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VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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NTR TO  
ROMANCE MRUNAL  
IN NTR30

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 15 OF 20 MAHA MINISTERS FACE CRIMINAL CASES

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

# Godavari flood situation grim

○ Several villages surrounded by water, 2<sup>nd</sup> warning sounded at Dowleswaram Barrage

PNS ■ ELURU

The flood situation of River Godavari continues to be grim as the floodwater has been rising, affecting several villages. The second warning was sounded at the Cotton Barrage at Dowleswaram.

The floodwater of the river Godavari continued to rise on Thursday also as over 14 lakh cusecs of water was discharged into the sea at Dowleswaram barrage.

The flood water was overflowing on causeways at various places in Eluru and ASR districts and vehicular traffic to several villages was suspended.

The water level at Dowleswaram stood at 14.40 feet. The tributaries of Godavari, the Gowthami, Vasista and Vainateya are also in spate with heavy inflows. Several island villages were surrounded by floodwater.

The causeway at G Pedapudi Lanka submerged in the flood water cutting off road connectivity to the village. The villagers of Kanakayalanka were using coun-



**The water level at Dowleswaram stood at 14.40 feet. The tributaries of Godavari, the Gowthami, Vasista and Vainateya are also in spate with heavy inflows. Several island villages were surrounded by floodwater.**

try boats to reach the main road. The K Yenugupallilanka was also cut off from the outer world when the flood water was overflowing on the causeway.

The heavy flood water was flowing dangerously in Mummidivaram, I Polavaram and K Gangavaram mandals. Some villages in the union territory

Official sources said that 3 NDRF and 3 STRF teams had been deployed to the vulnerable mandals to take relief operations. The NDRF and SDRF teams

Yanam were also affected by the floodwater. The worst affected villages are in the six mandals which were merged in Andhra Pradesh after bifurcation.



were carrying out relief operations in P Gannavaram mandal in Konaseema district, Kunavaram, and VR Puram in ASR district. The NDRF personnel were also

carrying out relief operations at Kukunuru, the worst affected village near the Polavaram division.

Sources said that the flood water gushed into a relief camp at Kottanguluru in the ASR district but the officials plugged the breach into an embankment. Disaster Management MD BR Ambedkar warned the people living near to the river Godavari to be on high alert for the next three days as the flood water is rising.

The Pulichintala project has been receiving heavy inflow since yesterday. 12 crest gates of the project lifted to a height of 2.5 feet to release 2.47 lakh cusecs of water to the downstream Prakasam barrage.

Meanwhile, The Nagarjunasagar project is receiving a heavy inflow of 4,34,366 cusecs of water and 3,36,672 cusecs of water being discharged by lifting 26 crest gates. The water level at the NSP was 588 feet as against its full capacity of 590 feet.

At present 306.1010 TMC of water is impounded at the NSP.



## 17 gates of Pulichintala lifted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For the first time this monsoon season, 17 gates of the Pulichintala Project were lifted by 3.5 feet on Thursday. About 4,35,000 cusecs of water received from the Nagarjuna Sagar Project was released downstream of the barrage.

The Water Resources Department (WRD) authorities are expecting more than 4,50,000 cusecs of floodwater and it may reach the Prakasam Barrage on August 12 (Friday).

Due to heavy flood inflows from the catchment areas, the Irrigation Department has taken all steps to avoid untoward incidents downstream of the Prakasam Barrage.

According to sources, heavy rains lashed the catchment areas of River Krishna - Almati, Narayanpur, Srisailam, and Nagarjuna Sagar reservoirs.

As per the Central Water

Commission's (CWC) reports, about 4.5 lakh cusecs of the floodwater would reach the Prakasam Barrage. So, all the 70 gates were lifted and 1,06,370 cusecs of floodwater was released into the sea. Of these, 60 gates were lifted by 2 feet and 10 by 1 foot.

Irrigation Circle Vijayawada Superintending Engineer (SE), Sesham Tirumala Rao said, "We expecting more than 4.50 lakh cusecs of flood from Pulichintala Project. As of now, we are releasing about 1,06,370 cusecs of flood downstream of the Prakasam Barrage". Apart from Pulichintala, floodwater is coming from Paleru, Kattaleru, and Wyra tributaries, he added.

He further said that to maintain Prakasam Barrage crest gates level 12 feet, releasing 12,539 cusecs of water into canals. More than 1,18,909 cusecs of flood water is coming from the upper area and the same was released into the sea and canals, he said.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

It is settled law that the suspicion, however strong it may be, cannot take the place of proof beyond reasonable doubt. An accused cannot be convicted on the ground of suspicion, no matter how strong it is, the bench said.

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

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



## YSRCP women tie Rakhi to Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) women representatives tied Rakhi to Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan at his residence here on Thursday. Eshwari Brahmakumari representatives Rajayogini Brahmakumari Santi Didi, Sisters Padmaja and Manasa also tied Rakhi to the Chief Minister. They invited him to their Global

Summit to be held at Mount Abu in September as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav'.

Others who tied Rakhis to Chief Minister include Taneti Vanita, Vidadala Rajini, Women Commission Chairperson Vasireddy Padma, Vijayawada Mayor R Bhagyalakshmi, VMRDA Chairperson AVijaya Nirmala, RUDA Chairperson M Sharmila Reddy, Women Commission mem-

## 'Fidayeen' attack on army camp

○ 3 soldiers killed

PNS ■ JAMMU

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

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

2

## 'Youth must play key role in the progress of nation'



TTD Member Pokala Ashok and IIT-Ongole Dean D Mastanamma addressing the 'Sawatantira Spoorthi', a programme organised under the aegis of the Swatantra TV news channel on the SVPCEET campus at Puttur on Thursday.

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Member Pokala Ashok has recalled the freedom struggle and the sacrifices of freedom fighters in achieving Independence for the country.

He was addressing the gathering during the 'Swatantra Spoorthi' programme organised under the aegis of the Swatantra TV news channel at Sri Venkatesa Perumal College of Engineering and Technology (SVPCEET) at Puttur on Thursday.

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

IIT-Ongole Dean D

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

Mastanamma said that all Indians celebrate Independence Day irrespective of caste and religion. She exhorted the students to make use of the opportunities to achieve their goals and reach heights in life.

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

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



## YS Vijayamma escapes unhurt in car mishap

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a miraculous escape, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's mother YS Vijayamma escaped unhurt in an accident in Kurnool town on Thursday. The former MLA was in Kurnool to call on the family of a friend of her late husband and former chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy. When she was returning from Kurnool town, one of the tyres of the car in which she was travelling burst. The incident took place on the Gutthi Road. Vijayamma escaped unhurt to the relief of those accompanying her. She later resumed her journey in another car.

Last month, she resigned as the honorary president of YSR Congress Party. Vijayamma told the party plenary that she needed to stand by her daughter YS Sharmila, who has floated a political party in neighbouring Telangana.

2

## Govt bars words referring to Nayee Brahmins

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has issued orders banning words that are derogatory and abusive in nature while referring to the Nayee Brahmin community across the State. GO No 50 issued recently says that the words like 'Mangali', 'Mangaloda', 'Bochchu Gorigevada', 'Mangalidi', 'Konda Mangali' and others used to refer to Nayee Brahmins are considered as hurting their

sentiments and their community. Legal action will be taken against those responsible for using such slurs under the Indian Penal Code, it read. BC Welfare Department Chief Secretary G Jayalakshmi issued the GO on August 7 and came to light on Wednesday. Nayee Brahmins in Andhra Pradesh expressed happiness with the State government issuing an order banning such words which are derogatory in nature and have extended special thanks

to Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for protecting their self-respect and dignity. Telangana Nai Brahmin Aikya Vedika president Maddikunta Lingam Nayee expressed happiness over the AP State government's orders and thanked CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. He also appealed to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to implement a similar order in the State for the self-respect of Nayee Brahmins in Telangana as well.

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

SNCRN ACHARYULLU  
■ HYDERABAD

After the recent political developments in Bihar, the importance of YSR Congress President Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has increased at the Centre.

The BJP leadership has to depend on the YSR Congress to take crucial decisions in Parliament. The decision of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to break his alliance with the BJP has led to Jagan's importance increasing at the Centre. If the Centre wants to pass any crucial Bill the BJP must have a majority in both the Houses. But with the breakup of the alliance with the Janata

There are three nominated Members in the total vacancies of eight seats. Once the nominated Members are named the strength of the NDA in the Rajya Sabha will reach 121 including Members of the YSR Congress. So the support of the YSR Congress is very crucial for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha to pass important Bills.



Dal (United) led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar the BJP-led NDA's majority in the Rajya Sabha has gone down and it has to depend on parties like the YSR Congress and the Biju Janata Dal.

In the Rajya Sabha, the Janata Dal (U) has five Members and the YSR Congress has nine members. The current strength of the Rajya Sabha is 237. There are eight vacancies and the majority mark is 119.

The strength of the NDA in the Rajya Sabha was 114 and after the JD (U) left, the NDA's strength in the Rajya Sabha decreased to 109.

If the YSR Congress supports directly or indirectly the strength of the NDA will reach 118 and even then it will be short of one Member to reach the majority mark. There are three nominated Members in the total vacancies of eight seats. Once the nominated

Members are named the strength of the NDA in the Rajya Sabha will reach 121 including Members of the YSR Congress. So the support of the YSR Congress is very crucial for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha to pass important Bills. The TDP has only one Member in the Rajya Sabha. In spite of the alliance between the BJP and the YSRC, the TDP may support the BJP in the Rajya Sabha as it had during the presidential and vice presidential elections.

The current situation may help Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy to get some important demands like getting special status for the state and other issues if the YSR Congress uses the opportunity properly.

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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

TSMDC Chairperson Krishank Manne went to Varanasi and at the confluence of the Assi River took a sample of the polluted Ganga water and couriered it to Prime Minister



Modi. "In 2014, Modi declared that Ganga will be cleaned at a cost of Rs 20,000 crore and set 2021 as the target date for that. We are in 2022, and the country should know that Modi has failed not only in the country but also in his own constituency of Varanasi," he said.

2



# AP Gov felicitates gallantry awardees

August 13 to 15, as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, as the national flag represents the hopes and aspirations of the people of the country.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan felicitated the gallantry awardees who are the serving and retired personnel of the Eastern Naval Command, at a programme held in Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan here on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Harichandan said that the felicitation programme assumed significance as the nation was celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav commemorating 75 years of India's Independence. The Governor recalled the event when the 'Victory Flame' was brought to Raj Bhavan, as part of the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' celebrations, commemorating the 50th anniversary of India's victory in the 1971 war and the felicitation of the war widows and the gallantry award winners of the 1971 war on the occasion. He said his visit to the National War Memorial in New Delhi was a memorable moment for him as he could pay tributes to the martyrs, who made the ultimate sacrifice for the nation. The Governor said that as the whole nation was celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to commemorate 75



years of India's Independence, people should bring the Tiranga home and hoist it from August 13 to 15, as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, as the national flag represents the hopes and aspirations of the people of the country and it was a symbol of our national pride. "I appeal to everyone to bring the tricolour home and hoist it from August 13 to 15 and make the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign a grand success," said Governor Harichandan. The gallantry award winners, who were felicitated by the Governor during the programme, included serving personnel Commodore Varun Singh and Capt. Milind Mohan

Mokashi (Shaurya Chakra), Capt. AK Thomurothu, Commanders Shalender Singh, GB Yaduvanshi, Dhirender Bisht, Lt. Commander Manu Mishra, Petty Officers Thongbam Prakash Singh, LA Amit, MC A Ramesh Kumar Mukhar (Nao Sena Medal) and retired personnel Commodore Chinnaveerayya, YSM, NM (G), Commander Jai Prakash, Shaurya Chakra and Commander L Kakshmana Rao (Nao Sena Medal). Commodore M Goverdhan Raju, Naval Officer-in-Charge, Andhra Pradesh, Lt. Commander Dinesh Kumar, Coordinating Officer, PS Surya Prakash, Joint Secretary to Governor and others attended the programme.

## NCW writes to LS Speaker to take action against Madhav

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has received a complaint against Member of Parliament of Hindupuram Constituency, Andhra Pradesh, Gorantla Madhav pertaining to alleged sexual harassment. In the complaint, Gorantla is alleged to have engaged in an explicit video call without the victim's consent. Additionally, the video content is alleged to have been indecent, obscene and undignified. Taking serious note of the allegations, the Commission has written to the Lok Sabha, Speaker Om Birla, to look into the matter and to take appropriate action. Chairperson Rekha Sharma has also written to the Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh to conduct an independent inquiry in the matter, which should be communicated to the Commission at the earliest.

# CM releases Rs 694 crore under 'Vidya Deevena' for students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy deposited Rs 694 crore under 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena', benefiting 11.02 lakh students as part of the quarterly fee reimbursement from April to June 2022 here on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, he said the total fee reimbursement was done, irrespective of the amount, and the money was deposited into the mother's bank account as part of the social and economic empowerment of women on a festive day. Describing education as a valuable treasure, the Chief Minister said such initiatives would be remembered by the students for a long time to come and will increase their self confidence. In a fast paced world, we should catch up with the evolving changes and we should prepare our SC ST BCs, Minorities and EBCs to face the competitive world in the coming days and our Government will stand



up for all help, he said. That is why we have brought not just primary but even higher education under Right to Education and are implementing total fees reimbursement be it Rs 30,000 or Rs 1, 00,000. This scheme should help in bringing out an engineer, doctor or collector from each house and the fees reimbursement will be done quarterly and the amount will be deposited directly into the bank accounts of

mothers in the same quarter, he said. We have also cleared the dues of two years of the previous government amounting to Rs 1,178 crore which was not paid by Chandrababu Naidu and for this College itself we have paid Rs 14 crores, he said. "We have spent Rs 11,715 crore toward 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' and 'Jagananna Vasati Deevena' during the three years. For degree and Engineering

students Rs 20,000 is being paid, for Polytechnic students it is Rs 15,000 and for ITI students the amount is Rs 10,000. Various welfare measures being taken up by our government to revolutionise the education system include 'Jagananna Amma Vodi', 'YSR Sampoorna Poshana', 'Jagananna Gorumuddha', 'Jagananna Vidya Kanuka', 'Mana Badi Nadu Nedu', English medium and Byju's pact among others.

## RPF's passenger safety drive: 10 nabbed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Railway Protection Force (RPF), Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, is carrying out a month-long drive under the code name 'Operation Yatri Suraksha' with the aim of improving the security of rail passengers. As part of the initiative, which was launched in July, several steps are being taken to provide foolproof security to the passengers, such as train

escorting, visible presence on stations, surveillance through CCTV, surveillance on active criminals, collection of intelligence about the criminals and action there upon, identifying black spots and crime prone trains/sections and enhancing security threat among others to formulate an actionable strategy to reduce crime against passengers. Regular coordination is being made with all the stakeholders and joint action is

planned to improve passenger security regularly. During the drive, 10 suspects were nabbed by RPF personnel and were handed over to the GRPs for legal action, based on which 18 cases of passenger crime i.e., theft of passengers' belongings, drugging, robbery, chain snatching etc. were detected. Stolen property of passengers worth Rs 10.29 lakh was recovered either from the possession of these criminals or in the

course of investigation into the offences. Valleswara B Thokala, Sr Divisional Security Commissioner, Vijayawada Division, said that RPF would continue its efforts to enhance security of passengers in future, too, by launching drives, improving response, infusing technology and innovation in its working to enhance its response, effectiveness and reach and to realise its objective of 'Sewa Hi Sankalp'.

## BJP, TRS lock horns...

Continued from Page 1

He pointed out that sewage water is getting mixed in Ganga. He asked where the Rs 20,000 crore meant for cleaning the Ganga go. It may be mentioned here that Sanjay collected a bottle of Musi water to send it to Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. He said the water has been frothing and asked the Chief Minister to drink and prove whether the Musi River has been cleaned. Evidently, the TRS is going to go to any extent to take on Modi. BJP sources said that we cannot compare the two. "Ganga's quality has improved compared to 2014. 68 of 97 locations are now compliant with bathing standards. How we are spending is regularly updated on the website. Look at the Musi website. Its connection is not secure. Assi is one of the most polluted rivers and we cannot use it. Pollution levels in the Musi have remained the same as in 2014."

## Accused cannot be convicted...

Continued from Page 1

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by a man challenging an order passed by the High Court of Punjab & Haryana convicting him for the offences punishable under Section 302 (murder) and Section 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and sentencing him to rigorous imprisonment for life. Advocate Rishi Malhotra, appearing for the man, submitted that from the perusal of the postmortem report, it is clear that it is not proved beyond reasonable doubt that the dead body on which the postmortem was conducted was of deceased. The additional advocate general for the state on the contrary, submitted that the

high court and trial court have concurrently found the accused to be guilty of the offences charged with. The top court said there has to be a chain of evidence to complete so as not to leave any reasonable ground for a conclusion consistent with the innocence of the accused and must show that in all human probability the act must have been done by the accused. It has been held that the circumstances should be of a conclusive nature and tendency. This court has held that the circumstances should exclude every possible hypothesis except the one to be proved. It has been held that the accused 'must be' and not merely 'may be' guilty before a court can convict, the bench said.

# 'Fidayeen' attack on army camp

Continued from Page 1

Anand further said in the ensuing gunfight, the two terrorists were neutralised. Six soldiers of Indian Army were injured in the operation and of them, three bravehearts succumbed to injuries while repulsing the suicide attack, he said. The army personnel killed were subedar Rajendra Prasad (of Maligoven village in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district), rifleman Lakshmanan D (of T Pudupatti village in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu) and rifleman Manoj Kumar (of Shahjahanpur village in Haryana's Faridabad), he said. The Indian Army salutes the bravehearts for their supreme sacrifice in line of duty, upholding the highest tradition of the force. The nation will always remain indebted to them for their supreme sacrifice and devotion

to duty, he said. According to officials and eyewitnesses, the first gunshot was heard around 2 am when the terrorists attempted to breach the external fence of the camp located at Paragal, 185 km from here. The attack, which came four days ahead of Independence Day, marks the return of 'fidayeen' (suicide attackers) to the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir after more than three years. The last such attack took place on February 14, 2019 at Lethpora in Pulwama district of south Kashmir, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed. In Thursday's attack, the two 'fidayeen', believed to be from the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed, tried to sneak into the camp but were neutralised, Director General of Police Dilbag Singh told PTI. According to eyewitnesses, the last

gunshot was heard around 6.10 am. Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh, who heads the Jammu zone, said more forces were sent to the Army camp located around six km from the Darhal police station. He said a search and combing operation was underway. Security forces and the police had been put on alert following intelligence inputs on suspected movement of terrorists in the Rajouri belt, prompting them to launch a combing operation in Darhal and Nowshera belt on Wednesday. Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists had earlier attempted to carry out a 'fidayeen' attack on April 22 in Jammu when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to be in town. However, the two terrorists were killed in a chance encounter with the CISF near the Sunjawan Army camp. An officer of the paramilitary force

was also killed. On May 8, a terrorist was killed as the Army foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Laam area of Rajouri district. There were several blasts in Rajouri district in April and May. Police had busted two modules of the LeT instrumental in carrying out terror acts and ferrying drone-dropped weapons from Pakistan to the Kashmir valley. They arrested five members of two terror modules. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha condemned the attack and vowed to deal with terrorists and their supporters in a befitting manner. In a tweet, he said, "Strongly condemn despicable terrorist attack in Rajouri; tributes to brave soldiers who made supreme sacrifice. Heartfelt condolences to the families of the bravehearts martyred in the attack."

## YS Vijayamma escapes unhurt in car mishap

Continued from Page 1

Vijayamma was elected unopposed to the Assembly of then undivided Andhra Pradesh from Pulivendula constituency in Kadapa district after the death of Dr Rajasekhara Reddy in 2009 in a helicopter crash. In the by-elections held in 2011 following the resignation of Jagan Reddy and Vijayamma from the Congress party, they were elected from Kadapa Lok Sabha and Pulivendula Assembly constituencies, respectively, by record margins.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹180
Without Skin	₹195
Broiler at Farm	₹110
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	380
HYDERABAD	375
VISAKHAPATNAM	378
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.80

## SINGLE NODAL AGENCY ACCOUNT DELAYING CENTRAL FUNDS TO STATES TS Cabinet picks holes in procedure

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

There is an abnormal delay in the transfer of Central funds to States due to the newly introduced system of operating a Single Nodal Agency Account (SNA), the Telangana Cabinet placed on record on Thursday. A new procedure for the flow of funds to the state governments was introduced with effect from July 1, 2021 under which each state must notify a Single Nodal Agency (SNA) for each Centrally

Sponsored Scheme (CSS) and open a bank account of each SNA. Centrally Sponsored Schemes are those that are implemented by state governments, but funded largely by the Union Government with a defined State government share. They include schemes under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana etc. CSS funds flow from the Centre to the consolidated fund of the respective state and further to the bank account of SNA. Recently Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitaraman said that the new procedure had brought more transparency to the availability of CSS funds in state treasuries and bank account of SNAs and had led to better monitoring of the utilisation of funds and availability of funds with SNAs for CSS implementation. The State Cabinet, which met on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, held a comprehensive discussion on the state's economic situation. Officials informed the cabinet that the state registered 15.3 per cent growth rate

in revenues this financial year. The Chief Minister observed it was noteworthy that the state had registered growth, though the funds due to the state from the Centre under CSS and various schemes decreased by (minus) -12.9 per cent. "Delay in the release of central funds to the states is taking place due to the introduction of new system of Singal Nodal Account (SNA) accounts. Not only this, the FRBM limits are not being finalized in time and they are enforcing cuts in the limits", the Chief Minister said.

## POLITICAL HAPPENINGS

# 'Middle class' silence will hurt future generations'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The middle-class has mostly remained silent on political developments in the country and future generations would blame us for this silence, said experts at Acharya Kothapalli Jayashankar's birth anniversary. A distinguished lecture to commemorate Acharya Kothapalli Jayashankar's birth anniversary on Centre-State Relations and the Future of Federalism was held on



Thursday. Professor G. Haragopal, a visiting professor at the National Law School of India University of Bengaluru (NLSIU), urged people to realise things happening

around us and to be conscious of divisive forces. "The middle class has largely remained silent on political developments in the country and the future generations will blame us for this. In this con-

text, we need to consider policies that empower the federal system. The state's autonomy plays a vital role in development," Professor G. Haragopal said. B. Vinod Kumar, the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Board, said in his opening remarks that at present there is a lot of friction between the Centre and the States, especially in states ruled by regional parties. "In recent times not only political issues but financial issues too have become a bone

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



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP MLA representing Goshamahal, T. Raja Singh, has warned stand-up comedian Munavar Farooqui that he will beat up Munavar Farooqui and burn down the premises where Munavar Farooqui conducts his show. "I will definitely beat up back Munavar Farooqui and send him back. I will also burn down the place where he conducts his show... That is my challenge," said Raja Singh in a video statement released on Thursday. He appealed to the Telangana

government and the police department not to give permission to Munavar Farooqui's show scheduled for August 20. He warned that there will be serious consequences if anyone helps Munavar Farooqui to hold his show. Raja Singh asked KTR not to invite Munavar Farooqui to TS. He warned that Hindus will not remain silent if Munavar Farooqui, who insulted Hindu deities through his show comes to Hyderabad. Munavar Farooqui's organisers are making arrangements to organise his show on August 20 named 'Dongri to Nowhere'. Farooqui is famous for his comic timing and poetry and had revealed about his show in Hyderabad on Instagram. Farooqui had become famous with cine actress Kangana Ranaut's 'Lockup' show.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH  
ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT  
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
NIT No. 16/Plan work/CE (R&B) SH&ND, APRDC/2522-23 dt. 08.08.2022  
1) Online tenders in 1st call for the work "Widening and Strengthening of Nellore - Myapadu road from km 0/5 to 3/4 (SH-351) in SP&R Nellore District (old chainage from km 18/000 to 21/700 of Mysadu - Nellore - Beldary - Bombay Road)", 2) The last date of receipt of tenders is 30.08.2022 upto 3.30 P.M. 3) Tenders can download the tender schedules and other details from e-market place i.e. www.appeprocurement.gov.in.  
Sd/- Chief Engineer (R&B) SH & Managing Director, APRDC  
P.O.No: 5533/CLAD/VI/11024-22 Dt. 11.08.2022



# March with 1,000-m-long National Flag in Masula

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Krishna district headquarters Machilipatnam city witnessed a rally on Thursday with a 1,000-metre-long Indian national flag, which literally painted the streets saffron, white and green. Degree college students took out the rally with the 1,000-meter flag that began at the Koneru centre and concluded at the Pingali Venkayya statue near the R&B Guest House. District Collector S Ranjith Basha, along with Superintendent of Police (SP) P Joshua, inaugurated the rally.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said everyone should remember our freedom fighters, who fought against the British. He appealed to everyone to take part in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign and hoist the tricolour at their houses to mark the 75th Independence Day celebrations. He also asked all department officials to hoist the national flag at the government offices exactly at 9 am on August 13. Every Grama Sachivalayam should



conduct the flag-hoisting programme, take selfies and upload them on the website, he suggested.

SP Joshua said that students should read history books to learn about the Indian Independence Movement and how the leaders sacrificed their lives. He said that most of the students did not read history books. Krishna University Vice-Chancellor

Chandrasekhar, District Transport Officer Sithapati, and others participated in the programme. Meanwhile, APSRTC Machili patnam depot workers organised a photo exhibition on the tricolour. The photo expo was inaugurated by Collector Ranjith Basha. Joint Collector R Mahesh Kumar, DRO Venkateswarlu and Krishna District Public Transport

Officer Gadde Nageswara Rao were present. The District Labour Department also conducted a massive procession from the Koneru centre to the BHE company with national flags, raising slogans. Several district officials participated in the procession. Krishna DRO Venkateswarlu, Labor Department Deputy Commissioner Srimannarayana, Assistant Commissioner A

**SP Joshua said that students should read history books to learn about the Indian Independence Movement and how the leaders sacrificed their lives. He said that most of the students did not read history books**

Govind, Hyny school students and traders participated in the march.

Also, the Veterinary Department organised a rally to mark the 75th Independence Day celebrations at Elamaru village of Pedaparupudi Mandal. Swachh Vighraha programme was held at Siddhendra Yogi Temple in Kuchipudi village as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The temple and surrounding areas were cleaned up. Movva Tahsildar Veeranjanyulu and others were present.



**JAGANANNA VIDYA DEEVENA**

## Rs 57.73 cr released in Krishna, NTR districts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna Collector P Ranjith Basha and NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao distributed Rs 57.73 crore towards assistance under the 'Jagananna Vidya Deevana' scheme to 79,072 students for the months of April, May, and June on Thursday.

Krishna Collector Ranjith Basha distributed Rs 27.21 crore to 37,582 students and NTR Collector S Dilli Rao distributed Rs 30.53 crore to 41,490 students and the amounts were deposited directly into their mothers' bank accounts.

At a function held at the video conference hall in the collector's office, NTR Collector Dilli Rao, and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu presented the

cheque of Rs.30.53 crore to the students. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Malladi Vishnu said the State government had been implementing the fees reimbursement scheme for those who are willing to study higher education. It was introduced to ensure that students in no family would face an additional financial burden to continue their studies.

"The State government has made several changes in the education system by introducing the Nadu - Nedu scheme to provide infrastructure. By introducing the English medium, the AP students are competing at the international level, he added.

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao said that by using the 'Jagananna Vidya Deevana', students should reach the top position and for that work

hard. Because of education, society development is possible, he added. At the programme held at Machilipatnam, Krishna collector Ranjith Basha presented a cheque of Rs.27.21 crore to 37,582 students for April to June quarter.

Speaking on the occasion, Ranjith Basha said that the Jagananna Vidya Deevana scheme is fulfilling the desires of students who aimed to study ITI, Polytechnic, Degree, Engineering, and Medicine courses. Under this scheme, fee reimbursement would be deposited in the accounts of mothers for every quarter, he added.

Joint Collector R Mahesh Kumar, BC Welfare Empowerment Officer Ch Lakshmi Durga, Tribal Welfare Empowerment Officer D Phani, and others participated.

## Free entry to Buddhavanam on August 15

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Special Officer, Buddhavanam Project, Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation, in a release on Thursday, said that tourists can visit Buddhavanam, a 'Buddhist Heritage Theme Park' developed by Government of Telangana at Nagarjunasagar, free of ticket on August 15 as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to mark the 75th year of India's Independence. He added that all the tourists and local people can avail the opportunity of visiting various segments of the Buddhavanam on August 15 free of cost.

## 'One-stop centre' to bring light in lives of transgenders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Secretary of HM & FW and Project Director APSACS GS Naveen Kumar has said that setting up ONE-STOP Centre and a Help Desk for the Transgender Community is one of the key milestones in filling light in the lives of the transgender community by providing all comprehensive services.

Project Director Naveen Kumar on Thursday inaugurated Transgender One-Stop Center in Chenji Plaza, Bhavani Nagar, Tirupathi and a Help Desk in SVRR Government General Hospital, Tirupathi. The Project Director said, "The centre needs to be named with a specific name as 'Shree Centre' to minimize stigma and discrimination towards the transgender community in the process of pro-



viding health and social inclusion services."

He said, "All the medical professionals have to be sensitized on the health issues of the transgender community to provide timely and quality services. There should now be any stigma, discrimination and denial in providing services to the Transgender community."

He inaugurated 'Child-Friendly Play Centre' in SVRR Government General Hospital

which was set up by YRG Care. He said that all need-based healthcare services have to be provided to the Children Living with HIV/AIDS. He visited Mobile Blood Transportation Bus and Model Blood Bank and suggested the medical staff follow all the guidelines in procuring and conducting all tests. He suggested Blood Bank staff maintain sufficient stock of Platelets in view of seasonal Dengue Fevers. He visited the

ART centre and interacted with the ART users along with the ART centre staff of SVRR-GGH. He suggested the medical staff not use the word 'Patient' whenever talking about PLHIV. They should be called as clients who receive services from the ART centre. He further said to do follow-up with ART users through messages and Whatsapp to ensure they come for collecting ART medicines as per the prescribed dates. Additional DMHO Dr ArunaSulochana Devi, Medical Superintendent of SVRR Government General Hospital Dr Bharathi, Deputy Director of VHS Dr Vijayarman, State Programmet Manager of VHS Venkat, State Programme Manager of YRG Care, District Programme Manager Lalitha and stakeholders Jayachandra Reddy participated in the programme.

## Woman beheads daughter-in-law

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a horrifying incident, a woman beheaded her daughter-in-law and walked into the police station with her severed head. The incident took place in K Ramapuram in Rayachoti mandal in Annamaya district in broad daylight on Thursday noon.

According to reports, the woman Subbamma had cut off the head of her daughter-in-law Vasundhara (35), upset over her alleged affair with another man and also related to a house that was in the victim's name. Locals and passers-by were shocked to see Subbamma walking with the severed head into the police station. This is the first such incident in the history of this police station and in Rayachoti, locals said.

As per report the victim Vasundhara is a widow and had two children. Her husband bequeathed a house to her in which she was living. She was



**As per report the victim Vasundhara is a widow and had two children. Her husband bequeathed a house to her in which she was living**

said to be having an affair with another man and Subbamma, who was upset that she was going to give the house to the other man, killed her with the

help of a relative. The police were shocked to see the woman reaching the police station with the severed head in a polythene bag. The police rushed to the scene of the crime and shifted the torso along with the severed head to the government hospital for autopsy. The police suspect that domestic problems and property dispute led to the ghastly murder. A police officer said they have registered a case and are trying to identify and nab the others involved in the crime.

## 1,500 youngsters take part in 'Heritage Walk'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the Azadi Amrit Mahotsav and to mark the 75th Independence Day celebrations, a 'Heritage Walk' was conducted in Vijayawada on Thursday. Around 1,500 students took part in the Heritage Walk, which started from various points -- Benz Circle, SRR & CVR Government Degree College, PB Siddhartha Degree College and Tummalapalli Kalakshetram.

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu flagged off the Heritage Walk at the Babu Museum on the MG Road in Vijayawada. The Collector and other district officials participated in the walk. Youth and students enthusiastically participated in the Heritage Walk and raised slogans such as 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Mera Bharat Mahan'.

All the roads in the city were filled with students, youth and government officials, who par-



ticipated in the walk carrying national flags. Later, the Heritage Walk reached the Police AR grounds adjacent to MG Road.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Dilli Rao said that the youth must take inspiration from the freedom fighters and expressed his happiness over

youngsters turning up to take part in the Heritage Walk in huge numbers. "Indians will never forget Pingali Venkayya, who designed the national tricolour," he added.

He further said that though the country stood first in many areas, in the field of technology, it was lagging

behind the western countries. As of now, India has the world's largest youth population, he said.

MLA Malladi Vishnu said Vijayawada city had played a key role in the freedom movement and he felt happy that the city was now conducting the 75th Independence Day cele-

brations as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav grandly. "There is a need for the youth to know about the freedom fighters and consider them as an inspiration," he said. Mahatma Gandhi visited the city 17 times as part of the freedom struggle, he said.

Later, the students performed several programmes at the AR grounds. Students of Nalanda Degree College, PB Siddhartha Arts and Science College, SRR & CVR Government Degree College, Siddhartha Mahila College, and Gandhi High School took part in the cultural programmes.

Vijayawada ACP Chencu Reddy, District Employment Officer PV Ramesh Kumar, District Tourism Officer Hemachandra, Jignasa Interface Limited Director V Bhargav, CEO Gayatri, DWAMA PD S Suneetha, District Civil Supplies Officer Komali Padma, and ICDS PD Uma Devi were present.

## Priority for common pilgrims during 'Brahmotsavams': TTD EO

**CM Jagan to visit Tirumala on September 27 to offer silk robes**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TTD EO AV Dharma Reddy has said that after two years of Covid restrictions, the 'Salakatta Brahmotsavams' at Tirumala will be celebrated with the pilgrim participation from September 27 to October 5. TTD is making all arrangements to give devotees divine blessings of Mahayappa Swamy with colourful 'vahana sevas' that are going to be held after two years along the Mada streets.

He explained the preparations and arrangements for the celestial 'Brahmotsavams' to the devotees during the Dial-



**He explained the preparations and arrangements for the celestial Brahmotsavams to the devotees during the Dial-Your-EO-live phone in programme organised at Annamaiah Bhavan on Thursday**

Your-EO-live phone in programme organised at Annamaiah Bhavan on Thursday. Prominent events of the Brahmotsavams include Dwajorohanam on September 27, Garuda seva on October 1,

Swarna Ratham on October 2, Rathotsavam October 4, Chakra Snamam on October 5. All privileged darshans stand cancelled and only Sarva Darshan for the common man is the top priority. On September 27, CM YS

Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Tirumala to present 'Pattu Vastrams' to Venkateswara Swamy on behalf of the State government as per age-old tradition. In view of 'Dhwajorohanam' fete on the first day of the 'Brahmotsavams', the first 'vahana Seva', 'Pedda Sesha vahanam' will be conducted at 9pm. However, on the remaining days, the vahana sevas will be held between 8am and 10am and 7pm and 9pm.

Following the success of the TTD complaint tracking system rolled out in Tirumala to assist devotees in room allocations, TTD has decided to introduce the system in Srinivasam,

Vishnu Nivasam and Govindarajaswami Choultries as well in Tirupati.

Venkateswara Vaibhavotsavams With an intention to replicate the sevas that are being performed to Sri Venkateswara Swamy in Tirumala temple every day and bring the blessings of Srivaru to the doorsteps of His devotees, Venkateswara Vaibhavotsavams will be held at the AC Subba Reddy stadium in Nellore from August 16-20. TTD to organise a three-day festival of Srivari Tri-monthly Metlotsavam from August 25-27 under the aegis of TTD Dasa Sahitya Project in which prominent Swamijis will

participate daily and present Anuradha blessings.

The total of 23.40 lakh devotees had Srivari darshans in July. The Hundi collections offered by the devotees were Rs 139.33 crore. A total of 1.07 crore ladus were sold in July. As many as 53.41 lakh devotees had Anna Prasadam. In all, 10.97 lakh devotees offered hair ton-suring as part of their vows to lord Venkateswara.

TTD JEOs Sada Bhargavi, Veerabrahmam, SVBC CEO Shanmukha Kumar, CE Nageswara Rao SE-2 Jagadeeshwar Reddy, VGO Bali Reddy and other officials were present.

## HELP official invited by US to study human trafficking

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The US Embassy has selected Vantipuli Bhaskar working as senior project manager of HELP, a voluntary organisation, to visit the United States of America (USA) under its International Visitor Leadership Programme to study the interventions and success stories by the US Government and voluntary organisations on 'Combating Gender Based Violence and Trafficking In Persons' in America. HELP has been working for prevention of trafficking for over two decades in Andhra Pradesh. It is working in collaboration with the police and other line departments to rescue the women and girls from human trafficking for commercial sexu-

al exploitation, to facilitate the rescued survivors with various support services by the state including rehabilitation, to provide skill training that helps them to protect and enjoy their rights. In recognition of the hard work and commitment of Bhaskara Rao V, for the development, protection and rehabilitation of survivors, the US embassy has invited him to visit the USA under its International Visitor Leadership Programme. Bhaskar will be going to visit the USA from August 15 to September 2. He will visit various places in the country and government officials and representatives of NGOs to discuss and learn on their strategies and interventions to combat gender-based violence and trafficking in persons.



# Work hard to excel in life, Collector exhorts students

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Guntur district has got Rs 30.10 crore under the Jagananna Vidya Deevana scheme benefiting 39,627 students.

A programme was organised here on Thursday on the occasion of the disbursement of Rs 694 crore by Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to the 11.02 lakh students under the Vidya Deevana fee reimbursement scheme.

District Collector M Venugopal Reddy, MLAs Maddali Giridhar and state Madya Vimochana Prachara Committee chairman V Lakshman Reddy attended the meeting.

Addressing the gathering, Collector Venugopal Reddy said that Rs 30.10 crore was



credited into the account of 31,511 mothers. Guntur district had got Rs 470 crore under Jagananna Vidya Deevana scheme during the last three years, he informed.

The Collector said that only a few states in the country are

giving the highest priority to education and allocating funds. He said that in Andhra Pradesh from pre-primary level to high school, the shape of school buildings had been changed today under the Nadu-Nedu scheme and currently, in the

second phase, infrastructure is being provided in 560 government schools in the district.

Collector Venugopal Reddy said that along with infrastructure in schools, students are provided with quality education and nutritious food through the

'Jagananna Gorumudda' scheme and delicious midday meals are provided to children through Vidya Kanuka.

Exhorting the students to strive hard to excel in education to compete at the world level, he said that revolutionary changes are being brought in the education sector in AP. He said that despite financial difficulties in the state, fee reimbursement is being disbursed every quarter, and asked the students to study responsibly.

Steps are being taken to complete the internal ship for the degree students, he said adding he hopes that the students will study well, seize good opportunities and move ahead with a better future. MLA Giridhar, V Lakshman Reddy, Marketyard chairman Yesuratnam also spoke.



## Make 'Har Ghar Tiranga' a big success, people told

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh called upon people to make the Har Ghar Tiranga programme a big success in the district and contribute for national integrity.

As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' programme a huge rally was taken out with a long national flag by the school students here on Thursday. The Collector

flagged off the rally. Hundreds of students carrying a long national flag took out the rally which began at the Indoor stadium and went via the new bus stand, five station centre and SBI and reached the Indoor stadium where it concluded.

Some of the children who took part in the rally by skating had become the cynosure of all eyes. The Collector exhorted the students to play a vital role in the development

of the country. He said that various programmes including elocution, essay writing and cultural programmes are being organised from August 1 to 15 as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit programme. Additional SP Chakravarthi, DRO AVSN Satyanarayana Murthy, ZP CEO Ravi Kumar and DEO RS Ganga Bhavani and municipal commissioner Sk. Shaheed was among those who attended the programme.

## Debt burden drives teacher to suicide

PNS ■ SURYAPET

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

## YSRCP govt committed to welfare of Muslims: MLC

PNS ■ GUNTUR

YSRCP senior leader and MLC Lella Appireddy reiterated that the YSRCP government is committed to protecting the interests of the Muslims in the state and various welfare schemes being implemented for them.

A mass marriages programme was held in the 'Shadikhana' located at Pattabhipuram in which the marriages of 12 couples were performed. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, MLC Appireddy said that the YSRCP government always stands in the forefront to protect the interests of the Muslim community people, adding that various welfare schemes were



being implemented for their welfare.

He stated that they are moving forward in the footsteps of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, and are working sincerely for their welfare like the members of the Muslim family. He said that a mass-free

wedding ceremony was held for 14 couples from poor Muslim families at Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Shadikhana in Pattabhipuram on Thursday. MLA Giridhar said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is giving priority to the welfare of the Muslim commu-

nity people. MLC Lella Appireddy, MLA Maddali Giridhar, and AMC Chairman Chandragiri Esuratnam blessed the newly married couples which were organized in accordance with Muslim traditions under the auspices of the Shaadi Khana Committee.

## Teachers stage dharna

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Teachers affiliated with the STU staged a dharna in front of the Collector's office here on Thursday demanding the government to revoke the GOs 117 and 128. They held flex banners and raised slogans demanding the revocation of Government Orders 117 and 128. They also demanded the release of pension benefits, DA, PF and perks immediately. Speaking on the occasion, STU state president Sai Srinivas said that the government treasury, teachers and other employees participated in the dharna demanding to release their dues.

He said that the Cabinet sub-committee and the Civil Services Joint Staff Council assured to resolve their problems by July but they failed to do so. The teachers are facing severe financial hardship due to non-payment of

**He said that the Cabinet sub-committee and the Civil Services Joint Staff Council assured to resolve their problems by July but they failed to do so**

retirement benefits, PF and DP. The retired employees postponed the marriages of their daughters due to non-payment of their dues, which they deplored.

The STU union leaders warned of intensifying the agitation if the government did not take steps to disburse the dues. District finance secretary Janardhana Rao, state associate president Guttula Srinivas and district associate president D David and secretary Pushpalata were among those who participated in the dharna.

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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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



## Officials instructed to speed up ongoing civic works

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Municipal Commissioner Keerthi Chekuri has directed the officials concerned to expedite the ongoing development works in the city and complete them in the prescribed time.

The civic chief held a meeting with the engineering officials here on Thursday and reviewed the progress of the development works being carried out in the city. She also reviewed the works taken up under the Nadu-Nedu programme and growing of greenery in the city.

Speaking on this occasion, the Commissioner told the officials to take administrative permissions from the government for the construction of PVK Naidu Market and Modern Slaughter House in Guntur city, complete the ten-



der process at the earliest and start the works. She asked the EEs to take the responsibility. Keerthi Chekuri told the officials that the civil works should not be stopped anywhere in the Gorantla Reservoir works. She said that bonds would be issued

for the laying of the pipeline near Pandula colony. She directed the officials to take steps to set up solar plants in the vacant spaces belonging to the municipal corporation, and asked the officials to coordinate with the NEDCAP officials

and prepare proposals with cost, electricity generated etc.

The tender process for the establishment of the garbage transfer station should be completed by August 25 th and in coordination with the railway authorities, measures

should be taken to get permission for the drinking water pipe lines and outfall drains to cross the railway line and complete the work by the end of this month.

The civic chief directed the officials to lay special focus to the development of ponds under the jurisdiction of the city corporation and proposals for development in priority order should be prepared by the 16th of this month.

For the modernization of schools under the Nadu-Nedu programme, the DEE should personally monitor the quality of works. She directed the officials to grow greenery alongside main roads and plant saplings. EEs Santhi Raju, Konda Reddy, Sundararami reddy, DEE s Srinivasa Reddy, Shiva Kumar and Hanif Ahmad were among those who were present.

## Student injured in head on RGKUT campus

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

The students said the Vice-



Chancellor was conspicuously absent on the campus. The hostels are in pathetic condition. 'We requested Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao to visit the campus. The VC must stay on campus and

all posts should be filled,' students said.

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

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

## CybHER III trains 100 students as cyber ambassadors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Around 100 students and 50 teachers from every TS district were trained to become cyber ambassadors through 80 virtual training sessions using a standardised Learning Management System (LMS). The training sessions were on cyberbullying, financial fraud, online gaming and other cyber safety and security measures to improve their knowledge of prevention and redressal mechanisms so that they can address cybercrimes.

The Cyber Ambassadors will be acting as catalysts and agents of change by promoting women's safety in cyberspace with the help of She Teams in their schools and in the community. The programme was part of CybHER III, the phase three programme under

the Cyber Congress initiative of the Women Safety Wing of the Telangana Police which concluded its 10-month-long programme. The programme ended with a spectacular grand finale titled 'Cyberathon' on Thursday.

Around 3,300 cyber ambassadors, 1,650 mentor-teachers, volunteer mentors, headmasters and other stakeholders from the 33 districts of Telangana participated in the project's implementation. The grand finale was attended by Swati Lakra, IPS, the Addl. DG in charge of Women's Safety and Bharosa, Sumathi Badugula, IPS, the DIG of WSW & CID, Devasena, IAS, the Director of School Education, G. Ramesh, the Director of Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, Cyber Security Expert Rakshit Tandon, and others.

## 'Heritage walk' taken out with 600-m Tricolour

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Heritage walk was taken out with a 600-m-long National Flag at Durgi village in Palnadu district on Thursday.

District Collector L Shiva Shankar, MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy and a large number of students among those who participated in the 'heritage walk'.

The heritage walk began at the ZP high school and concluded at the Mandal Parishat office. Later, the Collector garlanded the statue of freedom fighter Kanneganti Hanumanth and paid tributes.

On the occasion, the Collector launched the distribution of National Flags to be hoisted on every house as part of the Har Ghar Tiranga programme. Later the Collector inspected the mid-day meal in



**On the occasion, the Collector launched the distribution of National Flags to be hoisted on every house as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme**

the ZP high school. The Collector also inspected the land through which a road would be constructed to go to Kasuruba girl hostel. He also

watched the sculptures in the Nagarajuna sculpture centre. Gurajala RDO Addeyya was among those who were present.

## Rain-drenched paddy to be converted into fortified rice

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

has issued orders to this effect. In lieu of the boiled rice, the Centre has agreed to procure fortified rice for the Central pool. Since fortified rice is being distributed among the ration card holders in Kumram Bheem, Bhupalapally, Kothagudem and Mulugu districts, the State government has decided to use the paddy soaked in the recent rains to be converted into fortified rice. In all, 90.95 lakh tonnes of

paddy has been shifted to the rice mills for custom milling of rice during the past three agricultural seasons.

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Warangal police on Thursday issued an order to the petrol filling stations not to sell petrol to two-wheeler riders who are not wearing helmets. The order will apply in Warangal, Hanamkonda and Kazipet. The police took the decision to see that the two-wheeler riders who are not wearing crash helmets are

denied fuel in the backdrop of a series of fatal accidents, according to Warangal Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi. The police handed over flexes and banners to the petrol filling stations. The banners will be displayed at the petrol filling stations. The police said there were 426 fatal accidents under the Warangal Police Commissionerate limits last year. While 426 died, 1,110 suffered injuries.



INDIA CORNER

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

PNS ■ SHIMLA

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

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

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

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

Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri, Congress MLAs Jagat Singh Negi, Ram Lal Thakur, Harshwardhan Chauhan, Sukhvinder Sukhu and lone CPI-M legislator Rakesh Singha spoke in support of the motion. Chief Minister Thakur, his Cabinet colleagues Rakesh Pathania, Bikram Singh Thakur, Sukh Ram Chaudhary and BJP MLA Rajeev Bindal spoke for the government.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## Assam to digitise birth, death registrations



PNS ■ GUWAHATI

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

## Odisha, ocean tech institute to protect coastline

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

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



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

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

## CVC brings down pendency of disciplinary matters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

## Your energy is infectious: PM to Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



among your greatest strengths." Recalling Naidu's strengths, Modi said from the small lanes of Nellore to the vice-presidency, yours has been an outstanding and inspiring journey. "Whenever any challenge or setback came, it only strengthened your resolve to go about your work with even more

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

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

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

PNS ■ BANDA

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

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

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



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

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

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

PNS ■ SHIMLA

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



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

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

## CSC, UN body to help migrant workers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

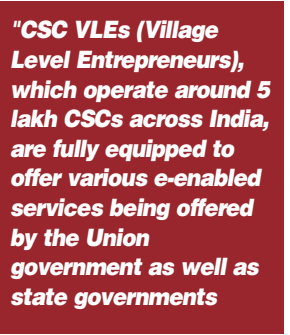
State-managed CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Organization for Migration-United Nations' India Mission to establish Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in Tamil Nadu.

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



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

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



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

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

CSC will be offering this service in other states also.

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

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



## Confusion over freebies

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

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



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

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

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

### PICTALK



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

## Market to decide airfares

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

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

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

# India as a major world player at 75

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

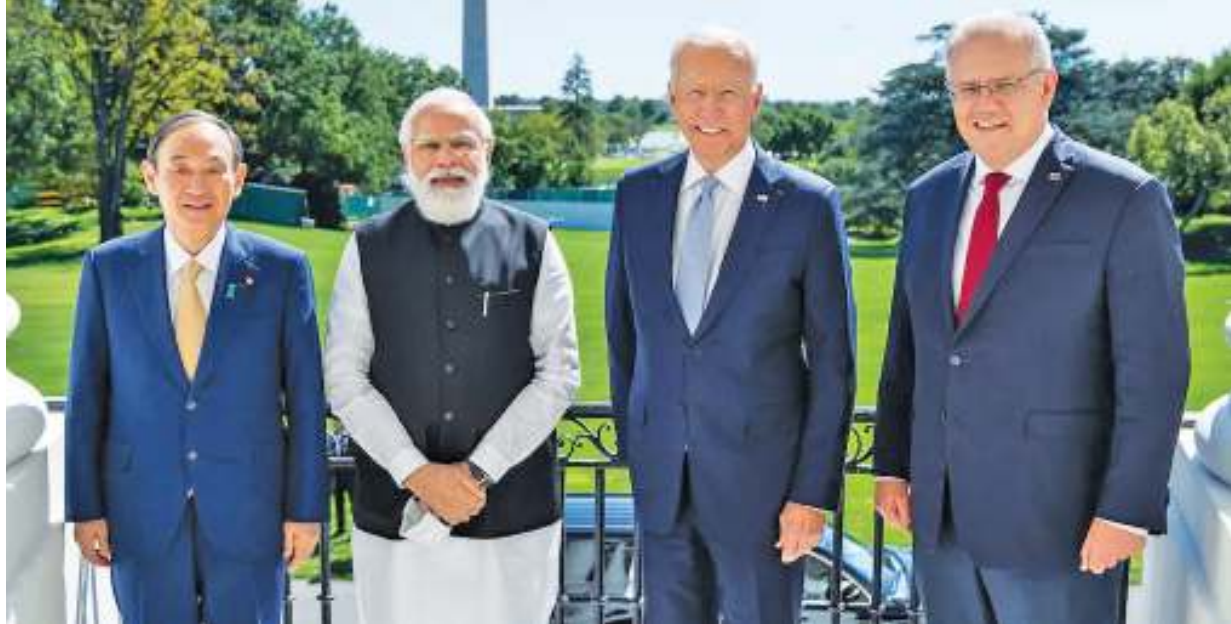


SIMRAN SODHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FREEBIES AS LIFESAVERS!

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

DVG Sankararao | Vizianagaram

### NITISH CM, TEJASHWI SUPER CM

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

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

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

### THE COLONIAL BAGGAGE

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

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

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



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

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

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### FESTIVALS MUST BE FOR ALL

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

Soumydeep Saxena | Ujjain

## SOUND BITE

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



Vice-President of India  
—Jagdeep Dhankhar



US President  
—Joe Biden

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



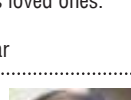
Filmmaker  
—Shekhar Kapur



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

Cricketer  
—Sachin Tendulkar

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



Congress leader  
—P Chidambaram

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

INDIA MUST REJIG TIES IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

(The author is a foreign policy commentator.)

When obedience is virtue, questioning evil

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



MOHIT KUMAR

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



RAM KRISHNA SINHA

(The author is a former bank executive.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

medium, pervading toxicity in social relations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Lower bad loans push PSU banks' profitability in June

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



profit of Rs 14,013 crore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

lower than the purchase price.

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



according to the report.

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

Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy).

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

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

## MONEY MATTERS

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



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

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



Oil India Ltd (OIL), the nation's second-largest state explorer, reported a tripling of its net profit in the June quarter on record oil and gas price realisation. Its net profit was Rs 1,555.46 crore, or Rs 14.34 per share, in April-June compared to Rs 507.94 crore, or Rs 4.68 a share, in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement. The earnings rose as the company got USD 112.72 per barrel price for crude oil it sold in the quarter as opposed to USD 67.15 a barrel rate realised in the same period last year. Gas price realisation more than doubled to USD 6.1 per million British thermal unit from USD 1.79. Higher crude oil and natural gas prices stem from the rally in international oil prices that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Turnover nearly doubled to Rs 6,029.86 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal year that began on April 1. The earnings were also aided by a 4 per cent rise in crude oil production at 0.78 million tonnes and an 8 per cent rise in gas output at 771 million standard cubic metres.

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



The digital lending industry, led by app-based credit suppliers, have welcomed the new set of regulations issued by the RBI, saying the move will help the sector scale up and become more responsible. The Reserve Bank had on Wednesday tightened the norms for digital lending to prevent charging of exorbitant rates and to secure customer interest by checking unethical loan recovery practices. Under the new norms, all loan disbursements and repayments are required to be executed only between the bank accounts of the borrower and regulated entities like banks and NBFCs without any pass-through/pool account of the lending service providers (LSPs). Also, any fees or charges payable to LSPs in the credit intermediation process shall be paid directly by the regulated entities and not by the borrower, the Reserve Bank had said. Welcoming the announcements, the Digital Lenders Association of India (DLAI) said the industry is very encouraged by the new regulations. Being a forward-looking financial regulator that successfully balances the needs of financial innovation with the constraints of securing the integrity and stability of the financial system, the RBI has provided a nuanced blueprint that will help the digital lending ecosystem to continue to grow in a responsible and sustainable manner, it added. At the same time, the RBI has clearly addressed the need to stamp out incipient trends that are antithetical to the best practices related to customer protection and data security, the association said in a statement on Thursday. It also welcomed the now mandated collaboration between the financial and fintech ecosystems, saying it is the best way to scale and sustain impactful and inclusive financial services.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

"The Group has access to



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

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

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

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

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

### TPDDL achieves full RPO compliance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

## MSME exporters facing demand squeeze in global markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

be closed and the accumulated pension wealth till date

would be given to the subscriber, the notification said.

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Salman Khan spends a day with the sailors

Amongst the largest destroyers built in India, INS Visakhapatnam has an overall length of 164 metre and displacement of over 7,500 tonne. The Indian Navy works to protect the shores of our nation, often sacrificing their lives, time with their families, only to ensure that the Indian seas are safe and secure. Salman Khan taking a whole day out of his hectic schedule to spend quality time with the sailors on Visakhapatnam, who were more than thrilled to have him in their midst. The heartwarming images that went viral on social media depict the joy on their faces. From hearing about their lives, training, time away from loved ones, seeing the state of the art vessel, cooking on the ship to doing push up challenges, signing autographs and hoisting the Indian flag, it was a day full



of patriotism, laughter and fun. Salman was left awed by the patriotism and courage the armed forces of our nation has. The Visakhapatnam also has medium and short-range guns, anti-submarine rockets, and advanced electronic warfare and communication suits. Visakhapatnam ship can accommodate a crew of 312, has an endurance of 4,000 nautical miles and can carry out a typical 42 days mission with extended mission time in out of area operation.

# Sonam is thankful to Arjun's ladylove Malaika, Here's why!

Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor Ahuja in the latest episode of *Koffee With Karan* revealed why she is thankful to her brother Arjun Kapoor's ladylove Malaika Arora. In the segment, #siblingtrolls, Sonam picked out a cards which read, "Who is the s\*\*\*\*tier sibling?" Sonam burst out laughing and said, "I don't even need to say it's self explanatory." Karan pointing at Arjun, "I'll answer this on her behalf, you are definitely the s\*\*\*\*tier sibling." The actor added that he is now 'retired'. Karan sided with Arjun and said, "And no shaming. It's great I'd love to be one." Sonam then thanked Malaika for being in her brother's life. She said, "Thank god for Malla fora. We had to deal with." Replying to his sister, Arjun asked, "What does this mean.. I would have continued if I didn't have a gf. It was a phase." The actor then said, "Don't make me say things that I would regret. It's the sanctity of the relationship that keeps me grounded."



# Rapper Travis Scott beats South Korean superband BTS merchandise sales record in UK



Rapper Travis Scott (II) made a record-breaking amount of money on merchandise in London over the weekend. The 31-year-old rap star sold more than \$1 million in merchandise at his weekend concerts, setting a new UK record and overtaking the previous landmark set by South Korean superband BTS, reports acshowbiz.com. The chart-top

ping group sold just under \$1 million worth of merchandise during their 'Love Yourself World Tour UK' dates in London in October 2018, according to TMZ. Ahead of his shows in London, Travis' team created some hoodies that were designed specifically for his shows. The hoodies sold for \$100 to \$125, while shirts were sold for between \$45 and \$75, and hats were sold for \$45. Travis was joined in London by his girlfriend Kylie Jenner and their two children, Stormi, four, and a six-month-old baby boy whose name has not been revealed. Earlier this week, the loved-up couple were said to have "mastered being together".

# Brett Goldstein is doing '400 push-ups' for Marvel debut as Hercules

Brett Goldstein is all set to join the Marvel Cinematic Universe as Hercules, the *Ted Lasso* Emmy winner shared that his role was never announced until the character popped up in the post-credits scene in *Thor: Love and Thunder*. He told The Playlist that the call to join Marvel came "literally out of the blue one night," reports Variety. "They turn around, and they reveal, 'It's Hercules; it's you'. And I went, 'What?' Just like, Are you serious? Are you f\*\*\*\*g with me? Is this a wind-up?" Goldstein said. "So yeah, it was as surprising to me as I think it has been to other people." The actor continued, "When I spoke to Taika, I said, 'You know I'm basically like a skinny comedian?' I said, 'When is this filming?' It was like in two weeks, and I was like, I



mean, I'll do my best, but two weeks feels. I said, 'He doesn't have to be as

big as Thor, does he?' "And look, on the day, I mean, I'm doing 400 push-ups that day. I was fit to explode. I did the best I could on that day." Goldstein's role was so top secret that he didn't even tell his parents, who found out about his Hercules casting just like the rest of the world when they watched *Thor: Love and Thunder* on the big screen. "I didn't tell anyone because Marvel put a chip in my neck that said 'If you talk about this you're dead,'" Goldstein told Variety last month. "My mom and dad, I sent them a text and said, 'I've just seen *Thor*. I knew it's not the kind of film they'd see. I said, 'You should go see it. It's funny.' "My mom is texting me all the way through the film giving me a

running commentary. I'm like, 'Just watch the film.' It gets to the end bit, where it shows Russell Crowe. My mom texts me 'Russell Crowe's in it again, he's very funny'. I go, "F\*\*\*\*g look up at the screen," he added. Goldstein knows nothing about his future in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. *Thor: Love and Thunder* ends with Zeus (Russell Crowe) commanding his son, Hercules, to go out and hunt Thor down. Presumably, Goldstein and Thor actor Chris Hemsworth will face off in the future. "I truly, honestly, this isn't me lying or being coy, I know nothing," Goldstein told Variety about his MCU future. "All I know is what I did that day and that's it. That could be it. It was a fun three seconds."

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

NANCY

GINGER MEGGS

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- A hole in a hill for a train
- On fire
- Unlock
- A month
- Very uncommon
- Reply
- An animal with a shell
- Defeated
- An erupting mountain
- A long sort of table where you are served in a shop
- A restaurant worker
- Meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid
- Scraps of material
- A planet
- Required
- On fire
- A month
- Reply
- Defeated
- Make music with the voice
- These birds hunt at night

DOWN

- Ripped and ragged
- Opposite of wide
- Tame animals kept at home

SOLUTION

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





## Doing data entry is not a bootless errand

SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TEJAL SINHA

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

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

To begin with, Harry shares



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the time when they are most fertile.

### Ovulation pain

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

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

### Libido changes

Many women who track signs of

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

## Signs that show you're nearing ovulation

and implanted successfully, it results in a pregnancy.

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

The doctor further gives more insights into ovulation.

### Changes in cervical mucus

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



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

### Change in basal body temperature

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

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

### Changes in the cervix

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

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

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

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

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

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

his world view.

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

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

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

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





# LONG JUMPER SREESHANKAR FINISHES 6TH IN DIAMOND LEAGUE DEBUT

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

PTI ■ MONACO

Commonwealth Games Silver medalist long jumper Murali Sreeshankar finished sixth in his debut Diamond League meeting here with a below-par 7.94m effort. Six days after winning a historic Silver at the Birmingham CWG, Sreeshankar competed in his much-anticipated maiden Diamond League but was far from his best in a strong field under conditions not very ideal for jumping on Wednesday night.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 2019 World Championships Gold medalist Tajay Gayle of Jamaica was



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

AP ■ MONACO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Arjun likely to play for Goa next season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

For Tendulkar, the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Babar is the only player in



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

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

"I would put my money

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP ■ JAMAICA

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

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

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

campaign immediately preceding this assignment.

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

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

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

PTI ■ CAPE TOWN

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

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

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

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

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



## CSK-owned franchise ropes in Faf du Plessis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

## Ross Taylor says he faced racism

AP ■ WELLINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AP ■ HARARE

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

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

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

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

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



match in ODI debutant Ebadot Hossain.

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

yorker that flattened the middle and off stumps.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## TRENDING INDIA WIDE



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Biopic on Khudiram Bose announced



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

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

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

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

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

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

K. RAMYA SREE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

both doing the mysterious project.

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

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

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

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

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



## NTR to romance Mrunal in *NTR30*

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

The big budget film, which is

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

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

## Nani to team up with Hanu Raghavapudi

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

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

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

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



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

**A**ctor Karthi has disclosed that he will begin work on the sequel to his superhit film *Kaithi* with one of Tamil cinema's most sought after directors, Lokesh Kanakaraj, early next year. Karthi, who is busy promoting his upcoming release *Viruman*, disclosed this detail while replying to a question from a media person during an interaction session.

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

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

official announcement has been made until now regarding this project.

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

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

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