

**ANALYSIS 7**  
BJP'S FOREIGN OUTREACH  
SERVES NATIONAL INTEREST**MONEY 8**  
RBI GUV FLAGS CONTINUED  
HIGH INFLATION AS 'A MAJOR CONCERN'**SPORTS 12**  
SERENA MAKES  
WINNING RETURN

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, JUNE 23, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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'I WANT TO PLAY A  
COOL, BUBBLY CHAR-  
ACTER'

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**22-YEAR-OLD BRAINDEAD STUDENT GIVES  
8 PEOPLE NEW LEASE OF LIFE**

A 22-year-old braindead college student gave 8 people a new lease of life as his organs were harvested and transplanted at a hospital here. S V Dhinesh of Salem met with an accident near Annur, some 35 km from here, on June 18 and was taken to a private hospital for first aid and then admitted to KMCH here for specialised treatment. As he did not respond to treatment, he was declared braindead on June 20, a release from KMCH said on Wednesday. His parents - Venkateswaran and Shanthi - came forward to donate their son's heart, kidneys, liver, eyes, skin and bones as was prescribed by the Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu, the release said.

**GOVT BUS DRIVER'S SON STEERS  
HIMSELF TO DON IPS HAT**

A government bus driver's son has become the toast of the town after joining the IPS after clearing the UPSC civil service examination. Hailing from Bhalki and brought up in the district headquarter town of Bidar in north Karnataka, Anurag Daru would don the IPS hat after he got the 569th rank in the civil services exams the results of which were announced last month. To celebrate Daru's success, the KSRTC (Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation) on Wednesday organised a felicitation ceremony where the KSRTC chairman M Chandrappa and managing director V Anbukumar honoured him and his parents Manik Rao and Kashi Bai.

**NO OF ITC EMPLOYEES WITH OVER  
RS 1 CR SALARY GOES UP TO 220**

The number of employees at conglomerate ITC drawing a salary of over Rs 1 crore per annum has gone up by 44 per cent in the recently-concluded FY2021-22 fiscal, according to the company's annual report. The total number of ITC employees drawing a salary aggregating Rs 8.5 lakh per month or over a crore rupees per year was 220 against 153 in 2020-21, said the latest annual report of ITC. "There were 220 employees, who were employed throughout the year and were in receipt of remuneration aggregating Rs 8.5 lakhs per month."

**ISRO'S PSLV-C53 TO LAUNCH 3  
SINGAPORE SATELLITES ON JUNE 30**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Wednesday said it will be launching - the second dedicated commercial mission of its commercial arm NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) - 'PSLV-C53' carrying three satellites from Singapore on June 30. The launch vehicle carrying DS-EO satellite along with two other co-passenger satellites is scheduled to lift off at 18:00 hours IST from the Second Launch Pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The countdown of 25 hours leading to the launch begins at 17:00 hours IST on June 29. The mission, proposes to demonstrate the utilization of the spent upper stage of the launch vehicle as a stabilized platform for scientific payloads.

**Rythu Bandhu  
disbursals from June 28****CM KCR directs CS for further action**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has decided to deposit Rythu Bandhu investment benefit for the coming 'Vanakalam' crop into farmers' bank accounts from June 28. The Chief Minister directed State Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar for further action. The state government will deposit Rythu Bandhu funds into farmers' accounts in a phased manner. Under the scheme, the State government gives Rs 5,000

each to farmers for both Vanakalam and Yasangi seasons. The farmers can use the amount for buying inputs for the ensuing season. The disbursals will be credited to the bank accounts of all the eligible farmers. It may be mentioned here that, about a fortnight ago, both BJP and Congress demanded that Rythu Bandhu be disbursed quickly as it would help farmers in purchasing seeds and fertilisers.

2

**Murmu certain to win**

■ YSRCP, BJD declare support; JMM also may back her ■ Challenge for Oppn to show their unity

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

Winning in the forthcoming Presidential election has become easy for the National Democratic Alliance's candidate Draupadi Murmu, with the YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh and the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha extending their support. YSR Congress president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has already assured the BJP leadership of his party's support to the NDA's choice in the Presidential election.

After the NDA declared former governor Draupadi Murmu, hailing from Odisha, as its Presidential candidate, Odisha Chief Minister and president of Biju Janata Dal Naveen Patnaik expressed his happiness. Naveen Patnaik tweeted: "Congratulations to Draupadi Murmu on being announced as candidate of NDA for the country's highest office. I was delighted when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed this with me. It is indeed a

proud moment for the people of Odisha. I am sure Murmu will set a shining example for women empowerment in the country". Biju Janata Dal also expressed its support to Draupadi Murmu. The BJP leadership feels that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) headed by Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren may also extend the party's support to Draupadi Murmu. The reason is that when Draupadi Murmu was Governor of Jharkhand



she maintained good relations with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. So, the JMM leadership has a soft corner for Draupadi Murmu.

2

**BJP TS unit hopes to benefit in reserved seats**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Telangana unit leaders are exultant at the selection of Draupadi Murmu, a tribal figure and former governor, as the NDA's Presidential candidate since it would help the party win particularly in the constituencies reserved for STs, in the forthcoming Telangana

Assembly elections. The BJP, which aims to come to power in Telangana, has been focusing on reserved Assembly constituencies. In Telangana, out of the total 119 constituencies, 19 are reserved for SCs and 12 for STs.

2

**Murmu likely to file  
nomination on June 24**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance's presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu is likely to file her nomination on June 24, and is expected to be accompanied by its top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Modi, several Union ministers and chief ministers, and key leaders of some other supporting parties like the Biju Janata Dal will join her during the nomination-filing as a show of support, sources said, adding that the prime minister is expected to be the first proposer.

A presidential candidate requires a set of 50 proposers and 50 seconders for his or her nomination. At least four sets of nominations may be filed in Murmu's support, BJP sources said. BJP president J P Nadda also held a meeting with party leaders involved in the polling process.

2

**Afghanistan quake kills 1,000  
people, deadliest in decades**

PNS ■ KABUL

A powerful earthquake struck a rural, mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan early Wednesday, killing 1,000 people and injuring 1,500 more in one of the deadliest temblors in decades, the state-run news agency reported. Officials warned that the already grim toll may still rise. Information remained scarce on the magnitude 6.1 temblor near the Pakistani border, but quakes of that strength can cause severe damage in

an area where homes and other buildings are poorly constructed and landslides are common. Experts put the depth at just 10 kilometers another factor that could lead to severe destruction. The disaster posed a major test for the Taliban-led government, which seized power last year as the U.S. planned to pull out from the country and end its longest war, two decades after toppling the same insurgents in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

2

**13k successful  
in Civils prelims**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 13,000 candidates have qualified the civil services (preliminary) examination 2022, the results of which were declared on Wednesday by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

The preliminary examination was held on June 5, 2022.

2

**AMID SPIKE IN COVID CASES****Kids seen without masks**DEEPIKA PASHAM  
■ HYDERABAD

After a 40-day-long summer vacation, schools in Telangana have re-opened amid Covid scare. Many of the children in primary sections are seen without masks. Some parents are wondering whether they should send their children to schools. Although the managements of some schools claim that they have been following Covid protocol related to children on their premises, parents are questioning whether the state government has been monitoring it.

As for children without masks, they say matter-of-factly: "We do not have it". Those who had them wore it inappropriately. In a recent meeting, Telangana Director of Public Health G Srinivasa Rao cautioned educational institutions that children eligible for vaccines must be instructed to get vaccinated. The principal of one of the private schools said: "We have mandatory rules to follow all the protocols of social distancing, wearing masks, and frequent sanitizing hands."

2

**Unprecedented digital  
transformation in India: Modi****Indian economy expected to grow by 7.5%**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is expected to grow by 7.5 per cent this year which will make it the fastest growing major economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday.

Highlighting the growth of India's digital economy, he said its value will reach USD one trillion by 2025 and that the government is supporting innovation in every sector. In a virtual address at the



Infrastructure Pipeline. He said that the kind of digital transformation that is taking place in India today has never been seen in the world before.

2

**WhatsApp groups'  
Admins arrested**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TS Police have arrested admins of 10 key WhatsApp groups in connection with the Secunderabad Railway Station arson and vandalism. Investigations so far have reportedly revealed that these admins instigated people through the WhatsApp groups. All the accused were produced before the court and remanded. An army aspirant involved in the Secunderabad Railway Station arson case reportedly attempted suicide.

DETAILS IN PAGE 03

**New pensions  
from next P2****Maha crisis is mockery of democracy: TRS**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amid the deepening political crisis in Maharashtra triggered by Shiv Sena Minister Eknath Shinde's rebellion, the TRS party observed on Wednesday that the developments were a mockery of democracy by the BJP government.

The TRS officially shared: "The BJP, led by Narendra Modi, is ridiculing the country's dem-

ocratic system and overthrowing various constitutionally elected state governments with a thirst for power".

The party's statement on Twitter was re-tweeted by Minister K T Rama Rao.

The TRS party said: "The dictatorial and authoritarian attitude of the BJP is making the very existence of democracy in the country questionable". The party cited instances of state

governments collapsing in Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Goa, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, and Jammu and Kashmir. The rebellion by Shinde, claiming the support of 46 MLAs, has pushed the two-and-a-half-year old Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government to the brink of collapse.

2

**Social media shaping persona of politicians**NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Social media is shaping the persona of politicians, if one goes by how parties are recognising their social media warriors and rewarding them with plum posts. At least five such SM warriors in TRS and a couple them in BJP have been made Chairpersons and spokespersons. The realization now is that you cannot become a politician of significance without dipping your toe into the world of social media and supporter engagement. On the flip side,

with the advancement of social media platforms, becoming a politician is relatively easier.

Of course, it is definitely not an easy task to upload a vlog or photos on a daily basis. But some of them have managed to crack the code. And, they are being rewarded. On Tuesday, TRS social media convener Yeruva Sathish Reddy was appointed as chairperson for the State Renewable Energy Development Corporation. Before him, Jagan Patimeedi and Krishank Manne were social media convenors of the party before being appointed as chairmen of various corpo-

rations last year. This practice is not confined to TRS. Even in BJP, such warriors' level of engagement in social media determines who ultimately gets the post. Kishore Poreddy, BJP spokesperson, Gayathri Bandari BJYM spokesperson were all active on social media and countering opposition parties with logic. Sathish says: "Definitely there is influence of social media on me being elected. I will continue to be active on social media which is where the future is compared to print or electronic media."

2





PREZ POLL DAY

## Fill form to vote from any Assembly if not present in Delhi: EC to MPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Members of Parliament who would not be present in the national capital on July 18 to cast their vote in Parliament House for presidential election can do so from state assemblies, provided they inform the Election Commission in advance.

In a letter addressed to all members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, the poll panel has reminded them that they can cast ballot at Room no 63 in Parliament House.

"However, on account of unavoidable reasons and exigencies of circumstances, if you cannot be present in New Delhi on the date of poll, you can opt to exercise your right to vote at the presidential election at any of the polling places situated in the state or Union Territory of Puducherry and NCT of Delhi," the June 16 letter said.

The MPs who intend to vote from one of the state legislative assemblies have to send a "formal request" to the EC by filling up a form. The request should reach the poll panel



"not later than ten days before the date of poll" so that necessary arrangements can be made. "It may kindly be noted that the request once made and accepted by the Commission to vote at any State Legislative Assembly will be final and no further changes will be entertained in this regard," the poll panel has cautioned.

While normally MPs vote in New Delhi and MLAs at the premises of legislative assembly of each state, facilities are provided by EC for any MP to vote in the legislative assembly of a state.

Similarly, an MLA can vote at the polling booth set up in Parliament House, if he or she is in Delhi on the date of poll.

In exceptional circumstances, MPs and MLAs may be permitted by the Commission to vote at other state legislative assemblies also.

Elected members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, but not the nominated members, are part of the electorate. Similarly, elected MLAs, not nominated MLAs, can vote. Members of legislative councils (MLCs) cannot vote in presidential poll.

# New pensions from next month: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT and Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao has announced that pensions to the new beneficiaries would be given from July.

On Wednesday, KTR visited Zaheerabad and inaugurated several developmental projects there. He later addressed a public meeting at the Baga

Reddy Stadium in Zaheerabad. "After Zaheerabad become a municipality, the credit for giving a lump sum of Rs 50 crore goes to CM KCR", he said. He said that many facilities had already been set up in the municipality and a veg and non-veg market complex for women was being set up at a cost of Rs 14.50 crore.

"Everything we see in

Zaheerabad is green. We have spent Rs 2.55 crore on greenery. We have released Rs 18.79 crore for urban development and another Rs 50 crore for infrastructure," KTR said.

The Municipal Minister said that Telangana was the only state that provided electricity 24 hours to farmers. "Before 2014, pensions were Rs 200; now it is Rs 2,016. We are giv-

ing pension to 40 lakh people across the state. In another month or two, we will give pension to all those who are eligible".

The Minister took potshots at the Congress and said Rahul Gandhi was coming to Telangana and asking the Congress party to give him one more chance. "Geeta Reddy, who had worked here in the

past, got the ministerial post but the people of the area said nothing had changed. We are just starting to rid the state of the stink and poverty that Congress party has created for 65 years. If we go on doing things like providing water, drinking water, setting up companies, some are trying to provoke by creating castes and religions issues", KTR said.

## Odisha-based public transport service gets UN Award

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

An Odisha-based public transport service is among the 10 global initiatives honoured with a prestigious United Nations award on Wednesday for their role and efforts in helping the world recover better from COVID-19 and the winning initiatives help keep children safe, advance gender equality, and protect life below water. The 2022 UN Public Service Awards, the global organisation announced. Ten initiatives from Brazil, Canada, India, Ireland, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and Ukraine have been recognised for their innovative public service

delivery with the prestigious UN Public Service Awards at a virtual celebration organised by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs on Wednesday. The awards recognise 10 innovations to help the world recover better from COVID-19 and the winning initiatives help keep children safe, advance gender equality, and protect life below water. The 2022 UN Public Service Award winners were announced by Liu Zhenmin, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, during a virtual event to commemorate the United Nations Public Service Day.

## Deputy secretary in CM Kejriwal's office, 2 SDMs suspended on corruption charges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A deputy secretary in Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's office and two sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) have been suspended by Lt Governor V K Saxena on corruption charges, official sources said on Wednesday.

The charges of "procedural lapses indicating corruption in land related matters" against the deputy secretary were from his tenure as Narela SDM, they said.

"The case against the deputy secretary at CMO has nothing to do with the Delhi CM's

office," a Delhi government official said.

Prakash Chandra Thakur posted as deputy secretary in the chief minister's office (CMO), Vasant Vihar SDM Harshit Jain and Vivek Vihar SDM Devender Sharma were suspended and disciplinary proceedings ordered against them, sources said.

"The charges against the three officials were related to procedural lapses in land matters hinting corruption," an official said.

The trio are DANICS cadre officers. "The transfer and postings of officers of Delhi

government comes under the Services department that is handled by the Lt Governor. So, Delhi government has no say in whoever is given a posting," the Delhi government official said. The move reflected LG Saxena's commitment to zero tolerance to corruption and ensuring probity in the functioning of the government, one of the sources said.

The lieutenant governor had on Monday suspended two assistant engineers of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) after finding lapses in the construction of EWS flats in Kalkaji Extension.

## Rythu Bandhu..

Continued from page 1

State Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy on behalf of the farmers thanked Chief Minister KCR for implementing the Rythu bandhu scheme for the farmers in spite of any difficulties. The 9th installment of Rythu Bandhu will start from June 28. Nirajan said, "Despite Central government trying to create adversities, This is a testament to Chief Minister KCR's admiration for farmers and his passion for the agricultural sector. We hope

that this year agriculture will be good, the crops will grow well and this support will be helpful".

Department of Agriculture requests CCLA to send details of eligible farmers in the wake of Chief Minister KCR's order to implement Rythu Bandhu from 28th of this month. During the monsoon season last year, Rs.7360.41 crore was provided to 60.84 lakh farmers.

In the last Yasangi, Rs.7412.53 crore was provided to 63 lakh farmers.

## Biden nominates Indian-American Arti Prabhakar as top science advisor

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Leading Indian-American scientist Dr Arti Prabhakar has been nominated by Joe Biden as a top science advisor to the US President, a decision hailed by the White House and the Indian-American community as "historic." If confirmed by the Senate, Dr Prabhakar would make history as the first woman, immigrant, or person of colour to head Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). She will also be the latest high-

ly-qualified professional from the Indian-American community to be named for a key position in the Biden administration. Dr Prabhakar is a brilliant and highly-respected engineer and applied physicist and will lead the Office of Science and Technology Policy to leverage science, technology, and innovation to expand our possibilities, solve our toughest challenges, and make the impossible possible, Biden said on Tuesday. I share Dr Prabhakar's belief that America has the most powerful innova-

tion machine the world has ever seen. As the Senate considers her nomination, I am grateful that Dr Alondra Nelson will continue to lead OSTP and Dr Francis Collins will continue to serve as my acting Science Advisor, he said. Once confirmed, she would also be Assistant to the President for Science and Technology. In this capacity, Dr Prabhakar will be the President's Chief Advisor for Science and Technology, a co-chair of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, and a member of the



President's Cabinet.

Further, if confirmed to lead OSTP, Prabhakar, 63, would become the third Asian American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander to serve in President Biden's Cabinet, joining Vice President Kamala Harris and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

## 13k successful in Civils..

Continued from page 1

Nearly 11.52 lakh people have applied for the examination and as many as 13,090 candidates have qualified it, an official said. The UPSC has put up on its website -- www.upsc.gov.in -- a detailed list mentioning roll numbers of candidates who have been declared successful in the test. Initially, a total of 861 vacancies were sought to be filled through the civil services examination 2022, which have now been increased to 1,022, the official said. All the successful candidates have been asked to apply again in the Detailed Application

Form-I (DAF-I) for the civil services (main) examination 2022, a statement issued by the UPSC said. The dates and important instructions for filling up the DAF-I and its submission will be announced in due course of time on the website of the commission, it said.

Candidates are also informed that marks, cut-off marks and answer keys of the civil services preliminary examination 2022 will be uploaded on the commission's website only after the entire process of the civil services examination 2022 is over, i.e. after the declaration of the final result, the UPSC said.

## Kids seen..

Continued from page 1

It is definitely an impossible task to tackle children below 10 years as they give various reasons for removing masks in classrooms." A parent Sushmitha said: "We are explaining to our children and giving them all the essential things such as masks, sanitizers etc. But is the government doing checks in schools? Are they being asked how many students are made to sit in each bench? Are there sanitizers in every classroom? Are teachers asking children to wash hands frequently because as parents we are not allowed inside premises. Still, government officials have all the rights to inspect both private and government schools. They can seal the (errant) school and such punishments will teach the managements to work efficiently." When schools were reopened, Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy said that there was no need for parents to panic over the recent spike in Covid-19 cases.

## Afghanistan quake kills 1,000 people..

Continued from page 1

Rescuers rushed to the area by helicopter Wednesday, but the response is likely to be complicated since many international aid agencies left Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover.

Reaching rural areas even in the best circumstances remains difficult in Afghanistan, a landlocked nation just smaller than Texas with rutted mountain roadways that may now have sustained significant damage.

Neighboring Pakistan's Meteorological Department said the quake's epicentre was in Afghanistan's Paktika province, some 50 kilometers southwest of the city of Khost.

Buildings were also damaged in Khost province, and tremors were felt some 375 kilometers away in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad.

Footage from Paktika showed men carrying people in blankets to waiting helicopters. Others were treated on the ground.

One resident could be seen receiving IV fluids while sitting



in a plastic chair outside the rubble of his home and still more were sprawled on curbs.

Some images showed residents picking through clay bricks and other rubble from destroyed stone houses, some of whose roofs or walls had caved in.

The death toll given by the Bakhtar News Agency was equal to that of a quake in 2002 in northern Afghanistan.

Those are the deadliest since 1998, when a 6.1 magnitude tremor and subsequent tremors in Afghanistan's remote northeast killed at least 4,500 people.

In most places in the world, an earthquake of that magnitude wouldn't inflict such extensive devastation, said Robert Sanders, a seismologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. But a quake's death toll more often comes down to geography, building quality and population density.

Because of the mountainous area, there are rockslides and landslides that we won't know about until later reporting. Older buildings are likely to crumble and fail, he said.

Due to how condensed the area is in that part of the world, we've seen in the past similar earthquakes deal signif-

icant damage.

The Taliban are still trying to reconstitute government ministries abandoned by staff loyal to its previous Western-backed government, and it was not clear how officials arrived at the casualty tolls reported by Bakhtar.

In Kabul, Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund convened an emergency meeting at the presidential palace to coordinate the relief effort, and Bilal Karimi, a deputy spokesman for the Taliban government, wrote on Twitter to urge aid agencies to send teams to the area.

The response is on its way, the U.N. resident coordinator in Afghanistan, Ramiz Alakbarov, wrote on Twitter.

That may prove difficult given the situation Afghanistan finds itself in today.

After the Taliban swept across the country in 2021, the U.S. military and its allies fell back to Kabul's Hamid Karzai International Airport and later withdrew completely.

Many international humanitarian organisations followed suit because of concerns about security and the Taliban's poor human rights record.

## Edible oil prices ease..

Continued from page 1

Both the companies said the stock with new MRPs will hit the market shortly. "Trends in edible oil prices are very positive due to the government's timely intervention and global developments," Pandey told reporters. Not only

edible oils, retail wheat and wheat flour prices are stable as well, he said, adding that regulations have been useful in keeping domestic prices in check. A senior food ministry official said major edible oil brands have reduced MRP in phases and most recently they cut the price by Rs 10-15 per litre.

## Encourage progressive..

Continued from page 1

"They don't see states or cities while deciding to invest. They look at the countries and what they offer in terms of infrastructure and ecosystem," he said. VEM will invest Rs. 1,000 crore in the facility com-

ing up on 511 acres in NIMZ. This is billed as the largest investment in the private sector in the defence manufacturing industry in India. The unit will employ 2,000 people in the next five years. VEM is a defence and aerospace company that offers end-to-end tech-

nology solutions and systems for various weapon systems for land, air, and naval applications. One of the top five defence companies in India, VEM will manufacture weapons systems and defence equipment like anti-tank guided missiles, small arms, sniper rifles, unmanned aerial system, underwater weapons systems and radars at their unit at NIMZ.

## Unprecedented digital..

Continued from page 1

"In order to deal with the economic problems arising out of the pandemic, in India we have adopted the mantra of 'reform, perform and transform. And the results of this approach are evident from the performance of the Indian economy," he said.

"This year, we are expecting 7.5 per cent growth, which makes us the fastest

growing major economy. Transformative changes are taking place in every sector in the emerging 'New India,'" Modi said.

He said a key pillar of India's current economic recovery is technology-led growth and that the government has made innovation-friendly policies in many areas like space, blue economy, green hydrogen, clean energy, drones and geo-spatial data.

## Maha crisis is mockery of..

Continued from page 1

The Sena has 55 members in the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly.

Animal Husbandry Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not want democratically elected governments to exist. Talasani said, "They are killing the democratic system. What

do Narendra Modi and Amit Shah want?"

He said there was an attempt to overthrow the government in Maharashtra as had been the case in Madhya Pradesh. He raised suspicion over the involvement of BJP as the MLAs were given security and buses were given to move them; with Goa Governor being given additional charge after Maharashtra Governor called

in sick. He said the MLAs were being moved from one place to another in a conspiracy to overthrow the government in Maharashtra.

Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav urged the party leaders to remember that power is not permanent and the BJP will not be in power for life. "When things go haywire, the situation in Maharashtra will come to the BJP as well," he said.

## Social media..

Continued from page 1

Now the responsibility has increased further. The Chief Minister told me to be active on social media and that there is a huge scope in the chairman post of Renewable Energy Corporation. Being from B.Tech ECE, it will be a good role to be chairperson of Renewable Energy Corporation and we will take forward social media further to all constituencies and strengthen it." So far social

media has given rise to influencers who did not exist before. It is not easy to become one. It requires years of relentless hard work in terms of making content without giving a chance to trolls. Kishore Poreddy, BJP spokesperson, said, "Social media presence played a role, but it is not the only criterion to become a BJP spokesperson. Some of the analysis of videos and tweets went viral, which led to a good word going around.





# 10 more arrested for arson in Secunderabad Railway Station case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Secunderabad Railway Police on Wednesday arrested 10 more persons in connection with the violence at the Secunderabad Railway Station last Friday.

All those arrested were produced before the court and remanded in judicial custody. The parents and the family members of the arrested staged a protest, saying that false cases were foisted on the youth.

Among those arrested was Prudviraj, who hailed from Adilabad, who took the videos of setting fire to coaches. He was identified as the main accused. The police identified with the help of videos found in the mobile phones of some of the persons who were arrested in the past.

The police claimed that the investigation into the violence revealed that the youth were provoked through videos circulated through WhatsApp groups. The investigation revealed that the admins provoked people through 10 WhatsApp groups.

The videos of the accused who initially set fire in train coaches in Secunderabad



Railway Station have gone viral. The main accused, Prithviraj from Adilabad, and the others, Bingi Ramesh (A3), Raja Surendra Kumar (A4), Santosh (A5), Mohammad Sabar (A6), Yogesh (A57), Parushuram (A58), Ayyappachari (A59), Shivasunder Reddy (A60), Tukaram (A 61) had encouraged other youths who had come to protest peacefully to resort to violence at the Secunderabad railway station, the police said. The police

team identified Prudviraj with the help of videos found on the mobile phones of some of the arrested persons.

Police officials said Prudviraj had circulated videos on all WhatsApp groups and provoked protesting Army jobs at the railway station.

A total of 61 accused had been identified, the police said. It may be recalled that 300 people equipped with sticks and petrol cans entered the Secunderabad Railway Station from Gate number 3. The

Government Railway Police (GRP) and Railway Protection Force (RPF) tried to stop the crowd, but they started damaging the CCTV cameras and platform display boards inside the station. At that time, there were three trains filled with passengers ready to depart; they were East Coast Express, Ajanta Express and Danapur Express. The crowd started damaging the coaches of these trains and when the RPF tried to stop them, the crowd moved to the railway tracks and start-

## Army aspirant attempts suicide

A youth, who was allegedly involved in the agitation against the Agnipath scheme at the Secunderabad Railway Station, on Wednesday attempted to commit suicide. Govind Ajay, a youth from Station Ghanpur om Jangaon, attempted to commit suicide fearing that he may be arrested in connection with the violence at the Secunderabad Railway Station. Police said he had consumed pesticide in an attempt to commit suicide. He was admitted to MGM Hospital in Warangal. His condition is stated to be critical.

ed pelting stones on the police. About 30 trains' coaches were damaged and four coaches were set on fire using the petrol cans they had.

The videos of Prudviraj indulging in violence went viral on social media platforms after some persons leaked them. A police official said the video would serve as clinching evidence in court against him.

## Minister asks Film Chamber, producers to meet workers' demands

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister Telangana Cinematography Talasani Srinivas Yadav asserted that the demands of Telugu film workers should be addressed and directed the Film Chamber and the Producers Council Association to call the film workers for talks and take initiative to resolve the issue.

The Minister at a media conference, said it was necessary to hold talks with the workers and resolve the issue. He said that most of the workers are poor. They had suffered a lot during the pandemic with the film shootings being cancelled, he said.

He explained that the film workers had gone on strike demanding hike in remuneration. Film shootings came to a standstill on Wednesday as the workers went on strike. Nearly 25 films under production in indoor and outdoor areas were affected.

Film shooting in and around Hyderabad was affected on Wednesday as more than 20,000 Telugu cine workers began a protest demanding a hike in wages.

Large number of cine workers laid siege to the office of the Telugu Film Industry Employees Federation in Jubilee Hills to demand a 45



per cent increase in wages

Police stopped the protesters, who raised slogans in support of their demand.

The Federation president and general secretary assured the workers that a solution will be found by the evening after talks with the Film Producers' Council. The workers' unions, comprising 24 crafts of cinema, have called for indefinite strike.

However, there was no clarity on whether the workers were staying away from work indefinitely. The protesters left the Federation office after an assurance by the leaders that they will ensure a 30 per cent hike but it was immediately not clear if they will resume work.

The workers said they had long been demanding revision in wages in view of the increasing cost of fuel and all essential commodities. They said

they extended all cooperation to the filmmakers by not pressing for their demand as the film producers were hit hard by Covid-19.

The union leaders said they were forced to launch the protest as no steps were taken to meet their demand though they had been discussing the issues with the Telugu Film Chamber for the last six months. They said since the film industry has recovered from the impact of Covid and has produced some big hits including pan-India movies, the Film Chamber should take the initiative and address their long-pending demand.

They expressed disappointment over the lack of coordination between the Telugu Film Chamber, Telugu Film Producers Council and Film Industry Employees Federation.

The protest affected production of about 20 films, including Chiranjeevi's 'Waltair Veerayya', 'Bholaa Shankar' and Prabhas' 'Salaar' and 'RC 15'. Meanwhile, actor Nareesh found fault with the decision to go on strike. He said such a move would hit the interests of the industry which was recuperating from the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. He urged the unions to hold talks to find a solution.

## Jubilee Hills gang-rape case: Bail of 4 accused rejected

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Juvenile Justice Board on Wednesday rejected the bail plea of four minors who are accused in the gang-rape of a minor.

The bail petition of another minor is likely to be filed Thursday.

The lawyer representing the accused approached the Juvenile Justice Board on Tuesday, seeking bail for four minors.

## 131 more Basthi Dawakhana to be set up in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The remaining 131 basthi dawakhana will be ready by August 15, said Minister for Health T Harish Rao on Wednesday.

During a review meeting held at the Marri Channa Reddy HRD institute here, Harish Rao said, "The government has set up 259 basthi dawakhana in Greater Hyderabad Municipal limits under the guidance of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao to provide healthcare to the people in urban areas. People can avail the T



Diagnostic services and Tele-Consultation services in the basthi dawakhana.

With the completion of the 131 dawakhana, the total operational units would rise to 390. The Minister directed the authorities to set up the remaining basthi dawakhana

by August 15. The Minister added that the basthi dawakhana are being set up taking into account the population of the locality and also the availability of medical services in that particular area. Harsih Rao also said that the poor can avail themselves of the scheme. The review meeting was attended by Health Secretary S A M Rizvi, Director of Family Welfare Swetha Mohanty, DME Ramesh Reddy, DPH Srinivasa Rao, TSMSIDC MD Chandrasekar Reddy, OSD Gangadhar and other officials from the health department.

## Abdullapurmet Police Station new bldg inaugurated

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A new police station at Abdullapurmet was inaugurated by Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali on Wednesday. The State government allotted 1.10 acres of land at Abdullapurmet for the police station. Foundation stone was laid on July 1, 2021.

The new police station is built on 9,090 sq ft (Ground + 1st floor) with an open area at a cost of Rs 3 crores.

Ramaji film city, Mount Opera, Sanghi Temple, Fruit Market, and Logistic Park are

some important establishments under police station limits.

MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, P V Surabhi Vanidevi, MLC, Manchireddy Kishan Reddy, MLA, Ibrahimpatnam, Mahesh M Bhagwat, Rachakonda Police Commissioner, Ch Vijayeswari, MD of the RFC, Shivaramakrishna, director of RFC, Sunpreet Singh, DCP, LB Nagar, Narayana Reddy, DCP Bhongir, Saleema, DCP The teams, V Srinivas, DCP Traffic and others were present.



Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali inaugurating new police station at Abdullapurmet on Wednesday. MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and others were present

## Artefacts of self-sacrifice found in Siddipet district

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Over a thousand years ago, the impact of selfless heroes on society was more prominent and the immortality of heroes in Shaivism is unparalleled.

It is thought that there is no greater offering to God than self-sacrifice. A new Virgal sculpture which depicts prayer before death was discovered in Salakpur Patigadda under Cheryala Mandal in Siddipet District.

The members of Telangana Charitra Brundam, Ahobilam Karunakar, Mohammad Nasir and N Kiran worked for two days on the information they received regarding the sculpture. "This black stone sculpture depicts a seated man in an ardhapadmasana position. Manipatta crown, ear piercings, neck rudraksha, necklaces, shoulder crowns, bracelets, knife in belt, cloth belt, half garment, 5 rows of bracelets for the legs. Sword in right hand, broken left arm," members explained.

Not far from his sculpture is a horse artefact. This horse is at rest. The big sword is vis-



**The members of Telangana Charitra Brundam, Ahobilam Karunakar, Mohammad Nasir and N Kiran worked for two days on the information they received regarding the sculpture.**

ible on the right side of the saddle on its back. It is as if he was sitting in a prayer before death which is sacrificing himself away from where the horse was parked, they added. The Historian Shivanagireddy confirmed that this sculpture was of the Rashtrakuta period and style.

The twins of these sculptures were not previously found anywhere else. These are examples of heroism in Shaivism. The proverb 'Bondito Kailasam' seems to have been born by them.

Devotees seeking Sivasayujya cut off the Ashtanga from their body, cut it and offer it to God. Massive crashes in which boulders jump over spears and die. All these are parts of heroism, a culture of self-sacrifice that originated in ancient Shaivism. Athmarpana Veerulu is the name given to those who have sacrificed their lives to God in various ways.

Hundreds of Satavahana-era potsherds, swamps, dabur and snails were found on the grass.



## SCR wants T-Hub to back Startups for Railways initiative

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an effort to develop solutions for some of the critical areas, the South Central Railways (SCR) has invited T-Hub to encourage startups.

SCR General Manager Arun Kumar Jain met T-Hub Chief Executive Officer M Srinivas Rao and his team and discussed how to take the initiative forward.

Indian Railways has introduced a novel concept to promote the participation of emerging entrepreneurs as part of its efforts to solve some of the critical areas in the Indian Railways, according to a press statement.

With the objective of harnessing these growing technological advancements in the startup ecosystem and to promote participation of emerging entrepreneurs to address quality, reliability and maintainability related issues of

the Indian Railways, the Ministry of Railways launched a unique initiative, namely, 'Startups for Railways'. As part of the initiative, Indian Railways has identified 11 critical areas wherein solutions from the startups are being invited and this number will be progressively increased over a period of time. The Railways has set aside a seed fund of Rs 1.5 crore to be given by the Railway Board to the startups. The funding scheme will be on a cost-sharing basis in equal proportion, between Indian Railways.

Under the policy, the Startup/MSME/Innovator/Entrepreneur will have exclusive ownership of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) created in the project.

A structured timeline framework has also been laid down so as to ensure speedy implementation of the projects showing potential.

## Santosh might stop sunrays thru Green India Challenge: Salman Khan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bollywood star Salman Khan asserted each plant supplies required oxygen to each person. The film star has arrived in Hyderabad for his film shooting and participated in Green India Challenge 5.0 along with Rajya Sabha MP and Green India Founder J Santosh Kumar here on Tuesday.

Accompanied by his film crew, Salman planted sapling at Ramoji Film City.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that every person should take the responsibility of plantation programme and also take adequate care of the saplings until they grow big trees. It is unfortunate that human loss due to natural calamities, heavy rains and floods is immense. The only solution to check human loss is promoting massive plantation. Salman said, 'Santosh ji has done very nice work. 17 crore such trees which give shade have been planted. I hope that this will continue. Santosh ji might stop sun rays from falling on earth by blocking everywhere. he might make it Amazon forest.'

Salman praised the TRS



MP Santosh for taking up the big task of plantation programme. He said that the MP's endeavour to improve Green Cover in India will help to safeguard the earth and future generations. He called upon his fans and followers to join Green India Challenge

and plant saplings on a large scale. Santosh Kumar thanked the Bollywood star for accepting his request and joined the Green India Challenge.

He said that the Bollywood star's initiative to plant saplings will definitely inspire crores of his fans.

## For over past 10 years, RTC has not acquired new buses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There is no sign of the TSRTC acquiring new buses even in the current rainy season. The age-old RTC buses are somehow pulling along during summer but their engines fail to rev during the monsoon season. The commuters are forced to push the bus to get it started.

The Greater Hyderabad zone acquired express buses 10 years ago and ordinary buses 15 years ago.

Even if the TSRTC were to place orders for supply of over 1015 electric buses, they are unlikely to be delivered before 2023 due to delays in their manufacture.

These RTC buses have become a real hell for commuters. Controlling them has become a Herculean task for drivers.

In case, if the bus were to be stopped near traffic signal, the commuters have to push it to rev up the engine.

Also, the traffic police have been switching on the signals only after clearing the route for the RTC buses. It indicates the sorry state of affairs.

It appears that the TSRTC has no option except making do with the old buses during the current rainy season.

Because of the fitness problems, a RTC bus belonging to Kukatpally bus depot on Sunday went berserk at Pragatinagar traffic signal and barged into the roadside shops. Out of the 45 commuters in the bus, two passengers sustained injuries in the incident.

Recently, RTC invited bids to acquire 1015 new buses under FAME-2 (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric



Vehicles). Ancillary unit of the public sector Energy Efficiency Services Limited - Convergence Energy Services Limited - expressed its inability

to manufacture 300 buses allotted to FAME-2 immediately. Even if the RTC wants to run bus services on hire basis, it would take at least six months

to 12 months to acquire the buses under the scheme, according to the RTC officials.

The RTC is not in a position

to acquire diesel services, given the increase of diesel charges. The mileage of diesel buses get is hardly 4 km per litre.

In this backdrop, the RTC finds it suitable to run electric buses on hire basis.

Meanwhile, the RTC hiked ticket fares, putting a burden of Rs 10 for every 2 km. It also increased the bus pass charges too, the increase is as good as three times the previous fares. There are at least six-lakh student bus passes in the city region.

The total number of bus passes for all categories crossed 8 lakh. On an average at least 23 lakh use RTC bus services. They have to make do with only 2,860 buses. However, the commuters have been demanding the RTC to run required number of buses at least during the peak hours.

## Bharosa Center in Hyderabad helps 13-year-old victim overcome trauma

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police in Bharosa Center in Hyderabad helped a 13-year-old victim, who was sexually assaulted by her stepfather, overcome the trauma and arranged access to education and healthcare and also offered all the legal aid at the centre.

It all started when the victim attended an awareness session conducted by Bharosa team, which boosted her confidence. After that, the victim informed her teacher about being abused by her stepfather. The teacher then tipped off the Bharosa team and an FIR was registered in Kachiguda Police Station. Ever since then, the trained professionals of Bharosa Centre have been going beyond the normal call of duty and guarding the child like a family by providing all the possible sup-

port.

The team accompanied the victim and produced her before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and arranged accommodation in a good hostel. Personal attention was being paid to her getting treatment at Kamineni Hospitals for free and ensured that she had access to education. Since 2018, the victim has excelled in academics and secured a GPA of 9.75/10 in her 10th standard and later also cleared intermediate with distinction.

Touched by the hard work of the victim, a senior woman police officer from Telangana has been paying the fees for the victim's CA coaching. The legal and police teams in the centre worked in tandem and that resulted in 20 years rigorous imprisonment to the accused.





International Health Group CEO Chester King meeting Minister for Health T Harish Rao in Hyderabad on Wednesday

## IHG senior officials laud TS govt for improving healthcare

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Representatives from the International Health Group (IHG) on Wednesday lauded the Telangana State government for its initiative in improving healthcare in the state. The UK-based IHG has completed 480 different healthcare projects in 55 countries. Senior officials from the IHG met Minister for Health Minister T Harish Rao on Wednesday to explore areas of collaboration in healthcare

services in Telangana State. Accompanied by British Deputy High Commissioner for Telangana State and AP Andrew Fleming, the Chief Operating Officer of IHG Simon Ashworth met Harish Rao. He was briefed about the ongoing works related to the establishment of new medical colleges in Telangana State, four super-specialty hospitals in Hyderabad and the mega-health hub at Warangal. Senior health officials, including Secretary of Health

SAM Rizvi, Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare Shwetha Mohanty, DPH Dr G Srinivasa Rao and others were present at the meeting. After the meeting, Andrew Fleming tweeted, 'Called on Harish Rao with a UK company to explore a potential area for new collaboration in the state. Positive and focused discussions with him and his team as ever. Sirs humbleness and grace as ever was remarkable and at a level so many of us can learn from.'

## Speed up execution of NH widening works, DC tells engineering officials

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

District Collector S Venkata Rao has directed the engineering officials to complete the national highway widening works in the city as early as possible. He paid a surprise visit to Mahabubnagar-Jadcherla national highway widening works at Shashab Gutta in the town. In view of the commencement of the monsoon season, he wanted the officials to execute the works as early as possible. He asked them to ensure that people did not suffer due to rains. He wanted the officials of the concerned government departments to coordinate

works to overcome any hiccups in the execution of works. Asking them engineering officials to speed up execution of works, he asked the municipal engineer in consultation with government pleader should get the stay vacated with immediate effect if there are any cases pending with court with regard to the highway widening works. He asked the officials to immediately take steps to relocate the electric poles and electric transformers to elsewhere as they are obstructing the highway widening works. Municipal Engineer Subrahmanyam, NHA official Ramesh were also present.



Mahabubnagar District Collector S Venkata Rao inspecting the ongoing national highway works in Mahabubnagar on Wednesday

## Mahindra's 3,00,000<sup>th</sup> TS-made tractor rolled out

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mahindra Tractors, part of Mahindra's Farm Equipment Sector, the world's largest tractor manufacturer by volume, rolled out its 300,000th Telangana-made tractor from the company's tractor manufacturing facility in Zaheerabad. Mahindra's 300,000th Telangana-made tractor was rolled out in the presence of Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama at the wheel of Mahindra's 300,000th Telangana-made tractor, which rolled out on Wednesday



Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama at the wheel of Mahindra's 300,000th Telangana-made tractor, which rolled out on Wednesday

300,000 Telangana-made tractors. With Mahindra's large presence in Zaheerabad, the company's manufacturing facility has provided opportunities to thousands, in not only making products for the domestic market, but also position Telangana as one of the largest tractor export hubs, based on Mahindra's world-class manufacturing facilities. As we move along, we look forward to Mahindra's next milestone in tractor production in the next few years. Commenting on the milestone, Hemant Sikka, President - Farm Equipment Sector, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. said, 'Rolling-out our 300,000th Telangana-made tractor from our Zaheerabad facility, is a significant milestone for all of us at Mahindra, and

for the state of Telangana. Besides being a hub to for wide range of products for the Indian market, the plant also caters to over 60 markets, including advanced markets of U.S., Japan and Europe. In line with the agri agenda of Telangana, we thank our colleagues in Telangana and the state government in helping us achieve this feat. We will soon roll-out our new light-weight K2 tractor series from our Zaheerabad facility. Established in 2012, Zaheerabad is Mahindra's youngest and largest tractor manufacturing plant in terms of capacity. It is the only tractor manufacturer in the state of Telangana and has invested close to Rs. 1,087 crores at its facility in Zaheerabad.

## Software engineer from TS shot dead in US

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A software engineer from Nalgonda was shot dead by an unidentified person in Maryland state of the US. Nakka Sai Charan (26), who hailed from Nalgonda district in Telangana State, was killed when a person said to be a black man opened fire on him on Sunday evening.



Sai Charan

His friends in the US informed his family about the incident. Sai Charan was shot dead when he was travelling in his car near Catonsville in Maryland. He was returning home after dropping off a friend at the airport, according to a website. The techie was shot in the head. He was shifted to the University of Maryland R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center where he was pronounced dead. The software engineer was working with a company in Baltimore city of Maryland for the last two years.

His parents and other family members were shocked on receiving the information. They appealed to the Central and State governments to help bring the body home. A pall of gloom descended on the residence of his parents. The parents of Sai Charan Nakka said on Wednesday they did not want their son to go to the US, leaving them here and insisted that firearm licences should not be given 'indiscriminately' by the US government to its citizens. His parents said Sai Charan was found injured inside a Sports Utility Vehicle after

sustaining an apparent gunshot wound to his head, according to authorities in the US state of Maryland. The family of Sai Charan in Nalgonda town received the news with shock, with his father N Narasimha and mother Padma remaining inconsolable after hearing about their son's death. Narasimha said he got the information about his son's death on Monday night from his brother, who stays in Hyderabad. 'We did not want to send our son to the US. We wanted him to be here. I had no interest in sending him there and told him not to go. But he insisted and then we allowed him to realise his wish as he was very particular to go to the US. We never imagined that he would be coming back as a dead body,' Narasimha, who could not hold back his tears, said. Narasimha said Sai Charan flew to the US in August 2020.

## TRS fails to develop Nalgonda district, says Komatireddy

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) star campaigner and Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Wednesday said the TRS government had failed to launch developmental activities in Nalgonda district. The previous Congress governments only launched several development projects and completed them, he observed. Speaking to reporters at Bommalaramam in Yadadri Bhuvangir district, Venkat Reddy expressed confidence that the Congress would bag all 12 Assembly seats in the next elections. The Congress party would hold a massive public meeting at Alair. He contradicted Chief Minister K Chandrababai

Rao's claim that the government was providing power round-the-clock in the State. But, the power was not provided even for six hours a day in Nalgonda district. There was still time for elections. The party would launch political campaign at the time of elections, he said. He criticised Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao for saying that panchayats can be developed with the revenue earned by collecting and selling empty bottles in villages. Venkat Reddy appealed to the people to elect Congress candidates in the next elections. He assured the people that the Congress party, if elected to power, would ensure all-round development of the district.

## Zilla Parishad meeting witnesses uproarious scenes

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Uproarious scenes were witnessed at the Zilla Parishad general body held at the ZP meeting hall here on Wednesday. The trouble began when TRS co-opted member Sukruddin staged a protest at the podium, alleging that funds were not allotted for development activities. The member, wearing a black scarf and holding placards, staged a sit-in at the podium. It led to heated exchanges between the protesting co-opted member and the elected members of the Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituencies (ZPTC). Zilla Parishad Chairperson K Vijaya announced the expulsion of the protesting members. Sukruddin alleged that he was discriminated by the powers that be because he belonged to minorities.

## Former ZP chief alleges land encroachment by TRS leaders

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Former chairman of Nizamabad Zilla Parishad and BJP leader Kotipalli Venkataramana Reddy has alleged that TRS leaders have grabbed lands worth Rs 300 crore in Kamareddy and villages on the outskirts of the town. Talking to media at the BJP office here on Wednesday, he said that the land encroachment was underway since 1989. The trend is still continuing even in the regime of TRS. As a result, several innocent persons are being duped, he lamented. He alleged that some leaders had developed illegal layouts and selling plots to the gullible public. In all, 1,000 house sites were sold in a 20-acre illegal layout developed on a government



BJP leader Kotipalli Venkataramana Reddy and party leaders addressing a media conference in Kamareddy on Wednesday

land, which is adjacent to newly-built Collectorate, he alleged. He said that he had taken all this to the notice of the district Collector Jitesh V Patil. In Vadulur village on outskirts of Kamareddy, 77 house sites were developed in an area of six acres. Of them, 62 were sold in 2018 alone. TRS leaders have been violating rules in several layouts and selling house-sites. The TRS leaders who were involved in the alleged encroachment of land would

face the anger of the people, he said. Speaking on Srivari Venture, which is the hottest news of late, the former ZP chairman came down heavily on the TRS leaders. He alleged that a road has been developed in forest area at a cost of Rs 3 crore and sought to know the rationale behind Panchayat Raj SE Prabhakar, EE Veerana and giving permissions to the same. As the road comes under Yellareddy constituency, he demanded Yellareddy MLA Surrender to respond on the issue.

## Security at Kazipet Railway Station beefed up

PNS ■ KAZIPET

Kazipet Railway Protection Force Circle Inspector Sanjeeva Rao on Wednesday warned of severe action if anyone dared to attack the railway properties. Speaking at a press conference, Sanjeeva Rao said it is important that everyone should realise the importance of keeping the premises of the railway stations clean. He stressed the need for everyone to protect the properties of the railways. He said that security was tightened in view of the violence by anti-social elements at some places. He cautioned people to take all precautions at the level crossing. An awareness campaign was conducted to educate people on the dangers of crossing the level crossing. He warned that severe action



**He said that security was tightened in view of the violence by anti-social elements at some places.**

would be taken against those who pulled chains on the running trains without valid reason.

## DCC demands immediate release of Rythu Bandhu funds

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

District Congress Committee (DCC) president Obedulla Kotwal on Wednesday staged a protest at the District Collectorate here demanding immediate release of Rythu Bandhu funds and raised slogans against the government. He charged the government with cheating the farmers. The other demands include payment of Rs 15,000 per acre towards input subsidy and immediate crediting of money in lieu of paddy procured into the farmers' bank accounts. The State government is yet to deposit Rythu Bandhu funds into the farmers' bank accounts in spite of com-



Mahabubnagar DCC president Obedulla Kotwal leading a sit-in at the District Collectorate in Mahabubnagar on Wednesday

mencement of Vanakalam season. Many paddy farmers from whom the government procured paddy are yet to receive the money for the sale of the

paddy. The bankers are also not advancing any loan to the farmer. As such the farmers are facing many hardships, he added. In the event of Congress coming to power, it

would implement the Warangal Declaration for the benefit of the farmers. Later, he submitted memorandum highlighting demands to the official at

collectorate. TPCC secretary S Jahir Aktar, media cell convenor CJ Benhur, TPCC president Lakshman Yadav and others took part in the protest.

## Collector directs officials to visit schools every Wednesday

PNS ■ YADADRI-BHONGIR

District Collector Pamela Satpathy on Wednesday expressed happiness over the government schools witnessing a qualitative change in terms of terms of education and infrastructure. She hoped that it would go a long way in improving the standards in the government schools. The Collector was launching an innovative programme 'Bhodhana' (teaching) at Zilla Parishad High School at Jameelpet under Bibinagar mandal in the district. Pamela Satpathy said the State government's programme, Mana Ooru-Mana Badi, to give a facelift to the government schools. The Collector directed the mandal



Yadadri-Bhongir Collector Pamela Satpathy interacting with students in ZP school at Jameelpet in Yadadri-Bhongir district on Wednesday

level officers to visit the schools every Wednesday and examine whether the students were reading lessons loudly. It is necessary to encourage students to read lessons loudly. She said the officers would also interact with the students to find out whether they were facing any difficulty in under-

standing the lessons. If the teacher worked well, the school would get good name. She also instructed the officials to take measures to maintain cleanliness in the schools, particularly in the kitchens mid-day meals. Additional District Collector Deepak Thiwari and Distr.



INDIA CORNER

### Maha court sentences ex-defence staffer to life imprisonment in murder

Thane, Jun 22 (PTI) A court here in Maharashtra has sentenced a former employee with a defence force to life imprisonment for killing a coolie in 2018. District Judge, Kalyan court, Shoukat Gorwade, in his order on Monday, also imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 on the accused Dhananjaykumar Sinha (58), who retired from the Navy in 2006. The designation of the accused was not mentioned in the FIR registered in the case. Additional Public Prosecutor Sachin Kulkarni told the court that the victim, Kanhu Balu Jaday (then aged 72), worked as a coolie at Khadavali railway station on the Mumbai-Kasara suburban section. He used to assist the railway staff and policemen at times to clear the mess on platforms and drive away beggars and others who created nuisance there. The accused, who lived alone, used to frequently go to the railway station and sleep on a platform bench, to which the victim had objected.



### Man guns down father, brother in property dispute in UP's Azamgarh

A man in a village here allegedly shot dead his father and brother in a property dispute, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in Dhandhari village in Kaptan ganj area here on Tuesday night, when an argument broke out between one Manoj singh and his father Shrinai rain, 75, and his 35-year-old brother Manish Singh, police said. In anger, Manoj Singh shot his father and brother with his licensed pistol, killing both of them on the spot, police said. The accused also beat up his aunt with sticks when she intervened in the dispute. Superintendent of Police Anurag Arya said that the accused had retired from army a year ago and his father was also an ex-serviceman. "The incident is stated to be fallout of a property dispute. The accused has been detained and interrogation is going on," the SP said. The bodies of victims have been sent for the post mortem examination, police said.



### Courts expected to pass order at earliest in matters involving personal liberty:SC

The Supreme Court has said that in a matter involving personal liberty, courts are expected to pass orders at the earliest in one way or the other taking into account the merits of the case. The apex court, while hearing a petition against a June 2 order of the Delhi High Court, observed that posting an application seeking anticipatory bail after two months cannot be appreciated. A vacation bench of Justices C T Ravikumar and Sudhanshu Dhulia noted that the petitioner's grievance is that his application for anticipatory bail moved before the high court was posted for August 31 without granting any interim protection. We are of the considered view that in a matter involving personal liberty, the court is expected to pass orders in one way or other taking into account the merits of the matter at the earliest.



# 'Ready to quit, will be happy if a Shiv Sainik succeeds me'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

An emotional Uddhav Thackeray offered to quit as Maharashtra Chief Minister and extended an olive branch to rebel Shiv Sena MLAs led by Eknath Shinde, saying he will be happy if a Shiv Sainik succeeds him, adding a new twist to the ongoing political crisis that threatens to bring down his coalition government of two-and-a-half years.

Breaking his silence over the revolt led by Shinde, a cabinet minister and Sena strongman from Thane, Thackeray said he was ready to step down if the rebel leader and MLAs supporting him, all camping in Guwahati in the BJP-ruled Assam, declare that they don't want him to continue as CM. In an 18-minute live webcast which was delayed by 30 minutes, Thackeray, who tested positive for COVID-19 earlier in the day, made an emotional appeal to the rebels as well as common



Shiv Sainiks and admitted to being inexperienced and clarified that a spine surgery late last year kept him away from meeting people. The CM said he was ready to give up the post of party president as well if Shiv Sainiks feel he isn't capable of leading the outfit which is heading the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, which also includes the NCP and the Congress. "Why make statements from Surat

(where rebels headed first on Monday night) and other places. Come and tell me on my face that I am incompetent to handle the post of Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president. I will resign immediately. I will keep my resignation letter ready and you can come and take it to the Raj Bhavan," he said. The CM said he would be happy if a Shiv Sainik succeeds him to the top constitutional post. Recalling the events of

### In 56 years, Shiv Sena faces 4th rebellion; 1st under Uddhav's watch

Despite being a party of committed cadres with unflinching loyalty to leadership of the day, the Shiv Sena has been vulnerable to rebellions in its ranks and it has seen revolts by prominent figures on four occasions, three of them under the watch of its charismatic founder Bal Thackeray, with Eknath Shinde becoming the latest leader to join the list. The rebellion by Shinde, a Cabinet minister who has walked away with a bunch of Shiv Sena MLAs, is most significant in the outfit's 56-year-old history as it threatens to bring down the party-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra, while the other revolts took place when it was not in power in the state. The present revolt, which started taking shape post Monday midnight after Legislative Council poll results, throws a big challenge before Maharashtra Chief Minister and Sena president Uddhav Thackeray as the three previous revolts took place when his father Bal Thackeray was still around.

November 2019 when the MVA took shape, Thackeray said he agreed to become CM despite his political inexperience after NCP president Sharad Pawar suggested him to take up the job. The MVA came into existence despite the Congress and the NCP being Shiv Sena's political adversaries for sever-

al decades, he said. Thackeray said he was shocked at the ongoing political developments in the state, which started on Monday night when Shinde (58) raised a banner of revolt and landed in a hotel in Surat, around 280km from Mumbai, with a bunch of disgruntled MLAs.

## Droupadi Murmu: Spiritual and soft spoken

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Councillor to president of India? The arc of triumph forged through personal tragedy is almost complete for Droupadi Murmu, tribal leader, former Jharkhand governor and now the BJP-led NDA's presidential candidate who could well be the next occupant of the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The low-profile Murmu, believed to be deeply spiritual, is a keen practitioner of the meditation techniques of the Brahma Kumaris, a movement she embraced after she lost her husband, two sons, mother and brother in the just six years between 2009-2015.

An early image on Wednesday of the 64-year-old who will be India's first tribal president and the second woman in the post if elected was perhaps in sync with this facet -- her sweeping the floor of the Purnandeswar Shiv temple in Rairangpur in her home state Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.

Catapulted into the national spotlight after being picked the ruling NDA's presidential



nominee in the July 18 polls on Tuesday, Murmu also visited the temples of Lord Jagannath, Shiva and Hanuman to offer prayers. "She is deeply spiritual, and soft-spoken person," said Basant Kumar Panda, BJP leader and Lok Sabha member from Kalahandi. It is from Rairangpur that she took her first step up the BJP ladder. She was a councillor in the Rairangpur Notified Area Council in 1997 and rose to being a minister in Odisha's BJD-BJP coalition government from 2000 to 2004. In 2105, she was appointed governor of Jharkhand and stayed in the post till 2021.

Born on June 20, 1958, Murmu was the first woman

governor of the state. If elected -- with the numbers stacked in favour of the BJP-led NDA combine she is likely to score a win over the Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha -- Murmu will also be the first president to be born after Independence.

She has been through a lot of pain and struggle, but doesn't get rattled by adversity, former Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal said.

Born into a Santhal family, she is an excellent orator in Santhali and Odia languages, Samal said. He added that she had worked extensively to improve infrastructure such as roads and ports in the region.

## Two children die as tanker crashes into them

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A three-year-old boy and his cousin sister were killed when a tanker transporting bitumen hit them while they were waiting at a traffic signal to cross a busy street in suburban Chembur, police said on Wednesday.

Rishi Gupta and Srishti Gupta (2) were killed when they were crossing the road near a hotel on Tuesday afternoon, an official said, adding that Srishti's mother Ranjana suffered injuries to her legs.

Ranjana was taking Srishti for a medical check-up with

a doctor and asked Rishi to accompany them. "Ranjana, Srishti, and Rishi were standing at a traffic signal to cross the road when the tanker driver lost his control over the vehicle which rammed into the trio. They were rushed to a hospital by local people where Srishti and Rishi were declared dead," the official said.

Tanker driver Rajendra Purohit was arrested under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) including 304-A (causing death by negligence). Further investigation is underway, the official added.

## 5 cops, home guard stabbed inside police station in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five policemen and a home guard were stabbed by a man inside a police station in east Delhi's Shahdara on Wednesday, officials said. The incident took place on the third floor of cyber police station, Shahdara, they said. The man is being questioned, police said. According to police, the man entered the police station and started recording a video. When he was obstructed by one of the policemen and asked the reason behind recording the video, the man suddenly took out a knife and stabbed the



personnel one after the other. All the injured policemen and the home guard were rushed to hospital where they are being treated. One of the cops sustained injuries on his chest and is critical, they said.

Meanwhile, the man later claimed that he was a complainant, but no complaint copy was found with him. Police said he also banged his head against the wall and sustained minor injuries.

## Sonia seeks more time for appearing before ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who was hospitalised for over a week for COVID-19 complications, on Wednesday wrote to the Enforcement Directorate seeking postponement of her appearance in the National Herald case by a few weeks till she recovers completely. The 75-year-old Congress leader, who was discharged from hospital on June

20, had been summoned by the agency for questioning on June 23 in the money laundering case related to the newspaper. Her son and former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has already been quizzed by the probe agency for over five days. Sonia Gandhi had earlier been scheduled to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on June 8 but had sought more time from the probe agency in view of her COVID-



19 infection. The agency had then issued a fresh summons.

## Uma Bharti urges Oppn Prez candidate Sinha to withdraw nomination

PNS ■ BHOPAL

BJP leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Uma Bharti on Wednesday urged Yashwant Sinha, who is opposition parties' candidate for the July 18 presidential election, to withdraw his nomination "if he believed in what he used to say" when he was in the saffron party earlier. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on

Tuesday named Droupadi Murmu, a tribal leader from Odisha, as its candidate, while former Union minister Sinha was declared as a joint nominee by major opposition parties, including the Congress, the NCP and the TMC. Sinha, who served in the cabinet of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had quit the saffron party in 2018 following serious differences with the party leadership.

## Mandaviya to chair high-level review on rising COVID-19 cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will on Friday chair a high-level review meeting with the core team of experts over increasing cases of COVID-19 in the country, official sources said. India has been witnessing an increase in coronavirus infections over the last couple of weeks. As on date, 10 states -- Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu,

Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Gujarat -- have over 1,000 active cases. The core team of experts will include AIIMS director Dr Randip Guleria, ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava and NCDC director Sajeet Singh. Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, Secretary of Department of Biotechnology Rajesh S Gokhale, Secretary in the Department of Pharmaceuticals S Aparna, among others,

will also attend the meeting. In a review meeting of INSACOG held last week, states/UTs were asked to submit "larger number" of samples for whole genome sequencing from districts and areas which had seen a surge in COVID-19 cases over a period of seven days.

The direction was issued to check the possibility of any new emerging variant or sub-variant and ascertain the reasons behind the breakthrough infections.

# Assam flood situation grim, 55 lakh people hit

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The flood situation in Assam continued to remain grim with rising water levels of the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers inundating fresh areas in the state and impacting over 55 lakh people across 32 districts, officials said on Wednesday.

Eighty-nine people have lost their lives since mid-May due to deluge, they said.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma travelled to Nagaon by train to review the situation in flood-hit areas in the district, the officials said, adding that he was also scheduled to visit a few relief camps there. Nagaon was severely affected by the current wave of floods with over 4,57,381 people coming under the impact of



the deluge and 15,188 inmates have taken shelter in 147 relief camps.

"Undertook a train journey from Guwahati to flood-affected areas in Chaparmukh and Kampur. The journey enabled

me to take a closer look at the areas ravaged by flood along the railway tracks, which will help us in taking informed decisions and intervene accordingly," Sarma said on Twitter. As the floodwaters of Kopili

have inundated large areas in Nagaon district, necessary steps will be taken to prevent the recurrence of such calamity in the future, he said. Sarma visited Chaparmukh railway station to interact with flood-

affected people taking shelter there and took stock of relief materials provided to them. "Assuring them all possible help, I asked district administration to ensure adequate relief to the affected people & be on stand-by," he said.

The flood situation in three districts of the Barak Valley - Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi remained critical with rising water levels of the Barak and Kushiara rivers inundating vast tracts of land in the valley, the officials said.

National Disaster Response Force personnel have been engaged in Cachar districts to evacuate people to safe places, while representatives of State Disaster Response Force and other agencies were deployed in the two remaining districts.



## First among equals

The NDA holds a distinct advantage as the presidential election nears

The ruling National Democratic Alliance has selected former Jharkhand Governor Droupadi Murmu as its presidential candidate. “I am surprised as well as delighted. As a tribal woman from remote Mayurbhanj district, I had not thought about becoming the candidate for the top post,” she said at her Rairangpur residence. It did not come as a big surprise to political commentators though, for it was widely speculated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi may opt for a person from either the tribal community or other backward classes (OBCs). All other major groups — Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs, women — have been represented. By choosing her as its presidential candidate, the BJP-led NDA expected to get support not just from the



MPs and MLAs from tribals but also from Odisha, her native State. The BJD, which is in power in Odisha, holds over 2.8 per cent of representation in the electoral college that will elect the President. “I am optimistic of support from all members of the Odisha Assembly and MPs,” she said, “I am daughter of the soil. I have the right to request all members to support me as an Odia.” Her optimism is well-grounded. Odisha Chief Minister and BJD boss Naveen Patnaik is favourably inclined towards her candidature. He tweeted: “Congratulations Smt #DraupadiMurmur on being announced as candidate of NDA for the country’s highest office. I was

delighted when Hon’ble PM @narendramodi ji discussed this with me. It is indeed a proud moment for people of #Odisha.” This will help her — and the NDA.

Equally important is the support she has got from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. “We express happiness at the candidature of Droupadi Murmu for President. She is a tribal woman and it is a matter of great happiness that a tribal woman is the candidate for the highest position in the country,” Nitish Kumar said. At any rate, the top BJP leadership is active and adroit enough to have its way, as evident from the political storm raging in Maharashtra. This is bad news for the Opposition which had propped up former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha as its presidential candidate. Opposition politicians had hoped that if somehow they managed to get their candidate occupy Rashtrapati Bhawan, it would not only add momentum to the campaign to eventually oust the BJP from office. That seems to be very difficult today; developments in Maharashtra have shown that not just the anti-BJP coalition is precarious but also that Opposition leaders are flatfooted. On the other hand, the BJP top brass calibrated all its moves. Supporting a tribal woman can be criticised as tokenism, but then it is not the first time tokenism has affected presidential poll; in 2007, for instance, the Congress selected Pratibha Patil, who was not a political heavyweight or household name, as its candidate. The BJP has been playing that game, and bagging rich dividends. And it is likely to get the President of its own choice.

### PICTALK



A view of the swollen Jhelum river following incessant rain, in Srinagar

# Gulf nations must avow India’s step

The Government has asserted its respect for all religions while the Gulf countries have often been suspect in establishing their secular credentials



VIVEK GUMASTE

The *démarche* issued by a host of Islamic nations with regard to the unfortunate Nupur Sharma incident had stirred up a hornet’s nest in India and unleashed a welter of emotions. An ugly cocktail of shame, embarrassment, anger and frustration swirled and vitiated the air. There have been concerns about India’s international image; some have rued over its impact on trade with the Arab world.

A former BJP leader sanctimoniously claimed that India’s “image has now come crashing down”. He further averred that “...(It) caused grievous damage to our image as a liberal, secular democracy...”. But is this really so? Do we need to feel ashamed? And did this controversy erode our credibility as a liberal secular democracy?

We, as Indians, suffer from a deep-set flaw in our psyche; a profound lack of self-esteem and self-confidence that stems from not knowing who we are! So much so that even when two-bit nations with a combined moral quotient of zero pass adverse remarks about us, we go into a tizzy and subject ourselves to an endless bout of self-loathing. Nothing illustrates this phenomenon better than our current response.

First, one person’s aberration, even if the individual belongs to the ruling party, cannot indict an entire nation, its people and its Government. Second, the Government did act to rectify the indecorum by asserting its respect for all religions and by suspending the errant office bearer. Nupur Sharma has since apologised for her remarks.

Next, let us take a closer look at those Muslim countries that are hectoring India on morality. These include Kuwait, Qatar, Iran, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan, Bahrain, Maldives, Malaysia, Oman, Iraq and Libya. The majority of them are autocracies which designate Islam as the official religion; a caveat that automatically relegates all other religions to second-class status.

Countries like Saudi Arabia



prohibit the construction of non-Muslim places of worship; in other Gulf countries, non-Muslims have to seek Government permission. These countries do not even afford non-Muslims the basic courtesy of dignity in death. Kuwait and Qatar do not allow cremations forcing non-Muslims to fly dead bodies out of the country to their native places. And let us not forget that Qatar is the country that indirectly endorsed MF Hussain’s blasphemy against Hindu gods by honouring him with a citizenship.

In contrast, despite all the criticism that the Modi Government has been subject to, both at home and abroad, and despite all the talk of Hindu hyper-nationalism, we still remain a liberal democratic country par excellence that treats all its citizens equally. Muslims have the same rights as any Hindu. They have access to the same educational institutions, same job opportunities, the same health facilities and are beneficiaries of the same ration cards. They can build their own mosques and pray unhindered in these. We cannot be shamed by countries whose record on religious freedom is ques-



THE MAJORITY OF THESE MUSLIM COUNTRIES ARE AUTOCRACIES WHICH DESIGNATE ISLAM AS THE OFFICIAL RELIGION; A CAVEAT THAT AUTOMATICALLY RELEGATES ALL OTHER RELIGIONS TO SECOND-CLASS STATUS

tionable. We need to be confident in our own skin and answerable to ourselves alone as the bearers of an ancient moral civilisation.

Coming to the question of trade, the Gulf Cooperation Council (consisting of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) is a major trading partner with exports of \$44 billion and imports worth \$110 billion (2021-22). About a third of India’s crude oil needs (Saudi Arabia 18 per cent; UAE nine per cent and Kuwait five per cent) are supplied by the Gulf countries. However, since the Russia-Ukraine crisis, the equation is fast changing. Crude oil supplies from Russia have dramatically shot up reaching 3.36 million metric tonnes in May 2022 — a nine-fold monthly increase compared to 2021. India’s dependence on oil from Gulf countries is significant but can be balanced by increasing supplies from Russia.

On the flip side, the Gulf countries are overwhelmingly dependent on India for their food needs. Specifically, India accounts for 84 per cent, 91 per cent and 80 per cent of Qatar’s, Kuwait’s and Iran’s rice

requirements. So, vulnerability due to trade disruption extends to both sides.

What is most concerning is that this outrage has emboldened terrorists to threaten India with attacks and encouraged anti-social elements amongst India’s Muslims? It has led to calls for beheading on national television, rioting through the streets and obscene calls for Hindu genocide from mosque tops. The Government of India has done the right thing to defuse the crisis by reiterating its respect for all religions and by suspending the errant office bearers.

The Gulf countries too must step up to the plate. After having vented their disapproval publicly, they must now show maturity if they do not want the narrative to be hijacked by radical fundamentalists. To put an end to the matter, they need to release another statement that welcomes the Indian Government’s actions and acknowledges India as a genuinely secular nation.

(The author, a US-based academic and political commentator, frequently writes on current affairs in India. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### START AGNIPATH ON TRIAL BASIS

Sir — While working out the financial benefits of the Agnipath scheme, national security concerns and administrative feasibility cannot be brushed aside. The moot question is whether after completing four years in uniform, they will be able to withstand the pressures of unemployment. These well-trained youths can easily be lured, recruited and exploited by anti-social elements, creating newer challenges after completing their tenure. There is no gain saying that the new recruitment scheme for jawans is being pushed in a hurry to counter the rising discontentment among the unemployed youth and ever-growing resentment against the Government.

Another rational way of revisiting the Agnipath scheme is to downsize the Army, as China did in 2015 by giving 2.3 lakh soldiers VRS as part of its modernisation drive. The poor execution of SPARSH is a case in point. The new pension system for the armed forces veterans, which was launched with much fanfare in 2021 for post-2015 retirees, also ended in a fiasco as on May 1, almost 60,000 ex-servicemen were kept deprived of their pension. Taking lessons from its poor execution, it is essential to run Agnipath on a trial basis first.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### RADICAL REFORMS AFTER CONSULTATIONS

Sir — This refers to ‘Some reforms may look unfair at first, but help nation in long run: Modi’ (June 21). The PM’s statement is relevant because it comes against the backdrop of widespread protests against the Agnipath scheme. Irrespective of the merits and demerits of the scheme, it has turned into a burning issue. Also, it is difficult to ignore the fact that this is the third big reform by the Modi-led Government to face such serious opposition. The land reform Bill in its first term and the farm reforms Bill in its second term were withdrawn to avert likely electoral losses despite there being enough reasons to persist with these.

## Comments malign Cong’s image



Union Minister of Congress, Subodh Kant Sahai. It’s a sad state of affairs. The Congress has been an old national party. It has had a golden history. But today, the language the senior Congress leaders are using in public meetings is not in any way in the interest of the party.

What derogatory remarks are being made by the leaders about certain constitutional posts, they don’t even care about it. The Congress has ruled the country for more than 60 years and all that has been possible only because of the nation’s people. It has also been the tradition of Congress to respect the sentiments of the same people. The Prime Minister is not only a leader of a political party, his is a constitutional post, leading the country in the world. Insulting any constitutional post does not suit the leaders of a national party like the Congress. Such statements will only hurt the image of the Congress.

Rajender Kumar Sharma | Haryana

The issues that these two aborted reforms set out to address remain, and are likely to have a detrimental impact on the Indian economy. While it is possible the opposition to such reforms was inevitable, it is also possible that their intensity might have been diminished through a consultative process involving all stakeholders, an elaborate detailing of the contours of the reforms. However, when it comes to the adoption of radical reforms, good intentions and a majority in Parliament may not necessarily translate into instant and universal acceptance.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

### NEED TO HARMONISE WITH TECH

Sir — With great admiration and belief in the columns of your newspaper, I seek to bring to your attention the fast-growing menace of tech addiction and the resultant health scares among the youth of our country. Today, we are able to enjoy some of the most convenient gadgets to have ever existed, which offer far more information and

sources of entertainment than any other. As a result, the upcoming generation has been becoming increasingly information-heavy. The number of hours an average person spends in gaining information, whether wanted or unwanted, is fast increasing, with a screen in front of our eyes showing us new wonders every minute.

And on top of that, the wonders are as per choice and preferences. All this temptation often leads young children to spend much more time on these gadgets than what’s healthy. And even though we may not realise it instantly, it levies a huge load of tiredness on our brains and eyes, often leading to inexplicable stress and irritability. Hence, through the pages of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to appeal to the youth worldwide to maintain a balance of all spheres of life to fully enjoy it.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

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

## SOUND BITE

Many reforms in the present may seem unpleasant... but over time, there are benefits.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi



Afghan ambassador —Farid Mamundzay

Music is also a form of yoga, which I have been practising since childhood.



Singer —Sukhwinder Singh



India chief coach —Rahul Dravid

I am happy to inform you that the Indian farmers are completely protected.



Commerce Minister —Piyush Goyal

## Trouble next door

India will do well to learn lessons from the goings-on in its immediate neighbourhood

There are several political developments taking place in our neighbourhood, and all of these portend to our own polity, what may be wrong with it, or what should be corrected. Sri Lanka is burning. Pakistan is in the black. Afghanistan remains simmering under its newfound cloak of civility. Nepal, under the new Prime Minister, has just about found its step after the former communist-leaning Premier was ousted. The suffocating situation in Myanmar is also nothing new. Now Kuwait’s crown prince has dissolved Parliament and called for an early election following a stand-off between the Government and elected Assembly that has hindered fiscal reform. Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah has said that the decree would be issued for the dissolution of Parliament, the Gulf region’s oldest. Even the ruling Emir of Kuwait has blessed the dissolution move. The Opposition lawmakers are staging an open-ended sit-in since last week at the Parliament complex to press Sheikh Meshal to name a new Prime Minister to replace the caretaker Premier who has faced a combative Parliament. The political crisis, which has blocked the country’s economic and social progress, seems to be worsening.



Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe admitted in Parliament that its economy has “completely collapsed” and an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the only path to revival. While it is a fact that the island nation faces a far more serious situation beyond mere shortages of fuel, gas, electricity and food, any financial rescue plan with the IMF is not expected until Colombo agrees with its creditors on restructuring its \$51 billion foreign debt, which could take months. The country first defaulted on its debt in April and went cap-in-hand to the IMF, which asked Colombo to raise taxes and restructure loss-making state enterprises, but it made people angrier. To soothe the seething population, Sri Lanka’s Cabinet has approved an amendment to the Constitution that could curtail presidential powers. Besides, Sri Lanka’s Parliament sessions will be restricted to two days this week instead of four days amid the current fuel supply crisis. The situation in India is no better. Unemployment is rampant, inflation is rising, growth is slowing and the nation is seemingly in the throes of lumpen elements that threaten to derail our foreign relations anytime. We must seriously be on our guard!



FIRST COLUMN

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE TO STRENGTHEN UNITY

India already has a fairly uniform set of laws



RAJENDRA PRASAD GUPTA

In a country as diverse as India, a lot has changed during the 75 years of Independence. India is continuously climbing the ladder of success. The country is asserting itself as a major economic and military power. In such a milieu, there is an urgent need that India, like other nations, strengthens the initiative of national integration by passing a uniform civil code.

The criminal code, civil procedure code, the Special Marriage Act, etc., apply uniformly to all citizens. Barring a few exceptions, India has a fairly uniform set of laws.

The British government had entrusted the responsibility of initiating a uniform civil code to Warren Hasting in 1772 when he was conferred the civil, judicial and administrative responsibility. Later, the British government emphasised the need to compile the codification of Indian laws on various subjects in 1835, with a few exceptions.

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution gives us freedom of conscience and freedom to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, including the protection of our cultural diversity. At the same time, there is Article 44, which upholds a "uniform civil code" for citizens. It is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution.

In order to bring uniformity in law, various courts have often said in their judgments that the government should strive towards ensuring a uniform civil code.



With the passage of time, many laws have been changed in India. The demand for a uniform civil code has also been going on since the time of Independence. In fact, even the framers of the Constitution had deliberated on it, but it was put on hold due to opposition by the Muslim representatives.

India will not be the first nation to implement a uniform civil code. The US, Canada, and European nations as well as many Islamic countries like Turkey, Indonesia, and Sudan have uniform civil codes.

By promoting the politics of appeasement in India, a select few fundamentalist organisations, which are protected by political parties, are engaged in dividing the country. If one looks at the developments in history, one will find that since Independence these organisations have been involved in anti-national activities. Many conspiracies have been hatched for the purpose of precluding a uniform civil code. Owing to vote bank politics, top leaders of many major political parties started fear-mongering, telling the Muslim community that a uniform civil code would violate their rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

These politicians forget that the same Constitution has also talked about implementing a uniform civil code. They should also be aware that a uniform civil code has been in force in Goa for years, which has proved to be effective in maintaining harmony and a peaceful environment, and accelerating development there.

Therefore, it would be better if today we make meaningful efforts to solve the problem and not leave it to the future. This step will also be commendable and in tune with the motto of 'One Nation and One Legislation.'

For this it is necessary that the Centre, Parliament and state governments agree on this issue to develop a national consensus. While preserving cultural diversity, it is necessary that no person should be discriminated against. As far as possible, there should be the same law in India and a uniform civil code.

Several pending issues like triple talaq, Article 370, and Ram Mandir have been addressed in the last few years. This has raised hope that uniform civil code will also become a reality.

(The author, a professor, is the vice-president of BJP in Bihar and a member of Bihar Legislative Council)

# BJP's foreign outreach serves national interest

The outreach is an exercise to realise democratic ideals and reach out to those uninitiated and curious about our country



SUMET BHASIN



BIASES, PREJUDICES, AND PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES THAT THE BJP HAS SOUGHT TO ADDRESS IN ITS OUTREACH TO DIVERSE AUDIENCES. 'KNOW BJP' IS AN INITIATIVE OF THE RULING PARTY

(The author is Director, the Public Policy Research Centre, the BJP's principal think tank; twitter at @sumetbhasin)



motion by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbott dialogue, which went on for several years, had laid the foundation for the Indian pivot in Asia for the US, which also augmented the global outreach of India.

Notably, former BJP chief and deputy PM LK Advani had set in motion the party's foreign outreach by creating a foreign cell and the overseas friends of the BJP, which are playing important roles in the outreach, who in turn have become vocal advocates of Indian national interest. Deployment of technology for outreach by the BJP in the last one decade by tapping the full potential of social media platforms has given a boost unseen in the past.

Vajpayee, being a true democrat, had the idea to connect with the Indian diaspora to tap their growing influence to work for the Indian national interest. Needless to say, increase in the Indian outreach with foreign capitals corresponds with the rise in the politico-economic clout of the Indian diaspora.

In PM Modi, the Indian diaspora got the perfect voice for Indian national interest. Predictably, the interactions with the diaspora are a regular feature during his foreign visits. So, while Vajpayee laid the foundation for the connect with the world, Modi has upgraded it by building a grand edifice of an India that's connected with every corner of the world—from developed countries to island nations, from the African continent to the developing nations and the immediate neighbourhood. He has deployed full resources to build relationships of

a reliable and dependable friend.

For many, the BJP is a relatively new political party, for they have been used to seeing Congress in power for decades. The BJP gained full majority in the Lok Sabha only in 2014 under the leadership of Modi. This happened again in the 2019 general election. While Vajpayee led the government within the coalition limitations, PM Modi has the unprecedented popular mandate to unlock India's fullest potential. The Modi-led government at the Centre has carried out a legislative agenda which was earlier seen as impossible.

Revocation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Then the archaic practice of triple talaq among the Muslims was discarded; this caught the attention of many in the world. Such political will to carry out hard reforms is tough to find even among many world leaders. This fuels curiosity of foreign commentators in the BJP and its leadership; this has necessitated a creative outreach strategy, so that we could keep pace with the fast-changing global narrative.

The outbreak of Covid-19 tested the characters of national leaders of several countries. India with over one billion population was seen by many as too vulnerable to the deadly pandemic. But the incumbent Indian leadership proved equal to the task; in fact, it excelled in its response with two made in India vaccines that shielded not just Indians but millions in several countries. The neighbouring countries remained solely dependent on India.

PM led the outreach at the policy front, holding consultations with the scientific community to find answers to the looming challenges in the form of Covid-19. India showcased why the country is the pharma capital of the world, with the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro expressing gratitude for the medicines and vaccines by equating the efforts with Hanuman carrying the 'Sanjeevani Booti' for injured Lakshman.

The BJP's outreach with the poor during such trying times shaped the party's deep social drive in the form of distribution of dry ration kits to millions of people during lockdowns and thereafter. BJP workers ran community kitchens across the country. Blending of the social and political work further helped the endeavour.

Dialogue and dissemination are in the DNA of the BJP and its parent organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Foreign commentators have their misgivings about the RSS and the BJP because of the long-term narratives fed to them by the political rivals and the well-entrenched 'Left-liberal ecosystem.'

RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat held extensive interactions with the representatives of the foreign media at Vigyan Bhavan a few years ago where he responded to all the questions. He explained to them the worldview and functioning of the organisation.

The BJP leaders have their ears to the ground; outreach helps them know the pulse of the people. They are not the prisoners of history; they are willing to walk the tough road.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE HAVE OPENED UP THE SPACE AND THE DEFENCE SECTORS WHICH, FOR DECADES, WERE UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 75 YEARS, SERVICE CHIEFS ARE BEING FRONTED TO DEFEND A GOVERNMENT'S POLICY DECISION.

—LEADER OF OPINION IN THE RAJYA SABHA MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

# South Africa: Anti-graft Prez faces scam charges

A politically-linked former spy hurled some not-very-convincing charges at President Ramaphosa, ruining latter's name

Once upon a time (about four years ago) Cyril Ramaphosa was seen as South Africa's last, best hope. Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, the leadership of the country's ruling African National Congress (ANC) had passed from the wise and heroic Nelson Mandela to the intellectual but ineffectual Thabo Mbeki and then to the corrupt and ignorant Jacob Zuma.

But in 2018 the fractured and demoralised ANC pulled itself together, remembered its purpose, and replaced Zuma as president with Cyril Ramaphosa. Hope soared: Ramaphosa had a long record of activism in the struggle against Apartheid; he was a former trade union leader; and he was so rich that he didn't need to be corrupt. He was the ideal candidate.



GWYNNE DYER

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

For a while it went well. The economy didn't grow much and unemployment stayed very high, but Zuma's chief cronies fled abroad, others were charged with various crimes, and even Zuma wound up in jail. Ramaphosa was at least trying to clean up the mess—but then, two years ago, there was a burglary at his wildlife game farm in Limpopo province.

Nobody heard about it at the time, because Ramaphosa didn't mention it publicly. That's understandable, because the burglars allegedly found \$4 million in cash hidden in cushions on his sofa. That's not a good look for a president whose USP is fighting corruption, so no report was made to the police. Ramaphosa just swallowed the loss.

That's not as crazy as it sounds: Ramaphosa is one of the richest men in South Africa, and \$4 million is less than one per cent of his wealth. He could just be trying not to draw attention to it. But then, early this month, Arthur Fraser, former head of South Africa's intelligence agency, lodged a criminal complaint with the police about the affair.

Fraser said that Ramaphosa's 'presidential protection unit' (bodyguards) had tracked down the burglars, kidnapped, and interrogated them, and then bribed them to keep quiet about the cash. Maybe Ramaphosa was just trying to protect his reputation as a man of the people, but even so he would have been breaking the law. And then Fraser outed him.



The news is now out all over town, and by this week Ramaphosa was under attack from all sides. "Criminals do not report crimes when the proceeds of their crimes are stolen," as Julius Malema, leader of the opposition Economic Freedom Fighters party, put it, and a great many other people in Parliament and in the street

took the same view.

This comes at just the wrong time for Ramaphosa, who faces a leadership challenge in the ANC in December. His anti-corruption campaign within the party has not prospered, and Zuma's supporters staged riots that killed hundreds when he was jailed. Now Zuma's out of jail, and Ramaphosa is tarred with the same corruption brush himself.

There's a lot that's wrong with this story. Arthur Fraser, the former spy chief who brought the complaint against Ramaphosa, is a close ally of Zuma's. The South African President does hold regular cash auctions of his prize Ankole cattle and various game animals at his farm, but why would he hide the cash in pillows? Tax avoidance?

This is a man who has sat on literally dozens of boards and is allegedly worth \$450 million. If he wants to avoid taxes, he has lawyers aplenty; he doesn't need sofa cushions. The whole 'burglary' operation, and especially the source and the timing of the 'complaint', smells like a political sting. Nevertheless, Ramaphosa is in deep trouble.

The real object of the sting would have been to highlight Ramaphosa's great and unexplained wealth. He probably didn't break the law to get it, like Zuma did, but he didn't inherit it and he didn't earn it by hard work. He just got paid huge sums to sit on boards, and invested the proceeds wisely.

Ramaphosa got on those boards as part of the ANC-sponsored 'Black Economic

Empowerment' programme, one of whose purposes was to provide a reliable, low-profile income stream for its political work. Most of its supporters were very poor, but the chosen 'BEE' appointees were expected to donate much of their large incomes to the ANC.

It's less lurid than Zuma's route to great wealth via partnership with Indian 'entrepreneurs' in a project of 'state capture', but both men's riches come from their ties to the ANC. To the average voter in Alexandra township, the two men will look exactly the same.

That is why the ANC will probably lose its majority in Parliament in the 2024 election, after 30 years in power. High time, really, even though nobody knows what's coming out of the box next.







## INTRODUCING GIRLS IN THE GAFFER DEPARTMENT

SHIKHA DUGGAL

It was a day when Actress Richa Chadha realized that there are no women working in the gaffer circle when in the crew. So her associate, Tanya Negi came up with the idea for a one-of-a-kind workshop. This made Richa launch Undercurrent Lab along with the director of her maiden production. It's all about representation and the *Gangs of Wasseypur* actress wants to bring a socio-cultural change in her own industry.

The programme is a joint partnership between the Women in Film and Television Association, India and one of the largest lighting and grip equipment providers in Bollywood Light N Light. In an exclusive conversation with us, Richa spilt the beans on this incubation lab and said, "Last year, for my maiden production I was crewing up. I noticed, there are no women in the light industry. We just need enough options to choose from, why aren't their women who want to apply for this job? In its first year, Suchi and I will focus on training ten women in lighting for cinema. It will start with a first-of-its-kind, hands-on workshop, where the trainees will learn

the art from gaffers and cinematographers from the industry."

Richa Chadha can see how sexism continues to be the default behaviour is not only in the film industry but also the society at large.

She continued, "Sexist behaviour is the default setting of our society. It's very common behaviour. We hope to change that a bit by slowly and slowly by including women in the workplace. That's how change literally begins. That's what I want to do."

After the week-long crash course, the girls will be sent out on the field, to work on film sets as trainees. Two of the ten girls will be placed on the nearly all-women crew on Richa and Ali's maiden production which shoots from October this year.

"The experience is great. This is basically a field where there were few women to no women. That's why we started this, and now because the girls are really learning, we are really feeling happy. We hope to continue this, not just for lighting, but maybe for some other department next," she added.

Director Shuchi Talati applied for a grant at Berlinale Talent Footprints in February this year to set up this lab, and won. The 'Undercurrent lab' will give the oppor

This week for Community-wise, *The Pioneer* brings to you how Actress Richa Chadha is on a mission to bring a socio-cultural change in her own industry.

tunity of making a solid career in the lighting department in the film industry, to their ten candidates who were selected after a careful series of interviews. She is thankful to folks at Arri, Berlinale, Light and Light and Gratitude House for coming on board to help them pro-bono.



## Providing digital solutions



PNS HYDERABAD

Having witnessed a gap in utilizing the data while working in various IT projects, Damodar Gummadapu and his brother Raj Gummadapu came up with the idea of Techwave IT consulting services and solutions.

Techwave provides entrepreneurs proper IT and software infrastructure. Telling us more about the same, Raj says, "We enable companies that are doing business and needs to have its presence in the ITR or the web. We help them with the process, to display their products on a website and how they can have seamless interaction and view of it, and ability to buy those products online and same time for their internal operations also. They need systems and IT infrastructures for people to log on and check their details. We provide them with the infrastructure and support them."

The founders believe that the main key components for a business to survive is culture, people and values. When we mix the culture and people, we get to see innovations and that is what defines a company.

As the decision maker how do you ensure that the culture is maintained. To this, he shares, "As the decision maker or the promoter, a culture is so important because the way we have grown is basically having a very flat structure in the company and then very integrity and diversity and inclusion is a part of our bigger values. As a management, we ensure these are valued and communicated to new employees and associates tell them this is how we live and breath on a daily basis."

Explaining us more about the inspiration, Raj shares, "Before this I was managing large IT projects or engagements and that's where I spent considerable amount. While doing this I always found a gap. We were implementing systems, lot of data being captured by those systems. But those enterprises having a problem of utilizing the data in a meaningful way. That's when we thought of helping the offices of CFO to read the data and make many full decisions of that."

Like any other company, Techwave had also faced its own challenges. He says, "I started it in an apartment and I was the only employee, I invested and started working, building relationships, slowly attracted employees and people who believed in us and started joining us and that's a journey. Convincing clients that we would help them was the bigger challenge. Slowly we started gaining the trust and one thing that made us truly successful was our ability to deliver what we had promised to. It took us roughly 14+ years."

The two main goals that the organization is looking forward in the upcoming years, is to be a 250 dollar million company with around 10,000 people by 2025.

He further adds, "That's more financially and quantitative kind of a goal but the other underline goal is that we want to be recognized as one of the key digital solutions providers as a go to solution provider in the market. We want to be known as a company that provides values. The other goal is how we actually give back to the communities, where we live and work in."

Meanwhile, as we wanted to know how is the IT sector going to be in the upcoming years, he shares us about how the IT sector is going to grow with a lot of developments. So, what

are they? He says, "There is a lot of growth in the IT sector. We will grow in a minimum of 6 to 7 percent. In India, one of the biggest advantages that we have is the knowledgeable workforce and our ability with the communications and the scale that we can provide. Innovation here is happening at a rapid pace and we as a country are quickly able to adapt the innovations. The reasons why we see companies in particular states is because of the infrastructure. IT companies needs infrastructure with respect to facilities, internet connectivity, transportation and skilled resources. Now, we see IT companies going to even tier 2 and tier 3 cities. Now availability, resources, and infrastructures are increasing rapidly and in 5 years other states will also have IT sectors."

"If we look at where we are as a company, we are very small but we are considered to be a semi-medium company and we have a lot of growth to come in. I come from a very rural background. What we started and what we are able to generate this kind of employment ability to a lot of other people to grow is actually what excites me every day and let the community also grow along with us," the founder signs off.



The world is embracing the idea of travelling with a purpose and wellness holiday, that is the yoga retreats are high in demand.

Attending a yoga retreat gives you the opportunity to take time off for yourself and do deeper into your practice. It's like pressing the pause button and giving ourselves the time to reset our mind, body and soul. But with so many options available, the real question is how do you decide which yoga retreat is best for you? It can be quite daunting and confusing to zero down upon something if you don't know what you are looking for.

Jenil Dholakia, a yoga and wellness expert shares with us five things to consider while choosing a yoga retreat:

### Location

This is probably the most important factor to consider when looking for a yoga retreat. Some basics to check are, where is your retreat happening? Does that location appeal to you? Do you wish to explore that destination? How near or far is it & how will you get there? Check the surroundings and weather. Make sure the climate is suitable for you. Is it a beach or a mountain location? The correct location will be the game changer for your experience.

### The teacher

Find out who is going to be your teacher or facilitator for the retreat. If it's a teacher you know or have practised with before, then you surely will have some idea of the teaching style and overall personality. But if it's a teacher that you don't know, then definitely take a look at their website to get some understanding of the teaching styles and offerings. You want to make sure that your teacher is experienced, educated, well-informed and capable of leading a group. Don't hesitate to get in touch with the teacher to clarify any doubts about the teaching.

### The budget

A wide range of yoga retreats are available and they can vary quite a bit in the price range. So, it's important to fix your budget and ask questions like what all is included in the package? What all is not and will be your additional expense? What is the maximum you can spend? Account for

Choosing a yoga retreat?

Keep these in mind

the travel cost as well. The price may even differ based on what time of the year you are choosing to do the retreat. Once you have an idea of your budget, you will be searching retreats with some filters and it will be easier to select.

### The offerings

When selecting a retreat, you must pay attention to what the retreat offers you. What are your intentions from this experience and what are you seeking? Do you want an intensive yoga asana practice or a more relaxing one? A combination of yoga and nature activities? A reflective and restorative retreat? Choose a retreat that speaks to you, that is suitable to your needs, experience, preference and health conditions to get the most out of your experience.

### Duration

Yes, you want to go to the retreat, but how much time you can actually take out of your schedule and everyday life is an important thing to consider before you start looking out for retreats. You can choose anywhere from a short weekend getaway to a longer 7-10 days immersion.





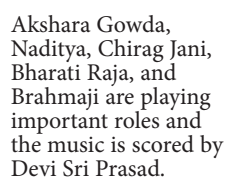


"I'll rip you apart." The intense background enhances the impact of the glimpse immensely and action junkies can expect nothing short of a feast from #PVT04. A launch poster where Vaishnav holds a trisoolam in front of a bull catches your interest too. "This is an out-and-out mass vehicle for Vaishnav Tej. It's a full-on action entertainer," say the makers. The untitled film will go on floors shortly. Other details about the cast and crew will be out soon. Presented by PDV Prasad, the film is produced by S. NagaVamsi and Sai Soujanya. The film is slated for a Sankranthi 2023 release.

It seems RGV had a certain image in mind. It was very important what not to wear, and what not to show on the screen. Listening to Surekha's interviews helped the actress understand her personality and make her own notes. She didn't want to copy her, though. She is a simple lady.

After watching the rushes, the daughter found Irra authentic. "She told me I had given 1000%. She was present when her father was shot at. The execution of the interval scene convinced her that we were doing it right. So, life is full of ups and downs. You can't stop because the circum-

stances are adverse. You have to live your life. You have to respect yourself. You have to stand for yourself. You have to achieve what you want to. That's what my character brings out. As an actor, I want to play all kinds of characters. At the moment, I want to play a cool, bubbly character. I have something coming up in Telugu too, that's all I can reveal," she signs off.



extremely guarded about my personal life, my family. My friends' circle," Chinmayi also announced that she and her husband Rahul Ravindran would not be posting any of their twins' photos on social media, for at least a while.

"Photos of our kids won't be on our socials either for a long while," she said.



SERENA MAKES WINNING RETURN

Mane joins Bayern

AP ■ EASTBOURNE

Serena Williams made a winning comeback after a year on the sidelines as the American legend teamed with Ons Jabeur to beat Sara Sorribes Tormo and Marie Bouzkova 2-6, 6-3, 13-11 in the Eastbourne International doubles on Tuesday.

Williams, a 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, was back in action for the first time since she made a tearful exit from Wimbledon last year.

The 40-year-old suffered a leg injury during her Wimbledon first round match against Aliaksandra Sasnovich and had not been seen on court since.

Before Williams made the surprise announcement of her return last week, rumours of retirement had swirled around her for several months.

But, with Wimbledon starting on June 27, Williams finally resumed her career, playing with Jabeur at the Wimbledon warm-up event by the Sussex seaside.

Williams and Tunisia's Jabeur, who is third in the WTA singles rankings, saw off Spain's Sorribes Tormo and Bouzkova of the Czech Republic in the last-16 tie.

Although Williams was far from her vintage best, she will be encouraged by her first outing for 12 months.

She and Jabeur will face Japan's Shuko Aoyama and Taiwan's Chan Hao-ching in the quarter-finals.

"It was so fun to play with Ons. We had a lot of fun and our opponents played amazing. We were happy to stay in there," Williams said.

"I called Ons, she has been playing so well and I knew I needed to play some matches and she has always been so nice to me on tour.

"Yeah, I caught some fire behind me, it was good."

Serena has been given a wildcard to play in the singles at Wimbledon as



she restarts her history bid.

Williams is one Grand Slam crown away from equalling Australian Margaret Court's record of 24 singles titles at the majors.

The last of Williams' 23 Grand

Slam singles titles came at the Australian Open in 2017.

Since then she has lost four Grand Slam finals, including at Wimbledon in 2018 and 2019.

Williams won the seventh and

most recent of her seven Wimbledon singles titles in 2016.

Serena, who became a mother in 2017, has plummeted to 1,204th in the WTA rankings due to her period out of action.

TENACIOUS SPIRIT

Wimbledon is widely considered Williams' best chance of winning another Grand Slam and this was her first step towards that goal.

After so long away, Serena soaked up the applause during a raucous reception from the crowd when she walked onto court in the early evening sunshine.

Williams' husband Alexis Ohanian was watching from the stands as his wife made an understandably rusty start.

With Williams' groundstrokes initially lacking their usual precision, the first set quickly slipped away.

Serena was appearing in doubles competition on grass for the first time since 2016, when she won Wimbledon with her sister Venus.

The 14-time Grand Slam doubles champion was well short of peak form and Bouzkova and Sorribes Tormo twice led by a break at the start of the second set.

But Williams showed the tenacious spirit that has defined her career, striking the ball cleaner and crisper as she and Jabeur hit back to level the match at one-set all.

In the match-deciding tie-break, Serena squandered a match point on her serve with a wayward forehand at 9-8 and Jabeur wasted another at 10-9.

But the pair saved a match point from Bouzkova and Sorribes Tormo at 10-11, reeling off the last three points to clinch a dramatic victory in the dusk.

In the Eastbourne women's singles, last year's Wimbledon runner-up Karolina Pliskova lost 6-1, 4-6, 4-6 against Britain's Katie Boulter.

Spanish top seed Paula Badosa was beaten 6-4, 6-3 by British wildcard Jodie Burrage.

In the men's singles, Ryan Peniston also enjoyed an impressive victory on home turf, beating French Open quarter-finalist Holger Rune 4-6, 7-6, (7/5), 6-1.

AP ■ MUNICH

Bayern Munich confirmed the signing of Sadio Mane from Liverpool on Wednesday, as the Senegal forward signed a three-year deal with the Bundesliga champions.

Bayern have reportedly paid a fee which could rise to 41 million euros (\$43 million) for Mane.

The 30-year-old won the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup and Club World Cup titles during six years on Merseyside.

"My agent told me that there were also enquiries from other clubs, but for me, the feeling was right from the start when Bayern presented their plan with me," Mane told German daily Bild.

"It was the right club at the right time.

"It is one of the biggest clubs in the world and the team are always fighting for all the titles."

Mane added he wants to

"do everything to make sure I win titles with my teammates".

Bayern won a 10th straight Bundesliga title last season.

Mane, voted African footballer of the year in 2019, is a versatile attacker who has spent the majority of his career on the wing but can also play through the middle.

His arrival will ease the pain for Bayern if wantaway striker Robert Lewandowski leaves the club, while Serge Gnabry is also stalling over a contract extension.

"Sadio Mane is a global star, who underlines the appeal of Bayern and will increase the attractiveness of the Bundesliga as a whole," said Bayern president Herbert Hainer.

"Fans come to the stadiums to see unique players like this."

The signing of Mane takes some pressure off Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic after Lewandowski made it clear he would not extend his contract which expires next year.



Boehly named new Chelsea chairman, Granovskaia departs

AP ■ LONDON

Todd Boehly on Wednesday was named as Chelsea's new chairman to replace Bruce Buck and will act as interim sporting director after the club confirmed the departure of Marina Granovskaia.

Granovskaia is stepping down from her role as director as part of a shake-up at Stamford Bridge, leaving co-controlling owner Boehly to spearhead Chelsea's negotiations in the transfer window.

All the top Boehly-Clearlake Capital consortium figureheads have been added to Chelsea's new board following the purchase of the club from Roman Abramovich.

"As custodians of Chelsea FC, we now begin executing our long-term vision and plan for the club, creating an outstanding experience for its passionate, loyal fans, and continuing to challenge for top honours in line with Chelsea FC's dedicated history," said Boehly.

"Working together, side by side, we are firmly committed to winning, both on and off the pitch. For us, that effort has begun."

Clearlake chiefs and Chelsea co-controlling owners Behdad Eghbali and Jose Feliciano have also been added to the Blues' new board.

Los Angeles Dodgers co-owner Mark Walter, Swiss magnate Hansjoerg Wyss and British tycoon Jonathan Goldstein have all been officially named on the Chelsea board.

Chelsea will now start the search for a permanent sporting director, with Granovskaia leaving the club after almost 20 years at Stamford Bridge.

Granovskaia rose to prominence as one of the toughest negotiators in football in Abramovich's Chelsea reign.

"Boehly will operate as interim sporting director until the club names a full-time replacement, continuing the club's work towards its targets during the current transfer window,"

said Chelsea's statement.

Granovskaia will remain available during the current transfer window to help the club's transition.

Chelsea face a hectic summer transfer market of transfer dealings.

The club, who finished third in the Premier League last season, have been linked with Sevilla's Jules Kounde, Manchester City's Raheem Sterling and Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele.



PSG president denies Zidane talks



AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain president Nasser Al-Khelaifi insisted he "never spoke" with Zinedine Zidane about becoming coach in an interview published by French daily Le Parisien on Tuesday, saying the club had "chosen another option".

"We never spoke with him, neither directly, nor indirectly," said Al-Khelaifi, without ruling out that others in Qatar had approached the former France star.

"When I say 'we', it's PSG. Me, I am the president of PSG and I never spoke with him."

The Qatari official said the club was keen to head in a different direction.

"We chose a coach who will

be the best for what we want to put in place," said Al-Khelaifi as he confirmed talks with Nice boss Christophe Galtier.

"I hope we'll quickly find an agreement but I respect Nice and the president (Jean-Pierre) Rivere, everyone stands up for their own interests."

**TEXTOR COMPLETES LYON TAKEOVER**

Lyon president Jean-Michel Aulas said on Tuesday a deal had been struck for US businessman John Textor to complete a takeover of the seven-time French champions.

Eagle Football Holdings, a sports investment vehicle controlled by Crystal Palace shareholder Textor, is set to acquire a majority stake in the Ligue 1 club.

Delayed Tokyo 2020 Olympics cost double original estimate



AP ■ TOKYO

The final price tag for last year's Tokyo Olympics was more than double the city's original 2013 estimate after a one-year coronavirus postponement added to the already hefty bill.

The organising committee said Tuesday the Games had cost 1.42 trillion yen, the equivalent of \$13 billion at the time.

At today's rates, with the yen at a 24-year low against the dollar, the figure would be \$10.4 billion.

Tokyo 2020 was held a year later than planned because of the pandemic — the first Olympics postponed in peacetime — and spectators were banned from nearly all events, which were held under strict

Covid-19 countermeasures.

The Games cost twice the 734 billion yen that the Tokyo Games organisers had predicted in their bid to the International Olympic Committee in 2013, but less than the final pre-Games budget unveiled in December 2020.

Despite losing out on ticket sales, organisers saved some cash by simplifying events and avoiding the cost of hosting millions of fans.

The organising committee, which disbanded at the end of June, said the event's final cost was 200 billion yen less than projected in its pre-Games budget in 2020 and 29 billion yen less than the final slimmed-down costs prediction in December 2021.

"It's up to everyone involved in this event to pass on the legacy of the Tokyo Olympics to the next generation," said Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto.

Tokyo experienced a Covid-19 surge last year as the Olympics approached, fuelling fears the event could worsen outbreaks in Japan and possibly the world.

The northern Japanese city of Sapporo is bidding to host the Winter Olympics in 2030.

A March survey of Sapporo and the surrounding region showed that a majority of the public are in favour of holding the event.

Officials have ruled out holding a public referendum on the 2030 bid.

PRAVIN THIPSAY

In my column 'Champion born this month', today I have the pleasure of presenting a beautiful game by a champion who can be called William Shakespeare of Chess. Let us see what some 'all time greats' have said about him. — "He was the most accurate Chess Player" and "He was probably the greatest genius in Chess" — Bobby Fischer. Or "He mostly played with zero inaccuracy" and "He is the only player who never made a blunder" — Garry Kasparov. Or "Finest Chess player ever existed" — Adolf Anderssen.

Though nothing much has been said about Morphy by the Soviets, most of the Soviet Chess Trainers give a lot of emphasis on teaching his way of play. In the famous book 'Miniatures by World Champions', Anatoly Karpov has dedicated more than one third of the book to the games of this all time great player.

Yes, I am talking of the undisputed Champion, Paul Morphy!

Paul Charles Morphy (22nd June 1837 — 10th July 1884) was born at New Orleans in a wealthy distinguished family. According to his uncle Ernest Morphy (a strong and imaginative player himself), no one formally taught Chess to Paul. However, at the age of 13, Paul became famous as the best player in

DE RIVIERE – PAUL MORPHY

United States. In 1850s Paul Morphy visited Europe and defeated the strongest players in the world with such an ease that he was acknowledged as the Best Chess Player in the World. (The official World Champion titles, however, started much later, in 1886). Morphy's victory over Count Carl Isouard and Duke of Brunswick of France is probably the most famous Chess game. His stunning Rook and Queen sacrifice against the then British Champion Henry Bird finds place in every book on Chess combinations.

Morphy didn't talk or write much about Chess but his simple quote "Help your pieces so they can help you" is the best advice a Chess Trainers could give to their pupils. Paul Morphy demonstrated that the safety of King and activity of pieces invariably decided outcome of a Chess game. Even today, the times of Paul Morphy are known as "The Golden Era of Chess".

Today we will see a comparatively unknown but extremely creative game by Morphy. I was lucky to see it as a child, that too, annotated by master of King side attack, Grandmaster Leonid Shamkovici. I was indeed greatly impressed by the



originality of Morphy's play then but I must confess that today I stand even more impressed by the game, the planning as well as the execution.

1. e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Ng5

This double attack on Black's f-pawn is a standard procedure of attacking f7. 4...d5 5.exd5 Na5!

The classical system of counter-attack for Black. Instead of recapturing the pawn at d5, Black goes after the enemy bishop.

6.d3?!

This move allows Black to take the initiative but it was a popular choice at that time.

Better is 6.Bb5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6 8.Be2 h6 9.Nf3 e4 10.Ne5 Bd6 though Black's lead in development compensates for the sacrificed Pawn.

6...h6

Black drives back the White knight. 8.Nd4 ...Bc5! 9.Nb3? allows Bg4! with a powerful initiative to Black.

8.Nf2 is bad due to 8...Bg4! 8...Nxc4 9.dxc4 Bc5! 10.h3! 10...0 11.Nh2 Nh7?!

Black shows a very deep understanding of the position since he realizes that piece play alone will not break through White's position. He

prepares a 'Pawn Storm' by pushing the f-pawn till it is stopped by White pieces. However, more accurate would have been 11...e3! 12.Bxe3 Bxe3 13.fxe3 Ne4 14.Nf1 Qh4+ 15.g3 Qf6! 16.c3 Bf5! 17.Nbd2 Nc5!;

11...c6! was a strong alternative as well. 12.Be3! was called for. 12...f5 13.Nb3 Bd6! 14.0-0

Trying to castle on the Queen side would have led to catastrophe. For example, 14.Bd2? e3!! 15.fxe3 Bg3+ 16.Kd1 Nf6! 17.Be1 Bxh2! 18.Rxh2 b5! 19.Nd4 bxc4 20.Qxc4 Nxd5 21.Nc6 Ba6 22.Nxd8 Bxc4 23.Nc6 Nxe3+ 24.Kc1 Rae8! 25.Bb4 Rf6 26.Na5 Bd5 27.g3 Nf1 etc.

14...Bxh2+! 15.Kxh2 f4!

Black has the advantage due to his active pieces and White's vulnerable king.

The knight enters the game with a gain of tempo on the White queen.

17.Qg6!? was an interesting option. For example, 17...Bf5 18.Qh5 Bxc2 19.Nd4 Bd3 etc.

17.Qd3! would have led to a complex and unclear position.

The move played -- 17.Qd4? --, allows a stunning combination followed by an unexpected finale.

Morphy clinched the issue with 17...Nf3+!!

A beautiful sacrifice which creates decisive light square weakness on White's King side.

17...Bxh3? allows White to

defend with 18.Bxf4! Bd7 19.Kg1 etc. 18.gxf3 Qh4 19.Rh1!

White seems to have guarded his King side well. The obvious capture 19...Qxh3 check gives White a clear upper hand after 20. Kg1 whereas an attempt to bring the King Rook in play with 19...Rf6 allows White to move the King to safety after 20.Kg2!

However, Morphy had already planned his final assault after the Rook move as well.

The point! Now the White King has been caught in a cage with no possible escape.

20.Nc5 leaves the White Queen unguarded and is punished with 20...Rf6! 21.Bxf4 Bf5+! 22.Kg1 Rg6+ 23.Bg3 Qxd4 etc.

20.Bxf4 Rxf4 21.Qxf4 Qxf4+ 22.Kxh3 Qxf3+ 23.Kh2 Qxf2+ 24.Kh3 Rf8 is hopeless.

20.Rg1? allows 20...Bf1 checkmate! 20. Kg1 allows 20...Qg5 ch, 21. Kh2, Qg2 Checkmate.

20...Rf6 21.Qxf6

21.Ra1! leads to an immediate mate after 21...Bf5+ 22.Kg2 Rg6.

21.Nc5 trying to bring the Knight for defence is too slow. Black plays 21...Rg6! followed by a deadly discovered check by the Queen.

21.Qd3 (to stop ...Rg6) allows a similar finish as in the game. 21...Qxf2+! 22.Kxh3 Qg3#

21...Qxf2+! 22.Kxh3 Qg3 Checkmate!