

ANALYSIS 7

TIME FOR CPI(M) TO
CHANGE ITS STYLE

MONEY 8

REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF LEATHER
PROCESSING: JITENDRA

SPORTS 12

FRANKFURT BAG
EUROPA GLORY

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



'AS AN AUDIENCE,
I BURST OUT
LAUGHING AFTER
WATCHING F3'

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DOCTORS' BODY PITCHES FOR REVIVING CONCEPT OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

The Academy of Family Physicians of India (AFPI) on Thursday highlighted the need for reviving the concept of family physicians and popularising family medicine as a clinical speciality. World Family Doctor Day is being observed on May 19 to highlight the role and contribution of family doctors in healthcare systems around the world. "Family doctor is not a new concept in India. Historically family doctors used to be generalist practitioners who would not only act as health managers but as a friend, philosopher, protector, and guide for a family," Dr. Raman Kumar, President of the Academy of Family Physicians of India, said.

SOUTHWEST MONSOON EXPECTED TO REACH KERALA EARLY NEXT WEEK

After an early arrival over Andaman & Nicobar islands, southwest monsoon is racing towards the mainland with the weather office forecasting onset over Kerala by the middle of next week. Conditions will continue to be favourable for further progress leading to onset of Southwest Monsoon over Kerala towards end of the week, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Thursday evening. If the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala happens this weekend, it will be the earliest onset in recent years. Monsoon had reached Kerala on May 23 in 2009.

WORLD'S HIGHEST WEATHER STATION INSTALLED ON MT. EVEREST

A team of experts from the National Geographic Society has installed the "world's highest weather station" on Mt. Everest at an altitude of 8,830 metres to automatically measure various meteorological phenomena, the Nepalese media reported on Thursday. Nepal's Department of Hydrology and Meteorology (DHM) said the automatic weather station was installed a few metres below the summit point (8,848.86 metres) last week as the snow and ice on the summit are not suitable for fixing equipment.

LANKA DECREASES LIMIT OF FOREIGN CURRENCY PEOPLE CAN HOLD

Sri Lanka's Central Bank on Thursday decided to substantially decrease the limit of foreign currency a person can hold in his possession to USD 10,000 from USD 15,000 as the forex crisis has led to limited imports with no gasoline in filling stations in the country facing the worst economic crisis. Central Bank Governor Nandalal Weerasinghe said that under the Foreign Exchange Act, there is a limit anyone can hold foreign currency, which used to be a value of maximum USD 15,000, Lanka 1st news website reported.

KCR on nation-wide tour from today

■ Delhi, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, Shirdi, West Bengal & Bihar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will travel across the country to participate in various political and social events at the national level. Delhi, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, Shirdi, West Bengal are Bihar are among the places on the Chief Minister's itinerary.

During his tour, he will meet with dignitaries from political, economic and media sectors. He will extend support to the families of soldiers who died heroically for the country. The Chief Minister will also visit the bereaved families of the farmers who lost their lives fighting against the BJP-led Central government against the farm laws.

KCR will visit Delhi on Friday



afternoon. The CM is scheduled to meet leaders of various political parties in Delhi and also leading economists. The economic situation in the country will be discussed. On the sidelines, KCR will have meetings with journalists from leading national media organizations.

On the afternoon of May 22, Chief Minister KCR will head to

Chandigarh from Delhi. As previously announced, KCR will visit about 600 farmer families affected by the national farmers' movement. He will give away cheques worth Rs 3 lakh to each of the families as announced earlier. The distribution of these cheques will be carried out by CM KCR along with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Bhagwant Man Singh. Cheques will be handed over to the families of farmers from the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

On the morning of May 26, KCR will visit Bengaluru. As part of the visit, he will meet with former Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda and former Karnataka Chief Minister Kumaraswamy.

Nikhat Zareen becomes World Champion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen lived up to the expectations as she clinched the coveted gold in flyweight (52kg) division with a facile 5-0 win over Thailand's Jitpong Jutamas in the final of the Women's World Championship in Istanbul on Thursday. Capping off a stupendous campaign that saw her dominate all her rivals, the Telangana boxer out-punched her Thai opponent to win via unanimous verdict with judges scoring the bout 30-27, 29-28, 29-28, 30-27, 29-28 in her favour. With this win, Zareen, a 2019 Asian Championship bronze medallist, became only the fifth Indian boxer to be crowned world champion. Six-time champion Mary Kom (2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2018), Sarita Devi (2006), Jenny RL (2006) and Lekha KC (2006) are the other pugilists who have won the world title.



CM Jagan inaugurating Swatantra Channel's studios and test signals virtually at his camp office at Tadepalli, Vijayawada on Thursday

Jagan launches 'Swatantra'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has wished the Swatantra news channel, being launched shortly by Ascendas Broadcasting Pvt Ltd, success. The Chief Minister on Thursday unveiled the Swatantra TV news chan-

nel's studios and test signal, virtually from his camp office at Tadepalli, Vijayawada.

The Chief Minister telecommuted to the studios in Hyderabad from Vijayawada and congratulated the staff and management.

Managing Director of Ascendas Broadcasting Pvt. Ltd

and Swatantra TV news channel B Krishna Prasad explained the details and modalities of the operation of the news channel. He said that the news channel was being launched with latest technology, senior journalists, and professionals.

Govt orders minor rejig of IAS officers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has conducted a minor rejig of IAS officers.

V. Karuna, IAS, (2004), has been posted as Secretary in the Education Department. She will be relieving Sandeep Kumar Sultania, IAS, (1998), from full additional charge (FAC).

Before the rejig, two flagship programmes of the government, 'Mana Ooru Mana Badi' and 'Palle Pragathi', were handled by Sultania. The government has reportedly decided to separate it and hence ordered the rejig. Sultania who is the Secretary of the PR & RD Department has been given FAC of the post of Secretary, Youth Affairs Training Department, in place of Somesh Kumar, IAS.

The government has transferred and appointed Additional Chief Electoral Officer Jyoti Buddha Prakash as the Secretary of the Industries and Commerce Department (handlooms, textiles and handicrafts).

GST recommendations not binding

○ Only have persuasive value, says Supreme Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday ruled that the Goods and Service Tax (GST) council's recommendations are not binding on Union and State but have a persuasive value as the country has a cooperative federal structure.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, Surya Kant, and Vikram Nath also held that the Centre and State governments have simultaneous powers to legislate on GST but the council must work in a harmonious manner to achieve a workable solution.

The bench said that as per Article 246A, both Parliament and the State legislature have equal power to legislate on matters of taxation.



Unlikely to alter GST regime

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court ruling on applicability of GST Council's decisions is unlikely to materially impact the one-nation-one-tax regime as it is only a reiteration of the existing law that gives states the right to accept or

reject the panel's recommendation on taxation -- a power that none has exercised in the last five years, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said on Thursday.

Govt hikes liquor prices, hopes to net Rs 600 crore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has increased liquor prices by 20 to 25 per cent.

With the new prices, the Telangana government hopes to net nearly Rs 600 crore as additional revenue every month.

The government has hiked the prices of beers by Rs 10 and the price of a quarter liquor

bottle by Rs 20.

The price of a 1,000 ml liquor bottle was hiked by Rs 120 and that of a full bottle by Rs 80.

The increased prices will be slightly different for different brands.

The new prices came into effect on Thursday. This is the first time the government has increased prices after bringing in the 2021-23 liquor policy.



Varanasi court
fixes May 23 for
next hearing in
Gyanvapi case

DAY 2 IN LONDON

KTR holds meetings with various industry leaders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the second day of the visit, the Telangana delegation led by Minister KT Rama Rao held a series of meetings with the top leadership of various companies in London.

During a round table meeting organised by the UK India Business Council and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) in London, KTR interacted with automobile industry leaders and pitched the state as an investment destination. He said



that Telangana is one of the front runners in the EV revolution.

TS signs MoU with King's College London

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A notification will be issued shortly for filling up 9,168 Group-4 posts in Telangana Government service.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar held a preparatory meeting with Special Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries and all Heads of Departments at the BRKR Bhavan on Thursday

regarding the steps that have to be taken for issuing Group IV notifications.

The Chief Secretary said that the government had brought in the Presidential Order 2018 with an objective to not only protect the rights of the state's people but also to reform the functioning of the government.

As per the order 95 per cent of the posts are reserved for locals.

9,168 Group4 posts for notification soon

Recently, the Government started the process of issuing job notifications by issuing a notification for filling up 503 posts in Group-1 service. The police recruitment process is going on and clearance has been given for filling up posts in the education department, he said and added that the notification for TET has been issued.

To prevent funds diversion, Centre sending directly to GPs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Replying to Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's statement that the Centre has been behaving cheaply by sending funds directly to villages, BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar has made it clear that the Centre has been sending funds directly to gram panchayats to stop the diversion of funds for the sake of commissions and that it is in tune with the spirit of constitutional amendments.

He said that the Centre has been sending funds directly to villages as per the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments.

Sanjay alleged that sarpanches have been begging the TRS government for funds. Is it right for the government to suspend sarpanch-



es for pointing out its mistakes? he asked.

Sanjay said that the 73rd constitutional amendment's main aim is to send funds directly to gram panchayats.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Panchami

May 19 08:24 PM

to May 20 05:29 PM

Shashthi:

May 20 05:29 PM

to May 21 02:59 PM

Nakshatram:

Uttara Ashadha:

May 20 03:17 AM

to May 21 01:18 AM

Shravana:

May 21 01:18 AM

to May 21 11:46 PM

Rahukalam:

10:36 AM to 12:12 PM

Yamagandam:

3:25 PM to 5:02 PM

Varjyam:

05:03 AM to 06:33 AM

Gulika:

7:23 AM to 8:59 AM

Amritakalam:

07:26 PM to 08:54 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

11:46 AM

to 12:38 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 29%

Sunrise: 5:47 AM

Sunset: 6:37 PM

Updated: MAY 19, 2022 5:00 PM

KTR IN UK

TS signs MoU with King's College London for Pharma University

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with King's College London in connection with the Pharma University in Hyderabad Pharma City.

The MoU was signed on Thursday in the presence of Minister KT Rama Rao during the Telangana delegations visit to the UK by Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan and Professor Richard Trembath, the Senior Vice President (Health & Life Sciences) and Executive Director of King's Health Partners.

The visit also provided an opportunity to discuss future collaborations between the State and King's College London, with focus on Telangana's Pharma City, a



cluster for industry and academic innovation currently being developed.

This MoU sets out a joint intention between King's and the Government of Telangana to explore the development of higher education facilities in Pharma City.

This will involve research projects, staff and student

exchanges as well as curriculum development and upskilling.

KTR's visit to London follows an engaging trip to India by King's delegates, including the President and Principal of King's College, London, last month, spearheaded by the British Council as part of its focus to strengthen HE sectors

through internationalisation in both India and the UK.

Professor Shitij Kapur, President & Principal of King's College, London said, "King's is a global university and we are proud of our academic partnerships and research collaborations with India. These include an anthropological research study with India's flagship cancer hospital, the Tata Memorial Centre in Mumbai and the King's India Institute, an interdisciplinary centre for research, education and public engagement on contemporary India launched in 2012.

This collaboration represents an exciting opportunity to develop higher education in Telangana with focus on areas with current global significance in which King's has world-leading expertise, including technology and

healthcare."

KTR said, "With Telangana's life sciences ecosystem valued at USD 50 bn, combined with King's College London's world leading expertise in research and training, I'm hopeful that this collaboration will deliver beneficial partnerships for both Telangana and the UK."

Sir Steve Smith, the UK government's International Education Champion said, "The Government of Telangana and the British Council are longstanding partners in driving internationalisation of higher education in the state. On behalf of my colleagues in the UK Government and the British Council I am delighted to support the signing of this MoU."

Meanwhile, KTR held meetings with industry leaders on day two of his UK visit.

BJP, Congress leaderships in TS face similar problems

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

The scenario in Telangana's opposition parties appears like a combination of the bitter and the sweet.

The main opposition parties in Telangana, the BJP and the Congress, which were trying to become an alternative to the ruling TRS, are facing similar problems from their leaders.

The Telangana BJP chief has been facing invisible problems from leaders who joined the BJP from other parties and TPCC Chief Revanth Reddy has been facing problems from his own party's senior leaders.

BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar has been facing problems from the leaders who joined from other political parties and also from some old-time loyalists of his own party. It is learnt that some BJP leaders are teaming up with the leaders who joined the BJP from other political parties and is troubling Sanjay in invisibly. The result is that the party has been missing many

opportunities to attract leaders from other political parties.

An example of this is former TRS MLA Nallala Odelu and his ZP Chairperson wife Bhagyalaxmi joining the Congress after quitting the TRS.

Although the BJP's leadership has been giving top priority to Sanjay, the leaders who joined from other political parties and some BJP leaders have been creating invisible problems for him. These problems may trouble the Telangana BJP in a visible manner soon, a party leader told 'The Pioneer' on condition of anonymity.

This problem must be solved as soon as possible or else the BJP would have to pay a heavy price as it is planning to induct leaders from other parties in a big way, he added.

It is learnt that Nallala Odelu was in touch all these days with his former colleague, the BJP MLA representing Huzurabad, Eatala Rajender. The BJP leaders were shocked at Odelu joining the Congress, it is

learnt. The leaders are now holding talks to find out what went wrong regarding the Odelu couple.

But TPCC Chief Revanth Reddy has been transforming the troubles created by his party's senior leaders to his advantage. It is learnt that Revanth has been inducting leaders from other parties easily as he had also joined the Congress from the TDP. Revanth has been strengthening his position in the Congress using the troubles created by his party's seniors.

Congress leaders, who started their political career with the Congress and have been continuing in the party for decades have told journalists that they were not getting due respect in the party and that leaders joining from other parties are getting top priority.

They pointed out the refusal of passes to attend Rahul Gandhi's Warangal public meeting as an example of the neglect they were facing from the present Congress leadership in TS.

Odelu couple quits TRS, join Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior TRS leader former MLA Nallala Odelu and his ZP Chairperson wife Bhagyalaxmi have quit the TRS. They joined the Congress on Thursday in the presence of AICC General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi at New Delhi.

Odelu's wife is the ZP Chairperson of Mancherla district. Priyanka welcomed the Odelu couple and offered them a party shawl.

TPCC chief Revanth Reddy, TPCC Election Management Committee Chairman Damodara Rajanarsimha, and former MLC K. Premasagar Rao took the Nallala Odelu couple to New Delhi.

After joining the Congress, Nallala Odelu said that they had joined the Congress due to the harassment of Chennai MLA Balka Suman of the TRS.

He said that the government is not following protocol in the



case of his ZP Chairperson wife Bhagyalaxmi and that Balka Suman had been harassing him politically. Bhagyalaxmi has two more years to go as ZP Chairperson.

"I worked hard for the victory of Balka Suman as per the directions of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao even though the party had refused a ticket to me in 2018. But Balka Suman had been conspiring to get me expelled from the TRS after becoming an MLA. They were also harassing me mentally by tapping my phone calls. The TRS

high command didn't care even though I complained to them several times.

The TRS is now giving top priority to Telangana betrayers and is neglecting protagonists like me. So I am quitting the TRS. Madigas too are facing injustice inside TRS," Odelu said.

Odelu said that the development of Telangana is possible only through the Congress which gave Telangana state. He said that farmers, unemployed youth and others have been facing a lot of problems under KCR.

9,168 Group4 posts for notification...

Continued from page 1

The Chief Secretary instructed officials to submit all relevant information, including roster point details to the Public Service Commission by May 29.

He directed that all sanctioned posts of Junior Assistants and equivalent posts should be included and notified for direct recruitment. Promotional vacancies in Senior Assistant and Superintendent cadres should also be filled, the CS added.

All HoDs should devote personal attention to reducing timeframes so that the process can be completed and the Finance Department can issue the GO to provide the mandate to go for recruitment

through the Public Service Commission, the CS said.

Janardhan Reddy, the Chairman of TSPSC, Sunil Sharma, the Special Chief Secretary of Housing, Rajat Kumar, the Special Chief Secretary of Irrigation, Adhar Sinha, the Spl. CS AH, Anjani Kumar, the Director-General of ACB, Shivshankar, the Sr. Consultant, Anita Ramachandran, the Secretary of TSPSC, Sandeep Kumar Sultania, the Secretary of PR & RD, Sheshadri, the CIG of Stamps and Registration, Rahul Bojja, the Secretary, of SC Development, Ronald Rose, the Special Secretary of Finance, PCCF Dobriyal, and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Govt orders minor rejig of IAS officers

Continued from page 1

Dr Buddha Prakash will replace Shailaja Ramaiyer and he will also have full additional charge as Transport Commissioner in place of K.S. Sreenivasa Raju.

Rahul Bojja, IAS, (2000), the Secretary to the CM, has been given full additional charge of the posts of Commissioner & Inspector General, Registration & Stamps and Commissioner & Director, Survey Settlement and Land Records & PD, Bhubharathi in place of V. Sheshadri, IAS, (1999) who was having FAC.

Sheshadri has been given full additional charge as Secretary of the General Administration Department.

Syed Ali Murtaza Rizvi, IAS, (1999), Secretary, HM&FW Department, has been given FAC of the posts of Director, Drugs Control Administration and Commissioner, Public Health & Family Welfare.

Jagan launches...

Continued from page 1

Government Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishnareddy, Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma, Information Commissioner T Vijay Kumar Reddy, Chief Minister's Secretary Dhanunjay Reddy and others were present on the occasion. Sajjala Ramakrishnareddy appreciated the programmes created by Swatantra channel and congratulated the staff.

Editor Thota



Bhavanarayana, Executive Editor CHV Ramana Rao, Assistant Editor Rama Vishwanathan, Chief News Coordinator A Amarayya and Technical Consultant YS Sudhir participated in the event.

Continued from page 1

Article 246A treats Centre and State as equal and Article 279 of the constitution says that Centre and State cannot act independent of each other, it said.

The top court said that recommendations of the GST council are a product of collaborative discussions between the Centre and States and it is not imperative that one of the federal units must possess a higher share.

It said that Indian federalism is a dialogue between cooperative and non-cooperative federalism and the Centre and States always engage in dialogue. The bench pointed out that there are no provisions in

the GST Act of 2017 that deal with repugnancy between the laws drawn up by the Centre and State and it is for the council to advise them suitably whenever such occasions come to fore.

The top court ruling came on a batch of pleas as it upheld a Gujarat High Court verdict to quash the levy of Integrated GST (IGST) on the importers on ocean freight under reverse charge. The High Court had held that no tax can be levied under the IGST on the ocean freight for the services provided by a person located in non-taxable territory by way of transportation of goods by a vessel from a place outside India up to the customs station in India.

KTR holds meetings with various...

Continued from page 1

During the session, KTR said that Telangana has launched a comprehensive policy on EVs.

He said that several marquee EV companies have already chosen Telangana to set up their facilities.

He said that Telangana ranks top in Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings and has a strong ecosystem in Defence R&D, and the emerging storage industry.

During the day, noted British Indian businessman and President of the Confederation of British Industry, Lord Karan Bilimoria, hosted KTR at the UK Parliament.

The Minister later interacted with MPs, representatives of CII & CBI, and the Indo-British APPG.

During the interaction, KTR informed the MPs and other participants about the trailblazing initiatives of Telangana and said that Telangana and Hyderabad are the preferred investment destinations for the IT, Life Sciences & Pharma, Aerospace & Defense and Food Processing industries.

After the meeting, Lord

One-year rigorous...

Continued from page 1

The top court, while allowing the review plea filed by the complainant on the issue of the sentence, said it is a case where some germane facts for sentencing appear to have been lost sight of while imposing only a fine on the Congress leader.

Though the apex court had in May 2018 held Sidhu guilty of the offence of "voluntarily causing hurt" to a 65-year-old man, it spared him a jail term and imposed a fine of Rs 1,000.

Noting that the hand can also be a weapon by itself where a boxer, wrestler, cricketer, or an extremely physically fit person inflicts a blow, the apex court said it does believe that indulgence was not required to be shown at the stage of sentence by only imposing fine and letting Sidhu go without any imposition of sentence.

The result of the aforesaid is that the review applications/petitions are allowed to the aforesaid extent and in addition to the fine imposed we consider it appropriate to impose a sentence of imprisonment for a period of one-year rigorous imprisonment to be undergone by respondent no.1 (Sidhu), a bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and S K Kaul said.

Unlikely to alter GST...

Continued from page 1

The Constitutional amendment that brought the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime from July 2017 by subsuming nearly one-and-a-half-dozen central and state levies, provided for a Council of Centre and states for decision making. The recommendations of the GST Council, as per the Constitutional amendment, were always a guidance and never a mandatory compliance, Bajaj said.

States, even though differing on tax rates on a par-

ticular good or service in the Council, never went back and framed legislations that were not in line with the panel's recommendations.

And this practice is likely to continue unhindered, the official said soon after the Supreme Court ruled in the Mohit Minerals Ocean Freight case that the recommendations of the GST Council are not binding and only have persuasive value. It held that Parliament and state legislatures can equally legislate on GST.

Nikhat Zareen becomes...

Continued from page 1

This is India's first gold medal in four years. Mary Kom (48kg) had won the last title in 2018.

Incidentally, it was the legendary Mary Kom who had participated in the flyweight category in the 2019 edition of the tournament.

Zareen had been refused a trial by the Boxing Federation of India (BFI), which decided to go by Mary Kom's consistent performances while making the choice and the Manipuri claimed her eighth world medal, a bronze.

The 25-year-old Zareen produced some beautiful combination of punches to outclass Jutamas.

Jutamas had a better start of the two but Zareen soon made up and took the upper hand. The first round was fought on an even keel but Zareen's blows were more powerful and her punches were eye catching.

The Indian took the first round comfortably but Jutamas made a strong comeback in the second.

The Thai boxer took advantage of her longer reach as she countered Zareen's attacks from a distance, while landing punches herself.

There was very little separat-

ing the two boxers but strength proved to be a key factor as Zareen used her powerful right hand and came up with beautiful combinations in the final round to seal the deal.

As the winner was announced Zareen was overcome by emotion and she jumped with glee and couldn't hold back her tears.

This is Zareen's second victory over Jutamas. She had got the better of the Thai boxer at the Thailand Open back in 2019 as well.

The Hyderabad pugilist has been in stellar form this year. She became the first Indian woman boxer to claim two gold medals at the prestigious Strandja Memorial in February.

Apart from Zareen's gold, Manisha Moun (57kg) and debutant Parveen Hooda (63kg) will return home with bronze medals.

A 12-member Indian contingent participated in the competition. While the medal haul has decreased by one, an Indian has been crowned world champion after four years.

India's best performance in the event remains the one in 2006 when the country snared eight medals, including four gold, one silver and three bronze.

blames the Centre's refusal to allow it to take loans and its delay in releasing grants for its inability to fund welfare schemes the people may think that if TS is the richest state why should it depend on the Centre for implementing its social welfare schemes.

The BJP wants the CM to criticise the Centre for lack of funds. If the TRS Government criticises the Centre for not allowing it to take fresh loans the BJP is ready to point out that the TRS Government is running on loans.

If the TRS Government blames the Centre for delaying the release of Central grants the BJP can say that the TRS Government depends on Central aid.

To prevent...

Continued from page 1

The Constitution clearly states that 29 topics including education and health is meant for villages, but KCR had transformed panchayats into ceremonial dolls by giving powers to MLAs to lord over them, he said on Thursday.

He said that sarpanches have been working as watchmen and security guards and were selling their assets due to KCR's inefficiency.

KCR had made Telangana a debt-riddled state by taking thousands of crores as commissions in the name of Kaleshwaram, Mission Bhagiratha, and Mission Kakatiya projects, Sanjay added.

KCR on nationwide tour from today

Continued from page 1

He is scheduled to leave Bengaluru on May 27 for Ralegaon Siddi. CM KCR will meet prominent social activist Anna Hazare. From there, CM KCR will go to see Shirdi Sai Baba. The tour will end there and CM KCR will return to Hyderabad thereafter.

After that, CM KCR will prepare for a visit to Bengal and Bihar on May 29 or 30. The CM will visit the families of Indian soldiers who were martyred in the Galvan Valley. As previously announced by the Telangana government, KCR will support their families. As things stand, KCR will be in Delhi on May 20, Chandigarh on May 22, Bengaluru on May 26, Ralegaon Siddi and Shirdi on May 27 and in Bengal and Bihar on May 29 and 30.



IN BRIEF

6 knee replacement surgeries performed at Gandhi Hospital

Six total knee replacement surgeries were performed for patients with advanced arthritis of the knee at Gandhi Hospital on Thursday between 9:30am to 3:30pm. The officials say that the surgeries which previously caused a lot of financial burden to those of lower socioeconomic status are now being done in huge numbers free of cost over the last two months under the Ayushman Bharat and Arogyasri schemes. The surgical team, headed by Dr Valya was supported by the Anaesthesia team lead by Dr Baby Rani and the nursing staff headed by the in-charge, Sunitha. The concerned teaching faculty, residents and interns were also actively involved and helped make this mammoth task a success. The staff said that patients are now in stable condition and are walking satisfactorily.

MLRIT Assistant Professor awarded Ph.D

Y Raghunatha Rao, who has been working as Assistant Professor of English in the Department of Humanities and Sciences (H & S) and Public Relations officer at Marri Laxman Reddy Institute of Technology (MLRIT), is awarded Ph.D (Doctor Of philosophy) degree by Jawaharal Nehru Technological University - Hyderabad, Telangana in the Faculty of English. Raghunatha Rao has successfully completed his research work under the supervision of Dr.Parvathi.V professor of English,JNTUH College of Engineering, Hyderabad. The Topic of research is "Images of Contemporary India in the Select Fiction of Upamanyu Chatterjee and Amitav Ghosh." On this occasion, Chairman MLRIT Marri Laxman Reddy, Secretary Marri Rajasekhara Reddy, Principal MLRIT Dr. K.Srinivas Rao, congratulated Y Raghunatha Rao for the achievement.

4 held for cheating in Andar Bahar card games

The Tukaramgate police have apprehended four persons - Syed Imtiyaz, Dhoni Ramesh, Orse Yadagiri and Anna Kumar while they were playing 'andar bahar' card game at Golden Bakery, East Marredpally, Secunderabad. Police seized cash worth Rs. 89,000. According to a press release, the accused persons have been procuring and supplying the latest illegal technical spy gadgets, other items (cameras, lenses) for the gamblers. They were causing huge losses to many innocent public/gamblers.

8 pc increase in Aarogyasri services

Finance and Health Minister Harish Rao has conducted a monthly review on the implementation and progress of the Aarogyasri scheme. He said, "Health services in government hospitals increased by 35 per cent in 2019-20 and by 43 per cent in 2021-22. The 8 per cent increase in Aarogyasri services as compared to the base year is commendable.

MANA OORU-MANA BADI

Will bring massive infra development in govt schools: Sabita Indra Reddy

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Education Minister Sabita Indra Reddy has stated that Mana Ooru-Mana Badi programme which was taken up by the state government on a prestigious manner would bring large scale development among government schools across the state.

Minister Sabita Indra Reddy, Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania and Director of School Education Devasena held a review meeting at the collectorate in Hyderabad on Thursday on Mana Ooru-Mana Badi/Mana Basti-Mana Badi programme.

The Minister directed the District Collectors and other officials to strive for successful implementation of the programme so that schools will be developed to the optimum level and would be readied in all respects for reopening after holidays. In the first phase of the programme, 9,300 government schools will be developed in the state.

In Rangareddy district, out



Education Minister Sabita Indra Reddy, along with others, addressing a meeting in Hyderabad on Thursday

of the total 1,309 government schools, basic amenities will be provided 304 government schools in rural areas and 160 schools in urban areas (total 464 schools) in the first phase. The government schools have to be developed on par with corporate schools, she said. MLAs, MLCs and other people's representatives have to work in coordination with

officials for the all round development of government schools, she further said. Necessary funds have to be mobilised from the association of old students, donors, school managing committees, sarpanches and others, she added.

TS and Welfare Infrastructure Development Corporation Chairman

Sridhar Reddy, ZP Chairperson Anitha Harinath Reddy, MLCs Patnam Mahender Reddy, Surabhi Vani Devi, Yegge Mallesham and Janardhan Reddy, MLA Sudhir Reddy, Arekapudi Gandhi, Kale Yadaiah, Anjaiah Yadav, Additional Collector Prateek Jain, ZP CEO Dilipkumar and others were present.

No takers for 'The Rainwater Harvesting Park'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rainwater Harvesting Park has no takers for now. With restricted entry into the park, authorities are trying to create awareness among specific groups like students, citizens, NGOs and school children on various Water Harvesting methods. As a result, these specific visitors are not showing any interest in visiting the park.

Rainwater Harvesting Theme Park is a unique park located at Road No. 51 in Jubilee Hills to promote rainwater harvesting practices. Despite the Hyderabad HMWSSB officials have promoted it through NGOs and in other ways to increase the influx of visitors, the park is unlikely to attract more visitors due to the prohibited



entry. Two years ago, the rainwater harvesting brought an 'Award of Excellence' to HMWSSB officials and earned a tag of role model for other states, which is now lacking with visitors.

The HMWSSB officials say that since the inception of pandemic Covid-19, students, citizens and other NGOs are not visiting the Rain water Harvesting Theme park. Even though the park consists of

more than 40 interventions on the theme of Water conservation, Rainwater Harvesting, Groundwater recharge, Water treatment and Sewerage treatment, visitors show no interest.

HMWSSB officials further stated that the number of visitors has been declining mainly from the pandemic induced lockdown by the Telangana government and now visitors come to the park

only once or twice a month.

Apart from that, The Pioneer Correspondent found that employees are stopped at the 'Music Fountain', the one which attracts the park more.

Meanwhile, Akash, in-charge of The Rainwater Harvesting Park, said, "I have been noticing a decline in the number of visitors for the past two years.

We promoted this park to increase the number of visitors through the NGO HMWSSB-led Gandhi Gnana Parishan. Most visitors rarely come and visit. About 15 students visit the park a month and the park is open without visitors for the rest of the days."

However, with a decline in registrations for visits to the parks, HMWSSB officials are planning to attract visitors.

SCR bags five National Performance Efficiency Shields

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway (SCR) has bagged five All India Performance Efficiency shields for last year. The zone has attained National recognition for demonstrating exemplary performance in various spheres of activity during the previous year. The shields are security shield, comprehensive health care shield (Jointly with West Central Railway), civil engineering shield (Jointly with Western and Central Railways), stores shield (Jointly with Western Railways) and civil engineering construction shield (Jointly with North Western Railways).

These shields will be presented by Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister for Railways along with Raosaheb Danve, Minister of State for Railways and Darshana Jardosh, Minister of State for Railways at Bhubaneswar. The shields will be received by the General Manager (In-Charge), SCR and the concerned Principal Heads of the Departments,



Picture for representational purpose only

SCR.

Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager (In-charge), SCR expressed his happiness and congratulated the team of officials and staff for their contribution which led to SCR obtaining five All India Performance Efficiency shields. The General Manager advised the team to focus on new areas and innovations to further enhance the performance across the zone.

Security Shield: The Security shield is bagged by SCR. To enhance security of the passengers, CCTV cam-

eras were installed at 58 Railway stations across the zone in the financial year 2021-22.

Comprehensive Health Care Shield: The Comprehensive Health Care Shield is bagged by SCR and West Central Railways jointly. To enhance the health and medical facilities of the staff during the uncertain pandemic times, SCR had taken several proactive steps to meet the medical needs of the employees. Covid-Care centers were set-up at five hospitals across the Zone.

'Developmental works taken up as per wishes of people'

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy has stated that development works are being taken in the constituency as per requirements and wishes of the people.

The MLA inaugurated function hall for Muslim minorities at Patancheru on Thursday. The function hall was constructed with the support from GVR Enterprises at a cost of Rs 2.25 crore. Addressing on the occasion, Mahipal Reddy said that marriage function halls are being constructed at various places in the constituency for various communities so that poor people can utilise these function halls to conduct marriages to their children. As many as seven marriage function halls have been constructed in Patancheru town for the benefit of poor, he said. After the formation of separate state for Telangana, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has been initiating steps for the development of all sections of people, the MLA added.

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI DISTRICT

Annual credit plan for 2022-23 prepared for Rs 16,373 crore

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Additional Collector Samson has stated that annual credit plans are prepared so that industries and MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) will get priority in fixing targets for sanction of loans for the year 2022-23 in Medchal-Malkajgiri district. The Additional Collector held a meeting at the collectorate on Thursday with bankers, DCCBs (district cooperative central bank) and DLRC (district level review committee) officials and other officials. The Additional

Collector Samsan released the annual credit plan for Rs 16,373 crore for the year 2022-23 for the district. Last year (2021-22), the annual credit plan was prepared for Rs 14,411 crore and loans were issued to the tune of Rs 14,736 crore making 102 per cent achievement.

During the current year, Rs 4,865 crore for industries and MSMEs, Rs 1,588 crore for agriculture, Rs 285 crore for education, Rs 898 crore for housing and Rs 7,909.56 crore for priority sector have been fixed as credit targets, he said. Samson directed the bankers

and other officials to work with coordination and try to sanction loans to eligible beneficiaries by solving problems if any. The list of eligible persons has to be updated regularly so that they will get loans. He released a book on annual credit plan for 2022-23 for the district. Lead Bank Manager P Kishorekumar, RBILDO Purnima, Nabard DDA M Pravin Kumar, Canara Bank DGM Anant, ZPCEO Devasahayam, Agriculture Officer Mary Rekha, Industries GM Ravinder, SC Corporation ED Balaji and others were present.



Medchal-Malkajgiri Additional Collector Samson and others releasing annual credit plan for the district for 2022-23 on Thursday

MANUU announces video documentary competition on Urdu Journalism

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Maulana Azad National Urdu University will be organising various competitions and events throughout the year as part of Bicentenary Celebrations of Urdu Journalism under the title Karwaan-e-Urdu Sahafat - Celebrating 200 years of Urdu Journalism: 1822 - 2022. The video documentary film competition is one of these events for which entries are open from May 30 to October 15, 2022.

The best documentary film will be awarded with a cash prize of Rs 20,000 in the valedictory function of Bicentenary Celebrations in



the month of November 2022 and best video documentary films will also be screened on the occasion.

According to Prof Ehtesham Ahmed Khan, Dean, School of MCJ, students pursuing Journalism and Mass Communication courses from any College, State or Central Universities, documentary filmmakers, media professionals or any individual or film enthusiast can participate in the competition. The competition will

provide students, media professional, amateur journalists to make video documentaries on the contribution of Urdu Journalism in the freedom movement, social and political reforms, and its development in different regions.

The participants must prepare a Good Script, may choose appropriate or innovative Title of their Video. The film may be produced preferably in Urdu or Hindustani language, but the entries in Hindi and English language are also accepted. The documentary is of maximum 20 minutes duration and quality of HD with high resolution. Participants can reach the department on email tahir_2kmq@yahoo.com.

Residents upset over non-removal of garbage from colonies

SAITEJA BURRA
■ HYDERABAD

While the government has been trying to implement solid waste management policy effectively and to make Hyderabad garbage-free city, GHMC has been negligent on garbage disposal in some parts of Hyderabad. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has neglected sending the garbage lifting trucks to parts of the city such as Rajendranagar, Dilshad Nagar in Mehdiapatnam, Machabollurum, Vanasthalipuram, Uppal GHMC Ward office and other places.

Citizens are upset over lack of waste lifting vehicles to move garbage from the city's colonies. They are struggling as the garbage accumulates and

the stench emanates. They also express concern that the lack of sweepers in their colonies has led to the accumulation of garbage on the road. Citizens who are plagued with these problems on a daily basis are now raising concerns and complain against GHMC officials.

A few citizens in Dilshad Nagar Colony in Mehdiapatnam said their colony was being neglected by GHMC officials as there was no truck to pick up the waste for months. They have been having trouble with large amounts of solid waste on the roads. During the rainy season, all the accumulated garbage comes in front of the houses.

"We did not see sweepers and garbage trucks coming to our colony. The sanitation personnel are cleaning the road in every colony and removing



garbage, but why are our colonies are being neglected?", asked Zaheer Khan, a resident of Dilshad Nagar.

When asked about not picking up garbage in Dilshad Nagar, Pawan, one of the drivers of a garbage truck in Mehdiapatnam, told The Pioneer that they would only pick up garbage on the main roads and not inside the colony.

The Pioneer correspondent

found that there was a lot of garbage left on main roads from Mehdiapatnam to Rajendra Nagar in Shivarampally.

Meanwhile, the residents of Sachivalaya Nagar in Vanasthalipuram said on Twitter that for the past one week, they have not seen any garbage trucks lifting the solid waste in their colonies.

Another resident Rajender

Nayak said that garbage collection by GHMC near Raghavendranagar, GHMC ward office in Uppal was not carried out regularly. They come once in 4 to 5 days. They are charging Rs 100 per month from the citizens for each house. Citizens are also complaining about the lack of sweepers in the colonies on a daily basis.

"We don't get daily or alternate days sweeping in Hayathnagar to Saheb Nagar. Even though we pay taxes to GHMC as they come under GHMC limits, they only sweep once a week on Sundays," said K Sai Vikram Kumar on Twitter.

However, Rajendranagar, Vanasthalipuram corporators and GHMC sanitation officials were not available for comment about the issue.

Hyd surpasses Bengaluru to become the most favoured office market

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad surpassed Bengaluru in net office space absorption in FY22. In contrast to previous fiscal year, Hyderabad surpassed Bengaluru to become the most favoured office market by the occupiers in FY22, accounting for 23% of the overall net office absorption, followed by 22% in Bengaluru and 15% in NCR.

The city recorded the highest leasing activity in the country with net office absorption of 7.85 Mn sft, contributing 23% to the overall office demand across the top 7 cities. A YoY growth of 3% and 38% were registered in the new office supply and net office space absorption in Hyderabad respectively. Latest ANAROCK Research reveals that Approx. 11.8 Mn sft of new office spaces entered the Hyderabad market, second highest in India after Bengaluru with 23% share.

Average citywide office rentals in FY22 stood at Rs 58/sf/Mo. It is the second lowest price among all top cities in the country. Office vacancy levels rose from 12.8% in FY21 to 15.7% in FY22 due to robust new supply. IT-ITeS occupiers remained the prominent



demand drivers for office space in Hyderabad with 52% share. Co-working spaces and BFSI were the next highest leased segments in the current financial year with 20% and 19% respectively.

Key office space leased out include Mindspace Block11, Divyashree Orion Block B and KRC Commerzone and KRC Mindspace 3A&3B in Madhapur and Gachibowli area.

With only 10% YoY change, Bengaluru's net office absorption growth is at the bottom as compared to the other top cities. The southern cities of Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai dominated new completions with a total of 58% share (approx. 29.85 Mn sq.

ft.). The remarkable growth in the office market of these three southern cities when viewed against their western and northern counterparts is directly attributable to robust demand by the IT/ITeS sector, affordable rentals, and the exponential growth of start-ups locally.

Anuj Puri, Chairman - ANAROCK Group says, "The hybrid work model emerged as a formidable new force on the Indian office real estate market during the pandemic. There was a gradual but significant transition to flexible spaces which offer businesses and employees the ability to continue operations seamlessly. Coworking spaces have become the most preferred

Average citywide office rentals in FY22 stood at Rs 58/sf/Mo. It is the second lowest price among all top cities in the country. Office vacancy levels rose from 12.8% in FY21 to 15.7% in FY22 due to robust new supply.

option to adopt the hybrid work model, compared to the other options of changing office layouts or the hub-and-spoke model."

TS protagonists are not allotted RS seats: NVSS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP vice-president N V S S Prabhakar on Thursday alleged that Telangana protagonists were not allotted Rajya Sabha seats. It is shameful on the part of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for allocating Rajya Sabha seats to tax evaders.

He claimed that the Centre was providing funds for gram panchayats.

But the Chief Minister was opposing the Centre providing funds to gram panchayats directly because he did not get 'commissions', he alleged. In the KCR rule, a policy of 'beer to every house and a bar in every street' had been adopted, he said.

BJP MLA from Dubbaka M Raghunandan Rao said that the Centre has been sending funds directly to gram panchayats to ensure corruption-free administration. He wondered as to why the Chief Minister was against the practice. He advised Minister for Municipal Administration and TRS MLC not to speak in a manner that would disturb the integrity of the country.



Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav addressing a meeting with officials in Hyderabad on Thursday

Bansilalpet Stepwell will get more facilities: Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Dairy Development Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Thursday said that 60 per cent work has already been completed on the rehabilitation of the Bansilalpet Stepwell. Upon completion of the works, a walking track, fountain, view point, skywalk, cafeteria and benches will be set up for tourists coming to the Bansilalpet Stepwell.

On Thursday, Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav held a review meeting with officials

from GHMC, Revenue officials, HMDA, Revenue and other departments on various development works along with Municipal Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar at the Municipal Administration Department office in Masab Tank.

The officials briefed the meeting on the development work to be undertaken to make the Bansilalpet Stepwell area a tourist destination. Authorities have been directed to complete the work by August 15.

Similarly, the officials briefed the Minister about

the beautification of Gandhi Park on MG Road and the setting up of a new statue of Mahatma Gandhi. Minister said an order has been placed to erect a new 16-foot statue of Mahatma Gandhi in addition to the existing one. The Minister directed to expedite the acquisition of land for the expansion of the park, removal of power transformers, removal of poles and removal of existing structures. He said steps should be taken to complete the work of setting up the new statue, developing the park and beautifying it by August 15.

BC, SC & ST Cong leaders hopeful of securing posts in party

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress leaders, belonging to Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, are hopeful of securing their share of posts in the party in accordance with the resolutions adopted at the Udaipur Chintan Shivir declarations. The leaders are expecting that the party leadership will soon fill the vacancies to accommodate them.

The Udaipur Chintan Shivir resolved to give 50 per cent positions in the party to the Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The AICC is yet to fill the posts of TPCC vice-presidents, general secretaries and presidents for about 15 District Congress Committees. The TPCC will

appoint TPCC secretaries on its own without the intervention of AICC.

A BC leader on condition of anonymity said that he has been hoping that the party may follow the Udaipur declaration and give 50 per cent positions to the BC, SC and STs.

He told The Pioneer that he would decide his future course of action if the party ignored him.

On the other hand, the AICC had already filled the posts of TPCC working presidents, senior vice-presidents, Campaign Committee chairman, Election Management Committee chairman, AICC Programmes Implementation Committee chairman, TPCC Star Campaigner and a few others.



Officials told to provide power to facilitate developmental works

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud on Thursday directed the officials of the Electricity Department to lay electric cables to supply power to the island to be developed in the middle of Pedda Cheruvu to promote tourism and fix lights there, besides installing electric transformers in Hanwada mandal and Mahabubnagar rural mandal.

He wanted the transformers to be installed to provide power facility to the tank bund, suspension bridge works, mini Shilparamam and other relevant development projects.

He wanted 13 transformers to be fixed in rural Hanwada mandal and 19 in rural Mahabubnagar district to meet the agriculture needs of



Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud holding a meeting with officials in Mahabubnagar on Thursday

the farmers. The officials told the Minister that a 50 KV power transformers is going to be installed on a war-footing. The rest of them will be installed in two or three days.

Electricity Department officials, including

Superintending Engineer, Executive Engineer, Divisional Engineer, Mahabubnagar Municipal councillor J Narsimulu, Hanwada mandal elected people's representatives and others were present.

Imposter demands money from Tahsildar

PNS ■ JAGTIAL

An imposter posing himself as Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) Deputy Superintendent of Police has threatened Tahsildars over phone in Jagtial district. He also threatened Malyal Tahsildar Sujata and demanded money. Accusing them of being corrupt, the fake ACB DSP, who claimed to have landed here from Bengaluru, demanded money. Shocked at the phone call, Sujata claimed herself that her hands are

clean and told the imposter that she did not commit any mistake. She claimed that she did not give trouble to anyone and gave strong retort to the imposter. The imposter found her to be a hardnut to crack asked her to give him her husband's phone number. He called her husband and threatened that his wife would be arrested. Her spouse sought more time to fulfil the demand. The phone call created sensation in the district. A complaint has been lodged with the police.

Plea for extra coaches: L&T changes frequency, starts extra trains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As commuters request for extra coaches in peak hours due to jam-packed metro trains, L&T Hyderabad Metro rail responds that it has increased the frequency of trains to four minutes and thirty seconds during peak hours and extra trains were also introduced. "We have already increased the frequency to 4 min and 30 seconds during peak hours. We have also started trains from Ameerpet to ensure crowding can be cleared. We will continue taking steps to improve services," says L&T Hyderabad Metro Rail.

The officials have addressed the issue after a number of commuters complained about the issue of over crowds in the peak hours. Certain people still have issues and they express that "Increasing coaches 3+3 will be a practical and thoughtful approach to accommodate more passengers." The daily commuters complain that getting down

at stations while navigating through the crowd is quite the adventure. Few also let go off trains nowadays and also think of starting almost 30 minutes early both ways, so that they get a seat for themselves. Others witnessed that though the metro maintains cleanliness the huge numbers of passengers being pushed into each compartment is making the coaches stink.

Women say, "Officials must ensure that the coaches reserved for ladies are strictly implemented because men also enter these spaces. There is no foot space to stand at least. Experts view this deliberate move of not increasing extra coaches differently, they said. "The officials are maximising the profits because the metro incurred losses during pandemic. The issue of extra coaches is not once or twice complained by commuters, it has been persistent as things got normalised after Covid. But nobody bothers on expansion and scaling up public transport."

ISB recognises entrepreneur couple's contribution

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian School of Business has set up a new chair named after noted philanthropist and entrepreneur couple B V Jagadeesh and Anuradha Jagadeesh in recognition of the generous and significant financial contribution made by them to the School in its early years.

Making the announcement, Professor Madan Pillutla, Dean, ISB, expressed ISB's gratitude for their generous contribution and said, "I would like to thank B V Jagadeesh and Anuradha Jagadeesh for their generosity towards the Indian School of Business. Philanthropic support and contribution of well-wishers like them set the strong foundations that have enabled ISB to grow to be a world class institution



where cutting edge research and education combine to produce some of the finest thought leaders in the country." Expressing delight over the setting up of the Chair, B V Jagadeesh underlined that ISB has always been close to his heart and that he wanted to contribute to its growth. He said, "My wife Anuradha and I have been entrepreneurial at heart and ISB's vision to be a world-class, research led management institution has always resonated with us.

Uttam finds fault with CM's remark on Central funds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Taking serious objection to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for finding fault with the Centre for sending funds directly to the gram panchayats, the TPCC former Chief and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday stated that the former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi had launched scheme. The practice of sending funds directly to gram panchayats has been in practice for the last 30 years, he said.

Uttam Kumar Reddy demanded that more powers be given to sarpanches, MPPs, MPTCs and ZPTCs and also more funds be allocated to the local bodies. While speaking to the media along with party leaders Mallu Ravi and Malreddy Rangareddy on Thursday, Uttam Kumar Reddy said that sarpanches have been facing crisis because of KCR's policies.

Owaisi silent on mosques razed on TS Secretariat premises: BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government which razed two mosques during the demolition of old buildings on its Secretariat premises is now mired in controversy.

On Thursday the BJP lashed out at Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi over the Gyanvapi Mosque row and said that he is "communalising" the issue.

Amit Malviya, the in-charge of BJP's National Information and Technology, said in a Tweet, "Asaduddin Owaisi is communalising the Gyanvapi Mandir issue. In 2020, two mosques in Hyderabad, the Masjid-e-Mohammadi and the Masjid-e-Hashmi, were demolished to build the TS Secretariat but Owaisi, who is an MP from the city, didn't

utter a word."

Earlier, Owaisi said the BJP wants to take the country back to the 1990s when there used to be riots.

The AIMIM chief also criticised the Varanasi court's order which directed the area where the Hindu side claimed to have found a 'Shivling' during the survey in the Gyanvapi mosque to be sealed and said that the court order was "wrong."

"Owaisi is not just a communal bigot but a hypocrite who peddles lies planted in the fascist media. He runs away from journalists who ask him "questions," and engages only those who allow him to make vile charges and whip up a frenzy. He has no locus standi on the Gyanvapi Mandir issue," Malviya added.

On Monday, the Varanasi

court had directed the district administration to seal the spot surveyed inside the Gyanvapi complex where a 'Shivling' was allegedly found by the surveying team. Hearing the Gyanvapi mosque case on Tuesday, the Supreme Court ordered the Varanasi district magistrate to ensure that the area where a Shivling was purportedly found is protected without interfering with the Muslim community's right to worship. On Thursday Owaisi tweeted, "Mathura's Sri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sangh and Shahi Idgh Trust had resolved their issues by an agreement in 1968. The Places of Worship Act, 1991, prohibits such cases from even going to court. But the law doesn't matter anymore. Robbing Muslims of their dignity is the only goal now?"



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Doctors have raised alarm over the branded ORSL drink being sold in the market. This is a move by the big pharmaceutical companies to mislead consumers and trick them into buying ORSL instead of the Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO), said a doctor from the city. Doctor would prescribe ORS along with butter milk and coconut water to patients suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting. But, when patients go to a medical shop or super market, they are lured to buy ORSL which is available in apple and orange flavours. It does not meet the requirements

set by the WHO, the doctors said.

Dr Sivaranjani Santosh, chief paediatrician, Magnus Centre and Rainbow Hospitals said "Diarrhoea is the third leading cause of death among children. When a child suffers diarrhoea and vomiting, one must understand that the body is losing water and salts which cause dehydration.

If the dehydration is left as it is, then it may cause shock, paralysis and even death. After a lot of studies, WHO came up with Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS). The ORSL available in the market has a small disclaimer which says do not consume it during diarrhoea."

INDIA CORNER

Rain havoc: Protect 'Brand Bengaluru', S M Krishna tells CM

Veteran politician S M Krishna has written to Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, expressing concern that frequent rain havoc in the city would hurt 'Brand Bengaluru' and drive away investors. The 90-year old leader, credited by many for putting Bengaluru on the global map, has also made some suggestions aimed at protecting the 'Brand Bengaluru.' Krishna joined the BJP in 2017 after more than 45 years' association with the Congress. "Rain havoc in Bengaluru which is at the forefront among the fastest growing cities in the world has raised a concern; this has caused a disquiet about the Brand Bengaluru and may send a wrong message for those willing to set up industries and investors willing to invest in the state," the former Union Minister said in his letter to Bommai. He cautioned that this (frequent rain havoc) may result in investments and industries going to other states, and hamper Karnataka's progress.



Maha: Puntamba farmers to launch fresh agitation over sugarcane woes

Farmers from Puntamba village in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, which had become the epicentre of a massive protest by cultivators in 2017, have decided to launch a fresh agitation over issues related to sugarcane and other crops. A meeting was held in this regard at the Puntamba gram panchayat on Thursday, said sarpanch (village head) Dhananjay Dhanwate. "A preliminary meeting of farmers was held, where we decided to start another agitation for various issues related to sugarcane under the banner of the Kisan Kranti Morcha (KKM)," he told. "Sugarcane cultivation was on the higher side in the state due to (last year's) excess rains, but now sugar factories are not picking up the crop. Farmers are burning the crop or even committing suicide," Dhanwate said. "Our demand will be that the state government provide help of Rs 2 lakh to the farmers whose sugarcane is still in the fields," he added.



Centre giving 2,000 additional paramilitary personnel to Punjab:CM

About 2,000 additional paramilitary personnel will be deployed in Punjab to enhance security as there have been regular inputs that some elements are trying to create unrest in the state, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said on Wednesday. Mann said this after a meeting here with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who assured him of all assistance from the central government. "There have been regular inputs that some miscreants are trying to create trouble in Punjab. So I have request the home minister to sanction additional forces for the security of the state," he told reporters. The chief minister said 10 companies of paramilitary personnel have already reached Punjab while another 10 companies will be approved by the Union Home Ministry soon. One company of paramilitary comprises about 100 personnel.



'Universities should not become spaces for ideological conflict'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Universities should be a platform for exchange of views and not become spaces for ideological conflict, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Thursday.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a three-day international seminar on "Revisiting The Ideas of India from Swaraj to New India" at the Delhi University.

Shah said that if a particular ideology is a cause for strife, it is "not an ideology and definitely not India's ideology".

"Universities should become a platform for exchange of views and not become spaces for ideological conflict. An ideology progresses through ideas and discussions.

"No one remembers those who destroyed the universities of Nalanda and Taxila. It is said



that the library of Nalanda University burnt for months. But the thoughts from those universities continue to live on even till now," he said addressing the students.

He also advised the youths to understand their duties towards the country and spoke about India's defence policy.

India did not have a defence policy before Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power

and even if it existed, it was a "shadow" of the foreign policy, Shah said.

Referring to the anti-terror surgical strikes and airstrikes, the minister said that these actions showed the meaning of India's defence policy.

"Before Prime Minister Modi, India did not have a defence policy. Even if it existed, it was a shadow of foreign policy.

"Earlier, terrorists would be sent to attack us and there were similar attempts to do so with the Uri and Pulwama attacks. But with the surgical strikes and airstrikes, we showed what the defence policy meant," he said.

The home minister also stressed that India "worships peace", "wants peace" and has cordial relations with every country in the world.

"India is a geo-cultural country and the people will not understand the idea of India until they understand this," he said.

"Some people call India a country of problems, but we believe that our country has the potential to solve millions of problems.

"From 2014 to 2022 under PM Modi, India achieved several things and crores of poor people started considering

themselves as part of the country," he said.

Shah said that some people talk about the human rights of those involved in terror attacks, but those who die due to such acts also have human rights.

Talking about the scrapping of of Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, he said that Prime Minister Modi abrogated Article 370 and Article 35A with the snap of a finger on August 5, 2019.

"Those who had said that there would be a bloodbath (khooon ki nadiyaan bahengi) could not even indulge in stone-pelting.

"PM Modi has shown how change comes if someone keeps the nation as a priority. Our idea of India also revolves around 'surkashit (safe) Bharat'," he said.

CBI files FIR against Bengal Minister, daughter

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The CBI on Thursday filed an FIR against West Bengal minister Paresh Chandra Adhikari after he failed to meet the deadline set by the Calcutta High Court for appearance before its sleuths in connection with a case of alleged illegal appointment of his daughter as a teacher in a state government-aided school, an official said.

Adhikari, who is the minister of state for education, along with his daughter, was booked under IPC sections 420 (cheating and dishonesty) and 120B (criminal conspiracy), besides sections under Prevention of Corruption Act, the official of the agency said.

"The minister was supposed to appear before our officers by 3 pm as per the Calcutta High Court order, but he did

APPOINTMENT SCAM

not. We have lodged an FIR against him and his daughter," he said.

The high court on Thursday had initially directed Adhikari to appear before the CBI by 3 pm, but his lawyer submitted that he was in Coochbehar and would travel to Kolkata by air in the evening. Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay then asked the Bidhannagar police to take him to the CBI office as soon as he lands at the NSC Bose Airport here.

The court also said that if Adhikari was found missing on the flight, it would be treated as a hoax created by him to escape the court and the CBI and, in that case, the matter would be dealt with accordingly.

According to the CBI official, Adhikari had mailed to the agency, seeking more time to appear before its sleuths.

"He has written to us seeking more time to appear before the officers in connection with the ongoing investigation. We are ready to question him," he added.

The court had initially directed the minister to appear before the CBI on May 17, taking note of plea that claimed Adhikari's daughter was appointed as a teacher, despite having scored less than the petitioner.

The TMC leader, however, skipped appearance on Wednesday. He also failed to meet the 3 pm deadline set by the court on Thursday.



Varanasi court fixes May 23 for next hearing in Gyanvapi case

PNS ■ VARANASI (UP)

A Varanasi court hearing the Gyanvapi-Shringer Gauri case on Thursday posted the matter to May 23 for the next hearing.

Both the parties filed their objections and counter-objections on Thursday. In view of the Supreme Court's order to the lower court not to proceed with the matter till Friday, it fixed May 23 for the next hearing, Madan Mohan Yadav, the lawyer representing the Hindu side, said.

Abhay Yadav, the lawyer appearing for the Muslim side, said the plaintiff had demanded the court-appointed team to carry on with its proceedings by demolishing certain walls, "to which we have objected".

"Also, a government counsel had demanded the removal of



fish from a man-made pond located on the premises of the mosque. These fish are ours and we have raised our objection to this petition as well," he said.

The two petitions filed in the Gyanvapi case were to be heard on Wednesday, but due to a lawyers' strike over the remarks of a special secretary-level official, the hearings could not be held.

The strike call was given by the Banaras Bar Association and the Central Bar Association and the hearing was scheduled on the same on Thursday.

On Tuesday, Rekha Pathak, Manju Vyas and Sita Sahu had filed an application in the court, stating that there is a basement to the east of the spot where a "Shivling" was claimed to have been found. The basement has been sealed with brick, stone and cement, they said.

Besides, there is also a wall and a basement in front of an idol of Nandi in the Kashi Vishwanath temple, and this basement has also been blocked with brick, stone, sand and other items, they said.

They had also asked for orders to the court-appointed team to report the length, width and height of the "Shivling", besides to open the door of the west wall, which is covered with debris inside the barricading, and to carry out its work there. Accepting the application, the court had said it would hear the matter on Wednesday.

Delhi government had

defended the scheme on the ground that it was for the poor who were being threatened by fair price shop (FPS) owners to opt-out of the home delivery mode otherwise they would not be given ration.

The AAP government had earlier stated that there was a complete misconception that fair-price shops would cease to exist after the implementation of the scheme.

It had said states like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka's Bengaluru have identical doorstep delivery schemes.

The Centre, represented by Central government standing counsel Monika Arora, had opposed the Delhi government's doorstep ration delivery scheme, saying that the State could mitigate the architecture of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) while implementing it.

It had earlier said the court should not allow any state government to interfere with the structure of NFSA and destroy its architecture and that FPS is an integral part of the Act.

The Centre had explained that as per the NFSA, it gave food grains to states which have to take it from the godown of the Food Corporation of India to deliver it to the doorsteps of fair price shops for distributing it to the beneficiaries.

Both the Congress and BJP, however, converged on their opposition to Perarivalan's release.

Opposing the release of Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convicts, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) on Thursday held silent protest in several parts of the state while the BJP accused the grand old party of adopting double standards in the issue.

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BJP misusing central agencies, has unleashed a 'Tughlagi raj': Mamata amid SSC row

PNS ■ JHARGRAM

Amid the row over irregularities in SSC appointments, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday slammed the BJP-led government at the Centre for unleashing a "Tughlagi raj" in the country and "misusing federal agencies to settle political scores".

Banerjee also claimed that

there were many discrepancies in government recruitment during the erstwhile Left Front regime in the state, details of which, she said, she will "reveal soon".

"The BJP is running a 'Tughlaqi' regime (referring to 14th-century Delhi sultan Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq who was known to be wilful) in the country and is trying to divide the nation. It is controlling

central agencies and using those to settle political scores," she said at a public meeting here.

"A lot of things are being said about discrepancies in recruitment. The people are well aware of those who are involved in corruption. They don't like such people neither do I. If someone has committed any wrong, the law will take its own course.

he said, mentioning a host of dynasty-run regional parties in almost every state as well as the Congress in his attack.

These parties lack any ideology and their sole aim is to grab power, Nadda alleged.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president blamed the

Congress for the growth of regional parties, accusing the main opposition party of not giving space to regional aspirations during its dominance over national.

The BJP, he said, believes in "unity among diversity" and gives space to regional aspira-

tions while keeping the centre strong.

As regional parties grow, personality cults become "overbearing and overwhelming" in these outfits, sidetracking ideology and local aspirations, Nadda said.

"What is most saddening is that the Congress has become neither national nor Indian nor democratic. It is also standing now as a party of bhai-bahan," he said, in an apparent reference to Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra playing key roles in running the show in their party.

The BJP is the only party where internal democracy is maintained, Nadda said.

Citing the presence of dynas-

Assam Police alerts Oil India, ONGC

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam Police has issued an advisory to Oil India Ltd (OIL) and ONGC regarding probable subversive activities by banned ULFA(I) militants on their installations in the state as well as their employees, officials said on Thursday.

The two PSU energy

majorities have taken the security input "seriously" and already issued a series of "dos and don'ts" for their staff after meetings with various agencies such as CISF and AISE.

A senior official at the Assam Police told PTI that a telephonic advisory was issued to the officials of Oil India on possible strikes,

including kidnapping of officials, on its installations by the ULFA(I). "During the monsoon, many places where the oil rigs are located become inaccessible. So, we alert the companies about the security aspect. This is a periodic and routine thing," he said, without elaborating further. When contacted, OIL spokesperson Tridiv Hazarika

told PTI from its field headquarters in Dulaijan that the company received "some intelligence input" from the police earlier this week.

"Immediately an internal meeting was called and chaired by Resident Chief Executive In-Charge. It was attended by senior officials of CISF, AISE OIL Security and other departments," he said.

Mizoram reported a fresh outbreak of Fall ArmyWorm (FAW), a pest that damaged maize cultivations in several parts of the state, an official said on Thursday.

Director of Agriculture Department James Lalsiamliana told PTI that a report about the outbreak was received from some parts of the state on May 13.

Following that, agriculture officers in all districts were alerted to take steps to prevent the outbreak, he said.

The outbreak has affected 89

villages in seven districts, Lalsiamliana said.

FAW was detected in more than 490 hectare of land across the state where maize is cultivated, he said. Mizoram has 11 districts and detailed information from Khawzawl and Saha districts is awaited. Negligible incidence of FAW was also reported from Serchhip and Hnahthial districts, the official said. Lunglei and Mamit districts are the worst hit, he said.

While FAW was detected in 287 hectare of land in 22 villages of Lunglei, it was found in 93.6 hectare of land in 29 villages in Mamit district, he said.

MILITANT ATTACK BY ULFA

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PNS ■ AIZAWL

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Spoiling for war

The Russia-Ukraine war has been reduced to a long-drawn spectacle, with no winners

War is a macabre spectacle. In Ukraine, it is tragically theatrical and absurd as well. The Russian invasion has dragged on for close to three months. Perhaps even Vladimir Putin does not know if he is winning or losing. Wars are accountable to the people who launch them and the victims they kill. This war somehow seems different. It has caused enough mayhem already, disfigured several cities and suburbs of Ukraine, maimed, wounded or killed hundreds, maybe thousands, of civilians and soldiers. The breathless bodies decaying in mass graves are testimony to the depths of Russian villainy. And yet, look at the irony. The Ukrainians, who have cornered the world's sympathy and aid worth billions, are starving because of a food shortage. Ukraine is among the top exporters of grain, but Russia is denying Ukrainians access to produce. Russia, facing western sanctions, is earning more revenue than in peacetime. The sanctions are deliberately weak to probably ensure an unaffected supply of Russian oil and gas to Europe. Russia earned \$9 billion in additional revenue from energy sales in April due to spiralling oil prices. More bizarre things are happening as the war continues to take its toll, making one wonder if a surreal media spectacle is being played out around the wanton destruction. A big draw on US television was the sudden appearance of the wife of President Joe Biden in Ukraine. Jill secretly landed in Ukraine's Uzhhorod, on Mother's Day. She is used to such visits, having earlier gone to Baghdad in 2010 along with her husband, the then Vice-President.



The husband, now President, designed a tour of his own, even if it was to an Illinois family farm to "discuss" the war's impact on food supply and prices at home and abroad. Ukraine claims a part of the food problem is caused by Russia "stealing" its grain, vegetables and sunflower seeds and shipping them home. NATO did its bit too, going on an expansion binge and receiving joining requests from Finland and Sweden only for Turkey to object and use the opportunity to challenge the US. The diplomatic world is in turmoil as Russia expels dozens of Italian, Spanish and French diplomats because they did the same to Russian diplomats. At the same time, diplomats of BRICS members are busy preparing for the Summit meeting with India, Brazil and South Africa, readying for a cordial meeting with China and Russia. But what takes the cake is Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy taking time off his war to open the Cannes film festival, telling an elegantly dressed audience how "hundreds of people are dying every day" in Ukraine. And Zelenskyy seems to be in a hurry not to end the war but to launch publicised war crime trials against captured Russian soldiers. One such soldier has already pleaded guilty, a mass media campaign victoriously has declared. This war may one day tire of its publicity.

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PICTALK



Tourists enjoy rafting on the Beas river, in Manali

PTI

Right course?

The Oppn is trying to pin the Govt on the mat on inflation, unemployment

Of late, there's been some sudden stirring in the Opposition ranks. On the one side are politicians who are deserting their parent party and looking for greener pastures in a foster outfit. In this category fall leaders like Col Ajay Kothiyal (Retd), who was the Aam Aadmi Party's chief ministerial candidate in the Uttarakhand Assembly elections and who has recently resigned from the party. Another one in the same category is former Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar, who quit the Congress last week and has since made his way into the BJP's fold. Yet another is Patidar leader Hardik Patel, who has also parted ways with the Congress, saying during the ongoing Gyanvapi mosque controversy that the "Congress's aversion to pro-Hindu policies" was hurting its fortunes. Interestingly, in his resignation letter, Hardik had mentioned that the senior Congress leadership was more focused on ensuring that chicken sandwiches for leaders who had come from Delhi were delivered on time. However, unlike Jakhar, Hardik has "till now" not decided whether he would join the BJP. Though these developments might make it seem like the saffron party is having an easy time in terms of the threat of desertions, it is up against another kind of attack.



A few Opposition parties, which have been for a while now lying inert, have discovered their voice and are jumping out at the ruling BJP in an attack mode. After BSP supremo Mayawati, who hit out at the saffron dispensation earlier this week, now Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has put the Union Government in his crosshairs. Taking the Government to task over the rising inflation and unemployment rate in the country, the Congress scion has said that India currently "looks a lot like Sri Lanka". He also advised the Government to stop doing things to distract people since it's unlikely to change the facts. Elaborating on his litany of complaints, Rahul also shared graphs of unemployment, rising petrol prices and incidents of communal violence, and showing similar images of India and Sri Lanka citing various sources. Hours earlier, Mayawati had raised the same points while lashing out at the BJP-led Government. She alleged that the saffron party was targeting religious places to divert people's attention from issues like poverty, unemployment and inflation. She also claimed that such attempts would only end up weakening the country. Maybe they have a point!

Flawed COVID death count data

The World Health Organisation relied on a modelling methodology to reach its estimates, but the Indian Government has termed it 'flawed'



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report on excess mortality due to COVID-19 pegging the India figure at nearly 10 times the official toll at 47.4 lakh has created a controversy of sorts. On the one hand, WHO's data suggests that over 90 per cent of deaths in India have gone unreported and its death toll of 5.23 lakh so far is an undercount. The base number of expected deaths (in a non-COVID scenario) for 2020, which the WHO has used in its report, is almost nine lakh more than the average number of deaths recorded each year in India for the last 15 years. The WHO claims that its results are based on well-established mathematical models. Several other studies have shown India's COVID-related death count at anywhere between 25 lakh to 60 lakh. On the other hand, the report has received a lot of criticism in India.

The Health Ministers of various States who attended a three-day conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW) under the chairmanship of Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya passed a resolution objecting to the WHO's estimates. They said the report was "intended to show the country in poor light", and that the modelling methodology used was "flawed". India has a robust, efficient and comprehensive system for registering deaths and all COVID-19 fatalities are recorded transparently, they said.

For its part, the track record of WHO on COVID has not been above board. Its own study concluded that crucial time was lost in fighting the virus because it delayed the announcement of an international emergency. It spent weeks persuading China to allow a team of international scientists to visit Wuhan after the outbreak. It then swung to the other extreme last year after the relatively less virulent Omicron surfaced, and it rang needless alarm bells instead of educating the world about the new variant.



However, the WHO's importance can't be underestimated. For estimating COVID deaths in India, the WHO study has relied, among various sources, on death registration data from the Civil Registration System (CRS). Several media houses had published monthly CRS for a few States last year and these numbers did not always match. Depending on which publication was selected to pick these numbers, the mathematical model would have been different.

According to experts, the WHO report, in case of India or other countries, doesn't go into the technicality of calculating the scale of the undercount. It has adopted a straightforward method of calculating excess mortality by estimating the total number of people who likely died in India in 2020 due to all causes and has subtracted from that the expected number of all-cause deaths if there was no COVID. These "excess deaths" are considered a result of COVID-19. There is general agreement that because most of the studies have been pointing to similar estimates, they must be reflective of the true toll. But the fact seems to be that the researchers and peer review-



FOR ITS PART, THE TRACK RECORD OF THE WORLD BODY ON COVID HAS NOT BEEN ABOVE BOARD. ITS OWN STUDY CONCLUDED THAT CRUCIAL TIME WAS LOST IN FIGHTING THE VIRUS BECAUSE IT DELAYED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY

ers belong to an overlapping set of people using similar methodology.

Going by deaths per thousand population, India does not figure among the top 100 countries, though the infection fatality rate of 1.2 per cent places it in seventh position, globally. Among the reasons for confusion over accurate COVID death estimates are: One, as accurate death statistics by causes is hard to come by — around 70 per cent of deaths take place at home even normally — attempts have been made to identify "excess" deaths; two, the Supreme Court's decision to consider all deaths within three months of COVID infliction as COVID deaths resulted in a surge in reporting; three, independent journalists and health statisticians who had sourced registration data and fragmented ground-level information have raised concerns over CRS' inadequacy. Consequently, the WHO placed India in the category for which COVID death figures are to be generated through modelling and not based on the officially reported numbers.

However, in reality, at this stage, any discussion on the undercount is premature

because India has not yet stopped counting its COVID deaths. The figure of 5.24 lakh deaths is under constant revision, and is likely to remain so for some time. Even the death numbers reported in 2020 and 2021 are not final. For example, more than 21,000 deaths Kerala has reported in the last four months have not happened this year. Most of them pertain to last year. Many deaths that would have happened in 2020 but are not included in the 1.49 lakh tally would have been accounted for at later stages. Those deaths have not been missed; these will reflect in the statistics. The same is true for 2021.

The need of an hour is to compile robust data from official sources which should be scientifically collated and validated through field surveys. Unfortunately, reliable data is not available with Government agencies, which is creating miscommunication and confusion leading to speculation. The Government should take appropriate steps to clear the doubts about the actual count of COVID deaths.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A HISTORIC MOMENT FOR INDIA

Sir — The Indian men's badminton team has made the nation proud by scripting history with a spectacular win against formidable opponents Indonesia in the Thomas Cup final. Such a feat of glory and achievement won million of hearts in the country and around the globe. It proves that the Indian badminton teams, both men and women, have come a long way. They have carved a niche for themselves like never before with the dint of constant hard work and dogged determination. The consistent positive approach and perseverance of players with right professional guidelines of mentors have yielded astounding results in the Thomas Cup, which had eluded us for long.

The individual women's individual successful records post-Olympics will forever remain as an inspiration to all. The experienced and veteran chief national coach, Pullela Gopichand, deserved accolades as he has helped the game of badminton reach a zenith at the international level as well as mould new talent. The men's badminton team's historic win will forever remain etched in our minds and be considered as the greatest thing that ever happened to India in the sport of badminton. It is also to be hoped that the feat will inspire youngsters to take to the game.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Jalpaiguri

RAJIV GANDHI ASSASSINATION CASE

Sir — The Supreme Court has ordered the release of AG Perarivalan, who has served over 30 years of his life term in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. A Bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao invoked its extraordinary power under Article 142 to grant relief to Perarivalan. Article 142 deals with enforcement of decrees and orders of the Supreme Court. On March 9, the apex court had granted bail to Perarivalan while taking note of his long incarceration and no history of complaints when out on parole.

The top court was hearing the plea of 47-year-old Perarivalan seeking suspension

Russia is destroying dreams



This refers to the May 18 article, 'War crime watch: Targeting schools, Russia bombs the future'. As the Ukraine-Russia war continues for nearly three months, heart-rending pictures of the suffering of Ukrainians continue to raise questions over the actions of Russian soldiers. The Russian troops have bombarded 1,000 schools so far, killing innocent children and citizens, even after writing in bold letters 'Children' on top of the school buildings. The Russian soldiers are committing cold-blooded murders. It is a serious war crime which Putin's

country is committing. Even after the imposition of sanctions and turning Ukraine into virtual rubble, there is no point of such heavy shelling on innocent Ukrainians.

The Russian troops' advancement didn't spare even kindergartens. This shows the cruelty and inhumanity of the Russian advancement. At this rate of fatality, the recovery of Ukraine is far from imaginable since schools are the foundation and future of any country. Damage to such institutions is far more hideous and puts the future in jeopardy. Russia must stop shelling civilians and educational institutions. The intention of Russia reeks of tyranny, which is not the healthy foundation of any nation. Russia is not only militarising Ukrainians, but also cutting down the feathers of their dreams. Russia should exercise its power morally. Right now, the world sees Putin as a tyrant who is committing genocide, and which is highly condemnable.

Manoj Kumar Jena | Cuttack

of his life sentence in the case till the Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency probe is completed. In its May 1999 order, the top court had upheld the death sentence of four convicts — Perarivalan, Murugan, Santham and Nalini. On February 18, 2014, the top court had commuted the death sentence of Perarivalan to life imprisonment, along with that of Santham and Murugan on the grounds of an 11-year delay in deciding their mercy pleas.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CONGRESS MUST REVIVE ITS GLORY

Sir — More than the Congress' total dominance in national politics till the late 1990s, the subsequent sharp fall in its fortunes has led the way to the rise of the multi-party system in India. Unfortunately, the party, nurtured for long under the shadow of secularism after Partition, could not fully grasp the essence of Nehruvian context, which was not the separation of religion from the State but of

staying neutral towards all. Minority appeasement grew on it more a vice than virtue and the Congress remains blind-sided to it.

Also, their consistent failure to gel then ushered in the BJP with its calculated political strategies and adapting to the changing times, which brought Narendra Modi to the centre stage. History is witness to the waves of totalitarianism that inevitably tend to invite a backlash. Progressive societies have then striven to restore equilibrium, which today is skewed even more by the pandemic and the following economic travails. This is a time for the Congress to again undertake a *padyatra*, much like the Dandi march. Its pedigree in the fight for freedom, more than its subsequent dynastic credentials, must help it reclaim relevance.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

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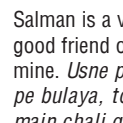


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



The next couple of months will be the most difficult ones of our lives.

Sri Lanka PM — Ranil Wickremesinghe



Salman is a very good friend of mine. *Usne party pe bulaya, toh main chali gayi.*



Actor — Kangana Ranaut



It'll take some time to get the timing and confidence back on my attacking moves.

Indian wrestler — Bajrang Punia



The ongoing farmers' protest (on Chandigarh-Mohali border) is unwarranted and undesirable.

Punjab Chief Minister — Bhagwant Mann

FIRST COLUMN

NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST POLICY OF INDIA-NEPAL

India has done well by refreshing its cultural shared narrative with Nepal



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hopped across to Nepal to mark Buddha Poonrma celebrations in Lumbini earlier this week. This one-day visit marks a renewed effort to amend ties with a long trusted partner and friend in the region. Lumbini is the birthplace of Buddha and for many years India and Nepal have not managed to cooperate and integrate it within the larger Buddhist place-of-interest framework. There had been angst for decades among the Nepali citizens regarding India taking away the cream of Buddhist tourism-circuit, while ignoring the birthplace. Meanwhile Lumbini became a place of interest for China which has been using all avenues possible to increase its strength in Nepal. It has in the past announced as part of its muscular external infrastructure policy the possibility of investing nearly \$3billion in Lumbini to make it a world peace city and construct a railway line connecting Nepal with Tibet. The status of many of these announcements are on hold at present, but one doesn't know when they can be revived. The Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, enmeshed in shared cultural contexts of the region, has been an interest area for many power blocs including the US, European Union and China for some decades now. China has been on alert to the changing influence spheres in Nepal and has painstakingly built up its share of supporting voices amongst the political and cultural elite. Last month Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi was in Nepal to ratchet up support in its favour from the different factions of the Nepalese Communist



Party. It is understood that Wang Yi (also a known India-baiter), insisted on the quarrelling factions of the Nepalese Communist Party to stay united and work towards a larger agenda (dictated by Chinese communist party). It was during the reign of Nepalese Communist Party Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli that relationship between India and Nepal tanked to its historic low. He had nearly acted as an extended arm of Beijing's geopolitical strategy. Clearly, China has been trying to isolate India's long-term partners in the region by muscling its way into their domestic security, infrastructure and economic issues.

The Prime Minister's visit to Nepal, along with some other initiatives taken by the government in the past few months, suggests India's reinvigorated enthusiasm to engage with its immediate neighbourhood. In April, just before foreign secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla retired, a high-level inter-ministerial meeting took place to focus on India's neighbourhood first policy. It saw participation from the ministries of home, finance, commerce, fisheries and defence to name a few. It deliberated on ways to improve roads and other border infrastructure with Nepal, starting railway link with Bangladesh and providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and Myanmar. Nepal was the focus during the meeting given the historical and cultural ties with the nation. India has done well by refreshing its cultural shared narrative with Nepal and announced a bunch of new measures to improve people to people connect. India's willingness to develop sister-city relations between Lumbini and Kushinagar, considered the holiest sites for Buddhists, has been well received and could be the game changer towards integration of Nepal in the tourism circuit and improving economic relations between the two countries. India has also signed 6 MoUs with Nepal during the PM's visit, 5 of which are on improving educational and cultural relations while the 6th relates to hydel power project. India and Nepal blessed with the abundant wealth from the Himalayas need to focus on reviving their deep and rich shared cultural heritage while making way for a new age bilateral relation.

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Time for CPI(M) to change its style

There are examples of comrades who have acquired assets and incur expenses disproportionate to their known sources of income



VANAM JWALA NARASIMHA RAO

The largest arm of the Communist Party in the country the CPI (Marxist) founded by stalwarts like Pucchalapalli Sundarayya, EMS Nambudiripad, Harkishan Singh Surjit, Pramod Dasgupta, AK Gopalan, BT Ranadive, M Basava Punniiah, P Ramamurti and Jyoti Basu could manage to win just three Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 elections. For the first time since its formation in 1964, the party drew a blank in West Bengal. The CPI(M) which played a pivotal role in government formation at the centre in 1989, 1996 and 2004 is no more a confidant of Government of the day. The failure of the Communists will certainly enhance the influence and authority of right-wing politics and communalism and that is not healthy for the nation.

After India's Independence, a series of events like Sino-Soviet split and Sino-Indian war led to the split in the Communist Party of India in 1964. The breakaway Communist Party of India (Marxist) emerged stronger both in terms of membership and performance in Indian elections. CPI (M) has a glorious record in conducting class and mass struggles. It is the biggest contingent of the Left. It was once heading Left-led Governments in three States, now cut down to one.

In early 1950s, the united CPI was bitterly divided over the manner in which political power in India should be captured. The militant voices advocated the 'Chinese path', or capture of power through violent means and the other group was for the 'Indian path' or capture power within the constraints of Indian Constitution. Chandra Rajeswara Rao, who advocated Chinese Path, did not sail with CPI(M) after the split. Makineni Basava Punniiah, who advocated Chinese Path along with Rajeswara Rao, became a politburo member of the CPI(M) after the split in 1964. However, Sundarayya in his letter to the party Polit Bureau and Central Committee in August 1975 offered his resignation as party General Secretary and criticized Basava Punniiah for limiting his role in the party.

Pucchalapalli Sundarayya was a founding member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and a leader of the peasant revolt in the Telangana Rebellion. In 1936, Sundarayya became a member of the Central Committee of the undivided Communist Party of India. He went underground between 1948 and 1952. He was re-elected to the Central Committee in 1952. He was also elected to the Polit Bureau, the highest forum in the Party. When the Party leadership was in favour of supporting the Government at the time of the Sino-Indian War, Sundarayya resigned his positions protesting against the policies of the dominant leadership of the Party. He was arrested and imprisoned during November 1962 at the time of India-China border war. After the split Sundarayya was elected as



IT'S TIME FOR THE CPI (M) TO HAVE AN INTROSPECTION AND LIVE UP TO THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PEOPLE. IT IS THEIR ESSENTIAL DUTY TO ALIGN WITH LIKE-MINDED FORCES OF SECULAR, DEMOCRATIC AND SOCIALIST FORCES TO COUNTER RIGHT-WING POLITICS

(The writer is Chief Public Relations Officer to Chief Minister of Telangana. The views expressed are personal.)



its General Secretary. He continuously remained Party's General Secretary till 1976. In that year, which fell during the Emergency, he resigned as General Secretary and Polit Buro member for what he called the "revisionist habits" acquired by the Party.

Sundarayya in his resignation pointed out among others, the Polit Buro's failure to concretize party's tactical line, non-seriousness on agrarian resolution in practice, ignoring building of secret part of party's organization, Polit Bureau not functioning as a collective body and so on. Had the Party taken serious note of his anguish, CPI (M) position would have been much, much better than the present humiliating status.

The 19th CPM Party Congress held in 2008 at Coimbatore called for a rectification campaign against wrong trends in the Party. The rectification was meant to unify and strengthen the Party on correct principles. How far the objective could be achieved and how far the campaign percolated down below the cadre in its true spirit is not known.

There is no doubt that alien values and ideas affected CPI(M) Party leaders and cadres. Along with the concentration of wealth, the creation of business-politician nexus at all levels is intertwining between corporate and business interests and the political system. Even the CPI(M) Central Committee once observed that the role of money power has increased to an unprecedented level in politics, particularly in elections and CPI(M) cadres are no exception to

it. With the association with bourgeois parties at various levels, particularly through electoral understandings and with the rise of the business-political nexus, there is a corresponding rise in use of money and other bourgeois practices. These have corrosive effect on CPI(M) cadres. Its relationship with secular parties was also on the declining mode.

Majority of the Party membership consists of new entrants who are still to acquire the basic outlook of the Party and they are yet to be grounded in the class and mass struggles. Such a situation leads to all sorts of feudal, bourgeois and petty bourgeois trends emerging within the Party. The party top leadership noted that, in the leading committees of the Party only around 30 per cent belong to working class, poor peasants and agricultural workers. Violation of communist norms have also arisen. Due to parliamentary outlook and electoral opportunism, mass movements, launching struggles and building the Party is being neglected by CPI(M).

Due to distinct increase in parliamentary opportunism among CPI(M) cadre, increased numbers of individual comrades resorted to revolting when refused party ticket. The use of money, liquor and other corrupt practices has grown in the party. The money used in elections has reached an unprecedented level in states where the party is in existence even for namesake.

The party feels threatened when some leaders and cadres fail to live up to the communist stan-

dards and values. The party is no exception to a lavish lifestyle, building posh houses, spending large amounts on weddings, and organizing festivities on a big scale. There are examples of comrades who have acquired assets and incur expenses disproportionate to their known sources of income. There are cases of Party leaders running NGOs with no check or accountability for the funds being used. Real estate promoters, contractors and liquor contractors seek to establish connections with CPM cadre and those in elected positions. The tendency to collect big amounts of money from individuals and affluent sections, instead of mass collection, has increased specially to meet election expenses. Accounts for these are not properly maintained and submitted to the respective committees. Often the Party committees are unable to initiate action due to various reasons such as factional trends, liberalism and reluctance to antagonize an important Party cadre.

Against this background now it's time for the CPI (M) to have an introspection and live up to the expectations of the people. It is their essential duty to align with like-minded forces of secular, democratic and socialist forces to counter right-wing politics. Maybe it is time for the party leadership to think in terms of actively supporting the alternate national agenda proposed by Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu so that the rise of the right-wing is checked and democratic forces are strengthened.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SWEDEN AND FINLAND WILL HAND IN OUR RESPECTIVE APPLICATIONS TO JOIN NATO, ABANDONING OUR NEUTRALITY POLICY.
— SWEDEN PRIME MINISTER
MAGDALENA ANDERSSON



THE MOVE POSES NO DIRECT THREAT TO US... BUT THE (NATO) EXPANSION WILL CERTAINLY PROVOKE OUR RESPONSE.
— RUSSIAN PRESIDENT
VLADIMIR PUTIN

Farewell neutrality: Sweden and Finland

Both are very much in the same position as Ukraine militarily

It's easy to imagine Vladimir Putin coming into the shop marked 'Sweden', breaking some fine china accidentally on purpose, and growling: 'Nice little shop you've got here. It would be a pity if something happened to it.' But Sweden is not a pottery shop, Putin is not a Mafia capo, and what's going on in the Baltic now is not a protection racket.

The Russian president has stampeded both Finland and Sweden, two neutral countries of long standing (almost eighty years for Finland, over two hundred for Sweden), into joining the NATO alliance, the very 'threat' that Putin claimed he was trying to drive away from Russia's borders. Finland has a 1,300-km. border with northern Russia. The Swedish and Finnish response to his invasion of Ukraine would have surprised



GWYNNE DYER

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'The Shortest History of War'. The views expressed are personal.)

Putin. He would see no connection between his invasion of Ukraine, a former Russian imperial possession that needed to be whipped back into line, and two independent countries that have not been in Russia's sphere of influence for over a century.

They, on the other hand, did see a connection. A neighbour they previously rated as dangerous but rational had suddenly revealed himself to be an aggressive and probably irrational gambler. No fully sane and competent Russian ruler would have attacked Ukraine with the inadequate forces and haphazard, overconfident strategy that Putin employed.

You might think that Putin's sheer incompetence would be reassuring to the Swedes and the Finns, but it was not. On the contrary, it frightens them, because



they are very much in the same position as Ukraine militarily: relatively small countries (Sweden has ten million people, Finland five million) with very good military forces.

I can vouch for this personally, because in the course of making a documentary film about neutrality I spent time at sea in the Baltic with Swedish fast attack boats out of Karlskrona,

and with Finnish reservists on exercises between Lappeenranta and the Russian border. They might even be able to stop the Russians dead (and nobody else is in a position to invade them). That's why the Swedes chose neutrality: they reckoned they were safer that way. If there were a general war, they were not a strategically vital place and they would be very costly to invade, so

maybe the major combatants would just leave them alone.

The Finns had neutrality thrust upon them by the Soviet Union after the Second World War. They lost a lot of territory to the Russians, but they fought hard enough that Moscow let them be neutral rather than reducing them to satellite status.

So why have both countries now decided to join NATO? They are still such tough nuts to crack that they could probably stop the Russians by themselves if Moscow was also engaged in a war with NATO. And why would the Russians attack only them alone? Stay neutral, and even in the worst case the Russians will probably pass you by.

That remained a valid assessment until 24 February 2022, and then it suddenly wasn't. Putin invaded Ukraine, probably to the

astonishment even of his own entourage, and from the start began issuing veiled warnings about resorting to nuclear weapons if he was thwarted.

The Russian attack in Ukraine bogged down almost at once, as it was bound to do unless the Ukrainian army was utterly useless. Too few Russian troops, too many lines of attack. And the hints from Moscow about resorting to nuclear weapons to compensate for a conventional defeat multiplied.

This is crazy stuff, and all military skills and hardware the Baltic countries could bring to bear in a conventional war would be irrelevant if they were faced with similar Russian nuclear threats themselves.

The only effective counter to a nuclear threat is a credible promise of nuclear retaliation.

Sweden and Finland have no nuclear weapons, and the only way they can have their security guaranteed by a nuclear deterrent is to join NATO. So that is what they are doing.

The Swedes still don't like nuclear weapons, and Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson emphasised that Sweden will not allow foreign troops or nuclear weapons to be based in the country, but the deal is done.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is demanding that the two Baltic countries expel some anti-Turkish Kurdish activists as a reward for not vetoing this NATO expansion, but this problem will be finessed. It will take months to do the legal work, but in practice the two Baltic countries are already covered by NATO's nuclear guarantee.

Reduce carbon footprint of leather processing: Jitendra

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Union Minister of State for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh on Thursday said the carbon footprint of leather processing activity should be brought to zero-level and the bio-economy of animal skin-derived products would be the new mantra.

Collagen-based innovative biomaterials for applications in human healthcare are new opportunities and they could well become co-products of leather, if the next generation leather-making technologies avoid contaminating skin-based matrix materials with lime, sulfide and many other sensitive chemicals, he said.

Speaking at the platinum jubilee celebrations of the Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), Chennai, Singh said the leather footwear needs to be designed and developed into footwear solutions with foot hygiene and wearer comfort as the unique selling proposition.

"There are as many as half a million cells in the sole of the



feet that enable the sweating process and leather enjoys an unmatched potential for transpiration," he said. Diabetics' footwear is one such product that ensures better quality of life due to the reduction in the abnormal distribution of plantar foot pressure, the Minister said. Efforts are on to prepare customised footwear for Indians by using 3D technology to scan the feet of the persons to prepare their footwear. About 73 districts in the coun-

try have been included to implement the project in the first phase, he said.

The Indian leather industry must seek net-zero carbon footprint to meet the environmental norms, he said and added that the carrying capacity requirement of the leather sector in locations like Tamil Nadu demands the implementation of zero liquid discharge as the enforced environmental norm, which is under discussion.

"The new vision for leather research and industry during the next 25 years may need to be on sustainability, net zero carbon footprint, bio-economy of animal skin-derived products and ensuring income parity for workers besides brand-building," he said. Singh said the Indian leather sector, which provided livelihood for about 50,000 people in 1947, is widely known to support the livelihood of over 45 lakh people in the country today.

Sensex tanks over 1,400 pts amid global market rout

PNS ■ MUMBAI,

Equity benchmarks fell sharply on Thursday, mirroring a sell-off in global markets, with the Sensex and Nifty tumbling over 2,600 points on across-the-board selling. Persistent foreign fund outflows also continue to dampen sentiment.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex dived 1,416.30 points or 2.61 per cent to settle at 52,792.23. During the day, it tumbled 1,539.02 points or 2.83 per cent to 52,669.51.

The broader NSE Nifty tanked 430.90 points or 2.65 per cent to end at 15,809.40.

From the Sensex firms, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Infosys, TCS, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major laggards.

ITC and Dr Reddy's emerged as the gainers.

Barring Shanghai, other Asian markets ended lower, with Seoul, Hong Kong and Tokyo settling in the red.

Equity exchanges in Europe were also trading sharply lower in the afternoon session. Stock markets in the US had ended deep in the red on Wednesday.

Sugar exports up 64 pc to 71 lakh tonnes during Oct'21-Apr'22 period

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sugar exports have risen by 64 per cent to 71 lakh tonnes during October 2021-April 2022 period on better demand for the Indian sweetener in global markets, according to industry body ISMA.

In a statement, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said that 43.19 lakh tonnes of sugar was exported during the corresponding period of the last year.

"As per port information and market reports, over 85 lakh tonnes of contracts for export of sugar have already been entered into so far. Out of this, around 71 lakh tonnes of sugar have been physically exported out of the country till end of April 2022," ISMA said in a statement.

Another 8-10 lakh tonnes of sugar is in pipeline to be physically exported in May 2022.

ISMA said it expects over 90 lakh tonnes of export in the current 2021-22 marketing



year, as against 71.91 lakh tonnes exported in the previous year.

Sugar production rose by 14 per cent to 348.83 lakh tonnes till May 15 of the current marketing year that started in October 2021, on higher sugarcane production, according to ISMA.

Sugar production stood at 304.77 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period.

The sugar marketing year runs from October to September. "The net sugar production without diversion into ethanol is higher by 58.07 lakh

tonnes as compared to last year. However, in terms of actual sugar produced after considering diversion for production of ethanol, the difference in sugar production is about 44.06 lakh tonnes," ISMA said.

Total sales in April, 2022 has been estimated as 23.91 lakh tonnes.

"Total sales in the current season up to April, 2022 are estimated at 160.05 lakh tonnes as against 152.61 lakh tonnes during the same period last year," the statement said.

MONEY MATTERS

HDFC Securities to open more digital centres to assist investors



Brokerage house HDFC Securities on Thursday said it will be opening multiple digital centres in the country to boost digital adoption for its customers. This announcement is a part of the company's commitment to empower its clients with the latest technological solutions to

ease their trading journey, while helping them to take charge of their own investments. Thousands of new investors entered the stock market in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This new generation of investors has a very different investment ethos than their predecessors. A large percentage of these traders are millennials and Gen Zers, who are not just tech-savvy, but are also digital natives, HDFC Securities said in a statement. These digitally native investors want uninterrupted journeys with an ease of investing available at their fingertips. However, periodically, they also need some handholding in understanding the processes, it added. To address this need, HDFC Securities said it is gearing up to operate 13 digital centres across India, acting as propellers for customers to get more out of their digital engagement with HSL platforms. It further said the number of such centres may grow based on the requirement. "To be able to attract and retain this new generation of investors, we need to focus on digital transformation in a way that eases the customer's entire trading lifecycle."

Govt should focus on public policy framework : Amitabh Kant



IITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on Thursday said it is the private sector's job to create wealth and the government should focus on laying down public policy framework. Addressing 'GovTech Summit 2022', Kant further said India needs a very simple, efficient,

and transparent government. "The government's job should be laying down public policy framework, it is the private sector's job to create wealth. The only other areas where the government should be are health, education and nutrition," he said. Talking about the digital economy, Kant said India is at the cusp of a very important transformation and the whole process of digitalisation has been a transformational journey. "If eastern parts of India digitises fully and makes governance very easy, then eastern part of India will actually become a very responsive government," he said, adding that these states are full of mineral resources.

Rupee slumps 10 paise to close at all-time low of 77.72/US \$

The rupee extended its losses and slumped 10 paise to close at a record low of 77.72 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a negative trend in domestic equities and unabated foreign fund outflows. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 77.72 against the greenback, and finally settled for the day at 77.72, down 10 paise over its previous close. During the trading session, the rupee touched an intra-day low of 77.76 and a high of 77.63. On Wednesday, the rupee declined by 18 paise to close at 77.62. "Rupee consolidated in a narrow range despite sharp sell-off in domestic and global equities."

Hero MotoCorp launches new edition of Splendor motorcycle

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two-wheeler market leader Hero MotoCorp on Thursday launched a new edition of its popular motorcycle Splendor, priced at Rs 72,900 (ex-showroom, Delhi).

Named the Splendor+ XTEC, the new edition comes with features such as full digital meter with Bluetooth connectivity, call and SMS alert, real-time mileage indicator, low fuel indicator, LED high intensity position lamp and exclusive graphics, the company said in a statement.

Additionally, it also comes with an integrated USB charger, side-stand engine cut-off and Hero's idle stop-start sys-



tem, i3S technology, it added. Hero MotoCorp head of strategy and global product planning Malo Le Masson said, "Hero Splendor is the most popular and the best-selling motorcycle in India, a true companion to millions

across India. It has been an icon for almost three decades and will still continue to inspire many with the launch of the Splendor+ XTEC model, adding technologically advanced features and a smart modern design."

AirAsia India halves excess baggage fees for passengers taking connecting intl flights

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AirAsia India on Thursday announced that it is offering 50 percent discount on excess baggage fees for passengers taking connecting international flights till June 30.

Flyers connecting to international flights from AirAsia India's domestic flights can now pre-book their excess baggage at the significantly

discounted price of Rs 100 per kg, compared to the standard excess baggage charges of Rs 450 per kg when booked online and Rs 500 per kg when booked at the airport, the airline's statement said.

This discounted excess baggage fees can be booked up to two hours prior to domestic flight's departure, it mentioned.

AirAsia India is majority-owned by Tata Sons Private Ltd with a shareholding of 83.67 percent and the remaining stake is with AirAsia Investment Ltd (AAIL), which is part of Malaysia's AirAsia Group.

Last month, Tatas-owned Air India had sent a proposal to Competition Commission of India (CCI) to acquire AirAsia India.



Gold gains Rs 76; silver tumbles Rs 710

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Thursday gained Rs 76 to reach Rs 50,027 per 10 grams, supported by rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had finished at Rs 49,951 per 10 grams. In contrast, silver tumbled Rs 710 to Rs 60,224 per kg from Rs 60,934 per kg in the previous trade.

The rupee extended its losses and slumped 10 paise to close at a fresh record low of 77.72 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a negative trend in domestic equities and unabated foreign fund outflows. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,812 per ounce while silver was flat at USD 21.33 per ounce. "Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading marginally down at USD 1,812 per ounce on Thursday."

After cement, Adani to foray into healthcare

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group has created a new company for its foray into healthcare services through the acquisition of large hospitals, diagnostic chains, and offline and digital pharmacies.

Adani Enterprises Ltd - the group's business incubator firm - in a regulatory filing said a wholly-owned subsidiary, Adani Health Ventures Ltd (AHVL) was incorporated on May 17, 2022.

AVHL will "carry on the business of healthcare-related activities including, inter alia, setting up, running, administering medical and diagnostic facilities, health aids, health tech-based facilities, research centers and to do all other allied and incidental activities in this regard," it said.

AHVL, it said, will commence its business operations

in due course.

The group, which runs businesses from seaports to airports and energy, forayed into the cement sector through the acquisition of Swiss cement maker Holcim's India operations for a total of USD 10.5 billion.

For its healthcare foray, the group reportedly has been in talks with big names in the sector and may invest up to USD 4 billion.

It and Piramal Healthcare are reportedly in the race to buy the public sector pharmaceutical firm, HLL Lifecare Ltd (HLL). The government had in December 2021 decided to sell a 100 per cent stake of the company to private entities. As many as seven initial bids have been received for the company. The healthcare space in India is quite fragmented with the market dominated by local and regional players.



Rising cotton, yarn prices may hit apparel exports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The unabated surge in prices of cotton and cotton yarn may affect the country's apparel exports target of USD 19-20 billion during the current fiscal, AEPC chairman Narendra Goenka said on Thursday.

He said that the prices have jumped by about 125-130 per cent during the last 18 months and one of the reasons for that would be "unchecked" exports of cotton and cotton yarn.

He suggested the government to impose a temporary ban on exports of cotton and cotton yarn like Indonesia has done for its palm oil.

"In 2021-22, the exports were USD 16 billion and we are targeting USD 19-20 billion this fiscal. But because of the price rise, it looks to be a concern on achieving the target. The industry is facing a big challenge at the



raw material front," Goenka said.

He added that if the price rise does not stop, global customers would start looking at sourcing options other than India. "About 60-70 per cent of cotton and cotton yarn are going to our com-

petitor countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. This is a worrisome situation," he said.

On export front, he said that the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) is taking several steps like organising buyer-seller meets in different parts of

he world to promote exports.

"The free trade agreement with UAE and Australia would give a significant jump in our exports. Resolving the raw material issue will help in availing full benefit of these agreement," he said.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEER, PU DIVISION, JANGACH
MT No.22 & 11/Tenders/2022. "e-Procurement Tender Notice" Dt. 19.05.2022.
No. of works (2) Name of the work, 1) City 20 Nos Independent 2BHK houses at Hiranagar (V) of Narmada (M) Jangach district estimate Cost Rs. 100.80 lakhs 2nd call & 2) City 20 Nos Independent 2BHK houses at Kanneboinagudem (V) of Narmada (M) Jangach district estimate Cost Rs. 100.80 lakhs 1st call undersigned total Estimate Cost Rs. 201.60 lakhs. Bid uploading Starting Date: 23.05.2022 & Closing Date: 19.06.2022. Further details can be had from e-Procurement market place www.tenders.telangana.gov.in Sd/- District Panchayat Raj Engineer, PU Division, Jangach. R.O. No. 209-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23

Government of Telangana, Panchayat Raj Engineering Department
Office of the Regional Officer, Regional Office PR Nalgonda
e-Proc.TN.No.PR.ES. 86/2021-22. "e-Procurement Tender Notice" Dt. 19.05.2022
No. of works (2) Name of the work, 1) Construction of Bridge on R/R Beemansapally to Palakuravaram at 1/3 to 1/4 km of Madapally (M) in Nalgonda Dist & other work in undersigned Total EOV: 552.11 Lakhs Tenders Download Start & End Dt.21.05.2022 to 30.05.2022. Every NIT/Bid will be having (7) clear working days time from the date of publishing for further details "e-Procurement Market place i.e. www.aprocentment.gov.in Sd/- Regional Officer, Regional Office, PR Nalgonda. R.O. No. 203-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23

Dating with disability: It should not be a disclaimer

Finding love is never easy, and when disability enters the picture, dating can be a real challenge.

According to a survey conducted by dating app QuackQuack among people aged 21 to 30, 43 per cent of disabled people stated that dating has always taken a back seat due to their condition. Fifty-seven per cent said they have been on dates. They deal with everything differently than the average Joe because they have a disability. However, this does not prevent them from falling in love. Life must continue!

Weakened confidence

Most people have little understanding of what it is like to live with a disability. In the survey, 41 per cent of disabled women from tier 1 and 2 cities expressed a lack of confidence as a result of their living conditions. They admitted to believing that people might not find them as attractive and appealing as those who are not disabled. It takes a long time for them to accept the fact that they have a disability. Dating with the label attached to them can be devastating to their self-esteem.

Dating apps to the

rescue

Because it is more convenient, 52 per cent of disabled people aged 25 to 30 have used dating apps to find the right match. Many of them found it difficult to go out and meet new people. Dating apps, on the other hand, allowed them to communicate with others from the comfort of their own homes.

While many people with disabilities find it difficult to disclose their condition, 51 per cent of disabled people over the age of 30 believe it is better to inform their date about their disability early on. They commented that having a relationship with an elephant in the room is unrealistic. While many people believe that addressing it beforehand will help ease the initial shock and anxiety, 49 per cent believe that their disability does not define them and would not want conversations based on it. They don't believe in revealing it before meeting someone.

Rejected

According to the survey, 38 per cent of disabled men said their date proposal was rejected because they are differently-abled. They revealed that preparing for judgement is as natural as breathing. They stated that society looks the other way when it

comes to disabled people. When it comes to dating, this ableist society sees them as the undesirable and discarded part of the equation.

Take a rain check

According to the survey results, 29 per cent of disabled people aged 25 to 30 in tier 1 cities admitted to cancelling a date because they didn't feel confident enough to meet someone new. Some revealed that the plan had been postponed indefinitely. They were concerned about being judged because of their situation. Some complained that the world was constantly harsh to them, with comments here and there, stares here and there, and everything else making them feel uneasy throughout their lives. The weight of the judgments was too much for them.

Success stories

On the plus side, the survey discovered that 39 percent of disabled men aged 21 to 30 had a great time on their date. Their conversation revolved around their common interests and shared passions. They admitted to barely discussing the disability. Thirty-seven per cent of disabled men from tier 1 and 2 cities said their dates were interested in their living conditions and that they respected that interest.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Arpan Kumar Chandel aka King, shares with us some details about his upcoming project *Khwaabeeda*, his second big loop of 2022, *Ek Tarfa*, and more.

TEJAL SINHA

Arpan Kumar Chandel, aka King, has made his name in the music industry as an artist with some amazing albums, including *Tum Saath Rehna*, *Main Bas Kehti Nahi*, *Tera Hua Na Kabhi*, *Tu aake dekhle*, and *Baazi*.

We caught up with The King over a zoom call to learn about his journey as an artist and also about his upcoming project. So just get relaxed and read ahead.

Unlike the rest, King was someone who used to listen to the songs from his childhood. He shares, “*Woh mera ek roop hai jisme mai khilta hoon. Meri saari ussi pe lagti hai*. I am a good listener, and I have listened to a lot of music since childhood. When time passed, the music just got ready in the back of my mind, and I started using it as an opportunity. Whatever mistakes that I made, I made sure to learn from them in a faster way.”

His journey to becoming a musician began in a very playful way. To this, he shares, “I used to make some music and add words to it and then add different types of music. I became a little more active on YouTube in 2019, after which I got a lot of appreciation from people around me. This was when I understood that there was something within me and why should I simply hide it?”

It was in 2019, that he got an opportunity to be a part of MTV Hustle, which turned out to be a turning point in his career.

“Getting an opportunity to be a part of MTV Hustle helped me a lot in my career. That was the first time I went to Mumbai. With the show, I knew I would get this thing called fame. Joh agar dhang se use hogayi toh bahut achi cheez bhi hai aur khudh pe zyada haavi kardi toh naksan hai. One thing I got to know was that you have to work hard. Even if I got fame, I tried to keep that with me and use it when I needed it, or else keep it just with me. For me, it is my work that matters. I have to work hard. One won't get what

‘I’ll always be the same person on screen as I am in reality’

they wish for without working hard. When you go out of the show, as an artist, how would you present it because you won't be having those expensive cameras out there? Reality is different. There are many people who show that they are stars, but in reality it is very different. For me, I'll always be the same person on screen as I am in reality. I knew I had to work on both sides. It was good because there was a good exercise pattern where you had to keep the song ready, record, and perform within the given time, which was going to be live. If you make a mistake, then it will be there. The show was not a scripted one. People made it sound as if it was scripted. People themselves sounded like it was scripted but it was not,” shares the artist, adding that he wouldn't stay in the show if it was scripted. The show had helped him mould himself even better than before.

YouTube has also played a very important role in shaping his career. What does an artist want? It took an artist like King, who used to sing in a closed room, made music and took a little courage to upload them.

He adds, “This platform gives you opportunities to perform, and I didn't have to get scared because the person making the video in the camera is also mine. The music was created by me. I have never been shot in any public place. All my songs are shot in some part of New Delhi. It was important so that I could easily open up in the environment. That is when I'll come in front of the people. By the time you get the confidence on screen, the confidence can also be seen publicly. YouTube has played a very important role. According to me, everything has a good and a bad side. You can use the platform in a good way and also see people using it in a bad way as well as people not using it properly. This is the entertainment business. People do not actually care. People will come see your video and then get bored. For me, I'll be trying from the very first day to put in the right work.”

His music also got him the offer of being a part of the *Bigg Boss 15* show. However, he refused to be a part of the show. Why? Let's listen to the King. “I have been watching Bigg Boss since my childhood. I have seen around 3 or 4 seasons, but then since I used to play football as a sportsperson, I was not much into these. After that, I was a part of the MTV Hustle and, by God's grace, I received a lot of respect from it. Views, popularity, and fame are all at different places, but with the show, I would just get fame. We see a lot of violence in the show. But with me, the

problem is that I cannot listen to anything wrong, which for sure would happen in the show. Someone would just come and poke you for no reason. I would not like to go on a show where people put down their dignity. I would not fit in there because within me, in real life, I have a lot of patience, but if things are going out publicly, I would not like to listen to or talk about them. I have worked hard to live the life I am living now, and that is what I need. You should learn to say no to put a good vision in your mind,” he shared, adding that he would surely be a part of a reality show if he felt like it.

According to him, there are two types of famous people. “One who is just famous, which we generally see, and the other is famous with respect, which is very rare. When you say FWR, a name just comes into your mind. For me, fame means being famous with respect. Success for me is that never a day should come in life when my family has to take the help of someone else, no matter what the reason is. That is when you've done something.”

On the work front, King released an album called *The Carnival* in 2020, which was inspired by his own life. “I have never had a godfather or guru who has taught me something in music. There are things that every one of us is suffering from. Be it empty pockets, relationships, demotivation, or fantasies. We wish for them but are not able to get them. So I just took these things and my voice and put them all in one place. I can't make things just to hype them up; they have to be relatable. I write for people.”

At present, King is going to come up with a first of its kind musical EP titled *Khwaabeeda* — a weekly series of stories and songs documenting the journey of a

man in search of purpose, love, or meaning. We will get to see a story along with the track.

Highlighting more about it, he shares, “*Khwaabeeda* is a cinematic project happening for the first time ever in this country. There are three songs and four different chapters with different characters. In this, we will see how these relate to each other in their timeline. It is going to be a totally different concept. We have worked on every detail. Let's just see how it goes. We have made it, and it's going everywhere. I just want things to go at this pace. Once this 11 project work gets completed, people will understand what I was trying to show. People have expectations that it is going to be a revolution in the industry.”

“My approach is also there itself to bring revolution in a very positive way and even if I'm able to get even 1 percent it's going to be a huge thing for me,” he signs off.



TALIB ZAFFER

Prathima Koppolu, now CEO and co-founder of Fitbee, was 16 when she got diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and had to take a lot of medicines. Taking a lot of medicines and a poor lifestyle meant gaining a lot of weight.

“Because of these things I had irregular menstrual cycles for 8 months. Due to this, my doctor asked me to start exercising because I cannot be taking medicines at that age. I made a significant lifestyle change. Started with basic running and exercising and later also started doing weight training. My husband who also happens to be my co-founder is a physical fitness trainer and he is the one who introduced me to fitness and all the different kinds of workouts,” she shares with us.

Given the interest of the couple in fitness, Prathima, and Avinash, a wife-and-husband duo from Hyderabad, India started Fitbee. “We started this in May 2017 but we com-

pletely went at it with full potential during the pandemic. The reason was that there were so many women who had to stay home and take on multiple responsibilities at once. PCOS, PCOD, and other hormonal issues are very less often discussed because of the stigma associated with these in our society. We have been working on it constantly to build awareness and ensure that people don't hesitate to tell us that there is an irregularity with their periods, different other issues in periods, or excessive pain—all of these things people have just been brushing under the carpet for so many years. And we want to change that,” she says.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) affects 6 to 12 percent of women of reproductive age. Sedentary lifestyles and increased dependence on technology have further aggravated the situation.

A peak in hormonal imbalances has drawn attention to several lifestyle changes, and doctors say that more than 80 percent of patients with hormonal imbalances are obese.

Although there are certain conditions in which PCOS can last a lifetime in women, in most cases, dietary and lifestyle changes have proved to be successful in curbing the effect of the syndrome. Apart from the reproductive issues that women might face due to Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, they might be at a higher risk of incurring diabetes, high blood pressure, and other health complications.

“We have brought in something that is very convenient and yet highly personalised. In India, we have women eating different kinds of things according to the area they are in, so figured one thing for all wouldn't work because lifestyles vary from one woman to another. Our dieticians speak to our clients and ask them what they eat and what their lifestyle looks like, and then they provide them with a dietary and fitness plan. We also have gynecologists on board who would speak to the clients. Every one in five women in India goes through PCOS or PCOD, and that is about the recorded ones, imagine how many would have gone unreported. The main rea-

sons are our eating habits, lifestyle, and elevated stress levels,” Prathima says.

Several experts have said that women ignore the early signs of PCOS, like the irregular menstrual cycle, due to the stigma and lack of awareness.

She adds, “The stigma seems even stranger when you think almost every woman goes through it. There are 60 Crore women just in India and we don't tend to talk about the problems almost every single woman of them potentially has.”

Ninety percent of the clients of Fitbee either come from their website or Instagram page. They have around 128k Instagram followers to date. They provide a lot of fitness videos there and try to make people aware of the symptoms and other things related to these hormonal issues.

Regarding what could be done to control the rise, Prathima believes that the first step in the journey is to de-stigmatise the conversations about periods and a woman's sexual health.

She concludes by saying, “The important

thing to do is to have conversations about. We don't talk about periods with our family members, or how we are supposed to talk about its irregularities. That is why most women who come to us, are about to get married or have trouble conceiving because till then they do not feel like talking about it due to the stigma.”

Few tips for prevention and care:

- Start with losing weight. Obese women are more likely to suffer from PCOS effects, say reports.
- It would help if you had a healthy diet and performed exercise
- Consume healthy carbs like whole grains, legumes, flax seeds, sweet potatoes, nuts, etc.
- Boost your daily fibre intake by adding broccoli, beans, spinach, berries, etc.
- Make a high-protein diet plan and follow it strictly. It would help if you tried greek yogurt and sesame seeds too.
- Try doing yoga or Pilates.
- Try to stay positive and reduce stress.

what's brewing?



● Syeda Azra



● Abdur Rahman



● Satish

NEW BEGINNINGS

Mrs. Uma Rachakonda (Winner Mrs South Asia Elite world 2022 & Dashing Diva 2022, Dallas Texas) was appointed as the brand ambassador for Helping 2 Hands foundation. On this occasion, sports kits and stationery items were distributed to orphans at Amanvedika Sneghgar, Vijaynagar Colony, which was followed by a dinner.



● Uma Rachakonda



SBI Wealth Box Cricket Premier League was held at Attapur recently. This event was organised by Yash Joshi of YDI events. The Box Cricket Premier League was conducted to promote a social cause. The winners got Rs 15,000 and the runner up received Rs. 10,000 as cash prize.



To create awareness about the available assistive technology that can help people with disabilities lead a quality and independent life and to mark the Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD), L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) organised an Assistive Technology Exhibition on Thursday. The exhibit had several assistive technology products on display that promotes digital, web, software, mobile, and infrastructural accessibility for people with vision impairment to help them integrate into the mainstream society.

LISTINGS

Lendingkart ropes in Rajkumar Rao

Lendingkart, a fintech platform, on Thursday announced Rajkumar Rao as their first brand ambassador. The Indian fintech leader has roped in Rajkumar Rao to engage with millions of MSMEs in India, aspiring to expand their ventures to achieve greater feats.

To MSMEs across the country, Lendingkart offers unsecured business loans which are completely tech-driven with lightning-fast disbursal, an unbiased approval process and easy access and availability – all the while being seated at home. Lendingkart believes that for businesses to flourish in the 21st century, they need a companion and partners from this century in helping them grow exponentially.

The campaign has been conceptualized by WPP's Contract Advertising, where the thought is pegged in the insight based on the idea that for many things in life, there are conflicting choices and can put oneself in a dilemma. But for a few things, the choice is clear, such as business loans equal only Lendingkart.

Zee Telugu, as a part of its mega 17th anniversary celebration, is all set to treat its audience to a fun-filled yet emotional evening - Zee Mahotsavam, which will air on May 22, 6 pm onwards, only on Zee Telugu.

The special episode has been curated to enthrall Zee Telugu viewers, who have showered the channel with their love and appreciation for the past 17 years and show the channel's gratitude towards them. Zee Mahotsavam will also be graced by the entire team of F3 heroes - Daggubati Venkatesh, Varun Tej, Mehreen, Sonal, Sunil, Director Anil Ravipudi along with the Zee Telugu Kutumbam.

Unlimited fun, no frustration

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



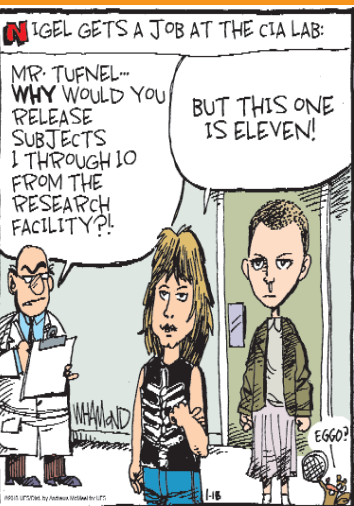
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



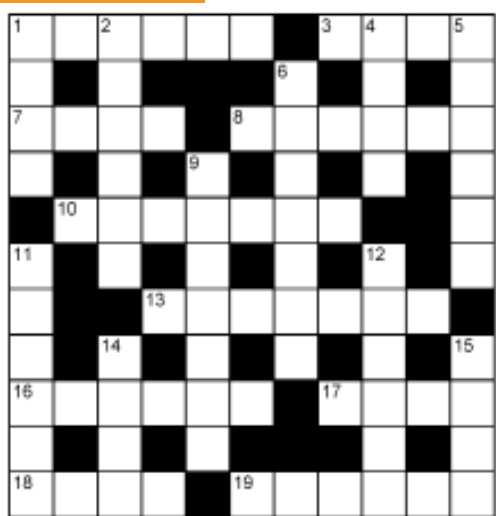
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Tired and yawning
- Opposite of fast
- Imitate
- A team game with stick and ball
- Very old
- A bird with a huge fan tail
- Queen's residence
- Let fall
- Italy's largest city
- Picked
- Exit door (3,3)
- Join together
- Complete quiet
- Assistant
- Frightens
- A fruit with a stone
- Unlock

DOWN

- Unwell
- Stretch outwards
- A large area of water surrounded by land



Dil Raju, the producer of *F3*, the sequel of *F2* shares with *The Pioneer* some more exclusive information about the movie and also speaks on the much-debated issue of the hike in ticket prices.

‘As an audience, I burst out laughing after watching *F3*’

K. RAMYA SREE

Venkatesh Daggubati, Varun Tej, Tamannaah Bhatia, and Mehreen Pirzada's blockbuster combination with director Anil Ravipudi is back to entertain you all once again with *F3*. Popular producer Dil Raju is producing the film under Sri Venkateswara Creations. This is a sequel to the 2019 super hit movie *F2*. It is scheduled to release on May 27 worldwide.

We got in touch with the producer of the film, who informed us all about *F3*. "Anil got the idea of *F3* even before the release of *F2* but decided to go ahead with the project if *F2* does well at the box office. As expected, *F2* was a big success. After Sarileru Nikeevvaru, we completed the script and brought all the actors together again for *F3*. *F3* is a non-stop entertainer, and it is a completely fun ride," he explained.

He shared how different *F3* is going to be from *F2*, saying that *F2* is all about love and marriage. "*F3* is about money and the frustration a person gets if he has no money. The story revolves around money, and Anil wrote the storyline in a brilliant manner. The thing I like about Anil is that he focuses more on the narrative than the story. He checks whether the audience will be engaged or not. As an audience member, I burst out laughing after watching *F3*. The run time of the movie is 2 hours and 28 minutes. I was continuously laughing for 90 minutes."

Speaking about the much-debated ticket hike, he shared his views, "We saw many changes in filmmaking after the pandemic. The audience got used to watching films at home. Attempts have been made to increase rates for big-budget movies like *RRR* and *KGF2* and make an adequate recovery. Good results were also achieved in this. But the point here is that most audiences are moving away from the theater. Also, the repeat audience decreased. The upper class is OK, but middle-class and lower-middle-class audiences are less likely to come to the theatre after the ticket rate hike. *F3* is a movie made for everyone. The film is a must-watch for families and audiences from all walks of life. We have reduced the ticket prices to the old prices so that all sections of the population will enjoy this film in theaters."

While theatres like Prasad Multiplex, AMB, etc. will charge Rs 250 + GST, single-screen theatres will charge Rs 150 + GST.

When asked if he intended to make *F3* on a pan-India level, he said, "For a pan-India film to be released, there is a lot of homework to be done. For *F3*, we did not have pan-India intentions from the very beginning."

Meanwhile, during the interview, he left a hint that there might be another *F3* franchise.

Lastly, on working with Venkatesh, he said, "I was a big fan of Venkatesh during *Kaliyuga Pandavas*. I booked my ticket a week before and saw it at Sudarshan Theatre. We worked together for the first time for *Seethamma Vakitlo Sirimalle Chettu*. Venkatesh is a hero coming from a production house family. He cannot tolerate anything being wasted on sets. That is a great quality that Ramanayudu taught him. On location, he is very smart."



Here to change the way you know fear

After the massive success of SS Rajamouli's work of art, *RRR* has created NTR as a pan-Indian star, and excitement for his next two massive movies are big.

NTR's upcoming film, tentatively titled *NTR 30*, has already gained traction, as a result of the actual fact that he'll be reuniting together with his *Janatha Garage* director, Koratala Siva. Koratala Siva secure that NTR thirty updates would be free on NTR's birthday, and these days the manufacturers delivered the much-anticipated NTR thirty update. The makers undraped a putting motion poster, that is simply raised the anticipation to new heights. The motion poster depicts the theme with visuals whereas NTR delivers a mass dialogue in an exceedingly roaring voice. The high beating background score by Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander will certainly lit up the screens.

The cinematography is handled by master photographer Ratnavelu ISC, veteran stage director Sabu Cyril is handling the art direction, Sreekar Prasad is onboard for editing, and Anirudh Ravichander, who is presently on a streak of chart-topping albums, can compose music for the NTR 30.

Sreshth Movies acquire Kamal Haasan's *Vikram* Telugu rights


Kamal Haasan's *Vikram* under the direction of Lokesh Kanagaraj is one of the most awaited movies now. Director Lokesh only delivered blockbusters till date and it's his dream to direct his favourite star Kamal Haasan in a movie. What's more, the film produced by Kamal Haasan and R Mahendran under Raaj Kamal Films International features popular stars Vijay Sethupathi and Fahadh Faasil in crucial roles, wherein Suriya will appear in a cameo. Tollywood's versatile star Nithiin's home banner Sreshth Movies acquired rights of this crazy film for the Telugu states for a fancy price. The film will have a grand release in Telugu, along with Tamil and other languages on June 3rd. Sreshth Movies is one of the leading production houses and distribution houses in Tollywood and they are planning a massive promotional campaign.

The film definitely is in safe hands in Telugu as it will release in a huge number of theatres with Sreshth Movies backing it.

The film's Tamil trailer was released recently to overwhelming response. Telugu audiences have been waiting eagerly for the theatrical trailer in Telugu. As of now, they have released a teaser of the movie which took the expectations to another level.

Anirudh Ravichander scored music for the movie, while cinematography is by Girish Gangadharan and editing is by Philomin Raj.

Apart from star cast, the film also features Kalidas Jayaram, Narain, Arjun Das and Shivani Narayanan in supporting roles.





Aadi Saikumar's Crazy Fellow first look launched

Producer KK Radhamo has good taste in selecting scripts and making different kinds of movies. His latest movie under Sri Sathya Sai Arts with young and talented hero Aadi Saikumar playing the lead role and debutant Phani Krishna Siriki directing it is titled *Crazy Fellow*. The film's crazy first look has been launched on Thursday and it looks quite interesting. Aadi Saikumar looks much younger here and his acts describe craziness of the character. Taking selfie, Aadi is seen posing like the comic cartoon behind him. The funky hairdo, fashionable outfit and the light beard enhance the style quotient.

Digangana Suryavanshi and Mirnaa Menon are the heroines opposite Aadi Saikumar in the film. Billed to be an out and out entertainer, RR Dhruvan renders soundtracks for the film, while Satish Mutyala is handling the cinematography. Giduturi Satya, Kolikapogu Ramesh and Rama Krishna supervise editing, art and stunts respectively.

The film's post-production is presently underway.



Shiva Karthikeya is happy with *College Don*'s response in Telugu states

The name of actor Shiva Karthikeyan is abuzz these days because of the hits he is delivering and the stories he chooses. Shiva Karthikeyan, who entertained the Tamil and Telugu audiences with his films *Remo* and *Dr. Varun*, has recently received another blockbuster success with his film *College Don*. The film, produced by Lyca Productions in association with Sivakartheayan Productions under the direction of Shibi Chakraborty, was released on May 13 and was a big hit. The film has been released in the two Telugu states by producer NV Prasad.

Speaking on the occasion, Shiva Karthikeyan said, "Special thanks to the producer NV Prasad who released the movie *College Don* in the Telugu states. I am very happy that everyone liked the film. When I first heard the script from director Shibi Chakraborty, we thought everyone would like this story. Our beliefs came true. Varun Doctor was well received by the Telugu audience. I want *College Don* to be respected as well."

"I wanted to speak in Telugu. Although I understand the language, I have yet to learn to speak Telugu. I will definitely speak in Telugu for the film I am doing with Anudeep," he added.

Adivi Sesh: I can't be Major Sandeep, but I can be his parents' second son

Major actor Adivi Sesh spoke about spending time with Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan's family during the course of making of the film, which is based on the brave martyr who foiled the plans of terrorists by holding the fort during the 26/11 attacks of Mumbai.

Speaking at the song launch of *Oh Isha* from *Major*, the actor told the media, "We persuaded uncle and amma (Major Sandeep's parents) endlessly to meet us just once. Uncle hung up on me a couple of times when I first tried to get in touch with him, then we got a girl from our team to speak with him so that he might agree to talk to us. Eventually, he agreed to meet us."

Sesh, who has also written the film, continued, "When I met him, he told me that a lot of filmmakers from Bollywood or even Malayalam cinema have tried to approach him but he declined every time because all of them gave away that impression that they were doing us a favour. This he felt was a genuine effort from our side to portray his son's story."

"During the course of filming, uncle and amma became a family. 'Main off screen Major toh nahi ban sakta par I can try to become their second son (I may not become a Major off screen but I can surely become their second son),' the actor added.

"We have dubbed the film in Malayalam as well, out of respect for the great man as he was from Kerala. There were no commercial considerations with regards to this decision," he concluded.

Major is set to release on June 3 in cinema halls in Hindi, Telugu and Malayalam.



FRANKFURT BAG EUROPA GLORY

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers 5-4 on penalties to win Europa League title
AP ■ SEVILLE

Eintracht Frankfurt beat Rangers 5-4 on penalties to win the Europa League on Wednesday after the final in Seville finished 1-1 at the end of extra time.

Aaron Ramsey missed for Rangers in the shoot-out after coming on as a substitute with only three minutes left of extra-time, before Rafael Borre struck the winning shot to complete Frankfurt's remarkable triumph.

Borre was the hero of the night, after already cancelling out Joe Aribo's opener for Rangers as Frankfurt won their first European trophy since 1980 and booked their place in next season's Champions League.

"We are all heroes. Without the fans we wouldn't have made it," said Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp.

Both clubs were looking to win a second European title in their history, Rangers after clinching the Cup Winners' Cup in 1972 and Frankfurt after they lifted the UEFA Cup 42 years ago.

But Rangers came up just short at the end of an incredible run to the final. Only ten years ago this week, Rangers fell into administration before being liquidated and relegated to Scotland's bottom tier. Frankfurt had already beaten Real



Betis, Barcelona and West Ham en route to the final and they were probably deserving winners, shading a compelling contest that always seemed to lack real technical quality.

With a capacity of just under 43,000, Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan was never going to be big enough to house all the travelling fans, with Rangers bringing over an estimated 100,000 while around 60,000 followed Frankfurt to Spain.

"WE ARE ALL HEROES. WITHOUT THE FANS WE WOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT," SAID FRANKFURT GOALKEEPER KEVIN TRAPP.

The vast majority enjoyed the day in good spirits but security concerns were not unfounded, with skirmishes breaking out in the city centre during the day

on Wednesday while five German fans were arrested late on Tuesday night after police said 200 Frankfurt fans launched an attack on Rangers supporters.

It was a scruffy opening 15 minutes as Joe Aribo almost got away after a neat pirouette by Scott Wright before John Lundstram scraped his studs down the dipping head of Sebastian Rode, leaving the Frankfurt captain with a bloody shirt that had to be changed and a head that had to be strapped.

The German team gradually took control, faster to the ball and slicker in their passing, suffocating Rangers, who were reduced to speculative punts for-

ward to try to escape the press.

PRESSURE MOUNTING

Frankfurt's Ansgar Knauff went close, the penalty box opening up for the winger at the end of a winding run forward, only for Allan McGregor to tip wide.

Rangers had their moments and improved before the break as Lundstram's header had to be pushed over and Ryan Jack drove too high.

Frankfurt seemed rejuvenated for the start of the second half but it was Rangers who took the lead just before the hour, capitalising on two dreadful Frankfurt errors, each compounding the other.

First, Djibril Sow misjudged a header in midfield, sending it back behind his own defence for the lively Aribo to latch onto, and then as Frankfurt's Tutu chased, he slipped, gifting a free run to the Rangers striker, who calmly slotted home.

Lindstrom might have equalised almost immediately but his finish was blocked and then Daichi Kamada looped onto the roof of the net when Rangers had failed to clear.

The pressure was mounting and in the 69th minute, it told, as Filip Kostic was given too much space out wide to cross and then in the middle, Connor Goldson and Calvin Bassey both hesitated to clear. Borre nipped between them and prodded in.

There were precious few opportunities in the final minutes but the contest became stretched in extra-time, with Borre almost capitalising on a Bassey stumble.

Rangers were the better team in the second period and their golden chance came in the 118th minute as the sprinting Ryan Kent arrived at the back post but somehow hit keeper Trapp from five yards.

To penalties, and the Rangers fans roared when the coin toss put the shoot-out at their end. James Tavernier, Steven Davis and Scott Arfield all scored for Rangers as did Frankfurt's Christopher Lenz, Ajdin Hrustic and Kamada, whose shot squeezed in off the post.

But Ramsey fired too straight, hitting Trapp's left foot and after Kostic and Kemar Roofe converted, it was up to Borre to finish it. He made no mistake.

‘Blood, sweat and tears’ pays off for Tammy

AP ■ ROME

Tammy Abraham said to himself when he joined AS Roma from Chelsea last summer he would give his "blood, sweat and tears for this club". In keeping his promise he could be rewarded with European silverware next week.

The 24-year-old England international striker's nine goals have been pivotal in Roma's passage to next Wednesday's inaugural European Conference League final against Dutch side Feyenoord in Tirana.

With 25 in all competitions he has more than justified Roma coach Jose Mourinho's decision to convince the board to shell out 40 million euros — not including bonuses — for him.

It brought to an end a disappointing final few months for the homegrown Chelsea player who fell out of favour with manager Thomas Tuchel when the German replaced Frank Lampard.

Abraham failed to make either the FA Cup final or Champions League final matchday squads under Tuchel. The German even selected two substitute goalkeepers for the European showpiece.

However, Abraham has put those setbacks firmly behind him and from the first day in Italy his attitude was one of positivity.

"For me since day one, as soon as I touched down in Rome, it made me feel like one of their own straight away," he said.

"It was the love, the passion, the way they worked with me.

"I told myself, 'I'll give my blood, sweat, tears for this club,' and it's been an amazing year."



Abraham's impressive performances and the way he has adapted to a different lifestyle in a country where English players have not always flourished could well see him add to the 10 international caps he has accrued.

However, for the moment he is focused on bringing home Roma's first silverware since the Italian Cup in 2008 and first European trophy since the old Fairs Cup — the predecessor to the UEFA/Europa League — back in 1961.

The Europa Conference may be in its first year and some may sniff at it being the poor man of the three European club competitions but Abraham said that mattered little to him.

"For me it's not a little cup," he said.

"I believe every final is a final — no matter what competition it is.

"You get to the final, you want to win the final."

"It's a trophy and these are the moments you look back on in your career, saying you want to win trophies.

"For me this is an opportunity and for my teammates and for Roma fans this is an opportunity to lift a European title."

Mourinho, like Abraham, took the Roma posting to try and revive a career which had rather lost its lustre with a sour end to his spell at Manchester United and a disappointing time at Tottenham Hotspur.

"For me, he's been one of the best coaches in the world for a long time," said Abraham.

"He knows his stuff about football.

"When I spoke to him on the phone he had ambitions, the club had ambitions and a mindset where they want to get to.

"For him to take a club to a final, which they haven't been in many years, you can only see how well he's doing and how well we're doing."

Sindhu enters Thailand Open quarters, Srikanth out

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu remains the lone surviving Indian shuttler in the competition after she sailed into the women's singles quarterfinals of the Thailand Open here on Thursday.

The world No 7 Sindhu, seeded sixth, took just 37 minutes to get the better of Sim Yu Jin, who had played a pivotal role in Korea's Uber Cup win, 21-16, 21-13 in a second round match.

Sindhu, who had defeated world number 62, USA's Lauren Lam in the opening round, will next face second seed Akane Yamaguchi of Japan.

Yamaguchi beat Korea's Kim Ga Eun 21-23, 21-15, 21-16 in another second round match.

However, Kidambi Srikanth, one of the main architects of India's historic Thomas Cup triumph, exited from the BWF World Tour Super 500 event after handing a walkover to his opponent in the men's



singles second round.

Srikanth, seeded eighth, gave a walkover to his Irish rival Nhat Nguyen. The reason for his withdrawal is not yet known.

The world No 11 Indian had earlier produced a gritty show to get the better of Brice Leverdez of France 18-21, 21-10, 21-16 in his opening round match. In the women's singles, it was curtains for Malvika Bansod, who lost 21-16, 14-21, 14-21 to Line Christopherson of Denmark in the second round.

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto also bowed out in the second round, losing 19-21, 20-22 against sixth seeded Malaysia combination of Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie.

Later, Ashwini Bhat K and Shikha Gautam too crashed out in the women's doubles second round, losing 19-21, 6-21 against fifth seeds Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara.



Top-ranked Axelsen out

AP ■ BANGKOK

Badminton world number one Viktor Axelsen pulled out of the Thailand Open on Thursday, citing an injury he sustained at last week's Thomas and Uber Cup finals.

It means the top two seeds are out after the early exit of the out-of-former world champion Kento Momota, who slumped out in the first round on Wednesday.

"After slipping on the courts last week during Thomas Cup, I suffered a minor injury which I have been dealing with the last 7-8 days," the 28-year-old Dane said on Twitter.

"After my match yesterday it has gotten worse and therefore I have decided to pull out from the Thailand Open and get 100 percent again."



Ghosal loses in World C'ship last 16

PTI ■ CAIRO

India's leading squash player Saurav Ghosal could not match the quality of world number four Mostafa Asal and lost his pre-quarterfinal in straight games at the World Championships here.

The world number 17 from India lost 2-11, 7-11, 3-11 to the fast rising Egyptian, who is 14

years younger than him, on Wednesday night.

Ghosal came into the World Championship after the high of Tournament of Champions in New York where he reached the semifinals for the first time.

In the women's draw, Joshna Chinappa had to withdraw from her round of 16 match against Egypt's Rowan Elaraby due to a bout of food poisoning.

Stubblety-Cook smashes 200m breaststroke WR

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Olympic 200m breaststroke champion Zac Stubblety-Cook smashed the world record on Thursday at the Australian championships, touching in 2mins 05.95secs to send a warning for the world championships and Commonwealth Games.

The 23-year-old was under the record pace for the entire race to shatter the 2:06.12 mark set by Russia's Anton Chupkov in 2019. "I was just trying to swim fast — I didn't think that fast. I can't really believe it to be honest, but I'm very happy with that," he said poolside in



Adelaide. "Last year I put everything in and got that result (Olympic Gold), but this year there's a lot less pressure and obviously that pressure is nice not to have, and I'm just stoked."

Stubblety-Cook swam a blistering race to stun the field and win Gold in Tokyo last year in a new Olympic record time of 2min 06.38sec ahead of Dutch ace Arno Kamminga.

Bale named in Wales squad for WC play-off final

AP ■ CARDIFF

Gareth Bale has been named in the Wales squad for their World Cup play-off final against Scotland or Ukraine despite recent back trouble as they seek to qualify for the tournament for the first time since 1958.

The captain has made just two substitute appearances for Real Madrid since scoring both goals in Wales's 2-1 World Cup play-off victory over Austria on March 24.

The 32-year-old has been absent from Real's past five matchday squads with a back problem but has returned to training in the Spanish capital and is on course to be available for the club's Champions League



final clash against Liverpool on May 28.

Aaron Ramsey is included for the play-off in Cardiff on June 5 after suffering penalty shoot-out misery for Rangers in their Europa League final loss to Eintracht Frankfurt on Wednesday.

Leicester goalkeeper Danny Ward is available again after knee surgery and replaces Salford's Tom King.

Bournemouth forward Kieffer Moore also returns to the squad after missing the Austria win with a broken foot.

Wales also face four Nations League ties in June, with home and away games against the Netherlands as well as a trip to Poland and a visit from Belgium.

Aubameyang retires from international football

AP ■ MADRID

Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has retired from international football, his country's federation has confirmed.

Barcelona's Aubameyang, who is Gabon's all-time top scorer with 30 goals in 72 appearances, sent a letter to the federation on Tuesday, confirming his decision.

"After 13 years of pride in representing my country, I announce I am ending my

international career," wrote the 32-year-old.

"I would like to thank the Gabonese people and all those who have supported me in the good and bad times alike.

"I will keep a lot of good memories like the day I made my debut... or the day I came back from Nigeria with the African Ballon d'Or.

"I would also like to thank all my coaches, staff and the players that I have come across during this career."

No major surprises in Indian team for FIH Pro League away leg

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic medal-winning defender Amit Rohidas will continue to lead the Indian men's hockey team in the crucial last leg of the 2021-22 edition of the FIH Pro League in Belgium and the Netherlands, next month.

India are leading the FIH Pro League standings with 27 points from 12 games, three ahead of Argentina and the Tokyo Olympic Bronze medalist will look to utilise the four matches to extend their domination and also get much needed match practice ahead of the Birmingham CWG.

India will play world No 2

Belgium on June 11 and 12 in Antwerp before facing the Netherlands on June 18 and 19 in Rotterdam.

As has been the case in the last two legs at home, star drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh will be Rohidas's deputy.

There are no big surprises in the squad as the Indian team management continues to test various combination from the core group in the Pro League ties ahead of a busy calendar year, which includes the CWG and the World Cup next year.

Goalkeeper Kishan Bahadur Pathak has made way for Suraj Karkera as he has sustained an injury at the last minute.

In the backline, there is only one change from the last Pro League squad with Gurinder Singh, who will lead India in the inaugural FIH Hockey 5s in Lausanne on June 5 and 6, missing out.

Sunder Kumar, Harmanpreet, Varun Kumar, Rohidas, Jugraj Singh and Jarnanpreet Singh make up for the rest of the defensive line-up.

Barring the exclusion of Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh and transfer of Akashdeep Singh from the forwardline, the midfield remains the same featuring experienced Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Shamsher Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, and Nilakanta Sharma.