

HYDERABAD, SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



I AM INDEBTED TO MY FATHER MS RAJU: SUMANTH ASHWIN

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NORTHERN ARMY COMMANDER HONOURS 84-YR-OLD FOR SERVICES IN 1962 OPS

Northern Army commander Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi on Friday honoured 84-year-old Army porter Tsetan Namgyal for his services during the 1962 operation in Ladakh, officials said. Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi is currently on a four-day visit to Ladakh to review the operational preparedness of troops in the Union Territory, officials said. He was working with Param Veer Chakra awardee Lieutenant Col Dhan Singh Thapa during the 1962 operation in Ladakh.

TWITTER WITHHOLDS COLUMNIST'S ACCOUNT ON GOVT'S REQUEST

Twitter has withheld the account of C J Werleman, a columnist who writes on Islamophobia and issues such as conflict and terrorism, at the request of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. "@cjwerleman's account has been withheld in India in response to a legal demand," read a message on the columnist's Twitter handle. An official said the account has been withheld following a request from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for comments spreading "anti-India propaganda". Werleman said his account has been withheld in India because of demands made by the "far-right, Hindu fascist regime of Narendra Modi".

SHIP-BORNE WEAPON SYSTEM VL-SRSAM SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT-TESTED

India on Friday successfully flight-tested the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) from a ship at Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, an official statement said. The VL-SRSAM, a ship-borne weapon system, is meant for neutralising various aerial threats at close ranges, including sea-skimming targets, the statement said. Defence minister Rajnath Singh congratulated Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy on the success of the mission.

PARAMESWARAN IYER APPOINTED AS NITI AAYOG CEO

Former Drinking Water and Sanitation Secretary Parameswaran Iyer, who spearheaded the Swachh Bharat Mission, was on Friday appointed as the CEO of Niti Aayog, according to a government order. He will replace Amitabh Kant, who will demit office on June 30. Iyer has been appointed for two years or until further orders, whichever is earlier, the personnel ministry order stated. According to the order, Iyer's appointment has been made on the same terms and conditions as were applicable for Kant. A 1981-batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre, Iyer is a well-known sanitation specialist, and best known for spearheading Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's flagship scheme the Swachh Bharat Mission between 2016 and 2020.

RBI allows TS to raise Rs 3K cr

○ In June, the state wanted to raise Rs 4,000 crore but raised Rs 7,000 crore

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

In total, the RBI has allowed TS' open market borrowings only twice this quarter.

After making it tough for Telangana to go for open market borrowings, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has gone easy on Telangana in the last week of the first quarter.

Even though as per the loan calendar, Telangana was supposed to raise only Rs 1,000 crore, it gave permission for Rs 3,000 crore. As per the loan calendar, Telangana was planning to raise Rs 15,000 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal. In June, the state wanted to raise Rs 4,000 crore but raised Rs 7,000 crore.

The Telangana Government has offered to sell stock through auctions for an aggregate amount of Rs 3,000 crore. The auction will be conducted on the RBI's Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber) system on June 28, 2022.

With this the state could cover only 46.6 per cent of the loans compared to the target of Rs 15,000

crore this quarter. In total, the RBI has allowed TS' open market borrowings only twice this quarter.



Centre's change in stance politically significant

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two days after Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao announced the disbursement of funds to Rythu Bandhu beneficiaries, the RBI's permission to auction securities has

assumed significance. This auction is important for Telangana, as the state had to disburse Rs 7,400 crore to Rythu Bandhu beneficiaries from July 28.

Official sources remained uncertain about issues with

the Central Government. Sources said that for now, they have "approval." Sources said the RBI would not have given permission to Telangana without the Centre's approval.

Ratings linked to crash tests for automobiles now

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To boost road safety in India, Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said the new car assessment program -- Bharat NCAP, proposes a mechanism wherein automobiles in India shall be accorded 'Star Ratings' based upon their performance in crash tests.

In a series of tweets, Gadkari said the Bharat New Car Assessment Programme (Bharat NCAP) will serve as a consumer-centric platform, allowing customers to opt for safer cars based upon their Star-Ratings, while promoting a healthy competition among original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in India to manufacture safer vehicles.

"I have now approved the draft GSR notification to introduce Bharat NCAP (New Car Assessment Program), wherein automobiles in India shall be accorded Star Ratings based upon their performance in crash tests," he said.

The Road Transport and Highways minister stressed that Star Ratings of Indian cars based on crash tests is extremely crucial not only to ensure structural and passenger safety in cars, but to also increase the export-worthiness of Indian automobiles.

Entire Inter syllabus to be taught this academic year: TS BIE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Intermediate syllabus will now be taught like in pre-pandemic days as officials have announced that the entire syllabus will be covered during this academic year.

The decision regarding this has already been taken by the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TS BIE). Intermediate colleges for second-year students have already opened for the academic year 2022-23. Earlier, due to the Covid pandemic institutions were asked to reduce the syllabus by 30 per cent and to consider only the remaining 70 per cent.

The Board will also take a call on the question paper pattern that



has to be followed for examinations during this academic year.

In view of the pandemic, the Board had provided ample choices among questions in exams to reduce the stress of students whose physical classes were disrupted.

As junior colleges began for second-year students as per the academic calendar this question pattern is also being reviewed.

JEE exam put off

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As students faced tense moments at exam centres writing the IIT JEE the Aurora College at Abids postponed it due to server problems.

Aurora College Principal Chandrasekhar said the date of the examination will be mailed to students.

They were told to check for information on the National Testing Agency (NTA) website. The management made it clear that no one needs to worry.

KCR to open T-Hub2 on June 28

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao will inaugurate T-Hub2 on June 28. He will deliver the inaugural address at around 6 pm.

The new building comes with a built-up area of over 5.82 lakh square feet which makes it the world's largest innovation campus, the second largest being the start-up incubator Station F in France.

Established in 2015, T-Hub (Technology Hub) is an innovation hub and ecosystem enabler based in Hyderabad. T-Hub has planned a day-long panel session with

TRS hopes Hyderabad jinx continues for BJP

○ After 2004 NEC in city, BJP lost power

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After 18 years, the BJP is gearing up to host its National Executive meeting in Hyderabad next month. The TRS is hopeful of history repeating after the NEC meeting.

The last NEC was organised in the city in 2004, during the time of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. After the BJP led NDA lost elections. TRS sources hoped that the scene should hopefully repeat itself. A source said that

we hope the buck stops here (Hyderabad) for BJP's ambitious Mission South.

Ahead of the general election in 2004, the BJP organised NEC at Hyderabad in January 2004. Akin to the plans of NEC 2022, even in 2004, the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad were all spruced up to host the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. At that time, the Party president was M. Venkaiah Naidu who is now the Vice President. The meeting was held at the Viceroy Hotel

overlooking Hussain Sagar on January 11 and 12. They have seen it as Mission 2004 at that point of time and now polls in Telangana as per plan.

It may be mentioned here that NEC2022, is scheduled on July 2 and 3 with who's who of the party including Prime Minister Narendra Modi staying here. Already TRS has started its battle online with nationwide trends on social media. Ahead of the meeting, more trends and social trends are likely to come up.

Naidu administers oath to five Rajya Sabha MPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday administered oath to five newly-elected MPs from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha.

The oath was administered in the Rajya Sabha chamber in Parliament House here.

Those who took oath are Niranjan Reddy Sirgapor and Ryaga Krishnaiah (both of YSRCP) from Andhra Pradesh, Damodar Rao Divakonda and B Parthasaradhi Reddy (both of TRS) from Telangana and Niranjan Bishi



(of BJP) from Odisha. While Krishnaiah, Divakonda and Reddy took oath in Telugu, Sirgapor did so in English.

I left my bungalow, not my resolve, says Uddhav

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday reached out to the functionaries of his party, which is currently battling a rebellion, and sought to allay fears surrounding the survival of his political outfit and the MVA government. The Sena has been witnessing the rebellion within the party after Eknath Shinde broke away and formed a rebel group with the support of several legislators. Shinde is currently camping with at least 38 rebel MLAs of the Sena and 10 independents in Guwahati.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Dwadashi:

Jun 24 11:12 PM to Jun 26 01:10 AM

Jun 26 01:10 AM to Jun 27 03:26 AM

Trayodashi:

Nakshatram:

Bharani:

Jun 24 08:04 AM to Jun 25 10:24 AM

Krithika:

Jun 25 10:24 AM to Jun 26 01:06 PM

Rahukalam:

9:03 AM to 10:41 AM

Yamaganadam:

1:56 PM to 3:34 PM

Varjyam:

11:45 PM to 01:32 AM

Gulika:

5:47 AM to 7:25 AM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms

Temp: 31°

Humidity: 73%

Sunrise: 5:44 AM

Sunset: 6:54 PM

Updated: JUNE 24, 2022 5:00 PM

BJP files complaint against RGV for tweet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP has filed a complaint with the Abids Police against film director Ram Gopal Varma (RGV) for making a controversial tweet against BJP-led NDA's presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu.

BJP leaders Gudur Narayana Reddy, Nandishwar Goud and others filed the complaint against RGV. Police said that they will take legal opinion before filing a case.

Speaking to the media, Gudur said that RGV's mind is not working properly and that it is not proper to tweet abusively against the future president of India.

RGV had tweeted saying, "If DRAUPADI is the PRESIDENT, who are the PANDAVAS? And more importantly, who are the



KAURAVAS?"

Goshamahala MLA T. Raja Singh expressed anger at RGV and described him as a useless man.



He asked the police to file an SC, ST atrocity case against RGV.

The tweet is painful at the time an Adivasi woman is going to

become the president. He said that RGV tweets after consuming liquor and makes controversial tweets to attract attention.

Andhra Pradesh BJP President Somu Veerajra said that it is not proper to use the presidential candidate's name as a noun in a satirical manner at a time when the Adivasi woman is going to become the president. He appealed to the police to file a suo motu case against RGV as RGV had misused his right to free speech.

RGV later explained that his intention was not to insult Draupadi Murmu and said that he likes the role of Draupadi in Mahabharata a lot. He added that some names are rare and that he had remembered some roles connected to the mythical Draupadi.

30 per cent jump in Covid cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India reported a single-day rise of more than 17,000 fresh COVID-19 cases on Friday after a gap of over four months (124 days), recording a 30 per cent jump in daily cases, according to the Union Health Ministry. A total 17,336 coronavirus cases were reported in a span of 24 hours, taking the total infection tally to 4,33,62,294, while the death toll due to the disease has climbed to 5,24,954 with 13 new fatalities being reported, data updated by the ministry at 8 am showed.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 4.32 per cent and the weekly positivity rate at 3.07 per cent, according to the ministry.

The count of active cases has increased to 88,284, comprising 0.20 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19

recovery rate was recorded at 98.59 per cent, it said.

An increase of 4,294 cases has been recorded in the active COVID-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours, the data showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has surged to 4,27,49,056, while the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.21 per cent. According to the ministry, 196,77 crore vaccine doses have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive.

India's COVID-19 infection tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5, 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and the one-crore mark on December 19, 2020.

Six lessons from Basara RGUKT students’ agitation

Basara, located on the banks of the holy river Godavari near Nizamabad town in Telangana, is the abode of Gnana Saraswati. Students of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) at Basara deserve full compliments for their grit and determination in setting the faulty system right. Unable to bear the KCR government’s lethargy, indecisiveness, inaction and negligence of the highest order, students launched a peaceful agitation braving the heat, rain, and police tactics for seven days and brought the government to its knees.

The Basar episode epitomizes a bigger malady plaguing Telangana for the last eight years. In my view, there are six key takeaways from this awe-inspiring agitation: utter disregard for human capital; anti-intellectualism; cruel ploy to kill rural talent;

adhocism; student power, and civil society’s reaction.

Human capital is the knowledge and skills that people accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society. In the words of social reformer and playwright Gurajada Appa Rao, a country does not mean land, a country means people (deshamante matti kaadai, deshamante manushuloi). People are not ‘vote banks’, they are wonderful resources to build any nation. The omissions and commissions of the KCR government suggest that it does not have much regard for human capital.

Had it not been the case, KCR and his government would have either acted proactively or reacted with alacrity to fix the issues raised by Basar students. The plight of more than a dozen universities in Telangana showcases

Had it not been the case, KCR and his government would have either acted proactively or reacted with alacrity to fix the issues raised by Basar students. The plight of more than a dozen universities in Telangana showcases his utter disregard for human capital

his utter disregard for human capital.

The modern world is shaped by people who engage in critical thinking, research, and reflection about the reality of society.

These people, called intellectuals, propose solutions to the normative problems of society. It was intellectuals like Kaloji and Prof. Jayashankar who vociferously voiced their concerns over discrimination and inspired generations to join the no-holds-barred struggle to achieve ‘self-rule’

for Telangana people. Having realized the power of these intellectuals, KCR developed a strong aversion to them. Kapilavai Dilip Kumar, author of the sensational book Aparichitudu, recalls a diktat issued by KCR to put a board in Telangana Bhavan - the TRS party headquarters - barring the entry of intellectuals. It suffices to reflect the aversion that KCR has towards those who use their brains to think and question. Otherwise, he would have appointed VCs and adequate



faculty members at not only RGUKT - Basara, but all the public universities in the state, long ago.

Established as a university in combined Andhra Pradesh in March 2008, RGUKT-Basara’s goal is to provide top-class engineering education for impoverished but educationally gifted rural youth - the crème de la crème from every mandal.

It accepts 1,000 students who pass 10th grade into its 6-year integrated B.Tech degree program every year. The main objective of RGUKT is to enable such students “experience educational standards in engineering education that are of world-class”.

Such a useful institute meant for unlocking rural talent has been decimated by KCR. The way the parents of the agitating students were dealt with by the police is unpardonable.

Another salient feature of the KCR government is adhocism coupled with substandard decision-making. The government’s initial response to the agitation was to press officials into action to pacify the students. While the Chief Minister remained indifferent, his son took to Twitter for making generic assurances. The Education Minister tried to play down the agitation by

dubbing the list of students’ demands as ‘silly’. For more than a week, the government tried various methods to weaken the agitation, but the students did not budge. Finally, the government agreed to ‘soon’ appoint a full-time VC and allocate some funds to address immediate needs. To independent observers, it seemed that the government bought time to dilute the students’ cause.

The Basara episode has brought back the revolutionary zeal of student power -- the key ingredient for the success of the Telangana movement. The father-son duo know very well that university campuses are potential threats to their autocratic family rule. Hence, the state government created a rift among students on the campuses of State-run universities to silence any kind of resentment or dissent. In this gloomy situation, Basar stu-

dents proved their mettle and inspired students to fight for better facilities and just demands.

The Basara agitation provoked civil society members to discharge their responsibility. Voices that had been silenced during the past eight years have become strident once again.

Leaders like BJP state unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar were arrested for extending their support to the students of Basar.

The media was denied permission to cover the inspiring agitation of these students. In such a grave situation, civil society members played a vital role in building pressure on this thick-skinned government. The successful agitation in the abode of Gnana Saraswathi will usher in a broader change in Telangana.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

Police withdraw security given to Bandi Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad police have withdrawn the enhanced security cover provided to Telangana BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Friday.

The police had provided a 1+5 rope team along with an additional escort vehicle whenever he stays in Hyderabad after an Intelligence alert. The Intelligence wing had alerted the Hyderabad police that there is a threat to Bandi Sanjay Kumar as he had made comments in Karimnagar. The Hyderabad police withdrew the enhanced security cover given to Bandi Sanjay Kumar. Intelligence IG Anil Kumar told ‘The Pioneer’ that Bandi Sanjay Kumar had made controversial comments in Karimnagar and Karimnagar. The police will take care of them, he said.

KTR’s placatory efforts fail

○ Nagarkurnool turns TRS leaders’ battleground

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A week after Minister KT Rama Rao met former minister Jupally Krishna Rao the situation in Nagarkurnool has gone haywire.

TRS MLA Beeram Harshavardhan Reddy and former minister Jupally Krishna Rao clashed over the constituency’s development and corruption.

The situation became tense with the two leaders hurling challenges and counter-challenges at each other and calling for a public debate.

A camp follower of MLA B. Harshavardhan Reddy applied for permission for a public discussion with the SP.

Nagarkurnool SP K. Mahonar said, “Permission was sought for a public media conference by former minister Jupally Krishna Rao on June 26



— KTR last week met Jupally Krishna Rao at his residence —

at the Dr BR Ambedkar Junction. On the same day, permission was sought for a rally from MLA B. Harshavardhan Reddy’s house to Jupally Krishna Rao’s house followed by a public media meeting. If we approve any of these two events, a law and order issue is likely. So we rejected permission for both the events.”

He said that if the public gathers or organiseriallies or meetings in Kollapur action will be taken.

TRS Working President KT Rama Rao is busy trying to pacify sulking TRS dissidents.

A week after having lunch at Ponguleti in Khammam, on Saturday (June 18) KTR was at Jupallys for lunch in Kollapur. Jupally Krishna Rao didn’t

even attend the TRS plenary and had alleged there was a conspiracy by local TRS leaders against him. Even on Saturday (June 18) Jupally didn’t take part in any of the meetings and his absence was felt.

There were rumours that Jupally Krishna Rao and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy who were ignored by the party would leave the TRS.

Jupally Krishna Rao is at loggerheads with MLA B. Harshavardhan Reddy who had joined the TRS after getting elected on a Congress ticket.

Similarly, the former Khammam MP was also upset with new entrants into the TRS getting the upper hand.

Jupally went to Khammam and met Ponguleti and Tummala Nageshwar Rao who were upset at the dominance of others in TRS despite being with the TRS for a long time.

BJP tries to make Adityanath stay in a TS constituency

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP has been trying to make Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stay in one of the 119 Assembly constituencies of Telangana as part of its political programmes.

Speaking to ‘The Pioneer,’ former MLC N. Ramchander Rao said that they had appealed to Yogi Adityanath to stay in one of the 119 constituencies. But Yogi has not agreed so far.

The BJP has asked BJP National Executive Committee members to stay in the 119 constituencies of TS for two-and-a-half days from June 30 to July 1 and 2.

The BJP is also planning to make former Chief



Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister Anurag Takur stay in one of the Assembly constituencies within GHMC limits.

The party is also trying to make Union Minister Kiran Rijji stay in one of the Assembly constituencies and the Deputy Chief

Ministers of BJP-ruled states to stay in Telangana’s Assembly constituencies.

The party is also planning to conduct meetings with people settled in Hyderabad from other states. BJP Chief Ministers and important BJP leaders will participate in those meetings.

The leaders will come to Hyderabad to attend the BJP National Executive Committee meetings from their respective constituencies on the afternoon of July 2.

The BJP is also planning to welcome party President JP Nadda grandly. The party has decided to organise a rally from RGI Airport to Novotel Hotel by 50,000 BJP activists on July 1.

Snapped HT wire snuffs life out of two siblings

PNS ■ ELURU

In a tragic incident, two siblings were electrocuted when a high tension wire got snapped and fell on them when they were going on a motorcycle at Devulapalli village in Jangareddygudem mandal of Eluru district on Friday.

Police said that the deceased Vallepalli Nagendra (21) and Vallepalli Phanendra (19) were going to their fields on a motorcycle.

An 11 KV high tension wire got snapped and fell on them, resulting in the siblings being electrocuted.

One of the siblings was charred along with the motorcycle. Nagendra was studying final year engineering while Phanendra completed Intermediate.

Villagers alleged that the indifference of electricity department officials in maintaining the quality and maintenance of the high tension wires caused the accident.

They said that earlier they had complained to the electricity officials about the high tension wires problem but they did not take any action. They demanded to disburse Rs 25 lakh compensation to each of the deceased.

Ashwaraopet MLA joins Congress

○ Revanth says more leaders would flood into Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Another politician silently joined the Congress in Telangana. The former MLA of Ashwaraopet, Thati Venkateshwarlu, joined the Congress without announcing that he is joining.

Thati Venkateshwarlu joined the Congress along with Karaka Gudem ZPTC Komaram Kantha Rao on Friday evening in the presence of TPCC President Revanth Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, Revanth said that more leaders would join the

Congress and that the Congress would organise a huge public meeting in Aswaraopet soon.

Revanth said the TRS government has been attacking Adivasis in the name of Haritha Haaram. The government is preparing residential youts by grabbing the lands of tribes, he added.

He said the Congress will get strengthened by the entry of Thati and Komaram and that it will come to power in the next 11 months as elections would be held soon.

He exuded confidence

that the Congress will win 10 MLA seats in erstwhile Khammam district.

Thati Venkateshwarlu said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had abandoned the loan waiver scheme. Can constructing flyovers in Hyderabad be called development, he asked.

The people are facing a lot of problems now and all farmers are having trouble with the Dharani Portal.

The Pinapaka MLA pays no attention to public issues but is more interested in land grabs and the sand mafia, he said.

Revanth meets Bandla Ganesh, holds talks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC chief Revanth Reddy met film actor-cum-producer Bandla Ganesh and had a two-hour discussion at the latter’s residence on Friday. Both leaders didn’t make any statement after their meeting. It is learnt that Revanth asked Bandla Ganesh, who is not active politically these days to participate in Congress programmes. It is also learnt that Revanth has been trying to bring Bandla Ganesh into active politics. It may be recalled that Bandla Ganesh had shown interest in contesting the last Assembly elections.

JEE exam put off

Continued from page 3

Early in the morning students came for the exam which was scheduled to start at 9 am at Aurora College. But the exam did not begin. Parents who accompanied their children to Moosarambagh centre said that the entrance test scheduled to commence at 9 am did not start even at 10.30 am. The parents said that of the 225 candidates allotted to the centre for the first session, nearly 135 were stopped from entering the centre citing server issues despite reporting before 7.30 am. Later, after a protest by parents, the students were allowed but

again stopped near the door. A parent said that there were problems regarding registration at the entrance. Other students explained that while answering the paper with 90 questions, 26 were not displayed properly.

Twenty questions means 104 marks. If the question is not displayed, we will not be able to answer. When we brought the issue to the attention of the invigilators they said they did not know and that it was a server problem. They asked to refresh the screen which we did but it was of no use. All students who were in my lab faced the same problems.

RBI allows TS to raise..

Continued from page 3

It may be mentioned here that for the first time in this quarter, the RBI has allowed the Telangana government to participate in the auction. These State Governments have offered to sell stock by auction to raise an aggregate amount of Rs 19,000 crore.

It may be mentioned here that in the indicative calendar shared by Telangana with the

of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal to participate in the auction. These State Governments have offered to sell stock by auction to raise an aggregate amount of Rs 19,000 crore.

It may be mentioned here that in the indicative calendar shared by Telangana with the

RBI, the total money to be raised through loans in April and May was Rs 11,000 crore.

The State was supposed to raise Rs 1,000 crore on April 11, Rs 2,000 crore on April 26, Rs 3,000 crore on May 2, Rs 2,000 crore on May 17, Rs 3,000 crore on May 27, Rs 4000 crore on June 3, Rs 1000 crore on June 10 and Rs 1,000 crore on June 24.

TRS to focus on..

Continued from page 3

KTR addressed the swearing-in ceremony of the Reddy Association at Rajanna Sircilla District Centre.

Similarly, sites would be given for Mudiraj, Goud, Gangaputra, Golla, Kuruma, Munnuru Kapu and other castes to build their Atma Gourava Bhavans, he said evincing interest to know about their woes, provided they invite him to their association buildings foundation stone laying ceremonies.

He received representations from the leaders of various castes.

ZP chairperson Nyalakonda Aruna Raghava Reddy, Additional Collector B. Satya Prasad, RDO Srinivasa Rao, Municipal Chairman Zindam Kala Chakrapani and others attended the event.

I left my bungalow, not my resolve, says..

Continued from page 3

He has claimed that the faction led by him is the “real Shiv Sena”.

In his virtual address to the party’s district unit chiefs and ‘sampark pramukhs’ assembled at the Shiv Sena Bhavan at Dadar in central Mumbai, CM Thackeray said he may have vacated the chief minister’s official residence,

but his determination is intact.

“Despite the rebellions that the party has faced earlier, it came to power twice. I may have left ‘Varsha’, the chief minister’s official residence, but not my determination,” he said.

Thackeray added that in the last two-and-a-half years, he battled the COVID 19 pandemic as well as his own

ill-health, but opponents took advantage of this situation.

Shiv Sena leader and minister Aaditya Thackeray was present at the Shiv Sena Bhavan during the chief minister’s address. In the wake of the revolt by Shinde, CM Thackeray had on Wednesday night vacated his official residence in south Mumbai and moved to family home in suburban Bandra.

HC refuses to lift ban on Chintamani

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court, on Friday, refused to issue a stay order to ban Chintamani Natakam. Narasapuram MP Raghuram Krishnam Raju approached the High Court after the Andhra Pradesh government banned the 100-year-old Chintamani Padya Natakam in January this year. The government banned the play after Arya Vyshya community representatives went to court in 2020 alleging that it was degrading their community.

The counsel for the petitioner, Umesh, argued that banning Chintamani Natakam was violation of the freedom of speech. The counsel said that many lost their livelihoods due to the ban on the play.

Ratings linked to crash tests for..

Continued from page 3

The testing protocol of Bharat NCAP shall be aligned with global crash-test protocols factoring in the existing Indian regulations, allowing OEMs to get their vehicles tested at India’s own in-house testing facilities, Gadkari said.

According to him, Bharat NCAP will prove to be a critical

instrument in making our automobile industry Aatmanirbhar with the mission of making India the top automobile hub in the world.

Bharat NCAP will encourage manufacturers to participate voluntarily in the safety testing assessment programme and incorporate higher safety levels in new car models.

The proposed assessment

will allocate Star Ratings from 1 to 5 stars.

The initiative is aimed at making mobility safer amid the country witnessing a total of 3,66,138 road accidents during the calendar year 2020, causing 1,31,714 deaths.

Recently, Gadkari had said the government has set a target to reduce 50 per cent road accident deaths by 2024.

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Microsoft, ICT Academy to train women in cyber security

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Not many colleges have realised that there is a career in cyber security but companies are hiring employees for cyber security jobs.

Microsoft and ICT Academy are focussing on training more women through their Cyber Shiksha programme as they found that there is a huge gender gap among cyber security professionals. They also think that it is an opportunity to improve statistics and have many perspectives on the table.

The programme was launched as nowadays hackers are finding more ways to hack into accounts and we see money being deducted from credit cards and random calls for OTPs. This programme will train students to get trained for future hiring.

"ICT retains membership with colleges and these are benefits which are given to these colleges through programmes.



First educators will get trained and then train students. There are around 600 students from Telangana. We are also concentrating on selecting students from covid-19 affected families who might have lost either one or both parents," says Hari Balachandran, the CEO of ICT Academy of Tamil Nadu.

Students must know the fundamentals of databases. Some of the colleges selected are the GMR Institute of Technology, ACE Engineering College, BVRIT, Vignan Bharathi Engineering College, Sree Daitha Group of Institutions, Gitam Institute, and the AV College of Arts, Science and

Commerce. Cyber Shiksha will train teachers and higher education students from the rural engineering colleges of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Assam, Uttarakhand, Delhi NCR and Rajasthan. In its first leg, the programme will empower 400 teachers from 100 rural institutions in India

with industry-relevant skills in cyber security and will equip them with the tools to train students. The programme will train 6,000 students from rural engineering colleges through trained teachers and ICT facilitators to prepare them for a career in cyber security.

Kate Behncken, the Vice President and Lead of Microsoft Philanthropies said, "As the cyber security threat landscape becomes complex, investing in cyber security skills and preparing the next generation of security professionals has become more important than ever. India is estimated to have 1.5 million jobs in cyber security by 2025. The Cyber Shiksha programme for educators is a significant step towards creating a vibrant and diverse cyber security talent pool in India. Our intent is to take cyber security skills to the grassroots and empower both educators and students with the skills needed to function in a digital economy."



Minister for Education Sabita Indra Reddy speaking at meeting at Chevella in Rangareddy district on Friday

Sabita distributes Rs 35.83 crore among SHGs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Education Minister Sabita Indra Reddy has described Palke Pragati as a great programme that changes the face of village. Villages are going to have a great future with the special initiative of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao and Urban Development Minister K T Rama Rao.

On Friday, she distributed Rs 35.83 crore under the bank-linkage programme among 689 women's self-help groups and Rs 6.9 crore under Srinidhi at a programme held at Government Degree College in Chevella along with MP Ranjit Reddy. Chevella MLA Kale Yadaiah was also present on the occasion.

Later, she laid the foundation stone for additional works at Yellakonda village of Nawabpet mandal under

Manavooru-Manabadi programme and laid the foundation stone for a CC Road from Yellakonda village to Parvati Parameswara Swamy temple at a cost of Rs 50 lakh.

Later, she declared open the underground drainage in Madireddy Palli developed at a cost of Rs 23 lakh and laid the stone for the CC road works in the village to be taken up at a cost of Rs 25 lakh.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, she praised the Chief Minister, K Chandrashekhar Rao, for releasing funds every month to village panchayats under Palke Pragati. As a result, the villages in Telangana have achieved all-round development. Out of the 20 best villages at the national level, 19 villages are located in Telangana.

Mana Ooru-Mana Badi programme is going to revolutionise the government schools.

Under the scheme, 26,000 government schools would be developed at a cost of Rs 7289 crore. In the first phase, 9123 government schools would be developed at a cost of Rs 3497 crore. She announced that English Medium has been introduced in Government schools from classes 1 to 8.

She said that there are very good teachers in government schools. As part of Pattana Pragati programme, every month Rs 2.12 crore is being released to 16 municipalities and municipal corporations every month. So far, Rs 57.14 crore has been released to urban civic bodies in the district. Plans are being drafted to establish nurseries in wards and sports complexes. Local leaders and government officials took part in the programme.

Hyd Police receive Rs 25 lakh for training youth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Aurobindo Pharma Foundation (APF), the philanthropic arm of Aurobindo Pharma Limited, donated Rs 25 lakh on Friday to the Hyderabad Police as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes for training 2,000 youths from slums who had applied for the posts of Constables and Sub-Inspectors (SI) notified by the TS government recently.

S. Sadananda Reddy, the Director, CSR, handed over a cheque for Rs 25 lakh to the West Zone DCP Joel Davis, at a Police Recruitment Training (PRT) centre. DCP Joel Davis thanked K. Nithyananda

Reddy, the Director of Aurobindo Pharma Limited and P. Sarath Chandra Reddy, a Director of the Aurobindo Pharma Foundation.

Speaking about the initiative, K. Nithyananda Reddy said, "Aurobindo Pharma is extremely honoured to do something for enhancing the skills of youths from slums to get into the police. This collaborative CSR effort with the police is going to give a chance to the youth to achieve their dreams."

Other officers who attended the event are Madhukar Swamy, the Addl. DCP (Training), Sudarshan, the ACP of Banjara Hills and PRT students.



Ministers KTR and Gangula Kamalakar inaugurated Savana Sri Software Solutions office in Hyderabad on Friday

Nandumuri Balakrishna tests positive for Covid-19

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Film actor Nandumuri Balakrishna on Friday tested positive for Covid-19. According to a release issued by Basavatarakam Indo American Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, 'Balakrishna advised all those who came in close con-

tact with him for the last two days should get themselves tested immediately and take necessary precautions.' Balakrishna requested all his fans and well-wishers not to worry about him. He said that he was doing fine and hoped to recover soon.



Balakrishna is the chairman of the hospital. Meanwhile, Minister for Health T Harish Rao shared the stage with Balakrishna on June 22 when the former was the chief guest at the 22nd Foundation Day celebrations of the Basavatarakam Cancer Hospital in Hyderabad.

150-year-old Tank Bund police check post to be restored

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 150-year-old photograph taken in Hyderabad shows a British Viceroy crossing the Tank Bund on way to the Secunderabad Army Cantonment.

In the backdrop, one can see a small structure which was a police check post of that time. The structure still exists and is being used as an outpost by the central zone police division.

Asif Ali Khan, an architect from Hyderabad, pointed out that the structure has beautifully dressed stone masonry, three-pointed horseshoe arches in front and an ornate parapet wall. Madras terrace roof with wooden rafters can also be seen.

Unfortunately, the wooden roof is beginning to disintegrate due to lack of maintenance. The front covered por-



tion is currently being used as a two-wheeler parking lot by the police.

Asif Ali Khan requested through social media the Special Chief Secretary of Urban Development, Arvind Kumar, to restore the historical structure.

"About 150 years ago this was a police check post. It can be fully restored and can serve as the tank bund police sta-



Unfortunately, the wooden roof is beginning to disintegrate due to lack of maintenance

tion," Asif Ali added. Arvind Kumar replied to Asif Ali Khan saying, "Will have it checked and taken up."

Free coaching for SC and ST candidates for overseas education

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Scheduled Caste Development Department Skill Upgradation provides Free Coaching to the SC Students for eligibility tests such as TOEFL/IELTS and GRE/GMAT and others for admissions to Foreign Universities.

The government has issued orders for providing coaching to Scheduled Castes students for eligibility tests such as TOEFL/IELTS and GRE/GMAT of other equivalent examinations for seeking admission to Post Graduate courses in reputed foreign universities.

The allotment of SC students to the institutes shall be as per the choice/option of the students to be given at the time of registration in the online portal (e-pass). Interested candidates

can contact Stepin Leads Academy Private Limited to register their names and learn more about the course.

The SC Development Commissioner Yogita Rana said, "free training would be given to SC and ST candidates who want to pursue a postgraduate course in foreign universities. Free training and advice will be provided for TOEFL / IELTS, GRE / GMAT and other qualifying examinations for master Admissions in foreign universities. The training will be held at the Stepin Leads Academy near Suchitra Cross Road, Hyderabad."

She also suggested that SC and ST candidates completing their degrees across the state of Telangana and want to pursue a master's abroad should take advantage of this opportunity.

Prime accused apprehended in Secunderabad Violence case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Government Railway Police (GRP) on Friday has reportedly apprehended the prime accused in connection with the Secunderabad Railway Station violence. Avula Subba Rao, Director of Sai Defence Academy, who was earlier detained by the Andhra Pradesh Police, was handed over to the Hyderabad City Police after which he was questioned for 3 days. Four others, including Subbarao's associates, have also been taken into custody.

Subbarao was taken to Gandhi Hospital for his medical examination and was produced before a local court in Secunderabad.

According to reports, Subbarao was in contact with managers from his own institute and owners of other coaching centers from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The police said



A group of Protestors facing the police on the railway tracks of Secunderabad Railway Station on June 17

that all these people had conspired and pre-planned the violence. Subbarao along with other coaching institute owners instigated the students against the Agnipath scheme through Whatsapp groups saying that the scheme will spoil their future.

The police found out that Subbarao and his followers had come down to Secunderabad on

June 16 and stayed at a hotel near the railway station. On June 17, as soon as the violence started, Subbarao escaped to Guntur where he was apprehended by Guntur Police.

The police so far have arrested 55 persons for their involvement in the violence at the Secunderabad Railway Station on June 17.

One more dose of RTC fare hike likely soon?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TSRTC is gearing up give one more shock treatment to commuters by resorting to hike the bus fares by 20-30 per cent. Having hiked the bus fares in the name of diesel cess, rounded off proportionate charges in higher class of services to avoid the problems of small change, the transport undertaking is seeking permission to hike the fare by 20-30 per cent to overcome the accumulated losses. As and when the state government clears the relevant file, the charges would be hiked for the third time. Earlier, Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar



and TSRTC Chairman Bajireddy Goverdhan went on record several times stating that hiking the fares was

inevitable as the TSRTC is running under severe losses. The relevant file is kept pending with the CMO since long.

Having hiked the fare twice to overcome the losses, the people are of the view that there would be no further hike in the fares. At this juncture, the officials are suggesting that another dose of hike would be likely.

It is reliably learnt that the hike in ticket fares has reached the final phase, according to the proposal the fare hike would be at least 30 per cent below a distance of 100 km. The hike, if at all the file is cleared, is applicable to Palle Velugu, Express and Ordinary services.

It is learnt that the fare hike for long-distance travel buses would be at least 20 per cent.

The Deluxe, Luxury, Super Luxury, Rajadhani, Garuda, Garuda Plus services would have the fare hike of at least 20 per cent. The fare hike in ordinary and city services would be 25 paise per km and the buses above them would have a fare hike of 30 paise per km, according to a statement made by the transport minister earlier.

However, it is reliably learnt that the file has been submitted to the CM making minor changes to the earlier proposals. If the government were to give its green signal to the proposal, the RTC commuters are going to be burdened with fare hike soon.

Free eye camp for police personnel held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A free eye examination camp was organised on Friday at the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate for the police personnel. The camp was conducted by Smart Vision Eye Hospital, Gachibowli. About 327 police personnel and officers were examined at the camp. The camp is being organised for two days, on Friday and Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm. Cyberabad Police Commissioner Stephen Raveendra said that all the police personnel and their families should take advantage of the opportunity. A team of ophthalmologists, Abida Fatima, Prem, Naresh, Sreekanth, Navya and others conducted tests. A team from Medicovert Hospitals also provided their services.



An ophthalmologist examining a policewoman at a free eye camp in Hyderabad on Friday

GOCL holds training camp for Intelligence sleuths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A one-day training programme for Telangana State Intelligence Security personnel in detecting explosives and neutralising them was organised by GOCL Corp Ltd.

The workshop gave the personnel practical exposure to a wide range of new-age explosives and detonators and a live demonstration in the blasting of detonators and detonating cords across the entire range of ordinary, electric and non-electric detonators to understand and execute safety measures.

The induction training was led by the Integrated Intelligence Training Academy (IITA) of Moinabad.

The training model of GOCL focused on subjects like Safe Handling of Explosives and Detonators, Disposal of Explosives and Detonators, Precautions and



Intelligence officials participating in training programme in Hyderabad on Friday

Safety Measures, Safe Transportation of Explosives and Detonators, and Practical Live Detonating and Measuring Velocity of Detonators (VOD).

The induction programme was attended by 47 personnel from the Telangana State Intelligence Department.

Mr Pankaj Kumar, the CEO of GOCL said, "We are oblig-

ed to be a part of the exercise as it provides practical training to these unsung heroes to deal with real-world circumstances at the ground level during bomb disposal and anti-sabotage operations. We are committed to the state and the country at large and take pride in being a part of this programme while they are steadfast in safeguarding

peace and harmony. We have ensured the training encapsulates all aspects of quick detection, disposal and other safety measures."

Kiran Rai, the Principal of IITA, Moinabad, Tasvir Qbal, the Director General of Police and Anil Kumar, the Addl. Director-General of Police took part in the training programme.

Normal childbirths increase in govt hospitals

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

Childbirths in government hospitals went up to 74 per cent from 68 per cent during the last two months in the district, according to District Collector Anudeep Durishett on Friday. Presiding over the District Coordination Committee meeting here, the Collector said deliveries in private hospitals had come down to 22 per cent from 30 per cent in the past two months. The C-section surgeries too came down to 43 per cent from 45 per cent in government hospitals. In private hospitals, the caesarean surgeries came down from 71 per cent to 61 per cent, the Collector said.

He directed the officials of the Medical and Health Department to conduct tests to prevent anaemia among the girls. He asked ASHA workers to collect health information sub-centre wise as far as pregnant women are concerned. He noted that not a single delivery was not performed during the last two months at Sujathanagar primary health centre.

Minister attends training programme for ITDA officers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Minister for Tribal Women and Child Welfare, Satyavathi Rathodga, attended a two-day training programme with ITDA project officials at DSS One in Hyderabad.

"It is a pleasure to see a large number of students at the Gurukul Ashram School as the new academic year begins," she said.

The Minister reacted seriously to incidents in which one of the students studying in U.R.J.C. fell ill, and another died after consuming pesticide. The authorities were directed to pay special attention to students studying in the Gurukul Ashram School.

"The authorities should focus on students' health and mental condition and conduct screening tests for students. It is advisable to inform their parents if they have any medical problems and if necessary to admit them to the hospital," she said. "It was gratifying to see such a large number of students enrolling in



Ashram schools after the introduction of English medium this year. Efforts should be made to provide better education and uniforms, books, blankets, glasses, trunk boxes and other facilities as soon as possible," she added.

She suggested that the facilities at the school should be monitored and authorities must adhere to quality standards regarding meals and ensure that meals are served according to the menu.

"If there is a problem of fallow lands, especially in tribal areas, they should immediate-

ly try for a solution and see that people do not have any trouble, if there is a road problem during the monsoon it should be resolved immediately," she said.

The Minister advised officials to ensure that there is no problem with drinking water and electricity. Medical camps should be organised in villages during the rainy season to prevent diseases, and proper facilities should be provided to the people.

She said that in addition to 'Gripshon' KCR has also ordered to provide nutrition and 'balamritam' to tribals. She clarified that special attention should be paid to tribals and all schemes should be made available to them.

Satyavathi Rathore was accompanied by Tribal Welfare Secretary Christina Z. Chongtu, Special Secretary Sridhar, and Additional Director of Tribal Welfare, Sarveshwar D.D., Joint Director Lyan, Treasurer GM Shankarra Wu, Lakshmi Prasad Trakar, DG Bikhshapati and ITDA project officials.



Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi president Manda Krishna Madiga addressing a media conference in Suryapet on Friday

SCHEDULED CASTE CATEGORISATION

MRPS threatens to call for 'sadak bandh' on July 2

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Madiga Reservations Porata Samithi (MRPS) founder president Manda Krishna Madiga on Friday threatened to call for sadak bandh on July 2 and chalo Hyderabad on July 3 to press the Centre to initiate steps for classification Scheduled Castes. Speaking to the media here, Krishna Madiga demanded that the Centre clarify its stand on scheduled Caste classification before the BJP national council meeting is held in Hyderabad on July 2 and 3.

He threatened to organise protests against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Ministers if the Centre failed to announce its readiness to categorise the Scheduled Castes. He appealed to the BJP State unit to impress upon the Prime Minister the importance of Scheduled Caste categorisation. He recalled that MRPS has been fighting for categorisation of Scheduled Castes for the last 28 years. In fact, the united Andhra Pradesh BJP unit had included the subject in its election manifesto in the 1994 elections.

Developmental projects launched in KCR Eco Park

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The KCR Eco Park at Appannapalle reserve forest in Mahabubnagar district is a feast for eyes. Plans are afoot to develop its further, according to Minister for Prohibition and Excise Srinivas Goud.

There was not even one park in Mahabubnagar in united Andhra Pradesh. Not less than 30 parks had been established since Telangana attained statehood, he said. Srinivas Goud along with Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy, Lok Sabha member Manne Sriniva Reddy and Rythu Bandhu Samithi president Palla Rajeswar Reddy launched several developmental works in the park. The Ministers inaugurated percolation tanks built at a cost of Rs 8.71 lakh, solar pumpset established at a cost of Rs 1.86 lakh, butterfly self point and Maha Brand Stall set by women self-help groups. The Minister took selfies at the butterfly point. Speaking to the media, Srinivas Goud said there was not even a park.



Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud and Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy at butterfly point in KCR Eco Park in Mahabubnagar on Friday

Now, a large number of parks have been established in Mahabubnagar town. The KCR eco park is the country's largest eco park. It was established in Mahabubnagar district.

The women self-help

groups are selling over 65 different products under the brand name of 'Maha Brand,' he said. Maha Brand stall will be established in all Shilparamams, he said. The government has been encouraging women self-help groups

to flourish.

DCCB president Nizam Pasha, Zilla Grandhyalaya president Rajeswar Goud, District Collector S Venkata Rao, Municipal Chairman Kormoni Narasimul and others were present.

BE students asked to grow as industrialists

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

District Additional Collector Muzammil Khan has called upon engineering students to apply their creativity and grow as industrialists. He exuded confidence that the youth would be able to do anything if they really want to.

Participating as the chief guest in the entrepreneurship development programme for the Backward Classes last year students here on Friday, he observed that for the last 100 years the world has seen many inventions and discoveries, thanks to creativity of humans, rather rapidly to register faster growth in society. In effect, human life has become more comfortable.

The youth should give up their stereotype thinking of securing a job and should think in terms of creating jobs as an industrialist, he felt.

Everybody has creativity, but the people should use it according to circumstances, he



said. The degree of poverty has come down currently, he said advising the youth to sharpen their creativity and launch their own industries taking support from their families as well as from the government.

Nokia mobile phone was invented by a small country whose population is not more than a million and the whole world is using the gadget, he observed. Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) CEO Rajiv Sharma said that eminent industrialist Dheerubhai Ambani started on a low-scale and soon grew to be an industrialist, described as the pride of India.

Farmers demand return of land 'grabbed' by Jamuna hatcheries

PNS ■ MEDAK

Farmers whose lands were alleged by grabbed by promoters Jamuna Hatchers at Hakimpet and Atchampet villages on Friday staged a protest in front of the District Collectorate here under the aegis of Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS), Mala Mahanadu, Rajaka Sangham.

The leaders of the organisations submitted a memorandum to Narsapur MLA Madan Reddy requesting him to use his good offices to ensure that the lands encroached upon by the Jamuna Hatcheries on the outskirts of Atchampet are returned to them. For over a year, the dispute is



Farmers staging a protest in front of the MLA Madan Reddy camp office in Medak on Friday

pending before the court, they said, adding that they have yet to

get justice. The State government conducted a survey of the

lands, but no decision was taken so far. Later, they submitted a

memorandum to Ramesh, the Additional Collector.

They assured all help to the farmers.

Later, District Collector S Harish spoke to the farmers over the phone and attributed the delay to court cases.

So far, pattas have been given away to 337 farmers and still 87 are yet to be given pattas. He promised to do justice to them all. MLA Madan Reddy promised to ensure that the farmers get back their lands. Washermen's Association district president Swami, Mala Mahanadu district president Kalluru Sanjeev, MRPS leaders, TRS leaders, farmers and others took part in the event.

Officials urged to sensitise people against use of single-use plastic items

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Hanamkonda District Collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanthu has appealed to people to stop using single use plastics as the government banned use of plastic items with thickness less than 75 microns.

Addressing an awareness programme on use of plastics, held under the aegis of the Telangana State Pollution Control Board, at Hanamkonda collectorate conference hall here on Friday along with Warangal district collector Gopi, he asked the DPO and munic-

ipal commissioners to immediately confiscate the plastic sachets less than 50 microns thickness from the shops and educate people on jute, cotton, non-oven fabric bags. He asked the officials to serve notices on those who violate the rules and impose fines on them.

TS spent Rs 3.75 Lcr on agriculture

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The TRS government has spent Rs 3.75 lakh crore on agriculture and allied sectors during the last eight years. Telangana is the only State which had spent such a huge amount of money on the agriculture sector, said Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy.

Participating as chief guest in a workshop at the Vanakalam preparatory meeting organised for Mahabubnagar and Nayyanapet districts here, the Minister said that Telangana doubled agricultural production in eight years. With free power and availability of water abundantly following the construction of irrigation production, the State was able to produce the highest paddy yield. The production of various crops too had risen sharply, he said. The State government, he said, had brought about revolutionary changes in the agriculture sector within a short period. Paddy production in the State touched a record high of 3 crore tonnes. The State government's efforts to improve the living standards of farmers and farm-



Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy lighting the traditional lamp to mark the inauguration of Vanakalam preparatory meeting in Mahabubnagar on Friday

workers had yielded results. He appealed to the farmers to cultivate crops which have market demand. The agricultural tools provided to Dalits under Dalit Bandhu schemes would help the agriculture sector, he said. Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud recalled that the farmers used to struggle for water in the past. He urged the farmers to compare the situation in the past with that of the present. The

efforts by the government has led to 70 to 80 per cent of agricultural lands securing water for irrigation. More irrigation projects would be constructed to ensure that 100 per cent of lands secure water for irrigation, he promised.

Mahabubnagar Lok Sabha member M Srinivas Reddy, Narayanapet MLA S Rajender Reddy and others spoke.

Secretary for Agriculture Raghunatha Rao said the gov-

ernment has been giving top priority for agriculture. The Rythu Bandhu funds would be credited into the accounts of farmers from next week, he said. Narayanapet Zilla Parishad Chairperson Swarna Sudhakar Reddy, MLC Vani Devi, State Warehouse Cooperative Society chairman Sai Chand, Girijan Corporation president Balya Nayak, District Collector S Venkata Rao and others were present.

KU teaching, non-teaching staff demand scrapping Common Recruitment Board

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Teaching, and non-teaching staff of the Kakatiya University (KU), Warangal, working on the contract basis, staged protests in support of their demand that common board for recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff in State universities should be scrapped.

They also demanded that the government regularise the services of the contract staff. The agitating teachers and non-teaching staff said that they have been working for the last 25 years on contract basis with the hope that their services would be regularised one day. They demanded that the State government scrap the board and regularise services of 1,335 contract teachers in the State. Telangana all Universities' Contract Teachers Association general secretary Sridhar Kumar Lodh demanded that the State government increase the salaries of the contract teachers by 30 per cent as it was done with the college teachers. Meanwhile, the JAC of the non-teaching staff led by Podichetti Vishnuvardhan opposed the common board for centralised recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff posts in State universities. It may be recalled that the Higher Education Department on Thursday announced the constituting the board headed by the Telangana State Council of Higher Education Chairman. The board will take up all recruitment pertaining to State universities.

TELANGANA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD REGIONAL OFFICE-I, RANGAREDDY DISTRICT H.No.6-3-1219, Block C, Ward No.91, 2nd Floor, Backside of Country Club, Kundanbagh, Umanagar, Begumpet, Hyderabad - 500016.	
ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION	
In accordance with the Notification No. S.O.1533 (E) Dt. 14-09-2008 of Ministry of Environment & Forests & Climate Change, Government of India, it is hereby notified that the mining activity of 5.0 Ha is required Public Hearing. Rough Stone & Road Metal Mine of M/s. Jahnvi Minerals -1 (13.50Ha), M/s. Jahnvi Minerals -2 (13.50Ha), M/s. Vishnu Minerals -1 (14.90 Ha), M/s. Vishnu Minerals -2 (14.90 Ha) & M/s. Vishnu Minerals -3 (16.56 Ha) (Total - 63.366 Ha), Sy.No 95, Mudwin Village, Kadthal Mandal, Rangareddy District, Telangana State has proposed Rough Stone & Road Metal Mine in an area over an extent of 63.366 Ha. It is hereby notified to conduct Environmental Public Hearing in Rangareddy District for the proposed project. The details of the project activities given by the project authorities are as follows:	
1 Name of the Project with the Phone Number and Address	Rough Stone & Road Metal Mine of M/s. Jahnvi Minerals - 1 (13.50 Ha), M/s. Jahnvi Minerals -2 (13.50 Ha), M/s. Vishnu Minerals -1 (14.90 Ha), M/s. Vishnu Minerals -2 (14.90 Ha) & M/s. Vishnu Minerals -3 (16.56 Ha) (Total - 63.366 Ha), Sy.No 95, Mudwin Village, Kadthal Mandal, Rangareddy District, Telangana State
2 Location of the Project	Sy.No 95, Mudwin Village, Kadthal Mandal, Rangareddy District, Telangana State
3 Name of the authorized person to be contacted with address and phone number	Sri Sudabattula Suman , C/o. M/s. Jahnvi Minerals, Managing Partner, Block No. 705, My Home Vihanga, Near Q City, Gachibowli, Serilingampally (M), Rangareddy District Ph.No. 9704277730 Email: sudabattulas@gmail.com
4 Capital Cost of the Project	Total cost of the Project is Rs. 305 Lakhs
5 Name of the Project consultant / Environment consultant	M/s. Rightsource Industrial Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Plot No. 203, 5-36/203, Prashanthnagar, IDA Kukatpally, Medchal-Malkajgiri District, Mobile: 9849359244, Email: peddhan@gmail.com
6 Line of activity/ Capacity	Rough Stone & Road Metal Mine
7 Date/Time/Venue of Public Hearing	Date: 27.07.2022; Time: 11.00 AM Venue: At Project Site i.e., Sy.No. 95, Mudwin Village, Kadthal Mandal, Rangareddy District, Telangana State
8 Place of availability of Executive Summary (Telugu & English) & Draft EIA report of the proposed project along with CD:	1. O/o. The District Collector, Rangareddy District. 2. O/o. The CEO, Zilla Parishad, Rangareddy District. 3. O/o. The District Industries Centre, Rangareddy District. 4. Regional Office, Integrated Regional Office, Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, 3rd Floor, Aranya Bhavan, Sarfabad, Hyderabad, Telangana. 5. T.S. Pollution Control Board, Regional Office-I, Rangareddy District, H.No.6-3-1219, Block C, Ward No.91, 2nd Floor, Backside of Country Club, Kundanbagh, Umanagar, Begumpet, Hyderabad - 500016. 6. O/o. T.S. Pollution Control Board, Panyavara Bhavan, A-3, Industrial Estate, Sanathnagar, Hyderabad-500018. 7. O/o. T.S. Pollution Control Board, Zonal Office, H.No.6-3-1219, Block C, Ward No.91, 1st Floor, Backside of Country Club, Kundanbagh, Umanagar, Begumpet, Hyderabad 500016. 8. Revenue Divisional Office, Kandukur, Rangareddy District. 9. Tahasildar Office, Kadthal Mandal, Rangareddy District. 10. The Executive Summary of the project both in Telugu & English are available at Gram Panchayat office of Mudwin Village.
Suggestions, views, comments and objections of the Public, if any, are invited within 30 days from the date of Publication of this Notification. All the interested persons can also make written suggestions to the undersigned Officer of the T.S. Pollution Control Board and can also participate in the proceedings of the Public Hearing on the date, time and venue specified above.	
Place: Rangareddy District Date: 25.06.2022 RO No: 315-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23	
Sd/- ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER, T.S. POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, Regional Office-I, Rangareddy District.	

INDIA CORNER

Nadda seeks opposition leaders' support for Droupadi Murmu

BJP president J P Nadda on Friday reached out to various opposition leaders and sought their support for the NDA's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu. Sources said Nadda called up Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, former prime minister and JDS leader H D Deve Gowda while seeking to build a consensus on Murmu's candidature. Sources add that Nadda has also called NC leader and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah and some other opposition leaders. Murmu herself had earlier called senior opposition leaders including Sonia Gandhi, Sharad Pawar and Mamata Banerjee and sought their support for her candidature for the top constitutional post in the country. Murmu, if elected, would be the first tribal and the second woman to occupy the post of President of India.



NHRC notice to Environment Ministry on air pollution impacting life

The National Human Rights Commission has issued a notice to the Union Environment Ministry over the impact of air pollution on the life expectancy of people, officials said on Friday. In a statement, the NHRC said it has taken motu cognizance of media reports quoting a survey that air pollution is a great threat to human health in India, reducing overall life expectancy by five years and 9.7 years for the people in Delhi. The rights panel has observed that the contents of the media reports, if true, raise a serious issue of the right to life. Accordingly, it has issued notice to the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, seeking a report within four weeks, including the status of the National Clean Air Programme, launched in 2019. The commission expects the state authorities to take the issue with utmost sincerity in a time-bound manner, the statement said.



Visa scam: ED assures HC no coercive action against Karti till July 12

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday orally assured the Delhi High Court that no coercive action will be taken against Congress MP Karti P Chidambaram till July 12, when his anticipatory bail plea in the alleged Chinese Visas scam will be taken up for hearing. Justice Jasmeet Singh also asked the ED to file a status report on the matter before the next date of hearing. At the request of counsel for Karti and ED, the court listed the matter for further hearing on July 12. Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, representing the ED, orally assured the court that nothing will happen till July 12. "I will not make a statement but it is understood that nothing will happen till then. My understanding is only till the 12th (of July)," he said, adding that there is no apprehension of the arrest.



AMID MVA'S SURVIVAL CRISIS

Govt depts headed by NCP, Cong issue GRs for sanction of funds worth crores

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Even as the Shiv Sena-led MVA dispensation is currently facing a survival crisis due to a rebellion by Sena minister Eknath Shinde, the state departments - mostly controlled by ruling allies NCP and Congress - have issued government orders for the release of funds worth thousands of crores in the last four days for various development-related works.

Between June 20 and 23, the departments issued as many as 182 government resolutions (GRs), while on June 17, they passed 107 such GRs. These orders can be seen on the government's official website.

Technically, these are called government resolutions or GRs, which are essentially an approval order sanctioning release of funds for development-related works. However, the opposition BJP sought Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari's intervention to curb the "rush of GRs" seen over the past few days, which it termed as "suspicious".

From Tuesday, Maha rashtra's ruling alliance - the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) - started battling its worst crisis since coming into existence in 2019 after Shinde rebelled against the party and herded some MLAs to BJP-ruled Assam.

The crisis, which erupted



hours after the Legislative Council polls held on June 20, which saw the opposition BJP managing to get its fifth candidate elected. Shinde had gone incommunicado following the results. He and a group of rebel MLAs first stayed in Gujarat, but later moved to Assam. He is currently camping in a Guwahati hotel along with 37 rebel MLAs of the Sena and nine independents. Although Shinde's rebellion became public on June 21 morning, his growing discomfort had been sensed by the Sena's allies - NCP and Congress. NCP chief Sharad Pawar had even claimed that he had sounded Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray about the possible revolt by Shinde and some MLAs, sources said. So since the ruling partners had

sensed what was coming, the departments controlled by these parties went on a spree to issue the GRs, they said.

The water supply and sanitation department, headed by Shiv Sena's Gulabrao Patil, issued over 84 GRs on a single day on June 17. Most of the orders were pertaining to sanctioning of funds, administrative approvals and for salaries of staff working on various water supply schemes in the state.

Patil was among the last Sena legislators who joined the rebel camp headed by Shinde by reaching in Guwahati. June 17 was a Friday - the last working day of the week - and MLC elections took place on Monday. During the June 20 and 23 period, the least number of GRs - 28 - were issued on Monday.

All' tourists' are welcome in Assam, says Himanta on Maha MLAs in Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday sought to downplay the camping of Maharashtra's rebel Shiv Sena MLAs in his state saying all 'tourists' are welcome there. Sarma also said he has nothing to do with the politics of Maharashtra where the survival of the Uddhav Thackeray-led government is at stake after 38 of his party's MLAs rebelled and are currently camping at a hotel in Guwahati after being flown there in several flights. "Some people have come to Assam. They booked hotels. I am happy for that. You also come, it will help Assam's economy. Through this, Assam's tourism is also getting promoted," he said after accompanying NDA's presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu while filing her nominations here at Parliament complex. Asked about the ongoing political developments in Maharashtra, he said he cannot comment on it as it is a big state. "How can I comment on Maharashtra. It is a big state. I am happy that people are choosing Assam as a preferred destination," he said.

One more Shiv Sena MLA joins rebel Eknath Shinde's camp

The Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena suffered yet another setback as one more party MLA has joined the camp of rebel legislators headed by minister Eknath Shinde in Assam. A video of MLA Dilip Lande entering the luxury hotel in Guwahati, where the party rebels have been camping for the past few days, was shared by Shinde's office here on Friday. The move of Lande, who represents Chandivai Assembly constituency in Mumbai, takes the number of Sena MLAs in the rebel camp to 38. However, Shinde has claimed the support of 40 out of the total 55 Shiv Sena MLAs and 12 independents. Shinde, who has claimed that his faction is the 'real Shiv Sena', has sent letters carrying signatures of 37 MLAs to state Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and the legislature secretary to inform them about his appointment as the legislature party leader and that of Bharat Gogawale as the party's chief whip.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday shared a tweet by Param Vir Chakra awardee Capt Bana Singh criticising the Agnipath scheme for military recruitment and asked whether only 'friends' will be heard 'new India' and not heroes.

Sharing the tweet, he also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying on one side is his arrogance and dictatorship and on the other is the country's 'Paramvir'.

Last week, violent protests against the Agnipath scheme rocked several states, including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Telangana, while peaceful agitations were held in several places. "On one side is the country's Paramvir and on the other is the arrogance and dictatorship of the prime minister. In 'New India', will only



'friends' be heard and not the heroes of the country," Gandhi asked in a tweet in Hindi, while sharing a screenshot of Capt Bana Singh's tweet. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh also shared the screenshot of Capt Bana Singh's tweet. "The fact that a Paramvir Chakra Awardee had to delete an honest, heartfelt tweet against Agnipath scheme demonstrates that in Modindia not only Freedom of

Speech, but Freedom AFTER Speech is also under peril," he said.

Capt Bana Singh, a Paramvir Chakra awardee, in a Twitter post, had shared his interview saying the Agnipath scheme will destroy the Army.

"Save the country, Agnipath scheme will badly damage us, India is going through a crucial stage. Youngsters are the future of our motherland," he had said on Twitter.

SFI protest march turns violent

PNS ■ KERALA

A protest march of the SFI, the students wing of ruling CPI(M), against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's office here on Friday turned violent as a group of protestors allegedly entered the Lok Sabha member's office and

vandalised it. Police said the protest march contained around 100 Students' Federation of India (SFI) activists and they barged into the office. "There were around 80-100 activists. As of now, eight of them are under custody. More police have been deployed," police told PTI. The

student organisation protested alleging that Gandhi failed to intervene in the issue of creating buffer zones around forests in the hilly areas of Kerala. Television channels aired visuals of a group of protestors creating ruckus inside the MP's office.

File on Kejriwal's scheduled Singapore visit stuck with L-G

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has not yet cleared the Delhi government's several important files, including one relating to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's scheduled visit to Singapore in July to attend World Cities Summit, official sources claimed on Friday.

This is likely to trigger a fresh round of tussle between the L-G office and the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation. There was no immediate reaction from the L-G office on the matter.

Earlier this week, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia



had accused Saxena of "bulldozing the law" to favour the BJP after the L-G gave his nod to the Anti-Corruption Branch to probe allegations of irregularities in the construction of seven temporary hospitals here

during the Covid pandemic. Official sources said the file on the chief minister's Singapore visit has been pending with the L-G office for approval since June 7.

"Several important files of the Delhi government have not yet been cleared by the L-G, including the one about the CM's visit to Singapore.

The file has been lying with the L-G since June 7. Kejriwal has to participate in the World Cities Summit in Singapore," official sources said.

They claimed that even files on small issues are "stuck" with the L-G office. It may affect governance in Delhi, official sources said.

UP teen ends life after failing Class 10th

PNS ■ SHAHJAHANPUR

A 16-year-old girl ended her life after failing in Class 10th exams, police said on Friday. The board exam results were announced by Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (UPMSP) on June 18. Station House Officer (SHO) of Jaitipur police station Rajesh Babu Mishra said that a 16-year-old student ended her life in Bainsla Bainsli village. "As per her family members, she took the extreme step on Friday morning. Her body was found hanging with a 'dupatta' inside a room at her house," Mishra said. Police have recovered the body and sent it for a post-mortem examination, the SHO added.

Group of 75 'concerned citizens' strapline say deeply disturbed by recent developments

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A group of 75 people including eminent personalities have written an open letter to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, expressing concern about "recent developments" that threaten to destroy peace and diversity in Karnataka.

They requested Bommai to take proactive steps to ensure that a clear message is sent to those instigating or indulging in violence and creating fear and that such unlawful behaviour will not be tolerated and will be punished. The group, calling themselves 'concerned



citizens', pressed for restoring the State to a 'Sarva janangada shantiya thota' (a garden of peace for diverse communities), as mentioned in 'Naada

Geethe' (state anthem) penned by Kuvempu.

They said the "current spate of divisive actions aimed at alienating particular communities and denying them their fundamental rights" will not only hamper development but also hurt our state's reputation, hinder progress and innovation, erode the confidence of entrepreneurs and investors, heighten insecurity, suspicion, fear and resentment among citizens. The restoration of communal harmony is an important and urgent task, they said, expressing trust that the government headed by Bommai

will not wish to go down in history as the one that precipitated a "steep downturn" in the reputation and fortunes of our state through inaction. The signatories include retired civil servants, writers, artists and academics like Yellappa Reddy, Indian Forest Service (retd), Ravivarma Kumar (former Advocate General, Karnataka), Chiranjiv Singh, IAS (retd), Ajai Kumar Singh IPS (retd), Raghunandan IAS (retd), Shashi Deshpande (writer), Vaidehi (writer), Girish Kasaravalli (film maker) and Ramchandra Guha (historian).

No material to support Godhra riots were pre-planned: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday said there is "no tittle of the material" to support the plea that the 2002 Godhra riots were a pre-planned event owing to the criminal conspiracy hatched at the highest level in the State.

There is no tittle of the material, much less tangible material to support the plea of the appellant that the Godhra incident unfolded on February 27, 2002, and the events which followed, were a pre-planned event owing to the criminal conspiracy hatched at the highest level in the State, a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar said.

The apex court said Special Investigation Team had recorded the statements of all concerned including the officials before forming the opinion, as noted in the final report, to discard the allegation.

The top court also said inaction or non-responsive admin-



istration, can be no basis to infer hatching of criminal conspiracy by the authorities of the State Government.

The Magistrate, as well as, the High Court committed no error whatsoever in accepting the final report presented by the SIT.

Thus understood, the argument pressed into service about the existence of materials regarding the build-up of communal mobilizations and stockpiling of weapons, arms and ammunition even before the

Godhra episode on February 27, 2002, being part of the larger criminal conspiracy, is devoid of merits, the bench also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar said.

It said, "there is the absence of clear and direct material indicative of involvement of named persons in hatching a criminal conspiracy to cause mass violence across the State targeting minority community." "The attempt of the appellant (Zakia Jafri) is bordering

on the sewing of insignificant unconnected circumstances and events regarding the failures and in some cases, laxity in administration, which is being projected as an act of concerted effort of all the State officials up to the highest level without there being any tittle of material to show that there was the meeting of minds of all these persons at some level, the bench said.

The top court's observation came while upholding the SIT's clean chit to then Gujarat chief

Disappointed by SC verdict, says Ehsan Jafri's son

Tanvir Jafri, son of former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri, on Friday said he was disappointed by the Supreme Court's verdict dismissing a petition challenging the clean chit given by the SIT to then chief minister Narendra Modi and others in 2002 post-Godhra riots cases. Ehsan Jafri was killed during the riots. Zakia Jafri, his wife, had filed the petition challenging the Special Investigation Team's report giving a clean chit to Modi and 63 others. "I am disappointed with the court verdict. Since I am out of the country, I will give a detailed statement after studying the judgement," Tanvir Jafri told PTI. As per his lawyer, he was in Mecca for Haj pilgrimage, while Zakia lives in the United States with her daughter. Senior Congress leader from Gujarat Arjun Modhwadia said there was no option other than to accept the Supreme Court's verdict. "Many people were burnt alive during the riots. One of them was our party's former MP Ehsan Jafri. His wife Zakia was fighting the case even at the age of 85 because she was hoping to get justice.

minister Narendra Modi and 63 others in the 2002 riots in the state and dismissed a plea by slain Congress leader Ehsan Jafri's wife Zakia who had alleged a larger conspiracy.

Bringing the curtains down on the bid to reopen the probe,

the apex said the material collected during the investigation does not give rise to strong or grave suspicion regarding the hatching of a larger criminal conspiracy at the highest level for causing mass violence against Muslims.

At least 5 die as bus collides with truck in UP



PNS ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

At least five people died and around 12 were injured when a bus collided head-on with a truck on the national highway at Unchgaon-Adlisapur crossing under the Isanagar Police Station area on Friday afternoon, police said.

According to the police, the accident occurred when the bus driver while attempting to overtake a pick-up van collided with the truck coming from the opposite direction. Circle officer of Dhaurahra S N Tiwari said

Balchandra Mishra (40), bus conductor Nayab Singh (35), passenger Jamal Khan (45) and two unidentified persons died in the incident. Tiwari along with SDM Dhirendra Kumar Singh and Isanagar police station in-charge Arvind Kumar Pandey rushed to the spot and made arrangements to send the injured persons to the hospital.

Two of the injured bus passengers were sent to the district hospital, while others were taken to the Dhaurahra community health centre, police said.

FIRST COLUMN

CUSTOMS DUTY IS MUST ON E-TRANSMISSIONS

It will provide a level playing field to the domestic industry



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions has got another lease of life at the World Trade Organisation's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12). Some say this has happened due to pressure exerted by the United States, others think that India has bargained this for other gains.

It's noteworthy that India had pronounced that it would oppose this moratorium, as it causes a huge loss of revenue, apart from hurting our digital development, as domestic players face intense competition from global tech companies.

Significantly, at the time of the start of the WTO, trade in electronic products was very limited. In such a situation, the tariff on the trade of electronic products was temporarily suspended and it was decided in the Second Ministerial Conference of the WTO in 1998 to study the issues related to the global electronic trade with reference to the development needs of the developing countries. It was proposed that tariffs on electronic products be postponed till the next ministerial conference.

It is unfortunate that the developed countries kept suspending the decision on imposing tariffs on the import of electronic products, on several pretexts. Today the situation is that more than \$30 billion of electronic products are being imported into India alone. That is, even if 10 per cent tariff is imposed, the government will get revenue of more than \$3 billion.



According to a recent study, developing countries could have generated \$56 billion from imports of just 49 digitalised products in the period 2017-19. Least developed countries could have generated \$8 billion in this period, which is double the amount they need for giving double dose of Covid vaccine to their populations.

The issue here is not only about loss of revenue, it's a much larger issue for a country like India, where our start-ups and software companies are able to make a variety of electronic products, where we can make movies and other entertainment products in our own country, but when all such products are imported undeterred, without tariff, there is little incentive to produce them indigenously.

Tariff moratorium on e-products is actually killing our efforts of Atmanirbhar Bharat, benefitting the US, European countries, and China.

At the beginning of MC12, India started with a bold stance and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said: "I think this moratorium, which has been continuing for 24 years, must be reviewed and re-looked at."

However, the decision on moratorium in MC12, is read as follows: "We agree to maintain the current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until MC 13, which should ordinarily be held by 31 December 2023. Should MC 13 be delayed beyond 31 March 2024, the moratorium will expire on the date unless Ministers or the General Council take a decision to extend."

In the earlier Ministerial Conferences of WTO, in the last 24 years, the developed world had been easily getting the moratorium. MC12, was the first such conference where they faced some resistance from the developing countries. With this, a hope had arisen that the moratorium would end ultimately. But this battle was also lost.

Since 1998, the digital revolution has changed a lot in the world. There are digital products which are fast replacing physical products. Many of the digital products in health, fintech, public services, etc., incorporate artificial intelligence and 3D printing. Failure to tax them in innovative ways is likely to impact the government finances adversely.

We have started developing our own digital products; the production linked incentives (PLIs) scheme has been designed to nurture our infant digital products industries. Imposition of custom duties can help them by providing a level-playing field.

Though MC12 is over, India should leave no stone unturned to end this moratorium.

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

Despite its low share price, LIC is valuable

NIRJHAR MAJUMDAR

The IPO was a failure but LIC policyholders and investors will get their money's worth in course of time

The insurance industry is now at a crossroads. The regulator is busy changing the rules of the game. Insurers are changing business models, disrupting the traditional value chain. Foreign insurers and reinsurers are taking more interest in the business, as the insurance market is growing, following the rising prosperity of people despite a recessionary situation. Yet, insurers are still at their wits' end as to how to take insurance penetration to the next level.

Amidst this scenario, LIC launched its IPO by offering 3.5 per cent of its shares to retail and institutional investors. This has enabled the government to mop up about Rs 21,000 crore from the market. As much as 10 per cent of the offloaded LIC shares have been allotted to policyholders and 5 per cent to employees. In fact, this was the biggest IPO in India's corporate history.

About a month has elapsed since the listing of LIC's shares in stock exchanges. At the moment, LIC shares are traded about 30 per cent below the issue price. Some doomsayer analysts have already started fear-mongering in the market, proclaiming this as a bad omen for the market leader. In this article, I would try to dispel this notion.

Certain facts merit special attention of those who have invested money in LIC's IPO. This article is all about instilling confidence in LIC policyholders and shareholders by reassuring that they will get their money's worth in the days to come.

Let us see how LIC is placed in the market vis-à-vis its competitors. It has customers all over the country and across all sections of society. It has 30 crore in-force policies in its books as on date. On the other hand, none of the private insurers has a strong presence in rural India, as most of them are engaged in picking up low-hanging fruits of the metro and Tier-I cities. None of the private life insurers has even 1 crore of in-force policies. Most Indians living outside metros and Tier-I cities have not even heard the names of leading private insurers. For them, life insurance means LIC.

Besides, LIC is insuring the lives of crores of poorer citizens through low-cost group insurance schemes. Some financial analysts go to the extent of saying that LIC's products are not innovative enough. The fact is all insurers have innovative products. It is more important to check whether the insurers are able to sell those products in the market. Even on this count, LIC is much ahead of the competition. LIC sells all types of insurance products in large numbers—endowment, term, whole life, or even annuities. On the other hand, private insurers as a whole earn 40 per cent of the premium income by selling Ulips only.

While Ulips are not necessarily unde-



THE LIC HAS CUSTOMERS AND 30 CRORE IN-FORCE POLICIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND ACROSS ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY. ON THE OTHER HAND, NONE OF THE PRIVATE LIFE INSURERS HAS EVEN 1 CRORE OF IN-FORCE POLICIES

(The author is an insurance industry analyst)



sirable products, they are more investment-oriented than insurance. Indians need more protection, savings, and annuity products than investment products with some element of insurance. And LIC has been selling more protection/savings products, to take the benefits of insurance to the remotest corners of the country.

Let's talk a little bit about the technicality of this business. Embedded value (EV) is defined as the present value of future profits plus adjusted net asset value. EV of LIC was calculated to be Rs 5.4 lakh crore before the launch of IPO. This was arrived at, on the basis of realistic assumptions on future mortality, expenses and interest rates. Insurers and their consultants made pretty conservative assumptions on these parameters. All these bases of valuation are, however, more or less the same for all the insurers (except to some extent the expenses).

What then can make the difference? I would say persistency ratios of insurers (especially 61-month persistency) can determine EV of the insurers a lot. For LIC, this ratio is 48 per cent in terms of policies (the industry average being 33 per cent and 59 per cent in terms of premiums). This is very close to the global standard. A satisfactory persistency ratio of LIC means there will be a satisfactory flow of premium income in future, resulting in better surpluses. If there are better surpluses, there will be higher dividends and also higher share price.

Nobody can belittle the contribution of private insurers. But people need to know certain facts

which prove LIC's dominance in the industry across the country. LIC is respected not just for its holding 66 per cent market share but also for its omnipresence in the country, making it convenient for ordinary people to visit the insurer's offices. The hallmark of its operations is the honesty and integrity with which the employees have been discharging their duties and clean image that the organisation has been able to maintain in the midst of corporations getting entangled in recurring financial scams. LIC is one organisation which has worked from their brick-and-mortar offices even during the worst of pandemic times, keeping the interests of crores of its customers and one million plus intermediaries in sight.

Now, let's talk about the movement of share price of LIC. As have already been mentioned, only 10 per cent shares have been sold to policyholders and 5 per cent to employees. A bulk was sold to anchor investors. Hence, the people reposing faith in LIC as policyholders and the people investing in IPO are completely different.

A section of investors is being made to believe that the IPO was overpriced and that the price would slide even further as the fundamentals of the organisation were below par. They were also fed on the rumour that anchor investors would offload their shares immediately after lock-in period. All such negative publicity contributed to the fall in share price so rapidly. But there is a limit to such fall as regards the share price of an organisation as financially sound as LIC.

Let's remember some basics of the investment game. Once Warren Buffet said, "In the short run, stocks behave like a slot machine, but in the long run, they behave like a weighing machine." Now the share price of LIC is moving randomly and is getting determined purely by forces of demand and supply. These random movements cannot be used to predict the long-term value of the stock.

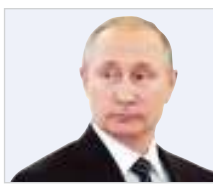
In the long run, the intrinsic value of a company remains constant, irrespective of what the traders of stocks do every day in the market. In the long run, the share price will be equal to the intrinsic value of a company. This is true for all the markets and for all the stocks. The annual report of LIC is in the public domain and investors can access that. All successful investors of the world muster the skill of making sense out of financial and industry data, and wait patiently for the fair value of a company to emerge.

Every Indian knows what LIC stands for. The organisation has weathered many storms in its 66-year journey since 1956. Yes, there is a need for the business model of the organisation to undergo change; it is already working towards that.

Finally, we must remember that not all analysts are in the business of misguiding investors. JP Morgan said in its recently released report on LIC that the market failed to understand the strength of LIC. The price to embedded value ratio (P/EV) is unrealistically low. This means that both the LIC policyholders and investors will get their money's worth in course of time.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

BRICS CAN BOLSTER GLOBAL POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY... MUTUAL COOPERATION HAS BENEFITED THE LIVES OF ALL CITIZENS.—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



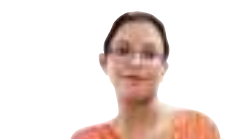
THE WEST IS FOMENTING CRISIS. THE STATE OF GLOBAL ECONOMY IS DUE TO THE SELFISH ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL STATES.—RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

US-Pakistan partnership: Always at India's cost

Pakistan, which played an important role in containing the spread of communism, continues to be of help to the US

US State Department spokesperson Ned Price recently commented in favour of advancing the "US-Pakistan partnership" in a manner that serves their "mutual interests." Elsewhere, at the CNN News18 Town Hall, S. Jaishankar stated that a "lot of India's problems with Pakistan are directly attributable to the support that the United States gave to Pakistan." The link between the US support to Pakistan and India's problems needs to be revisited.

Theoretically, the power of the weak states to attract the great powers has been well established. Weak states cannot defend themselves. Consequently, they seek financial and military aid in exchange for their strategic autonomy and the geopolitical location. Pakistan is



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

(The author is Assistant Professor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda)

one such state.

Soviet Union leader Stalin first extended an invitation to Pakistan PM Liaquat Ali Khan in 1949 to visit Moscow. The fundamental differences between an Islamist state and a communist Soviet prevented that entente; hence, Pakistan sided with the US and played an important role in containing the spread of communism.

By 1955, Pakistan had joined two regional defence pacts, the South East Asia Treaty Organization and the Central Treaty Organization (Baghdad Pact). A little before 1955, in 1953, when Ayub Khan visited Turkey, he reiterated Dulles's 'northern tier defence pact' in which the two countries would occupy a prominent position. Later in 1954, the Turko-Iraqi agreement (Baghdad Pact)

superseded the Turko-Pak plan.

Consequently, from 1953 to 1961, Islamabad received nearly \$2 billion in US assistance, one-quarter of this in military aid. Apart from this data, information retrieved from the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) indicates that from 1955 to 1959, US arms exports amounted to \$1.02 billion. When correlated with Pakistan's then financial situation, strong indications of a vicious cycle of US aid and US arms exports emerge. In the budding relationship between the two, the core security concerns of India, a democratic nonaligned country, were sidelined.

Upon India's vehement protests, oral assurances were given by Eisenhower to Nehru that the US would take care of

the situation in a case of Pakistan's aggression against India. Thus, while India was idealistically following a nonaligned policy, Pakistan was hard bargaining its geostrategic location in lieu of military aid. According to the strategic experts, nearly four-fifths of all the foreign aid Pakistan received during 1951-60 came from the US. From the 1960s to the late 1970s, there was a brief period when US aid to Pakistan decreased.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan again allowed Pakistan to extract more aid from the US. In exchange for Pakistan's role in the Afghan war, a \$400-million US aid was offered to Pakistan. It was rejected by the Zia-ul-Haq regime in 1980 and was labeled as 'peanuts.' Haq eyed the F-16,

which Islamabad later got.

Thus, from 1983 to 1990, Pakistan received military aid of \$3.73 billion along with 1,000 Stinger missiles, and the component of US arms sales was \$2.2 billion. This was the same period when Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir started, including the massacre of Kashmiri Hindus.

Also, at a regional level, many security experts attribute the birth of the Taliban to ISI and US agencies. Had the US assistance not been there, Pakistan would not have been so aggressive against India and its other neighbours, such as Afghanistan and Iran. Thus, the relationship between Pakistan and the US has always been based on a patron-client state wherein foreign or military aid is given to serve the US geopolitical interests.

In the post-Cold War phase,

Pakistan was reeling under sanctions due to its nuclear tests and was denied any military aid. However, the 9/11 attacks in the US again brought Pakistan to the forefront of Washington's South Asia policy. As per the SIPRI data, during 2002-14 Pakistan, as a major non-NATO ally, got military aid worth \$5.81 billion and the arms sales component was \$3.2 billion.

This was the same period when the Nandimarg massacre and Mumbai attacks took place. All these attacks were attributed to Pakistan. India collected the 'proof' and gave it to the US, hoping that the US might acknowledge it and help India. Little did India realise that the geopolitics of national interests, military aid, and arms trade are closely interrelated factors. Hence Pakistan was never

labeled as a 'terrorist state' by the US.

It was only after Pakistan's backstabbing of the US in Afghanistan that former US president Donald Trump realised America's mistake and commented in 2018 that it had "foolishly" given aid and, in return, merely got "lies and deceit."

Today, despite Washington's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and the backstabbing by Pakistan in Afghanistan, the US is all set to re-engage Pakistan, which will harm India's interests.

Given the evolving situation, India too is changing. The coupling of strategic autonomy and Atmanirbhar Bharat in the defence sector is the answer to the geopolitics of the patron-client relationship.

Amazon Prime Video partners with AMC Networks for entertainment content in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

OTT platform Amazon Prime Video has partnered with US-based entertainment company AMC Networks to offer its content on Prime Video Channels in India, the company said on Friday. As part of the collaboration, Amazon Prime video will provide access to advertisement-free subscription service AMC+ and AMC's streaming service Acorn TV on Prime Video Channels in India on a subscription basis. "We are delighted to partner with AMC Networks and offer our viewers an even wider selection of popular and blockbuster English content. Prime members have loved our extensive selection of premium international content, available as add-on subscriptions, and we are committed to satisfying their diverse entertainment needs," Amazon Prime Video India, head of Prime Video Channels, Chaitanya Divan said in a statement. Subscription to AMC+ will offer Amazon Prime Video customers full access to Acorn TV with crime thrillers, mysteries and dramas from Britain etc.

Not targeting any level, but RBI will not allow 'jerky movements' of Rupee

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael D Patra on Friday said the Central Bank is defending the Rupee against volatility and will not allow "jerky movements", though it is not looking at any particular level for the domestic currency against the US dollar.

Patra, who looks after the monetary policy department in the RBI, also stressed that the Indian currency has witnessed least depreciation in recent times.

"We don't know where the Rupee will be. Even the US Fed doesn't know where the dollar will be. But be sure of one thing. We will stand for its (Rupee) stability, and we're doing it on an ongoing basis even as I speak.

"We are there in the market. We will not allow disorderly movements in the Rupee. We have no level in our mind, but we will not allow jerky movements. That's for certain...let it be widely known that we are in the market defending the Rupee against volatility," he said.

He was replying to a query on Rupee depreciation at an



interactive session on 'Geo-Political Spillovers and Indian Economy' organised by industry chamber PHDCCI.

Patra further said if one looks at the depreciation of Rupee, it is one of the least in the world and that is the power of USD 600 billion dollar forex reserves.

The rupee on Friday slipped 1 paisa to close at its all-time low of 78.33 (provisional) against the US dollar.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 78.20 and

finally settled at its all-time low of 78.33, down 1 paisa from its previous close.

During the day, the local unit witnessed an intra-day high of 78.19 and a low of 78.35 against the American currency.

To a question on Rupee-Ruble payment mechanism, Patra said the Reserve Bank will do whatever the government decides.

He said the government is seized of the matter.

Patra further said the decline in India's current

account deficit (CAD) to 1.5 per cent of GDP in the fourth quarter, from 2.6 per cent in the third quarter of 2021-22, augurs well for India's external viability.

On an annual basis, therefore, the CAD turned out to be a modest 1.2 per cent of GDP in 2021-22, with the intrinsic strength of India's foreign exchange earnings mitigating the terms of trade shocks imposed by geopolitical spillovers and the surge in import demand, the deputy governor added.

NTPC'S installed RE capacity hits 2 GW with commercial ops of Kayamkulam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned NTPC on Friday said its installed renewable energy capacity has crossed the 2 gigawatt mark, with the commissioning of the 92 MW floating solar capacity in Kerala.

The company began commercial operations of the last part capacity of 35 MW out of 92 MW Kayamkulam Floating Solar PV Project at Kayamkulam, Kerala.

Spread over a 480-acres reservoir, this floating solar project would generate electricity from more than 3 lakh solar PV modules, NTPC said in a statement.

This would be sufficient to light around 26,000 households. Around 1,73,000 tons of CO₂e would be avoided every year during the lifespan of this project. According to the statement, more than 4 GW renewable energy (RE) capacity in 22 projects is under implementation, while over 5 GW RE capacity is under tendering. "Work is under progress at Leh on an integrated project for mobility where five buses would ply intracity using Green Hydrogen. At NTPC Kawas near Surat (Gujarat), the work for Green Hydrogen blending with Natural Gas (PNG) is currently under progress," it said.

Earlier, in a BSE filing, NTPC said "Consequent upon successful commissioning, the last part capacity of 35 MW out of 92 MW Kayamkulam Floating Solar PV Project at Kayamkulam, Kerala is declared on Commercial Operation with effect from 00:00 hours of 24.06.2022." With this, the standalone installed and commercial capacity of NTPC has become 54749.20 MW, while group installed and commercial capacity of NTPC has become 69114.20 MW. NTPC, under the ministry of power, is the country's largest power producer.



MONEY MATTERS

MG Motor inaugurates residential community EV chargers in Jaipur



MG Motor India on Friday said it has inaugurated the first two residential community SMART electric vehicle chargers in Jaipur as part of its plans to set up more such charging stations in the Rajasthan capital.

Under the company's MG Charge initiative, the automaker will install 1,000 AC fast chargers at residential localities across India in 1,000 days, it said in a statement. MG Motor said it is taking conscious steps towards green mobility and strengthening the EV charging infrastructure in the country. It provides 6-way charging ecosystem with a plug-and-charge cable onboard, AC fast chargers (installed at the customer's home/office), DC superfast chargers at MG dealerships, public charging network, charge-on-the-go with RSA (Roadside Assistance) and community charger. MG has also recently partnered with Jio-Bp and BPCL to add momentum to EV adoption by expanding opportunities for intercity travel while installing EV chargers across highways and cities, it said. The SMART chargers installed in an NRI colony in Jaipur are Type 2 chargers, sim-enabled and supported through a sharable charger management system while the connected AC charging stations will cater to the residents and visitors of these societies for their EV charging needs round-the-clock, MG Motor said.

Bajaj Auto launches all-black variant of Pulsar 250



Bajaj Auto on Friday announced the launch of an all-black variant of its Pulsar 250 model with dual-channel ABS (anti-lock braking system). Pulsar N250 (Naked Streetfighter) and Pulsar F250 (Semi-Faired Street Racer) are priced at around Rs 1.50 lakh (Ex-showroom Delhi), the

company said in a statement. However, the single-channel ABS variant of the bike model will continue to sell in the existing colours, it added. The company also said that it has delivered 10,000 units in less than six months of the bike's launch, which is an achievement for any 250-cc segment motorcycle in the post-BS VI era. The all-new dual-channel ABS variant of the Pulsar 250 is equipped with 300 mm front and 230 mm rear disc brakes and larger tyre dimensions for an improved grip to provide assured overall safety, it noted. "Bajaj Pulsar 250 has enjoyed an immense response from riders across the country. We will continue to entice them with the newly launched Dual-Channel ABS variant, which comes on top of already existing features."

Rupee settles at all-time low of 78.33 against US dollar

The rupee on Friday slipped 1 paisa to close at its all-time low of 78.33 (provisional) against the US dollar. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 78.20 and finally settled at its all-time low of 78.33, down 1 paisa from its previous close. During the day, the local unit witnessed an intra-day high of 78.19 and a low of 78.35 against the American currency. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 78.32 against the US dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.25 per cent to 104.17. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 1.13 per cent to USD 111.29 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 462.26 points or 0.88 per cent higher at 52,727.98, while the broader NSE Nifty gained 142.60 points or 0.92 per cent to 15,699.25. Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers in the capital market on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 2,319.06 crore, as per stock exchange data. Meanwhile, Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael D Patra on Friday said the Central Bank will not allow "jerky movements" of the rupee and stressed that the Indian currency has witnessed the least depreciation in recent times. "We will stand for its stability, and we're doing it on an ongoing basis even as I speak."

Traders, transport bodies oppose Delhi govt's move to ban heavy vehicles in city

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposing the Delhi government's decision to ban entry of medium and heavy goods vehicles in the city, traders and transport organisations said it would "grossly and adversely affect" businesses in the national capital.

The decision to ban the entry of medium and heavy goods vehicles to the national capital from October 1 to February 28 was aimed at curbing vehicular pollution.

However, vehicles carrying raw vegetables, fruit, grains, milk and essential commodities will be allowed to enter the city, they said.

According to an official, vehicular pollution leads to deterioration in the air quality during the winter months.

President of all India Motor and Goods Transport Rajender Kapoor demanded the rollback of the ban and asked the gov-



ernment to consider some other way to resolve the pollution problem.

"Transportation quantity (of various essential commodities) is in hundreds of tons, which can be done only by heavy motor vehicles, not by light motor vehicles. Heavy machinery and building materials are also brought from various states and that cannot be done by light motor vehicles," he said.

The Confederation of All

Electric mobility startup Matter raises US\$ 10 mn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electric mobility startup Matter on Friday said it has raised USD 10 million (nearly Rs 80 crore) in its latest round of funding from investors, including Capital 2B, a technology fund backed by Infoedge and Climate Angels Fund. The new investors now join the founders and existing investors, including Baring Private Equity Partners, the company said in a statement.

The fresh capital will be deployed towards continuous technological innovations, manufacturing, and marketing, it added.

These include launching a line of electric mobility and energy storage products that are designed and innovated for India and the world using a completely new ground-up approach, Matter said, adding

it also intends to launch its first electric motorcycle later in the year.

"Matter is gearing up for its first electric motorcycle launch this year and we aim to develop a world-class portfolio of EV and energy storage products to catalyse the clean energy transition in India," company Founder and CEO Mohal Lalbhai said. Commenting on the investment, Capital 2B Partner, Vibhore Sharma said, "Matter, with its home-grown technology stack, is set to redefine the two-wheeler mobility and energy segments. Matter is one of the first investments from our fund, and is promising of an exciting journey..." Baring Private Equity Partners India Managing Partner Rahul Bhasin said Matter has created products that will make a positive impact on people and the planet.

Shadowfax to hire 75,000 delivery partners by July-end

PNS ■ MUMBAI

On-demand third party logistics provider Shadowfax Technology has said it plans to hire 75,000 delivery partners by next month as it expands delivery network.

In addition, the company said, it is open to hiring people who can not commute long distances but want to earn money/be financially independent, it said. The platform had earlier announced its plan to create 5,000 delivery partner jobs in Tamil Nadu. "Shadowfax will recruit 75,000 delivery partners across India by the end of July 2022."

Ola Electric crosses Rs 500 cr revenue in Apr-May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electric two-wheeler maker Ola Electric on Friday said it has crossed Rs 500 crore revenue in the first two months of FY2022-23.

Amid reports that the company's sales have slowed down, Ola Electric asserted that it is on track to cross the USD 1 billion (over Rs 7,800 crore) revenue by the end of this year.

In a statement, Ola Electric said it has surpassed Rs 500 crore revenue in its first two months of FY22-23 without sharing the total number of vehicles sold during the two months. It further said it "is on track to surpass USD 1 billion run rate by end of this year".

"As customers' confidence in EV continues to grow, the future forecast looks even stronger for Ola Electric. We have also been able to streamline our manufacturing capacity at the Ola Futurefactory, Krishnagiri to 1,000 units per day. We have a strong order



pipeline and will be ramping up further," a company spokesperson said.

However, reports citing vehicle registration data from Vahan said the company's Ola S1 Pro registration fell to 9,196 units in May this year from 12,683 units in April. Ola Electric said it has so far delivered its scooters to over 50,000 customers across different parts of the country. The company, which in August last year forayed into the green mobility space with the launch of its electric scooters, S1

and S1 Pro priced at Rs 99,999 and Rs 1,29,999, respectively, had postponed delivery timelines for its much anticipated products citing global semiconductor shortage issue.

The company, after opening reservations at Rs 499 in July last year for its electric scooters, started online purchase process in September and initially planned to start deliveries in October but was later pushed to November and then again to the second half of December last year.

Gold declines by Rs 70; silver falls Rs 621

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices declined by Rs 70 to Rs 50,557 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to HDFC securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 50,627 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also declined by Rs 621 to Rs 59,077 per kg from Rs 59,698 per kg in the previous trade.

"Spot gold prices for 24-carat gold in Delhi fell by Rs 70 reflecting overnight fall in COMEX gold prices," said Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities) at HDFC Securities. In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,828 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 20.97 per ounce. Spot gold prices were up 0.33 per cent at COMEX, Patel added.



BEL inks deal with Belarusian firm for supply of Airborne Defense Suite

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Bharat Electronics Limited on Friday signed a MoU with a Belarusian company and its subsidiary for supply of Airborne Defense Suite (ADS) for helicopters of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The Bengaluru-headquartered defence PSU said it inked the MoU with Defense Initiatives (DI), Belarus, and Defense Initiatives Aero Pvt Ltd India (a subsidiary of DI Belarus), in the presence of

Joint Secretary (DIP) and senior IAF officials.

The MoU is aimed at cooperation between the three companies for supply of ADS for IAF helicopters.

In a statement, BEL said it would be the prime contractor and supported by DI with transfer of technology (manufacturing and maintenance) for supply of advanced electronic warfare suite for helicopters under 'Make in India' category.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Procurement Notice
NIT No. 16/DIV.13 (Old-TB)/GHMC/2022-23
Name of Work: Civil works (26 Nos). Estimate amount: Rs. 224.31 Lakhs. Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 24.06.2022 from 04.00 PM, 28.06.2022 upto 04.00 PM. Name & Address of Officer Cell No.: Executive Engineer, Division No.13, GHMC, Khairatabad, Hyderabad. Ph: 9989930376. For further details can be seen at www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer
R.O.No: 3727-PP/CIV/ADVT/11/2022-23, Dt. 24.06.2022 Division No.13 (Old-TB): GHMC.



Saga of an entrepreneur-turned-athlete

The Pioneer for this week's Hyderabad edition, brings to you a unique story about Madhuri, who has broken several stereotypes and overcame the challenges that she had faced all through her life.

SHIKHA DUGGAL



USA to pursue a couple of skill enrichment programs and also to explore the world on the other side of the horizon. I stayed there for a month and came back to Hyderabad. My former boss at i3 launched a company called Ennoble Group Inc., in New Jersey, in and hired me to head the training and staffing divisions. I started my journey again to achieve professional excellence. I got myself trained in project management and went on to become a certified PMP in my first attempt. On September 22, 2016, Ennoble India was co-founded by Venkat and me. After all the set-backs in my career, I became an entrepreneur and we started building an IT company. This will remain as the greatest of all my fondest memory," she shares.

We hope the story of Madhuri Vardhinedi has changed the way we pictured athletes and inspired us to step up to every challenge of our life.

and inspires me to set higher expectations."

The year 2014 was a remarkable year and a dark year simultaneously in her life. She was fulfilling the responsibilities of an HR head and a Quality Manager for an MNC when her fate laughed at her again. She was the best performer in the company that year and that feat was achieved in just ten months after she joined i3 software. Her employer sold his company to a global giant Ebix in December 2014 and under that business decision many of the non-IT employees lost their jobs and she was one of them. She felt betrayed and devastated by what happened to her. She decided not to look for another job in India as she felt she would be humiliating herself.

"In January 2015, I traveled to the

This story narrates the awe-inspiring journey of Madhuri Vardhinedi, an accomplished entrepreneur and a renowned karate athlete, who was awarded the black belt in Shotokan Karate at the age of 42.

She co-founded Ennoble Technologies, based out of Hyderabad in 2016, at the age of 38. She is an established orator too in Telugu and has helped edit the Telugu version of Amish Tripathi's *The Secret of the Nagas*.

As for her other interests, she is an avid music lover and a Carnatic classical singer. She successfully made a statement by breaking the stereotypes and overcoming various challenges in her life.

She says, "Learning Karate was my childhood fantasy but could not pursue it back then, as there were no academies in Hyderabad in the 1980s. Finally, I realised my dream in my 40's, when I came across Taika Martial Arts Academy which is very close to my home in 2017, and then started my journey from being an entrepreneur to becoming a National Level Karate Champion and a black belter in Karate. Under the tutelage of Ashok Chakravarthi, I got myself transformed into a formidable Karate athlete."

Her life has never been easy. At every juncture of her life, she had to fight to live her life and to secure her future.

She further says, "My family stood with me during my turbulent journey. I underwent a major operation at the age of 30 following which I slipped into depression. I built my health that became brittle after I underwent a major inevitable operation. My mental strength and strong resolve helped me come out of it. My professional journey too was eventful as I kept on losing jobs at regular intervals while I tried staying strong like a rock. During that turbulent phase, I continued acquiring knowledge as it always keeps me motivated

Edtech has grown rapidly over past decade and has 4,600 firms in a highly fragmented sector that serves over 500 million students from kindergarten to higher education, thus spawning INR 7.5 lakh crore per annum industry. This is mainly due to Education being one of two sectors in India that has unsatiated demand, the other being Religion. This demand stems from the view (and rightly so) that Education leads to prosperity. Incorporated in 2020, Ed4All is a new-age edtech startup that brings a comprehensive, advanced, sustainable and inclusive Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) Learning, Skilling and Testing platform. Powered by core technology from Microsoft, the platform caters to the needs of K-12, Higher Education and Vocational markets and aims to deliver affordable and accessible NextGen education for skilling the Learners and making them employable.

Ed4All has two external firms; one for Company Secretarial, and the other for Accounting. Both

firms run the roost through bandying of arcane rules from board composition to board meetings to GST to audits. Sanjay Viswanathan, Chairman & CEO, Ed4All says, "When compliance can be second largest cost in a Firm's operations (after product development), there must be something wrong. And this in a land where even some public firms have cupboards with skeletons. India will truly become a Startup Nation when compliance is simplified and transparency the norm. Second challenge is Government sector's procurement rules. If India truly wants to be a Startup Nation, it needs to design public sector procurement norms that will enable Startups to participate and deliver services."

After all 150 years ago even the Tatas were a startup. Thus, today's startup will be tomorrow's Tata. We recognise that when public exchequer is involved to pay for services there must be a fair and transparent selection process involved. However, India is perhaps the only Nation where Government rejects Firms that partners with them to deliver revenues for the public exchequer.

Ed4All is an EdTech Startup that solely partners with Government to invest in low-cost or high-impact learning, skilling, and testing across the country to drive overall literacy and employability. India needs an investment of INR 7.5 lakh crore

over next decade or 0.25-0.5% of annual GDP to make this happen. Ed4All will lead the way for others to follow, so together we can accelerate India's place as the most educated and prosperous Nation on the Planet.

He further shares, "Unlike most EdTech players who are focused on individual segments of education continuum such as coaching, tuitions, content, or certifications, Ed4All views the comprehensive provision of building blocks for hybrid education from software to hardware to connectivity to operations that also include curriculum, content, teaching, and certifications, and capital as central to rewiring of education in India so learning and skilling outcomes can be positively

Making education accessible for all

impacted. To make learners in Tier 2, Tier 3 towns, and Rural markets educated, skilled, and employable, and at warp-like speed, Ed4All will collaborate with Central and State Governments and Industry. Ed4All will pioneer Education 4.0, so this enables Industry 4.0. Ed4All is Made in India, for the World."

To bring most advanced technology to Government-sector Education in India, Ed4All has teamed up with most advanced technology Firms in Education like Microsoft, Hitachi, and Lenovo. To ensure employability based on most advanced Skills and Certification, Ed4All has allied with most visionary Institutions including CHRIST



EARLY SIGNS OF HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY

The moment a woman discovers she is pregnant, she hopes for an uncomplicated and smooth pregnancy. For most women, that is exactly what happens barring a few bumps on the road.

However, some women may have a greater chance of experiencing pregnancy complications and difficulties. A high-risk pregnancy is when the woman, her baby or both are at a higher risk of developing unexpected complications during pregnancy or childbirth. In India, about 20-30% of pregnancies belong to the high-risk category.

Dr. Seema Sharma, MBBS, DGO, MD, F.MAS, MRCOG, FICOG, FRCOG (London, U.K), Obstetrics and Gynecology, Apollo Cradle and Children Hospital, Moti Nagar said, "A high-risk pregnancy may stem from pre-existing maternal conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart or blood disorder or foetal conditions such as birth defects, genetic syndromes, anaemia etc. Consumption of alcohol, drugs or cigarettes, advanced maternal age or multi-foetal gestation may also lead to a high-risk pregnancy."

Vaginal bleeding or watery discharge

Bleeding or spotting is quite common during the first trimester. But bleeding in the second or third trimester is often associated with complications such as placental abruption, preterm labour or miscarriage. Any bleeding in pregnancy should never be ignored and it is best to contact the healthcare provider immediately. Similarly, women should notify their doctors if they see any abnormal clear or coloured discharge from their vagina.

Blurred vision or frequent change in the spectacle number

A temporary loss of vision, light sensitivity, experiencing flashing lights or spots and blurry vision are a clear indication of preeclampsia, marked by high blood pressure and signs of damage to other organs. It is best to call the doctor or rush to the hospital immediately upon the occurrence of these symptoms as they can progress rapidly and severe problems.

Severe headaches or dizziness

Getting a headache or experiencing some dizziness once in a while during the first

trimester of the pregnancy is normal. But a persistent and severe headache accompanied by dizziness and blurring throughout may be a symptom of preeclampsia. If not monitored or treated right away it can lead to serious complications.

Sudden swelling in the face, hands or feet

Gradual swelling in the legs, ankles, feet and fingers is absolutely common during pregnancy and often escalates as the pregnancy progresses further. But a sudden increase in swelling in the face, hands or feet can be a sign of preeclampsia and should be monitored right away. During a high-risk pregnancy, it is accompanied by severe headaches and blurry vision and can lead to serious complications if not treated immediately.

Pain or cramping in the lower abdomen

During the first trimester, a woman's body is preparing for the growing baby and pain or cramping in the stomach is normal. But severe pain or cramping that does not

go away after 30 to 60 minutes might indicate a high-risk pregnancy. Persistent cramping that ranges from moderate to severe pain can be the indication of ectopic pregnancy which can be life-threatening. Women experiencing extreme pain or cramps along with vaginal bleeding should consult their doctor immediately.

Decreased foetal movement

Foetal movements become common as the pregnancy progresses over 20-22 weeks and by the third-semester women should be able to feel foetal activity regularly. A sudden decrease in the foetal movement may be a red flag that there is a complication. In absence of at least 10 foetal movements during 2 hours, pregnant women should immediately call their specialist to make sure that they are not at a risk for stillbirth or the umbilical cord wrapping around the baby's neck.

A high-risk pregnancy may sound ominous of complications but it does not necessarily mean that something bad will happen. Keeping an eye out for the warning signs, having thorough discussions with your doctor or a specialist and doing your best to stay positive can promote a healthy pregnancy. Extra care and vigilance can ensure a healthy birth.

Considering the uncertainties of today's world, the one certainty is that digitisation is at the core of a child's future. This is even more so in the case of Education. If used wisely, Technology and Digital tools can be a blessing for children as it provides a rich and immersive educational experience, thereby enlightening their minds and embellishing fundamental skills in them.

In the coming months, Ed4All plans to expand in two directions. One, go deeper and broader within India and mark its presence in at least 8 States and Union Territories that will represent 15% of learners across K-12, higher education and vocational. Through this vector, Ed4All anticipates investing INR 8,000 crores to enable Central and State Governments to re-boot and transform way learning, skilling and testing is delivered.





Macherla Niyojakavargam shooting wrapped up

Young and versatile star Nithiin's mass and action entertainer *Macherla Niyojakavargam* under the discretion of MS Raja Shekhar Reddy has completed the entire shooting part, except for the last song. The remaining song will be shot soon. The post-production works are also happening simultaneously for the movie. Re-recording work of first half of the movie is done.

Sudhakar Reddy and Nikitha Reddy are producing the movie on Sreshth Movies banner. Rajkumar Akella presents the movie billed to be a pucca mass and commercial entertainer with political elements.

The movie is being made on high budget with lavish production standards and top-notch technicalities. The team will opt for aggressive promotions and they will be coming up with updates on regular

basis.

The picture released by the team shows the lead pair Nithiin and Krithi Shetty in ecstasy. They are seen dancing and needless to say the still is from a song in the movie that was shot in an exotic Europe locale. Nithiin looks uber-cool, wherein Krithi Shetty looks gorgeous in the poster. Catherine Tresa is the other heroine in the movie.

Prasad Murella is the cinematographer. Mamidala Thirupathi has provided dialogues and Sahi Suresh is the art director. Kotagiri Venkateswara Rao is the editor. Three might masters Venkat, Ravi Varma and Anal Arasu choreographed action part of the movie to be high on mass and action elements.

Macherla Niyojakavargam is scheduled for its worldwide theatrical release on August 12.

I am indebted to my father MS Raju: Sumanth Ashwin

PNS | HYDERABAD

7 Days 6 Nights has already hit the cinemas. The rom-com stars Sumanth Ashwin, Meher Chahal, Rohan and Krithika Shetty in lead roles.

In this interview, Sumanth Ashwin talks about his character, working with his father MS Raju, why the film can be watched with one's family, his upcoming movies, and more.

Commencing with, he says, "It has been a decade since I have been an actor. I debuted with 'Tuneega Tuneega' in the year 2012. The journey has been great regardless of the success or failure of my movies. These ten years have passed in a blink. I have resolved not to essay the kind of characters I have already played. Even though I have done natural characters all the time, they had a tinge of a larger-than-life element to them. I want to play very realistic characters that the audience can easily relate to from now. These days, the audience have changed tastes, thanks to the exposure to new formats. We have to give them next-level things. I hope I get the opportunity to do that."

For him, *7 Days 6 Nights* is a beautiful, simple, entertaining story with a proper story. He is very happy with the story that it tells and the way it tells the story. Previously, he would realize that something was amiss in the second half of his movies. He promoted such movies with a sense of disappointment. But this film is totally satisfying for him. The entire story takes place over a span of seven days, as the title suggests.

And, "The audience will fall

7 Days 6 Nights released in theatres on Friday. *The Pioneer* connects with the lead Sumanth Ashwin who shares with us about his character, working with his father and a lot more

in love with the characters. They will think about the characters after watching the movie. I have played an aspiring filmmaker in the film. He is undergoing a lot of personal and professional struggles in life. He is a smoker

and is not taking care of his physical fitness. He is leading a messy lifestyle."

Leading this to another aspect of his life, he recalls, "I used to be overweight as a child. I used to admire the physical fitness of Mahesh Babu, Prabhas and all and used to think that it was impossible for me to become an actor because I was not fit. I, therefore, wanted to become a technician. I happened to join aerobic classes and suddenly started losing weight. Around the time films like *Nuvvostanante Nenoddantana* were being produced by my father, the likes of Prabhu Deva garu and Trivikram garu spotted me. At that time, Trivikram garu and my father were planning to produce a movie with Mahesh Babu garu. *Sainyam* was its title. Trivikram garu commented that I was looking good. I slowly got inclined to do something in front of the camera."

He thinks he is indebted to his father who has made everything for him. "I have never had to ask for what I need. He is the best father. I want to be born to him birth after birth. He and I have always put the best effort possible right since our first film together. We just work hard and do our best. With *Dirty Hari*, my

father has entered the 2.0 phase of his career. The transition phase was a bit confusing. During the transition phase, he learned about the changing tastes and trends. It has been a complete makeover. *7 Days 6 Nights* feels like a young filmmaker's film. At the same time, it has my father's stamp over it. This is the most realistic movie from us."

Judging a script is not an easy thing. Even seasoned makers fail at it sometimes. The actor wanted to be a better judge in the future. Because, in the past, he has been influenced badly to do imperfect scripts. "It was my father's call to cast a newcomer like Rohan as my buddy. At first, I recommended that someone who is known be cast. Casting Rohan has been a solid decision. Meher Chahal, my heroine, has done a great job as well. We have also done another movie and it will be released in theatres later

this year," he added.

Clarifying the rumours around his father's last directorial, he clears, "I want to clarify that *7 Days 6 Nights* is a neat film. In fact, I watched it with my sister and mother. Had the content been cheap or vulgar, I wouldn't have done that. This is not a bold or adult film. Why would youngsters pay money to watch adult content in a theatre when they have plenty of adult material available on YouTube?"

Sati is his next film. It's a *Drushyam* type family mystery thriller. The story is between a husband and a wife. The actor wants to go slow even if it means he is jobless for a couple of months. "I have to pick the scripts with thoughtfulness. If you are investing a lot of your energy and time, it has to be worth it. I watch all sorts of movies, especially sci-fi and graphics-heavy ones. While love stories come my way, I love sci-fi and CG films the most," he signs off.



Mega154 to release this Sankranti



The most-awaited Mega154 in the crazy combination of Megastar Chiranjeevi, the very talented director Bobby (KS Ravindra) and the most happening production house Mythri Movie Makers gets its theatrical release date. The mega update for mega fans and cine goers is that *Mega154's* poonakalu in theatres will begin from Sankranti, as the movie is aimed for festival release, 2023.

"Kaluddam... Sankranti ki Jan 2023, they announced

through the poster. Official title and teaser of the movie will be revealed soon. Although his face isn't visible, megastar Chiranjeevi can be seen holding an anchor in his hand in the poster and in the background, sea and boats are visible.

Mega154, as of now, has completed 40% of its shoot. The film's next schedule will begin from next month and they will shoot non-stop to wrap it up within the deadline.

Bobby who is a die-hard fan of Megastar Chiranjeevi is

putting in maximum efforts to present his demi-god in a never seen before mass-appealing and power-packed role. The Poonakalu will begin from the day, the title and first look will be released.

Shruti Haasan is playing the leading lady opposite Chiranjeevi in the movie billed to be a mass action entertainer laced with all the commercial ingredients.

Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar are producing the film, while GK Mohan is the co-pro-

ducer. A top-notch technical team is associating for the project, while several notable actors are part of it.

#Mega154 has music by Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad who provided several chartbuster albums to Chiranjeevi, while Arthur A Wilson handles the cinematography. Niranjan Devaramane is the editor and AS Prakash is the production designer. Sushmita Konidela is the costume designer.

While story and dialogue were written by Bobby himself, Kona Venkat and K Chakravarthy Reddy penned screenplay. The writing department also include Hari Mohana Krishna and Vineeth Potluri.

A day after singer Chinmayi Sripada shared pictures of her newborn twin babies with husband Rahul Ravindran, her Instagram account has been suspended.

Chinmayi Sripada, who, however, saw this coming after her DM's were blocked, had a backup account created through which she has started posting her content for quite a while now.

Instagram suspends singer Chinmayi Sripada's account

These social media businesses apparently, operate differently and take sur-

prising actions in the name of policies.

If we are to believe vocalist Chinmayi Sripada, who is best known for providing a voice for noted actresses, especially Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Instagram has taken extreme measures in her current situation.

"Instagram has basically removed my account for reporting men who send me (pics of) their penises on DMs. Its been going on for a while where I report, but my access was barred. Anyway, that's that. Here is my backup account," the singer wrote.

She revealed that her account was removed after she complained on Instagram about males sending her inappropriate pictures.

Additionally, Chinmayi disclosed the username of her backup Instagram account - chinmayi.sripada.

Chinmayi has been subjected to a lot of abuse on social media since she spoke out for the #MeToo movement and named some prominent figures in the Tamil film industry who exploit women and attempted to engage in sexual misconduct with girls.



Well-known actor Charan Raj's younger son Dev, a pilot by profession, is to make his debut as an actor through his dad's upcoming film *Kuppan*.

Charan Raj, who has acted in over 600 films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, and Bengali, is returning to the film industry as a director through *Kuppan*.

The film is named after a man, whom the director says he befriended during his morning walks.

Charan Raj, who has penned the story, screenplay and dialogues for his film, says, "I have been living in Palavakkam for over 35 years and I go for walks with my dog on the seashore every morning. During my walk, I would chat with several people on the way and return home. It was on one such walk that I got introduced to a fisherman named *Kuppan*. My interactions with him made me want to pen a story on the fisherman. So, after finishing the script, I named the film after my friend. He has also acted in a small role in the film."

Dev Charanraj, who is the second son of Charanraj, was a pilot. He underwent special

training at an acting school before turning hero.

Aadhi Dev is making his debut as the other hero. Along with them, Sushmitha Suresh and



Actor Charan Raj's younger son Dev makes his debut with *Kuppan*

Priyadarshini Arunachalam are also making their debut as heroines.

Charan Raj is also acting in an important role after a long time. He plays his son's uncle in the film.

Sources say *Kuppan* will be a

love story that will revolve around a young fisherman and a north Indian girl in a village.

Cinematography for the film will be by Janarthan and editing will be by SP Ahammed. The film which is being co-directed by K Suresh Kumar, will have music by SG Elai.

Amitabh Bachchan responds to Bachchan Saab fan anthem from Chor Bazaar

The release of *Chor Bazaar*, the newest film starring Akash Puri, has been generating a lot of buzz for its tribute to megastar Amitabh Bachchan.

A tweet from Amitabh Bachchan regarding one of the songs in *Chor Bazaar* has caught the attention of all. The movie *Chor Bazaar* has a special song devoted to megastar Amitabh Bachchan, that is titled 'Bachchan Saab Fan Anthem', in which Akash Puri plays Amitabh's diehard fan. *The tune of Bachchan Saab Fan Anthem* has been made available as a tribute to the illustrious actor.

Amitabh Bachchan



himself has discussed the song. Earlier on Thursday, Amitabh tweeted, "ufffff.. what to say.. this is very gratifying.. my love and respect," in response to

a user's tweet about the song. Directed by Jeevan Reddy of 'George Reddy' fame, the movie has Gehna Sippy as the female lead in *Chor Bazaar*.

India can finish on podium in hockey WC: Savita

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India captain Savita feels there is no dearth of motivation and confidence in the national women's hockey team as it eyes a historic podium finish at the upcoming World Cup.

The top International Hockey Federation (FIH) tournament will be jointly hosted by the Netherlands and Spain from July 1 to 17.

India finished a historic fourth at the Olympics last year and Savita said the Tokyo Games had instilled a belief that they can match the best in the business on the biggest stage.

"Our performance in Tokyo gave us the belief that we can finish on the podium in global events," Savita said.

"Post Olympics, we realigned our focus on taking our performance to the next level. We channelled our energy into doing well in the FIH Pro League and finishing third in this prestigious league has given us a boost ahead of the World Cup."

Indian women's best-ever result at the World Cup is a fourth place finish in the inaugural edition in 1974. In the 2018 tournament, India secured the eighth spot.

India's splendid show in Tokyo has changed the face of women's hockey in the coun-



try. Featuring in its debut FIH Pro League, the Indian women gave big shots like the Netherlands and Argentina tough fights to finish a creditable third.

"The Indian women's hockey team has never won a medal at the World Cup and it is our mission to make this dream come alive this time," Savita said.

The ace goalkeeper said playing and fighting together as a unit will be key to success in the World Cup.

"We are very excited to play in the World Cup. We just want to play as a team. For us, the Olympics was a great experience. We learnt a lot from there and we believe we have to play together and fight hard," she said.

"After the Olympics, everyone in our team is so motivated, so focused. We really want to play against good teams," she added.

In the upcoming quadrennial event, India are placed in Pool B alongside England, China and New Zealand, and will open their campaign against England on July 3 at Amstelveen.

"Of course, England, China and New Zealand are good teams. We've already played against them. But we have to focus on ourselves first. We will go match by match," Savita said.

Consistency is paramount for progress: Schopman ahead of WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian women's hockey team coach Janneke Schopman is stressing on consistency, without which, she said on Friday, the side will struggle to go far in the upcoming World Cup.

The quadrennial event will be jointly hosted by the Netherlands and Spain from July 1 to 17.

India's best-ever result at the World Cup is a fourth-place finish in the inaugural edition in 1974. In 2018, India finished eighth.

"If we truly play to our potential, we play the way we know we can consistently, anything is possible. Women hockey at this moment is very tight, anyone can beat anyone," Schopman said.

"(But) consistency is a big point of attention. If we can play consistently well, top-4, and who knows a podium in the World Cup is a possibility."

"At the same time if we don't perform we can miss the quarterfinals."

The coach said the players need to understand their



potential and deliver on the field in order to achieve consistency.

"I think we have great potential and if we actually play to our potential we are a tough team to beat," the 45-year-old said.

Schopman, a double Olympic medallist defender from the Netherlands, said players will have to shoulder responsibility to achieve success in the World Cup.

"If anything I need to see

is players taking up ownership on the field and believe that they can perform.

"Realistically, I think we are up there. We are in the top 6. Our performance against Argentina (recently in Pro League) showed that we can compete against any country."

India finished a creditable third in their debut FIH Pro League season and Schopman said the recent back-to-back high-intensity matches against Belgium and Argentina augur well ahead of the World Cup.

"Pretty happy with our preparation. We have another week. Last week we had the Pro League matches and quite happy with the way we responded after the Belgium matches. So preparation is going in the right direction."

"It's a great achievement to finish on the podium in your first Pro League. We had good runs against pretty much every team we played. Apart from points we got we learned a lot from these games. It was a satisfying run," she said.

Serena to begin Wimbledon against 113th-ranked foe

AP ■ WIMBLEDON

Serena Williams will begin her Wimbledon comeback by facing Harmony Tan, a 24-year-old from France who is ranked 113th and owns a 2-6 career record in Grand Slam matches.

The placement of Williams in the women's bracket was the most anticipated aspect of Friday's draw at the All England Club. She is making her first appearance in singles at any tournament since she hurt her right leg and stopped playing during the first set of her first-round match at Centre Court a year ago.

Because of her lack of activity over the past 12 months, Williams - who has been No 1 in the rankings - is outside the WTA's top 1,200 this week and so could have ended up anywhere in the field and against any opponent in the first round. She only returned to the tour this week by playing two doubles matches at a tuneup event in England.

While the 40-year-old

American's track record would merit a seeding, the All England Club now adheres strictly to the rankings in determining how it seeds players.

Williams has won seven Wimbledon championships, part of her total of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, a record for the professional era. Tan, meanwhile, will be making her debut at the grass-court tournament.

If Williams gets past Tan, next up could be a match against Sara Sorribes Tormo, who is seeded 32nd but has never been past the second round at the All England Club or the third round at any major in 19 past appearances.

The third round potentially would put Williams against a tougher test: No 6-seeded



Karolina Pliskova, who was the runner-up to Ash Barty last year at Wimbledon and also reached the final of the 2016 U.S. Open - beating Williams in the semifinals there.

Barty retired at age 25 in March and so is not defending her title when play begins on Monday. That also leaves open the question of which woman will have the honor of playing the first match at Centre Court on Tuesday, a slot traditionally reserved for the prior year's champion.

The two most likely choices would seem to be No 1 Iga Swiatek, who enters on a 35-match winning streak and is coming off a title at the French Open, or Simona Halep, who won the 2019 trophy.

Kvitova vs Ostapenko in Eastbourne final

AP ■ EASTBOURNE

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova advanced to her first grass-court final in four years by beating Beatriz Haddad Maia 7-6 (5), 6-4 at Eastbourne on Friday.

Kvitova will face defending champion Jelena Ostapenko in the final. The eighth-seeded Latvian defeated 12th-seeded Camila Giorgi 6-2, 6-2 in the other semifinal match.

Haddad Maia had won 12 straight matches on grass including back-to-back singles titles in Nottingham and Birmingham over the last two weeks.

The 14th-seeded Kvitova reached her first final of 2022 and first grass-court final since Birmingham in 2018. Kvitova earned the only



service break of the match to begin the second set against the 15th-seeded Brazilian.

The 32-year-old Czech player's only career loss in five grass-court finals was to Marion Bartoli at Eastbourne in 2011, when Kvitova went on to win Wimbledon for the first time.

Medvedev loses to Bautista Agut in Mallorca quarters

AP ■ PALMA

Top-ranked Daniil Medvedev will remain without a title on grass this season after a straight-set loss to Roberto Bautista Agut in the quarterfinals of the Mallorca Championships.

Medvedev lost 6-3, 6-2 after entering the match with an 8-2 record on the surface for the year, with his losses coming in consecutive finals in Germany and the Netherlands.

Medvedev, who will not play at Wimbledon because of the ban on Russians over the war in Ukraine, needed to come from behind to get past Aslan Karatsev in the round of 16 on



Wednesday. Medvedev, the defending champion in Mallorca, had only one break opportunity against the 20th-ranked Bautista Agut, who had advanced without having to play in the last 16 because Nick Kyrgios withdrew with an abdominal injury.

Archery WC Stage 3: Compound mixed pair in final

PTI ■ PARIS

Indian archers assured themselves of a second medal in the World Cup Stage 3 with ace duo of Abhishek Verma and Jyothi Surekha Vennam sailing into the compound mixed team final here on Friday.

A day after Deepika Kumari and Co. cruised into the final of recurve women's team event to confirm their first medal of the meet, the compound mixed pair of Verma and Jyothi followed suit, defeating Estonia's Robin Jaatma and Lisell Jaatma 156-151 in a lopsided semifinal.

The Indian duo will face fifth seed France in the com-



pond mixed team final on Saturday.

Making a comeback after more than seven months, world

number 3 Jyothi, who was sidelined in the Asian Games trial, is also in the hunt for an individual medal, having advanced

into the semi-final.

A day after Lisell gave Jyothi a tough fight in the individual quarterfinal, the Estonian along with her teammate Robin failed to create much pressure and slipped behind after the Indian pair had a perfect first round.

Maintaining their consistency, Verma and Jyothi extended their lead to five points in the third round that proved decisive, even as their rivals levelled it 38-38 in the final set of arrows.

Having got a bye into the pre-quarters, third seeded India began their mixed team campaign eliminating Puerto Rico by a handsome eight-point margin (158-150).

Milan begin Scudetto defence against Udinese in mid-August

AP ■ MILAN

AC Milan will begin their Serie A title defence with the visit of Udinese after the 2022/23 season's fixture list was announced on Friday.

Stefano Pioli's side then face Atalanta, Bologna and Sassuolo before hosting the first Milan derby of the season in early September.

Milan took the Scudetto from Inter on the final day of last season's enthralling title race and will likely be doing battle with their local rivals -- who are set to bring back Romelu Lukaku -- for the title in a campaign which starts earlier than usual.

The opening round of fixtures are on August 13, due to the World Cup which kicks off in Qatar in November, and finishes on June 4 next year.



The first week of the season will be held around when Italian families traditionally set off to the seaside, lakes or mountains on holiday to escape the intense summer heat.

The league will break from November 13 to make space for the World Cup but unlike the Premier League will not return in December, with the action starting up again on January 4.

Inter start with a trip to Serie B champions Lecce, one of only three teams from Italy's southern regions, before facing Spezia, Lazio and promoted Cremonese before their first

local derby of the season.

Should the season go down to the wire as it did in May, there are some big matches in the final few weeks which could have an impact on the destination of the title.

BERLUSCONI BACK

Juventus, hotly-tipped to sign free agent Paul Pogba, host Milan in the penultimate round of fixtures, when Inter await rivals Atalanta at the San Siro.

The week before Inter travel south to Napoli, who were well in the title race last season until they fell away in the final weeks of the campaign.

Milan fans will welcome back former owner Silvio Berlusconi in late October when promoted Monza visit the San Siro during the 11th round of fixtures.

Daruvala completes successful Formula 1 test with McLaren

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Young Indian racer Jehan Daruvala made a successful Formula 1 test debut this week with eight-time constructors' winner McLaren and is now eligible for a Super Licence.

The 23-year-old, who is aiming to become the third racer from India to race in Formula 1, drove the Woking-based team's 2021 race-winning challenger -- the MCL35M -- on Tuesday and Wednesday at Silverstone.

The test was Jehan's first taste of F1 machinery and he chalked up over 130 laps combined over the two days, over twice the distance F1 drivers will cover during British GP. The track time helped him earn enough points to apply for a



Super Licence, which is needed to compete in F1.

Jehan, who ran trouble-free on both the days, currently races with Italian team Prema in the Formula 2 championship, the feeder series that sits one step below Formula 1, and is third in

the overall standings.

"I really enjoyed my first time driving a Formula One car. I felt immediately at home and while it was physically more demanding than anything I have driven in the past, I didn't have any issues with my fitness," Jehan was quoted as saying in a media release on Friday.

According to Jehan, the experience gave him good understanding of how teams operate on an F1 weekend.

"As a result, we were able to work through the run plan well and complete everything we had mapped out. We did a mixture of high-fuel long runs and as well as shorter, low-fuel runs on different tyre compounds. That gave me a good understanding of how teams operate on an F1 weekend."