

**ANALYSIS 7**  
SELLING PUBLIC SECTOR  
BANKS IS NO SOLUTION

**MONEY 8**  
ONGC SIGNS DEAL  
WITH EXXONMOBIL CORP

**SPORTS 12**  
CAPTAIN KL RAHUL IN FOCUS  
IN ZIMBABWE

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022; PAGES 12 & 3



# the pioneer



'I WANT TO WIN SOME  
HEARTS OVER IN  
TELANGANA FIRST'.

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## BRITAIN'S INFLATION HITS 40-YEAR HIGH AS FOOD PRICES SOAR

Britain's rate of inflation has surged to a new 40-year high as the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose to 10.1 per cent on Wednesday, with increasing food costs the biggest driver of the latest hike. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), annual inflation for essential food items is now running at 12.7 per cent, up from 9.8 per cent in June, fuelled largely by price rises for basics such as bread, milk, cheese and eggs. The latest figures come amid soaring energy bills and a mounting cost-of-living crisis across the country. "A wide range of price rises drove inflation up again this month, said ONS chief economist Grant Fitzner.

## TELECOM SUBSCRIBER BASE GROWS TO 117.2 CRORE WITH JIO TAKING LEAD

Telecom subscriber base in the country grew marginally to 117.29 crore in June with Reliance Jio adding maximum number of new customers, according to data released by sector regulator Trai on Wednesday. There were 117.07 crore subscribers in May 2022. "The number of telephone subscribers in India increased from 1,170.73 million at the end of May 2022 to 1,172.96 million at the end of June 2022, thereby showing a monthly growth rate of 0.19 per cent," Trai said in the report. The wireless subscriber base grew to 114.73 crore in June from 114.55 crore in May.

## MUSK TWEET JOKING ABOUT BUYING MANCHESTER UNITED CAUSES STIR

Elon Musk caused a stir by tweeting that he was buying the English soccer team Manchester United whose current owners are opposed by many fans then saying several hours later that it was a joke. It comes as the billionaire Tesla CEO faces a legal battle in the U.S. after backing out of a deal to buy Twitter for 44 billion. He is a prolific user of the platform, often musing about social issues or joking with his 103 million followers and occasionally getting into trouble with the U.S. regulators. Early Wednesday, Musk sent a tweet about his political affiliations and then added in a second tweet: Also, I'm buying Manchester United ur welcome.

## LIONESS DIES AFTER TOUCHING ELECTRIC FENCE AT GUJARAT FARM; TWO HELD

Two farmers were arrested in connection with the death of a lioness who came into contact with an electric fence erected around their farmland at Untwala village in Gujarat's Amreli district, a Forest department official said on Wednesday. The incident occurred in the Jasadhra forest range in the Gir East Wildlife division. The forest department came to know about the death of a lioness on the morning of August 13, said range forest officer (RFO), Jasadhra, LB Bharwad. "A forest department team reached the spot and found that a lioness had died due to electric shock she suffered after touching the fence put around the farm.



## POLL PROMISES Political parties can't be prevented: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Political parties and individuals cannot be prevented from making poll promises aimed at fulfilling the constitutional mandate and the term freebie should not be confused with genuine welfare measures, the Supreme Court said Wednesday. Observing that the voters are not looking for freebies, the top court referred to the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and said, Given an opportunity, they will look for dignified earning.

# Beware of evil forces: KCR

Don't take it easy, hold discussions on developments in the country

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has cautioned people to be wary of 'disruptive, vengeful and evil forces'. He was speaking after inaugurating the Integrated District Offices complex in Medchal on Wednesday. KCR advised people to refrain from taking things easily and emphasised the need for them to hold wide-range discussions on certain developments in the country. In particular, he urged them to discuss BJP's contribution to the development of the nation, especially Telangana, over the last eight years. He wanted people to understand why other States were unable to progress as much as a young State like Telangana in terms of providing basic amenities like drinking water and quality power supply to people. KCR said: "Telangana was merged with Andhra because we did not fight 60 years ago. Telangana State was achieved after



KCR advised people to refrain from taking things easily and emphasised the need for them to hold wide-range discussions on certain developments in the country.

58 years of unrelenting struggle. What would be the fate of Telangana if it were still part of Andhra Pradesh? People in the villages should discuss developments taking place in the country. It is easy to destroy a building, but very hard to build one"



CM KCR inspecting the new Secretariat complex on Wednesday

## 'BUILD SECRETARIAT WONDERFULLY AND BEAUTIFULLY'

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has directed R&B Minister Vemula Prashant Reddy and the officials concerned to complete the construction work relating to the new Secretariat complex as quickly as possible without any compromise in quality. He suggested that the works pertaining to all the departments in the Secretariat should be executed wonderfully and beautifully.

KCR inspected works relating to the upcoming new Secretariat complex on Wednesday evening. The Chief Minister verified whether the works were being executed in line with the approved designs. He ordered steps to ensure completion of the works as per timelines. He made it clear that the works should not be delayed under any circumstances.



## INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME

# Centre approves Rs 34,856 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With RBI hiking the lending rate, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday earmarked Rs 34,856 crore towards the interest subvention scheme to help banks provide short term agriculture loans of up to Rs 3 lakh at a rate of 7 per cent. Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the Cabinet has decided to restore interest subvention on short term agriculture loans to 1.5

per cent for all financial institutions. The interest subvention of 1.5 per cent will be provided to lending institutions for financial years 2022-23 to 2024-25 for short term loans of up to Rs 3 lakh to the farmers. The interest subvention support requires additional budgetary provisions of Rs 34,856 crore for the period of 2022-23 to 2024-25 under the scheme, an official statement said.

# Sanjay crosses milestone in padayatra

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party Telangana unit president and Member of Parliament from Karimnagar Bandi Sanjay Kumar crossed a milestone on Wednesday by completing 1,000 km of his padayatra, when he entered Appireddypalle village of Palakurthi mandal in Jangaon district.

Sanjay, who has so far covered 34 Assembly constituencies over 84 days in three phases of his 'Praja Sangrama Yatra', unveiled a specially-erected pylon at Appireddypalle, amidst



the bursting of crackers, release of 1,000 balloons, beating of drums, and blowing of trumpets.

Sanjay embarked on the march professedly to personally understand problems of the people of Telangana and give them

the confidence and assurance that the Narendra Modi-led BJP government was there to take care of them.

The first phase of the padayatra began on August 28, 2021, at the Bhagyalakshi temple near

Charminar in Hyderabad and concluded with a public meeting at Husnabad on October 2, marking Gandhi Jayanti. In all, Sanjay walked 438 km over a period of 36 days, covering nine districts, six Lok Sabha constituencies and 19 Assembly constituencies.

The second phase of the padayatra was launched on April 14, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Babasaheb B R Ambedkar, main architect of the country's Constitution.

## India supplies 60% of vaccines used worldwide: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said nearly 60 per cent of all the vaccines used in the world are produced in India and over the decades, the country has made remarkable contribution to vaccinating the world. India today is double dosing every citizen and produced COVID-19 vaccines even during the lockdown period, she added. Launching the book 'India's Vaccine Growth Story' by Sajjan Singh Yadav, Additional Secretary, Expenditure Department, Sitharaman said it is in the country's DNA to be able to contribute to world vaccination.

# Poll panel pushes for inclusive, accessible electoral processes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Wednesday made a renewed push for inclusive and accessible electoral processes by discussing collaboration with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for strengthening of infrastructure at polling stations.

During the interaction with top officials of the department, which comes under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar emphasised on achieving a new normal of enabling environment in the entire



election process ecosystem, from registration to voting, to nudge persons with disabilities (PwDs) for their active involvement and participation. During the meeting, discussions were held on various aspects of collaboration for strengthening of infrastructure at polling stations, including acces-

sible toilets, tactile tiles and temporary props, exchange of available data for targeted interventions and outreach. Development of appropriate outreach content, stakeholder engagements with national-level institutes working in the domain, and training and capacity building of election officials, also came up for discussions, the poll panel said. Kumar said PwD achievers and trained individuals suggested by the department will be associated as partners to supplement the Election Commission's (EC) efforts of making polling areas more PwD-friendly.

## India monitoring developments in its neighbourhood: EAM

P5



## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:  
Tithi: Saptami: Aug 17 08:24 PM to Aug 18 09:21 PM  
Ashtami: Aug 18 09:21 PM to Aug 19 10:59 PM

Nakshatram:  
Bharani: Aug 17 09:57 PM to Aug 18 11:35 PM  
Krittika: Aug 18 11:35 PM to Aug 20 01:53 AM

Rahukalam: 1:54 PM to 3:28 PM

Yamagandam: 6:03 AM to 7:37 AM

Varjyam: 12:44 PM to 02:29 PM

Gulika: 9:11 AM to 10:45 AM

Amritakalam: 06:28 PM to 08:10 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:54 AM to 12:45 PM

### HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 29°C

Humidity: 75%

Sunrise: 6:00 AM

Sunset: 6:40 PM

Updated: AUGUST 17, 2022 5:00 PM

## Gadkari, Chouhan dropped from BJP parliamentary board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major shake-up, the BJP on Wednesday dropped Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan from its parliamentary board, its apex organisational body, and brought in six new members, including Karnataka leader B S Yediyurappa and Iqbal Singh Lalpura, first Sikh representative.

The party also rejigged its Central Election Committee (CEC) and named Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis



and Union minister Bhupendra Yadav among its new members. Gadkari and Chouhan ceased to be CEC members after their ouster from the board.

## NEW ENTRANTS IN RAJYA SABHA Three of TRS asked no questions

## ○ BJP's lone Laxman posed 26 questions

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Four from Telangana, comprising three from TRS and one from BJP, are among the new entrants to the Rajya Sabha. However, during the recently concluded monsoon session of Parliament, among these only BJP's Dr K Laxman, who was given the seat from Uttar Pradesh, opened his account so to speak. The three new Rajya Sabha members from TRS did not ask even one question during the



session. Dr K Laxman asked 26 questions in his very first session. Divikonda Damodar Rao, B Parthasaradhi and Vaddiraju Ravichandra did not ask any questions in the session, as per an analysis of data available on the Rajya Sabha website. B.Lingaiah Yadav, Ravichandra Vaddiraju and Damodar Rao Divakonda were suspended for disrupting the proceedings of the House. An analysis done by The Pioneer on the Rajya Sabha members suggests that, Lingaiah Yadav, despite being suspended, had asked 28 questions in the monsoon session and 260 questions in total till date as RS member.

## RBI seeks public feedback on charges in payment systems

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday sought views from the public on fees and charges in payment systems, with an aim to make such transactions affordable as well as economically remunerative for the entities involved. The payment systems include Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system, Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system and Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

# Now, taste local flavours as vendors return on trains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bringing back the nostalgia of buying local wares from hawkers and gorging on regional cuisines, the Railways will now allow vendors to sell their goods on trains, as part of its efforts to boost local businesses.

The Railways will also provide them designer carts and kiosks to sell their wares at stations and on trains. Part of the "One Station One Product" policy announced this year in the Union budget, the Railways aims to promote a local product at each railway station.

Earlier, hawkers used to board trains at stations selling local products, mostly food items to passengers. However, they were illegal and

raised both safety and hygiene concerns. The Railways conducted large scale eviction drives which eventually making them a rarity on board trains and even at stations.

Now, however, the variety on offer would range from food products to handicrafts to household goods to decorative items, and would be sold with permission of the national transporter.

This is not all. To ensure that the platforms on which the vendors sell their goods are not crowded with carts hampering passenger movement, the Railways has tied up with Ahmedabad-based National Institute of Design, which has designed kiosks on wheels having different compart-

ments to hold varied products and built-in areas to store additional goods. The design even has areas where products can be displayed.

Presently, only IRCTC-approved vendors are allowed to sell goods on stations and trains.

Taking the concept further of vendors selling local wares at stations, they will also have permission to board trains and travel up to one station to offer their goods to passengers on board.

"The plan is to get in touch with local business associations and offer them a chance to take up places at railway platforms to sell local products, be it handicrafts, food, clothes. Each vendor will have to pay a fee of Rs 1,500 each and they can sell

their wares for 15 days, after which the space will be replaced by another vendor. These vendors can also travel in trains and sell their products by travelling up to one station on board," an official said.

A test run on over 78 stations has seen a per day earning of Rs 5,000 for vendors under this policy, the official said.

So, passengers travelling on trains can now savour jalebi and shrikhand, dhokla and fadfa as they pass through Ahmedabad, puri aloo at Mughalsarai station, dosa at Davangere railway station and purchase of Molkalmuru sarees, buy spice and copra products at Arsiikere; purchase coffee in Hassan and Channapatana toys at Srirangapatna.





## Vision problems rampant in kids

Red Cross and LVPEI join hands to treat children

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Addiction to mobile phones and television screens, lack of balanced nutrition and ignorance are the main factors that are affecting the vision of children across the country. We see a lot of children in private and corporate schools wearing spectacles, even in primary classes. However, not many children from economically-backward families are seen with spectacles in schools. That doesn't mean poor children do not have vision problems. In fact, vision problems are more rampant in children belonging to poorer sections because of malnutrition and absence of proper eye care. This may be because of poverty or ignorance. But, many children from modest

economic backgrounds are seen reading books keeping close to the eyes while some cannot read writings on blackboards in classrooms. Since their parents cannot afford to provide the best eye care, these children continue to live with vision problems, which may become serious problems in future.

The representatives of the AP Red Cross Blood Banks and projects have visited a number of private, corporate, municipal schools and anganwadis and interacted with children, teachers and parents to study the vision problems of children. This study revealed that children from affluent families had access to the best eye care and were taken care of in the early stages with spectacles to correct the vision.

## Gadkari finds support in TRS

○ **BJP elated over Laxman's elevation**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

After dropping Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan from the party's highest decision-making body, the BJP claimed that its reconstituted parliamentary board shows organisational strength and gave emphasis on diversity. However Gadkari found support in TRS. TRS spokesperson pointed that "he may meet the same fate as LK Advani". TRS had always praised Nitin Gadkari for his efficient functioning.

Rajya sabha MP Dr K Laxman from Telangana was made a member of the board and CEC. BJP Telangana is elated over the development and importance given to the state leader.

The BJP on Wednesday announced the reconstituted 11 members for its Parliamentary Board and 15 members for Central Election Committee (CEC). Former party president and Union Minister Gadkari and Chouhan were dropped from the Parliamentary Board and six new faces have been included. The new reconstituted Parliamentary Board shows how the party rewards old workers and values their experience. People like B.S. Yediyurappa, Satyanarayan Jatia, Dr K. Laxman have given their lives to the party, building it brick by brick from the start. Their coming to the highest decision-making body shows how the party values its esteemed Karyakartas (workers)," BJP sources said.

Pointing towards the diver-

sity of the newly constituted Parliamentary Board, BJP sources said: "There is an emphasis on diversity. Sarbananda Sonowal is from the Northeast, L. Laxman and B.S. Yeddyurappa hail from South. In Iqbal Singh Lalpura there is a Sikh."

"Sudha Yadav is a self-made political leader whose husband was martyred in Kargil. Her inclusion shows utmost respect to women and families of armed forces personnel. Representation from the South and Northeast is at an all-time high in the Parliamentary Board," sources added.

Eleven members of the reconstituted Parliamentary Board includes BJP chief J. P. Nadda, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and Sarbananda Sonowal,

former Karnataka Chief Minister Yediyurappa, OBC Morcha national president K. Laxman, Iqbal Singh Lalpura, Sudha Yadav, Satyanarayan Jatia and national general secretary (organisation) B. L. Santhosh. The six new faces in the Parliamentary Board are Yediyurappa, Sonowal, Laxman, Lalpura, Yadav and Jatia.

The 15-member Central Election Committee includes the 11 members of the Parliamentary Board and Union Minister Bhupender Yadav, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis, Om Mathur and national president of party women wing Vanathi Srinivasan. Senior leaders Shah Nawaz Hussain and Jwal Oram were dropped from the CEC.

**WILL WITHDRAW CAMPAIGN**

## If Bihar new govt provides 5-10 lakh jobs in 2 yrs: Kishor

**PNS ■ SAMASTIPUR (BIHAR)**

Poll strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor on Wednesday asserted that if the newly formed 'Mahagathabandhan' government in Bihar provides five to 10 lakh jobs in the next one or two years, he would withdraw his Jan Suraj Abhiyan' and extend support to the Nitish Kumar dispensation.

Addressing his supporters in Samastipur on Wednesday, Kishor, once a confidant of Kumar, also claimed that the RJD-JD(U)-Congress government does not enjoy the support of people. Nitish Kumar uses Fevicol (adhesive brand) to stick to the CM's post, while other parties continue to revolve around it, he stated. Deputy Chief Minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav

had recently said that his party, as part of the new government, would deliver on the promise of providing 10 lakh jobs, made during 2020 Assembly elections. Kumar, during his Independence Day speech at Gandhi Maidan, too, said, "We aim to provide jobs to 20 lakh people in government and private sectors of the state. People of the new generation (Tejashwi Yadav) are with us; hence, we will jointly work to provide jobs. Our goal is to place Bihar in the category of developed states." Responding to the promises made by the Grand Alliance government, Kishor said, I will withdraw my Jan Suraj Abhiyan' and extend support to the Nitish Kumar government, if five to 10 lakh jobs are provided in the next one to two years.

## KTR invited to Asia leaders' meet

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao has received an invitation to the Asia Leaders Series' meeting to be held in Zurich on 4th October, 2022.

The Asia Leaders Series is a neutral forum to facilitate open dialogue among the most influential leaders in Asia and Europe, advocating diversity, supporting collaboration, and fostering trusted relationships. The meeting involves 100 of Europe and Asia's most prominent business leaders, who will gather to discuss growing geopolitical uncertainty affecting large companies operating in the Europe-Asia corridor. "Our goal is to inspire a meaningful and thought-provoking discussion among respected, influential figures such as yourself. For this reason, access to the meeting is reserved for board members

of companies with revenues of at least \$1 billion," said Callam Fletcher, Founder, Asia Leaders Series, in the invitation letter to Minister KTR.

Among the leaders set to attend the meeting are Sir John Scarlett, former Chief of British Intelligence Service (MI6), Margarita Louis-Dreyfus, Chair of LDC Group, Lord Jim O'Neill, former Chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Prof. Dr. Jordi Gual, Non-Executive Chairman of VidaCaixa, Dr. Gerard Lyons, UK Board Member at the Bank of China, and Lord Stephen Green, former Group CEO & Chairman of HSBC. The Minister expressed his happiness over receiving an invitation from the Asia Leaders Series. He stated that this would be a great platform for global leaders to come together and share their thoughts and ideas on various topics.

## JUBILEE HILLS MINORS GOT BAIL DUE TO LOOPHOLES IN LAW

IT Minister K T Rama Rao said on Wednesday that rapists are escaping due to loopholes in laws. "Even in the case of the rape that took place in Hyderabad recently, the accused escaped from harsh punishment as they were minors and got bail", he observed. KTR suggested that minors committing crimes like rape should be treated as majors and punished accordingly. He opined that rape cases could be brought down by instilling social consciousness, enhancing awareness from childhood and taking stringent measures like awarding capital punishment or life imprisonment to those convicted of rape. KTR said that judiciary would work effectively only when there were strong laws and suggested that

appropriate changes be made to the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the Juvenile Justice Act for the betterment of society and children. He urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure that courts do not grant bail to rapists. He offered to extend his cooperation to the Union government in this regard, regardless of political differences. KTR again expressed his anger over the release of the convicts in the case relating to Bilkees Bano, who was gang-raped during the 2002 Gujarat riots. He criticized the Gujarat government for exposing its mean mentality by releasing those rapists who had gang-raped Bilkees Bano when she was five months pregnant.

## WATER SOURCES UNDER JAL JEEVAN MISSION

## Govt to form committees to assess sustainability

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The government plans to set up "source finding committees" under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to assess the sustainability of the sources supplying raw water for the piped water scheme, a senior official said on Wednesday.

The government also proposes to train five women in every village in using field testing kits to ensure that there is no arsenic, fluoride or bacterial contamination of sources of water, Vini Mahajan, Secretary in the Ministry of Jal Shakti, said at a seminar organised by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

The Mission was announced in August 2019 with the objective of supplying 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through household tap connections by

2024.

Around 10 crore of the 19.11 crore rural households have been covered already, Mahajan said. She said that the government has set up more than 2,000 labs across the country for water quality testing and more than 900 of them are NABL accredited.

"We are trying to make sure that every district and sub-district has an NABL-accredited lab where people can conveniently go and get water samples tested," the official said.

"Also, to make the quality of water part of the ethos ... We ask that at least five women in every village should be trained in using free testing kits.

These simple, easy-to-use kits should be made available free in every village. The community should be encouraged to keep using them to make sure that no arsenic, fluoride or

bacterial contamination is happening," Mahajan said.

She said sources could dry up in certain water-stressed areas as we extract the water required to provision 55 litres per capita per day under the scheme. What the mission requires as of now is that there must be a source finding committee comprising engineers and other local people who should access the source from which the scheme is drawing its raw water," she said.

The panel will sign off and assure about the sustainability of a particular source, the official said. Sunita Narain, Director General, CSE, said the Jal Jeevan Mission and the Swachh Bharat Mission are the next generation reforms instituted by the country in water and sanitation. "One of their objectives has been to ensure 'functional' tap water

supply across the country. This is a significant aim, because it is an acknowledgement of the fact that water and sanitation management is not just about putting infrastructure like pipelines in place; it is about making the whole system sustainable, she said during the seminar that discussed best practices from rural India in water, greywater and faecal sludge management.

CSE's latest publication on the subject, a compendium of case studies titled 'Big Change is Possible', was released on the occasion. The compendium records and celebrates the successful stories from over 60 villages and peri-urban locations from across India about systems that have worked, such as ensuring sustainable supply of drinking water, greywater management, and faecal sludge treatment and management at the village level.

## Three of TRS...

*Continued from page 1*

Dr K Keshav Rao signed the register only on six of the 16 days of sitting and did not ask any question in the recent session.

Since the time Joginapally Santosh became MP in 2018, he has asked only two questions. The questions were on the status of community radio stations in 2019 and death of lions in Gir forest, Gujarat in 2018. He signed the register on 10 of the 16 days of sitting.

K.R. Suresh Reddy has asked 185 questions since he became MP. He posed 27 questions in the monsoon session. TRS MPs largely protested outside Parliament near the Gandhi Statue.

## Centre approves Rs 34,856 cr

*Continued from page 1*

Thakur said the government's support to banks for the interest subvention scheme was stopped in May 2020 as lenders were themselves able to provide short term agriculture loan at 7 per cent.

However, with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increasing the repo rate or short-term lending rate thrice by 140 basis points in recent months, it became necessary to compensate banks so that they can continue providing agriculture loans at 7 per cent.

Thakur also said the government has not let the fertiliser prices to rise despite the increase in global prices.

Further, the minister said the fertiliser subsidy in the cur-

rent fiscal year is likely to be more than Rs 2 lakh crore.

In the Union Budget for 2022-23, the fertiliser subsidy was estimated at Rs 1.05 lakh crore. The subsidy was Rs 1.62 lakh crore in the last financial year. On the interest subvention scheme, the official statement said the government support will ensure sustainability of credit flow in the agriculture sector as well as ensure financial health and viability of the lending institutions, especially regional rural banks and cooperative banks. Banks will be able to absorb the increase in the cost of funds following the hike in repo rate by RBI and will be encouraged to grant loans to farmers for short term agriculture requirements. This will also lead to

generation of employment since short term agriculture loans are provided for all activities including animal husbandry, dairying, poultry, and fisheries, the statement said.

The government had introduced Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS), now renamed as Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), to provide short term credit to farmers at subsidised interest rates.

Under the scheme, short term agriculture loan of up to Rs 3 lakh is available to farmers engaged in agriculture and other allied activities at 7 per cent. An additional 3 per cent subvention (Prompt Repayment Incentive - PRI) is also given to the farmers for prompt and timely repayment of loans.

## Gadkari, Chouhan dropped from BJP...

*Continued from page 1*

All parliamentary board members, which include Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh and BJP president J P Nadda, automatically become part of the CEC, which has some additional members as well.

The other new board members are K Laxman, Sudha Yadav and Satyanarayan Jatia, three old party faithfuls but considered political lightweights.

The omission of former BJP president Gadkari (65), considered close to the RSS, and Chouhan (63) marks their diminishing stock within the party which has tried to make its key organisational bodies more socially and regionally representative by inducting members of different communities, including former cop and Punjab leader Lalpura, currently the chairman of the National Commission for Minorities.

Former Union ministers Jwal Oram and Shah Nawaz Hussain

have been dropped from the CEC. After these changes, the board now has the full strength of 11 members while the CEC has 15 leaders.

The new entrants to the CEC are Rajasthan leader Om Mathur and BJP women wing chief Vanathi Srinivasan besides Fadnavis and Bhupender Yadav. Srinivasan replaces her predecessor Vijaya Rahatkar as the party's 'Mahila Morcha' chief as its an ex-officio member. With Chouhan gone, there will be no chief minister on the board.

## Sanjay crosses...

*Continued from page 1*

It was kicked off at the Jogulamba temple in Alampur, Jogulamba-Gadwal district, and culminated in a public rally at Tukuguda of Ranga Reddy district on May 14. In all, the BJP state unit president walked 383 km over 31 days, covering three LS constituencies and nine Assembly constituencies in five districts. The ongoing, third phase of the padayatra gone on August 2 at the Yadadri temple in Yadadri

Bhongir district. So far, Sanjay has walked 183 km over the past 15 days. During these 82 days of padayatra, Sanjay could bring to light many issues confronting the people of Telangana. He met various sections of people and received thousands of representations on various problems. Despite his hectic schedule, the BJP president wrote a series of letters to the Telangana government highlighting the issues he had come across during the padayatra.

## Political parties can't be...

*Continued from page 1*

We all must remember the good old saying: There is no free lunch", the apex court said, adding the concern is about the right way of spending public money. There has to be a distinction between the offer of ornaments, television sets, consumer electronics free of cost and real welfare offers. The promise of free coaching for professional courses cannot be compared with the promise of free white goods, a bench head-

ed by Chief Justice N V Ramana said. The bench, also including justices J K Maheshwari and Hima Kohli is mulling and setting up an expert panel to brainstorm the issue of freebies announced during elections. It said that the issue of regulating freebies is getting increasingly complicated and asked all the stakeholders to give their suggestions on the proposed panel while fixing the PIL for hearing on August 22. At the outset, the bench said the expression 'freebie' should not be confused

with genuine welfare measures and gave illustrations to distinguish between freebies and real welfare offer.

As rightly pointed out by some of you, Article 38 (2) of the Constitution mandates the State to strive to minimize inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities, and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.

## India supplies...

*Continued from page 1*

"Over the decades India has made remarkable contribution. Nearly 60 per cent of all the vaccines which are used in the world are produced in India. India has singular contribution to make to the world in terms of vaccination and that which is being produced and supplied to the entire world," Sitharaman said.

## Five of family killed as container truck hits their car near Pune

**PNS ■ PUNE**

Five members of a family, including three children, were killed after a container truck coming from the wrong side of the road rammed into their car in Pune district of Maharashtra early on Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred near Ranjangaon on the Pune-Ahmednagar highway around

1.30 am, they said. "Six members of a family were returning to Panvel in a car after attending a marriage in Ahmednagar district. When they reached near Karegaon, a container coming from the wrong side collided with their vehicle. Five of the family members were killed in the accident, while a woman was injured," an official of the Ranjangaon police station said.



CALLING STUDENT INNOVATORS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

# Telangana AI Mission, Wells Fargo launch Academic Grand Challenge

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The aim is to scout talented student teams that will provide innovative and viable solutions using emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) to assist Wells Fargo with two use cases. Winning student teams will be awarded a combined prize of Rs 5 lakh. Telangana AI Mission (T-AIM) announced the launch of the Academic Grand Challenge, in partnership with Wells Fargo, to foster innovation for the banking sector. T-AIM is an initiative of the Government of Telangana, powered by NASSCOM.

In this challenge, student teams from India are expected to build solutions for two areas, one involving building a futuristic, pure digital bank that integrates modern technologies to enable banking wherever and whenever and the other requires building a predictive



analytics model to estimate financial markets performance during this year. The winning student teams will receive prize money and merchandise worth Rs 5 lakh. This challenge is open to all student innovators in the country. The challenge is now open for registration. Student teams will be selected based on their approach note and the shortlisted teams will get eight weeks to present a proof of concept.

The submissions will be judged based on approach, technique and result. Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Government of Telangana, said, "It is highly encouraging to see the private industry encourage the young talent through this initiative. Modern technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, have the innate ability to transform various sectors, including banking."

**The winning student teams will receive prize money and merchandise worth Rs 5 lakh. This challenge is open to all student innovators in the country**

Arindam Banerji, EVP & Managing Director, Wells Fargo India & Philippines, said, "As an organisation that looks to engage early talent for customer-centric ideas and innovations, we hope that the Academic Grand Challenge will give students an opportunity to use their fresh, out-of-the-box thinking to create innovative solutions."

## IT department raids officers of Vasavi Group

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As many as 40 teams from the Income Tax department on Wednesday conducted raids at various locations in Hyderabad and also at other places in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on the premises belonging to real estate firm Vasavi Group in connection with alleged tax evasion.

Special teams from the IT department raided the company headquarters situated in Banjara Hills and they have reportedly seized certain documents related to their projects. Simultaneously, raids were also conducted at the residences of the chairman, vice-chairman and directors of the real estate firm. The officials also verified documents pertaining to the subsidiaries of Vasavi group, which include Vasavi Reality, Vasavi Nirman and Vasavi Ventures. There have been allegations against the firm that they were constructing large ventures worth thousands of crore rupees but were committing irregularities in payments of income tax.

INDIA-JAPAN JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

# Smart urban transport vital for low-carbon society

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 7th Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting of researchers from Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H) and Japanese-related organisations was held here on Wednesday. This India-Japan joint research project has been designed collaboratively by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as a scheme of "Science Technology Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS)". The aim of this project, named M2Smart project, is to establish a reliable and common approach for grasping the traffic situation in cities by building a system that effectively utilises mobile devices, traffic sensing, big-data analysis and network technology. This was the final



JCC of this joint research project. The Indian and Japanese researchers had summarised the activities and achievements during the past five years with regard to traffic monitoring and the traffic flow analysis by utilising deep learning Artificial Intelligence (AI) recognition architecture, driving behavior sensing, and environment gas monitoring. Indian and Japanese researchers of this M2Smart project conducted the work-

shop by inviting other experts from IIT-Roorkee and IIT-Bombay, in order to share the achievements of this joint research project. Speaking on the occasion, Saito Mitsunori, Chief Representative, JICA, India, said, "Enhancing the academia industry network between India and Japan is one of the most important elements in terms of long-term benefit for both countries."

# Mass plantation drive on Aug 21

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The forest department has announced that a mass plantation programme will be conducted across the state on the occasion of Swatantra Bharata Vajrotsavam with special Harithaharam on August 21.

Minister Indrakran Reddy has held a video conference with Collectors, District Forest Officers, HMDA, GHMC Officers and said that all public representatives, officials, staff and all sections of people should participate in large numbers.

The officials were ordered to make all arrangements for



planting saplings according to the availability of plants in the nurseries. Not only the planting of saplings but also the action to protect the plants

must be taken, he said. Collectors were advised to prepare action plans in coordination with the officers of all departments.

## Getting threatening calls to name politicians: Chikoti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chikoti Praveen on Wednesday said that he has been receiving death threats and is being asked to give the name of certain political leaders. "There is an app called Hitman in which they have given a supari against me and I am being threatened that if I do not name those politicians, I will be killed," he added. Praveen said that he has sent a letter to the Hyderabad City Police Commissioner regarding the threats and is waiting for a reply.

# Other festivals semi finals, Ganesh Chaturthi finals: CP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad City Police Commissioner CV Anand on Wednesday held a coordination meeting with all Station House Officers (SHOs) and senior officers at the city police headquarters in Telangana State Police Integrated Command and Control Centre (TSPICCC) on Ganesh festival.

A slew of instructions were issued by the commissioner during the meeting regarding setting up of Ganesh idols, intimation forms, immersion of PoP and clay idols and the procession routes. As some of the SHOs and DCPs are new



to the city and will be doing the bandobast duty for the first time, Anand spent a lot of time explaining various aspects of the preparatory works for the biggest event in the Hyderabad police calendar.

Speaking at the meeting, the commissioner said, "All the festivals since January have been conducted peacefully

despite the huge turnout of crowd post Covid. Those were all quarter finals and semi final. Ganesh bandobast is the finals and I am sure all of you will rise to the occasion."

The organisers must intimate the SHOs concerned about setting up of the idol and obtain permission. Instructions were given to immerse PoP idols at the arti-

ficial ponds. Clarity was given regarding the court orders and the efforts made till now and then Khairatabad Ganesh Committee agreeing to use clay for its idol and how to go about implementing it in conjunction with GHMC and other departments. The peace committee members should be actively involved and precautions should be taken to watch social media and mischievous posts, Anand added. The meeting was also attended by DS Chauhan, Addl CP (L&O), AR Srinivas, Addl CP (Crimes and SIT), M Ramesh, Joint CP (Admin), AV Ranganath, Joint CP (Traffic) and all the DCPs.

## Scholarship announced for 'Women in STEM'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Progress, on Wednesday announced the openings of the applications for the Progress Software Akanksha Scholarship for Women in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) 2022 in India.

The Akanksha scholarship is a four-year, renewable scholarship of up to Rs 1,60,000 (\$2,000) annually to cover tuition, fees and educational expenses. Eligible candidates for the scholarship programme are women, reside in India and are pursuing an undergraduate degree in computer science, computer information systems, software engineering and/or IT. The recipients for the scholarship will be chosen based on academic achievement, interest and experience in computer science, computer information systems, software engineering and/or IT; and personal attributes exemplifying courage, conscientiousness, resilience and excellence.

"In its second year, the Akanksha Scholarship for Women in STEM was created to empower deserving women in India who have a passion for technology, and we look forward to selecting this year's recipient," said Yogesh Gupta, CEO, Progress. The last day to submit the completed applications is August 22, 2022 by 5 pm. The selected recipient will be notified in September.

## SEEKING BLESSINGS



Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao performed puja at Sri Thota Mutyalamma temple in Bollaram on Wednesday, being honoured by the priest

# Two transgenders among 74% students qualified for LAW CET

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The results of Telangana State Law Common Entrance Test (TS-LAWCET)-2022 for three-year law and five-year law degree courses and PGLCET-2022 were declared on Wednesday. There were over 74 per cent of candidates qualifying the tests. Out of 28,921 candidates who appeared for the tests, 21,662 have qualified.

Two transgenders namely K Sonali from Course: LLB 5YDC and VS Kiranraj G from Course: LLB 3YDC, said that they have appeared for law exams to become advocates and stand up for their community. Sonali said, "I feel very happy. I want to pursue LLB and become a civil advocate. There is no advocate fighting for justice for us and hence I want to fight for our rights. I have prepared by watch-



ing YouTube."

Kiranraj explained, "This is my first attempt. I strongly opine that there are fewer laws for transgenders. We also have limited advocates fighting for us. Transgenders have no awareness of what they are doing and I want to educate them on law because there are circumstances that transgenders are suffering with punishment for doing nothing." Many other course students such as from BA-3282, BCOM-4627, BSC-3714, BBA-170, BBM-49, BCA, BE/B.TECH-2733, B Pharmacy-234, MBBS-34, BDS-25, Pharm D-13 and Bachelor of Physiotherapy-10, are from among other courses who have qualified.

Out of the total, 20198 are male, 8720 are female and three transgenders. The qualified percentage stands at male with 77.33 per cent, female at 69.28 per cent and transgender at 66.67 per cent. In top 10 rankers list of Lawcet, K Venkateshwarlu scored rank 4, LPK Chouhan stood at rank 5,

V Surya Teja scored rank 6, J Sasidhar Reddy stood at rank 8 and K Srujan Mourya stood at rank 10. The 10 rankers list of Lawcet LLB five years course was occupied by the Telangana students. Among the districts list, the highest qualified is Bhadradi Kothagudem with 86.99 per cent, Nalgonda with 81 per cent and Adilabad with 80 percent. Whereas Hyderabad Central is with 75.46 per cent, Hyderabad East with 78.37 per cent, Hyderabad North is with 76.21 per cent, Hyderabad South East with 73.19 per cent and Hyderabad West is with 77.93 per cent. The results were declared by Telangana State Council of Higher Education Chairman Prof R Limbadri, TSCHCE Vice-Chairman Prof V Venkata Ramana and Osmania University Vice-Chancellor Prof D Ravinder.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sleuths of Hyderabad Narcotics Enforcement Wing (HNEW), along with Osmania University Police, arrested one inter-state drug peddler and seized 20 ecstasy pills, 5 LSD blots, 4 grams of MDMA, one mobile phone and Rs 4,000 cash, all amounting to a total of Rs 1 lakh.

The accused P Narayan Borkar is a resident of Goa. To make easy money, he developed contact with M

Ahmed and together started procuring hard drugs in bulk from six people for a lesser price and the same was sold to needy customers at a higher price. The police said that these persons have been selling drugs since the last eight years in Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The accused was also caught red-handed by Panjim Narcotics Department in 2014 for which a case under NDPS was also booked against him. Based on credible information, when the accused

was trying to sell drugs to consumers at Habsiguda, HNEW, along with Osmania University police, arrested him. The accused revealed that about 600 consumers regularly purchase drugs from him. The police have identified 166 persons so far.

The arrest was made under the supervision of Addl DCP HNEW Sneha Mehra, Inspector HNEW P Rajesh, SI HNEW GS Daniel, along with Inspector OU PS L Ramesh Naik and his staff.

# Makers of short film on TSRTC felicitated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total of 61 short film entries were received for a contest of short films on the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC), out of which first three winners have bagged cash prizes.

Managing Director VC Sajjanar has felicitated Ramu Mogiloji with Rs 10,000 in the first category, Ram Sardhar with Rs 5,000 in the second category and Sanjeev Chinnakotla with Rs 2,500 in the third category, along with a certificate of appreciation. Speaking on the occasion, Sajjanar said, "It is impossible to capture the services of the TSRTC in short films. Depicting the meritorious services provided by it in short films is a



reflection of the unit's talent. He praised the talent of the members of the short film unit saying that it is a great thing to show the services along with the concessions offered by the compa-

ny. He further said that every citizen has a connection with the RTC and everyone's efforts are needed to support the organisation which is providing services even to remote areas.

# Release of rape convicts triggers debate on existing laws

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The recent release of convicts in the Bilkis Bano gangrape and murder case has triggered a discussion on whether there should be changes in the existing laws of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC). The Gujarat government on August 15 released 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case of the 2002 Gujarat riots.

Telangana Minister for Information Technology KT Rama Rao on Wednesday took to twitter requesting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene and rescind the Gujarat government remission order releasing 11 rapists.

"Sir, it is nauseating to put it mildly and against MHA order. Need you to show sagacity to the nation. I also urge you to make necessary arrangements to the Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure suitably that no rapist can get a bail. Strong legislation is the only way to ensure that judiciary can deliver swiftly and perform at its best."

Speaking to the pioneer, V Sandhya, National Convener, Progressive Organisation for Women (POW) said, "If we only look at humanitarian grounds, then nobody can be called a convict. There are many Scandinavian countries which have a punishment of



100 years or even more as the punishment for such heinous crimes. Similarly in India, instead of the 14-year imprisonment, changes should be made so that the jail term

increases to 30 to 40 years. We are against death penalty but these changes can bring a difference. Jails are often looked at as places where people get reformed but not everybody

gets reformed."

"The law of commutation and pardon has been strictly followed and there have been no violations in this specific case, considering the release. Hence, the backlash is politically motivated. Any exemptions ought to be framed by legislatures", said Rachna Reddy, Advocate and official Spokesperson of Bharatiya Janata Party in Telangana.

Another advocate based in Hyderabad said, "We are not a retributive society. The people in the administration must have felt that the convicts have reformed and 14 years imprisonment is a considerable amount of time they have served. At the end of the day,

a procedure should be followed and the law should equally be applied to everybody, it cannot be done according to the whims and fancies of the people in power."

Varsha Bhargavi, Director of a collective called 'Where are the Women' said, "No rule of law has been followed. The 2014 policy came in place after the Nirbhaya incident. They used the 1992 policy for pardon citing which was effective at the time of conviction. This pardon will set a precedent to release more such convicts. I hope Supreme Court takes cognisance of this case in a suo moto manner and a corrective measure is taken."

# 1,080 people donate blood in GHMC camp

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Circle-wise and constituency-level blood donation camps were organised by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) on Wednesday on the occasion of Swatantra Bharata Vajrotsavam celebrations being held from August 8 to 22. A total of 1,808 people donated blood at camps across 30 circles of the GHMC. The legislators concerned started the blood donation camps in their respective circles in collaboration with Red Cross Society and other NGOs. Animal

Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav inaugurated a blood donation camp in Sanath Nagar constituency.

LB Nagar MLA Sudheer Reddy participated a blood donation camp in Vanasthalipuram Area Hospital. Goshamahala MLA Raja Singh inaugurated the camp at UPHC in Begum Bazaar. Jubilee Hills MLA Maganti Gopinath participated in the blood donation camp at Yousufguda. Deputy Speaker Padma Rao, along with Deputy Mayor Srilatha Shoban Reddy, inaugurated the blood donation camp at Seethaphalmandi.



ANTI-INCUMBENCY FACTOR

# KCR better placed than Jagan

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

Forthcoming Assembly elections are very crucial for the TRS in Telangana and the YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh. The two ruling parties are facing a challenge from opposition parties in their respective states.

Compared to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TRS supremo and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao is in an advantageous position.

In Telangana there are two major political parties, the Congress and BJP, which are posing a challenge to the ruling TRS.

But in Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam party is the only opposition party to challenge the ruling YSRCP. The two major opposition parties in Telangana may split the anti-incumbency vote between themselves. It may turn out to be advantageous to



the TRS. The BJP is also emerging as a strong opposition party on a par with the Congress. In the triangular fight, the ruling party will have some advantage unless there is severe negativity against the ruling party.

Meanwhile, in Andhra Pradesh, there will be a straight fight between the ruling YSR Congress Party and the Telugu Desam party.

There is no strong third

party to come to the rescue of the ruling party.

If there is any anti-incumbency, it will go in favour of TDP.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Congress is not likely to recover from the state bifurcation effect.

The BJP and Jana Sena are not able to become strong in the State. If the TDP and Jana Sena have an alliance, then also the anti-incumbency

**Compared to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TRS supremo and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao is in an advantageous position.**

votes will go to this alliance. In Andhra Pradesh, the latest surveys revealed that YSR Congress party is still in a strong position and about 57% of people are in favour of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to become the Chief Minister again.

In the previous Assembly elections, the YSR Congress party secured about 50% vote share, now it has increased to 57%, according to surveys.

Even though the Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy are facing no threat to

their posts in the upcoming Assembly elections, as per survey reports in Andhra Pradesh, the main opposition may increase the number of Assembly seats.

In Telangana, the BJP's growth may prevent the Congress from increasing its tally. KCR seems to be intending to restrict the Congress from securing more seats.

In the previous Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, YSR Congress won 151 seats out of a total of 175 seats. In the next Assembly elections, Jagan Mohan Reddy has set the target of winning more seats.

BLOOD DONATION CAMPS

## 10,000 units of blood collected in State on single day: Harish

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Ten thousand units of blood were collected on a single day on Wednesday in the State as a large number of people participated in a blood donation programme as part of the diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence.

Minister for Health T Harish Rao, while talking to the media here, blood donation camps were held in all Assembly constituencies across the State in response to the call given by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao. He described the event as an excellent programme.

Shortly after presenting certificates to those who donated blood in the camp held at his camp office, Harish Rao said that 75 units of blood were collected in each constituency. It meant that 10,000 units of blood were collected on a single day on Wednesday.

The blood collected from donors is called 'whole blood,' and it consists of red cells,



Minister for Health T Harish Rao presenting a certificate to Officer on Special Duty Balaraj at blood donation camp in Siddipet on Wednesday

plasma and platelets. It will be separated into specific components and distributed to patients.

The Minister further said the doctors and health workers in all government hospitals, Primary Health Centres and Teaching Hospitals held blood donation camps. He said that people had risen above narrow considerations such as caste and religion. India, one of the most diverse

countries in the world, has always cherished the concept of unity in diversity, he said. 'We breathe the air of freedom because of the sacrifices of our freedom fighters,' he pointed out. Every blood donation would enhance social solidarity, he pointed out.

The Minister presented certificates to all those who donated blood. TRS activists, people's representatives and others were present.

## Minister distributes Aasara pensions to 1,481 beneficiaries

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy on Wednesday asserted that Telangana is the only State which has been implementing numerous welfare programmes. The leadership provided by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has made it possible to implement numerous welfare schemes, he said.

The Minister distributed Aasara pension to 1,481 beneficiaries, who hailed from 27 villages under Munugode mandal.

The government has been spending Rs 50,000 crore yearly to ensure that welfare schemes are implemented for the benefit of the poor, he said. He explained that various developmental and welfare schemes implemented by the Telangana State government, including loan waivers, entailed a huge



Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy distributing Aasara pension to beneficiaries at Munugode MDO office on Wednesday

expenditure.

MLC Takkellapally Ravinder Rao, Miryalaguda MLA N Bhaskar Rao, Nakirekal MLA Chirumarthi Lingaiah, District Collector T

Vinay Krishna Reddy, Additional Collector Rahul Sharma, DRDO Khalindini, RDO Jagannath Rao and local public representatives participated.

Sardar Papanna Goud birth anniversary to be held officially today

PNS ■ MEDAK

District Collector S Harish on Wednesday said the birth anniversary of Sardar Sarvail Papanna Goud would be celebrated officially on Thursday.

The Collector said that floral tributes would be to Papanna Goud's portrait at the Collector at 10.30 am. Later, the birth anniversary will be observed at a meeting to be held at Renuka Yellamma Mandir.

Floral tributes will be paid at Papanna Goud's statue.

Local MLA Padma Devender Reddy would preside over the meeting, Harish said.

He appealed to the people to participate in the programmes across the district in a big way and make them a success.

## Collector stresses need to encourage blood donation

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

District collector P Uday Kumar on Wednesday stressed the need to encourage blood donation. 'Blood donation saves lives,' he said, while inaugurating a blood donation camp at the government hospital here.

The Collector said the blood donation camps were held in response to the call given by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao as part of diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence. The Chief Minister, he said, had directed the district administration to organise a blood donation camp.

The District Medical and Health Department, Red Cross, District Government Hospital doctors and health workers also organised blood donation camps.

The Collector said that donating blood is a social



Nagarkurnool District Collector P Uday Kumar at a blood donation camp in Nagarkurnool on Wednesday

responsibility. Regular blood donation by healthy people is needed to ensure that blood is always available for patients, he said.

The Collector presented certificates to those who donated blood. He was accompanied by Additional Collector Manu Chowdhary.

Zilla Parishad Chairperson

Padmavathi, Medical College Principal Dr Ramadevi, District Headquarters Hospital doctors Dr Raghu and Dr Rohit, Hospital Superintendent Dr Ramesh, District Public Relations Officer Seetharam, Red Cross Society district unit secretary Ramesh and junior secretary Kumar and others were present.

Blood donation helps save lives: Police Commissioner

PNS ■ WARANGAL

City Police Commissioner Dr Tarun Joshi has made it clear that lives of the people can be saved with the help of blood donation. A blood donation camp was held at Police Commissionerate here on Wednesday in connection with the diamond jubilee celebration of Indian independence. Participating as chief guest, he inaugurated the blood-donation camp. At first, Additional DCP Vaibhav Gaekwad donated blood. Several men and officers in the police department and general public followed suit. Later, the city police commissioner distributed certificates among the blood donors and also fruits. Explaining the significance of the blood-donation, he appealed to youth to come forward to donate blood. Donation of blood helps prolong the lives of the chronically ill patients by administering blood to them at appropriate time.

## CLP delegation prevented from visiting Kaleswaram pump house, giant motors

PNS ■ BHUPALAPALLY

The Congress leaders on Wednesday demanded that the State government spell out why they were prevented from visiting Kaleswaram project.

A Congress Legislature Party (CLP) delegation, comprising CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka, AICC secretary and MLA D Sridhar Babu, MLC T Jeevan Reddy and MLA Sitakka, were prevented from visits the project. The Congress leaders staged a sit-in at Manjurnagar in the district to protest against the police preventing them from visiting the project.

On Wednesday, the CLP delegation set out on a tour to visit the Kaleswaram project to inspect the damage caused to it due to floods.

However, the police restrained them, stating that the delegation has no permission to visit the pumphouse of



Congress leaders staging a sit-in at Manjurnagar in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district on Wednesday

Kaleswaram project. Expressing severe resentment at this, the CLP leaders staged a sit-in on national highway 353 C. The Congress leaders had heated argument with the police.

The state government has been claiming that it built the biggest ever project in world - Kaleswaram project, they said, expressing their desire to assess the extent of the misuse of the

public funds by inspecting the pump house and giant motors in the pump house which were damaged due to floods. They criticised the government for failing to come to the rescue of the farmers who had lost their crops due to heavy rains.

Going by the style of functioning of the government, the CLP team wondered whether there was pump house at all at Kaleswaram project.

## Errabelli inaugurates blood-donation camp

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Wednesday inaugurated the blood-donation camp held at the Hanamkonda DRDA office as part of the diamond jubilee celebrations of Independence Day and described response from the people to the camp as overwhelming.

He appealed to the people to take part in the diamond

jubilee celebrations, which are being held on an unprecedented scale in Telangana.

JP Chairman Dr Sudheer Kumar, MLAs Tatikonda Rajaiah, Aroori Ramesh, KUDA chairman Sangamreddy Sundar Raj, District Collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumantu, DRDO project director Srinivas Kumar, revenue divisional officer Vasu Chandra, DMHO Sambasiva Rao and others took part.



Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao at blood donation camp at Hanamkonda on Wednesday

## MLA distributes modern pottery making tools

PNS ■ JAGTIAL

Local MLA Sanjay Kumar has expressed the opinion that ban on single-use of plastic products will promote use of earthen utensils. He distributed modern equipment to master trainers of Kummari and Salivahana communities at a programme held in Lingampet area of the town under the aegis of the Backward Classes Welfare Department.

Addressing the gathering, the MLA said he was happy at distributing seven units of modern equipment on subsidy sanctioned to the Salivahana community. Caste-based vocations stand as a testimony to the culture and tradition of a country. It is essential to use earthen pots in place of plastics. He said that Lingampet is very special to him. He appealed to the master trainers who learnt the art of pottery using modern equipment should train others. He desired that the elimination of plastic use should begin from



Jagtial MLA Sanjay Kumar distributing modern tools to earthenware makers in Jagtial on Wednesday

Lingampet. He quoted the examples of how the state government helping the fishermen community by releasing fishlings in water bodies, proving 100 units of power to barbers, distribution of sheep units among the Yadavs and said that the government has been striving for the economic development of washermen, Viswabrahmins, weavers and others.

The Telangana state is ahead of other states in implementation of welfare schemes, he said quoting the examples of

schemes like Rytu Bandhu, Rytu Bima, pension to beedi workers and disbursement of Asara pensions and so on.

Mechanisation helps improve production and augments revenue eliminating the need for manual work.

He assured the potters to speak with district collector to allot a suitable site for marketing of pots. He offered to contribute funds from his constituency development funds for raising a shed. Later, he inspected the manufacturing process of pots.

## CPI considering contesting Munugode by-poll: Chada

The party will announce its decision after its State Committee meeting on August 19 and 20

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

The Communist Party of India (CPI) is seriously considering contesting the Munugode by-elections, according to party State secretary Chada Venkat Reddy. He recalled that the CPI had won in Munugode Assembly constituency for five terms.

Speaking at a media conference on Wednesday, Venkat Reddy said the party would take a decision on contesting the by-poll after discussing the subject at the party's state committee meeting to be held on August 19 and 20. The party leadership would finalise its poll strategy after consultation with the party leaders and activists and also the friendly parties, he said. He accused former Congress



CPI State unit secretary Chada Venkat Reddy speaking to reporters in Siddipet on Wednesday

MLA Komatireddy Rajopala Reddy of imposing a by-poll on people in Munugode constituency to serve his own self-

ish interests.

He said the Communists can only wage a fight on behalf of the people. He called upon

the party activists to expose the misdeeds of the Union government. The BJP government at the Centre and the TRS govern-

**The BJP government at the Centre and the TRS government in the State have adopted anti-people policies. The responsibility to fight the anti-people policies of the government rested on the Communist parties, he said.**

ment in the State have adopted anti-people policies. The responsibility to fight the anti-people policies of the government rested on the Communist parties, he said.

The poor became poorer during the 75 years of independence.

He came down heavily on the Narendra Modi government for privatising the public

sector units.

He said the Modi government had written off Rs 12 lakh crore loans for corporate. He ridiculed the Prime Minister for criticising the 'freebies'.

CPI district unit secretary Manda Pavan, CPI leaders Jagari Satyanarayana, Gadipati Mallesh, Krishnapuram Lakshman, Yada Padma and Eeri Bhumaiah were present.

## Congress infighting boils over in Telangana State

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader Marri Shashidhar Reddy on Wednesday accused Telangana Congress affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore of acting as an agent of Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president A Revanth Reddy.

Shashidhar Reddy's criticism of Manickam Tagore assumed significance when the latter arrived in the city to chalk out a strategy for the Munugode by-election.

He criticised the Congress leaders for 'misleading' the high command in New Delhi. He said that what Dasoju Sravan and Rajagopal Reddy, who quit the Congress and joined the BJP, stated about the state of affairs in the party cannot be ignored. The party leaders in the

State have been sending 'fake' reports to the party high command. He hinted that Revanth Reddy's style of functioning was causing harm to the party.

Speaking to the media, Shashidhar Reddy alleged that an office parallel to the Gandhi Bhavan (TPCC headquarters) has been run.

He further said, 'I believe in the statement of Komatireddy that Revanth Reddy purchased TPCC presidency with money.'


He wondered whether the Congress leaders looked like Home Guards to Revanth Reddy. 'What Dasoju Sravan and Rajagopal Reddy said are facts. Revanth Reddy, Manickam Tagore and political strategist Sunil Kanugolu are in cahoots with each other,' he said.



INDIA CORNER


### Everyone knows who the ‘real CM’ is: Aaditya Thackeray’s dig at Shinde

In a searing attack on the Eknath Shinde-led government in Maharashtra, Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray on Wednesday said everyone knows who is the “real chief minister”, apparently alluding to the clout of Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis of the BJP in the new dispensation. Taking a dig at the cabinet expansion, Aaditya Thackeray said the ministerial team has neither heard Mumbai’s voice nor the voice of women or Independent MLAs. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde last week expanded his Cabinet, inducting nine MLAs each of the rebel Shiv Sena camp and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is supporting his government. No woman legislator or Independent was inducted in the Cabinet whose strength is now 20. The first 14 to 15 MLAs who aligned with Shinde when he revolted against the Shiv Sena leadership in June have not found a place in the Cabinet. So there is no place for loyalty, Aaditya Thackeray, a former minister, mocked while talking to reporters outside the state legislature.




### Not received any donation in excess of Rs 20,000 in 2021-22: BSP tells EC

Mayawati-led Bahujan Samaj Party has informed the Election Commission that it has not received any donation in excess of Rs 20,000 from individual donors and entities during the financial year 2021-22. In its annual contribution report submitted in June this year and put in the public domain by the poll panel on Wednesday, the party said it received “nil” contributions that were more than Rs 20,000 during 2021-22. Section 29 C of the Representation of the People Act states that the treasurer of a political party or any other person authorised by it will prepare a report about the contribution in excess of Rs 20,000 received by the party from any person or other entities in a financial year. The BSP’s statement is in line with its stated claim that it only gets funds from people with small earnings. The Mayawati-led party has maintained this stand for the past several years. The Election Commission had been pushing to do away with the limitation of Rs 20,000 to make it mandatory for parties to show on record all voluntary donations, irrespective of the sum.



### Mizoram student body demands withdrawal of CAA, AFSPA

Mizoram’s apex student body Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZIP) on Wednesday staged a demonstration in Aizawl demanding withdrawal of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. The protest was made in response to a call given by the North East Students’ Organisation (NESO), the umbrella body of major student bodies in the eight North-eastern states. In the sit-in held at the MZIP office here, supporters of the organisation demanded that the Centre revoke CAA and AFSPA from the region. It also asked the central government to resolve the inter-state boundary disputes in the Northeast and the problems faced by the states of the region along the international border. The MZIP demanded that an education policy be framed to suit the culture of the people of the region. Its other demands included providing relief to the Myanmarese refugees staying in the Northeast and declaration of a separate time zone and special employment zone for the Northeast.



# India monitoring developments in its neighbourhood: EAM

PNS ■ BANGKOK

India monitors any development in its neighbourhood which has a bearing on its security, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday, as a high-tech Chinese research vessel docked at a strategic port in Sri Lanka. Jaishankar, who arrived here on Tuesday to attend the 9th India-Thailand Joint Commission Meeting, made the remarks when asked about the docking of the ballistic missile and satellite tracking ship ‘Yuan Wang 5’ at the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

“What happens in our neighbourhood, any development, which has a bearing on our security issues, is of interest to us,” Jaishankar said while replying to a question during a press conference along with his Thai counterpart Don Pramudwinai after the joint commission meeting.

“I think a spokesman had said



some time ago, we obviously monitor any development, which has a bearing on our interests very, very carefully. So, I think I will leave at that,” he said. The Chinese vessel will be docked at the southern Sri Lankan port till August 22 for replenishment, Sri Lankan officials said.

The ship was originally scheduled to arrive at the

Chinese-run port on August 11 but it was delayed in absence of permission by the Sri Lankan authorities.

Sri Lanka had asked China to defer the visit amid India’s concerns over it.

On Saturday, Colombo granted the port access to the vessel from August 16 to 22 on condition that it will keep the Automatic Identification System

(AIS) switched on within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of Sri Lanka and no scientific research to be conducted in Sri Lankan waters.

Sri Lanka has said that the security clearance was granted from the Ministry of Defence for the visit of the vessel for replenishment purposes during the stipulated period.

It said no rotation of personnel would take place during the port call and the Sri Lankan government was requested to provide the necessary assistance by the Chinese Embassy in Colombo.

The security and cooperation in the neighbourhood are of utmost priority in handling the issue of the Chinese vessel, the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry said in a statement last week.

The local telecommunications regulatory authority had issued a No Objection Letter for the use of frequencies and communication equipment subject to non-interference and non-protection basis.

## DECARBONISATION OF TRANSPORT SECTOR

### Cabinet approves contract between India and France

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Cabinet approved on Wednesday the signing of a contract between India and France to support some activities aimed at decarbonisation of the transport sector, according to an official statement.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, France on behalf of the International Transport Forum and the Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), India will support the forum activities in India’s transport sector, according to the statement.

The contract was signed on July 6. The statement said the activities to be carried out under this contract will lead to new scientific results, new policy insights, capacity building through increase scientific interaction and identification of technology options for decarbonisation of the transport sector in India.

## DALIT BOY DEATH

# Father took child to 6 hospitals over 23 days, but failed to save

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Treatment at six different hospitals over 23 days could not save the life of the nine-year-old Dalit boy who was allegedly thrashed by his school teacher in Rajasthan for touching a drinking water pot, according to information shared by the National Commission for Scheduled Caste.

Indra Meghwal, a student of a private school in Jalore district’s Surana village, was beaten by his teacher on July 20.

The incident has triggered a row, with family members claiming that the boy was thrashed as he was a Dalit while the teacher belonged to the upper caste.

The Social Justice and Empowerment department of Rajasthan’s Jalore district shared the police report with the NCSC after the latter sought explanation from the state government over the matter.

The boy’s father and uncle



recounted the incident in the police report.

The boy succumbed to his injuries at a hospital in Ahmedabad on August 13.

According to the police report shared by the NCSC, Meghwal was thirsty and tried to drink water from the pot meant for the head of institution. Seeing that, the teacher started beating the boy due to

which he fell and started bleeding from his ears.

His father has a repair shop in front of the school where Meghwal came narrated the incident while complaining of ear pain, the report said.

Devaram Meghwal took his son to Bajrang hospital in Bagoda the next day where he was treated but after two days the pain in his ear again started following which the boy’s father rushed him to Aastha multi-speciality hospital in Bhinnmal where he was admitted for a day, it said.

After the pain in the ear did not subside, Devaram took his son to a third hospital Triveni Multispeciality Hospital & Trauma Centre in Bhinnmal where the boy was admitted for another two days.

When there was no reduction in pain, the family of the boy was advised to consult another hospital in Gujarat, the report said.

The father then took the boy to a fourth hospital Karni hospital in Deesa.

# MHA says no move to shift Rohingyas to EWS flats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday denied any move to shift Rohingya Muslims in Delhi to economically weaker section (EWS) flats and directed the Delhi government to ensure the “illegal foreigners” remain in detention centres pending their extradition.

The ministry’s clarification came hours after Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri put out a tweet saying India has always welcomed those who have sought refuge in the country and announcing that all Rohingya refugees would be shifted to EWS flats in east Delhi’s Bakkarwala area.

The Home Ministry issued a statement clarifying its position.

“Illegal foreigners are to be kept in Detention Centre till their deportation as per law. The Government of Delhi has not declared the present location as a Detention Centre. They have been directed to do the same immediately,” a spokesperson said in the statement on Twitter.

“With respect to news reports in certain sections of media regarding Rohingya illegal foreigners, it is clarified that the MHA has not given any directions to provide EWS flats to Rohingya illegal migrants at Bakkarwala in New Delhi,” the spokesperson said.

Puri tagged a news agency story in his posts and said those who had made a career out of spreading canards on India’s refugee policy deliberately linking it to CAA will be disappointed.

“India respects & follows @UN Refugee Convention

1951 & provides refuge to all, regardless of their race, religion or creed,” he said.

“India has always welcomed those who have sought refuge in the country. In a landmark decision all #Rohingya #Refugees will be shifted to EWS flats in Bakkarwala area of Delhi. They will be provided basic amenities, UNHCR IDs and round-the-clock @DelhiPolice protection,” he posted.

According to a Home Ministry estimate, around 40,000 Rohingya migrants live in different parts of the country, including Delhi.

Noting that the Delhi government proposed to shift Rohingya Muslims to a new location, the Home Ministry said it has directed the Delhi government to ensure “these illegal foreigners” remain at their present location.

It has already taken up the matter of their deportation with the country concerned through the Ministry of External Affairs, the Home Ministry said.

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), which functions under the Home Ministry, has constructed EWS flats in Bakkarwala area near Tikri border.

Last year, the government informed the Rajya Sabha that “illegal Rohingya immigrants” are staying in 12 states and union territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, Telangana, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Karnataka and Kerala.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the government had got reports that Rohingya Muslims have indulged in illegal activities in the country.

## ‘MAKE INDIA NO. 1’ DRIVE

# Kejriwal launches ‘national mission’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an eye on 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday formally unveiled his Aam Aadmi Party’s national ambition with the launch of Make India No 1’ campaign, saying the country cannot be left to those who have been ruling till now if it has to be developed.

At an event organised at Talkatora stadium here, he proposed a five-point vision for good governance and said he would travel across the country to rally support for the cause.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor termed the campaign a national mission and appealed to the masses to join



it to realise the long-cherished dream of India becoming the best in the world and

figuring in the list of the developed countries.

He said those from the BJP, Congress and any other political party can also join it as it is apolitical in nature, even as he blamed the parties in power, without taking names, for the slow progress of India since Independence.

In the past 75 years, they did nothing other than filling their homes and that of their friends with wealth, he charged.

If we leave this country with these parties and leaders, we will go back by another seventy-five years. Some of them (leaders) live for their family while others for friends. Someone has to indulge in corruption while some others have to plunder the country, he said.

# SC allows Varavara Rao to approach trial court seeking to travel for cataract

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday allowed 82-year-old poet and activist P Varavara Rao, an accused in the Bhima Koregaon case, to approach the trial court with his plea to travel to Hyderabad for cataract surgery.

A three-judge bench of Justices U U Lalit, S R Bhat, and Sudhanshu Dhulia noted that as per its August 10 order, it was directed that Rao shall not leave the area of Greater Mumbai without express permission from the trial court.

Senior advocate Anand

Grover, appearing for Rao, submitted that the petitioner is 82 years of age and has been advised of cataract surgery.

He submitted that Rao hails from Telangana and was a resident of Hyderabad.

Grover said that because Rao has his roots in Hyderabad, he would like to get operated there.

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the NIA, opposed his plea and said earlier when three months were given, he did not go for the surgery.

The apex court in its order said, However, considering

the limitations put by this Court, the Petitioner was to stay within the limits of Greater Mumbai.

Instead of this court considering the request, we give the petitioner the liberty to make a representation before the concerned trial court within two weeks with an advance copy to the public prosecutor, the bench said.

The apex court said that the concerned court shall take into consideration the plea within three weeks on receipt of such application.

The top court on August 10 granted bail to Rao, an

# Fulfill citizens’ expectations: Jitendra Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday asked a group of newly inducted officers to work towards fulfilling citizens expectations in a diligent and result-oriented manner by cutting down delays, ensuring timely disposal of business and strengthening the system of monitoring outputs and outcomes, according to a Personnel Ministry statement.

The minister said the Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) have the advantage of bringing in a fresh perspective and views on existing problems and they can use new thinking and ingenuity in their work processes, wherever posted.

Singh said the government has institutionalised capacity building of its officials for getting maximum output.

He said the government of India attaches high priority to training needs of every official.

It is now implementing the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building or Mission Karmayogi aimed at creating an opportunity of world class capacity building of all government officials based on the key principle of “role-based learning” than the earlier practice of training in rule based programs.

ciently, smartly and effectively.

He said it is time for them to work towards fulfilling the expectations of a citizen in a diligent and result-oriented manner by cutting down delays, ensuring timely disposal of business and strengthening the system of monitoring outputs and outcomes, according to a Personnel Ministry statement.

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## MARITIME SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

# Navies of India, Malaysia to work jointly

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar and his visiting Malaysian counterpart Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Bin Mohd Sany on Wednesday vowed to uphold the principle of collective responsibility for maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.

In their wide-ranging talks, Admiral Kumar and Admiral Reza also identified several new areas to further strengthen

bilateral naval cooperation between the two sides, the Indian Navy said without elaborating.

The resolve by the two navies to uphold the principle of collective responsibility in the Indian Ocean comes amid increasing concerns over China’s increasing forays into the region.

The Malaysian commander is on a four-day visit to India.

The Navy said Admiral Kumar apprised the Malaysian



Navy chief of a broad range of foreign cooperation activities pursued by the Indian Navy.

“The leaders identified several new avenues for further strengthening bilateral naval

cooperation and also expressed commitment to their support to uphold the principle of collective responsibility for maritime security in the Indian Ocean region,” the Navy said in a statement.

Admiral Reza would also be interacting with high ranking officials from the Ministry of External Affairs and the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).

Admiral Reza is an alumnus of the Indian Navy’s

Dronacharya Gunnery Training Establishment at Kochi, from where he graduated as a Gunnery Specialist back in 1990.

He is also scheduled to visit his alma mater.

Bilateral cooperation between the Indian Navy and Royal Malaysian Navy spans across a wide canvas ranging from training to operations.

Both navies carried out the bilateral exercise Samudra Laksamana in May.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## 'Nari Shakti' goes for a toss!

Just a day after PM called for need to respect women his own party led govt in Gujarat released 11 rape convicts

Just after the day, the prime minister called for the need to respect women his own party-led government in Gujarat released 11 rape convicts, defying logic. On the occasion of 76th Independence Day, the prime minister unfurled the national flag at the Red Fort and made a clarion call to honour 'Nari Shakti.' He made an emotional appeal to shun misogyny and take a pledge to respect women. As if to mock him, the BJP government in Gujarat released all the eleven rape convicts the very next day. They all were convicted in 2008, by a special court in Mumbai which was later upheld by the Bombay High Court. The gory incident took place in 2002 during the Gujarat riots. Five-month pregnant Bano was gang raped and her toddler daughter was killed along with six others from the family on March 3, 2002. The family was hiding in fields to survive the mayhem when they were spotted by the perpetrators. Only a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave a



clarion call to respect women. The Gujarat government chose to free all 11 convicts giving them amnesty as per its policy, allegedly. The release however is sound technically. One of the convicts approached the court for his early release under the Code of Criminal Procedure, as he had served about 15 years. In line with the Supreme Court decision which maintained that the Gujarat government could decide as per its 1992 policy, which was in place at the time of the conviction. The apex court neither stopped nor allowed the release of the convicts.

Ironically the state government chose to ignore the central government's guidelines for prisoner release. The central government had recently made a special release policy for convicted prisoners to mark 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and the Rape convicts were categorically listed as not eligible for such release. This is a curious case as there is a so-called double engine government in Gujarat and it is very unlikely that the state government took this decision on its own. There are only two possibilities. Either the government of Gujarat doesn't take the prime minister very seriously (which is very unlikely) or second, it knows what the prime minister says is for mass consumption and so it doesn't need to bother about it. The decision is bizarre as elections are round the corner in Gujarat and the opposition is going to make it an issue and give the BJP bad publicity, especially among the women voters. The BJP has recently suffered due to the Tyagi controversy and it would not like to be called gender insensitive during elections. But it might be thinking of polarizing votes as Bilkis Bano happens to be a Muslim woman. Meanwhile, as the perpetrators of the Bano case walk free another lady Teesta Setalvad struggles to get bail. She was the one who fought for Bilkis Bano!

### PICTALK



Priests participate in a traditional procession on the occasion of Chingam 1 or Malayalam New Year, in Kochi

PTI

## The murder most foul

If the death of innocent Dalit boy due to beating by his upper caste teacher can't stir our conscience, what will?

In yet another shocking incident Indra Meghwal, nine-year-old Dalit boy in Rajasthan was beaten to death by his upper caste teacher for drinking from matkameant for upper castes. The boy died after three weeks battling for life at hospital in Ahmadabad. The boy was allegedly hit by teacher Chail Singh, on eyes and ears. The boy was also abused by the teacher with cattiest slur. The boy from the SC community studied at third standard at Saraswati Vidya Mandir, a private school, in Jalore. When the matter was widely reported the police swung into action and arrested the teacher on charges of murder and sections of the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot tweeted lamenting the death of the Dalit boy and ensured that justice would be delivered fast. The state government also announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh to the family from the CM Relief Fund. But unfortunately all this is nothing more than routine set up to



cool the tempers and let the incident bury in the past. Life would then go on as before and the Dalit boys would get a lesson in drinking water. Forget the teacher the society and the administration would remain as insensitive as ever. The body of the boy was buried at night. The family was lathi-charged and asked not to make fuss about it. The congress party must walk the talk as Rahul Gandhi has often maintained that his party stands with the marginalized people.

One MLA and 12 councilors have stepped down owing to the incident. Pana Chand Meghwal resigned saying he doesn't have the right to remain a legislator if he can't protect his community. That gives some hope that one day change would come as somebody would have the courage to stand up against the abhorable practice of caste sacrificing his position. The incident is condemnable on many counts. The perpetrator is a teacher who was supposed to be a mentor or 'guru' and taking lives of students in certainly not 'guru dharma' The boy was just nine years old and he just wanted to quench his thirst, did not meant to hurt anybody or abused anyone. Gehlout government, if it is really disturbed about it, must set an example and ensure that a clear instruction is issued to all the schools in Rajasthan that no discrimination against any student on any ground would be tolerated and harshest possible action would be taken against the person indulging in castists behavior. Set an example now!

# Think of 'Sermon on the Mount'

The PM rightly asked the nation to shed its colonial mindset. It is our biggest mental block on the way to becoming superpower



PRAFULL GORADIA

Prime Minister's Independence Day speech reminded one of "Sermon on the Mount" presumably delivered to Prophet Moses and his Judaic followers on their deliverance to Israel. The contents were not necessarily similar but their import was comparably classical. In 25 years, the PM wants India to be a developed country. Until the last century, we used to go deaf hearing that India was a developing economy, belonging to the Third World. From today the open objective is to be a part of the First World by the year 2047. In Hindi, this means India must be Viksit Bharat.

This is a sharp and clear objective for the citizens to pursue especially its leaders. Presently, many of them are obsessed with distributing freebies to win elections. This is a waste of wealth that should be deployed for economic growth. To elucidate this point, take demonetization followed by the introduction of Goods & Services Tax. The first was a loud and clear message to people to keep away from hoarding tax-evaded wealth because it cannot be productively deployed for developmental activities. The GST was a very constructive, ongoing follow-up on retaining surplus wealth and deploying it for growth. Many citizens, habituated to hoarding their surpluses, still cannot see these two measures in this light.

This obstinate mentality which afflicts not only the wayward but also some academics and intellectuals would be one of the enduring roadblocks to the Prime Minister's march towards First World Status. Apart from distancing our people from mental roadblocks, it is necessary for the people, especially the rulers, to undergo an intellectual revolution whereby unethical and stubborn old ideas are rejected spontaneously and not merely by the fear of the Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax Inspectors, Central Bureau of Investigation and other agencies.

The other psychological change required is to acquire equality confidence and over-



come anything like an inferiority complex. To give a recent example, I have a friend resident in Chittaranjan Park who was delighted that I may visit Dhaka to attend a wedding. His advice to me to go, to go and see how a poorer neighbour has overtaken the Indian economy comprehensively. A couple of decades ago, there were Indians who believed that Pakistan has overtaken us in terms of economic points. The PM, therefore, asked us in his speech not to be affected by anything like a slavery complex which we could have been contracted by any of us over the last millennium.

The PM asked the people to shed any vestige of a slavery complex that might have been acquired inadvertently over the last many centuries. Indians of older generations did betray a readiness to concede the superiority of a foreigner, say a white person. At the same time, they were equally ready to come in the way of their friends and colleagues getting ahead by competition.

Being aware of one's legacy or virasat is often the best



THE PM ASKED THE PEOPLE TO SHED ANY VESTIGE OF A SLAVERY COMPLEX THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACQUIRED INADVERTENTLY OVER THE LAST MANY CENTURIES

way to feel self-confident. Other than political performance in the centuries past, Indians have a great deal to be proud of. Had we not been a great civilization we could not have survived the blows of so many foreign invasions. A great deal of our legacy is on display in buildings, temples, literature, epics, and whatnot. Treat our united diversity as a source of strength and how the variety adds power to team India - such a team would be a winning team especially if we keep our motherland as our first love and our priority. And of course, we must resolve to be always free and always free. And not go under a conqueror's boots as we often in the past.

There is nothing that Indians cannot achieve if they collectively make up their mind. Until 2014, for example, we had not paid much attention to cleanliness. But once we decided on Swatch Bharat we have come a long way, the same with the electrification of our villages and several other things. How quickly do we succeed? So with manufacturing our toys and importing as few of them as possible. We

resolved and we achieved.

Look at our frontiers today and contrast them with how weakly defended they were in the past. The secret to success was our willpower and sincere application. Now if we encourage our women-folk to come more and more forward, India would progress must faster. They comprise a huge reservoir of India's strength which is lying untapped and, in effect, wasted. Turning to digital technology, luckily we caught its bus in time. See how soon we will derive what great advantage in this competing world. All in all, India is strong, resourceful, and will do well. Remember our single-minded aim to become a Developed country by 2047.

We have not had the benefit of such a visionary leader in memory. Now that we have his commandments, we should get down to work. I believe one of the great secrets of American success has been the lack of dynastic inheritance.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### RESPECT THE INSTITUTIONS

Sir — Mr Naidu the ex-vice president showed anger at his farewell party due to denigrating remarks by opposition members of the house. Such unbearable finger pointing toward going dignitary is unhealthy anyway and it is against the very spirit of farewell. If one has the courage to pass the negative remarks, better it would have done during the tenure. Everyone whether the members of the opposition or the then-present prime minister should pay respect to the retiring office bearer. Disciplinary action should be taken against those who indulge in such indecent behaviour. Democracy functions properly only when the institutions are respected and there is respect for the adversaries. **SM Arif Hussain | Hyderabad**

### COSTS TO CUT FRIVOLOUS LITIGATION

Sir — The Chief Justice of India-designate Uday Umesh Lalit wants the costs imposed to cut frivolous litigation. On many occasions in the past cost has been imposed for taking not-so-important issues to courts. There are provisions in the law to impose costs when frivolous litigations are brought to court. Imposition of costs should be in the rarest of the rare cases. It should be more an exception than a norm. Just as it is necessary to block frivolous litigations entering the court, it is also necessary that the litigant public is not instilled with fear to take even serious matters to courts fearing that the case they take may be viewed as frivolous followed by the imposition of heavy costs.

The litigant public should take the call given by Justice Lalit as a wake-up call. The court's time is precious. The litigants who take the cases to court generally believe that they are seeking justice in serious matters. It is for the courts to decide what are frivolous cases and what are cases that merit the attention of courts. The courts should dismiss the cases considered to be frivolous and reprimand the petitioners rather than imposing hefty costs. Just as the pop-

## Let us build the India of our dreams!



The diamond jubilee of India's Independence had already been marked with a lot of glittering celebrations all over India. We are blessed to have evolved in the past 75 years. When every Indian enthusiastically participates in the national festival, one can only feel optimistic and hope for a better future for the country.

Now that we have completed 75 years of

Independence celebration, our eyes are on the vision 100 for India. We had so many recommendations of What India should be when it completes 100 years of Independence in 2047. The vision is to historically change what we are today. Let us dream of India as a technology giant, Tech savvy, economically stronger, and resilient where every citizen can live a life of dignity.

We need to build India which cherishes unity in diversity, and is confident enough to admit its mistakes and make a course correction if required; so let us all work towards making India of the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi and BR Ambedkar where justice prevails and freedom is the way of life. Of course, wishes come true when we work for them we need to start today on our lacuna and only then our future turns better.

**Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur**

ulation is rising, the number of litigants is also on the rise. To overcome this situation, the strength of the judges has also been steadily raised and more courts have come up. Tribunals and Lok Adalats are working in tandem with courts. Appellate authorities are in place in departmental matters. Tribunals, Lok Adalats, and Appellate authorities in government departments have been established to ease the burden on civil, sessions, High Courts, and also Supreme Court. Costs should be imposed in cases, not to the extent that the litigant public becomes afraid of approaching the courts for justice. Frivolous cases should be dismissed at the earliest possible time and the petitioners responsible for bringing such cases should be so admonished that it should be a lesson to others.

**KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru**

### A VICIOUS ATTACK ON RUSHDIE

Sir — The vicious stabbing of the Indian-origin British author Salman Rushdie is horrifying. It is an unpardon-

able blow on freedom of expression too. Rushdie has faced several death threats since his novel The Satanic Verses was published in 1988, as many Muslims consider it to be sacrilegious. (editorial, "A cowardly attack", Aug. 15).

Rushdie has written 14 books, including the 1981 Booker Prize-winning book, Midnight's Children. But, it is The Satanic Verses that made him the target of a fatwa in Iran, forcing him to go into hiding. Fatwas were revoked and even the Iran government had macerated its stance on the issue, and yet the heightened hate towards a book and its author remained alive. After more than 33 years now, the savaging attack on Rushdie has stung the entire literary world. Taking revenge through knives for words is certainly a spineless act. Said Mahatma Gandhi, 'A coward is incapable of exhibiting love, it is the prerogative of the brave.'

**Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai**

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

## SOUND BITE

TRS is running a government of corruption-dictatorship for 8 yrs. CM doesn't meet people. The People don't want such a CM. Such a CM won't remain in Telangana. Lotus will bloom here.

**Union Minister**  
—G Kishan Reddy

To be clear, I support the left half of the Republican Party and the right half of the Democratic Party.

Also, I'm buying Manchester United you are welcome.

**Tesla CEO**  
—Elon Musk

We are boycotting the very people who have given the best of business in the industry. All the Khans in the industry are legends.

**Film producer**  
—Ekta Kapoor

He (Ravi Shastri) had a very low tolerance for somebody who wouldn't bat at a certain pace he did not like. He would not be very appreciative of that.

**Cricketer**  
—Dinesh Karthik

It's not just people who will join the cabinet, every worker & MLA of RJD is a part of it, there will be everyone's participation. The entire cabinet reflects Bihar's interest.

**RJD MP**  
—Manoj Jha



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We must cleanse our hearts first for Krishna to enter it



RADHANATH SWAMI MAHARAJ

Vedic scriptures explain that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. Vedic scriptures explain that Krishna is the Supreme Lord. Brahma Samhitasays, Isvarah paramah Krishna/ saccidananda vigraha, which means 'Krishna who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body.' So, now the question is, if Krishna is God and is eternal then why he has to appear or take birth? We can understand this by the analogy of the sun. When early in the morning we see sun in the eastern horizon we say that sun has appeared (or is born) and when it sets in the evening, we say the sun has disappeared. But the sun is always there in the sky. Based on our seeing it or not seeing it, we say, it appeared or disappeared. Similarly, Krishna is eternal. When we see him on earth, we say that he has appeared and when he finishes his pastimes and returns to the spiritual world, we say he has disappeared because we cannot see him.


Janmashtami is the day when Krishna appeared in this world. He appeared on the eighth day of dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) in the month of Bhadrapada (August–September). But why does God, Krishna, take birth in this world? What is the need? Krishna answers this in Bhagavad Gita 4.7. He says that he comes here to establish religious principles and to teach people like you and me how to live righteously. He comes to lead us from darkness to light - tamaso ma jyotirgamaya. Krishna appeared in a pitched dark prison cell in the middle of the night to Devaki and Vasudeva who were bound by iron shackles and were living in constant fear of Kamsa. As soon as Krishna appeared, the dark prison cell got illuminated. Not just that, Krishna's appearance dispelled fear from the heart of Devaki and Vasudeva. Before Krishna appeared, Kamsa had killed six sons of Devaki immediately after they were born. When Devaki and Vasudeva had just got married, a celestial voice had predicted that the eighth child of Devaki will be the cause of Kamsa's death. Upon hearing this ominous voice, Kamsa wanted to kill Devaki, his own sister. To save his wife's life, Vasudeva promised Kamsa that he will deliver all the child of Devaki to him, and Kamsa can do whatever he wants to do with the child. So, one after another Kamsa mercilessly killed the six children. The seventh child was mysteriously transferred to the womb of Rohini, Vasudeva's other wife who was living in Vraj, from the womb of Devaki. That child was Balarama. Krishna appeared as the eighth child and as predicted, he killed the atrocious demon, Kamsa.

The six sons of Devakiwho were killed by Kamsa represent six rebellious proclivities of the mind – kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (envy), mada (pride), matsara (illusion).As long as we allow these six enemies to reside in our heart, Krishna will not appear in our heart. If we analyse our life, we will find that we suffer in this world because of these six vices which are called anarthas. In Bhagavad Gita 16.21, Krishna says, lust, greed and anger are gateway to hell so every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul. As soon as we succumb to these lower nature troubles begin in our life. Our mind remains out of our control because of these impurities. It is important that we cleanse our heart of these six enemies which bring inauspiciousness in our life and seek Krishna's shelter? This has been beautifully explained by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the founder of Gaudiya Vaisnavism and the pioneer of Bhakti Movement. He says that the best way to take Krishna's shelter is by chanting his holy names like the Hare Krishna Mahamantra which cleanses our hearts. Once our heart is cleansed our mind will come into our control. And when the mind is under our control then we can always live in peace and bliss. So, this Janmashtami let us try to alleviate our life by inviting Krishna to reside in our heart.

*(The author is the Spiritual Guru of International Society for Krishna Consciousness)*

# The idea of India has always been inclusive

## May the 'inclusive idea of India' be on the march on the celebrated occasion of the 75th anniversary of independence



MD THOMAS

The word 'inclusive' denotes 'including or containing everything'. It would further mean embracing all people, irrespective of race, gender, age, language, ideology, creed, class, culture, social mores, food habits, dress patterns, nationality, disability or other conditions. To be included is a universal human right.

'Being inclusive' implies equal access and opportunities for all. It rules out discrimination and intolerance. It advocates removal of barriers between individuals, communities and nations. A few of the related words are 'including, surrounding, containing, encompassing, wide-ranging, universal, global and all together'.

'To be inclusive' is to

(The author is Director, Institute of Harmony and Peace Studies.)

embrace and celebrate differences. There are differences in backgrounds, perspectives and experiences, like gender. People think, feel, understand, act, react, and the like, differently. Engaging with every category and to be integrated with one and all is the ultimate value of life.

"Taking everyone along", along with going together, crossing all borders is the spirit of inclusiveness. 'Nation' is totally an inclusive idea. It is a country or all the people in a country. It has no particular religion, language, culture, and the like. It is a large body of people, united in terms of a certain territory and government. Nation or country accommodates diverse languages, ideologies, ethnic groups, etc.

People of a certain nation

are known for their 'collective identity', mostly supported by a set of shared history, features, beliefs, institutions, interests and sentiments. A strong sense of community, backed by integrity, integration, solidarity and relatedness are the assets of the people of a certain nation.

India is a nation and a country, at the same time. The 'Republic of India', Bhaarat Ganrajya is a country in South Asia. It is the seventh largest country by area, the second most populous country and the most populous democracy in the world. It is a nation with a self-governing State with cultures and traditions.

'Patriotism', obviously, is at the core of a nation. It is the feeling of love, devotion and sense of attachment to one's

country. Ethnicity, language, cultural traits, social traditions, historical roots and political affiliations could be at the back of the patriotic sentiments.

Patriotism motivates one to have special affection towards one's country, define oneself in terms of one's country, being interested in the welfare of one's country and being ready to sacrifice oneself for the sake of national prospects. This is often the natural trait of all the citizens, while the degree varies.

Patriotism is not the same as nationalism, even though they share several factors. The former is loyalty to a group conceived of in judicial and political terms, whereas the latter is loyalty to a group understood primarily on ethnic and cultural terms. The former has focus on values and beliefs, while the latter on heritage.

Furthermore, patriotism leads one to serve the country, while nationalism makes one plunge into taking pride in national symbols, monuments and achievements, as well as reviving cultural traits. In either case, devotion to one's country or nation leads one to a sense of 'national consciousness', which proceeds to exalt one's nation or country above some or all others.

'Islamic State' and 'Hindu Raashtra' are outstanding instances of the inordinate type of patriotism and nationalism. Now, what is wrong with 'Islamic State' and 'Hindu Raashtra'? Islamic State is a radical and militant Islamic group of the Sunni tradition. 'Hindu Raashtra' is the fanatic and extremist idea of Hindu polity that was conceived and mooted by Savarkar. Both are religion-based, exclusive and violent ideologies that brutally cross the courtesy lines between communities of other affiliations and proceed to hate, and even engage in brutal massacres. They function as a 'blend of power, money and faith', though in disguise.

Like 'Islamic State' elsewhere, 'Hindu Raashtra' in India sharply violates the basic fibre of being inclusive. It negates and contradicts the fundamental right of other religious, ideological and cultural traditions to co-exist peacefully.

The India of today is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-ideological, multi-religious, multicultural, multi-cuisine, multi-dressed, multi-coloured,

multi-traditional, multi-party, multi-community, and the like. This is what the tri-coloured 'Indian flag' is all about.

The greatest ideal of India is 'vasudhaiv kutumbakam' from Maha Upanishad, meaning 'the world is one family'. 'Let good thoughts come from all directions' is its real driving force. 'Satyamev jayate', 'truth alone prevails' is the expressway to real development and progress. 'Sarve bhavantu sukhinah', 'let all be happy', is the esteemed destination of India. Nothing less than these ideals could be acceptable to India.

May the 'inclusive idea of India' be on the march on the celebrated occasion of the 75th anniversary of India as a free nation, in special, towards a leadership beyond borders!



# Selling public sector banks is no solution

## Public sector banks still have enormous relevance which is not matched by their private counterparts

“

GOVERNMENT BANKS ARE BOUND TO IMPLEMENT ALL GOVERNMENT SCHEMES. IF FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL BANKING ARE REMOVED FROM THE FUNCTIONING OF PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS, THEIR PROFITS CAN ALSO INCREASE IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS.

(The author is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi.)



For some time now, the talk of privatization of public sector banks has been gaining momentum in the policy circles. Significantly, under the banking reforms, the Central government has reduced 27 public sector banks to just 12 in just three years after a merger exercise. However, the government has also said that banking will continue to be recognized as a strategic sector.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech this year said that two public sector banks and a public sector insurance company would be privatized. It is noteworthy that according to the current laws 51 per cent participation of the Central government in public sector banks is mandatory. But as per the current announced policy, the government intends to reduce its participation to zero.

The Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill was listed in the Winter session of Parliament last year, but for some reasons it was not presented. It was being said that now this Bill will be presented in the Monsoon session, which also didn't take place.

However, debate on privatisation of public sector banks has intensified recently after Poonam Gupta, director general of the National Council of Applied Economic Research, and Arvind Panagariya of Columbia University, former vice chairman of NITI Aayog, published an academic paper. This article recommends that all public sector banks should be privatised, keeping only the State Bank of India in government's hands. Both the authors are not saying anything new, as their views about privatisation are well known. They consider privatisation to be the solution to all problems in all sectors, including banks.

**FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

The arguments of proponents of privatisation of public sector banks cannot be justified for several reasons. When 14 private banks were nationalised for the first time in 1969 and six more in 1980, the government's main objective was to promote inclusive growth. Considering that agriculture, small scale industries, education, export promotion, etc., are of primary importance, the availability of credit was ensured for them through public sector banks, as priority sectors.

Availability of micro loans to extremely small borrowers at very low interest rates was also ensured by public sector banks. However, the situation has changed significantly since then. According to the directions of the Reserve Bank, efforts were made to link private banks also with national objectives, but it is equally true that despite all the rules, bye-laws and instructions, private sector banks are no match to the way the task of financial inclusion is being performed by public sector banks.

After the Narendra Modi Government

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I HAVE MENTIONED EVERYTHING IN MY AFFIDAVIT. MAKING AN ALLEGATION AND PROVING THE ALLEGATION ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS. —BIHAR LAW MINISTER KARTIKEYA SINGH



I ASK HIM (NITISH KUMAR), IS HE TRYING TO TAKE BIHAR BACK TO LALU'S TIMES? KARTIKEYA SINGH SHOULD BE DISMISSED. —FORMER DY CM, BIHAR SUSHIL KUMAR MODI





ASHWANI MAHAJAN



MONEY MATTERS

## Disruption now feels like business as usual: Kumar Mangalam

India appears to be well placed to ride through an uncertain global economic environment brought by various disruptions, which now feel like 'business as usual', UltraTech Cement Ltd Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said on Wednesday. In his virtual address to shareholders at the cement maker's annual general meeting, Birla said one can expect the medium-term growth recovery to remain on track even though businesses would need to remain on guard regarding financial market volatility and cost pressures this year. "The turn of the decade felt like a moment of departure. The COVID-19 pandemic made 2020 an unprecedented year. And then the supply chain whiplash made 2021 feel unprecedented. And now, the Russia-Ukraine war and global stagflation are making 2022 feel unprecedented. Disruption now feels like 'business as usual'," he said. Birla noted that the Indian economy has not remained unscathed by these global developments.



### DEEPSEA EXPLORATION IN INDIA

## ONGC signs deal with ExxonMobil Corp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Wednesday signed a Heads of Agreement (HoA) with global oil giant ExxonMobil Corp for exploration of oil and gas in the deepsea on the country's east and west coasts.

The two oil explorers would focus on the Krishna Godavari and Cauvery basins in the eastern offshore and the Kutch-Mumbai region in the western offshore, ONGC said in a release. It, however, did not elaborate on the nature of the partnership and if ExxonMobil will buy a stake in any of the blocks of ONGC.

"Collaboration between ONGC and ExxonMobil will be a strategic fit where ONGC's



knowledge and past experience in these areas will be coupled with ExxonMobil's global insights," the release said.

With its import dependence rising to 85 per cent for meeting oil needs, India has been seeking technical and financial support from global oil majors to find newer resources and raise domestic production.

ONGC, the nation's top oil and gas producer, has been in talks with ExxonMobil for several months now to explore a partnership. The two firms had

in 2019 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to undertake joint studies. That pact included working on deep-water and other licenses of ONGC on the east and west coasts and jointly bidding for acreage offered in future bid rounds.

ONGC's Head of Exploration Rajesh Kumar Srivastava said his company is looking for a "long-lasting partnership with Exxon".

"Through the discovery route, ONGC hopes to move to development wherein the inherent strength of ExxonMobil would be beneficial for efficient fast-track monetization," he said. "This will enable ONGC to ensure steps towards energy security for India."



## Steps to develop waterways with private sector's help: IWAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) Chairman Sanjay Bandopadhyaya on Wednesday said that efforts are being made to develop waterways with the help of the private sector.

To promote water transport in the country, 111 inland waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs) under the National Waterways Act, 2016.

Speaking at the 'Maritime Public Private Partnership Conclave 2022', Bandopadhyaya said, "We have given assured depth contract at three stretches and more contracts are on bids." Waterways around Kolkata are also being developed, he said, adding that the city is connected to even far-flung north-eastern region and other parts of the coun-

try through waterways and rivers.

Central government through IWAI, an autonomous organisation under the ministry of ports, shipping and waterways, regulates development of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.

The infrastructure developed on NWs like channels with navigational facilities and terminals/jetties may also be used by ferry/tourist vessels.

Also, financial assistance for the construction of passenger jetties and infrastructure facilities on waterways in Karnataka has been approved under Sagarmala scheme.

Cargo movement of 108.79 million metric tonnes (MMT) by inland water transport through NWs has been recorded during 2021-22.

## Rs 50 K cr more under ECLGS to hospitality sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday approved an additional Rs 50,000 crore under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to ensure low-cost credit flow to hospitality and related segments hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Union Cabinet has approved the enhancement in the limit of ECLGS by Rs 50,000 crore from Rs 4.5 lakh crore to Rs 5 lakh crore, with the additional amount being earmarked exclusively for enterprises in hospitality and related sectors, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur told reporters here.

The increase has been done on account of the severe disruptions suffered by hospitality and related enterprises due to the pandemic.

The enhancement is expected to provide much needed relief to enterprises in these sectors by incentivising lending institutions to provide additional credit of up to Rs 50,000 crore at low cost, an official statement said.

The ECLGS was announced in May 2020 in wake of the outbreak of COVID-19 to help various sectors, especially in the MSME segment, to get credit at a concessional rate of 7 per cent. Loans of about Rs 3.67 lakh crore have been sanctioned under ECLGS till August 5, 2022.

## Gautam Adani to address Forbes Global CEO Conference in Singapore

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani will join Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Lawrence Wong to address the Forbes Global CEO Conference in Singapore on September 26-27. Some 400 leading CEOs, entrepreneurs and investors are expected to convene at the 20th Forbes Global CEO Conference to share insights, spotlight opportunities and stake out the way forward, Forbes Media announced on Wednesday in Singapore. Adani will be making a keynote speech on the second day of the conference, where, to date, some 40 speakers have confirmed their participation. One of the highlights on the opening day of the conference is a one-on-one dialogue between Wong and Steve Forbes, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Forbes Media. Among the speakers are Indian business leaders such as Ajay Banga, Vice Chairman of General Atlantic, Byju Raveendran, Founder and CEO of Byju's and Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India.



## Trauma care soon for mishap victims at nearest point

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is working on providing trauma care to road accident victims at the nearest point, Road Transport and Highways Secretary Giridhar Aramane said on Wednesday. There is a need to do many things on road safety, he added.

Addressing the 'National Conference on Technology and Road Operation', Aramane said once an accident happens, providing medical facilities to the accident victims in the most efficient way is very important.

"We need to do several things on road safety... We are working on providing trauma

care to road accident victims at the nearest point," he said, without providing more details.

According to recent government data, a total of 3,48,279 persons were injured in 3,66,138 road accidents across the country during the calendar year 2020, causing 1,31,714 deaths.

Aramane noted that economic growth happens when highways are efficient.

While pointing out that the largest number of complaints and parliament questions he receives is related to the quality of roads, the secretary said the use of technology is paramount in the design and construction of roads.

## Syrra SGS Tech IPO subscribed 2.27 times on Day 3

The Initial Public Offer (IPO) of Syrra SGS Technology received 2.27 times subscription on the third day on Wednesday. The Rs 840 crore-IPO received bids for 6,48,39,020 shares against 2,85,63,816 shares on offer, according to NSE data. The category meant for non-institutional investors got subscribed 3.58 times, Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) 2.66 times and Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) 71 per cent. The IPO has a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating to Rs 766 crore and an offer for sale of up to 33,69,360 equity shares. The price range for the offer is at Rs 209-220 per share. On Thursday, Syrra SGS Technology raised Rs 252 crore from anchor investors. It is the first company to tap the primary market in two-and-a-half months. Prior to this, the IPO of Aether Industries was open for public subscription during May 24-26.



## Vikram Solar gets Sebi nod to mop up funds via IPO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vikram Solar has received capital markets regulator Sebi's go ahead to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO).

The IPO consists of a fresh issue of up to Rs 1,500 crore and an Offer-for-Sale (OFS) of up to 50 lakh equity shares by the selling shareholders.

Vikram Solar, which filed preliminary IPO papers with the markets regulator in March, obtained its observation letter on August 10, an update with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed on Wednesday. In Sebi's parlance, its observations imply its go ahead to float the IPO.

Vikram Solar is a leading domestic module manufacturer. It produces solar photo-voltaic (PV) modules and is an integrated solar energy solutions provider offering engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) services, and operations and maintenance (O&M) services.

Going by the draft papers, proceeds from the fresh issue will be utilised for setting up an integrated solar cell and solar module manufacturing facility with an annual pro-



Vikram Solar is a leading domestic module manufacturer. It produces solar photo-voltaic (PV) modules and is an integrated solar energy solutions provider offering engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) services, and operations and maintenance (O&M) services.

duction capacity of 2,000 MW.

The company has a global footprint through a sales office in the US and a procurement office in China and has supplied solar PV modules to customers in 32 countries, as of December 31, 2021.

In India, the company's customers include NTPC, Rays Power Infra, Amp Energy India, Azure Power India, West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd, Solar Energy Corporation of India, Hindustan Petroleum

Corporation Ltd and Keventer Agro. The company's international customers include Amp Solar Development Inc, Safari Energy LLC, Standard Solar Inc and Southern Current.

As of December 2021, the company had an order book of Rs 4,870 crore.

JM Financial Limited and Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd are the book running lead managers to the public issue. The equity shares will be listed on BSE and NSE.

## Rupee gains 29 paise to close at 79.45 against US dollar



PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained 29 paise to settle at 79.45 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday as heavy buying in domestic equities and persistent foreign capital inflows strengthened investor sentiment.

Besides, softening crude oil prices and easing infla-

tionary pressures supported the domestic unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened strong at 79.32 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 79.26 and a low of 79.48. It finally ended at 79.45 against the American

currency, registering a rise of 29 paise over its previous close of 79.74.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.06 per cent to 79.74.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 417.92 points or 0.70 per cent higher at 60,260.13, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 119 points or 0.67 per cent to 17,944.25.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, slipped 0.06 per cent to USD 92.28 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors remained net buyers in the capital market on Tuesday as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,376.84 crore, as per exchange data.

After turning net buyers last month, foreign investors have continued to invest in Indian equities and pumped in Rs 22,452 crore in the first two weeks of August.

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## Govt to set up expert groups to explore adoption of common chargers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will set up expert groups to explore the adoption of common chargers for mobile and all portable electronic devices and submit a detailed report in two months, Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh said on Wednesday.

Emerging out of the meeting with industry stakeholders, the secretary said India can initially think of exploring shifting to two types of chargers, including a C-Type port. "It is a complex issue. India has a position in the manufacturing of chargers. We have to understand everybody's perspective -- industry, the users, manufacturers and environ-

ment -- before taking a final decision," he said told reporters. Each stakeholder has a different perspective and expert groups will be formed to examine separately those issues, he said.

Separate expert groups will be formed to study charging ports used in three segments -- mobile and feature phones, laptops and ipads, and wearable electronic devices.

The groups will be notified this month and will submit the recommendations in two months, he said.

Although the sector-specific associations and manufacturers agreed to the concerns of e-waste but sought more discussion on the matter, he added.

## ATF prices, rupee decline to hit domestic carriers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Elevated Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices and Rupee depreciation are likely to pose a serious threat to the recovery process for domestic carriers, credit ratings agency ICRA said on Wednesday.

In India, ATF accounts for around 45 per cent of the operational cost of an airline.

Besides, as much as 35-50 per cent of the airlines' operating expenses are US dollar driven, as per ICRA.

An area of concern remains the ATF prices, which surged by around 77 per cent Y-o-Y in August, given the elevated crude oil prices due to geo-political issues arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the ratings agency said.

On an aggregate basis, it said a return to normalcy will lead to recovery in passenger load factors, which, in turn, will aid revenues;



ICRA believes that the domestic air traffic yields have moved up by 25-30 per cent over pre-Covid levels on domestic routes. The industry earnings in FY2023 will continue to reel under pressure owing to the elevated jet fuel prices, coupled with the depreciation of the Indian Rupee against the US dollar.

however, these two factors will continue to weigh on the domestic airlines' earnings in FY23.

This apart, the expected launch of Jet Airways and the entry of Akasa Air, are likely to intensify the com-

petition for the domestic carriers.

"ICRA believes that the domestic air traffic yields have moved up by 25-30 per cent over pre-Covid levels on domestic routes. The industry earnings in FY2023 will contin-

ue to reel under pressure owing to the elevated jet fuel prices, coupled with the depreciation of the Indian Rupee against the US dollar," Suprio Banerjee, Vice President and Sector Head at ICRA, said.





## Integrate performance marketing into your marketing strategy

**M**arketing has got advanced rapidly in the recent years because of social media platforms. Modern digital marketing strategies such as performance marketing are used to survive in a competitive market. There are a variety of tools available today for marketers to collect customer data. Performance marketing can also be applied to a myriad of business endeavours, such as brand, product, and service promotion. As a result, effectively incorporating performance marketing into a strategy can boost growth, and an analytical approach can provide businesses with information.

Performance marketing is a digital marketing technology that allows advertisers to pay only after obtaining the desired outcome, such as clicks or conversions. It is also made up of a set of marketing tools that measure the outcomes of advertising campaigns and credit marketing performance to a variety of channels based on the results collected. Furthermore, it can be beneficial to businesses because it helps to hold everyone accountable. Businesses can build on the service and grow brand recognition while avoiding risk by creating clear deliverables for affiliates. Thus, marketing has a plethora of advantages that businesses may use in their strategy to achieve momentum in their competitive edge.

### Integrating into your strategy

As advertising progressed, so did the methods for tracking performance. Marketers may more readily track and optimize campaign performance with the emergence of digital marketing via display, email, and social media channels. Consider the following three significant advantages of incorporating performance marketing over traditional methods:

### Performance marketing boosts productivity

Although performance marketing is supposed to primarily assist businesses, it can also benefit marketers. All because having proof that you're accomplishing the required activities will assist you in demonstrating how useful you are to the company for which you work. Therefore, the marketer will have increased confidence in their offering and talents. Furthermore, because your efforts are being documented, management will be able to readily recognize and reward

individuals that surpass expectations. Employee morale and productivity can be improved by rewarding good performance.

### Performance marketing helps to reduce risks

The most significant advantage of performance-based marketing is that it reduces the risk for the brand due to the fact that clients know exactly where their money is going. Gone are the days of receiving unclear outcomes, exaggerated invoicing, and yet being unsure whether you're getting any ROI. You can see that the proof of the pudding is in the eating now. You only pay when you receive the consequences you want with performance marketing.

### Performance marketing is Measurable

Performance marketing not only informs brands about what they are paying for, but it is also measurable. This removes all uncertainty on the part of the brand as they can track the marketer's or affiliate's progress at every step of the journey. This technique promotes transparency, which can aid in building confidence in the collaboration. Furthermore, performance marketing methods that create a sense of reasonability are beneficial to both businesses and marketers. It allows the marketer or advertiser to demonstrate their worthwhile campaign, also reducing risk on the business side.

In performance marketing, everything is trackable, whether you're using a social platform's analysis tool or a social media auditing tool, and this helps keep everyone accountable. Owing to this, performance can boost productivity by motivating affiliates to go above and beyond to achieve their goals.

### Performance Marketing: Taken Center Stage

With the changing times, performance marketing provides businesses with the capacity to measure everything. As advertisers become transparent, they are going beyond branding to develop marketing strategies that will help them obtain market traction. In a nutshell, incorporating performance marketing into your business processes will increase innovation in the marketing team. Together, the team needs to do anything and everything to reach their targets, they can be innovative in their approach.

(The writer, Amitesh Sinha, is the COO of ET Medialabs)

This week's Community Wise features Raghavendar Askani, co-founder of Swatantrata Center and founder of YPP, who is on a mission to build a peaceful and prosperous society in which every individual has the choice and opportunity to live a decent and dignified life.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

**R**aghavendar Askani is well-known for his innovative work on youth empowerment, civic engagement, policy education, advocacy, and liberal solutions. He has also conducted various awareness and training programmes on political systems and policies such as liberal democracy, transparency and accountability, civil liberties, entrepreneurship education, and public policy.

You name it, he has done it. The founder and general secretary of the Youth Parliament programme, along with co-founder and director of Swatantrata Center, he is a public policy think-tank focusing on ideas and policies that cause human flourishing.

He tells us, "I have worked as a national coordinator of Youth for Better India, one of the leading and most influential youth organisations that promote anti-corruption bills and institutions that advance transparency and accountability. I was born into a middle-class family in Wanaparthy and hold a postgraduate degree in economics from Osmania University. I have been engaged in social services since I got my intermediate. Checking into youth organisations, research think tanks, and international networks that work on youth empowerment, civic engagement, policy education, advocacy, and liberal solutions, they have done it all. The Foundation has also trained me for Democratic Reform at the School for Democracy. So, doing social work is in my veins."

The activist was also awarded the prestigious Karmaveer Chakra Award and a REX Global Youth Fellowship, which made him elated.

"Before being a social entrepreneur by profession, I was a development consultant who worked with various Indian and international non-profit organisations. In 2009, I started my student activism by promoting the anti-corruption movement, inspired by Dr. Jayaprakash Narayana and Anna Hazare. My focus was on politics and efforts to reform political systems.

# A forum for youth to speak up



Under the leadership of JP Narayan, I started working as a youth leader for the pro-liberal Lok Satta party. I was involved in social activities like voter registration drives in colleges, youth empowerment training, and right to information act seminars," says the activist, who has established that Youth for Better India is an organisation that promotes anti-corruption as a national coordinator. He and his NGO wished to mobilise people.

He adds, "I went to different colleges and explained the importance and uses of the prevalent bills. I alone succeeded in gathering more than 20,000 supporters for the cause. Then came the time when I was selected for my first international training by Capitalism: Unlocking Human Potential, a division of the Foundation for Economic Education at Clemson University. With huge inspiration and experience from its summer seminar, I founded the Youth Parliament Program with advice from Dr. Jaya Prakash Narayan and Venkatesh Geriti. The YPP initiative was widely supported by multiple well-known youth organizations. It engaged youth on various aspects such as education, health, and electoral and political reforms."

Through youth parliament sessions across Telangana, the organisation was able to identify, engage, and nurture some of the brightest minds and mentor the youngsters to pursue careers in policy through internships and opportunities in civil society organizations.

He further shares, "We were really successful in creating the next generation of leaders. Many of them are changing society in real-time right now through the RTI and public interest litigation creating policies. We also witnessed some of its members contesting elections in Telugu states. Can you imagine? Especially youngsters who understand the parliamentary process and respect the law, understand that respect for rules is essential for conducting any discussion systematically and effectively."

This organisation has created a considerable impact on matters such as the Citizens Charter Bill, National Education Policy, and Agricultural Policy. In order to raise awareness and empower youth, they held boot camps on liberal ideas where they could come together, think, discuss, and debate policies that would inspire them to

express their views in an organised manner. According to the founder, it will also allow for the emergence of bright future leaders. He later went on to co-found The Swatantrata Center for Human Flourishing Foundation, which is a liberal public policy think-tank that focuses on ideas and policies that cause human flourishing, along with young liberals led by Venkatesh Geriti. "The roots of the Swatantrata Center lie in the legacy of its predecessor. These groups believe in ideas that are particularly important for understanding and supporting a pluralistic society in which intellectual and economic progress is the norm and where individuals flourish in a context of openness, voluntary and peaceful cooperation with mutual respect."

Swatantrata Center works on lifting barriers by advancing choice and opportunity through policy education, grassroots advocacy, and digital activism. The work is to deepen democracy and enhance community participation. The organisation has been a pioneer in mentoring youngsters and building character and competence in them for nation-building.

"I believe every nation needs a band of committed youngsters with character, competence, and a deeper understanding of democracy. Over the years, each and every effort that I have taken up has been an effort to deepen democracy and enhance community participation, especially youth in the governance process. India has immense potential for economic growth and, given the situation we are in, I want to focus on economic reforms and support aspiring entrepreneurs, not just in cities but also in tier 1 and tier 2 areas, which I believe can be tremendous growth engines and can script our next economic leap. We also wanted to make sure every citizen was able to have their constitutional rights and liberties guaranteed," says the activist.

The Swatantrata Center urged the Supreme Court to formulate a Model Code of Conduct against police brutality and to uphold civil liberties. They have started the civil liberties campaign with the aim of providing students and young people with meaningful training, discussions, debates, and other opportunities to deepen their understanding of fundamental rights, political rights, and the strong rule of law.

# Who will portray Meena Kumari in *Pakeezah*?

Speculation is rife about who will play the iconic actor in the big-budget Yoodlee and Bilal Amrohi production

**T**his seems to be the season of biopics. There is *Blonde*, an upcoming Netflix film based on a novel by Joyce Carol Oates and inspired by the life of Marilyn Monroe where the tragedy-scarred star, will be essayed by Ana de Armas. Back home, there are stories about at least two Madhubala biopics in the works, and some time back Yoodlee Productions and Bilal Amrohi, the grandson of filmmaker Kamal Amrohi, announced a series based on the making of the iconic blockbuster, *Pakeezah*. The fictional series that will go on the floors in 2023 will also focus on the intense relationship between the director Kamal Amrohi and his muse, Meena Kumari against the backdrop of the historic film. Right now the search is on for the female actor who will play Meena Kumari and

speculation is rife about which star will be a perfect fit for this once-in-a-lifetime narrative.

Here are some of the names that might look good playing the major role.

### Sara Ali Khan



With her natural Nawabi demeanour, clear diction, and ability to be playful and regal at will, Sara Ali Khan may just be the unexpected but right fit to play a role that so many actors are coveting.

ing. It is hard to visualize a contemporary actor like Meena Kumari but with deep engagement with her life and work, Sara could perhaps do justice to one of the finest actors in the history of Hindi cinema.

### Janhvi Kapoor

With dancing and histrionics running in her genes, Janhvi Kapoor could play Meena Kumari convincingly. She has a certain sensitivity and an



ability to convey stillness and pathos that could work in her favour. With her expressive eyes and traditional features, she could successfully take us back to the era of *Pakeezah* and fill us with nostalgia for the kind of filmmaking that we don't see anymore today.

### Kareena Kapoor Khan



With a career spanning over two decades and counting, the only thing missing in Kareena's oeuvre is a well-made period film or a series where the story revolves around her. She also can project femininity, vulnerability, as well as strength. Meena Kumari's screen presence is always communicated. With her passion for vintage cinema, timeless beauty and talent, Kareena could today be a good bet to play Meena Kumari.

### Vidya Balan

Vidya Balan who paid the perfect cinematic tribute to Silk Smitha in *The Dirty Picture* and pathbreaking mathematician *Shakuntala Devi* and has consistently picked performance-oriented roles is also a unique, fearless performer like Meena Kumari. She

too has always focused on portraying characters rather than projecting glamour. She also has a traditional, Indian beauty that would lend itself well to a portrayal of Meena Kumari whose double role in *Pakeezah* remains unmatched for its range, artistry, and refinement.

### Alia Bhatt

Alia is the best actor of her generation and all doubts about whether she, with her diminutive build and baby face can play a powerful woman were put to rest with her towering performance in *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. It may be tough to imagine her as Meena Kumari but she is one actor who, like a chameleon, becomes just about any character she is asked to play. She already has a stunning body of work for someone her age and playing Meena Kumari could just be the next challenge she may be looking for post-motherhood.

Who do you think will be the best fit for the role?







Sana



Sree leela



Deepthi Ganesh



Mohib, Ganesh and Khalequr rehman



Shilpa ghor



Shaniya mishra



Sushila bokadiya

Actress Sana, along with socialites graced the celebrations of Varalakshmi Vratam by celebrity designer, Deepthi Ganesh, at her designer studio, Deepthi Ganesh label, located at Road No.12 in Banjara hills.Hyderabad

# what's brewing?

## PARTY



As part of its activities, the Sangianjaly Foundation organised One World Fusion, an annual musical event that curates the right mix of melody, rhythm, and symphony. The One World Fusion has completed eight successful years and this year, the Sangitanjaly Foundation organised its 9th Edition at Shilpakala Vedika in Hi-tech City.



Prereethaji and Krishnaji are Co-Creators of Ekam-World Centre for Enlightenment. They led thousands of seekers gathered in G.M.C. Balayogi Gachibowli stadium, Hyderabad into experiencing Enlightenment, a sacred inner journey into a state of enlightened peace.



SFA returns with a sports extravaganza for their annual multi-sport championship and to honour principals and coaches in Hyderabad. The upcoming SFA Championship, touted to be among the country's biggest school sporting events, will be held between October 8 and October 22.



Aragonda, a village in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor District, becomes the first place in India to host the country's first AI-driven Hygiene Park. The park forms a part of the work the Apollo Foundation's Total Health (AFTH), the CSR initiative of the Apollo Hospitals group, does in rural India. To support these initiatives, over 1,000 walls in homes around Aragonda will sport the message of handwashing, to commemorate 75 years of independence.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



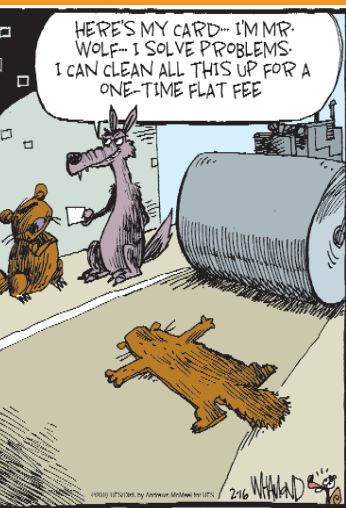
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



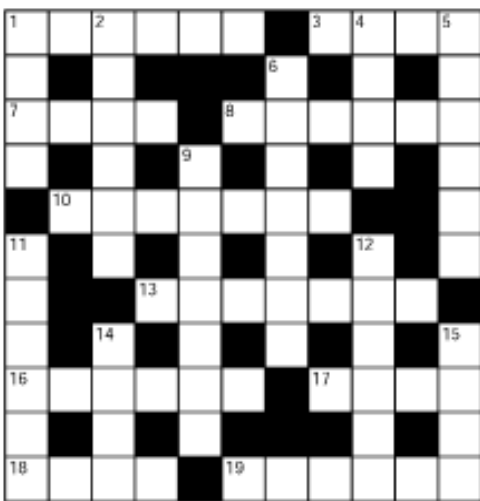
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



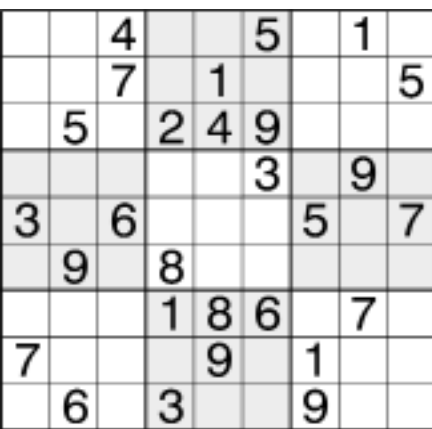
### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

### ACROSS

- Pepper might make you do this
- Use needles and wool to make something
- Quick
- Spread this on bread
- Rich
- Injured
- Repaired
- Factual
- Utters
- A weight to stop a boat drifting

- A short letter
- Wearying
- Shoving
- Permitted
- Postage stickers
- Look carefully for
- Jealousy
- Expensive



### DOWN

- Not in danger
- Less difficult





## Ananya Panday seeks blessings from Vijay Deverakonda's mother ahead of *Liger* release

Actor Ananya Panday seeks blessings from her co-star Vijay Deverakonda's mother at his residence in Hyderabad ahead of the release of her upcoming sports action film *Liger*.

Taking to Instagram, the *Khaali Peeli* actor dropped a string of pictures which she captioned, "Blessings from Vijay's amma @deverakonda and a pooja at his home in Hyderabad for #Liger #Thankful #Grateful #Blessed thank you auntyyyyyy." In the first picture, the *Liger* couple could be seen sitting on the sofa with joined hands, smiling faces and red shawls on their shoulders.

In the picture, a group of priests could be seen standing in front of Vijay and Ananya along with the *Arjun Reddy* actor's mother in a green saree.

In the second picture, the *Pati Patni aur Woh* actor can be seen in a happy mood, as Vijay's mother ties a band to her hand as a sign of blessing. In the last picture, Ananya shows the bands that Vijay's mother tied to her and the *Dear Comrade* actor's hand.

Vijay also shared the post on his Instagram stories, which he captioned, "This

whole month touring across India and receiving so much love already felt like god's blessing. But mummy feels we needed his protection as Pooja and sacred bands for all of us. Now she will sleep in peace while we continue our tour #Liger." Both Ananya and Vijay are currently busy promoting their upcoming sports action film *Liger* which is all set to hit the theatres on August 25, 2022, in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. After multiple delays due to COVID-19, the makers are currently promoting the film in full swing.

Dharma Productions recently unveiled the trailer and three songs from the film, *Akdi Pakdi*, *Waat Laga Denge*, and *Aafat*, which gathered positive feedback from the audience. The film marks Vijay's debut in Hindi cinema and Ananya's first multi-lingual film.

Apart from *Liger*, Ananya will be also seen in *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan* along with Siddhant Chaturvedi and Gourav Adarsh. Vijay, on the other hand, will be also seen in a multi-lingual film *Kushi* alongside Samantha Ruth Prabhu, which is slated to release on December 23, 2022.

Anand Deverakonda is all excited and busy promoting his upcoming film, *Highway*. *The Pioneer* connects with the actor for a quick interview, during which he shares some exclusive tidbits about the film, his experience while shooting, and his plans in Bollywood.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Our movies have always had a soft spot for highway cinema. With the same desire, Anand Deverakonda wants his upcoming venture, *Highway* on Aha Video, to be memorable not just for what will be shown on screen, but for what the spirit of the movie can mean for the people.

In an exclusive 'sambhashana' with us, he knocks us over with some interesting tidbits about the new movie. While he learnt that his director heaped praises on his craft, in turn, Anand let us know how equally he had been dying to work with him for a very long time.

He mentioned, "I have been on a full promotion spree since yesterday, not as stressful as a theatrical release. One of the important reasons for signing this film for

me was the novice experience of K V Guhan, which cannot go unnoticed. I was looking for new stories when I stumbled upon *Highway*'s script. I was worried about what kind of doom the pandemic would bring upon theatres and what kind of movies would run successfully. When I met my director, his experience in cinematography shone across the room. I think we are an experimental duo."

More than just an excuse to get from point A to point B, this movie has a lot more to see because, "I needed a variation in my career graph; I was longing for it. This movie has the potential to be a uniquely rewarding one. Every streaming platform ensures there's a super thriller released every month. This time I want mine to be number one!"

elled to Araku Valley and Chikmagalur, but I had never been there, so it turned out like a vacation for me."

Wandering in the mountains, the cast bonded too. Anand was mesmerised by 'Hathoda Tyagi' already and to shoot with him was a cherry on the cake for him, perhaps.

He elaborated, "For some reason, the chilly weather got into us. It was really like

we were on vacation. Shooting in Hyderabad can be quite hectic, but Chikmagalur came in like a fresh whiff of air after the pandemic. We were driving through the dense forests, chatting with Abhishek in the jeep, and he was sharing his insights on how Bollywood works. He did spill some beans on season two of *Paatal Lok*, but you gotta wait guys (he laughs). To be honest, *Paatal Lok* was my first ever web show."

Though his elder brother is making quite some noise back in Mumbai, Anand has no such plans yet. He says, "I am not thinking about the grandeur right now, my short-term goal is to give a memorable theatrical hit anytime soon. I want to win some hearts over in Telangana first and then move to other showbiz industry."



Neither was I worried about the trading process."

Narrating his experience of shooting on the highway, he spills, "We started in the summer last year, then there was a pandemic halt. We saw three different phases and ended up shooting with masks. I couldn't imagine my director's action behind a face covered with a mask. Most of the scenes were shot in natural light, so we hardly used any of the commercial techniques. The moment Abhishek and Saiyami arrived, we started to keep the set-ups apt and brought a car-avan, so basically, the scale of the film increased. We trav-



## SS Rajamouli protégé Ashwin Gangaraju to direct magnum opus *1770*

Based on Bankim Chandra's *Anandamath*, the producers Shhailendra Kumar, Sujay Kuttiy, Krishna Kumar B and Suraj Sharma release the motion poster marking 150 years of Vande Mataram.

Celebrating the glorious 75th Independence Day of India, producers Shhailendra Kkumar, Sujay Kuttiy, Krishna Kumar B and Suraj Sharma announced their much talked about magnum opus *1770*, based on Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Bengali novel *Anandamath*. Produced under the banner of SS1 Entertainment and PK Entertainment, this multi lingual film will be helmed by acclaimed director Ashwin Gangaraju, who assisted SS Rajamouli in *Eega* and *Baahubali* (both series). He made his debut as director with critically acclaimed *Aakashvani* in 2021.

"This subject was a huge challenge for me, but with legendary V Vijayendra Prasad sir writing the adapted story and screenplay, I think what we have on paper is a blockbuster cinematic experience," affirms director Ashwin Gangaraju.

"As a filmmaker, I'm more drawn towards the stories which have periodic setups, bigger emotions, scope for larger than life action etc and this is something that sits in perfectly for me. Initially I was a little sceptical but I spoke to Ram Kamal Mukherjee and after listening to his vision I gained confidence," he added.

"I met producers Shhailendra ji, Sujay Kuttiy sir, Krishna Kumar sir and Suraj Sharma in Mumbai shortly after that. We had a prolonged discussion on the film and how they want to take it forward. Their warmth and attitude of working as a team made me connect to them

instantly," shares Ashwin.

This year also marks 150 years of Vande Mataram, the song that appeared first in Bankim Chandra's novel *Anandamath*, which almost shook the roots of the British Empire. India's most celebrated storyteller V Vijayendra Prasad who penned the screenplay says, "I feel that Vande Mataram was a magical word. It was a mantra that was given by Maharishi Bankim Chandra for a nation to unite against tyranny and injustice. In 1770, we dealt with the story of unknown warriors who ignited the fire of the freedom movement."

Internationally acclaimed author and filmmaker Ram Kamal Mukherjee being the creator of this magnum opus says, "I am grateful to my producers for having faith in my vision. I instantly liked the vibe of Ashwin as a filmmaker. He came prepared, with his own ideas, that enhanced the narrative visually. I loved his film *Aakashvani* and appreciated his skill as a storyteller. But the most important aspect of *1770* lies in the magical words written by Vijayendra Prasad sir, who is known for his unique ideas. His way of story telling connects with the audiences, beyond linguistic boundaries. I am truly blessed to have a passionate team like this."

Shailendra Kumar from SS1 Entertainment feels that this is the right time to make larger than life cinema. He collaborated with Suraj Sharma from PK Entertainment and former Zee Studio head Sujay Kuttiy and producer Krishna Kumar B to make this dream come true. "Being a singer from Jhansi, we have grown up singing Vande Mataram in our schools and colleges. But when Ram da (Kamal) mentioned the story of

*Anandamath* and Vijayendra Sir gave his version, I was completely bowled over. I am grateful to Sujoy Kuttiy and Krishna Kumar B for making this impossible task possible. It's not a film, it's a dream to create one of the finest entertaining cinema for the big screen."

Suraj Sharma from PK Entertainment says, "Being the youngest in the team, I am glad to be a part of this dream project. I am fortunate enough to learn a lot from such experts and legends who created such blockbusters."

Producer Sujoy Kuttiy, known for making historical sagas like *Manikarnika-The Queen of Jhansi* and many other prestigious films under Zee Studios, collaborated in 1770 because he could see the potential in the narrative. "My equation with Vijayendra Prasad Sir is beyond work. He is an inspiration. I was sure that if I ever make *1770*, then this has to be written by Sir, or else I am not doing this film," says Kuttiy. "Sujoy sir is absolutely right," seconds producer Krishna Kumar B, "A film as huge as *Anandamath* needs an extremely able shoulder. We have grown up singing Vande Mataram, and now we will witness the birth of this mantra. I have closely worked with Ashwin and his associates, and when Ram Garu (Kamal) narrated me the story, I had Ashwin in my mind."

The film will be made in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannad and Bengali. The team will lock the main lead before Dassera, and by Diwali they will announce the cast of the film. Ashwin along with his team has started researching the period and trying to create a visual that is unique.

## Jacqueline accused in Rs 200 crore extortion case

Actress Jacqueline Fernandez who was recently seen in *Vikrant Rona*, has been named an accused in a supplementary charge sheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate in the Rs 200 crore extortion case against conman Sukesh Chandrashekar.

Jacqueline has been summoned several times by the Enforcement Directorate in connection to the money laundering case. Earlier, Sukesh's lawyer had informed the media that the actress was allegedly dating Sukesh. However, Jacqueline's team later denied her involvement with Sukesh.

Jacqueline Fernandez's name cropped up in the case after her pictures with Sukesh Chandrashekar surfaced. While Jacqueline Fernandez initially denied involvement with the conman, Sukesh Chandrashekar told the ED that they were dating each other.

Sukesh Chandrashekar, who has been involved in extorting hundreds of crores from businessmen, politicians and celebrities, is accused of extorting Rs 215 crore in one year from a businessman's wife over spoof calls while he was lodged in a Delhi jail.

The agency had in April provisionally attached Rs 7.27 crore funds of Jacqueline under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). She was last issued summons for recording of her statement in June as the agency was tracing the remaining proceeds of crime in this case. She was grilled by the agency for eight hours.



## Urvashi Rautela appointed as the official judge of Miss Universe Bahrain

Urvashi Rautela who has not only made her mark in Bollywood, but also was recently seen in *The Legend*. The actress, who was the youngest judge in the history of Miss Universe 2021 and after that, the actress once again made us proud by adding one more feather to her kitty.

The official miss universe Bahrain shared a picture of the actress as they made an announce-

ment stating, "Presenting the brightest glowing Bollywood Superstar as she shines her light as a judge of Miss Universe Bahrain 2022 @urvashirautela @missuniversebahrain Anything can spark as they are kindred by the light. And anyone can shine if there is a beam in sight. But the greatest illumination is not hidden on those gold bars. Because only in the darkness where you can see real stars."

Director Sukumar's explosive blockbuster *Pushpa: The Rise*, featuring actors Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna in the lead, led the list of nominations in the Telugu section of the 10th Edition of the South Indian International Movie

*Doctor*, featuring Sivakarthikeyan in the lead, got nine nominations while Lokesh Kanakara's *Master* and director AL Vijay's *Thalaivi*, the biopic of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa, got seven nominations each.

In the Malayalam segment, Basil Joseph's

## SIIMA Awards: *Pushpa: The Rise* with 12 nominations leads pack in Telugu



Awards (SIIMA) that is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru on September 10-11.

While *Pushpa* got nominated in a whopping 12 categories, Boyapati Srinu's *Akhanda*, featuring Balakrishna in the lead, has got nominated in 10. Anudeep KV's *Jathi Ratnalu* and Buchi Babu Sana's *Uppena* were close behind with eight nominations each.

In the Tamil section, director Mari Selvaraj's critically acclaimed blockbuster *Karnan*, featuring Dhanush in the lead, led the pack with 10 nominations. Director Nelson Dilipkumar's action-comedy entertainer

superhero film, *Minna Murali* starring Tovino Thomas, got the maximum nominations.

It has been nominated in 10 categories while Dulquer Salmaan-starrer *Kurup* has been nominated in eight categories. Fahadh Fasil's *Malik* and *Joji* have six nominations each.

*Robert* with 10 nominations led the pack in Kannada. *Garuda Gamana Vrishabha Vahana* with eight nominations and actor Puneeth Rajkumar's *Yuvarathnaa* with seven nominations are leading the SIIMA Nominations for 2021 in Kannada.



PTI ■ HARARE

**S**kipper KL Rahul's form and fitness will be observed keenly when India take on Zimbabwe in a three-match series, starting Thursday, in 50-over format, which is fast losing popularity and struggling to retain its identity.

Supposed to be one of the most vital cogs in India's T20 World Cup top-order, Rahul would like to make full use of the game time he gets as an opener during the three games against Regis Chakabva's side.

Rahul's immediate task at hand after almost three-month lay-off, during which he underwent a sports hernia surgery, is to keep his opening slot in T20 cricket and adapt to the team's philosophy of going hell for leather from ball one.

It won't just be about runs that skipper Rohit Sharma or coach Rahul Dravid would be looking at when they monitor Rahul's performance in Zimbabwe.

Rather they would like to check out his approach and the manner in which he is scoring runs, something he would need to tweak before that first Asia Cup game against Pakistan on August 28.

On the Harare Sports Club batting belt where Zimbabwe chased down Bangladesh's 300 plus and 290-odd targets in successive games in the recently-concluded series, India's batting line-up with Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda and Sanju Samson will certainly prove to be more than a handful for hosts.

And unlike Bangladesh, a bowling attack comprising Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Deepak Chahar, Kuldeep Yadav along with all-rounders Shardul Thakur and Axar Patel has more potency in any conditions against this Zimbabwe line-up.

For Zimbabwe, the aim would be to become the proverbial banana peel on which Rahul and his men can slip as a series win for 'Men in Blue' would hardly win

# CAPTAIN KL RAHUL IN FOCUS IN ZIMBABWE



Zimbabwe vs India  
Live from 12:45pm IST  
SONY SIX & TEN 3

them any accolades but a defeat would invite sharp criticism.

The hosts therefore wouldn't mind if the likes of Sikandar Raza, Chakabva and Innocent Kaia repeat their batting performances from the Bangladesh encounters and show the world that the previous series win was not just a mere flash in the pan.

## OBJECTIVES OF SERIES

Gone are the days of Flower brothers (Andy and Grant), Heath Streaks (now tainted and suspended), Neil Johnsons, Murray Goodwins and Henry Olongas. It was a side that could take the Mickey out of the opposition on good days.

Zimbabwe cricket, like the

country itself has gone through turmoil over the past two decades and the quality has been severely impacted.

Someone like 36-year-old Raza, 34-year-old skipper Chakabva or 34-year-old Donald Tiripano are sincere performers but would never make any opposition feel threatened.

India's tours of Zimbabwe are normally a kind of gift from 'big brother' to help a 'younger' gain financial stability.

The TV and digital rights revenue from three India games will cover Zimbabwe cricket's more than half the costs for the year.

So this earns BCCI a goodwill gesture.

On the cricketing part, this

gives selectors a chance to look at bench strength and also jot down some of the names, who will figure in the larger picture for the 2023 50-over World Cup.

Right now, Indian cricket possesses such quality that it can field three white ball teams in three different continents at the same time.

This is one such glorified 'A' series as a lot of the members will be playing in the home A series against New Zealand and Australia later this year.

## CHAHAR AND KULDEEP

Two bowlers who would be looking to give it their all are Deepak Chahar, who is back in the mix after six months and

Kuldeep Yadav, who is slowly getting his mojo back.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar has consolidated his place in the T20 set-up but Chahar with his swing bowling in Powerplay overs and ability to hit big shots in the death overs will like to make an impression. He is already in the standby list for the Asia Cup.

Another player, who would fancy a debut would be Maharashtra man Rahul Tripathi, a consistent IPL performer and may be someone who VVS Laxman could use in the middle-order at times at the expense of Shardul Thakur.

In all, a 3-0 clean sweep is the order of the day and any diversion would be considered a below-par effort.

## SQUADS

**India:** KL Rahul (Captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Ishan Kishan (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shardul Thakur, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Avesh Khan, Prasidh Krishna, Mohd Siraj, Deepak Chahar, Shahbaz Ahmed.

**Zimbabwe:** Regis Chakabva (captain), Ryan Burl, Tanaka Chivanga, Bradley Evans, Luke Jongwe, Innocent Kaia, Takudzwanashe Kaitano, Clive Madande, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, John Masara, Tony Munyonga, Richard Ngarava, Victor Nyauchi, Sikandar Raza, Milton Shumba, Donald Tiripano.

# Shastri had very little tolerance for failure: Karthik



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**R**avi Shastri used to push players to achieve special things but he had very little tolerance for failure during his stint as India's head coach, said veteran wicketkeeper batter Dinesh Karthik.

The 37-year-old had played sporadically during Shastri's tenure as India coach, especially during the 2019 World Cup.

The Shastri-Kohli tenure was a good one for Indian cricket but often the duo was criticised for not standing by a few players, who probably needed a bit more empathy during their lean patch.

"He (Shastri) had a very low tolerance for somebody who wouldn't bat at a certain pace he did not like or someone who was doing very differently in the nets and in the match, he would go and bat differently," Karthik said on Cricbuzz.

"He (Shastri) would not be very appreciative of that. Shastri knew exactly what he wanted from the team, the way in which it was played but his tolerance was very little for failures. He always used to push people to do very well."

Karthik, who at 36, is a designated finisher in T20 set-up, has already said that he feels way more relaxed and secured in the Rohit Sharma-Rahul Dravid era.

Shastri had a successful coaching stint as under him India claimed Test series victories on Australia soil twice, drew the Test series 2-2 in England and also entered the World Test Championship final.

"I think Shastri, the player was somebody, who was probably not as talented but fulfilled his talent as coach. He did much better than what he was expected to do. As a coach, he was a larger-than-life person. He was somebody who pushed players to try and achieve special things," he added.

# India to play 38 Tests, 42 ODIs, 61 T20Is in Men's FTP '23-'27

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**T**he Indian men's team will be playing a whopping 138 bilateral international matches during the next five-year Future Tours & Programme (FTP) Cycle between May, 2023 to April, 2027, the ICC said on Wednesday.

Most sought-after team commercially, the 'Men In Blue' will play 38 Tests, 42 ODIs and 61 T20Is in the five-year period and focus on shortest format is an indicator how priorities across formats will be changing.

The ODI bilaterals will remain but mostly be three-match series.

India expectedly has a choc-a-bloc calendar but as usual there won't be any bilateral cricket series with Pakistan due to obvious political reasons.

The 12 Members will play a total of 777 international matches - 173 Tests, 281 ODIs and 323 T20Is - in the 2023-2027 FTP cycle compared to the 694 in the current one.

This includes the next two cycles of the ICC Men's World Test Championship, multiple ICC events and a host of bilateral as well as tri-series action.

As far as India's schedule is concerned, the traditional India versus Australia Test series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, that used to be a four-match affair for a long time will become five-Test series.

India will be playing five-Test series against both England and Australia and also on the T20 front, there are a lot of



five-match series which is on expected lines with the broadcasters demand with premium advertisement rates for short-form matches.

During the next FTP cycle, India would be travelling to West Indies (July-Aug 2023) for a full tri-format series

including 2 Tests, ODIs and 3 T20Is.

The marquee five-Test home series against England will be tentatively held between Jan-March in 2024.

While Australia is visiting India early next year to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in a four-Test series

as a part of previous cycle, India's next big trip Down Under is in December-January, 2024-25 when they play Australia in a five-Test series for the first time since 1991.

In this cycle, India will host Bangladesh for a two-Test series in September 2024.

## 27 ODIs BEFORE WC

The Indian team will play 27 ODI games before it plays the 2023 50-over World Cup in India scheduled in October-November next year.

The 27 ODIs starts with India's series against Zimbabwe in Harare from Thursday. The chunk among the 27 ODIs is from the previous FTP cycle which also include home three-match series against South Africa and an away three-match event against New Zealand just after T20 World Cup.

## 40 TESTS FOR OZ

Australia and England during the same five-year phase will be playing 40 and 43 Test matches respectively, which is a few games more than India.

The inaugural World Test Championships New Zealand in the next cycle have 32 Tests earmarked, while South Africa in the same duration play only 29 Tests. They mostly play two and some three-Test series.

Pakistan have only 27 Tests between May, '23-April '27 while Sri Lanka and West Indies play 25 longest format games each respectively.

# Rabada sparks England's collapse

AP ■ LONDON

**B**en Stokes was dismissed on the stroke of lunch on the opening day of the first Test between England and South Africa at Lord's on Wednesday, to leave his side perilously placed on 100-5.

South Africa fast bowler Kagiso Rabada once again proved his worth, removing openers Alex Lees and Zak Crawley after England had been sent in to bat by Proteas captain Dean Elgar.

Fellow quicks Marco Jansen and Anrich Nortje followed up by capturing the prized wickets of Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow, with all four dismissed batsmen out in single figures as England slumped to 55-4.

With the final ball of the morning session, Nortje squared up Stokes (20) to have the England skipper caught in the slips. Ollie Pope was the lone batsman to hold firm, with 51 not out.

Spearhead fast bowler Rabada had been doubtful for the opening match of the three-Test series with an ankle injury, but the 27-year-old showed no sign of discomfort, taking 2-26 in nine overs.

England came into the



game with a perfect record of four wins from as many Tests under their new leadership pairing of Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

All of those victories had been achieved by chasing down targets in the fourth innings, something that cannot happen in this match after Elgar won the toss and fielded a green-tinged pitch under overcast skies.

Rabada had left-hander Lees caught behind for five and removed Crawley for nine after he nicked a ball that nipped away low to Aiden Markram at second slip.

Star batsman Root was powerless to prevent further

collapse, the former England captain lbw for eight to a huge inswinger from left-arm pacer Jansen.

Root reviewed Indian umpire Nitin Menon's decision but replays indicated the ball would have clipped leg stump.

Bairstow had made 106 and an unbeaten 114 during England's most recent Test -- a seven-wicket win over India at Edgbaston last month.

But he was bowled between bat and pad for a five-ball duck by Nortje as he tried to drive on the up, with England now 55-4 inside 17 overs.

Pope completed a 69-ball fifty but the session belonged to South Africa.



# Pakistan win 1st ODI by 16 runs

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

**P**akistan overcame a slow start and early loss of an opener to beat the Netherlands by 16 runs in their first ODI.

Pakistan won the toss and chose to bat first. Only at 3-0 after four overs, it got worse for the visitors at 10-1 in six overs following Vivian Kingma's maiden wicket which claimed Imam-ul-Haq (2) leg before wicket on referral by the Netherlands.

Opener Fakhar Zaman led the recovery with 109 runs in 109 balls, including 12 fours and a six, before he was run out. Zaman and captain Babar Azam (74 in 85) shared a 168-run partnership for the second

wicket, and Shadab Khan later smashed a 28-ball 48 not out as Pakistan posted a challenging total of 314-6.

Dutch pacer Bas de Leede took 2-42 in 10 overs.

In reply, the Netherlands came close with 298-8. Dutch captain Scott Edwards was not out on 71 in 60 balls. Opener Vikramjit Singh and No. 5 Tom Cooper both hit 65 runs each. Cooper scored at a much faster pace, needing 54 deliveries for his 65 compared to 98 balls for Singh.

Pacers Haris Rauf (3-67) and Naseem Shah (3-51) did most of the damage.

The second of three ODI matches is at Rotterdam on Thursday.

# Praggnanandhaa notches up 2nd straight win

PTI ■ MIAMI

**Y**oung Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa continued his fine run in the FTX Crypto Cup, the American finale of Champions Chess Tour, beating Anish Giri of the Netherlands 2.5-1.5 in the second round here on Wednesday.

Having started his campaign with victory over world No.4 and the top ranked junior Alireza Firouzja, the 17-year-old Indian prodigy scored the all-important win in the fourth and final game, to hand Giri his second straight loss.

Praggnanandhaa, who played a key role in the Indian 'B' team's Bronze medal win in the recent chess Olympiad in Mahabalipuram near Chennai, edged out his Dutch opponent in 81 moves in the fourth game after the first three ended in draws.

The Indian GM is now on six points after two wins, the same as world No.1 Magnus Carlsen of Norway, who beat Hans Niemann 3-1.

Praggnanandhaa will take on Carlsen in the third round later on Wednesday night.

# Want to win another World Cup: Russell

AGENCIES ■ ANTIGUA

**W**est Indies all-rounder Andre Russell has hinted at a possible return to the Men in Maroon side at this year's ICC T20 World Cup in Australia.

Russell has not represented West Indies since last year's ICC T20 World Cup in Dubai, but the veteran could be in line for a quick return to international cricket at this year's 20-over tournament. "Of course, of course. The maroon is all over," Skysports quoted Russell as saying.

"Honestly, I have two franchise hundreds and I wish those hundreds were actually playing for West Indies."

"I don't regret saying this just now. I really enjoyed playing for Jamaica Tallawahs but those two hundred, it would be more special coming in international cricket."

Following his stint in England, Russell will play for the Trinbago Knight Riders in the month-long Caribbean Premier League that commences at the end of this month.

"I always want to play and give back," Russell told Sky Sports.

"But at the end of the day, if we are not agreeing on certain terms...they have to respect my terms as well. At the end of the day, it is what it is. We have families and we have to make sure that we give our best opportunity while we have one career. It's not like I can start over again. I'm 34 and I want to win another World Cup - or two more - for West Indies because at the end of the day, I'm here now, and I'm just taking it day by day," he added.



# Hetmyer, Keemo out of NZ ODIs

**Antigua:** West Indies suffered big blows ahead of their upcoming ODI series against New Zealand with star all-rounder Shimron Hetmyer, Keemo Paul and Gudakesh Motie have been ruled out of the series. The replacements are middle-order batter Jermaine Blackwood and leg-spinning allrounder Yannic Cariah. Odean Smith, the seam-bowling all-rounder, has been added as a reserve.

# Chandrakant Pandit named new head coach of KKR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

**T**he doyen of India's domestic coaches Chandrakant Pandit has been appointed Kolkata Knight Riders' head coach for the upcoming IPL season, the franchise announced on Wednesday.

Pandit replaces Brendon McCullum, who is now the head coach of the England Test side.

Pandit, the most celebrated coach in the Indian domestic circuit, recently guided Madhya Pradesh to their maiden Ranji Trophy title, having won the national championship multiple times with Mumbai and Vidarbha.

Known to work wonders with unheralded domestic teams, this will be the former India wicketkeeper's first big assignment at the elite level.

"We are very excited that Chandu is joining the Knight Riders family to lead us through the next phase of our journey," KKR CEO Venky Mysore said in a statement.

"His deep commitment to what he does and his track

record of success in domestic cricket, is there for everyone to see. We are looking forward to his partnership with our skipper Shreyas Iyer, which promises to be an exciting one," he added.

Accepting the new challenge, Pandit said, "I have heard from players and others who have been associated with the Knight Riders, about the family culture, as well as the tradition of success that has been created."

"I am excited about the quality of the support staff and the players who are part of the set up and I am looking forward to this opportunity with all humility and positive expectations."

The 60-year-old Pandit played five Tests and 36 ODIs for India between mid '80s to early '90s.

In an interview to PTI, Pandit had said that he had once had a meeting with KKR's principal owner Shah Rukh Khan during the early years of IPL but back then he had made it clear that he wasn't keen to join support staff as an assistant coach.