

ANALYSIS 7
MAHAPRABHUJI'S VISION OF
UNIVERSAL PEACE**MONEY 8**
ALL EFFORTS ARE ON TO INCREASE
COAL OUTPUT: COAL MINISTRY**SPORTS 11**
MEDVEDEV WINS,
SHAPOVALOV EXITS

VIJAYAWADA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

'YOU CAN
CONSIDER ME
A ONE-TAKE
ACTOR'

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**CONCERN OVER INDIAN-ORIGIN BOY
BEING ASSAULTED IN SCHOOL GOES VIRAL**

All four Indian-American members of the current US Congress have expressed deep concern over the recent incident of an Indian-origin boy being assaulted at a school in Texas, the video of which has gone viral online. In a rare joint statement on Monday, Indian-American Congressmen Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal said: "We are expressing our deep concern about the recent incident of bullying which occurred at Coppell Middle School North in the Coppell Independent School District (CISD)."

**DGCA WARNS AIRLINES NOT TO GIVE
UNSERVICEABLE SEATS TO PASSENGERS**

The aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday warned airlines against offering unserviceable seats to passengers on their domestic and international flights. Earlier this year, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation had conducted an audit of seats and other cabin fittings in aircraft of airlines, and found that many had broken or unserviceable seats. In a communique sent to all Indian carriers on Tuesday, the DGCA said that some of the carriers are offering unserviceable seats to passengers on their scheduled international and domestic operations. "This practice is not only causing inconvenience to the travellers but also inviting a serious safety concern as well," the regulator mentioned.

**UK PM FACES FRESH ALLEGATIONS AS
NEW 'PARTYGATE' PHOTOS EMERGE**

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is facing fresh allegations around the partygate scandal of illegal gatherings at Downing Street in breach of coronavirus lockdown rules after new images surfaced of him with a drink in hand. The pictures, released by ITV News channel, reportedly show Johnson at a farewell drinks party on November 13, 2020, for which at least one person is believed to have been fined by Scotland Yard. London Mayor Sadiq Khan is among Opposition Labour leaders calling for an explanation from the Metropolitan Police why the UK Prime Minister was not handed a second fine for that particular party.

**SNOWFALL, RAIN DISRUPT CHAR
DHAM YATRA, PILGRIMS STOPPED**

Snowfall and rain hit the Char Dham Yatra on Tuesday with thousands of pilgrims halted en route to Kedarnath and Yamunotri temples in the Garhwal Himalayas as a precautionary measure. Kedarnath began receiving snow early on Tuesday while the lower areas were lashed by rains prompting the authorities to stop the pilgrims for their safety in Gaurikund and Sonprayag. Pilgrims going to Yamunotri were also halted in Janakichatti, the last stopover on way to the famous shrine, as the weather turned worse in the afternoon. The peaks around Badrinath also received snow.

Konaseema burns after stir over name change

SP grievously hurt in stone-pelting; families of a Minister and an MLA shifted to safety; roadside vehicles torched

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The protest launched opposing naming the newly-carved out Konaseema district after the architect of the Indian Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar turned violent, pushing the serene Konaseema region into a boil here on Tuesday.irate mobs torched several buses and resorted to stone-pelting at various places.

District SP KSSV Subba Reddy, who was severely injured in a stone-pelting incident, was shifted to hospital and Amalapuram DSP Y Madhava Reddy had fallen unconscious. A minister and a ruling party MLA along with their families, had run out of their houses for life as the mob set their houses on fire. The irate protesters, who were prevented by police from taking out a protest rally in Amalapuram town, headquarters of Konaseema district, went berserk.

They pelted stones at police, torched wayside vehicles and a minister, a ruling party MLA along with their families had to run for their life as the angry protestors ransacked their houses and put them on fire.

To bring the situation under control, additional forces from the neighbouring districts were rushed. These additional forces



Protesters set fire to Andhra Pradesh Minister Pinipe Viswarup's residence at Amalapuram on Tuesday during the 'Chalo Konaseema' march against the proposal to rename Konaseema district as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district.

ANTI-SOCIALS BEHIND VIOLENCE: HOME MINISTER TANETI

Home Minister Taneti Vanita has said that some anti-social elements resorted to violent incidents in Amalapuram on Tuesday. She told the media that it is painful to note that some people were opposing naming Konaseema district after Dr. BR Ambedkar. It has been decided to name Konaseema district after Dr. Ambedkar on the demand of the people. All should feel proud of naming it after Ambedkar. She said that 20 police personnel were injured in stone-throwing incidents, two private school buses were set on fire and a police jeep was damaged by the mobs. "All those who were involved in the violent incidents in Amalapuram will be punished," she said.

had literally taken over the entire Amalapuram town by the night.

Sensing trouble, police had shifted Transport Minister, Pinipe Viswarup along with his family from their residence in

Amalapuram town to safety. The mob had ransacked the residence of the minister, damaged the furniture, and also torched the building.

2

**District's name changed only after
considering people's aspirations: Sajjala**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Strongly condemning the violence caused due to the protests against changing the name of Konaseema district to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema district government advisor, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said the decision was taken in the wake of demands from various organisations considering the aspirations of the people and added that all the political parties supported it.

Speaking to the media at the party central office here on Tuesday, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said Ambedkar was a great leader and the state government doesn't have any political interests in naming a district after him. He said some vested interests are responsible for the violence and the issue will be settled down soon.

Asserting that "No one is above the law" in the State government's policy, Sajjala Ramakrishna



Reddy said the government didn't involve in the investigation of the murder of former driver of MLC Anantha Udaya Bhaskar, and police were given free hand and added that they immediately registered a murder case and later arrested the MLC.

He slammed Opposition Chief N Chandrababu Naidu, Nara Lokesh, and a section of media for creating unnecessary ruckus over the case by politicising the issue.

Citing the incidents of TDP leader Chintamani Prabhakar and Bonda Uma's son, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy explained how Naidu always managed institutions to benefit their party people though they committed crimes.

He said the era of Naidu is over in TDP and he has been confining only to Tweets and added that he should move on by giving them power to his son in the upcoming Mahanadu.

Old Pension Scheme can't be implemented: Govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Consultative Committee on Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) has categorically said that the Old Pension Scheme cannot be implemented due to a few legal issues. A meeting on CPS with employees' unions was held by the State government at the Secretariat on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana, Municipal Administration Minister Adimulapu Suresh, Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, Finance

Special Chief Secretary Shashi Bhushan Kumar, Finance Secretary N Gulzar, Secretary (GAD Services) H Arun Kumar and Government Advisor P Chandrasekhar Reddy.

The committee sought the cooperation of the employees towards the implementation of the newly proposed Guaranteed Pension Scheme (GPS) along the lines of OPS. The leaders of the employees' union, citing the implementation of OPS by the Rajasthan government, sought the AP government to reconsider OPS implementation.

2

Shocked at special treatment to MLC: Pawan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan has said that it is shocking the way the police are showering special honours on MLC Anantha Udaybhaskar even after he accepted his involvement in the murder of SC youth Subrahmanyam of Kakinada.

"Will you show a similar kind of heart even to ordinary people? The political bosses, who are showing their supremacy over the police, are the reason for this type of tendency. The persons, who had claimed that they did not have trust in the Andhra Pradesh police in the Kodi katti case, have given directions to that particular department. I don't know what the fate of the 'Kodi



Kathi' case is. Even now the investigation into the murder of YS Vivekanand Reddy didn't reveal who the real culprits are. Not only this, the ruling party had harassed an SC youth Girish Babu, who had contested as an independent in the Samalkot municipal polls. The

youth had committed suicide after the rulers used the police in the case," Pawan Kalyan said in a statement.

The police are forced to become silent though a police officer was abused and collared by the state minister for Fisheries in Visakhapatnam. The ruling party had resorted to attacks on the Jana Sena sarpanch and ward members while they were enjoying the victory celebrations at Matsyapuri village in the Bhimavaram constituency. A tenth-standard girl Misba, who was deprived of schooling with the misdeeds of the YSRCP leader in Palamaner finally committed suicide, he added.

2

**JANA SENA CHIEF CONDEMNS
AMALAPURAM VIOLENCE**

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan has appealed to the people in Amalapuram to maintain restraint and condemn the violent incidents which took place on Tuesday. "I appeal to all to maintain restraint and cooperate to instill peace and tranquillity in Amalapuram. All democrats should condemn the violence," he said in a statement here on Tuesday. Pawan Kalyan said that all those who respect democracy would also respect Dr. B R Ambedkar.

2

**Punjab Health
Minister sacked over
corruption, arrested**

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Health Minister Vijay Singla was sacked from the state Cabinet Tuesday over graft charges, and was arrested shortly afterwards, with Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann asserting his government has zero-tolerance to corruption.

The chief minister himself announced Singla's removal from the Cabinet which was sworn-in just two months ago after the Aam Aadmi Party stormed to power, riding on the agenda of corruption-free governance.

TODAY**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham:
Tithi: Navami May 23 11:34 AM to May 24 10:45 AM
Dashami: May 24 10:45 AM to May 25 10:32 AM

Nakshatram:
Purba Bhadrpad: May 23 10:22 PM to May 24 10:33 PM
Uttara Bhadrpad: May 24 10:33 PM to May 25 10:20 PM

Rahukalam: 3:26 PM to 5:03 AM
Yamagandam: 08:59 AM to 10:36 AM
Varjyam: 08:28 AM to 10:07 AM
Gulika: 12:13 PM to 1:49 PM
Amritakalam: 02:29 PM to 04:06 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 38%
Sunrise: 5:45 AM
Sunset: 6:40 PM
Updated: MAY 24, 2022 5:00 PM

**Tension as cops foil
BJP bid for march
to Jinnah Tower**

P4

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Though the majority of the State has witnessed water level rise in the post-monsoon season more than 1/4th had experienced a fall in water level trend.

Long-term water level trend analysis for a decade from 2011-to 2021 done by Central Ground Water Board, in Andhra Pradesh showed that the falling trend in water level of 0-1.98 meter/year is observed in 35pc of the state during the post-monsoon season. Whereas a rising trend of 0-

2 m /yr in water level was observed in 65pc of the area in the state during the post-monsoon season.

The falling trend is recorded at 462 locations and the rising trend is recorded in 680 locations. The falling trend of 0 to 1 m/yr was more prevalent in all the districts except Chittoor and Visakhapatnam, where relatively less area was seen.

The falling trend of 1 to 2 m/yr is observed in parts of all the districts. The falling trend of more than 2 m/yr is identified in a few locations in Prakasam, Nellore, Kadapa, Krishna, and Godavari districts.



In the pre-monsoon season, water level falling of 0-2.6 m/yr was observed in 90pc of the area and a rising trend of 0-1.4 m / yr in water level was observed in 10pc of the area in the state.

The falling trend is recorded at 721 locations and a rising trend in



been issued so far in Parliament. When the whip has not been issued so far, the question of vio-

Groundwater level dips by 35% in AP, post-monsoon

219 locations during May. The falling trend of 0 to 1 m/yr is more prevalent in all the districts.

The falling trend of 1 to 2 m/yr is observed in parts of the Anantapur, Kadapa, Prakasam, Krishna, Nellore, and West Godavari districts.

The falling trend of more than 2 m/yr was restricted to a few locations in Prakasam and Nellore districts. A rising trend of 0 to 1 m/yr is observed in parts of all the districts except the Prakasam, Nellore, Guntur and Krishna districts.

Central Ground Water Board, has been carrying out groundwater regime studies all

over the country for generating historical data in order to establish the dynamics of groundwater regime which plays a crucial role in the estimation of the groundwater resource.

Groundwater monitoring is carried out as part of the national groundwater monitoring programme four times a year during January, May, August, and November and groundwater quality once a year in May. March 31, 2021, a total of 867 Ground Water Monitoring Wells (GWMS) are in existence in the state. Around 122 observers were appointed to monitor GWMS in participatory mode.

**Modi policies detrimental
to country: Vundavalli**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MP Vundavalli Arun Kumar has alleged that the policies of the Narendra Modi-led Union government are detrimental to the country. The BJP has succeeded in dividing the country on communal lines. Addressing a meet-the-press programme at Press Club here on Tuesday, he said that except for releasing water with gravity, the completion of the Polavaram project is not possible and water could not be impounded at the project. He said that the Polavaram project could not be completed because Rs 30,000 crore had to be disbursed as compensation to the evacuees.

"The ruling YSRCP, TDP and Jana Sena are supporting BJP in the State and the leaders are unable to point out the wrong policies of the BJP led Centre. Despite the change in the government in AP, the situation remains the same.

2

Will TDP take concrete steps to come out of oblivion?

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is at a critical juncture ahead of the birth centenary celebrations of its founder and former chief minister of combined Andhra Pradesh, NT Rama Rao, as well as the big test of '2024' that would determine the very future of the nearly four-decade-old party.

In the backdrop of its humiliating defeat three years ago, after having ruled the residuary state of AP for the first five years since its formation, TDP president Chandrababu Naidu no longer has the early mover advantage. Given his experience of having ruled the state for almost two terms previously, in the minds of people he was the right person to rule the state formed with a deficit of Rs. 16,000 crore, following bifurcation of the undivided state of AP.

In contrast, the president of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) YS Jaganmohan

Reddy was then almost novice in politics, lacking experience of ruling.

Still, after becoming the ruler, Chandrababu Naidu spent time with his hurriedly drawn policies and plans on various issues, including finalising designs for the construction of capital city of Amaravati for the state of residuary AP. Despite having all plus points, he managed to get people's mandate by the difference of just one per cent of excess votes polled by TDP. Initially Chandrababu thought that his experience was essential to bail out the state of AP from all its problems.

The issue of Amaravati became crucial for both YSRCP & TDP.

Had Chandrababu completed at least half of the construction of the new capital Amaravati, it would have obviated the need for a reversal of the decision taken by the successive government

Only a meaningful perspective with a proper vision for the near future will take TDP further, for which a new ideology is needed. Will Mahanadu look at this aspect and take the right decisions to give voters some clarity?

headed by YSRCP. Chandrababu spent 75% of his time finalising designs and graphics required for building of the capital city Amaravati. Consequently, a significant portion of the work could not be completed by the end of Naidu's tenure.

He thought that building Amaravati could be his trump card for retaining power in the 2019 elections.

His poll campaign was designed in line with his thoughts on Amaravati. According to that strategy, TDP cadre simply requested the electorate to

give one more opportunity to Naidu to enable him to complete his unfulfilled programme of building Amaravati and that too "for your beloved children". People instead voted for YSRCP, decimating TDP to mere opposition party with just 23 out of 175 seats.

Now TDP is preparing to celebrate the birth centenary of its founder NT Rama Rao during this week at the venue of the party's annual meet Mahanadu. Mahanadu may show the way forward for the TDP, which is bracing to move forward 'come what



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

may!

Naidu has announced that his party is ready for 'sacrifices' on a large scale if the situation warrants. The word 'sacrifices' perhaps indicates seat sharing with other like-minded parties, particularly Jana Sena Party (JSP) headed by film star Pawan Kalyan.

The JSP president Pawan announced on its formation day rally that he will not allow anti-YSRC government's votes to get divided at

any cost.

This created ripples in political circles of AP. Pawan's words have become an inspiration for opposition parties that are working against the government.

This perhaps prompted the TDP supremo to broadly indicate his line of thinking on a possible alliance with Pawan's JSP. He exhorted his possible future political ally that the ongoing discussion among cadres of both the parties should not be like 'one side love story'.

Since the completion of local bodies' polls across the state, which was swept by the ruling party, TDP had been in a pessimistic mood over elections. Pawan's words changed the situation. Both parties seem to be inclined for an alliance. The modalities may be discussed in the days to come. TDP is currently looking like a warrior without sword. The past provides solace sometimes. After two consecutive defeats at the hands of TDP in the elections

of 1983 & 1985, the Congress was in distress for some period. But incidents such as Dalits' killings at Karamchedu and Neerukonda had created anti-TDP mood among the electorate. This reflected in the local bodies' elections held in 1987 in which the Congress achieved impressive results. A very big incident took place in 1988: Congress MLA Vangaveeti Mohanaranga Rao (Vijayawada -East) was brutally killed in Vijayawada. Large-scale violence ensued and this paved the way for the Congress to come to power. Now TDP may repeat the same, if it wants too. Dalits are subject to harassment on various occasions. Being the principal opposition, TDP must be able to use this factor and expose the state government's lethargic attitude in dealing with the situation.

At the Mahanadu, Naidu would be compelled to promote himself as future leader of the party. What about succession plans? If Naidu does not succeed in projecting his

son as his successor, he has to agree for giving due importance to his alliance partner(s) in the days to come. What else does 'sacrifices' mean in this context? It may be too early to discuss power sharing, instead of just seat sharing; yet, it seems inevitable for both the parties to be prepared for any eventuality.

TDP had been shining for four decades on the political platform of undivided AP. Today it is feeling suffocated due to desertions since the last General Election. Naidu's flip-flops on crucial issues such as AP's bifurcation without taking a firm stand, abrupt shifting of the administration from the joint capital Hyderabad to Vijayawada only to save himself from 'cash for vote' case resulted in TDP's bad shape.

Only a meaningful perspective with a proper vision for the near future will take TDP further, for which a new ideology is needed. Will Mahanadu look at this aspect and take the right decisions to give voters some clarity?

ArcelorMittal to invest Rs 1K Cr for expansion of its Vizag pellet plant

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India has confirmed a proposed investment of Rs 1,000 Crore towards brownfield expansion of its Vizag pellet plant in Andhra Pradesh. The planned expansion will increase pellet production capacity at Vizag by 35%, from 8 MTPA to 11 MTPA. AM/NS India's Vizag pellet plant is already connected to a slurry pipeline in Chhattisgarh, which ensures a clean and efficient method of transportation of raw materials required for pelletization from source to plant. AM/NS India intends to complete the

expansion project in 2023, subject to receiving Environmental Clearance in the coming months.

This investment follows a recent announcement by ArcelorMittal, a parent company of AM/NS India, to develop a 'round the clock' renewable energy project with 975 MW of nominal capacity, also in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The project, involving investment of more than Rs 4,600 Crore will combine solar and wind power and be supported by Greenko's hydro pumped storage project, which helps to overcome the intermittent nature of wind and solar power generation. Round The

Clock power of 250MW This will result in over 20% of the electricity requirement at AM/NS India's Hazira plant coming from renewable sources, reducing carbon emissions by approximately 1.5 million tonnes per year.

Commenting after a meeting with Mr. Aditya Mittal, CEO of ArcelorMittal and Chairman of AM/NS India, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Shri Jagan Mohan Reddy, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh said, "We welcome these significant investments by ArcelorMittal and AM/NS India to Andhra Pradesh, which reinforce the state's leadership in attracting

pioneering manufacturing and renewables projects that will not only support India's steel making growth ambitions, but also assist the country's efforts to advance industrial decarbonisation."

Dilip Oommen, CEO of AM/NS India, said: "Following ancient agreement that saw ArcelorMittal invest in a renewable energy project in Andhra Pradesh to supply power to the steelmaking operations of our joint venture business in India, we are pleased to strengthen our commitment to the state with a further investment to significantly expand our pellet manufacturing plant in Vizag."

Terror funding: Delhi court likely to convict Yasin Malik

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court is likely to pronounce on Wednesday its judgment on the quantum of punishment for convicted Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik, who had earlier pleaded guilty of all the charges including those under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), in a terror funding case.

Special judge Praveen Singh had on May 19 convicted Malik and had directed NIA authorities to assess his financial situation to determine the amount of fine likely to be imposed. Malik is facing a maximum punishment of death penalty, while the minimum sentence for the offences committed by him is life imprisonment.

Housing prices rise up to 11pc across 8 cities in Jan-Mar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Housing prices increased by up to 11 per cent annually across eight major cities during January-March period of this year due to a rise in demand for residential properties and a sharp hike in rates of construction raw materials, according to a joint report by CREDAI, Colliers and Liases Foras.

Delhi-NCR witnessed highest rise in housing prices by 11 per cent to Rs 7,363 per sq ft during January-March 2022 as compared to the year-ago period, as per the first edition of Housing Price-Tracker report by realtors body CREDAI, real

estate consultant Colliers and data analytics firm Liases Foras.

Hyderabad witnessed 9 per cent increase in housing prices to Rs 9,232 per square feet, while Ahmedabad saw a 8 per cent appreciation to Rs 5,721 per square feet and Kolkata 6 per cent to Rs 6,245 per square feet.

Housing prices in Bengaluru, Chennai and Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) rose by 1 per cent each at Rs 7,595, Rs 7,107 and Rs 19,557 per square feet, respectively.

In Pune, prices of residential properties went up by 3 per cent to Rs 7,485 per square feet

during the first quarter of this calendar year.

"A pick-up in housing demand across most cities and skyrocketing prices of raw materials for almost two years, led to YoY increase in housing prices, surpassing pre-COVID levels across all eight metro cities," a joint statement said.

The average residential prices in India rose by 4 per cent YoY (year-on-year) during January-March 2022 after a prolonged slowdown, indicating that the residential market is on its path to recovery.

Colliers India CEO Ramesh Nair expects a further increase of 5-10 per cent in housing prices over the next 6-9

CM asks firms to partner with AP...

Continued from Page 1

Elaborating further, he said, you build a dam and the quantum of water used is just 1 tmc to drop water during peak hours to generate power and lift it back to the reservoir using solar and wind power during non-peak hours. At the end of it you have 1650 MW power that can be given 24 hrs a day and it is economic, sustainable, and feasible. To generate power from solar and wind and to pump the water back, is a simple concept.

Andhra Pradesh has the capacity to build these pump storage capacities up to 33,000 MW and it is open for the globe to come over and participate. The conventional industry can convert into a green industry. Using this power to create hydrogen, ammonia, desalinate water, and electrolysis in the days to come and years to come will become a reality. Andhra Pradesh is there to welcome you in this grand endeavour.

The panelists Amitabh Kant, CEO of Niti Aayog, Aditya Mittal CEO of ArcelorMittal, Anil Kumar Chalamsetty, MD and CEO Greenko and Florence Verzellen, Executive Vice President Dassault Systemes were full of appreciation

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

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	385
HYDERABAD	385
VISAKHAPATNAM	410
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.85

Shocked at special...

Continued from Page 1

"No action is taken against the culprits who attacked Gudivada RI for preventing mining. They are foisting false cases against the Jana Sena activists in the name of social media postings and resorting to political vendetta. These are only some examples. Because of the attitude of the rulers, the criminals have developed a strong belief with more courage that nothing will happen even if they do any attack or resorted to killings and rapes. If the government would have acted tough as per the law and in the 'Kodi Kathi' case and Vivekananda Reddy cases by arresting the real criminals; will it have emerged the feeling of lowering the image of the police and the courage of a 'nothing will happen' attitude?," Pawan Kalyan asked.

JANA SENA CHIEF...

"It is unfortunate that Ambedkar's name has become a centre point for controversies. The government should own responsibility for dragging Ambedkar's name into controversies. The government had failed to maintain the law and order situation in Amalapuram," he lashed out. The State government had failed in developing the State and they are creating problems to cover up their failure and draw the attention of people, he slammed. The people of the State, particularly those belonging to the district know who is responsible for creating the controversy in Amalapuram, he said. "I condemn the Home Minister's statement mentioning the name of Jana Sena party. Do not put your failures and ineptness in maintaining the law and order on the Janasena party," he lashed out.

Modi policies...

Continued from Page 1

We could not get the Special Category Status granted to AP and failed to bring funds for the completion of the Polavaram project," he observed.

Arun Kumar said that the policies of the Narendra Modi-led Central government were detrimental to the country.

He said that the Modi-led Central government had failed to mitigate the financial crisis, deal with external affairs efficiently and also manage the defence system. The Modi-led Centre had succeeded in dividing the country on a communal basis, he alleged.

Senior leaders are joining the BJP without keeping in view the ideology of BJP, he said and commented, "The Modi-led Central government's policies will be helpful to the forces which are trying to isolate India," he said.

Old Pension Scheme can't...

Continued from Page 1

The ministers and government advisors made it clear to the unions that they would discuss the issue in detail and look into all aspects that would not harm the government and the employees.

Ministers Satyanarayana, Suresh and Government Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy told the union leaders that they would once again meet and discuss the issue in detail. Satyanarayana said steps would be taken to expedite the release of government orders regarding the PRC. Employees' union representatives AP NGO Association President Bandi Srinivasa Rao, AP Revenue Services Association President Bopparaju Venkateshwarlu, AP Government Employees

Union President Suryanarayana, State Secretariat Employees' Union general secretary N Prasad, Rajesh, STU president Sai Prasad and APUTF president N Venkateshwarlu and representatives of PRTU, RTC, drivers' union, fourth-class employees' union, and other unions were present.

Reacting to the meeting of the Consultative Committee, the UTF president Venkateswarlu said that they strongly oppose the GPS proposal of the government and demanded immediate implementation of OPS. He said that the union leaders told the committee that they strongly oppose the GPS proposal. He demanded that aided teachers' retirement be increased to 62 years and the government release orders to that effect.

Continued from Page 1

Another building, which is the camp office of the minister, was also set on fire. Similarly, the house of Mummidiavaram MLA Ponnada Sateesh was also ransacked and was burnt later. Sateesh was seen coming out of his residence weeping as he came out of his home that went up in flames.

Many police personnel were injured as the protestors pelted stones at them. The protestors had also used boulders to attack police vehicles.

"We have taken the entire town under our control. Currently the situation is under control. Thousands had suddenly converged that led to the situation. We urge everyone to maintain restraint," said DIG G Pala Raju, who along with police forces, rushed to Amalapuram.

Last week, Section 144 was imposed in the Konaseema

district in the wake of protests against the proposal to rename the district and also Konaseema Sadhana Samithi (KSS) members had called for 'Chalo Konaseema' march on Tuesday.

Despite prohibitory orders in place, the protesters attempted to proceed towards the Collectorate in Amalapuram crossing the clock tower area from different directions.

As they were prevented by the police, protesters resorted to stone-pelting, at the vehicles of the SP KSSV Subba Reddy and Amalapuram DSP Y Madhava Reddy. They set fire to a private bus that was parked at the protest site and also a police vehicle was burnt.

On May 18, the State government issued a preliminary notification proposing to change the name of Konaseema district to 'Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema dis-

strict' under the relevant sections of AP Districts (Formation) Act 1974.

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

Konaseema was carved out of the East Godavari district on April 4, 2022 with Amalapuram as the district headquarters as part of reorganisation of 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh into 26.

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

60-year-old man, wife commit suicide

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Even as the twin suicides by a mother and her son are still green in public memory, a couple allegedly committed suicide in Maya Bazar area in the town on Tuesday. Their bodies were found hanging from the roof of their house. The deceased were identified as Gajawada Kuberam (60), and his wife Gajawada Lakshmi, 55. The incidents have created sensation in the town. A suicide note, purported to have been written by them, held none responsible for their committing suicide. Moreover, it urged the authorities to not to conduct post-mortem on their bodies and cremate them together. According

to the locals, the couple committed suicide in separate rooms of the house in the early hours of Tuesday. Kuberam is a dry fruit merchant in daily market of the town. They are survived by two daughters, Sameera and Susrita. They celebrated marriages of their daughters 10 years ago. The couple apparently have no known problems. People are at a loss to know as to why they had taken the extreme step of committing suicide. According to the mother of Gajawada Kubera, the couple are living together happily. The bodies were sent to Kamareddy Area Hospital.

The twon police registered a case and are investigating the case.



GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NTT No. 21 to 27 / 2022-23 S. Estt. (Welfare)

Date: 26-05-2022

The following Cause-way and Construction of a building in Anko Division and Construction of a market shed in Paduru Division of Visakhapatnam Tribal Welfare Engineering Circle at an Estimated Cost of Rs 1057.99 Lakh. Time and date of issue of Tender schedules: From 4.00 am on 27-05-2022. Last date for submission of tender documents: 4.30 pm on 03-06-2022. Opening of technical bids: After 5.00 pm on 03-06-2022. Opening of financial bids: After 11.00 am on 07-06-2022. For other details contact e-procurement market place: www.e-procurement.gov.in. Phone: 0891-2783210. Sd/- The Superintending Engineer, T.O No: 40502/INT/17/2021-22, Dt: 24.05.2022

TRIBAL Welfare Department, Visakhapatnam

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Huge opportunity for start-ups to enter export biz: Official

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Joint Director General of Foreign Trade, B N Ramesh, has said that India's exports have reached \$400 billion in the current financial year 2021-22 and in this more than half constitute exports related to industrial and technological products.

He said the Government of India is carefully planning its agreements so that it balances its bilateral relations with other countries and at the same time balances the 'Make in India' campaign.

He was speaking at a round table on International business opportunities organised by GITAM School of Business on Tuesday. Dr BN Ramesh further said that there is huge potential for export from India and many start-ups can enter the export business to make a successful career.

He said that the 'District Export Hubs' Initiative will be forming a significant component of the new Foreign Trade Policy. The objective is to convert each district of the country into an export hub by identifying products with



export potential in the district.

Further, the states are made active partners in exports. Consequently, states can actively develop specific export strategies based on the competence and strengths specific to their region. He also presented the various schemes of DGFT supporting and accelerating the exports of the country and in particular the 'Niryat Bhandu' scheme which gives a handhold support to the budding exporters.

Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Assistant Director, R Prasad Naik, said the coun-

try exported 6.05 lakh tonnes of marine products worth Rs 27,575 crore in the first six months of the current financial year 2021-22 with Andhra Pradesh as the leading global Marine products exporter with East and West Godavari districts leading as the second-largest marine products exporters from the country.

He presented the different stages in marine exports and the potential of marine exports to different countries from India. Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) manager, Kavita Kumari, pre-

sented various risk covers offered by ECGC and different types of classification of risks and she also presented that ECGC reach is in more than 239 countries. She further said that even a country like Sri Lanka which is in the current turmoil ECGC is taking up case to case to protect the exporters.

ELITE Group Director, A Ravi Shankar, presented the logistics support available in and around Andhra Pradesh and the potential for exports from Andhra Pradesh. He further presented on different types of freights available and the increase in the EXIM volumes of containers from Andhra Pradesh, Visakhapatnam.

The Roundtable coordinator and Associate Professor Radha Raghuram said that India's export basket have changed from agricultural products to more machinery, chemicals and technology products and especially, post pandemic this shift has been drastic with a lot of digitalization and automation and firms looking for nearshoring and quality financing.



Krishna Collector inspects housing scheme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector P Ranjith Basha has instructed officials to expedite the construction of houses in the layouts. The Collector visited Challapalli village of Avanigadda constituency on Tuesday and assessed the progress of works. He said that Challapalli would be developed as a model village under the Jagananna Swachh Sankalpam.

He added that infrastructure and other facilities would be provided to modernise the compost units as a model. During his visits to housing layouts, he ordered the officials to achieve 100 percent of their targets. The Collector further said that the government was giving Rs 1.80 lakh for house construction to every beneficiary. He suggested that the officials distribute sand, cement and iron to the beneficiaries in the stipulated time.

'MoUs signed in Davos will strengthen AP power sector'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy has said that the agreements signed for investments in Andhra Pradesh by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at the World Economic Forum at Davos will strengthen the power sector in AP.

In a press release here on Tuesday, he said that MoUs for 10,000 MW solar power projects and a 3700 MW pumped hydro storage project will help towards providing permanent quality free electricity to farmers across the state.

The Minister said that the MoU signed with Adani Green Energy to invest in the power sector in the State was historic. He said the Adani Group had stepped in to invest heavily in the state with an agreement to set up 10,000 MW solar power projects in the state. He stated that with this 10,000 MW power generation, Chief Minister YS Jagan has set his sights on providing permanent quality free electricity to farmers in the state of Andhra Pradesh in the future as well. He said this would lead to large-scale development in



the Rayalaseema region, as well as employment opportunities for thousands of youth.

The Energy Minister said that the Adani Group has also come forward to set up a 3700 MW pumped hydro storage project in Andhra Pradesh. He said with these two MoUs, Adani Green Energy would invest Rs 60,000 crore in the state, which would also create 10,000 jobs for the unemployed in the state. He stated that CM Jagan is giving highest priority to pollution-free

industries and lauded the implementation of the modern development formula in the state which would save the lives of the people.

Minister Ramchandra Reddy said that special attention is being paid to the production of carbon-free fuels. "With this MoU, we will not only be able to attract investment and job opportunities to the state, but we will also be able to meet the growing demand for electricity in the future," he said.

TTD officials visit Navi Mumbai site

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A team of TTD officials led by Mallikarjuna, Special Officer of Estates Wing, visited the site allotted to TTD by the Maharashtra government for the construction of Sri Venkateswara Temple at Ulvi in Navi Mumbai. Kailash Shinde, Joint Managing Director of the City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra (CIDCO), handed over the papers and site map to the TTD Special Officer in Mumbai on Tuesday.

The 10-acre site costing around Rs 400 crore is located in a prime area with its proximity to Old and New Mumbai Cities. On one side, it is close to the beach and on the other side, to the new airport which is under progress. Mumbai Temple Superintendent Giri Kiran and Surveyor Harnath were also present.

Minister inspects developmental works at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Endowments Minister Kottu Satyanarayana visited Indrakeeladri and Kanakadurga Nagar on Tuesday. The minister inspected the works on the parking lot and the Prasadam building. He said that a master plan had been prepared for the development of the temple and the works would be expedited as soon as the plan was approved.

The minister said that there was no shortfall of funds for the development activities of the temple. He said that the traffic on the Ghat Road was being reduced and arrangements were being made for the devotees, including VIPs and

VVIPs, to visit through the Rajagopuram in the Maha Mandapam.

"It is believed that Arjuna performed 'tapas' on the Indrakeeladri hill top. Stairs will be built to the top of the hill and a viewpoint will be set up. Very soon, devotees will be allowed to perform holy dip in River Krishna at the ghats," said the minister. He added that in view of the summer season, the officials concerned were instructed to erect tents on the temple premises for the convenience of the devotees.

The minister was accompanied by Endowments Principal Secretary Anil Singhal, Commissioner Hari Jawaharlal and temple EO D Bhramaramba.

City beautification top priority: MLA Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Central MLA Malladi Vishnu said that the government was paying special attention to beautify parks, keeping in view the health of the people of the city. The MLA, along with City Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi and Deputy Mayor A Srisailaja Reddy, laid foundation stone for the project comprising an open-gym, walking track, retaining walls, drinking water facility and toilets in five major parks in divisions 27, 33 and 37 on Tuesday. The works will cost Rs 65.10 lakh.

On the occasion, MLA Vishnu said that the parks in the constituency were being beautified in a way that would bring joy and happiness to the people of the city. "Funds of Rs 65 lakh were being released for the purpose. Of this, Rs 19.90



lakh will be used for the works on Chittoori Visvesvaraya Park, Rs 12.70 lakh for Durgapuram Park, Rs 7.90 lakh for Gulabhi Thota park, Rs 4.90 lakh for Sammeta Ramaswamy Park and Rs 19.70 lakh for Andhra Ratna Park at Satyanarayanapuram. For the development of parks in other divisions, Rs 75 lakh has been sanctioned and the works will start in two days. In addition, another Rs 1.5 crore has been

sanctioned from the 15th Finance Commission funds for the works," said the MLA.

Malladi Vishnu said that the previous Telugu Desam Party government had completely neglected the development of the city. The idea of building a DP station in Satyanarayanapuram was not even raised by the previous government. It was being built on a war-footing under the CM Jagan Mohan Reddy government.

Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi said that after Covid-19, people were focusing on exercise and physical fitness. "An open gym is being set up in the parks for such people. In addition, a wide range of walking tracks will be made available along with the play equipment needed to entertain the children," she said.

Arul Thomas is new VP of IHRC AP chapter

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The International Human Rights Commission (IHRC) has appointed noted social activist Arul Thomas Selvanathan as the vice-president of IHRC Andhra Pradesh State chapter. To this effect, IHRC State president and general secretary K R a h e n d r a n Vignam and M E l i z e r Devasahayam issued a letter on Monday. IHRC is one of the worldwide peace and human rights bodies established in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 24, 2003.

They said that as per the decision taken by the IHRC International Assembly, Arul Thomas was appointed as the

vice-president of the AP chapter. On the occasion, they said they were looking forward to working together in perfect vision for the growth and development of such a noble assignment. To discharge their duties and responsibilities efficiently and effectively, one should have the knowledge of human rights and privileges according to the law of land. They said that IHRC should work for the people of AP State, mainly amongst the downtrodden, without the discrimination of caste, creed or religion.

Arul Thomas expressed happiness on being appointed as the IHRC vice-president and endorsing such a big responsibility on him.



Mani Sravani wins gold in Powerlifting Championship

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

N Mani Sravani, a B.Sc student at PB Siddhartha Degree College in the city, won the gold medal in the South Zone Junior Powerlifting Championship, which concluded in Anakapalli recently. She participated in 84+ kg category and lifted 367.50 kg to secure first place.

College Principal M Ramesh, Director Baburao and others congratulated Mani

Sravani at a programme held at the college on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Ramesh said that his college had been encouraging sports and games. "We want an international medal in powerlifting. Mani Sravani will definitely participate in international tournaments in future," he added.

College Dean Prof. Rajesh C Jampala, Physical Education Director A Chinababu and others were present.

TDP panel demands 'dismissal' of YSRCP MLC

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) fact-finding committee on Tuesday held an elected woman representative close to YSRCP MLC Ananta Babu responsible for the murder of car driver Veedhi Subrahmanyam.

The TDP committee members warned that their party would hold massive protests at the AP Council and the Raj Bhavan if the murder accused Ananta Udaya Satya Bhasker was not dismissed from his MLC post.

Addressing a press conference here, TDP ex-Minister Peethala Sujatha, party SC Cell president M.S. Raju, spokesman Pilli Manikya Rao and state secretary Kasi Navin slammed the Jagan Reddy regime for its 'anti-Dalit stand'. If Chandrababu Naidu did not send the fact-finding committee to Kakinada GGH, the Government would not

have arrested Ananta Babu.

The TDP leaders asked how long the YCP Dalit Ministers and MLAs would do slavery to Jagan Reddy despite his regime drinking the blood of their Dalit kin and taking Dalit dead bodies in their cars. If deterrent punishment was not given to Ananta Babu, the Dalits would give a taste of their pride and revolt to CM Jagan Reddy sooner than later.

Sujatha said that the three-year rule of Jagan Reddy marked only the tearing of 'mangala sutra' of women of all sections of society. From Dr. Sudhakar to driver Subrahmanyam, the Dalits have been falling victim to the merciless regime of the YSRCP. The police manhandled and attacked the TDP fact-finding as part of a conspiracy to suppress the case.

The TDP leader asked why Kakinada district SP gave an entirely different narration of

the murder without considering the statements of the witnesses. How could the SP so blatantly say that the MLC had killed the car driver in a moment of self defence? Sakshi media did not publish even a small story on the Dalit's gruesome killing.

M.S. Raju strongly objected to the SP addressing the murder accused as 'Ananta Babu gaaru' with needless respect. The district SP and DSP had secret dealings with Ananta Babu from the beginning. This was why they had made all possible efforts to save the tainted MLC.

The TDP leader termed as unfortunate that the police themselves were erasing all evidence so as to help the murder accused to escape from punishment. Five to six persons had attacked and beaten driver Subrahmanyam to death. Nobody would believe the false stories being woven by the police.

Govt diverting ration rice: TDP

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP Palakollu MLA Nimmala Rama Naidu on Tuesday demanded that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government immediately distribute two months of ration rice that was denied to the poor families of the State. Rama Naidu accused the YSRCP regime of diverting, even the poor people's ration rice to enable the ruling party leaders to make quick money. Addressing a press conference here, the TDP MLA accused the Chief Minister of receiving the ration rice supplied by the Centre and diverting the same to sell in foreign countries for illegal income. As a result, the poor people in AP were suffering from half-quenched hunger. Rama Naidu warned that the poor people of Andhra Pradesh were eager to teach a strong lesson to Jagan Reddy who was hatching a con-



spiracy to cancel ration shops just like how he deprived the poor of affordable food at Anna Canteens. Jagan Reddy would go down in history as an unethical CM who had turned even ration rice into a source for his massive corruption. The TDP MLA recalled how the Jagan regime did not give single rupee assistance through the Centre gave assistance of Rs. 1,000 during the Covid pandemic. Other States extended consider-

able relief from their side but not AP. Now, Jagan Reddy got ready to cancel the distribution of the Centre's ration rice to the poor people. Rama Naidu asked why the Jagan Reddy Government was not distributing ration rice for the past two months. All other States were distributing it from 1st to the 15th of every month but AP was not honouring this. Ministers were making contradictory and confusing statements. The civil supplies minister was saying ration rice became a burden on the Government. The TDP MLA said the plan to give money in place of ration rice was an atrocious and wicked one. Jagan Reddy promised to distribute 'Sanna Biyyam' (fine quality rice) in the 2019 election but after coming to power, he was planning to cancel even the present quality ration rice.

Rugby coaching camp begins

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The four-day combined coaching camp for Krishna district senior and junior rugby teams began at Vikas Education Institutions at Nunna near Vijayawada on Tuesday. Vikas Educational Institutions vice-chairman Naredla Satyanarayana Reddy inaugurated the camp.

Speaking on the occasion, Satyanarayana Reddy said that rugby was an international game and it had been very popular in the State. "Students studying in high schools and colleges are showing a lot of interest in the game. Not only boys, but girls are also playing the game well," he added.

He further said that it was a very fast game and every play-



er should be paying attention and playing mind games for points. He desired a medal in the inter-district championship to be held at Kurnool from May 28 -30. Krishna District Rugby Association secretary M Chandrakala said that rugby was a different game when compared to other games.

School children had been attracted to the game and there was a huge response to the selection trials held at Gannavaram recently, she added.

Krishna district coach B Ganesh and senior physical education teachers MV Satya Prasad and K Sugunaroo were present.

Assembly polls in TS, AP crucial for the BJP

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The forthcoming assembly elections in both the Telugu states are crucial to the BJP which wants to extend its reach in the south.

The BJP has no strong base in any southern state except Karnataka. It has some hopes of gaining ground in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

But it has no chance of becoming strong. The future of the BJP in both the Telugu states depends on the next Assembly elections.

The BJP's aim is to occupy the place of the Congress in Telangana and the place of the TDP in Andhra Pradesh. Unless the BJP comes second in both the states it will not have a polit-

ical future in these states.

Currently, in Telangana, the TRS and the Congress, and in Andhra Pradesh the YSR Congress and the TDP are strong. The BJP wants to become the main opposition in these two states. Unless the Congress in Telangana and the TDP in Andhra Pradesh lose ground the BJP cannot become strong. In Telangana, if the BJP cannot win more seats than the Congress it will remain only in the third place.

Political circles think that there is no BJP swing in Telangana as expected. After the Huzurabad by-election the BJP had a good swing in its favour and it appeared that it may challenge the TRS in the next Assembly elections. But now the BJP swing in Telangana is



decreasing.

There were speculations that several important political leaders including a former MP will join the BJP during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's Telangana visit. Amit Shah came to Telangana and went back, but nobody joined the BJP.

Moreover, some important leaders including a former minister are planning to leave the BJP.

Amit Shah's Telangana visit helped Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar to consol-

idate his position in the party but it did not help the BJP to strengthen itself.

Meanwhile, in Andhra Pradesh there is much talk about an alliance between the TDP, the Jana Sena and the BJP.

Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan openly said that he has good ties with Prime Minister Modi and that he will convince the BJP to have an alliance with the TDP. But the BJP will not accept an alliance with the TDP at any cost. In Andhra Pradesh, there are only two strong political parties, that is, the YSR Congress and the TDP.

Unless one of these two parties lose ground the BJP has no chance of becoming strong in the state. At present, the ruling YSR Congress is strong and also has become friendly with the

BJP. If the TDP loses the next Assembly elections it may disappear in the state. TDP supreme Chandrababu Naidu who is now 72 will be almost 80 by the time of the 2029 Assembly elections.

There is no strong second rung leader in the TDP to take over party affairs. The BJP thinks that the defeat of the TDP in the next Assembly elections will enable it to occupy the second position by the time of the 2029 Assembly elections.

The BJP will not give life to the TDP by having an alliance with it at the cost of its future.

If the YSR Congress retains power in the next Assembly elections it will not affect the BJP as it may help it to form the government at the Centre after the next LS general elections.



POCSO CASES AND CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

Police officials directed to expedite probes

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Bapatla district Superintendent of Police Vakul Jindal has directed the police officials to expedite the investigation of the POCSO cases and crimes against the women. The SP enquired about the arrest of the accused and the investigation process in all reported cases and he was directed to file the charge sheets before the court within the stipulated time.

The SP reviewed here on Tuesday all the grave cases pending in the district to date and issued appropriate directions and guidelines on the investigation, progress of the cases, arrest of the accused, and filing of charge sheets.

The SP directed the police officials to take immediate action to reduce the number of pending cases as per the special plan, to expedite the investigation in the POCSO Act cases and women related cases, file the charge sheet within the stipulated time, and to expedite the trial, and to advocate on the cases to them while the witnesses appear in the court during the trial. He also



ordered steps to punish the perpetrator of the crime and provide justice to the victims.

Vakul Jindal directed the police officers and the SEB personnel within all the police stations in the district to carry out continuous raids on the ID arrack bases in the district, strengthen the information system at the field level and make every effort to make the district-free from ID arrack.

During the meeting, the SP said that POCSO cases and rape cases should be expedited and investigations into other women-related crimes should be expedited in a scientific

manner in crucial cases and should be taken up immediately without showing any negligence in cases of disappearance of women and children.

Vakul Jindal told the SEB officials to take more steps to curb illegal activities. In order to keep vigilance on old offenders and rowdy sheeters, counselling should be given to those who misbehave within the police station, trouble mongers and anyone who disturbs the peace should not be neglected, he told them.

The SP further said that the fingerprints of suspicious persons should be checked on the mobile security check device.

All the officers in the District set up effective Larkin beats and pickets to prevent crime and extortion and check the beats frequently and instructions given to staff.

He asked them to respond immediately on complaints and assured the victims. The SP warned that if any of the staff were found guilty of corruption, they would not be ignored and departmental action would be taken against them immediately. P. Mahesh, Addl.SP(Admin), Bapatla, A. Srinivasarao, SDPO, Bapatla, G. Lakshmaiah, DSP, DCRB, A.Srinivasa rao, CI, DSB, Bapatla and all CIs in the district attended the meeting.



37 sent to jail, fined Rs 2K for violating traffic rules

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A special drive was conducted against drunk driving by the NTR district Police Commissionerate and cases were booked against people violating the traffic rules. A total of 37 people were booked by the traffic police for drunk driving and traffic rules violation.

The police produced the traffic violators before the Seventh Metropolitan Magistrate Court (Railway court) on Tuesday and the judge sent all of them to jail and imposed a fine of Rs 2,000. Three of them were sent to jail for seven days, one person for six days, three persons for five days, eight persons for four days, one person for three days, 12 persons for two days and another four for one-day imprisonment.

Tension as cops foil BJP bid for march to Jinnah Tower

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Tension prevailed in the city on Tuesday when a large number of BJP activists tried to take out a rally towards the controversial Jinnah tower demanding to name it Abdul Kalam.

The police prevented the BJP activists from going to the Jinnah Tower. The police and BJP activists jostled leading to a tense situation. The police arrested and whisked away some of the BJP leaders including BJP national secretary Y Satya Kumar, Sunil Deodhar, and BJYM state president Surendra Mohan to the police station.

BJP state president Somu Veerajulu condemned the arrest of BJP leaders. He said that the police could not prevent the BJP activists from using their lathis. He said that Mohammad Ali Jinnah caused the division of the country and a tower with his name is objectionable. The BJP demands to name the tower Abdul Kalam tower, he reiterated. Somu Veerajulu demanded the government take steps to maintain the law and order situation in Amalapuram.

"The BJP cadres will not participate in the agitation in Amalapuram. We strongly condemn the violent incident



in Amalapuram. The government failed in protecting the law and order situation in Amalapuram. The government should own responsibility for the violence in Amalapuram" Veerajulu said.

Meanwhile, the BJP held its state executive committee meeting here on Tuesday in which national secretary Y Satya Kumar, co-in-charge of party affairs in AP Sunil Deodhar, national executive committee member Kanna Lakshminarayana and state president Somu Veerajulu attended.

Speaking on the occasion, Sunil Deohar questioned the Telugu Desam party why it was silent on the change of name of Jinnah tower. The

BJP abides to protect the HinduSanatan Dharma, he reiterated. There is no difference in respect of the deteriorating financial position between AP and Sri Lanka, he alleged. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government had ruined the state's prospects, he slammed.

Kanna Lakshminarayana criticised Jagan Reddy that he was resorting to vote bank politics to come to power again in 2024. The YSRCP leaders are plundering the national resources, he lambasted. Yuvamorchha state president Kethineni Surendra Mohan, district president Patibandla Ramakrishna and other leaders were present.

Ashirvad Pipes to invest Rs 500 crore in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao is rolling out the red carpet to companies in Davos.

Ashirvad Pipes of Aliaxis will be setting up a greenfield facility at a cost of Rs 500 crore in Telangana. This will create around 500 jobs.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Aliaxis and the Telangana Government in the presence of KTR in Davos.

The firm will manufacture plastic pipes, fittings, and accessories.

The announcement came after Aliaxis CFO Koen Sticker met KTR during the WEF meeting in Davos. Ashirvad Pipes is also in talks with the Telangana Government for setting up a centre of excellence for manufacturing in the state.

Expedite works in Jagananna layouts: VMC Commissioner

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

VMC Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar has directed the officials to expedite the infrastructure work in Jagananna layouts and ensure that the beneficiaries undertake housing construction. The Commissioner, along with officials, inspected the works being carried out in Kondapavulur, Velagaleru and Nunna areas.

He said the government was allocating houses to deserving people living in urban areas under the Janananna Housing Scheme to fulfill their dreams of having

their own houses. He said the authorities should pay special attention in providing minimum infrastructure facilities such as electricity, drinking water, roads and drains, required for beneficiaries to undertake housing construction in the layout. He instructed the officials to hold meetings with the beneficiary and take steps to undertake construction of as many houses as possible in the layouts.

Supervising Engineer (Works) PVK Bhaskar, City Planner GVGSV Prasad, Secretariat staff and others were present.



Snake slithers into RBK, killed

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

A five-foot cobra slithered into the Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBK) at Urvakonda on Tuesday.

RBK staff told the media that when the doors of the RBK were opened on Tuesday by a secretariat assistant, the cobra fell down from the roof. The staff fled in panic. The RBK staff searched the RBK office and found the cobra hidden behind files. They killed the snake. The snakes are often seen in the locality due to unhygienic conditions prevailing in the surrounding areas, the staff said.

Headmasters told to focus on quality of education

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector A S Dinesh Kumar directed the teachers to focus on providing quality education to the students. The Collector held a meeting with the headmasters, engineers and officials concerned on the second phase of Nadu-Nedu and 'We Love Reading' here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the Nadu-Nedu first phase works were successfully completed today. In the same spirit, he called for undertaking the second phase works. The second phase works in 462 schools are being carried out in the district. The collector said headmasters should oversee these works. Parents committee and masons committee should coordinate with engineering assistants, he told them.



The Collector said that the work of Nadu-Nedu should be taken forward without any obstacles. He said that there was no shortage of equipment for carrying out the works. Today, in the second phase, there is an opportunity for the construction of additional classrooms.

The Collector said that the onus was also on the headmasters to increase the reading habits among the students. It is suggested to make use of this summer season. Students were

instructed to make available the necessary books, he said.

The teachers have a responsibility to teach students the basics of reading and to value them as an ideal, he said, adding that the tenth class examinations ended peacefully except for one or two sporadic incidents and the teachers performed their duties efficiently. D.E.O. Vijaya Bhaskar, S.S.A. A.P.P. Srinivasa Rao, APWIDP EE, Bhaskar Babu, MEOs and other officials were present.

Two die in a road accident at Nidamanuru

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Two persons died in a road accident on National Highway at Nidamanuru, near Vijayawada, in the wee hours of Tuesday.

The duo were travelling in a car when their vehicle collided with a lorry from behind. Both the persons died instantaneously.

The deceased were identified as C Harish (29) from Palasa in Srikakulam district and Gowri Raju from Undi in West Godavari district.

According to police, C Harish was an Army personnel who came to the State on leave recently.

He was heading to Hyderabad to pay a visit to his sister when the incident took place.

Gowri Raju, who was also proceeding to Hyderabad, joined him.

High demand for luxury homes in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The demand for luxury housing is high in Hyderabad.

Anarock group says that in overall housing sales in cities, Hyderabad had the highest demand for luxury (17 per cent) and ultra-luxury (8 per cent) homes priced above Rs 2.5 crore.

Although average prices in Hyderabad are much less than that in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), property sizes in these segments are significantly larger than in MMR.

Across major cities, the 2 and 3 BHK types had the maximum demand, accounting for 64 per cent of overall demand. 2BHK units are most popular in Chennai, where nearly 67 per cent of the sales during the fiscal were for that configuration. Bengaluru sold the maxi-



mum 3BHK units, which accounted for 49 per cent of overall sales during the year, closely followed by Hyderabad with 44 per cent.

In Delhi-NCR, 4BHK+ homes were sold more.

The focus of buyers' has clearly shifted from affordable housing (homes priced under INR 40 lakh) to mid-end (INR 40 to 80 lakh) and high-end homes (INR 80 lakh to INR 1.5 crore).

Cycling track along ORR in a year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A cycle track will be coming up within a year along ORR. The cycle track will stretch 8 km from Nanakramguda to TSPA, and 13 km from Narsingi to Kollur. The cycle track will have a solar panel-covered roof.

The Hyderabad Growth Corridor Limited is taking up construction of the cycle track along ORR. Industries Minister KT Rama Rao directed the department to create the South Korean style cycle track with solar roofing.

The cycle track will be 4.5 metres wide and can accommodate three cycle lanes with one metre of green space on either side within the available right of way.

The track will be a cycling surface. Facilities like parking spaces, lighting arrangements for use at night, CCTV cameras, bicycle docking and rental stations, food courts, drinking water, restrooms and basic repair shops will be



provided along the cycle track. Officials said that the project will be launched by August.

The cycle track will come up between the Service Road and MCW and will be taken up along with the widening of service roads.

Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar said, "The

cycling track will be always open to the public. Cycles are available on rent. Even a car parking facility is being provided for people who want to cycle for leisure. Lighting with sufficient level of brightness will be made available to facilitate cycling during the early and late hours of the day. The power needed for

the lighting will be generated from the solar panelled roof making the project self-sustainable."

This solar project will be implemented as per the RESCO model where a RESCO operator will invest the initial capital needed for solar panels and will also maintain the project for 25 years and supply power to the Department at a discounted price.

Around 9 MW of power can be generated through the solar roofing of the cycle track and it will be used by HGCL for ORR lighting, drip irrigation and other requirements of ORR.

B. Santosh, the Managing Director of Hyderabad Growth Corridor Ltd, said the cycle track will be built as per international standards.

At Narsingi, a sports hub is being set up for cyclists and families to relax during weekends. It will have skating boards, and volleyball and squash courts.



Telangana Minister KTR participating in a panel discussion held at Davos on Tuesday

USE OF AI AND FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGIES BY GOVT'S

Right regulation need of the hour

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KTR spoke on the use of AI by governments at a panel discussion during the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos. He shared his thoughts on 'AI on the Street: Managing Trust in the Public Square'.

Speaking at the session, KTR said, "The big challenge in using technologies like facial recognition coupled with AI is for us to gain citizens' confidence that the government is unbiased in its use of data and that citizens will not be kept under surveillance unless they have been notified."

KTR also said that the only way to be able to achieve this would be to first clearly identify the regulatory powers that each government organisations would require. "These powers must be given to them in a parliamentary and a fully transparent method," KTR said.

"Facial Recognition has reduced dependence on physical resources and the time taken to find criminals and missing people. With the right regulatory system we can make it far easier for the police and also support citizens," KTR said.

Emphasising making the

process transparent, KTR said that every single step that the government takes to use Facial Recognition needs to be shared with the public first before it is used by government organisations. This needs to be formally bestowed upon them as per the rules of democracy.

KTR said that securing public confidence is very important. "The government understands the advantages that Facial Recognition provides in policing.

The confidence that the public has in this system needs to be strengthened by optional systems that can expose them to the method and only then scale up."

Talking about education within the government, the Minister said, "We need minds that are well-versed in AI, ML, Blockchain, Data Sciences and the risks that come with the use of the same. The data being used must be fully secured and the security must be verified."

The other members of the panel discussion were Takayuki Morita, President, Chief Executive Officer, and Representative Director, NEC, Japan, Angie Nicole OD, Executive Director Ushahidi, South Africa, and Coen van Oostrom, CEO & Founder of Edge Tech.

Yanamala, Devineni Uma inspect steps for Mahanadu

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Telugu Desam politburo member and former finance minister Yanamala Ramakrishnu had claimed that the 'Badude Badudu' programme being carried out by the TDP leaders is receiving an overwhelming response from the people across the state. Ramakrishnu, along with former minister Devineni Umamaheshwara Rao, inspected the arrangements being made for the Mahanadu meeting here on Tuesday.

Talking to the media on the occasion, he said that a huge response is being received from

the country and other countries for the annual conclave of TDP Mahanadu.

The Badude Badudu programme was well taken by the TDP cadres into the people. When the TDP leaders go to the villages they receive a huge response from the villagers for the 'Badude Badudu' programme, he said.

The people of the state are questioning the failure of YSRCP leaders when they go to localities for the 'Gadapa Gadapaku' programme, he claimed. "Unable to digest the growing popularity of the TDP among people, the YSRCP is taking up different programmes with different



names," he ridiculed. He slammed the YSRCP government for crippling the economy of the state. He questioned where

social justice is in the administration. Economic inequalities have increased under this government, he flayed.

He said that a public meeting would be held on May 28 on the concluding day of Mahanadu where it is expected that more

INDIA CORNER

E-procurement eliminates avenues for corruption: CAG

Making a strong case for promoting e-procurement, CAG Girish Chandra Murmu on Tuesday said it has the potential to eliminate avenues for corruption and rent-seeking in public procurement. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) was speaking at the e-seminar of INTOSAI Working Group on IT Audit (WGITA) on the topic 'Auditing e-procurement systems', hosted virtually by SAI India. "There is no doubt that e-procurement has potential to eliminate avenues for corruption and rent-seeking in public procurement. E-procurement with its promise of transparency, is also a deterrent to collusion between officials and the suppliers as a digital trail for every transaction is recorded," said Murmu, as the Chair WGITA. However, Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) need to remain vigilant as discretion in many steps in the procurement process continues, leaving scope for corruption, he added.



HC grants 12 weeks to K'taka to complete delimitation for ZP-TP polls

The Karnataka High Court has given 12 weeks time to the State Government for the delimitation exercise and preparing the reservation list for the Zilla Panchayat and Taluk Panchayats. The HC accepted the 12 weeks time sought by the state in the memo filed before it. The Karnataka State Election Commission (SEC) had approached the HC following the Supreme Court directions to hold the elections immediately. The state government had constituted a delimitation panel and a backward classes commission under the chairmanship of a retired judge, the HC was informed. The SEC accepted the government's proposal. The HC made it clear to the government that it cannot seek an extension. The HC directed the SEC to announce the elections within a week after the government completes the delimitation and reservation exercise.



Modi to address cooperative sector meet, dedicate hospital in Guj on May 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a conclave of cooperative sector leaders and dedicate a multi-specialty hospital in Gujarat on May 28, officials said on Tuesday. As per the official schedule, the prime minister will first inaugurate a multi-specialty hospital built by Shree Patel Sewa Samaj at Atkot village in Jasdian taluka of Rajkot district at 10 am. The 200-bed KD Parwadia Multispeciality Hospital is situated on Rajkot-Bhavnagar Highway and built at a cost of Rs 40 crore, said Managing Trustee of the hospital, Dr Bharat Boghara said. "The hospital will benefit people in rural areas of Rajkot, Botad, Amreli and other surrounding districts. We will provide free treatment to people who possess Ayushman Bharat and other cards issued by the government."



MODI'S MEET WITH JAPANESE PM KISHIDA IN TOKYO

Defence mfg, trade & tech on agenda

PNS ■ TOKYO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday met his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida here and the two leaders undertook a comprehensive stocktaking of the entire framework of the bilateral partnership to carry forward cooperation in diverse areas, including defence manufacturing in India and trade and technology. Prime Minister Modi, who is here for the second in-person Quad summit, held a bilateral meeting with Kishida during which they underscored the importance of maintaining the momentum of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries.

Both leaders undertook a comprehensive stocktaking of the entire framework of bilateral partnership to carry forward our cooperation in diverse areas, including in the field of defence manufacturing in India, skill development, partnership, trade and technology partnership cooperation,



including for resilient supply chains in the region, and other areas, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said in a media briefing. This is Prime Minister Modi's fifth visit to Japan since becoming Prime Minister and his second meeting with his Japanese counterpart Kishida, he said.

Prime Minister Kishida invited Prime Minister Modi to visit Japan later this year for the annual summit, the Foreign

Secretary said. In fact, during the summit, both Prime Ministers underscored the importance of maintaining the momentum of regular high level exchanges between the two countries, he added.

Prime Minister Modi, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Kishida and Australia's newly-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Tuesday attended the second in-person Quad summit

which took place under the shadow of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The summit also took place at a time when the relations between China and the Quad member countries have become tense, with Beijing increasingly challenging democratic values and resorting to coercive trade practices.

India, the US and several other world powers have been talking about the need to

ensure a free, open and thriving Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China's rising military manoeuvring in the region.

China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea.

In March last year, President Biden hosted the first-ever summit of the Quad leaders in the virtual format that was followed by an in-person summit in Washington in September. The Quad leaders also held a virtual meeting in March.

Australia will host the next Quad summit in 2023.

In November 2017, India, Japan, the US and Australia gave shape to the long-pending proposal of setting up the Quad to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence, amidst China's growing military presence in the strategic region.

Quad condemns terrorism; denounces 26/11, P'kot attacks

PNS ■ TOKYO

The leaders of India, Australia, Japan and the United States on Tuesday unequivocally condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, and reiterated their condemnation of terrorist attacks, including the 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks perpetrated by Pakistan-based terror groups.

In a Quad Joint Leaders' Statement issued after the second in-person meeting of the Quad leaders here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Australia's newly-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese reiterated that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever. We condemn unequivocally terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, the statement said. The four leaders denounced the use of terrorist proxies and emphasised the



importance of denying any logistical, financial or military support to terrorist groups which could be used to launch or plan terror attacks, including cross-border attacks, it said, without naming any country. We reiterate our condemnation of terrorist attacks, including 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks, the leaders said in the joint statement.

Terrorists of Pakistan-based outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) had carried out the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack and the January 2016 Pathankot air-

base attack. JuD, led by Hafiz Saeed, is the front organisation for the LeT which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans. Saeed, a Pakistani national, is a UN-designated terrorist on whom the US has placed a USD 10 million bounty. Last month, the Indian government designated as a terrorist Ali Kashif Jan, the Pakistani handler of the 2016 terror attack on Pathankot air base in which six terrorists and seven Indian soldiers were killed.

Kerala to conduct special vaccination drive for children



PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Health Department is gearing up to conduct a three-day COVID-19 vaccination drive exclusively for children from May 25.

The objective of the drive was to vaccinate as many children as possible in view of the reopening of the schools next month after summer vacation, state health minister Veena George said on Tuesday.

It is being organised in collaboration with schools, residents' associations and volunteer groups, she said adding that children can receive the shots in all major hospitals by registering in the COWIN portal or through spot registration at the respective centres. School ID cards or Aadhaar cards are mandatory for children to get vaccinated, the minister said and directed the officials concerned to ensure that all children of this age group are vaccinated in the state.

George gave a direction in this regard in a meeting of the state rapid response team held here, an official statement said.

As many as 81 per cent of the total children, belonging to the age group of 15-17 years of age, were given the first dose of vaccine so far, while 52 per cent of the same age category received the second dose also.

Plea for 'restoration' of Hindu & Jain deities inside Q-Minar opposed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on Tuesday opposed a plea before a Delhi court seeking restoration of Hindu and Jain deities inside the Qutub Minar complex, saying it is not a place of worship and the existing status of the monument cannot be altered.

The ASI also said that it would be contrary to the law

to agree to the contention of any person claiming a fundamental right to worship in this centrally protected monument.

The ASI, however, said that the architectural materials and images of Hindu and Jain deities were re-used in the construction of the Qutab complex.

Additional District Judge Nikhil Chopra reserved the order on the plea for June 9. "Fundamental right cannot

be availed in violation of any status of the land. The basic principle of protection conservation is not to allow starting of any new practice in a monument declared and notified as a protected one under the Act, the ASI said.

It said that revival of worship was not allowed wherever it was not practiced at the time of protection of a monument.

"Qutab Minar is not a place

of worship and since the time of its protection by the central government, Qutab Minar or any part of Qutab Minar was not under worship by any community, it said.

The counsel for the ASI further said that it was very clear from the Persian inscription at the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, that the cloisters were erected with carved columns and other architectural members from 27 temples.



BJP brass ignores plea to field BSY's son in MLC polls

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The BJP's central leadership has ignored the recommendation made by party's Karnataka unit to field former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's son in the June 3 biennial election to seven seats of Karnataka Legislative Council.

The BJP had on Tuesday announced the candidature of former Deputy Chief Minister and party vice president Laxman Savadi, party's state secretaries Hemalatha Nayak and S Keshavaprasad, and President of SC Morcha Chalapathi Narayanaswamy.

The state BJP core committee had recommended state BJP vice president B Y Vijayendra's name to the central leadership, as one of the probable candidates. According



to party sources, the leadership decided against giving ticket to Vijayendra, as it wants to field him as a candidate during the 2023 assembly elections, and is likely to give him a greater role in the party ahead of the polls as a placatory move. There were also some reports that Yediyurappa had desired to make his son an MLC and then

insist on making him Minister in the Basavaraj Bommai cabinet.

There have been such demands from his supporters after Yediyurappa stepped down as Chief Minister in July last year. The central leadership is also said to have decided against Vijayendra's candidature, as it will weaken the BJP's stand against dynasty politics, ahead of 2023 assembly polls, as Yediyurappa is currently a MLA from Shikaripura assembly seat, while his elder son B Y Ragahavendra is Shivamogga MP. The BJP announced the four candidates hours before the deadline for filing of nominations ends on Tuesday.

The JD(S) too announced former MLC T A Saravana as its candidate.

Vijayendra to abide by decision of high command

After the BJP central leadership decided against fielding him as a candidate for upcoming MLC polls in Karnataka, Former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's son and party's state Vice President B Y Vijayendra on Tuesday said power and position itself are not the ultimate objectives in politics. Asking his supporters and well-wishers to abide by the party's decision, he also appealed against making any unnecessary comments on social media and elsewhere, following this decision, stating that it will not only damage the reputation of the party but also hurt the sentiments of Yediyurappa and himself. "My party and our leadership have always encouraged and stood by me ever since I entered politics, by giving me an opportunity to work as Vice President of the party's state unit. I appeal to all Karyakartas and my supporters to understand that power and position itself are not the ultimate objectives in politics," Vijayendra said in an appeal. "I would like to convey to all my well-wishers that any unnecessary comments on social media and elsewhere will not only damage the reputation of our party but also hurt the sentiments of Yediyurappa Ji and myself," he said.

Pak-American man kills 3 kin, ends life

PNS ■ HOUSTON

A Pakistani-American man apparently took his own life after he shot dead his estranged wife, their 4-year-old daughter and his mother-in-law in a small town in Texas, according to police and media reports. Law enforcement officials descended on The Commons at Vintage Park apartment complex in the Champion Forest area after gunfire was reported there early on Thursday and found the four people inside a residence, Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez said.

A semi-automatic firearm was found near the body of the man, he said.

Father's death biggest learning experience: Rahul

PNS ■ CAMBRIDGE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said that the assassination of his father and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was the single biggest learning experience of his life, asserting that he cannot get away from the fact that the event also made him learn things that he would have never learnt otherwise.

In conversation with Indian-origin academic Dr Shruti Kapila at the prestigious University of Cambridge on Monday, he was asked about the death anniversary of his father who was killed in an LTTE suicide bombing during an election rally in Tamil Nadu in May 1991.

Kapila, Associate Professor in the Faculty of History at Corpus Christi College, posed the Opposition MP with a



Gandhian question of violence and how to live with it at a personal level.

The single biggest learning experience of my life was my father's death. There is no bigger experience than that, said Gandhi, after several minutes of pause during which the 51-year-old leader seemed visibly

moved. Now, I can look at it and say the person or the force that killed my father caused me tremendous pain that's correct, as a son I lost my father and that's very painful.

But then I can't get away from the fact that the same event also made me learn things that I would never ever

have learnt otherwise. So, as long as you are ready to learn, it doesn't matter how nasty or evil people are, the Congress leader said. Gandhi went on to relate this to day-to-day politics, adding: If I turn around and (Prime Minister) Mr (Narendra) Modi attacks me, and I say oh my god he's so vicious, he's attacking me. That's one way of looking at it, and the other way of looking at it great, I could learn something from him, give me some more.

Asked if loss could be productive, Gandhi reflected on the perils of politics where large energies are at play.

In life you will always, especially if you are in places where large energies are moving, you will always get hurt. If you do what I do, you will get hurt. It's not a possibility, it's a certain-

ty because it's like swimming in an ocean with big waves you are going to go under. When you go under, you learn how to react from it, he said.

During the course of the session at Cambridge University, Gandhi also fielded a series of questions from students from the university who wanted to know how they could get involved with making a difference in Indian politics.

The Congress leader said they could join as interns with party leaders and then be sent to different parts of India to witness political action, but urged them to be ready to tough it out. It's a hard business and if you do it properly, it's a painful business, it's not a fun business it's a tough job and you are going to get beaten up, he said, calling upon the youth to join in.

Akhilesh slams UP govt over crime

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a face-off with Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on law and order, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday recalled SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav's "boys will be boys" remark on rape.

Opposing death penalty for rape, Akhilesh Yadav's father and Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav had purportedly said at a rally, 'Ladke, ladke hain. Galti ho jati hai (Boys will be boys. Mistakes happen sometimes)'.

Replying to Leader of Opposition Akhilesh Yadav's attack over the crime against women, the CM said, "This is the government of the BJP. Here it's not said that boys will be boys. Mistakes happen sometimes." Any kind of crime



is "unforgivable" and the government is taking strict action against criminals, especially those committing crime against women, he claimed. During the zero hour, Yadav referred to the crime against women in Allahabad, Chandauli, Siddharthnagar and Lalitpur, claiming that maximum crimes against women were committed in UP.

Referring to a girl's rape allegedly by an SHO in Lalitpur,

he said the case was registered only after the CM went there. Yadav added that the CM at a meeting said he will set "officers right" and asked them to leave acting like "middlemen". The CM wasn't aware of it in the past five years, said Yadav in a jibe at Adityanath.

Adityanath retorted to Yadav saying, "You support every criminal who spreads anarchy in the state and practise hooliganism."

All heart

Delhi is taking notable steps in public health care by planning to instal AEDs in public spaces

In a commendable move to reduce fatalities caused by sudden cardiac arrest, the Delhi Government proposes to place heart care devices in public places across the city. Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are to be placed in crowded areas like railway stations, bus stations and markets. These portable AEDs are easy to handle even by the general public with minimal training. The idea is to stabilise the heart of the person suffering a cardiac arrest till the ambulance arrives. In a sudden cardiac arrest, the heart's electrical system fails, and it unexpectedly stops pumping blood. This produces abnormal heart rhythms and the pulse rate increases rapidly. If an AED is immediately available, it can deliver electrical shocks and restore the heart's normal rhythm. This is called defibrillation. But time is of the essence. A cardiac arrest can degenerate into death within seven to 10 minutes. An AED must therefore be used in time, and effectively. In India, 10 per cent of all deaths are caused by sudden cardiac arrests as patients await ambulances or reach late to hospitals. In this context, the Delhi Government's move is path-breaking. In the United States and Europe, the policies allowing AEDs in public places were implemented only after the turn of the century. Today, millions of these devices exist in these countries. All ambulances have them. So do most public transport systems. Having AEDs in the homes of high-risk cardiac



patients is now being considered.

The Delhi Government must note that software developers abroad have developed apps that help people locate these devices. Access to such a database is a necessity if the AEDs are to be of help in emergencies. Once this programme extends beyond Delhi, we will also need people trained in CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) to sign up as medical volunteers who can be located on apps. The key element of the proposal is training people to use the AEDs. Even before placing the devices, the Delhi Government's health department and city hospitals must team up to carry out large-scale awareness campaigns and organise training camps for the general public. The ambulance services spread across the national Capital should be linked to a common database. The Government must be sensitive to some of the issues involved in placing the AEDs in public places. The first one is easy. They should be placed in crowded areas that have a high chance of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests. The AEDS are needed in large residential areas as well, especially those far away from health centres. These are of critical importance in slums and unauthorised colonies where the poor live and where cardiovascular disease causes the maximum number of premature deaths. Finding locations in such slums will be a challenge unless Government schools or police stations are chosen to host these devices. The proposal needs a lot of coordination between the Government and the public to be a success.

PICTALK



Devotees at the Kedarnath temple after it experienced fresh snowfall

PTI

Heavy weather

The Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand has been halted in view of the inclement weather

Snowfall and heavy bouts of rain are pummelling the Char Dham Yatra pilgrims in the upper reaches of Uttarakhand. Thousands of pilgrims have been told to break their journey en route the holy temples of Kedarnath and Yamunotri in the Garhwal Himalayas as a precautionary measure. The peaks around the famous Badrinath shrine have also received fresh snowfall. Kedarnath has been receiving snowfall for nearly 48 hours now, and its impact was experienced in the faraway Delhi-NCR as well where the temperatures fell nearly eight degrees Celsius and the weather turned quite pleasant as compared to the previous fortnight which was nothing less than a scorcher. While Garhwal's upper regions have been receiving snowfall, the lower areas are being lashed by incessant rains, prompting the authorities to halt the travel by devotees. The pilgrims and tourists were directed at Gaurikund and Sonprayag not to proceed any further in view of the impending inclement weather. The devotees proceeding towards Yamunotri were also halted at Janakichatti, virtually the last stopover point on way to the famous shrine that makes part of the State's Char Dham circuit also comprising Gangotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath, as the weather started playing truant in the afternoon. According to the local administration at Badkot and Rudraprayag, the pilgrims have been told not to proceed any higher as a precautionary measure as it wasn't safe for pilgrims to travel beyond these points



"for the time being". They shall be allowed to continue their ascent as soon as the weather clears. With the COVID-induced restrictions having been eased after almost two years, a record number of pilgrims this year are visiting the holiest of the four Himalayan temples in Uttarakhand. More than nine lakh pilgrims have already paid obeisance at these temples in the Garhwal region since the Char Dham Yatra got underway on May 3. Meanwhile, the Hemkund Sahib Yatra also began on Sunday with 5,000 pilgrims allowed to visit the shrine daily. The peaks surrounding Hemkund Sahib experienced light snow on the day the portals of the shrine were opened "but it has not affected the yatra", according to an official of the Hemkund Sahib Management Trust. The need of the hour is for the authorities to limit the number of pilgrims per day each season so as not to put pressure on the region's fragile ecology.

Albanese will foster India engagement

The new Australian Prime Minister has consolidated his position within the Labour Party over years, and he well understands India's relevance



ASHUTOSH MISRA

Australia has voted for change and elected a new Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, Member for Grayndler in New South Wales since 1996. Nicknamed 'Albo', his substantial rise in the party eventuated under Kevin Rudd's Kevin07 dispensation in which he was given a ministerial position. In the 2010 hung Parliament, Albanese was also instrumental in securing the support of independent members when the Government was shy of the majority mark. After the drubbing in the 2013 elections, when the Australia Labour Party chose Bill Shorten over him as the leader, he secured the Deputy Prime Minister's position.

Subsequently, following the shock defeat of the ALP in 2019 when Shorten resigned from leadership, Albanese became the party leader. There is no denying that Albanese took charge of the party in very challenging times and needed to unite its factions, restore public and business confidence in Labour's policies and values and, most of all, consolidate his own authority as a leader — and he has done fairly well on all counts. The jury may differ over his leadership style, articulation and capabilities, but his political resume certainly testifies his credentials as a peace/deal-maker within the Labor caucus and in Parliament. Above all, he possesses a key virtue to be a successful political leader — patience.

Come 2022, biding his time, he backed his political convictions and after the initial gaffes in the media, brick-by-brick built his prime ministerial image in the public. He championed change in the way politics was conducted, inclusiveness in decision-making, compassion for the indigenous Australians and hope for the jobless. His promise to create a national anti-corruption commission is a big tick with the teals and also the Australian public. His win was also aided by a strong anti-incumbency over rape and sexual misconduct; rising cost of living, fuel, electricity and essential commodities; stagnating wages, waning climate commitments and Scott



Morrison's delayed response in securing COVID vaccines and handling natural disasters. Most recently, ScoMo's flip-flop response in dealing with the Queensland floods gave the ALP leadership in Queensland the much-needed ammunition to target the federal Government. Morrison's mishandling of the Brittany Higgins' rape allegations and assault allegations against his two parliamentary colleagues, Christian Porter and Alan Tudge, especially inflicted a severe beating to the party's and his own public image, and last-ditch effort to announce Marise Payne as the 'Prime Minister for Women' proved futile in winning back women voters.

Albanese is likely to get a majority reaching 76, and thus escape teals (climate change activists) and the Greens breathing down his neck. He will have more space to manage the expectations of the resource industry and instil some moderation in climate policy and pursuit of "renewable energy superpower" status for Australia. In the post-pandemic recovery, the flagship resource sector is the key for GDP growth which the IMF has raised to 4.2 per cent in its latest forecast. The resource industry contends that more

THE JURY MAY DIFFER OVER HIS LEADERSHIP STYLE, ARTICULATION AND CAPABILITIES, BUT HIS POLITICAL RESUME CERTAINLY TESTIFIES HIS CREDENTIALS AS A PEACE/DEAL-MAKER WITHIN THE LABOUR CAUCUS AND IN PARLIAMENT

mines, minerals and metals are needed to build a modern society and boost economic growth and decoding this remains a challenging conundrum for the Albanese Government.

For New Delhi, bipartisan in Australia's India policy means the regime change would not disrupt policy continuity. In the wake of the Pulwama attack, new Foreign Minister Penelope Wong, then the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, had condemned the "atrocious terrorist attack against security personnel in Jammu and Kashmir". In April, Anthony Albanese, as the Leader of the Opposition, had also welcomed the "deepening of ties" and signing of the Australia India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (AI-ECTA). In 2017, Albanese had led a parliamentary delegation to India to deepen parliamentary ties, people-to-people relations and understand the social, economic, governance and political issues. He concluded his visit brief by writing: "...it is important that the parliamentary officers work closely to ensure that Australian parliamentary visitations don't wait some 17 years before the next visit." The insights gained will prove useful now.

Albanese well understands India's relevance which has been elevated to 63rd in 'doing business with ease' rankings in the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 Report, making it the sixth fastest growing economy, surpassing France. It is now the ninth largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment destination in 2019 by the World Investment Report 2020 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). As per the Global Innovation Index (GII) published by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), India ranks 52nd in innovation, improving from 57th in 2018, and topping the list amongst the Central and South Asian nations.

In market sophistication, India ranks 20th both in terms of 'Ease of Getting Credit' and 'Market Capitalisation'; third in 'Domestic Market Sale' and sixth in 'Ease of Protecting Minority Investors'. In business sophistication, India has jumped from 51st in 2018 to 27th rank, and 23rd in 'University/Industry Research Collaboration', something that should interest the academic stakeholders in Australia. India is a major success in Knowledge and Technology and ranks 1st in ICT services exports (as a percentage of total exports) and also ranks 22nd in the list of 'Exporter of Creative Goods'.

As Albanese meets his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi in Tokyo at the Quad summit, both draw comfort from the fact that their strategic and bilateral interests cannot be seen in isolation. This means they can keep an eye on what happens between and around them, simultaneously. (The author is the CEO, Institute for Australia India Engagement, Brisbane, National Sports Chair {Australia India Business Council} and Editor-in-Chief, India News Australia. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COURTS MUST PRIORITISE HEARINGS

Sir — It is a matter of great concern that the precious time of courts, including the Supreme Court, is wasted on adjudication of cases pertaining to disputes over whether certain deities were worshipped in places where some mosques exist now. It is worrisome that the courts are forced to deal with such unimportant cases when they have to deal with huge backlog of cases related to the lives of the common people. Some Hindus believe that several mosques, the Gyanvapi mosque, for example, were built by demolishing temples. Muslims, on the other hand, believe that no such temples existed in these places.

It may be recollected that similar arguments had led to the demolition of Babri Masjid. The Places of Worship Act, 1991, was legislated by Parliament to prevent religious organisations from making claims on other mosques and shrines. For a long time the courts refused to hear cases questioning the legality of mosques. However, when the courts showed willingness to hear such cases, many litigants started filing petitions on flimsy grounds. In fact, the courts need to reject such cases as they violate the Places of Worship Act.

Venu GS | Kollam

STATES CAN DO WITH MORE REVENUE

Sir — The Opposition-ruled States like Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Kerala have decreased VAT on petrol and diesel after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's call to provide further relief to consumers following a cut in excise duty by the Centre, though some other States appear reluctant citing their inability to take more strain on revenue. It is debatable whether States can afford to give up revenue from the Value Added Tax (VAT) on petrol and diesel unless the Centre devolves more funds or gives them more grants. The Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra Government slashed the VAT on petrol by ₹2.08 per litre and diesel by ₹1.44 per litre.

A statement by the Government said

The Gyanvapi mosque row



character of a place of worship and 'changing' it and of arguing that 'ascertainment' of the character of a place of worship is not barred under the Act in the present context could defeat the whole object of this crucial piece of legislation.

The intention behind seeking 'to determine' the character of Gyanvapi mosque is 'to change' it. The present litigation is not for any academic interest, but for carrying out the Hindu right's agenda of converting certain mosques into temples in the name of 'correcting historical wrongs' and as part of Hindu revivalism. We are a secular democracy; we don't wish to see the sad events that happened in late 1980s and early 1990s reenacted in the 2020s. Disputes over places of worship cannot substitute efforts needed to be made to improve the quality of life of aam aadmi.

G David Milton | Kanyakumari

the State exchequer will have to bear an annual loss of ₹2,500 crore as a result of this decision. Despite the tax reduction announced by the Centre, the rates are still high compared to 2013 when the Congress (UPA) ruled the country. The Union Government's levies on petrol have gone up substantially in the last seven years. Though the revenue to the Union Government has increased manifold, there has not been a matching increase in the revenues to States. It means that the Centre's excise duty cut on petrol and diesel is eyewash.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS LOOMING

Sir — As per the World Food Programme, the world's largest humanitarian organisation focusing on food security and hunger, a crisis is looming. WFP has recently made a painful revelation that worldwide, up to 811 million people go to bed hungry every night, and the number of those facing acute food insecurity has

more than doubled — from 135 million to 276 million in the last three years. The hunger crisis has been caused by various factors like conflicts, climate shocks and the economic consequences in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WFP says that 'conflict' is the biggest driver of hunger, with 60 per cent of the world's hungry living in areas affected by war and violence. Also, the events unfolding in Ukraine are proof of how conflicts feed hunger. The pandemic has only exacerbated the problem, driving hunger to unprecedented levels. Putting an end to hunger and malnutrition is a moral obligation of humankind, and it is not just the duty of the Governments. Ordinary citizens, high net-worth individuals, youth influencers and celebrities can all play their part and raise their voice against the injustice of global hunger.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Mujhe makkhan par lakeer kheenchna mein maza nahi aata; main patthar par lakeer kheenchna hoon.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

The US will intervene militarily if China were to invade Taiwan. This burden is bigger than Ukraine (invasion).



US President — Joe Biden

Keep experimenting. It doesn't matter whether you succeed or you fail.



Actor — Madhuri Dixit

I'm the type of player who gets motivated by the idea of rising in the rankings.



Former world No. 1 — Naomi Osaka

Many parties have agreed to the date but we must have the consent of all parties.



Bihar Chief Minister — Nitish Kumar

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA MUST STABILISE THE VALUE OF RUPEE

Steep falls reveal that rupee's value is vulnerable to net forex outflow



RP GUPTA

In Maysecond week, the forex reserve of India has reduced to \$595 billion from \$635 billion in September 2021. Existing reserves are about 18% of nominal GDP which is acomfort zone. Despite this, the value of rupee against US dollarfell almost by 6%to ₹77.4 in May, 2022 from ₹73 in September 2021. Such steep fall reveals that the value of the rupee is vulnerable to the net outflow of forex. Historically, India has been in the trade deficit (goods & services) and therefore, the forex reserves are generally built from the "capital receipts" in shape of debt and equity. Net "inward remittance" in the current account is about\$60-65 billion which is consumed in the part financing of trade deficit and mostly, India had been in "current account deficit". Trade deficit is somewhat similar to "operating loss" and the current account deficit is similar to"net loss" of Nation in the international trade. This is not a good scenario for the stability of rupee. Ideally, India should be in "trade surplus" for a stable rupee. For appreciation ofrupee value, India should have"current account surplus" on consistent basis. Import of energy (Petroleum & Coal) must be partially replaced with domestic production. India is having enough reserves of coal and its production must be increased through mineral and coal sector reforms. Indiahasalso good reserves of oil and gas, as quoted by ex-petroleum Minister VeerappaMoily and also by Vedanta's Anil Agrawal. However, thisneeds huge spending in prospecting. For replacing imports of electronics and defence items, Government has taken good steps; that may be pushed. Similar steps are also needed for other



major imports. Government should bring a white paper for boosting-exports and replacing imports with domestic production. Besides this, there is a vast scope of export of services in the field of tourism, consultancy (legal, accounting and engineering), shipping, education and health sector; that also needs a separate white paper.

The financial savings of India are not adequate for financing the investment needs and therefore, the dependency upon the inflow of global funds shall continue for few more years. As an interim measure, the physical savings in gold must be reduced to alimstnil through financial innovation, as suggested by author in his Book 'Turn Around India'. Huge import of gold is indeed a drag on the trade balance. In 1992,the regime of fixed exchange rate was ended. Thereafter, the value of rupee was almost stable from the year 2000 to 2010, as evident from the table below. It means that; it is feasible to maintain stability of rupee. Simultaneously, the reasons for subsequent fall inrupee value must be analysed and resolved. Total financial assets in the world are exceeding \$200 trillion. Global investors are in search of such destinations which provide them a high return in terms of US dollars. In case, India succeeds in achieving stability of Rupee, the global funds shall rush in. In such case, it is imperative that global funds are mostly used for the investment in productive assets and not for consumption. Failing which, the inflation might aggravate and the servicing of global funds might pose problem. For boosting investment in productive assets, the regulatory easement and the simplification of Tax laws are the prerequisites. Theexternal risks, if any, arising due to outflow of forex anddepreciation of rupee shall be totally eliminated. Rather, due to surplus forex reserves, the diplomatic relation of India shall improve, particularly with neighbouring nations. And thus, India shall command high respect in the global fraternity.

(The writer is an economist and author. The views expressed are personal.)

Mahaprabhuji's vision of universal peace



PRASHANT TEWARI

A Vaishnav does not harbour negative feelings of hatred, jealousy, envy, and so on, and treats everyone with respect, equanimity and equality

Vaishnavism is one of the major forms of modern Hinduism, characterised by devotion to Vishnu and his incarnations. A devotee of Vishnu is called a Vaishnava. The Vaishnavite tradition is known for the loving devotion to an avatar of Vishnu, and as such was key to the spread of the Bhakti movement in South Asia in the 2nd millennium CE. For Vaishnavas, absolute reality is manifested in Vishnu, who in turn is incarnated in Rama, Krishna, and other avatars. Through his avatars, Vishnu defends traditional righteousness in keeping with the moral law.

Vaishnavism is the worship and acceptance of Vishnu. The various sects of worshippers of Vishnu pray to him in different ways. For some, the goal of religious devotion to Vishnu is liberation from the cycle of birth and death. For others, it is health and prosperity in this life, good crops, success in business, or thriving children. Vaishnavism comprises many sects and groups that differ in their interpretation of the relationship between the individual and God. It has four main categories of sub-schools: the medieval-era Vishishtadvaita school of Ramanuja, the Dvaita school of Madhvacharya, the Dvaitadvaita school of Nimbarkacharya, and the Pushtimarg of Vallabhacharya. The Srivaishnava sect, for example, emphasises the doctrine of qualified non-dualism of Ramanuja, according to which, although the differentiated phenomenal world is illusory, it is nevertheless the medium through which devotees may gain access to God. Another group professes the dualism of the philosopher Madhva, the belief that God and the soul are separate entities and that the soul's existence is dependent on God. The Pushtimarg sect maintains the pure non-dualism doctrine of the theologian Vallabhacharya, which does not declare the phenomenal world to be an illusion. The Gaudiya sect, founded by Chaitanya, teaches inconceivable duality and non-duality, the belief that the relation between God and the world is beyond the scope of human comprehension.

HDH Shashth Pithadishwar Puja Pad Goswami 108 Shree Dwarkeshlalji Maharajshree is the chief patron - managing trustee of Vaishnav Innerfaith Pushtimargiya Organisation (VIVO-Global). His Divine Holiness hails from the Pushtimarg tradition of Vaishnavism as the direct descendant of Jagadguru Shrimad Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhuji, the founder of Pushti Bhakti Marg and one of the five great Acharyas in Hinduism. His Divine Holiness is enthroned as the 14th Gadipathi of Shashthpeeth at Vadodara, one of the seven thrones of Shri VitthalnathjiGusainji, the son of Shri Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhuji. He is not only the head at Kalyanraiji Mandir, Vadodara but also at several temples/Havelis in India, the UK, the USA, and Canada. The first supreme omnipresent Jagad Guru Shrimad Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhuji established the Vaishnav religious system to grace upon



INNER FAITH IS THE DIVINE LOVE ONE EXPERIENCES AFTER REALISING KRISHNA'S TRUE NATURE. IT IS THE RECOGNITION OF THE ALL-PERVADING NATURE OR BRAHMAVAD ESSENCE OF GOD WITHIN OURSELVES AND IN THE WORLD THAT GIVES A POSITIVE OUTLOOK AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS LIFE

(The writer is Editor-in-Chief of Opinion Express. The views expressed are personal.)



the Universe, the Divine Grace, also known as Pushtimarg. Jagad Guru Vallabhacaryaji had two Divine Sons - Shri Gopinathji& Shri Vitthalnathji-Gosainji. Shri Vitthalnathji-Gosainji had seven sons. His sixth son was Shri Yadunathji. Shashtha pithadishwar Param Puja Goswami 108 Shree DwarkeshlaljiMaharajshri is the 14th Generation of Shri Yadunathji. For the past 13 generations based on the traditions of Shashtha pithadishwar, he resides on every Gaadi-Pati (Throne) as Raj-Tilak. He is presently residing in Vadodara as Raj-Tilak in Seva of Mohini Swarup Shri Kalyanrayji. This is the same Swarup that Beloved Vallabhacharya ji served (Sevya).

Pujyapad Goswami 108 Shree DwarkeshlaljiMaharajshri is presently the Raj-Tilak Gaadi-Pati of Vadodara, Ahmedabad-Naroda (Shri Mahaprabhaji'sBethakji), Gondal, Baria, (Gujarat), Gokul (Uttar Pradesh), Dhanpur, Shergad (Rajasthan), Vidisha (Madhya Pradesh), Sikandarabad (Telangana). Likewise, in Atlanta-Gokuldham, Ocala-Pushtidham, Connecticut-Vallabhdham (All-USA) &Leceister-Shreeji Dham (UK). Moreover, he is serving var-

ious other religious establishments around the world as an advisory. From a very young age, Puja Maharajshree has been an inspirational religious, social and cultural leader as well as a guiding force for the young and old alike and strong support for the disadvantaged members of society. He has motivated thousands of youngsters to embrace Pushtimarg through various religious, cultural, educational, and charitable institutions throughout India and the world. Over the years, HDH has been honored for His profound philosophical and poetic writings as well as for His religious, social, and humanitarian work. He is a renowned Pushti Margiya Propagator, Philosopher and Teacher. He appreciates antique collections and art &artistry. He is very proficient in playing Mrudang (Pakhawaj) in Music Area. He is articulate in preparing and adorning jewelry for Shree Thakorjee. He has written several ongoing poetries in Gujarati, Hindi & Vraj Bhasha. He is the author of various religious and philosophical articles and texts. He has an interest in ancient & modern, known-unknown Gazals' collections. He displays a keen interest in national geographic and

current affairs of past and present times...

He has received several accolades and awards including the prestigious "Glory of Gujarat" award in 2015 for promoting social well-being, Indian culture, and religion as well as for His valuable contributions to economics and religious research. Most recently in August 2021, His Divine Holiness was awarded an honorary doctorate by North American University, USA.

Puja Maharajshree continues to travel tirelessly throughout the world. HDH Dwarkeshlalji Maharajshree enlightens the world on the specifics of terminology commonly used by followers of the Vaishnav cult.

Who is a Vaishnav? Anyone offering divine loving services to Lord Shree Krishna by dedicating and finding refuge in Him is called a Vaishnav. A Vaishnav does not harbor negative feelings of hatred, jealousy, envy, etc., and treats everyone with respect, equanimity, and equality.

What is Inner Faith?Inner faith is the divine love one experiences after realising Shri Krishna's true nature. It is the recognition of the all-pervading nature or Brahmavad essence of God within ourselves and in the world that gives a positive outlook and attitude towards life and creates respect, understanding, and awareness of oneself as well as others. Unyielding faith originating from one's experiences of God's omnipotent presence can lead to extraordinary experiences which are practical and liberating. In this state of liberation, one merges into Shri Krishna's blissful form and no caste, creed, color, sex, or age prevents one from attaining Shri Krishna's grace. It transcends all boundaries of identity, time, space, and place.

What does Pushtimargiya mean?Pushtimarg also known as "The Path of Grace" is a Vaishnav sect of Hinduism established by Jagadguru Shrimad Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhuji, one of the great Acharyas of Hinduism. "Pushtimargiya" is spontaneous, selfless, motiveless love for LordVaishnavism theology, descend to empower the good and fight evil, thereby restoring Dharma. This is reflected in the passages of the ancient Bhagavad Gita as: Whenever righteousness wanes and unrighteousness increases, I send myself forth.

For the protection of the good and for the destruction of evil, and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being age after age.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THIS IS A GOVERNMENT WORSE THAN THAT OF HITLER, MUSSOLINI OR EVEN STALIN. THEY ARE BULLDOZING THE NATION'S FEDERAL STRUCTURE.

— WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAMATA BANERJEE



IN THE LAST EIGHT YEARS, WE HAVE MADE OUR DEMOCRACY STRONG AND RESILIENT... ONE OF THE STRONGEST PILLARS OF PROGRESS.

— PRIME MINISTER

NARENDRA MODI

Rajya Sabha elections will give BJP numerical edge

The regional parties may gain more than the two national parties, the ruling BJP and the Congress, in elections to the Upper House

The composition of Rajya Sabha will soon mirror Lok Sabha giving an advantage to the ruling BJP. But it will not gain the majority yet. Stakes are high for the BJP and the opposition parties because of the upcoming Presidential and vice-presidential polls in June-July. Any changes in the composition of state assemblies will impact the Rajya Sabha, the House of Elders.

The House will witness several changes after the upcoming biennial elections for 57 Rajya Sabha seats and two bye-elections on June 10. Some retiring members might come back, and others may not. The regional parties may gain more than the two national parties - the ruling BJP and the Congress — after the biennial polls.

The regional satraps rule



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

several states like West Bengal, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Delhi, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu. The last three states are coalition governments. The young Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ruling Delhi and Punjab has been the biggest gainer in the Rajya Sabha biennial elections. It won five seats, with which its strength in the House has gone up to eight. The regional parties might increase their tally to 27 from 25 seats out of the 57.

Secondly, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first term (2014-2019), the Congress-led opposition was strong and created hurdles for most bills. The BJP, which had just 47 members in 2012, has touched three digits. The numbers changed in Modi- 2-0, enabling the Government to



push through many contentious bills, including the abrogation of Article 370 and the trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Of the 59 members retiring, 25 belong to the BJP, while its allies, the Janata Dal (United) two and AIADMK, three. The shrinking National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has 31 seats out of the 59. It will be challenging for the NDA as it will likely lose 7 to 9. As far as other parties are

concerned, the Samajwadi Party has three, the Biju Janata Dal four, the Bahujan Samaj Party two, and the Telangana Rashtra Samiti three. In contrast, the YSR Congress, the Akali Dal, and the Rashtriya Janata Dal have one each.

In Andhra Pradesh, the BJP will lose the three it currently holds out of the four seats going to the polls. The YSRCP's sweeping victory in 2019 means

it will gain all four seats. Similarly, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) will gain both seats going to the polls. Biju Janata Dal (BJD) will continue to hold all three seats. In Bihar, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) will improve its tally from one seat to two, and AAP will win both the seats in Punjab that Congress and Akali Dal previously held. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) has offered one seat to Congress, held by the BJP.

Thirdly, the Congress Party, the main opposition since 2014, could shrink further. Electorally, the Congress Party has not recovered from the jolt it received in 2014 and 2019 and has lost one state after the other since then. Its tally in Rajya Sabha will dip further after the forthcoming biennial elections

to the Upper House. The party will get zero seats in Andhra Pradesh, come down in Rajasthan from 4 to 2, and lose one seat each from Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. Moreover, between now and 2024, there will be elections for 65 seats, but Congress's chances are bleak and its strength will decrease further.

Fourthly, some senior Congress leaders might not get a Rajya Sabha berth due to the recent Udaipur resolution giving a 50 percent share to the youth in all positions. The tenure of senior Congress leaders, like P Chidambaram, Kapil Sibal, Jairam Ramesh and Ambika Soni, are set to end. Some Union ministers including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and

Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi will also retire. However, they are all likely to come back. The party will be able to accommodate almost all of them after its recent massive win in four of the five state Assembly elections.

On the contrary, Congress's footprint has shrunk geographically. The party is ruling in only four states-in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh on its own and in Maharashtra and Jharkhand as a junior partner in the ruling alliance. The party will have zero representation in the Rajya Sabha from 17 states and Union Territories.

Above all, the Rajya Sabha is likely to have a new Chairman if the incumbent, M. Venkaiah Naidu, is either elevated as President or does not get a second term.

MONEY MATTERS

BSNL to migrate 30,000 wifi hotspots to PM-WANI framework by June: DoT official

State-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam will migrate 30,000 of its wifi hotspots to the PM-WANI framework by June, a senior telecom department official on Tuesday said. Adding Railways too has an ambitious blueprint for all its future hotspots to be under the framework. Speaking at Broadband India Forum (BIF) event, Vivek Narayan, DDG (data services) in the Department of Telecom (DoT) mentioned the potential and impact of the PM-WANI wifi hotspots scheme across areas, such as tourism, smart cities and last-mile connectivity in villages. In a bid to fuel broadband internet proliferation across the country, the government, in December 2020, approved the setting up of public wifi networks and access points by local Kirana and neighbourhood shops through public data offices that will not involve any licence, fee or registration. The public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface, known as PM-WANI, hold the promise of unleashing a massive wifi revolution in the country.



LG eyes leadership position with 32 pc share of Indian TV market

South Korean consumer electronics major LG is targeting for a 32 per cent share of the Indian TV market in 2022, with a gain of around 5 per cent to become the number one player in the segment, a top company official said. The company is banking on its country-specific product line-up with local insights, expansion of retail and after-sales network, as it seeks to be the leading player in the TV segment providing a quality viewing experience to its customers, LG Electronics India Director- Home Entertainment Hak Hyun Kim told PTI. "Our aspiration is to be the number one TV brand. We would have around 32 per cent market share when we exit 2022," Hyun Kim said in an interview here. The Indian TV market is estimated to be at USD 4.6 billion (around Rs 35,700 crore by value) and the South Korean firm had close to 27 per cent market share in 2021, he added.



'Indian data centres may get up to Rs 1.2 lakh cr investment in five years'

Data centres capacity expansion in India by both foreign and local firms is expected to add investments to the tune of Rs 1.05 lakh to 1.2 lakh crore over the period of next five years, credit rating agency ICRA said on Tuesday. The Indian data centres market is witnessing a healthy growth primarily driven by large hyper-scalers like Amazon web services, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, IBM, Uber, Dropbox etc who are outsourcing their storage needs to third party data centre providers, ICRA said. Indian corporates like the Hiranandani Group, Adani Group, foreign investors which include Amazon, EdgeConnex, Microsoft, CapitaLand, Mantra Group have started investing in Indian data centres. "Along with them, existing players like NTT, CtrlS, Nxtra, STT India are also expanding their capacities. Overall, 3900-4100 MW of capacity involving investments of Rs 1.05 to 1.20 lakh crore are likely to get added in the next five years," ICRA said.



Komaki Electric launches two new e-scooters

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Expanding its electric scooter portfolio, Komaki Electric on Tuesday launched two advanced models -- DT 3000 and LY -- priced at Rs 1.22 lakh and Rs 88,000 onwards, respectively. The DT 3000 comes with a unique battery while the high-speed LY with anti-skid functions, the company said in a release. Komaki Electric in January this year rolled out its first battery-powered cruiser motorcycle Ranger and e-scooter Venice. The introduction of the two new electric scooter models has expanded the company's product portfolio to eight models with four of them coming in this year alone, Komaki said. The launch of these vehicles also reflects the company's commitment to aggressive R&D activities, production capacity and prompt response to the ever-changing demands in the market, it said. "After receiving overwhelming response from the customers, we are inspired to be back with two new EVs, the DT 3000 with its unique battery and LY with anti-skid functions," said Gunjan Malhotra, Director, Komaki Electric Division.

All efforts are on to increase coal output: Coal Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coal ministry on Tuesday said all efforts are being made to further boost output and dispatch of coal, and that production of the dry fuel jumped over 36 per cent in the first half of May.

The ministry's statement comes against the backdrop of certain parts of the country grappling with power outages due to shortage of coal for power plants.

"During the first half of May 2022, total coal production increased to 33.94 Million Tonnes (MT) achieving a growth of 36.23 per cent over the production of 24.91 MT during the same period last year," the ministry said in a statement.

The dispatch of the dry fuel also increased 15.87 per cent to 37.18 MT in the first half of the current month over the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

The coal ministry "is continuing all efforts to further enhance coal production and dispatch to meet the increasing power demand in the country



due to sustained economic growth and also the seasonal factors".

Total coal dispatches were at 71.77 MT in April, registering a rise of 9.39 per cent on a year-on-year basis. The country's coal production rose to 67 MT in April. Coal India Ltd (CIL) -- which accounts for over 80 per cent of the domestic coal output -- has played main role in augmenting production and recorded its highest monthly coal output of

53.47 MT in April.

The total dispatches of the dry fuel from CIL increased to 57.50 MT in April from 54.23 MT in the year-ago period. This represents a growth of 6.03 per cent.

As per the consolidated figures, overall dispatches (including non-CIL production) to the power sector have been at the level of 61.69 MT as compared to 52.32 MT in April 2021, an increase of 17.91 per cent.

The dispatch of the dry fuel also increased 15.87 per cent to 37.18 MT in the first half of the current month over the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

India, 12 other Indo-Pacific nations pledge to promote free & fair trade

PNS ■ TOKYO

India along with other Indo-Pacific nations including the US, Japan and Australia, on Tuesday committed to a free and fair trade with a view to promoting investments and achieving sustainable economic growth.

The Indo-Pacific nations also agreed to identify additional areas of cooperation based on consultations among partners to further shared interests, a joint statement said. The joint statement was issued after the launch the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) on Monday.

"We, the India, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States and Vietnam of the Indo-Pacific region, acknowledge the richness and the diversity of our vibrant regional economy.

"We share a commitment to a free, open, fair, inclusive, interconnected, resilient, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region that has the potential to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic



growth," it said.

The member nations also acknowledged that the economic policy interests in the region are intertwined, and deepening economic engagement among partners is crucial for continued growth, peace, and prosperity.

In the long term, the statement emphasised, the economic competitiveness would largely defined on the ability of nations to harness technology, promote innovation, participate in the digital economy, achieve energy security, and tackle the climate crisis.

Asking other interested Indo-Pacific partners to join the initiative, the statement said that collective discussions were being launched toward future negotiations on the fol-

lowing pillars -- trade; supply chains; cheap energy, decarbonization, and infrastructure; and tax and anti-corruption.

As regards trade, the statement said that the objective would be to build high-standard, inclusive, free, and fair trade commitments and develop new and creative approaches in trade and technology policy that advance a broad set of objectives that fuels economic activity and investment, promotes sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and benefits workers and consumers. The statement also expressed commitment of the leaders to improving transparency, diversity, security, and sustainability in supply chains to make them more resilient and well-integrated.

GOYAL MEETS GLOBAL LEADERS

Pitches India among best investment destinations

PNS ■ DAVOS

Pitching India as one of the best investment destinations globally, Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday asked global business leaders at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting to "come to India and grow with India".

Goyal, who has been meeting a host of global leaders here since Saturday, reiterated India's position as one of the world's most preferred investment destinations and told them about the massive scope and range of opportunities it presents to investors globally.

The Commerce and Industry Minister, who addressed a breakfast session on Tuesday morning, said there was so much interest in India among those present



here that he was finding it hard to adjust his calendar, but was trying to accommodate everyone as all of them are important and are keen to make large investments. On Monday evening, he also met John Kerry and discussed future

tracks for India-US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership.

In his meeting with Deutsche Bank chairman-elect Alexander R Wynaendts, he discussed how the financial institution can further complement the Indian government's sustainable growth agenda.

The two leaders also explored how digitisation can aid businesses pursue environment, social and governance-linked goals. He also addressed a global investors roundtable here.

His other meetings included those with Standard Chartered Bank Group CEO Bill Winters, Micron Technology CEO Sanjay Mehrotra and Brookfield Asset Management CEO Bruce Flatt.

Norms tightened to check wheat export by corrupt traders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Commerce Ministry has imposed a new condition for the grant of registration certificates for wheat exports as it looks to curb shipments by unscrupulous traders.

The government is allowing wheat shipments for which irrevocable letters of credit (LoC) were issued on or before May 13, when the ban of the export of the foodgrain was imposed.

According to the new condition notified by the DGFT, the message exchange date between the Indian and foreign bank/swift date for the issue of a LoC should be on or prior to May 13, 2022.

Exporters will have to submit the message exchange date with foreign banks along with



a valid LoC, issued on or before May 13, to obtain registration of contracts (RC) to ship their consignments, according to a notice by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).

The DGFT issued the notice

to prevent unscrupulous traders from exporting wheat on the basis of fraudulent back-dated letter of credits (L/C). The notice stated that exporters having valid L/Cs would have to register with the regional authorities (RAs) of

the DGFT to obtain registration of contracts (RC) to ship their consignments. Information has been received from sources that fraudulent back dated L/C showing date of issuance as on or prior to May 13, 2022, are being submitted by some unscrupulous exporters for issue of RCs, but as per the L/C, message exchange date between foreign and the Indian bank/swift message is after May 13, 2022," the DGFT said.

The matter, it said "has been considered and it is clarified that for registration of L/C with the RAs of DGFT, apart from the L/C date, the message exchange date between the Indian and foreign bank/swift date should be on or prior to May 13, 2022".

India's crude oil production falls 1% in April

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's crude oil production fell 1 per cent in April after lower output from fields operated by the private sector wiped away gains by state-owned firms such as ONGC, official data showed Tuesday.

India produced 2.47 million tonnes of crude oil in April, down from 2.5 million tonnes in the same month last year, according to data released by the Ministry of Petroleum

and Natural Gas.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) produced 1.65 million tonnes of crude oil in April, which was nearly 5 per cent more than the target set for it and 0.86 per cent higher than the 1.63 million tonnes produced last year.

Oil India Ltd (OIL) produced 3.6 per cent more crude at 2,51,460 tonnes but fields operated by the private sector produced 7.5 per cent less

crude oil at 5,67,570 tonnes.

The government has been focused on raising domestic production of oil and gas to cut reliance on imports. India imports 85 per cent of its oil needs and about half of its natural gas requirement.

Natural gas output rose 6.6 per cent to 2.82 billion cubic meters on the back of higher output from eastern offshore - home to the KG-D6 block of Reliance Industries Ltd and BP plc.

Indian cos show resilience despite short-term disruption

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 50 per cent of Indian CEOs acknowledge that COVID pandemic has caused short-term disruption to their industry, but Indian companies have continued to demonstrate resilience as economy rebounds, a survey said on Tuesday.

The EY India CEO Survey 2022 has found that merger and acquisitions (M&A) is a key strategic lever for Indian CEOs as they look to buy versus build to achieve their transformation ambitions.

"Today, amidst challenges of inflationary pressures, supply chain issues, and increasing geopolitical conflicts, CEOs in India are resetting their risk



radar and reframing their investment strategy for reshaped future, with transformation and sustainability increasingly driving the M&A agenda," the survey said. According to the EY 2022 CEO Outlook Survey, 50 per cent of Indian CEOs acknowledge the pandemic

caused short-term disruption to their industry.

Geopolitical challenges have further exacerbated a tumultuous period and created additional risks to business operations. "However, Indian companies have continued to demonstrate resilience, on Indian eco-

Geopolitical challenges have further exacerbated a tumultuous period and created additional risks to business operations.

nomic rebound," it added.

As many as 80 per cent of Indian CEOs also acknowledge making adjustments to their global operations and supply chains. For 63 per cent, the purpose has been to reduce logistics

costs and increase resilience.

"This said, Indian CEOs recognize that increasing geopolitical tensions, trade conflicts and protectionism, along with increasing competition from non-traditional competitors and the acceleration of climate change impacts will pose the greatest risks to their future growth strategy," the survey said. EY India Chairman Rajiv Memani said, "There is no doubt that Indian CEOs are leading from the front to combat the challenges emanating from the pandemic and geopolitical tensions ... They are increasingly looking at M&As as a lever for accelerating business transformation and long-term value creation."

Govt likely to cap sugar exports at 10 mn tons this year: Official sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is likely to restrict sugar exports to 10 million tonnes for the first time in six years in order to maintain enough domestic supply and prevent rise in prices, according to official sources. Mills have contracted for export of 9 million tonnes of sugar so far in the 2021-22 marketing year (October-September). Out of which, 7.5 million tonnes of the sweetener has been exported, the sources added. India is the world's second largest pro-

ducer and exporter after Brazil.

"A notification on sugar export restrictions will be issued in a day or two," the sources said.

A closing stock of 6 million tonnes is required at the end of September 2022, to meet the domestic demand in the first two months of the new 2022-23 marketing year.

Also, the country's priority is first to meet the domestic requirement, keep prices under check and allow export only if there is surplus quantity, the sources said.



853 FDI proposals disposed of in 5 years through FIFP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 853 foreign direct investment proposals have been disposed of through the foreign investment facilitation portal in the last five years, the commerce and industry ministry said on Tuesday.

The Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP) was developed after the abolition of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) in May 2017. After the abolition of FIPB, granting of government approval for overseas investment under the FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) policy and FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act) regulations was entrusted to the concerned ministries/departments, the commerce ministry said in a statement. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), under the ministry, was made the nodal department.

Theatre actor Gagan Dev Riar to headline Hansal Mehta's *Scam 2003: The Telgi Story*



Theatre actor Gagan Dev Riar has been roped in to play the lead role in *Scam 2003: The Telgi Story*, the makers announced on Tuesday. Hansal Mehta, who delivered the critically-acclaimed first part *Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story*, will serve as the showrunner and direct alongside Tushar Hiranandani.

The upcoming season, produced by Applause Entertainment in association with StudioNext, will tackle the 2003 Stamp Paper fraud by Abdul Karim Telgi. Gagan, who has acted in films like *Sonchiriya* and Netflix series *A Suitable Boy*, will be essaying the role of Telgi. Applause Entertainment announced Gagan's casting in a clip shared on its official Twitter page.

Starring Gagan Dev Riar as Telgi, produced by Applause Entertainment in association with StudioNext, *Scam 2003: The Telgi Story* will be helmed by showrunner Hansal Mehta and director Tushar Hiranandani. Casting by Mukesh Chhabra. Streaming Soon, only on @sonylivindia #Scam2003, the post read. The new season will chronicle the life of Telgi, a fruit-seller born in Khanapur in Karnataka, and his journey to becoming the mastermind behind one of the most ingenious scams in India. It is adapted from the Hindi book *Reporter ki Diary* penned by journalist and news reporter Sanjay Singh, who is credited with breaking the story of the scam.



Justin Bieber to perform in New Delhi on Oct 18

Pop star Justin Bieber is set to bring his Justice World Tour to New Delhi on October 18, promoters BookMyShow and AEG Presents Asia announced on Tuesday. The Canadian singer, known for tracks like *Baby*, *Sorry*, *Ghost* and *Lonely*, will travel with his tour to over 30 countries, playing in more than 125 shows, from

May 2022 through March 2023. The tour started in Mexico this month and will have a stop in Italy in July before continuing on to Scandinavia for shows in August, followed by South America, South Africa, the Middle and India in October. The concert is scheduled to be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (JLN Stadium)

in New Delhi. Tickets for the show are set to go on sale from June 4 on BookMyShow, with the pre-sale window opening on June 2. Tickets are priced from Rs 4,000 onwards. The tour will close out the year in Asia, Australia and New Zealand before moving to the UK and Europe in early 2023. Additional dates have

also been announced for Dubai, Bahrain, Sydney, Manila, Amsterdam, London and Dublin. These new shows come right after Bieber's 2022 North American tour, which kicked off in San Diego on February 18. The New Delhi gig would mark the 28-year-old Grammy winner's second visit to India post his 2017 Purpose World Tour.

Jessica Chastain, Peter Sarsgaard to lead Michel Franco's *Memory*

Oscar winner Jessica Chastain and actor Peter Sarsgaard are set to feature in filmmaker Michel Franco's new movie. Titled *Memory*, the film is rumoured to revolve around a New York City staycation and marks Franco's second America-set film after 2015's *Chronicle*, according to Deadline. In addition to Chastain and Sarsgaard, the movie will also star Merritt Weaver, Josh Charles, Elsie Fisher and Jessica Harper. Franco, a festival-favourite, won the Venice Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize for his 2020 feature *New Order*. His other directorial credits include *After Lucia*, *April's Daughter* and

Sundown. *Memory* is produced by Teorema in collaboration with High Frequency Entertainment, and in association with Screen Capital/Screen One, Mubi, and Case Study Films. Chastain, who won the Oscar for best actress this year for *The Eyes of Tammy Faye*, will next be seen in *Good Nurse* and *Mothers Instinct*. Sarsgaard most recently featured in Hulu series *Dopesick* as well as films like

The Batman and *The Lost Daughter*, which was directed by his actor-wife Maggie Gyllenhaal.



Alia Bhatt's maiden production *Darlings* to release on Netflix

Actor Alia Bhatt on Tuesday announced that *Darlings*, her debut film as a producer, will premiere on streaming platform Netflix. The 29-year-old actor is starring in and producing the film through her banner Eternal Sunshine Productions, in collaboration with superstar Shah Rukh Khan's Red Chillies Entertainment. Bhatt shared the news of the film's Netflix debut on her social media handles. "Hey, darlings. I want to tell you something big but the network is not good here. Hello..hello? #Darlings #DarlingsOnNetflix," the actor wrote alongside a promotional video, also featuring co-stars Shefali Shah, Vijay Verma and Roshan Mathew. *Darlings*, a dark comedy, marks the directorial debut of writer Jasmeet K Reen. The Mumbai-set film is mounted against the backdrop of a conservative lower middle-class neighbourhood. It explores the lives of a mother-daughter duo trying to find their place in the city, seeking courage and

love in exceptional circumstances while fighting against all odds. Bhatt and streamer Netflix are yet to announce the official release date of the film. In a statement, the actor said "Darlings holds a special place in my heart." "It's my first film as a producer and that too with Red Chillies. We are very proud and happy how the film has shaped up and we hope it will entertain and engage audiences world over," she said. Reen thanked Red Chillies and Eternal Sunshine for taking the film across the globe with Netflix. "I couldn't have asked for a better feature film debut working with a pool of versatile and talented actors has been an absolute pleasure," she added. *Darlings* features music by Vishal Bhardwaj and lyrics from veteran writer Gulzar. "Darlings is very special to all of us... Gulzar Saab and Vishal Ji have given soul to the film with the songs. We couldn't have asked for more. I cannot wait for the audience to finally

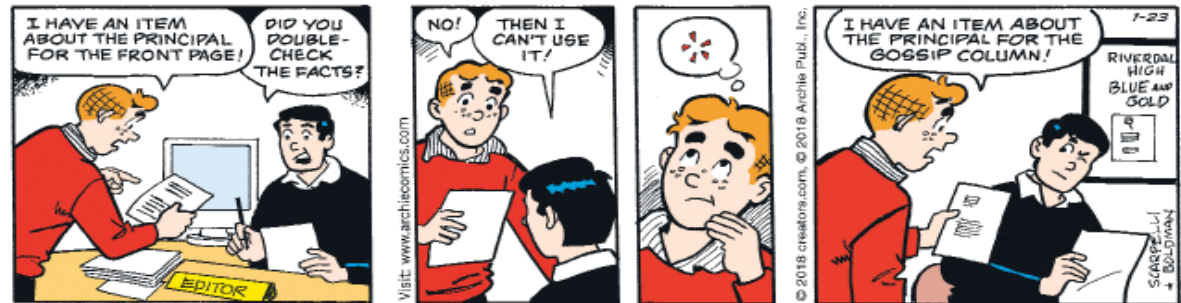
see the film," Gaurav Verma, producer and COO, Red Chillies Entertainment, said. Pratiksha Rao, Director, Films and Licensing, Netflix India, said the streamer always aims to entertain its subscribers with the best in class films, across genres. "With *Darlings*, we continue our long standing partnership with Red Chillies Entertainment and are excited to be the home for Alia Bhatt's first



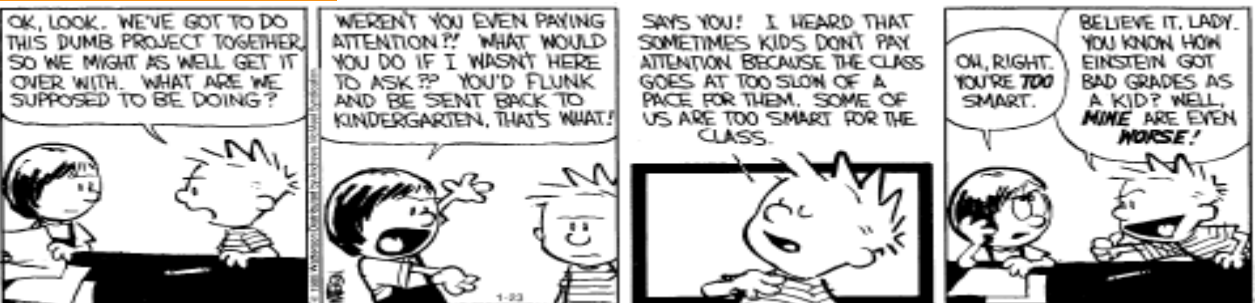
production. *Darlings*, by debut director Jasmeet K Reen, is a must-watch-a perfect storm of a riveting plot, fresh storytelling brought to life by powerful performances," she added.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



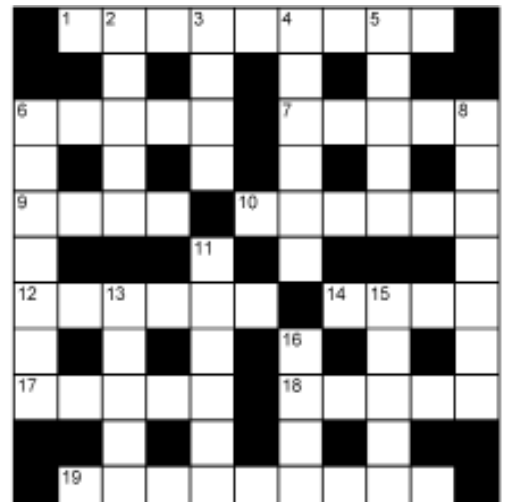
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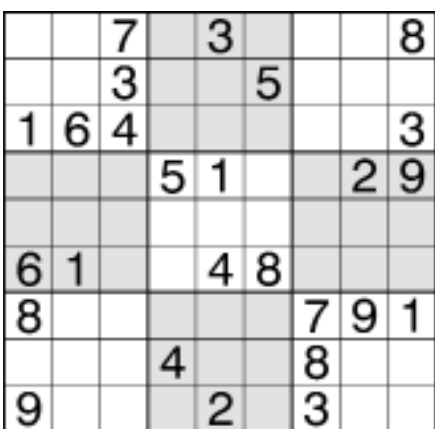
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- A four-sided shape
- A month
- A number of people or things together
- Change direction
- A road in a town
- To tremble or shake a little
- Female horse
- Choose by votes
- A grown-up
- Put together from parts

DOWN

- Mistake
- Chatter
- These are longer in winter





Ankush Bahuguna, who turns the voice of modern men with his one-of-a-kind initiative #TheGentlemanInYou, shares with *The Pioneer* some exclusive details about the same.

-SHIKHA DUGGAL

Little do you know that men face their own set of pressures and that in turn doesn't help them defy norms. They tend to take a setback, but among them, there is the audacious actor Ankush Bahuguna who is always on his toes to discourage this unnecessary toxic masculinity.

But, how? He's doing his bit by bringing us to a one-of-a-kind initiative to drive larger conversations around by bringing out

the right direction. With respect to the recent boom in the men's grooming industry, it is a matter of great joy that more and more people are letting go of the archaic mindset. The fact that modern men are not shying away from grooming and using hygiene products is a considerable change. The majority of men were always interested in religiously grooming themselves. Given that brands like The Man Company are also providing easy yet efficient grooming-related information, male customers are embarking on their grooming journey with utmost ease. Undoubtedly, the old attitude towards grooming is changing at an incredible pace."

Everything men want to talk about but never get the opportunity to do so, for them this is one of a kind initiative and the idea is to create a platform, where modern gentlemen feel comfortable and encouraged to talk about topics that are often considered non-masculine.

He continues, "Defining masculinity shouldn't be our prerogative. Instead, we should focus on being our true selves without pretending to be someone the society deems fit. Men who dress unconventionally or wear makeup are often shamed, ridiculed, and bullied because we refuse to accept men if they don't conform to societal standards. Today, with podcasts and campaigns the conversation is getting started. We are trying to achieve the same with the new podcast series. It's a platform where like-minded people can feel confident to talk about their experiences and encour-

and the rebounding spending as the COVID-19 infections subside, present tremendous opportunities for the companies.

"Mental wellness as a government policy is also gaining ground. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her budget speech for the 2022-23 financial year, focused on the likely push to prioritise mental health for the employees in a bigger way. She announced the launch of a National Tele-Mental Health Programme, with a network of 23 tele-mental health Centers of Excellence. The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences would be the nodal agency, while the International Institute for Information Technology, Bangalore would provide the technical support. With a holistic healthcare approach, the National Tele-Mental Health Programme aims to break the taboo around mental health. Replete with social stigma, issues pertaining to mental health are still not discussed openly. Availability of cost-effective and timely healthcare services in small towns and rural areas also remains a concern. However, technology is playing a vital role in breaking the temporal barriers," he asserts.

"Tele-consultation with doctors and health experts was proven to be a lifesaver tool during the lockdown imposed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. He continued, "Many startups are providing the facility of consulting health experts online. A person from a remote village now can consult the doctors in the cities and get treated. Basically, if

you have access to the internet, you have a very good shot at getting access to quality and reliable treatment."

Wellness industry now has a vast expanse as it has transcended the domains of individual sectors. "Growing demand for organic food and its value-added products has opened new opportunities for agriculture and food processing sectors. The cosmetics industry is betting big on curated wellness products from face packs to aromatic oils and candles among others. Pharmaceutical firms are investing in health supplements. Many specialized companies have emerged that provide focused health and wellness programmes for employees sponsored by the employers. These companies have seen exponential growth in terms of adoptions by big companies as these companies are truly interested in the well-being of their employees and their families. Many firms and social media influencers are making popular posts by producing educational videos on yoga, daily workout and healthcare," he added.

While mental wellness throws open many opportunities, competition is equally intense. He said, "Many companies are expanding their market reach and product ranges to cash in these emerging opportunities. Therefore, a keen eye for the preferences of the targeted customers with customized offerings is key to commercial success and brand recall. Mental health is the key to India's prosperity." The economic burden of mental disorders is very high.

age others to share their vulnerabilities. We are also discussing the question regarding rigid gender roles set by society."

The show hosted by Ankush Bahuguna has already created a niche in the men's grooming and makeup industry by calling into question the gender roles set by society. It will touch upon topics related to men's insecurities around balding, their friendly relationship with mothers but so-called diabolical ones with fathers, the pressure of choosing stable and conventional career choices, taboo around applying makeup or even basic cosmetics, myths and stereotypes surrounding sexual orientations and more.

Moreover,

spend some time with yourself and find out what makes you happy."

Unmasculine shouldn't be an insult. And, when it comes to men's grooming, even the statistics showed us earlier that it was found that most men do not wash their hands even after eating food, petting an animal, peeing, coughing, or sneezing. There might be a chance of ignoring certain basic hygiene rules in day-to-day life. During the lockdown, it was the perfect time to check on personal hygiene habits as not following these can lead to unimaginable infections. And, with a booming industry in this area now, men are really focussing on this aspect of their lives too.

On a concluding note, the host of the show tells, "Men's grooming is a whole new world. Every day, new brands and products are being introduced.

The sudden but welcoming boom in the industry has given a whole new perspective on men's grooming.

Going beyond shaving products, men's grooming today comprises everything from fragrances to skin and hair care and intimate hygiene. Brands are regularly working towards making men feel more confident by launching products in tandem with the consumer's demands. If you listen to my new podcast you'll know that the men's grooming world is blossoming like never before."

Use the Right Product

While selecting the right aroma is important, it is also crucial to have the right product in place. Finding the right product often depends on a host of factors such as area, usability, exact purpose, etc.

A worthy choice is using an electronic or a reed diffuser, which can give a dash of spontaneous aroma. These reed diffusers are a preferred choice in many households as they do not need heat and electricity and are safe to operate. All you need is to insert reed sticks inside the diffuser oil. A typical reed diffuser with 10 sticks can work for around 75 days.

A traditional choice could be using a candle that can cast the whiff of your favorite aroma, rendering an olfactory makeover. While going for the candle, it is important to check the design and the aesthetics, as a beautifully designed candle is a perfect recipe to blend fashion with fragrance.

Candles are also versatile and can be used in a wide range of places. It can be used in the living room giving a perfect dash of energy. It can be put on a dining table, making the scene for a candle-lit dinner. Decorated candles can also be used on the porch, patios, gardens, deck areas, etc.

Classy and chic potpourri are increasingly becoming popular. Besides spreading your favorite aroma, these potpourris are visually appealing and can greatly enhance the overall décor and ambience. It can be placed at the entrance of homes, offices, retail spaces, etc. Meanwhile, traditional products like sprays and sachets can't be missed. In a time of fancy, beautiful, and elegantly designed aroma products, sachets have not yet lost their charm. It is cost-effective and multipurpose. Sachets can be used in living spaces, workstations, and bedrooms. Likewise, they can be tucked inside drawers, shelves, laundry bags, purses, luggage bags, etc. to keep everything clean and fresh.

Facelift your home
with refreshing aromas



The last few years have taken a toll on all of us. With ongoing uncertainty about the economy, staffing shortages, and political and social upheaval, it is not surprising that mental health issues among citizens continue to rise.

Sanjeev Dahiwadkar noticed all well is how we usually greet people. But people now mean it. Both physical and mental well-being has gained prominence like never before, especially after the multiple waves of the coronavirus pandemic claimed millions of lives across the globe.

The founder and CEO of Cognota Healthcare observed, "The pandemic has also caused various health complications even after recovery. The social media, news platforms and research papers are loud about the considerable rise in anxiety levels owing to the health calamity and its socio-economic consequences. In short, wellness has become the buzzword now."

The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social



Growth
prospect
hinges on
mental
wellness
metrics

Medvedev wins, Shapovalov exits

AP ■ PARIS

World number two Daniil Medvedev eased into the French Open second round on Tuesday as Denmark's Holger Rune reminded Roland Garros that Carlos Alcaraz is not the only teenager dreaming of the title.

Medvedev, who came into Paris with just one match on clay this year following hernia surgery, routed Argentina's 103rd-ranked Facundo Bagnis 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 on the back of 35 winners and eight breaks of serve.

"I love Roland Garros, especially since last year," said Medvedev, who had lost in the opening round on his first four trips to Paris before reaching the quarter-finals in 2021. "I hope this year I can go further."

Rune, 19 and just a week older than the highly-rated Alcaraz, marked his main draw debut with a 6-3, 6-1, 7-6 (7/4) dismissal of 14th-seeded Canadian Denis Shapovalov.

Rune, the boys champion in 2019 and a former world junior number one, entered Paris at a career-high 40 having started 2021 outside of the top 400.

In the current clay season, he won his first title in Munich, beating world number three Alexander Zverev on the way.

Shapovalov committed 53 unforced errors in a tie played at breakneck speed.

"I didn't really show up today but Holger played great tennis," said Shapovalov, a Wimbledon semi-finalist in 2021.

Later Tuesday, fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, who lost last year's final to Novak Djokovic after leading two sets to love, has a dangerous assignment against Italy's Lorenzo Musetti in the night session on Court Philippe Chatrier.

The 20-year-old, ranked 66, also led Djokovic by two sets in the last 16 in 2021 before injury curtailed his



challenge.

This year on clay he made the quarter-finals in Marrakech and third round at Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Madrid where he was forced to retire against world num-

ber three Alexander Zverev.

However, Tsitsipas is enjoying an impressive clay court season in which he has successfully defended his Monte Carlo title, was runner-up in Rome and made the semi-finals in

Madrid.

The Greek also enjoys a season-leading 31 wins on the tour this year.

OSTAPENKO IN DOUBT

Two former women's champions

were also in action.

Simona Halep, the 2018 champion, who is working with Serena Williams's coach Patrick Mouratoglou, faces Nastasja Schunk, an 18-year-old lucky loser from qualifying, ranked at 165 in the world.

Jelena Ostapenko, who was a shock Roland Garros winner in 2017, defeated Italy's Lucia Bronzetti 6-1, 6-4 to end a five-match losing streak having started the year winning 14 of 18.

Ostapenko became the latest player to cast doubt on her appearance at Wimbledon after the tournament was stripped of ranking points in response to its banning of Russian and Belarusian players.

"If there are no points, I'm not really sure what I'm going to," said the Latvian.

"I think maybe they are going to change their mind. I'm not sure about points. But I think a lot of things may happen within the next week or two weeks."

BOPANNA-MIDDELKOOP WIN

Rohan Bopanna and his Dutch partner Matwe Middelkoop progressed to the men's doubles second round of the French Open with an easy straight-set win over local wild cards Sascha Gueymard Wayenburg and Luca Van Assche.

The experienced 16th seeded Indo-Dutch pair had no trouble in dispatching the lower-ranked home combo 6-4, 6-1 in the opening round.

Ramkumar Ramanathan is also in the fray, having teamed up with American Hunter Reese. They are up against the German team of Daniel Altmaier and Oscar Otte.

In the women's doubles, Sania Mirza and her Czech partner Lucie Hradecka have been seeded 10th and they open their campaign against Italy's Jasmine Paolini and Martina Trevisan.

All three Indians will feature in the mixed



Djoker intends to go to Wimbledon

AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic on Monday said he "intends to go to Wimbledon" to defend his title despite the controversy over the tournament being stripped of ranking points. "Yes, I intend to go to Wimbledon," said Djokovic after overcoming Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka in the French Open first round. However, he added that the initial decision of the tournament to ban Russian and Belarusian players following the invasion of Ukraine was a "mistake".

The 35-year-old Djokovic stands to lose 2,000 points due to the

decision by the ATP and WTA tours to remove ranking points from Wimbledon in response to the player ban. "On a personal, individual level, I have been very negatively affected by that," said Djokovic.

He has already lost 2,000 points by not being able to defend his Australian Open title.

"Collectively I'm glad that players got together with ATP and showed to the Grand Slam that when there is a mistake happening, and there was from the Wimbledon side, then we have to show that there is going to be some consequences."

Earlier Monday, former world number one Naomi Osaka said she is "leaning towards not playing"

Xavi says Barca need rebuild but silent on Lewandowski



AP ■ BARCELONA

Coach Xavi Hernandez on Tuesday said his Barcelona team must be rebuilt after a turbulent season but refused to be drawn on whether Robert Lewandowski was a transfer target.

The Catalan giants finished 13 points behind La Liga champions Real Madrid, their campaign ending in a whimper on Sunday with a 2-0 home defeat to Villarreal.

Barcelona were beaten in four of their last nine games in all competitions.

They were on a plane the next morning for their first-ever match in Australia, a friendly against an A-League All-Star team coached by former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke and captained by former Manchester City defender Jack Rodwell.

Xavi has brought 20 players to Sydney, including captain Sergio Busquets, Dani Alves,

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Frenkie de Jong, Memphis Depay and teenage sensation Ansu Fati.

Gerard Pique and teenage forward Pedri were among those missing. "Next season we need to improve a lot, we improved a lot since November," said Barcelona midfielder legend Xavi, who was appointed in November with the team lying ninth.

While he helped revive them and they achieved the most important objective of qualifying for the Champions League, they went out to Frankfurt in the Europa League quarter-finals and in the last 16 of the Copa del Rey.

"I think we are in a good way, we have to be positive. But next season, at least, we need to compete and win the Champions League, why not," said Xavi.

"We are rebuilding the team. We have a plan, of course, and we need to be competitive

next season. We cannot permit another season without winning titles."

Prolific Bayern Munich forward Lewandowski, who was top-scorer in the Bundesliga last season for the fifth year running, has been heavily linked with Barcelona.

Xavi refused to confirm his interest. "I cannot confirm Lewandowski or any other names," he said. "Of course we are working hard and it is obvious that we need to improve."

"It's a matter of time," he added of unveiling new players. "If we have to announce something we will announce it, but it is not the moment right now."

Man Utd need 'major surgery' under Ten Hag: Yorke

AP ■ SYDNEY

Former Manchester United striker Dwight Yorke on Tuesday said that new coach Erik ten Hag must perform "major surgery" at the club to get them back to the top.

Yorke, who won three Premier League titles, the Champions League and the FA Cup with United, spent the last fortnight around Old Trafford and saw for himself what needed to be done.

"We (Man Utd) are nowhere near where we are supposed to be, especially with the players that we have in the squad at the moment," he said.

"I spent the last two weeks there and had some more insight into looking where the club is and why we are in that position. He's (Ten Hag) got some major surgery to



repair there, there's work that needs to be done."

United finished a massive 35 points behind Premier League champions Manchester City, who pipped Liverpool to the title by a point, with the Red Devils registering their lowest-ever points tally.

"I'm not sure what his first step needs to be but he must stamp his authority on the team in terms of getting the players united together. That seems to be a bit of a challenge at the moment," added Yorke.

"When you look at our squad we have some fantastic players but the achievement doesn't add up to it. There's some major ground work that needs to be done."

Former Ajax coach Ten Hag is United's fifth permanent manager since the club last won a league title in Alex Ferguson's farewell season in 2013.



Despite their domestic dominance, the Champions League has remained beyond City despite the billions spent amassing a stellar squad.

Another heartbreaking exit to Real Madrid in the semi-finals earlier this month could have derailed their Premier League title charge, but they bounced back to take the necessary 10 points from the final four games.

"There was a lot of tension in the last month after (the defeat to Madrid) and a lot of difficult games."

"We never give up and we have to be so proud of the group."

The event also became a farewell party for club captain Fernandinho, who will return to his native Brazil this summer after nine years and 12 trophies with the club.

"When I came here for the first time and met someone from City they said, 'Listen, we want you to be one of the leaders, we want you to be a champion,'" the 37-year-old said.

"When I look back all of the titles we won are really special."



Japan crush India 5-2 in Asia Cup hockey

PTI ■ JAKARTA

A new-look Indian team paid for its inexperience and profligacy with Asian champions Japan soundly thrashing them 5-2 in a group A league match of the men's Asia Cup hockey championship here on Tuesday.

Having drawn against Pakistan in the opening game, India's chances after this defeat will be badly dented as even a big win against Indonesia in the last game might not be enough for qualification to the knock-out stages.

Ken Nagayoshi, Kosei Kawabe (twice), Ryomi Ooka and Koji Yamasaki scored for Japan while Pawan Rajbhar and Uttam Singh found the target for the Indians.

However, the younger crop of players didn't measure up against the Japanese, who looked more organised and hit India repeatedly on the counters. India fizzled out in the second

quarter after that initial spark, in the 24th minute, Ken Nagayoshi converted the penalty corner with a powerful angular drive that beat a diving Suraj all ends up.

It was in the 40th minute Japan made it 2-0 in a counter-attack with Kosei Kawabi snatching the ball from the Indian midfield and sprinting down the right wing running left-back Dipsan Tirkey ragged with his speed.

India found something going their way in the dying moments of the third quarter when veteran Birendra Lakra kept a powerful assist inside the striking circle melee and the big-bodied centre forward Pawan Rajbhar was in the right place to lay his stick for a perfect deflection that found the top corner of the net.

The final quarter once again saw the Indians going all out and conceding a goal against the run of play in the 48th minute.

Spinazzola back for Finalissima and Nations League

AP ■ MILAN

Leonardo Spinazzola will make his return to the Italy squad after Roberto Mancini named him among 39 players for the European champions' 'Finalissima' clash with Argentina and the Nations League.

Roma full-back Spinazzola was one of the stars of Italy's charge to Euro 2020 glory but ruptured his Achilles tendon during his side's 2-1 quarter-final win over Belgium.

The injury left the 29-year-old out for almost the entire season, only returning to action for Roma earlier this month, and will join the squad after the Conference League final



on Wednesday.

He features in the squad alongside Giorgio Chiellini who will play his final game for the national team when they face Copa America winners Argentina at Wembley on June 1.

Three days after captain Chiellini waves goodbye Italy will then begin their Nations League campaign with the visit of Germany to Bologna, before they host Hungary in Cesena on June 7.

Italy then take on beaten Euro finalists England in Wolverhampton on June 11 and travel to Moenchengladbach to play Germany three days later.

Coach Mancini has given Sassuolo's promising midfielder

Hertha Berlin keep Bundesliga status

AP ■ BERLIN

Hertha Berlin secured their place in the Bundesliga for next season with a 2-0 away win at Hamburg on Monday to take the promotion/relegation play-off 2-1 on aggregate.

An early headed goal by Hertha captain Dedryck Boyata and a speculative second-half free-kick from Marvin Plattenhardt saw Hertha turn their fortunes around in Monday's return leg.

Hertha had lost the first leg 1-0 in Berlin last Thursday, but the visitors flew out of the traps in Hamburg when Boyata



smashed in a header after just four minutes.

Falling behind subdued the hosts, who lacked the composure of the first leg.

After nine straight seasons in the Bundesliga, Hertha

avoided their first relegation since 2011/12.

The aggregate defeat denied Hamburg a return to Germany's top flight after four seasons since their 2018 relegation.

winning squad apart from the injured Federico Chiesa, Gaetano Castrovilli, Rafael Toloi and Ciro Immobile.

Davide Frattesi and Empoli attacker Andrea Pinamonti their first senior call-ups for the run of fixtures. He selected every player from the Euro-

F3, the sequel to box-office hit F2, is soon to be released in the nearest cinema theatres, and fans can't wait to go on a laughter ride. Hold your excitement, as **The Pioneer** gets in touch with the lead actor of the film, Venkatesh Daggubati, who gives us some insights about the movie and more.

'You can consider me a one-take actor'

K. RAMYA SREE

Not just his films, even this press con began with wide smiles and big laughs, because we had Daggubati Venkatesh aka Venky Mama in the house promoting his upcoming film F3. The film is directed by Anil Ravipudi, starring Venkatesh, Varun Tej, Tamannaah Bhatia, Mehreen Pirzada, Sonal Chauhan, and Sunil, among others.

F3 is a sequel to F2, which is already a superhit film at the box office, and expectations are really high for this sequel. Venkatesh is sure that this film will give you double the laughter that F2 gave.

When The Pioneer asked him what made him come on board for the sequel, he said, "I want something in the story that people will identify with. They have to own the character, and only then will it reach a wider audience. We wanted to do the same even for the sequel.

Everybody has that little greediness in life in order to earn easy money. Anil took the subject that way, and I liked it. I feel this is more hilarious than F2, but I am waiting for the audience's response now as I am done with the acting part."

The actor performs as if every film is his first film and he feels comedy comes easy for him because of how he is off-screen. He likes to be spontaneous in comedy. Hence, he says he totally improvises his dialogues for every film to get that comedy timing because it's nice to be crazy rather than planned. What say?

He says, "Comedy is very easy for me. In general, I'm a very jovial person (joker laga untanu) with friends and family, and I like to see myself happy and energetic. So this genre gets easier for me. During my childhood, I remember watching a lot of entertaining films. This connects with people."

Like many say, Venkatesh admits to the fact that he behaves more like a producer than an actor on sets. Reason: He doesn't like anything being wasted on sets. While this is impressive, his character in the film (greedy for money) is completely opposite to what he is in real life.

His comedic timing needs no introduction, nor his interest in having meaningful conversations with others. When asked if he was interested in becoming a host to produce meaningful content, we got a straight NO from the actor. He adds, "I have been approached many times. I am someone who likes doing things in a single take. In hosting, things are different. If the shot is not okay, I cannot do retakes. In fact, I feel bad for all the anchors, who have to retake

the same dialogue while hosting. For me, that kind of work is different."

Asked if we can call him a 'one-take actor', he said, "Absolutely. I am comfortable like that. Even while shooting for my films, I get my dialogues in a single take. So you can call me a 'one-take actor', but hosting is not my cup of tea, as after two takes I face that block."

The actor believes everyone is one of a kind and he likes to take things in a flow in life instead of stressing himself out by comparing himself with others.

Lastly, heaping praises on his director, the actor, who is happy to be connected with the younger generation as well because of F2, said, "Anil got the best of everybody. He got the flare that gives flare for natural performances. He's always very energetic and we are crazy together. He wants me to be like that. I knew him as a writer when he worked for our company. Our rapport was from the days of Masala itself. He had a wonderful spark."

Meanwhile, after this conversation, it is safe to confirm that Venkatesh has signed two big projects with two big production houses: Sithara Entertainments and Mythri Movie Makers. He also has another Bollywood project lined up with Salman Khan in *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali*, where he plays Salman's brother and whose shooting is underway.



layer of excitement to the chase sequences and I think that will seek out the inherit action buffs and add new fans to the base. Ajith Kumar is a celebrated name in the industry and known to perform his own stunts throughout his career and I was sure he could get the job done."

Directed by H. Vinoth, *Valimai* features Ajith Kumar along with Huma

Qureshi, Kartikeya Gummakonda and Bani J in the pivotal roles. About her experience, Huma shares that action sequences are often loved by the audience, "Action as a genre is rapidly growing in audiences. And now, with top class action entertainers like *Valimai*, there are a million more reasons why the genre has become even more exciting. Films like *Valimai* push the envelope with a hatke story line accommodating cutting-edge action sequences and along with the hero, even strong female characters taking on the enemies."

On sharing her experience of preparing for her role, "Learning to ride a bike to don the 'never get bogged down' attitude, this film made me feel empowered and fierce; I would like everyone to feel that way when they watch this film," she adds.

Valimai will have its world television premiere on May 28 on Zee Cinema at 8 p.m.

Ajith's Valimai set for world TV premiere on May 28

Producer Boney Kapoor and actress Huma Qureshi

share their experience of working on Tamil action thriller *Valimai*. The movie will have its world television premiere on May 28.

Speaking about *Valimai*, producer of the film, Boney says, "Cinema in India has a sole purpose to entertain the families around and present a good time. With *Valimai* I wanted to create something that entertains and at the same time thrills the audience."

While talking about the storyline of the movie, he shares, "The police-thief genre is always something that audiences have enjoyed in the past. *Valimai* brings that genre back but with layers of robust action and a message. The high-tension bike chase in the film adds a

Ram Gopal Varma gets booked for cheating of Rs 56 lakh in Hyderabad

Police in Hyderabad booked filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma for allegedly cheating a production house to the tune of Rs 56 lakh.

On a complaint lodged by Koppada Sekhar Raju of Sekhara Art Creations, a case was booked at Miyapur Police Station under Cyberabad Police Commissionerate.

The complainant alleged that Varma borrowed money from him for producing a movie *Disha* with a promise to return it before the release of the said movie but did not repay.

The movie was based on the 2019 gang rape and murder of a veterinary doctor near Hyderabad carried out by four persons, who were later killed by police in an alleged encounter.

Raju told police that got acquainted with Varma



through a common friend Ramana Reddy a few years ago. The complainant stated that he gave Rs 8 lakh in January 2020 and another Rs 20 lakh a few days later. RGV, as the filmmaker is popularly known, promised to repay the amount in six months. Raju said RGV approached him in February 2020 and borrowed another Rs 28 lakh citing financial problems.

The complainant told police that

RGV promised to repay the total amount on or before the release of the movie but in January 2021 he later learnt that the filmmaker was not the producer of the movie. He alleged that the filmmaker cheated him. A case under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 417 (punishment for cheating), 420 (cheating and 506 (punishment for criminal intimidation) was registered against RGV.

Major gets U/A certificate

Adivi Sesh is promoting his ambitious Pan India project *Major* like never before. The film, in the meantime, completed censor formalities and it has been awarded a

U/A certificate. The film's total duration is 149 minutes. Censor officials were very impressed by the film's content and deep emotions in it. The first half of the movie is enchanting with *Major*'s beautiful snippets of his personal life with his parents and his childhood love Isha.

The second half is gripping as it offers an edge of the seat experience to viewers with intense action, high moments and adequate emotional

tional moments. The high production values and brilliant performances are the other major highlights of the movie.

Adivi Sesh was spell-bound with his stellar performance and the transformation of the scenes of school days is unbelievable. With lots of expectations, *Major* will be arriving in cinemas on June 3, wherein the film's early previews will be held across the nation.

Tollywood actor Akkineni Naga Chaitanya shared a new update on his upcoming film on social media. The actor shared a BTS video of *Thank You* on Twitter and also announced the teaser release date. He seemed to be excited about the release of *Thank You* teaser.

The teaser of the film, *Thank You*, will be unveiled on May 15, 2022. This news has got fans of *Thank You* as well as Chay super-excited. Raashii Khanna has been roped in to play the leading lady opposite Chaitanya in the movie. *Thank You* is one of the films that audiences have been anticipating for a long

Naga Chaitanya's Thank You makers announce teaser release date

time. Chaitanya and Raashii, who will be seen sharing screen space in the film, are in talks for their sizzling chemistry in the film.

The film also features Avika Gor, Sai Sushanth Reddy, Chakravarthi and Malavika Nair, among others, in prominent roles. S. Thaman is composing the tunes for this film, with PC Sreeram handling the camera and Navin Nooli doing the edits.



Kushi team clarifies about rumors on injuries

Vijay Deverakonda and Samantha's *Kushi* team clarifies about rumors on injuries. The makers of Vijay Deverakonda and Samantha's *Kushi* have put an end to rumors about the mishap in the sets of the film. It is speculated that Samantha was injured while shooting for the film in Kashmir and the movie team has now rubbished all the rumors.

The makers took to social media and wrote, "There are few reports that #VijayDeverakonda and #Samantha were injured while shooting for *Kushi* movie. There is no truth in this news. The entire team returned to Hyd yesterday after successfully completing 30 days of shooting in Kashmir. Don't believe such news (sic)."

The first look poster of this romantic family entertainer is recently

out and Vijay and Samantha fans are eagerly waiting for this film. This is going to be the second film for Vijay Deverakonda and Samantha as they already worked earlier for

Mahanati. The shooting of this film is expected to finish by the end of this year and the movie will be released next year. Music director Heshab Abdul Wahab is composing tunes for this film.



Court permits the screening of Jeevitha's Shekar

Rajashekar's family film *Shekar* is a Telugu remake of Super Hit Malayalam film. Dr Rajasekhara plays the titular role in the above film and the film was released in theaters last Friday, May 20.

Last Sunday one of the film financiers Parandhama Reddy reportedly initiated litigation in the Hyderabad civil court asking its screenings across the theaters to have stayed. Rajasekhara's wife and the director of this film approached the court with her advocate and reportedly made a strong argument about the same. The court has reportedly ruled out its stay and gave permis-

sion to screen her film in the theaters.

Rajashekar's daughter Shivani Rajasekhara took to her social media handle and wrote, "The court has ruled out the stay order as an incorrect, tampered and inadequate case. Yet still, we lost our weekend in the theaters. Our film was stopped just out of spite. As I said before, I can only hope that Shekar gets its due

recognition. We stand by our producers with whatever decision they take regarding the screening of *Shekar* in the future - Dr Rajasekhara" (sic). Now, the film will reportedly have a re-release and the official confirmation of the same will be out soon.

