

ANALYSIS 7
DESPITE ITS LOW SHARE
PRICE, LIC IS VALUABLE

MONEY 8
NOT TARGETING ANY LEVEL, BUT RBI WILL
NOT ALLOW 'JERKY MOVEMENTS' OF RUPEE

SPORTS 11
INDIA CAN FINISH ON PODIUM
IN HOCKEY WC: SAVITA

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



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.

Cabinet okays renaming Konaseema dist

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Notwithstanding the resistance that led to the arson and protests, the YS Jaganmohan Reddy-led Cabinet on Friday approved the proposal to name the newly carved Konaseema district as Dr. BR Ambedkar Konaseema district. Among many other decisions, the State Cabinet that had met on Friday had approved renaming the Konaseema district.

The government's decision to rename the Konaseema district had led to protests in the otherwise peaceful Konaseema region last month. The protests also turned violent with the mobsters setting fire to the houses of a minister, and a ruling party MLA. They also torched a few private vehicles.

Now, an official gazette notification will be issued renaming the district.

The government on May 18 issued a preliminary notification changing the name of the Konaseema district to 'Dr. BR Ambedkar Konaseema' district under the relevant sections of the AP Districts (Formation) Act 1974.

The government sought any



Ruling party leaders alleged conspiracy behind the violent protests. Transport minister, Pinipe Viswarup whose house was also burnt by the protestors said the government will not spare anyone who had taken part in the arson

objections or suggestions related to the name change from the general public from the jurisdiction of the district within 30 days from the issue of preliminary notification. They can submit the objections and suggestions, if any, to the District Collector in the stipulated period.

Meanwhile, on May 24, a protest launched by those opposing renaming the Konaseema district had turned violent, pushing the serene Konaseema region to the boil.

Ruling party leaders alleged conspiracy behind the violent protests. Transport minister,

Pinipe Viswarup whose house was also burnt by the protestors said the government will not spare anyone who had taken part in the arson. He said rowdy elements had infiltrated into the mob and attacked his house and the government had all the evidence.

A week before the arson, Section 144 was imposed in the Konaseema district in the wake of protests against the proposal to rename the district, and also Konaseema Sadhana Samithi (KSS) members had called for 'Chalo Konaseema' on May 24.

2

YSRCP's reps sign nomination papers of Droupadi Murmu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On behalf of YSRCP, Parliamentary Party leader V Vijayasai Reddy and the party's leader in Lok Sabha, P V Mithun Reddy signed the nomination papers of the NDA candidate Droupadi Murmu ahead of the Presidential elections. Murmu on Friday filed her nomination papers for the July 8 poll.

YSRCP, on Thursday, confirmed its support for the NDA Presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu and signed her nomination papers for the Presidential elections on Friday morning. YSRCP Rajya Sabha MP Vijaysai Reddy and Lok Sabha MP Mithun Reddy signed the nomination papers. YSRCP holds a 4pc vote share in the polls.

BJD and YSRCP were the non-NDA parties that have taken part in the nomination of Murmu in Delhi.

While YSRCP supremo YS Jaganmohan Reddy was supposed to participate in Murmu's nomination, the plan was later dropped as he had to attend a



pre-scheduled cabinet meeting on Friday morning in the state secretariat.

YSRCP had decided to back the NDA's candidate Droupadi Murmu for president of India as for the first time in the history of India a tribal that too a woman was given such an opportunity, said YSRCP on Thursday while announcing its decision.

As a party that has been giving importance to social justice on a large scale in the last three years YSRCP had decided to support NDA's candidate, said YSRCP.

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. The Chintamani Natakam spoke against the Devadasi Act and there was no need to ban the play, he said. Umesh asked the High Court to issue a stay order on the decision of the AP government to ban the play.

The High Court, however, rejected the request and did not agree to issue interim orders. The court ordered the submission of a translated version of the original book. The case was adjourned to August 17.

2

Green light for welfare calendar, Byju's pact & 3,700 MW project

Nod for Jyoti Surekha's appointment as Dy Collector

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh State Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, on Friday, has taken several key decisions which include 'Amma Vodi', the pact with Byju's, and Green Energy Project of 3,700 MW plant.

Briefing media after the Cabinet meeting, Minister for Information and Public Relations Chelluboina Venugopala Krishna said the Cabinet had approved Jagananna Amma Vodi where Rs 6594.6 crore will be disbursed, benefiting over 43 lakh mothers for sending their children to schools. He said the State government is committed to providing quality education and thus made a pact with Byju's to guide students studying from Classes 4-10, adding that the Cabinet had approved providing tabs to 4.7 lakh students studying Class 8.



The Minister stated that the welfare calendar for July 2022 was approved, where 'Jagananna Vidya Kanuka' will be given on July 5, 'YSR Vahana Mitra' on July 13, 'Kapu Nestam' on July 22 and 'Jagananna Thodu' on July 26.

2

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



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

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.

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.

2

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.

2

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 indif-

ference 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.

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 Veerajua 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.

Venkaiah 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 Sirigapoor 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 BJD) from Odisha.

While Krishnaiah, Divakonda

and Reddy took oath in Telugu, Sirigapoor did so in English.

Bishi has been elected to the Rajya Sabha in the bypoll to fill the casual vacancy caused in the Rajya Sabha due to resignation of Subhash Chandra Singh. He took oath in Oriya.

Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh and Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and External Affairs V Muraleedharan, Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha P C Mody and other senior officers of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat were present.

The MPs were elected unopposed from the respective states earlier.



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Tithi: Divadashi:
Trayodashi:
Nakshatram:
Bharani:
Kritika:
Rahukalam:
Yamagandam:
Varjyam:
Gulika:

Jun 24 11:12 PM
to Jun 26 01:10 AM
Jun 26 01:10 AM
to Jun 27 03:26 AM
Jun 24 08:04 AM
to Jun 25 10:24 AM
Jun 25 10:24 AM
to Jun 26 01:06 PM
to Jun 25 10:24 AM
9:03 AM to 10:41 AM
1:56 PM to 3:34 PM
11:45 PM to 01:32 AM
5:47 AM to 7:25 AM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms
Temp: 36°
Humidity: 64%
Sunrise: 5:37 AM
Sunset: 6:43 PM
Updated: JUNE 24, 2022 5:00 PM

Six lessons from Basra RGUKT students' agitation

Basra, 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 Basra 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 Basra 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;

ad hocism; 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, deshamente 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 Basra 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 Basra 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 dictat 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 - Basra, but all the public universities in the state, long ago.

Established as a university in combined Andhra Pradesh in March 2008, RGUKT-Basra'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 ad hocism 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 Basra 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, Basra stu-

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

The Basra 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 Basra.

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)

CM invited to inaugurate ATC plant

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was invited to inaugurate ATC Tires Plant, which was set up at Achyuthapuram in Visakhapatnam and ready for the launch in August this year.

ATC Tires Director Toshio Fujiwara, along with the representatives of his company have called on Chief Minister here on Friday.

ATC - The Yokohama Rubber Co. Ltd., is a Japan-based company that formed a joint tires group (ATG) with subsidiary companies and has emerged as a world leader in the off-highway tire (OHT) business.

Over the years, the company has spread over to 120 countries on six continents, and in India, ATC has two manufacturing plants one at



Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu) and the other in Dahej (Gujarat).

ATC has come forward and established a Plant in Achyuthapuram with an investment of Rs 1750 crore, an initial production capacity of 135 MT per day, and creating employment for 2,000

people. The company manufactures Small Tires (AFC Segment), Large Bias Tires (Agri & Cons), Radial Tires (Agri), Radial (OTR), Bias Tires, OTR Tires, Forestry Tires, and Solid Tires.

Minister for Industries, Investments and Commerce Gudivada Amarnath, ATC

Tires AP Pvt Ltd Executive Vice Presidents Prahlad Reddy, Ambareesh R Shinde, PR Head YV. Krishnam Raju, Industries Department Special CS Karikala Valavan, Director of Industries Srijana Gummalla, and CMO officials were present on the occasion.

TTD to provide more facilities to waiting devotees: EO

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer AV Dharma Reddy has directed the employees and officials to strive to provide more facilities to the devotees and serve them better.

Addressing a review meeting at Annamaiah Bhavan, here on Friday, the EO asked the officials to take steps to provide more facilities to the waiting devotees as queue lines had crossed 'Asthana Mandapam' and the rush appeared to become unprecedented even on Saturday.

The EO said a pattern has emerged that from Thursday to Sunday the devotees' crowds remain heavy to very heavy, driving the management to deploy more supervision of crowd management from 'Vendi Vakili' to 'Mahadwaram'.

"Over 90,000 devotees are provided Srivari Darshan during peak days. The officials have to ensure the supply of Anna Prasadam and drinking water to the waiting devotees without hassle," he said.

Dharma Reddy asked them to ensure food and beverages, and water supply in Queue lines, VQC -1 & 2, Narayanagiri Gardens. He also instructed on the traffic management and asked to enhance 'Kalyana Katta' supervision as daily almost 40,000 and above devotees have been tonsuring.

The EO directed the vigilance officials to coordinate with police and health officials in queue maintenance, cleaning, and reception officials to provide rooms.

Petitioner apologises to HC for filing plea on Konaseema arson

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP High Court dismissed a petition against the arson in Konaseema district on Friday. The High Court expressed anger at the petitioner saying that it was provocative and that filing such petitions was not a good practice.

One should think before filing such petitions that would provoke hatred among one another, the court said.

The petitioner apologised to the High Court when the court said that it would impose a fine of Rs 50 lakh for filing such petitions.

It may be recalled that some people had indulged in large-



scale violence in the district headquarters of Amalapuram on May 24, opposing the move to rename Konaseema district after Ambedkar.

They set the houses of Transport Minister P Viswaroop and Mummdivaram MLA P Satish Kumar on fire, besides damaging public property.

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.

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.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹245
Without Skin	₹280
Broiler at Farm	₹200

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	425
VISAKHAPATNAM	415
HYDERABAD	418
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.25

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 Niranjana 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



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

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. 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.

Cabinet okays renaming Konaseema...

Continued from Page 1

Despite prohibitory orders in place, the protesters attempted to proceed towards the Collectorate in Amalapuram on that day, crossing the clock tower area from different directions and later setting fire to private vehicles and properties including those belonging to the minister and the MLA.

The period to receive suggestions and objections had ended on June 18 and Friday cabinet approved the renaming proposal. Konaseema was carved out of the East Godavari district on April 4, 2022, with Amalapuram as the district headquarters as part of reorganisation of 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh into 26.

While Kakinada was another district carved out of the East Godavari with Kakinada town as the district headquarters, Rajahmundry was made the district headquarters of the remaining portion of the East Godavari district.

There had been several demands for renaming Konaseema after either former Lok Sabha Speaker GMC Balayogi or B R Ambedkar. The government appears to have obliged the demand for renaming Konaseema as Dr. BR Ambedkar Konaseema district.

Green signal for welfare calendar, Byju's pact & 3,700 MW project

Continued from Page 1

Asserting that the government would not shirk its responsibilities in providing welfare schemes, he said that all the welfare schemes are being implemented in a transparent manner.

The Minister said that ZP Chairpersons of 13 districts will continue as Chairpersons for 26 districts. Power subsidy for aqua farmers having up to 5 acres has now been increased to 10 acres. Further, an R & R package for the displaced families of Vamsadhara Project of Rs 216.71 crore was approved. It also gave the green signal for the changes made in the PRC GO, as per the recommendations made by the committee.

Also, permission was granted to the Green Energy Project being set up in Andhra Pradesh with an estimated cost of Rs 15,000 crore to generate 3,700 MW of power in a phased manner. Approvals were accorded for the recruitment of 3,530 jobs in medical colleges along with 2,558 jobs in hospitals under AP Vaidya Vidhana Parishad across the State. The Cabinet approved providing a Group-1 job to Arjuna Awardee Jyoti Surekha and appointing her as a Deputy Collector.

State Cabinet gave nod for the recruitments in Raj Bhavan, SIPB approvals, 75 acres of land allotment to Wingtech Mobile manufacturing unit in EMC Tirupati, pay scales to aided colleges under AICTE norms, and canceled Disciplinary Protection Tribunal.

State debt well in control...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister flayed opposition for its malicious propaganda on fourteenth and fifteenth finance commission funds and said the state government has cleared the pending arrears of Rs 2,200 crore electricity charges of local bodies. He said the average investment between 2014-19 in large and medium projects was Rs 11,994 crore while it was Rs 13,201 crore in the present government despite the Covid pandemic.

He also added that the rank of the state in exports has been improved in this government.

The data proves that TDP and its friendly media have been constantly and blatantly misleading the people on State finances.

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.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
"e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE"
NIT No. 06/MDR/ENC/MDR/2022 Dated: 22-06-2022
1) Online Tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for a total of seven road works under MDR-Capital, SCC and SR Revenue works Vizianagaram, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru, Krishna and Guntur Districts.
2) Tenderers can download the tender schedules from e-procurement market place, i.e. www.aapeprocurement.gov.in from 30.06.2022 @ 3.00 PM onwards. The last date of receipt of tenders is on or before 14.07.2022 up to 3.30 PM. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place, i.e. www.aapeprocurement.gov.in Sd/- Engineer-in-Chief, (R&B), MDR.
R.O No: 5943/CLADVT/11/2022-DT, Dt. 24.06.2022

Cycling tracks across city soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation authorities are planning to set up a cycling track in the city. The officials are inspecting all possible places for the cycling track in line with walking tracks in the city. The authorities are likely to set up a 20-km track in Vijayawada. The VMC will formally launch a 500-m track on MG Road on Saturday.

With the changing lifestyle, people are giving priority to health and fitness these days. Apart from walking, people have adopted cycling as the fitness mantra. However, for cycling lovers, there is no cycling track in Vijayawada at the moment.

A meeting held to discuss the setting up of cycling tracks was attended by VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar, Additional DCP T Sarkar, Sports Officer Uday Kumar, and representatives of cycling associations. They discussed identifying suitable cycling tracks in the city without causing any disturbance to the traffic, with the support of the Police Department.

A track was set up from



Lemon Tree Park hotel to PWD grounds covering 500 m on both sides of MG road. Police cones and road markings were set up to help the riders. The VMC authorities have informed the cycling clubs and on Saturday, a trial run would be formally launched.

The VMC authorities are planning to set up cycling tracks adjacent to Bandar, Raviz, and Eluru canals in the city and a survey is being done by the engineering staff and urban consultants. The

VMC was planning to set up a 20-km cycling track beside canal bunds and erect benches for the cyclists to take a rest. For an ordinary cycling track, it would cost Rs 9 lakh while for thermoplastic cycling track, the cost is Rs 45 lakh per kilometre.

Swapnil Dinkar said that steps were being taken to bring down pollution in the city which was on the rise. As part of it, cycling tracks were being planned across the city at all possible places. He said on

Saturday, a trial run would be held at 5.30 am from Lemon Tree Park to PWD grounds with the support of traffic police and all cycling clubs would take part in the event.

VMC Sports Officer Uday Kumar said that they were studying the feasibility of cycling on MG road. He said that the VMC was planning to create awareness among the people about cycling. "Very soon, cycling tracks will be set up and made available to the denizens," said Uday Kumar.

CM pats Kidambi Srikanth, Sheikh Jafrin

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy congratulated ace Badminton player Kidambi Srikanth and Deaflympian tennis player Sheikh Jafrin who met the Chief Minister at the Secretariat here on Friday.

The Chief Minister lauded Kidambi Srikanth for playing a key role in the recent victo-

ry of the prestigious Thomas Cup in Bangkok. Also, he congratulated Sheikh Jafrin, a tennis player from Kurnool who won a bronze medal at the Deaf Olympics (Defylympics - 2022). He directed the officials to provide a government job to Sheikh Jafrin based on merit along with a cash incentive. He felicitated Srikanth and Jafrin, and instructed the CMO offi-

cials to cater to all the required facilities and arrangements they need on behalf of the government.

The Chief Minister stated that the Andhra Pradesh government was extending all the help to the players and encouraging them to bring laurels to the State.

AP Badminton Association president Mukkala

Dwarkanath presented a badminton kit to the Chief Minister on behalf of APBA. Tourism and Sports Minister RK Roja, SAAP Chairman Byreddy Siddharth Reddy, Srikanth's parents Radhamukunda, KVS Krishna, Sheikh Jafrin's father Sheikh Zakir Ahmed, SAAP sports officer June Galliot and SAAP officials were present.



TDP creating disturbances in Palnadu: MLA Pinnelli

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ruling YSRCP MLA and Government Whip Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy has alleged that Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh are trying to flare up factional politics in the Palnadu region, where people are living in peace. He alleged that Telugu Desam-encouraged criminals and history sheeters in their party were creating disturbances in the Palnadu region.

Speaking to the media persons on Friday, Ramakrishna Reddy termed Lokesh 'a joker', who did

not know the difference between console and other casual programmes. Alleging that Lokesh came to Palnadu on Thursday to create disturbance in the society, the MLA asked if Nara Lokesh knew what was going on in Palnadu and what was the actual history of Palnadu?

The MLA said that Lokesh came to console the family members of deceased Jallayya who was involved in many crimes and ten police cases were registered during the TDP government led by Chandrababu Naidu in 2014-19. He said that Jallayya was mur-

dered in personal quarrels but Lokesh giving it political colour to flare up disturbances in peaceful Palnadu.

He further alleged that Chandrababu Naidu appointed Brahma Reddy as Palnadu TDP president who was involved in 15 faction murders and this is showing Naidu's conspiracy to create law and order problems in Palnadu. He alleged that Brahma Reddy, who has a factional background, is sent to Macherla and the father and son (Naidu and Lokesh) are looking to set fire here again and start a riot.

Supply quality chilli seeds to farmers: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao has instructed the Agriculture officials and Agriculture Advisory Board members to build confidence among the farmers to get more profit through less investment and overcome various problems being faced by them.

During a meeting with the Agriculture officials and the board members on Friday, the collector directed them to give appropriate and valuable suggestions to the farmers as they have started the sowing of Kharif crops. He said that measures should be taken to supply seeds, pesticides and



fertilizers to the farmers and ensure that minimum support price be given to the farmers produce.

The collector said that most

of the farmers in the district cultivate chilli, cotton and pulses. During the previous season chilli was cultivated in 42,000 acres. Farmers suffered

loss with severe pest issues and the insurance to the farmers was disbursed on June 14 to those registered under E-crop. The collector told the concerned officials to supply quality chilli seeds through Rythu Bharosa Kendrams on MRP only and stern action will be taken if sold more than MRP under section 6A.

Advisory Board chairman D Bamodar Reddy, district agriculture officers M Vijaya Bhaskar, Horticulture department AD B Dayakar Babu, Fisheries AD CS Chakrani, Animal Husbandry department officer K Vidyasagar and others were present on the occasion.

AE arrested in bribery case

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

An Assistant Engineer of APEPDCL has landed on ACB net for demanding a bribe. M Chanti Babu, Assistant Engineer at APEPDCL's Dairy Form Substation in Kakinada mandal, Kakinada district, was caught by the ACB for demanding a bribe of Rs 25,000.

B Devi of Dairy Form Centre, Kakinada mandal, had lodged a complaint with ACB through 14400 App stating that Chanti Babu had demanded Rs 25,000 as a bribe to shift the HT electrical line which was passing close to her house.

Officials asked to render dedicated service to devotees

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TTD EO AV Dharma Reddy has exhorted employees and officials to serve devotees with dedication during the rush of the summer season. Addressing a review meeting at Annamaiah Bhavan on Friday, the EO urged the officials to focus on providing more amenities to the waiting devotees as queue lines had crossed Asthana Mandapam and the rush appeared to become unprecedented even on Saturday.

He said a pattern had emerged. From Thursday to Sunday, the crowd remains heavy to very heavy, driving the management to deploy more supervision of crowd management from Vendi Vakili to Mahadwaram.

As many as 90,000 devotees are provided Srivari Darshan during rush days and officials are pressed to ensure the supply of Anna Prasadam and drinking water to the waiting devotees without hassle. He instructed vigilance officials to coordinate with the police and Health officials in queue maintenance, cleaning and reception officials to provide rooms.

He asked them to ensure food and beverages and water supply in queue lines. He also asked the officials to enhance 'Kalyana Katta' supervision as over 40,000 devotees were tansuring on a daily basis.

Chief Engineer Nageswara Rao, SE-2 Jagadiswar Reddy, VGO Bali Reddy and others were present.

YSRCP govt initiated murder politics: Yarapatineni Srinivasa Rao

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP former MLA Yarapatineni Srinivasa Rao on Friday alleged that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government triggered murder politics while the previous Chandrababu regime focused on welfare and development.

Srinivasa Rao said that Nara Lokesh had a glorious legacy from NTR and Chandrababu Naidu who turned Rayalaseema into 'Rathanala

Seema' (place of jewels). Whereas, Jagan Reddy descended from Raja Reddy and YSR who turned Rayalaseema into a hotbed of faction killings.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader challenged YSRCP MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy to climb the footsteps of Tirumala hills with the same ease as that of Chandrababu Naidu. It was Jagan Mohan Reddy who was

fostering murder politics. Srinivasa Rao pointed out how the ruling party leaders stated at the time of Thota Chandraiah's murder that there were 10 more persons who should be killed. Only as part of this premeditated plan, Kancherla Jallaiah was eliminated. However, the TDP would not be afraid of the threats and murder politics of the ruling YSRCP MLAs.

The TDP leader strongly



objected to Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy 'twisting'

the statement of Lokesh that he had got the pride of Rayalaseema. The grandfather of Lokesh had a bright history while that of Jagan's grandfather was very dark and blood-stained. Nobody would be able to shake the foundations of the TDP.

Srinivasa Rao said that the TDP was a party that would feed the poor people while the YSRCP had a bad history of snatching away food from the

mouths of poor families. What was the problem of the ruling party leaders when the TDP was giving food to the poor people? The TDP activists would fight like warriors against the boundless corruption of the Jagan regime.

The TDP leader warned that the YSRCP would not be able to stay in power forever. On the other hand, the Jagan regime had cancelled all pro-people programmes. They promised

to give Rs. 1 lakh to Muslim brides under Dulhan. After coming to power, it was totally ignored. Such was the betrayal of the Chief Minister.

Srinivasa Rao pointed out that the Congress party did not even get opposition status in 1994. As it did faction politics, the people gave just 26 out of the total 294 seats. At that time, these YSRCP leaders were in the main Congress party from which it descended.

TDP chief condemns attack on ex-mayor

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP national president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday condemned what he described as the YSRCP government-sponsored attack on Chittoor ex-mayor and TDP leader Kathari Hemalatha.

Naidu expressed surprise that some police officers were degrading themselves to win favours from the Jagan Reddy rule. What message were they sending by harassing witnesses in the mayor couple's murder in Chittoor and by filing false cases against them?

In a statement here, the TDP chief asked whether the erring police were trying to save the culprits. It was atrocious on the part of the police to put a bag of ganja in the house of Poorna in order to file a fabricated case against him.

Naidu said when ex-Mayor Hemalatha went there to stop the police highhandedness, they did not hesitate to run the

police jeep on her. With what confidence, the police were resorting to such atrocious activities? The Government-sponsored attacks were highly condemnable.

Chandrababu Naidu warned that the TDP would not leave the police officers who were committing serious offences by turning into the ruling YSRCP activists.

Meanwhile, TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh, in a separate statement, said that their party would fight a legal battle on behalf of the victimised TDP leaders. After coming to power, the TDP would take all the necessary action against all the erring officers.

Lokesh asked whether asking for protection to the witnesses in a murder case was the crime of ex-mayor Hemalatha. The police should explain whether they were living with the salaries taken from the public or just the private army is run by the Jagan Reddy mafia.

Slain driver's parents meet Naidu

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The parents of slain driver Veedhi Subrahmanyam met TDP national president and former chief minister, N Chandrababu Naidu, at the TDP office here on Friday.

Nookarathnam and Satyanarayana, mother and father of the slain driver, told Naidu that the police were trying to dilute the murder of their son.

The accused in the murder of Veedhi Subrahmanyam was YCP MLC Anantha Babu, who has been sent to jail.

A TDP press release here said that the driver's parents alleged that the police were making every effort to save Anantha Babu.

The aged parents asserted that they were prepared for



a legal battle for which they sought the support of the Telugu Desam Party.

Subrahmanyam's parents strongly believed that the accused persons in their son's murder would get correct punishment only if the CBI

would probe the case. They thanked the TDP for giving them financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh.

Chandrababu Naidu assured them of all support from the TDP side in their future struggles.

Galla Aruna hangs her boots in politics

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Participating in the groundbreaking ceremony of the building for Amara Raja Skill Development Centre at Diguvaamagham of Thavanampalle mandal in Chittoor district on Friday, senior Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader and former minister Galla Aruna Kumari said that her political career had come to an end. She said there was nothing to do in politics now and she had seen everything in politics and held many positions.

She also made an interesting comment about Galla Jayadev, who is presently TDP MP from Guntur. She said that Jayadev would continue in politics. He and his followers could be there in any party that has a future.

Aruna made it clear that she was no more a senior leader in

the party. In the present circumstances, she had no role to play in the party and that was why she had been silent.

Galla Aruna had been with the Congress party for quite a long time, before switching over to the TDP after the State bifurcation. She contested the Assembly elections from Chandragiri constituency in 2014, but could not win the seat. In 2019, she did not contest the elections at all.

On the other hand, Galla Jayadev, who joined the TDP, won as Guntur MP both in 2014 and 2019. In October 2020, Aruna resigned from the TDP politburo much to the shock of the party workers.

Interestingly, the decision was taken after the State government retrieved 253 acres of land leased out to her family-run company Amara Raja Group, as no industry was set up on the land.

Indian Navy ships visit Vietnam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of their deployment to South East Asia, Indian Naval Ships Sahyadri and Kamorta under the Command of Rear Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet of Vizag base, are on a visit to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam from June 24 to 26. INS Sahyadri is an indigenous designed and built 6000-ton multi-role stealth frigate and INS Kamorta is an indigenously built ASW corvette.

The visit of the Indian Navy ships coincides with celebrations marking 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Vietnam and seeks to bolster maritime cooperation and strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two navies that would contribute toward security and stability in the region.

During their stay in Ho Chi Minh City, a wide range of interactions including professional exchanges and sports fixtures are scheduled between the two navies.



Medical equipment donated to KGH

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In an attempt to boost health infrastructure in Visakhapatnam, Vedanta has provided medical support to the city's King George Hospital. As part of its CSR initiative, the company donated a Cardioline Holter Monitor to the Cardiology Department of the hospital. The device was handed over to the hospital Superintendent Dr P Mythili by the company Chief Executive Officer C Sateesh Kumar in the



presence of Dr Malladi Srinivasa Rao, Head of Cardiology Department, King George Hospital, and Dr Shirin Rahman, local influencer. Dr Srinivas thanked Vedanta for

the benevolent gesture and said that the medical device would benefit patients as well as students.

Sauvick Mazumdar, CEO, Vedanta, said the constant endeavour was to support holistic development of communities around through our structured CSR programs, and they believed that quality healthcare facility was an extremely important aspect of community development. "This initiative is yet another step in our efforts to contribute towards the upgra-

dation of medical infrastructure for the larger benefits of the people of Vizag and peripheral areas," he said.

Dr Malladi Srinivasa Rao, Head, Cardiology Department, King George Hospital, expressed gratefulness to the benevolent gesture rendered by Vizag General Cargo Berth (Vedanta) by donating the valuable Holter recorder and analyser to the department of Cardiology, King George Hospital, Visakhapatnam.

Awareness of natural farming underscored

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector P Prasanthi underlined the need for creating awareness among the farmers on natural farming.

An awareness programme on natural farming was organised by the AP state rural development, Panchayat Raj, and farmers' empowerment committee to village sarpanches here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prasanthi said that such a situation prevailed making nature farming mandatory. She said that fertilizers and pesticides are being used in high quantities on horticulture crops including vegetables and other crops which are polluting the soil and also water. Using huge quantities of fertilizers and pesticides is creating various health problems for people. As huge quantities of pesticides are being used to prevent pests on horticulture crops and vegetables it causes cancer, she informed.



Nowadays, the traders use chemicals to make vegetables and fruits look fresh which are hazardous to health, she informed. The Collector said that the farmers invest 50 per cent on their crops to buy pes-

ticides and fertilizers, the Collector said.

Using pesticides more than prescribed levels would cause the pests to gain immunity to face the pesticides. In the present situation, taking natural

farming is imperative, she said. She advised the farmers to prepare compost fertilizer to strengthen the soil.

Village sarpanches of 61 villages attended the awareness programme.

SEB conducts checks against illicit liquor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) officials registered 558 cases and arrested 667 people during weeklong inspections against illegal liquor in Andhra Pradesh. SEB Commissioner Ravi Sankar Ayyanar said that the SEB had taken key steps to restrain the illegal liquor and ganja menace. He said that strict and regular checks were taking place at all border places in the State to prevent smuggling.

667 people arrested in 558 cases

Ravi Sankar Ayyanar said that with the establishment of surveillance using the latest technology, the SEC had intensified patrols to curb illegal liquor and ganja transportation. He said that the SEB was conducting surprise inspections, which were helping to curb illegal liquor menace.

Ravi Sankar Ayyanar said that under the supervision of DIG Ramesh Reddy, the SEB conducted surprise checks from June 17 to 23 in the State, in which SEB seized 3,239 liters of ID liquor.



Complete houses in Jagananna layouts: Addl Secy

PNS ■ ELURU

Housing Department Additional Secretary Rahul Pandey has asked the district officials to work in a coordinated manner to complete the construction of houses in the Jagananna layouts.

Rahul Pandey held a review meeting with district Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh, state housing corporation MD M Shiva Prasad, and other officials at the Collector's office on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Additional Secretary Rahul Pandey said that the state government was giving utmost priority to the housing scheme for the poor in the Navaratnalu programme. The State government had given over 32 lakh title deeds of house sites to the eligible poor and no other

state in the country had implemented such a scheme.

He asked all the officials of the concerned departments to work in coordination for the successful implementation of such an ambitious program. He wanted to expedite the construction of houses by making the beneficiaries fully aware of the free sand, cement, iron and other construction materials provided by the state government as subsidy for the construction of houses.

Rahul Pandey said that engineering assistants in the village secretariat level should lay special focus on the construction of houses and educate the beneficiaries in this regard. He asked them to expedite the construction of approach roads, levelling of low lying areas, and providing drinking water and other basic ameni-

ties to the colonies.

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that steps should be taken to make the beneficiaries, who had not yet started construction of houses in their plots, start construction of houses. The officials should motivate the beneficiaries to take up construction works of their houses in the allocated plots, he told the officials.

The Collector said that efforts would be made to ensure that the houses in the Jagananna colonies would be constructed by the prescribed time. He said that cement, sand, and iron were being supplied to the beneficiaries. Joint Collector P Arun Babu, housing PD Venugopal, municipal commissioner Sk. Shahid and other officials were present.

TG donates hostel bldg to Vasavi choultry

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Arya Vysya Choultry's president Devaki Venkateswarulu thanked BJP leader and MP, TG Venkatesh, for donating Rs 20 crore worth of Arya Vysya hostel building to Vasavi choultry.

The Arya Vysya hostel building is located in Kurnool which is accessible to many colleges. Devaki Venkateswarulu said that TG Venkateswarulu is extending all kinds of help to Arya Vysya and he tries to resolve their problems. TG Venkatesh donated Rs 20 crore worth of hostel building to the VasaviChoultry. "On behalf of all Arya Vysyas I thank TG Venkatesh for donating the building", he said.

On the occasion, the Vasavai organisation felicitat-



ed TG Venkatesh at a programme organised here. Vasavi organisation general secretary Uppala Bharataiah, Additional general secretary Elluru Lakshmiiah, Treasurer Perumalla Koteswara Rao and members Perumalla Subramanyam, Baisani Subramanyam, Vemula Venkateswarlu and Guturi Subbarayya were present.

Police officials directed to focus on checking road accidents

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Bapatla district Superintendent of Police Vakul Jindal has directed the police officials to take measures to check road accidents in the district.

The SP on Friday personally visited Epurupalem cross-road, Thotavaripalem junction, Burlavaripalem junction, Kothapeta Junction, and Papayapalem junction which are the accident-prone areas.

District SP instructed officers to arrange sign boards, danger boards, speed breakers and radium sticker pasted sand drums in a zigzag manner by the association of concerned panchayat officials in the above-said places. District SP said every Saturday in the week is observed as No Accident Day in the district and black spots on National



Highway 216 and various places prone to road accidents were visited.

Further, the SP Instructed Authorities to install sand-filled drums affixed with radium stickers in a zigzag manner, arrange Warning boards, and speed breakers, and police

personnel and officers will be on duty to prevent road accidents in the areas frequently identified as black spots on Saturday. Chirala SDPO P Srikanth, DSB Inspector A Srinivas, and other officials were among those who accompanied the SP.

KCR to open T-Hub2 on June 28

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu 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 start-ups and entrepreneurs.

There will be a stand-up comedy, panel discussions and exchange of MoUs.

The Telangana IT department and Koo App will exchange MoUs. T-Hub will exchange MoUs with HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Hero Motocorp, Pontaq and Web3.0. T-Hub1 was inaugurated by Ratan Tata.

TRS hopes Hyderabad jinx continues for BJP

After 2004 NEC in Hyd, BJP lost power

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After 18years, Bharatiya Janata Party is gearing up to host its national executive meeting in Hyderabad next month. TRS is hopeful that history repeats after the NEC meeting. The last NEC was last 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 ambition of Mission South.

Ahead of general election in 2004, 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, Party president was M Venkaiah Naidu who is now the Vice

President. The meeting was held at 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 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.

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.

TDP blocks road against removal of pension

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) activists, led by former MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy, organised a rasta roko at Kamalapadu village in Podili mandal on Friday in protest against the weeding out of pensions to 16 Dalits.

The TDP activists squatted on the road blocking the traffic in the village. Talking to the media former MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy alleged that the pension of 16 Dalits was cancelled in an unjust manner.

He said that a Dalit family received Rs 21,370 electricity bill, at the same time, their pension was cancelled.

The ex-MLA demanded that the pension to the 16 Dalit should be revived. He said that the crop loss compensation was disbursed only to the farmers who are affiliated with the YSRCP. The officials spoke with the former MLA and promised that their demands would be met. With the assurances from the officials, the TDP activists called off their rasta roko.



Accused in Ganji Prasad murder case escapes

PNS ■ ELURU

One of the accused in the sensational murder of Ganji Prasad escaped from the Government hospital where he was admitted for treatment.

Police said that Koduri Raviteja was one of the accused in the Ganji Prasad murder case which took place at G Kottapalli in Dwaraka Tirumala manal a few months ago.

He was arrested in the case and was on judicial remand. He was lodged in the district prison as a remand prisoner.

He was admitted to the Government hospital on June 14 for treatment. On the night of Thursday, he escaped from the Government hospital. The police formed special teams to arrest him. He belongs to IS Raghavapuram

in Dwaraka Tirumala mandal. He was involved in several criminal cases including chain snatching and fake current notes racket. Several cases were registered against him in Lakkavaram police station. The escape of Raviteja created a common among police officials and special teams deployed to nab him.

Meanwhile, the police arrested the escaped under trial prisoner Raviteja at Nallajarla village on Friday.

Superintendent of police Rahul Dev Sharma suspended a head constable and three constables for dereliction of duty in connection with the escape of an under trial prisoner. The police held four persons K Rambabu, Undrajavarapu Pravin, P Ramakrishna in connection with his escape from the police custody.



Rs 16,231.36 cr Nabard-approved annual credit plan unveiled

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Collector K Venkataramana Reddy outlined a Rs 16,231.36 crore NABARD approved annual credit action plan for 2022-23 and urged officials to implement the same to bring all-around development to the Tirupati district.

The Collector informed that after the bifurcation of the district, the Rs 16,231.36 crore credit plan for Tirupati included Rs 8844.73 crore for the

agricultural and allied sector, Rs 2484.24 crore for small and medium scale Industries, Rs 1074.35 crore for planned sectors, Rs 3728.03 crore for non-plan sectors.

The credit plan included 15 000 rural and 4200 urban self-help groups with bank linkage up to Rs 899.89 crore. He said as per 2022-23 official records only 40 percent of targeted works were complete



and need to speed up the rest by 60 percent. Among others, the District Collector urged officials to take up completion of credit

deployment works programme wise in housing, BC, SC and ST sectors. NABARD Assistant General Manager said that a Rs 16,000 crore credit plan was embedded in the current fiscal for implementation.

Expedite investigation into SC/ST atrocity cases: SP

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Superintendent of police directed the police officials to expedite the investigation of the SC/ST Atrocities case and resolve them at the earliest.

The SP held a video conference with the DSPs here on Friday on the SC/ST Atrocities cases, crimes against women, rapes, and

POCSO cases. Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that an action plan should be evolved to reduce pending cases.

The SP reviewed the investigation, arrests of the accused, and filing of charge sheets in the SC/ST atrocities cases. The SP reviewed the cases registered so far under the SC and ST Atrocities Act across the district and

reviewed the investigation, progress of the cases, arrest of the accused, and filing of charge sheets.

FSL reports in SC and ST cases should be filed expeditiously and charge sheets should be filed within the stipulated time, she told them.

The SP warned that departmental action would be taken against the officers who were indifferent in the registering

and investigation of SCs and STs Atrocities cases.

She inquired the officers about the pending SC and ST cases at various stages. She asked them the reasons for the pending cases and issued appropriate guidelines to the officers to resolve the old and pending cases quickly and take special measures as per the plan to reduce their number.

The SP also reviewed the

POCSO cases, crimes against women, and other cases being investigated by the DSP level officers under special investigation. It was suggested that the investigation in the POCSO cases should be completed within 7 days and the culprits should be punished with proper evidence, with a greater focus on property cases and recovery of stolen property, she told the officials.



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-Adlispur 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

NIJRJAR 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.

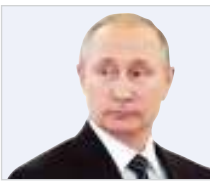
In the long run, the intrinsic value of a company remains constant, irrespective of what the traders of stocks do every day in the market. In the long run, the share price will be equal to the intrinsic value of a company. This is true for all the markets and for all the stocks. The annual report of 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



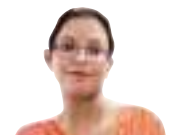
THE WEST IS FOMENTING CRISIS. THE STATE OF GLOBAL ECONOMY IS DUE TO THE SELFISH ACTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL STATES.—RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

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 geostrategic location. Pakistan is



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

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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. We are there in the market. We will not allow disorderly movements."

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

India Traders (CAIT) has convened a meeting of leading business associations of Delhi on June 29 to decide the future course of action over the issue. Condemning the Arvind Kejriwal government's decision, CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal said the move will ruin the trade in Delhi to a larger extent. He claimed the traders in Delhi are "anguished and will oppose the arbitrary and obnoxious order".

Forex reserves dip by US\$ 5.87 bn to US\$ 590.588 bn

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves declined by USD 5.87 billion to USD 590.588 billion in the week ended on June 17, the RBI data showed. In the previous week ended on June 10, the reserves had dropped by USD 4.599 billion to USD 596.458 billion. In the reporting week, the forex reserves fell due to a dip in foreign current assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves, and also in gold reserves, the data showed. FCA decreased by USD 5.362 billion to USD 526.882 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement, released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

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.



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.

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."

Most large merchants comply with card tokenisation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the large merchants have complied with the RBI's card-on-file (CoF) tokenisation norms and 19.5 crore tokens have been issued so far, sources said. The RBI had directed the merchants to implement its tokenisation norms by June 30, 2022. The central bank has twice extended the deadline of its implementation in the past. Card-on-file or CoF refers to card information stored by payment gateway and merchants to process future transactions. According to the sources, the system is fairly well prepared as most large merchants have already adjusted. Under tokenisation ser-



Some of them are in the process of doing it, while for some foreign entities business may not be that large for them to focus on making these changes, the sources said. There are about 19.5 crore tokens have already been issued so far and it is going up regularly, they added. The basic purpose of

vices, a unique alternate code is generated to facilitate transactions through cards. The RBI in last September prohibited merchants from storing customer card details on their servers with effect from January 1, 2022, and mandated the adoption of CoF tokenisation as an alternative to card storage.

RBI extends card tokenisation deadline by 3 months till Sep

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday extended the card-on-file (CoF) tokenisation deadline by three months to September 30, 2022, given various representations received from industry bodies. Card-on-file, or CoF, refers to card information stored by payment gateway and merchants to process future transactions. The earlier deadline was expiring on June 30, 2022. In a circular, the RBI said the industry

stakeholders have highlighted some issues related to the implementation of the framework in respect of guest checkout transactions. Also, a number of transactions processed using tokens is yet to gain traction across all categories of merchants. These issues are being dealt with in consultation with the stakeholders, and to avoid disruption and inconvenience to cardholders," it said while extending the timeline of June 30 by three more months to September 30, 2022.

tokenisation is to increase and improve customer safety.

With tokenisation, storage of card details is limited.



Taraji P. Henson Wants To Leave US Due To ‘Pressures Of Being Black’

Actress Taraji P. Henson is considering leaving the US because she's tired of the 'pressures of being Black'.

According to *aceshowbiz.com*, in a new interview, the 51-year-old actress shared that she is 'really considering' finding somewhere else to live because the political and social climate in the US has left her feeling exhausted.

She said on the *PEOPLE Every Day* podcast, "I'm really considering getting up out of here, leaving and living in another country. That's something that comes with 50, you get tired of fighting. I'm tired."

Asked what has left her tired, the *Empire* star noted the 'pressures of being Black' and the constant fight for peace and justice.

She adds, "I just don't want to have to do another hashtag a I fought, I chanted, I marched. I'm tired."

The *Minions: Rise of Gru* star feels she could lead a stress-free life elsewhere and is happy she's achieved so much in her professional life that she now has the freedom to travel if she wants.

"I want to go where there's neutral ground. I want to just be. And be happy. I want to be called 'Bella' every day, drink wine and swat flies on the porch. Stress-free," she said.

"There's something that happens when you turn 50, where all of your f**** are behind you. I've accomplished a lot and I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm at the point now where if I say, I quit, I'm going to go travel the world, I can. It's so freeing," she added.

Henson still has some career ambitions.

She said, "I've always wanted to play a villain. I still want to play a real-life villain like a Marvel character, but I'm happy to be Belle Bottom (in *Minions: The Rise of Gru*). She is jazzy and has a big afro."

Though Henson has no definite plans in place to move at the moment, she is looking forward to taking a break with her friend Mary J. Blige soon.

She said, "I and Mary have been trying to do this trip for so long but our schedules just keep getting crazy. I just told her Look, enough is enough, I need a vacation."

Chris Pratt Says His *Super Mario Bros.* Voice Is ‘Unlike Anything You’ve Heard’

Actor Chris Pratt says his voice performance as Mario in the upcoming feature adaptation of the *Super Mario Bros.* video game will be "unlike anything you've heard".

"Variety" got the chance to catch up with Pratt at the Wednesday night premiere of his new Amazon Prime Video series *The Terminal List* to talk about finding his voice for the film, which co-stars Charlie Day as Luigi.

There's been much internet discussion over Pratt's casting in the animated film as the Italian plumber despite his non-Italian background, with critics expressing concern that his accent could potentially be offensive.

However, the film's co-producer, Illumination Entertainment's Chris Meledandri, defended Pratt's casting and vowed that his voice work is phenomenal in a recent interview with *TooFab*. Pratt echoed Meledandri's sentiment, telling *Variety* that Mario's voice has been updated, reports *'Variety'*.

"I worked really closely with the directors and trying out a few things and landed on something that I'm really proud of and can't wait for people to see and hear. It's an animated voiceover narrative. It's not a live-action movie. I'm not gonna be wearing a plumber suit running all over. I'm providing a voice for an animated character, and it is updated and



unlike anything you've heard in the Mario world before," Pratt said.

The untitled Universal movie, directed by Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, will hit theatres next April. Rounding out the cast are Anya Taylor-Joy, Jack Black, Keegan-Michael Key, Seth Rogen, Kevin Michael Richardson, Fred Armisen and Sebastian Maniscalco.

Pratt hit the carpet on the heels of

another dino-blockbuster. In its second weekend of release, *Jurassic World Dominion* brought in a domestic gross of \$259 million.

It's Pratt's third film in the six-installment franchise.

He has no plans to reprise the role of Owen again, but who knows what the future could hold.

"It seemed pretty intentional that this was just three movies. It felt like

a trilogy," Pratt said.

Sure, but if he wanted another *Jurassic* film, he could probably make it happen, right?

"I'd have to read the script. I can think of a million ways to contrive to bring Owen back, but I would want it to be authentic and real and be worthy of the story. I would say no, but I guess you can't rule it out 1,000 percent," Pratt said.

Game Of Thrones Sequel With Kit Harrington Gets Working Title *Snow*

The *Game Of Thrones* sequel starring Kit Harrington as Jon Snow will be named after the character, according to the creator of the fantasy novels, George R.R. Martin.

"Yes, there is a Jon Snow show in development," Martin wrote in his personal blog on Thursday, reports *Deadline*. He said, "Our working title for the show is *Snow*."

In the entry on his blog, the author on whose books the award-winning blockbuster was based, teased out a few more details of the potential series, which seems to be much further

along than previously presumed. For one thing, reiterating what the series' star Emilia Clarke said, Martin shared that it was Harrington himself who initiated the idea for the new show.

The scribe once called the 'American Tolkien' by *Time* Magazine also revealed that *Snow* is partially staffed up. "Yes, it was Kit Harrington (sic) who brought the idea to us, the self-described way too busy," Martin wrote. "I cannot tell you the names of the writers/showrunners since that has not been cleared for release yet... but Kit brought them in too, his own team, and they are ter-



rific. *Snow* has been in development almost as long as the other three, but for whatever reason, it was

never announced and it never leaked... until now," Martin noted. The trio of previously announced *Game Of Thrones* spinoffs in the works is the Amanda Segal directed *10,000 Ships*, 9 *Voyages aka Sea Snake* from Bruno Heller; and the Steve Conrad-penned *Dunk and Egg* prequel series entitled either *The Hedge Knight* or *Knight of the Seven Kingdoms*. The first prequel series, *House of the Dragon*, stars Matt Smith, Olivia Cooke, Emma D'Arcy, Steve Toussaint, Eve Best, Fabien Frankel, Sonoya Mizuno, and Rhys Ifans and is set to premiere on August 21.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



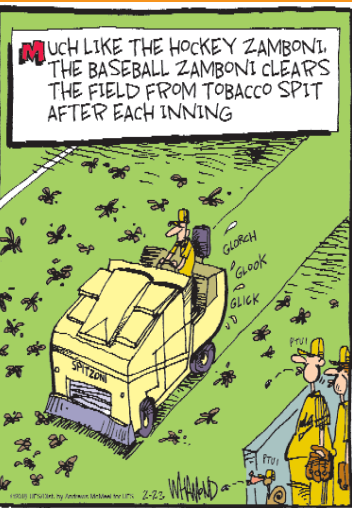
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



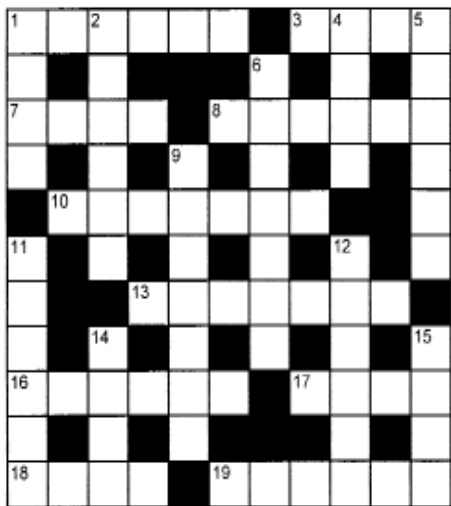
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Cleaned with water
- A wartime explosive
- One quarter of thirty-six
- A robber at sea
- Old-aged
- Using a shovel
- Talented, skillful
- Wicked
- Gritty stuff on the beach
- Connected together

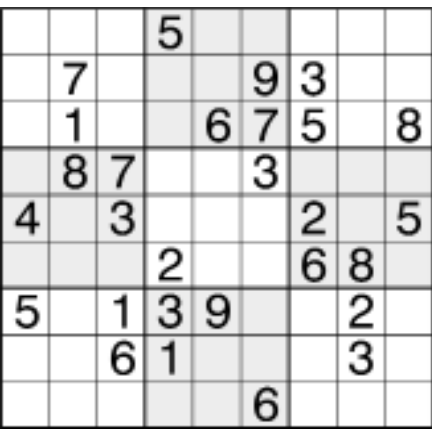
DOWN

- Close and open one eye quickly
- Unmarried
- Egg-shaped

SOLUTION



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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



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 setbacks 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 vision-ary 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.



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



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.

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

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-



pound 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."



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 an 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 have 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.

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.

Instagram suspends singer Chinmayi Sripada's account

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*.

