on the world stage. But challenges remain some very tough ones like China. How well India navigates these challenges will shape its foreign policy and the country in the decades to follow.

(The author, a Delhi-based journalist and foreign affairs analyst, holds a Masters in International Relations from the American University in Washington DC. In 2009, her book 'Piercing the Heart: Untold Stories of 26/11', was published. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FREEBIES AS LIFESAVERS!

Sir — The Election Commission has rightly opined that freebies can be lifesavers during crisis periods. The supreme court has also said that there is a difference between freebies and welfare schemes like the difference between chalk and cheese. One cannot differentiate both from one another without much thought. So it takes a deep understanding and brainstorming among all stakeholders to formulate proper guidelines to curb the inducement culture pre and post polls period without hurting the welfare agenda. When ambiguity prevails in defining such culture itself, it's not possible to stop the parties from making unrealistic promises. As the apex court has aptly said it's also undemocratic to punish the political parties on that grounds.

DVG Sankararao | Vizianagaram

### NITISH CM, TEJASHWI SUPER CM

Sir — Once again a grand coalition government has formed in Bihar. Nitish Kumar took oath as Chief Minister for the record eighth time and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav took oath as Deputy Chief Minister for the second time. At the moment it is not clear which ministry Tejashwi Yadav will handle as Deputy Chief Minister, but if the Home Ministry comes to him, then it will be clear that this time he will be a more powerful Deputy Chief Minister than last time.

This may increase the challenge of Nitish Kumar because no one can know better than him how questions have been raised about law and order during RJD's time. It also cannot be overlooked that when Nitish Kumar came out of the Grand Alliance, he highlighted the corruption of RJD leaders as well as their interference in law and order. It may be difficult for Nitish Kumar to pursue his agenda of good governance and accommodate the election promises of RJD.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

### THE COLONIAL BAGGAGE

The colonial baggage of things that have managed to take root in Indian society is numerous. One such legacy is the tie that seems to have been ingrained in our society, especially in Schools, and offices even though it is not conducive to the climate prevalent in India. If earlier it was a mark of elitism, today, it has acquired a more complex existence. But the innocuous-looking tie could turn out to be a health hazard according to a recent study.

The world has also undergone a massive transformation, as the codes of clothing are coming to terms with new social realities.

Necktie in India a tortured soul dangling awkwardly on a school children's neck. Research has shown that wearing a tie results in a 7.5% reduction in blood flows to the brain. Research published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology reveals that a tie can restrict the blood flow through the jugular vein as well



as through the carotid arteries. It could also trigger glaucoma and cataracts, and other ailments according to a study.

So, this colonial legacy must be worn with prudence and taking scientific studies into consideration. Clothing must be determined based on comfort, suitability to a particular region, and climatic conditions rather than forced on school children based on the false sense of superiority, notions, and beliefs.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### FESTIVALS MUST BE FOR ALL

Sir — Rakshabandhan is a major festival in India celebrated widely all over the country. As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, India possesses a rich cultural heritage too. A hugely diverse group of people celebrating different festivals throughout the year. As we see the markets and sweet shops overcrowded in festival seasons. Still, we can see a huge divide between the incomes of people across India. As one section enjoys overwhelming options of food rich in taste and energy, contradictory to that other section is hardly able to survive and enjoy the festival. Surprisingly, One section of Indians (around 40%) are struggling with obesity. On the other hand, one section faces a lack of proper nutrition-rich diet and malnutrition throughout the year. Instead of overconsuming food and materials this festival season, let's try to fill the gap and make sure every section of society enjoys it with the same joy.

Soumydeep Saxena | Ujjain

### SOUND BITE

I will begin the day by visiting Raj Ghat and paying my respects to PujyaBapu at 8.30 AM at Rajghat.



Vice-President of India  
—Jagdeep Dhankhar



US President  
—Joe Biden

What a wonderful day spent with the 'Golden Boy of Indian Cinema' ssrajamouli? ..discussing Filmmaking, Philosophy, Storytelling and Technology. Such a learning process.



Filmmaker  
—Shekhar Kapur



I first met Rudi in 1992 & we became good friends over the years. He was a warm-hearted person who always greeted players with a big smile! My heartfelt condolences to his loved ones.

Cricketer  
—Sachin Tendulkar

BJP never betrays the people of a State. Encouraging defections from other parties is a welfare measure to uplift the defectors. Breaking other political parties is to purify those parties. Destabilising state governments is to bring stability to governance in those states.



Congress leader  
—P Chidambaram

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA MUST REJIG TIES IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

India emerges as the kind, wise no-frills ally to its neighbours



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India has been an outlier in its neighbourhood for some time. The size of the country, home to a rich diversity of religions and regional identities, apart, the Indian economy has been a shining story. This story gets a sharper edge when almost every nation on its borders is going through a financial crisis.

Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and to an extent Bangladesh are looking for international aid (read an IMF bailout). The frequency of such international bailouts has been highest for Pakistan, followed by Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. As India and perhaps the entire neighbourhood celebrates 75 years of being an independent sovereign in their own rights, the growth has been fractured for the region.

Domestic economic policies, institutional wisdom in key sectors, domestic politics and upheavals, faith in Constitution and Constitutionally approved governance framework have all contributed to creating this study in contrast in Southeast Asia. India has clearly emerged as a leader not just in the neighbourhood but also on the global stage. However, the move towards the next level of influence in the chaotic chess board of international relations must be careful and measured, with a firm vision for the next 25 years.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka stand as success stories of India's stated position of neighbourhood first. India was the first country to establish diplomatic relations with Bangladesh in 1971 and both countries have been moving towards steady bilateral relations by building on shared culture, history, and geography.



India and Bangladesh form an inseparable part of critical landmass in South-east Asia, with complementary resources and geography. The two countries share 54 rivers, besides one of the largest mangrove forests in the world. The Sundarbans, located in one of the most fragile bioclimatic zones around the globe, provides exclusive breeding ground for many endangered species, besides offering an almost live glimpse into the impact of climate change. India and Bangladesh have in the past four decades worked closely in preserving these unique natural sites from decay and destruction, much of which is manmade. India needs to closely follow its neighbour's economic trajectory if New Delhi wants to stand tall in the international order.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was in Bangladesh this week, where one of the promises made was to increase duty free access for Bangladeshi garments, woven products into the Chinese market by one per cent. Already, China is one of the largest trade partners with Bangladesh. China has also invested billions of dollars in building major infrastructure projects, ranging from bridges, seaports, access roads in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Bangladesh has turned to China to push back the millions of Rohingya refugees, as the country is staring at an economic crisis. China had brokered a repatriation of nearly 0.7 million refugees in 2017. This aid from China comes at a cost, which puts Bangladesh in a tricky situation when it comes to balancing bilateral relations with the US and India.

Bangladesh had to issue a support statement for "One China policy" amid the visit of senior US leader from the legislative wing, Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan.

Sri Lanka, going through a financial crisis of its own, is economically dependent on China. Colombo would find it difficult to stop a Chinese spy ship docking at its port. India and some of its western allies have so far managed to delay the ship, but it is a matter of time before China takes an aggressive stance.

India has to start reshaping its narrative during the ongoing financial crisis in the two countries and emerge as the kind, wise no frills ally.

(The author is a foreign policy commentator.)

When obedience is virtue, questioning evil

The past few years have put democratic institutions of the country in a spot amid cult dominance



MOHIT KUMAR

India has been a democratic country for 75 years, but in the last five to six years, the debate about democracy and authoritarianism has suddenly hit the conscience of Indian academics, media channels, and public space. The question is, why is this the case in the last few years even while the country celebrates the 75 years of Independence and democratic life?

Why are we so perplexed and doubtful of our democratic system's success after 75 years of its accomplishment? Is it because of rising trends or apprehension of authoritarian tendencies? If we carefully observe the debate, we can conclude that this indeed is the case in the minds of the people.

The first apprehension of this trend comes from the politics of labelling the people into electorally wanted or unwanted categories. Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar (June 6, 2022) in an article said that after July 7, 2022, the current Bharatiya Janata Party will not have a single MP or MLA from the Muslim community, which according to the 2011 Census comprises 14.2 or approximately 172.2 million people in the country. It isolates and reduces the Muslims to politically insignificant constituency, which is similar to authoritarian policy of anti-Semitism. Besides, the nature of politics is divisive and creates a binary geography of friends and foes, which is nourished by rewarding the dissemination of mindless separatist or demonized statements of party leaders, short quotes, videos or messages.

The idea of an internal enemy or outsider living inside is constantly invented or reinvented to create a politics of anxiety among the majority and to polarize them in a fashion that reduces their politically diverse or heterogeneity interests into homogeneous interests. A scientific justification for this aversion of the minority is given through pathologizing or presenting them as conspirator, traitor, unfit so that they can be locked up in the minds of the majority in the line of social Darwinist thinking of survival of the fittest. This trend is so obvious that it draws popular attention towards the challenges of democracy.

Another factor explaining the challenges of democracy and rise of authoritarianism in India can be located into new trends which set up a new moral conscience that gives priority to duties over rights. In a programme titled "Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav Se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that "for the last 75 years, we have only kept talking about rights, fighting for rights, and wasting our time" that kept the country weak. He suggested that for the next 25 years, India must adopt a new vision that prioritizes duties over rights. However, it is noteworthy that he emphasized the duties of the people to the nation rather than duties of the government to the people. The emphasis on duty is situated



THE ATTEMPT TO PROCLAIM DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO DISSENT INEVITABLY MORPHS INTO AN ATTEMPT TO OBSTRUCT NATIONAL GLORY AND IS CONSPIRED BY MALIGN INTENTION OF THE OPPOSITION, AND THUS MUST BE DEALT WITH IMMEDIATELY, WITH OR WITHOUT DUE PROCESS OF LAW.

(The author is an Assistant Professor at Bhagini Nivedita College, University of Delhi.)



ted in an intriguing analogy between the time of colonial rule, when people suffered, struggled, and sacrificed for national freedom, and the present situation, in which an independent nation, though free, still requires sacrifice and suffering for an imagined or utopian future vision of a nation devoid of any socio-political and economic crisis.

Any appeal to suffering is an aesthetic duty that deserves people's praise, because it is a means to achieve national glory. It can be better dissected by examining the government's justification for the 2016 demonetization policy, the Goods and Services Tax policy 2017, the Farm Bills of 2020, and the recent Aganiveer scheme, in which the government makes an emotional appeal for the approval of these schemes founded on the imagined cheerful future that can be achieved by prioritizing the people's duties over their rights and the government's rights over its duties.

These challenges are exacerbated by views that regard obedience to authority as a virtue and resistance or questioning as evil. It is based on the idea that the leader is infallible or an emperor endowed with superhuman qualities, and the popular media invests in portraying him in such a way that people become curious about what he eats, how many hours he works, and his childhood adventures, which elevates him above criticism. Its goal is to distance him

from infallible people, bureaucrats, opposition leaders, and his own ministers, so that failure can be blamed on them rather than on him.

It tactfully moved his acts and choices out of the realm of scientific justification or criticism and into that of religion and faith. Any effort to contest the supreme leader's choice or action is viewed as a plot or an act of heresy, not just against him but also against the nation.

It fosters an irrationalism based on what Umberto Eco refers to in The New York Review article (June 22, 1995) as "the cult of action for action's sake. Action being beautiful in itself, it must be taken before, or without, any previous reflection. Thinking is a form of emasculation". In Indian politics, this pattern is fairly obvious; if we look at the last ten years of parliament's legislative business in terms of passing the bills, we will find that approximately 41 per cent of the bills were passed without adequate debate and discussion, and without involving the standing and consultative committees and stakeholders.

This trend is also evident in the state legislature, where, according to the Annual Review of State Law 2020, 59 per cent of bills were passed in a single day without adequate time for scrutiny. Any attempt by the Opposition to call legislation, bills, or laws into question is undermined by eliciting an emotional response and reaction

from supreme leaders through a new rhetoric of action just for the sake of action. The primacy of action over thinking and deliberation is a concerning sign of the rising trend of authoritarianism.

The most important of these are the centralising discursive practices pushed and disseminated through the media by the business tycoon in order to free the welfare state from its democratic commitment to social welfare and allow for rapid privatisation and liberalisation of the economy without delay or dissent. The attempt to proclaim democratic right to dissent inevitably morphs into an attempt to obstruct national glory and is conspired by malign intention of the Opposition, and thus must be dealt with immediately, with or without due process of law.

Here, what is interesting about the discourse is that the Opposition is a powerful evil that, though not able to harness its power in electoral success, is so effective at misleading people for large protests and movements. Therefore, it must be dealt with by deploying democratic tactics that justify and necessitate authoritarian actions, revealing how mechanistically authoritarianism uses democracy and democracy uses authoritarianism.

In conclusion, the current discussion about democratic challenges is quite pertinent and clear, and it requires a critical examination of its pervasive and silent discourse.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE STRENGTH OF THE RECOVERY PROVIDES A COMFORTING BACKDROP...IT IS THE BREADTH OF THE RECOVERY...WE ARE SEEING GROWTH FIRING ON ALMOST ALL CYLINDERS.  
—FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN



NO QUESTION OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY GETTING INTO RECESSION, SAYS FINANCE MINISTER. SHE IS RIGHT!! BECAUSE OUR ECONOMY HAS ALREADY GOT INTO IT.  
—BJP LEADER SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

Goal of social democracy isn't fulfilled for lack of fraternity

While liberty and equality are enforced with constitutional means, fraternity is getting the short shrift

Fraternity, as opposed to liberty and equality, fails to get traction in public discourse or political programmes. Political leaders and Constitution makers laid as much importance to fraternity as to liberty and equality.

Indian unity and solidarity, it was realised, was not to be taken for granted. It had to be strengthened by recognising and accepting India's immense regional, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity.

Dr BR Ambedkar held that political democracy cannot last unless there lies at its base social democracy. By social democracy, he meant a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as principles of life.

They form a union of trinity in a sense that to divorce one



RAM KRISHNA SINHA

(The author is a former bank executive.)

from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Elaborating on the importance of fraternity, he said, "Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians being one people. It is the principle which gives unity and solidarity to social life."

The beginning was filled with hope for fraternity. There was a broad social consensus on the values of nationalism, secularism and democracy, as well as on the practice of non-violence across all major political entities, which together contributed to the creation of a temper of democracy in the country. Discussion, debate and persuasion, backed by public opinion, was stressed upon for advancing social and political change as opposed to glorification of mistrust, animosity and violence.

However, soon the tradition of consensus and reconciliation that was expected to guide and steer the spirit of fraternity, was found eroding.

The linguistic, caste and communal riots generated a lot of negative energy and, in the process, depleted much of our social capital. The initial optimism for unity and a sense of nationhood, born out of the rich legacy of the freedom movement, mature political leadership, and Constitutional spirit, started to taper off.

Amid the social and political churning, one serious casualty was the erosion of credibility of the political parties, with its negative multiplier effects pervading our social and economic life. Inter and intra-party instability, intense mudslinging, infighting and fac-

tionalism within parties, absence of long-term political programmes have been the common maladies.

Dharnas, bandhs, blockage of roads, rioting, wanton violence, mob lynching, attacks on private and public property are now order of the day. Not only educational and military institutions, even Constitutional bodies are witnessing encroachments of dirty politics. All these developments are grossly vitiating social fabric and public life.

The amplifying power of social media coupled with an absence of its accountability have also provided a fertile ground to create divisions and fissures in society. Misinformation, disinformation, outrage, hate speech, fake news — all are in full play through the

medium, pervading toxicity in social relations.

The question is, why an ideal so enshrined in the preamble in our Constitution has got a short shrift or getting marginalised in public discourse and imagination, in contrast to liberty and equality? Why has fraternity failed to gain a privileged expression and attention in political manifestos, programmes and activities?

Some reasons are obvious. The principle of fraternity requires from us a sense of duty and responsibility as opposed to rights, privileges and entitlements. This may appear an onerous task for most of the people.

Further, the idea of reciprocity, solidarity and social bond do not sit well with individual goals in a predominant

tly materialistic, market-driven modern life. Further, unlike equality and liberty, which seem attainable through political, legal and Constitutional means, fraternity doesn't seem to have any clear and well-defined institutional frameworks for it to get traction and realised.

Clearly, for making fellow-feeling as a way of life, we have to recognize the major sources, platforms or trigger points of discord and enmity. First, all the political parties must sit together and have a broad consensus on the key issues with a national perspective. Secondly, accountability of social media needs to be fixed urgently. Thirdly, we must focus more on issues and activities which demonstrate commonality and collectivism. Sports, music, space science, yoga, valour of

Indian Armed Forces, Indian constitution, national anthem/song/tricolour, inspirational personalities, etc., could be some arenas surrounding which we can build bridges and deepen cohesion.

Fourthly, the Government and the ruling party as key stakeholders in the project must do virtue signaling through right actions and legal frameworks to promote our diversity and plurality. Lastly, a sense of fraternity must be internalised and displayed by us all, in private and public life alike, and also at all times, good or bad.

The challenges in the path of fraternity projects are many. But we must overcome them, as it is on the pillar of fraternal relations that a well-functioning and healthy democracy rests.

# Lower bad loans push PSU banks' profitability in June

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector banks have raked in more profits in the three months ended June on the back of a persistent decline in bad loans and the trend may have a positive bearing on their balance sheets in the coming quarters.

In the June quarter, Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and State Bank of India (SBI) were in the lowest quartile as far as Gross Non Performing Assets (NPAs) and net NPAs were concerned, according to an analysis of the quarterly financial numbers published by the public sector lenders.

Cumulatively, all the 12 public sector banks reported a profit of about Rs 15,306 crore in the three months ended June, registering an annual growth of 9.2 per cent. However, leading public sector lenders -- SBI and PNB -- posted lower profits in the June quarter.

During the April-June period of the previous fiscal, state-owned banks recorded a total



profit of Rs 14,013 crore.

As per the analysis, the gross NPAs reported by BoM and SBI were 3.74 per cent and 3.91 per cent of their total advances, respectively, in the first quarter of the current fiscal.

The net NPAs for these banks came down to 0.88 per cent and 1 per cent respectively, at the end of June.

Gross NPAs of other public sector lenders varied from 6.26 per cent to 14.90 per cent.

In the June quarter, Bank of Baroda's gross NPAs stood at

6.26 per cent and it was 14.90 per cent for Central Bank of India, which is still under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework of the Reserve Bank of India.

Most of the banks' net NPAs were below 3 per cent of their respective total advances. Only three lenders -- Union Bank of India (3.31 per cent), Central Bank of India (3.93 per cent) and Punjab National Bank (4.28 per cent) -- reported net NPAs of more than 3 per cent in the June quarter.

Narendra

**Cumulatively, all the 12 public sector banks reported a profit of about Rs 15,306 crore in the three months ended June, registering an annual growth of 9.2 per cent.**

Solanki, head of equity research at Anand Rathi Shares & Stock Brokers, said NPAs have broadly reduced, resulting in lower provisions and better profitability. However, due to rising yields, Mark-to-Market (MTM) losses were also reported in treasuries which should get incrementally lower once the rate hike pace slows and finally ends, he noted.

MTM losses occur when the financial assets held are valued by the market at a price

lower than the purchase price.

"Largely, with declining provisioning and improving quality of books, the public sector banks space is in a sweet spot to target growth in the coming quarters. Also, the ability to gather low cost deposits at scale is positive in current scenario," Solanki said.

To improve the financial health of public sector banks, the government has implemented a comprehensive 4Rs strategy -- Recognition of NPAs transparently, Resolution and recovery of value from stressed accounts, Recapitalisation of the banks, and reforms in the banks and the wider financial ecosystem.

As part of the strategy, the government has infused Rs 3,10,997 crore to recapitalise banks during the last five financial years -- from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

Out of the total amount, Rs 34,997 crore was sourced through budgetary allocations and Rs 2,76,000 crore through issuance of recapitalisation bonds.

## India-UK trade set to double by 2030: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Trade between India and the UK is expected to double by 2030 driven by the proposed free trade pact, investment in technology, diversification of global supply chains and ease of doing business, a report said on Thursday.

India's trade in goods and services with the UK increased to USD 31.34 billion in 2022 from USD 19.51 billion in 2015, said the report.

The second edition of the Britain Meets India Report 2022, launched by Grant Thornton Bharat in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), supported by the UK's Department of International Trade, also revealed that 618 UK companies have been identified in India that together employ approximately 4.66 lakh people and have a combined turnover of Rs 3,634.9 billion. "The UK remained the sixth-largest investor in India, with a cumulative investment of approximately USD 31.92 billion in 2000-22. This constituted around 5.4 per cent of the total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India,"



according to the report.

In June, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal expressed hope that the free trade agreement between India and the United Kingdom will be concluded by Diwali. "The FTA is also expected to result in significant benefits for both countries through tariff concessions on alcoholic beverages and the movement of professionals," the report said, adding that the proposed pact is expected to boost Indian exports in labour-intensive sectors such as leather, textile, jewellery, processed agri-products and marine products, IT/ITES, education, pharma and healthcare (Ayurveda,

Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy).

According to the report, the UK is likely to look at reducing tariffs on products such as apples, UK-manufactured medical devices and machinery. British High Commissioner to India Alexander Ellis CMG said: "India has been one of the UK's most important partners in the journey of 75 years."

The 'living bridge' between our countries is set to transform into a stronger bond as we continue to fight the pandemic together and address the challenges to our security in both the physical and digital worlds.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Sensex rallies 515 pts to reclaim 59,000-mark



Equity benchmark Sensex rallied 515 points on Thursday to reclaim the 59,000-mark after a gap of four months, propelled by heavy buying in IT, banking and financial stocks amid sustained foreign fund inflows and positive Asian equities. The 30-share BSE index ended 515.31 points or 0.88 per cent higher at 59,332.60 -- its highest closing since April 8, 2022. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty gained 124.25 points or 124.25 per cent to close at 17,659. Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, climbing 2.75 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, HDFC, Tech Mahindra, TCS, SBI and Wipro. On the other hand, ITC, NTPC, HUL, Bharti Airtel, Maruti and Nestle India were among the major laggards, sliding as much as 1.56 per cent. Market breadth was in favour of the bulls, with 19 of the 30 Sensex counters logging gains. "Investors cheered the US inflation data for July, which came in below the estimate and raised hopes that the Federal Reserve may not be that aggressive in hiking interest rates in its next meeting. Hence, the optimism spread across Asian markets, including India where investors lapped up banking, IT and realty stocks. "Traders have also been drawing comfort from the falling crude oil prices and FII inflows into the local shares in the last few sessions," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

### Oil India net profit triples on oil, gas price boost

Oil India Ltd (OIL), the nation's second-largest state explorer, reported a tripling of its net profit in the June quarter on record oil and gas price realisation. Its net profit was Rs 1,555.46 crore, or Rs 14.34 per share, in April-June compared to Rs 507.94 crore, or Rs 4.68 a share, in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement. The earnings rose as the company got USD 112.72 per barrel price for crude oil it sold in the quarter as opposed to USD 67.15 a barrel rate realised in the same period last year. Gas price realisation more than doubled to USD 6.1 per million British thermal unit from USD 1.79. Higher crude oil and natural gas prices stem from the rally in international oil prices that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

### Industry says new digital lending norms to help them scale up

The digital lending industry, led by app-based credit suppliers, have welcomed the new set of regulations issued by the RBI, saying the move will help the sector scale up and become more responsible. The Reserve Bank had on Wednesday tightened the norms for digital lending to prevent charging of exorbitant rates and to secure customer interest by checking unethical loan recovery practices. Under the new norms, all loan disbursements and repayments are required to be executed only between the bank accounts of the borrower and regulated entities like banks and NBFCs without any pass-through/pool account of the lending service providers (LSPs). Also, any fees or charges payable to LSPs in the credit intermediation process shall be paid directly by the regulated entities and not by the borrower, the Reserve Bank said.

## Spencer's Retail Q1 net loss widens to Rs 33.63 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group arm Spencer's Retail Ltd on Thursday said its consolidated net loss widened to Rs 33.63 crore for the first quarter ended June 30.

The company had posted a net loss of Rs 23.55 crore in the April-June period a year ago, Spencer's Retail said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations increased 12.5 per cent to Rs 621 crore during the quarter under review against Rs 552 crore in the year-ago period.

The company's total expenses rose 12.47 per cent to Rs 673.03 crore in Q1 FY 2022-23 compared to Rs 598.37 crore a year earlier.

Spencer's operates 155 stores with a total trading area of 13.89 lakh square feet as of Jun 30, 2022.

According to the company, its current liabilities, including current borrowings, exceed current assets by Rs 403.73 crore.

"The Group has access to



unutilised credit lines with its bankers and also additional capital from its promoters, if and when required. The Group also has other investments, which can be liquidated, if and when required," said Spencer's Retail.

Over the business of Nature Basket, which it has acquired from Godrej Industries, Spencer's Retail said it has reported a standalone turnover of Rs 67 crore.

Natures Basket operates 35 stores with a total trading area of 1.07 lakh square feet as of Jun 30, 2022. "Natures Basket

continues to be EBITDA positive on a quarter-on-quarter basis, driven by sustained higher margin and cost efficiencies. We have opened 2 new Spencer's stores during the year," it said.

"Our business has grown by 15 per cent quarter on quarter basis backed by improved consumer footfalls and robust omnichannel presence. Our Gross margins have also improved by 53 bps on a quarter-on-quarter basis with both Food & Non-Food delivering better," Spencer's Retail Sector Head Shashwat Goenka said.

### TPDDL achieves full RPO compliance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited on Thursday claimed that it has sourced 2,200 million units of green power from renewable sources.

With this, the company has become a 100 per cent Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) compliant discom for the second consecutive year, it claimed.

"We have sourced 2200 Million Units (MUs) of green power from renewable sources like solar, wind, hydro and waste to energy, including large hydro sources, and fulfilled RPO for the financial year 2021-22 through physical power," the discom claimed.

It asserted that this was approximately 25 per cent of the total units sold to consumers in its operational area.



## Air India to operate 24 additional domestic flights from Aug 20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India on Thursday said it will operate 24 additional domestic flights from August 20 onwards.

"The additional 24 flights include two new frequencies from Delhi to Mumbai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad,

and from Mumbai to Chennai and Hyderabad, as well as one new frequency on the Mumbai-Bengaluru route and Ahmedabad-Pune route," the airline said in a statement.

Air India MD and CEO Campbell Wilson said, "Over the past six months, Air India has been working closely with

our partners to return aircraft to service, and we are delighted that this effort is now bearing fruit."

Air India's narrowbody aircraft fleet stands at 70, of which 54 are currently serviceable. The remaining 16 aircraft will progressively return to service by early 2023.

## MSME exporters facing demand squeeze in global markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

MSME exporters are facing slowdown in demand in the global markets due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and they have sought immediate intervention of the government to deal with the situation, according to industry players.

They added that the dip in demand may impact the country's exports in the coming months. Ludhiana Hand Tools Association President S C Ralhan said the industry is passing through "acute recession" in both domestic and international markets.

"Most of the sectors including hand tools auto parts and spinning mills are working at 25-60 per cent capacity only. At the moment, we are getting very small orders," he said in a statement.

Most of the exporters said they have orders for only one or two months.

"This scenario would impact exports growth," Ralhan added.

Sharing similar views, Dalpat Forge (India) Manager Ashwani Aggarwal said the demand situation is "bad" in both domestic as well as global markets like the US and Europe.

"The government should support us to deal with the situation," he said.

Leading leather sector exporter and Chairman of Farida Group Rafeeq Ahmed said though the factories currently are running at full capacity, the order book position is gradually "dwindling" for the season. "There are demand issues mainly in the US due to high inflation there. We as exporters are planning how to deal with this slowdown," Ahmed said. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Vice Chairman Khalid Khan added that "order book position is bad".

## Income tax payers barred from enrolling in Atal Pension Yojana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Income tax payers will not be allowed to enrol in the government's social security scheme Atal Pension Yojana (APY) from October 1, according to a notification.

The government introduced APY on June 1, 2015, to provide social security to workers mainly in the unorganised sector. Subscribers of the scheme get a minimum guaranteed pension of Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000 per month after attaining 60 years of age depending on their contribu-

tions. "... from 1st October, 2022, any citizen who is or has been an income tax payer, shall not be eligible to join APY," the finance ministry said in the notification.

The ministry has modified its earlier notification on APY. The new notification, issued on Wednesday, will not apply to subscribers who have joined or joins the scheme before October 1, 2022.

In case a subscriber, who joined on or after October 1, 2022, is subsequently found to have been an income tax payer



on or before the date of application, the APY account shall

be closed and the accumulated pension wealth till date

would be given to the subscriber, the notification said.

Under the income tax law, people having taxable income of up to Rs 2.5 lakh are not required to pay income tax.

Currently, all Indian citizens between the age group of 18-40 years can join APY through bank or post office branches where one has the savings bank account.

The government had contributed 50 per cent of the total contribution or Rs 1,000 per annum, whichever is lower, to each eligible subscriber, who joined the scheme

during the period from June 2015 to March 2016. It was also subject to the condition that the subscriber was not a beneficiary of any social security scheme and also not an income tax payer.

Those APY subscribers received the government's co-contribution for a five-year period from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

More than 99 lakh APY accounts were opened during the last fiscal, taking the total number of subscribers to 4.01 crore at the end of March 2022.



## Doing data entry is not a bootless errand

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Do you know that data entry jobs are not as simple as you may think? It is not just about typing a few forms, as some of these websites propagate. Before you plunge into this line, it would help if you had an accurate idea of what data entry jobs are. And for this, we exclusively reached out to Divij Singhal, Managing Director & CEO, ICCS, a company that encourages data entry jobs as a responsible one and not looked down upon. He begins to tell us, "With the evolving corporate landscape, automation is gaining centre stage to broaden the workplace. One that involves data extraction as well as data validation, and then concludes with the aim of additional data entry in the downstream. Corporate journeys are no different. Automation and data entry combined is a lethal mix that may result in anything from client happiness to break-through."

You might find yourself full of exciting new ideas and no idea how to make your voice heard in the

industry sometimes. The manager speaks, "Simply described, data entry automation is the process of digitising and automating workflow using data and information insights. In other cases, data entry automation is simply a matter of incorporating technology into a process that previously relied on manual labor, demonstrating where you need to balance things in order to relieve the pressure of a heavy workload at a certain moment."

It's important to remember that some of the most successful leaders in tech today started small. So many industry giants started in entry-level positions only and swear by the experience they gleaned from rising through the ranks. Employees feel overburdened as a result. Furthermore, data input automation creates the framework for overall company operations and automation, resulting in improved performance and intelligence. Simply put, digitization allows people to easily generate new ideas while also lowering the risk associated with transition. A few more words of wis-

dom from the titan of technology prove that you can start at data entry and work your way up. For example, "Corporate firms may automate their data administration using intelligent automation software, leaving the more difficult tasks to their human workforce, while decreasing mistakes, making customers happy, and constantly increasing profit margins."

Businesses can now proactively regulate finance and online fraud that results in a loss of profit income, improve cashflow by calculating tax or finance that the system is utilizing, and eliminate erroneous administration. Furthermore, it will assist people in excelling at professions that are better suited to their abilities. While the workplace has changed dramatically as a result of technological improvements, many firms are wrestling with how to create connections with manual workers and keep them motivated. As a result, once you get the hang of it, data automation is simple. It will assist corporate life in reaching new milestones and enable them to reach new heights and vistas.

## 'People spreading hatred for the film needs to first watch it'

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, actor Harry Parmar shares some exclusive tidbits about *Laal Singh Chaddha* and more.

TEJAL SINHA

The Aamir Khan starrer *Laal Singh Chaddha* opened in theatres on Thursday. The film has been receiving mixed responses, mostly negative talk from audiences and critics alike.

The film *Laal Singh Chaddha* is an adaptation of the 1994 Oscar-winning film, *Forrest Gump*. Amidst this box-office hullabaloo, *The Pioneer* connects with actor Harry Parmar, who was seen playing the lead antagonist in the film, who shares with us some exclusive Behind The Scenes while shooting for the film.

To begin with, Harry shares



his feelings about being a part of the film and says, "It's a fantastic feeling because, being a fan of *Forrest Gump*, I watched it when I was in my growing up years. I was very happy when I was called for this audition and got through it. The feeling cannot be expressed in words for sure."

Harry plays the character of an underworld don, who gets in touch with Kareena's character, and basically, he is the guy who is Rupak's (Kareena Kapoor Khan) boyfriend and the antagonist in Rupak's life.

Sharing with us about the action and fight sequences in the film, he says, "With Kareena, I had a couple of sequences where there was not much action, but there was one sequence that I had with Aamir Sir that was fun to shoot. I and Sir share only one scene and that's a fight scene. It took us one entire night to shoot. During the course of the scene, I had a minor injury, but Aamir

Sir had actually injured his rib in that particular sequence."

The shooting for the film had already begun in 2019 but had its own challenges because of the pandemic. Sharing about shooting on the sets, he says, "When we were shooting in 2019, that was immediately after my first kid was born and the pandemic happened. The rest of the shoot was shot in a very controlled environment, and since we shot my sequence after the first lockdown, those times were very scary. We were shooting in a very contained environment; we couldn't have that much fun on set."

Harry started his career as an actor and did theatre in Delhi, and then when he came to Mumbai, he continued doing theatre. He then ventured into casting and wanted to have a hand in it. He found it very creative and interesting. And, ever since then, there's been no looking back. He has been babbling between casting and act-

ing simultaneously, and he says it's been fun so far.

Speaking about the hatred and negativity that the film has been receiving on social media, he says, "I think that the initial negativity has settled down. Now the buzz has been great. I think once the hate mongers or whoever is spreading such hatred once watches the film, they will come out very happy, and I am sure they will go and get their friends to watch the film. I am sure about that. Ultimately, *Forrest Gump* and *Laal Singh Chaddha* are both about spreading love. I am very positive about it."

Apart from the film, Harry has finished shooting for a series called *Pirates* on Disney plus Hotstar. The showrunner of the series is Hansal Mehta and the series is directed by his son, Jay Mehta.

"We shot it in 3 and a half months in Cape Town, and that's going to be a visual treat for the audience," he signs off.

During each menstrual cycle, healthy women who are not using birth control have around a 25 to 30 per cent chance of conception. This window of opportunity opens right before and during ovulation and lasts four to five days. Ovulation is the process by which a woman's body releases one or more eggs from the ovary. The five days leading up to and including ovulation are the most fertile days. If the egg is fertilised

the time when they are most fertile.

### Ovulation pain

Many women experience sharp and sudden pain, usually mild, on the side of their abdomen when the ovary is releasing the egg. This is known as ovulation pain or Mittelschmerz. It generally feels like a cramp or a spasm and lasts a few minutes to a few hours. However, sometimes the pain may last for as long as a day or two with high pain,

monitoring their basal body temperature first thing in the morning regularly and keeping track, women will be able to determine whether ovulation has occurred.

### Libido changes

Many women who track signs of

and feel softer and more open. By checking these changes in the cervix's position along with the cervix mucus, women can know whether they are ovulating or not. After ovulation, the cervix feels

## Signs that show you're nearing ovulation

and implanted successfully, it results in a pregnancy.

"In an ideal menstrual cycle, ovulation takes place on day 14 and the fertile window opens on day 10. But since the menstrual cycle varies, it's best to identify the signs of ovulation instead of calculating the days. By identifying the signs of approaching ovulation, couples trying to conceive a baby can boost their chances of pregnancy. Couples should indulge in sexual intercourse during the days leading to ovulation to increase their odds of conception," shares Dr Seema Sharma, consultant obstetrics and gynaecology, Apollo Cradle & Children's Hospital, New Delhi.

The doctor further gives more insights into ovulation.

### Changes in cervical mucus

As a woman nears ovulation, her body produces more oestrogen, causing the cervical mucus to become sticky, wet, and clear like egg white. An increase in such secretion is detected chiefly immediately prior to ovulation. The body produces the greatest amount of this type of cervical mucus on the day of ovulation. Once the ovulation ends, the discharge gradually becomes thicker and less frequent. When women notice a stretchy, egg-white-like cervical mucus, it's



in which case, women must consult their doctor. This pain is a sign of fertility since it indicates the release of the egg or ovulation.

### Change in basal body temperature

'Basal body temperature' is the body's temperature when at rest. Many women believe the average body temperature is 98.6 degrees, but the truth is it varies throughout the day and month. Immediately after ovulation, most women will notice a rise in their average body temperature. The temperature will stay elevated during that time. By

ovulation, libido changes before or during ovulation. An increase in sex drive can be an indication of nearing ovulation and the opening of the fertile window. However, sometimes women may also notice an increase in sexual desire when they are anxious, stressed or depressed. As a result, women should keep an eye out for all the accompanying signs of ovulation to identify when ovulation is taking place.

### Changes in the cervix

Just before and during ovulation, a woman's cervix may move higher

## Ali Fazal changes fitness regime, trainer for *Mirzapur 3*

Bollywood actor Ali Fazal, who plays Guddu Pandit in the webseries *Mirzapur*, is currently busy with the shoot of season 3 of the show. In a new development, the actor has hired a new trainer to work towards his character's physicality.

Fitness trainer Rohit Nayyar, who has taken the onus, specializes in Jijitsu, MMA and boxing at pro levels. Rohit has taken on the challenge to train Ali with a brand new fitness regime in mind for *Mirzapur 3*. Ali has decided to change a lot of things in his appearance.

Commenting on the same, Ali says, "I don't think I have it in me to be stifled inside a gymnasium at all times knowing how big the world is and the word fitness is. I experiment a lot to keep myself engaged. For me, it has to be like going back to play school. Even on sets during action sequences, I am like a kid in an amusement park, just trying have some fun - choreographed fun."

The actor further mentioned that Rohit has been a great addition to

his world view.

"He is full of surprises and raw talent and most of all a good heart. So I will try and learn as much as I can," the actor added.

But, all the physical work hasn't taken Ali's focus off the craft of acting, "Baaki, acting bhi hai, (there's acting as well) which is most important and sometimes in the fight for

might and best body, we often forget that we are not in the sculpting business, but the moulding one (that's if we are exchanging metaphors here)," he concluded.

Apart from this, Ali will next be seen as the lead in Vishal Bhardwaj's *Khufiya* with Tabu and another Hollywood flick, *Kandahar* where he will be sharing the screen with Gerard Butler.





● Srilekha



● Srilekha S



● Ananya



● Bhuvaneshwari



● Nikita



● Kushi



● Kusuma

The Hilife exhibition is all set to mesmerise Hyderabad yet again with the three-day exhibition that will begin in the city from August 20 till August 22, at HICC Novotel in Hi-tech City.

**PARTY**

Photos by SV Chary

### AMAZON EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR KDP PEN TO PUBLISH CONTEST 5TH EDITION

Amazon announced a deadline extension for submission of Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) Pen to Publish Contest entries by another month to October 10, 2022. The 5th edition of the contest was launched in July this year with the aim to encourage enthusiastic writers transform their dream of becoming an author, into reality. This flagship event by Amazon KDP will witness a judging panel consisting of renowned authors including Sudeep Nagarkar, Sudha Nair, Satya Vyas, Vijay Kakwani and Naga Chokkan for the 5th edition of this contest. The process for registration is quite simple and mentioned in detail on [www.amazon.in/pentopublish](http://www.amazon.in/pentopublish). Participants can sign up to the official Amazon KDP page and upload original, unpublished eBooks authored solely by participants in English, Hindi, or Tamil languages, using the KDP service. Entries should include pentopublish5 keyword in the eBook's information and all eBooks will be available on free Kindle apps for iPhone, iPad, Android phones and tablets, PC, and Mac as well as Kindle E-readers.

### PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

The 'Indian Photo Festival' Photographer of The Year (IPOY) Award opens doors to an exciting exhibition of Photographs covering some of the best works of Photographers from around the world featuring Travel and Nature, Wildlife, Street, Portrait, Photojournalism, Documentary, Wedding and Mobiles. These photographs are selected by renowned Photographers and Editors from around the world including the ones from National Geographic. The photographs exhibited are the final nominations that are in the running to win the most coveted IPF Photographer of The Year Award.  
**Date** : August 19, 2022 to September 19, 2022  
**Place** : The State Art Gallery, Madhapur, Hyderabad  
**Time** : Between 11 am to 6 pm  
**Contact Details**: 09963371314

### PLATFORM 65 CELEBRATES 75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH 75 SPECIAL DISHES

Platform65 is proud to celebrate India's 75th Independence Day in a special way. On this occasion, Platform65 curated a menu consisting of 75 special dishes. These 75 different dishes will make this Independence Day memorable and special. Military personnel and their families are being offered 15% discount on all items on the main menu. On the occasion of India's 75th Independence Day Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that the "Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" will include a number of large-scale events. From August 11, all the 75 special dishes will be available on all their outlets and delivery app.

### GET HANDPICKED BANARASI BY KANKATALA SAREES

Kankatala Sarees, known as the 'Queen of Sarees' brings Handpicked Sarees of India Exhibition & Sale exclusively for Hyderabad from August 12 to 14 at Jubilee Hills Outlet, Hyderabad. The brand will showcase the signature Banarasi Marvels including Kora Banarasi, Jamdani Banarasi, Kadwa Banarasi, Phekwa Banarasi, Bandhani Banarasi, Georgette Banarasi, Tissue Banarasi, Banarasi Katan and many more handpicked by Kankatala family from across 40 weaving clusters of India specially for Saree connoisseurs of Hyderabad.


Popular singers Pranav Kaushik, Sudarshan, and Parvathi, among others, visited the Deccan Kitchen Restaurant in Film Nagar, Hyderabad






The Principal Secretary of the Industries & Commerce (I&C) and Information Technology (IT) Departments of the Telangana Government, along with Mr. C. K. Venkataraman, Managing Director, Titan, among others, launched Titan Smart Labs, which aims to breathe life into ground-breaking ideas by harnessing cutting-edge technologies and bolstering its design, development, and testing capabilities.


### ARCHIE




### GARFIELD




### NANCY



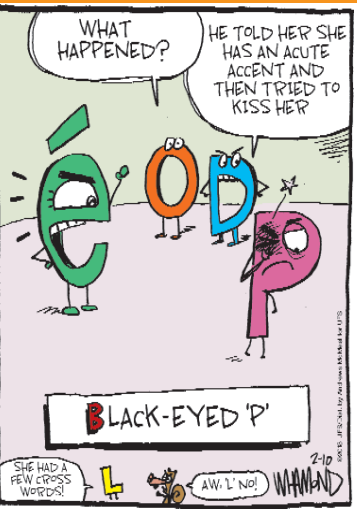
### GINGER MEGGS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### REALITY CHECK



### SUDOKU

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

Rules

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

### CROSSWORD

1	2		3	4	5
			6		
7			8		
			9		
10					
11				12	
			13		
			14		
16				17	
					15
18					
18				19	

ACROSS

- A hole in a hill for a train
- Unlock
- Very uncommon
- An animal with a shell
- An erupting mountain
- A long sort of table where you are served in a shop
- A restaurant worker
- Meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid
- Scraps of material
- A planet

DOWN

- Ripped and ragged
- Opposite of wide
- Tame animals kept at home
- Required
- On fire
- A month
- Reply
- Defeated
- Make music with the voice
- These birds hunt at night

SOLUTION

A	D	J	E	C	T	I	V	E
R	O	N	D	G	A	N	O	E
E	G	G	A	N	G	A	L	
A	C	H	E	A	N	A	S	K
C	A	N	E					
H	E	L	P	E	R	S	P	O
E	U	N	G	U	I			
D	A	N	C	E				
C	B	U	S					
S	H	A	T	T	E	R	E	D



## Shine Screens to produce Balakrishna-Anil Ravipudi's film

Natasimha Nandamuri Balakrishna and double blockbuster maker Anil Ravipudi are all set to join hands for the first time. Tentatively titled *#NBK108*, the film was announced officially on Balakrishna's birthday. On Thursday, the film's producers as well as music director have been proclaimed.

The crazy project will be produced on lavish budget by Sahu Garapati and Harish Peddi under Shine Screens banner. Star composer S Thaman comes on board to score music for the film.

This is first time association of Anil Ravipudi and Thaman, while he already delivered blockbuster music for Balakrishna's sen-

sational hit Akhanda. The makers released a video to make the announcement. "Bombarding soon..." announced the makers regarding commencement of shoot of the project.

An ensemble star cast will play crucial roles, while *#NBK 108* will have leading craftsmen taking care of different crafts.

## Biopic on Khudiram Bose announced



Khudiram Bose, born in 1889, is considered the first and youngest freedom fighter the Indian freedom movement produced. History buffs and students know him for the famous Muzaffarpur Conspiracy Case, in which he was convicted by the British Raj and sentenced to death in 1908.

How about making a biopic on his valour and martyrdom? Debutante producer Rajitha Vijay Jagarlamudi has resolved to make one in association with talented director Vidya Sagar Raju. Produced by Golden Rain Productions, the biopic is presented by Jagarlamudi Parvathi. "It's a fight that has etched its way into history but was a hidden gem," the makers said on

Thursday, introducing the project. The film will be made in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, and Hindi.

Marking the acting debut of Rakesh Jagarlamudi, the ambitious project sees the coming together of some of the finest acting and technical talents. Music director Mani Sharma, award-winning production designer Padma Sri Thota Tharani, stunt director Kanakannan, and cinematographer Rasool Ellore have been onboarded for this epic saga. Editor Marthand K Venkatesh and dialogue-writer Baaladitya have also come on board.

The title of the film was released on Thursday by the former Vice-President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu garu.



Actor Karthi has disclosed that he will begin work on the sequel to his superhit film *Kaithi* with one of Tamil cinema's most sought after directors, Lokesh Kanakaraj, early next year.

Karthi, who is busy promoting his upcoming release *Viruman*, disclosed this detail while replying to a question from a media person during an interaction session.

"We are planning *Kaithi 2* next year. After Lokesh finishes Vijay sir's film, we will start," the actor said.

Interestingly, although it is widely believed that Lokesh will be directing Vijay's next film, no

Karthi, Lokesh Kanakaraj to begin work on *Kaithi 2* next year

official announcement has been made until now regarding this project.

Dream Warrior Pictures, the firm that made the immensely popular *Kaithi*, had soon after the film's success hinted at the possibility of making a sequel.

*Kaithi*, which was director Lokesh's second film, after his

impressive debut with the superhit *Maanagaram*, went on to emerge a blockbuster, making a whopping Rs 105 crore at the box office.

As the dates of the release is getting closer, the team of *Karthikeya 2* are super excited for the release. After director Chandoo, now *The Pioneer* connects with the lead actor Nikhil Siddhartha, who shares some exclusive tidbits about his character, how this part is different from the previous one and a lot more.

K. RAMYA SREE

*Karthikeya 2* promotions are in full swing. Just yesterday, we had the director of the film, Chandoo Mondeti, converse with us about the film, and today we bring to you our conversation with the lead actor of the *Karthikeya* franchise, Nikhil Siddhartha.

It has been a while since we saw Nikhil on the big screen after *Arjun Suravaram*. While you already know that *Karthikeya 2*, the sequel to

*Karthikeya*, was postponed multiple times before it finally got its release date, Nikhil tells us that part 2 of the film is going to be even better than its prequel.

While Anupama Parameswaran is playing the leading lady in the film, produced by People's Media Factory and Abhishek Agarwal Arts, popular Bollywood actor Anupam Kher will be seen playing a pivotal role in this movie.

"Chandoo narrated this story to me in 2016 and I am happy it is finally being released on big screens in 2022 after multiple delays.

Chandoo Garu has written the story of this movie much better than the first part. In this, I am playing a full-time doctor and part-time detective. I am playing a character who doesn't mind taking a risk and going on adventures to resolve the problem brought to my notice," tells Nikhil about his character in the film.

Elaborating further on the concept behind *Karthikeya 2*, Nikhil said, "We shot this movie as History vs. Mythology. Every scene has a meaning. Mysterious suspense is thrilling. People who don't know whether God exists or not will like this movie. What God is, will be shown in this movie. Some of the scenes were shot in the hills. Many people put graphics on hills. But we went before the pandemic and even after the pandemic, and shot in the hills for real."

The reason for casting Anupam Kher, Nikhil says, is that the movie takes place in North India. "He is a very great person. Some of the scenes with him were scary for me. Even though he is a very famous actor, he acted normally without any problems. Anupama Parameswaran is seen in a never before avatar in this movie. She is an excellent actress. Also, all the actors acted very diligently," said the *Happy Days* actor, who is an ardent fan of Tin Tin books, which are adventure stories. Co-incidentally, Chandoo is also very fond of these books, and that's what got them

both doing the mysterious project.

This is the first time that Nikhil's film is released in other languages, and the actor is as nervous as he is excited.

Meanwhile, Nikhil hinted that he will not mind playing a villain, if he comes across a good script.

"Currently, the villain character should be forgotten because if you take a Batman movie, both the hero and the villain characters have equal scope. So, if I get good characters, I will definitely do it. My career is going up slowly but

it has not gone down till now," said the actor in conclusion.

On the acting front, Nikhil has his next with Geetha Arts' *18 Pages* lining up for theatrical release. After that he has another film with Sudhir Varma and four other films, all being made for theatrical releases only.



## NTR to romance Mrunal in *NTR30*

Mrunal Thakur mesmerised movie lovers with her debut performance in Tollywood. She created a sensation stealing the hearts of all and making a lasting and memorable impression as Sita in Dulquer Salmaan-Hanu Raghavpudi's romantic entertainer *Sita Ramam*. Mrunal Thakur is getting flooded with offers from Tollywood filmmakers.

In the midst of all this, reports are coming that Mrunal Thakur may romance Young Tiger NTR soon. Inside talk is Koratala Shiva who is directing Young Tiger NTR in his next *NTR30* is planning to rope in Mrunal Thakur as the female lead. Earlier the makers planned to cast Alia Bhatt but she backed off due to her pregnancy.

The makers planned to rope in Janhvi Kapoor but she is in two minds. In the midst of all this, with Mrunal Thakur coming with exceptional

performance, Koratala Shiva is keen to zero on the latest sensation. Koratala Shiva is currently busy fine-tuning the script for the project.



## VISHAL INJURES KNEE WHILE SHOOTING FOR *MARK ANTONY*

Actor Vishal, who is now shooting for director Adhik Ravichandran's *Mark Antony*, has sustained an injury to his knee while filming an action sequence for the film.

Sources say the unit, which has been shooting in the city for the last week, was filming an action sequence on Wednesday.

Vishal, who has already sustained two major injuries to his leg while shooting for *Laththi*, again sustained a serious blow to his knee.

He had to be taken to a private hospital nearby where he was administered first aid and advised



rest. *Mark Antony*, which features both Vishal and SJ Suryah in double roles, also has Ritu Verma as the female lead.

The big budget film, which is

getting made in five languages including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada, is being billed as a pan-Indian film by the unit. Work began in the first week of May in Chennai.

The film, which will be Vishal's 33rd film, is being produced by S Vinod Kumar, the man who had produced Vishal's *Enemy* as well. GV Prakash Kumar is scoring the music for this film which will have editing by Vijay Velukutty and cinematography by Abhinandan Ramanujam. Famous stunt directors Kanakannan, Peter Hein and Ravi Varma are doing the stunts for the film with Umesh Rajkumar doing the Production Design.

## Nani to team up with Hanu Raghavapudi

Hanu Raghavapudi has created a sensation across the globe with his latest romantic entertainer *Sita Ramam*. Analysts and critics are hailing Hanu Raghavapudi's story, screenplay, and direction capabilities which left movie lovers mesmerised casting a magic spell on them.

In the midst of all this, reports are coming that *Ante Sundaraniki* Star Nani is planning to team with Hanu Raghavapudi. Nani and Hanu Raghavapudi earlier entertained movie lovers with Krishna Gadi Veera Prema Gadha. Inside talk is producer Sudhakar Cherukuri longtime back gave advance to set Nani and Hanu Raghavapudi's combination but the string of flops from

both of them put it on the back burner. Now that Hanu Raghavapudi scored a blockbuster in form of *Sita Ramam*, Sudhakar Cherukuri is

keen to revive the project. Nani is currently busy with *Dasara* and sources say the project will take off once Nani completes his project.



# LONG JUMPER SREESHANKAR FINISHES 6TH IN DIAMOND LEAGUE DEBUT

SIX DAYS AFTER WINNING A HISTORIC SILVER AT THE BIRMINGHAM CWG, SREESHANKAR COMPETED IN HIS MUCH-ANTICIPATED MAIDEN DIAMOND LEAGUE BUT WAS FAR FROM HIS BEST IN A STRONG FIELD UNDER CONDITIONS NOT VERY IDEAL FOR JUMPING

PTI ■ MONACO

Commonwealth Games Silver medalist long jumper Murali Sreeshankar finished sixth in his debut Diamond League meeting here with a below-par 7.94m effort.

Six days after winning a historic Silver at the Birmingham CWG, Sreeshankar competed in his much-anticipated maiden Diamond League but was far from his best in a strong field under conditions not very ideal for jumping on Wednesday night.

Most of the 10 jumpers faced headwind of above 1m/s in the first round but it got better as the competition progressed.

Sreeshankar had won Silver in the CWG six days ago with a best jump of 8.08m. He has a season's and personal best of 8.36m.

He had finished seventh in the World Championships in Eugene, USA, last month with a best jump of 7.96m.

The 23-year-old opened with a 7.61m under a 1.5m/s

headwind. He bettered it to 7.84m and then followed it by 7.83m.

From sixth in the first round, he slipped to eight after the third and just about squeezed into the top eight to save himself from elimination.

Sreeshankar had 7.69m in his fourth attempt and 7.94m in his fifth to leave him at the sixth spot.

Under the revised 'Final Three' rule of the Diamond League, only the top three get the sixth and last attempt.

Tokyo Olympics Bronze medalist Maykel Masso of Cuba won the event with a best effort of 8.35m.

World Championships Silver medalist and reigning Olympic champion Miltiadis Tentoglou of Greece (8.31m) finished second ahead of Marquis Dendy (8.31m) of USA though both had identical best jumps.

Tentoglou had two 8.30m jumps as his second best while Dendy had 8.30m and 8.17m as second and third best jumps.

The 2019 World Championships Gold medalist Tajay Gayle of Jamaica was



## Fraser-Pryce, Lyles shine, Kipyegon just misses WR

AP ■ MONACO

Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Noah Lyles underlined their dominant sprint seasons with victories at the Monaco Diamond League on Wednesday, as Faith Kipyegon narrowly missed a sensational world record in the 1500m.

Jamaica's Fraser-Pryce, fresh from a fifth world 100m title in Eugene last month, clocked a world leading 10.62 seconds for the win.

The Jamaican's victory in Monaco was her third sub-10.70 run within a week and saw her become the first woman in history to break 10.70 six times in the same season.

Her time also smashed the previous meet best of 10.72sec set by disgraced American Marion Jones in 1998.

"I did what I needed to do and we had fun and let the clock do the talking," said Fraser-Pryce.

Lyles, who won the world 200m title last month, also set a meet record, clocking 19.46sec to improve on his previous mark of 19.65 set back in 2018.

The American ran a powerful bend in a US clean sweep, getting the better of teenager Erriyon Knighton and world 400m champion Michael Norman.

World and Olympic 1500m champion Kipyegon arguably produced the stand-out performance of an amazing night of track and field.

The Kenyan ran the second fastest ever time over the distance as she won in 3:50.37, falling just half a second short of Ethiopian Genzebe Dibaba's world record set in 2015, also in Monaco.

fourth with a best of 8.06m while world indoor Silver medalist Thobias Montler of Sweden was fifth with a best effort of 7.96m.

Sreeshankar's next event could be in Lausanne, Switzerland as he has said he has entered his name for World Athletics Tour silver label event there on August 30.

He collected three Diamond League points to be at 10th in the qualification ranking for the final in Zurich on September 7-8. He will not make the season-ending finale as only the top six qualify for it and there is no men's long jump event in the remaining two legs in Lausanne (August 26) and Brussels (September 2).

Tentoglou is at the top of the Diamond League rankings with 31 points, followed by Masso (20) and Montler (16).

A new Diamond League format for jumps and throws was approved in December, following outrage from the athletes regarding the controversial 'Final Three' — winners-takes-all last round — format.

Under the new format, the best throw or jump from the

entire competition, not just the final three, win the event. But only the top three competitors after the fifth round will get the sixth and final attempt.

Moreover, the best throwers/jumpers are seeded to perform at the start of each round.

After round 3, only the top eight will remain in the competition and the order of jumps will be redrawn with the best performing athlete starting first in the next two rounds (rounds 4 and 5).

After round 5, the top three athletes get one additional attempt each. The order of the three remaining athletes is redrawn so that the best-placed athlete after round five goes first in the 'Final 3'.

There will be a two-minute break from the end of round five to the start of the final 3. Any 'live' field and track events will be stopped for the duration of a 'Final 3' competition.

The old format did not consider marks achieved in the previous five attempts, with the top three athletes going into a fresh competition in the sixth and final round to pick the champion.



## Arjun likely to play for Goa next season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary Sachin Tendulkar's son Arjun is all set to leave Mumbai and in all likelihood will ply his trade for south-western neighbours Goa in the next domestic season.

The 22-year-old left-arm pacer, who has also been a part of IPL franchise Mumbai Indians, have played two games for Mumbai, during the 2020-21 edition of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy against Haryana and Puducherry respectively.

It has been learnt that Tendulkar junior has already applied for No Objection Certificate (NoC) from his home association MCA.

"Getting maximum game time on the ground is important for Arjun at this juncture of his career. We believe that the shift will improve the probability of Arjun featuring in more competitive matches. He is embarking on a new phase of his cricketing career," SRT Sports Management said in a statement.

Tendulkar has played two 'Tests' for the India U-19 against Sri Lanka, three summers back and has featured in the Mumbai probabilities for the white ball leg of the domestic season even this time.

For Tendulkar, the

biggest disappointment has been getting dropped from the Mumbai squad this season without being given a chance to prove his mettle.

People who have monitored his progress feel that the youngster has the right attitude and work ethic but does need consistent game time to showcase what he is capable of.

He has recently been a part of Mumbai Indians' developmental squad that played a lot of T20 games in England.

The likes of Kumar Kartikeya, Anmolpreet Singh, Ramandeep Singh, Dewald Brevis were all part of the squad that played T20 games against club sides.

A senior Goa Cricket Association (GCA) did acknowledge that Tendulkar junior is expected to be considered among state's pre-season probabilities.

"We have been looking out for left-hand bowling talent as also add players to the middle order with multiple skills. In this context, we invited Arjun Tendulkar to join the Goa side. We will be playing pre-season trial-matches (white ball) and he will be playing in those games. The selectors will then take a call based on his performance," Goa CA president Suraj Lotlikar told PTI.

## Jayawardene backs Babar to dethrone Root as top Test batter

PTI ■ DUBAI

Sri Lanka legend Mahela Jayawardene has picked Pakistan captain Babar Azam as the cricketer who, he believes, can dethrone England's Joe Root as top Test batter.

Root has been ruling the roost at the top of the Test rankings since June, with the Englishman enjoying a fine World Test Championship, and in a rich vein of form under new coach Brendon McCullum.

The former England captain has scored more runs than any other player since the turn of the decade, and deservedly claimed the ICC Men's Test Player of the Year award in 2021.

"Tough one!" Jayawardena said on the latest episode of The ICC Review, when asked who can dethrone Root from the top spot.

"I would say Babar Azam has an opportunity. He's been consistent in all three formats and it shows in his rankings. He's a naturally gifted player, plays in all conditions, he's got the game to adapt as well.

"It depends on the amount of cricket, who's playing when and how much but the Babar might be the guy."

Babar is the only player in



the top three in the batters' rankings in all three formats, occupying the top spot in each of the white-ball formats and currently ranked No.3 in Tests.

"T20Is and ODIs, it is tough one to hold on to because there are a lot of good players who have to be consistent," Jayawardene said.

"I would put my money

on him at least for a little while to hold to all three but there are some good quality players around who will keep pushing him."

Asked what makes Babar such a special player, Jayawardene said he was most impressed by the amount of time the Pakistan skipper has while at the crease.

"(I) think it is just the technique, the time that he has and the composure that he has out there in the middle," the former Sri Lanka captain said.

"He's not rattled at any time, whether he plays T20Is, ODIs or Tests, he adjusts quite brilliantly."

"Joe (Root) in Test cricket is the same. He knows what he needs to do, he can the tempo when he wants to, bats to what the conditions offer. Babar has that same quality, so that's why he's been so consistent in all three formats."

The two star cricketers will come face to face later this year when England tour Pakistan for a three-match Test series in December.

Root could further solidify his No.1 spot in the upcoming series against South Africa, while Babar will have to wait until the series against England later in the year to make a charge for the top.



## Santner stars as NZ beat WI in T20 series opener

AP ■ JAMAICA

West Indies' season of white ball woe continued on Wednesday when New Zealand completed a 13-run win in the first T20I of a three-match series at Sabina Park in Jamaica.

Fresh from a successful European sojourn, the Black Caps posted a formidable 185 for five batting first in a rain-interrupted innings before their premier bowlers combined to limit the Caribbean side to 172 for seven in reply.

Since getting the better of Bangladesh 2-0 in a T20I duel, the West Indies have been swept 3-0 by the Bangladeshis and India in successive ODI series before going down 4-1 to the Indians in another T20I

campaign immediately preceding this assignment.

New Zealand almost paid for a period of complacency towards the end of the match as an explosive unbroken 58-run eighth-wicket partnership between Romario Shepherd (31 not out) and Odean Smith (27 not out) gave the hosts a glimmer of hope after they had crashed to 114 for seven in the 16th over.

But they were left with too much to do as 'Man of the Match' Mitchell Santner's haul of three for 19 ripped the heart of the West Indies batting as he claimed the wickets of captain Nicholas Pooran first ball before adding Shimron Hetmyer and top-scorer Shamrah Brooks (42) to his list of victims.

## Rashid, Rabada, Livingstone to play for 'MI Cape Town'

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

Afghanistan's star spinner Rashid Khan, South African pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada and dashing English batter Liam Livingstone are among the five direct signings of MI Cape Town which will take part in the inaugural Cricket South Africa (CSA) T20 League.

The talented Dewald Brevis, who played for Mumbai Indians in IPL along with England all-rounder Sam Curran are the other two direct signings of the franchise.

For the record, Rashid plays for Gujarat Titans, Rabada and Livingstone for Punjab Kings and Curran last played for CSK in the Indian Premier League.

MI-Cape Town has thus signed three overseas players, 1 capped South African and 1 uncapped South African.

"With our direct player signings, we have taken the first step towards building the MI philosophy — having a strong core around which the team will be planned. I am glad to welcome Rashid, Kagiso, Liam, Sam and happy to have Dewald continue with us on this new journey," team owner Akash Ambani said.



## CSK-owned franchise ropes in Faf du Plessis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former South Africa captain Faf du Plessis has been roped in by the Johannesburg franchise owned by IPL giants Chennai Super Kings (CSK) as their marquee signing for the inaugural edition of the Cricket South Africa (CSA) T20 League, according to a report.

Du Plessis, who played for the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the IPL last season, was part of the CSK from 2011 to 2021, except for 2016 and 2017 when the team was suspended.

Wednesday was the last day for the direct acquisition of players for the six-team upcoming league.

The inaugural edition of the CSA T20 League is scheduled to be played in January-February 2023 and all the six franchises in the tournament have been acquired by current IPL team owners.

The CSK-owned Johannesburg franchise is also believed to have roped in England all-rounder Moonen Ali as one of its marquee players, according to Cricbuzz.

## Ross Taylor says he faced racism

AP ■ WELLINGTON

New Zealand Cricket said on Thursday that they are looking into allegations by former skipper Ross Taylor that he suffered racism.

The 38-year-old, who is of New Zealand-Samoan descent, retired from international cricket in April after a glorious career spanning 16 years.

Taylor's comments are the latest accusation of racism in cricket.

In his autobiography *Black and White* released on Thursday, the legendary batsman says he endured racially barbed comments from teammates, but does not specify at what level of the game in New Zealand.

Taylor said that for most of his career he was "an anomaly, a brown face in a vanilla line-up".

"In many ways, dressing-room banter is the barometer," he wrote.

"A teammate used to tell me, 'You're half a good guy, Ross, but which half is good?'



You don't know what I'm referring to.' I was pretty sure I did.

"Other players also had to put up with comments that dwelt on their ethnicity."

He represented New Zealand in 112 Tests, scoring 7,683 runs between 2006 and 2022. He was captain of the Black Caps for two years until 2012.

A spokesman for New Zealand Cricket said they have contacted Taylor about the allegations.

"NZC has reached out to Ross to discuss some of the comments in his book, both to better understand the details of them and to offer support. These discussions are ongoing," said the spokesman.

"Ross currently sits on an NZC working group seeking to improve the game's engagement with Pasifika communities and his input is greatly valued."

"We consider him an important part of our cricket family and are deeply disappointed he's been exposed to this type of behaviour."

AP ■ HARARE

Sikandar Raza's golden run ended with a golden duck as his Zimbabwe side lost by 105 runs to Bangladesh on Wednesday in the third ODI in Harare.

An unbeaten 85 by Afif Hossain lifted Bangladesh to 256-9 in 50 overs when put in to bat and Mustafizur Rahman then took 4-17 as Zimbabwe were all out for just 151 in 32.2 overs.

Pakistan-born Raza batted brilliantly in guiding Zimbabwe to a winning 2-0 lead in the three-game series last weekend, hitting unbeaten knocks of 135 and 117 in superb run chases for two five-wicket victories.

But the 36-year-old, whose childhood dream to be a fighter pilot in the Pakistan Air Force was dashed by an eyesight glitch, finally met his

## Raza out for golden duck as Zimbabwe lose 3rd ODI



match in ODI debutant Ebadot Hossain.

Facing his first ball with Zimbabwe reeling at 17-3, Raza fell victim to an inswinging

yorker that flattened the middle and off stumps.

"It would have been nice to score lots of runs and win again, but my mood does not

change when I fail to do so," said Raza.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to play cricket for Zimbabwe, to enjoy life and be in good health."

"India will be here next week for three ODIs and all of us are looking forward to that huge challenge."

Raza skipped Zimbabwe on Wednesday after wicket-keeper Regis Chakabva — standing in for injured captain Craig Ervine during the series — sprained a hand.

Reacting to the first ODI victory on the tour, Afif said: "I think we played very well but we have to improve our bowling and today we did very well with the ball."