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VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY, MAY 9, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



RAKUL PREET WAS
ONCE CALLED A
'STICK'

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AFTER LEAK, RELIGIOUS RIFT OVER LEGAL ABORTION ON DISPLAY

America's faithful are bracing some with cautionary joy and others with looming dread for the Supreme Court to potentially overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision and end the nationwide right to legal abortion. A reversal of the 49-year-old ruling has never felt more possible since a draft opinion suggesting justices may do so was leaked this week. While religious believers at the heart of the decades-old fight over abortion are shocked at the breach of high court protocol, they are still as deeply divided and their beliefs on the contentious issue as entrenched as ever.

BORDER PATROL: HUMAN SMUGGLER KNEW PASSENGERS COULDN'T SWIM

Federal authorities say a boat operator knew his passengers could not swim when he abandoned six Indian nationals on a sinking boat during a failed smuggling attempt across the frigid St. Lawrence River into northern New York. Brian Lazore, a U.S. citizen, was ordered held without bail last week on smuggling charges. His defense attorney, Gabrielle DiBella, told The Associated Press that Lazore is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. Authorities spotted the boat April 28 after it left a hotel in Cornwall, Ontario, and crossed the St. Lawrence River. Court filings saying Lazore proceeded to exit the sinking vessel and walked to shore with the vessel taking on water some 800 feet from the Canadian border.

DICTATOR'S SON, RIGHTS LAWYER VIE FOR PHILIPPINE PRESIDENCY

More than three decades after a largely peaceful People Power revolt overthrew Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, his son and namesake has emerged as the top contender in Monday's presidential election based on most voter-preference surveys. If Ferdinand Marcos Jr. triumphs, it will be a stunning reversal of the 1986 pro-democracy uprising that booted his father out of office into global infamy. Many Filipinos remember the human rights atrocities and plunder that unfolded under his dictatorship and would likely push back against any perceived threat to democracy or Marcos Jr.'s attempt to recover his family's assets that were seized by the government as ill-gotten wealth.

LIC IPO SUBSCRIBED 1.79 TIMES ON DAY 5; OFFER CLOSES TODAY

Life Insurance Corporation's IPO, the country's biggest public offer, was subscribed 1.79 times on the penultimate day of the offer on Sunday. Against 16,20,78,067 shares on offer, 29,08,27,860 bids were received, according to the data posted on stock exchanges at 7 pm. However, the Qualified Institutional Buyer (QIB) category is yet to be fully subscribed. Bids were received for 0.67 per cent of the shares earmarked for the segment, showing a poor response. With regard to non-institutional investors (NIIs), a total of 3,67,73,040 bids were received for 2,96,48,427 shares reserved for the category, reflecting a subscription of 1.24 times.

TS liquor, K'taka fuel dent AP exchequer!

○ Tipplers prefer popular brands in border states; filling stations in Anantapur district do the vanishing act due to poor business

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM
■ VIJAYAWADA

While Andhra Pradesh is still struggling to wriggle out of the bifurcation blues and severe financial crisis, the flight of revenue to the neighbouring states on account of the State government's liquor policy and the Centre's fuel policy has become a cause for concern. Liquor and fuel sales are the main source of revenue for any state. While alcohol is a state subject, revenue from fuel sales is based on policies announced by the Centre. On account of these policies, the revenue that is supposed to accrue to the AP exchequer is flowing into the neighbouring states of Telangana and Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Odisha.

Due to the non-availability of branded liquor in AP, tipplers in Krishna, Guntur, Srikakulam, Anantapur, Nellore and Chittoor districts are going to bordering states of Telangana, Odisha, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to get their favourite liquor.

In a strange development, liquor lovers in the districts are learnt to be camping in the border states on



weekends to have their favourite brands.

The liquor available in Telangana is not only qualitative but its price is 30 per cent lower than that sold in AP. With this, liquor lovers from Guntur and Krishna districts are going to Telangana crossing the checkpoints at Vijayapuri South near Nagarjunasagar on Guntur district border and Garikapada on

Krishna district border. Recently, only a few popular brands of liquor were available in AP at 30 per cent higher rates compared to the state of Telangana. With this, liquor lovers' natural choice is Telangana.

"In Telangana, a full bottle of 100 Pipers whiskey sells for Rs 1,910 while it is priced at Rs 2,500 in AP. A quarter bottle of cheap liquor is



sold at Rs 90 in TS, while in AP it costs Rs 120. In Telangana, a Mansion House quarter bottle sells for Rs 120, while in AP it goes for Rs 200. Moreover, Telangana liquor is made of molasses, so the quality and the taste are good. But in Nandyal, Nandigama and Singarayakonda distilleries, the spirit is used in liquor manufacture. Therefore, it does not taste like the

liquor available in Telangana. People are fearing health problems on account of this. This precisely the reason why liquor lovers are going to bordering states for liquor," explained the owner of a bar and restaurant in Guntur.

What appeals to liquor lovers the most in Telangana is the range of choices they have. They say their choice is restricted in AP.

Bar owners in AP say that Mansion House brandy and whiskey brands of Blender's Pride, 100 Pipers and Black Dog are popular in AP.

Liquor lovers complain that strange brands of liquor whose names they had never heard of are being sold at government liquor outlets in AP. They say this is one of the reasons they prefer popular brands of liquor available in border states.

It is alleged that some ruling party MPs and leaders from Guntur, Nellore and Chittoor districts are making huge money by smuggling liquor from Goa.

Coming to the revenue from fuel, private buses, cars and two-wheelers from the Anantapur district are going for refilling on Karnataka border. While the AP government did not reduce VAT on petrol and diesel, it also imposed an additional one-way road cess during the Corona pandemic. It is generating about Rs 650 crore in revenue. However, the BJP government in the neighbouring state of Karnataka has reduced VAT on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 and Rs 11 per litre respectively. All the BJP-ruled states

in the country have reduced VAT on petrol. As a result, people along the Andhra border seem to be moving toward Karnataka to meet their energy needs. Vehicles of private travel agencies, that operate services between AP and Karnataka, are making the most of the cut in the prices of fuel in Karnataka.

The impact of this situation has not only fallen on the AP exchequer but also on the filling stations in the Anantapur district. The problem is so severe that the petrol bunk owners are leaving the business and selling the lands.

Anantapur district on the Karnataka border also fell on petrol banks. The result seems to be the plight of owners selling petrol banks, including space. This trend can be witnessed in Anantapur, Bagepally, Pavagada, Madhugiri, Bellary, Gauribidanur, Vidapanakallu, Kodikonda, Eguravapalli and Chilamarthur which are close to Karnataka.

Almost all petrol bunks in D. Hirehal, Guntakal and Bommanhal mandals have been closed down due to poor business. The farmers who bought the filling station sites are using them for haystacks.

Ticket prices hiked for 'Sarkaru Vaari Paata'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has permitted the hike in ticket prices of the much-awaited movie 'Sarkaru Vaari Paata' which is all set to hit the theatres on May 12.

The AP government on Sunday released directions to fix special ticket prices for the film for the first 10 days after its release. As it is a high budget film, the tickets will be increased by an additional Rs 45 for the first 10 days. The makers of 'Sarkaru Vaari Paata' have thanked the AP government.

Meanwhile, ticket bookings for the Mahesh Babu-Keerthy Suresh film have opened up in a phased manner across the Telugu States and the world. The film has already received a UVA certification by the CBFC on Friday and the same was shared by the SVP makers on Twitter.

Will keep anti-YSRCP vote intact, reiterates Pawan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena supremo Pawan Kalyan has reiterated that a split in the anti-YSRCP vote will push Andhra Pradesh into darkness and he would do whatever it takes to protect the State.

Pawan Kalyan, who visited Kurnool district on Sunday, said if the anti-YSRCP splits in the forthcoming polls, Andhra Pradesh will be pushed into darkness.

"An alternative government is required for the future of Andhra Pradesh State to free people from the chaotic rule of YSRCP and I wish to take Jana Sena forward to ensure it. The anti-government vote should not get split to save Andhra Pradesh from the misrule of YSRCP. If it is so, the state will incur a loss. Hence, I echoed the same at the Party Formation Day meeting," he said.

If the anti-YSRCP vote gets divided, the YSRCP will come to power again. As a result, Andhra Pradesh will be pushed into the darkness, Pawan Kalyan said.

He added that he had never felt that alliances shall be not for an

individual's gain as they should be useful for people. Pawan Kalyan spoke to media persons near Sivivella village during the Jana Sena Kaulu Rythu Bharosa Yatra in the united Kurnool district on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, Pawan Kalyan said, "BJP and Jana Sena had contested jointly in the 2014 elections. In my view, the alliance must be useful for people. If I failed to solve the people's issues, I will come out of the alliance. I will not have an alliance for personal gains. The reason for my statement on the Party's Formation Day on March 14 that I won't allow to split the anti-YSRCP vote, is due to poor YSRCP rule. The government is allowing none to live. They are affecting the financial sources of all people. When the tenant farmers are killing themselves, the government is not supporting them. There are no jobs for youth and no job calendar. No industry is coming up.

The roads across the state are in bad shape and there are power breakdowns. After observing all these issues, I thought there shall be a strong alternative and all shall join hands for the future of Andhra Pradesh," he said.

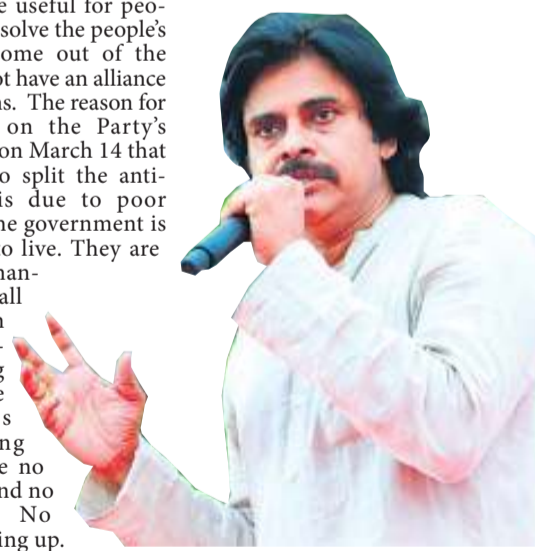
There should be a strong power as an alternative in the state, he said.

"During the emergency in the bad country, all parties came forward united and fought against the Congress party.

To protect the state from the misrule of YSRCP, the vote shall not get split. It will be known in the future how far all with broad perspectives come together by understanding the situation. Polls are far away and a debate should take place on the issue. At present, we are in alliance with BJP. We take the future of Andhra Pradesh and situations here to the notice of the Centre. I hope they will understand," he added.

As part of the 'Rythu Bharosa Yatra' in the Kurnool district, he said Jana Sena was providing assistance of Rs 1 lakh to 130 families of tenant farmers on Sunday.

He added that due to the misrule of YSRCP, Jana Sena was forced to take up 'Rythu Bharosa Yatra'. They had promised in the manifesto that they will give Rs 7 lakh compensation if the tenant farmer committed suicide.



AP Cabinet meet on May 13

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Cabinet will meet on May 13. It will be the first meeting of the new Cabinet that was reshuffled last month. After a long period of speculation Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had retained 11 ministers from the earlier Cabinet and given a chance to 13 new faces in the Cabinet 2.0. The new Cabinet will meet for the first time on May 13.

Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma's office had forwarded a note to all the Special Chief Secretaries / Principal Secretaries / Secretaries to send their proposals to include in the cabinet meeting agenda that will be held on May 13.

Tenders finalised for 5 fishing harbours

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vishwa Samudra Engineering Limited has won the tenders for the construction of five fishing harbours to be undertaken by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the second phase.

Under the second phase, the AP Maritime Board has invited tenders for the construction of fishing harbours at Budagatlalapaem (Srikakulam), Pudimadaka (Visakhapatnam), Biyyaputhippa (West Godavari), Port (Prakasam) and Kothapatnam (Prakasam) at a cost of Rs. 1,496.85 crore.

Maritime board officials said on Sunday they had won the tenders as they quoted the lowest price. The state government is already developing the fishing harbours at



Juvvaladinne in Nellore district, Nizampatnam in Guntur district, Machilipatnam in Krishna district and Uppada in East Godavari at a

cost of Rs 1,204 crore under the first phase.

Officials said that the work was being expedited by MRKR



Asani moving towards Vizag coast, may take U-turn to Bangladesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Cyclone Asani that had formed in the Bay of Bengal may spare north Andhra Pradesh as the moving cyclone may take a U-Turn and head towards Bangladesh before the landfall.

However, Vizag and adjoining areas in north Andhra Pradesh will witness light to moderate rainfall in the next few days.

"Cyclone Asani in the Bay of Bengal is and heading straight towards Vizag coast on May 10.

It will cause light and moderate rainfall in the entire North

Andhra Pradesh coast on May 10 and 11 and then move towards Bangladesh by taking a 'U-Turn'. The official forecast also shows Cyclone Asani will definitely move close to Vizag city.

Requesting all our Vizagites and North AP people to keep mobile phones charged and do all the important work. Impact of this Cyclone will be less, but we need to be prepared," noted weather blogger B Sai Praneeth, who is popular as 'Andhra Pradesh Weatherman'.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Ashtami: May 08 05:00 PM to May 09 06:32 PM

Navami: May 09 06:32 PM to May 10 07:24 PM

Nakshatram:

Ashlesha: May 08 02:58 PM to May 09 05:08 PM

Magha: May 09 05:08 PM to May 10 06:40 PM

Rahukalam: 7:25 AM to 9:01 AM

Yamagandam: 10:37 AM to 12:12 PM

Varjyam: 05:54 AM to 07:36 AM

Gulika: 1:48 PM to 3:23 PM

Amritakalam: 03:23 PM to 05:08 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny

Temp: 40°C

Humidity: 55%

Sunrise: 5:43 AM

Sunset: 6:31 PM

Updated: MAY 8, 2022 5:00 PM

Vishwa Samudra Engineering Limited has won the tenders for the fishing harbours to be undertaken by the Govt of AP in the second phase

Dharma Reddy made TTD EO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government on Sunday issued orders appointing Additional Executive Officer of TTD, AV Dharma Reddy as EO with FAC relieving KS Jawahar Reddy from the post.

Monday Mirchi

Differing perception of security in three CP offices

Threat perception as well as security detail and check cannot be different at the same level in the Police Department. Yet, for reasons best known to the Commissioners of Police, the rules are different in three CP offices. Cameras, cell phones and bags are not allowed in the Hyderabad Commissioner of Police's office. Hyderabad CP does not let phones inside his chamber. Cyberabad CP does not even care what others are carrying and they are allowed inside. Rachakonda is a hybrid model. Some are allowed to take phones and bags, while many are not. The restrictions per se are in place because people may record or live-telecass something and cops might be caught off guard. A little birdie told us that current Hyderabad CP is more lenient, compared to the previous one. Earlier, people had to deposit phones at the reception in the ground floor and head to fifth floor. Now, they are allowed to carry phones till the fifth floor and the restriction applies only to this CP office.

An eye on the Governor's guests

There is a thin line between official functions and quasi-official or social gatherings. Even this line has got blurred in Telangana State because of the ongoing tug-of-war between the Chief Minister and the Governor. Amid the growing rancour between the Raj Bhavan and the Pragati Bhavan, officials are caught in a cleft stick. Some of the officials, who had got the invite for the Ugadi celebrations from the Governor's office, went and attended the event assuming no harm. It was only after they reached the venue that they realised that some of the invited officials had deliberately skipped the function. A little birdie told us that the list of attendees at the Governor's function is being scrutinized by the higher-ups.

There have been occasions when bureaucrats just went on leave to avoid being caught in the conflict between the Chief Minister and the Governor. Those who attended the

Ugadi celebrations may draw solace from the thought that freedom is being you without anybody's permission.

Nurturing a special park

Denizens of Machilipatnam's Panchayat Raj Colony are somewhat fortunate because the local park being developed will be nurtured with special attention. Named after Yerra Nageswar Rao, father of senior IAS officer Yerra Sri Lakshmi, who has donated Rs 5 lakh for the park in memory of her father, the park will stand out for its features. Sri Lakshmi, as the MA & UD secretary, is expected to give priority and personal attention to the park. Sri Lakshmi did her schooling in Machilipatnam. On Saturday, the foundation stone was laid for the park. Given municipal money totaling Rs 29 lakhs and Rs 22 lakh funds under Amrita scheme, the park is being developed at a total cost of Rs 1.50 crore. Apart from soothing greenery, the park will have high mast lights, walking track and exercise equipment, among other high-lights.

Babus in the dock

All is not well with the babudom in both Telugu states, with key IAS officers running into trouble with the judiciary. The Andhra Pradesh High Court has convicted three IAS officers in a contempt of court case. The High Court sentenced IAS officers Poonam Malakondaiah, H Arun Kumar and G Veerapandian to four weeks' jail and imposed fine of Rs 2,000 on them. The Telangana High Court has directed IAS officer Smitha Sabharwal to refund Rs 15 lakh to the state government. The High Court viewed the sanction of Rs 15 lakh to the IAS officer by the state government to pursue a defamation case as "not for a public purpose".

Chief Justice of India Justice NV Ramana expressed his displeasure at the Telangana government's Chief Secretary at a joint conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of High Courts for not implementing decisions taken by the state government and the Telangana High Court.

—Yours truly

Community service essential for college students

Giving back and assisting others is the basis of community service. It teaches us how significant it is to help the needy, the ones who are less fortunate than us. The importance of community service lies in the fact that it connects us to the community by improving it and making it a better place for all of us to live in.

When students are involved in community service, it nurtures them to develop real-world skills that will mould them to achieve professional and personal success. Of late, many colleges and universities have promoted community service as experiential learning by making it a part of the teaching and learning process.

Community service gives students an opportunity to explore academic interests through application of classroom theory. Community service projects play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theory and the application of knowledge in practice.

Research affirms that students who give back to the community perform better in their academics and become responsible citizens of the nation.

When students get involved

Community service gives students an opportunity to explore academic interests through application of classroom theory. Community service projects play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theory and the application of knowledge in practice.

in community service, they not only help others but also expand their worldview, develop empathy and leadership skills, and realize how their actions can have a positive impact on others. Students can also return to the classroom, realizing how they could apply their learning to the real world, which reinvigorates their passion for learning. Learning through community service develops higher accountability to fulfil social responsibilities and offers students a chance to grow into a civically affiliated environment. Such learning allows students to practice giving back to humanity at large, while it also supports classroom learning through experiential activities-community service being one of them.

Community service is something that students do apart from their regular academic studies and hence it

plays a vital role in overall personality development. Research studies have acknowledged the role of community service as a means of promoting social, moral, and ethical values among students.

Community service learning plays an important role in developing social skills through building ethical qualities and makes them responsible citizens. When students learn to help the community, they may continue this habit of serving others voluntarily in their later life also.

Volunteer experience can also help students to get admission into premier institutions for further studies and make them eligible for scholarships. By getting involved in community service at a young age, students can develop a richer perspective of the world they live in.



SRINIVAS VISSAPRAGADA

Community service is an essential part of preparing students to take responsibility as open-minded, principled citizens in a global community. While performing community service, students will have the opportunity to get first-hand experience. Community service is one of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen existing relationships. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and an opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, project planning, task management, and organization. By helping others in need through community service, a person can

grow both personally and intellectually, resulting in a better world for those who are helping and for those who are being helped.

Through community service, students gain real-world experience and practice important habits like leadership, problem-solving, and time-management. It offers students the opportunity to apply their classroom learning to practical scenarios that have real implications.

Introverts sometimes have problems meeting people and making friends.

Community service might help shy and quiet individuals with this activity as it offers lots of opportunities to meet and work with various people. Thus, it is a valuable experience for improving and practicing how to socialize in diverse surroundings.

Students are advised to do community service in order to get work-related knowledge and skills. At the same time, it increases their chances of getting a job since their community involvement creates good references for potential employers.

(The author is a lecturer, Department of Commerce, P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts and Science, Vijayawada)

AP Governor praises Red Cross for its services during pandemic

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor and president of the Indian Red Cross Society, Andhra Pradesh State branch, Biswabhusan Harichandan, offered floral tribute to the portrait of Jean Henry Dunant, founder of International Red Cross, at the Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan on the occasion of World Red Cross Day on Sunday. The birth anniversary of Jean Henry Dunant is observed as World Red Cross Day.

The Governor said Dunant had built a great humanitarian organisation that had its roots in kindness and World Red Cross Day-2022 was aptly celebrated with the theme 'Be Human Kind'.



The Governor praised the services rendered by the members of the Andhra Pradesh State branch of Red Cross Society during the difficult times of Covid-19. He said that he was immensely pleased

to note that the Red Cross volunteers came out in large numbers and helped the people across the State in the hour of need by creating awareness about the dangers posed by the virus and distributing

masks, home isolation medical kits, oxygen concentrators and, especially, serving food to lakhs of destitute.

He said the Red Cross volunteers, through their all-out efforts, helped thousands of migrant workers reach their destinations safely during the lockdown period and congratulated the team for collecting whole blood and plasma even during tough times, thus saving precious lives.

Harichandan inaugurated a Thalassemia Day Care Centre, established by the Red Cross in the remote tribal region of Paderu, Alluri Sitaramajuru district, and an old age home in Kakinada, in virtual mode from Raj Bhavan. He complimented the Red

Cross volunteers, especially the Youth Red Cross and Junior Red Cross volunteers, for taking up various activities like tree plantation, blood donation etc. and said that their initiative had given shape to a big humanitarian and cultural movement all over the State. Governor Harichandan presented awards to the volunteers for their exemplary work. He congratulated Dr A Sridhar Reddy, chairman, AK Parida, general secretary and CEO, and the entire team of IRCIS Andhra Pradesh State branch for their dedication, hard work and committed services. RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to Governor, and other officers were also present.

TDP demands Rs 1 cr for Repalle rape victim

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP politburo member Varla Ramaiah on Sunday urged Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to provide Rs 1 crore compensation to the Repalle railway station gang-rape victim immediately.

In a letter to the CM here, Ramaiah said that the victim woman's mental condition revealed how much agony she underwent. She was shivering with fear and terror on seeing the menfolk now.

The TDP leader said that under such conditions, the Government was keeping her under near detention at the Ongole RIMS Hospital where she was getting treatment. It was very difficult even to meet her. There was no clarity on how and when the Government had given the announced compensation to her.

Ramaiah asserted that going by the manner in which the police ignored the gang rape in



where, Ramaiah slammed the Jagan regime for adopting a discriminatory approach in giving compensation. The government had given Rs. 1 crore compensation to each victim in the LG Polymers gas leak tragedy in Visakhapatnam. It was a private company but the YCP rulers showed special interest.

The TDP leader said just Rs. 4.12 lakh compensation was given to the SC Madiga woman, who was the victim of the Repalle gang-rape. This showed the inhuman approach of the Jagan regime. It revealed the lack of any concern on the part of the present rulers towards the plight of SC women. Ramaiah demanded that the Government should give Rs. 1 crore compensation, five acres of land, a government job, and own house. In addition to this, she should be provided with social and financial security. The Government should ensure that no such incident would take place again in the State.

the railway station exposed the total deterioration of law and order in the State. It was irresponsible on the part of the Home Minister to say such incidents were taking place because of a lack of proper upbringing on the part of mothers. The TDP leader accused the Government of claiming huge credit in the name of a non-existent Disha law. It had not taken any constructive steps for ensuring women's safety in the State. As a result, atrocities were taking place on a regular basis every-

Ticket prices...

Continued from Page 1

'Sarkaru Vaari Paata' is one of the much-awaited Telugu films of 2022 especially after 'Pushpa' and 'KGF 2'. Helmed by director Parasuram, the family entertainer is jointly produced by Naveen Yeneni, Y Ravi Shankar, Ram Achanta, and Gopichand Achanta under Mythri Movie Makers, GMB Entertainment, and 14 Reels Plus banners.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹264
Without Skin	₹284
Broiler at Farm	₹149

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	315
HYDERABAD	320
VISAKHAPATNAM	375
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.15

Dozens feared dead

Russian bomb destroys Ukraine school

PNS ■ ZAPORIZHZHIA

Dozens of Ukrainians were feared dead on Sunday after a Russian bomb destroyed a school sheltering about 90 people in the basement as Moscow's invading forces kept up their barrage of cities, towns and villages in eastern and southern Ukraine.

The governor of Luhansk province, one of two areas that make up the eastern industrial heartland known as the Donbas, said the school in the village of Bilohorivka caught fire after Saturday's bombing. Emergency crews found two bodies and rescued 30 people, he said.

Most likely, all 60 people who remain under the rubble are now dead, Gov. Serhiy Haidai wrote on the Telegram messaging app. Russian shelling also killed two boys, ages 11 and 14, in the nearby town of Pryvillya, he said.

Since failing to capture Ukraine's capital, Russia has

focused its offensive in the Donbas, where Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting since 2014 and occupy some territory.

The largest European conflict since World War II has developed into a punishing war of attrition due to the Ukrainian military's unexpectedly effective defense.

To demonstrate success, the Russian military worked to complete its conquest of the besieged port city of Mariupol, which has been under relentless assault since the start of the war, in time for Victory Day celebrations on Monday. A sprawling seaside steel mill is the only part of the city not under Russian control.

All the remaining women, children and older civilians who had been sheltering with Ukrainian fighters in the Azovstal plant were evacuated Saturday. The troops still inside have refused to surrender; hundreds are believed to be wounded.

Asani moving towards Vizag coast, may take...

Continued from Page 1

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said that the cyclonic storm Asani over Southeast Bay of Bengal moved northwards on Sunday with a speed of 13 kmph and lay centered over the same region near latitude 11.6°N and longitude 88.7°E, about 530 km west-northwest of Car Nicobar (Nicobar Islands), 440 km west of Port Blair (Andaman Islands), 900 km southeast of Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and 960 km south-southeast of Puri (Odisha).

"It is very likely to move northwards and intensify further into a Severe Cyclonic Storm over east-central Bay of Bengal during next six hours. It is very likely to continue to move northwards till May 10 evening and reach West central and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal off North Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coasts. Thereafter, it is very likely to re-curve north-north eastwards and move towards Northwest Bay of Bengal off the Odisha coast," said IMD.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the east-central and southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining the Andaman Sea on Sunday. They were also advised not to venture into central parts of the Bay of Bengal on Monday and Tuesday and over Northwest Bay of Bengal from May 10 to 12.

Will keep anti-YSRCP vote intact, reiterates...

Continued from Page 1

"When the Jana Sena active members are providing financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh when the people are facing problems, how much does the government have to do as it is collecting cess and taxes from the people, Pawan Kalyan questioned.

About 90 per cent of land is cultivated by tenant farmers in the state. Such tenant farmers are in trouble now. They are taking extreme steps of committing suicide because of accumulating debts as they are not getting even if they sold their crops," he said.

Jet Airways closer to relaunch, gets clearance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union home ministry has granted security clearance to Jet Airways that is planning to relaunch commercial flight operations in the next few months, according to an official document.

The Jalan-Kalrock Consortium is currently the promoter of Jet Airways. The airline in its old avatar was owned by Naresh Goyal and had operated its last flight on April 17, 2019.

Last Thursday, the airline conducted its test flight to and from the Hyderabad airport in a step towards obtaining the air operator certificate.

A letter sent by the civil avi-



ation ministry to the airline on May 6 informed it about the grant of the security clearance by the Union home ministry.

The letter, which has been accessed by PTI, said it is directed to refer to your appli-

cation to convey security clearance for change in shareholding pattern of the company/firm, for scheduled operator permit, on the basis of security clearance received from the Ministry of Home

Affairs". "The security clearance can, however, be withdrawn any time in the light of any adverse inputs, if so received from the Ministry of Home Affairs in future," it added.

The letter was also sent to aviation safety regulator DGCA and aviation security regulator BCAS.

Last Thursday's test flight was conducted to prove to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that the aircraft and its components are operating normally.

After the test flight, the airline has to conduct proving flights after which the DGCA will grant the air operator certificate.

Proving flights are similar to commercial flight with DGCA officials and airline officials as passengers and cabin crew members on board.

Financial distress forced Jet Airways, which flew for more than two decades, to suspend operations on April 17, 2019 and a consortium of lenders, led by State Bank of India (SBI), filed an insolvency petition in June 2019 to recover outstanding dues worth over Rs 8,000 crore.

In October 2020, the airline's Committee of Creditors (CoC) approved the resolution plan submitted by the consortium of the UK's Kallrock Capital and the UAE-based entrepreneur Murari Lal Jain.

Service in Srivari abode was a divine opportunity: Jawahar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Outgoing TTD Executive Officer KS Jawahar Reddy has said that service in the abode of Srivaru was a divine opportunity. Reddy handed over the full additional charge as EO to TTD Additional EO AV Dharma Reddy at Tirumala temple on Sunday.

Earlier, Dr KS Jawahar Reddy had darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy along with his family. He was rendered Vedaseervachanam at Ranganayakula Mandapam. Dharma Reddy has presented Theertha Prasadam, a coffee table book, and a Srivari photo to Jawahar Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr KS Jawahar Reddy expressed his immense plea-



sure for having rendered service as Executive Officer of TTD for 19 months in the divine abode. He thanked Srivaru for giving him the great opportunity. "With His blessings, I was able to complete many projects," he said. AV Dharma Reddy took

charge as EO (FAC). Later, he took the oath as ex officio Board Member, TTD inside sanctum sanctorum on Sunday in Timbale Srivari temple. He was administered the oath by TTD JEO (H & E) Sada Bhargavi. After the darshan of Srivaru, the EO FAC AV

Dharma Reddy was rendered Vedaseervachanam at Ranganayakula Mandapam. He was later presented with Theertha Prasadam and photo of Srivaru by JEO (H & E).

Speaking on the occasion, he said he had rendered service in the capacity of Additional EO of TTD for two- and-a-half years and now Srivaru has blessed him as EO FAC. He said he will continue to take forward the pilgrim welfare and other developmental activities.

CVSO Narasimha Kishore, CE Nageswara Rao, SE 2 Jagadeeshwar Reddy, ACVSO Siva Kumar Reddy, DyEOs Ramesh Babu, Kasturi Bai, Harindranath, Bhaskar, Venkataiah and other officers were also present.

'All are suffering under YSRCP govt'

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TTD National president and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday undertook a whirlwind visit to Visakhapatnam and Bheemili on the second day of his 'Badude Badudu' campaign against increased taxes and current charges.

Naidu held a roadside protest at a tea stall when the police stopped his convoy on the national highway and prevented him from going to the Rushikonda Haritha hill resort.

Later, the TDP chief proceeded to Thallavalasa in the Bheemili assembly constituency where he addressed the 'Badude' protest programme. He enquired from the local people about their problems under the present regime in the past three years.

Speaking on the occasion, Naidu asserted that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy had totally destroyed the State with his greedy policies. All sections of



people were suffering. There was no doubt that the 'one chance' given to Jagan Reddy in 2019 would be his 'last chance' to rule AP. Nobody was ready to forgive and spare this atrocious rule any longer.

Chandrababu Naidu said the Chief Minister was making false claims on Amma Vodi though its benefits were not reaching the students. The TDP regime ensured good education to the youth so that they could go to

other countries and work as software professionals to earn lakhs and crores. But Jagan Reddy was giving just 'volunteer' jobs with a salary of just Rs. 5,000.

Naidu asserted that under the TDP rule, children of constables and coolies also became engineers. A weaker section student in the Nuzvid segment used the TDP Vidusi Vidya and went to Canada. There he got a job and started earning Rs. 60 Lakh. He

was sending Rs. 4 Lakh monthly to his parents. The YCP rule has destroyed all such opportunities for the AP youth nowadays.

The TDP chief said their party would surely come to power and strongly punish the ruling YSRCP gangs that grabbed lands and caused destruction in Vizag, Rushikonda was pounded and pulverized into powder. Who gave the power to this Chief Minister to do this kind of environmental damage? The TDP would not spare anybody once it would form the Government.

Naidu termed it as 'unpardonable' that massive copying and irregularities were taking place in the 10th class exams. One mother was expressing shock that her son was not studying since he would be able to write exams by copying. Would anybody give jobs to such students who would not acquire knowledge but pass exams by the wrong means?

'Ayushman Bharat', 'Aarogyasri' a boon to people: Governor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan inaugurated Dr Varun Cardiology Sciences, an advanced cardiology care hospital set up by Dr Gunturu Varun, consultant cardiothoracic surgeon, at a programme held here on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) were the main cause of death globally and with increased globalisation and urbanisation, the risk of cardiovascular disease had increased due to increased exposure to risk factors. The Governor said heart attack was the most prevailing condition and awareness could save many lives as prevention was better than cure.

He said advanced medical care had been brought within the reach of common man



with the 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme of the Central government and the Aarogyasri scheme implemented by the State government. Those schemes proved to be a boon to the BPL families in terms of access to advanced medical care and financial protection. The Aarogyasri scheme aimed to provide good quality health-care services and assist poor families. Serious diseases affecting heart, kidney and

brain, cancer, burns and accident cases were covered under the scheme, including 2,434 types of surgeries or therapies in 30 categories.

Jogi Ramesh, Minister for Housing, R Bhaga Lakshmi, Vijayawada Mayor, Dr Muralidharan, Dr Chandrasekhar, RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to the Governor, and other dignitaries attended the programme.

Murder mystery in Vja unravelled within 48 hours

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Suryarao pet police cracked the murder mystery of an elderly woman Jupudi Hymavathi who was beaten to death in Punnamithota. The accused Natta Suresh Kumar Dev (Bablu) (27) of Varalakshmi Nagar under Machavaram police station limits was nabbed by the police within 48 hours.

The accused Suresh Kumar Dev allegedly murdered an elderly woman Jupudi Hymavathi a resident of Punnamithota on May 5 night. The accused was a former tenant and lived in the house owned by the victim Hymavathi in Punnamithota. Suresh Kumar vacated the house and shifted to Varalakshmi Nagar under Machavaram police station some years ago and maintained good relations with the old woman.



He earlier worked as a manager in a private company. He recently visited the residence of Hymavathi as she used to take the help of Suresh for personal work. However, the accused Suresh hatched a plan and decided to eliminate the old woman to rob the gold articles and cash from her home. As planned, he went to the residence of the old woman and brutally murdered her.

Later, he escaped with gold

articles worth of Rs 20,000. The police during the course of the investigation noticed their involvement of Suresh and arrested him. The police recovered the gold articles weighing 168 grams and cash of Rs12,000 from the accused.

Commissioner of police Kanti Rana Tata congratulated the Suryarao Pet and CCS police for the arrest of the accused within 48 hours of the incident.

Amara Raja Batteries wins two awards

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amara Raja Batteries Ltd's (ARBL) energy business president Vijayanand Samudrala was named CXO of the Year and its head of R&D - Li-Ion Dr Venkateshwarlu Manne was named the Researcher of the Year in the Energy Storage category at the fifth edition of the India Energy Storage Alliance's (IESA) prestigious Industry Excellence Awards.

The IESA, India's leading alliance on energy storage and e-mobility, was founded in 2012 to create awareness about energy storage and eMobility technologies within the government as well as the industry in India. This year the Chief Guest was Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways.

ARBL Executive Director Vikramadithya Gournineni said, "The whole Amara Raja



family takes great pride in this achievement, so aptly recognised on such a prestigious stage. Enabling and empowering our teams is an intrinsic part of the Amara Raja DNA and this recognition is a testament to our relentless effort to always find a better way to do things."

Amara Raja, the leading name in automotive and industrial batteries is also leading the foray into R&D on Li-ion technology that is safe, affordable, and efficient - specifically suited to Indian.

Summer camp for students at Vizag zoo

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam, will organise a Summer Camp to encourage children and educate them on the importance of Wildlife. Vizag Zoo is organising this Summer Camp from May 23 to June 2 for students aged between 05-18 years in two batches, according to Dr. Nandani Salaria, Curator of Vizag Zoo. She said that the first batch for 5-11 years will be conducted from May 23 to May 27 & the 2nd batch for 12-18 years will be from May 29th to June 2nd.

Stone laid for Arya Vysya Bhavan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister and Vijayawada West constituency MLA Velampalli Srinivas Rao laid the foundation stone for Arya Vysya Bhavan under the aegis of the Andhra Pradesh Arya Vysya Maha Sabha in Gandhinagar on Sunday.

On the occasion, Velampalli said that Arya Vysya Bhavan was in Hyderabad in the undivided Andhra Pradesh. "After bifurcation, we do not have one and we have laid the foundation stone for it in Vijayawada," he said. Velampalli said that rooms and a hall were being constructed in the building to accommodate Arya Vysyas



coming from various other places and also to organise functions.

"It is very unfortunate that the Opposition Telugu Desam party leaders are politicising

the construction of the building. Stop false propaganda against the Arya Vysya Bhavan," said Vellampalli, and added that there were no Arya Vysyas in the TDP.

He said the State government would extend all possible support for the construction of the building.

MLA Maddala Giri, Maha Sabha president Mukkalla Dwarkanath, Repala Srinivasa Rao, Gubba Chandra Sekhar, Penugonda Subba Rayudu, Gunnasetti, Kanakaraju, Naga Babu, Potula Suresh, Konakalla Vidyadhara Rao, Kondapalli Bujji and other Arya Vysya leaders and activists were present.

Kapus facing 'injustice' in YSRCP govt: TDP

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP Repalle MLA Anagani Satya Prasad on Sunday said the Kapu community faced more injustice than justice under the Jagan Mohan Reddy Government in the past three years.

Satya Prasad said while Chandrababu Naidu provided food and livelihoods for the Kapus, Jagan Reddy was snatching away food from their mouths. Ever since he became the Chief Minister, Jagan Reddy adopted a vindictive approach towards the Kapus in the State.

In a statement here, the TDP MLA recalled how the previous regime spent Rs. 1,500 Cr every year for Vidusi Vidya to the Kapu students. But Jagan Reddy had reduced scholarships from Rs. 10 Lakh to Rs. 5 Lakh to the Kapu students going to foreign countries.

Satya Prasad said that the Chandrababu regime created facilities for the Kapu students to stay at the AP Bhavan in Delhi to prepare for competitive examinations. Jagan Reddy had even removed this programme. Without any principles, the AP Bhavan was converted into the YSRCP Bhavan.

The TDP MLA deplored that the ruling party had turned the Kapu corporation into an ornamental entity without any

funds or powers. The Kapu youth were totally deprived of all job opportunities. Why was the Chief Minister giving sole focus to his Tadepalli palace but not to the Kapu corporation? He did not hold a review on this even once?

Satya Prasad said that the Kapu Mahila Netham programme was implemented for just 2.5 Lakh out of the total 40 Lakh eligible beneficiaries. The Government was betraying them and showing all the pensions and Amma Vodi funds under general programmes in the Kapu welfare benefits.

The TDP MLA termed it as deplorable that the Central welfare programmes were also being merged with the State programmes. The old programmes were being renamed after YSR and they were being implemented as if they were new programmes.

Satya Prasad asserted that Chandrababu Naidu provided 5 per cent reservations to Kapus without causing any injustice to the BCs. Jagan Reddy had cancelled even these reservations and thereby revealed his hatred towards the Kapu community.

The TDP MLA recalled how the Jagan regime had cancelled the Kapu Bhavans. No priority was given to Kapus in the nominated posts.

Krishna boxers excel in inter-district tourney

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Erstwhile Krishna district boxers won several medals at the inter-district sub-juniors boxing championship which was held at Visakhapatnam Swarna Bharathi stadium recently. According to Krishna District Boxing Association (KDBA) secretary U Umamaheswara Rao, the district boxers bagged two bronze and one silver medal.

He further said in a statement on Sunday that in the girls' segment B Sai Niharika secured second place and won silver medal in 32-35 kg category and Ch Jahnavi excelled in the 50-52 kg category and won the second silver medal. In the Boys category, V Vaali Kethan Raju secured third place and won the bronze medal, said the secretary.

Krishna District chief coach A Ajeez and DSA CEO U Srinivasa Rao praised the winners and coach T Sri Latha.



Legal awareness campaign conducted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

K Suresh Babu, Magistrate of Metropolitan Magistrate Court VII for Railways, Vijayawada, along with RPF staff of Vijayawada Division, conducted a legal awareness campaign to educate the passengers at the railway station here.

K Suresh and the staff educated the passengers about RP (UP) Act, Railway Act and Excise Acts offences/violations in trains and railway

station premises, and also explained various penal provisions. RPF staff also told the passengers to call the number 139 for any assistance from the Railways.

T. Murali, public prosecutor, Vijayawada, Ravi Prakash, Station Superintendent, Vijayawada, Tirupathi Rao, BBA State co-ordinator, Subba Rao, magisterial squad, TSCS Reddy PC/BZA and P Srinivas IRP/BZA with RPF and GRP staff took part in the legal awareness campaign.

10K get jobs in YSRCP's 3rd 'Mega Job Mela'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The two-day Mega Job Mela of the ruling YSRCP concluded at Acharya Nagarjuna University on Sunday, offering more than 10,480 jobs to the unemployed youth in Andhra Pradesh.

On the occasion, YSRCP national general secretary and MP V Vijay Sai Reddy said that a total of 40,263 jobs were offered in the three job fairs held at Tirupati, Visakhapatnam and Guntur in the past few days.

Vijaya Sai Reddy said that as many as 10,480 people got employment in two days. He also said that the fourth job fair would be conducted at

Yogi Vemana University in Kadapa in the first week of June. He said that YSRCP was conducting job melas on the instructions of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to provide suitable opportunities to those who had completed their education and were looking for jobs. He explained that more than 30,000 jobs were created in the two job fairs organised in Tirupati and Visakhapatnam. He further explained that the job fair organised at Acharya Nagarjuna University on Saturday and Sunday was attended by youth with all qualifications like Tent, Inter,

ITI, diploma, degree, PG, BE, B.Tech, engineering and post-graduation.

The MP said that on the second day of the job fair on Sunday, out of 14,500 people, 3,700 were selected. He said that there were no caste, religion or creed biases in the Job Melas and the programme was aimed at creating employment opportunities for the youth. He stated that the job fairs held so far had been attended by representatives of the HR departments of nearly 540 companies.

Vijay Sai Reddy appealed to unemployed youth to make good use of the fourth Mega Job Mela as well.

International meet discusses impact of climate change

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

VIT-AP University, in collaboration with SICOM (Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) and GCRS (Geo Climate Risk Solutions Private Limited) as knowledge partners, organised an International Conference on Climate Crisis and Future Implications. The two-day virtual conference ended on Sunday.

The programme was inaugurated by Sanjai Jalla, mission head, SICOM, in the presence of

Dr SV Kota Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, VIT-AP University.

On the occasion, Jalla emphasised on the importance of responsible production and consumption of resources in mitigating the impacts of climate change. The conference was an attempt to continue the dialogue on adaptation policies, economic and legal strategies and provisions of infrastructure to society keeping the climate at the centre of it. Invited guests and speakers included international and national academicians, policy-



makers, and professionals from all disciplines aiming to collaborate and extend the discourse of

climate crisis and its implications. Dr Kota Reddy stressed the need for taking active measures

against climate change. He stated that VIT-AP aimed to reduce the in-house energy consump-

tion by installing solar PV panels on the campus. Invited international speakers from the United States and the Middle East provided a multi-faceted global perspective on the issues of climate change.

Dr. Rajneesh Misra, Dean, VIT-AP School of Social Sciences & Humanities, Dr. Sumita Shyamundar Assoc. Dean, VISH, Dr. Tania Chakravarty, Dr. Arenkala Kichu, Dr. Priyanka Ghosh, Kanaka Himabindu Pottumuthu, faculty and scholars were also present.

Tension as Dalits 'denied' temple entry in Kurnool village

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Tension prevailed at Kunkunuru village in Devanakonda mandals where some Dalits were allegedly prevented from entering a temple on Sunday. The Dalits of the village wanted to offer prayers at the newly constructed temple.

Sri Rama temple was constructed in the village and the consecration ceremony was held on Sunday. On the occasion, some Dalits of the village went to the temple to worship the god. When they went to the temple, some people belonging to the other castes prevented them from entering the temple. The Dalits questioned the



other caste people why they were prevented from going to the temple. A heated argu-

ment took place between the Dalits and other castes people at the temple leading to a

tense situation. The police registered cases against 9 people for obstructing the Dalits from entering the temple.

Meanwhile, TDP politburo member Varla Ramaiah condemned the incident. He tweeted that even after 75 years of independence; the Dalits were prevented from entering a temple in the state. He expressed anger over the incident. He alleged that the YSRCP-led government is not implementing the Justice K Punnaiah Commission's recommendations. He demanded the government take action against those who were responsible for the incident to ensure that such incidents recur in the state again.

3K Run for kids marks Mother's Day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Scores of children from various places brought their mothers to the nature camp organised by the Amaravati Walkers And Runners Association (AWARA) on Sunday on the occasion of Mothers' Day.

Besides, a 3K-run for kids was organised in Amaravati. Children ran and walked with their mothers and fathers in tow, enthusiastically led by Octopus HC Venkatesh. After the run was completed, each child was encouraged to speak up about their mothers and the children waxed eloquently in their mother tongue.

Sakuntala Devi and Vaishnavi coordinated the run, fun, swim and learning events for children in the lap of nature, well attended by their parents and grandparents.

1,300 litres of black jaggery wash destroyed, one arrested

PNS ■ BAPATLA

The police conducted condone and search operations in the Chirala two town and Vedullapalli police stations limits as part of curbing distilling of illicit liquor and destroyed 1300 litres of jaggery wash meant for brewing illicit liquor on Sunday.

SP Vakul Jindal said that the police team under the supervision of DSP A Srinivasa Rao, led by CIs K Srinivasa Reddy and A Srinivasa Rao, conducted a cordon and search operation at Vedullapalli village and destroyed 600 litres of fermented jaggery wash which was concealed under the soil. They also seized 4 litres of illicit liquor. The police arrested one person in this connection.

A police team under the supervision of Chirala DSP P



Srikanth, led by CIs M Vijay Kumar and M Mallikharjun Rao and SEB personnel conducted a joint cordon and search operation at Adinarayanapuram village. They found 700 litres of jaggery wash concealed under the soil to distill illicit liquor. They destroyed the jaggery wash and seized 2 litres of illicit liquor and registered cases against some persons.

The SP said that stringent action against those who resort to brewing and selling illicit liquor. He said that consumption of illicit liquor is hazardous to health as it leads to many health-related problems.

He directed the police officials to invoke the PD Act against those who involve in brewing and selling of illicit liquor repeatedly.

Satya Sai Trust disowns US outfit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Sathya Sai Central Trust and Sri Satya Sai Global Council headquartered in Prashanthi Nilayam of Satya Sai district has distanced themselves from an organisation being run out of the USA in the name of Sri Satya Sai Baba.

"Attention is drawn to all the people in every country all over the world that the Sri Satya Sai International Organisation headquartered in California, United States of America has no affiliation or recognition from the Divine Abode of Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba, Prashanthi Nilayam, or from Sri Satya Sai Global Council or Sri Satya Sai Organisations in the United States of America and other parts of the world, affiliated to Sri Satya Sai Global Council," said K Chakravarthi, Chairman of the Sri Satya Sai

Global Council.

He added that it has come to the notice of the Sri Satya Sai Global Council that certain organisations continue to use the holy name of Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba to conduct activities in his name while holding out that they are part of the institutions coming under the umbrella of Sri Satya Sai Central Trust and organisations under Sri Satya Sai Global Council at Prashanthi Nilayam.

"One such organisation which is headquartered in California, United States of America, and operating under the name of Sri Satya Sai International Organisation has been attempting to promote campuses in the California, United States of America and other parts of the world, claiming them to be centres of divinity in the name of Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba," he added.

Bojjala cremated, Naidu carries coffin

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A tearful adieu was given to Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader, five-time MLA and former minister Bojjala Gopalakrishna Reddy as the last rites were for his mortal remains were performed at Urundur village. TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu carried the coffin.

The cremation was conducted in Bojjala's agricultural field in the village with state honours.

Hundreds of TDP activists, followers and relatives of Gopalakrishna Reddy attended the funeral. Chandrababu Naidu carried the coffin for some distance. Naidu consoled the wife of Gopalakrishna Reddy.



5 die as lorry collides with auto trolley

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Five persons were killed and 20 others suffered injuries when a speeding lorry collided head-on with an auto trolley at Hsanapally village under Yellareddy mandal in the district on Sunday evening.

The accident happened when the auto-rickshaw attached with a trolley was on its way to Chillargi village

from Yellareddy. There were a total 26 persons in the trolley when the accident happened. The lorry was proceeding towards Nizamsagar from Pitlam. The impact of the accident was so high that three persons died on the spot. Three more persons died while being ferried to a hospital at Banswada. The bodies and the belongings of the passengers were strewn all over the place. The condition

of three of the injured persons was state to be critical.

The deceased were identified as Lachava, Devvaiah, Kamsava, Keshiah and auto driver Sailu. They all belonged to Chillargi village. The accident happened when they were returning after attending a function. The auto driver's body got trapped in the vehicle. The police had to use cutters to extricate the body from the wreckage.



Auto trolley with injured persons at Hasanapally village in Kamareddy district on Sunday

SRKR Engg College students develop 'Techthon' app

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

SRKR Engineering College Artificial Intelligence branch students have developed a new web portal and presented an Android application to society.

The college Information Technology (IT) Department has organised a two-day national level technical symposium 'Techfleet 2k 22' on May 7 and 8. The symposium included a 12-hour competition for students to develop a new web portal or Android application called 'Techthon'.

In this competition, 2nd-year Artificial Intelligence and Data Science branch students G Narasimha Reddy, A Venkata Lakshmi Sravani, N Renu Satwika, and N Rajesh have won the first prize for the development of "Education Web portal." On the occasion, the students said that this web portal would greatly help them in choosing the best college for those who join after intermediate in the Engineering stream having placements, faculty, infrastructure, and other facilities.

The 2nd Prize winners of 2nd-year Computer Science students T Seshadri, YJSSD Balaji, Neelash, Tarak, and Swetha have developed an



android application that can detect holes on the road if any vehicle is moving towards them on the road. The Application also can identify speed breakers and any hurdles on the road and gives information to vehicle drivers and alert them to take precautions.

The special appreciation prize goes to Vasavi Engineering College, Tadepalligudem students under the leadership of T Rajesh. They developed a "Solar based boat" even if sunrise is not available automatically, can use diesel engines to move the boat without any hurdles.

During the prizes distribution ceremony held at the college, principal Dr.M.Jagapathi Raju appreciated the students for developing societal need applications within a short time using the latest technology using algorithms, best web portals, and android applications.

The college Secretary and correspondent Sagi Vithal Ranga Raju, IT Department Head Dr.Bh. V. K. Ramakrishnam Raju, Dr. I. Hemalatha, Dr. K. Kishore Raju and other members of the faculty congratulated the students for taking the challenge within 12 hrs and winning the prizes.

Shamshabad cops arrest two, seize 800 kg ganja

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

SOT Shamshabad of Cyberabad commissionerate, along with Shamshabad police, nabbed two members of an interstate ganja smuggling gang on Sunday. The police seized 800 kg of ganja, a truck and two mobile phones all valued at Rs. 2 crores from them.

The arrested persons are identified as Khushi Mohammed (34) driver and Sonu Singh (23), lorry cleaner, both belong to UP. Three persons Sikhander of UP, Somu alias Bhagawan of Odisha and Bijendra Singh of UP are absconding.

M Stephen Raveendra, Cyberabad Commissioner of Police said that the gang was caught at ORR Pedda Golconda crossroads when they were transporting the contraband after concealing it in a truck laden with cotton seed waste. "Sikhander and Bijendra Singh placed an order for the ganja with Somu a few days ago. To take delivery of the consignment Khushi and Sonu went to Rajahmundry and loaded it in the truck and were bound for Bulandarshahar when they were nabbed," said the Cyberabad CP.

The consignment was to be resold to drug peddlers in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh by the gang.

MLAs' absence at stone-laying at Narasaraopet bares rift in YSRCP

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The internal bickerings in the ruling YSRCP in the district came to the fore on Sunday as many MLAs did not attend the programme of laying the foundation stone for the construction district party office.

The YSRCP is constructing a new building for the district office in the city. The Foundation stone laying ceremony was held on Sunday in which MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayalu and district party president and MLA Pinnelli Rama Krishna Reddy participated. The other six YSRCP MLAs did not attend the programme which exposed the

internal dissensions within the ruling party in the district.

Interestingly, though the foundation stone laying programme was held in Narasaraopet itself, local MLA Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy did not attend the programme either. The issue led to a heated debate among senior leaders in the party. According to the YSRCP sources, there are serious differences between MP Sri Krishnadevarayalu and Minister for Health Vidadala Rajini in the district.

Meanwhile, the MP performed Bhoomi Pooja and laid the foundation stone for the construction of a new office on the Palnadu road here on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP said that a new president would be appointed to the Palnadu district, which was created a couple of months ago, by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. He called upon the activists to take the welfare schemes to the people which would help to achieve a big victory in the next elections.

Significantly, the YSRCP MLAs including Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy, Bolla Brahma Naidu, Namburi Shankar Rao, MLC Dokka Manikya Vara Prasad and ministers Vidadala Rajini and Ambati Rambabu attended to the Atmeya Sammelanam meeting held in the evening.



Cricket betting: one held, Rs 44,600 seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sleuths of the Commission's Task Force, Central Zone on Saturday apprehend one person from Kachiguda for involvement in illegal online cricket betting. The accused is Gandam Srinivas (36), a resident of Kachiguda. He came in contact with his friend Naresh, the main bookie. Srinivas would regularly place bets through Naresh and make money illegally. On Saturday the police caught Srinivas near RTC Cross Roads while he was betting online. The police seized Rs 44,600 cash and his mobile phone.

AP police set new benchmark in criminal justice delivery

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Police created history and set a new benchmark in criminal justice delivery by securing a guilty verdict for two accused, in an attempt to rape case, in just 57 days, after having completed the prosecution process in 14 days.

"This was the first such attempt ever made in the country. And we were successful in securing a verdict in such a quick time after a scientific investigation process. This case highlights the tremendous coordination between the police, prosecution lawyers

and the judiciary," state Director General of Police K V Rajendranath Reddy said.

The case related to an attempt to rape against a Lithuanian national, who was passing through a forest patch in SPS Nellore district on March 8, 2022.

Two persons lured her to a place in the forest and attempted to molest her but she managed to escape to safety and file a complaint with the police.

"Within three hours, the two accused were arrested and by March 16 we filed the charge sheet against them in court. We got the case listed for

prosecution in quick time as the victim was supposed to return to her native country," the DGP said.

The trial in the case was completed in three days from March 29 and the Nellore sessions court completed examination of evidence in one more day.

The court heard the arguments of the two sides on April 6 and 7 and reserved the judgment, which was finally delivered on May 5.

The two accused, I Saikumar and Syed M o h a m m a d Abid, were sentenced to a prison term of seven years each and ordered to pay a fine of Rs 15,000. The victim sent a video message to DGP congratulating and thanking the state police for the speedy conviction.

"This case exemplified how the criminal justice system could work effectively through proper coordination. This was

a first not only in the state but also the country that such a case was tried and the accused convicted in just a matter of days," Rajendranath noted.

The DGP said the conviction and the pace at which it happened, should now keep the criminals worried that the system would catch up with them in no time.

"The average time taken to complete investigation in rape and (women) murder cases came down to 58 days in the last three years, as against 222 days during 2016-19. In cases of gang rape, it has come down to just 37 days from 250," he

said. In 50 per cent of these cases, the accused were being arrested in less than 48 hours.

Rajendranath said AP stood first in the country in filing charge sheets in 92.21 per cent of POCSSO and rape cases in 2021.

"We have taken a series of steps with a focused holistic approach so that justice delivery is expedited by cutting the delays in arresting the accused and filing charge-sheets. This will have a deterring effect and also eliminate scope for witnesses turning hostile," Rajendranath added.

Transport facility to Collector, SP offices demanded

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The government carved out a new district with Bhimavaram headquarters without providing the needed infrastructure, resulting in the people being forced to travel a long distance to reach the Collector's office and the SP's office.

The district offices were set up in a closed engineering college which was located on the outskirts far away from the town. Hundreds of people come to Bhimavaram from various towns and villages to work in the Collector and SP offices. However, they face difficulties to reach the offices as they are located far away from the town. Adding to the woes of people, there is no proper transportation facility to the Collectorate and SP office from the town.

Those who want to go to the Collector's office should reach the Vissakoderu bridge by bus. From there, they have to walk about 3 KMs to reach the office. Those who want to go to the SP office should also walk about 3 km after alighting the bus. There are no sufficient auto-rickshaw services to reach the offices.

Dalita Ikya Vedhika state president Ganta Sundar Kumar told the Pioneer that proper roads should be constructed to reach the newly established Collector and SP offices and a free transportation facility should be provided for at least six months.

Talking to the Pioneer, Lions Club president Nandamuri Rajesh said that he had personally seen the difficulties which the people are facing to reach the Collector and SP office which are located far away from the town. He said that the Collectorate and SP office staff, who come from Koyyalagudem and Nidamarru, are also facing problems reaching the offices from the bus station.

"When the staff of the Collector's office was stranded on the road due to lack of transportation, I took them to the office in my car. They told me their ordeal which they endure daily to reach their offices," he said.

INDIA CORNER

Maha: Sarpanch asks woman marrying outside caste to shun govt benefits

A village 'jaat panchayat' here has allegedly forced a woman, who married a man from another caste, to give a written submission that she would not avail government benefits meant for the Scheduled Tribes (STs), prompting the Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) to seek action against the village sarpanch.



MP Navneet Rana dares Maha CM Thackeray to contest election against her

Independent MP Navneet Rana, who recently got bail after being arrested by Mumbai police last month over 'Hanuman Chalisa' recitation row, on Sunday challenged Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to contest an election against her.



Bihar govt takes steps to stop irregular practices at places of worship

Amid complaints of irregular practices at several religious places in Bihar, the government has asked circle officers (CO) in all 534 blocks of the state to identify and mark the registered and unregistered temples and mutts in their areas of jurisdiction and upload the information on portals run by the district administration.



Value of vote of MPs to go down to 700 from 708 in July Prez poll

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The value of the vote of a Member of Parliament is likely to go down to 700 from 708 in the presidential polls scheduled in July due to the absence of a legislative assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Saturday.



The value of the vote of an MP in a presidential election is based on the number of elected members in legislative assemblies of states and union territories, including Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Electoral College for the presidential election comprises the members of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and those of the legislative assemblies of states and union territories including Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir.

assembly seats. According to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, the Union Territory of J&K will have a legislative assembly, while Ladakh will be governed directly by the Centre.

tation of assembly constituencies. Last week, the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir notified its final order in which it has recommended a 90-member House for the newly carved out union territory. But it may take some time to have an elected House in place in the UT. It is not for the first time

elect. However, Jammu and Kashmir will not go unrepresented in the presidential elections as members of Lok Sabha will be eligible to exercise their franchise to elect the First Citizen of the country.

The value of the vote of a Member of Parliament has been fixed at 708 since the 1997 presidential election.

The value of vote of a Member of Parliament for the first Presidential election in 1952 was 494. It increased marginally to 496 in the 1957 presidential election, followed by 493 (1962), 576 (1967 and 1969).

The presidential elections were held in 1969 due to the death of President Zakir Hussain on May 3, 1969.

In the 1974 presidential election, the value of vote of an MP was 723. It has been fixed at 702 for the presidential elections from 1977 to 1992.

PM Modi now template for national leader: Amit Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now the template for what it means and takes to be a "national leader", Home Minister Amit Shah has said, asserting that the label was earlier handed out to even politicians of no proven merit and only capable of winning election from one or two safe Lok Sabha seats.



While national leaders were identified in the immediate aftermath of the independence movement by their "name recall" across regions because of their participation in the freedom struggle, in the latter decades, notably at the height of the coalition era, the expression came to be much abused, he said, adding that Delhi media generously distributed the status to its 'friends and favourites'.

Writing in the book "Modi@20 Dreams Meet Delivery", brought out by Rupa Publications and to be launched on May 11, Shah said such "facile and insincere manufacturing of national leaders" was shown up for what it was

after Modi led the BJP to its biggest Lok Sabha win in 2014 before repeating the feat with a bigger margin in 2019.

A confidant of the prime minister for over three decades, Shah wrote that the best teacher for a leader is "travelling to ordinary places, meeting ordinary families, sharing ordinary experiences, and doing all this by ordinary means."

"Narendra Modi has done so with greater frequency and perseverance than any politician in the past 75 years," he said, adding that before the 2014 and the 2019 polls, there

had been "no mandate for hope; and no mandate that was simply a reward for tested performance".

Noting that no party had won majority in Lok Sabha since 1984 till 2014, he said parties and prime ministers won majorities between 1952 and 1984 on the basis of the goodwill of the freedom movement, family legacy, anger against the incumbent (1977), a mix of fear and sympathy (1984) with appeasement, sectional prejudice, vote bank mobilisation and empty sloganeering like 'Garibi Hatao' of 1971.

BSF helped to form the first Mukti Bahini group 51 yrs ago



PNS ■ AGARTALA

One of the lesser known facts of the Bangladesh liberation war is that India's Border Security Force (BSF) help form the first group of Mukti Bahini or the Bangladesh Liberation Force a day after the Pakistani army unleashed a reign of terror in that country some 51 years ago along the Tripura border.

Major P K Ghosh, who was then commanding four border outposts (BOP) of BSF at Sreenagar, Amlighat, Samarendraganj and Nalua in the southern part of Tripura bordering Chittagong division, in the then east Pakistan was instrumental in this.

Major Ghosh, an octogenarian war hero, now settled in Delhi, when contacted, told PTI in detail about first crossing over the Indo-Pak border and formation of first Mukti Bahini group

on March 26, 1971. On March 26, 1971 morning, Pakistan army sent an Infantry battalion from Comilla cantonment to Chittagong commanded by a Brigadier to counter the forces of Major Ziaur Rehman and deployed 10-15 men for protection of Shubhapur Road Bridge, near the Sreenagar BOP in Sabroom, the southernmost town in Tripura, he said. The bridge was located on a strategic point, which connected the Chittagong and Dhaka and was the main supply line of food and other materials, he added. "At about 1400 hours, my East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) contact, Havildar Nuruddin came to Sreenagar BOP along with Prof. Obaidullah Majumdar, a member of the National Assembly and Dr. Amir Hussain, a Awami League leader and they told us about the terror let loose by the Pak army personnel.

'Elderly woman dies after being assaulted by police'

PNS ■ FIROZABAD (UP)

An elderly woman died after being assaulted by a police team at her home here, her family members alleged on Sunday.

They alleged that 60-year-old Radha Devi was "violently shaken" following which she collapsed and died. The woman's husband, Fauran Singh, was also admitted to the hospital apparently due to trauma of his wife's death, according to family members. The police have ordered a probe into the matter. The woman's four sons



were released from Tundla Jail in Firozabad on Saturday, police said. Superintendent of Police

(City) Mukesh Chandra Mishra said, "A police team reached the house of the family under the Pachkhera police station limits on Saturday evening to check on the brothers. But an altercation took place between family members and the police team." Mishra said the family members alleged that during the altercation, the woman was "violently shaken" by a policeman following which she collapsed and died.

Genome resource banking part of plan to conserve rare, endangered bird species

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The authorities in Delhi-NCR plan to develop methods for procreating and conserving select rare, endangered and threatened (RET) bird species using surrogate species, and create a state-of-the-art genome resource banking facility for them.

Genome resource banking is the storage of reproductive cells and embryos from threatened species with an intention to use them in breeding programmes in the future.

A draft action plan has been prepared by the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) for the conservation of avian diver-



sity, their ecosystems, habitats and landscapes in the Delhi-NCR over the next 10 years. The action plan for the Delhi-NCR is part of a broader plan which covers 17 states in five zones -- north, south, east, west, and central. It was shared with the Delhi forest and wildlife department last month. The Delhi-NCR accounts for almost one-third of the total bird species found in India. Out of the total 446 bird species

reported in the region since 1970, sixty-three are considered rare, endangered and threatened (RET).

Studies focusing on wetland birds, including 20 RET species, have highlighted many conservation issues including high pollution load and stunted flow in the Yamuna, and encroachment on bird habitats in the form of buildings etc.

SACON, along with the forest and wildlife departments of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, will study possible threats to RET species, assess conservation measures required to restore their populations, and re-introduce them in their native habitats, if reported.

NCR schools revise timings, restrict outdoor activities



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Revising school timings, restricting outdoor activities, stocking ORS and glucose sachets, and constantly motivating children to stay hydrated are among the steps schools are taking because of the heatwave conditions in the national capital region (NCR).

A torrid heatwave had sent the mercury soaring across large swathes of India with the temperature in Delhi rising to 46 degrees Celsius. The national capital also recorded its second hottest April in 72 years with a monthly average maximum temperature of 40.2 degrees Celsius. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had earlier this week said a fresh spell of heatwave is likely to begin over northwest India from May 7 and over central India from May 8. While closing schools due to heatwave is not an option as suggested by experts as offline classes have

started from the new session after nearly two years due to the Covid-induced pandemic.

According to Shubhi Soni, the Head of the Shri Ram Wonder Years school in Rohini, all outdoor activities have been restrained in the wake of the rising temperatures.

"School timings will also be revised as per the prevailing conditions and dispersal in the afternoon peak hours will be avoided to prevent heat strokes and energy drainage among students. We also have an emergency kit for use, which comprises ORS, glucose, and oral electrolyte to be given to children if they need it. The school staff is keeping a thorough check on children and constantly motivating them to drink water to manage the heatwave," she said. Anshu Mital, the principal of MRG School, Rohini, said they have also reduced outdoor activities extensively to safeguard students from exposure to heat.

BURIAL PITS AT HARAPPAN-ERA RAKHIGARHI

DNA samples of skeletons sent for analysis

PNS ■ RAKHIGARHI (HAR)

DNA samples collected from two human skeletons unearthed at a necropolis of a Harappan-era city site in Haryana have been sent for scientific examination, the outcome of which might tell about the ancestry and food habits of people who lived in Rakhigarhi region thousands of years ago.



The skeletons of two deceased women were found a couple of months ago at mound number 7 (named RGR 7 by the Archaeological Survey of India), believed to be nearly 5,000 years old. Pots and other artefacts were also found buried next to them in a pit, part of the funer-

ary rituals back in the Harappan Civilisation era, ASI officials said. "Seven mounds (RGR 1-RGR 7) scattered around two villages (Rakhi Khas and Rakhi Shahpur) in Hisar district are

part of the Rakhigarhi archaeological site. RGR 7 is a cemetery site of the Harappan period when this was a well-organised city. The two skeletons were unearthed about two months

ago by our team. And, DNA samples were collected by experts about two weeks ago," Joint Director General, ASI, S K Manjul told PTI. At present RGR 1, RGR 3 and RGR 7 have been taken up for investigation.

Manjul, who is leading the excavation team at Rakhigarhi site, about 150 km north-west of Delhi, since it commenced on February 24, 2022, said the DNA analysis will help answer a lot of questions, anthropological or otherwise. The samples will be first examined by Birbal Sahni Institute of Paleosciences, Lucknow for preliminary investigation and scientific comparison, before being sent further for forensic analysis from

anthropological perspective, he said. "The outcome of the DNA analysis will help tell about the ancestry of the people who lived at this ancient city, whether they were native or had migrated from elsewhere to settle. Besides, samples taken from the teeth area would tell about their food habits, what kind of food they consumed and other anthropological patterns related to that human settlement which must have been one of the largest, dating from the Harappan Civilisation period," said Manjul, who had also led the excavation at Sanauli in Uttar Pradesh in 2018 where pre-Iron Age artefacts were unearthed.

Khalistan flags at HP Assembly gate

PNS ■ DHARAMSHALA

Khalistan flags were found tied on the main gate and slogans scrawled on the walls of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly complex, police said on Sunday.

The flags were put up on the outer side of the main gate number one of the assembly complex. They were removed by the administration.

The winter session of the HP assembly usually held in Dharamshala.

"It might have happened in the late night or early morning today. We have removed the Khalistani flags from Vidhan Sabha gate. We are investigating and going to register a case," SP Kangra Khushal Sharma said. Condemning the incident,



Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said the culprits will be caught soon.

"I condemn the cowardly incident of raising Khalistan flags at the gate of Dharamshala Assembly Complex in the dark of night. Only the winter session of the assembly is held there, and

hence require tighter security arrangements during that time only," he tweeted.

Taking advantage of this, the cowardly incident was carried out, but the government will not tolerate it. Wherever the culprits are, they will be caught soon. Strict action will be taken against the perpetrators of this incident, Thakur added.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Crush Khalistan bogey

Those hoisting the Khalistan flags must realize their dreams can never become a reality

The tying of Khalistan's flag on the main gate of the boundary wall of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly in Dharamshala on Sunday morning is nothing but a cowardice attempt to keep the Khalistan pot boiling. The action is supposed to be in retaliation to the State Government's decision to ban vehicles carrying Bhindranwale and Khalistani flags. In the last week of April, Intelligence agencies warned of such attempts and said the Sikh for Justice (SJF) would try to hoist the Khalistan flag in the state. The incident in itself is not alarming. Anyone can sneak into the dead of the night, tie a flag to an object, scrawl a few slogans on the wall, and slip away. But what is worrying is the tacit support being provided to the Khalistan movement by elements both within India and at the international level. Within the country, there have been several cases of seizure of explosives and arrest of Khalistan sympathizers. Unfortunately, such sordid attempts find explicit support from the political class in India. Recently, a politician from Himachal Pradesh, Harpreet Singh Bedi, openly supported the demand for 'Khalistan'. Bedi put out several tweets in support of Khalistan on the microblogging site Twitter and then deleted the account. "According to the constitution, Sikh can demand Khalistan, then how it is wrong if you want to stop this issue, try to change the act otherwise shut the..." one such tweet read. Bedi was formerly associated with AAP but he was subsequently expelled from the party.



Political parties and their leaders must exercise extra care in targeting each other on the Khalistan issue. Instead of hurling pro-Khalistan accusations in public, they should provide evidence, if any, to the police. Remember, there are laws to deal with subversive activities. Using such serious issues for political gains would be playing into the hands of the elements behind

the Khalistan movement. Intelligence inputs out in the media have shown that the Khalistan movement has a strong international financial backing and Pakistan's logistic support. Worldwide, such elements have tried to come into the limelight by indulging in violent activities. The recent seizure of explosives from Khalistan sympathizers has to be seen in that light. India has crushed these elements every time they have tried to raise their heads. But we cannot afford to lower our guards. There should be no let-up in the ongoing efforts to flush out all active Khalistan sympathizers. Equally important is to create an environment of well-being in Punjab so that youth could not be lured to such movements. Freeing Punjab from the drug menace should be the first step in that direction? Tackling the issue of growing unemployment faced by the educated youth and problems faced by the farmers should follow in right earnest. Those hoisting the Khalistan flags must realize that their dreams can never become a reality. India has crushed them in the past and will do the same in the future, too.

PICTALK



Pilgrims visit Badrinath Temple after it reopened for devotees in Badrinath

Systemic reforms for justice delivery



PRAFULL GORADIA

The PM's emphasis on the use of local language will indeed increase the confidence of the masses in the justice delivery system and they will feel connected with it

At the CMs-CJs' (Chief Ministers - Chief Justices) conference in Delhi on April 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Justice of India NV Ramana too were present. There was a free and frank discussion on why cases in most of the courts are languishing. The Prime Minister said three and a half lakh undertrials are languishing in prisons and expediting their trials is essential to deliver justice as soon as possible. Most of these undertrials are poor and deserve early justice. The Prime Minister advised the use of the local language up to the district-level courts to dispense justice.

Chief Justice Ramana opined that one of the causes of piling up of the cases is the non-performance of the legislature and the executive, itself a contentious issue. Perhaps, the CJ's contention is that laws passed are not clearly drafted and that leads to unnecessary controversy. "I think the time has come now to revisit the demand and take it to a logical conclusion. The practice of law before Constitutional courts should be based on one's intelligence and understanding of law..." the Chief Justice of India said.

Similarly, indifferent administration at the lower level compels citizens to approach courts to seek justice. The judiciary's perpetual grouse is that despite vacancies, judges are not appointed on time. There are a number of points that trouble all the three wings of Government.

Seventy per cent of the cases arise from the administrative side or the government. The first step should be to restrain the functionaries from giving adverse decisions. Doubts should be cleared by the department lawyers and the courts must not make the citizens spend time and money on litigation unless absolutely necessary.

According to the Prime Minister, the Centre has repealed 1,450 laws because they had become obsolete, and another 350 laws are lined up to be struck off. The States should also pursue this line of spring



cleaning. Moreover, the drafting of petitions, affidavits as well judgments in district courts and High Courts is tortuous when it comes to terminology. An institution under my charge a few years ago received a judgment that began with *Rabindra Nath Tagore* and went on in that poetic tone; it was a pleasure to read it. But we had to appeal to the apex court, which turned down the poetic piece. All this means a consumption of time, money and the need for more solicitors, advocates and judges.

Way back in 1976, we had to take legal opinions on a company based in the UK. The London lawyer produced a draft the next day that was just a little longer than one page. The one that came from India was ten times longer; the difference was in the style of writing. The advocate in the UK preferred the shorter one and rightly so because the points covered were about the same. The other area of editing is appeals. I am not a lawyer, yet



"I THINK THE TIME HAS COME NOW TO REVISIT THE DEMAND AND TAKE IT TO A LOGICAL CONCLUSION. THE PRACTICE OF LAW BEFORE CONSTITUTIONAL COURTS SHOULD BE BASED ON ONE'S INTELLIGENCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF LAW..." THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA SAID.

I have come across a case of tenant eviction which began in Mumbai's Small Causes Court and ended up in the Supreme Court! The right to appeal should be reduced to two. Before commencing the final hearing, the judge should decide how much maximum time the two opposing advocates would be permitted. If either advocate exceeds his limit, s/he should have to pay a stipulated sum of money every extra minute, as is done on taxi rides for every hundred metres exceeding the minimum fare.

Very recently, I heard of an advocate arguing in the apex court for two full working days. Adjudgments should cost expensively to the requesting side; say, half the court fee charged to the litigant. Otherwise, adjournments would continue to be availed freely and popular advocates would carry on getting more and more briefs. Whereas if the client has to pay an adjournment fee, s/he would choose an advocate

who has served in Delhi as well as in other cities.

Judicial activism should be kept to the minimum as also public interest litigation (PILs). The latter was introduced to help the poor and the voiceless to articulate their grievances. It was never meant for the rich and influential. How to "plead promptly without failing to communicate with the judge" is one subject that should be taught seriously. In my college days, a great many topics were dealt with. Often, as a result, if an advocate argued speedily, the judges could not always understand the finer lines of the argument. Or the advocate had to go on pleading indefinitely until he felt he had got his point across, or the judge stopped him from going on. Given the current state of our judicial system, this must be consigned to history.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A DANGEROUS PROPOSITION

Sir — Time and again, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi throws tantrums and is thus becoming a laughing stock in front of the public. But this time round, it has exceeded all limits and showed his ignorance in the open. The Congress leader sitting alongside the party cadre was seen asking "What is the main theme today?", thus exhibiting his utter ignorance on the subject of the meeting that he was attending. We can well understand how to go to the extent of elaborating and giving a lecture when he does not know the subject. It is indeed a testing time for the Congress and its party cadre to manage a leader who is ignorant about basic things and needs a note to show his presence.

On the other hand, the leaders from other parties have command over the subject and make relevant speeches rather than looking for a subject. The recent rally in Telangana also revealed Rahul Gandhi's total ignorance. It is indeed a dangerous proposition to have a national leader from the Opposition party going blank on basic things.

Gundu K Maniam | Coimbatore

POWER POLITICS AT PLAY?

Sir — The Punjab & Haryana High Court in a midnight hearing recently directed the Punjab Government to not take any coercive action against BJP leader Tajinder Bagga until the next hearing on May 10. The BJP leader had moved the High Court challenging the non-bailable arrest warrants issued against him by a Mohali court relating to a case registered against him on the charges of making provocative statements, promoting enmity and for alleged criminal intimidation.

As per the court's order, the arrest warrant was issued against Bagga by the court of Judicial Magistrate Ravtesh Inderjit Singh. Keeping in view the fact that sufficient opportunities had already been granted to the accused to join the investigation and, despite that, the accused has failed to join the investigation, the court ordered that it is necessary in the

Yoga in MBBS is a good move



Everyone knows the miraculous values of Sanjeevani *booti* and needs no further elaboration and there are numbers of miraculous plants in Indian system of medicines and recently in this regard WHO had opened research centre at Junagarh, Gujarat. The UN had also declared June 21 as the World Yoga Day and almost all countries had supported this proposition leaving aside their religious affiliation. On this day, all Indian embassies celebrate this day. Former PM Morarji Desai was fully in favour

of the Indian system of medicines; even Atal Bihari Vajpayee got the treatment of his knees done through Kerala therapy. Even Dr Manmohan Singh got his heart bypass surgery done in Delhi.

In the past, the ambassador of Denmark who was posted in Pakistan visited India for the treatment of the motor neuron disease. It is a neurological disease and it is said to be incurable in the entire world but the ambassador tried the various treatments of the Indian system of medicines. Ultimately, he got cured. This incident proves the strength of the Indian system of medicines. When we talk about the Indian system of yoga, it is also included in it as yoga has already proved its results on the front of many incurable diseases and with the inclusion of yoga in MBBS, it will prove beneficial to the common man and will be helpful for the country.

Yash Pal Raihan | Jalandhar

interest of the justice to issue non-bailable warrants of the accused, Tejinder Pal Singh Bagga for 23.05.2022, who is evading arrest, in order to facilitate the investigation. All these developments took place following the dramatic instances that led to an open political war between the BJP and the AAP, which has since taken an ugly shape.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

ON THE SEDITION LAW

Sir — The Union Government's stance on the sedition law is clear and unambiguous; it is in favour of retention of the Indian Penal Code's Section 124A pertaining to sedition and treating the 1962 Constitution Bench upholding its validity as a 'binding precedent'. At the same time, the enlightened opinion is that the sedition law has become a legal anachronism and has to be scrapped. This colonial-era law is mostly slapped on dissenters and defenders of basic human rights and religious freedom, political activists fighting for greater autonomy and

critics of the Government's strong-arm tactics. Obviously, the purpose of retaining the sedition law becomes dubious.

There have been umpteen instances to show that it has been rampantly misused 'to punish' those who exercise their legitimate democratic right to hold the Government of the day to account for its policies and acts of commission and omission. Nowadays anyone who does not toe the line and is critical of the Government and its misdoings is accused of seditious activity. The sedition charge is often slapped in the guise of abusing human rights activists, independent journalists, Dalit leaders and leaders of farmer movements. The sedition law hangs like the sword of Damocles over the heads of those who stand up for citizens' rights and work to advance the causes of justice and freedom.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Nationalist victory

Sinn Fein Northern Ireland win fuels unification call

Sinn Fein, representing Irish nationalists, has emerged as the largest party in the elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly. It is a record of sorts, considering that the party was long associated with the paramilitary Irish Republican Army that for decades attempted to separate Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom through violence. The victory of Sinn Fein has the potential to change the geographical contours of the United Kingdom as we know it today. Scotland has already taken the initiative to leave the United Kingdom. Its national referendum in 2014 could not muster the needed support and a second one is on cards. Sinn Fein is already ideologically bent on unifying the northern part with the Republic of Ireland. That would directly impact links with the United Kingdom. Exactly a century ago a large part of Ireland seceded from the Kingdom to become a free state. However, six counties, known as Northern Ireland, remained within the Kingdom under the Anglo-Irish Treaty. It is a coincidence that for the first time in Northern Ireland, a pro-British unionist party, the Democratic Unionist Party, stands relegated to the second position.



However, the coast is not all clear for Sinn Fein. First of all, it has to succeed in forming the government. Northern Ireland has a delicate power-sharing system where in the government can only be formed when the posts of First Minister and Deputy First Minister are filled. Both have equal status. Sinn Fein proposes the name of its Northern Ireland leader Michelle O'Neill as First Minister. However, DUP refuses to forward a name for the deputy First Minister on the pretext that its demand for post-Brexit border arrangements is not yet met. The issue relates to customs and border checks on Northern Ireland's border with the European Union.

If the impasse continues, then the ministers from the previous government will remain in power. A new election will be held if the issue is not resolved even after 24 weeks. Even if it manages to form the government, Sinn Fein cannot start work towards shifting Northern Ireland from the Kingdom to the Republic. A referendum is required for it and that is at the discretion of the British government. And given London's mood, the step is years away. For the present, Sinn Fein's victory is hugely symbolic and ends century-old domination by pro-British political parties.

SOUND BITE

We should develop a hybrid system of online and offline learning to avoid tech overexposure in school kids.

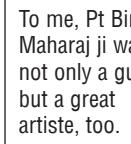


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I am ready to willingly resign if my successor can resolve the current economic crisis.

Sri Lanka PM — Mahinda Rajapaksa



To me, Pt Birju Maharaj was not only a guru but a great artiste, too.

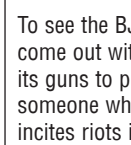


Kathak dancer — Shovana Narayan



For the last couple of years, the way the IPL went about, I felt like I wasn't treated properly.

Cricketer — Chris Gayle



To see the BJP come out with all its guns to protect someone who incites riots is a shame.

AAP leader — Atishi



FIRST COLUMN

SOLOMON ISLANDS STIRS UP ROW IN AUSTRALIAN POLITICS

Fear of China setting up a base on the Islands rattles even the US



PK VASUDEVA

The Australian opposition is accusing the present Government for bungling the security situation of Solomon Islands. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has rejected accusations that the coalition has bungled a key security relationship, after Solomon Islands shrugged off warnings from Australia and signed a new pact with China. The controversial deal has been the subject of significant debate recently, amid fears it could allow China to establish a military base in the South Pacific. The opposition Labour has called the handling of the issue the greatest Australian foreign policy blunder in the Pacific since World War II, and questioned why the government sent Pacific Minister Zed Seselja instead of Foreign Minister Marise Payne to Honiara after a draft of the pact leaked. Senator Seselja was sent to Solomon Island in a last-ditch effort to convince the Government in Honiara to walk



away from the deal, a trip now shown to be fruitless. Shadow Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Morrison had ignored warnings about the deal last year, and should have personally intervened to ensure it was never signed. Morrison told reporters in Adelaide he made a deliberate decision to send Senator Seselja because it would be counter-productive to publicly heap pressure on Solomon Islands over the agreement. There is going to be a great danger for Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific if Beijing gets a foothold in Solomon Islands. "I'm not going to act like former administrations that treated the Pacific like some extension of Australia. The Pacific Islands are very sensitive to that and I have always had an approach with the Pacific Islands which understands those sensitivities because there is a lot at stake." Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare defended the pact with China. "We intend to beef up and strengthen our police capability to deal with any future instability by properly equipping the police to take full responsibility of the country's security responsibilities, in the hope we will never be required to invoke any of our bilateral security arrangements," he said. Sogavare is not willing to release the full text of the agreement because he would like to consult China before the agreement is brought into the public domain. Beijing typically does not release the text of its bilateral security agreements with other countries. The silence on the part of Sogavare shows that the agreement is more in favour of China for beefing up its security in Pacific. Beijing is going all out to give financial and military aid to Honiara to win over Solomon Islands without understanding that China will finally make its military base there.

The US National Security Council, said the US convened a meeting with senior officials from Australia, Japan and New Zealand. "The officials reaffirmed the four countries' enduring and shared commitment to the Pacific Islands," she said. "The United States resolved to intensify its engagement in the region to meet 21st-century challenges. "Officials from the four countries represented also shared concerns about a proposed security framework between the Solomon Islands and the People's Republic of China and its serious risks to a free and open Indo-Pacific." Foreign Minister Marise Payne says the signing of the security pact disappoints the Government. Payne rejected Senator Wong's assessment that inaction by the Morrison government had fuelled the situation. "I think that's an unfair characterisation, and I don't think it recognises the sovereign decisions that governments, of course, make for themselves," she said. "We are looking at very serious geo-strategic challenges in our region, and they are realities."

(The writer is former Senior Professor, International Trade and Member, Vivekananda International Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

Will speeds of Indian trains ever increase?



M K GUPTA SUDHANSHU MANI

IR has only a small stretch of track and allied infrastructure between Delhi and Agra which is fit for trains to run at 160 km/h.

Development of Train 18 — Vande Bharat Express — the first semi-high-speed train of Indian Railways (IR), and subsequent announcement of its large-scale proliferation with 400 rakes in three years, raised the hope that India would soon have a sizeable sector of such trains. The semi-high-speed sector is ill-defined but in the Indian context, stuck as we are in the mail/express train speed range of 110 to 130 km/h for decades, it would mean passenger train operation in the speed range of 160 to 200 km/h.

The reality, however, is far-removed from the hope. IR has only a small stretch of track and allied infrastructure between Delhi and Agra which is fit for trains to run at 160 km/h. IR has been talking about running coaching trains at 160km/h speed for more than five decades since 1960s and the timeline for achieving the number of times has been revised, embarrassingly, on several occasions. IR's flagship trains, Rajdhani and Shatabdi continue to ply at the same maximum speeds up to 130 km/h since their induction.

Another important aspect which is perhaps as important, if not more, than the maximum speed of operation is the average speed of trains. It calibrates the capacity of IR to run passenger trains consistently at a good speed. Comptroller and Auditor General of India recently tabled a report in parliament, berating IR for not making any perceptible improvement in the running speed of mail/express trains despite spending a significant amount of ₹2.5 lakh crore on track infrastructure between 2008 and 2019. The report stated that the average speed of such trains in 2019-20 was only 50.6 km, which is less than per cent higher than what was registered a decade back. IR has talked about 'Mission Raftaar' since 2016-17, which envisaged raising the average speed of these trains from 50 kmph to 75 kmph by 2021-22. While the target has been missed by a mile, there appears to be no hope of achieving an average speed of even 60 Km/h in near future.

A project to increase the maximum speed of operation to 160 km/h on Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai section is in hand for some years. While the declared target date of completion is March 2023, the project is not likely to see completion by then, or even by 2024. IR must look at its strategy closely as such default indicates some gaps in planning, financing and execution.

Let us see this in global perspective. There are more than 20 countries where passenger trains run at a speed of 200 kmph or more; there are many countries which have achieved this by upgrading their existing track, allied infrastructure and rolling stock, including tilting, to raise average and maximum speeds to the range of 150 and 225 kmph respectively; but after the fiasco of the Talgo train trial drama, this may be a distant dream for IR.



THE CAG RECENTLY SUBMITTED A REPORT TO PARLIAMENT BERATING IR FOR NO PERCEPTIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE RUNNING SPEED OF MAIL/EXPRESS TRAINS DESPITE SPENDING ₹2.5 LAKH CRORE ON TRACK INFRASTRUCTURE BETWEEN 2008 AND 2019

(Gupta is retired Member(Engineering) and Mani is retired General Manager, Indian Railways. Both are independent rail consultants. The views expressed are personal.)



This is evident since so far as IR has not even formulated the guidelines for construction and maintenance of assets for speed beyond 160 kmph, although R & D arm of IR, RDSO was assigned the task more than three years ago.

A glance at the time table published by the IR (for period July 2019-June 2020) shows that even for train like Vande Bharat, Tejas & Shatabdi expresses on different routes, there is a vast difference in actual average speeds. While the highest average speed is only 96 Kmph for Varanasi-New Delhi Vande Bharat, it is as low as 53 Kmph for Dehradun and Kathgodam Shatabdi. This is mainly on account of various permanent and temporary speed restrictions and operational factors like number of halts & time allowances provided in the time table for planned maintenance works and unforeseen incidents. Unless these impediments are removed in a time-bound manner, merely increasing the maximum speed will provide only limited advantage in terms of overall reduction in travel time in spite of prohibitive capital expenditure.

The average speeds remain low even with induction of more powerful locomotives also because of differential speeds of various trains as all of them, including freight trains, share the same track with curves on which speeds are regulated and the maximum speeds are achieved only for a small time in a run. The impact of laying flatter horizontal curvature on average speeds is evident from the experience of Mumbai

and Madgaon section of Konkan Railway which was originally built for 160 kmph speed potential with flatter curves and hardly any permanent speed restrictions; on this section, Tejas express is able to achieve an average speed of 85 kmph in spite of it being non-electrified single line.

With multiple objectives of speed and capacity, IR sanctioned the project to increase the speed to 160 kmph on New Delhi-Howrah and New Delhi-Mumbai Central routes, to be completed by March 2023, at a cost of about 17000 cr. The scope of the project includes fencing, Automatic Train Protection System, Mobile Train Radio Communication and automated and mechanised diagnostic systems. Major portion of 17000 cr is planned through institutional financing (about ₹16000 cr) and till March 2020, no expenditure has been incurred. In addition, the cost of removal of all level crossings, is funded separately. Under the circumstance, completion of these two works by end of this fiscal looks too far-fetched and there is a high risk of severe cost and time overruns.

It is conceivable that once this infrastructure is put in place, the maximum speed capability of Train 18 type rolling stock can be increased to 200 kmph with minor inputs from IR engineers themselves. As for increase in average speeds, IR should try out tilting in some Train 18s to assess its reliability in the Indian environment.

With the fillip given in recent years to construction of expressways, improvements in designs

and comfortable speeds of cars, affordability of modern tourist taxis and higher penetration of air travel, IR will find it difficult to even retain its present share of passenger traffic. If the travel time of inter-city Shatabdi type day trains is not reduced by increasing the average as well as maximum speed, rail travel may no longer offer a significant journey time advantage over road, beset as it is already with an extra travel time to and from the station. Readers would recall that Mumbai-Pune Shatabdi express had to be discontinued because of poor patronage after the commissioning of Mumbai-Pune expressway. Similarly, unless the travel time of Rajdhani is reduced drastically, making services like New Delhi to Mumbai and Howrah truly overnight, similar scenario may emerge after completion of new expressways.

It is obvious that irrespective of the road quality, a Ferrari will run only with the speed of an auto-rickshaw in Chandni Chowk; for the same reason, if IR is genuinely serious to run semi-high-speed trains on existing tracks, with a decent average speed, say around 120 km/h, then the whole eco-system needs a relook; improvements in rolling stock, particularly on reducing the gap between freight and passenger train speed, time-tabled running of goods trains, reliability of assets and completing the two projects of 160 kmph, without many permanent speed restriction, expeditiously.

With a young and dynamic minister in charge of Railways, the time to act is now.

POINT COUNTER POINT

"DELHI CM AND PUNJAB CM SHOULD APOLOGISE TO THE SIKHS FOR WHAT HAPPENED (TAJINDER BAGGA ARREST CASE) YESTERDAY."
— NATIONAL SECRETARY, BJP
R P SINGH



"THE BJP WANTS TO PUSH THE COUNTRY INTO A WEB OF HATRED AND VIOLENCE SO IT CAN AVOID DEBATE ON INFLATION, HEALTH, WATER AND POWER."
— AAP MP
SANJAY SINGH

Price hike, profiteering ravage all, growth a mirage

Most companies are raising prices in response to the global supply squeeze in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war

Hyper-inflation - rapid, excessive, and out-of-control general price increases - has become a serious issue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi talking to states for bringing down the fuel prices, supposedly a key reason for the economic trouble.

Soaring corporate profiteering is another reason for the rising prices. The top 20 companies continue to have 70 percent profits, as per Mercilus Investment Managers, and higher product prices in a supposedly subdued market. Unilever, Suzuki Motor and JSW Steel all are in the game of raising prices.

Most companies are raising prices in response to the global supply squeeze in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

war. It needs a probe. Despite efforts by the government, except Gujarat and Karnataka, not many states are known to have given relief in their taxes on petroleum products. This is becoming a political issue with the opposition joining the spat and the finance ministry announcing that Rs 78,704 crore of the states' shares of cess are yet to be transferred.

This is despite the Brent crude falling to \$104 a barrel. For the past about two years, the benefits of unprecedented low crude prices were not passed on to the consumers. Fuel prices have risen by 31 percent in eight years.

Even petrol pumps supposed to be benefiting from higher commissions as fuel prices rise, are paying almost



double the cost for tankers. In addition, the rising toll taxes are making goods even more expensive. Tolls also affect inter-region and localized trading. The country sees an opportunity in the Ukraine situation of globally selling food grains at a higher price. While this may ensure higher remuneration to farmers, there is a flip side. It could cause domestic prices to soar. The prime minister recently said the government was approaching World Trade Organisation for

facilitating sales of Indian food grains in the world market. The WTO still has not come out with its terms. The Ukraine situation has created a void as the largest suppliers are unable to meet the world demand. Ukraine exported about 1.7 million tons grains last month, according to consultant ProZerno. The most recent volume still is only about half of March 2020. Markets are bracing for more upheavals as deliveries from Ukraine and Russia - which together account for about a quarter of the world's grains trade - turn increasingly complicated and raise the spectre of food shortages.

A new market may gradually open up for India. Its ramifications are too early to study. India domestically has

been overflowing with food grain. About 80 crore people are being given free food doles worth over ₹2 lakh crore a year for past two years. While India is the second-largest wheat producer with a share of around 14.14 percent of the world's production in 2020, it accounted for less than 1 percent of global wheat exports. The export potential could be large but with corporate domination, dream prices may elude farmers. The ramifications on the domestic market can cast shadow on the political spectrum.

Coal shortage, its higher prices and dependence on thermal power is increasing power cost per unit to ₹6 to over ₹10 or more. This would make use of electricity for trains, vehicles, farms and

industry an expensive affair. Inflation is eating volumes of large companies like Hindustan Unilever (HUL), claims CEO Sanjiv Mehta but he has no answer for its high 20 percent operating margins, lower than earlier 24 percent. The rising prices are 'rationalising' consumer spending. High raw material prices are now being compensated by raising product prices. As the company tries to transfer costs, consumers are being thrifty and settling for lower priced products. Still, it is having profits at ₹2203 crore or 8.5 percent. This testifies that high profiteering is the bane.

The consumer buys only what he needs of the FMCG. Many companies foresee a decline in high profits.

Intelligent consumer spending is hitting large companies in urban and rural areas. Rising prices are hurting household consumption. Overall market trends can improve if profits are rationalized.

The UN Conference for Trade and Development finds that despite everything, the e-commerce trade is growing. It, however, does not consider this healthy. Total retail sales during the pandemic increased to 19 percent in 2020 up from 16 percent in 2019. It has hurt the least-developed countries as well as small businesses.

Modi needs to set up a committee of experts and act tough to ensure the country goes back to a magic low inflationary phase for concerted growth.

Tata Steel to grow organically, new acquisitions unlikely: MD

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Tata Steel Ltd will look to grow organically, and the steel giant is under "no pressure" to look at fresh acquisitions during this decade, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director T V Narendran said. Narendran said that the Jamshedpur-based behemoth will fuel its growth ambitions to more than double its output, relying on organic growth at its existing sites. "Most of our growth in the last few years has been through the inorganic route (acquisitions). Currently, we are in a position where all our growth ambitions can be met through organic growth in our existing sites. "We don't really need to acquire any new assets to grow (output) to 40-50 MTPA (million tonnes per annum) from the present level of 20 MTPA... We will rely more on organic growth during this decade," Narendran told PTI in an interview.

Global factors, macro data, earnings to drive mkt trends

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global markets trends, inflation, release of industrial output data and quarterly earnings will dictate movement of the equity benchmarks this week, analysts said, adding that volatility might continue amid slew of announcements of macroeconomic data at the global level too. Moreover, foreign fund movement, crude oil prices and trend in rupee would also act as major drivers for the equity market, they added. "The direction of global equity markets along with movement in dollar index and crude oil prices will continue to dominate while inflation numbers of the USA on May 11 and inflation and IIP numbers of India on May 12 will also cause volatility in the market," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd. Meena said the last batch of



Foreign fund movement, crude oil prices and trend in rupee would also act as major drivers for the equity market, they added.

fourth quarter earnings will have a stock-specific movement with SBI, Tata Motors, L&T, UPL, Tech Mahindra and Cipla are among the key results slated to be announced. "This week, participants will first react to Reliance numbers which were announced post-market on Friday. Besides, developments on the Russia-Ukraine front and performance of global markets will

be on the radar. "On the macroeconomic front, IIP (Index of Industrial Production) and CPI (Consumer Price Inflation) data are scheduled for May 12 and market will be eyeing these numbers to gauge the next possible move from the RBI," said Ajit Mishra, VP Research, Religare Broking. Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries

Ltd on Friday reported a 22.5 per cent rise in its net profit for the quarter ended March 2022 on the back of bumper oil refining margins, steady growth in telecom and digital services and strong momentum in the retail business. This week, market will track inflation numbers across the globe, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Discoms outstanding dues to gencos rise 4 pc to Rs 1,21,765 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Total outstanding dues of electricity distribution companies to power producers rose by 4.04 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,21,765 crore in May 2022, according to the official data. Discoms owed a total of Rs 1,17,026 crore to power generation firms in May 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators). On a sequential basis too, total dues in May 2022 increased from Rs 1,20,954 crore in April 2022. The PRAAPTI portal was launched in May 2018 to bring transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and discoms. In May 2022, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of a grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 1,06,902 crore as against Rs 94,354 crore in the same month a year ago.

MONEY MATTERS

'Commercial vehicle industry to see double-digit growth this fiscal'



The commercial vehicle industry is expected to grow in double-digits this fiscal, driven by favourable demand conditions amid accelerated economic activities, although high fuel prices and increase in interest rates on vehicle loans are headwinds, according to Tata Motors Executive Director Girish Wagh. The commercial vehicles segment, which saw its peak in 2018-19, with industry volumes of over 10 lakh units, went into a downturn in the following two fiscal years, has begun to pick up momentum from the last financial year. While it may take longer to reach the highest volumes again, in terms of payload, the industry could reach the previous peak sooner amid rising demand for commercial vehicles (CVs) with higher payloads. "I think last year, the economy started doing well again and we saw growth in the commercial vehicle market by around 26 per cent. We (Tata Motors) have grown by 33 per cent. We have done better than the industry," Wagh told PTI. In the context of the last three years, he said, "FY19, was our previous peak, when the commercial vehicle industry volumes crossed 1 million (units). After that, we have had two years of downtime. FY20, which was the year of preparing for BS-VI transition and FY21, which was the year of COVID, if I may say so. In both these years, the market dropped and FY21 volumes were almost 52 per cent of FY19 volumes."

Cargo-partner looks to increase turnover to Rs 1,500 cr in 3 yrs



Logistics firm cargo-partner on Sunday said it looks to increase its turnover to Rs 1,500 crore over the next three years as it has framed a three-pronged strategy, including expansion of its warehousing business, to drive growth. With the e-commerce market growing at a very fast pace, the company plans to expand in the area of warehousing, cargo-partner Managing Director (India) Rajiv Singh said in an interview. "At present, we are aiming to grow from Rs 530 crore to a Rs 1,500-crore company in the next three years and we are ready to invest as much capital as will be required," Singh said. The company, which at present operates in 14 cities in India, plans to expand to 10 more cities in the next two-three years. "Due to the pick-up in domestic demand... we have set up our warehouses in 2-3 cities as well. I can say that we are in a very mature stage of expansion plan as to how we grow our company to meet the increasing demand of the people," Singh said. The company which is eyeing growth in the pharmaceutical space believes that India is the one the largest manufacturers of medicines and there are ample opportunities for big firms to come up with more innovations in this area. "There are ample opportunities for many big companies to come up with more innovations in this area and make efforts to make it affordable to arrange and make the cold chains in India affordable," the managing director said.

PSU general insurers may get capital infusion of Rs 3,000-5,000 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government may infuse Rs 3,000-5,000 crore additional capital in the three public sector general insurance companies based on their performance and requirement during the year, sources said. The capital infusion would help improve the financial health of the general insurance firms -- National Insurance Company Limited, Oriental Insurance Company Limited and United India Insurance Company. In the last financial year, the government made capital infusion of Rs 5,000 crore in these three insurance companies. During 2020-21, Rs 9,950

crore was infused in three PSU general insurers by the government out of which Rs 3,605 crore was infused in United India Insurance, Rs 3,175 crore in National Insurance and Rs 3,170 crore in Oriental Insurance. Fund support was given to the weak general insurance companies last financial year, some more fund requirement is there to bring them back on profitability path, sources said. Capital infusion of Rs 3,000-5,000 crore may be done in these companies based on their performance, sources said, adding, the government has already enhanced their authorised capital keeping further fund infusion in mind.

UAE Minister to lead high-level biz delegation to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

UAE Minister of Economy Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri will be leading a high-level business delegation to India this week to discuss ways to further promote trade and investments between the two countries, an official said. The visit, from May 11-15, assumes significance as both the countries have implemented the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on May 1. UAE's minister for small and medium enterprises is also part of the delegation. "It will be an important visit as we have implemented the free trade pact," the official said.

LPG price hike part of global phenomenon: Goa CM's wife

PNS ■ PANAJI

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's wife Sulakshana Sawant has said the rise in LPG cylinder prices is not restricted to the state, but is part of a global phenomenon, and expressed confidence that the government will work out some solution soon. Talking to reporters on Saturday, she said the state government was trying to offset the impact of price rise through various social welfare schemes implemented for people of the coastal state. The cooking gas LPG prices were on Saturday hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder, the second increase in rates in just over six weeks following the firming of international energy rates.



working on it," said Sulakshana Sawant, who formerly headed the Goa BJP women's wing. Citizens might have to face the price rise for some time, but "something will work out soon," she said. Asked about the Goa government limiting its promise of providing three free gas cylinders only to families under the below poverty line (BPL) category, she said past experiences showed that many people who could afford to pay were taking advantage of such schemes. "For example, the Ladli Lakshmi scheme, where we saw well-off families availing its benefit," she said, referring to the scheme providing a one-time amount of Rs 1 lakh for a girl's education or marriage.

The non-subsidised LPG now costs Rs 999.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder in New Delhi, up from Rs 949.50 previously, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. Since April 2021, the prices have risen by Rs 190 per cylinder. "The LPG cylinder price rise is not restricted to the state. It is part of a global phenomenon. The government is

Airports Authority of India partners with self help groups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In efforts to help artisans, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has started providing space for self help groups at various airports to sell their locally-developed products. Self Help Groups (SHGs) are already showcasing their products at 12 airports, including at Agartala, Kushinagar, Udaipur and Madurai, under the AVSAR (Airport as Venue for Skilled Artisans of the Region) initiative. Airports at Varanasi, Calicut, Kolkata, Coimbatore and

Raipur, among others, in coordination with the respective state governments are in the process of allotting space to local SHGs, according to AAI. Other airports that plan to have SHG outlets are Vizag, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Jorhat. "Showcasing the unique identity and culture of the various regions and states, the objective of AVSAR initiative is to not only provide visibility/platform to SHGs at airports but also introduce the heritage and ethos of the place to air travellers," AAI



Chairman Sanjeev Kumar said in a statement to PTI. He also said AAI is committed to contributing to the prime minister's vision of creating an atmosphere for

strengthening SHGs and promoting local artisans. Outlets of various SHGs are already open at 12 airports -- Agartala, Dehradun, Kushinagar, Udaipur, Amritsar,

Belagavi, Chennai, Ranchi, Indore, Surat, Madurai and Bhopal. In the given space -- an area of 100-200 square feet -- at each airport, SHGs will display the products made by rural women and artisans. The space would be allotted to SHGs by turns where in each group will get to display their products for 15 days. AVSAR has been started to help build strong grassroots institutions empowering poor rural women and to provide promising market opportunities and right promotional avenues, AAI said.

Graymatics mulls opening

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CCTV-based video analytics solutions company, Graymatics, is exploring opening an additional development centre in India, a market it considers to be a "nerve centre" for its growing operations, according to a top company official. The company has a development centre in Bengaluru, although it has provided employees with flexibility to work remotely since the start of the pandemic. Graymatics founder Abhijit Shanbhag told PTI that the company is now mulling a new development centre for which locations such as Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR are in the reckoning. "Our staff is currently fairly well distributed, and it does not make sense to have just one development centre in Bengaluru. We will expand, based on convenience of staff, available talent pool, and proximity to clients," Shanbhag said. Graymatics is looking to have a new development centre in place in 9-12 months, Shanbhag added. The company sees India as a nerve centre for its operations.

Rate hike wasn't surprising, timing was: Sitharaman

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the recent interest rate hike by the Reserve Bank was not surprising for her but the timing was, asserting that the rising cost of funds will not impact the government's planned infrastructure investments. For the first time since August 2018, RBI had

on May 4 delivered a blunt 40 basis points increase in key repo rate to 4.40 per cent, and also hiked the cash reserve ratio by 50 basis points to 4.5 per cent after an unscheduled meeting of the rate setting panel, citing increased inflation pressures following the Ukraine war and the resultant spike in crude oil prices. Retail infla-



tion printed at 6.9 per cent in March and the April reading is forecast to top 7.7 per cent. "The timing of RBI's rate hike came as a surprise but not the action itself as people thought it should have been done anyway...It came as a surprise because it's between the two MPCs (monetary policy committee) meetings. But the US Fed had been saying it all the while," Sitharaman said.

Macrotech to invest Rs 3,800 cr in FY23 on realty projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Macrotech Developers will invest Rs 3,800 crore this fiscal year on construction of its various ongoing and new projects as it has set a target to deliver 10,000 homes by next March, a top company official said. The company, which got listed last year by raising Rs 2,500 crore through its Initial Public Offer (IPO), markets its product under the Lodha

brand. In an interview with PTI, Macrotech Developers MD and CEO Abhishek Lodha said: "We spent about Rs 2,600 crore on construction last fiscal year. Our construction spend is estimated at Rs 3,800 crore during the current fiscal." He attributed the increase in expenditure on construction to a significant rise in number of projects being executed and a strong pipeline of new launches.

Future Enterprises to raise Rs. 3,000 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Debt-ridden Future Group firm Future Enterprises Ltd expects to raise around Rs 3,000 crore from selling its stake in the insurance business to pare debt, which may save the company from facing the rigour of the insolvency process, according to industry sources. Earlier on Thursday, Future Enterprises Ltd completed the sale of its 25 per cent equity in Future Generali India Insurance Company Ltd (FGIICL) to joint venture

partner Generali for Rs 1,266.07 crore. After this transaction, FEL will directly and indirectly continue to hold 24.91 per cent shares in FGIICL. "Now in the next 30-40 days, they will sell the remaining 25 per cent stake of the Generali insurance business for another Rs 1,250 crores to another entity," a source said. Besides, FEL is also planning to sell its 33.3 per cent stake in its Life Insurance JV - Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Limited (FGILICL).

'Lower taxes on hybrid cars can help faster adoption of EVs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lowering taxes on hybrid vehicles can lead to faster adoption of electric vehicles in the country, according to a senior official of Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL). The automaker noted that hybrid technology is currently best suited for Indian conditions as it is not dependent on external charging infrastructure. The total tax incidence on hybrid vehicles in the country is 43 per cent, which is inclusive of GST, while battery electric vehicles attract a tax of about 5 per cent. "There is a big gap (in taxes). So, yes it would be a welcome

The total tax incidence on hybrid vehicles in the country is 43 per cent, which is inclusive of GST, while battery electric vehicles attract a tax of about 5 per cent.



step if the government could support us (by reducing tax on hybrid vehicles as well) ...We request the government if they could consider it," Honda Cars

India Ltd (HCIL) Vice-President (Marketing and Sales) Kunal Behl told PTI. He further said: "We believe if they (government) can

reduce it, the adoption of the electric vehicles would be very fast." Behl noted that hybrid vehicles could help in the

transition to fully electric vehicles while at the same time helping in cutting down vehicular emissions and fossil fuel consumption. "We really respect the government's understanding that they want to bring down the emission levels...they want to reduce the consumption of fuels, so both these objectives are met by the hybrid vehicles. So, I am sure there could possibly be a thought which goes in the government into relooking into favourable conditions where customers can adapt to such technologies faster," he stated. Honda believes that hybrids are the best solution for the country as buyers do not

encounter range anxiety issues and there are no curbs on the performance of the vehicle as well, Behl noted. "According to us in the current scenario there is nothing better than this (hybrid)... it is the best solution right now," he added. The company, which has forayed into the mainstream hybrid segment with the introduction of City e:HEV, plans to ultimately transition to full battery electric vehicles as per the global vision of its Japan-based parent company. Honda globally plans to launch 30 EV models by 2030, with an annual production volume of more than 20 lakh units.

Aditi Rao to debut at the Cannes Film Festival this year



The 75th annual Cannes Film Festival is an upcoming film festival that is scheduled to take place from May 17 to May 28, 2022. The film festival is going to be huge for India this year as Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone will represent the country once again at Cannes. The *Padmaavat* actor will be a part of the jury at the 75th edition of the film festival. Now, as per the latest development, popular actor Aditi Rao Hydari is all set to make her debut at the 75th Cannes Film Festival representing the innovative global smartphone brand Vivo India. Opening up about her Cannes debut, Aditi Rao Hydari, who was last seen in *Hey*

Sinamika, spoke to ANI as she expressed her excitement to walk the red carpet of the Cannes Film Festival. She said, "I am excited and thrilled to walk the red carpet of the Cannes Film Festival to represent the brand and India on the global stage." The *Bhoomi* actor further added that as an artist, being a part of a prestigious institution that celebrates cinema is an exhilarating feeling.

was that day and after that there was no communication. For those two weeks, he was on the ventilator and there was no conversation and no communication." She added, "There was no interaction. Well, there he was, looking at me, and I took an iPad with the alphabet and I told him to point out what he wanted to say, but he couldn't lift his finger. It was just Ranbir and me in the hospital, and to see him go through that was so tormenting. To see a man like him, he wanted to say so much, and he couldn't

express. I couldn't see him like that." She also said that having grown up together through a companionship of 40-45 years, it was difficult to get used to Rishi's absence. Recently, on Rishi's death anniversary, Neetu took to her Instagram and wrote, "Today is two years since Rishi ji left us... losing a partner of 45 years was difficult and painful at that time the only way to heal my heart was to keep myself mentally occupied. Movies and television helped me achieve that.

Neetu Kapoor revisited the time when she last spoke to Rishi Kapoor and recalled how she and their son Ranbir Kapoor were the only people to see the late actor through his struggle in the hospital during his last days. Rishi Kapoor passed away on April 30, 2020 at the age of 69.

when his last film, *Sharmaji Namkeen* released. April 13, 1979 was when we got engaged. April 13, 2020 was the last time he spoke to me. Ranbir and Alia got married on April 14, but the puja was on April 13. Rishi went on a ventilator

'He wanted to say so much but couldn't'; says Neetu Kapoor remembering the last days of *Bobby* actor Rishi Kapoor

Ranbir and Alia Bhatt tied the knot on April 14 this year with their engagement taking place a day prior. Neetu has now said that April 13 also marked the last time she talked to Rishi, back in 2020. The late actor was put on a ventilator after that. Neetu shared, "March 31



Rishiji will always be remembered and will stay in everyone's heart forever." She also posted a video clip of a woman paying tribute to Rishi Kapoor on the dance reality show *Dance Deewane Juniors*. Neetu is a judge on the show. She will next be seen in *Dharma Productions Jug Jug Jeeyo*, directed by Raj Mehta. The film also features Anil Kapoor, Varun Dhawan and Kiara Advani.

Acclaimed comic book artist George Perez dies at 67

George Perez, an acclaimed comic book artist and writer known for his influential work on such superhero titles as the Avengers, Wonder Woman and the Teen Titans, has died, Marvel and DC Comics announced. Perez was 67. He revealed last year that he was battling pancreatic cancer. "George Perez was an artist, a writer, a role model and a friend. His work paved seminal stories across comics, and his legacy of kindness and generosity will never be forgotten," Marvel Entertainment said on Twitter.



DC Comics tweeted that Perez's contributions were pivotal in both driving and reinventing DC's long and rich history. Perez and writer Marv Wolfman had created many characters including Cyborg, Raven and Starfire. Their *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, a reboot, saw several major characters killed off in a multiverse saga that still resonates in popular culture. Perez was known for his clean, dynamic and realistic style. "George Perez never went half way, in art or life. He pushed the limit of what a comic could do: his style was somehow, impossibly both overwhelmingly powerful

and subtly graceful," tweeted Tom King, a comic book writer who, like Perez, had won a coveted Eisner Award, an accolade akin to an Oscar in the industry. Perez's family had moved in the 1940s from Puerto Rico to New York, where his father found work in a factory. His talents emerged early. Perez began working as an assistant at Marvel before turning 20, and was soon working on titles including

Astonishing Tales and *The Avengers*. DC publisher Jim Lee said Perez's art style was "both dynamic and incredibly expressive... the per-

fect storytelling canvas for some of the most important events in DC history."



Selena to make her hosting debut

Singer and actress Selena Gomez is all set to make her hosting debut on 'Saturday Night Live' on May 14. As per Variety, Gomez will co-host the comic episode with Post Malone. One of the upcoming episodes

of 'Saturday Night Live' will also see Benedict Cumberbatch as a host, marking his second time leading the NBC comedy series. Arcade Fire will be the musical guest. It will be the band's fifth time on 'Saturday Night Live'.

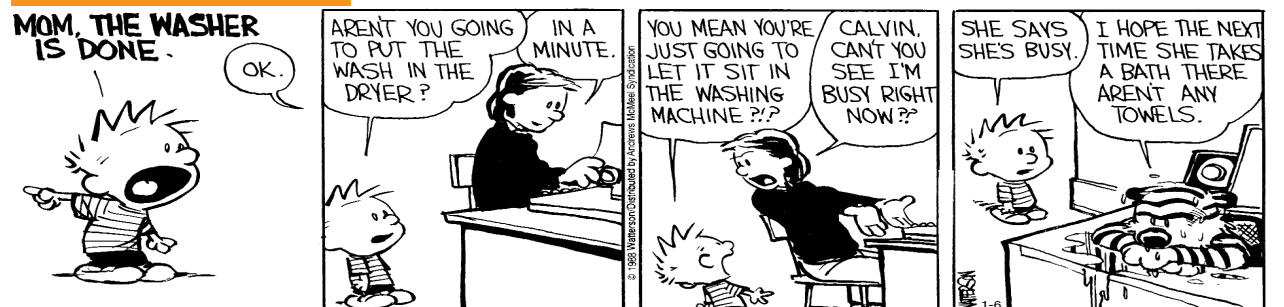
Meanwhile, on the acting front, Gomez is coming up with the second season of the hit Hulu series *Only Murders in the Building*, which premieres June 28. The murder mystery and comedy show also stars Steve Martin and Martin Short.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



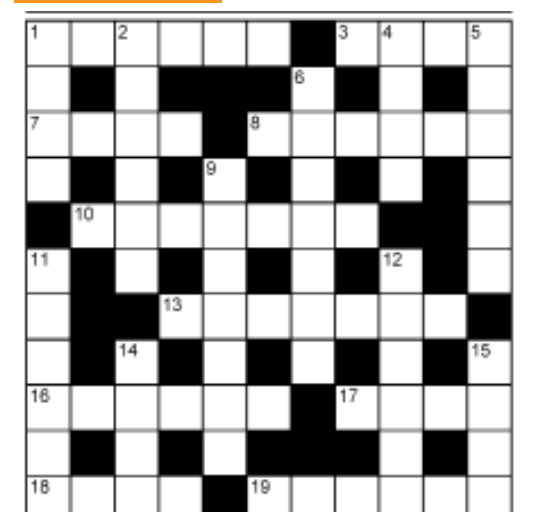
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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Rules

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

ACROSS

- Meat from a sheep
- Talk in a friendly way
- A sewed joint
- Wound someone
- Envious
- A green gemstone
- Cunning
- Moist
- Border
- Jail

DOWN

- A face disguise
- Go on a journey
- Drag along
- Three times four
- Ask
- A region's weather conditions
- Save from danger
- Forever
- A long sharp animal tooth
- Twirl around



GINGER MEGGS



Raise in the new unicorn; THE METAVERSE

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Since Facebook changed its name to 'meta', the term 'metaverse' has become a hot topic. It looks like the gamers have already been involved with the concept for the entirety of their gaming careers.

Indeed, Pratik Gauri, CEO and co-founder of 5ire, claims that the term metaverse became even more popular after it was revealed that the sector could be worth more than 800 billion dollars by 2025 and more than 2.5 trillion by 2030.

"The vertical has been around since at least 2019 and has produced some winning contenders, especially in the commercial space to help businesses humanize their in-person online interactions beyond a zoom call during a pandemic that just refuses to quit," he said.

The current metaverse concept is looking to accomplish something that focuses on real-life aspects.

Ria Bajaj, founder and head creative technologist, believes that the metaverse is here to change the way you look at marketing from a whole new perspective. It is largely touted as web 3.0. Interesting, isn't it?

She continued, "To make it easier for those who are new, the metaverse is brimming with innovative virtual reality potential for brands to harness in the time to come." The metaverse also offers more than what one's memory can imagine, from live shopping, to virtual stores, fashion shows, product launches, office spaces, workshops, and workplace events. The metaverse thrives on consumer experience and creating strong, engaging communities.

According to Bhavik Mehta, brand chief at Thinkin' Birds, "When a new phenomenon is introduced in the market, it is certain to create ripples in the ocean of brands. It is something that has created waves, not just ripples. We now trust marketing to leverage this and come up with a concept of the metaverse, making consumers consume content more comfortably in 3D. Although it is a ripe concept, brands around the world are quick to jump on this bandwagon. The pandemic has



already taught us how to work remotely, and the metaverse just made it interesting by providing a virtual environment where we can capitalize on our assets and also generate revenue. The opportunities the metaverse holds are endless. However, brands also need to keep a long-term vision for the metaverse utility and establish value-building relationships with their customers. Given that people spend a good amount of time on the internet consuming content, adding a 3D experience to their consumption only nurtures their love for your brand."

When stepping foot into the metaverse, users are able to create a digital version of themselves that serves as their digital twin. It's currently unclear whether there will be only a single metaverse in the future or a bunch of them, but many companies are currently battling against each other in terms of quality to create the best metaverse product and take the largest market share.

Microsoft and IBM are preparing to pour large sums of money into projects related to the metaverse. But, surprisingly, the emerging sentiments around technology are leaning

more towards collaboration than competition.

Enjin, a major provider of platforms for building Web3 and VR/AR games, has created its virtual headquarters on another metaverse competitor called Bloktopia. People may not need to commute to work every day since they have the option to spawn in their company's conference room in the blink of an eye. If you are wondering who's already in the metaverse, Brands like H & M, Gucci, and Nike are

already a part of the metaverse and are boosting sales.

Want to know how? "Be open to creating digital versions of your product. Develop a value offering. Virtualisation offers a bundle of value benefits. Be sure to develop it further to make it more coherent for today. A unique giveaway for consumers would be a great pinch of recall. Also, since wholesale is the ultimate goal, it is imperative to create a universe where consumers can actually experience the product and the manner of purchase. Lastly, the metaverse puts people before brands. The way you have positioned your brand

needs to change, as now you will be talking directly to consumers," guides Ria. Right now, multiple metaverse projects are auctioning land and buildings to the highest bidders. In addition, blockchain technology is presently expected to play a major role in building the metaverse because it permits a verifiable claim of ownership and transferability of digital assets. Furthermore, another leading contender, Decentraland, has created an entire 3D virtual world that belongs to its users. They are free to create virtual structures, from theme parks to galleries, and even allow them to monetize these virtual structures by charging other users to visit them. All powered by Ethereum blockchain technology. Bhavik engages and tells us, "This new-age technology will help companies present concepts virtually to their clients and will make it easier to manage a bigger team without actually being present. Your team can work out of remote locations with the help of such technology. It will become simple to explore the work and campaigns across the globe, which will make it look very realistic and fancy, depending on the type of work they represent. This technology creates itself by recording and preserving intellectual property that helps it make possible changes."

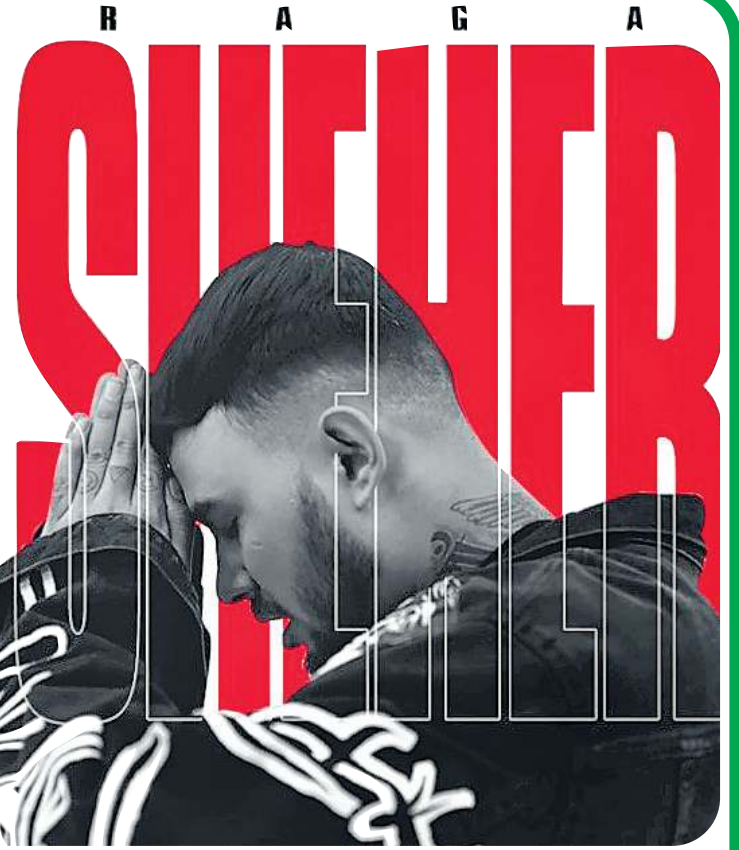
It is time to bridge the gap between physical and virtual marketing and leave no stone unturned to take your brand to every consumer through the metaverse now.



K RAMYA SREE

Ravi Mishra aka Raga, an acclaimed Indian rapper, singer and lyricist, known as 'Ewill Myth' in his early underground career, has built a name for himself in this highly-competitive world.

While constantly putting out music as an English rapper and being heavily involved in the New Delhi underground hip hop culture, he simultaneously started writing in Hindi. Just after seeing his Hindi rapping take a shape, he decided to re-introduce himself as 'RAGA' which at that moment received a great response. He has continued to drop inde-



Streets inspired me towards hip hop more like a lifestyle ; Raga

pendent music through his YouTube channel ever since he started and gained respect in the scene as a veteran.

He is now coming up with his new track 'Sheher' with Def Jam India.

The journey of Raga is not all glory. He says that he grew up in a toxic environment and was surrounded by negativity which led him to drug abuse. In his upcoming track 'Sheher', Raga mostly elaborates on how the streets inspired him and pushed him towards hip hop more like a lifestyle.

He also talks about the toxicity of his hood and how he had to deal with the law and the drug abuse and how this toxicity inspired him towards rap and making a career out of it.

While growing in a shady place in Delhi, Raga faced some of the biggest challenges in his life, like depression and drug abuse. At a time when he felt he almost ruined his life, Raga discovered his passion in writing poetry in rhythm, and it became a part of his daily life and soon his breadwinner.

Taking us through his journey from growing up in a dangerous neighborhood to becoming the most celebrated rapper, he shares, "I was born and raised in Laxmi Nagar, East Delhi. I was exposed to rock music because of having an older sister, and I didn't understand it until she was married. I began writing music while I was between the ages of 14 and 15. I bought a Philips microphone and recorded using audacity, a digital audio workstation. I was the first person in my neighborhood to own a laptop. With no rappers to draw inspiration from in India at the time, I was strongly affected by English rap singers such as Eminem."

He released his first track under the name Raga, 'Raahat', and a few more tracks. These steadily built a profile for himself, until he released

'Jannapaar', which went viral and earned him roughly 2 lakhs overnight, and that's the single that put him on the map, on everyone's radar.

"Things I witnessed around me, my personal experiences, my love of music, and my early exposure to hip hop encouraged me to start rapping. Rapping is a form of self-expression that I used to convey myself and the experiences I've had and continue to have," he added.

According to Raga, 'Jannapaar', 'Rap Ka Mausam', 'Nayak', and 'Samasya', were among the first songs to gain widespread popularity for him. These are the songs that went viral in a row during the YouTube era.

Having been a victim of drug abuse and mental health issues, Raga explains how big are the issues related to mental health. He shares, "Mental health problems can be extremely serious, and the use of drugs and alcohol just makes things worse since it alters the chemical wiring and operation of the brain. Mental health issues are not to be taken lightly, and anyone experiencing them should seek help and contact a therapist or psychiatrist. Drugs and alcohol will not cure mental illness but will only make it worse in the long term."

Seeking aid for mental health problems is just as common as getting care for physical problems. He also wants schools to teach their kids about men-

tal health issues from a young age. "When you have a bunch of friends who are doing drugs and doing the bad things and you want to feel like you're one of them, it's all well and good, but remember that drugs don't pay in the long run. Recognise that drugs are both a temporary source of delight and a doorway to more harmful addictions. If you're having trouble quitting drugs, seek help or simply look at me for inspiration," he said, who feels his biggest lesson learnt in his life was the drug misuse.

He continues, "The most common misperception people have of using drugs is that we can always control things and overcome addiction. You are unable to do so. It also taught me how to approach music as a profession and a business. To set high goals and put out effort. I've always enjoyed art, but you must learn things the hard way occasionally. The pandemic and family difficulties forced me to restart my work."

On sharing about his mantra of dealing with stress, he explains in conclusion, "For me, the meaning of stress has evolved with time, just as you develop and get a greater understanding of things. I try to keep myself occupied and appreciate the mental silence. So, for me, the slogan is to keep oneself active, but not as an escape. Accept your feelings, regrets, worry, and guilt. It's an endless cycle. So, while being silent and observant, I engage my thoughts and mind. I attempt to keep myself engaged by spending time with my loved ones, learning new things, reading, and doing things that I enjoy."

Home decoration is now a necessity and not something that comes after all other home expenses are taken care of," he said.



Home decors; now a necessity

K RAMYA SREE

With changing times, everyone wants their space to be lively, cultivated and sophisticated, reflecting their lifestyle. The demand for new brands in the segment is on the rise with everyone seeking creativity even in the furniture they place at home.

Established in 2015, The Décor Kart, a digital-first interior brand, aims to add a personalized touch to your home décor with their unconventional products.

Nihal Kalra, CEO & Co-Founder, The Décor Kart, shares with us the trends he foresees in the interior designing and home décor space this year.

Curved Furniture : Curvy furniture is about to have a heyday. As we continue to shift away from straight-lined minimalism and towards cozier interiors, our furniture is likely to get softer and more sculptural.

Plush, Cozy Textures: Texture plays a key role in how cozy a space feels, so

expect to see lots of plush textiles in 2022.

Dual-Purpose Rooms: Rooms will be designed for double duty; i.e. dining rooms walls lined with wine storage or books, guest rooms fitted with desks, bedrooms equipped with exercise equipment.

As people spend more time in their homes, they expect the spaces to work harder for them.

Talking about their journey, he said, "The business was started from a common desire to provide homewares that are approachable and yet don't compromise on design, that impress down to the last detail. Since then, the journey has been extremely fulfilling. What began as an independent B2B business in 2002 in Delhi has now become a national home brand."

Sharing about the new innovations being introduced lately, he said, "Being in the field of home décor and interiors, innovation has always been an integral part of our product portfolio. Even now, we are planning to introduce two new features including Augmented Reality

for our top selling products.

Users will now be able to see our products inside their homes using their phone camera which is one-of-a-kind blend between physical and digital #phygital."

Another service that they will be introducing is the interior design advice for our patrons at our online and physical stores. Interior design consultants will be available at your service for any recommendation you require for your home. In his experience, because of the pandemic, Nihal feels that there is a fundamental shift in how people view their homes. Home decoration is now a necessity and not something that comes after all other home expenses are taken care of. "COVID-19 was unexpectedly a catalyst in the growth of the interior design space. Since people were spending an increased amount of time in their abodes, they realized the importance of a harmonious work from home space. A

Having skill is one thing, but knowing what to do when is important. They've (Bowlers) been put under pressure a couple of times but they've stuck to their strengths and been brave with the ball — **KL RAHUL**

MI eye hat-trick of wins



Mumbai vs Kolkata
Live from 7:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Kolkata Knight Riders resembled a sinking ship ahead of a rather inconsequential IPL-15 match against bottom-placed Mumbai Indians who, even if already out of reckoning, will have their tails up here on Monday.

Panned for trying out too many combinations at the top, a part of their constant chopping and changing strategy this season which backfired on them pretty badly, KKR are coming off a 75-run drubbing at the hands of table toppers Lucknow Super Giants. While MI will enter the upcoming game on the back of a five-run win over second-placed Gujarat Titans, MI under Rohit Sharma have already been eliminated from the race to the playoffs as they have just four points from 10 matches and even if they win all their remaining games, the five-time champions can reach only 12 points, far from what is needed to advance to the next stage. Royal Challengers Bangalore have 12 points already and three other teams have 16 and 14 points.

Two-time winners KKR, under new captain Shreyas Iyer, came a cropper against Lucknow Super Giants on

Saturday and the huge margin of defeat has left them with eight points from 11 games. They have three matches left and the maximum they can reach is 14 points, which is again something that cannot guarantee even a fourth-place finish.

However, despite the inconsequential nature of the match, players from both the beleaguered sides can still gun for individual glory at the DY Patil Stadium.

With the season coming to a close for both the teams, the focus will also be on how to go about the task in the next edition, apart from looking to capping off their hugely disappointing campaigns on a positive note. Heading into the game, the Mumbai Indians enjoy an advantage thanks to their massive 22-8 head-to-head record against the Knights Riders.

At the moment, the best part about MI is that both their openers -- skipper Rohit and Ishan Kishan -- clicked together against the Titans and they would certainly look to convert their scintillating 40s into bigger scores against the struggling Knight Riders.

MI captain Rohit is also approaching a milestone as he is 88 runs away from completing 5000 runs for the franchise in the IPL.

CSK POST 208/6 AGAINST DC

points table

PO.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	LSG	11	8	3	0	16	0.703
2.	GT	11	8	3	0	16	0.120
3.	RR	11	7	4	0	14	0.326
4.	RCB	11	6	5	0	12	-0.444
5.	DC	10	5	5	0	10	0.641
6.	SRH	10	5	5	0	10	0.325
7.	PBKS	11	5	6	0	10	-0.231
8.	KKR	11	4	7	0	8	-0.304
9.	CSK	10	3	7	0	6	-0.431
10.	MI	10	2	8	0	4	-0.725

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Devon Conway continued his red-hot form, smashing his third half-century on the trot as Chennai Super Kings put up an imposing 208 for 6 against Delhi Capitals in an IPL match here on Sunday.

Conway scored 87 off 49 balls with seven fours and five sixes and also added 110 for the opening wicket with Rituraj Gaikwad (41 off 33 balls) to lay the foundation for a big score.

Conway added another 59 runs for the second wicket with Shivam Dube (32 off 19 balls) before MS Dhoni (21 not off 8 balls) added insult to DC's injuries at the tag end.

The South Africa-born New Zealander has been one of the key players for an ageing CSK side in transition and has responded nicely to captain Dhoni's call of being a like-for-like replacement of Faf du Plessis.

What makes Conway a stand-out performer among most overseas recruits is his mastery over spinners which is an absolute must to be a consistent success in IPL.

Whether CSK make it to play-off this time or not, Conway in all



likelihood will be serving the franchise for the next five years at least. Along with Gaikwad, Conway

showed how aesthetically pleasing stroke-play can destroy the confidence of rival bowlers. There

weren't any lap-scoops, switch hits, reverse flicks but shots within the 'V' with immaculate use of

boundary meter

4s	1480
6s	786

feet while negotiating the spinners. It did help that DY Patil Stadium track resembled a highway due to its flat nature.

Kuldeep Yadav's (3-0-43-0) length was completely in disarray as Conway repeatedly came down the ground to loft the deliveries with disdain.

If the delivery was flighted, Conway would come down the track and hit it down the ground or wide of long-on. If the bowler kept it flat, he would thump it through the covers and if it was fast and full, he would play the conventional sweep shot over deep square leg. The shot that stood out was a cover drive which was more like a slap with minimal back-lift.

Conway's third consecutive fifty came off 27 balls as poor Kuldeep had no clue as to what had hit him. His deliveries were like cannon fodder as he was hit for four fours and two sixes in his first spell. Conway repeated his 'dancing down the track' act in Kuldeep's second spell with another lofted six. It didn't help matters that Antich Nortje (4-0-42-3) and Shardul Thakur (3-0-38-0) bowled short during their first spell with Khaleel Ahmed (2/28 in 4 overs) being the only saving grace.

Conway's brutal yet classical assault gave Gaikwad time to gather his composure and play his own game at the other end as CSK reached 100 off 10 overs.

Finally, Gaikwad (41 off 33 balls) was dismissed when DC stuck to their gameplan and the opener was left in a tangle trying to tackle to a 152 kmph bouncer hurled by Nortje.

Faf, Wanindu set up RCB's win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Spinner Wanindu Hasaranga Spicked up a five-wicket haul after skipper Faf du Plessis' impactful half-century as Royal Challengers recorded a 67-run victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad to boost their playoff hopes in the IPL here on Sunday.

Opting to bat on a slow surface, du Plessis led from the front with a 50-ball 73 not out, while Dinesh Karthik (eight-ball 30 not out) provided the late flourish as RCB overcame an anxious start to post 192/3.

In response, Sunrisers Hyderabad were skittled out for 125 to crash to their fourth loss on the trot as Hasaranga stymied their chase with figures of 4-1-18-5.

The win also avenged their shocking nine-wicket loss to Hyderabad in the first leg at the Brabourne where Bangalore had collapsed to 68 all out.

Making amend for a sloppy outing on the field, Hasaranga cleverly used his wrong ones and derailed their chase in the middle overs with wickets of the hardhitting Nicholas Pooran and Jagadeesha Suchith in successive overs.

The Lankan then ended his spell in style with a double-wicket maiden, dismissing Shashank Singh and Umran Malik in successive deliveries to virtually seal it for Bangalore.

With this, he became the second bowler after Yuzvendra Chahal to get past the 20-wicket mark in the IPL. Hasaranga is now one wicket shy of current Purple Cap holder Chahal's tally of 22.

Hyderabad No 3 Rahul Tripathi made a fine 58 to keep them in the hunt but Josh Hazlewood (2/17) dismissed him and followed it up with the wicket of Kartik Tyagi next ball. For Bangalore, it was their



second win in a row, coming on the back of a hat-trick of defeats as they firmed up their place inside top-four.

Likewise Bangalore, Hyderabad too had a jittery start and went on to lose two wickets in the first over in their tall chase of 193.

Like Kohli, Williamson also went for a golden duck in a rare instance -- only third in IPL -- that a wicket fell on the first ball of both the innings.

Earlier, Du Plessis slammed eight boundaries and two sixes en route to his third fifty this season and seized the

initiative after he lost his opening partner Virat Kohli.

The South African veteran along with Rajat Patidar (48 in 38 balls; 4x4, 2x6) laid a solid foundation with a 105-run second wicket partnership off 73 balls.

But Hyderabad bowlers led

by spinner Jagadeesha Suchith (2/30) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (0/34) slowed things a bit in the middle overs before Dinesh Karthik gave a last-over flourish (25 runs) to prop up the total.

Making full use of a reprieve by Rahul Tripathi in the third ball of the final over, the Indian experienced wicket-keeper-batter went on to make a quickfire eight-ball 30 not out.

He smashed four sixes, three of them coming in succession followed by a boundary in the last over against Afghanistan debutant Fazalhaq Farooqi, en route to his entertaining cameo.

Hyderabad had their solitary moment of glory, the very first ball of the game when Kohli (0) got out for a third golden duck this season, sixth overall in IPL. This was also his second golden duck against the same team season.

Hetmyer leaves for Guyana, to return after first child's birth

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Rajasthan Royals on Sunday said that their West Indian batter Shimron Hetmyer has left for Guyana for the birth of his first child.

"We are helping him (Hetmyer) in every way we can, and our best wishes are with him and his wife Nirvani," the Royals said on their official Twitter handle.

They also said that Hetmyer would return to Mumbai soon and resume his duties for the franchise for the remaining matches of the IPL.

"We look forward to Shimron then returning to Mumbai, and resuming duties at the Royals for the remainder of our matches in IPL 2022," the franchise added.

Royals, who had defeated Punjab Kings in their last league game, will play Delhi Capitals in their next match.



I wasn't treated properly: Gayle on opting out of IPL-15

PTI ■ LONDON

One of T20 cricket's all-time greats, Chris Gayle has revealed that he opted out of IPL-15 because of lack of respect, saying he "wasn't treated properly" in the last couple of years despite doing so much.

The swashbuckling West Indian has been one of the top performers with the bat since the inception of the lucrative league.

After stints with Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore, 'the Universe Boss' joined Punjab Kings. But after enjoying a good 2019 season, when he finished as the sixth highest run-getter in the tournament, Gayle struggled to find a spot in the Punjab playing XI in 2020 and 2021. Last year, Gayle featured in 10 games and scored 193 runs at a strike rate of 125.32, while in 2020, he played just seven matches and amassed 288 runs. "For the last couple of years, the way the IPL went about, I felt like I wasn't treated properly," Gayle was quoted as saying by 'mirror.co.uk'.

"So I thought 'okay, you (Gayle) didn't get the respect



you deserved after you did so much for the sport and IPL. So I said 'okay, that's it, I'm not going to bother to enter the draft, so I left it as it is."

"There is always going to be life after cricket so I'm just trying to adapt to normality."

However, the big-hitting Jamaican has also vowed to return to the league next year, adding that he would love to

win a title with either RCB or Punjab Kings. "Next year I'm coming back, they need me! "I've represented three teams in the IPL -- Kolkata, RCB and Punjab. "Between RCB and Punjab, I would love to get a title, with one of those two teams. I had a great stint with RCB where I was more successful within the IPL, and Punjab, they've been good.



DC players forced into isolation after net bowler tests Covid+ve

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Delhi Capitals players were once again forced into isolation in the ongoing IPL-15 after a net bowler of the franchise tested positive for COVID-19.

"One net bowler tested positive today morning in test. Players have been asked to stay in rooms," IPL sources said hours ahead of their Sunday's match against Chennai Super Kings.

Delhi Capitals are scheduled to play against CSK in the day's second match, at the DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. Sources said a fresh round of testing took place on Sunday morning with all members of the contingent confined to their rooms.

It is the second time during the IPL 2022 that the Delhi team has been forced into isolation.

Earlier in the season, six members of the franchise including physio Patrick Farhart, all-rounder Mitchell Marsh, keeper-batter Tim Seifert and three other non-playing members had tested positive for the virus.

The Capitals' matches against Punjab Kings and Rajasthan Royals, originally scheduled to be played in Pune, were also moved to Mumbai.

As per the IPL protocol, Delhi Capitals will have to undergo another round of testing and till then all members will have to be isolated in their rooms.

McCullum rues KKR's power play struggles

PTI ■ PUNE

Kolkata Knight Riders were found wanting on more than one front, but head coach Brendon McCullum singled out their struggles in the power play, as a disappointing IPL campaign neared its end.

Former champions KKR suffered their seventh defeat on Saturday night, a 75-run drubbing by Lucknow Super Giants here.

"We struggled in the power play which has been a frustration for us throughout the season," McCullum said, adding that the team needs to find a way to be more aggressive without losing wickets in the first six overs.

The Shreyas Iyer-led side now finds itself on the brink of elimination. "We've been good throughout the middle phase and not too bad at the death," McCullum said at the post-match press conference.

"But in the power play we've been a little stuck and we've to find a method to not lose many wickets and also throw a few punches and get a



few boundaries," he reiterated. KKR have used several opening combinations this season but failed to find the one that clicks. Their openers have not been able to give kind of starts required for teams to win matches. "If you look around other teams at the top of the table, one of their opening

batters is also one of their highest run-scorers. It's an area we haven't been able to settle. Unfortunately, some of the guys haven't been in the form that they would have liked to. "That happens, sometimes. In a quick tournament, you do have to sometimes change personnel.

Rukshar is done effecting damsel in distress roles

-SHIKHA DUGGAL

The film *Ashok a Vanamlo Arjuna Kalyanam*, starring Rukshar Dhillon has premiered with positive reviews. Directed by Vidyasagar Chinta, the film has received praise for her acting and on-screen chemistry with the currently trending actor Vishwak Sen.

The celebration bash is going on in the city of Hyderabad and nothing can keep her satisfaction at bay. When we approached the actress to know how elated is she feeling after the box-office collection of her recent Tollywood hit, she stated, "Pandemic was a sun-downer for the film industry but now with the way film content is changing,

especially in south, nothing can stop the entertainment fraternity from booming back again with blockbuster hits. After the favorable outcome of my movie, I would continue to work with young directors as well. I can see their approach is so nuanced. Roles that give out a strong message to the society, moving trends through my performances and persuade young women to stand up for themselves is what I would love to dig deeper into now. I am done effecting damsels in distress roles."

Going with the story, Vishwak essays the role of Arjun, a small-time money lender in Telangana. At the age of 33, the man is still unmarried and becomes desperate to marry. His father, after much deliberation, arranges his match and transports Arjun to his engagement with Madhavi essayed by Rukshar.

She continued, "With this film, we proved that people are coming back to watch simple family-entertainers too. The grandeur of RRR was extremely massive, but our film made families laugh a lot. I witnessed it myself,

they had a gigantic smile on their faces.

Cinema is pretty much gone, and content is the king. This may sound hyperbolic, but as we see titles like *Baahubali*, *RRR*, *KGF* win, audiences are scanning movie length and making choices based on it. So is Rukshar. She further said, "Tollywood cinema has always been grand. But, you know what, OTT filled the gap. Most importantly, when I saw myself back on the big screens, it filled me with so many pleasurable feelings. Can't even begin to tell you. We even had a small success party, pictures went viral. My family got to watch my movie back in Bangalore and sms' couldn't stop pouring on how the theaters were full there."

Speaking about how do we live in a world where we don't lose cinema and keep the rewards coming in? The actress concluded saying, "Box-office collections won't lead me to the best actress awards. For a long time, we have been an industry that loves money, but we also love art. And, this art will bring me the best performance award, I am sure about it."

I'm just my moms loyal fan : Seerat Kapoor



dent where she went above and beyond to honor her mother and says, "Not a single day goes by when I am not reminded of her strength, grace, stability and the ability to take on life with a confident smile. When I observe mom's own life, I feel no doubt that I can too. She's the real star and my greatest inspiration. I'm just her loyal fan. Everything I have achieved in life has been because of her consistent support, love and encouragement. She calls me her battery, it's actually the other way round."

On sharing about her favorite childhood memory, the actress said, "Too many to choose. Moms spoil me silly all through childhood, buying me some of the most unique outfits. I also learnt through that journey, sometimes even money can't buy taste. I enjoy wearing brands but would carry any outfit, so long as it connects with me creatively. Mom introduced me to fashion and taught me how important it is to build an individual taste. Who knew today, it would become my extended identity."

Sharing about one ideal wish of her mother, that she is looking forward to complete, the actress said, "Honestly, she's very excited about my Bollywood debut and can't wait for my film *Maarich* to release. I have both my fingers and toes crossed, I would love to give her that experience."

Mother's are born with superpowers. No work in this world can be done without moms. She is the solution to all our problems. And when it comes to t-town actresses, mothers have always played a very important role. On this Mother's Day, Seerat Kapoor, like the rest of us, shares a few memories with her mother.

Actress Seerat Kapoor talks about an inci-

Vikrant to debut in *Spark* opposite Mehreen

Titled as *Spark*, Vikrant makes his debut as a hero with this action thriller. He is a successful businessman, who is entering into cinema with a passion and has huge plans on filmmaking.

Vikrant will be seen playing his role opposite Mehreen Pirzada, who is seen playing the female lead in the psychological thriller.

Directed by Aravind Kumar Ravi Varma, Deaf Frog productions is funding the project, which was launched by Politicians Talasani

Srinivas Yadav, Ranjith Reddy, Director Surender Reddy, Cinematographer Ratnavelu and Producer Anvesh Reddy on May 6.

A sensational music director will also provide the music. The first schedule of this action thriller will take place in Hyderabad, followed by other schedules in beautiful locations.

This psychological thriller features a stellar supporting cast that includes Vennela Kishore, Satya, Srikanth, Kiran Ayyangar, Annapurna, and many other well-known actors.



Rakul Preet was once called a 'stick'

Rakulpreet, who has not only made her name and massive fan following in the South film industry but also in Bollywood. But the irony here is that the actor was once called a 'stick' in Tollywood because she was underweight.

In fact, after giving in and gaining weight, when she arrived in Bollywood, she was asked to lose pounds.

Recently when Rakul Preet Singh appeared on actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra's chat show *Shape of You*, the actress spoke about how the

subject of weight in divas differs from Bollywood to South Indian movies.

When Shilpa recalled that she was asked to put on a few kilos for a south movie, Rakul shared, "When I debuted, Samantha and Kajal were already stars, and they were fit. I think people became conscious about how they look on the screen because the content was being consumed everywhere. But when I debuted, I was told I am too thin. People would call me stick and I would say no. But after two-three years I gave in also." Continuing the topic, the *Runway 34* actress also shared her experience when she had come to Mumbai. The actress explained, "When I came to Mumbai, I started auditioning at the age

of 20. I was told that I will have to lose weight because that was the standard of Bombay. But I haven't had any access or understanding since I was a kid."

The actress also shared that for appearing alongside Ajay Devgn in *De De Pyar De*, she had lost 10 kgs in 50 days. She adds, "I didn't think I was 10 kgs overweight, but I was."



Disha joins the cast of *Project K*

Disha Patani who was last seen in the movie *Radhe*, is all set to star in Nag Ashwin's tentatively titled movie *Project K*, alongside Prabhas, Deepika Padukone, and Amitabh Bachchan.

Billed as a multilingual sci-fi film, the upcoming feature is backed by production banner Vjayanthi Movies. The actor took to her Instagram story late Saturday night to share the

photo of a gift hamper sent by the makers of the movie.

"Dear Disha, *Project K* welcomes you. We are thrilled to have you on board," read the note signed by Vjayanthi Movies.

Patani is known for films such as *Malang* and *Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai*,

and will play an interesting role in *Project K*. Patani will next be seen in *Ek Villain Returns*, *Yodha*, and *KTina*.



Nayanthara finally to take that upward leap in her personal life

Nayanthara, who has been dating director Vignesh Shivan for quite some time now, might get married in June. Reports suggest that Nayanthara and Vignesh are planning to tie the knot on June 9, at Tirumala Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh. According to these reports, the couple have apparently zeroed in on their wedding date and venue. They are planning to have an intimate wedding with the presence of only their family and close friends.

