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VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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ANASUYA TO PLAY  
A PROSTITUTE  
IN HER NEXT

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EU CHIEF WARNS OF DANGER OF  
COMPLETE CUT-OFF OF RUSSIAN GAS

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said Wednesday that the 27-nation European Union needs to make emergency plans to prepare for a complete cut-off of Russian gas in the wake of the Kremlin's war in Ukraine. It is obvious: (Russian President Vladimir) Putin continues to use energy as a weapon. This is why the Commission is working on a European emergency plan, she told legislators in Strasbourg, France. The EU has already imposed sanctions on Russia, including on some energy supplies, and is steering away from Kremlin-controlled deliveries.

AROUND 30 FLIGHT INCIDENTS OCCUR  
PER DAY IN INDIA

About 30 flight incidents happen every day in the country and a majority of them have no safety implications, Arun Kumar, chief of aviation regulator DGCA, said on Wednesday. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued a show-cause notice Wednesday to SpiceJet after its planes had eight technical malfunctions over the past 18 days. In a statement on Wednesday, Kumar said: "On an average, about 30 incidents do take place, which includes go around, missed approaches, diversion, medical emergencies, weather issues, bird hits, runway incursion, runway excursion et al."

NEERAJ CHOPRA COULD BE INDIA'S FLAG  
BEARER IN CWG OPENING CEREMONY

Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra could be India's flag bearer during the opening ceremony of the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) may pick the 24-year-old Chopra to lead the country's contingent during the inauguration of the 2022 CWG on July 28. "The flag bearer may be Neeraj Chopra. We will check his availability for opening ceremony," IOA Secretary General Rajeev Mehta told PTI. The qualification round of the men's javelin throw competition will be held on August 5 while the final will be on August 7.

COPS FACE MUSIC FOR GIVING NOD  
FOR NIGHT PARTY

Two police personnel were suspended by the Nagpur police commissioner for giving permission for a night party without informing their seniors, an official said on Wednesday. The action was taken after the police conducted a raid around 11.30 pm on Sunday at a farmhouse in Khasarmari village on Wardha Road when the party, where liquor was being served to guests, was on, he said. The suspended personnel were identified as Head Constable Sanjay Gaikwad and Constable Dhruv Pande, attached to the Hingna police station in Nagpur city, the official said.

Jagan set to tighten  
grip over partySNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSR Congress supremo YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is set to make certain significant announcements concerning the party structure during the party plenary meeting to be held at Guntur on 8th and 9th July.

Top sources close to Jagan said that he, following in the footsteps of Tamil Nadu former chief minister and AIDMK general secretary late J Jayalalitha, would make himself the permanent president of YSR Congress Party, while his mother YS Vijayamma would be made the permanent honorary president of the party.



Interestingly, no political party has discussed media during its plenary so far. For the first time, YSR Congress Party has decided to discuss yello media. After 2017, the YSR Congress party is holding its plenary meetings now. Three years after the party came to power with a massive mandate, for the first time, the party is holding plenary session.

## CM JAGAN ON TWO-DAY TOUR TO KADAPA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is scheduled to tour Kadapa district for two days starting from Thursday. He will be participating in various programmes at Pulivendula and Vempalli on Thursday. On Friday, the Chief Minister will pay homage to his father and former Chief Minister Dr. YS Rajashekar Reddy at Idupulapaya and will head to Vijayawada for participating in the YSRCP plenary meeting. On Thursday, the Chief Minister will be laying the foundation stone for Nutech Biosciences at AP Carl in Pulivendula. Later, he will inaugurate the YSR Memorial Park at Vempalli as well as the newly constructed buildings of Vempalli Zilla Parishad High School, and will interact with the students. On the following day, the Chief Minister will visit YSR Ghat at Idupulapaya and pay homage to his father. Later, he will return to Vijayawada and take part in the YSRCP plenary meeting near Nagarjuna University.



YSRCP general secretary & Rajya Sabha member V Vijaysai Reddy inspecting arrangements for party plenary at the venue near Nagarjuna varsity.

Four fishermen  
still untraced

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In spite of the intense search operation conducted by the Coast Guard and disaster management teams, the four missing fishermen could not be traced till Wednesday evening. The four fishermen, belonging to Cambel Pet of Machilipatnam, went missing after the boat engine developed technical problems in the sea near Antarvedi on July 3. The Navy, Coast Guard and disaster management teams began the search with choppers on Tuesday and continued the search on Wednesday, too.

One chopper was pressed into the search operation for the missing fishermen between Kakinada and Visakhapatnam till 5 pm on Wednesday. But, there was no information about the missing boat. Besides, two boats were also pressed into service to trace the missing fishermen. Viswanadhapalli China Mastan, 51, Ramani China Nancharaiiah, 64, Chekka Narasimha Rao, 51, and Moka Venkateswara Rao, 44, along with other fishermen ventured into the sea five days ago.

## Data on DBT financial aid a boon for YSRCP

○ The system helping MLAs during house visits

SNV SUDHIR  
■ VIJAYAWADA

Apart from delivering government programmes and schemes at the doorsteps of the beneficiaries, the volunteer network and grama/ward secretariat system introduced by the YSRCP government has also come in handy for the ruling party MLAs to remind the beneficiaries with 'pin point' details about the financial assistance they have received from the government in the past three years under several schemes.

To calculate and arrive to the exact amount of financial assistance each beneficiary among the total 1.67 crore families has received with a breakup of each scheme in the last three years would have been an herculean and mammoth task if not for the presence of the new volunteer and village/ward secretariat system that was introduced as part of the decentralisation of governance.

Every MLA, who has been visiting every family and house under their respective constituency as part of Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhutvam, is provided with a let-

Volunteer and village/ward secretariat system records all details about financial assistance people received under several schemes

ter having the details of the financial assistance each member of the family has received. For instance, a woman beneficiary living under one of the ward secretariats of Pattabhipuram area in Guntur has received a total Rs 1,40,876 financial assistance under several DBT schemes of the government in the past three years. The breakup details of the total amount was Rs 86,000 under YSR pension Kanuka, Rs 4,800 under YSR Sunna Vaddi, Rs 15,000 under EBC nestham and Rs 35,000 under YSR Asara.

"Reminding the beneficiary of the total amount received along with detailed breakup will definitely have an impact on them. This is one way of telling or reminding the benefi-

aries what the government did to them directly without any confusion or fuss. Most governments fail or lose in polls even after doing good work for not communicating it properly to the public. This gap has been filled with Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhutvam programme with the help of the data," said a YSRCP MLA.

Until now, the present government has given Rs 1.36 lakh crore to the beneficiaries under several DBT schemes. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, while talking about the Gadapa Gadapaku programme, stressed the importance of the mass contact programme and directed them to ensure that every MLA participated in it.

The prime objective of the Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhutvam, according to the government, is to create awareness among the public about the schemes and programmes of the government; to ensure that the benefits reach the last mile beneficiary covering all the eligible beneficiaries, and seek feedback/suggestions from the public to further improve the service delivery.

## Union Agriculture Secretary's pat for RBKs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Manoj Ahuja, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, has lauded the Andhra Pradesh State government for providing quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides at YSR Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK) and teaching farmers modern cultivation techniques.

A committee of higher officials led by Ahuja visited the Integrated Call Centre at the RBK at Vanukuru of Penamaluru mandal and paddy fields in Krishna district on Wednesday.

Ahuja verified the services provided to the farmers by the RBK. He visited the RBK's live studio and listened to how the staff responded when the



farmers made phone calls and what suggestions they gave.

Later, Ahuja said that Andhra Pradesh was the only State to maintain the RBKs and it had ISO certificate for the quality services. He

enquired about the MSP for paddy and other products. He was happy to meet a few farmers who were going to the RBKs to sell their produce.

The officials also went to paddy fields and inspected the Rythu

Radham Veterinary Mobile Vehicle. Later, they visited the YSR Integrated Agri Testing Lab that provides services to the farmers free of cost.

Manoj Ahuja appreciated the State government and the Agriculture Department for supplying quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides to the farmers.

Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation, Farmers Welfare Joint Secretary Ritish Chowhan, Assistant Commissioner K Suneel, Nodal Officer Azam Karan, Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Department Special Chief Secretary Punam Malakondaiah, Krishna District RBK Joint Director Sridhar, Agriculture Officer Manohar Rao and others were present.

## Revenue deficit grant: Centre releases Rs 879.08 Cr to AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, on Wednesday released the fourth monthly instalment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD) Grant to Andhra Pradesh, along with 13 other States.

The Centre released Rs 879.08 crore to Andhra Pradesh for the month of July. A total of Rs. 7,183.42 crore was released to 14 States. The grant has been released as per the recommendations of the 15th Finance

Commission.

The 15th Finance Commission has recommended a total Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant of Rs. 86,201 crore to 14 States for the financial year 2022-23. The grant is released by the Department of Expenditure to the recommended States in 12 equated monthly instalments. With the release of fourth instalment for July, the total amount of Revenue Deficit Grants released to the States in 2022-23 has gone up to Rs. 28733.67 crore.

The Post Devolution Revenue

Deficit Grants are provided to the States under Article 275 of the Constitution. The grants are released to the States as per the recommendations of the successive Finance Commissions to meet the gap in Revenue Accounts of the States post devolution.

The eligibility of States to receive this grant and the quantum of grant for the period from 2020-21 to 2025-26 was decided by the 15th Commission based on the gap between assessment of revenue and

expenditure of the State after taking into account the assessed devolution during this period.

The States that have been recommended Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant by the Finance Commission during 2022-23 are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

Around Rs 10,549 crore of PDRD for 2022-23 was recommended.

## Four from south get RS nomination

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday nominated four noted personalities, including celebrated athlete P T Usha and music maestro Ilaiyaraaja, from as many southern states to the Rajya Sabha, in what is being seen as the ruling BJP's big outreach to recognise prominent figures from south India.

Veerendra Heggade, the head of the famous Dharmasthala temple in Karnataka and a philanthropist, and screenwriter K V Vijayendra Prasad,



who is from Andhra Pradesh and is known for blockbusters like "RRR", the "Baahubali" series and "Bajrangi Bhaijaan", were the two other choices.

es of the government for the Upper House of Parliament.

## Govt reviving literary works banned during British rule

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is in the process of reviving and popularising Indian literature banned during the British rule as part of its efforts to celebrate 75 years of India's Independence, officials said Wednesday.

As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations, the Culture Ministry has identified poems, writings and publications that the British Raj banned, primarily due to their patriotic fervour, and put them together as catalogues for people to read and appreciate. The catalogues have been published on the official website for the project. These literary works are in different Indian languages, including Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, Punjabi, Sindhi, Telugu, Gujarati and Tamil. These are mostly revolutionary pieces penned during India's struggle for Independence and were considered "dangerous" to the "security" of the British rule in India.

In a move to make these literary



works popular among the masses, the Culture Ministry has enrolled the services of Union ministers to recite poems particular to their region which have been uploaded on the official website.

Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan can be seen reciting the poem 'Darida Nian' by Odia poet Gangadhar Mishra, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya recited Gujarati poem 'Kasumbi No Rang' from the book Sindhubo by poet Jhaverchand Meghani and Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy read

'Bharatha Matha Geetham' by Telugu poets Vaddadhi Seetharamanjaneyulu and Pudipeddhi Kashi Viswanatha Sashtri. All these works were banned during British rule.

Officials also highlighted the Culture Ministry will encourage people to hoist the national flag in their homes in the week ahead of August 15. Officials said the Har Ghar Tiranga scheme will reach out to over 20 crore homes on Independence Day. The campaign will be officially launched by mid-July. Senior officials said the

scheme envisages that people will buy the flags made by local self-help groups giving a fillip to the economy.

They also said the ministry has tied up with e-commerce firms to ensure that flags are sold online to meet the anticipated rise in demand. Once the programme is officially launched, campaigns will be undertaken to raise awareness on Tricolour.

Culture Secretary Govind Mohan said in the last 15 months of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations over 47,000 programmes have been conducted.

Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy read 'Bharatha Matha Geetham' by Telugu poets Vaddadhi Seetharamanjaneyulu and Pudipeddhi Kashi Viswanatha Sashtri.

"From commemorating unsung heroes of freedom struggle to celebrating India's achievements through Dhara: An ode to Indian knowledge systems, documenting local history via digital district repository, celebrating India's literary contributions, spotlighting states and their contribution to the freedom struggle, and poetry based on banned literature, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav aims to connect people to their past and inspire them to participate in India's progress as we make our way through Amrit Kaal (period of 25 years from 2022-2047)," he said.

LPG price hiked  
by Rs 50; rates  
up by Rs 244

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cooking gas LPG price on Wednesday was hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, the third increase in rates since May on firming international energy prices.

Non-subsidised LPG now costs Rs 1,053 per 14.2-kg cylinder in the national capital, up from Rs 1,003 previously, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

Common households pay non-subsidised rates for the cooking gas they buy, after the government restricted subsidy to just poor beneficiaries who got connections under the Ujjwala scheme.

This is the third increase in the LPG rate since May and the fourth this year.



# 'Stop killing and illegal transportation of cows'



**The cow was the mother of the universe and some people were hurting the Hindu dharma by killing cows. The State government is not taking any action against the cows' illegal transportation and unauthorized killing without taking permission from cabelas, he alleged**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Gopariwar Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Andhra Pradesh and Hindu religious organisations launched a protest against the killing and illegal transportation of cows in lorries in view of Bakrid on July 10, at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Shaiva Kshetra Peetadhipati Shiva Swamiji said that killing

of cows hurt the sentiments of Hindus. They are creating fake certificates that the cows are being moved to the cabelas, he alleged. He further said that the cow was the mother of the universe and some people were hurting the Hindu dharma by killing cows. The State government is not taking any action against the cows' illegal transportation and unauthorized killing without taking permission

from cabelas, he alleged. The State government should amend all Acts relating to cows and save the cows in the State, he urged. Later, he appealed to Director General of Police KV Rajendranadh Reddy and the Vijayawada Police Commissioner to take necessary action against those who were killing cows. He also gave a call to stop the lorries transporting cows to cabelas on July 10.



## New Joint Secretary takes charge in Raj Bhavan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

PS Surya Prakash Rao, Joint Director, Treasuries and Accounts Department, presently working as Chief Executive Officer, ZP Krishna district, took charge as Joint Secretary to Governor in Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday, on transfer by relieving D Sanyasi Rao, Deputy Secretary, from additional charge.

Surya Prakash Rao called on RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to the Governor, and submitted his joining report. Officers and staff members of Raj Bhavan members later met the new Joint Secretary and greeted him. Surya Prakash Rao earlier held positions in the Chief Minister's Office, Endowments Department, Excise Department etc.

# Renovated Sir Vizzy Swimming Pool opened

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Government Whip and Jaggaiahpet MLA Samineni Udayabhanu, Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu and Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi inaugurated the Sir Vijay Kumar Raiy (Sir Vizzy) Swimming Pool in the city on Wednesday. The VMC has spent Rs.1.66 crore for modernisation and renovation of the swimming pool.

The swimming pool is reopening after two years as it was closed for modernisation and renovation works. The VMC authorities will start the training for swimmers on Thursday.

At the inaugural function, Samineni Udayabhanu said that swimming and walking were very good for health. Sir Vizzy Swimming Pool is the oldest in the State and several swimmers who had been trained there won medals at the national championships and participated in international events, he said.

He further said that the State government had been giving top priority to sports and games. "The State government is setting up walking tracks in all the vil-



lages to create health awareness among the people. By making good use of the pool, swimmers from the area should get more medals at the national and international events," he added.

MLA Malladi Vishnu appreciated Mayor Raayna Bhagalakshmi and Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar for sanctioning Rs.1.66 crore for the renovation of the swimming pool. "The swimming pool has trained so many national and international swimmers and it will continue in future," he said. Mayor

Bhagalakshmi said that the VMC was developing facilities for sports and games in the city for the convenience of the students, youth and athletes. There are so many swimmers who performed well at the national and the international levels, she said.

Deputy Mayors Avuthu Sri sailaja and B Durga, Grandhalaya Samstha chairperson J Purnamma, corporators B Govindu, BHSV Janareddy, VMC co option member Aleem, Executive Engineer V Srinivas, DEE Gurunadhi and others were present.

# Railways to encourage use of UTS app to book tickets

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Commercial Department of the South Central Railway conducted a seminar on 'Passenger Business' with focus on proliferating the adoption of UTS mobile app and digital transactions in ticketing at the Divisional Railway Auditorium, Vijayawada, on Wednesday.

On the occasion, G John Prasad, Principal Chief Commercial Manager, stressed the need to deliver ticketing services in a smooth manner and provide satisfactory services to the passengers. He exhorted the participants to spread awareness about the UTS app, through



which passengers can get their tickets conveniently from their mobile phones,

without visiting railway booking counters. Prasad said that SCR Zone

stood first in passenger share using UTS app among all the zones in June and appealed to

the branch officers and staff to increase the share of UTS app in ticketing to 25 per cent.

Shivendra Mohan, DRM, Vijayawada Division, underscored the importance of increasing the share of digital modes of ticketing and payments in smoothly handling the passenger rush at stations in unreserved segments. The DRM said that India held the first position in digital payments in the world and it was time to tap that potential for maximum adoption of UTS app and increase the share of digital transactions.

Mohan Raja, Divisional Railway Manager, Guntur Division, in his address,

emphasised the need to leverage technology and proliferate easy methods of ticketing such as UTS app and Automatic Ticket Vending Machines at the stations by taking up public awareness campaigns.

K Sambasiva Rao, Chief Commercial Manager, Vavilapalli; Ram Babu, Sr DCM, Vijayawada; V Anjaneyulu, Sr DCM, Guntur; G Somasekhar Naidu, DCM, South; N Kiran Kumar, DCM, North; R Ravi Varma, ACM, North; TH Prasad, ACM, Guntur; Nusrat M Mandrupkar, PRO, Vijayawada, inspectors and staff participated in the seminar.

Multi-axle goods vehicles going from Visakhapatnam towards Chennai will be stopped at Hanuman Junction and will be allowed after 10 pm. Parking of vehicles coming to the plenary.

The parking for buses coming to the plenary from Vijayawada is at RK Venuzia Layout. Cars, autos and two-wheelers coming from Vijayawada should be parked at Acharya Nagarjuna University.

For buses coming from Guntur, the parking facility is at Nambur and Kanteru Road.

## Traffic curbs on July 9

Visakhapatnam from Hyderabad will be diverted from Ibrahimpatnam, G Kondur - Mylavaram - Nujiveedu - Hanuman Junction.

Multi-axle goods vehicles going towards Visakhapatnam from Chennai side will be stopped at Chilakaluripet, Ongole and Nellore near National Highway without any diversion.

Those vehicles will be allowed after 10 pm.

via Chirala-Bapatla-Repalle-Avanigadda-Pamarru-Gudivada-Hanuman junction are diverted towards Visakhapatnam and Ibrahimpatnam.

Vehicles going from Guntur to Visakhapatnam will be diverted via Budampadu X Midhuga Tenali, Vemuru, Kollur, Vellathur Junction, Penumudi Bridge Midhuga Avanigadda, Palmeru - Gudivada - Hanuman.

Heavy vehicles going

towards Chennai from Visakhapatnam will be diverted from Hanuman Junction via Gudivada - Palmeru - Avanigadda - Raypalle - Bapatla - Cherala - Trovagunta - Ongole.

Heavy vehicles going towards Hyderabad from Visakhapatnam will be diverted from Hanuman Junction towards Nujiveedu-Mylavaram-G Kondur, Ibrahimpatnam.

Heavy vehicles going to

## Jagan set to tighten grip over party

Continued from page 1

The plenary will change the party's constitution to this effect. That is, there would be no more election to YSR Congress president post in the future. In Tamil Nadu, Jayalalitha became the permanent general secretary of AIDMK in a similar manner.

After YS Sharmila launched YSR Telangana Party, there were speculations that YS Vijayamma was gradually distancing herself from his son and AP Chief Minister YS Jagan. YSR Congress leaders are of the view that once Vijayamma is made the permanent honorary president of YSR Congress, such speculations would come to an end.

YS Vijayamma has gone on record that her son YS Jagan and daughter YS Sharmila are like two eyes to her. Besides, Jagan has reportedly decided to discuss the trend of 'yellow media' and 'dusta chatustayam' (the quartet of evil). Former ministers Kodali Nani, Minister Jogi Ramesh and others will speak on this subject.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹223
Without Skin	₹232
Broiler at Farm	₹200

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	457
HYDERABAD	454
VISAKHAPATNAM	452
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.57

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Traffic restrictions will be imposed on the national highway-16 at Pedakakani, Mangalagiri mandal, Guntur district from 10 am to 10 pm on July 9 in connection with the YSRCP State plenary meeting.

All heavy vehicles will be diverted to avoid entering the national highway.

Heavy vehicles coming from Chennai side to Visakhapatnam via Vijayawada and Ibrahimpatnam, Nandigama will be diverted at Throvagunta in Ongole district

## 4 from south get RS nomination

Continued from page 1

Usha is from Kerala and Ilaiyaraaja, a Dalit, is from Tamil Nadu.

The decision came days after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), at its national executive meeting in Hyderabad, identified south India as the territory for its next phase of growth. The saffron party has been traditionally weak in southern India, barring Karnataka.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated all four and cited their contributions in their respective fields.

"The remarkable PT Usha Ji is an inspiration for every Indian. Her accomplishments in sports are widely known but equally commendable is her work to mentor budding athletes over the last several years. Congratulations to her on being nominated to the Rajya Sabha. The creative genius of Ilaiyaraaja Ji has enthralled

people across generations. His works beautifully reflect many emotions. What is equally inspiring is his life journey -- he rose from a humble background and achieved so much. Glad that he has been nominated to the Rajya Sabha," Modi tweeted.

For Heggade, the prime minister said he is at the forefront of outstanding community service. "I have had the opportunity to pray at the Dharmasthala Temple and also witness the great work he is doing in health, education and culture. He will certainly enrich Parliamentary proceedings," he said. Praising Prasad, Modi noted that he has been associated with the creative world for decades and his work showcases India's glorious culture and has made a mark globally.

Official sources said these nominations show yet another instance of the Modi government recognising outstanding

Indians who have made a mark in diverse fields.

The four nominated members have had illustrious careers in their respective fields and received national and global recognition for their contributions, they said, adding that they will expand the southern region's representation in the Rajya Sabha.

Citing Modi's "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" slogan, they said the government has consistently ensured adequate representation for various under-represented groups. The four nominated members include a woman, a Dalit and a member of a religious minority (the Jain community).

"These four nominees have given back to the society at every possible instance -- if one of them has groomed athletes, the other has mentored creative geniuses, another has nurtured cinematic talent and one has done community service.

## Naqvi, RCP Singh resign from Union Cabinet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union ministers Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and R C P Singh submitted their resignations to Prime Minister Narendra

Modi on Wednesday, a day before the completion of their Rajya Sabha term, sources said.

During a cabinet meeting earlier in the day, Modi laud-

ed both Naqvi and Singh for their contributions to the country during their ministerial tenure, sources said.

Former bureaucrat and once a confidant of Bihar

Chief Minister and JD(U) supremo Nitish Kumar, Singh resigned on his birthday, one year after joining the Union Cabinet from his party's quota.

## Data on DBT...

Continued from page 1

NON-SUBSIDISED LPG NOW COSTS	
RS 1105 in Hyderabad	RS 1151 in Patna
RS 1,079 in Chennai	RS 1,068.50 in Kolkata
RS 1,053 in Delhi	RS 1,052.50 in Mumbai
RS 1,075 IN VIJAYAWADA	

At that time, the government also stated that Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy on cooking gas will be limited to only 9 crore poor women and other beneficiaries who got free connections under the Ujjwala scheme and the remaining users including households will pay the market price (also known as non-subsidised rate).

The MLAs would make visits to the households in their jurisdiction as per the schedule finalised by the respective district collectors within the limits of grama/ward sachivalayam.

The MLAs will visit all the households in all villages/wards along with public representatives and officers at mandal/municipality and village/ward levels. The programme will be continued till all the households in their jurisdiction get exhaustively covered.

The MLAs, during their village visits, will carry the booklets listing the last three years' achievements covering all important schemes. The district collectors in the State will coordinate with the Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhutvam at district-level until its completion.



LPG DOMESTIC CYLINDER PRICE UP BY RS 50

# CPM to protest rise in prices on July 11

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The price of domestic cooking cylinders has been hiked once again. As per State-owned oil marketing companies, Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders used in domestic households will go through a price hike of Rs 50 starting from Wednesday. After the latest hike, the 14.2 kg domestic LPG cylinders cost is Rs 1,075 in Vijayawada, up by Rs 50.

It may be noted that when the BJP-led Modi government took the reins at the Centre, the LPG domestic cylinders cost only Rs 400. Instead of bringing the price under control, the BJP government totally removed the subsidy on LPG.

Left parties opposed the hike and said that ever since the BJP government came to power, prices of essential commodities had gone up drastically. The Modi government, which came to power saying that within 100 days they would reduce the prices of all essential commodities, has increased the prices to an all-time high. On the other hand, the Central government has levied a bur-



**Left parties opposed the hike and said that ever since the BJP government came to power, prices of essential commodities had gone up drastically**

den of Rs 25 lakh crore on the people of the country through increase of fuel prices, said the Left party leaders. CPM State executive body member Ch

Babu Rao said that the Modi government was favoring the corporate companies by imposing an unbearable burden on the common people. He alleged

that the BJP government was planning to privatise all the petroleum companies and hand them over to corporate companies. The ruling YSRCP in the State should question the BJP at the Centre on the abnormal price hike. On July 11, the CPM will protest at all the collectorates across the State against the price hike of essential commodities, LPG and others.

## Bapaiah is APERC Secretary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) has appointed K Raja Bapaiah, who is presently working as Director (Engineering) of APERC, as Secretary (FAC). He assumed charge on Wednesday. He has been assisting the AP Electricity Regulatory Commission in Tariff and Engineering-related matters in the cadre of Director Engineering of APERC. Previously, he worked as Chief Engineer of Vijayawada Zone. He has also worked as Director of Projects in APEPDCL and Chairman and Managing Director of APEPDCL in Full additional charge.



## Rath Yatra from July 8 to 10

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

ISKCON Vijayawada is organising a mega Rath Yatra festival at Vajra grounds near A1 Convention Center from 1 pm on July 8. This will be the first Rath Yatra after the opening of a new Jagannath mandir by the society in Krishna Lanka near the Skew Bridge last year, said ISKCON Vijayawada president Chakradari Das.

Addressing media persons on Wednesday, he said that Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan would grace the occasion as chief guest. The Governor and Cabinet ministers will be attending the inaugural ceremony, which is scheduled to begin at 1 pm. Later, the Rath Yatra procession will start, which will be attended by thousands of devo-

tees. He said a special team of devotees from seven different countries would perform a musical show, which would be the special attraction for the whole event. Artists from different States would join. The Rath Yatra, after beginning from Brindavan Colony, will pass through MG Road, Jammi Chettu Centre, Siddhartha College, Poly Clinic road, Gayathri Nagar, Ramesh Hospitals, Guru Nanak Colony, Fun Times Club Road and NTR Circle, and conclude at ISKCON Vijayawada Jagannath Mandir. A distance of eight km will be covered.

He further said that from July 8 to 10, there would be Rath Yatra Mela in line with Sri Jagannath Puri. Many cultural programmes and competitions would be organised on

the ISKCON premises. The highlight of the festival would be the replica of Gundicha Mandir of Jagannath Puri, made by reputed artists from West Bengal. Jagannath Mela will be open for the residents of Vijayawada from 5 pm to 10 pm everyday from July 8 to 10. Prasadam arrangements for more than 10,000 people will be made during three days. The entire event, Rath Yatra procession, festival and competitions will be telecast live on the YouTube channel of ISKCON.

The whole event will be led by a team of Brahmacharis, all IITians, to give an experience of Puri Rath Yatra to the residents of Vijayawada, said ISKCON Vijayawada. Manager Venudari Das and others were also present.

### Krishna swimmers to take part in national championship

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Swimmers from Krishna district will participate in the 48th Junior National Aquatic Championship - 2022, which will be held at Biju Patnaik Swimming Pool-cum-Sports Complex of Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar from July 16 to 20. As many as 15 national-level swimmers will be part of the Andhra Pradesh team, said Krishna District Swimming Association secretary Ramesh.

**Participants:** Group - I Boys: N.Deva Ganesh, K Johnson, KK George, T Satwik, M Sarath, Group - I Girls: M Durga Devi, Sudhishna, K Sanvi, U Premamrutha, Ch Mounika, Group - II Boys: M Theerthu Samadev, M Yagna Sai, Group - II Girls: B Alamkruthi, N Pavani Sarayu, Ch Bhanu Sri

### Paid AC relaxing lounge opened at Vizag rly station



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the East Coast Railway (ECoR) Waltair Division's endeavor to provide a comfortable journey to passengers, DRM Anup Satpathy inaugurated a Paid AC relaxing lounge at Visakhapatnam railway station on platform No.1, near Gate no 03 on Wednesday. The new lounge is expected to prove to be a new benchmark for providing luxury and comfort to rail passengers at affordable rates. The

AC Waiting Hall boasts of high luxurious cushioned three-seater sofa and chairs, aesthetic roof ceiling, vitrified tiled floor, glossy glass finish, washroom with premier fittings, aesthetic lighting, luggage rack, fully air conditioned, separate bathroom for women and men, CCTV surveillance, PAS system and smart TV. The facility is available for bonafide passengers at a meager charge of Rs 30 per one hour and Rs.20 for the next hour.

## Govt ensures favourable environment for industries

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Industries, Commerce, Infrastructure, and Investments Gudivada Amarnath has said that the government has created a favorable environment for companies to invest, and slammed the Opposition for trying to spoil the brand image of the State with its malicious propaganda.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, the minister said that Andhra Pradesh had topped the Business Reform Action Plan 2020 Rankings in the Ease of Doing Business, where the Centre has given the rankings after carefully examining all aspects and taking feedback from the industrialists. He said that TDP leaders couldn't digest the good news and thus resorted to cheap politics by falsely



accusing the government. The previous government had only shown fake MoUs and graphics to bluff people and betrayed the youth in the name of creating four lakh jobs. He recalled that four Partnership Summits were conducted during N Chandrababu Naidu's rule with zero output and high promo-

tions. People had given Opposition status to the TDP after going through all such betrayals. "Many companies are looking at Andhra Pradesh and are coming forward to invest, as the government is providing all facilities and extending full support to them," he said.

## Jagan ignoring govt employees: Yanamala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP politburo member Yanamala Ramakrishnudu has alleged that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has ignored employees' welfare and distributed the looted public money to the village volunteers, who are his own party workers. "Employees are the bridge between the government and the public and their efforts are needed for proper administration by the government, but CM Jagan is treating the employees as his slaves," he said.

Yanamala pointed out that the employees were not getting salaries on time. In the past three years' rule by the YSRCP government, the State government employees rarely got their salaries on the first day of the month. CM Jagan was doing gross injustice to the

**"Employees are the bridge between the government and the public and their efforts are needed for proper administration by the government, but CM Jagan is treating the employees as his slaves," he said**



employees, while promoting the village volunteers, who were his own party workers. The volunteers had been looting the public by taking bribes for any welfare scheme, he said.

The TDP leader further said that there were 2.66 lakh village/ward volunteers in the State, who needed Rs 5.5 crore every month for purchasing newspapers. "The CM is giving money to the volunteers from the government exchequer and they buy CM's Sakshi news paper. People understand clearly all the acts and

deeds of the Chief Minister are to loot the government exchequer for himself and his henchmen," he alleged.

The Chief Minister had cancelled many schemes introduced by the previous TDP government. On the other hand, YSRCP leaders and workers were looting all natural resources in the State, grabbing government lands and amassing wealth. The Jagan government was imposing heavy taxes on the public, and diverting those funds to his own media.

# Pet owners asked to register details

## Free rabies vaccination programme conducted for pets and stray dogs in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark World Zoonoses Day, VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar and others took part in a free rabies vaccination programme at Bhavanipuram Jeevakarunya Ashram on Wednesday. The programme was jointly organised by VMC and Jeevakarunya Ashram in the 43rd division.

On the occasion, the Commissioner said that the free rabies vaccination programme had been conducted for pets and stray dogs in the city. He said that dog owners should take advantage of the opportunity and ensure that their dogs got rabies vaccina-

tion. "It is very important to properly vaccinate pets and stray dogs either at the veterinary hospital or privately to prevent rabies infection. Animal lovers are advised to get their pets vaccinated responsibly," he said.

The Commissioner further said that as per the Municipal Corporation Act, it is necessary for everyone in the city to register the details of pet dogs and stray dogs in their areas at the municipal office or nearby secretariats. Through these details, they will know how many dogs are there in the city, how many have been vaccinated and other details. The Commissioner appreciated the

management of Jeevakarunya Ashram for the medical services they were providing to the stray dogs in the city and the arrangements done for their care.

VMC Assistant Surgeon Dr Ravi Chand stated that about 450 dogs had been vaccinated at Jeevakarunya Ashram and Kothapeta Nehru Bomma Centre through this vaccination drive and vaccination would be done on Thursday as well.

Local corporator B Koti Reddy, Chief Medical Officer Dr Ch Babu Srinivasan, Health Officer Dr Iqbal, Jeevakarunya Ashram members and others were present.



# CJI should respond to open letter: Dr K Narayana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Communist Party of India (CPI) national secretary Dr K Narayana has said that Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana should respond to an open letter from a group of retired judges, bureaucrats and former officers of the armed forces to the Supreme Court. "The letter read that the Supreme Court judges' remarks against expelled BJP leader Nupur Sharma crossed the 'Laxman Rekha'," Narayana said.

The CPI leader participated in the two-day Andhra Pradesh State CPI council meeting held at the Dasari Bhavan in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

While addressing reporters, Narayana said that though CJI



NV Ramana was not in the country when the Supreme Court judges made the comments, he should have responded on the issue. "People do not appreciate silence on the sensational comments of the

judges," he said. He further said that the Chief Justice was part of the judicial system, and the issues raised by the intellectuals pertained to the entire system. Today, there might be more open letters, and tomorrow,

the people would agitate against it, he added. Dr Narayana said that the BJP-led NDA government, too, was silent on the open letter. In fact, the BJP was turning the tide in its favour. The Modi government wanted to take advantage of the communal tensions for its vested interests, he alleged.

On NV Ramana's observation that mediation was necessary in addressing the disputes, he said that it might work in ideal conditions and societies, but not in India as long as criminal politics and goondaism prevailed and the poor had no access to justice through mediation.

"Meanwhile, there is a growing demand for doing away with the collegium system in the wake of the

Supreme Court judges' observations. The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) in place of collegium is not desirable. It's better to not involve the Central government," he said. Narayana said that the YSRCP and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy failed in achieving Special category status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh. CM Jagan washed off his hands by merely submitting a memorandum. Instead, he should have mounted pressure on the Centre saying his party would support Presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu only if SCS was accorded to Andhra Pradesh, he added.

Later, he alleged that PM Modi ravaged the Federal spirit of the country by arrest-

ing several civil rights leaders accusing them of treason. In this situation, Left-oriented, progressive and democratic parties should unite and fight against the government, he said.

"Modi spends Rs.70 lakh per month on his clothes and I am ready to face any case or debate on my words in this regard. I welcome Pragna Bharati Foundation's Dr Hanuman Chowdary, who has an RSS background, to file criminal proceedings," Narayana said. He further said that the CPI national conference would be held in Vijayawada from October 27 and before that, the party national council would be held in New Delhi from July 13 to 17.

## Applications invited for yoga trainers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) will recruit yoga coaches for all the Assembly constituencies under the 'Pay and Play' scheme. SAAP Vice-Chairman and Managing Director Dr N Prabhakar Reddy said in a press release on Wednesday that interested persons who have experience in yoga training may apply for the post.

He said that SAAP would provide a site for setting up a Yoga Training Centre. Interested yoga coaches, both men and women, may contact the State Yoga Coordinator G Venkateswara Rao, he said. He



said that the eligible candidates can contact G Venkateswara Rao (mobile number: 7842829449). Interested candidates may send their applications to the mail id, gvr9449@gmail.com, he added.



# Collector says govt will do justice to Veligonda project evacuees

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Collector A S Dinesh Kumar assured that the evacuees of Veligonda project would be done justice and the government would disburse due compensation to them.

A programme was held at Lakshimpuram village to distribute house sites to villagers of Krishnanagar in which the Collector and MLA Anna Cenkata Rambabu participated. 114 house sites, spread in 20 acres of land at Ondutla village, were distributed to the villagers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the villagers had parted with their house sites for the construction of Veligonda project which would provide irrigation water to 4.47 lakh acres and drinking water to 11 lakh people. The construction of the project had



become an easy task since the villagers had given their lands, he complimented.

The government is also giving top priority for the completion of the Veligonda project at

the earliest. The Collector asked the villagers not to trust the mediators in the issue of rehabilitation package and the government is committed to do justice to all those who parted

with their lands for the project. He asked them to get their doubts allayed by speaking with the officials concerned.

Collector Dinesh Kumar told them that he would personally

monitor the provision of facilities in the rehabilitation colonies. All eligible people would be rehabilitated. "I will take the issue of assigned lands to the notice of the government. I will take a decision on the assigned lands after discussing with the officials concerned", he made it clear.

The Collector said that regarding the lands of Velagalapaya and Papineni Palli villages he would take a decision on the lift irrigation issue after discussing with the officials.

MLA Venkata Rambabu thanked the farmers for giving their lands for distributing house sites. The flagship project of Prakasam district Veligonda project is possible since the farmers had given their lands, he appreciated. The farmers of the district would get the fruits of the Veligonda project soon, he said. The MLA appealed to the

Collector to take steps to provide water to Velagala Paya and Papineni Palli villages by lift irrigation scheme.

Joint Collector Abhishikt Kishore said that a school and Anganwadi centre were being constructed in the rehabilitation colony and all facilities would be provided soon. The government had allocated Rs 7 crore for the same, he added.

He asked those who were allocated house sites to take up construction of houses at the earliest. He announced that house pattas would be handed over to the evacuees of Vemulakota village by one month. An evacuee Panduranga Reddy expressed happiness at the support being extended by the government and providing all facilities to those who had given lands for the project. RDO Lakshmi Shiva Jyothi, Special Collector Rama Subbaya, ZPTC and MPTCs were present.

AFTER UNVEILING BY PM

## Sitarama Raju statue is in the dark



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Though the 30 feet bronze statue of Alluri Sitarama Raju was unveiled in grand programme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 4, now the statue is in dark as the officials did not provide lighting at the statue.

Many people who went there this evening to see the giant statue of legendary freedom fighter were disappointed

as it plunged in the dark and is beyond visible. The Kshatriya Seva Samiti spent crores of rupees to install the statue and organise the programme but they did not evince that much interest to arrange lighting at the statue. Those who went there today to have a look at the giant statue appealed to the officials to arrange lighting at the statue so that they would see the statue in the evening also.

## P.B. Siddhartha College inks MoU with Eduskills Foundation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts and Science inked MoU with Eduskills foundation to set up Industry centre of Excellence for providing certificate courses, internships and career opportunities in globally renowned IT corporates viz. AWS Academy, Palo Alto cybersecurity Academy, Celonis, Red Hat academy, Altrix data analytics, Juniper networks, Blue Prism University, Microchip Academy, said Principal of the college Dr. M. Ramesh.

In a program held on college premises here on Wednesday, co-founder and CEO of Eduskills foundation Mr. Subhagit Jagadev exchanged MoU documents with college principal Dr. M. Ramesh. Subhagit created awareness on using Eduskills platform to all the students of college. He



advised students to utilise the opportunity of up-skilling themselves by engaging with these corporate training programs and certification assessments. He also added that pursuing internships provided by these leading corporates leads to full-time career opportunities with high salary packages. Dean of the college Prof. Rajesh Jampala lauded the contribution of College alumni association for subscribing to Eduskills platform for 5 years. College

placement head Sridhar Kavuri anticipated that the subscription of Eduskills will serve as catalyst to enhance the number of placement offers and salary packages in the forthcoming years. The MoU signing ceremony was attended by college director V. Baburoo, Alumni Association office bearers N. Venkateswara Rao, A. Prasanth Chowdary, D. Murali, B. Amarender, J. Lakshminathi and other members along with students.

## Collector assures basic facilities in Jagananna colonies

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Guntur district Collector M Venugopal Reddy assured to provide all the required basic amenities to the YSR Jagananna colonies and asked the beneficiaries to complete the construction of houses at the earliest.

The Collector inspected the houses in the Jagananna colony at Atmakur village in Tadepalli municipal corporation limits on Wednesday. He spoke with the dwellers and knew their grievances. He also inspected the RBK, ZP high school and Anganwadi centre. The colony dwellers brought to the attention of the Collector that 95 percent of the houses had been constructed in the layout and electricity and potable water should be supplied properly. The roads and sewerage canals should also be constructed in the colony, the dwellers told the Collector. Responding to this, the



Collector directed the municipal officials to prepare proposals for the construction of roads and sewerage canals and take steps to supply ration rice and distribution of pension through MDU units with the formation of volunteers in the colony. The colony dwellers urged the Collector to take steps to grant loans to those whose house construction is pending. They also requested the Collector to set up special police patrolling as brats and drunkards roam on

the way from the main road to the colony.

The officials of the electricity department were instructed to complete the electricity works in the colony and take steps to provide power supply without interruptions. The officials were also directed to conduct regular tests on the drinking water should be supplied by the city administration and create awareness among the people to drink boiled water during the rainy season.

**They also requested the Collector to set up special police patrolling as brats and drunkards roam on the way from the main road to the colony**

The Collector also inspected the additional classrooms being constructed through Phase 2 in primary and high schools, toilets and classrooms constructed in the first phase. Teachers should ensure that the toilets are cleaned at least thrice every day at the specified time to keep them clean, the Collector said, adding that lakhs of rupees were being spent on school development works and they should be used to educate students properly.

The engineering officers should constantly monitor the construction of additional classrooms and ensure that they are completed with quality and within the stipulated time. The Collector inspected the seeds are kept ready for the distribution to the farmers at the RBK. Housing PD Sainath Kumar, Special officer Rajababu, Tahasildar Ram Prasad, MPDO Ram Prasanna and agriculture AR Sailaja were among who accompanied the Collector.

## Three injured as car ploughs through crowd



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Three persons were injured one of the critically when a car ploughed through the crowd at Telephone exchange in Tenali on Wednesday.

Police said that a minor boy was driving the car when the

mishap took place. The car ploughed through the tricycle rickshaw repair shop. The leg of one of the victims was badly crushed in the accident. The police rushed there, shifted the victims to the government hospital and registered a case.

## Officials directed to expedite land acquisition process for port construction

PNS ■ NELLORE

District Collector KVN Chakradhar Babu directed the officials to expedite the land acquisition process for the construction of Ramaya patnam sea port. He held a meeting with the officials concerned here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion he said that the rehabilitation process of evacuees should be completed by July 20. On this occasion, Gudlur Tahsildar Lavanya told the Collector that a total of 850 acres of land had to be acquired for the construction of Ramayapatnam port of which 180 acres of land had already been acquired and compensation was paid to the farmers. The acquired land was



handed over to the port authorities, she said. She apprised him that out of the 150 government land and 65 acres of assigned land were also handed over to the port authorities. Draft notification was issued for the acquisition

of 100 acres dotted land. 70 acres of land was in title dispute, she added. The district Collector said that there should be no delay in the land acquisition process and made it clear that the work should be speed-

ed up immediately and the entire land acquisition process should be completed by July 20 th. A committee meeting should be arranged to confirm the R&R package, he said. The Collector directed the officials to prepare the necessary layout for the resettlement of the villagers of Ravulapalem, Mondivaripalem and Karlapalem who are losing their lands. In this regard, the land acquisition report should be submitted every week, he said.

DRO Venkata Narayana mma, Kandukur RDO GV Subba Reddy, Collectorate, Tehsildars Venkata Sunil, Vijayakumar and other revenue officials participated in this meeting.

## TDP misleading people on YSRCP regime: YSRCP leaders



PNS ■ ELURU

The YSRCP leaders have alleged that the Opposition Telugu Desam party leaders are misleading people against the YSRCP regime by making false statements.

The YSRCP organised its district plenary here on Wednesday. Addressing the cadres MLA Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas alleged that unable to digest the growing popularity of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TDP leaders were making malicious statements against the government.

He said that the government is providing welfare schemes benefits to all the eligible irrespective of caste and religion. "It is shameful to note that the person who worked as Chief Minister for 14 years has not constructed a house in Andhra Pradesh. When the people pointed it out, he started constructing a house in his own constituency Kuppam. Let us leave the construction of a house in Kuppam to his discretion", the former deputy Chief

Minister said. Kalikrishna Srinivas said that when the state government was making efforts to start major projects, Chandrababu Naidu was creating obstacles to them by using his influence at the Centre, he flayed. The Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government has allocated house sites for all the houseless poor, he claimed.

"Unable to digest the huge popularity of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TDP is creating hindrances to the development and projects. The TDP leaders created hurdles to the Gadapa Gadapaku programme at various places", he lashed out. Taking a dig at film star turned politician Janasena chief K Pawan Kalyan, the YSRCP leader said that Pawan Kalyan could not stop the YSRCP with his political strategy as the people are with the YSRCP. He predicted that the YSRCP would come to power once again. MLA Meka Pratap Appa Rao predicted that Jagan Mohan Reddy would be the Chief Minister of the state for three consecutive terms.

## Shyam Prasad Mukharjee birth anniversary held

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The 121 st birth anniversary of Dr. Shyam Prasad Mukharjee was organised by BJP leaders in the district office here Wednesday. BJP national executive committee member Kanna Lakshminarayana paid tributes to Shyam Prasad Mukharjee by garlanding the portrait. Later he

planted saplings in the premises. Speaking on the occasion, Kanna Lakshminarayana said Shyam Prasad Mukharjee opposed the Article 370 and he died under suspicious circumstances in Kashmir. He had striven for one national flag to India. He had also striven for the integrity and unity of the country.

## Minor girl allegedly gang-raped

PNS ■ ONGOLE

A minor girl was allegedly gang raped by three persons at Pattabhipuram in Nallapadu police station limits and the police here registered Zero FIR under POCsOA Act by the Tripurantakam police.

The relatives of the victim told the media that she passed 10 th class and is making efforts to



study Intermediate. The victim, a resident of Nadigadda village in Tripurantakam mandal was orphaned as her parents died 0 years ago and she is under the

care of her relatives. The accused Avulamanda Venkatesh, Badveti Mahesh and Avulamanda Kashi Rao promised the victim to admit her at a college and took her in the car about 10 days ago. They lodged her in a relative's house and later gang raped the girl. They video graphed the heinous crime and threatened to expose it if she revealed it to anybody by uploading it on social

media. Later the accused freed the girl at Tripurantakam bus stand. She informed the matter to her relatives who lodged a complaint with the police who registered a Zero FIR but the police have not arrested the accused so far even after 10 days, they told the media. They appealed to the police officials to take firm action against the accused.

## 10 inter-state thieves arrested, Rs 20 lakh booty recovered

PNS ■ KADAPA

The police arrested 10 notorious interstate thieves and recovered gold jewellery, silver ornaments worth Rs 20 lakh and Rs 45,000 cash from them.

Informing this media here on Wednesday, Superintendent of police KKN Anburajan said that two gangs, of AP and Karnataka states, comprising 10 thieves were arrested.

The 10 thieves of the two gangs were involved in several thefts, burglaries, chain snatches and robberies in various districts. The SP said that



a six member gang of AP including its kingpin Mallika

Shyamala was arrested. The Mallika Shyam gang commit-

ted crimes in Kamalapuram and Proddatur limits. The police arrested the six member gang Kondreddipalli bus stop on Pulivendula-Veerapunay nialli highway.

The police gave the names of arrested thieves as Mallika Shyamal alias Mallika Shyam, Mallika Venkatesh, Mallika Eruvaram Raju, Mallika Anji, Malika Indra and Ragi Nagaraju. The police arrested another gang belonging to Raichur in Karnataka state at Ganganamma temple in Pulivendula. The modus operandi of the gangs was

that they would identify locked houses and later they would break open the doors and decamp with the booty.

The police recovered gold jewellery and silver ornaments worth Rs 20 lakh, Rs 45,000 cash and two motorcycles. The SP appreciated the Pulivendula rural CI Bala Maddileti, Kadapa 1 town CI Nagaraju, Pulivendula Urban CI Raju, Vemula SI Dhananjayudu and Pulivendula SI Gopinath Reddy for arresting the gang and announced reward to them.

## Banned tobacco products seized

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The police seized banned tobacco products while being transported at two places and arrested 2 persons.

Police here on Wednesday said that on the directions of SP Mallika Garg, under the supervision of SEB JD N Suryachandra Rao, Ongole SEB task force officials conducted checking of vehicles. The found 27,375 banned gutka sachets were being transported illegally and seized them. The police arrested M Venkata Naga Shiva



Charan in this connection. When he was questioned he provided information that gutka sachets were hoarded in a house at Brundavan colony. The police conducted a raid

and seized 2,39,556 gutka packets and arrested G Srimannarayana in this connection. The police seized gutka sachets worth Rs 3,43,224 in the two raids.



INDIA CORNER

1984 anti-Sikh riots SIT arrests 2 more accused in Kanpur

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the 1984 anti-Sikh riots cases has arrested two other accused who were allegedly part of a mob that had set a house ablaze during the violence, which had left 127 people dead here. The SIT has so far arrested 13 people in connection with the violence that took place following the assassination of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in Delhi. The fresh arrests were made on Wednesday in a separate case lodged with the Naubasta police. The SIT was formed by the Uttar Pradesh government three years ago to re-investigate the cases related to the riots. The arrested accused -- Sidh Gopal Gupta alias Babbu (66) and Jitendra Kumar Tiwari alias Raja Babu (58) -- are residents of Kidwai Nagar. They were produced before a court, which remanded them in judicial custody for 14 days, said Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Balendu Bhushan Singh, who is heading the SIT.



Headlines managed, economy mismanaged: Rahul

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi Wednesday attacked the government over the issue of price after LPG rate was hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, accusing the BJP dispensation of managing headlines but mismanaging economy. His attack came on a day the cooking gas price witnessed a third increase in rates since May on firming international energy prices. Non-subsidised LPG now costs Rs 1,053 per 14.2-kg cylinder in the national capital, up from Rs 1,003 previously, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. 'Headlines Managed. Economy Mismanaged,' Gandhi tweeted, with a photo with text to suggest the BJP's stance on inflation and the depreciation of Indian currency changed after it came to power. In the text, he said the BJP used to propagate (prachar) in the past that the currency of a country goes down if it has a corrupt government.



Couple, 8-yr-old daughter commit suicide in Agra

In an apparent suicide pact, a couple and their eight-year-old daughter were found hanging from the ceiling of their home here Wednesday morning, police said. The couple leaves behind a six-year-old son, and a purported suicide note which mentions the man was unemployed. Sonu (30), along with his wife Geeta (28) and their daughter Shrishti used to live at the first floor of his father's house in sector 10 at Awas Vikas, police said Senior Superintendent of Police (Agra) Prabhakar Chaudhary said Wednesday morning that police received information about the incident and rushed a team to the spot. According to the purported suicide note recovered from the spot, Sonu was unemployed and the couple decided to commit suicide along with their daughter, he said. The couple also has a six-year-old son, Shyam, who went outside to inform the neighbours about the incident, he said.



India will lead fourth industrial revolution, asserts PM Modi

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that the Centre and the Assam government are working together to minimise the problems faced by people during the ongoing floods in the state.

While virtually inaugurating the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Assamese newspaper 'Agradoot', he said the state and its people are struggling due to the devastating floods this year, but Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his team are working hard to provide succor to the affected people.

"I have been regularly speaking with the CM and others. I want to assure the people of Assam that the central and the state governments are working together to minimise people's problems," he said. Modi said that while India



lagged during the last three industrial revolutions as most people did not have access to its vast knowledge, which is in Indian languages, the country, backed by digital knowledge, will lead the fourth industrial revolution of the 21st century. "Before Independence, our

languages didn't grow. In fact they shrunk as most people didn't have access to knowledge. The space for innovation and invention was limited. But the fourth industrial revolution in the 21st century will be led by India on the back of digital knowledge," he said.

PM to inaugurate 3-day seminar on National Education Policy today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a three-day seminar at Varanasi on Thursday which will see participation of over 300 educationists deliberating on implementation of National Education Policy, officials said. The Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam will provide a platform for leading Indian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to discuss, deliberate and share insights on strategies, success stories and best practices in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. Organized by the Ministry of Education in association with University Grants Commission and Banaras Hindu University, the seminar will bring together over 300 Vice Chancellors and Directors from public and private universities, educationists, policy makers, as also industry representatives to deliberate on how the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, can be taken further across the country after successful implementation of several initiatives in the last two years. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan, will also attend the summit, a senior MoE official said on Wednesday. 'The Ministry, along with UGC and AICTE, has brought in several policy initiatives. The MoE official further explained that many universities have already onboarded the reform train but there are still many who are yet to adopt and adapt to the changes.

Assam Rifles to train students for competitive exams

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

An institute to mentor students from remote areas and economically-challenged backgrounds is being established by the Assam Rifles in Manipur.

The paramilitary force signed an agreement on Tuesday with National Integrity and Education Development Organisation (NIEDO), and Axis Bank to establish the 'Assam Rifles Centre of Educational Excellence' at Kangvai in Churachandpur district.

The project has been conceptualised as a year-long fully residential coaching and mentoring facility for students from economically weaker and under-privileged sections for competitive examinations such as NEET and JEE, a statement said.

The project is expected to be fully functional for the first batch of 30 students by the first week of August, it added. This



will be the second institute in a series of initiatives that aim to transform educational opportunities in remote locations, with the first one coming up in Nagaland.

Governor La Ganesan said the initiative will provide access to high-quality education facilities to students who are deprived of it.

Director-General of Assam Rifles Lt Gen PC Nair said the institute will not only fulfil the aspirations of the talented youths of Manipur but also will

usher prosperity and happiness in society.

He said the mentoring will provide value-based education, including soft skill training, critical life competencies, leadership capabilities, personal conditioning, wellness programmes, vocational training, personality development and end-to-end grooming.

CEO of NEIDO Rohit Srivastava, and Head of Corporate Affairs of Axis Bank Rudrapriyo Ray were present at the programme.

600 units of free power to every household in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Cabinet on Wednesday accorded approval to giving 600 units of free power to every household per billing cycle in the state with effect from July 1. A decision to this effect was taken in a meeting of the council of ministers held here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, an official statement said. Punjab has a two-month billing cycle for power supply. "All domestic consumers in the state will be eligible to get zero bills if their consumption is up to 600 units in every billing cycle.

BJP bags 102 of 130 seats unopposed in Arunachal panchayat bypolls

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

The BJP bagged 102 of 130 panchayat seats unopposed in Arunachal Pradesh where by-elections are scheduled next week, Panchayat Minister Bamang Felix said.

By-elections to 130 panchayat seats and a zilla parishad constituency were scheduled to be held on July 12. Of the 130 panchayat seats, BJP bagged 102 unopposed. Another 14 seats were secured unopposed by Congress, NPP and Independents, Felix said.

BJP candidates have bagged unopposed all the panchayat seats in Tawang, West Kameng,



East Kameng, Pakke Kessang, Kamle, Upper Subansiri, West Siang, Upper Siang, Namsai, Siang, Lower Siang, Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts. In Kurung Kumey, the BJP won five seats unopposed, while its ally NPP won one seat. The Congress managed to

secure the Gangte-I gram panchayat seat in Kra Daadi uncontested, while all the other four seats were won by the BJP.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu tweeted, "Congra tulations and thanks to all karyakartas, supporters and sympathisers for electing 102 @BJP4Arunachal candidates unopposed in bye-elections to 130 Gram Panchayat Constituencies of Arunachal Pradesh."

Union Law minister Kiren Rijju said the people of Arunachal Pradesh have full faith in the leadership of the chief minister, who is working tirelessly to fulfill their aspirations.

‘We have become laboratory of human rights violations’: West Bengal Governor

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday urged the Bengali intelligentsia to break their silence on what he described as the "decimation of democratic values" in the state.

Speaking to reporters after paying floral tributes at the statue of Syama Prasad Mookherjee on his birth anniversary, the governor claimed West Bengal should not become a place "where democracy breathes its last". "We have become a labora-



ry of human rights violations," he claimed.

Dhankhar, who has had frequent run-ins with the

Trinamool Congress dispensation in the state since taking over as governor in July 2019, asserted that he will not allow democracy to be decimated in the state, maintaining that he cannot fail in his constitutional oath.

"The greatest threat to democracy and which we cannot allow to happen, is extreme appeasement," he said.

Holding that Constitution allows a fair approach and equality for all, he said the Centre has given a categorical indication towards it through the policy of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka

Vikas'. Calling upon the people of the state to remember Mookherjee's contribution at the time of Partition, the governor said that it was his significant role that resulted in what West Bengal is at present.

"The threat that was there at the time of Partition could be nullified by the great efforts of this great son of Bharat Ma (Mother India)," Dhankhar said.

He said that Mookherjee was a nationalist, freedom fighter and a great leader who sacrificed his life in the true spirit of service to 'Bharat Ma'.

Need MSP till mrkts get competitive: NITI Aayog

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The minimum support price on agri crops should continue as long as markets become competitive and efficient, but it should be given through means other than procurement, government think-tank Niti Aayog member Ramesh Chand said on Wednesday.

Chand -- while addressing a conference on 'Getting agriculture markets right' -- organised jointly by National Stock Exchange and ICRIER -- said: "Deficiency Pricing Payment (DPP)" is one such means of giving MSP (Minimum Support Price) to farmers, but cautioned that DPP cannot be stopped once implemented. Under DPP,



the difference between the open market price and MSP is given to farmers, he said, adding that it has been implemented in some states like Madhya Pradesh.

MSP is a minimum price at which the government undertakes procurement. MSP is fixed for 22-23 crops. Rice and wheat

are largely procured crops by the government.

"In some cases, MSP is justified in times of volatility in prices and glut. I feel what matters is how we give MSP to farmers. ...MSP has to be there as long as markets are not competitive and efficient.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann to get married today

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will on Thursday tie the nuptial knot for the second time.

Mann (48) separated from his first wife in 2015. He has two children from his first marriage. "The chief minister is getting married in a private ceremony here tomorrow. He will tie the knot with Dr Gurpreet Kaur, who belongs to Pehowa in Haryana's Kurukshetra, AAP's Punjab unit chief spokesperson Malvinder Singh Kang told PTI over the phone.

Only family members, including Mann's mother, sister, relatives, and a few guests will



attend the wedding, sources said, adding Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal is expected to be in attendance. Sources said that this marriage is an arranged one. State ministers

Harjot Bains and Aman Arora as well as the party's senior leader Raghav Chadha congratulated Mann on Twitter. "Wishing my Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Ji a very happy and blessed married life ahead.

I wish them both a lifetime of love, respect and companionship," Bains said.

Arora congratulated Mann for starting married life and wished "both a life full of happiness, joy, love, prosperity, health and companionship. May the almighty shower His blessings on both of you".

Senior AAP leader Raghav Chadha gave his best wishes to Mann and his would-be wife.

"Best wishes to my 'vaddaveer' (elder brother) Mann Saab and Dr Gurpreet Kaur for a happy and blessed married life," tweeted Chadha, who is a Rajya Sabha MP. Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring also congratulated

Mann as he starts a "new chapter in his life".

"My heartiest congratulations to the CM Bhagwant Mann Ji as he starts a new chapter in his life tomorrow. Best wishes for a happy and blissful married life ahead," he tweeted. Mann's 21-year-old daughter Seerat and 17-year-old son Dilshan from his first marriage had flown in from the US for the ceremony when he took oath as Punjab chief minister in March.

Bhagwant Mann had taken oath on March 16 as Punjab chief minister at a ceremony held in freedom fighter Bhagat Singh's village Khatkar Kalan village in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district.

Naqvi's term ends; no more Muslim among BJP MPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Rajya Sabha term of Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi ending on Thursday, the BJP will have no Muslim MP among its 395 Members of Parliament.

Naqvi, who resigned from the Cabinet on Wednesday, was among the three BJP Muslim MPs whose term ended during the recent round of Rajya Sabha polls to 57 seats across 15 states but none of them were renominated by the party.

The term of two others, former Union minister M J Akbar and Syed Zafar Islam, has already ended.

The opposition has been accusing the BJP of not giving adequate representation to Muslims, but the saffron party



has maintained that its MPs work for all communities and are not representatives of any religion. Over the decades, Muslim BJP MPs have had a nominal presence in Parliament. Naqvi himself has been a Rajya Sabha member

for three terms, Najma Heptulla for two terms and Shah Nawaz Hussain, currently a minister in the Bihar government, was elected to Lok Sabha twice. Naqvi was a Lok Sabha member for one term as well. Sikander Bakht, a

founder member of the party and one of its first three general secretaries, was a Rajya Sabha member twice.

It will be after a considerable period of time that the BJP will not have any Muslim MP.

To questions about the development, BJP minority moucha chief Jamal Siddiqui asserted that politics should not be attached with religion and that MPs are elected as representatives of the people and not of any religion.

"So even if someone from our religion or caste is not there, we should understand that our own countrymen are there. Responsibilities keep on changing in the BJP and I am confident that the party

will ensure representation of all communities," he said.

The party also has Muslim lawmakers in some states, including one each in Bihar and UP.

However, there is a buzz about the party's outreach to Muslims, India's largest minority community, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked BJP leaders at its recent national executive meeting in Hyderabad to cultivate deprived sections in communities other than Hindus as well.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also highlighted the party's good performance in local polls in some regions with a sizeable Muslim population.

FIR against Mahua Moitra for 'Kali remark'; BJP demands arrest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An FIR was registered on Wednesday against TMC MP Mahua Moitra in Bhopal for allegedly "outraging religious feelings" as the row over her comment on Goddess Kali intensified with the West Bengal unit of the BJP demanding her arrest and Moitra daring the saffron party to "bring it on", saying she was not afraid of its "goons".

She also said that she was a "Kali worshipper and not afraid of anything". Moitra on Tuesday triggered a controversy with her remarks that she has every right as "an individ-



ual to imagine Goddess Kali as a meat-eating and alcohol-accepting goddess", as every person has the right to worship god and goddess in his or her own way. While her party,

Trinamool Congress distanced itself from the comment and condemned it, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said he is "taken aback by the attack" on Moitra and urged people to "lighten up and leave religion" to individuals to practice privately.

Demanding her arrest, the Bengal BJP said it would move the court if no action was initiated against her in 10 days by the police.

Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari said hundreds of police complaints had been lodged against Moitra across the state.



## Newsmen as news

The incident has brought the independence and integrity of several media houses under a cloud

The fracas between Chhattisgarh and Noida Police over detention of a news channel anchor is not a healthy development. The arrest preceded high drama at the anchor's house in Ghaziabad's Indrapuram on Tuesday morning. The Chhattisgarh Police had come to arrest him with a warrant for his alleged role in doctoring a video of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The doctored video allegedly made it appear that Gandhi indirectly condoned the gruesome murder of the Udaipur tailor by a couple of jihadists. Around 6.15 am, the anchor reached out to the Uttar Pradesh Police and Government, including Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, through a SoS tweet, saying Chhattisgarh cops had reached his residence to arrest him without informing the local police. That brought Noida Police on the scene. Meanwhile, the news channel has distanced itself from the doctored video. It claimed in a police complaint that the *faux pas* happened "due to oversight and inadvertence". The company claimed that two employees have been dismissed. "In the given circumstances, the company has reasonable belief and suspicion that the aforesaid negligence and dereliction of duties may have been committed by (the producers) knowingly and intentionally in connivance with each other," the company said in its police complaint. Only a probe can bring out the truth, but the incident has given voice to sceptics who are increasingly questioning the independence and integrity of several media houses.



There is nothing wrong in taking a political stand on issues, but when a media organisation — or some of its journalists — is seen as promoting the interests of a party, it ceases to be journalism; it becomes politicking, with all the attendant consequences. This episode should be seen as a lesson to the entire media: Nobody is outside the jurisdiction of the law of karma.

The political class should also realise that if cops are stopped or harassed when they are probing an interstate matter, the enforcement of law will be adversely affected. This happened in May in the case against BJP leader Tajinder Bagga. The Punjab Police wanted to arrest him for his "provocative statements and promoting religious enmity", but Delhi and Haryana police foiled the attempt. His tweets had targeted Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party boss Arvind Kejriwal. According to the Punjab Police, he was an offender who should be arrested, but this view was not shared by the police of Delhi and Haryana. Evidently, cops' understanding of the law did not correspond with what is written in statute books but to the interests of the politicians they report to. This is not the rule of law; this is the rule of men and women who occupy political offices. In effect, it becomes the tyranny of arbitrariness, hurting all sooner or later. When editorialists bemoan it, they are often ridiculed as dreamy moralists. But the law of karma also catches up with cynics, including journalists and politicians.

### PICTALK



Farm workers plant paddy saplings at a field, in South Dinajpur

PTI

## Double trouble

Peak summer conditions increase pollution levels and risk to environment, human health, economy

As the weather turns scorching and the wind speed picks up, pollution levels in the summer are supposed to be lower than in the winter. However, pollutants in the former case are more easily dispersed in the atmosphere thanks to the clear skies. The increase in dust particles brought on by building activity and vehicle traffic is the main cause of summertime pollution, experts aver. This summer, a case in point is that India not only faced increased heat but also more air pollution. A new report released on Wednesday stated that the Capital experienced increased summertime air pollution in 2022 compared to 2021, with the city's particulate matter levels significantly exceeding the normal limits. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) confirmed that the allowed levels for PM 2.5 and PM 10 in Delhi during the four summer months (March, April, May and June) this year were five times higher, according to an analysis by NCAP Tracker, a project of environmental organisations *Climate Trends and Respirer Living Sciences*. Interestingly, even abroad, in the Los Angeles region for example, the air quality significantly declined and remained dangerous after hundreds of Fourth of July fireworks displays lit up the skies there.



Due to the fireworks' high amounts of particulate matter and metal air pollutants, the South Coast Air Quality Management District issued a particle advisory for most of Southern California, from Los Angeles to the Coachella Valley. The South Coast Air Basin's fine particulate matter levels on July 4 and July 5 are routinely among the worst of the year. In addition to the fine particles already existing in the basin, mostly brought on by vehicles, fugitive dust and industrial pollutants, fireworks also contribute to smoke and combustion products. It has been well established that the summertime and a warmer environment can affect air quality in a number of ways, with a variety of negative effects on human health and economy. Extreme weather conditions, as well as both natural and man-made pollution, run the risk of worsening our air quality and having a variety of negative health effects as our planet's climate changes. Fortunately, we have some control. Environmental insights with a health focus help us see the year-round effects of invisible air pollution. With the correct knowledge, we can enable individuals to take responsibility for the air they breathe.

# Of the fraction or the faction?

Till the Election Commission decides who deserves the symbol, the Shinde camp remains a faction; the Uddhav camp is nothing more than a diminishing 'fraction'

Though the mainstream media equates both the Shiv Sena groups with the same bulk of command over the splintered party, the fact remains otherwise. It is now clear that the bigger chunk has already been taken away by Eknath Shinde, and what is left over for Uddhav is a tiny and still-diminishing fraction.

Though the 'faction' has already formed the Government and passed the floor test, a deeper political crunch is still undergoing within the larger Shiv Sena Parivaar. The bone of contention and the fight for survival for both groups now concentrate on the most important question: Who will finally own the party and its symbol? This will continue till the EC takes the final call, deciding on who qualifies to be the owner of the Shiv Sena and its symbol.

Now, the saviours of either camp must be hectic in exploring all thinkable routes to conquer that technical-legal existential battle at EC by all means possible. In particular, the political legitimacy and the future course for both camps will be on tenterhooks till the EC spells the final word.

**Principles for the EC:** The opinion of experts shows the success of either group depends on the single available option to them — how they can successfully establish their majority before the EC. When the needle of the entire game says to the evidence of majority, it is pretty evident that either faction must be trying hard to drag it into their favour.

**The focused dynamics:** The dynamics of proving the majority constitute the following parameters, and the precedents indicate that the EC will certainly examine into it. So, the EC will examine the support each faction enjoys within the party's organisation, in the legislature wing, in the top committees and decision-making bodies.

Most importantly, before deciding on these factors, the EC will certainly have to learn the Shiv Sena constitution for once. As this particular case goes, the most tangible parameter that the EC will take into account is the number of lawmakers and legis-



lators in each camp. And, in this case, the legislative wings necessarily consist of MPs, MLAs and maybe the count of MLCs if the EC wants to consider. Secondly, the EC will examine the strength of support that each faction enjoys within the party's organisational setups. Here, the EC may go a little further and ask both camps to produce the necessary evidence with documentary support.

**The EC's discretion:** Now, the ball is in the EC's court. When it is about a political party, the EC will certainly listen to all stakeholders, then whoever wants to be heard, and it will consider the pre- and the post- factual circumstances that led to the splintering. Here, the EC's power will be certainly at play. The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, gives it power to deal with the very issue. However, the EC's discretion will finally prevail and remain binding.

As far as the EC's discretion goes, it doesn't lack any restriction to decide in favour of one of the factions or neither of these. However, in this case, it can probably rule in favour of

“THE SAVIOURS OF EITHER CAMP MUST BE WORKING OVERTIME TO WIN THE TECHNICAL-LEGAL EXISTENTIAL BATTLE AT EC BY ALL MEANS POSSIBLE. IN PARTICULAR, THE POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND FUTURE COURSE FOR BOTH CAMPS HANG IN BALANCE

one of the factions based on the real majority of support it enjoys both in the organisation and in the legislative wings. Then, it can keep the party symbol reserved for that faction in majority and may ask the other faction to register itself as a new political party with a different symbol.

**Who is at advantage?** As a recent precedent, a lesson can be drawn from the Samajwadi Party case where the father-son duo reached the EC to claim the party's symbol. Akhilesh won against Mulayam Yadav, evidencing that he not only commanded the Government but also the party.

In this particular case, the E-faction may also be considering to take over the party even before the EC steps in. E-faction has validated its majority in the legislative wings by establishing a fresh Government in Maharashtra, followed by winning the floor test in the Assembly. Now, it is for the E-faction then to confirm its majority in party organisation, particularly by bringing the Sena office bearers into its fold.

**The final batting of the U-fraction:** If certain people

break from the party, the anti-defection law comes into play. Under the law, whether it is one person or 100, the anti-defection law comes into application. Defection equates to the intended partition from the party and its membership; and at this very point, the U-fraction will surely stick to it. Nevertheless, on the disqualification issue, the only option is to knock at the Speaker's office. But then, it is rather unlikely that the Speaker would entertain such a petition.

**New surprises:** The total strength of Maharashtra Assembly is 287 and the majority mark is 144. The E-faction-led Government in coalition with BJP has won the floor test with 164.

Many independent MLAs are still roaming around the negotiation camps as dark horses. With Congress as well as NCP as the focal political contenders, the ruling faction on the edge may unfurl added surprises by breaking into their camp also.

(The author is Assistant Professor of Political Science in Mody University, Rajasthan. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### GOVT-TWITTER FACE-OFF

Sir — The Government and Twitter have been at loggerheads over the new IT rules since May 2021 and even earlier. The long-running confrontation over content regulation has now entered a new phase with Twitter moving the Karnataka High Court against the Government's 'blocking orders' under the IT Act. The important question to ask is, if the Government orders Twitter to take down content in the absence of sound reasons, don't undermine the notion of freedom of expression. The paramount and inviolability of freedom of expression must be upheld. Twitter has a point — it finds the Government's 'recurring removal requests' too much of an interference in the company's affairs.

Sometimes the Government asks Twitter to not just block the posts, but take down the user accounts themselves without notice to 'content originators'. It is widely known that Twitter incurred the displeasure of the Government when tweets in support of farmers' protests and tweets critical of the Government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic found space on the platform. The threat to strip the social media company of 'safe harbour immunity' is a blatant attempt to put pressure on Twitter to fall in with the ruling dispensation.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

### THE VALOUR OF J&K VILLAGERS

Sir — It speaks of the valour of villagers who overpowered two hardcore terrorists who were about to create havoc. The people of Reasi village deserve to be applauded for tactfully handling the case. This is a case of unarmed and untrained people capturing armed and trained terrorists. The announcement of cash reward of ₹5 lakh by L-G Manoj Sinha and ₹2 lakh by the DGP is welcome and the taxpayers' money has been put to best use. Reasi villagers have set a good example that they can also do what security forces can.

The nabbed terrorists were responsible for many terror incidents. The erosion of

### Safety audit for aviation sector



Though India has one of the better air safety indicators in the world as compared to global average, recent several flight scares bring to the fore urgency of further strengthening air safety and need for a comprehensive safety audit in the aviation sector, airworthiness of aircraft, pilots' training and ground safety. Several recent incidents of midair troubles are scary and highlight the situation that requires urgent DGCA

attention. A Delhi-Dubai flight had to make an emergency landing at the Karachi Airport after it developed a technical fault midair with the malfunctioning of the fuel indicator; then there was a fire incident in the aircraft of Delhi-bound Patna flight while flying.

All this is a really dangerous and scary thing as there was risk to 185 lives but due to the pilot's skill and ability to navigate, despite the scary situation the aircraft landed safely. Though modern passenger aircrafts are built to operate even with one operational engine, it can sometimes result in catastrophe. The DGCA must put all measures in place for a robust air safety mechanism. DGCA should conduct a thorough investigation to find out the reasons for such incidents. Also, the airlines should give more attention to regular maintenance of aircraft and upgrading the training for pilots and air controllers. For a growing nation, air safety should be top priority.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bangalore

30-year old terrorism in the Valley by security forces has been instilling confidence among people to live a peaceful life. Yet the terrorists want to prove that they are still around to create disturbance. The tribe of terrorists has perished to a large extent after security forces were given a free hand to deal with the situation. A Russian President once said: "It is for God to forgive the terrorists. But it is our duty to send the terrorists to God." Also, courts should harness their energy in deciding the cases of captured terrorists expeditiously.

KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

### NEED TO SAVE AAREY FOREST

Sir — The rescheduled fifth Test of the Pataudi Trophy turns out to be a ding-dong battle. England playing at home was formidable and the toss favoured them to put Team India to bat first. As in the four Test matches last year, early wickets went cheaply and the rearguard action saw the teams

putting up a moderate total. After putting up 400-plus, India was in the driver's seat. England folded up for 284-plus and that gave them a handsome 132-run lead and consolidated their position.

With a score of 190 for 5, India dictated terms but the sudden rush of blood saw it losing remaining wickets for just 55 runs. That collapse in one session triggered the fear of losing and England started on a bright note and amassed 100 runs before losing the first wicket. Two more wickets fell and still resolute batting from Root and Bairstow saw the pair adding 269 runs, which saw the team sailing past the 10th highest target and thereby squared the series 2-2 in a convincing way. The absence of an off-spinner was felt when the left-handers and Root thrived for long. England applied an attacking policy and won.

CKR Nathan | Ghaziabad

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

## SOUND BITE

Domestic output of conventional and indigenous nano urea will totally replace the imports.



Union Fertiliser Minister —Mansukh Mandaviya



Keir Starmer —Britain's Oppn leader

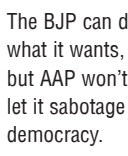
My son is a rock star. My daughter is a chatterbox and a full-on momma's girl.



Actor —Shilpa Shetty Kundra



India's stand-in captain —Jasprit Bumrah



Delhi Chief Minister —Arvind Kejriwal

If we go back, if there's no rain in the first match, we could have won the series.



FIRST COLUMN

EDUCATORS TO DISCUSS  
NEP IMPLEMENTATION

The policy is focused on human values  
of Bharatiya civilisation



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Samagam, which will be held in Varanasi July 7-9, will be a ‘Maha Kumbh of Higher Education’. The core objective is to extract Amrut (nectar) from a number of quality imperatives enshrined in the National Education Policy 2020. The event will also mark the second anniversary of NEP 2020, which is aimed at making the youth future ready, while focusing on human values, life skills and traits of Bharatiya civilisation.

The event would take stock of gains made from the learning system of India and transform it to empower youth with ‘glocal’ competencies. Deliberations will be focused on mapping interests, abilities and demands of the younger generation for framing enabling rules for NEP 2020 on the basis of the objectives of ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’. Also, the event will re-visit and re-strategise already drawn pathways for the implementation of NEP 2020. A key thrust area will be to prepare for a holistic perspective for flawless implementation of NEP 2020. Educational luminaries will look at the ways to ensure speedy and effective implementation of NEP 2020.

In knowledge driven society, the quality of education system provides for economic vitality, health and overall well-being. NEP 2020 was launched on 29th July, 2020 with a view to transform the existing learning system and to actualise the needs of the 21st century learners. The seriousness of this mammoth assembly of Directors and Vice-Chancellors of the higher educational institutions can be appreciated from the fact that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself will inaugurate and address the gathering. Education Minister Dharmendra Kumar will remain present during the course of the event.



India can become Atmanirbhar only when we make our youth competent enough to contribute meaningfully and purposefully and become instrumental in the Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0 by making use of disruptive digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Intelligent Robotics, Big Data Analytics, Cloud Computing and so on. In IR 4.0, Cyber-Physical Production System (CPPS) is utilized for industrial production. Education 4.0 envisages co-learning, co-creation and innovation; anytime, anywhere, and any type of learning. Also, it calls for the use of flipped classrooms for transforming passive to active learning at home or outside, while institutions are used for skill-development. Besides, the thrust is also on personalized and collaborative learning, as lesson plans become creative, and continuous training ensures updation of domain knowledge and skills.

In nutshell, it can be said that Education 4.0 is outcome-based. Senior academicians and officials at the event will focus on the need to formulate policies to make youth future-ready to face a highly uncertain and volatile future. The speed of changes witnessed by the education sector is outpacing the ability of the existing system to respond adequately and appropriately. Indeed, the educational system faces the risk of becoming outdated if changes are not adopted.

Threadbare deliberations will take place on the student-centric and Bharat-centric reforms, with thrust on skill-development and employability, research, innovation and entrepreneurship, capacity building of teachers. Also, ways to ensure ranking and accreditation along with digital empowerment and online education will be discussed. Indeed, equitable and inclusive education within the Indian knowledge system will also be addressed.

The Ministry of Education and the UGC are burning midnight oil in making provisions/regulations on outcome-based learning with multi-disciplinary curriculum, while offering students multiple exit-entry options. Also, academic bank of credits and education in mother tongue/regional language at least up to primary level are among top concerns of NEP 2020. Emphasis will also be on shift in pedagogy, while learners will have to evolve to think like employees and employees will need to think like learners.

(The author is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab.)

NATO faces two-front  
geostrategic challenges

NATO needs to reimagine its role to defend two fronts, in  
Europe and the Indo-Pacific region



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

The Chinese hegemonic intentions are visible from its deteriorating relations with the West and India, the growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, apart from the human rights issues in Tibet and the Xinjiang region.

Financial crises in Sri Lanka and Pakistan further worsen matters. In 2020, China replaced the United States as the EU’s largest trading partner. By 2021, Beijing had built 50 per cent of the total ships in the world. Through various mechanisms such as design collaboration agreements, cyber espionage, and acquisitions, China has copied advanced innovative ship designs, endangering the West’s future naval productions. In a nutshell, the world is witnessing China’s coercive policies in international politics and geo-economics, a deeply embedded civil-military fusion through espionage and dual-use production facilities, which raises sovereignty issues for several countries.

On the other hand, from the French President’s statement in 2019 that NATO is “brain dead” to the 2022 Russia-Ukraine conflict and the completion of the accession protocols of Sweden and Finland, the alliance has been reinvigorated with its new Trans-Pacific identity through the 2022 Madrid summit. The heads of the states of NATO’s Asian regional partners — Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea — attended the NATO Summit, a new development indicating the expanding horizons of Asia’s militarization to counter the Chinese hegemonic designs. The message stands clear, NATO is pivoting to Asia. The NATO 2022 ‘Strategic Concept’ minced no words to state that the “PRC’s malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target Allies and harm Alliance security”. It strongly indicates that NATO now prioritizes the Indo-Pacific region. Before the 2022 summit, the foreign ministers of these four countries met at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in December 2020 for the first time to push the emerging multilateral interoperability in the Indo-Pacific. This was in the backdrop of the “NATO 2030” expert reflection group that had labelled China as a “full-spectrum systemic rival, rather than a purely economic player or an only Asia-focused security actor.”

However, President Barack Obama was the first leader to foresee the Chinese threat and announced the “pivot” policy in 2011, while addressing the Australian Parliament. Further, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton penned an essay titled “America’s Pacific Century,” where she argued for a “strategic turn to the region”, which indicated relocating the US navy from West Asia to the South China Sea. The policy did not receive much attention, given the U.S. engagements in West Asia and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, today, the region’s shifting sands, whereby the U.S. has



NATO HAS  
FINALLY  
WOKEN UP TO  
CHALLENGES  
BUILDING UP  
IN EUROPE ON  
ACCOUNT OF  
RUSSIAN  
AGGRESSIONS,  
WHILE CHINA’S  
EXPANSIONIST  
ATTEMPTS  
HAVE  
ALARMED  
NEIGHBOURS  
IN SOUTH  
CHINA SEA

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snowballed the peace process through the Abraham accords and the Saudi-Turkey peace process, strongly indicate that the upcoming days in the Indo-Pacific will be highly turbulent. From another essential perspective, the militarization of the Indo-Pacific region would also provoke China and Russia to react, thereby offsetting the relative peace on Russia’s Eastern and Southern borders. Over the last few decades, Russia has adopted a relatively peaceful approach in the two directions to entirely focus on its Western front. The change in NATO’s strategy thus would be testing for the Sino-Russian friendship as Russia is more focused on Europe.

Nevertheless, the prelude to the new Cold War, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, has led to a consensus in Europe that it needs to view Russia as its primary geopolitical challenge. At the same summit, NATO also decided to increase its rapidly deployable troops by 300,000, apart from doubling or tripling to the brigade level in the Baltic States and five other frontline countries. Further, it plans to increase munitions and other supplies in response to Russia’s aggressiveness. This overhauling of the deployments would be complete by 2023. Currently, the defence spending of its members will increase by 1.2 per cent in real terms by the end of 2022. Simultaneously, as Europe intends to reduce its energy dependencies, a pertinent question that needs to be pondered over is, at the same point of time, what would be the proportion of financial and military commitments of NATO towards first, the European Defence, and second, the containment of

China in the Indo-Pacific region? Which objective would be a priority for the European countries? Can they counter two threats at the same time? The Ukraine-Russia conflict might continue for a couple of more months, if not years.

Moreover, what if China decides to invade Taiwan during the same period or creates crises in the Indo-Pacific region? It must be recalled that during the Russia-Ukraine conflict’s initial phase, France and Germany were reluctant to cut off their gas supplies. The future is hard to predict, and so are the sustenance levels of multiple military alliances. What then happens to the safety of allies in Asia is worth pondering. Thus, NATO needs to develop a genuinely transatlantic China policy in addition to the deployments in the Indo-Pacific, which might make China more reactionary and possibly provoke it to test the unity of NATO.

Three crucial issues emerge regarding South and Central Asia and the recent developments. First, attempts by Russia and China to expand their joint sphere of influence to include countries having an anti-American perspective, such as Iran and Pakistan. The emerging counter quad can present a formidable challenge to the West’s allies. Second, the destruction of the agricultural fertility of Ukraine will lead to increased demand for food grains. One of the most critical inputs for good agricultural produce are phosphates, the supplies dominated by China, which can be used as an essential geopolitical tool against the West via the supplier countries, especially in South and Central Asia. Third, the impact of the conflict would be the rise in the

earth’s average temperatures, particularly in the Arctic region; hence, melting the ice would be a new strategic issue. The opening of the new sea routes, especially in the arctic, would further bring the Indo-Pacific region to the centre of the gravity of the upcoming new conflicts.

India firmly believes in multipolarity and hence has its presence in China-led SCO, BRICS, and RIC apart from its strategic partnership in the Quad grouping. The multi-alignment policy of PM Narendra Modi has yielded positive results. As the militarization of Asia is imminent and there are increased chances of confrontations, the moment presents India with an opportunity to delicately balance hegemonic tendencies and democratic ideals without compromising India’s security and sovereignty. For this, it becomes essential that the country adjusts its budget to soon emerge as a self-reliant defence actor to maintain the strategic autonomy, failing which it might be sandwiched between the arms trade geopolitics of the West and Russia. Even for a couple of years, some hard decisions to divert financial resources towards indigenous development and emergency procurements of cyber and space capabilities is a must. On the flip side, we also need to evolve our policies in case the hegemonic tendencies pose an imminent threat. In such a case, New Delhi’s traditional ally, such as Russia, might side with China and hence would allow India to find military and tactical support from the willing partners, thereby bringing profound changes in the South Asian security architecture.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I DON’T THINK @RRRMOVIE IS A GAY LOVE STORY BUT EVEN IF IT WAS, IS ‘GAY LOVE STORY’ A BAD THING?  
—BAAHUBALI PRODUCER  
SHOBU YARLAGADDA



THERE WAS NOTHING WRONG WITH IT. I MERELY QUOTED...THE BANTER THAT ALREADY EXISTS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.  
—OSCAR-WINNING SOUND DESIGNER  
RESUL POOKUTTY

Bizarre Cuban Missile Crisis redux in Nicaragua

Nowadays, both Russia and the United States have ample weapons that they can fire at each other from their homelands

It was a piece of news so obscure and implausible that I missed it when it first surfaced last month. The news was that the Russians are going to put hypersonic nuclear missiles into Nicaragua and terrify the Americans into backing down over Ukraine. Or kill them all if they don’t.

“If American missile systems can nearly reach Moscow from Ukrainian territory, it’s time for Russia to roll out something powerful closer to the American ‘city on a hill,’” said Olga Skabeyeva on the news show on ‘Rossiya-1’, the most popular Russian TV channel.

The usual crew of panelists hugged themselves with delight at the idea of American cities being blown away. “Objects like the city of New York, a good city, but it would



GWYNNE DYER

(The author’s new book is  
The Shortest History of War)

be gone. Completely gone with one rocket,” said one.

Then they rambled on about how the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 had brought the Americans to their senses (bet you didn’t know that the US lost), and how Russian missiles in Nicaragua might bring Americans to their senses again. They will give in before they really get hurt.

As a substantial majority of the Russian television audience watches the show, that’s the news ordinary Russians are getting. But if these people really represent the Russian elite’s views of what is possible and necessary, then we’re all in trouble. Nuclear war is at hand.

I don’t really think nuclear war is at hand, but there is a lot of loose talk about it in Russia at the moment. So let’s examine

the optimistic assumption in the West that some people in the Russian military and diplomatic hierarchies – hopefully quite senior people – have a better grasp of reality than the television pundits.

Are there really Russian generals and senior foreign ministry officials who think that “American missile systems can nearly reach Moscow from the Ukrainian territory”? If you mean American nuclear missiles, then of course not.

The United States has given non-nuclear battlefield missiles to Ukraine, but it has deliberately restricted the ammunition to types that cannot reach any significant distance into Russia. There are no American troops in Ukraine, and no nuclear weapons in Ukrainian hands. The business about moving

American nuclear missiles ‘closer’ to Russia is complete tripe: they are just as lethal from where they are now. Russian generals and diplomats are not stupid: they know that American nuclear weapons systems have been able to reach Russia from the US homeland or any of the world’s oceans since the 1960s.

Well, then, how would putting Russian nuclear missiles in Nicaragua, ‘closer’ to the United States, give Russia any advantage either? It wouldn’t, although it would probably provoke the US government into a massive over-reaction. Like Russian nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962, you know?

The difference between Cuba in 1962 and Nicaragua today is that ‘close’ still meant something in 1962, when the

United States already had intercontinental ballistic missiles that could reach the old Soviet Union, but Russia had no long-range ballistic missiles that could hit American cities yet.

The Russians sneaked some shorter-range nuclear missiles into Cuba to even things up, but the Americans spotted them, imposed a blockade, and threatened to invade Cuba. Moscow pulled its missiles out, and everybody lived grumpily ever after.

Nowadays, both Russia and the United States have ample weapons that they can fire at each other from their homelands. ‘Closer’ no longer confers any advantages. Besides, Nicaragua has not said it will host Russian nuclear weapons, or indeed Russian weapons of any sort.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega published a decree last month authorising small numbers of troops from Russia, the United States or other Central American countries to deploy to his country for a limited time ‘for purposes of training, law enforcement or emergency response’.

Ortega was a Marxist in the 1980s. After the Nicaraguan revolution triumphed, he got Soviet help, and US President Ronald Reagan financed a guerrilla/terrorist movement in an unsuccessful attempt to bring him down, but that was long ago.

Now, Ortega is just another dictator like Putin. He rigs elections, jails the opposition, and treats the state budget as his private income. Nicaragua is broke, so Ortega is happy to take

Russian money, but he’s probably not stupid enough to let the Russians bring missiles in.

Russia’s much-hyped hypersonic missiles are irrelevant anyway, since ‘hypersonic’ missiles are only useful if a country has good anti-missile defences. In fact, nobody has good missile defences, so, they make little difference strategically. Dumb missiles with some terminal guidance work just fine.

The rational conclusion, therefore, is that this is all just propaganda blather by ignorant Russian TV pundits, but a warning. I predicted that Russia would not invade Ukraine because it would be utterly stupid to do. I am still assuming that Russian leaders are rational, but now I have some doubts.



MONEY MATTERS

## FinMin extends duty exemption on raw cotton imports

The finance ministry has extended the exemption of customs duty on raw cotton imports by a month till October 31. On April 14, the ministry had given exemption from the duty and Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC) till September 30, 2022, for import of cotton to lower prices in the domestic market. In a notification dated July 4, the ministry extended this till October 31, 2022. Amid rise in cotton and yarn prices, the textiles ministry had been pitching for an extension of the duty waiver beyond September. Industry too had been demanding extension of the duty-free import of cotton. Before April 14, raw cotton imports attracted 5 per cent Basic Customs Duty (BCD) and an equal percentage of AIDC. The exemption from duty would benefit the textile chain -- yarn, fabric, garments and made-ups -- and provide relief to consumers. Cotton prices have increased from Rs 44,500 per candy in February, 2021, to Rs 90,000 per candy in March 2022. Each candy weights 356 kilogram.



## RBI liberalises norms to boost forex inflows

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday further liberalised norms to boost inflows of foreign exchange, including doubling the borrowing limit under the ECB route, amid the rupee falling against the US dollar.

In a statement, the central bank said it has been closely and continuously monitoring the liquidity conditions in the forex market and has stepped in as needed in all its segments to alleviate dollar tightness with the objective of ensuring orderly market functioning.

The measures taken by the central bank comes in the backdrop of rupee depreciating by 4.1 per cent against the US dollar during the current financial year so far (up to



July 5) amid the ongoing geopolitical tensions.

"In order to further diversify and expand the sources of forex funding so as to mitigate volatility and dampen global spillovers", the central bank said it has decided to undertake five measures to enhance forex inflows while ensuring overall macroeconomic and

financial stability.

The measures include easing norms for FPI investment in debt market, and increasing the External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) limit under the automatic route from USD 750 million or its equivalent per financial year to USD 1.5 billion.

## Honda India Power Products enters e-commerce space

Honda India Power Products Ltd (HIPP) on Wednesday announced its foray into the e-commerce space with plans to sell its products exclusively through its webstore to cash in on the pandemic-induced digital adoption. The company is making its products, including generators, water pumps, tillers and brush cutters, available on the website for direct purchase. It is aiming to get closer to its customers by embracing more digital connectivity and reach out to potential customers who currently find it difficult to visit the nearest company's dealerships. "We have more than 600 outlets across India. However, in some places customers are 50 kilometers away from our nearest outlet... So through our website customers can choose and compare products and make payments and the dealers will take care of pre delivery inspection and after sales service," HIPP Chairman and Managing Director, President, and CEO Takahiro Ueda told PTI.



## BMW Group India reports 64.2 pc rise in car sales

BMW Group India on Wednesday reported 64.2 per cent growth in its car sales at 5,570 units in the January-June period of 2022. The BMW brand posted sales of 5,191 units during the period, a growth of 65.4 per cent while the MINI clocked 379 units, an increase of 50 per cent over the comparable period last year, the group said in a statement. The group's luxury motorcycle brand BMW Motorrad registered sales of 3,114 units at a growth of 56.7 per cent in the first half of 2022, it added. "Against all odds, BMW Group is taking rapid and consistent strides in India. Despite the turbulences caused by various factors in the domestic and international market, we have achieved the best-ever half-yearly sales performance for BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad," BMW Group India President Vikram Pawah said. He further said, "This success underpins the enormously strong demand for BMW Group products in the luxury car and premium motorcycle segment in India."



## Sensex, Nifty rebound over 1 pc as financials, FMCG shares gain

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded over 1 per cent on Wednesday following buying in FMCG, financials and auto stocks amid softening crude oil prices and foreign funds turning net buyers of domestic equities after a long gap.

The 30-share BSE barometer climbed 616.62 points or 1.16 per cent to settle at 53,750.97 as 25 of its shares ended in the green. During the day, it rallied 684.96 points or 1.28 per cent to 53,819.31. The NSE Nifty shot up 178.95 points or 1.13 per cent to 15,989.80 with 40 constituents posting gains.

Among Sensex shares, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever, Asian Paints, Titan, Maruti Suzuki India, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Nestle were the major gainers.

Power Grid, NTPC,

Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Steel were the laggards.

Softening crude oil prices, FIIs repositioning to net buyers and strong business data from lenders boosted domestic equities, Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Crude prices fell sharply by 10 per cent on Tuesday which "boosted the appetite for consumption, chemicals, logistics and OMCs as it will reduce the cost burden of these sectors", Nair said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.76 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.94 per cent.

Among the BSE sectoral indices, auto jumped 2.73 per cent, followed by consumer discretionary goods & services (2.47 per cent), FMCG (2.45 per cent), consumer durables (2.42 per cent) and realty (2.39 per cent).

## Coal output grows 32 pc to 67.59 MT ; despatches rise 20 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic coal production rose sharply by 32 per cent to 67.59 million tonnes (MT) in June 2022 compared to 50.98 MT in the same month last year, the Coal Ministry said on Wednesday.

"Coal India Ltd (CIL), Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) and captive mines/others registered a growth of 28.87 per cent, 5.50 per cent and 83.53 per cent by producing 51.56 MT, 5.56 MT and 10.47 MT, respectively", the ministry said citing its provisional data.

Of the top 37 coal mines, as many as 22 mines produced more than 100 per cent, and production at another nine mines stood between 80 per cent and 100 per cent, it said.

At the same time, coal despatch also increased by 20.69 per cent to 75.46 MT



from 62.53 MT as compared to June 2021. During June 2022, CIL and captives/others registered a growth of 15.20 per cent and 88.23 per cent by despatching 58.98 MT and 11.05 MT, respectively.

The despatch to power utilities has grown by 30.77 per cent to 64.89 MT during June this year as compared to 49.62 MT in June last year due to increase in power demand.

"The overall power gener-

ation in June 2022 has been 17.73 per cent higher than in June 2021. However, Coal based power generation in the month of June 2022 has been 95880 MU in comparison to 98,609 MU (million unit) in May 2022 and registered a negative growth of 2.77 per cent", the ministry said.

Total power generation has also decreased in June 2022 to 1,38,995 MU from 1,40,059 MU in May 2022.

## Ban on service charge in food bills without any legal basis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) on Wednesday said the government cannot make changes in levy of service charge in food bills by making guidelines and CCPA's decision to bar hotels and restaurants from such practice has created unnecessary confusion amongst consumers and disrupted smooth operations of restaurants.

It alleged that there is an attempt to start a campaign against this restaurant industry practice without any legal basis through "repeated guidelines", while asserting that service charge is part of the total price of a product and neither the government nor any authority can interfere with the decision of the business owner in this regard.

In a statement, NRAI argued that service charge is a part of the owner's discretion or decision regarding the total price



payable by a customer with regards to sale or service of a product.

"It constitutes one of the components of the total price of the product. Neither the government nor any authority can interfere with the decision of the business owner in this regard. It is a universally accepted trade practice," it asserted.

NRAI also claimed that the legality, reasonableness or justification of levying service

charge has been considered by the Supreme Court, High Courts, National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, erstwhile Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission and by the Income Tax Authorities (ITAT) and has been "upheld in various judicial pronouncements".

"It is therefore the owner's discretion as to how to run its business and what policy should be put in place regard-

ing pricing of the product. The government cannot bring about a change insofar as a levy of service charge is concerned by making guidelines," it said.

Stressing that guidelines by the very nature of things are only for guidance, the industry body said, "in case there is a need for such change, there has to be either a new law or an amendment in the existing laws."

NRAI further said, "It is also relevant to state that extra charges are being levied by many other industries, including some government agencies. However, the guidelines are issued only for the restaurant industry." On Monday, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) barred hotels and restaurants from levying service charge automatically or by default in food bills and allowed customers to file complaints in case of violation, amid rising consumer complaints.

## Inflation continued to 'hit hard' FMCG industry : GCPL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's FMCG industry continued to be "hit hard by inflation levels" leading to successive price hikes as well as impacting volumes during the three months ended June, according to Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL).

In its update for the first quarter of the current fiscal, the leading FMCG player also said that rural markets witnessed slower growth compared to urban markets during the period.

GCPL expects to deliver early double-digit sales growth on a high base in India and the growth will be mostly "price-driven". The company would have "mid-single-digit volumes drop on a high base,



with a 3-year volume CAGR close to mid-single digits," in the domestic market, as per the update. "The Indian FMCG industry continued to remain soft during the quarter. It continued to be hit hard by inflation levels aggravating due to geopolitical tensions, leading to successive price increases and impacting vol-

umes," GCPL said. In recent months, inflation has been on the rise in most of the markets worldwide.

Among the international markets, GCPL said that in Indonesia, which is the company's second-largest market after India, also faced an impact on consumption and margins.

## Govt to implement fuel consumption standards

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to reduce pollution and introduce more fuel-efficient vehicles, the government has proposed to make it mandatory for light, medium and heavy duty motor vehicles of various categories to comply with fuel consumption standards from April 2023, according to an official statement.

The statement said the continued compliance to fuel consumption standards shall be verified as per the procedure of conformity of production, outlined in the Automotive Industry Standard 149.

"The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has issued a notification dated 1st July 2022, amending Rule 115 G of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR) 1989, to include compliance with Fuel Consumption Standards

(FCS), for light, medium and heavy duty motor vehicles of various categories, manufactured in, or imported by, India," it said.

Prior to this notification, the statement said, compliance with annual fuel consumption standard was applicable to vehicles of M1 category (motor vehicle used for carriage of passengers, comprising not more than 8 seats, in addition to the driver's seat) with Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) up to 3.5 tonnes.

The MoRTH in a statement said the aim of this notification is to expand the ambit of vehicles for compliance with FCS, and hence introduce more fuel efficient vehicles.

The statement further said the date of applicability of this notification is April 1, 2023 and comments have been invited from all stakeholders within 30 days from the date of the notification.



## MF industry's asset base rises 14 pc to Rs 37.75 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The asset base of domestic mutual fund industry witnessed an annual growth of 14 per cent to reach Rs 37.75 lakh crore in the three months ended June on sustained inflows in equity schemes by way of SIPs (Systematic Investment Plans) and lumpsum investments.

Going ahead, the long term trend and acceptability of mutu-

al funds across different investor segments will continue to strengthen taking the Assets Under Management (AUM) to new highs, Abhishek Dev, Co-Founder and CEO of Epsilon Money, said. According to Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) data, the industry's average AUM rose to Rs 37.75 lakh crore in the quarter ended June 2022 from Rs 33.2 lakh crore at the end of June 2021.

## KRAs to report cyber attacks within six hours of detecting them

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has asked the KYC Registration Agencies (KRAs) to report all cyber attacks, threats and breaches experienced by them within six hours of detecting such incidents.

The incident will also be reported to the Indian Computer Emergency Response team (CERT-In) in accordance with the guide-

lines issued by CERT-In from time to time, according to a circular.

Additionally, the KRAs, whose systems have been identified as 'protected system' by National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) will also report such incidents to NCIIPC. "All cyber attacks, threats, cyber incidents and breaches experienced by KRAs shall be reported to Sebi within six



hours of noticing / detecting such incidents or being brought to notice about such incidents," the regulator said

on Tuesday. The quarterly reports containing information on cyber attacks, threats, cyber incidents and breaches experienced by the stock brokers and depository participants and measures taken to mitigate the vulnerabilities, including information on bugs vulnerabilities, threats that may be useful for others, will have to be submitted to Sebi within 15 days from the end of every quarter.

## Google announces Startup School India initiative

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Google on Wednesday announced an initiative, Startup School India, that aims to organise accumulated knowledge into a structured curriculum to enable startups in small cities overcome various challenges.

Google hopes that the programme will help 10,000 startups in tier 2 and tier 3 cities (smaller cities).

The nine-week programme, delivered virtually, will have fireside chats between Google leaders and collaborators from across the startup ecosystem, spanning fintech, business-to-business and business-to-consumer e-commerce, language, social media and networking, job search and other areas.

The curriculum will feature

instructional modules on subjects such as shaping an effective product strategy, deep dives on product user value, building apps for next billion users in markets like India, driving user acquisition among others.

With nearly 70,000 startups, India is the third largest base for startups in the world. As more Indian founders lead their companies successfully to IPOs or unicorn status, it has sparked a virtuous cycle wherein their success stories have ignited aspirations among young Indians across the country.

No longer restricted only to larger cities like Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai or Hyderabad, promising startups are mushrooming in centers such as Jaipur, Indore, Gorakhpur and



other locations.

In fact, these account for nearly 50 per cent of all recognised startups in India, at present. That said, 90 per cent of all startups fail within the first

five years of their journey, mostly for the similar key reasons -- unmanaged cash burn, flawed demand assessment, ineffective feedback loops or lack of leadership, Google said

in a blogpost. The latest initiative recognises this void, and acknowledges the need for programmes that can organise accumulated knowledge into a structured curriculum and

deliver it across a wide footprint.

"Startup School India - a Google for Startups initiative is designed to do precisely that as we align our efforts to support this expansion," the company said. Indian entrepreneurs have garnered a wealth of institutional knowledge, Google said, noting that a defining tradition of the community has been knowledge sharing, which helps others learn faster, avoid known pitfalls and borrow useful growth hacks.

"Aimed at early stage founders with a minimum viable product, the programme provides the flexibility of a virtual curriculum and allows attendees to pick and choose the modules they'd like to tune in for," the blogpost said.



## Squid Game star Lee Jung-jae to make new spy movie with directorial debut *Hunt*

**S**quid Game star Lee Jung-jae said that his directorial debut *Hunt* is a mix of his decades-long experience as an actor and his dream of making a new type of spy movie.

*Hunt* is a story about two rival intelligence agents in South Korea, Park Pyong-ho (Lee) and Lee Jung-do (Jung Woo-sung), who separately chase after a North Korean spy leaking top secret information that could jeopardise national security. The two end up discovering a plot to assassinate the South Korean president, Yonhap news agency reported.

It premiered as part of the non-competition Midnight Screening section at this year's Cannes Film Festival held in May.

It is Lee's first film where he works behind the camera in his 30-year acting career, during which he has starred in about 40 films and TV series. He also wrote the script of his maiden film.

"Although I've been in this world for a long time, I thought writing and direct-



ing are different from acting. So I hesitated a lot. But I decided to take charge of this project and dived into it," Lee said in a press conference.

For his directorial debut, he said that he spent most of pre production, which lasted for four years, in writing the script. He tried to build emotions of each character who confronts unknown and unseen spies, and combines them with his own style of suspense, thrill and action from the beginning.

"As many male actors do, I used to enjoy espionage films. As a director, I wanted to create a new type of spy

film with *Hunt*," said Lee, who rose to international fame with the global sensation *Squid Game*.

"Before going into an action sequence, I help actors build their emotions and get deeply immersed in the situation. I think this emotional building explains the violence and rage behind the action scenes."

The 48-year old actor-director-writer said it was not easy for him to direct himself.

"I know I can't do both well. I kept that in mind from the beginning," he said.

"So I tried to focus more

on acting when actors stood out, while I concentrated on directing when directorial parts are more important."

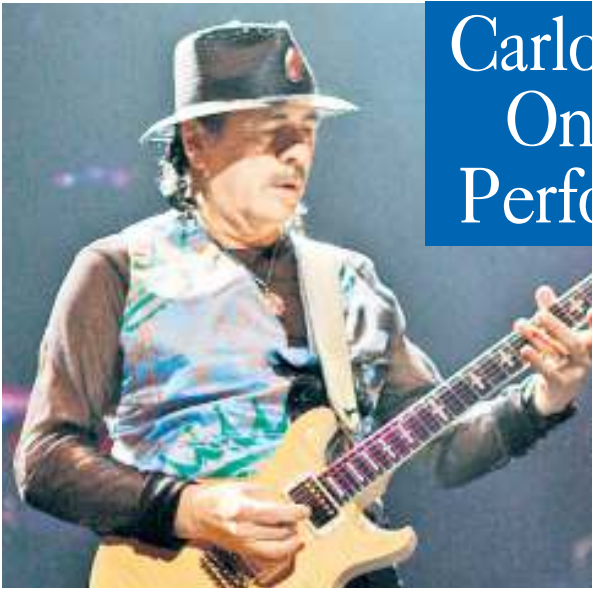
*Hunt* is his first project following the global sensation *Squid Game*, which brought him a number of major acting prizes in the United States, including best lead actor at the Screen Actors Guild Awards.

It has also been in the media spotlight due to the reunion of the lead actors, Lee and Jung, from the 1999 drama film *City Of The Rising Sun*.

Actor Jung Woo-sung, who is well known as an old friend of Lee, said he accepted Lee's offer to star in his directorial debut because of Lee's passion in the project, not because of their decades-long friendship.

"I tried to distance myself from his project and see it from an objective point of view," he said. "I thought he was ready to do it. I know how much effort he has put into it."

*Hunt* will hit Korean screens on August 10.



## Carlos Santana Passes Out On Stage During Live Performance In Michigan

**T**he Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston, Michigan saw veteran guitarist Carlos Santana passing out onstage during the Miraculous Supernatural 2022 tour with Earth, Wind

and Fire. However, Santana was treated quickly and was seen waving to fans as he was wheeled offstage, reports Variety.

According to a statement from his representative,

accessed by Variety, Santana 'was overtaken by heat exhaustion and dehydration', and was taken to the emergency department at McLaren Clarkston hospital for observation.

Santana's manager, Michael Vrionis, issued a statement late Tuesday (Pacific Standard Time) saying, "the musician is doing well, although the concert scheduled for July 6 at the Pavilion at Star Lake in Burgettstown, Pa. will be postponed to a later date. More details to follow thru Live Nation," he added.

Sources told Variety that Santana was about 20 minutes into his set when he sat

down on the drum riser at the beginning of the song Joy and then fell backwards. Medical personnel rushed onstage and the crowd was initially "asked to pray for him because of a 'serious medical' issue," according to a Tweet from Fox2 Detroit's Rooop Raj.

Along with touring, Santana is also working with filmmaker Rudy Valdez on an upcoming biographical documentary, produced by Imagine Documentaries and Sony Music Entertainment.

A native of Mexico, Santana began playing the guitar as a child and later moved with his family to California.

## Cezanne Khan On Playing Chef And Love For Food In *Appnapan*

**K**asautii Zindagi Kay actor Cezanne Khan, who is seen playing Nikhil, a celebrity chef in the show *Appnapan - Badalte Rishton Ka Bandhan*, reveals why this show was the right choice for him and how his love for food helped him play chef with perfection.

On what made him choose *Appnapan*, he says, "I have a special connection with Balaji Telefilms because they gave me my biggest break and made me a household name. *Appnapan* is a family drama which is different from what I have done previously. Whenever a challenging role comes across, every actor wants to do it."

He finds his role in the show different and after reading the script, he found it intriguing and relatable. "This is something very different and I am sure people will like it because they haven't seen me do a character like this before. The story will not only tug the audience's heart but will make them connect to each and every character in the show as well because all of them



have a story to tell which is quite relatable," he adds.

The 44-year-old actor says that his on-screen character Nikhil and himself in reality are complete opposites.

"My character Nikhil and I are poles apart and don't share any kind of similarities. But, one common thing that we both share is that I love to cook and enjoy eating which is the same with Nikhil as

well. So, we are similar along those lines. Otherwise, both of us are quite different and that's what pulled me into doing the role because it was challenging for me to portray a character who is unlike me in every sense," he shares.

Playing a chef means that you get to be around food a lot. When asked if cooking comes naturally to him, he said, "I am not a chef but I

do like to cook and more than that I am a foodie. Cooking does not come naturally to me but I don't find it difficult. I am good at chopping and making things. I am not talking about omelette and all, I can make good food like tandoori etc. I may not be great like my character but it's not like I can't cook. There have been times when I have cooked a lot of stuff. I am not bad." On how he prepared himself for his role, the actor gives credit to Ekta R. Kapoor for making him understand his character, "Ektaa briefed us on the role. The way she had perceived the character, she explained to us properly. You are seeing your character, but the director is seeing every character. He is like the captain of the ship."

"I prefer being a director's actor till the time I don't grasp the script completely. Once I get into the game and I know the character, the push is not required," he concludes.

*Appnapan - Badalte Rishton Ka Bandhan* airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

## Kanye West says he charges much more than \$1mn for a performance



and asked to correct it as he claimed that he actually charges much more than \$1 million, reports aceshowbiz.com.

"Please change this," Kanye wrote to the account, adding, "my performance fee is \$8 million."

The account also noted in the caption of its post, "Kanye messaged its \$8Million not \$1 Million," and shared a screenshot of the rapper's message to them via its Story.

Previously, the hip-hop Instagram account put together a list of artists' performance fees, which included the likes of Joey Bada\$\$, JID, Denzel Curry, Vince Staples, Kid Cudi and Tyler, the Creator. According to the account, Drake's show costs \$500,000, while Young Thug charges triple at \$1.5 million per show.

Kanye has made Forbes' list of worldwide billionaires. According to the magazine, per April this year, the Grammy Award-winning artist's net worth is \$2 billion, making him the wealthiest musician in the world.

**R**apper Kanye West has shared his staggering seven-figure performance fee when debunking a claim that he charged \$1 million for a performance.

Kanye responded to RapThoughtsDaily's Instagram post about several artists' performance fee. Catching wind of the post, the Atlanta native contacted the Instagram account

### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



#### NANCY



#### GINGER MEGGS



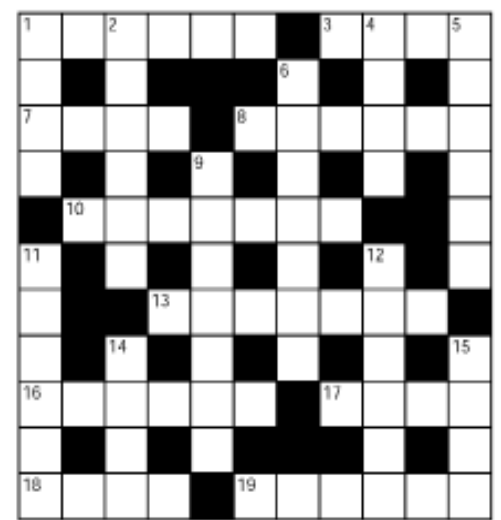
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### ACROSS

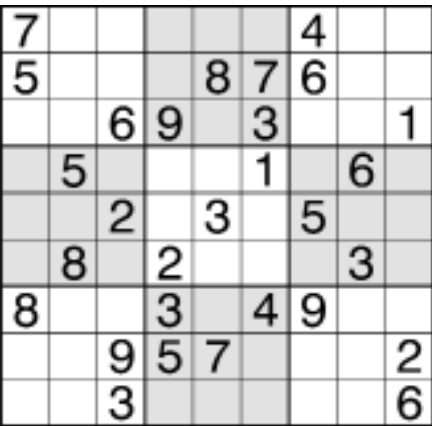
- 1 Begins
- 3 A worshipped statue
- 7 Keep a pet bird in this
- 8 Yells
- 10 A citizen of Israel
- 13 Took no notice of
- 16 People invited
- 17 A large public building for meetings, functions
- 18 One third of twenty-seven
- 19 A pie's covering
- 5 Use your ears
- 6 Opposite of deep
- 9 Badly behaved
- 11 We need this gas to stay alive
- 12 Leave
- 14 Very unkind
- 15 Potters use this

#### DOWN

- 1 Unwell
- 2 A month
- 4 A musical instrument played with sticks



#### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution								
7	9	1	4	2	6	8	3	5
8	2	4	5	3	7	9	6	1
3	5	6	9	1	8	4	2	7
5	7	8	3	4	9	2	1	6
1	6	2	8	7	5	3	4	9
9	4	3	1	6	2	5	7	8
6	8	7	2	9	3	1	5	4
4	3	5	7	8	1	6	9	2
2	1	9	6	5	4	7	8	3

#### Rules

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





## Changing lives with financial assistance



PNs | HYDERABAD

The poor have been a part of that section of society who have been ignored for years, leading to no access to essential services. Thanks to organisations like the Grameen Foundation, who are working hard for the betterment of these people. Grameen Foundation enjoys a unique position among development organisations in the country. They have a bottom-of-the-pyramid client approach, a deep set of channels, and technologies appropriate for serving low-income and under-served population segments. Founded in 1997, Grameen Bank was inspired by Nobel Laureate Professor Mohammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank and a global leader in the fight against poverty. Over the years, it has grown into a global non-profit that helps the world's poorest people reach their full potential by providing access to essential financial services and information on agriculture and health.

Debopama Sen, the director, tells us, "I believe that all of us desire to improve our lives and that all of us, even the poorest among us, can reach our full potential if we are given access to the right tools and timely information." Globally, their agriculture programmes provide solutions to the problems that confront smallholder farmers every day, whether that is access to finance, farm inputs, weather information, technical information for farm and production management, or markets. They specialise in designing and implementing innovative programmes to facilitate access to finance, livelihood oppor-

tunities, health and nutrition information amongst low-income people.

They address the barriers on the demand-side and supply-side through scalable models, the use of technology applications, and innovative partnerships. In doing so, they work closely with the private sector, governments, agriculture and health implementers, mobile network operators, financial institutions, and other stakeholders to prime their solutions for adoption and scale. They believe that when poor rural women are empowered with knowledge and commensurate resources, they are able to transform their lives and the lives of their larger communities. Their projects have already impacted over 1 million women. And they are working to impact a billion more.

She adds, "We have been doing pioneering work in the area of financial inclusion with low-income communities, especially women. We focus on innovation and digital to offer the last mile of financial connectivity to reach the unbanked and underserved population with a range of cost-effective financial services and products. Then, there is a programme that seeks to transform the agricultural sector in selected districts by promoting a food systems approach to agriculture through nutrition-focused crop diversification, introducing innovative women's-friendly and climate-smart technologies, and developing market linkages."

That's not all. They have designed the Lakshyavati programme to improve educational attainment and reduce school dropout rates amongst girls between Grades VII and XII. Girls belonging to low-income families suffer the risk of having their education de-prioritised when they reach middle school, often leading to early marriages for most of them. To address and arrest this reality, they run a scholarship programme to provide a fixed monthly bursary, which is transferred directly to the bank accounts of over 65 girls. All the 65 girls have continued their education.

Smallholder farmers in India face enormous challenges and high operating costs due to inefficiencies in agriculture supply chains, lack of awareness.

Their additional Grameen Kisan Connect platform addresses these challenges of smallholder farmers, especially women, in improving access to finance, technology, agriculture inputs, and the market for their produce with the ultimate objective of increasing farmers' incomes.



## Love them or hate them; they're here to RULE

This is such an exciting phase for Indian FMCG. At no other point in history have we seen this industry go through such rapid waves of innovation and creativity as it is seeing today. Walk out into the market and you see multiple brands that are unabashedly Indian and extremely successful.

But who is responsible for this spurt of product-within-product categories? Who's been ensuring that brands make what they want to buy? That's a no-

than 63% of Millennials make their purchases online because it's convenient. They get access to products that are not available in stores near them and also because they get better discounts and can make purchases as many times as they want without having to step out."

Look around and you'll notice that many new brands today are started 'By Millennials and For Millennials'. And they are killing it in the market because these brands speak their language, they live where they live, they know what makes them tick, and more importantly, they know what they will buy.

Considering that India has the largest Millennial and GenZ workforce in the world today, which translates to significant spending power, the market is ripe for FMCG startups to offer purpose-led, benefit-heavy products.

From chemical-free baby products to zero-calorie flavoured tonics to packaged cold-brewed coffee to freshly sourced antibiotic-free meats to men's grooming kits to made-in-India audio products, the FMCG industry in India looks like it's having a party.

It's so heartening to see these young brands not only survive but flourish in the aftermath of the pandemic. From what I have observed, it was the sheer market potential of the Indian market that helped companies adjust their sails and ride out the storm with determination.

Their stories of grit and thinking on their feet are motivating hundreds of other FMCG startups to take their brand from idea to product, and carve out a niche of their own. And mind you, none of these brands is lacking in ambition, capital or the intent to be the best at what they do. Most of them can easily compete for head-on with global brands in their category. They are here to tell their own story. They are here to be profitable. They are here to win.

TEJAL SINHA

Content creation has been one of those industries that has given a platform to many people to express themselves. Of course, nothing comes ready-made. Surviving as a content creator is not an easy task. There's a lot behind those thousands of likes and views.

Many content creators felt the pandemic was real-time for them to entertain their followers. One amongst them is Harjas Sethi, aka Vellijanani. Harjas has her own journey behind being one of the ranting queens on the internet. Content creation was never pre-planned for her, but something that had randomly started and become her mode of expressing herself. She says, "I was enjoying it. In fact, I used to put videos up every day, with one video every single day. I really liked the process of creation. I really loved to find a concept every night so that I could create it the next morning, and that happened when I had like 800 followers."

We're sure most working people had a great time working from home in most comfortable 'pyjamas'. Being a corporate professional, she too had some amazing experiences working from home, until she received a mail to return to the

## Starting from scratch

office. Isn't it more akin to heartbreak? She made a video on this which went viral all over the world, not only on Instagram but on other social media platforms as well. In fact, she was even in the news.

"People in my office were like, 'Why does she upload such videos and stuff? But then when I received mail from my office to get back to the office, I made this WFH video that just blew up. That was when, I got a lot of audiences within a week. My account went from 800 to 35k followers, and I found new ways of entertaining my audience. Most of the time, it is my self-expression."

Harjas believes that her life has not changed much since the time that she started making content and tries to make herself be the same person as she is in her real life.

She says, "It's just that I have some people on the internet who know me. It's nice to share your life with them sometimes. I try to be the person I am in real life. I do not try to fabricate or be another person, although there's a side of me that I portray on the internet and not all of me,

even then I try to keep it as realistic as possible. There is no change in my personal life. My mother still treats me the same (she laughs). My friends and my colleagues too still treat me the same. Workwise, yes, I feel really excited about doing new things on Instagram. Content creation for me started off as an interest and not a job, but now it looks like a job, which was not the same initially. Initially, it was something I was doing for fun. If something I like turns into a goal of my thoughts, then I think there is nothing better than that. Career-wise and goal-wise, I like how my life has turned."

According to Harjas, there's nothing

called as 'Success Mantra'. Different things work for different people. However, one thing for her is being herself.

She shares, "Truly accepting that it's okay is my style. When I started content creation, I would get overwhelmed by seeing this person getting so many views, so I even tried something like that, but that may not work for me. Getting to understand yourself or what and how you want to portray yourself and how you want to put yourself out there and understanding why people are watching you, what they like about you, and also surprising them with something new as well. In my case, that has worked."

Every time a person expresses themselves or gives their opinion, trolls are these ever-ready people to just troll and pass on vulgar comments. In fact, the comments on her posts are filled with trolls.

Speaking about them, she says, "There are all kinds of people in the world and on the internet. Sadly, there's no filter that you can put in and you have to be on the receiving end. There are a lot of things you don't deserve. There are people who are going to love you and there are people who are going to hate you, and that's okay. Initially, trolls did affect me because I wasn't used to them. When the video blew up, I had no experience of being a person on the internet. A lot of hate also came my way, and I retaliated. I started exposing them and it's

fine."

"I have changed my way of handling them. If there's like a comment from a public account, I try to make something funny out of it without hurting them or myself. Sometimes it's important to put your feet down and make people aware of it. In fact last year, I also filed a cybercrime complaint against this guy who continuously harassed me on all social media platforms. It got to such a point that I had to take it to the police station. People make fun of saying you have grey hairs, aunty, it doesn't bother me at all (she laughs) but there are things I am insecure about and if people go to comment on that then it may hurt me. So I keep reminding myself that one, social media doesn't tell myself worth, a person cannot tell myself worth who doesn't even know me," she signs off.



*The Pioneer* connects with Harjas Sethi, aka Vellijanani, who shares with us her journey in content creation and how she has her own way of giving it back to the trolls



# INDIA BEGIN PREPS TO PICK BEST WT20 ELEVEN

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Experimentation will go out of the window as India will get down to finalising their best eleven for the World Cup during the three-match T20 series against an ultra-aggressive England, beginning here on Thursday.

Skipper Rohit Sharma, who missed the fifth Test in Birmingham after contracting COVID-19, will be travelling to the port city on Wednesday and is expected to feature in the series-opener.

Test players including Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja, Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant will join the T20 squad from the second game onwards.

Their absence would give fringe players like Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sanju Samson one more game to make a statement though they seem to have fallen in the pecking order in India's list of probabilities for the World Cup in Australia.

A niggles meant Gaikwad could not open alongside Ishan Kishan in the two games in Ireland and if Rohit is back, he will have to warm the bench once again.

Kishan has done reasonably well in the chances that he has got and he will look to strengthen his position in the team as a reserve opener with a substantial knock against the mighty England.

With Kohli expected to be back at number three from game two, Deepak Hooda will be aiming for another match-winning effort to keep himself in the mix.

With a century and 47 not out against Ireland, Hooda has certainly made it tougher for the team management to keep him out of the eleven.

The uncapped duo of Rahul Tripathi and Arshdeep Singh have not been included for second and third T20 and it is unlikely they will get a look in on Thursday.



England vs India  
Live from 10:30pm IST  
SONY SIX, TEN 3

Suryakumar Yadav, who made a comeback from injury against Ireland, could not get going in the games in Malahide and will be backing himself to get back to his innovative best. He and Hooda were amongst the runs in the warm-up against Derbyshire last week.

In the bowling department, pacer Umran Malik will be brimming with confidence after defending 17 runs in the last over of a high-scoring second T20 against Ireland. However, he remains a work in progress and needs to improve on his accuracy.

The pacers including the seasoned Bhuvneshwar Kumar and wily Harshal

Patel were stunned by the Irish attack and against a tougher opposition, they will have to be at their best.

Yuzvendra Chahal will be expected to replace Ravi Bishnoi in the playing eleven.

India have about 15 T20 games to play before the T20 World Cup in Australia in October -- three against England in the current series, five against the West Indies (July 29-August 7), about 5 in Asia Cup (August-

September) and three against Australia (September).

The England series will mark the beginning of the process to identify its best XI for the marquee event.

For England, the series marks the beginning of the Jos Buttler era following the retirement of Eoin Morgan.

Ben Stokes and star of the fifth Test against India, Jonny Bairstow, have been rested from the series.

However, there is enough firepower in the England batting to rattle the opposition.

Both Buttler and Liam Livingstone showed devastating form in the IPL and would be looking to build on that.

## SQUAD

**England:** Jos Buttler (Captain), Moeen Ali, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Richard Gleeson, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Tymal Mills, Matthew Parkinson, Jason Roy, Phil Salt, Reece Topley and David Willey.

**India:** Rohit Sharma (Captain), Ishan Kishan, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Sanju Samson, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Hardik Pandya, Venkatesh Iyer, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Ravi Bishnoi, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel, Avesh Khan, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik.



## Pant surges to career-best No. 5

PTI ■ DUBAI

India's star wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant blazed his way into a career-best fifth position in the latest ICC Test rankings announced on Wednesday, even as the out-of-form Virat Kohli dropped out of top-10 for the first time in six years.

Pant's meteoric rise in the rankings comes after his heroics in the recently-held COVID-delayed fifth Test between India and England in which he scored 146 and 57 across two innings.

It is worth mentioning that Pant scored two tons and three half centuries in his last six Test innings.

However, former India skipper Kohli dropped four places to 13th in the batting rankings, thanks to a prolonged lean run.

Interestingly, it is for the first time in six years that Kohli has found himself out of top 10 in the Test rankings.

Current Indian captain Rohit Sharma, who missed the Edgbaston Test after testing positive for COVID-19, also dropped one place in the rankings.

England batter Joe Root, who reigned supreme at Edgbaston with a sublime 142 in England's second innings, consolidated his position at the top of the rankings with 923 points, with Australians Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith taking the second and third positions respectively.

Jonny Bairstow, who is in the form of his life and played a pivotal role in guiding England to a historic victory with his unbeaten 114, climbed 11 places to 10th in the rankings.

Bairstow has so far scored 1218 runs at an average of 55.36 with six centuries in the current ICC World Test Championship cycle.

# India aim to whitewash Sri Lanka

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Confident India will look to complete the formalities and assert their supremacy by completing a whitewash of Sri Lanka in the third and final women's ODI here on Thursday.

Playing ODI cricket for the first time since the talismanic Mithali Raj retired from the game, the Indian team won the opening two games in contrasting fashion to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

The visitors had bagged the preceding T20I series 2-1.

Chasing similar targets, India looked much more confident in the second ODI as they galloped to 10-wicket win on Monday.

India controlled all aspects of the game. It was the kind of dominant display expected out of Harmanpreet Kaur and her troops through out the tour of the island nation.

After an underwhelming tour by their standards, star openers Smriti Mandhana and Shefali Verma finally joined the party with unbeaten half centuries.

The duo, that had struggled to build a decent partnership and provide electrifying starts in the first ODI and the T20 series, would be keen for an encore in the final game.

New full-time skipper Harmanpreet has been India's most consistent player this series. The all-rounder has shone with the bat, her innings often turning out to be the difference between the two sides.

While, Indian spinners were ruling the roost on the slow tracks in the T20s,



Sri Lanka vs India  
Live from 10:00 am IST  
FANCODE

## Have made a conscious effort to improve strike rotation: Shafali

PTI ■ PALLEKELE

Young Indian opener Shafali Verma, who is known for her big-hitting prowess, says she is making a conscious effort to improve her strike rotation to become a better cricketer.

The 18-year-old slammed a run-a-ball 71 not out, her career-best score in ODIs, in an unbroken 174-run partnership with Smriti Mandhana (94 not out) as India decimated the hosts by 10 wickets here on Monday to take a unassailable 2-0 lead in the three match series.

The 18-year-old has not been able to maintain consistency in her performances, especially in the 50-over format.

"Having seen my past matches, I thought I lacked in taking singles, so I've worked on it. I'm trying to be better as I feel taking singles is very important to build your innings in ODIs," Shafali said on the eve of the third and final ODI of the series.

the ODI series has belonged to pacer Renuka Singh, who has picked seven wickets in the two 50-over matches, including a career best 4/28.

In the absence of veteran Jhulan Goswami, who has often been the side's best pacer, Renuka's performance shows that that young and relatively inexperienced Indian pace unit has potential.

A 3-0 series win will also boost the visitors' confidence for their next assignment — the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Sri Lanka will, once again, be keen to pick up a conciliatory win like they did in the T20 series.

Let down by its batters this series, the Chamari Athapaththu-led side would hope it can navigate the Indian bowling attack better in the dead rubber.

On the bowling front, the spin duo of Inoka Ranaweera and Oshadi Ranasinghe have been the stand-out players, doing most of the heavy lifting.

# Dhawan to lead India in WI ODIs



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shikhar Dhawan was on Wednesday named India captain for the three ODIs against the West Indies in the absence of regular skipper Rohit Sharma, while Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant were among those who have been rested for the series beginning on July 22 in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Two other senior players, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammad Shami have also been rested. Hardik Pandya, who recently made his India

comeback following a successful IPL, is also not a part of the side.

Deepak Hooda, Sanju Samson, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Avesh Khan, who are not part of ODI squad for the series in England beginning July 12, have been included in the 16-member team for the West Indies tour.

Shubman Gill, who last played an ODI in December 2020, has also got the selectors' nod.

Ravindra Jadeja has been named Dhawan's deputy for the series.

Dhawan, who only plays ODI, had first captained the side during the tour of Sri Lanka last year when the Test specialists were in England.

There has been criticism from some quarters regarding the appointment of too many captains of the Indian team over the past one year with Bumrah, Pant, Rahul, Hardik, Dhawan leading the side due to scheduling and injury issues, and as part of workload management.

All the three games will be played in Port of Spain.

The games in the West Indies are the only ODIs India will play before the T20 World Cup in Australia and therefore, senior players being rested doesn't come entirely as a surprise.

After the ODIs, India will play five T20Is against the West Indies in the Caribbean and the United States, the squad for which is yet to be announced.

Considering every T20I game is important before the World Cup in Australia, the senior players are likely to return for the five-match series to be played from July 29 to August 7. The T20I matches will be played in Trinidad, St Kitts and Lauderhill in Florida.

**ODI Squad:** Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Ravindra Jadeja (vice-captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Deepak Hooda, Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan (wk), Sanju Samson (wk), Shardul Thakur, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Avesh Khan, Prasidh Krishna, Mohd Siraj, Arshdeep Singh.

## Smith unfazed by 'Bazball'

AP ■ GALLE

Australia's Steve Smith said Wednesday he found England's new attacking "Bazball" approach entertaining to watch, but questioned whether it was sustainable.

England have won all four Tests under new coach Brendon "Baz" McCullum and skipper Ben Stokes with a fearless new mentality, including thrashing India on Tuesday.

"I've watched a little bit of it, it's certainly been entertaining, they're coming out playing their shots," Smith said ahead of Australia's second Test against Sri Lanka starting on Friday.

"Even someone like Alex Lees started to come down the wicket when he was on nothing really to play the way he played (against India)," he told reporters.

Having tongue-in-cheek shouted "Bazball" before whacking a shot in an earlier net session, Smith said he was "intrigued to see how long it lasts, if it's sustainable."

"If you come on a wicket that's got some grass and Josh Hazlewood, (Pat) Cummins and (Mitchell) Starc are rolling



in at you. Is it going to be the same? We'll see what happens."

England's Joe Root now has more centuries to his name than Smith, but the Australian was quick to point out that his rival has played 35 more Tests.

"He's a quality player and looks like he's pretty tough to get out at the moment," Smith said of the prolific run-getter.

The touring Australian team have themselves played attacking cricket on turning pitches to go one-up in the two-Test series with a hammering

of the hosts in the opener.

Spinner Nathan Lyon led the bowling charge with nine wickets in the match and the batsmen took control of the opposition spinners with Cameron Green scoring 77 as he used the sweep shot to good effect.

"We went at a good pace in the first Test. If you were sitting there not playing your shots or looking to score, you were probably going to get out eventually. So it was getting them before they get us," Smith said.

# India eye win against NZ to stay in hunt

PTI ■ AMSTELVEEN

A lacklustre Indian women's Hockey team need to tick all boxes against New Zealand in its final Pool B match to seal a direct quarterfinal place in the FIH World Cup, here on Thursday.

The Indians, who achieved a historic fourth place finish in last year's Olympics, drew 1-1 against Tokyo bronze medallist England and China in their first two pool matches.

The Savita-led side is currently placed third in Pool B with two points below China and leaders New Zealand, who defeated England 3-1 on Tuesday.

"New Zealand will be a tough team to play. They are very dangerous in their counter-attack and we will have to be ready for that, on the ball we have to play to our strengths," chief coach Janneke Schopman said.

According to the tournament format, the 16 teams are divided in four pools of four teams each. The top four sides from each pool will directly qualify for the quarterfinals, while the second and third



India vs New Zealand  
Live from 11:00pm IST  
STAR SPORTS 1

placed teams will feature in the crossovers.

The winner of the cross over matches will grab the remaining four quarterfinal spots. So, India would look for an outright win against New Zealand and hope for a Chinese draw or a loss against England to top Pool B.

But going by the way they played in the first two matches, it would be easier said than done.

While the Indian defence

has impressed in both the matches, denying England a single penalty corner in the first game, it is the performance of the forwardline and midfield which was found wanting.

Barring Vandana Katariya, who scored India's two goals, no other striker could live upto expectations so far with the likes of Lalremliam, Sharmila Devi and Navneet Kaur cutting a sorry figure.

It is not that the Indians didn't create chances, but they

failed to grab those opportunities.

The midfield too needs to raise their game as it looked rusty against China.

Penalty corner conversion is also an area of concern for Schopman as India made use of just two out of the 12 earned in two games, and that too both the goals coming through indirectly from the sticks of Vandana.

While against England, Vandana scored from a rebound, against China she got a beauti-

ful deflection to Gurjit's flick to draw India level.

"I thought we started well against a tight Chinese defense. We were unlucky to not score early on and one moment of not paying attention defensively resulted in us conceding a goal," Schopman said.

"After that we struggled for a bit but when we found the space, we were able to play some good combinations."

"The PC goal was great but felt like we forgot to push through after that with China being more aggressive in the end phase."

"We are where we are but obviously, we would have liked to have more points. Our pool is incredibly tough and small things will make the difference," she added.

Gurjit Kaur too needs to polish her skills and raise her conversion rate if India have to progress far in the tournament.

The Black Sticks women, however, would be brimming with confidence after the win over England.

Both the sides would have a fair idea about the equations they need as China and England play earlier on Thursday.



# Cinematography helped me understand how scenes work: Director Anji

It looks like before getting into directing, Anji understood the A to Z of filmmaking, which led him to direct *10th Grade Diaries*. *The Pioneer* connects with him, during which we get to know that he will also be doing films as a cinematographer as well

PNS | HYDERABAD

The movie *10th Class Diaries*, directed by Garuda Vega Anji, stars Sriram aka Srikanth and Avika Gor in lead roles.

In this interview, director Anji talks about his new venture and tells us that this film is not a fictional story. The producer, Achut Rama Rao, wrote it based on his real-life experiences and observations. And that's the reason why you will find a wide range of elements in the movie.

The director has previously worked with Sriram twice as a cinematographer, and they have always shared a strong rapport. This is a story with rare sensibilities.

Anji didn't want to debut as a director with a thriller or a regular commercial entertainer. So he is also doing films as a cinematographer simultaneously. He says, "My experience as a cinematographer helped me understand the visual appeal of cinema and how scenes work. I have got to


work with several directors over the years, starting with Ram Gopal Varma. When the producer of *10th Class Diaries* narrated the story, I decided to go in-depth. I marshalled my wide experience to give my best shot. Moreover, I received thorough support from my team."

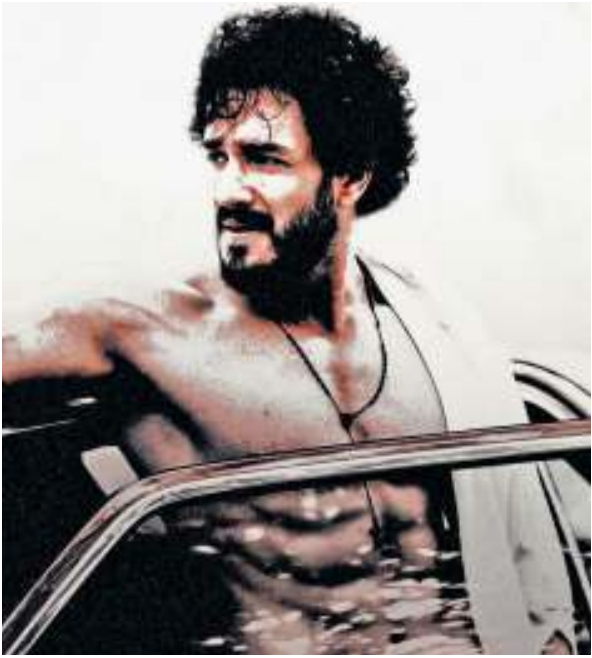
But it was *Garuda Vega* that turned out to be a game-changer for him. How? He narrated, "Cranking the camera for PSV, *Garuda Vega* changed my surname. I have since then been called as *Garuda Vega* Anji. The credit goes to its director, whose unique visual sense made me deliver the output I did. Since then, quite a few movies done by me have fetched me a name for my cinematography work."

For any specific reasons, why did he choose Sriram and Avika for the lead roles? He recalled, "The male protagonist had to look middle-aged. That's why I chose Sriram for the role. Moreover, I have known him for many years. He is handsome and, at the same time, looks mellow

and emotional. He can make the audience emotionally connect with his feelings. And Avika Gor looks like a girl next door. The character needed those vibes. After *Chinnari Pellakuthuru*, she had a certain image. That's why we picked her. She and Sriram are superb actors. They also come with vast experience as actors."

The director was 15 years old when he entered the film industry. As such, he doesn't have fond memories of his adolescent days. While making the *10th class diaries*, his mind did wander into his childhood days at times. The story was not written by him. So he had to adapt to it. Moreover, the good news is, "My next film as a director is ready. Senior director G Nageshwara Reddy has penned its story and screenplay. The film is *Bujji Ila Raa*, starring Sunil, Chandini Tamilarasan, and Dhanraj. I will wield the megaphone only if something inspiring comes my way. Otherwise, I will stick to cinematography."





## Agent postponed, again!

**A**gent, Akhil Akkineni's grandiose project, has been in the works for quite some time and has had numerous delays. The film has been postponed yet again, much to the chagrin of fans.

Production of the picture has been slow, and the *Agent* team is currently considering a December 2022 release date.

The main causes of the delays are Akhil's injuries and several schedule backlogs. It is also alleged that the film has undergone extensive script modifications as well as actor replacements. This acclaimed pan-India project is being funded by AK Entertainment and Surrender 2 Cinema, and is directed by Surrender Reddy. The producers are not skimping on action sequences and are spending a lot of money on them. After the underwhelming result of his previous film *Most Eligible Bachelor*, Akhil has high hopes for this product and hence, is not ready for any compromises.

Malayalam Superstar Mammooty is playing a vital role in the cop story with an international crime in the backdrop.

Offering a glimpse into different aspects of love in the form of stories set in Hyderabad, the soon-to-be-released *Modern Love Hyderabad* has renowned actor Revathy essaying the role of Mehrunisa, a mother in one of the episodes. Revathy and Nithya Menen are mother and daughter in the episode *My Unlikely Dream* *Pandemic Partner*, directed by Nagesh Kukunoor.

"She is someone whom I have played all my life, so it was easy for me to play Mehrunisa and it's nothing to do with lockdown, Nagesh told me about the character and I immediately said yes because I loved it," Revathy said.

Speaking about her experience playing the role, Revathy said, "Sometimes the characters are just

written as mothers with a very type-cast and typical feel to it which makes it common, but sometimes mother really have characterisation to it which makes the story count their contribution and changes the feel which this script

Revathy on her *Modern Love Hyderabad* role: She's someone I've played all my life

has." The recently released trailer of *Modern Love Hyderabad* has kept anticipation levels up. The series is the second of the three local editions of the much-loved international anthology series, *Modern Love*. The anthology is well known for showcasing different shades of love with its stories and talented star cast.

*Modern Love Hyderabad* is all set for its release on July 8 on Amazon Prime Video. The six-episode series is produced by Elahe Hiptoola with Nagesh Kukunoor as the showrunner and the episodes are directed by Nagesh Kukunoor, Venkatesh Maha, Uday Gurralla and Devika Bahudhanam.



## Vijay Sethupathi still in talks for *Jawan*?

**T**he King Khan of Bollywood Shah Rukh Khan has three films lined up to entertain his fans, out of which *Jawan* has been the most hyped project. *Jawan*, a Pan-Indian film helmed by Atlee has Kollywood lady superstar Nayanthara playing the female lead.

According to sources, the makers have also approached *Uppena* actor Vijay Sethupathi for an important role in the film.

A source close to the development has revealed that it is true that the makers had approached Sethupathi for the role of villain. However, nothing has been confirmed yet.


"He is yet to give his nod for the film so there is no truth about him joining the shoot soon in Mumbai. He is still working on his dates only for Atlee," said the source.

The source has also revealed that Nayanthara had also resumed the Mumbai schedule which will continue till July 15.

The makers had recently released

the first look of Shah Rukh Khan from *Jawan*. The film is slated to hit the theaters on June 2, 2023. The mega project also stars Priya Mani, Sanya Malhotra, and Sunil Grover in important roles.

Sethupathi is currently basking in the success of Kamal Haasan starrer *Vikram*. Apart from this, he also has some interesting Hindi projects like *Farzi* co-starring Shahid Kapoor, Sriram Raghavan's *Merry Christmas* featuring Katrina Kaif in the lead, and *Mumbaikar* co-starring Vikrant Massey.



## Aishwarya Rai's look as Queen Nandini from *Ponniyin Selvan* revealed


On the heels of releasing the first looks of Vikram as Aditya Karikalan and Karthi as Vanthiyathevan from director Mani Ratnam's magnum opus, *Ponniyin Selvan*, the makers of the much-awaited epic film on Wednesday released the first look of Aishwarya Rai Bachchan as Queen Nandini in the film.

Lyca Productions, which is producing the film along with Mani Ratnam's Madras Talkies, tweeted the first look picture of Aishwarya Rai in the film and said, "Vengeance has a beautiful face! Meet Nandini, the queen of Pazhuvoor."

The first part of the film, which will release on September 30 this year, will release in five languages; Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi.

The film is based on the classic Tamil novel *Ponniyin Selvan* by eminent writer Kalki. The film, called by Mani Ratnam as his dream project, will be among the most expensive projects ever undertaken in the country.





## Tollywood mourns the death of senior editor Gautham Raju

Well-known film editor Gautham Raju, who has worked in over 800 films, passed away at the age of 68 on Tuesday.

According to the latest reports, Gautham Raju was going through medical treatments for some kidney-related issues in Hyderabad, for the past few days. However, his health deteriorated at midnight and took his last breath. The Telugu editor's mortal remains were at his residence in Mothinagar, Hyderabad, and the last rites took place on Wednesday.

Several celebrities and fans have been paying their tributes and offering heartfelt condolences. The industry tracker Vamsi and Shekar confirmed the news about Gowtham Raju's demise. The duo took to Twitter to pay their last respects to the celebrated technician.

"Senior Editor Gautamraju garu passed away. May his soul rest in peace. Strength to family, friends, and loved ones," they confirmed after sharing a photo of Gowtham Raju on Twitter.

Sai Dharam Tej paid his

respects and tweeted, "Heartbroken at the loss of Editor #GauthamRaju Garu, a man of great work and character, with whom I have worked closely during my initial phase of career. You'll always be alive in your work sir. Sending my strength to family and dear ones. #RIPGauthamRaju Garu."

"Tremendous loss to the industry.. GauthamRaju Garu.. your work will be treasured forever. Strength to his family and friends," wrote Ram Charan.

"Saddened by the demise of renowned editor #GowthamRaju garu. May his soul rest in peace. Heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones," wrote actor Gopichand while sharing a picture of the actor.

*RRR* and *Baahubali* music composer MM Keeravani tweeted, "Saddened by the premature exit of Gowthamraju garu. Happened to work with him for Dhammu. Huge respect for his humility and talent."

Gautham Raju is best known for working for *Kick*, *Race Gurram*, *Gopala Gopala*, *Khaidi No 150*, and *Adhurs*.

## Keeravani's reaction triggers discussion

Oscar-winner Resul Pookutty's comment over Rajamouli's magnum opus *RRR* branding it a gay romance led to a huge controversy on social media. Fans have turned furious and have started demanding his ouster from Allu Arjun's prestigious project *Pushpa: The Rule*. Even though Resul Pookutty tried to calm down the tempers, seems like things have become really worse this time. Some even went on to accuse Resul Pookutty of jealousy as Rajamouli did not pick him up for his projects.

Meanwhile, music director Keeravani who worked for *RRR* came up with a subtle post and his reaction has led to a discussion. Keeravani had first posted a post and then deleted it and later came up with another post.

Keeravani's actions became a point of discussion. Keeravani used lower and upper case words in his post and he deleted it. While many felt that Keeravani gave a strong counter, others felt that Keeravani realised that there were some double-meaning words and deleted his post and came up with another post.

He said, "I am not able to see Ram and Bheem characters from *RRR* anymore (who looked like having shared a special relationship). All I can see is a mother waiting for a lifetime for her daughter Malli who was abducted. Hope my vision gets improved soon."

## Anasuya to play a prostitute in her next

Actress Anasuya Bharadwaj, who was most recently seen in Gopi Chand's *Pakka Commercial*, is set to appear in an intriguing web series.

Director Krish has been preparing to launch a web series with an interesting concept based on the events of a prostitute's life. Anasuya Bharadwaj will reportedly play a prostitute in the adaptation of Telugu novelist Gurajada Appa Rao's *Kanyasulkam*.

*Kanyasulkam* is a play written in the 1890s and has remained among the most popular ones over the years. Anasuya will play Madhuravani, a prostitute who is the drama's protagonist.

The online series will begin production soon under director Krish. More information about the same is expected to be out shortly.

Anasuya Bharadwaj's appearance in Allu Arjun's *Pushpa*, and Ravi Teja's *Khiladi*, marked a significant hype for her roles. However, it was her role as Rangamma Atha in Ram Charan-starrer *Rangasthalam* that had brought her much appreciation.

