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VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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

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

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

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

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

**MUSK TWEET JOKING ABOUT BUYING
MANCHESTER UNITED CAUSES STIR**

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Political parties and individuals cannot be prevented from making poll promises aimed at fulfilling the constitutional mandate and the term freebie should not be confused with genuine welfare measures, the Supreme Court said Wednesday.

Observing that the voters are not looking for freebies, the top court referred to the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and said, Given an opportunity, they will look for dignified earning.

We all must remember the good old saying: There is no free lunch," the apex court said, adding the concern is about the right way of spending public money.

**754 more procedures under
AarogyaSri from Sept 5**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In an important development, the AP government has included 754 more procedures in the AarogyaSri scheme, increasing the total procedures to 3,118. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said that the government decided to render more effective services under AarogyaSri, hence 754 additional procedures were added.

The CM instructed the officials to establish a new medical college in Parvathipuram Manyam district and use services of mid level health providers as community health officers.

The new procedures would be included from September 5, the Chief Minister said during a review meeting on the Medical and Health Department held here on Wednesday.

Another major decision taken in the meeting was to integrate all government hospitals, PHCs and village clinics to the respective



medical colleges.

This reform is for providing better medical care and for better coordination between the medical staff and an SoP should be prepared on the guidelines and responsibilities. Mid level health providers will hereafter be

Community Health Officers.

The Chief Minister said that Parvatipuram Manyam district would get a new medical college and steps should be taken in this direction.

The Family Doctor concept should be effectively implement-

ed, the Chief Minister said, adding that the Village Clinics and PHCs construction work should be expedited. Ambulance services should be at hand. The officials said mapping was done.

Every Village Clinic will have 3 to 4 employees and will carry out 14 types of tests. Medical hubs should come up in all districts and booster doses should be given to everyone above 18 years of age.

Minister for Medical and Health, Vidadala Rajini, CS Sameer Sharma, Medical and Health Department Chief Secretary MT Krishna Babu, Health and Family Welfare Director J Srinivas, Health Department Special Secretary, GS Naveen Kumar, APMSIDC VC and MD D Muralidhar Reddy,

AP Vaidyavidhana Parishad Commissioner, Dr V Vinod Kumar, Medical and Health Director (Drugs), Ravi Shankar, Dr YSR AHCT Additional CEO MS Hariprasad and other officials were present on the occasion.

**Godavari is in spate with heavy
inflow, relief operations begin**

PNS ■ ELURU

The river Godavari has been in spate again for the third successive time since last month and the government machinery in Eluru, WG, Konaseema and ASR districts have been put on high alert. The relief operations have begun.

The river Godavari has started receiving heavy inflow since Sunday and the flood water is gradually increasing. Aggrading the flood situation, the tributaries including Indravati, Pranitha, Kinnerasani and Shabari were also in spate with heavy inflows on Wednesday. The water level stood at 54.6 feet at Bhadrachalam and 15.08 lakh cusecs of water was flowing on the evening of Wednesday.

Many villages were inundated in

Kukkunuru and Velerupadu mandal and the road connectivity to many villages in the mandals was cut off. As the flood water was overflowing on the road at many places the officials stopped vehicular traffic on the road leading to the villages.

The villagers were using country boats to reach main roads. Thousands of villagers returned to their homes from the relief centres a few days ago and they were asked to be prepared to leave for relief camps again following the heavy inflows to the river Godavari.

The villages which are in the mandals which were merged in AP after bifurcation were bearing the brunt of the floods.

**‘Two overseas education
schemes are different’**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarajana has clarified that there is no truth in the propaganda being spread by TDP leaders that Ambedkar's name was removed and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's name was given to the Overseas Study Scheme. The Minister on Wednesday said that Opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu, who wanted to gain political advantage, was spreading false propaganda and confusion among the people by using his 'friendly media' and now trying to spread another lie.

**'Jagananna Videshi
Vidya Deevena' covers
all communities and
provides more benefits****RBI seeks public
feedback on charges
in payment systems**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

**YSRCP files intervention petition in apex court
○ Says welfare programmes are meant to uplift people**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ruling YuvaJana Shramika Rythu Congress Party filed an intervention application in the Apex Court on Wednesday justifying the welfare programmes undertaken by the State government, stating that ours is a welfare State.

Represented by general secretary of the YSRCP V Vijayasai Reddy and filed by senior Supreme Court advocate on record Mahfooz A Nazki, the intervention application (IA) is related to the writ petition filed by Ashwini Kumar

The YSR Congress party, justifying the welfare programmes it had undertaken for uplifting the poor.

Upadhyay on the freebies extended to the poor to lure the voters.

It may be recalled that Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the DMK had already filed intervention applications in the same writ petition.

The YSR Congress party, justifying the welfare programmes it had undertaken for uplifting the poor, recalls that the Constitution of India declares India

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said nearly 60 per cent of all the vaccines used in the world are produced in India and over the decades, the country has made remarkable contribution to vaccinating the world.

India today is double dosing every citizen and produced COVID-19 vaccines even during the lockdown period, she added.

Justice demanded for Hazira Begum's family

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minority Hakkula Parirakshana Samithi (MHPS) staged a protest at the Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada demanding the arrest of the accused persons, and justice for the Hazira Begum, who was raped and murdered at Yerrabodu of Gonegandla Mandal in Kurnool district. All political parties and associations extended their support for the dharna.

Even two years after Hazira Begum's murder, no action has been taken by the State government to nab the culprits. MHPS State president Farooq Shubli organised a protest with the support of all political parties, women's associations, minority associations, and Hazira's mother Begum Biya in Vijayawada.

**‘Naidu trying to block development of State’****He challenged Pawan to contest in 175 seats**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IT and Industries Minister Gudivada Amarnath has said that the government is adhered to industrial development through ease of doing policy and working to provide employment to locals in the industries. He said that Opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu was not happy when the State was developing industrially, and that was why he was trying to block the development and criticising the government.

Addressing a press meet here on Wednesday, Minister Amarnath



objected to the dragging of CM Jagan's wife Bharatamma's name by Naidu and Lokesh in their murky

politics. He said that they were not talking about the alleged differences between Lokesh and his wife and said that Lokesh had to settle the matter himself.

He alleged that the father and son wanted to play dirty politics by throwing mud at those who were not involved in politics and demanded that they refrain from such criticisms. Minister Amarnath said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was working dedicatedly for industrial development in AP.

Now, taste local flavours as vendors return on trains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The Railways will also provide them designer carts and kiosks to sell their wares at stations and on trains.

Part of the "One Station One Product" policy announced this year in the Union budget, the Railways aims to promote a local product at each railway station.

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

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

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

This is not all.

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

different compartments to hold varied products and built-in areas to store additional goods. The design even has areas where products can be displayed. Presently, only IRCTC-approved vendors are allowed to sell goods on stations and trains.

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

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

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

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

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



Vision problems rampant in kids

■ Red Cross and LVPEI join hands to treat children with vision problems

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

This may be because of poverty or ignorance. But, many children from modest economic backgrounds are seen reading books keeping close to the eyes while some cannot read writings on backboards in classrooms. Since their parents cannot afford to provide the best eye care,



these children continue to live with vision problems, which may become serious problems in future.

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

But, in poor families the parents are not taking care of

their children's vision problems. Nowadays, some States have initiated programmes to screen school children for vision and distribute spectacles. But, there are many children in Child Care Institutions, who are orphans, semi orphans or children in need of care and protection that didn't come under their screening net and even those covered under different schemes could not get treatment or surgeries for needy children.

BVS Kumar, State coordinator, AP Red Cross Blood Banks and Projects, has taken this issue to the notice of Dr



A Sridhar Reddy, Chairman of IRCS, AP State branch. L V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad, will join hands with the Red Cross to help the underprivileged children in providing safe vision. Accordingly, the State coordinator discussed the matter with Jachin, General Manager of LVPEI, and signed an MoU for screening, providing spectacles, treatment and performing required surgeries free of cost to all children living in licensed Child Care Institutions of 26 districts of Andhra Pradesh with the cooperation of the Women and Child Welfare and the

Juvenile Welfare departments, covering nearly 40,000 children in all districts.

Red Cross and LVPEI have prepared screening schedules for all districts and the programme is in full swing in all districts. East Godavari, Srikakulam and Chittoor have almost covered all Child Care Institutions in their districts and the programme will cover all children in all districts within a month or two.

The district collectors, who are the presidents of IRCS district branches, are happy with the programme and appreciated the LV Prasad Eye Institute.

Gadkari, Chouhan dropped from BJP parliamentary board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The party also rejigged its Central Election Committee (CEC) and named Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Union minister Bhopender Yadav among its new members. Gadkari and Chouhan ceased to be CEC members after their ouster from the board.

All parliamentary board members, which include Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh and BJP president J P Nadda,



automatically become part of the CEC, which has some additional members as well.

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

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

Commission for Minorities. Former Union ministers Jual Oram and Shah Nawaz Hussain have been dropped from the CEC. After these changes, the board now has the full strength of 11 members while the CEC has 15 leaders.

The new entrants to the CEC are Rajasthan leader Om Mathur and BJP women wing chief Vanathi Srinivasan besides Fadnis and Bhopender Yadav. Srinivasan replaces her predecessor Vijaya Rahatkar as the party's 'Mahila Morcha' chief as its an ex-officio member.

With Chouhan gone, there will be no chief minister on the board.

There was speculation that Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath may make an entry. Union minister Piyush Goyal, who is also the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha, Dharmendra Pradhan and Bhopender Yadav were also seen as contenders. Yadav, though, is in the CEC now.

Justice demanded for Hazira...

Continued from Page 1

The protesters displayed posters with Hazira Begum's photo and raised slogans.

Speaking on the occasion, MHPS State president Farooq Shubli said that attacks had been increasing on the Dalits, minorities, and women in the State, but the government did not take any action.

Even after two years, Hazira Begum's family has not gotten justice. The State government and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy backed the offenders and did not take action, he alleged. If the State government does not take action, agitations would be continued, he warned.

CPI State secretary and former MLA K Ramakrishna asked the State government why no arrests were made in the Hazira Begum case. They are moving in society freely, which would take a wrong message to other people, he said. The ruling YSRCP leaders protect the accused persons. He demanded that the State government arrest the accused persons and provide justice to Hazira Begum's mother.

TDP politburo member and former MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao said that Hazira Begum was raped and murdered by the supporters of YSRCP and so, police officers do not arrest them. Police are diverting the case and

they are forcing Hazira's mother Begum Biya, but she was not bending to them, he said.

CPM central committee member and former MLA MA Gafoor demanded immediate arrest of the accused persons and justice for her family. If the State government failed in this regard, all parties would organise agitations across the State, he added.

AP Mahila Samakhyas State general secretary P Durga Bhavani, AIDWA AP general secretary D Rama Devi, Congress party leader Sunkara Padma Shri, and others participated in the protest.

INTEREST SUBVENTION SCHEME

Centre approves Rs 34,856 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With RBI hiking the lending rate, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday earmarked Rs 34,856 crore towards the interest subvention scheme to help banks provide short term agriculture loans of up to Rs 3 lakh at a rate of 7 per cent.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the Cabinet has decided to restore interest subvention on short term agriculture loans to 1.5 per cent for all financial institutions. The interest subvention of 1.5 per cent will be provided to lending institutions for financial years 2022-23 to 2024-25 for short term loans of up to Rs 3 lakh to the farmers.

Vigilance raids fertiliser shops, 15 cases registered

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Director General and Principal Secretary of Vigilance and Enforcement Department, Dr Shankha Brath Bagchi said that with a view to control the price and quality of the seeds, fertilisers and insecticides for the benefit of farmers, surprise inspections were conducted again by the Vigilance & Enforcement officials on 47 wholesalers/retail units across the State on Wednesday. He further said that the 47 shops included three shops selling seeds, 35 shops selling fertilisers and nine shops selling insecticides.

Dr Shankha Brath Bagchi said that based on 49 inspections, 14 cases were filed U/s 6A of



Essential Commodities Act, 1955 on excess Stock limits as per G.O.Ms.No.14, Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies (CS.I) Department, dated: 03-12-2021 and 1 Criminal cases (Indian Penal Code and Essential Commodities Act) were also filed. He stated that

the Vigilance & Enforcement department is giving statutory warning against the wholesale and retail traders to prevent illegal hoarding and black marketing of seeds, fertilisers and insecticides and to ensure sale of good quality seeds, fertilisers and insecticides in the

State. Dr Shanka Brath Bagchi has warned that the fertilizers required for Kharif cultivation should be fully available to the farmers, and that strict action would be taken against those who commit irregularities by selling at high prices.

'Naidu trying to block development of State'

Continued from Page 1

For instance, the production centre of ATC Tyres manufacturing company of Japan's prestigious Yokohama Group was inaugurated the other day by CM Jagan in Atchutapuram SEZ of Anakapalli district. It can be said to be a milestone for the industrial revolution taking place in the state. He claimed that Yokohama group started work in 2020 in their government, refuted claims of Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh about the credit of the industry to their government and claimed that the credit

purely goes to CM Jagan.

Minister Amarnath termed Jana Sena as Kamma Jana Sena and not Kapu Jana Sena for surrendering to Naidu. He stated that Jana Sena is working under Telugu Desam Party Script and Chandrababu Production and running under the direction of Nadendla Manohar. He said that all Kapus in the state know that the party led by Pawan Kalyan is not Kapu Jana Sena. Amarnath challenged Pawan Kalyan to contest in 175 seats in the next election.

Amarnath demanded that Lokesh and Naidu release the

details of investments and industries which came to AP during the five years of Telugu Desam government. He said that CM Jagan was running the government on four pillars of public welfare, public prosperity, people's development and people's happiness. He questioned what Naidu did for the State during the five-year rule of the Telugu Desam government. He alleged that Naidu conducted partnership summits four times claiming jobs for 40 lakh people and spending about Rs. 150 crore on events, but nothing happened and the public money was wasted.

Continued from Page 1

The State bifurcation has caused widespread economic deprivation in the successor State of Andhra Pradesh. Owing to the inequitable reorganisation, the successor State of Andhra Pradesh inherited 58 percent of the combined State's population but only 45 percent of the combined State's revenues. Added to this, the policy paralysis in the State during the period 2014-19 have resulted in many crucial sectors such as education, health and agriculture, demonstrating poor performance.

Confronted with the above, it was essential that the new government in

which the people have overwhelmingly reposed faith, implement impactful programmes to mitigate the distress, the application said.

It would not be appropriate to regard the initiatives of the Governments formulated in adherence to the principles fundamental to Governance, enunciated in Part - IV of the Constitution of India, in areas such as education, health, woman empowerment, agriculture, housing, poverty upliftment and support to the old and needy, as freebies.

The application prayed the Supreme Court to permit the applicant to intervene in the Writ Petition No 43 that is filed by Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Godavari is in spate with heavy inflow, relief operations begin

Continued from Page 1

All the villagers in the six mandals were vulnerable to flood threat due to their proximity to the river Godavari.

The villagers talking to the media alleged that they were not provided information by the officials of the floods to the river Godavari. Meanwhile, The

Intermediate advanced supplementary examinations were postponed due to the floods to the river Godavari, Chinturu government junior College principal Raghuram told the media.

The officials said that three NDRF and 3 SDRF teams were deployed to the villages to carry out relief operations in Konaseema and ASR districts.

The teams had begun relief operations at Eyenavilli, Mamidikuduru and P Gannavaram villages in Konaseema district and Kunavaram, officials said.

Meanwhile, the villagers of Gokavaram in Kunavaram mandal in ASR district staged a novel protest against the apathy of the officials in providing them compensation.

The villagers stood in waist deep flood water of the river Godavari raising slogans demanding payment compensation. They said that they lost everything in the floods of the river Godavari in the month of July.

They were in relief camps for 15 days but they were not given any financial assistance. They said that they came to their villages from

the relief camps recently and the officials today asked them to move to the relief camps in the wake of the heavy flood to the river Godavari again.

"We were given only Rs 2,000 but not given compensation to the damaged and collapsed houses. We demand compensation should be disbursed at the earliest", the villagers said.

India supplies 60% of vaccines used worldwide: FM

Continued from Page 1

Launching the book 'India's Vaccine Growth Story' by Sajjan Singh Yadav, Additional Secretary, Expenditure Department, Sitharaman said it is in the country's DNA to be able to contribute to world vaccination.

"Over the decades India has made remarkable contribution. Nearly 60 per cent of all the vaccines which are used in the world are produced in India. India has singular contribution to make to the world in

terms of vaccination and that which is being produced and supplied to the entire world," Sitharaman said.

Today, the country is double dosing every citizen, she said, adding it is not easy to produce and execute COVID vaccination at that scale.

India crossed the target of 200 crore COVID vaccinations in a time-bound manner. So far, 208.57 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered under the nationwide inoculation drive.

No change in rule for booking tickets for kids' travel in train

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As there have been reports of the public claiming that there is a change in rules of booking tickets for children below 5 years of age, the Indian Railways said, "These media reports are misleading. It is informed that Indian Railways has not introduced any changes with regards to booking of tickets for children travelling in the train. On the demand of the passengers, an option has been given to them to buy a ticket and book a berth for their under-5-year-old child if they want.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹205
Without Skin	₹215
Broiler at Farm	₹190

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	462
HYDERABAD	460
VISAKHAPATNAM	460
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.62

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TIDCO COLONIES

Officials told to expedite provision of amenities

PNS ■ GUNTUR

District Collector M Venugopal Reddy directed the officials concerned to expedite providing amenities in the TIDCO housing colony and hand over the houses to the beneficiaries on October 2.

The Collector, along with MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, MLA Murugudu Hanumantha Rao and Mangalagiri-Tadepalli Municipal Corporation Commissioner Sarada Devi, inspected the TIDCO houses at Mangalagiri on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Venugopal Reddy said that the infrastructure works in Jagananna Nagar housing colony should be completed on a war footing. The Collector directed the officials of the concerned departments to work in coordination to provide drains, roads, electricity facility and provide drinking water.

The contractors and the TIDCO officials brought to the notice of the Collector that there was a shortage of sand for the construction. The Collector immediately responded and ordered the officials of the concerned departments to take steps to provide sufficient sand as soon as possible.

Later, the Collector, MLC Hanumantha Rao and MLA Ramakrishna Reddy held a review meeting with officials of



the concerned departments at Mangalagiri-Tadepalli Municipal Corporation.

The municipal department officials informed the Collector that the registration process of the beneficiaries is not being done quickly and due to lack of sufficient staff in the register office. The Collector suggested that they would speak to the district Registrar and take steps to complete the registration process expeditiously.

Collector Venugopal Reddy told the officials that the bankers should be urged to sanction loans to the beneficiaries of Jagananna Nagar houses at the earliest. The bankers should complete the loan process by August 30, he said. The Collector directed the municipal authorities to complete all the registration and mortgage work by the end of August.

Venugopal Reddy asked the officials to take the registration

process of houses as a challenge, work with commitment and work hard to provide houses to the beneficiaries at the earliest.

He also asked the officials to inform him through WhatsApp of the daily report on the process of loan sanction and house registrations. Municipal Commissioner Sarada Devi appealed to the Collector to allocate two acres of land for a dump yard.

VMC council meet witnesses heated

AP TIDCO house allotment still hot topic

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) council meeting was held on Wednesday, chaired by Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi. More than 63 questions were there in the agenda, which were sent to the council by several corporators. VMC did not allow the media to cover the council meeting, in which the opposition party members' raised the issue in the council.

The meeting witnessed a heated argument between the ruling YSRCP and Opposition TDP and CPM corporators on various issues that the VMC had failed to resolve.

The majority of members expressed dissatisfaction over the sanitation measures in the city and the mosquito menace. VMC authorities said that they had allocated Rs.1.5 crore in the budget to prevent the mosquito menace and focused on fogging, and anti-larvae activity.

Once again, the AP TIDCO housing scheme was a hot topic in the council meeting. A long discussion was held between YSRCP and TDP members over the selection of beneficiaries of the AP TIDCO housing scheme. TDP members alleged that YSRCP intentionally ignored the TIDCO housing and the ruling party members condemned the allegations and shouted at each other.

Meanwhile, CPM Corporator Boya Satya Babu raised a question seeking details of money to be returned to the beneficiaries who paid



an advance for houses. MLA Malladi Vishnu asked the council to seek vigilance and ACB inquiry on allegations of misappropriation in applications sold for TIDCO housing. He also sought an inquiry on fake TDR bonds. TDP also demanded the inquiry and the council made a resolution seeking an inquiry.

CPM and TDP members condemned the orders passed by the VMC authorities directing sanitation workers to pay garbage user taxes to get their salaries. They also demanded VMC withdraw targets and get garbage user charges collection that does not pressurise the ward sanitation secretaries. However, CPM member Boya Satya Babu demanded the VMC postpone the collection of garbage user charges as the matter is pending with the High Court.

Members demanded that the engineering wing explain the reasons for distinct drains. Chief Engineer Prabhakar explained that the project was



taken up as a part of the JNNURM project in 2007 and minor works were pending to bring the entire drain system into functioning. Council asked the officials to give top priority to this project as locals are facing severe inconvenience. Several members representing hill areas of the city expressed dissatisfaction over the failure of the underground drainage system.

Some of the ruling party members proposed to install statues of a few leaders on the city roads, also, various corporators and committees of the council sought to change the names of the various streets in Vijayawada. YSRCP floor leader Venkata Satyanarayana proposed to install the former minister Devineni Rajasekar (Nehru) statue and also. A pro-

posal came to the council for the installation of former CM Dr. YS Rajasekar Reddy and the other members also proposed several statue installations on the city roads.

Meanwhile, CPM member Satya Babu gave a dissent note on a collection of true-up charges and cut the subsidy of 200 units of power to SC and STs, which the council rejected. He gave proposals to implement GO 60 to enhance financial assistance for funerals of VMC employees. In this connection, Satya Babu raised several issues relating to municipal contract workers, leading to arguments between CPM and YSRCP members. Then, MLA Malladi Vishnu directed the Mayor to suspend CPM floor leader Satya Babu from the council meeting.



CM failed to keep assurance on power tariff: Babu Rao

'State government imposed Rs.1,400 crore additional burden on people'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPM State secretary Ch Babu Rao has alleged that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy failed to keep his assurance of not increasing electricity charges. An additional burden of about Rs.1,400 crore was imposed on the people by increasing power tariff from April, he said.

The Left leader visited Ajith Singh Nagar, Vambay Colony, Rajiv Nagar, and Vaddera Colony in Vijayawada on Wednesday. He conducted a door-to-door campaign and explained how the State government imposed electricity charges on various grounds.

Speaking on the occasion, Babu Rao said that the State government started collections in the name of true-up charges to the tune of Rs.2,900 crore, which would be continued for up to 36 months. The State government is ready to impose another burden of Rs.630 crore on the people, he said. The YSRCP government has been collecting additional deposits, consumer deposits and others, he added.

He further said that the government was collecting additional amounts such as fixed charges and electricity cess, which are not visible to the consumers. Also, the State government cancelled up to 200 units of free power for SCs and STs, he alleged. "The Central government has introduced an electricity amendment bill in

Parliament and trying to adopt the bill in the next sessions. If the bill is passed, new rules will be implemented to amend electricity charges every month," he said.

Babu said that electricity charges would be increased every month like petrol, diesel, and domestic gas prices. The Central government is trying to hand over electricity distribution to corporate companies and the BJP-led NDA government is more interested in protecting private electricity companies, he said.

The Left leader said that the State and Central governments joined hands to impose additional burdens on the people. The Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) is conducting a nominal inquiry and giving approval for enhancing the electricity charges without taking the opinions of the public.

From January to March, Rs. 630 crore will be collected in the name of additional true-up charges, and for that ERC is ready to conduct a public hearing in Hyderabad on September 7. Even after eight years of the State bifurcation, the ERC office is continuing in Hyderabad, he said.

"It is very sad that ERC is inviting people to Hyderabad to deliver their opinions on electricity charges. It is objectionable. The State government should shift the ERC office from Hyderabad to Vijayawada immediately," Babu Rao demanded.

HMs asked to upload MoUs on Nadu-Nedu phase II works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao has directed all headmasters and headmistresses to upload the details of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) regarding the works which were taken under the second phase of Manabadi Nadu-Nedu scheme. He asked them to speed up the building construction works.

The District Collector conducted a video conference on Nadu-Nedu, Jagananna Sashvatha Gruha Hakku Pathakam, Jagananna Housing, and other schemes with RDOs, Municipal Commissioners, Special Officers, MPDOs, Tahsildars, Education Officers



and Engineering Assistants on Wednesday.

He said that Manabadi Nadu-Nedu works should be expedited. "Funds for the construction of the school buildings have been released and the headmasters or headmistresses of the respective schools are to upload MoUs," he said.

He said that about 15,701

houses were in below basement level and he directed the officials concerned to take them into the basement stage. He sought an explanation from some of the mandal-level officers and engineering assistants where there was no progress in works. He directed them to take necessary steps to reach targets every

week.

The Collector also asked the officials to complete the pending registrations for One Time Settlement (OTS) under the Jagananna Sashvatha Gruha Hakku Pathakam. He made it clear that photos should be affixed on the registration documents. Registration works at the Grama/Ward sachivalayams should be sped up, and MPDOs and MEOs should be aware of the new documentation apps, he said.

Joint Collector S Nupur Ajay Kumar, DRO K Mohan Kumar, Deputy Collector S Rama Lakshmi, Housing EE Ravikanth, DEO CV Renuka, and other officers were present.

'Future of youth facing threat under YSRCP rule'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior TDP leader Yanamala Ramakrishnudu said on Wednesday that the future of youth under Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was facing a serious threat. Ramakrishnudu, said that Jagan Mohan Reddy, who came to power by making several promises to the youth, did nothing for them in the past three years. Employment to the youth in Andhra Pradesh has become a dream, he stated.

He recalled the assurance given by CM YS Jagan to the youth that soon after coming



to power, he would fill 2.3 lakh vacancies and release the job calendar every year. The senior TDP leader said that non job calendar was released in the past three years. The condition of the State in providing employment and creating job opportunities has become pathetic, he felt. As the industrial sector has not been recognised as a priority sector, the future of the youth is

thrown in a dilemma.

The TDP leader said that there was no proper action plan to fill the job vacancies and no investments in the State after CM Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power.

In fact, industrialists are withdrawing their investments following which the unemployment rate has gone up following which indiscrimination has reached its peak.

He said CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, who came to power promising regularisation of the services of the contact employees, has in fact removed them from their jobs, throwing them onto the roads.

CJ Prashanth Kumar Mishra and Collector Dilli Rao inspect security steps at City Civil Court Complex

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh High Court Chief Justice (CJ) Prashant Kumar Mishra, NTR district collector S Dilli Rao, and NTR Vijayawada Deputy Police Commissioner Vishan Gunni inspected the security arrangements at the City Civil Courts Complex premises on Wednesday, as it will be inaugurated by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana, and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on August 20.

In this connection, CJ Prashant Kumar Mishra said that tight security should be arranged at the court premises to avoid untoward incidents. He discussed with DCP Vishal Gunni the bandobast arrangements. The police department should coordinate with other departments and make success the function as a grand, he said.

Earlier CJ Prashanth Kumar Mishra, collector Dilli Rao, and DCP Gunni visited all areas of the court complex premises and conducted



a review meeting with the police and other departments.

AP High Court Judge Justice Shyam Sundar, district court judge Aruna Sarika, in charge of MSJ court Srinivas, CM's programmes coordinator, and MLC Talasila Raghu Ram, joint collector S Nupur Ajay Kumar, CSB ADCP Ch Lakshmiapathi, Bar Association president Vishnu Vardhan and other department officers attended.

Degree college guest faculty for job security, pay hike

They get Rs.14,400 per month at present

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government recently increased the wages of sanitary workers, who are working in the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department, from Rs.12,000 to Rs.15,000. They also get a monthly health allowance of Rs. 6,000. However, the Ph.D. holders who are working as guest faculties in various government degree colleges are getting Rs. 200 per day, that is Rs.14,400 per month, based on working hours.

There shouldn't be a comparison between sanitary workers and guest lecturers. The

point is, these lecturers are drawing very minimal wages when compared to daily labourers. They feel proud as well as disappointed at the same time when they meet their students who are working in MNCs and draw salaries up to Rs.1 lakh.

The degree college guest lecturers have demanded that the government provide job security to them with consolidated pay or enhance their hourly based remuneration from Rs 200 to at least 500. Meanwhile, the State government enhanced the remuneration of contract teachers who are working in model schools and AP residential schools



from Rs. 21,320 to Rs. 54,000 in February, as per the new PRC. The contract teachers include art, craft and music teachers, PD, PET, junior assistants, librarians, PGTs, and TGTs.

Compared to them, the con-

dition of degree college guest faculty, who have been working in their institutions for several years, is pathetic. The State government had enhanced hourly basis remuneration in 2017 from Rs.100 to Rs.200, not exceeding 14,400 per month and limiting the working hours to 72.

According to sources, as of now, 520 guest lecturers who completed their Ph.D. degrees are working under sanctioned posts in degree and junior colleges, while 200 lecturers are working under non-sanctioned posts. As the State government has increased the salaries of contract workers, they demand that the government

look into their request for consolidated pay.

As per the new PRC, the State government should increase their remunerations from Rs.200 to Rs.500, said the guest lecturers. They are doing the same work as government lecturers, but receiving very low wages. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is helping all people, except guest lecturers, they complained.

According to Bhavani Sankar Reddy Dasari, president of the Andhra Pradesh Degree Colleges Guest Faculty Association (APDGCFA), no worker is getting less pay than a guest lecturer in the State. APDGCFA vice-president

KVV Sarma stated that according to the norms of the UGC, hourly pay should be Rs 1,500. "The university faculty are getting salaries as per the UGC norms, but the faculty working in the degree colleges under the same universities are not getting the same pay for the same work," he said. He appealed to the State government to pay them at least Rs 500 per hour. APDGCFA zonal in-charge T Chandra Sekhar said that though they were Ph.D. holders, they were getting the lowest wages which were insufficient. He said they hoped that CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy would soon announce consolidated pay for them.

ANTI-INCUMBENCY FACTOR

KCR better placed than Jagan

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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



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

But in Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam party is the only opposition party to challenge the ruling YSRCP. The two major opposition parties in Telangana may split the anti-incumbency vote between themselves. It may turn out to be advantageous to the TRS. The BJP is also emerging as a strong opposition party on a par with the Congress. In the triangular fight, the ruling party will have some advantage unless there is severe negativity against the ruling party.

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

There is no strong third party to come to the rescue of the ruling party.

If there is any anti-incumben-

cy, it will go in favour of TDP. In Andhra Pradesh, the Congress is not likely to recover from the state bifurcation effect.

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

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

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

57%, according to surveys. Even though the Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy are facing no threat to their posts in the upcoming Assembly elections, as per survey reports in Andhra Pradesh, the main opposition may increase the number of Assembly seats.

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

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

Lightning kills four agriculture workers

PNS ■ ELURU

Four agriculture workers were killed and three others were injured when lightning struck them at Bogolu village in Lingapalem village in Eluru district in the wee hours on Wednesday.

Police said that when the deceased were working at a eucalyptus orchard, lightning struck on them killing R Raju (30), V Dharma Raju (26), G Kondababu (26) and K Srinivas (20).

Three others were injured in the incident and they were undergoing treatment in the Government General Hospital here where their condition is said to be very critical.

Meanwhile the activists and leaders CITU and Agriculture



he alleged.

The orchard owner had given only Rs 25,000 to the kin of the bereaved families and forced them to take the bodies. When the Union leaders tried to prevent the shifting of bodies, the police pushed them aside and forcibly shifted the bodies.

"We demand a compensation of Rs 20 lakh each from the family and employment to the eligible person. Better treatment should be provided to those who are undergoing treatment in the GGH, Vijayawada", he said. CITU district president P Kishore, city secretary V Sai Babu, secretary J Gopi and other trade union leaders were among those who took part in the darna.

works union staged a darna at the government hospital here demanding the government to announce ex gratia to the bereaved families. The trade union leaders raised slogans at the hospitals demanding compensation.

Speaking on the occasion Agriculture workers association district president PV

Rama Krishna said that some families came to the district from Kakinada district to work at the orchard and four of them lost their lives as lightning struck on them. The forest officials colluded with the contractor, who brought the workers to the district not to extend any compensation to the families,

Leopard strays into Veterinary varsity campus

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A leopard strayed into the campus of SV University Veterinary on the night of Tuesday. The leopard chased a dog in the campus which was captured by the CCTVs.

The security staff of SV Veterinary University informed the matter to the forest officials. The forest officials rushed there and found the pugmarks of the leopard. The dwellers of the colonies located near to the university demand the forest officials to capture the leopard.



8 injured as pvt bus overturns

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

As many as 8 passengers were injured when a private bus overturned at the outskirts of Nallajerla on the night of Tuesday.

Police that the Orange Travels bus was going to Visakhapatnam from Guntur

with 35 passengers. The bus overturned on the road in which 8 bus passengers suffered injuries. They were admitted to the Government General in Eluru. The condition is said to be stable. The police registered a case. The over speed of the bus and rash driving is said to be the reason for the accident.

No development in Rayalaseema region under YSRCP

PNS ■ KADAPA

CPI national secretary Narayana deplored that no development had taken place in the Rayalaseema region since Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy became the Chief Minister of the state.

The CPI held its state conference in Rayachoti in Annamayya district on Wednesday. Addressing the leaders and activists, Narayana said that Only murders and threatening were taking place in the region instead of development. The MPs, MLAs and MLCs of the ruling party were limited to taking out rallies and processions, he slammed.

Referring to the proposal of establishing a steel factory here, Narayana ridiculedly said that it is better for the state government to ask Gali Janardhan Reddy to establish a steel factory here, if the government could not do the same.

If the steel factory is established here it would help to create over 10,000 jobs. Alleging that the State and Central governments were imposing and hiking taxes indiscriminately, Narayana said that the Central government is privatizing public sector units.

The CPI senior leader lashed out that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy had adopted double standards in respect of privatizing the Visakhapatnam steel factory. "The Chief Minister is trying to make people believe that he is opposing the privatization of Visakhapatnam steel plant in the State, but at the same time, when he is in Delhi he is extending support to the Central government for privatizing the plant", he lambasted.

Taking a dig at the BJP, he said that tussles erupted within the BJP and cited Nitish Kumar's exit from the NDA as an indication. He advised Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy to disassociate himself from the BJP. "To do justice to five crore AP people, Jagan Mohan Reddy should cut off his close association with the BJP. Otherwise, the people of the state will immerse the YSRCP in the sea", he warned.

Coming down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Narayana flayed that except appearing in costly dresses, the Prime Minister had not done anything for the country so far. The Prime Minister is trying to protect those who plundered money and stashed the money illegally, criticised.



SP, Collector inspect arrangements for CM's visit

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of police Malika Garg, Collector AS Dinesh Kumar, along with other officials, inspected the arrangements being made for the visit of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The Chief Minister will visit Chimakurthi in the district on August 24 th to unveil the statues of former Chief Minister late Y S Rajasekhara Reddy and former MLA late Buchepalli Subba Reddy.

The SP and other officials inspected the BVSR

Engineering College ground, the helipad, the parking slots and dais for the meeting.

The SP discussed with Collector Dinesh Kumar and other officials on the Chief Minister convoy route, construction of barricades and other security arrangements.

ZP chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma, Collector Dinesh Kumar, MLAs Balineni Srinivasa Reddy and former MLA Buchepalli Shiva Prasad Reddy were among those who inspected the arrangements.



WG youth ascended Mount Elbrus

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A 22-year-old youth of West Godavari district has achieved a great feat by climbing Mount Elbrus.

Mount Elbrus is the highest and most prominent peak in Russia and Europe. It is situated in the western part of the Caucasus and is the highest peak of the Caucasus Mountains.

Talking to the media from Russia, 22-year-old Gogulamanda Das, belonging to Lankalakoderu in Palakollu mandal, said on Wednesday that he climbed Mount Elbrus, which is located 18,500 metres above sea level.

Gogulamanda Das achieved the feat by crossing ice floes and facing winds of 52 km per hour. A team of seven members left the base camp in Russia on August 12th to climb Mount Elbrus, which is 18,500 km above sea level.



He said that he had walked tirelessly for five and a half hours from 11 pm on August 15th and reached at 5.30 am on the 16th morning according to Indian time. He hoisted

ed the nation of India at its peak. He thanked MLA Cherukuvada Srinanganatha Raju for extending Rs 2.70 lakh financial assistance to achieve the feat.

Administrative sanction for Veligonda's Teegaleru-5 project

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Municipal Administration Audimulapu Suresh said that administrative approvals have been given to construct the Teegaleru-5 (China Kandaleru) project under the Veligonda project works at cost of Rs 83.78 crore.

The minister said here on Wednesday that the government had issued GO NO 1824 approving the administrative sanctions for Rs 83.78 crore worth works of Teegaleru-5 of the Veligonda project.

The people of Pullalacheruvu mandal thanked the minister and appreciated him for his efforts in getting sanctioned Rs 83.78 crore. The Teegaleru-5 project is a long pending dream of the people of villagers in Pullalacheruvu mandal.



The minister said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy assured to sanction the project when he visited the district a few months ago. He fulfilled his assurance by approving the project works, he said.

The minister said that if the Teegaleru project was completed

ed that would provide irrigation water to 11,500 acres and that would change the fate of the farmers in the area.

The villagers of the mandals are indebted to the Chief Minister for approving the long pending project, the minister claimed.

Mineral water RO plant opens in library

PNS ■ GUNTUR

MLC Lella Appireddy inaugurated a mineral water RO plant in the library at Arundalpet here on Wednesday.

Marupudi Shivarama Krishna's wife M Rajanikumari, sons Tej Kumar Ratna Gopal and Srinivasa Babu donated the mineral water RO plant to the library. District library corporation chairman Battula Devanand presided over the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLC said that the government is trying to bring the past glory to the libraries by setting up digital libraries in the state. Efforts are also being made to digitalize the libraries, he said.

The government is aimed to strengthen the library system across the state. All basic amenities are being provided to the libraries and a large number of books are provided to the libraries.

Appireddy said that the government is paying special attention to the development of libraries across the state as part of the education sector cleanup. He said that the library, which once played a vital



role in national development, is getting its past glory with digital technology.

The MLC felicitated the family members of Marupudi Shivarama Krishnaiah's

family members on the occasion. District library secretary Srinivasa Reddy, state students wind president Panuganti Chaitanya and other leaders were present.

Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samithi stages protest in front of APCPCDL

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samithi, a coordination committee of farmers' associations, staged a protest in front of the APCPDCL office near Swarajya Myadanam in the city on Wednesday demanding that the State government continue the free power to agriculture pump sets in the State.

The farmers' association leaders, including Y Kesava Rao, P Jamalaiah, Gundapaneni Uma Vara Prasad, Ulligadda Nageswara Rao, and others addressed the gathering before submitting a memorandum to the officials at the APCPDCL Superintending Office.



Farmers' leaders demand withdrawal of G.O.No.22

They said that the State government issued a GO 22 paving the way for fixing the electricity meters to agriculture pump sets. The government was trying to convince the farmers that the free power

would be continued for another 30 years, but, in reality, the government has no such intentions, they said. The people have seen what happened to subsidies on

LPG, they added.

They further said that the farmers were already reeling under losses as there were no remunerative prices for their produce. A few have committed suicide unable to clear their debts, they said. At this juncture, it was not correct to burden the farmers by fixing the meters for the agriculture pump sets, they said.

Meanwhile, they urged the government to withdraw the GO 22 immediately. They added that the Samithi has decided to organise protests in front of CMD offices at Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, and Vijayawada on August 25.

INDIA CORNER

Everyone knows who the 'real CM' is: Aaditya Thackeray's dig at Shinde

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



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

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



Mizoram student body demands withdrawal of CAA, AFSPA

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



India monitoring developments in its neighbourhood: EAM

PNS ■ BANGKOK

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

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

"I think a spokesman had said



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

The ship was originally scheduled to arrive at the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DECARBONISATION OF TRANSPORT SECTOR

Cabinet approves contract between India and France

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

DALIT BOY DEATH

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

The boy's father and uncle



recounted the incident in the police report.

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

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

which he fell and started bleeding from his ears.

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

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

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

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

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

MHA says no move to shift Rohingyas to EWS flats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The Home Ministry issued a statement clarifying its position.

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

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

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

"India respects & follows @UN Refugee Convention

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

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

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

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

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

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), which func-



tions under the Home Ministry, has constructed EWS flats in Bakkarwala area near Tikri border.

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

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

Kejriwal launches 'national mission'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

figuring in the list of the developed countries.

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Senior advocate Anand

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

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

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

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

The apex court in its order said, However, considering

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

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

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

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

accused in the Bhima Koregaon case, on medical grounds.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) vehemently opposed Rao's plea in the apex court claiming that he is involved in "serious anti-national activities".

The case relates to alleged inflammatory speeches made at the Elgar Parishad conclave held in Pune on December 31, 2017, which the police claimed triggered violence the next day near the Koregaon-Bhima war memorial on the outskirts of the western Maharashtra city.

Fulfill citizens' expectations: Jitendra Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Wednesday asked a group of newly inducted officers to work towards fulfilling citizens expectations in a diligent and result-oriented manner by cutting down delays.

Addressing the Assistant Section Officers (Probationers) of 2019 batch at the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM) here, he said welfare of every citizen is at the heart of national planning and programmes in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for building a new India.

Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, said citizen welfare is not only the prime constitutional mandate of the government, but it is also important for ensuring a participative form of the government. He reminded the probationers that the prime minister has always emphasised treating "government service as 'seva' and not naukri".

Singh told the officers that after qualifying the difficult exam, they are part of the government machinery, and the entire nation looks towards them for playing their role effi-

ciently, smartly and effectively.

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

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

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

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

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



MARITIME SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Navies of India, Malaysia to work jointly

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

The Navy said Admiral Kumar apprised the Malaysian



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

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

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

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

Admiral Reza is an alumnus of the Indian Navy's

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

He is also scheduled to visit his alma mater.

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

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

'Nari Shakti' goes for a toss!

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

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



clarion call to respect women. The Gujarat government chose to free all 11 convicts giving them amnesty as per its policy, allegedly. The release however is sound technically. One of the convicts approached the court for his early release under the Code of Criminal Procedure, as he had served about 15 years. In line with the Supreme Court decision which maintained that the Gujarat government could decide as per its 1992 policy, which was in place at the time of the conviction. The apex court neither stopped nor allowed the release of the convicts. Ironically the state government chose to ignore the central government's guidelines for prisoner release. The central government had recently made a special release policy for convicted prisoners to mark 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and the Rape convicts were categorically listed as not eligible for such release. This is a curious case as there is a so-called double engine government in Gujarat and it is very unlikely that the state government took this decision on its own. There are only two possibilities. Either the government of Gujarat doesn't take the prime minister very seriously (which is very unlikely) or second, it knows what the prime minister says is for mass consumption and so it doesn't need to bother about it. The decision is bizarre as elections are round the corner in Gujarat and the opposition is going to make it an issue and give the BJP bad publicity, especially among the women voters. The BJP has recently suffered due to the Tyagi controversy and it would not like to be called gender insensitive during elections. But it might be thinking of polarizing votes as Bilkis Bano happens to be a Muslim woman. Meanwhile, as the perpetrators of the Bano case walk free another lady Teesta Setalvad struggles to get bail. She was the one who fought for Bilkis Bano!



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

The murder most foul

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

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



cool the tempers and let the incident bury in the past. Life would then go on as before and the Dalit boys would get a lesson in drinking water. Forget the teacher the society and the administration would remain as insensitive as ever. The body of the boy was buried at night. The family was lathi-charged and asked not to make fuss about it. The congress party must walk the talk as Rahul Gandhi has often maintained that his party stands with the marginalized people. One MLA and 12 councilors have stepped down owing to the incident. Pana Chand Meghwal resigned saying he doesn't have the right to remain a legislator if he can't protect his community. That gives some hope that one day change would come as somebody would have the courage to stand up against the abhorable practice of caste sacrificing his position. The incident is condemnable on many counts. The perpetrator is a teacher who was supposed to be a mentor or 'guru' and taking lives of students in certainly not 'guru dharma' The boy was just nine years old and he just wanted to quench his thirst, did not meant to hurt anybody or abused anyone. Gehlout government, if it is really disturbed about it, must set an example and ensure that a clear instruction is issued to all the schools in Rajasthan that no discrimination against any student on any ground would be tolerated and harshest possible action would be taken against the person indulging in castists behavior. Set an example now!

Think of 'Sermon on the Mount'

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



PRAFULL GORADIA

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

resolved and we achieved.

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

We have not had the benefit of such a visionary leader in memory. Now that we have his commandments, we should get down to work. I believe one of the great secrets of American success has been the lack of dynastic inheritance. (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESPECT THE INSTITUTIONS

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

COSTS TO CUT FRIVOLOUS LITIGATION

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

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

Let us build the India of our dreams!



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

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

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

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

A VICIOUS ATTACK ON RUSHDIE

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

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

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

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

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

To be clear, I support the left half of the Republican Party and the right half of the Democratic Party. Also, I'm buying Manchester United you are welcome. Tesla CEO —Elon Musk

We are boycotting the very people who have given the best of business in the industry. All the Khans in the industry are legends. Film producer —Ekta Kapoor

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

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

FIRST COLUMN

INVITE KRISHNA TO RESIDE IN YOUR HEART

We must cleanse our hearts first for Krishna to enter it



RADHANATH SWAMI MAHARAJ

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

Janmashtami is the day when Krishna appeared in this world. He appeared on the eighth day of dark fortnight (Krishna Paksha) in the month of Bhadrapada (August–September). But why does God, Krishna, take




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

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

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

The idea of India has always been inclusive

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



MD THOMAS

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

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

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

'To be inclusive' is to

Selling public sector banks is no solution

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

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

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

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

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

FINANCIAL INCLUSION

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

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

After the Narendra Modi Government



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

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



came to power, Jan Dhan accounts with zero balance were opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), ensuring financial inclusion. So far, 46 crore such Jan Dhan accounts have been opened, through which not only the poor and common people have access to banks and with this they can deposit their micro savings. Direct benefit transfer by the government has also been made possible by these Jan Dhan accounts, which are linked with Aadhaar and mobile phones. Be it transfer of Kisan Samman Nidhi or transfer of COVID related cash to 20 crore women, all this has been made possible only due to Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).

But, we must understand that, today when the share of private banks in deposits and lending is around 36 per cent, only 10 per cent of Jan Dhan accounts have been opened by private banks. This fact speaks tons about the role of public sector banks in financial inclusion.

Not only this, 90 per cent livelihood loans to six crore women under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana are being provided by PSBs and regional rural banks (RRBs), sponsored by PSBs. Similarly, the task of giving loans to street vendors is also performed by public sector banks. In such a situation, naturally, the profitability of private sector banks is higher than that of the public sector banks, because these banks are free from the duty of financial inclusion.

Government banks are bound to implement all government schemes. If financial inclusion and social banking are removed

from the functioning of public sector banks, their profits can also increase in leaps and bounds.

REGULATION BY RBI

The RBI argues that it does not have much say in PSBs' affairs and, therefore, it cannot control them, whereas it has control over private banks. This argument doesn't hold water. The RBI does have control and regulatory powers over PSBs, which include say in key appointments, audit and policy on loans, etc.

As far as NPAs of public sector banks are concerned, it is well known that between 2004 and 2014 (UPA regime), huge loans were given in the name of infrastructure loans and a large number of these loans turned out to be NPAs. To recover these bad debts in one way or the other, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Law was enacted. But, in the process, a lot of money from public sector banks was lost. In such a situation, since the rules have been tightened now and the chances of such frauds recurring in future are very limited.

Therefore, privatization of public sector banks in the name of efficiency can be harmful in view of social banking and financial inclusion requirements.

Supporters of privatization of banks argue that if the manufacturing sector in the country is to be promoted, then privatization of public sector banks is necessary. But now the question is that there is no unanimity about handing over the public sector banks to the big industrial houses, as the same may lead to cronyism. If the promoters of private banks in the

country are not in a position to buy state-owned banks, there is also a danger that the privatization of public sector banks will lead to an increase in the stake of foreigners in the banking sector. It's notable that the exposure of foreigners in the Indian banking system has increased manifold in the last nearly two decades.

Some experts are of the view that privatization is no solution to the present day banking problems. Experience shows that the efficiency of an organization does not depend on its ownership, but on its management. If seen, after the nationalization of banks, the confidence of the general public increased in financial institutions and the mobilisation of household savings in the country increased significantly. Due to all this, necessary financial resources could be mobilized for development in the country. No government bank failed due to the central government's patronage in public sector banks. Many private banks were saved from failure, thanks to interventions of PSBs.

Recently, a private bank named Lakshmi Vilas Bank had to be handed over to DSB, a Singaporean bank. In such a situation, if the financial sector of the country goes under foreign domination due to the privatization of banks, then the economy will have to suffer its consequences. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to carry out the privatization of public sector banks only on the basis of suggestions made by some institutions or some economists. It is necessary to study the changes caused by this and its possible side effects.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

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

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

'To be inclusive' is to

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

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

People of a certain nation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

Disruption now feels like business as usual: Kumar Mangalam

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



DEEPSEA EXPLORATION IN INDIA

ONGC signs deal with ExxonMobil Corp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Rs 50 K cr more under ECLGS to hospitality sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

try through waterways and rivers.

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

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

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

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

Steps to develop waterways with private sector's help: IWA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Gautam Adani to address Forbes Global CEO Conference in Singapore

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



Trauma care soon for mishap victims at nearest point

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

Aramane noted that economic growth happens when highways are efficient.

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

Syrra SGS Tech IPO subscribed 2.27 times on Day 3

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



Vikram Solar gets Sebi nod to mop up funds via IPO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

duction capacity of 2,000 MW.

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

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

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

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

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

Rupee gains 29 paise to close at 79.45 against US dollar



PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

Besides, softening crude oil prices and easing infla-

tionary pressures supported the domestic unit, forex traders said.

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

of 29 paise over its previous close of 79.74.

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

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

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

ATF prices, rupee decline to hit domestic carriers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

petition for the domestic carriers.

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

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

On a month-on-month basis, domestic air passenger traffic was 7 per cent lower in July compared to the June passenger volumes of 10.05 million, given some impact of the cyclical in passenger travel, mainly arising from the lean period during the monsoon, it said.

ICRA said the hardening of fares impacted leisure travel during the month which, in turn, also impacted the volumes.

The ratings agency also said the removal of ceiling on airfares from August 31 will help domestic airlines to bring their ticket prices in line with the supply-demand dynamics.

"Although removal of fare restrictions from August 31 will partially enable domestic carriers to pass on the escalated cost by way of fare hikes, the possibility of such sharp fare hikes is limited, given the intense competition," Banerjee opined.

Joe Jonas admits to using injectables

Singer Joe Jonas has revealed that he uses injectables in his face to smooth out fine lines. "We're all getting older and part of that is being comfortable [in our skin]," the musician told People, reports pagesix.com.

Joe, who celebrated his 33th birthday on August 15, is the new celebrity brand partner for an anti-wrinkle injectable that temporarily improves the appearance of frown lines using a double-filtered formula.

"I don't think it's necessarily something that we have to shy away from, the *Only*

Human crooner said of his experience using injectables. "We can be open and honest about it and be confident and not really shy away from speaking our truth."

He uses the treatment for not only his frown lines, but also to smooth out a scar between his eyebrows.

"I appreciated that it wasn't over the top. It's very light," he raved.

Joe hopes that by speaking out about his cosmetic treatments, other men might feel comfortable doing the same.

"There were all these talks at one point, like, 'Oh, men can't do this or it's weird for

guys to do that,' and I think there's a stigma that's fading, and I like that," he said. "Guys are more openly wearing makeup, and it's great to see. It's like, do whatever you want, you know? It's a beautiful generation that we're living in."

Joe also spoke with Allure about his new partnership. "I didn't feel like I was going into this big thing that you only see on film and TV a I went with a friend and they also did it with me, so it wasn't stress-inducing," he told the outlet, adding, "To me, there's nothing more beautiful than confidence."



Zoe Kravitz shares what drew her to Channing Tatum before they met

Actress Zoe Kravitz was drawn to Channing Tatum before they even met.

The 33-year-old actress is making her directorial debut with *Pussy Island*, and she thinks Tatum is suited to playing a 'dark character' in the movie, reports aceshowbiz.com.

She shared, "I think that's exciting to watch someone who's mostly played boy next door, good guy, love interest, all of that.

I felt, even from afar, before I knew him, that he was a feminist and that he wasn't afraid of exploring that darkness, because he knows he's not that. That's why I was drawn to him and I wanted to meet with him. And I was right."

Kravitz and Tatum started dating after working together on the movie.

However, the actress-turned-director wants to keep their romance out of the spotlight for the time being. She told WSJ Magazine's Fall Women's



Fashion issue, "I guess what I'll say is when you make things with people it's a very sacred space, and when you're compatible with somebody creatively it often opens up other channels, because you're kind of sharing all of yourself."

"I'm really grateful that this movie has brought him into my life that way."

Meanwhile, Kravitz is also relishing the experience of working behind the camera. The actress is one of the most sought-after stars in the movie business,

but she's loving the challenge of directing, too.

She said, "I'm learning a lot about what it takes to make a movie and how many fires are constantly being put out before the actors show up to set. I'm just kind of sitting back and learning and trying to not constantly be in a state of panic.

If you zoom out too much and think about the whole thing at once, it causes a lot of anxiety but if you focus on the present moment, it's really fun."

With Aamir tanking, Akshay delivering 3rd dud, B'wood stares at an abyss

After disaster struck the two Independence Day long week-end releases Aamir Khan's long-awaited, mega-hyped *Laal Singh Chaddha* and the Akshay Kumar-starrer *Raksha Bandhan*, a wag commented that Bollywood has become like the Congress; it has only its past to live on and stares at a dim future, unless a miracle happens.

For Aamir, *Laal Singh Chaddha* has been his worst commercially since his 2000 film *Mela*, despite getting a five-day holiday weekend, starting with *Raksha Bandhan* on August 11 and ending with Independence Day. And it has been his second successive flop after the *Thugs of Hindostan*, which bombed despite the additional presence of Amitabh Bachchan.

For Akshay Kumar, *Raksha Bandhan* has been his third successive dud, starting with *Bachchan Pandey*, which got wiped out by *The Kashmir Files*, and *Samrat Prithviraj*, despite the film being endorsed by the BJP top brass and made tax-free in three states.

Neither of the two films has been able to recover even a part of the money that went into producing them



and much of this money, in fact, was spent on the fees of their leading stars.

They are also not alone at the bottom of the heap, they were preceded by the ignominious failures of *Shamshera* (Ranbir Kapoor and Sanjay Dutt) and Ranveer Singh's *Jayeshbhai Jordaar*.

It is as clear as daylight that Bollywood stars are not drawing audiences in post-Covid India, whose worldview has been altered by story-line-driven original content streaming on OTT platforms. And for the first

time in its history, Bollywood has neither a bankable star, nor a formula that works, not even music, which used to be its USP till not long ago.

At least *Laal Singh Chaddha* had the biggest opening in the overseas market after the other commercial failure, 83, and it may just be able to recover some money in China, where Aamir has a big fan following, but *Raksha Bandhan* has sunk without a trace.

In fact, according to the trade media, among the films that have had the highest opening weekends this year, two are pan-India productions *KGF 2* and *RRR*; one is the sleeper hit, *The Kashmir Files*; and three are Hollywood releases, *Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, *Thor: Love & Thunder* and *Jurassic World Dominion*.

Of the four Bollywood films that

made the cut to the above list, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2* (Rs 215 crore) and *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (Rs 153 crore) are the only two to figure among the top 10 grossers of 2022 across languages.

Neither of them has been powered by a superstar. One was led by the rising Kartik Aaryan. The other by a woman, Alia Bhatt, historically, it has not been easy for a female-centric film to do well in India.

Seven of the remaining eight top-grossers (the eighth is *The Kashmir Files*) are from the South, *KGF 2*, *RRR*, the Kamal Haasan magnum opus *Vikram*, Kichcha Sudeep's 3D Kannada movie *Vikrant Rona*, Tamil actioner *Beast*, Mahesh Babu's *Sarkaru Vaali Paata* and *James*, featuring the late Kannada mega star, Puneeth Rajkumar.

Jugjugg Jeeyo with Varun Dhawan, Anil Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor is at No. 11 and even No. 12 is from deep down South, the Tamil *Valimai*, starring Ajith Kumar and Karthikeya. At least Bollywood can take solace from the fact that it has been produced by Boney Kapoor.

'Jaldi nipta dena':Vicky to panditji at his wedding with Kat

Bollywood heartthrob Vicky Kaushal has shared insights to his wedding with actress Katrina Kaif on the upcoming episode of *Koffee With Karan*.

In the upcoming episode, Karan says to Vicky, "Maine aap ke prem kahani ke liye pura credit le liya! (I have taken all credit for your love story)."

A beaming Vicky Kaushal couldn't agree more.

"My moment on this couch last season was my way of knowing that she (Katrina Kaif) even knew I existed," the star revealed.

He later also revealed how the duo met at Zoya Akhtar's place for the first time in their life after manifesting on the couch.

Recalling events from the wedding, the star also shared how amidst the fanfare of their dream-like wedding, memes and funny tweets that were widely shared did not escape his attention.

"While all these random news were making the rounds, I was just there with the pandit ji saying, jaldi nipta dena

please. Ek ghante se jyada nahi," the star admitted.

This did not stop him from taking a break with bizarre memes and tweets.

"Every day during the wedding, these funny memes, tweets and messages would be shared on the internet and we were aware. We had my friends who read them out for us to have a good laugh. We used to have a blast finding them," the star shared.

Koffee with Karan Season 7 airs on Disney+ Hotstar.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



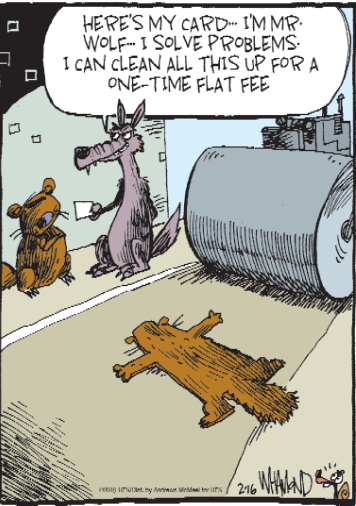
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GINGER MEGGS



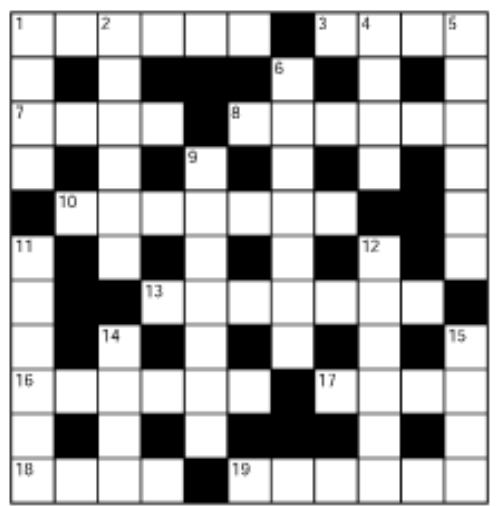
REALITY CHECK



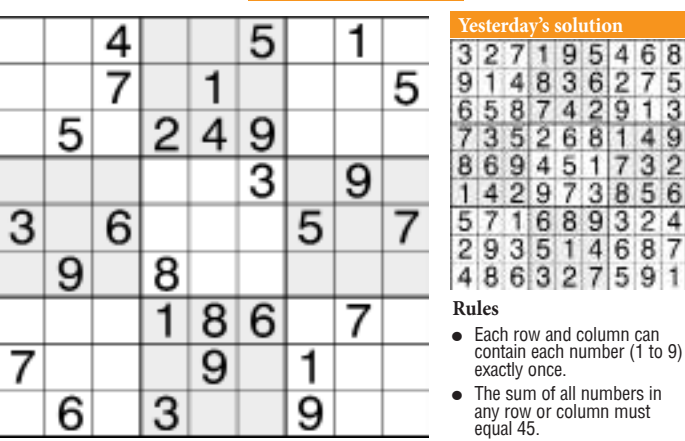
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



ACROSS

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

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

DOWN

- Not in danger
- Less difficult





Integrate performance marketing into your marketing strategy

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

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

Integrating into your strategy

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

Performance marketing boosts productivity

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

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

Performance marketing helps to reduce risks

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

Performance marketing is Measurable

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

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

Performance Marketing: Taken Center Stage

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

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

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

SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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

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

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

A forum for youth to speak up



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

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

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

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

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

express their views in an organised manner. According to the founder, it will also allow for the emergence of bright future leaders.

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

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

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

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

Who will portray Meena Kumari in *Pakeezah*?

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

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

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

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

Sara Ali Khan



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

Janhvi Kapoor

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



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

Kareena Kapoor Khan

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

Vidya Balan

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



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

Alia Bhatt

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

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



PTI ■ HARARE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAPTAIN KL RAHUL IN FOCUS IN ZIMBABWE



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

them any accolades but a defeat would invite sharp criticism.

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

OBJECTIVES OF SERIES

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

Zimbabwe cricket, like the

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

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

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

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

So this earns BCCI a goodwill gesture.

On the cricketing part, this

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

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

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

CHAHAR AND KULDEEP

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

Kuldeep Yadav, who is slowly getting his mojo back.

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

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

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

SQUADS

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

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

Shastri had very little tolerance for failure: Karthik



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian men's team will be playing a whopping 138 bilateral international matches during the next five-year Future Tours & Programme (FTP) Cycle between May, 2023 to April, 2027, the ICC said on Wednesday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

including 2 Tests, ODIs and 3 T20Is.

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

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

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

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

27 ODIs BEFORE WC

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

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

40 TESTS FOR OZ

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

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

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

Rabada sparks England's collapse

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

England came into the



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

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

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

Star batsman Root was powerless to prevent further

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

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

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

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

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



Pakistan win 1st ODI by 16 runs

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Praggnanandhaa notches up 2nd straight win

PTI ■ MIAMI

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

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

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

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

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

Want to win another World Cup: Russell

AGENCIES ■ ANTIGUA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Hetmyer, Keemo out of NZ ODIs

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

Chandrakant Pandit named new head coach of KKR

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The doyen of India's domestic coaches Chandrakant Pandit has been appointed Kolkata Knight Riders' head coach for the upcoming IPL season, the franchise announced on Wednesday.

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

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

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

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

"His deep commitment to what he does and his track

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Neither was I worried about the trading process."

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

instantly," shares Ashwin.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jacqueline accused in Rs 200 crore extortion case

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

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

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

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

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



Urvashi Rautela appointed as the official judge of Miss Universe Bahrain

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

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

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

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

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

In the Malayalam segment, Basil Joseph's

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



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

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

In the Tamil section, director Mari Selvaraj's critically acclaimed blockbuster *Karnan*, featuring Dhanush in the lead, led the pack with 10 nominations.

Director Nelson Dilipkumar's action-comedy entertainer

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

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

Robert with 10 nominations led the pack in Kannada.

Garuda Gamana Vrishabha Vahana with eight nominations and actor Puneeth Rajkumar's

Yuvarathnaa with seven nominations are leading the SIIMA Nominations for 2021 in Kannada.