

ANALYSIS 7
WE SHOULD CELEBRATE
INDEPENDENCE MONTH

MONEY 8
28 PC GST LIKELY ON
GROSS REVENUE

SPORTS 11
INDIA WOMEN EYE SERIES
SWEEP AGAINST SRI LANKA

VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



DIVYANSHA KAUSHIK THRILLED TO BE A PART OF RAMA RAO ON DUTY

Page 12

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DESTRUCTION EVERYWHERE, HELP SCARCE AFTER AFGHANISTAN QUAKE

When the ground heaved from last week's earthquake in Afghanistan, Nahim Gul's stone-and-mud house collapsed on top of him. He clawed through the rubble in the pre-dawn darkness, choking on dust as he searched for his father and two sisters. He doesn't know how many hours of digging passed before he caught a glimpse of their bodies under the ruins. They were dead. Now, days after a 6 magnitude quake that devastated a remote region of southeast Afghanistan and killed at least 1,150 people and injured hundreds more, Gul sees destruction everywhere and help in short supply. His niece and nephew were also killed in the quake, crushed by the walls of their house.

PRINCE CHARLES GOT SUITCASE OF CASH FROM QATAR FOR CHARITY

Prince Charles, the heir to Britain's throne, allegedly accepted a suitcase full of cash as a charitable donation from the former Prime Minister of Qatar, according to a UK media report on Sunday. The Sunday Times' says the suitcase was one of three bundles of cash given as charitable donations which the 73-year-old received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani. The three lots, which reportedly totalled Euro 3 million, were handed to the prince personally between 2011 and 2015. Each payment was reportedly deposited into the accounts of the Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund (PWCF), a low-profile grant-making entity which funds projects close to the royal's heart and his country estate in Scotland.

IRAN LAUNCHES ROCKET INTO SPACE AMID NUCLEAR TALKS

Iranian state television said Sunday that Tehran had launched a solid-fueled rocket into space, drawing a rebuke from Washington ahead of the expected resumption of stalled talks over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers. It's unclear when or where the rocket was launched, but the announcement came after satellite photos showed preparations at Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's rural Semnan province, the site of Iran's frequent failed attempts to put a satellite into orbit. State-run media aired dramatic footage of the blastoff against the backdrop of heightened tensions over Tehran's nuclear program, which is racing ahead under decreasing international oversight.

AROUND 3 LAKH PILGRIMS HAVE REGISTERED FOR AMARNATH YATRA

Around three lakh pilgrims have registered so far for the annual Amarnath Yatra which is scheduled to begin on June 30 amid unprecedented security arrangements in south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said on Sunday. Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), which manages the annual pilgrimage, commenced the registration of pilgrims for the 43-day yatra on April 11 through 566 designated branches of various banks across the country, in addition to the facility on its website. Registrations will continue till the end of the yatra.

YSRCP wins big in Atmakur by-poll

While Mekapati Vikram sets record with 82,742 majority, his BJP rival Bharat Kumar loses deposit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a massive victory, YSRCP candidate Mekapati Vikram Reddy had won the by-poll held for the Atmakur Assembly segment in the Nellore district with a huge margin. While the ruling party set an ambitious target of securing at least one lakh vote majority, Vikram Reddy won the seat with 82,742 votes which was also a record of sorts in the history of the Atmakur Assembly segment.

Vikram Reddy won with a huge margin over the nearest rival BJP's G Bharath Kumar Yadav who had settled at a distant second. The BJP candidate lost the deposit as he could get only 19,353 votes. TDP had stayed away from the by-poll.

Vikram Reddy's brother Goutham Reddy had won the seat with just 22,276 votes over his nearest rival of TDP's Bollineni Krishnaiah in 2019. The by-poll, which was held on June 23, was necessitated due to the sudden demise of Mekapati Goutham Reddy in February. The counting of votes took place on Sunday. From round one of counting, Vikram Reddy had maintained the lead until the last round.

"I thank the voters of Atmakur for reposing faith in me. With this win, I got an opportunity to take forward the good work left by Goutham Anna and also the ideals of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy," said Vikram Reddy after the poll authorities declared the result.



LOW VOTER TURNOUT SPOILS YSRCP'S 1 LAKH MAJORITY TARGET

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Though the ruling party candidates have won with huge margins in both the by-polls held recently for the Badvel Assembly segment in Kadapa district and now in Atmakur, low voter turnout had spoiled the expected vote margins of YSRCP. In the by-poll for Badvel in Kadapa district held in November last year, YSRCP candidate, Dasari Sudha who had polled a total 1,12,211 votes, had won with a thumping majority of 90,533 votes with a whopping 76.25 vote share over her nearest BJP rival Panathala Suresh who secured 21,621 votes and stood at a distant second and lost deposit. The Congress candidate former MLA P M Kamalamma, who secured only 6,205 votes, had lost the deposit. Sudha could win with a record margin despite a significant drop in the overall voter turnout. YSRCP leaders strived hard to

motivate voters to go out and vote to improve the overall poll percentage that may help Sudha secure more than a lakh votes margin. But, to their disappointment, voter turnout had dropped in comparison with the 2019 polls. The poll percentage on October 30 for the Badvel by-poll last year was 68.12 per cent which is a sharp decline from the voter turnout in 2019 polls. According to the poll data in the 2019 Assembly elections, Badvel recorded a voter turnout of 77.64 per cent. The voter turnout in the 2014 Assembly elections was 73.04 per cent and in 2009 it was 73.07 per cent. The by-poll to Badvel reserved Assembly segment was necessitated due to the sudden demise of the sitting MLA from ruling YSRCP Gunthoti Venkata Subbaiah in March. In Atmakur, 14 candidates were in the fray for the June 23 by-poll. YSRCP leaders pointed out the low voter turnout for not meeting the target of one lakh votes majority in Atmakur.

BJP IMPROVED VOTE SHARE: VEERAJU

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

While BJP candidate G Bharat Kumar Yadav, who was in the Atmakur by-poll fray, polled only 19,352 and lost the deposit, party State unit chief Somu Veerajulu claimed the saffron party had improved its vote share. After the result was out, Somu Veerajulu, on several social media platforms, using infographics, said while the party candidate in 2019 polled only 2,314 votes and 1.33 per cent of the total votes polled in the by-poll held now, party candidate Bharat Kumar had polled 19,332 votes and improved its vote share to 14.1 per cent. "The results of the Atmakur by-elections are direct proof of the increasing trust and affection of the people for BJP in the State. BJP Andhra Pradesh expresses heartfelt thanks to voters and activists," said Veerajulu. BJP had brought in many leaders for campaigning. The party had also set up a five-member panel to exclusively work on the Atmakur by-poll. Incidentally, YSRCP candidate Mekapati Vikram Reddy has polled only 1,02,241, very little over 92,758 votes secured by his brother Goutham Reddy in the 2019 polls. At that time, TDP candidate B. Krishnaiah had secured 70,482 votes.

People voted for good governance: Ambati P2

CRDA to lease out flats built for govt employees

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Keen to mobilise funds for the development of Amaravati in accordance with the High Court order, the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has now decided to lease out the residential towers it actually built for the government employees in the state capital city.

In the first lot, the CRDA has put up the D1 Tower, containing 120 flats, for lease to earn about Rs 8-10 crore per annum.

The VIT-AP University has come forward to take the tower on lease. "Our negotiations are going on. We are awaiting a formal order from the government to complete the deal," a senior official of the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department said. The D1 Tower is located in close proximity to the VIT-AP campus in Amaravati.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy gave the green signal for leasing out the flats, which lay abandoned ever since he came to power. In all, the CRDA has taken up construction of six towers in an area of 7.72 acres for Group-D employees of the state government. Between 2017 and 2019, 65 per cent of the works were completed, but the YSRC government stalled all development projects in Amaravati since June 2019.

With the High Court delivering a judgment on March 3 this year, directing the state government to complete all development works in

Amaravati capital city and region within six months, the CRDA has been scampering for funds to fulfil the obligation. On one hand, the CRDA is putting up huge tracts of lands, acquired from farmers, for sale and on the other exploring alternative avenues to raise resources. Accordingly, the proposal to lease out the flats built for employees was mooted and the Chief Minister approved it, official sources said.

In the first round, one tower will be leased out on as-is-where-is basis. The others will follow, depending on the response, the sources added. The total super built-up area of the six towers is 10,22,149 sqft and the CRDA expects to garner at least Rs 50-60 crore as lease rental per year.

Interestingly, Shapoorji Pallonji that is building the towers has sought extension of time to complete the project but now that may not happen as the CRDA has decided to rent them out.

The residential towers, with several hundred flats for Gazetted Officers and Non-Gazetted Officers, built in the vicinity are also half complete. Officials say these structures too could be leased out if there are takers.

Three banks have so far released a sum of Rs 1,862 crore for these residential towers and agreed to release the balance Rs 198 crore in due course of time.

Now that it has to take up other major development works and also repay the loans already taken, the CRDA finds itself stifled.



Rail traffic hit as goods train derailed

PNS ■ KADAPA

A goods train derailed near Muddanur railway station on the night of Saturday and five bogies were tilted to one side on the track.

The derailment caused delays in the running of several express trains. The railway authorities diverted the Dharmavaram express train via Gooty at Tadipatri. The railway passengers going towards Vijayawada, Hyderabad, and Chennai suffered severe inconvenience due to the sudden halt of passenger trains. The railway authorities had taken up track repairing works on a war footing and cleared the tracks.

Rs 5.8-crore smuggled gold seized, 5 arrested

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The sleuths of Customs Commissionerate (Preventive), here have detected cases of smuggling of gold in bullion form and ornaments which were being concealed and carried in passenger vehicles.

On Friday, after receiving specific information about the smuggling of gold bars from Chennai to Guntur and Rajahmundry inside three passenger vehicles, Customs had kept surveillance and intercepted on suspicion at Bollapalli Toll Plaza, on Vijayawada-Chennai National Highway.

On interrogation, they admitted to having concealed gold in their vehicles. The smuggled gold was concealed in a specially built box fixed behind the passenger seat and also in a specially built cavity under the passenger seats of the cars. The



search of the intercepted cars resulted in the recovery and seizure of 10.77 kgs of gold under the Customs Act, 1962. The total value of the gold recovered in the above three cars is Rs 5.80 crore approximately. Subsequent searches conducted by the Customs Preventive Division, Kakinada on Saturday at Rajahmundry led to the seizure of 24 silver bars each weighing 1 kilo with foreign markings.

TTD to release online quota of 'Arjita Seva' tickets for Sept today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TTD will release online quota of 'Arjita Seva' tickets for the month of September on June 27. Among the total 46,470 tickets, the lucky dip 'seva' tickets number 8,070 while the 'sevas' on the 'first in-first out' basis are 38,400.

The 'Arjita Sevas', viz, 'Suprabatham', 'Tomala', 'Archana' and 'Astadala Pada Padmaradhana' tickets are allotted in lucky dip for which devotees should register online between 10 am on June 27 and 10 am on June 29. Tickets confirmation is done after online lucky dip draws. The list of the allotted tickets is updated on the TTD website after 12 noon on June 29 and the devotees are informed via SMS and e-mails.

All the allotted devotees should credit the ticket fare within two days of the announcement.

MONUMENT FOR APATHY



Water hyacinth infestation at the Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada has turned into an obstacle to the free flow of water downstream of River Krishna. Pic by Ch Vijaya Bhaskar

Bring 'Sachivalayams' under panchayats: PR Chamber

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Chamber has demanded that the 'Gram Sachivalayam' and volunteer systems be brought under the control of sarpanches. Chamber president and former

MLC YVB Rajendra Prasad and general secretary Birru Prapat Reddy have also demanded that the two wings should be merged into the 'Grama panchayats'. In view of the declaration of proba-

tion of the 'Sachivalayam' staff by the State government, the two wings should work under the purview of sarpanches, the leaders said in a press release here on Sunday.

'Long Covid in children akin to adults, but no reason to worry'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Noting that long Covid manifests itself in children similar to adults, experts on Sunday said there is no need to panic but stressed on early treatment.

Children infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus can experience symptoms of long Covid lasting at least two months, according to a study published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health journal recently.

The largest study to date of long Covid symptoms in children up to 14 years used national level sampling of kids in Denmark and matched positive cases with a control group having no prior history of the infection.

According to Dr. Col. Vijay Dutta, senior consultant in Internal

Medicine, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, long Covid problems in children is a well-known issue.

"We are encountering long Covid syndrome in children similar to adults. They can have multiple presentations, like in the adult population we have involvement of the respiratory system, patients are experiencing recurrent pneumonia, the immunity is lower, so they are experiencing GI infections, such as chronic diarrhoea and weight loss," he said.

"Due to lowered immunity, they have symptoms like any rheumatological disorder overlap syndromes and other symptoms which are commonly seen in the immunocompromised pediatric age group. They are now being commonly encountered in children who have suffered from Covid. Long Covid

is now a well-recognised problem across the world," Dutta added.

Dr Krishan Chugh, Director and Head of the Paediatrics Department, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, said there was no need to panic.

Citing the Lancet study, he said in all three groups of children -- less than three years, four to 11 years, and 12-14 years -- those who tested positive in RT-PCR had higher chances of having at least one symptom at the second and third month compared to the children that remained indoors.

"However, in majority of the children, these symptoms were mild. Interestingly, the quality of life related to emotional and social functioning was better in those who had Covid compared to controls in the older children age group," he



said. The most commonly reported symptoms among children in the 0-3 year category were mood swings, rashes and stomach aches,

the study said. Among four to 11 years old, the most commonly reported symptoms were trouble remembering or concentrating and

rashes besides mood swings.

Among 12-14 years old, fatigue, mood swings, and trouble remembering or concentrating were the main symptoms, it noted.

Most of the symptoms the infected children exhibited were the same that could occur in those forced to stay indoors without any contact outside, such as mood swings, Chugh said.

The study included children infected during the Alpha and the Delta waves (first and the second waves) and not the present Omicron wave, which in all ways is milder, he added.

"So, while we have to recognise the children who have long Covid symptoms early and treat them, I think there is no cause for undue alarm. Children have braved Covid better than adults in every way.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Tithi: Chaturdashi: Jun 27 03:26 AM to Jun 28 05:52 AM

Nakshatram:
Rohini: Jun 26 01:06 PM to Jun 27 04:02 PM

Mrigashirsha: Jun 27 04:02 PM to Jun 28 07:05 PM

Rahukalam: 7:25 AM to 9:03 AM

Yamagandam: 10:41 AM to 12:19 PM

Varjyam: 10:21 PM to 12:09 AM

Gulika: 1:56 PM to 3:34 PM

Amritakalam: 12:27 PM to 02:14 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 72%

Sunrise: 5:37 AM

Sunset: 6:44 PM

Updated: JUNE 26, 2022 5:00 PM

Monday Mirchi

DONE AND DUSTED WITH GHMC

One heavy spell of rain is enough to wash out the claims, be they tall or genuine, of any corporation these days regarding the soundness of civic infrastructure. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation is no exception. There are very few IAS and IPS officers left in GHMC, compared to the situation a couple of years ago. A little bird told us that most of these officers also want to leave the corporation as they are done and dusted with it. While the corridors of power are yet to move the file related to an IPS officer who wants to move out of the corporation, some IAS officers have expressed their willingness to become district collectors and bid goodbye to the civic body. Officials are discussing the irony of how some of those who want to return to Hyderabad 'miss' GHMC. With the onset of monsoon, and looming threat of viral diseases, it would be surprising if any moves are made. Nonetheless, Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao hand-held Lokesh Kumar and made him inaugurate the Khaitlapur flyover last week. While shutterbugs captured shy Lokesh Kumar, the news is that the GHMC Commissioner might end up being the long-standing officers in the same post.

EXCEPTION TO THE GAG ORDER

After a long hiatus, some tongue-tied babus in TS have started 'speaking' to the media, though it is more in the nature of an exception to the existing gag order. All of them are speaking on only one common topic: How to prepare for exams? A little bird told us that officials are allowed to talk to scribes only about what went into their cracking civil services exam and how to study, considering that the state government has released notifications for various examinations. Otherwise, the order restraining babus from talking to the media is still in vogue. Bureaucrats now have a stock phrase as response when news hounds approach them for interviews: 'Keeping a low profile'. The larger, unanswered question is: From whom -- people or the higher-ups?

DON'T SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

Of late, some of the bureaucrats have done away with the culture of saying it with flowers and are offering saplings instead. At a recent FTICCI event, others went a step further. Krishna Bhaskar, Commissioner of Industries, got tributes, certificate, and a sapling for speaking at an event. The man, who had concluded his speech, rushed to the mic again to appreciate the gesture. He said, "In your honour, we will donate three dictionaries to the Government school students of Telangana. This is so much better than the culture of bouquet. This is exceptional, it has been on my mind always, but seeing it in reality for the first time ""

NOT IN RACE FOR DGP POST

Top IPS officer from Andhra Pradesh

VSK Kaumudi, who had been on central deputation for quite some time, recently got a new posting at the Centre. The buzz is that this implies that he is no longer in the race for the AP DGP post. Going by his seniority, Kaumudi was expected to throw in his hat for the DGP post. While the government is yet to send a panel of names to the Centre, Kaumudi's name figured among the probable. Kaumudi, 1986-batch IPS officer, has been appointed as secretary (security) in the central cabinet secretariat. He served as a special secretary (internal security) in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Kaumudi, an IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, served previously as superintendent of police in the state and then as superintendent of police in the Central Bureau of Investigation. He has served also as additional director general in the railways and in the National Investigation Agency. The officer was also posted as an Additional DG in the Bureau of Police Research & Development, which is the think tank for the Indian Police.

NO 'LAV' FOR AP

It appears that Lav Agarwal, Andhra cadre IAS officer on central deputation, is in no mood to return to his parent state. The Centre has extended the tenure of Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare, up to August 28, 2023. Lav Agarwal, 49-year-old IAS officer and an engineer, has worked for various state governments before he was appointed to the Union Health Ministry in 2016. A 1996-batch officer, Agarwal is an IIT-Delhi graduate. He has been on central deputation for the last six years. "Given the extensions he has had till date, one should not be surprised if he gets a few more extensions and completes a decade in Delhi," quipped a senior bureaucrat.

THE 'LINK' BETWEEN PRAGATI BHAVAN AND RAJ BHAVAN

In the fight between the Pragati Bhavan and the Raj Bhavan, one IAS officer is believed to be playing a key role. This IAS officer is giving all inputs to the Governor against the state government. In the past, this IAS officer and a Minister had a dispute regarding one project. Finally the Minister got the upper hand over him. Since then, the IAS officer has been angry at the TRS government. The Pragati Bhavan-Raj Bhavan tussle came in handy for the IAS officer. The IAS officer worked as the Joint Collector in the combined Andhra Pradesh state and as Collector in the Telangana government upon bifurcation. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has reposed a lot of confidence in the IAS officer. She is consulting him on issues relating to the state government. After dispute with the state government, that IAS officer has gone to the central government on deputation.

-Your's truly

Creation of AIDS awareness sought

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Naveen Kumar, Special Secretary, Medical & Health Department, and AP AIDS Control Society Project Director, has said that wide-spread awareness should be created among the people and a special action plan will be designed to control AIDS across the State. In a statement on Sunday, Dr Naveen Kumar said that a class on AIDS prevention measures would be given to Village/Ward secretariats, ANMs and women police. The special secretary said that steps would be taken to fill the vacant posts in the AP AIDS Control Society. The special secretary said that ART drug centres would be set up at every 50 km and ART medicines would be made available to HIV-infected persons.

He said that awareness programmes would be organised on AIDS in Andhra, Nagarjuna, Sri Venkateswara and KL Universities. An action plan will be prepared to organise awareness programmes in other universities.

He said that the youth shall be motivated to take precautions against HIV and awareness would be created to use condoms.

A toll-free number 1097 is set up for the people to clarify doubts and give suggestions on AIDS.

With the support of other departments, measures will be taken to create awareness on AIDS, he said and added that awareness will be created on AIDS among the Dhaba owners, fishermen and truck driver associations. All the NGOs working with the AP AIDS Control Society will be integrated to create awareness to use PrEP, or pre-exposure prophylaxis to people of high-risk groups, he added.

People have voted for good governance, avers Ambati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has scored a big win in the Atmakur by-election with people extending their continuous support to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government, said Minister for Water Resources, Ambati Rambabu. Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, he said that the people have witnessed the good governance and welfare initiatives brought in by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, which resulted in securing continuous victories, with the increasing majority. Taking the track record of YSRCP winning all the elections, including the



bypolls for Tirupati Lok Sabha and Badvel Assembly constituency, the Minister said that the party has won with a huge majority of 2.7 lakh votes in Tirupati bypoll, despite the massive campaigns done by the opposition parties TDP and Jana Sena. and in

Badvel by a whopping majority of 90228 votes.

Regarding the Atmakur by-poll, he said that another massive win was secured as YSRCP candidate Mekapati Vikram Reddy won with a majority of 83,888 votes, surpassing the previous majority of 22,276 votes in 2019. He said that people always stood by YSRCP irrespective of the evil conspiracies of opposition parties, especially TDP leaders who had even worked as BJP poll agents.

Stating that the poison is in the minds of TDP leaders but not in the liquor, the minister brushed aside the malicious propaganda of opposition on liquor policy. He said that the

available Indian Made Foreign Liquor was being distilled by licensed distilleries in the State and stressed that the current government had not permitted any new distilleries and breweries, and the existing ones were allowed by the previous government. It was Naidu's government that gave permission to numerous brands and for seven distilleries in his five-year rule, he said and stated that Chandrababu Naidu had brought 14 distilleries during his term. He said with the growing popularity of YSRCP, the Opposition TDP is conspiring to bluff people and mislead them with cheap politics and false propaganda.

BYPOLLS

BJP wrests Rampur, Azamgarh from SP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/ LUCKNOW/AGARTALA

Consolidating its position, the BJP wrested high-profile Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh from the Samajwadi Party and won three assembly seats, including that of Chief Minister Manik Saha, in Tripura in by-election results announced on Sunday.

While the AAP lost Punjab's Sangrur parliamentary constituency, vacated by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, to Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) leader Simranjit Singh Mann, it was able to retain Rajinder Nagar assembly seat in Delhi that party leader Raghav Chadha had given up after he was elected to Rajya Sabha.

The Congress won a seat each in Tripura, where it opened its account after draw-

ing nil in the last assembly polls, and Jharkhand, while the ruling YSR Congress emerged victorious in Atmakuru Assembly seat in Andhra Pradesh.

Counting of votes was held on Sunday for the June 23 by-election to three Lok Sabha and seven assembly seats spread across five states and Delhi.

In Uttar Pradesh, the opposition Samajwadi Party suffered a major setback as it lost to the BJP in its strongholds of Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha seats, vacated by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and party stalwart Azam Khan after they were elected to the Assembly.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed the BJP victory as "historic", asserting that this indicates wide-scale acceptance and support for the 'double engine' govern-

ments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh, a reference to the party being in power in both places.

Ruling candidate Ghanshyam Lodhi won the Rampur parliamentary seat by a margin of over 42,000 votes. He defeated Mohd Asim Raja, considered close to Azam Khan. In Azamgarh, BJP candidate Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua' defeated Dharmendra Yadav by a margin of 8,679 votes. Dharmendra is a cousin of Akhilesh Yadav and a three-time MP.

"People have sent a message that they aren't ready to accept dynastic and casteist parties who incite communal tension," Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said.

Akhilesh Yadav, ranked by the defeat, lashed out at the BJP and accused it of murdering democracy.

Bring 'Sachivalayams'...

Continued from Page 1

The Chamber leaders said that 'Grama Sachivalayam' and volunteer systems had been working independently and parallel to panchayats and sarpanches, in violation of the Indian Constitution. As per the Article 243G and 11th Schedule, 'sachivalayam' staff, volunteers and secretaries should work under the sarpanches, they said. They further said that the State government should issue necessary orders in this regard. Funds of all the 29 departments, staff and development and welfare activities should be under the purview of panchayats, they added.

They also demanded that MGNREGA works should be brought under the control of panchayats and powers should be delegated to the sarpanches as per the guidelines of the Union government.

Withdraw GO No. 389: CPM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao has demanded that G.O 389 regarding the sale of lands in the capital city be withdrawn. The previous government had taken the lands from farmers under the Land Pooling scheme for works in Amaravati, he said.

The State government has decided to sell 14 acres of Amaravati lands in the first phase, he said in a press release here on Sunday. This practice would become dangerous in future and hence people and political parties should oppose the G.O., he said.

He further said that as per the State Bifurcation Act, construction of the capital city was the responsibility of the Central government. The ruling YSRCP has not conducted any works in the past three years. The Union government is camouflaging to release the funds to build the capital city,



he alleged.

He said that the State government should press the Centre to release the funds. The State government should allot funds in the budget to develop the capital. Though the High Court has given orders, the development of the capital is being neglected, he felt.

Later, he said that the State government should take up development works in the capital and provide infrastructure facilities at the farmers' plots.

YSRCP wins big in Atmakur...

Continued from Page 1

While YSRCP fielded Goutham's younger brother Mekapati Vikram Reddy as its candidate, the rival TDP followed the tradition of not putting up a candidate if a sitting legislator dies. However, the BJP fielded Gundlapalli Bharat Kumar Yadav as its candidate. YSRCP leaders pointed out at the low voter turnout for not meeting the target of a one lakh votes majority. The by-poll witnessed less turnout than during the 2019 Assembly elections. The voter turnout was 64.27 per cent this time around whereas during the 2019 Assembly elections, it was 82.44 per cent.

Vikram Reddy in total secured 74.47 per cent, that is, 1,02,241 of the total 1,37,289 votes polled. BJP's Bharat Kumar could get a meagre 14.1 per cent -19,353 votes. NOTA got 4,182 votes. Not to take any

BJP IMPROVED VOTE...

Continued from Page 1

The by-poll witnessed less turnout than during the 2019 Assembly elections. The voter turnout was 64.27 per cent this time around whereas during the 2019 Assembly elections, it was 82.44 per cent.

chance and leave it to the sympathy, the YSRCP candidate would garner due to the demise of sitting MLA, ruling party YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had deployed senior leaders and ministers to ensure a resounding victory to Vikram Reddy.

Ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Kakani Govardhan Reddy, MPs Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, Maddida Gurimoorthy, former minister P Anil Kumar Yadav had personally monitored and implemented the campaign

strategy. Vikram Reddy, along with his other family members, extensively toured the constituency and completed the door-to-door canvassing more than once.

"In support of the good work done by the government, as a tribute to Goutham I thank every sister, every friend, every grandmother and every grandfather who had blessed Vikram with a huge majority of 83,000 in Atmakur," tweeted Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

While there were reports initially that Goutham Reddy's wife Sri Kirithi may contest the by-poll, Mekapati family had decided to field Vikram Reddy as the broad consensus among the family members had emerged. Vikram Reddy, who is Goutam Reddy's younger brother, had graduated from IIT-Chennai and also did his MS in the USA. He has been managing the family business KMC Group.

Applications invited for Inter admissions at KGBVs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Applications are invited for intermediate first year admissions at 352 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas (KGBV) across the State for the 2022-23 academic year. The online applications process will start on June 27 and end on July 12, Samagra Siksha State Project Director K Vetri Selvi said in a press release here on Sunday.

She further said that the State government introduced the intermediate course in 221 KGBV last year and now the remaining 131 KGBVs have been upgraded to intermediate course. SC, ST, BC, Minority, BPL families and orphan students who passed class 10 may apply online, she said. She made it clear that online applications only would be taken into consideration.

Moreover, she said that the interested girl students would apply through https://apkgbv.apcfss.in. for the intermediate admissions. SMS would be sent to those selected student's mobiles and lists would be displayed at KGBV notice boards, she added. For more details contact, mobile numbers 94943 83617, 94907 82111, she said in a press release.

Rs 5.8-cr smuggled...

Continued from Page 1

In this customs operation, five persons have also been arrested and three cars used in smuggling have been seized under the provisions of the Customs Act 1962. All the five accused have been remanded to judicial custody by the court of Special Judge to try Economic Offences, Visakhapatnam, on Sunday. Further investigation is on.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹300
Without Skin	₹320
Broiler at Farm	₹169

EGG RATES ₹/100

VIJAYAWADA	385
HYDERABAD	385
VISAKHAPATNAM	410
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.85

You are vibrant India's ambassadors

Modi lauds contribution of diaspora in Germany

PNS ■ MUNICH

Terming Emergency in 1975 as a "black spot" on the vibrant history of India's democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that democracy, which is in DNA of every Indian, was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago, but the people answered in a democratic way all the conspiracies to crush it.

"Today is June 26 which is also known for the day when India's democracy, which is in the DNA of every Indian, was trampled and suppressed 47 years ago. Emergency is a black spot on the vibrant history of India's democracy," Modi told a gathering of Indian diaspora here, targeting the opposition Congress Party.

"The people of India answered all the conspiracies to crush democracy in a democratic way. We Indians take pride in our democracy wherever we are," Modi said in his over 30 minutes speech at the massive diaspora event held at the Audi Dome stadium here. Modi, who is visiting Germany to



attend the G7 Summit, said that Indians are proud of their democracy. "Today, we can proudly say that India is the mother of democracy... The diversity of culture, food, clothes, music and traditions makes our democracy vibrant. India has shown that democracy can deliver and has delivered." Emergency was announced in India on June 25, 1975 when

Congress leader Indira Gandhi was the prime minister, and was lifted on March 21, 1977.

During the speech, Modi also shared his government's achievements and said India will not be left behind in the 4th Industrial Revolution. He said that now every village in India is open defecation free, has electricity and 99% of the villages also have clean cooking fuel. India

has been providing free ration to 80 crore poor people since last 2 years.

"This list of achievements is very long. If I keep speaking, your dinner time will be over. When a country takes correct decisions with correct intentions on time, then it is destined for development," he said, amid chants of Modi-Modi from the crowd.

"In IT, digital technology, India is making its presence felt. Forty per cent digital transactions in the world are from India. India is making new records in data consumption. India is among the countries where data is cheapest, he said. In the 21st Century's new India, the fast way people adopt technology is exciting.

"India now is ready, prompt for development, for its dreams. Today, India believes in itself and its capabilities. That's why we're breaking old records and achieving new goals, he said. Modi said that 90% adults have taken both doses of Covid vaccines in India and 95% have taken at least one dose. Made in India vaccine has saved crores of lives across the world, he added.

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KHARIF FARMING IN AP MOVING AT A SLOW PACE

The targeted area for cultivation is less than 50 pc in most parts

C PRADEEP KUMAR
VIJAYAWADA

Farming activity during the present Kharif season has been moving at a slow pace across the State. Despite the State government releasing irrigation water for cultivation as per the schedule announced earlier, the targeted area under cultivation is less than 50 per cent in most parts of the State.

According to a report of the State government, the targeted area for the cultivation of various crops for the current Kharif season is 36.82 lakh hectares. The area sown is 1.14 lakh hectares against 2.55 lakh hectares, which is 45 per cent. The targeted area of paddy cultivation in the State is 15.59 lakh hectares. However, the area sown is 0.27 lakh hectares.

As per the report, the total area where coarse grains were sown during the Kharif season was 1.95 lakh hectares. The area sown was 0.06 lakh hectares against the normal as of date was 0.16 lakh hectares translates to 36 per cent. Pulses



are cultivated in a total area of 3.13 lakh hectares during the season. The area cultivated was 0.02 lakh hectares against the normal as of date was 0.14 lakh hectares that is 12 per cent. Oil seeds are cultivated in 7.18 lakh hectares. The area cultivated was 0.28 lakh hectares against the normal as of date was 0.58 lakh hectares that is 48 per cent.

Large excess rainfall (60 per cent and above) was recorded in the southwest monsoon from June 1 to June 22 in the Rayalaseema districts Sri Sathya Sai, Annamaya and

YSR. Meanwhile, Visakhapatnam, Ananthapuram and Chittoor, received excess rainfall (20 per cent to 59 per cent). Vizianagaram, Anakapalli, Konaseema, Kakinada, West Godavari, Eluru, SPSR Nellore, Kurnool, Nandyal and Tirupati received normal rainfall of +19 per cent to -19 per cent. Srikakulam, Alluri Sitararama Raju, Parvathipurammanyam, East Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Bapatla, Palnadu and Prakasam received deficit rainfall of -20 per cent to -59 per

cent and NTR district received large deficit rainfall of -60 per cent to -99 per cent.

AP Agriculture Mission Vice-Chairman MVS Nagi Reddy said that it is too early to say anything in June. "By July-end, we will have a clear picture of the area under cultivation of various crops. Except for a few districts in AP, there is normal rainfall in the State and better rains are predicted in July," he said.

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao has directed the officials concerned to take measures to supply quality seeds, pesticides and fertilisers to the farmers through Rythu Bharosa Kendras. He said that farmers should be educated to insure their crops under e-crop.

Meanwhile, BJP State president Somu Veerajulu said Godavari districts were once considered to be the 'Rice Bowl of India' and the State government is forcing the farmers of these Godavari districts to give up paddy cultivation during Kharif and Rabi seasons.

'Pavitra Ashada Sare' celebrations at Durga temple from June 30

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam is making all arrangements for conducting the 'Pavitra Ashada Sare' celebrations from June 30 to July 28. A large number of devotees and religious and spiritual organisations present the sare to Goddess Kanaka Durga during the Ashada masam. The temple administration has sent messages to the religious organisations about the beginning of Ashada festivities and requested the latter to register their names with the temple administration.

On the other hand, the Hyderabad-based Mahankali temple committee will visit Sri Durga temple and present the Sare on July 3. Every year, devotees and temple committee members, and people representatives from Hyderabad will visit the Durga temple on Indrakeeladi and present the golden 'bonalu'.

Durga temple Executive Officer D Bhramaramba said the temple administration will also celebrate Sakambari celebrations from July 11 to 13. Several thousand devotees participate in the three-day celebrations.



Dallas soaks in divine charm

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As a part of the ongoing 'Srinivasa Kalyanam' in different cities in the United States of America (USA), the NRI denizens were mesmerised by the divine charm of the deities during the celestial wedding ceremony. 'Srinivasa Kalyanam' was performed with religious fervour amidst chanting of 'vedic mantras' in the city of Dallas in the wee hours of Sunday as per Indian Standard Time (IST).

TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, AP NRT Chief Venkat, Raju Vegnesa, Government Advisor Rathnakar, SVBC Director Srinivasa Reddy and others participated.



Rally taken out against drug abuse

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A huge rally was carried out by the Police Department from District Court Centre to the police headquarters in Machilipatnam to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (IDDAIT) on the same Sunday. Additional SP N Venkata Ramanjaneyulu, Special Enforcement Bureau Additional SP Asma Farheen, AR Additional SP SVD Prasad, Training IPS Jagadish Adahalli, DMHO Geeta Bai, Municipal Commissioner Chandrayya and senior police officials took part in the rally.

On the occasion, Additional SP Venkata Ramanjaneyulu said that the public should be made fully aware of drugs and their use. If someone notices a person often moody and addicted to drugs, he should be immediately shifted to the de-addiction center at the government hospital and bring him back to normal. He said that initially taking drugs becomes a habit and later on it becomes an addiction. So women police, Asha workers, and medical staff should be talking to families constantly in the respected areas. He said that this should be a continuous process to create awareness of drugs.

SEB Additional SP Asma Farheen said that the use of drugs is high right from children to adults to overcome stress and anxiety. Initially, they use alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs for temporary relief, however, it turns out to be a habit and later

addiction. She said that awareness should be created against drugs and their ill effects in educational institutions by organizing awareness programmes. She said that drugs can ruin not only the lives of those who consume but also the family's reputation. So parents need to be watchful of their children often and make them aware of drug abuse, she said.

Police, Special Enforcement Bureau officers, Doctors, Nurses, Asha workers, women police, and Local people participated in large numbers and created awareness among the people with slogans.

People's support sought to eradicate drug menace

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP) K Srinivasa has said that the public should be involved in the efforts to fight drug menace. "Drug abuse will make one's body lifeless though they are alive," he said. The NTR Vijayawada Police Commissionerate, Nanna Police Station and the Enforcement Bureau jointly observed the International Day against Drug Usage and Illicit Trafficking, at H Block community hall in Vambay



Colony in the city on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, ADCP Srinivasa Rao said that the drug mafia had chosen the youth as its target. He appealed to the youth to stay away from drugs.

"People should fight against the drug menace and the

police are ready to give them all the support," he said.

Special Enforcement Bureau Additional SP M Sattibabu, Taskforce ACPs GV Ramana Murthy, VSN Varma, Nanna Station Inspector K Srinivasa Rao and others were present.



Senior journalist Krishna Prasad launching Swatantra News Channel in Hyderabad on Sunday. (below) Excited employees of the channel



SWATANTRA TV LAUNCHED

People in Telugu states overwhelmed

Swatantra, billed as New Age Telugu news channel, was launched amid the chants of Vedic hymns at a glittering function on the premises of the channel on Road No 5 Banjara Hills in Hyderabad on Sunday.

Senior journalist and Resident Editor of The Pioneer, Krishna Prasad, the moving spirit behind Swatantra, launched the TV channel in the presence of his family members as well as employees of the channel.

People from all walks of life in the Telugu states, apart from many dignitaries, expressed their happiness at the launch of the nation's first channel oriented towards common people. They also expressed their hope that the channel, given its unique mission, would scale great heights in the years ahead with God's blessings. Previously, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS

Jaganmohan Reddy launched the channel's Vijayawada studios virtually from his camp office. Before that, TS IT Minister KT Rama Rao launched the channel's logo and its website.

Swatantra, with its 180-person team of seasoned and committed journalists as well as technical personnel, has pledged to be a common man's news channel. Right at the beginning, the 24/7 satellite news channel has made it clear that it would listen only to people and report and address their concerns without pandering to the interests of any political party.

As an apolitical TV channel focused on improving the lot of disadvantaged sections, Swatantra's programmes are uniquely tailored to bring out the truth, after cutting through political claptrap. A network of over 100 enthusiastic senior journalists will

sift through a mountain of information day after day 24/7 to distil and present only news that matters to the common people. Viewers get to see things as they are, with total objectivity as the hallmarks of its programs related to news and views.

Within the above framework designed solely with the common people in view, Swatantra's innovatively packaged programs include: Udayagam, heralding dawn with lilting melodies; Health secrets, documenting the latest fitness regimens; Jatardhamas, exposing the hollowness of politics with biting sarcasm; Movie Mirchi, encapsulating everything bit of interest in the tinsel town; News review, bringing reality to the fore with incisive analysis in in-your-face dissection; Palleturu, cherry-picking

the beauty of promising developments on the countryside; SirulaPanta, giving the farmer his due as the nation's Annadata; Swatantra debate, looking dispassionately at burning topics with experts airing their opinion in a cool and collected manner; Sunday special, packing a riot of laughter for the whole family; Mega game show, taking quiz to the next level involving college students; Maata-Paata, providing a feast for the eyes and ears with a medley of music and lyrics from the yesteryear numbers to those in the works in studios; Movie review, rating films purely from the standpoint of viewers regardless of box office big talk; Puzzle show, involving viewers with exciting prizes; and Telugu Cinema Katha that walks viewers through more than a century of Telugu cinema.

Noisy silencers crushed under road roller

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Visakhapatnam police took stern action against motorists creating sound pollution by installing modified silencers on the motorcycles. On Sunday, the police lashed out at the motorists who used silencers to create loud noise creating disturbance for others. About 1200 silencers were crushed under a road roller on the beach road on Sunday.

The Vizag police conducted a special drive in recent times against motorists who replace the company silencers and fitted with noisy silencers making loud noises creating sound pollution and also disturbing others. The traffic police caught about 1200 motorists at various places in the city using noisy silencers during the special drive and were trampled with a road roller at the police mess on Beach Road. Visakhapatnam Police Commissioner Ch Srikanth was present while the silencers were crushed under the road roller.



'YSRCP govt betrayed Kapus'

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP Repalle MLA Anagani Satya Prasad on Sunday expressed concern over the Jagan Reddy government's 'endless insults and betrayals' to the Kapu community in the State.

Satya Prasad slammed the CM for stopping even 'Kapu Nestham' now after cancelling Videsi Vidya and fee reimbursement in the past.

In a press release here, the TDP MLA said real justice was done to Kapus only during the previous Chandrababu rule. Jagan Reddy has been carrying out an 'anti-Kapu' regime in the past three years by cancelling each and every benefit to them.

Satya Prasad said that the Kapu community was suppressed economically, politically and socially. They were deprived of many benefits under the Government programmes. Jagan Reddy has reduced Videsi Vidya scholarships from Rs. 10 lakh to just Rs. 5 lakh for Kapu students.

The TDP MLA pointed out that the Chandrababu regime spent Rs. 1,500 Cr for Kapu students' Videsi Vidya. Boarding facilities were provided to Kapu students preparing for competitive examina-

tions in AP Bhavan in Delhi. The YCP rule has cancelled even this.

Satya Prasad said injustice was done by turning Kapu Corporation into an ornamental body without any funds to create self-employment opportunities. Benefits given through Amma Vodi and pensions were being shown as exclusively given to Kapus.

The TDP MLA slammed the YSRCP rule for claiming credit for even the funds released under the Central programmes. YSR's name was prefixed to old programmes only to cheat the innocent beneficiaries. A situation was created now where Kapus were forced to go to other States in search of work and livelihood opportunities.

Satya Prasad said the TDP regime provided 5 per cent reservations to Kapus without harming the BCs. Jagan Reddy has cancelled even these reservations. The CM showed his hatred towards Kapus by cancelling Kapu Bhavans.

The TDP MLA said that the Kapus should get ready to throw out Jagan Reddy for suppressing them in all aspects. No priority was given to Kapus even in the nominated posts.

Lokesh slams move to sell Amaravati lands

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Sunday accused Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy of hatching non-stop conspiracies to destroy the Amaravati Capital City.

Nara Lokesh asked how Jagan Reddy could put up Amaravati lands for sale at Rs. 10 crore per acre after his government called the Capital City region just a 'smanam' (cremation ground).

In a statement here, Lokesh recalled how the ruling YSRCP Ministers and MLAs carried out a nefarious campaign against AP Capital. They said that Amaravati was prone to earthquakes and that the Capital city lands were vulnerable to floods.

Lokesh said that Jagan and his party leaders spread vicious information propaganda against the mother-like Amaravati Capital.

Now, the same YCP leaders were trying to sell Amaravati lands at a very high value.

There seemed to be no end to the scheming and plotting of Jagan Reddy against the State and its Capital city.



Soft skills: Key to enhance employability, shine at workplace

Human resource drives business organizations and performance of employees is central to a company's priorities. Hence, apart from requisite technical skills, employees need soft skills to deliver on their job because customers will contact employees first. A combination of hard and soft skills will make people more efficient and productive.

Today, corporate firms focus on communication, relationships and ways of presenting the organization in a positive way to the stakeholders. Hence, soft skills at the workplace are becoming increasingly important. Soft skills among employees will help organizations use their technical skills effectively without being hampered by interpersonal issues.

ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS
In this fiercely competitive

business world, organisations are always looking for ways to move forward. Technical skills will no longer suffice for the workforce to compete in this highly competitive world. A college student or an employee exhibiting soft skills has a greater chance of being successful in their professional career. To become a stellar employee or an admired leader requires an arsenal of skills. Human resource experts opine that employees without the right mix of soft skills will be a liability to the organisation. Growth in one's career depends a lot on good relationships.

WHAT ARE SOFT SKILLS?

In 1918, the Carnegie Foundation published research findings that only 15% of job-related achievements depend on a person's knowledge and technical skills. As much as 85% of suc-

In 1918, the Carnegie Foundation published research findings that only 15% of job-related achievements depend on a person's knowledge and technical skills. As much as 85% of success in the workplace is based on soft skills.

cess in the workplace is based on soft skills. Soft skills are personal attributes that enable a person to interact effectively with others. Soft skills are behaviors, personality traits and work habits, such as collaboration, critical thinking, perseverance and communication that help people propel themselves at work. Hard skills can be quantified and measured, whereas soft skills are intangible and difficult to evaluate. Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication abili-

ties, personality traits, attitudes, interpersonal intelligence that enable employees to navigate their work environment. People who have eclectic soft skills can create a salubrious climate to achieve their goals. "A plumber's knack to use the grip wrench is a hard skill, whereas his ability to communicate with his clients effectively is a soft skill."

Soft skills such as effective communication, empathy, emotional intelligence, adaptability, integrity, team work,



Srinivas Vissapragada

optimism, self-motivation, interpersonal relationship and resilience have become crucial factors for business success. Soft skills are complementary to hard skills.

BENEFITS OF SOFT SKILLS

Managing people at workplace is a difficult task without soft skills. Usually, recruiters consider the tech-

nical abilities of candidates, but soft skills bring career success. According to a research survey report, 89 per cent of recruiters say that when a hire does not perform well at office, the ostensible reason would be lack of soft skills. Usually, companies hire people based on their qualifications and knowledge, but they often terminate employees due to lack of soft skills. HR managers consider soft skills as essential part of the hiring process.

The success of a team, and a business, does not depend on just the workers' technical know-how but also on how employees interact with one another and with clients. Skills such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, time management, and working well under pressure are critical at the workplace. Employees with

diverse soft skills will engender harmony at the workplace. Soft skills decrease employee attrition and enhance personal effectiveness. Soft skills eliminate conflicts and promote camaraderie among workforce that leads to improved organizational performance. People who have soft skills can be transferred to any job or organization and could build relationships with peers and managers.

SOFT SKILL VITAL TO LURE RECRUITERS

When choosing between two seemingly equal candidates, organizations are now prioritizing soft skills as a key component for selection. In the corporate workplace, interpersonal relationships will be given priority and they show a huge impact on employee productivity and organization-

al success. Personal attributes like listening, presenting ideas, resolving conflicts, and fostering openness and candid work environment are given profound importance to build nourishing human relations. This relationship helps people to positively participate in team projects and extend support to team members. Without the right mix of soft skills, it is difficult to manage people at the workplace and execute tasks. Young job seekers should realize that besides hard skills they should nurture soft skills to become an effective team player and move forward in career.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts & Science, Vijayawada)

'Strong family system can help keep youth away from drugs'

PNS ■ GUNTUR

District Principal Judge and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Chairman YVSBG Parthasarathi has said that preventing human trafficking and putting a check on the use of narcotics are the responsibilities of all and a strong family system will help prevent youth from getting addicted to narcotics.

Addressing an awareness meeting on curbing the use of narcotics and human trafficking held at the Nyayaseva Sadan on the District Court premises here on Sunday, Parthasarathi said that if the family system is strong it would help prevent youth from getting addicted to drugs.

"If the family system is strong, the family members will be able to constantly monitor the youth so that they do not get addicted to narcotics. Parents should constantly monitor the habits of their children and make them aware of the good habits and ensure they will not be attracted to bad habits," the Judge said.

The Judge opined that the drug addicts are more likely to



indulge in raping women. Trafficking in women and bringing them into prostitution is a heinous crime. If there is information about drug users or human traffickers in the surrounding areas, people should immediately inform the police and cooperate to curb it.

Meanwhile, the National Lok Adalat was held on Sunday as per the directions of the National Legal Services Authority (NLSA) for resolving pending cases in courts. In the combined Guntur district, the Lok Adalat had identified about 13,500 pending cases and issued notices to both the

parties, he informed. Parthasarathi said that 35 benches had been set up in the district for the highest number of cases in the National Lok Adalat and 8 benches had been set up in Guntur. Blood relatives are also suing in court over small matters, losing further peace of mind and falling ill, he regretted. He said the Legal Cell Authority would provide such an opportunity as more issues could be resolved by the two sides sitting down and talking when there is a dispute.

"We want more clients to settle their cases by taking advantage of the National Lok Adalat.

The legal services panel lawyers and paralegal volunteers need to be fully aware of the clients involved in the compromise cases and encourage them to resolve their disputes in the Lok Adalat," he said.

District legal services authority secretary and senior civil Judge Ratna Kumar called upon people to come forward to check the human trafficking and use of drugs. He deplored that nowadays the youth are getting addicted to the use of ganja and other intoxicant substances. The addicts should be de-addicted through de-addiction centres.

He said that there are rigorous punishments under the law for offenses such as consuming, selling, and buying narcotics. In such cases, they could be jailed for up to 180 days without even getting bail at the trial stage, with a maximum sentence of 10 to 14 years if convicted.

He informed that Sections 370 to 374 of the IPC provide for severe punishments for crimes such as trafficking of women, especially minor girls, into brothels in connection with human trafficking.



Accused in rape case arrested

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The police arrested the accused in a rape case that took place at Chinnapavani village in Lingasamudram mandal. DSP Srinivasulu told the media in Kandukur on Sunday that the accused was involved in raping a woman and he was arrested.

He said that the accused befriended the husband of the rape victim. He got him addicted to alcohol. When he was in an inebriated state, the accused offered a soft drink laced with an intoxicating substance to the victim.

When she fell unconscious after drinking the soft drink, he had raped her. When the accused threatened the couple, they tried to end life. However, they lodged a complaint with the police. Nellore SP Vijaya Rao laid special focus on the case and the police arrested the accused. The accused is being produced before the court.

Govt committed to efficient governance: YSRCP leaders

PNS ■ ONGOLE

YSRCP leaders, including Minister Adimulapu Suresh, have reiterated that the State government is committed to providing efficient and transparent governance and fulfil the aspirations of the people.

The YSRCP organised its plenary here on Sunday. Addressing a huge gathering on the occasion, Minister for Municipal Administration Adimulapu Suresh said that the YSRCP government is implementing the welfare schemes as per its assurances.

"The people of the state have given 151 MLA seats to the YSRCP. It is the responsibility of the party to provide efficient governance and implement welfare schemes for all eligible people. YSRCP has become synonymous with the welfare of the poor," he claimed.

In the plenary, the implementation of welfare schemes and the development of the state were discussed. In the TDP's Mahanadu, they were limited only to criticising the YSRCP, he slammed.

"Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will continue as the Chief Minister of the state



for the next 30 years and his name will enter into the Guinness Book of World Record," the Minister predicted.

The people of the state are not in a position to trust Chandrababu Naidu who would consign in history as a betrayer.

MP Magunta Srinivasa Reddy said that in the coming days there would be no opposition in the State and people would forget the TDP.

MLC Potula Sunita said that the people of the state irrespec-

tive of castes and religion all eligible to be getting welfare schemes.

She said that the Veligonda project would be completed this year. The construction of the Pullacheruvu tank and Chinna Kandaleru project would also be constructed in the year which would go away with the drinking water scarcity.

ZP chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma, MLAs Meruga Nagarjuna, Anna Rambabu and senior leader Burra Madhusudan were present.



Plastic harmful to environment: MLC

PNS ■ GUNTUR

YSRCP State general secretary and MLA Lella Appireddy expressed concern at the huge pollution due to plastic articles adding that the plastic had become a grave detrimental to the environment. He also underlined the need of eradicating the plastic menace.

The MLC participated in an awareness rally on the rampant use of plastic and use and throw articles at Brodipeta here on Sunday. Corporators Echampati Venkatakrishna led the rally from Shankar Vilas Centre to 14 Line Brodipeta.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLC emphasised the ban

on plastic articles including the use and throw of plastic utensils. Plastic is causing a great extent of pollution, he stated.

MLA Maddali Giridhar said that plastic has become a menace to the entire world as it is creating huge pollution. "One of the biggest menaces we are facing is the plastic," he said.

He appealed to the traders and consumers to understand the pollution plastic is generating and stop using plastic materials. Deputy mayor Vanama Balavajra Babu, district library corporation chairman Battula Devanand and YSRCP leaders were among those who participated in the awareness programme.

Film director unveils NTR statue

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Popular film director K Raghavendra Rao unveiled the statue of Telugu Desam party founder and former Chief Minister N T Rama Rao at Nadigaddapalem village in Vemuru constituency in the district on Sunday.

The TDP activists took out a huge motorcycle rally from Dundipalem village to welcome Raghavendra Rao. Former ministers Nakka Ananda Babu, Alapati Rajendra Prasad, and TDP official spokesperson Pilli Manikyala Rao were among



those who attended the programme.

Raghavendra Rao garlanded the NTR statue and paid trib-

utes. He also garlanded the statue of Dr. BR Ambedkar in the village.

Speaking on the occasion,

K Raghavendra Rao said that he feels great about unveiling the NTR statue than directing NTR in films. "Those who are in the dais will be in the high power of positions after one and half years," he predicted.

Former Minister Ananda Babu said that the statue of NTR was unveiled as part of the centenary celebrations of NT Rama Rao. All should draw inspiration from NT Rama Rao.

The TDP leaders said that they would not rest till Chandrababu Naidu becomes the Chief Minister of the state.

ROAD RENAMED AFTER SAGI

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Sagi Ramakrishnam Raju Marg was inaugurated by West Godavari District Collector P Prasanti and Bhimavaram MLA Grandhi Srinivas on Sunday.

Late Sagi Ramakrishnam Raju established an engineering college here 42 years back which helped Bhimavaram become an education hub. In this regard and remembering his services, the Bhimavaram municipality and the Government of Andhra Pradesh, granted permission to rename Juvvalapalem Road as 'Sagi Ramakrishnam Raju Marg' between Addavanta and Pedamiram cross roads.



Addressing a public meeting on the occasion College president Sagi Prasada Raju and MLA Grandhi Srinivas said that Bhimavaram had made great strides in the field of Education with the help of educa-

tion donors like late Sagi Ramakrishnam Raju and others. Ex-MP and TTD Board Ex-Chairman Kanumuri Bapi Raju said that Bhimavaram is the birthplace of freedom fighters like Alluri Sirarama Raju and others.

In this programme Undi MLA Mantena Ramaraju, Addl. SP AV Subba Raju, former MLAs V Sivarama Raju, Ramanjaneyulu the college president Sagi Prasada Raju, secretary, and correspondent SRK Nisant Varma, Vice presidents, P Krishnam Raju, Gokaraju Ramaraju, SV Ranga Raju, governing body members Sagi Prateek Verma Principal Dr.M.Jagapatiraju and others participated the program.

CPI takes out rally opposing steel plant privatisation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CPI organised a rally in support of the Vizag steel plant privatisation movement, which has 500 days. A big number of left party leaders and cadre and trade union leaders participated in the rally. However, the police tried to prevent the rally.

Speaking on the occasion, CPI State secretary K Rama Krishna said that the agitation would continue until the Central

government announced to withdraw the privatisation decision. Prime Minister Narendra Modi started to privatise 26 companies in the country, however he never tried to start a single public company from the last eight years, he alleged.

He further said that the Central government had been plundering the country's wealth to Adani and Ambani. The Vizag Steel Plant Privatisation movement had been in existence



for a long time and it would be written with golden letters in the history of country, he said. All the trade unions and public

associations had come into one entity and it would be continued till the Central government makes a specific announcement

to withdraw its decision, he said.

Moreover, he said that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy should bring pressure over the union government. CM Jagan has been agreeing and giving his support to Modi's decisions about what he took and why don't question the Vizag Steel Plant privatisation issues, he commented.

Later, he said that though he gave consent to vote in favor of

President nominee Droupadi Murmu, the CM Jagan did not open his mouth for the Special Category Status, Ramayapatnam Port, Kadapa Steel Plant. The left leader said that his party supports the Amaravati agitation where the farmers have been continuing the agitation from the 922 days.

CPI State secretariat member Akkineni Vanaja, leaders D Sankar, G Koteswara Rao and others participated.

Trade unions stage dharna

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Trade union leaders and activists staged a dharna opposing the Central government's proposal to privatize the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) at Addanki Bus stand on Sunday. The trade union leaders led by CITU city president Dama Srinivasulu, AITUC district leader K Venkateswarlu and other leaders staged a dharna holding flags and raising slogans against the Union

government's proposal of privatising the VSP.

Speaking on the occasion, AITUC State President R Ravindra Babu said that the Modi government was trying to hand over the public sector units to the private companies.

The Centre is trying to hand over the public sector units to Ambani and Adani, he alleged. He said that the agitation opposing privatisation of the VSP completed 500 days on June 26.

INDIA CORNER

Some students in youth organisations are drunkards: Kerala Excise Minister

Kerala Excise Minister M V Govindan on Sunday said that a large section of youth and student organisations in the State were 'drunkards' and there was need to create awareness against alcohol consumption by them. Speaking at an event on the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Govindan said creating awareness was one of the methods to fight abuse of drugs and alcohol and for that student and youth organisations can be relied upon. "However, I have noticed that a large section of students of the various youth organisations in the State are drunkards. Not in a small way, but in a big way," the Minister said. "To address the issue, we need to sincerely work towards creating awareness among the coming generations, that is 'students in higher secondary, high school, college, including professional institutions', he said.



Day against drug abuse: Seized narcotics destroyed in Karnataka

Ganja weighing 53.128 kg and valued at Rs 23.75 lakh, 120 gm of heroin worth Rs 30 lakh was destroyed by the police as part of the international day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking here on Sunday. After obtaining permission from the court, the illicit drugs were destroyed in the biomedical waste management, processing and disposal unit of Ramky energy and environment limited here, police sources said. Police also destroyed seized 580.86 kg ganja, 25 gm heroin, and 320 gm MDMA seized under Mangaluru police commissionerate limits from 15 stations in 95 cases at the Ramky centre. The cost of totally seized narcotics is Rs 1.28 crore, they said. DK district superintendent of police Sonawane Rishikesh Bhagwan, Bantwal assistant superintendent of police Shivanshu Rajput and DySP Puttur sub-division Gana P Kumar were present on the occasion.



JNU asks canteen/dhabha owners to clear dues, vacate varsity premises

The Jawaharlal Nehru University administration has asked owners of several canteens and dhabas at the campus to clear their dues amounting to lakhs of rupees and vacate the varsity premises by June 30, alleging that their shops were allocated "without following due tender procedure". In a notice to several canteen owners dated June 22, the varsity's Joint Registrar (Estate) M K Pachauri asked them to clear all the outstanding dues against them within seven days of the issuance of the letter. Baffled shop owners are fearful of losing their livelihoods and are also finding it difficult to arrange the money to pay the dues. According to them, as many as 10 canteens/dhabas/Xerox shops at the campus have been served these notices. The university said the person will be liable for eviction proceedings as per the Public Premises Act, 1971 if he fails to comply with the notice.



AHEAD OF ROLLOUT

Apprehensions remain on 'Agnipath' scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apprehension continues to remain over the future of soldiers to be recruited under the 'Agnipath' scheme as the Centre and several state governments are yet to roll out a comprehensive plan for their rehabilitation once they retire after four years of service in the armed forces. Adding to the anxiety of the youths, none of the states ruled by the opposition parties announced any favourable recruitment scheme for 'Agniveers' to be hired under the scheme, while a few demanded that it be completely withdrawn. After the June 14 announcement of the 'Agnipath' scheme, at least 18 states and Union Territories - Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi

witnessed protests, some of them violent. While BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Assam announced that they would give preference to 'Agniveers' in the recruitment for police, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said it has decided to reserve 10 per cent vacancies in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Assam Rifles for 'Agniveers'. However, experts believe that the process would not be so simple. A state police recruitment board head said reservation cannot be more than 50 per cent in employment and most of the 'Agniveers' will be in the unreserved category as the Army has no reservation system. "So, the idea that they can be absorbed in CAPFs and state police may not work. They have to be considered only against 50 per cent of unreserved vacancies. It will also mean that meritorious and

better-educated non-Agniveers will find it difficult to join the police. This will impact the efficiency of the police. "So, how does the policy of Army recruitment reconcile with the system of reservation in the civilian sector of the government," the state police recruitment board head asked. Experts also believe that the entire process may come under legal scrutiny as it is not clear whether the pay of a retired 'Agniveer' after the four-year stint in the armed forces will be protected and seniority maintained. "This will be a tight rope walk for the government as this needs to be cleared to avoid any disgruntlement among the constables recruited directly by the state police," an expert said. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said youths who will serve the nation under the 'Agnipath' scheme would be given guaranteed 'Group C' (non-gazetted posts) or Haryana Police jobs. However, the state government is yet to spell out how

much percentage of the government jobs will be reserved for the 'Agniveers'. Similarly, the Uttarakhand government plans to adjust 'Agniveers' in police, disaster and 'Char Dham' management departments. "The idea is to use the services of the young and skilled 'Agniveers' in different sectors," Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had said. However, no specific quota has been announced for the 'Agniveers' in Uttarakhand government jobs. The Uttarakhand government already has a scheme to give jobs to retired defence personnel and their dependents as per their abilities in different departments through the Uttarakhand ex-servicemen welfare association or Uttarakhand Poorva Sainik Kalyan Nigam Limited (UPNL). About 30,000-35,000 ex-servicemen and their dependents have been given jobs through UPNL in the state, former chief secretary Subhash Kumar said.

Maha crisis: Sena leaders step up attack on rebels; Pawar in huddle with MVA leaders

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The power tussle between Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Shiv Sena dissident Eknath Shinde became intense on Sunday with Sena leaders, led by Sanjay Raut, launching an acerbic attack on the rebels while NCP chief Sharad Pawar held closed-door meetings with MVA leaders. On the second day in a row, Shiv Sena cadres staged protests against the dissidents in various parts of the state, including Mumbai and Pune. State minister Aaditya Thackeray, son of Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, and Sena chief spokesman Sanjay Raut addressed party cadres in suburban Dahisar to drum up support for the beleaguered party leadership and slammed the Shinde camp. Sharad Pawar met leaders of



NCP, Congress ministers Balasaheb Thorat and Ashok Chavan, and Shiv Sena's Anil Parab and Anil Desai to discuss the political fallout of the six-day-old rebellion. Striking an aggressive note, Raut said the present crisis was an opportunity to resurrect

Shiv Sena. "We have learnt a lesson on whom to trust....These are bodies whose souls have died. Their mind is dead...40 bodies will come from Assam and will be sent directly to the morgue for postmortem," Raut said in an apparent reference to

the number of MLAs camping in Guwahati with Shinde while addressing Sena cadres. Meanwhile, another Shiv Sena leader and cabinet minister for higher and technical education, Uday Samant, has gone incommunicado and is reportedly on his way to Guwahati from Surat. A 'passenger manifest' of an airport services company bearing the name of Uday Samant with destination Guwahati is doing rounds on social media. So far, state cabinet ministers Gulabrao Patil, Dada Bhuse, Sandipan Bhumre, and ministers of state Shamburaje Desai and Abdul Sattar (all Shiv Sena) have joined the camp of rebels. Another minister Bachu Kadu of Prahar Janshakti Party and an Independent minister from Sena quota, Rajendra Yedravkar, are also been camping with Shinde.

Slum-dweller, Delhi professor among Prez candidates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A slum dweller from Mumbai, a namesake of RJD founder Lalu Prasad Yadav, a social activist from Tamil Nadu and a professor from Delhi are among those who have submitted their nomination papers to contest the July 18 presidential election. While NDA nominee Droupadi Murmu and common opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha are the main contestants, at least 30 others also have filed their nomination papers with Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody, the returning officer for the election. Sanjay Savji Deshpande, a resident of the Amar Nagar Slum No. 1 in Mumbai's Mulund suburb, was among those who filed their nomination papers days after the election was announced on June 9. Lalu Prasad Yadav, a resident of Saran in Bihar, T Ramesh, a social worker from Namakkal district in Tamil Nadu, and Prof Dayashankar Agarwal from Timarpur in Delhi are the other nominations that have garnered some eyeballs in the presidential nomination.

Most of the nomination papers do not have the mandatory names and signatures of proposers and seconders or a bank draft of Rs 15,000 as security deposit and are set to be rejected. A couple of presidential hopefuls from Maharashtra have listed names of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda, former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, local MPs and MLAs as proposers and seconders, but have left the signature column blank. Among those who have submitted their nomination papers also include Paresh Kumar Manubhai Mulani from Ahmedabad, Ved Vyas from Mahedragad in Haryana, Ashok Shankar Patil from Dhule in Maharashtra, Vivek Sakharan Bagekar from Pune, Amit Kumar Sharma from Shahdara in Delhi, Ravikumar Kesagani from Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Kankanla Penchala Naidu from Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, Dr K Padmarajan from Salem in Tamil Nadu and Saira Bano Mohammad Patel from Andheri, Maharashtra.

Media and entertainment industry expected to generate Rs 7.5L crore

PNS ■ PUNE

The media and entertainment ecosystem is a sunrise sector, which is expected to generate Rs 4 lakh crore annually by 2025 and grow to Rs 7.5 lakh crore by 2030, Union minister Anurag Singh Thakur said here on Sunday. The Minister for Information and Broadcasting also said that the rapidly expanding digital infrastructure in the country and the ongoing advancements taking place in the AVGC (animation, visual effects, gaming and comics) sector have the potential to make India the preferred post-production hub of the media and entertainment industry. He was delivering the keynote address at the National Conference on 'Changing Landscape of Media and Entertainment 2022' organised by the Symbiosis Skill and

Professional University in Pune. "The media and entertainment ecosystem is a sunrise sector, which is expected to generate Rs 4 lakh crore annually by 2025 and reach USD 100 billion or Rs 7.5 lakh crore industry by 2030. The government has designated audio-visual services as one of the 12 Champion Service Sectors and announced key policy measures aimed at nurturing sustained growth," he said. "Many job roles have emerged in the field - video editing, colour grading, visual effects (VFX), sound design, rotoscoping, 3-D modeling, etc. Each job role in this sector requires a specific set of skills and competencies. It is imperative for the industry and academia to come together and design programmes relevant to the needs of this sector," Thakur added.

Former BJP MP moves SC challenging temple law

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A former BJP MP has moved the Supreme Court challenging the validity of certain sections of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. The plea filed by Chintamani Malviya challenged the constitutional validity of sections 2, 3 and 4 of the 1991 Act, claiming that they violate the principles of secularism. Malviya, a resident of Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, submitted that the Act is void and unconstitutional for many reasons. It has sought a direction from the court to declare sections 2, 3, 4 of the 1991 Act as void and unconstitutional for being violative of fundamental rights so far as it seeks to validate 'places of worship', illegally made by barbaric invaders. The plea claimed the provisions of the law not only offended fundamental rights to equality, non-discrimination and freedom to practice religion but also principles of secularism which is an integral part of the Preamble and the basic structure of the Constitution. Several other pleas, including one filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, challenging the validity of certain provisions of the 1991 Act have already been filed in the apex court. Recently, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind has filed a plea in the top court seeking intervention in a pending petition which has challenged the constitutional validity of sections 2, 3, and 4 of the 1991 Act.

Prez polls: When outcome is often certain & messaging important

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Outcomes of presidential polls have been mostly certain even before the first vote was cast and rival political parties have often used the contest to send out a larger message centred around their politics through their choices. In 2012, the BJP backed P A Sangma against the UPA's Pranab Mukherjee in the hope to earn some brownie points for supporting a tribal candidate from the North East while K R Narayanan and A P J Abdul Kalam were such a powerful mix of symbolism and substance in 1997 and 2002 respectively that even the main opposition party ended up backing them. Narayanan, a former diplomat who came from the Scheduled Caste, was a candidate of the United Front government and the Congress, and had received support from the opposition BJP as well. And when the saffron party picked Kalam, a much admired and respected scien-

tist, when it was in power, the Congress supported him. With its choice of Droupadi Murmu, a tribal leader from a humble background, the BJP seems to have succeeded in sending a wider message about its representative politics after naming a Dalit in 2017, incumbent President Ram Nath Kovind, as she is all but certain to be India's first ST president. Have the Congress and other strident BJP rivals like the Trinamool Congress and the Left been able to make an important point with their choice of former Union minister Yashwant Sinha? Political experts believe the Congress decision to back Sinha, first a choice of the TMC, does signal its willingness to accommodate regional parties as the opposition gears up for the 2024 general election even though the candidate, a former BJP leader, himself may not inspire much enthusiasm and confidence. The opposition's decision to

settle on a former BJP leader who rebelled against its current leadership seems to convey the message that all those against the present government should come together, said Manindra Nath Thakur, associate professor at the Centre for Political Studies of JNU. On symbolism, however, the opposition has lost out as even anti-BJP voices are wondering what is big deal about its candidate, he said, describing Sinha (84) as an 'exhausted politician' who always lacked any mass appeal. Though he does enjoy a clean image, Thakur added. That Sinha is a bureaucrat-turned-politician from an upper caste while Murmu is a tribal person from one of the most backward regions of Odisha has only accentuated the contrast, prompting regional parties such as the BJD and the YSR Congress to back her while an opposition member like Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, which associates itself with the tribal cause, is also in a bind.

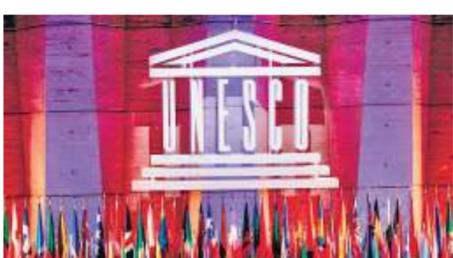


Faith-based schools perpetuate patriarchal norms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Madrasas and other faith-based schools in Asia can cancel out some of the positive impact of increased education access on gender equality and have implications for persistence of patriarchal norms and attitudes in society, according to the UNESCO-published global education monitoring report. The report, on the theme of "deepening the debate on those left behind", states that non-state faith-based schools in Asia have increased girls' access to education but it comes at a cost.

Madrasa graduates have less favourable attitudes towards higher education for girls and working mothers, consider raising children to be wives' main responsibility, believe the optimal number of children was up to God and indicate a preference for large families, it stated. "Several decades ago gender disparity in education was high in many Muslim-majority countries in Asia. Significant progress to increase access and close gender gaps has since been achieved, in partnership with non-state faith-based providers. Rising enrolment



of girls in madrasas helped relax social constraints on women's mobility in conservative rural areas where

madrasas have been low-cost platforms to achieve universal education," the report stated. "Madrasas can also cancel

out some of the positive impact on gender equality from increased education access. First, their curricula and textbooks may not be gender-inclusive, instead reinforcing traditional narratives on gender roles, as studies have shown in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Second, their teaching and learning practices such as gender segregation and gender-specific restrictions on social interactions may leave the impression that such gender-unequal practices are socially acceptable more broadly," it said.

According to the report, the teachers may lack training to address gender issues and may act as negative models, for instance affecting students' attitudes to fertility. "Fourthly, the more traditional institutions may have restricted environments with limited exposure to progressive role models and media. Reproducing traditional gender norms discourages participation in further education and employment. What happens inside faith-based institutions has implications for the persistence of patriarchal norms and attitudes in society," it said.





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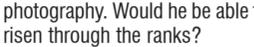
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Daggers drawn

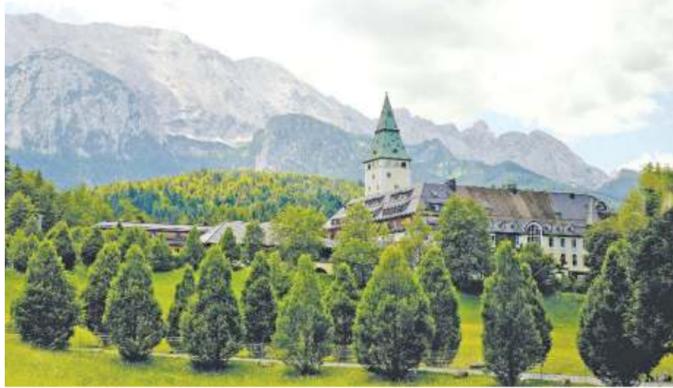
The Maharashtra crisis deepens while the Thackeray heir and his dissenters fight for Balasaheb's legacy

The political drama in Maharashtra is getting interesting every passing hour. The fear, however, is that it can become dirty in no time. In fact, Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's loyalists have already begun protesting against rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and his followers. The banners of rebels have been defaced, stones hurled at some places and an MLA's office has been vandalised in Pune. It seems that Chief Minister Thackeray, having overcome the initial shock of such a massive revolt, has decided to dig his heels in. It is not the first time that the party has suffered dissidence to a noticeable extent. In December 1991, Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's confidant Chhagan Bhujbal sought to split the party. Bhujbal, who belongs to other backward classes or OBC, might have thought of riding the Mandal wave, but the party remained intact. The revolt by Narayan Rane in 2005 also didn't break the party; ditto Raj Thackeray's rebellion a little while later. That was then; Bal Thackeray, who liked to be compared with the tiger, was alive and kicking. But political commentators are watching with great anticipation if his son, Uddhav, would be able to weather the raging storm? He is not believed to be aggressive as his father or even his own cousin Raj. He has often been portrayed as a gentler version of a typical Shiv Sena leader with an interest in wildlife photography. Would he be able to take on street fighters like Eknath Shinde who have risen through the ranks?



Anticipation is accompanied with fear, for Shiv Sena leaders are not known for patience and tolerance of their adversaries' views. Thankfully, the semblance of normal party functioning is being maintained. So, on Saturday, Uddhav Thackeray chaired a meeting of the party national executive, attended by his partisans. Unsurprisingly, they authorised him to take all party decisions. The meeting also asserted that only the Shiv Sena (that is, the group under Uddhav Thackeray) can use the name of Balasaheb Thackeray. It was also decided to serve disqualification notices to 16 rebel MLAs on the ground that they did not attend a party meeting Uddhav had called earlier in the week. Meanwhile, Shinde's supporters are crying foul, arguing that Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, an NCP leader, is not qualified to act against the 16 MLAs as there is a petition seeking his removal. The rebels are reportedly seeking legal opinion. Shinde, meanwhile, has presented himself as a Hindutva warrior. In a tweet, he urged the Shiv Sainiks to "understand MVA's plan". He claims to be "fighting a battle with a dragon to free the Shiv Sena and Shiv Sainiks from its clutches". Colourful imagery indeed, but the point is that Uddhav Thackeray is still the Chief Minister and therefore has control over the administration and police. One only hopes that the internecine battle within the Sena doesn't get nastier.

PICTALK



Castle Elmau and surroundings during the G7 summit in Kruen, near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

First among equals

There's nothing exciting about the Prez poll, at least not till the eve of the 2024 LS election

The process of electing the 16th President of India has begun. The election is scheduled for July 18 and the counting of votes will take place on July 21. Exactly a month earlier, Yashwant Sinha, the Opposition's unanimous choice, filed his papers. The choice of the ruling BJP and its allies is Droupadi Murmu. Unlike other elections, the presidential election is routine and there's nothing exciting about it. Generally, the ruling party with a majority in the Lower House and sufficient seats in the Upper gets its candidate elected. The Opposition candidate is more of positioning to tell all that the next President was not a consensus choice. Though the BJP is a little short on the numbers, its candidate is likely to sail through as BJD and others have pledged support to Murmu. The President is indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of MPs and MLAs. The electoral college comprises 776 MPs and 4,123 MLAs who would be voting to elect the President. Total votes for UPA candidate (including the support of non-UPA parties) are 4,02,682 which is 37.31 per cent of total votes while the votes for NDA candidates with outside support are 6,13,849 or 56.82 per cent.



Thus the outcome of the election is obvious. Though often the office of President is seen as politically insignificant, it is not. The President's role gets pronounced at the time of the formation of a new Government, especially when no party has a clear mandate. For this reason, the party in power never takes it lightly and settles for the most trusted person. Murmu is a former Jharkhand Governor, a two-term MLA from Odisha and served as Minister in the BJP-BJD coalition Government. Sinha has had an illustrious political career and a clear political ideology; he served as Finance Minister in the Vajpayee Government. But it is the numbers and not merit that would decide the President and Murmu's credentials as a tribal lady are unbeatable. What is more, Murmu is getting a lot of support from non-NDA parties and so is likely to win hands down. But her moment of truth would come in 2024 when she would be instrumental in the formation of a new Government at the Centre.

India at G7 Summit & its Ukraine stand



SIMRAN SODHI

It is quite clear that the western nations will make efforts to convince India to change its stance on Russia, which is a delicate diplomatic challenge

The upcoming G7 Summit in Germany will see global leaders get together to discuss several issues. The one that will dominate the deliberations is likely the Ukraine invasion, sanctions on Russia and how the world, the western world, should deal with defiant Russian President Vladimir Putin. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be there, as India, Indonesia, South Africa and Senegal have been invited as special guests. According to a report in Bloomberg, Germany was in two minds as to whether to extend the invitation to India; the reservation being that India has not condemned Russia for its invasion and also abstained from the United Nations Resolutions censuring Russia. But pragmatism won the day and India was extended the invitation. But it remains quite clear that in the luxury resort of Schloss Elmau in the Bavarian Alps, where the Summit will take place, the western nations will make efforts to convince India to change its stance on Russia.

For India and Modi, it will present a delicate diplomatic challenge. Of course, India today wants to be a part of the global leadership but it has no intentions of breaking ties with old and tested allies, Russia being the best example. The problem also is that not only has India not condemned Russian actions in Ukraine, it continues to buy oil at discounted rates from it and is also working out an alternative payment system to keep this going. The United States and Europe, who have been leading the charge against Russia, have expressed their frustrations but, of late, the approach has been more nuanced in public with the western world trying to show an understanding of India's position.

Indications are clear that while India will stick to its stand, so will the western world. Earlier this year, while visiting Germany, Modi called on both Russia and Ukraine to end the fighting, saying: "We believe that no party can emerge victorious



in this war." Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra also said that India has always maintained that "there should be cessation of hostilities in Ukraine and the path to resolution goes through diplomacy and dialogue". India is likely to toe this line during the G7 Summit. But, behind closed doors, the G7 intends to raise the pressure on India.

So far, one has to admit that India has maintained its 'neutrality' on the Ukraine war with success. The Quad, a grouping of the US, Japan, India and Australia which initially seemed to be tested by the Ukraine crisis with three members vocally critiquing Russia and India being the lone neutral voice, seems to have reconciled to the in-house differences. Challenges in the Indo-Pacific are a common cause for Quad and even as the Ukraine war presents a new challenge, reality stares hard in the shape of China. All four need one another to counter the dragon's ever-expanding global footprint. Also, for India, China is another worrisome factor that explains its stand on Russia. In the regional dynamics, Russia's embrace of China is worrisome and a

THE SUMMIT WILL TEST INDIA NOT ONLY IN HOW IT PUTS FORWARD ITS UNIQUE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE BUT ALSO CHECK WHETHER INDIA IS READY TO PUSH BACK DELICATELY AND DEMAND THAT THE WORLD SEE SITUATIONS AND CRISIS FROM A NON-WESTERN VIEWPOINT

closer relationship between Russia and Pakistan even more so. After the Ukraine war, the world has seen a change in the shape of its alliances and a closer Russia-China axis is there for all to see. It doesn't make the world comfortable but it worries India even more, with a boundary dispute, and the Chinese looking for yet another excuse to expand territorially.

The G7 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the US (the European Union is not a member of the G7 but attends the Summit). It is an informal grouping of the world's richest nations and hence the most powerful, too. Russia had joined the G7 in 1998 making it G8 then, but following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia was shown the door. Interestingly, China, despite the size of its economy and the global influence it asserts, has been kept out of the grouping. So looking at the G7 in an unbiased fashion, it's quite apparent that it is a grouping of rich and powerful western nations that has zero representation from Africa and the Middle East.

It also helps explain and understand the contradictions not just in the global order but also the response to the Ukraine war.

India is not part of the G7 or the western world. But with an economy that is growing and a strategic place in the Indo-Pacific, it today cannot be kept out. India is also one of the few countries that have shown the occasional spine to the western nations that still seem to view the world from a very narrow post-World War II perspective. The upcoming G7 Summit will test India not only in how it puts forward its unique global perspective but also check whether India is ready to push back delicately and demand that the world see situations and crisis from a non-western viewpoint. That, at the end of the day, is the hallmark of a global leader.

(The author, a Delhi-based journalist and foreign affairs analyst, holds a Masters in International Relations from the American University in Washington DC. In 2009, her book 'Piercing the Heart: Untold Stories of 26/11', was published. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANTI-MURMU PROTEST ISN'T GOOD

Sir — This refers to the editorial, 'First among equals' (June 23) wherein it was logically elaborated that the BJP has been playing its game beautifully, and reaping rich dividends. By nominating Droupadi Murmu for the post of the new President of India, the NDA has given a gift to all tribals, besides redeeming the tribal vote bank towards the alliance. Her nomination by the ruling NDA will tilt the political equations in its favour. Murmu has risen from the grassroots political level. She had attained a remarkable position as a teacher, Nagar Panchayat representative and ministerial position in the Odisha Cabinet.

She has completed the tenure as the Governor in Jharkhand without any controversy, which shows that she has a lot of experience of working in a high constitutional post. The NDA will get an opportunity to strengthen its penetration in tribal States like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Opposing Murmu's candidature will prove to be politically harmful for the Opposition parties. Another special thing is that in the presidential election, neither the NDA nor UPA will be in a position to issue a whip to their MLAs and MPs since the election is done by secret ballot.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

PURE AIR MAKES LIFE BEAUTIFUL

Sir — Through your columns, I wish to draw attention towards the topic of air pollution and its fatal effects. In today's world, almost everything around us is contaminated and so is the air that we breathe. Air pollution is becoming a matter of great concern each passing day. Every living being needs fresh air to remain healthy. Breathing in polluted air can lead to fatal diseases like asthma and cancer, which in turn can lead to death. With the increasing number of cars and factories, the world is becoming a tougher place to live in. Our environment thrives upon balance. To curb the air pollution, more trees

US must review gun rights order



It is most unfortunate that the US Supreme Court has not taken seriously many firing incidents on the locals and foreigners, including schoolchildren in major cities, expanded gun rights and ruled that Americans have a right to carry handguns in public (June 24). Though the Supreme Court ruled that handguns can be carried in public for self-defence outside homes, most of the guns are used for various offences and crimes. Many Indian students, software workers and salespersons are among the worst victims of guns

JP Reddy | Telangana

should have been planted. Instead, we can see deforestation all around us. People seem to carelessly do things that are making the environment more polluted. They need to take steps that will reduce the effects of air pollution, like using solar panels, replacing fossil fuels and by using electricity and petroleum efficiently. I hope that my small but sincere effort will help spread awareness among people about the fatal effects of air pollution and how dangerous it can be for the lives of those inhabiting this planet.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

WHAT A COMEBACK, DK!

Sir — As India's head coach Rahul Dravid has rightly said, Dinesh Karthik hasn't just knocked on the door of Indian cricket, but banged it hard and made a spectacular comeback into the national side after a gap of three years, riding on his stellar performance in the IPL this year. The Tamil Nadu wicket-keeping batter last played in Indian colours in the forgettable 2019

World Cup semifinals against New Zealand. Picked up by Royal Challengers Bangalore and donning a new persona, 'Dinesh Karthik 2.0'; the seasoned middle-order batter, took up the role of a finisher to perfection, which became one of the biggest talking points in the cash-rich tournament.

Since making his Test debut way back in 2004 against Australia, Dinesh Karthik has made several comebacks to the Indian team but the latest one is undoubtedly the most inspiring of all and is nothing less than a fairytale. His 27-ball 55 against South Africa in the Rajkot match, which was his first half-century in T20s, further underscores his value as a 'finisher'. Ahead of the 2022 T-20 World Cup to be held in Australia in October-November, Dinesh Karthik will be the cynosure of all eyes.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

SOUND BITE

The laws of J&K, adapted in Ladakh, provide protection to both jobs and land.



Ladakh Lt Governor —RK Mathur



China's and India's common interests far outweigh their differences.

Chinese Foreign Minister —Wang Yi

Women today are capable enough of doing their own thing in their own way.



Actor —Ankita Lokhande

It's so easy to get up for these relays... and just not think and go. I'm proud of our team.

World championship swimmer —Katie Ledecky

There is a need to tighten the (Indian cyberspace) accountability matrix.



Union Minister —Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

HELP KIDS COPE WITH DEATH OF DEAR ONES

Handle them sensitively yet with honesty



SONALI KHAN

With the novel coronavirus hitting the globe, many families were left staggered to their feet with medical emergencies, untimely death of their loved ones. What began with a learning loss resulted in weakened financial conditions and also, in many cases, the loss of parents, grandparents or loved ones for children. Usually, when it comes to talking about death with children, adults don't know how to start the conversation or how and what exactly to say.

Here's how you can explain what happened. While explaining about death to children, it is critical that they are handled most sensitively yet with honesty. It's important for an adult (whom the child feels safe and comfortable to interact with) to talk to him or her in a quiet place. Conversations help to create an open and comforting environment that allows them to question and freely express their thoughts and feelings.

You can begin with explaining what death is. For example, you might say, "When a person dies, his or her body stops working. The heart stops beating and the body stops moving, eating, and breathing."

Many times, younger children may not realise that death is permanent and ask questions like "when will Naani come back?" and "I want to show Papa what I made". Phrases such as "he is gone into long sleep," "your loss," and "passed away" may seem gentler but can also confuse the young children, who often think literally. They may think if the relatives look for the "lost" loved one, he or she could be found. Hence, it's important to reaffirm the facts gently, and reassert death with most honesty.



Children go through waves of emotions when something like this happens in their life. They experience anger, frustration, anxiety and build a story that it might have happened because of a certain reason. Remind them that nothing they did caused the death or there's nothing that can reverse it.

Also, sometimes it is natural for children to feel angry or disappointed with the family member for leaving them alone or when a close relative passed away. In such a situation, one must allow kids to express themselves freely and assure that feeling this way is alright by saying something like "I know you're upset that Mom died. Sometimes I feel like that, too."

However, children can develop strong fears about their own personal safety or about the death of the surviving parent. And that's when their fears need to be addressed and they need to know that you are there to take care of them. Grief is a very complex emotion; it is not easy for children to cope with. Sometimes children's responses can be harsh when coping with the death of their parent or any loved one. Children may have nightmares or scary thoughts. They may not want to talk about the deceased person in any way, inclusive of happy memories. They may experience trouble sleeping, concentrating, and others. If such feelings or behavioural patterns occur to a degree that concerns you, then it's best to seek professional help.

It may not be possible to prepare fully for the emotions that may follow however, with time they may become easier to process. Remind your children that while change is hard for everyone, you are there for them to get through this time. It's important that you give them all the information that they need to avoid assumptions leading to confusions.

Maintaining some routines can help children. It's important to keep the memories of the deceased alive for your children; after all, they still love the deceased person.

Remember grieving is a slow process that requires time. While feelings attached with the loss may never completely go away, with each passing day they can become easier to endure. Give yourself and your children permission to feel happy again. Be assured that the memory of your loved one can live on in the hearts of your family.

(The author is a journalist-turned-activist who works towards women empowerment and development of children.)

We should celebrate Independence Month

Individuals celebrate birthdays, but a nation ought to celebrate its Independence for a month, not in a single day



BALAKRISHNAN SATYAM

To understand a certain concept better, we expect that a paragraph about it will help us better than a single sentence. Likewise, we say that to achieve greater skill development, our practice sessions need to be longer. Thus, when we accord something more time, we hope to have given it that much more attention.

Generally, in our minds the expression 'a day or two' suggests a quite short duration. 'Day' is such a familiar word, and so casually used that we rarely reflect on it. It is an important unit of time. If an individual celebrates his or her birthday, shouldn't a nation celebrate Independence Month rather than only a day?

Many kinds of organisations played a role in our gaining Independence; they were quite different from each other, and unique in what they did. You have heard it said that we should also render proper respect to many movements and sacrifices across the country. An Independence Month, organised as themed weeks, or even as distinct days to recognise and highlight various aspects of self-governance would also spread greater political awareness among the people.

There are of course programmes on the day of official and ceremonial significance, but in practical terms, Independence has meant our own currency without colonial insignia, that our houses of legislature are sovereign, our own Chiefs of the Armed Forces, our own Election Commission, and various Indian Councils for research, our Central Universities, and national corporations in the Energy and other sectors. Showcasing each of them and celebrating their progress is something that can be done in greater detail than through only a few tableaux over three hours in a single day. It can be a richer, longer, more informative experience through an Independence Month.

The opportunity to organise a number of exhibitions on progress will not only inform our citizens about the energy sector, the telecom and ITES sector, the space sector and so on; it will also help the youth.

Now, for argument's sake, someone could say that a much larger country in terms of area and with about twice our number of states is, after all, observed on one day with a lot of fireworks and parades. Their struggle for Independence, while admirable for many things, was quite different. It was concentrated in a few battle arenas, and basically under one command. Their nation itself grew in territory over the mainland over several decades, and largely drew upon the progressive political ethos of Western Europe as its main source.

While we thus appreciate the US's particular history, it is plain to see that our own liberation from the colonial yoke has been a different kind of process. Given our geography and ancient heritage, our



THE OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANISE A NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS ON PROGRESS WILL NOT ONLY INFORM OUR CITIZENS ABOUT THE ENERGY SECTOR, THE TELECOM AND ITES SECTOR, THE SPACE SECTOR AND SO ON; IT WILL ALSO HELP THE YOUTH

(The author is a creative director, advertising faculty, and an amateur epistemologist. The views expressed are personal)



Constitutional spirit includes elements from Western and indigenous frameworks as we had an equally illustrious and forward-looking team of authors as were the Founding Fathers of the US.

In fact, the project to draft the Constitution is itself an undertaking about which more information can be shared. From inception, there has been a strong inclusivist orientation in the Republic of India. Cabinets at national and state levels have sought to have members from under-represented or marginalised communities, or from places far away from economic and political hubs.

On the contrary, it is much rarer to find Native Americans among Secretaries or in the House of Representatives. Representation for them was initiated only in 1924, and it took till 1965 for them to even properly participate as voters across most States. Given our own greater diversity and many regional and district cultures, India is more representational in its political culture from the beginning.

Much more remains to be done, yet the Constitution adopted within three years of Independence got us off to a flying start. There is in it a pluralism and coexistence of doctrines—there are some curbs on exploiting fellow humans for profit even while incentivising industrial growth. The mixed economy approach of having some utilities undertaken and operated by the State, a broadly welfarist outlook, a planning model suited to the developmental needs of a Third World country (typical for most recently decolonialised)—all parts of a

unique 'middle path' policy, in itself a marvel. There was advocacy of a scientific temper and promotion of modern education for all. In an ethos where both consumerism and spirituality have been pursued parallelly!

The generation of leaders and experts who determined and agreed upon such a choice was a generation that could boast of knowledge and practical experience. While no set of principles may be such that a further adaptation cannot be considered at all, what we've had already so far is not narrow, and any fault is actually about weak implementation.

A month, therefore, would not only be a celebration, it would be a thanksgiving, a reaffirmation and a renewal of our commitment to our fair polity. With the passing years, we won't have people any more who had known how things were, prior to 1947. The domination by the European, the severely limited participation in governance in those times, the inadequate infrastructure across sectors, will all be long forgotten. Our present rights and freedoms had been dreamt of for decades before they were ushered in 75 years ago.

The very theme of Independence can lead us to reflect, as families and citizens, on how it can be practically maintained. There's an important aspect of economic freedom, which Gandhiji had underlined.

In the US, a lot of ordinary people are groaning under the yoke of steep debt—for housing, healthcare and education. A small part of it is due to heedless use of credit cards, but much of it has to do with the lack of a sense of soci-

ety, and with the adoption of a view of people as customers first, and only then as humans. Student debt, and steep cost of university education are formidable barriers to opportunity and social mobility. It helps to remember something here that is often forgotten.

Rather than being accorded our freedom, we have to realise that we are born free, and as Rousseau famously said, the chains get forged only subsequently.

For India, decolonisation halted the robbery of our natural resources by an imperial power. It brought us into the modern era of representative government, and put us on the path of inclusive development. It shook off past shackles and at the same time, launched visions of a prosperous and progressive future for all strata in our society. The Directive Principles, as enshrined in the Constitution, undertake to uplift large numbers living in various kinds of deprivation, whose circumstances in recent generations had offered little or no scope.

This is a socioeconomic gap that a positive governmental agenda can bridge. Yet, independence is really all about people being kept out of debt, than being placed in debt. We reciprocate by serving national interest in many small ways for the broad support we receive. This is what President J.F. Kennedy, in his 1961 White House inaugural, said, "Ask what you can do for your country."

An Independence Month of thirty-one days would offer enough time to ask these questions, and to discover enough answers.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SHARAD PAWAR IS THREATENING THE (REBEL) MLAS TO COME TO THE ASSEMBLY. THEY'LL VOTE AS PER THEIR WILL.
—UNION MINISTER NARAYAN RANE



WE WILL STAND BY CM UDDHAV THACKERAY. WE ARE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION.
—MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM AJIT PAWAR

Israel: All turbulence in politics is about Netanyahu

Netanyahu or Bibi is the standard-holder for the Jews who favour a bigger country but without citizenship to Palestinian Arabs

There was a rare moment of grace in Israeli politics last Monday, as Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid announced they would dissolve their extraordinary coalition and pitched Israel into its fifth election in three and a half years.



GWYNNE DYER

The coalition was extraordinary because it included such a broad spectrum of political conviction in Israel, from Rightwing pro-settler parties like Bennett's Yamina to Centre-Left Yesh Atid (Lapid's Party) and even, for the first time ever, an Islamic party, the United Arab List.

The moment of grace was the loyalty and even friendship shown by Bennett and Lapid, political and ideological opponents who rose above the bitter divisions of a fragmented Israeli

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

political scene characterised by defections and betrayals.

They did not blame each other for the coalition's collapse. They treated each other with respect. Bennett even kept his word to share the top job in rotation with Lapid, who will become prime minister of the transitional government for the months between now and the next election, probably in late October.

"They are political rivals who were wise enough to create a rare partnership, almost utopian by Israeli political standards. They began nicely and ended even better. We were as dreamers—is this Israel, or Denmark?" wrote Haaretz journalist Yossi Verter. But these two men apart, it's Israel. Definitely Israel.

The eight-party coalition

had one unifying principle: to stop 'Bibi' (Binyamin Netanyahu, prime minister for most of the past 25 years) from coming back to power yet again. It could only work by concentrating on social issues (where there was some agreement) while preserving the status quo on 'security', settler violence and Palestinian rights.

Even so, the attempt to hold such a spectacularly diverse coalition together was ultimately sunk by the defections of members who felt morally compromised by working with people of such radically different views. It only had 62 Members of the Knesset out of 120 to start with, and just three MKs quitting, one at a time, destroyed its parliamentary majority.

So will Netanyahu be back



in power again after October? He's still on trial for breach of trust, accepting bribes, and fraud, but the coalition didn't get around to banning people on trial for felonies from becoming prime minister, so it's certainly possible.

That was why Netanyahu strove so hard to bring the coalition down, getting the

opposition to vote against every single coalition measure. The Knesset and the country are so evenly balanced that any reshuffle of the deck is another chance to win.

Netanyahu even got his allies in the Knesset to vote against another five-year extension of the regulation that places Jewish settlers in the West Bank under Israeli civil law, not the military law that controls life for Arabs in the occupied territories.

That normally goes through automatically, without debate, but Netanyahu's Likud Party and its allies voted against it despite the fact they are pro-settler parties. Bibi knew that the four Arab members of the coalition government couldn't bring themselves to vote for the settlers having special rights, so the

measure failed and the coalition fell.

Actually, everything political in Israel is ultimately about the settlers and the occupation now, and the country is split down the middle with almost surgical precision. That's why it was so hard to make an anti-Bibi coalition, but it's just as hard to form a pro-Bibi one.

Few people realised that this was the future they were creating when Israel won the 1967 war and conquered substantial Arab-populated territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

Between the 1948 war, when most Arabs fled or were driven from what then became Israel, and the Six-Day War of 1967, about 85 per cent of Israel's population was Jewish. After Israel's victory in that

war, about half the population on the land now controlled by Israel was Arab and either Muslim or Christian.

That is still the case today, although the Gaza Strip has been turned into an open-air prison that is technically not in Israel. So unless you are planning to give the occupied territories back, you can have a democratic Israel where half the population is Arab, or a Jewish Israel where half the population has no political rights.

That's the choice that divides and paralyses the country, and there's no decision on the horizon. Bibi is the standard-holder for all those Israeli Jews who favour a bigger country but one where most Palestinian Arabs are not citizens, and he may be back in power by the end of the year.

MONEY MATTERS

After 5 months, ONGC finally gets a director on HPCL board

After over five months, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has finally got a director appointed on the board of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd - a firm it had acquired for Rs 36,915 crore. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on June 22, conveyed its consent for the appointment of Pankaj Kumar, Director (Offshore), ONGC as a director on the board of HPCL, according to regulatory filings by HPCL. For over five months, ONGC had no representative on the board of HPCL - a company in which it owns a 51.11 per cent stake since January 2018. HPCL for over one-and-a-half years - between January 2018 and August 2019 - did not recognise ONGC as its promoter despite the government selling its entire 51.11 per cent stake in the company to the oil explorer. It relented only after a rap from market regulator SEBI. ONGC got the right to appoint one director who HPCL called 'Government Nominee Director (Representative of ONGC)'.



IOB aims to boost advances to retail, MSME, agri, corporate sector in FY23

State-owned Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) is aiming to boost advances to retail, MSMEs, corporate and agricultural loans during the current fiscal year, as the lender has substantially brought down the stressed assets on its balance sheet through sustained and targeted efforts. The outlook of the Indian banking sector is seen to be improving on the back of better credit demand and strong balance sheets, IOB said in its FY21-22 annual report. In the fiscal year ended March 2022, IOB witnessed doubling of its net profit at Rs 1,709 crore, as against Rs 831 crore in the previous fiscal year, as the bank improved on its asset quality through a multi-pronged strategy and focussed recovery initiatives. IOB said the asset quality of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) are on an improving trend though some loans are classified as restructured loans under pandemic permitted RBI schemes.



ASICS expects 50 pc of sales from online channel in India in 2-3 years

Japanese sportswear major ASICS expects online channel to account for 50 per cent of its total sales in India in the next two-three years with consumers opting for more digital purchases due to the pandemic, according to a senior company official. At the same time, ASICS India, the company's arm, is also accelerating expansion of its physical retail stores to tap into the growth potential in the country. "Prior to the pandemic, digital sales from our own website and marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart was around 25 per cent of the total sales. Now it has touched 35 per cent of the total business...It is still growing," ASICS India and South Asia Managing Director Rajat Khurana told PTI. Stating that the shopping behaviour of consumers has changed, he said, "In the next two to three years, digital sales will contribute to 50 per cent of the overall sales."



CASINOS, ONLINE GAMING AND HORSE RACES

28 pc GST likely on gross revenue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council in its meeting this week is likely to vet a proposal of the panel of state finance ministers on levying 28 per cent GST on online gaming, casinos and horse racing, sources said.

The Group of Ministers, headed by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, has recommended that online gaming should be taxed at full value of the consideration, including contest entry fee paid by the player on participating in the game.

In case of race courses, the GoM has suggested that GST be levied on the full value of bets pooled in the totalisators and placed with the book-makers. In casinos, GoM recommended that the tax would be levied on the full face value of the chips/coins purchased from the casino by a player. No



further GST would apply on the value of bets placed in each round of betting, including those placed with winnings in previous rounds.

Also, the GoM suggested that 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax be levied on entry/access fees into casinos, which compulsorily includes foods/beverages etc.

However, optional supplies,

made independently of the entry tickets, would be taxed at the rate applicable on such supplies, sources added. Currently, services of casinos, horse racing and online gaming attract 18 per cent GST. The GoM would decide on the method of valuing the services.

The Government had in May last year set up a panel of state ministers for better valua-

tion of services of Casinos, online gaming portal and race courses for levying Goods and Services Tax (GST).

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said 28 per cent tax bracket for online gaming, horse racing, and casinos would peg them at par with numerous sin goods like pan masala, tobacco and aerated waters. "Taxing online gaming,

horse racing, and casinos at gross revenue instead of net value addition would be a departure from the global tax ethics," Mohan said.

This proposal may sweeten the exchequer for a while; however, it would also entice the unorganized sector leading to rampant generation of black money in the long term, he added.

The report of the GoM is likely to be taken up in the next meeting of the GST Council on June 28-29 in Chandigarh.

The other state ministers in the 8-member GoM include Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Gujarat Finance Minister Kanubhai Patel, Goa Panchayat raj Minister Mauvin Godinho, Tamil Nadu Finance Minister P Thiaga Rajan, Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna and Telangana Finance Minister T Harish Rao.

India can bring trusted solutions for world

First semiconductor project approval this year: Vaishnav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The indigenous 5G technology developed by the TCS-CDOT-led consortium has the potential to win global deals as people the world over are looking for trusted telecom solutions and no country can match the level of trust India can bring in, Telecom and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has said.

While sharing the government plans to deploy 1.25 lakh mobile sites in the BSNL network based on indigenously developed technology gears, Vaishnav in an interview with PTI expressed concern over the shortage of semiconductors and said the first project proposal for the high-tech electronic chips will be approved in coming few months this year. "We are



very rapidly progressing on developing our own 5G technology stack. There is a huge interest among the whole world community in having a good trusted and affordable technology source for telecom because telecom is today the primary consumption point for all digital services. People want a trusted telecom solu-

tion. And as you know, the trust which India can bring, no other country can match," Vaishnav said. Several countries led by the US and European nations have blocked 5G telecom gear from Chinese companies. India too has set up a process for approving trusted telecom gears in local networks.

Mcap of nine of top-10 valued firms jumps Rs 2.51 lakh cr



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nine of the 10 most valued firms added Rs 2.51 lakh crore to their market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainer. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,367 points or 2.66 per cent. HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited and ICICI Bank were among the gainers while Reliance Industries was the sole loser in

the pack. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 74,534.87 crore to its market valuation which stood at Rs 12,04,907.32 crore at close on Friday.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever jumped by Rs 44,888.95 crore to Rs 5,41,240.10 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation rose by Rs 35,427.18 crore to Rs 7,51,800.31 crore and that of HDFC's by Rs 24,747.87 crore to Rs 3,97,190.50 crore.

SBI, other PSU banks commit Rs 6,071 cr to Adani group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ports-to-energy conglomerate Adani Group has forayed into copper manufacturing with tying up of finances from public sector lenders for a 1 million tonnes a year unit at Mundra in Gujarat. "Kutch Copper Ltd (KCL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), is setting up a greenfield copper refinery project for production of refined copper with 1 million tonnes per annum in two phases," the company said in a statement. For the phase-1 capacity of 0.5 million tonnes, KCL has achieved financial closure through a syndicated club loan for the greenfield copper refinery project at Mundra, Gujarat. It has executed "financing documents with the consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI).

FinMin asks banks to explore fintech partnership, co-lending

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has asked public sector banks to explore fintech partnerships and co-lending opportunities to expand their business.

In the recently concluded performance review of PSBs by the Finance Ministry, sources said, lenders were asked to focus on technology and data analytics to push their lending.

The ministry also urged the heads of the public sector lenders to strengthen IT security systems and cybersecurity to check fraud. According to the sources, banks were asked to sanction loans for productive sectors to accelerate the revival of the economy facing headwinds, including the Russia-Ukraine war. As per the RBI's latest data, growth in lending by PSBs has improved



significantly to 7.8 per cent in March 2022 from 3.6 per cent a year ago. Some of the PSBs recorded 26 per cent growth.

Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) recorded a 26 per cent increase in gross advances to Rs 1,35,240 crore at the end of March 2022. It was followed by the State Bank of India and Union Bank of India with 10.27 per cent and

9.66 per cent growth, respectively. The Pune-headquartered BoM witnessed a 16.26 per cent deposit growth and mobilised Rs 2,02,294 crore at the end of March 2022. Union Bank of India was the second with an 11.99 per cent growth in deposits (Rs 10,32,102 crore), while Indian Bank recorded a 10 per cent rise to Rs 5,84,661 crore.

FPIs' pull out continues; Rs 46,000 cr in Jun so far

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors continue to desert Indian equity markets and pulled out close to Rs 46,000 crore so far this month following monetary policy tightening by the Reserve Bank and US Federal Reserve, high oil prices and volatile rupee. The net outflow by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from equities reached Rs 2.13 lakh crore until now in 2022, data with depositories showed. Given the policy normalisation narrative by the US Fed and other major central

banks, coupled with high oil prices and volatile Rupee, FPIs are likely to stay away from emerging market assets, Hitesh Jain, Lead Analyst - Institutional Equities, Yes Securities, said.

FPIs inflow will only resume once there is visibility on the peak of bond yields in the US and an end to Fed rate hikes, he added. Moreover, FPIs are likely to sell more if the current trend of rising dollar and bond yields persists, said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.



Global trends, crude oil key drivers for stocks this week

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stock markets will be driven by global trends, crude oil movement and foreign institutional investments this week, analysts said, adding that benchmark indices may also face volatility amid the scheduled monthly derivatives expiry. Moreover, the movement in the rupee and

the progress of monsoon would also be watched by investors, they added. "Indian markets managed to recover from lower levels after two weeks of sharp cuts thanks to a recovery in global markets and a cut in commodity prices. It seems that this recovery may see a further extension and we can expect a decent rally in the coming

days in equity markets," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd. "Apart from F&O expiry, monthly auto sales numbers and monsoon development will be important triggers," Meena said. Crude oil, rupee movement and FIIs' behaviour will be other important factors, he added.

EODB: States' ranking to be out on Jun 30

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry is expected to release on Thursday the ranking of states and Union Territories (UTs) in terms of ease of doing business, according to an official. "It has been decided to release the assessment of states/UTs under BRAP (Business Reforms Action Plan), 2020, on June 30 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman," the official said. The exercise is aimed at triggering competition

among states to improve the business climate to attract domestic and global investors. The parameters include various areas, such as construction permit, labour regulation, environmental registration, access to information, land availability and single window system. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) conducts the exercise for all States/UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP). In the last ranking released in September

2020, Andhra Pradesh topped the chart, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. Till date, state rankings have been released for 2015, 2016, 2017-18 and 2019.

The larger objective of attracting investments and increasing ease of doing business in each state was sought to be achieved by introducing an element of healthy competition through a system of ranking states based on their performance in the implementation of BRAP.



India exported 1.8 mln tn wheat since ban

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has exported 1.8 million tonnes of wheat to a dozen-odd countries, including Bangladesh and Afghanistan, since the country banned exports of the grain on May 13, according to Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey.

About 33,000 tonnes of wheat as humanitarian assistance has already been supplied to Afghanistan against the commitment of 50,000 tonne, he said.

Pandey, addressing a ministerial conference on 'uniting for global food security' held at Berlin, Germany on June 24, said India has always taken the needs of the world into consideration, even while meeting the onerous obligations of feeding its population of 1.38 billion people, an official statement said. The secretary said: It is important here



to explain that the recent decision by the Government of India (GoI) to bring about regulation on wheat exports was essentially taken to protect domestic availability as well as availability to vulnerable countries to whom supplies cannot be ensured by

market forces. "India has nonetheless continued with its commitment to cater for the genuine needs of neighbouring countries and food-deficit nations through Government-to-Government supply commitments already

made, he said. After the regulation until June 22nd this fiscal year, 1.8 million tonnes of wheat have been shipped out, almost four times from the previous year to countries including

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Israel, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, UAE, Vietnam and Yemen," he said.

On May 13, the government suspended wheat export with immediate effect. It moved the export of all varieties of wheat, including high-protein durum, from free to the prohibited category. The decision was aimed at controlling rising prices of wheat in the domestic market.

India had exported a record 7 million tonnes of wheat during 2021-22 fiscal, while typically, the country exports around 2

million tonnes which is around 1 per cent of global wheat trade, he said.

Stating that India is deeply conscious of its responsibilities towards the most vulnerable in various parts of the world, Pandey said the country continued to provide humanitarian assistance, both through the supply of vaccines as well as food consignments, during and beyond the pandemic. For instance, the country has dispatched several shipments of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, including 33,000 tonnes of wheat of a total commitment of 50,000 tonnes made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and continues to do so in the wake of the devastation caused by the earthquake a couple of days ago, he said.

Govt to invite bids for power from 8,000 MW thermal units without PPAs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will invite bids from states to sell electricity generated from 8,000 megawatt (MW) thermal capacities without PPAs, Power Minister RK Singh has said.

A total of 8,000 MW of thermal capacities in India are without any power purchase agreements, Singh, who is also the Minister for New and Renewable Energy, told PTI.

Replying to a question related to capacities without PPAs in India, the minister said, "There are 8,000 MW of capacities which don't have PPAs in thermal". Sharing the government's plan to resolve the issue, the minister informed that states



have been asked to send their electricity requirement, and accordingly bids will be invited. "We will aggregate (their demand) and call on for bids and based on the bids, whoever puts in the lowest bids, PPAs will be signed. Once PPAs are signed, they (states) will get the power," he said. Speaking fur-

ther, the minister said there are also some thermal capacities undergoing the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) proceedings, and the government has already taken several steps, including meeting with the bankers, to resolve the issue at the earliest so such plants can start operations.

'PATHAAN' fulfills my desire to do an action film, says Shah Rukh Khan

For somebody who is known as the 'King of Romance', starring in an out-and-out action film like *Pathaan* was nothing less than a dream come true opportunity, says superstar Shah Rukh Khan.

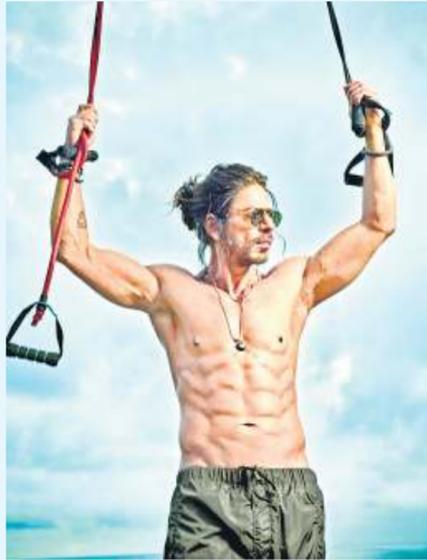
The 56-year-old star returns to the silver screen with the upcoming Yash Raj Films project, the first look of which was released on Saturday on the occasion of Khan's 30 years in the movies. Directed by War helmer Siddharth Anand, *Pathaan* is billed as a high-octane spy thriller.

Khan said he came on board the film at a time when he wasn't enjoying the process of filmmaking, but the project brought him back on sets.

"I wasn't enjoying the process of filmmaking, which is most important for me, even more than the film itself. When we started shooting *Pathaan*, it was a lot of fun and action. It's a kind of film I always wanted to do for 30 years. I've always thought of myself as somebody who can do cool action and stuff," the superstar said during his first Instagram Live.

The actor quipped even though he is trying to be macho in his fifties, he is hopeful that people will like him as an action hero. "In *Pathaan*, I'm doing all this action which I wanted to do when I was in my twenties. It's a little late. At the age of 56, I'm trying to be macho and solid and trying to make it work, but I think Siddharth and the whole action team has put in a lot of effort. I hope I will look like a good action hero."

In his three-decade-long career, Khan has given life to many iconic characters, be it Raj from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* or Rahul from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. The actor said every role of his has a little bit of Shah Rukh Khan in them. "I love Raj and Rahul, there's a big part of me in



them. The bigger part is of Aditya Chopra and Karan Johar, but there's a part of me also. They will always be special like all characters. I told one film critic once that each character has a little bit of Shah Rukh Khan in them. So Rahul has a bit of it, Raj has a bit of it and *Pathaan* has a lot of it because I feel like a *Pathaan*," he said.

The first look motion poster of *Pathaan* features Khan in a rugged look with long hair and beard, holding a shotgun. Gushing about his long hair in the film, the actor said he misses the hairstyle.

"I miss my long hair now. Hopefully if you all like *Pathaan* and we make the part two, I will grow my hair again," he teased.

Pathaan features Deepika Padukone and John Abraham in pivotal roles, with a special appearance by superstar Salman Khan.

SRK said Salman Khan is a

like family and he wishes to make a full-fledged movie with him some day.

"With Salman Khan, there is no working experience. It's always rather a love experience, happy experience, friendly experience, brotherly experience. It's amazing whenever I work with him."

The superstar said he will also try to appear in Salman Khan's upcoming actioner *Tiger 3*.

"Salman is like family, a brother. We don't know who's the elder brother. Each one of us on different days behave like the elder brother to each other. Whoever makes a mistake, the other guy becomes the elder brother," he added.

Pathaan will hit the theatres on January 25 next year. The actor said the first trailer of the film will arrive sometime in November-December.

ADNAN SAMI's jaw-dropping transformation takes over the internet



Singer Adnan Sami's latest pictures from his Maldivian holiday have taken over social media as it seems he has undergone a huge weight loss transformation. Sami took to Instagram to share a glimpse of his holiday with family, which took the fans and social media users by surprise. He shared a picture with his daughter while chilling in the pool. He captioned the picture, "There's absolutely no time to waste and so 'Let the fun begin PARTY-POOPER-DISCLAIMER- It's NON-ALCOHOLIC Sparkling Grape Juice.'" He also shared a selfie, where he is seen flaunting a big smile at the camera with a picturesque view of the ocean and the sky in the background. According to reports, when Sami stepped into the industry, he weighed a whopping over 200 kilos. He is popular for his songs such as *Bhardo jholi*, *Lift Karadey* and *Sun Zara*, among many others.

THOR: LOVE AND THUNDER Showing Chris Hemsworth's Butt Was '10 Years in the Making'

Thor: Love and Thunder's Chris Hemsworth has revealed that showing his butt in the upcoming MCU film was 10 years in the making and was basically a dream come true for the actor.



Speaking to *Variety* at *Thor: Love and Thunder's* premiere at El Capitan Theatre in Hollywood, Hemsworth shared why this revealing moment is so special to him.

"It was 10 years in the making that scene — kind of a dream of mine," Hemsworth said. "The first time I played Thor I took my shirt off and I thought, 'You know what's gonna sweeten this a decade from now it's all gonna come off.'"

Thor: Love and Thunder director Taika Waititi also discussed Hemsworth's big butt moment in the film, saying that Chris worked too hard to not show off his body.

"I feel like we had all talked about it," Waititi said. "We had talked about, 'Yeah, we gotta show off this body.' My whole thing was like, Chris works so hard, you've gotta show it off. Don't cover it up with all these suits and the cape and stuff, it's not fair."

In the same chat with *Variety*, Hemsworth also talked about seeing Natalie Portman as Mighty Thor for the first time, saying that it was a little stab to the ego, but he quickly got over it and he was in awe of everything she had done.

You can check out a blurred version of Thor's butt at the end of *Thor: Love and Thunder's* official trailer, and you can thank Russell Crowe's Zeus for making it happen.

Thor: Love and Thunder will be released in theaters on July 8, 2022.

BARBARA BROCCOLI calls Prince William 'perfect candidate' for next James Bond

Producer Barbara Broccoli has quipped that Duke of Cambridge, Prince William is the perfect candidate to become the next James Bond. Broccoli and her sibling Michael Wilson were honoured with Commander Of The (Order of the) British Empire (CBEs) from the Duke at the Buckingham Palace this week, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

When asked who she'd like to see replace Daniel Craig in the iconic spy role, she said the Duke of Cambridge ticks all the boxes.

According to *The Mirror*, she said "Unfortunately, the person we just met isn't available. He's occupied, unfortunately, but he would be the perfect candidate. He ticks all the boxes. But he's not available, sadly. So we're still on the hunt."

It was recently claimed that Idris Elba is back in the running to play Bond.

The *Luther* actor was believed to have stepped back from replacing Craig as the suave spy and had instead spoken to producers about potentially appearing as the villain in the next movie, but he's once again under consideration for the role of 007 after scoring favourably in market research.

A source told *The Sun* newspaper's Bizarre column that "Idris has long been in talks to play a role in the next era of James Bond's story and last year was being considered for a role as an antagonist."

"However, talks surrounding him playing the



lead have started again as producers realised how popular he would be after carrying out secret market research," she continued.

"He ranked highly among the diverse group of movie buffs invited to participate in it. They didn't want to see him as a nemesis - they want him as the hero," she added.

Earlier this year, Idris had been in the frame for the iconic role. "We know Idris, I'm friends with him. He's a magnificent actor. You know, he has been part of the conversation, but it's always difficult to have a conversation when you have somebody in the seat," she said.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



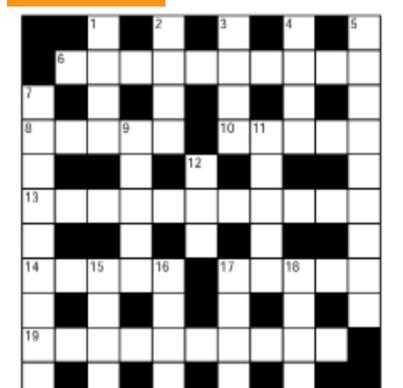
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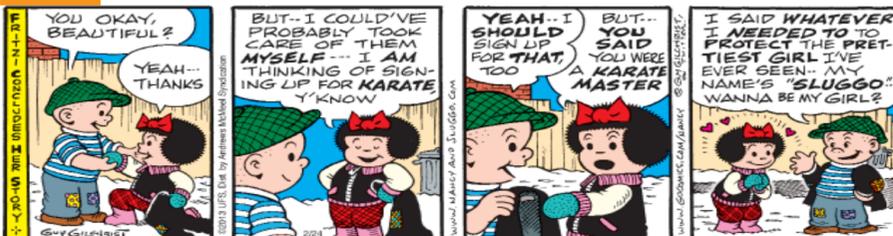
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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- 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.

GINGER MEGGS



ACROSS

- The total number of people in a city or country
- The starboard side
- The head of a city council
- People who don't eat meat
- Baggy
- Depart
- A sudden shaking of the ground
- Went on a journey
- The back part of the feet
- Living
- Candle substance
- Belonging to us
- Sound rebound
- Very noisy
- Enquires

DOWN

- Lengthy
- Resign from a job
- Peaceful
- Very small
- Took one's clothes off



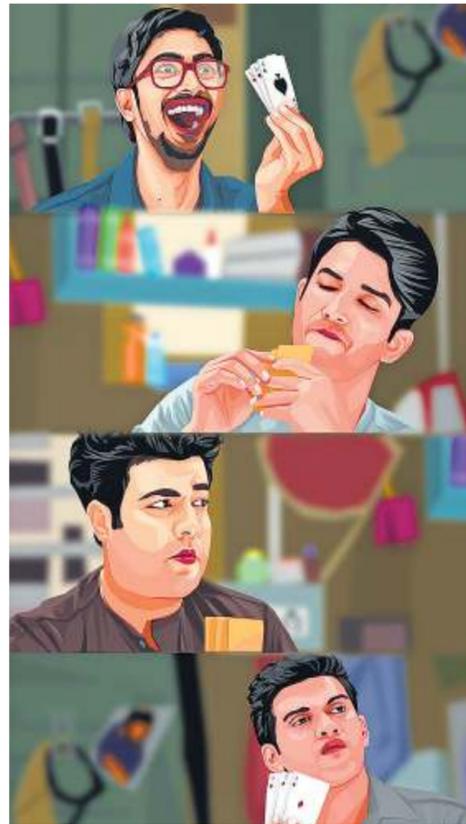
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Monday
June 27, 2022

The fusion of music and art



TEJAL SINHA

We are sure at least once, in your life, that you might have shared a reel (short video), either on your

Instagram story or with your friends. It could contain anything. However, there are some reels that take you back to those good old days.

Videos posted by Pixoury on its page bring us some aesthetic art along with some of our favourite or underrated songs. Have you ever wondered how Hrishiraj Sugre, the founder of Pixoury, does it? It's through vector art. Vector art is a form of computer graphics and a mechanism where the artist creates some visual images using geometric shapes. Hrishiraj learned all this by watching videos on YouTube and learning various courses online.

So, what inspired Hrishiraj to start Pixoury? To this, he shares, "During the first COVID lockdown, amidst the uncertainty of the future of business and life in general, I wanted to entertain people. I thought of utilising my skills, i.e., vector

art, and using it for something Indian audiences like. I tried creating posts on cricket and other trending subjects, but it didn't work. Then I got an idea to work on Bollywood scenes and songs. I never imagined so many people would like the videos. And here we are, a community of 948k families."

Like any other page or influencer, he had his own challenges, but the biggest was to create content that would go viral. Telling us more about it, he says, "There were many challenges, but the most difficult challenge was to find a concept for the content which can go viral. After many failed attempts, I found the concept that went viral, but the challenge was making a reel every day. It took me 7-8 hours to make a reel when I started, and it was challenging to keep creating trending reels every day while working on my business."

He believes Pixoury is a community and not just a page. "From day 1, I knew I wanted to build a community. The reason is, that the community creates loyal followers and it has a niche where we can market rele-

The Pioneer brings the story behind Pixoury, a community that brings together people who connect with underrated songs and brings back those nostalgic memories of our childhood.



vant products to have less spam content. A few reels went viral in their community, after which, the community suggested new content, and then it went on to get bigger. Pixoury now is a community which likes Bollywood's classic songs and scenes in the manner that I present to them. It helps me to differentiate my work from others and the

content doesn't violate copyright laws as it is written by me and is not copied. This helps the community to share some unique content that they don't find elsewhere," he adds.

"Imagine playing songs for your friends at a party or in the car. There won't be a single song on which everyone will agree. Everyone has their own choice and they



feel that their favourite song is the best one. Without getting trolled, I have to do this for a million people every day. So the trick that I have followed for a long time now is to create reels on songs which are generally recommended to me. Also, I try not to create reels based on my own personal favourites, as the audience won't like them. I generally look for the kind of comments that song has on different sites and if the song is trolled less and there are positive comments about it, I go for it," he says, adding that people still ask about the software or the process that he uses to make these videos.

People's desire to learn the art prompted him to post videos about the process on YouTube and IGTV. He has been taking live tutorials. Until now, he has conducted over four live tutorials, but soon plans to be regularly taking live tutorials on one of India's leading educational platforms, which will be announced soon. Be it the 90's hits like *Jiya Dhadak Dhadak*, *Zara sa, Dilko tumse pyaar*, or of the most recent *Kesariya*, or *Mere Dholna*, the videos have just gone viral, with every video having more than 60k to more than 441k likes.

He has also received the ANN Award for Best Reels from Animation Xpress.



Rise of veganism & its impact on the human race

Veganism is a lifestyle that excludes all animal products and attempts to limit animal cruelty and exploitation as much as possible. Veganism is an extreme form of vegetarianism, the term was coined in 1944, and the concept of animal products and by-products avoidance can be traced back to ancient Indian and eastern Mediterranean societies.

Vipen Jain, Founder, Fitspire, India's Premium Vegan and Vegetarian Health and Wellness Brand shares, "Veganism encourages humans to be less destructive to animals and the world around them. This is important in itself, but there are plenty of specific reasons that veganism matters to individuals and to our collective future. People choose to be vegan for health, environmental, and ethical reasons. Vegans, on the other hand, think that all animals have a right to be free from human use."

Vegans say no to all the forms of dairy products and eggs as they believe in eliminating every form of animal cruelty, even if many vegetarians don't mind consuming them.

As a result, they try to stay away from all animal by-products. Eating a plant-based vegan diet can boost your mood and is associated with lower levels of cholesterol than omnivorous diets. Plant foods are high in antioxidants that help to prevent damage to cells and decrease inflammation. When you consume animal products, you are consuming bacteria and other harmful contaminants that accumulate in the body and have the ability to remain there for years.

Eating a vegan diet can help to avoid some of these dangerous toxins. Plant foods can also help restore balance to certain neurotransmitters involved in depression.

It helps in reducing your risk of heart disease by lowering cholesterol levels, lowering your chances of getting certain types of cancer, such as colon cancer and managing diabetes by lowering A1C levels.

Have you ever wondered how a plant-based diet helps combat global warming that creates a positive impact on the human race?

Most of you have wondered the same but, yes the greatest contributor to this cause is human activity, to reduce this we often inculcate some activities in our daily tasks, but changing your diet to one that's vegan is a whole different way to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect habitats, species and conserve water. It was about 2.6 million years ago that non-veg became a significant part of our diet. Being a herbivore was extremely easy as fruits and vegetables don't run away, after all for hunting. But they're also not terribly calorie-dense. So, at that time also there were better alternatives available for a calorie-dense food were root vegetables like potatoes, beets and yams.

Carbon dioxide is a significant pollutant that contributes to global warming as it always adds to the greenhouse effect, which drastically damages our environment. As per the research, livestock production is responsible for approximately 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, GHG emissions could be as high as 51% which about 37% of these GHG emissions come from the manure that animals produce, which produces methane, a gas that heats the earth almost 20 times faster than carbon dioxide. Other agriculture emissions come from transportation, preparing land for livestock, and producing crops to feed the animals, which creates another harmful gas called nitrous oxide. This shows that the process of meat production requires large amounts of energy which in return emits more greenhouse gas. A study, suggests that going on a vegan diet can save 1.5 tons of carbon dioxide per year.

VEGAN NUTRITION

The key is to eat a varied diet. A healthy and varied vegan diet includes fruits, plenty of leafy greens, whole grain products, nuts, legumes and seeds. It is very easy for a vegan diet to meet the recommendations for protein as long as calorie intake is adequate. Strict protein planning or combining is not necessary.

Overall, producing vegan foods requires much less energy and resources than producing animal products. Becoming vegan is just one change in our lifestyle that can help each one to reduce the impact humans have in contributing to global warming. Even if you can't become vegan in one go, try eliminating animal products and by-products from your diet, reducing your intake to one or two less meaty meals every week which will eventually make the biggest difference. Maybe having 'Meatless Mondays' can put a contributing hand to helping the planet.



Veganism encourages humans to be less destructive to animals and the world around them. This is important in itself, but there are plenty of specific reasons that veganism matters to individuals and to our collective future. People choose to be vegan for health, environmental, and ethical reasons. Vegans, on the other hand, think that all animals have a right to be free from human use.

-Vipen Jain

FILMS CELEBRATING childhood

Taare Zameen Par, Gandhi & Co., Stanley Ka Dabba, Chillar Party, The Blue Umbrella and I Am Kalam has broadened the scope of children's cinema with universal themes. Cinema for children in

India has had an indistinct presence even though over the years, there have been popular films including Kidar Sharma's 1957 classic *Jaldeep* which won the Best Children's Film Prize at the International Film Festival at Venice. There was also Shyam Benegal's 1975 film *Charandas Chor* while in mainstream cinema, films like *Jagriti* (1954), *Boot Polish* (1954), *Ab Dilli Door Nahin* (1957) entertained children. Tapan Sinha's 1978 triumph *Safed Hath* won the National Film Award 1978.

In recent times, India has not produced enough content exclusively for children but here is our pick of some films that not only engaged the young but also gave food for thought to the grown-ups.

TAARE ZAMEEN PAR:

Released in 2007, the film revolves around a gifted eight-year-old dyslexic boy, Ishaan Awasthi (Darsheel Safary) who is deeply observant, sensitive and loves to paint. His teachers and father repeatedly make him feel worthless and he is sent to boarding school where he withdraws into his shell even more till a teacher Ram Shankar Nikumbh (Aamir Khan) decides to mentor, guide, and befriend him. *Taare Zameen Par* was screened in Seattle, Washington by the International Dyslexia Association in 2008 and in 2009. It was India's official entry for the 2009 Academy Awards Best Foreign Film category and also won the Filmfare Best Film Award and the National Film Award for Best Film on Family Welfare.

GANDHI & CO.:

Producer Mahesh Danannavar and National-Award-winning director Manish Saini have put Indian cinema for children on the world map with their acclaimed film, *Gandhi & Co* that recently garnered global recognition by winning the Golden Slipper award at the 62nd edition of the prestigious Zlin Film Festival in the Czech Republic.

'Golden Slipper' is a coveted award presented to the best feature film in the children, youth, and animation category. The film's child artists Reyaan Shah and Hiranya Zinzuwadia also won the Best Child Actor awards at the New York Indian Film Festival 2022. The film won the Second-Best Indian Feature award at the 13th Bengaluru International Film Festival and the Best Children Film award at the International Gujarati Film Festival (IGFF) 2022. It has been winning hearts and minds in the international festival circuit, highlights the enduring value of Gandhian principles and revolves around two boys who discover the gentle heroism of Gandhi via a mentor. They learn that Gandhi is not just a chapter in a school book but a way of life. The movie also stars Darshan Jariwala, Jayesh More, Druma Mehta, Sunil Vishrani, Reyaan Shah, Hiranya Zinzuwadia and Dhyani Jani.

STANLEY KA DABBA:

Directed and produced by Amole Gupte, the movie revolves around a schoolboy called Stanley who doesn't carry a lunchbox and

has to rely on his friends to feed him during recess. Nobody knows the dark facts about his life because he is witty, has an irresistible smile and is always cheerful. Despite his hard circumstances, he makes the people around him happy. While his English teacher (Divya Dutta) is impressed by his sunny demeanour, he is always at the receiving end of his Hindi teacher's (Amole Gupte) hostility. The story offers a heart-breaking twist in the end, revealing why Stanley cannot bring a lunchbox to school. And why he is not like any other child in the school. Partho Gupte received the National Award along with the Filmfare Special Award for his role.

CHILLAR PARTY:

Produced by Salman Khan Films, the 2011 comedy entertainer *Chillar Party*, has an ensemble of feisty young children, who challenge adult cruelty and political corruption to protect a dog from certain death. In doing so, the children teach the adults that ideals like, 'We must always

help others', 'A friend in need is a friend indeed' and 'We must do what is right' should not be relegated to books but also incorporated into real life. Led by young actors, Sarath Menon (Arjun/Encyclopedia), Naman Jain (Jhangya), Chinmai Chandranshuk (Panauti/Lucky) and others, the film beautifully shows how only coexistence can bring true happiness and harmony. The stellar performances by the children also overshadowed the adult actors.

THE BLUE UMBRELLA:

Director Vishal Bhardwaj, the film captures an idyllic, rural life of simple joys till a little girl Biniya (Shreya Sharma) gets a blue umbrella from a Japanese tourist and the umbrella becomes the cynosure of everyone's eyes. It inspires jealousy and negativity and even irks the middle-aged shopkeeper Nandakishore 'Nandu' Khatri (Pankaj Kapur). One day the umbrella is stolen and Biniya initiates an investigation into the theft of her prized possession. The film, jointly produced by Vishal Bhardwaj and Ronnie Screwvala also bagged the National Film Award in 2006 for the best children's movie and was also screened at the Pusan International Film Festival.

I AM KALAM:

2010 film directed by National Award winner and Padma Shri recipient Nila Madhab Panda depicted how a positive role model can inspire a child to rise above his circumstances. The film was screened at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival and won 34 international awards at various film festivals. The story is told from the perspective of a child labourer Chotu (Haresh Mayar), who works in a roadside dhaba. There, he befriends Ranvijay Singh (Husain Saad), and being an avid learner, takes his help to gain more knowledge. An accidental glimpse of the Republic Day Parade and President APJ Abdul Kalam's salutation march changes something within him and he instantly decides to become just like him. The film continues to remind us of the untapped potential in street children and child labourers whose dreams and reality never match but whose zest for life can inspire us all.



INDIA WOMEN EYE SERIES SWEEP AGAINST SRI LANKA

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The series already in their pocket, a confident India will look to complete a white-wash when they take on hosts Sri Lanka in the third and final women's T20 International here on Monday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led outfit had thrashed the home team by 34 runs in the opening T20 and then followed it up with a dominating five-wicket win in the second game to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

More importantly, the wins will be a morale booster for India ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham starting next month, where women's T20 cricket is set to make its debut.

India seem to have found the winning momentum, but they won't be entirely pleased with their performance in the series so far.

While the bowlers have done a stellar job in the two games, India's batting has left a lot to be desired.



Additionally, the Indians have been sloppy on the field.

The bowling unit has been on the mark for India. The spinners have been sensational, making full use of the slow nature of the pitch. They had comfortably defended 138 in the opening game.

Sri Lanka skipper Chamari Athapaththu (43) and opener Vishmi Gunaratne (45) presented the Indian bowling unit with a challenge as the duo put up a 87-run stand in the second game.

But the Indian bowlers made a strong comeback as they gave just 14 runs in the last 3.1 overs while claiming six wickets to restrict Sri Lanka to a below-par 125.

But the visitors were made to work hard for what should have been a comfortable chase.

Shafali Verma (17), Sabbhineni Meghana (17) and Yastika Bhatia (13) were unable to convert their starts.

The team's top scorer in the previous game Jemimah Rodrigues (3) also perished cheaply and will aim for consistency.

After stuttering in the first game, prolific opener Smriti Mandhana roared back to form, her 39 off 34 balls helped the tourists win the match and the series.

Mandhana was complemented by Harmanpreet (31 not out), who is now India's leading T20I run scorer. The all-rounder played a captain's knock guiding her side over the line while also pitching in with the ball.

Sri Lanka will be desperately hoping to avoid a second consecutive whitewash, having gone down to Pakistan 0-3 in a T20 series recently.

The hosts will seek to perform as a cohesive unit and grab a consolation win, which will lift their spirits heading into the three-match ODI series, starting Friday.

For that they need more contributions with the bat while their bowlers will also need to support the spin duo of Inoka Ranawera and Oshadi Ranasinghe, who have done most of the task with the ball for the side till now.



ASHWIN RETURNS TO SNAP TWO WICKETS

PTI ■ LEICESTER

opener Shubman Gill struck a sublime fifty while Ravichandran Ashwin snapped two wickets after making his first appearance in the game following his recovery from a COVID-19 infection as India's warm-up match against Leicestershire ended in a draw here on Sunday.

As many as five Indians turned up for both the teams during the four-day practice match as the visitors looked to put final touch to their preparation for the rescheduled fifth Test against England starting in Birmingham on July 1.

It was a much-needed outing for Ashwin, who had travelled to England late after testing positive for the virus. He looked in good touch as he bowled 11 overs and took two wickets, conceding 31 runs.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah led India on the fourth and final day after the country woke up to the news of their skipper Rohit Sharma testing positive for COVID-19, which put his participation in the one-off Test in serious doubt.

If he misses out, Gill will have to take the onus of giving India a good start and the Punjab batter, who was earlier dismissed for 21 and 38, finally managed to convert the starts with a 77-62 studded with eight hits to the fence and two maximums.

He emerged as the top-scorer after he turned up for Leicestershire, who were set a target of 367 to win following India's second innings declaration at 364 for 7.

Hanuma Vihari, who also batted for both

the teams, spent some quality time in the middle with his 86-ball vigil producing a 26-run innings. He had scores of 3 and 20 in the earlier innings.

Chasing 367, Leicestershire lost Hasan Azad (12) early on day 4 but Gill stitched a 67 run partnership with skipper Samuel Evans (26) to steady the innings.

However, spinner Ashwin dismissed both the set batters.

The 35-year-old from Chennai had first Gill caught by Mohammed Shami in the 28th over and then removed Evans with wicket-keeper Srikanth Bharat coming up with a clean take behind the stumps to effect the stumping.

Vihari and Louis Kimber (58 not out) then came together and forged a 72-run stand to take Leicestershire close to the 200-mark.

Vihari's stay ended when Ravindra Jadeja (1/35 in 8 overs) had him caught behind in the 56th over.

Kimber and Joey Evison (15 not out) batted for another 10 overs, adding 37 before both the teams decided to shake hands.

Prasidh Krishna and Bumrah bowled for both Indians and Leicestershire but both remained wicketless on the final day.

While Krishna bowled five overs for 19 runs, Bumrah rolled his arms for 8 overs, conceding 12.

Among other Indians, Cheteshwar Pujara also had batted for both teams, while Shreyas Iyer and Jadeja had batted twice in India's second innings on Saturday.

Rohit Sharma tests positive for COVID-19: BCCI



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India skipper Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 in a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and placed in isolation ahead of 'fifth' Test against England, the BCCI said on Sunday.

The Test match is scheduled to begin from July 1 in Birmingham and if Rohit remains in six-day isolation, either pacer Jasprit Bumrah or wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant could be asked to lead the team.

"Team India captain Mr Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted on Saturday," BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said in a media release.

"He is currently in isolation

at the team hotel and is under the care of the BCCI Medical Team. An RT-PCR test will be conducted on Sunday to ascertain his CT value," the release added. Rohit had batted on first day of the ongoing warm-up game against Leicestershire but didn't take field on the second day. He did not bat in the second Indian innings.

The 35-year-old Indian skipper is expected to open the innings alongside Shubman Gill in the Test match and his participation would now depend on result of his RT-PCR test and recovery.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin had also joined the squad in England late since he had also tested positive for COVID-19 before the team left for the UK tour.

Mitchell, Blundell frustrate England again

AP ■ LEEDS

New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell frustrated England again on Sunday as they denied the hosts a fresh breakthrough in their quest for a series whitewash.

The pair batted through the entire morning session to take the Black Caps to 254-5 in their second innings, a lead of 223 runs, at lunch on the fourth day of the third Test at Headingley.

Mitchell, who had already scored three hundreds this series, including 109 in New Zealand's first innings 329, was 44 not out.

Blundell, fresh from his first-innings 55, was unbeaten on 45.

The pair had so far put on 93 to follow their first-innings partnership of 120 and this latest stand also saw them get through the first two overs the new ball, available to England for two overs before the interval.

World Test champions New Zealand resumed on 168-5, a lead of 137 runs, having lost a flurry of wickets late on Saturday.

And with England having



chased down 299 inside a day to win at Nottingham and go 2-0 up in the three-match series, the Black Caps still had plenty to do if they were to avoid a whitewash.

Mitchell and Blundell, four and five not out respectively overnight, were rarely troubled as England captain Ben Stokes -- yet to bowl himself Sunday -- rotated his pace attack.

But England left-arm spinner Jack Leach, who took 5-100 in the tourists' first-innings, did pose problems by gaining plenty of turn, dip and bounce.

Leach thought he had Mitchell, pushing forward, lbw for 17 with the total on 206.

South African umpire Marais Erasmus raised his fin-

ger, but Mitchell's review indicated the ball would have bounced over the stumps and the decision was overturned.

England had been forced into a late change, with Sam Billings called up as an emergency wicketkeeper after Ben Foakes was ruled out of the rest of the match following a positive test for Covid-19.

Foakes did not take the field on Saturday afternoon because of a stiff back, with Jonny Bairstow deputising behind the stumps, but Billings, who made his Test debut in the final match of England's Ashes series loss in Australia earlier this year, was drafted in for the remainder of this fixture.

Mithali is an inspiration to many: PM Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid glowing tributes to Mithali Raj and conveyed his best wishes to the legendary former Indian skipper who announced her retirement earlier this month.

Having made her debut at the age of 16, Mithali brought an end to an illustrious 23-year career, finishing as the most capped player, the highest run-scorer and the most successful women's captain.

In Sunday's episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi described Mithali as "one of the most talented cricketers in India".



"Her retirement from cricket has emotionally moved many sports lovers. Mithali has not only been an extraordinary player but has also been an inspiration to many players. I wish Mithali all the very best for her future," the prime minister said.

Since making her debut on June 26, 1999 against Ireland, Mithali represented the country in 12 Tests, 232 ODIs and 89 T20Is. In 333 international matches, the 39-year-old aggregated 10,868 runs across three formats. She has led India to a record 89 wins from 155 ODIs, ahead of Belinda Clarke who is second in the list with 83 victories.

MP create history with maiden Ranji triumph

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Madhya Pradesh, not considered among cricketing elites during the past decade, on Sunday humbled domestic powerhouse Mumbai by six wickets in a one-sided Ranji Trophy final under coach Chandrakant Pandit, who exorcised the ghosts of losing one at this very ground 23 summers ago.

On the final day, Mumbai could only manage 269 in their second innings, leaving MP with a paltry target of 108, and they did it in style as Pandit won a record sixth national title as a coach.

Sarfraz Khan (45), who finished the season with 18 short of 1000 runs and young Suved Parkar (51) tried their bit, but with the need to attack at every opportunity, MP's Kumar Kartikeya (4/98) and the other bowlers knew that wickets would come their way.

While chasing, there were some hiccups, but with just over 100 to get, it was a stroll in the park for the MP team.

As they completed the victory, Pandit was flooded with memories (not happy ones), which he hasn't been able to erase for over two decades and despite winning five trophies as a coach.

It was here at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in the summer of 1999 when MP, despite a first-innings lead of 75, failed to win the game as Pandit, a proud captain, finished his playing career in tears.

Before the final, he spoke to PTI about divine intervention and circle of life and during the five days, sat in one corner with a white towel on his lap.

He has again proved to be an 'Alchemist', after guiding Vidarbha to four trophies (successive Ranji and Irani Cup), with a team that didn't have superstars.

The Yash Dubeys, Himanshu Mantris, Subham Sharmas, Gourav Yadavs or Saransh Jains aren't players who would give you the feeling that they are India prospects, the classy Rajat Patidar being an exception.



But they gave enough indication that they aren't ready to concede even a micro millimetre without a good scrap.

They gave the Mumbai men a lesson in perfect execution of tactic with dollops of 'Khadoos' cricket, which many thought was a patent of the 41-time champions.

MP's win once again proved

that the Ranji Trophy is often won by sides which don't have too many superstars or India prospects with ambition or wherewithal to play top-flight cricket.

It happened with Rajasthan when they had Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Akash Chopra during their triumph while Vidarbha had Wasim Jaffer and Ganesh Sathish guiding a bunch of

youngsters.

In MP, there was no Avesh Khan or Venkatesh Iyer and had only an emerging potential star in Patidar, yet they followed Pandit's 'Gurukul' style of 'My Way or Highway' coaching philosophy to emerge triumphant.

Since 2010, the Ranji Trophy, barring Karnataka's dominance for a few seasons and Mumbai winning it

once, it has been won by teams like Rajasthan (twice), Vidarbha (twice), Saurashtra (once) and Madhya Pradesh, who would never be in contention in the past.

This shows that cricket has moved from the Shivaji Park, Azad Maidan or Cross Maidan in Mumbai, from the National Stadium in Delhi or the state-of-the-art camps in Bengaluru or Kolkata, to the hinterlands.

Bhopal's Yash Dubeys, who had problems with his eye-sight during teenage years or Sultanpur's Kumar Kartikeya, who hadn't gone back home for nine years or Hoshangabad's Gourav Yadav, who would beat Prithvi Shaw's bat many times just for fun are men, who haven't had it easy.

When the Ranji Trophy started, the Madhya Pradesh cricket team wasn't even formed and it was back then known as Holkar, a princely state from the British era, which produced the country's finest cricketers - the charismatic Mushtaq Ali -- or the first ever captain of the Indian cricket

team -- the great CK Nayudu.

Holkar was a formidable team till the 1950s before it was rechristened as Madhya Bharat and subsequently Madhya Pradesh.

MP, over the years, have produced some fine cricketers - spinners Narendra Hirwani and Rajesh Chauhan -- who had brief but eventful international careers.

Amay Khurasiya, who had finished his cricket some years before the IPL, where he would have been a rocking success.

And then there was the peerless Devendra Bundela, who was one of those unlucky middle-order batters, who played in the 1990s and 2000s when Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman were in their pomp.

But as a Ranji team, it never looked menacing save the occasional final they played 23 summers back under Pandit's captaincy.

However, this was a team that had enough self-belief and was ready to punch above its weight. They did it with aplomb through five days.

