

ANALYSIS 7 GOVT MUST TAKE FRESH LOOK AT GAS PRICING

MONEY 8 DEVELOPED NATIONS SHOULD TALK LESS, COOPERATE MORE: SITHARAMAN

SPORTS 11 OZ CHASE RECORD TOTAL TO BEAT INDIA

VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN HYDERABAD

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the pioneer



PRIYANKA MOHAN, NIVEDITHA SATISH TO PLAY FEMALE LEADS IN CAPTAIN MILLER

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WITH CEREMONIES OVER, KING CHARLES III FACES BIGGEST TASK

The cannons have sounded, the bells have rung and the mourners have paid their respects. Now King Charles III faces the task of preserving a 1,000-year-old monarchy that his mother nurtured for seven decades but that faces an uncertain future. The challenge is immense. Personal affection for the queen meant that the monarchy's role in British society was rarely debated in recent years. But now that she's gone, the royal family faces questions about whether it is still relevant in a modern, multicultural nation that looks very different than it did when Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1952. Amid a global re-examination of the history of colonialism and slavery, an institution that was once the symbol of the British Empire is likely to face renewed scrutiny.

MEDICAL STUDENT FROM WEST BENGAL JUMPS TO DEATH IN JHARKHAND

A 19-year-old medical student from West Bengal allegedly jumped to death from the fourth floor of a hotel in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district after being spurned by a girl, police said on Tuesday. The man, a resident of Bankura district in West Bengal, was a medical student at a college in Bengaluru. He met the girl from Chatra, who is studying in Hazaribag town, when she went to Purulia district in West Bengal for a one-year course, police said. The man checked into the hotel on Sunday, and wanted to meet the girl. After continued cajoling, she agreed to meet him at the hotel on Monday evening, they said. The man soon started blackmailing her, forcing her to accept him as her boyfriend.

GUJARATI FILM 'CHELLO SHOW' IS INDIA'S OFFICIAL ENTRY FOR OSCARS

Gujarati coming-of-age drama 'Chhello Show' is India's official entry for the 95th Academy Awards, the Film Federation of India (FFI) announced on Tuesday. Titled 'Last Film Show' in English, the movie, directed by Pan Nalin, will release in theatres countrywide on October 14. 'Chhello Show' is India's official entry for Oscars 2023. FFI Secretary General Supran Sen told PTI. The film is produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur's banner Roy Kapur Films, Jugad Motion Pictures, Monsoon Films, Chhello Show LLP, and Marc Duale. The movie, which features Bhavin Rabari, Bhavesh Shrimali, Richa Meena, Dipen Raval and Paresh Mehta, had its world premiere as the opening film at the Tribeca Film Festival in June last year.

UNION CABINET TO TAKE UP LOGISTICS POLICY TODAY

The Union Cabinet is likely to approve the National Logistics Policy in its meeting on Wednesday, sources said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week unveiled the policy which seeks to cut transportation cost by promoting seamless movement of goods across the country. While launching the policy, the prime minister had said that "from 13-14 per cent (of the GDP), we should all aim to bring the logistics cost to single-digit as soon as possible". According to an e-book of the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT), a unified logistics interface platform (ULIP) will be developed as part of the policy.

Govt data shifted to TDP: House panel report

Previous TDP government used the stolen data to influence voters, says panel chief Bhumana

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The AP House Committee on Tuesday submitted its interim report on the alleged data theft by the previous TDP government. Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, Chairman, House Committee, on "Unlawful interception of communications, data theft and illegal transmission, causing an infringement of citizens' rights during the period 2016-19" placed the report, amidst Opposition slogans against the government in the House.



Bhumana Karunakar Reddy said that the House Committee, after interacting with officials of different departments concerned, came to realise that data theft happened between 2017-19 in general and 2018-19 in particular. He said that the sensitive data from the government offices was illegally transferred to the TDP.

He said that the House Committee, after interacting with officials of different departments concerned, came to realise that data theft happened between 2017-19 in general and 2018-19 in particular. He said that the sensitive data from the government offices was illegally transferred to the TDP. It was alleged that the transferred data was used to threaten the anti-TDP voters and tried to remove their votes from the electoral rolls. Karunakar Reddy said, "The data from the State Data Centre was directly transmitted to some impor-

tant persons in the TDP office. The transfer of the data was aimed at providing undue benefit to the party. We have organised meetings four times since last March. We have identified that the transferred official data was provided to TDP's Seva Mitra App. The TDP has tried to remove the votes of their opponent." At this juncture, the TDP leaders questioned Speaker T Sitaram that how they could introduce the report without prior intimation to the

opposition party. Further, they alleged that the government did not provide the report to the members of the House. They staged a protest by surrounding the podium of the Speaker. Reacting to the Opposition, YSRC MLA G Srikanth Reddy stated that the subject was mentioned in the business list of the day and the same was brought under Rule No. 222.

What the panel found

SAMBASIVA RAO M PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The House Committee on 'Unlawful interception of communications, data theft, and illegal transmission, causing an infringement of citizens' rights during the period 2016-19' found that a large volume of data was transmitted from 18 SDC servers hosting PSS data to several external servers during the period November 30, 2018,



to March 31, 2019, and that there was no permissible purpose or reason to transmit such data from these servers in the SDC to external IP addresses belonging to

Google LLC. The M/S google was not able to identify the users of these IP addresses.

The House Committee was constituted on March 25, 2022, and YSRC MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy as Chairman and Kolsu Parthasarathy, Monditoka Jaan Mohana Rao, Kothari Abbaya Chowdary, Kottagulli Bhagya Lakshmi, Jakkampudi Raja, and

TDP rubbishes report on data theft

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Giving a strong counter to the ruling party, TDP MLA P Keshav has said that the House Committee has failed to

establish the alleged data theft but made an attempt to spread false propaganda against the opposition party. Speaking to media persons after the TDP MLAs were suspended from the Assembly on Tuesday, he said the House Committee on alleged data theft,

headed by Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, submitted the interim report to the Assembly on the fourth day of the ongoing session. Keshav alleged that whenever a report was submitted by any committee to the Assembly, it was mandatory to provide a copy to every member of the House.

State government exempts APSDRI from RTI purview

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The State government introduced a notification in the Assembly on Tuesday, exempting the AP State Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (APSDRI) from the purview of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

The General Administration Department released a GOMS No 86 on September 1, 2022, and published the same in the Extraordinary Gazette on the same day, exempting the APSDRI from the RTI Act. It maintained, "In exercise of the powers conferred under sub-section 4 of section 24 of the Right to Information Act, 2005, the government notifies that the provisions of the RTI Act 2005 shall not apply to the APSDRI established by the State government subject to the conditions indicated in the proviso thereunder."

CM reels out reforms in edn, medicare sectors

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Reiterating that the amount being spent on education is an investment for a better future, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said it works in shaping the generation next into confident and competent youth to start their careers while drastic changes in the medical and health sector are being brought in to bring quality medicare within the reach of the needy.

Concluding the short discussion on Vidya Vaidyam Nadu Nedu in the State Assembly here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said the State Government has been striving not just for the right to education but for



the right to English medium and right to higher education with incentives from pre-primary to college education while the previous dispensation had tried to push back gov-

(GER) is drastically improved by providing incentives and also revamping the schools under 'Nadu-Nedu'. We have instructed that 12 visible changes should be in place in the government schools which include, toilets, clean drinking water, repairs, tube lights and fans, furniture for students and teachers, green chalkboards, painting, English lab, compound wall, kitchen shed, additional rooms and digital interactive panels. Besides government schools, even pre-primary foundation schools and Anganwadi hostels are also being developed under 'Nadu-Nedu'.

ernment schools into oblivion to benefit corporate schools with a vested interest. "We have chalked out our priorities well and wanted to see that the Gross Enrollment Ratio

Annual Navy Day celebrations outside Vizag

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Authorities have decided to hold the annual Navy Day celebrations later this year outside Visakhapatnam, sources said on Tuesday.

The choice of the new venue is "not finalised yet", but Mumbai is being considered, they said. The Army Day Parade next year will be held outside Delhi, official sources had said earlier in the day.

'Supply issues' delay tab distribution

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Students and teachers of Class 8 will have to wait three more months to receive the tablet computers (tabs) promised by the Andhra Pradesh government.

Though the State government announced it will distribute tabs to 4,59,564 students and 59,176 teachers in government and aided schools in September, 'supply issues' are said to be pushing the delivery date further to December.

The total 5,18,740 tabs will cost the government Rs 664 crore and are supposed to come with pre-loaded Byju's academic content for Class 8, sources in the Education



Department said.

The AP Technology Services finalised the deal with a private supplier for the Samsung T220 Lite Tablet PC, with the delivery schedule supposed to start this month.

In the first phase, the department planned to distribute the tabs in 15 districts spread over north coastal

Andhra and Rayalaseema by September 30. The remaining 11 districts in coastal Andhra were supposed to be covered in the second phase by October 31.

However, Education Minister Botsa Satyanarayana told the Legislative Council on Friday last that the tab distribution would be done on Children's Day (November 14) across the state.

"But we may not meet even that timeline now because of the paucity of the gadgets. Eventually, it may happen only in December," a senior official of the Education Department said.



AP govt apathetic to cops' plight: Pawan

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The ruling YSRC is not showing interest in resolving the problems being faced by the police personnel, Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan has alleged. The YSRC government is keen on using the police mechanism for political compulsions and vindictive activities, he alleged in a statement on Tuesday.

"Though they are making tall claims in the public meetings that the police personnel have been given week-offs, it is not being implemented. The Travelling Allowance (TA), which the police are entitled to get, has been kept pending for the past 14 months," he mentioned. He wondered how police personnel can work if they are always on journeys as part of their duty and not paid the TA amounts.

The police personnel, including civil, AR, and special police, are worried about the pending arrears for several months now.

"Are the amounts collected from the salaries for police security purposes safe? The rulers have to explain what they have done with the collected amount. They have to clarify what message they want to send to the employees by harassing small-time employees," he added.

Pawan Kalyan said, "The government has failed to arrest even one accused in the murder of Sri Surendra, a police constable in Nandyal. Such incidents will hamper the spirit of police personnel. The higher officials have to take steps to ensure clearance of TAs, and surrender amounts in time to the police personnel keeping in view their welfare."

CM clears new RTI CIC, Commissioner

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

A committee headed by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy cleared a file related to the appointment of the RTI Chief Information Commissioner and one other Commissioner on Tuesday and forwarded the same for Governor's consent through the General Administration Department (GAD).

For the first time, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is offering two posts to journalists. RM Bhasha, a senior journalist appoint-



ed as Chief Information Commissioner, worked with 'Sakshi' Telugu daily and other newspapers for his entire career. P Samuel Jonathan, working as Principal Correspondent for 'The Hindu' is being posted as Information Commissioner, RTI.

TTD launches QR Code for Tirumala locations

Initially, the initiative to be piloted on Srivari Sevaks for upcoming 'Brahmotsavams'

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

From now onwards, the devotees thronging Tirumala from different parts of the country, speaking different lingos need not have to struggle to get proper directions, as TTD has come out with yet another pilgrim-friendly initiative. TTD EO Sri AV Dharm Reddy reviewed and did a trial run of this new QR code facility in his camp office on Tuesday which will be initially piloted on Srivari Sevaks who render free services at different places in Tirumala. Usually, the Srivari Seva volunteers hail

from 13 states across the country and especially those coming from Northern and Eastern States feel difficulty in searching the places where they were allotted duty due to the language barrier.

However, this new facility will provide an easy way out to reach the required destination with ease. All they have to do is to scan the QR code on their smartphones and get instant directions to over 40 locations in Tirumala including CRO, Additional EO Office, all cottages, rest houses, laddu counters, Vaikuntam queue complex,

Vigilance office, hospitals, Museum, Mutts, Mada streets, police station, luggage and mobile storage units and others. The TTD EO lauded the new tech initiative developed jointly by TTD Engineering and PR division which is useful for the devotees to a great extent. The EO also instructed TTD PRO Dr. T Ravi to pilot the QR code facility on Srivari Sevaks during the ensuing annual festival which will be of great help to them to identify and reach their specified service locations to offer services to pilgrims every day without any confusion and delay.



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sep 20 09:26 PM to Sep 21 11:34 PM
 Dwadashi: Sep 21 11:34 PM to Sep 23 01:17 PM

Nakshatram: Pushya: Sep 20 09:07 PM to Sep 21 11:47 PM
 Ashlesha: Sep 21 11:47 PM to Sep 23 02:03 PM

Rahukalam: 12:19 PM - 1:50 PM
 Yamagandam: 7:49 AM - 9:19 AM
 Varyyam: 01:48 PM - 03:33 PM
 Gulika: 10:49 AM - 12:19 PM
 Amritakalam: 04:40 PM - 06:27 PM
 Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy
 Temp: 32°
 Humidity: 79%
 Sunrise: 5:56 AM
 Sunset: 6:05 PM

Updated: SEPTEMBER 20, 2022 5:00 PM

Is it really impossible to make Amaravati capital of Andhra Pradesh?

Should Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, who has no doubt won with a huge majority, trash the erstwhile Telugu Desam Party government's policy on building the capital of Andhra Pradesh in Amaravati for the heck of it? Does it have to do with his self respect or ego, considering that Jagan appears to be unmoved by the agitation of farmers, who, along with like-minded people, are for development of Amaravati as the solitary capital of Andhra Pradesh as decided by the state Assembly during the erstwhile regime of TDP headed by N. Chandrababu Naidu. For,



Jagan, whose YSRCP was then the principal opposition party, had endorsed the decision on the floor of the House and even made the suggestion of acquiring not less than 30,000 acres of land for the construction of the capital city. However, after taking the reins of AP, Jagan changed his mind on Amaravati. The main reason seems to be the unconscionable delay by the Chandrababu Naidu government in finalising the designs for constructions and the perception in some quarters that people belonging mainly to the Kamma caste would end up dominating Amaravati with their head start in landhold-

The main reason seems to be the unconscionable delay by the Chandrababu Naidu government in finalising the designs for constructions and the perception in some quarters that people belonging mainly to the Kamma caste would end up dominating Amaravati with their head start in landholdings.

ings. So, the Jagan government, taking a leaf from the South African model, proposed to set up three capitals for AP. Noticeably, Jagan did not conduct a single meeting with the stakeholders on his drastically modified capital plans. It may be mentioned here

that till 1947, Lahore was the capital for the undivided Punjab state. The city of Chandigarh was built by renowned architect Le Corbusier. After further division of Punjab, Chandigarh has been continuing as the joint capital for both Punjab and Haryana. So, at time of



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

declared as the joint capital for both Telangana and AP for 10 years as per the provisions of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. Both Chandrababu Naidu and Jagan were wrong in not pursuing the hilt AP's options to make the most of Hyderabad as the joint capital till completion of the stipulated 10 years. Today Jagan is creating an impression that it is impossible to make Amaravati a capital. He is firm on his decision to set up three capitals of Visakhapatnam (executive), Amaravati (legislative) and Kurnool (Judiciary) in the name of decentralisation. The AP High Court has ruled in favour of farmers demanding Amaravati as the solitary capital for Andhra State. Six

months after the HC's decision, the Jagan government has approached the apex court for a stay on the HC's verdict. Everybody knows enough about the dismal position of the state's finances. Yet, Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy has claimed on the floor of the House that the financial condition of the state is "very good" and not as bad as is being painted by the opposition parties. The Padayatra of farmers in support of Amaravati is drawing crowds en route to Arasavilli Sun temple in Srikakulam district. The provocative methods being adopted by YSRCP are disgusting. How would it be for YSRCP cadre if their TDP

counterparts put banners and flexi boards around the venue of their plenary? Jagan's team is on tenterhooks as to whether the petition filed in the Supreme Court seeking a stay on HC orders will be admitted. The Chief Minister is painting a different picture and trying to create an impression that completion of Amaravati would take 100 years. It is a different matter whether people would accept his position on Amaravati. The larger question is: Will he prolong the Amaravati issue till the 2024 elections? People need to await the intervention of the apex court for specific answers to their queries concerning the eventual AP capital.

Bill on amendment to labour law tabled

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

As part of decriminalisation and enhancement of the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) in the State, the government introduced the AP Labour Welfare Fund (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022 in the Assembly on Tuesday. It was promulgated as an Ordinance on September 9 and is now introduced as Bill for enactment in the Assembly.



It has now been decided to focus on decriminalisation of provisions of imprisonment for minor violations. These are primarily spread across laws about labour, industry, finance and taxation, environment, health, safety and others. There is a need to eliminate the risk of imprisonment for citizens and businesses for minor violations. Many such provisions have outlived their utility. A comprehensive exercise in this regard has been initiated by the Government.

This will empower the government to impose fines ranging from Rs 25,000 to Rs 1 lakh. There will be a penalty for obstructing inspection or for failure to produce documents. The inspecting officials will impose fines up to Rs 25,000 for the first offence and up to Rs 1 lakh for a second or subsequent offence. At the same time, there is another penalty for non-compliance with the direction of the Board. Any person who wilfully fails to produce any document required by the Board or to furnish any information called for by the Board or wilfully fails to comply with any direction issued by the Board under Section 29 will be imposed a fine up to Rs 25,000 for the first offence and up to Rs 1

lakh for a second or subsequent offence. While introducing the new Bill, the government observed that "It has now been decided to focus on decriminalisation of provisions of imprisonment for minor violations. These are primarily spread across laws about labour, industry, finance and taxation, environment, health, safety and others. There is a need to eliminate the risk of imprisonment for citizens and businesses for minor violations. Many such provisions have outlived their utility. A comprehensive exercise in this regard has been initiated by the Government." The Ministry of Labour and Employment codified 29 labour laws into four

codes. While formulating the codes, reforms have been undertaken to decriminalise provisions therein. Several provisions have been either decriminalised completely or have been converted into civil penalties. To reduce the burden on police and criminal courts, the option for compounding has been included in many provisions. To facilitate decriminalisation, the amendments are proposed for imposing fines for violations instead of imprisonment and consequential deletion of provisions relating to prosecution and jurisdiction of courts, therefore. In light of the urgent need to decriminalise such provisions for improving

the standards of Ease of Doing Business in AP, and also to be compliant with the objectives of the Four Central Labour Codes that shall come into effect shortly, it needs immediate legislative intervention. As the Legislature was not in session then, having been prorogued, and it has been decided to give effect to the above decision immediately, the AP Labour Welfare Fund (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2022 was promulgated by the Governor on September 9, 2022. The Bill seeks to replace the Ordinance and to give effect to the decision, maintained by Gummamur Jayaram, Minister for Labour, Factories, Boilers and Insurance Medical Services.

AP SHOPS & ESTABLISHMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

Decriminalisation of minor violations on the anvil

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The government introduced the AP Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Bill 2022 on Tuesday, focusing on decriminalisation of provisions of imprisonment for minor violations and imposing fines. The amendments are proposed for imposing fines for violations instead of imprisonment and for also consequential deletion of provisions relating to prosecution. The proposed measures are in pursuance of the policy to decriminalise provisions relating to the establishment and running of shops and establishments, and such measures are required to be introduced emergently in the public interest for improving the standards of Ease of Doing Business in AP and India. As the government was not in session, it promulgated the AP Shops and Establishments (Amendment) Ordinance on September 9, 2022. The present bill seeks to replace the said ordinance and to give effect to the decision, observed Gummamur Jayaram, Minister for Labour, Factories, Boilers, insurance, and medical services. This will impose a fine of maximum of Rs 10,000 for the incorrect or false statement given by the employer. For the first two violations, the government will impose Rs 10,000 per each. The fine will be Rs 20,000 for the third violation and Rs 50,000 for subsequent offences. There is a penalty for obstructing inspection, up to Rs. 50,000.

Advantage TRS and YSRCP, but...

○ Delimitation unlikely before Assembly polls in Telugu states

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

Although the delimitation of Assembly constituencies in Telugu states is expected to benefit the ruling parties in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the process per se may not be completed before the next Assembly elections. The delimitation of Assembly constituencies in the Telugu states is now being discussed in political circles after the Supreme Court issued notices to the Central government, the Election Commission and the governments of the Telugu states. As per schedule, the next Telangana Assembly elections must be held in or before December 2023 and the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections before June 2024. So there are 15 months for the Telangana Assembly elections and less than two years for the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections. Experts say that the delimitation process will take at least two years. The delimitation of Assembly constituencies was started in 2004 in the combined Andhra Pradesh and completed in 2008. Moreover, if delimitation is completed before the next Assembly elections in the Telugu States it will be advan-



tageous to the ruling parties in both states politically. In Andhra Pradesh, if the ruling YSR Congress gains an advantage, that would be no problem for the BJP, which is in power at the Centre. The problem for the BJP is with Telangana and the TRS. With the increase in Assembly constituencies, the magic figure for forming a government will increase from 60 to 77 seats. For the BJP, winning 77 Assembly seats is impossible in the present political circumstances. Actually, even getting 60 Assembly seats to form a government in Telangana also is an uphill task for the BJP. With the increase in Assembly seats, the TRS will get a chance to accommodate 34 more leaders by giving them Assembly tickets and that will help to reduce dissidence in the party. Apart from this, if the strong Assembly constituency of a ruling party is made into two it will get two MLAs instead of one. All these go against the BJP's

interests. Former delimitation committee member Gade Venkata Reddy said that it would not be possible to complete the delimitation process before the next Assembly elections in both the Telugu states. He said it would require a minimum of two years. Speaking to 'The Pioneer,' Gade Venkata Reddy said that, according to the AP Reorganisation Act, it was not possible to take up the delimitation process without amending the Constitution. He said the Reorganization Act had only assured to increase the number of Assembly seats and had not specified any time limit for that. Meanwhile, former minister Marri Sashidhar Reddy, who had studied the issue in detail, sought to know why the Centre, which had taken up delimitation in J&K, could not do so in the Telugu states. Speaking to 'The Pioneer,' he pointed out that as J&K was now under the Indian Constitution, how could the Centre take up delimitation only in one state. He said that if the Centre wanted delimitation in J&K, it should do so in Telugu states too. Otherwise, the Centre must wait till 2026 to take up delimitation in all states.

TDP RUBBISHES...

Continued from Page 1

But, in this case, the government and the House Committee did not circulate the report to the members. After the TDP MLAs staged a protest and demanded circulation of a copy of it, they provided it to the Opposition, he added. The TDP leader said that, if they could not access the report, then there was a chance for the public to believe the false propaganda being spread by the YSRCP leaders and the House Committee chairman. Now, the report could not establish any illegal data transfer as they alleged. Further, the House Committee consulted Google to know about the servers used to transfer the alleged data, which Google could not establish as the government expected. The House Committee was constituted without representation from the Opposition, TDP and it was the only such committee in the entire country, he criticised. Further, he maintained that it was not the House Committee, but the YSRCP Committee. Even then, they failed to prove that the data theft had happened, as per their interim report.

What the panel... Govt data shifted to TDP..

Continued from Page 1

Maddali Giridhara Rao as members to find the unlawful interception of communications, data theft, and illegal transmission, causing an infringement of citizens' rights during the period 2016-19. The committee held its preliminary meeting on June 14. It held elaborate discussions with the Principal Secretary of Government, the Home Department, and the Principal Secretary of the ITE & C Department in four sittings. The Committee requested the ITE & C Department to provide the network logs from State Data Centre (SDC). It was informed that the AP Computer Security Operations Centre (APCSOC) monitors the servers and network devices in the SDC and logs were provided for detailed analysis the Police

(Intelligence) Department reviewed the logs as part of their investigation and submitted a preliminary report of their findings. Based on an analysis of the network logs and other available information, the Intelligence Department provided a report on where the Data was transmitted. The Committee concluded that it appears that there was an unauthorised and improper transmission of large amounts of sensitive data from the SDC to unknown external servers. The Committee submitted a 57-page interim report to the Assembly, in which it detailed the devices of AP SDC onboarded to APCSOC, devices related to PSS/SRDH projects, extracted external IPs from the server, apart from communication between the Committee and Google.

Continued from Page 1

He further explained that, under Rule number 222, the House Committee would only present the report to the Assembly and there would not be any discussion on it. Rule No. 222 (1) says that "The report of a Committee shall be presented to the House by the Chairman or in his absence by any member of the Committee. (2) In presenting the report by the Chairman or in his absence the member presenting the report shall, if he makes any remarks confine himself to a brief statement of fact, but there shall be no debate on the statement at this stage." Hence, the members of the House would not get a chance to discuss it, but the Chairman of the Committee gave a brief Statement, he

added. Meanwhile, the TDP leaders continued to protest for more than half an hour at the Speaker's podium and raised slogans against the State government and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The TDP leaders demanded an adjournment motion on problems in implementing the welfare schemes, but the Speaker did not allow it. The TDP leaders shouted in the House that the welfare was going back from the last three years. The 'Anna Canteens' were removed, 'Chandranna Bima' was removed and many other welfare schemes were not being implemented by this government, they alleged. After almost an hour-long drama, Minister Kottu Satyanarayana moved a sus-

pension motion against all the TDP leaders present there in the House and surrounded the podium. After the House accepted the motion, the Speaker suspended the TDP leaders including K. Atchannaidu, Adireddy Bhavani, N Chinaraajappa, P. Keshav, and others, for the day. It may be noted that the TDP leaders were suspended for the last four working days. The YSRCP MLA B. Madhusudan Reddy alleged that the TDP leaders were coming to the House with a motive to disturb the business. The TDP leaders criticised that the Government could not dare to debate any public problems being raised by the opposition party in the Assembly and escaped by suspending all the members.

'Supply issues' delay...

Continued from Page 1

This apart, sources said, there were also some technical issues involved that needed to be sorted out with the content provider. The tabs will come loaded with a feature that enables tracking of usage by students and teachers. Initially, the government proposed to give the gadgets only to students of Class 8 but the state Cabinet gave its approval on September 7 extending the facility to the teachers in government and aided schools as well. Sources in the Education Department said the govern-

ment entered into an agreement with the vendor on September 5 under which each Tab with a 64 GB memory card will be supplied at Rs 12,843, as against the market price of Rs 16,446. Originally, the State government promised to distribute laptop computers to students from classes 9 to 12 (intermediate) instead of the Rs 13,000 per annum 'Amma Vodi' dole. The plan was aborted after the suppliers quoted a base price of Rs 24,000 for each laptop. The government then came up with the tabs idea, to be distributed to Class-8 students every year from now on, which they will have to carry to classes 9 and 10.

CM reels out reforms in edn, medicare sectors

Continued from Page 1

In the first phase, 15,715 schools were revamped with a cost of Rs 3,700 crore and the digitization of classrooms will be in place from next academic year. The second phase of modernization has started, the Chief Minister said, and has given the visual presentation of schools in Chandrababu Naidu's birthplace Naravariapalle and Kuppam before and after taking up the Nadu Nedu programme. The GER in primary schools for 2015-16 in the State was very poor and we could increase it drastically through the schemes like 'Amma Vodi',

'Goru Muddha', 'Vidya Deevana' and 'Vasathi Deevana'. While government schools had 37.20 lakh students in 2018-19, it increased to 44.29 lakh in 2021-22, he said. Amma Vodi has been a unique scheme under which a mother is incentivised to send her children to school with Rs 15,000 per annum with the rider of 75 per cent attendance and Rs 1,000 each should be contributed toward Toilets and School Maintenance Funds for the upkeep of schools. During the three years Rs 19, 617 crores were spent under the scheme. Under Gorumuddha, with a daily changing menu and nutritious food, the State has

been spending Rs 1,800 crore while it was just Rs 450 crore annually by the previous government, which did not clear the dues of ayas and provisions as well. Vidya kanuka kits with a school bag, bilingual textbooks, workbooks, notebooks, three pairs of uniform, shoes, two pairs of socks, dictionary are being given to students on the school reopening day itself which cost about Rs 886 cores, and for 8th class students and teachers 5.18 lakh tabs would be given in November last week. The tabs would have pre-loaded Byjus content which would serve as a home tutorial, he said. The Byjus content, which would otherwise cost

about Rs 24,000 would be given free of cost. 'Vidya Deevana' is the other incentive where full fee reimbursement is given along with Vasathi Devena which takes care of the hostel and mess charges and the total amount works out to Rs 11,717 crores. The curriculum is changed with job orientation so that the youth would come. On the medical front, YSR Village Clinics and the concept of Family Doctor are being worked out so that Village Clinics and PHCs take care of preventive medicine while the CHCs, area, and district hospitals take care of the curative treatment. Every mandal will have four doctors and two

ambulances with one doctor and an ambulance touring villages assigned and the regular visits would familiarize the patients and their ailments, thus developing a rapport. Of the 10,032 village clinics, 3,673 are ready and several Rs 1692 crores was spent and the project would be completed by year-end. Staff recruitment will be done by October 15. In addition to the 11 teaching hospitals another 17 hospitals are coming up and construction is at various stages the medical and health care have improved drastically when compared to the previous government where the hospitals had sordid tales to tell, he said.

Annual Navy Day celebrations...

Continued from Page 1

The Air Force Day on October 8 this year will also be held outside its traditional venue of Hindon Airbase in Ghaziabad, IAF officials had recently said. Asked if the Navy Day celebrations too will be shifted to a venue outside Visakhapatnam, a naval source said, "Yes" while asserting that "the new venue has not been finalised yet". "The country celebrates December 4 every year as Navy Day in commemoration of Operation Trident when the ships of the Indian Navy deliv-

ered a lethal and powerful missiles attack on Karachi harbour, paving way for a great victory for India during the 1971 Indo-Pak war and in memory of those who made supreme sacrifice," according to the Indian Navy website. A large number of Indian Navy ships and other vessels of different classes and capabilities gather in Visakhapatnam annually to mark the historic day with grand celebrations. Last year, India also celebrated the golden jubilee of the victory of the 1971 war as 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh'.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT
No. Item 206 to 216/2022-23 E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE Date: 16-09-2022
e-Procurement tenders are invited for execution of 11 works to be executed with Jal-Jeevan Mission under the scheme of Rs 1342.23 lakh in Anaparthi, Kozimkonda, Buchhayaipeta, Ravikarlam, Nalavaram, Kotaburra, Nookapalli, Paravada, Munugapaka, Anandapuram and Perurthi mandals of West Godavari and Anaparthi districts under the jurisdiction of the office of the Superintending Engineer, Visakhapatnam. The package works are related to augment the existing drinking water supply scheme and fix drinking water taps to each household. Availability of tender schedule: From 11.00 am on 22-09-2022 till 4.00 pm on 07-10-2022. For other details: <http://tender.approcurement.gov.in>
Phone No: 9891-2795461. Sd/- Superintending Engineer
G.O. No: 9579/CLAD/DTM/1202-23, Dt. 20.09.2022

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SAAP ready to amend GO to provide jobs to sportspersons

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Chairman Byreddi Siddharth Reddy, and Vice Chairman and Managing Director (VC&MD) Dr N Prabhakar Reddy conducted a meeting with 23 recognised Andhra Pradesh Sports Associations belonging to several disciplines at the SAAP office on the premises of the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) stadium in Vijayawada on Tuesday.



Chairman Siddharth Reddy says State govt is keen to provide sports infrastructure in all districts

The sports bodies' representatives have raised several issues such as affiliation, financial assistance, recognition, and other issues of concern to the chairman and VC&MD. Speaking on the occasion, SAAP Chairman Byreddi Siddharth Reddy said that the State government is ready to give any support for the sports and games. All sports associations should work for better results and the government would provide cash awards and other facilities, he said. He further said that GORT No.74 would be amended to provide jobs for outstanding sports persons. Also, creating infrastructure in every district, providing website facilities to all sports bodies, and giving sup-

port towards technical and financial assistance, he added. Meanwhile, he said as per the National Sports Code - 2011 guidelines all sports associations should submit their annual activities, financial transactions, elections, players selections, and other issues to the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh. He sought the tournament details for the year 2022 and several stages selections list should be submitted, he said. Also, he appealed to the sports bodies for submitting the past ten years of results, and the medal winners list. Later the VC&MD N Prabhakar Reddy gave clarifications about the construction of Jagannanna Sports Clubs and did not cancel the sports associations' recognition. Later, there was a discussion held about the 36th National

Govt sanctioned Rs 23.91 L for National Games: Roja

Minister for Youth Services, Sports, Tourism, and Culture RK Roja has said that the State government has sanctioned Rs 23.91 lakh as financial support for the 36th National Games which will be held in Gujarat. The funds will be spent on purchasing sports kits, providing TA, and DA facilities to all sportspersons, coaches, and managers, she said in a press release here on Tuesday. She further said that 250-strong contingent, including 170 players, would take part in the National Games. She thanked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for providing financial assistance. "I will take steps to hand over financial assistance to the players without delay. All players should return to the State with medals," she said.



Games and the sending of sports teams, financial facilities, and other issues. According to sources, some of the association representatives raised objections about the recognition of the Andhra Pradesh Olympic Association (APOA) led by its president Dharmana Krishna Das and

general secretary RK Purushottam. They made it clear that they would not send their teams with the particular APOA, the sources said. The SAAP Administrative Officer V Uma Maheswara Rao, 23 sports associations presidents, and general secretaries were present.

Make 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' a grand success in Telugu States: Uttam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Congress MP & AICC Coordinator for Telangana & Andhra Pradesh for 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' Capt. N Uttam Kumar Reddy has appealed to the Congress workers to make Rahul Gandhi's yatra in both the Telugu states a grand success.

Addressing a meeting of Congress workers in Vijayawada on Tuesday, Uttam Kumar Reddy appealed to the party cadre to make elaborate arrangements for Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' which will enter Andhra Pradesh from Karnataka on October 20. "All Congress leaders and workers must work unitedly to make the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' a grand success in Andhra Pradesh. AICC leader Rahul Gandhi is leading the biggest ever 'padayatra' in history of 3,500 km from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, covering 12 States in 150 days. The yatra will continue for four days in Andhra Pradesh before entering Telangana on October 24. Therefore, all of us must ensure huge participation in both the Telugu States," he said.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the main slogan of 'padayatra' is 'Bharat Jodo, Nafrat Chodo' (Unite India, Quit



Congress MP from Nalgonda, Uttam Kumar Reddy, addressing the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' coordination committee meeting at the Andhra Raina Bhavan in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

The Nalgonda MP asks AP Cong workers to make elaborate arrangements for the first-ever political event of the party after the bifurcation

Hatred). Therefore, he said, by ensuring huge participation, the Telugu States must convey a strong message that they were against the divisive policies of RSS, BJP, and their allies.

He said that the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' has been receiving tremendous public response in the last 13 days. So far, it cov-

ered nearly 280 km in Tamil Nadu and the Kerala States. The Congress MP said that Rahul Gandhi would also speak about important issues like the increase in the prices of fuel and essential commodities and unemployment. Further, he would also speak about the BJP government's failure to implement the promises made to the Telugu States in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act and other injustices done to the Telugu States.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' would be the biggest event of the Congress

party in Andhra Pradesh after the State was bifurcated in 2014 to carve out Telangana. He said the people have now realised that bifurcation was the right decision taken by Congress president Sonia Gandhi in 2013 which benefited the people of both regions. The Congress MP also further said that 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' would go on for 15 days in Telangana, covering a distance of 366 km in four Lok Sabha and nine Assembly constituencies.

He expressed confidence that 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' would be a grand success in both the Telugu States.

NADU-NEDU PHASE II

35,000 additional classrooms to be built

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education Botsa Satyanarayana has said the State government is developing infrastructure facilities spending Rs 8,000 crore in 22,346 government schools under the Nadu-Nedu programme in the State. He said the first phase of works was completed for Rs 3,669 crore in 15,715 schools. The government has decided to construct 35,000 additional classrooms in the second phase to meet the requirements of the schools. Botha Satyanarayana was replying to a question in the Legislative Council on Tuesday, the fourth day of the proceedings.



Minister Botsa further said the government recently took a decision on appointing watchmen in the high schools to check robberies.

Council members M Arun Kumar, Krishna Raghava, Chennuboina Srinivasa Rao and P Ravindrababu enquired about the steps taken by the government to improve the educational standards in government schools through the Nadu-Nedu programme. In replying to the question, the Education Minister made it clear that the government was doing verification and constructing the required number of rooms. He said the government was regularly monitor-

ing the progress of the works. Legislative Council chairman K Moshem Raju chaired the session. Botcha Satyanarayana further said the government recently took a decision on appointing watchmen in the high schools to check robberies. Referring to the Mandal Education Officers, he said the government was trying to complete the procedure to appoint the second MEO to the mandals.

UTS MOBILE APP

Distance curbs relaxed for purchase of tickets

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To provide a hassle-free and convenient ticketing system for passengers purchasing unreserved tickets, South Central Railway introduced the 'UTS' Mobile Application for issuing unreserved tickets in the year 2018. The response from rail users has been very good and since then, the number of people utilising the App, is steadily increasing. To further encourage rail passengers to use the App, Indian Railways has relaxed the distance restriction by giving more area coverage to the unreserved passen-

gers to use the digital purchase option.

The existing distance restriction for using the App to purchase unreserved tickets has been relaxed from 5 km to 10 km in the case of suburban stations and 5 km to 20 km in the case of nonsuburban stations. Accordingly, now, unreserved journey tickets can be purchased.

The UTS mobile APP is a more convenient option to obtain hassle-free train tickets. The APP works on smartphones with Android, IOS, and Windows versions of the operating system and the same



can be downloaded free of cost. The main benefit of this APP is passengers can purchase unreserved, platform, and season tickets through their mobile (Cashless) at their convenience without standing in the queue at booking counters.

Being paperless, it is also environmentally friendly. The payment can be made through wallets like R-Wallet, PayTM, Mobikwik, or through internet banking. This facility is a big leap in unreserved ticketing and a boon to rail users.

Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager in-charge, of South Central Railway has appealed to all rail users in general and passengers travelling in unreserved compartments, in particular, to utilize the UTS Mobile App and have a comfortable journey without standing or waiting in queues for purchase of tickets at stations.



Governor invited to Dasara festivities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

D Bramarambha, Executive Officer, Durga Malleswara Swamyvarla Devasthanam, along with priests and officials of the temple, called on Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhan Harichandan at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday. They invited the Governor to participate in the Dasara festivities planned to be held on Indrakeeladri.

The Executive Officer informed the Governor that the Dasara festivities were scheduled to begin on September 26 and would go on up to October 5, with

Kanakadurga Ammavaru giving darshan to devotees in nine different alankarams. On the fifth day, the presiding deities of the temple will be taken on 'Hamsa Vahanam' as part of the Teppotsavam in Krishna River.

The Executive Officer briefed the Governor that all arrangements had been made to conduct the festivities to provide all amenities and hassle-free darshan to the devotees.

The priests of Durga temple offered blessings and presented theertha prasadam to Governor Harichandan and his wife Suprava Harichandan.

Rs 1 CRORE DONATED TO TTD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chennai-based Subeena Banu and Abdul Ghani couple, donated Rs.1.02crores to TTD on Tuesday. The donation includes Rs 87 lakh worth of furniture and utensils for the newly constructed Padmavathi Rest House and a DD for Rs 15 lakh towards SV Annaprasadam Trust. They handed over the DD to TTD EO AV Dharma Reddy at Ranganayakula Mandapam in Tirumala temple.



2-day workshop on Arogyasri inaugurated

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Principal Secretary for Health, Medical, and Family Welfare MT Krishna Babu inaugurated the two-day consultative workshop on Dr. YSR Arogyasri with special Committees here on Tuesday. On this occasion, he said that the specialists' committee will find out the new procedures which will be useful to the public.

'Environmental clearance is required for Varikapudisela project'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Water Resources Ambati Rambabu has said that on August 28, 2022, Minister of Empowerment, Govt of India, informed MP Lavu Krishnadevaraya that prior environmental clearance is required for irrigation projects having a command area greater than 2000 Ha. Accordingly, action is initiated to obtain Forest clearance.

Answering the question asked by the council members KS Lakshman Rao and Dokka Manikya Vara Prasad Rao under rule 311, about the matter of the Varikapudisela project, Minister Rambabu said that tenders were invited and the work was awarded to M/s PSR Constructions for Phase-I work of Varikapudisela Project in Palnadu district. He said that the work was awarded to M/s PSR Constructions for several Rs 3.49 crore (+) 3.95 excess over the ECV value of Rs 3.36 crore on July 8, 2022, and the survey work is under progress.



state Government has accorded administrative approval for conducting SID operations and preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Phase-II work "Conducting detailed Block leveling survey and preparation of detailed project report, preparation of Hydraulic Particulars, Designs of CM & CD works, Detailed Earth work excavation estimates and preparation of Detailed Project Report of Varikapudisela lift irrigation

scheme for providing irrigation facilities in Veldurthi, Durgi and Bollapalli Mandals of Guntur District" for several Rs 3.97 Crore on June 2, 2021.

The minister recalled that the government has accorded administrative approval for the Construction of the Lift Irrigation Scheme on Varikapudisela vide Go 104. Water Resources (Projects-II) Department on February 6, 2019, for an amount of Rs 340.26 crore to irrigate an aya-

cut of 24,900 acres in Veldurthi Mandal. The work was awarded to Ms. Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Ltd., Hyderabad for Rs 298.47 Crores @ 4.70 percent Excess.

Accordingly, the Survey work is completed and proposals are submitted by the Government of AP to the Member Secretary, National Board for Wild Life, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climatic Change, New Delhi vide Letter No.1613/Section-III/2021(1628720) on February 21, 2022, for approval of the standing committee of National Board for Wild Life (NBWL), Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climatic Change, New Delhi. As required under section 29 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for the diversion of 19.13 Ha Forest land falling in Compartment No: 67 & 68 of Gangalakunta Reserve Forest, Vijayapuri South Range, Markapur Wildlife Division (Part of Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and core area of Nagarjuna Sagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve).

Dasara: Two ways for VIPs now!

Durga temple authorities arrange a second way beside Kanakadurga Nagar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanams (Durga Temple) officials are arranging two ways for the VIP devotees to have Durga Darshan. An earlier meeting had decided that there would be only one way. But the authorities are making arrangements for another path from the side of Maha Mandapam along with Ghat road to provide darshan to the VIPs.

In the meeting held earlier, it was decided that the VIP devotees should take darshan from the side of Ghat road, and for that, the department will arrange vehicles to Indrakeeladri, but the temple authorities are arranging queue lines in another way.

According to sources, the temple authorities have been making arrangements for three queue lines for the devotees - one from the Vinayaka temple to the uphill of Indrakeeladri and two VIP queue lines from the Om. Another one is being arranged from the Vijayeswara Alayam to Maha Mandapam. The new VIP way was object-



ed to by the police in the very first meeting and it was not in the queue lines plan. The police said that it would be unable to provide security for VIPs and they also told the temple authorities the new way would create several traffic problems, the sources said.

But under pressure from the State government, the temple authorities are arranging a new way from the Vijayeswara Alayam to Maha Mandapam and later VIPs will be sent to the temple through a lift for taking the Durga darshan.

There are four lifts at the seven-storey Maha Mandapam and they will be used only for

VIPs, said the sources. However, the new VIP queue line was erected behind Prasadam counters, and it will be hard to control the devotees' rush at the Kanakadurga Nagar, they said.

Meanwhile, the Durga Temple officers have said that considering the past experiences, hassle-free darshan should be provided to the common people who purchase Rs.100, Rs.300 tickets, and also free darshan, arranging two ways for the VIPs. "There will not be any inconvenience to other devotees with these two VIP queue lines," said one of the officials.

On the other hand, the

arrangements for the Dasara celebrations, which will be held atop Indrakeeladri from September 26 to October 5, were almost completed. Prasadam counters were arranged at the Kanakadurga Nagar, Vijayawada Railway Station, and other important areas. Also, the lighting for the Durga Temple, Upalayams, Maha Mandapam, and other offices was completed.

Meanwhile, the temple engineering officers inspected all arrangements such as queue lines, lighting, and drinking water facilities on Tuesday. One of the queue lines from the side of Kummariapalem centre is in the final stage. The officials along with police and Vijayawada Municipal Corporation officers have been made cross-checks every day to avoid inconvenience to devotees.

However, tonsure centres and bathing arrangements at the river Krishna Ghats are expensive. Some of the ghats are unfit for devotees to take bath and the engineering officials are taking steps to get them ready, sources said.

CPM takes out rally seeking distribution of assigned lands

PNS ■ ELURU

The CPM has demanded that the government distribute the assigned lands grabbed by Devineni Rajasekhara's (Nehru) family at Dosapadu village in Denduluru mandal.

Braving rain, the Dalit farmers of the village, led by CPM State secretary V Srinivas Rao, took out a padayatra from Dosapadu village to Collectorate on Tuesday. They took out the padayatra holding flex banners and raising slogans demanding the government to distribute the assigned lands which were grabbed by former minister Devineni Rajasekhara Nehru's family.

The padayatra began at Dosapadu village and reached Eluru Collectorate via Kovvali and Palagudem villages. The Dalit farmers of the village staged a dharna at the Collectorate. Braving incessant rain, the Dalit farmers led by the CPM state secretary organised the padayatra.

Later addressing the gathering, CPM secretary V Srinivas Rao said that 240 acres of assigned lands were grabbed with the support of leaders at



the village. He said that 240 acres of assigned lands were given to Dalits farmers of the village. But they were usurped by the family members of Devineni Rajasekhara Nehru of Vijayawada.

The Dalit farmers with the support of the CPM had been agitating for the last four months demanding the government to take the lands from the grabbers and hand-over to the farmers but the government machinery did

not respond. CPI state secretary Srinivasa Rao warned of intensifying agitation if the officials did not come forward to resolve the issue.

State Agriculture workers union state president Dadala Subba Rao slammed that the government was praising itself for implementing Navaratnalu welfare schemes but it was not doing justice to the Dalits when 240 acres of their lands were grabbed with the support of leaders. When the Dalits of

the village were agitating for their lands, Section 144 was clamped at the village, and providing protection to those who grabbed the lands, he flayed.

If the government failed in distributing the assigned lands to the Dalits farmers, the farmers would take possession of the lands forcibly and start cultivating the lands, he warned. District Agriculture workers union secretary Ravi was among those who participated in the programme.

Tenders called for repairs of rural roads: Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Members of the Legislative Council have asked the government to immediately take up road repairs in rural areas, stating that the panchayat roads are in a very bad condition. Deputy CM and Panchayat Raj Minister Budi Mutyala Naidu replied that tenders had already been invited for taking up repairs and development of roads.

The minister answered to the notice given by Council member Ch Ramachandra Rao and said that there were many damaged roads in rural areas across the State. Replying to a question on the Siripuram-Thatipalli road in Karapa Mandal in Kakinada district that was totally damaged, the minister said that the actual length of the road was 4.36 km. The minister said that there was an existing CC road with a carriage way width of 3.75 m and that the remaining stretch was eroded. He said that the road was sanctioned with an estimated cost of Rs 60 lakh under APRRP.

People will teach a lesson to Jagan: Chandrababu Naidu

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TDP national president and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu has assured to extend full support to the TDP activists and stand by them if they are harassed by the government and predicted that the people of the state would teach a lesson to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Chandrababu Naidu visited the TDP leaders who were in the district jail on Tuesday in Chittoor. Addressing a huge gathering at the prison here on Tuesday he made it clear that the TDP leaders and activists would not be afraid of going to jail.

"We will continue to fight against the harassment of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government. We will not spare the police officers who are acting against the law", he said.

Naidu said that the TDP struggles to save democracy and it would not fear for false cases. The false cases being foisted against the TDP leaders and activists could not intimidate them.

Naidu alleged cases were registered against 72 TDP leaders and activists in the Kuppam



Anna canteen clash. "It is highly improper and unjust to register such a large number of cases against the TDP leaders. The YSRC leaders attacked the TDP leaders but cases were registered against the TDP leaders" he lamented. Naidu said that he had never gone to prison to visit leaders unjustly sent to jail in his long political life. "For the first time in my life I have visited 8 TDP activists who were lodged in the district jail", he said. "The day when Chief

Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will be driven away from the state is nearing. I dare Jagan Reddy to win from the Pulivendula constituency in the next election. Chief Minister Jagan Reddy has lied in the Assembly on the Polavaram project and Capital city Amaravati" Naidu lashed out.

Later Chandrababu Naidu visited former Mayor Katari Hemalatha at her residence. Hemalatha was injured when she forcibly boarded a police jeep recently.

Officials directed to provide amenities to Jagananna colonies

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Collector M Venugopal Reddy directed the officials to provide all amenities to the Jagananna colonies. Collector M Venugopal Reddy on Tuesday inspected the progress of house construction in Kolakalur village of Tenali mandal under the layout of houses for all the poor, Kolakalur village secretariat 2.

The housing department officials explained to the Collector that 1034 house plots have been allocated on 35 acres under the housing scheme for the poor in Kolakalur village and construction of houses has been granted to 671 people.

The Collector inspected the handbills and electrical works carried out for water supply for the houses under construction and the houses in the layout. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that 35 acres of land had been acquired to allocate house sites to the eligible poor and houses had been allotted to all the eligible people.

According to the layout of houses, approach roads, underground roads, hand bore, water supply, and electricity facility had been provided. Housing and Panchayat Raj officials should create full awareness through Secretariat employees so that all the beneficiaries could build houses, he told the officials.

The authorities should take measures to provide electricity and water facilities to the hous-

es that had already been completed, he said. The officials of the housing construction department should continuously monitor the progress of the construction of houses and coordinate with the mandal level officials and give suggestions to the field level officials, the Collector instructed the officials concerned.

Collector Venugopal Reddy, when the villagers brought to his attention that the supply of fresh water was not being done properly in the village, he asked the engineering authorities to take steps to ensure a full water supply in two days.

Later Venugopal Reddy inspected Kolakalur Village Secretariat 2. The Collector examined the lists of beneficiaries of various welfare schemes and welfare schemes promotional posters arranged for social audit in the secretariat and enquired about the services being provided in the secretariat daily.

The details of the drinking water supply in the village and the condition of sewage in the canals were appraised to the Collector by the ANM, Tehsildar Ravi Babu, MPDO Vijayalakshmi, ZPTC Pili Uma Pranathi, AE Housing Srinivasa Rao, Panchayati Raj AEM Venkateswara Rao, Electrical AE Vasantha Rao, RW SAE Sudhakar, MPTC Chennaboina Srinivasulu, Sarpanchi Preethi, VRO Rambabu, Secretariat, and Panchayat employees were among those who were present.

'Check illegal quarrying of granite'

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Joint Collector Dr. K Srinivasulu has directed the officials concerned to take firm steps to check the illegal quarrying of Granite. The Joint Collector held a review meeting with the officials of the mining and revenue department here on Tuesday.

Joint Collector Srinivasulu warned that legal action would be taken if the illegal quarrying was carried out at granite mines and if the granite slabs were transported illegally or overloaded in the vehicles.

He said that the main roads in the district were completely damaged due to vehicles running with extra loads of granite slabs. He said that groundwater is being depleted due to heavy quarrying at the



granite mines violating regulations and norms, he said.

The Joint Collector said that in the Bapatla district the steel granite quarries are spread over 380 hectares while the black pearls granite quarries are spread over 220 hectares. Based on these, 1500 crushers and polishing factories are functioning. The district earns Rs 8 crore income on the quarries, he informed.

Srinivasulu said that there is a good demand for silicon sand in the coastal area of the Bapatla district, adding that the government gets good income through the silicon sand. The Joint Collector enquired on why the owners of granite quarries had not been disbursing their CSR share to the government for the last five years.

The Joint Collector directed the granite quarry owners to pay their CSR share to the government within 15 days. He directed the officials to intensify the checking of vehicles at check-posts. The granite quarry owners should extend help generously for the construction of houses by the poor in the Jagananna colonies.

Meanwhile, the granite quarry owners took their grievances to the notice of the JC, Mines department DD Jagannatha Rao and other officials were present. Later addressing another review meeting with the officials, the Joint Collector directed the officials to resolve the grievances received during the Gadapa Gadapaku Mana Prabhatwam programme. He also reviewed the construction of buildings for village secretariats and war secretariats.

Create awareness about fake apps: Collector

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector A S Dinesh Kumar has directed the officials to create awareness among people on fake apps through the staff of village and ward secretariats.

The Collector held a review meeting with the officials on the fake apps, deceptions, and the fake app organisers' excesses on the borrowers while collecting money. He said that women police and volunteers should go door to door to sensitize the people about the fraud being committed by app organisers.

The Collector ordered the officials to take measures to prevent students and businessmen from falling victim to fake apps. He said that the app administrators were collecting personal information from the phones of borrowers and misusing it. Awareness programs should be organised so that people are not attracted to such scams, the Collector told the officials.



Collector Dinesh Kumar said that as part of Jagananna's 'Swachh Sankalp' the sanitary staff should go door to door every day to collect garbage, adding that the officials should inspect the waste to energy centres. The construction of structures for waste-to-energy plants should be expedited, he told them.

Every Tuesday and Friday a dry day program should be organised and the unhygienic areas identified in this pro-

gram should be uploaded in the hygiene app, he said. The Collector also directed them to lay focus on seasonal diseases. He asked the officials to take steps to carry out sanitary works, maintain hygienic conditions and spray bleaching to check the seasonal diseases. The grievances received during the Spandana programme should be resolved at the earliest, he told the officials.

The Collector said that as part of the Jaljeevan mission, the work of installing taps in every house should be completed quickly. The drinking water tanks in villages and towns should be cleaned in coordination with the Panchayat and Municipal authorities, he told them.

The development works being carried out under the 'Nadu Nedu' programme should be expedited, he said. DPO Narayana Reddy, CPO Venkateswarulu, DEO B Vijaya Bhaskar, and Panchayat Raj SE Kondiah were among those who attended the meeting.

Over 65 take part in Yoga contest

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The district-level yoga competition was held in the Kapu Kalyana Mandapam under the aegis of the Prakasam District Yogasana Sports Association here on Tuesday. The competitions were held in three categories and more than 65 people participated.

Prakasam District President Boyapati Ravi presided over the program, State Yogasana Association Vice President Gandhavalla Balasubramaniam, District Sports Officer G. Rajeshwari, AYUSH Secretary Dr Padmavati, RTA Krishnaveni, President of Andhrakesari Vidya Sanstha, RSS leaders Mandava Nageswara Rao, J Srinivasa Rao and yoga guru Challa Srinivasa Rao were among those who attended the programme. In the evening, Chaluvadi Badarinarayana and Mayor Gangada Sujatha attended the programme.

The programme began with the lighting of Jyoti and the dance performance by the children in praise of Lord Ganapati left the audience. Tanvi and Dhanashree in girls' category and Dhaneshwar in the boys cat-

egory in the Sub-Junior category emerged victorious in the Artistic Solo Yoga Competition.

Speaking on the occasion, State Vice-President Yogacharya G. Balasubramaniam said Yogasanas used to be practised with a spiritual feeling, now with the initiative of the Central Government Yogasanas had been introduced as a sport in the Olympic competitions.

The selection of contestants to participate in the respective competitions is now being done at the district level. He explained that those who won at the district level would be selected and they would be sent to the state competition to be held at Nagarjuna University in October, where the winners would be sent to the national level and also to the Olympics.

"Those who win the yogasana competitions will be allotted a special place in the government jobs", he said.

Chief Guests G. Rajeshwari, Dr Padmavathi and Challa Srinivasa Rao appreciated the efforts of the Yogasana Sports Association for recognizing yoga as a sport for everyone's health and happy life.

Man throws two kids into canal, bodies retrieved



PNS ■ GUNTUR

In a shocking incident, a man threw his son and daughter into the Buckingham canal at Tadepalli and both children met a watery grave the bodies were fished out on Tuesday.

Police said that the accused Venkatesh lives with his wife Jyothi at Pedakakani. Differences erupted between the couple as Venkatesh was suspecting the fidelity of his wife and he grew a grudge against her. The accused Venkatesh took his son Shankukha Varma (4) and daughter Jyotsna (6) to the Buckingham canal on the night of Monday. When the children did not return home, Jyothi complained to the Pedakakani police about the missing children.

The police got information about the two bodies of the missing children floating on the canal. The bodies were fished from the canal and shifted to the GGH for post-mortem. The accused Venkatesh is at large and the police have begun a search for him.

Woman found dead

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A woman was found dead in a church that is under construction here on Tuesday. Police said that Endukuri Nagalakshmi (45) was found hanging to the centering rod in the Rupanchara church. The Rupanchara church is under construction. The deceased belonged to Palakoderu village. The police registered a case and investigated on whether it was a suicide or murder. The body was shifted to the government hospital for post-mortem.



Jagan 'adopted son of Modi': Congress

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh has changed as Abaddala Pradesh (lies) alleged former MP Chinta Mohan. Addressing the media persons at a programme on Tuesday, he came down heavily on the YSRC government and CM Jagan Mohan Reddy and said that as the capital Amaravati construction has come to a grinding halt while farmers and women are facing severe problems and are on the roads.

He criticized CM Jagan by saying Jagan Mohan Reddy is the adopted son of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Jagan will do what Modi says. Modi is robbing the people and government money for Adani Andhra Pradesh is becoming an Adani state.

The former MP said that apart from Amaravati, Polavaram project construction is also not moving ahead in the YSRC rule.

BJP demands release of funds to panchayats

PNS ■ ELURU

The BJP has demanded that the State government release funds to the village panchayats by October 2 and warned of a statewide agitation if it failed to do so. The BJP activists led by state president Somu Veerajuu organised the 'Praja Poru' programme here and Veerajuu addressed the gatherings on Tuesday.

Talking to the media on the occasion, Somu Veerajuu had given an ultimatum to the state government to release funds due to be released to the village panchayats. He warned of launching a state-wide agitation if the panchayat funds were not released by the date.

The Narendra Modi-led Central government had enhanced the village Panchayat funds by 40 percent but the AP government had diverted the funds to other purposes. Now the village panchayats are unable to carry out any development works, he regretted.



Veerajuu slammed that the state government is diverting the Central government funds being provided for various development works, to other purposes including implementing welfare schemes. The AP government is constructing roads with the Central government funds released under the Amrit scheme, he charged.

Somu Veerajuu alleged that the previous TDP government and the present YCP government used the Polavaram project

for kickbacks. "Andhra Pradesh has become a hub for the sand mafia, liquor mafia, red sander mafia, and land mafia. The YCP government has failed on all fronts," he lashed out.

The BJP state president demanded Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy release a "White Paper" on the funds extended by the Central government and what purpose they were used by the State government.

INDIA CORNER

EPFO adds 18.23 lakh subscribers in July

Retirement fund body EPFO added 18.23 lakh new subscribers in July 2022, registering a 24.48 per cent rise as compared to the year-ago period, according to official data. The provisional payroll data of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) released on Tuesday highlighted that of the total new members added in July, around 10.58 lakh members have come under the social security cover of EPFO for the first time, a labour ministry statement said. The data of new members joining EPFO has shown a growing trend since April 2022, it said. Out of 10.58 lakh new members added, approximately 57.69 per cent are in the age group of 18-25 years. This shows that first-time job seekers are joining the organised sector workforce in large numbers following their education and new jobs in the organised sector are largely going to the youth of the country.



Lawyer arrested for attacking woman, daughter with sickle

A lawyer was arrested on Tuesday on charges of attempting to murder a law student and her mother, a special public prosecutor in Mahila Court in Tirupur, police said. Lawyer Abdul Rahman (25) is said to be in love with Amurish (20), a first-year student of Salem Law College, who hails from Tirupur. But, she rejected him. As the lawyer had stalked her, she lodged a complaint with police in Salem last month, leading to the arrest of Rahman, who was sent to the judicial custody, police said. After obtaining bail, Rahman, who is working as an assistant to a senior lawyer, went to public prosecutor Jameela's house on Sunday and attacked both the mother and daughter with a sickle and fled. The mother and daughter were admitted to a hospital in the city. Rahman was arrested early today and remanded, police said and registered cases under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section 294 (b), 307 and 447.



UP: Kabaddi players served food from toilet, official suspended

Kabaddi players at a state-level tournament in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur were allegedly served food from a toilet, prompting the authorities to suspend the district sports officer for laxity and blacklisting the caterer. A purported video of the incident that surfaced on social media showed cooked food stored in the toilet at Saharanpur's Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Stadium from where kabaddi players took it themselves. The state-level sub-junior girls' kabaddi tournament was held from September 16 to 18 in which over 300 players from 16 divisions of the state took part. The incident drew criticism, with ruling BJP's Pilibhit MP Varun Gandhi asking if Indian sports should be cleansed of politicians and their representatives to reach its zenith. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal too took a swipe at the incident, asking how Indian sportspersons would win gold at the Olympics if they are treated this way.



UPCOMING COP 27

Loss and damage will be major topic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

"Loss and damage" due to climate change will be a major topic for discussion at the 27th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC in Egypt in November, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said on Tuesday.

Addressing an event organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry here, he said the maximum impact of the climate crisis is being borne by the countries which have no role in global warming.

"Loss and damage will be a major topic for discussion at COP27 at Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt in November this year," he said.

The social and financial impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided are referred

to as 'loss and damage'.

According to the World Resources Institute (WRI), "loss and damage" is a term used in UN climate negotiations to refer to the consequences of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to, or when options exist but a community doesn't have the resources to access or utilise them.

Loss and damage is generally understood to result from both extreme weather events like cyclones, droughts and heatwaves, and slow-onset changes - such as sea level rise, desertification, glacial retreat, land degradation, ocean acidification and salinization.

Poor and developing countries have been pushing for serious discussions on 'loss and damage' at the global level to support their recovery and to prepare for the future.



Yadav said India is one of the few countries which have achieved the target set under the Paris Agreement with regard to increasing the use of non-fossil fuels.

"We have achieved our target nine years before schedule,"

he said.

India had committed to achieving 40 per cent of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030. The country has achieved this target in November 2021 itself.

"India talks of climate justice, climate efficiency and climate action. And if some ecological wrong has occurred due to our development, the country is committed to undoing it and establishing ecological harmony," Yadav said.

The minister said India has updated its nationally determined contributions in keeping with the promises made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26 in Glasgow.

According to the updated NDC, India now stands committed to reducing emissions intensity of its GDP by 45 per cent by 2030, from 2005 level, and achieving about 50 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

To further a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, 'LIFE' - 'Lifestyle for Environment' as a

key to combating climate change" has been added to India's NDC.

"We are not against consumption, but it should be mindful, not mindless utilisation -- not only with respect to energy but also the utilisation of land and biodiversity. We need to maintain an ecological balance," he said.

India updated its NDCs because it does not want to be part of the problem but the solution, Yadav said.

He said that the developed countries, which have 17 per cent of the world's population, account for 60 per cent of the global carbon emissions.

"Whereas, India is home to 17 per cent of the world's population and is responsible for only 4 per cent of the global carbon emissions. This is because of our sustainable lifestyle," Yadav said.

CMs of Assam, Mizoram to meet in Delhi today



PNS ■ AIZAWL

Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma would meet in New Delhi on Wednesday to find a solution for resolving the long-standing border dispute between the two Northeastern states, an official said on Tuesday.

Zoramthanga and Sarma would meet at Assam House in New Delhi at 1 pm, the official of the Mizoram Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said. Mizoram Planning Board

vice-chairman H Rammawi is likely to accompany Zoramthanga to the meeting, she said.

The meeting was scheduled on Monday but had to be postponed as Sarma returned to his state from the national capital.

This will be the second such meeting between the two chief ministers on the border issue. In November last year, the two leaders met in New Delhi in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

'Anybody can contest; Cong president poll will be free and fair, transparent'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Anybody can contest the Congress president's poll which will be free and fair as well as transparent, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said on Tuesday after meeting party chief Sonia Gandhi here.

Speaking with reporters outside Sonia Gandhi's 10 Janpath residence, the party's general secretary in-charge organisation said it was a "routine meeting" with the party chief on pending organisational issues.

Asked if the AICC chief's poll was also discussed during



his meeting with Gandhi, Venugopal said, "Polls have been announced, what is the need of a discussion. On September 22 notification will come and nomination will start on September 24."

"Whoever wants to file a nomination, can file it. We have said it will be an open

election, anybody can contest, free and fair election, definitely it will be a transparent election," he said.

Anybody can contest the election and that has been our stand which is continuing, he added.

Asked if Rahul Gandhi will contest, Venugopal said only the former can decide and he "has not told us anything".

On resolutions being passed by various state units of the party seeking Rahul Gandhi's elevation to the top post, Venugopal said there was nothing wrong in that as party workers were expressing their feelings.

BJP is only party with ideology: Nadda

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Ahmedabad, Sep 20 (PTI) BJP president J P Nadda on Tuesday asked party cadres in Gujarat not to worry about the coming Assembly elections, stating that their party is the only one which has ideology.

He was speaking at a gathering of the state BJP's elected representatives in local urban and panchayat bodies in Rajkot city.

"There is absolutely no need to worry. Because BJP is the only party in this country having an ideological background. There is no other party which follows an ideol-

ogy," he said.

"Whenever elections come, some people get anxious and say look this is happening, that is happening. I want to tell them, why they are worried? You belong to a party of 18 crore workers. Just give your best," Nadda added.

Assembly elections are expected to be held in December in BJP-ruled Gujarat.

Taking a jibe at the ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' of Congress, Nadda said instead of worrying about unifying the country, the opposition party needs to concentrate on keeping its own flock together.

Kejriwal calls for 'Bharatiya' system of education

PNS ■ VADODARA

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday called for a "Bharatiya" or indigenous system of education in the country in the place of the one inherited from the British.

Speaking at a town-hall meeting with parents and teachers here as part of his campaign for the coming Assembly elections in Gujarat, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader also said that India should become a destination for students from all over the world, like Nalanda University was in ancient times.

A participant at the program asked if the text books prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) should be changed. "Not just NCERT books but the entire content needs to be changed. There is a need to start a Bharatiya education system in the country by

abolishing the British education system," he said.

The country made a mistake by not doing away with the old education system after 1947, Kejriwal said.

"The entire system of education was left to us by the British. It is the system Macaulay prepared in the 1830s so that we could serve them by becoming clerks. I respect all freedom fighters, but when the country attained independence, we should have prepared a new system of education for independent India by abolishing the old British education system," he said.

His government in Delhi is working on this, Kejriwal added. "For example, our children start looking for a job after completing graduation. We need a system to prepare students who would not search for jobs but offer jobs. We have started the system in Delhi. For 11th and 12th students, we



have started teaching them how to do business," he said. Students in Delhi schools are also being taught patriotism and how to become a good human being, the AAP leader added.

"India attained independence 75 years ago. Despite having the best engineers, doctors, our country lagged behind. Today our children go to Ukraine for medical education, it is a matter of shame," he said.

"Students from across the world came to study at Nalanda University in ancient India....Today our students are going abroad," Kejriwal said, adding that foreign students should come to India rather than the other way round.

MEA MoS to visit Djibouti: to ink pacts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan will pay a two-day official visit to Djibouti starting Wednesday during which an agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports would be signed. This will be Muraleedharan's first visit to the country.

During the visit on September 21-22, he will call on Djibouti Prime Minister Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed and will hold talks with Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf and other dignitaries on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest, a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said. He will also interact with the Indian community in Djibouti.



During the visit, an agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic & Official/Service Passports, and an MoU between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) and the Institute of Diplomatic Studies (IDS) of Djibouti, will also be signed, the MEA said.

India and Djibouti share warm and friendly relations underpinned by historical and cultural linkages. Djibouti had extended extraordinary support in the evacuation of Indian nationals from war-torn Yemen in 2015 (Operation Rahat). Ram Nath Kovind, the then President of India, paid a state visit to Djibouti in October 2017.

'Agnipath' great scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar on Tuesday said 'Agnipath' is a great scheme which was arrived at after "extensive deliberations" and "extensive study" of how other military forces have structured their manpower.

He said this in an interaction on days after delivering a keynote address at an event here on 'India's Naval Revolution: Becoming an Ocean Power'. The idea got originated around mid-2020, "and it took around two years to bring it to fruition and to execution," he said. "It's a great scheme, and I feel it's long awaited, and should have been done many many years back," he said in response to a question on Agnipath scheme from the host during the interaction.

'Conspiracies hatched across the border to disturb peace'

PNS ■ JAMMU

Conspiracies hatched from across the border to disturb peace are being foiled by security forces on a daily basis in Jammu and Kashmir, Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh said on Tuesday.

Singh asserted that the security forces were fully alert to scuttle infiltration attempts by terrorists before the onset of winter.

"We are fully alert to the threats as conspiracies being hatched from across the border are being foiled on a daily basis by police and other security agencies," Singh told reporters after unveiling a wall dedicated to police personnel who died fighting terrorism in Reasi district.

He said attempts to push terrorists and smuggle weapons from across the bor-

der were going on but the alertness of the police and security agencies had thwarted most of these bids.

"Terrorists are infiltrated to sustain militancy. Most of the time, these attempts are foiled but sometimes they succeed. Those who are successful are neutralised by police and security forces (in the hinterland)," the DGP said.

He said many such terrorists were neutralised in successful anti-terrorism operations in Jammu, Poonch-Rajouri and different parts of Kashmir valley.

"Two 'fidayeen' (suicide squad) were eliminated in Jammu ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jammu and Kashmir (in April). The conspiracy was hatched across the border but they were neutralised on time," Singh said.

There is threat of post-Covid inflation becoming sticky

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is a threat of post-Covid inflation becoming sticky because of disruption of global markets for energy, food, finance and raw material, AIMA President C K Ranganathan said on Tuesday.

Geopolitics is making things worse, as "the battle of bans between the powerful adversaries is feeding fears of shortages and inflationary expectations", Ranganathan, who is also chairman & managing

director of CavinKare, said. Supply chain disruption during the pandemic and later Russia's war in Ukraine have pushed up prices of commodities. Leading economies like the US, Europe and Japan are battling with high inflation which has raised prospects of high interest rates.

"However, India has many intrinsic advantages and it can leverage those to overcome the challenges posed by the great uncertainty and change in the world," said

Ranganathan while delivering his address at AIMA's National Management Convention.

The Indian leaders would have to be mindful of unpredictability of geopolitical events and policy actions to bring the country's advantages into play, Ranganathan said.

The key is to focus on India's sustainable advantages such as strong domestic economy, geographical size and talent pool and not get carried away by the worries about the present instability in the world.



BJP spreading hatred in country, says Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ KOCHI

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday continued his tirade on the ruling BJP at the Centre and alleged that it was spreading hatred among the people of the country, resulting in foreign powers occupying the Indian territory.

Addressing a massive crowd at the Ernakulam district border where the Congress' 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' concluded for the day, Gandhi said those who spread hatred and create division in the society will be forgotten.

He claimed that the division created in the society has weakened the country, resulting in China's occupation of our territory.

"Our opponents outside can see what is going on in India. They can see that India is divided, full of hatred and clearly see the arrogance of the leadership. Today, for the first time we are in a situation where the Chinese have occupied thousands of kilometers of our land," Gandhi said.

He said even though the Army has admitted that the Chinese troops have occupied the Indian land, Prime



Minister Narendra Modi has publicly denied it.

"Our Prime Minister has said publicly that no one has entered. Our army has said that they have entered, but our PM denied. But the Chinese are sitting on Indian land of the size of New Delhi," Gandhi alleged.

The anger, hatred and the arrogance spread in this country has resulted in consequences, including unemployment and high prices of essential items.

"Would our social reformers including Sree Narayana Guru, Chattampi Swamikal and Mahatma Ayyankali approve of such violence that is happening in our country these days?" he asked.

He said the speeches of those who lead the country today are filled with hatred and anger and "you will not find a single speech where they would preach affection, love or humility".



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Desire, not plan

Opposition is clueless; Mamata is conciliatory; Kejriwal going solo; KCR for non-Cong alliance

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's statement in which she sounded conciliatory towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi came as a surprise for all—and as a shocker for those who want a change of regime at the Centre. She said that she does not believe Modi directing such federal agencies as the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate to act against her Trinamool Congress (TMC). Banerjee's logic appeared specious; and she didn't let facts come in the way of assertion. She said that the two agencies don't come under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) but under the Union Home Ministry. To begin with, Modi supporters may see this—that the PM is not in control of the CBI and the ED—find this as an affront to him. Besides, the CBI, which is under the Department of Personnel & Training, reports to the PMO. She blamed "the Central government and a section of BJP leaders" for the actions of the CBI and the ED. There's no point hair-splitting over her targets; what is quite evident here is that Banerjee has shed the fiercely anti-Modi stance that was apparent not long ago. Remember the West Bengal Assembly election last year, and the intensity with which she took on the entire saffron establishment? Compared to that, her recent statement on Modi can be called friendly. This, however, hasn't elicited a friendly reaction from the BJP. Its IT Cell head Amit Malviya has tweeted in response to her statement that nobody in the BJP, and most certainly the PM, needs any validation from Banerjee.



Political pundits may find her amiable gestures as the result of the corruption cases her party's leaders, including her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, are facing. These cases have surely pressured Banerjee; she had to remove former state education minister Partha Chatterjee from all posts he held. Her conciliatory approach is certainly not good news for Opposition unity. On the face of it, Opposition unity seems to be the natural choice for the anti-Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, as all of them claim that, among other things, they are being tormented by the agencies. While Mamata Banerjee may be constrained by corruption cases, other Opposition leaders have their own agendas. Aam Aadmi Party boss and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal doesn't seem very keen on an alliance. He recently said he doesn't "understand this politics of making or breaking alliances." Then there is Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu who favours an alliance to oust the BJP from the Centre; he even wants to launch his national party. He believes that there is a consensus on an "alternative national agenda." But there's a hitch: he wants to exclude the Congress from the proposed anti-BJP alliance. In other words, nobody in the Opposition seems to know how to go ahead. The Opposition has the desire but not the plan to remove the Modi Government.

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PICTALK



Six students from the US get ordained as Buddhist monks at the Royal Thai Monastery, in Bodhi Gaya PTI

Arrest climate change

Climate change is reaching crescendo, it's time developed nations practice what they preach

The world climate is once again on the main menu as the world leaders assemble at United Nations General Assembly climate week. It is one major forum where stakeholders come together to push for climate change initiatives. Five summits are to be held in the next three months to discuss climate change. It shows that some urgency is there among the world leaders to tackle the rising temperatures and assist people in dealing with it besides discussing food security. The effects of climate change are now very visible, be it floods in Pakistan or storms in Japan there is no country in the world that is not affected by it. However, the worst affected are the developing countries. The silver lining is that there are now technologies to deal with such exigencies. But it boils down to funding. No matter what they preach the developed countries remain the biggest culprits who have led to the pollution of air and water. The United States alone has emitted 25 percent of global carbon pollution since the Industrial Revolution.



But it doesn't match other developed countries in providing climate finance to the countries that are most vulnerable to climate impacts. In fact, the United States provides less than one-fourth of the \$25 billion in annual support that European Union members provide to developing countries for fighting climate change. US President Joe Biden has now proposed \$11 billion in climate assistance for the 2023 budget year. Even this would not be appropriate enough given the pace of climate change. The world financial institutions must take lead in providing generous funding for the climate. They can fund climate and biodiversity solutions for vulnerable countries. The World Bank can significantly contribute by increasing the target for the share of its financing for climate benefitting projects from 35 percent to at least 50 percent. Besides, it could take up several other innovative measures such as finance mechanisms, support for green banks, sovereign guarantees for energy transition, risk hedging, etc. Besides, there must be a cap on Public and private sector actors financing fossil fuels projects. The world's 60 largest private banks have given US\$ 4.6 trillion for fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement. This clearly is at cross purpose to fighting climate change. Until the developed countries walk the talk and practice what they preach the temperatures are going to rise on the planet.

Dealing with the dragon

The indomitable neighbour in China is testing India's diplomacy and prowess; but we are found wanting on both as it goes all out to extract its pound of flesh



ASHOK K MEHTA

India missed a good opportunity in nudging the disengagement and de-escalation process at the Samarkand summit last week after China had made a surprise concession of disengaging from Hot Springs three days before the summit. Although Prime Minister Modi avoided eye contact publicly with President Xi, they attended two round table sessions and were present together at two ceremonial photo ops and in one, standing next to each other. But neither leader made any effort for a public handshake or a pull-aside.

Why did China make the disengagement gesture 13 months after the last disengagement and two months after the last Corps Commander's talks to coincide with the Samarkand summit? Probably to demonstrate that negotiations on disengagement are progressing smoothly. That there would be no disruption from India at the summit on the border row was also on the cards, allusions were not absent. Modi said to Putin: "today's era is not an era of war" pointed to Xi also. Given that Modi and Xi had cultivated a close rapport after 18 meetings between 2014 and 2019 but none since the LAC brush, it was not unreasonable to expect the effusive and backslapping Modi to extend his hand to Xi during the photo op. (it was he who famously said in June 2020: "no one came inside, nor is anyone inside Indian territory", to the delight of the Chinese) A day before his 72nd birthday, Modi could not have been seen shaking hands with Xi when the opposition has been gunning for him over losing land to China. But it would have been a risk worth taking. At least the ice could have been broken. Much has been written about the disengagement process since the tragic unarmed Galwan clash. The 1993 and 1996 border protocols and subsequent border agreements of 2005, 2006, and 2012 Border Defence Cooperation Agreements have been violated by China and PLA. The policy change was initiated when Xi,



who had been vice president became President in 2013. The modus vivendi to border dispute and bilateral relations initiated in 1988 was torn to shreds in 2020 preceded by ominous indicators at Chumar, Depsang, and Doklam.

Comparing the multiple intrusions of 2020 with Sumdorong Chu in 1988 which took nine years to resolve is patently incorrect. It was a different era when India and China were co-equals economically and militarily. At Sumdorong Chu, military commanders took bold initiatives in occupying heights dominating PLA intrusions at Wangdung unlike in East Ladakh where Indian forces were caught napping. Dispute resolution resulted in the mutual pullback, prompting then BJP opposition MP Jaswant Singh to remark: "why are we withdrawing from our own territory".

China has managed to promulgate its 1959 Claim Line from Depsang to Demchok in serious adversity. It is instructive to analyse India's current self-inflicted dilemma. Unlike in the central

IN APRIL 2020, IN A SURPRISE SWEEP, PLA EASILY OCCUPIED POSITIONS ACROSS INDIAN LAC CORRESPONDING TO THEIR 1959 CLAIM LINE WHEN INDIA WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH ONSET OF COVID-19

and eastern sectors, the LAC is better defined and more settled by the McMahon Line than in the west where the LAC is seriously contested. In the east, our forward posture was triggered off by the PLA intrusions in Sumdorong Chu where defences and posts are close to McMahon Line. In the west, mainly Leh was defended with vast areas along the LAC unmanned and covered with dispersed ITBP and Army posts from where ITBP and Army patrolled up to the 65 patrolling points up to a line behind the LAC. The Chinese had their own perception of LAC that was never revealed. In April 2020, in a surprise sweep, PLA easily occupied positions across Indian LAC corresponding to their 1959 Claim Line. The mammoth intelligence failure was compounded by political and operational lapses. After the disengagement from Hot Springs (PP 15) on 8 September which Foreign Minister S Jaishankar called "one problem less", another buffer zone bereft of patrolling rights has been established on the Indian side of LAC. At Depsang, 18 km on

the Indian side of LAC PLA has blocked access to five Patrolling Points and at Demchok to four Patrolling Points. Konchok Stanzin, the counselor for Chushul, said: "our troops have gone back from PP 15 and PP 16 which we had for 50 years, we lost winter grazing ground". The Chinese have also effectively blocked two Indian offensive launch pads at Demchok and Daulat Beg Oldie-virtually transforming the area into 1000 sq km of DMZ.

On 9 May, COAS Gen Manoj Pande said: "We have to restore status quo ante April 2020". Diplomacy has to be restored to the Xi-Modi level; their 19th meeting could be at the Bali G20 summit in November. Meanwhile, plans should be made to establish BOPs in Ladakh to prevent further salami slicing.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PUNJAB PROTESTS

Sir — Protests erupted on the campus of a private university in Mohali over rumors that objectionable videos of several women students were recorded by a hosteller, following which Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann ordered a probe. The police arrested a female student and sent a team to take stock of the situation. The culprits should be brought to the book. People should not be allowed to play with the honour and dignity of women.

All along AAP was finding fault with the Union Government now facing the music. Protests continued throughout Sunday and the strength of students upset the balance of the state. Chandigarh University was at the center of all actions. The university authorities also rejected false and baseless reports that claimed videos of several women students in the hostel were made and leaked on social media and that distraught students had attempted suicide. Even false allegations of suicides of students were rejected. Punjab was the center of farmers' agitation and now feels the heat on a more sensitive issue.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

CHEETAH IS BACK

Sir — The Cheetah already declared extinct in the Indian subcontinent, seven decades back, has finally re-entered the country's soil after approx. 13 years of concerted global efforts. Eight cheetahs have been imported from Namibia and released into the Kuno National Park. It is expected that if the lineage of these cheetahs starts growing. Since every little thing becomes a matter of political discourse nowadays, the effort to rehabilitate the cheetahs also got a political colour. Of course, it was Prime Minister Modi's haughtiness that added fuel to ignite the fire. After leaving the cheetahs in the park, the Prime Minister said that

AIMING HIGH, THINKING WEAK



EWS is the very basis, the foundation upon which this reservation lies. It cannot be thwarted by some irrelevant arguments or illogical arguments. The very, extremely poor exist in all sections of society, for them, how can they afford an expensive education/career? Eliminating the reservation in one go is almost impossible. So few things should be

done- Introduce the concept of creamy layer in all sections and provide reservation for those who are lagging in socio-economic development and then you can have a par view on this sensitive subject.

We all know it's just politics and other than EWS, we ought to have no other ground for reservation, and that too just for education. It's a shame how our judiciary and polity can show their ridiculed faces for us 'general' folks who've been taxed for ages and yet in the name of support all we get to see is their crooked schemes to mint votes and brag long stories. I am a living victim of this machinery of fake statutory bodies where reserved human resources just sit and gossip. We always aim high but think weak in caste, creed, and religion.

CK Dorai Ramani | Bengaluru

the previous governments did not make any effort for cheetah rehabilitation.

Thereafter Congress started opening the pages of history that since when the efforts to settle cheetahs in India started. It is true that in our country many projects take a long time. The same have happened in the Cheetah Project. It is true that other than indiscriminate killings in pre-independence days, the lack of a favourable environment and carelessness in the conservation efforts have been major reasons. Many species have already become extinct, and many are on the verge of extinction. The reasons behind them are not hidden. Negligence in the maintenance of the sanctuaries affect the natural life of the wildlife. Nowadays, sanctuaries and national parks are considered a means of tourism development. Thus, the people coming for excursions create obstacles to the normal life of wildlife. The lack of proper arrangement of their food and water is also one of the common complaints. Therefore, the life of the cheetahs

of Kuno National Park will depend on how seriously their conservation is being taken care of.

Abhijit Roy | Jamshedpur

CONGRESS ELECTIONS

Sir — With the elections to pick the new Congress president round the corner, the chorus for Rahul Gandhi to take the mantle in his hands is growing louder with at least seven state units of the party passing resolutions urging him to return to the helm. With the notification of the Congress president polls just a few days away, Gandhi family loyalists and state units have stepped up efforts to mount pressure on Rahul to return to the helm amid indications that he was unlikely to change his earlier stance of not being AICC chief. With this, the suspense will be over in the coming days and it is a wait-and-watch situation without giving any chance or advantage to communal forces.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Anybody who wants to contest is free and welcome to do so. This is an open, democratic and transparent process. Nobody needs anybody's nod to contest



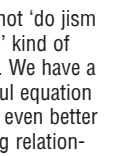
Congress leader —Jairam Ramesh

It is my most sorrowful duty to announce the death of my beloved mother, the queen. Irreparable loss we have all suffered.



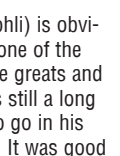
British Monarch —King Charles III

We're not 'do jism ek jaan' kind of people. We have a beautiful equation and an even better working relationship because we're both passionate about movies.



Actor —Alia Bhatt

He (Kohli) is obviously one of the all-time greats and there's still a long time to go in his career. It was good to see him back



Cricketer —Ricky Ponting

This case is really about malice in law. It is about we are telling the minority community; you will do what we tell you...



Advocate —Dushyant Dave



FIRST COLUMN

SWABHAVA IS CORE OF HUMAN NATURE

We have to control our minds, sharpen our intelligence



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Swabhava' is the English equivalent of human nature in Hindi, which has intrigued humanity for a very long time. The modern understanding of human nature essentially is that it's a concept denoting fundamental dispositions and characteristics, including ways of thinking, feeling and acting, that humans are said to possess.

The term is often used to denote the essence of human kind, or what it 'means' to be a human. According to the present thinking, areas of human nature are power, pleasure, profit, pride and permanence. These are functional aspects of human nature. Characteristics of human nature have been described briefly as emotion, rebellion, chaos, hard times, work for what we want and self-image.

Sources of human nature are genes, one is born with, and nurture, which one receives. For proper understanding of 'svabhava', we have to take help from the spiritual texts. Everything that we see originates from 'mahat-tattva', which has given rise to the three guna. These are sattva (goodness), rajas (passion) and tamas (darkness). A combination of them results in the material nature, bodies and 'svabhava'. These three gunas are forever competing for supremacy, as described in the Bhagavad-Geeta.



Lord Krishna states, "Goodness becomes predominant by overpowering passion and darkness; darkness becomes predominant by overpowering even goodness and passion; and passion becomes predominant by overpowering goodness and darkness." (14.10) In short, each mode tries to become predominant by overpowering the other two modes.

Geeta has more detailed information about 'svabhava'. Lord Krishna has spoken about it in several verses. In the verse # 3.33, the Lord states, "Even a man of knowledge endeavors according to his own nature; people follow svabhava. What shall repression do?" When Arjuna expressed his unwillingness to participate in the battle, the Lord told him, "What you are assuming, taking yourself as the doer, that 'I won't fight', your resolve is false; your nature will engage you in the battle." (18.59) Then the Lord repeated the same message in the next verse by telling Arjuna that he will helplessly do what he was refusing to do, bound by action caused by his nature. And for all of us the Lord has counselled that we should consider our svabhava before choosing our profession/work. (3.35 and 18.47)

How do nature relate to minds, intelligence, ahankar (ego) and consciousness? It is said that svabhava is a combination of all these. Our thinking, willingness and feeling - functions of the mind influence nature. Similarly, intelligence or its level has great influence over it, as do ahankar and our consciousness.

To improve svabhava, the first thing to do is to increase the percentage of the mode of goodness in self. This can be done by associating with it by doing all activities as far as possible in goodness. For example, one should eat what is in goodness like grains, vegetables, fruits, milk products, etc. Don't we know that what we eat our bodies become? Consequently, our minds, intelligence, ahankar, and consciousness will all begin to get better, which in turn will help make our svabhava better.

We have to be very determined, because it is a long 'tapasya', not easy at all. Additionally, we have to try to control our minds, sharpen our intelligence to turn spiritual, make ahankar do what it is supposed to do, i.e., take pride in doing one's duties and not be falsely proud of claiming to be a doer, and turn our consciousness in the direction of spirituality. Rise in the mode of goodness will be beneficial in more ways than one, and will open the door to connect with God.

(The author is a spiritual teacher)

Govt must take fresh look at gas pricing

The rising cost of natural gas has become a new challenge for key sectors such as fertiliser and power



UTTAM GUPTA

Faced with steep rise in the international prices of natural gas or NG triggered by Ukraine war and disruption in global supplies, and its attendant impact on cost of energy to industries across several sectors especially most sensitive ones such as fertilizers, power, etc., the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MPNG) has set up a committee under Dr Kirit Parikh to review the current pricing formula for domestically-produced NG. Out of 54.6 billion cubic meter or bcm consumed in the country, nearly 50 per cent is met from imports such as liquefied natural gas or LNG.

Mandated to restructure the formula in a manner as to ensure "a fair price to the end consumer", the committee has been asked to submit its report by the end of this month. Under the pricing guidelines effective since November 2014, for all domestic supplies from fields given under the New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP), as also blocks given on nomination to State-owned ONGC and Oil India Limited (OIL) before the NELP, the price, call it normal price, is a weighted average of prices at four international locations - Henry Hub (the USA), Alberta gas (Canada), NBP (National Balancing Point) (the UK) and Russian gas. It is revised every six months in a financial year.

Also, under a special package for deep/ultra-deep (D/UD), high-pressure/high-temperature (HP/HT) fields announced in March 2016, the supplies are allowed a "premium" price, arrived at based on a process of competitive bidding in which earlier, affiliates of gas producers were not allowed to participate. The price thus determined is subject to a ceiling which is linked to the prices of alternate fuels, including fuel oil, naphtha and LNG. If the bid based price exceeds the ceiling, then the buyer pays only the ceiling price.

From October 2020, the bar on participation of affiliates of the gas producing firm in the bidding process was removed. This meant that the producer can buy its own gas (albeit through its affiliate or subsidiary) and sell it to third parties at a higher rate, thereby circumventing the ceiling price.

For instance, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), which produces gas from the KG-D6 field in the Krishna Godavari basin off the Andhra Pradesh (AP) coast, did precisely this. In an auction on February 5, 2021, offering 7.5 mmscmd (million standard cubic meter per day) of new gas from this field, its subsidiary Reliance O2C Limited bought 4.8 mmscmd at a price of \$4.06 per million Btu (British thermal unit) - then prevailing ceiling price - and sold it for \$6-7 per million Btu to GAIL India Limited (Ltd), Shell and others.

Apart from the above two major sources, which account for bulk of the domestically-produced NG, the supplies from fields given under the Open Acreage



AS FOR IMPORTED GAS, INDIA SOURCES 80 PER CENT UNDER LONG-TERM CONTRACT, AVERAGE PRICE \$12 PER MBTU, WHILE 20 PER CENT IS FROM THE SPOT MARKET CURRENT PRICE BEING \$50 PER MBTU. THE EFFECTIVE PRICE IS \$19.6 PER MBTU

(The author is a policy analyst)



Licensing Policy (OALP) (introduced in July 2017) are eligible for market-based pricing.

Against this backdrop, the NG pricing scenario facing Indian consumers looks something like this: the average international price in the spot market is \$ 50 per mBtu; effective from April 1, 2022, normal price from old and regulated fields is \$ 6.1 per mBtu; premium 'ceiling' price from D/UD/HP/HT fields is \$ 9.92 per mBtu even as bid based price is normally above \$ 15 per mBtu.

Fertiliser sector is the largest consumer of NG, accounting for 33 per cent of the consumption, followed by city gas distribution or CGD at 23 per cent and power at 13 per cent. These sectors receive priority in allocation of regulated low-price gas. In fertilisers, bulk of the gas is used for producing urea, whose maximum retail price (MRP) is controlled at a low level to make it affordable to farmers. The excess cost of supply over MRP is reimbursed as a subsidy to manufacturers.

Of the NG requirement for fertilizers, nearly 67 per cent is met from domestic sources and 33 per cent from imported LNG. Within domestic sources, the industry draws around 50 per cent each from 'regulated' and 'premium' gas. The effective price of this gas comes to \$ 8 per mBtu (6.1x0.5+9.92x0.5) resulting in its contribution to overall gas cost to be \$ 5.5 per mBtu (8x0.67).

As for the imported gas, India sources 80 per cent under long-term contract, average price \$12 per mBtu, while 20 per cent is from the spot market current price being \$50 per mBtu. The effective price is \$19.6 per mBtu (12x0.8+50x0.2). Its contribution to overall gas cost comes to \$ 6.5 per mBtu (19.6x0.33).

Put together, the cost of NG to a urea producer comes to \$ 12 per mBtu (5.5+6.5). This excludes add-ons such as handling charges, cost of re-gasifying LNG, transportation tariff, marketing margin, taxes and duties, etc. Including them will boost it to \$ 15 per mBtu. Taking 24 mBtu for a ton of urea, gas cost alone comes to \$ 360 per ton or Rs 28,800 per ton - 5.5 times urea MRP at Rs 5360 per ton.

The high cost of NG is a major reason behind galloping fertilizer subsidy which for 2022-23 is expected to be Rs 250,000 crore. In the power sector, high NG cost is threatening the viability of gas-based generation plants as buyers can't pay for the resultant high cost of electricity. The CGD sector too is facing the heat due to the hike in price.

The price of NG in the international spot market is beyond control. In fact, it is expected to move up at a fast pace as EU countries proceed with their plan to replace 2/3rd of the gas coming from Russia by supplies from other sources viz. the Middle East, the USA, etc. This can also disrupt

Indian purchase under long-term contract, which will result in a steep increase in cost (as its substitution by spot gas will happen at price \$ 50 per mBtu which is over fourtimes).

Therefore, the focus has to be on reducing the price of domestic gas. What is the way forward? There is no valid justification for granting a higher price from D/UD/HP/HT fields. If producing from difficult fields involves more investment, these also deliver more gas. Even with normal prices, the producer can generate more revenue. With this logic in mind, initially, the Modi government had no intent to allow higher prices from these fields.

But, in March 2016, it buckled under pressure. Today, other than old/regulated fields, supplies from all others get market determined prices. The demand being far in excess of supply, this price is bound to be exploitative. The principle should be shunned; instead all domestic supplies should be eligible for formula-based price as per 2014 guidelines.

The current 'normal' price at \$6.1 per mBtu effective from April 1, 2022 is 100 per cent more than it was during October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Given the trend in NG price at four global locations, this will increase further (next revision is due on October 1, 2022). The government should freeze the price at the existing level and the freeze should continue till the global situation normalizes.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

DISTURBING MEDIA REPORTS SAY PUNJAB CM WAS DEPLAINED AS HE WAS TOO DRUNK TO WALK. THESE REPORTS HAVE EMBARRASSED & SHAMED PUNJABIS.
—AKALI DAL LEADER
SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL



SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTS ARE PROPAGANDA. THE OPPOSITION IS RATTLED BECAUSE MR MANN IS GETTING SOME INVESTMENT FROM HIS FOREIGN TRIP.
—AAP SPOKESPERSON
MALWINDER SINGH KANG

A Silicon Valley view of India high on digital path

Digital India is driving technology incubation and growth all around and the ecosystem is buzzing with new energy

Not only was I born and raised in India, but my passion for technology started there too. I was wandering through the British Council Library in Calcutta when I came across a book called 'The Little Kingdom'. It was a true story about Apple's founders, and I was immediately interested. I thought, "This is going to change the way we live and the way we work." From then on, I knew two things: I wanted a career in tech and I had to work for Steve Jobs.

I moved to Silicon Valley, worked for NeXT, the company that Steve Jobs started after Apple, ran a few startups, took a company through acquisition, and did a stint at Google.

Now, I find myself at this



CHET KAPOOR

awesome place called DataStax. We help enterprises and developers build high-growth, real-time applications and experiences. Recently, I headed back to India to meet with our team, get an update on the technology landscape and discover ways we can work together to build the future. After meeting with government officials and private sector technology leaders, I came away not only with a lot of great new connections, but also a strong impression of India's tech-forward mindset.

The public sector is all-in on India's digital transformation, which is key to India's journey to becoming a \$5 trillion economy. We all know about India's stature as a software development power-

house, and IT service providers like Wipro and Tata Consultancy Services are leaders in helping their clients around the world become digital leaders.

But I was surprised by the level of commitment the public sector has for moving India forward with technology. I saw and heard examples of this over and over. The Delhi Police is investing significant resources into AI and machine learning, for use in cases, including improved traffic flows. The federal government is making census data available via application programming interfaces (APIs), enabling developers to have simplified access to this data to build powerful applications (In 2021, census data was collected digitally, with a

mobile app, for the first time ever in India).

The global leadership that India has shown by making government payments (Unified Payments Service, or UPI) accessible in real time to so many citizens is impressive, too - particularly in light of the challenges that other countries have faced in making this a reality. As Rajeev Chandrasekhar, India's Minister of State for Electronics and IT, said recently, "India leads digital, and digital leads India."

Private sector technology leadership is strong. I always enjoy speaking with technology leaders to learn how they scale their businesses, inspire their teams, overcome challenges, and celebrate innovation. On my trip, I met with

several leaders who worked in a variety of fields, from healthcare to e-commerce to fintech - and the innovation that's happening there blew me away.

Consider VerSe, the company's technology enables more than 300 million users to consume content in their local language, driving creativity and connection through digital empowerment (not to mention a healthy valuation nearing \$5 billion). It's the platform behind India's fastest-growing short video app, Josh. This kind of success is enabled by an environment that promotes innovation and high sustainable growth.

As part of its quest to build a multi-trillion dollar digital economy, India is mov-

ing quickly to set up digital infrastructure. The goal is to provide internet and 5G service and ubiquitous access to data. This access to data and services via the applications they serve will be unprecedented. The Digital India initiative is focused on making data a critical asset to improve the lives of Indian citizens and modernise the way many governmental and state agencies function.

When it comes to data, especially in government agencies and citizen services, it's easy to think about data warehouses and analytics. Understanding data after it's been gathered and stored is important, but the digital civilization India is building calls for more than just "data at rest". Citizens expect from the

government and agencies a digital experience that's in-the-moment - instant and valuable. Government agencies are often involved in situations requiring instant and timely information from massive data sets to make critical decisions that ensure their mission, including citizen safety, continuity of service, a secured platform, and the optimized use of its resources.

Access to real-time data, whether for agencies and citizens to have real-time information in emergencies or for developers to build applications with, will play a key role in the success of the Digital India initiative. DataStax is excited to partner with the wide range of developers and enterprises who call this country their home.

MONEY MATTERS

eVolt India, Indian Oil Corporation tie up for EV charging stations

Electric vehicle charging infrastructure startup eVolt India on Tuesday said it has tied up with Indian Oil Corporation for the installation of over 75 charging stations in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. As part of the awarded contract, the Delhi-based charging solutions provider will set up 3.3kW AC and 7.4kW AC charging stations for both two-wheelers and four-wheelers at the existing Indian Oil fuelling pumps in these key territories. "Our partnership with an important stakeholder like IOCL aligns with eVolt's vision to build a robust EV charging station network and encourage mass EV adoption by alleviating range anxiety," eVolt India Founder and CEO Sarthak Shukla said in a statement. eVolt is also an empanelled vendor of three DISCOMs in Delhi, namely the BSES Rajdhani Power, BSES Yamuna Power and Tata Power Delhi Distribution.



Large panel TVs share expected to cross 50%: Crisil

Share of large-sized panel televisions (40-inch and above) has tripled to over 40 per cent of the overall market in the past five years, and is expected to cross 50 per cent by 2027, said a report from Crisil. This is led by a combination of tailwinds such as "reduction in prices, rising incomes, increasing internet penetration, higher bandwidth availability" and shift in viewing habits expanding segment as rising consumption of Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming, it said. "With the tailwinds continuing, the share should cross the 50 per cent mark by fiscal 2027," the report said. The report further stated that the pandemic has changed family viewing habits and the rise in fibre-to-the-home services will further improve broadband services, thereby aiding the adoption of larger panel Televisions (TVs). In the last five years, there has been a sharp decline of 35 to 40 per cent in the prices of large panel TVs, creating a spur in the segment.



KKR, Hero group to invest \$450 million in Hero Future Energies

Global investment firm KKR and Hero Group will invest USD 450 million (around Rs 3,588 crore) in Hero Future Energies, a statement said on Tuesday. Hero Future Energies is the renewable energy arm of the Hero Group. The investment will position Hero Future Energies (HFE) for continued growth and support its efforts to expand its renewable energy capacity and capabilities across technologies such as solar, wind, battery storage, and green hydrogen, and into new markets over time, the statement said. Through its range of solutions, HFE will also look to support companies in their efforts to decarbonize and transition towards sustainable energy sources to achieve their net zero emission goals. Founded in 2012, Hero Future Energies is a leading independent power producer (IPP) in India with a diversified portfolio of 1.6 GW of operating solar and wind projects.



FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Developed nations should talk less, cooperate more : Sitharaman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday regretted that developed countries have not fulfilled their USD 100 billion commitment to developing nations to fight climate change and stressed that what is needed is more global cooperation and less talk. She noted that India has fulfilled all its commitments made at the COP21 climate change conference using its own funds and the country is gradually moving towards adopting renewable energy. The minister said already five years have passed since the

"But no transfer of technology will happen, no monies will be pulled in to collectively help countries. But yet every one of us want the ambition to be even further, higher and higher. It's just not going to be possible for many countries"



developed countries committed to jointly mobilise USD 100 billion per year to address the needs of the developing nations. "(USD) 100 billion is still on. Five years or six years have gone by. We've not seen anything of that, not just we, no other country has seen it.

Coastal areas are getting eroded. Unusual events of rain, which should happen over three or four months, pours on

a single day. These are not things which (are) isolated in some part of the world. It's across the board," she said. Addressing FICCI Leads 2022 event, Sitharaman said all countries would have to do something towards mitigating the impact of climate change, but there is no transfer of technology or funds happening from developed nations. "But no transfer of technology will happen, no monies will be pulled in to collectively help countries. But yet every one of us want the ambition to be even further, higher and higher. It's just not going to be possible for many countries.

India to grow at over 7% in FY23, says CEA

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran on Tuesday said India's economy will grow at over 7 per cent, down from above 8 per cent of growth rate projected in January. He, however, said that the economic momentum and the animal spirits are "unmistakable". "India's own growth rates have come off the projections made in January down to about 7-plus per cent for the current financial year," Nageswaran said speaking at Global Fintech Fest event here. He said the world is still undergoing the aftereffects of Covid pandemic and the ongo-

ing war in Europe triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, suggesting that these factors are hurting growth. The economic survey released before the annual budget in January this year has estimated FY23 growth to come at 8-8.5 per cent. The RBI has estimated the GDP to grow at 7.2 per cent, but some analysts have said that there will be a downward revision of the estimate soon. Nageswaran said India is well-poised to sustain the 7 per cent growth per year during the remainder of the decade as well. Speaking at the event on fintech, Nageswaran said the government is moving from financial inclusion to financial

empowerment and the focus in the decade to 2030 is on helping people access financial services like credit and insurance using the base of the accounts opened earlier. He said with the aim of taking remittance charges to near-zero, the government is working to help establish interoperability between payment systems in Singapore and the UAE to help the diaspora. He said the unified payment interface "mimics" the soon-to-be-introduced central bank digital currency, on which India is moving ahead. On the credit front, "we are moving from the collateral based system to the one where cash flows come into essence", he noted.

Govt actively studying duties levied on steel exports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is actively studying the issue of export duty which was imposed on certain grades of steel in May this year. The matter is being discussed at the highest level, Union steel minister Jyotiraditya Scindia told reporters at the National Management Convention organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA) here. "This is something which is under active study by my department as well as the government. We are certainly discussing this at the highest level. When a decision is



taken on this you shall be informed," he said in reply to a question whether government is considering removing export duty on iron ore and steel intermediaries. On May 21, the government hiked the duty on exports of iron ore by up to 50 per cent and for a few steel

intermediaries to 15 per cent. It also waived customs duty on the import of some raw materials, including coking coal and ferronickel, used by the steel industry. The move was aimed at increasing the availability of these raw material for the domestic manufacturers.

[24]7.ai to add 9,000 new employees across India FY23

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Global customer service software and services company [24]7.ai on Tuesday said it is planning to add 9,000 employees in 2022-23, across India to meet increasing business demand. The company is hiring across voice and chat processes to serve its international client base, by adding 9,000 new hires to its workforce, over FY23, [24]7.ai said in a statement. The company is looking at concerted efforts to tap into talent from Tier II and III cities, with 'work from anywhere' options. "India has a well-recognised talent pool that we as pioneers in the industry have groomed over the years.

Efforts are on to improve road engineering, automobile manufacturing: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday said that efforts are being made to improve road engineering, automobile manufacturing and emergency services, and cooperation of all stakeholders is necessary to improve road safety. The government is also planning to conduct road safety audit in order to improve the quality of roads and reduce accidents, the minister of road transport and highways said. Speaking to the reporters on the sidelines of AIMA National Management Convention, the minister also termed the death of former Tata Sons chairman Cyrus Mistry earlier this month as "very unfortunate"



and shocking. On road safety, he said, the education and cooperation of people is very important and various initiatives through campaigns and advertisements are being taken to improve safety of people on the road. "...road safety is the highest agenda for all of us," Gadkari said.

The minister also said that on September 28 he will kick off a trial project involving Toyota's new car that will be powered by flex-fuel. "That day is not far when the cars will run 100 per cent on ethanol instead of petrol," the minister said, adding that as a result pollution will be reduced, import bill will come down and ultimately the farmers will be benefitted. Mistry, 54, was killed in a car crash in Maharashtra's Palghar district near Mumbai on September 4 when his luxury car hit a road divider. Mistry, an Irish citizen and scion of the real estate behemoth Shapoorji Pallonji Group, was travelling from Ahmedabad to Mumbai.

35 firms apply under PLI scheme for specialty steel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 35 companies have submitted 79 applications under the PLI scheme for specialty steel, Union Minister of Steel Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Tuesday. The minister shared the information while speaking at the 'National Management Convention' organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA) in the national capital. "We closed all the applications two days ago and we received close to 79 applications from 35 companies. Looking at putting in place a capacity close to 28 million tonne per annum (MTPA) of new specialty steel capacity which will result in the creation of 70,000 jobs," he said.

FM nudges fintech players to engage more with govt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday nudged the fintech industry to break the distance barrier and have more engagements with the government and its agencies to enhance trust. Sitharaman was replying to a question by Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2022 Advisory Board, who wanted to know how to ensure trust among industry, regulators, and the government. "I don't want to sound cliché, but distance brings distrust. So, cut the distance down, have greater engagement with the government," the minister said. Sitharaman further said everyone in the government, whether

the prime minister, ministers or think-tank Niti Aayog, is constantly available for engagement, discussions, and exchange of ideas. "So greater the engagement, greater the trust, which gets built up. So I think one sure shot way of retaining and building on trust is to keep the constant engagement going," she said. To a question related to the role of the central bank and the finance ministry on the proposed digital currency, Sitharaman said the Reserve Bank will come out with the RBI-driven digital currency. On February 1, she had announced in her Budget speech that Digital Rupee or Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) would be issued by the RBI in current financial year.

Rupee rises 7 paise to close at 79.74 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled 7 paise higher at 79.74 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as investors await the US Fed's policy statement for further cues. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 79.70 against the greenback. It witnessed an intraday high of 79.58 and a low of 79.77 during the session. It finally ended at 79.74, up 7 paise from its previous close of 79.81. The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.12 per cent to 109.87.

Markets extend gains despite Fed overhang; bank stocks shine

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty chalked up gains for the second straight session on Tuesday, propelled by across-the-board buying despite concerns over aggressive rate hikes by global central banks to tame inflation. The US Federal Reserve along with its Swiss and British counterparts will announce their policy decisions later this week amid fears of the global economy tipping into recession due to rising interest rates. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 578.51 points or 0.98 per cent to settle at 59,719.74. During the day, it rallied 964.56 points or 1.63 per cent to 60,105.79. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty went higher by 194

points or 1.10 per cent to end at 17,816.25. In intra-day trade, it advanced 297.05 points or 1.68 per cent to 17,919.30. Sun Pharma was the top gainer among the Sensex constituents, spurring 4.71 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Dr Reddy's, Tata Steel, Titan, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank and Asian Paints. Only four counters closed in the red -- Nestle India, PowerGrid, Infosys and Reliance Industries, shedding up to 0.64 per cent. "The weakness of western markets did not affect the buoyant domestic market. The Indian market is not seemingly apprehensive of Fed policy. Buying on dips is the strategy being reinforced here.

Overall credit market grows 11.1% to Rs 174.3 lakh crore in FY22

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Led by a 122 per cent spike in retail loan volume, the overall credit market grew 11.1 per cent in FY22 over the previous year to Rs 174.3 lakh crore, according to a credit bureau report. According to credit bureau CRIF High Mark, the total lending market stood at Rs 174.3 lakh crore as of March 2022, registering an 11.1 per cent growth over March 2021. Commercial, retail and microfinance lending portfolios contributed 49.5, 48.9, and 1.6 per cent, respectively to this growth. Giving a break-up, the

report said personal loans saw a full 46 per cent growth in originations by value, and a much higher 122 per cent growth in originations by volume in FY22 over the previous year, and the sector is dominated by state-run and private banks along with non-banking entities. Led by private sector banks, credit cards saw a higher 48 per cent growth in new card originations and the share of the new card originations of private banks increased from 61.2 per cent in FY21 to 71.4 per cent in FY22. Two-wheeler loans, dominated by non-banks and private sector banks, rose at a tepid 9.2 per cent growth in

originations by value, and 2 per cent growth in originations by volume. On the other hand, despite the steep fall in auto sales due to supply-side issues, auto loans grew 23 per cent in value and 8.5 per cent growth in volume. Home loans, the mainstay of the banks for long now, witnessed a 29 per cent growth in value and 20 per cent in volume. Consumer durable loans jumped 66 per cent in value and 43 per cent in volume and the sector is dominated by non-banking lenders. Reflecting the crisis among the poor, microfinance loans grew 22 per cent in value and 13 per cent in volume.

Govt promoting new farm technologies: Tomar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is promoting adoption of new farm technologies as it will help reduce the cost of production, enhance output and ensure better rates to farmers, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Tuesday. Tomar, while speaking at a FICCI event, said the use of various farm technologies will help achieve the production level required to meet the food demand in 2025. While the farm sector faces many challenges like falling acreage and impact of natural calamities, the government is overcoming these issues by focusing on drip irrigation,

organic and natural farming, among others, he said. Tomar further said the government is making efforts to take new technologies to the farmers. The use of technologies for weather forecast and new seeds and fertilisers will help reduce the cost of production, increase the output and ensure better rates to the growers, he added. Sharing his thoughts on a session titled 'Food for All: From farm to fork', New Zealand Agriculture and Trade Minister Damien O'Connor said the challenge before every country is to produce more amid pressure on arable land, besides disruptions seen through floods and



droughts due to climate change. Another challenge is greenhouse gas emissions of the farm sector. Agriculture, livestock and food systems around the world contribute 35 per cent of the global

emissions and it is 48 per cent in New Zealand, he said. New Zealand is focusing on new technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions besides conducting research so that agriculture remains

The use of technologies for weather forecast and new seeds and fertilisers will help reduce the cost of production, increase the output and ensure better rates to the growers, he added.

sustainable, he added. Talking about decarbonising businesses, Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd Managing Director and CEO Anish Shah stressed on partnerships to reduce carbon footprint and improve farm productivity. The time is ripe to take actions to transform the food systems to become truly sustainable and meet

the rising food demand, he added. Hindustan Unilever Ltd CEO and Managing Director Sinjiv Mehta said food systems are complex. About 17 per cent food gets wasted even as the world produces sufficient food. There is a need to address the gaps between farm to fork, he noted.

India expected to be US\$ 25-trillion economy in 25 years

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India is expected to be a USD 25-trillion economy in 25 years, veteran banker and chairman of National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development K V Kamath said on Tuesday. Kamath also said that he is "sceptical" about the crypto currency and does not see any value in such an asset. "The India that I look forward to, 25 years from now, (will be) a USD 25-trillion (economy)," Kamath said at the Morningstar Investment Conference here. Earlier this month India became the fifth largest economy in the world, displacing the UK, the Indian economy currently is the fifth

largest in the world, now only behind the US, China, Japan and Germany. The corporate India has squeezed its efficiency, which was never believed to be possible earlier. That has also contributed to their (corporates') clean balance sheet and has also made them more competitive, he said. "All this I would think 7-8 per cent growth, we are growing between 8-10 per cent compounded... and you will see where the economy should be in 25 years," he said. Noting that at present the current size of the Indian economy stands at 3.5 trillion, with growth rate at 8 per cent, he said it is expected to double every 9 years.

Gunehgaar. A star-studded psychological thriller



When a mysterious stranger (Mr Bansal), a cop (Om), and a famous journalist (Mrinalini) find themselves in the same house on a rainy evening, is it by design or is it just a coincidence?

See Theatre's riveting, psychological thriller *Gunehgaar* answers this question and takes the audience down a beguiling path to a shocking conclusion they could never have expected.

Directed by Akarsh Khurana, the teleplay stars Gajraj Rao (Mr Bansal), Shweta Basu Prasad (Mrinalini) and Sumeet Vyas (Om).

Gunehgaar will air on September 24 at 2pm and 8pm on Tata play Theatre, and on September 25 at 2 pm and 6 pm on Airtel Spotlight and D2H Rangmanch Active.

Bollywood superstars reinventing themselves on OTT

OTT platforms have been redefining the Indian entertainment industry, especially in the last few years and especially post the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The fathomless expanse of borderless content and thematic diversity has been attracting even big screen veterans to long-format stories they could not possibly have explored in cinema.

Here is our pick of stars whose foray into OTT narratives got us all excited.

Ajay Devgn

It is not hard to see why Ajay Devgn would be attracted to the British psychological crime thriller *Luther*. The series starring Idris Elba as DCI John Luther is about a detective who doggedly goes after criminals while trying to deal with his demons and won Elba, a Critics' Choice Television Award, a Golden Globe Award, and a Screen Actors Guild Award. A Hindi adaptation seemed the next logical step and Devgn who has been busy directing and acting on the big screen for over three decades post his debut in *Phool Aur Kaante* (1991), decided to finally appear on the small screen as DCP Rudra. The first season of *Rudra: The Edge of Darkness* is directed by the national award-winning director, Rajesh Mapuskar, and was released on Disney+Hotstar in March this year. Produced by Applause



Entertainment and BBC Studios India, *Rudra* also stars Atul Kulkarni, Esha Deol, and Rashi Khanna.

Suniel Shetty

Suniel Shetty is a man of many parts and since his debut in the action thriller *Balwaan* opposite Divya Bharti in 1992, he has starred in over 100 films and is a much-loved part of the industry as a producer and actor. The trade is now excitedly buzzing about his new project in an OTT thriller produced by Yoodlee Films. The suspense-laced series titled *Invisible Woman* will see Shetty as a cop trying to heal his past and earn some redemption. Things however get complicated when he gets implicated in the murder of an old woman. Shetty is paired opposite Esha Deol in this much-awaited series. This also happens to be Yoodlee's debut in the web series space and also stars Esha Deol and Rahul Dev, among oth-



Saif Ali Khan

Who would have thought that a disinterested actor who made a forgettable debut in the 1993 *Parampara* would one day emerge as one of the Hindi film industry's biggest risk takers? Be it as a producer or as an actor, Saif Ali Khan today plays by his own rules and made a splash in the OTT space as a Sikh cop Sartaj Singh in the Netflix series, *Sacred Games* (2019) much before his peers had realised the potential of streamers. The series based on Vikram Chandra's eponymous novel depicts the battle of wills between Saif's Sartaj and the gangster Ganesh Gaitonde (Nawazuddin Siddiqui). This was the first ever Indian Netflix original series and went on to be nominated for the Emmys. The two seasons pro-

duced by Phantom Films were jointly directed by Anurag Kashyap, Vikramaditya Motwane, and Neeraj Ghaywan. Saif also appeared recently in *Tandav*.

Abhishek Bachchan

It would not be wrong to say that Abhishek Bachchan has been able to break out of a pattern of rather mundane roles in films thanks to the varied opportunities that OTT seems to offer to actors. His role as a psychotic killer whose alter ego leads a perfectly normal life as a family man and a doctor in the second season of the *Breathe* series (2020) on Amazon Prime, paved the way for an interesting cameo in Netflix's black comedy, *Ludo* and in ZEE5's original thriller movie, *Bob Viswas*.

The biopic *The Big Bull*, was also digitally released on 8 April 2021 on Disney+ Hotstar.

Breathe: Into the Shadows however, was Abhishek's first brush

with the long format. The series was directed by Mayank Sharma and produced by Abundantia Entertainment. Amit Sadh and Nithya Menen played pivotal roles.

Bobby Deol

Bobby Deol is truly the destiny's child. He first appeared as a pudgy child artist in Manmohan Desai's 1977 blockbuster *Dharamveer* and then made his debut as a leading man in *Barasat* (1995).

Even though the film flopped, hits like *Gupt: The Hidden Truth*, *Soldier* and *Ajnabi* kept him afloat, and then in 2020, he surprised everyone, including possibly himself when his MX Player series *Aashram* became an instant hit.

He also appeared in the Netflix film *Class of 83* and in *Love Hostel* that was streamed on ZEE5. *Aashram* however continues to be the high point of his OTT foray. The third season of the series was released in June 2022.

Creating music of their own with a fusion of two cultures



known as the #1 DJs across the world for the genre of Punjabi music.

In recent years Twinbeatz have shifted paths into the world of singing and song-writing, pushing their music careers

in a new direction.

Twinbeatz have managed to accumulate well over 200 million+ genuine views across all major music platforms, alongside a quarter million subscribers on YouTube. Being raised in America but staying close-knit to the Punjabi culture and language, "Twinbeatz" have been successful in creating a style and sound of their own that fuses the two cultures. The duo is extremely popular amongst South Asian communities across the world, resulting in headlined and sold out tours internationally.

The duo had recently released their new single *Diamond*. The duo said, "We were just vibing and created this song in our studio one night. The song talks about a guy wanting to propose to the girl he loves, who's always stuck by his side, and he wants to be there for her to help her reach her dreams in life."

Singer-songwriters and music producers, "Twinbeatz" are twin brothers born and raised out of Chicago, IL, USA. The Twins initially entered the music scene as DJs and producers in which they successfully became

Bad Bunny's *Un Verano Sin Ti* becomes longest-running number 1 album in over 5 yrs

Rapper Bad Bunny's album *Un Verano Sin Ti* has clinched another non-consecutive week at number one, its 11th time at the top spot out of 19 weeks since its release.

Not since Drake's *Views* logged 13 non consecutive weeks at number 1 in 2016, had a similar feat been reached, reports.

Both *Views* and *Un Verano* runs were non-consecutive, however, Bad Bunny has yet to slip below a No. 2 slot. *Un Verano* enters with the equivalent of 97,000 album sales

in the US, according to Luminate via Billboard.

Former One Direction member Harry Styles also accomplishes a historic mark of 14 weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 songs chart, the longest stay at number one since Lil Nas X's chart-topping *Montero*, feat. Billy Ray Cyrus, logged 19 weeks in 2021.

Out of its 24 weeks on the chart, *As It Was* currently holds the record for the most weeks spent in the Hot 100's top two positions with 23 weeks. Meanwhile, Steve

Lacy and *Bad Habit* remains at a No. 2 peak; Nicki Minaj's former No. 1 single *Super Freaky Girl* lifts from No. 7 to No. 3, fueled by the release of its *Queen Mix* rendition; Post Malone's *I Like It (A Happier Song)*, feat. Doja Cat, inches back into the song chart's top five (6-5); and Morgan Wallen's *You Proof* jumps 10 to 6, following the premiere of its music video.

At No. 4 is Nicky Youre and Dazy's *Sunroof* and Lizzo's *About Damn Time* slips from its No. 5 position to No. 7. OneRepublic's *I*



Ain't Worried keeps at No. 8; Harry Styles' *Late Night Talking* surges 9 to 3; and Future's *Wait for U*, featuring Drake and Tems, rejoins the top 10 from No. 11.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



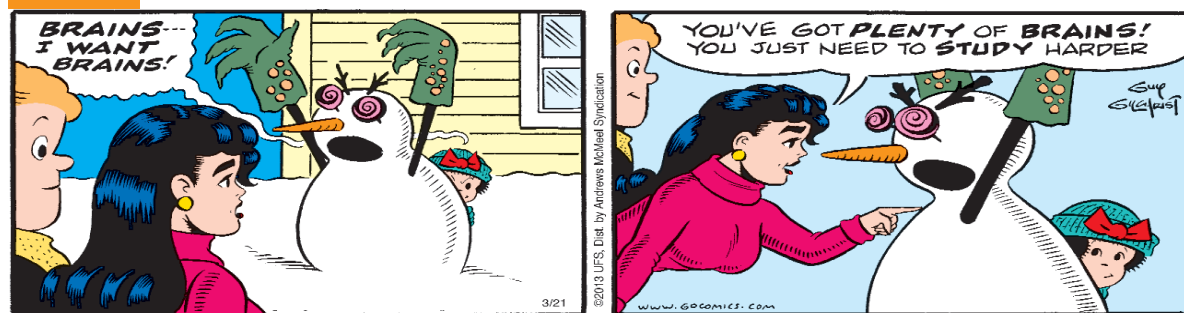
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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6		4		9				
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Yesterday's solution

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

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**
- Speaks very quietly
 - A builder follows these when building a house
 - The backbone
 - Athen is the capital city of this country
 - Fewer
 - You see with these
 - The large country just north of the USA
 - Weary
 - Near
 - Young people
- DOWN**
- A huge sea mammal
 - A six-legged creature
 - Shove
- 4 Lift up
5 Food that looks like lots of worms
6 A daily publication
11 A small dish under a cup
13 Garden soil
15 A nut from an oak tree
16 A worshipped statue
- SOLUTION**
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| A | C | O | I | T | I | O | H | | |
| B | L | I | D | E | D | A | B | | |
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| L | I | N | A | G | E | D | E | | |
| A | N | A | R | | | | | | |
| N | I | G | E | D | E | A | | | |
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'I had to fight for my position in a 'hero' dominated industry'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Another magnum-opus is on its way and will see Bengal's diva Rukmini Maitra helming it. Bringing to you a film that will be as good as its award-winning director Ram Kamal's vision and his cinema, bestowed with some of the most visionary times and over. Then there was *Sanak*, who gave Rukmini a platform to remain the ultimate face, and then the producers of the upcoming movie spotted her to play the lead.

A fictional biography of Bengal's theatre legend Binodini Dasi, everyone thought she could pull off the role immensely well. Who was Binodini? Born into prostitution, she started her career as a courtesan, and at age twelve she played her first serious dramatic role in Calcutta's National Theatre in 1874. This in-depth character role made Rukmini come on board for this larger-than-life film.

In an exclusive conversation with us, she chats, "Binodini Dasi wasn't just an on-screen queen but an aspiration for actresses like us in West Bengal. Her career coincided with the growth of the proscenium-inspired form of European theatre among the Bengali theatre-going audience. Her sudden retirement from the stage is insufficiently explained and hence, we are here to complete it."

Rukmini is adorned in the all-new avatar, totally unrecognisable in the first poster. Speaking about it, "When we decided on the first look of the film, we were working on a couple of ideas that might look different to the audience. But when we saw the image of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu from our look test, we knew that this would be the most unique representation of Binodini Dasi on stage, as she became immortal after portraying the character in her play Chaitanya Leela in 1884. Apart from that, the director also felt that in the history of Indian cinema, an

actress has never been portrayed as a male character, whereas Binodini created a revolution almost a hundred and forty years ago by portraying a male character on stage. We wanted to pay tribute to her courage, for which she became an iconic figure!"

Moreover, the actress, who has worked in many regional film industries, has realised that dedication, passion, and love for cinema are the same everywhere.

She says, "Everyone from both the industries, per se, Hindi and Bengali, works professionally to create the magic on screen. The only difference that one faces is budget! I know there are logistical issues to matching the financial parameters with Hindi."

The filmmaker had to struggle for almost two years to get the kind of budget he was expecting to mount a musical film like this. The only person who stood beside him like a Rock of Gibraltar was the actress herself. Since she saw his work in *Season's Greetings* and *Ek Duaa*, she believed that the director could definitely handle the pain and journey of this megastar from Bengali theatre.

Similarly, she also had a lot to say about this artistic filmmaker, and she remarked thereafter, "Ram Kamal Mukherjee, as he's widely known, is someone who carved his niche with award-winning films like *Cakewalk*, *Season's Greetings*, *Rickshawala*, and *Ek Duaa*. But for me, he is a dear friend and has developed his own style of narrative, which intrigued

me as an actor. When he called me for Binodini's role, I was ecstatic because I knew that he would portray the story in a completely different light. We have been working silently on this subject for the last two years because we had to go on auto-pause mode due to the pandemic. No hoo-hah."

The actress further said, "Since the time Ram Kamal mentioned that he wanted to make Binodini, I knew he would have a different take on the subject. Without questioning him even once, I trusted him blindly. This film would have happened two years ago, but a pandemic changed the entire scenario. Our entertainment industry suffered the most. This movie, with such reputed banners, producers, and most importantly, Dev coming on board as a presenter, makes this movie a magnum opus indeed."

Since it's a period drama, the makers will need enough time to recreate the era. Ram

Kamal is a very senior personality. The cinematographer was not even aware that he was planning this film with Rukmini until they shared the teaser poster. This was probably the best-kept secret from him. But when Dev saw the passion and love for their project, he, as a creative person, wanted to extend his gratitude towards a prestigious subject. He doesn't make such films these days, and it takes a lot of courage to touch upon subjects as sensitive as Nati Binodini.

Adding to that, the actress continued, "Since Binodini Dasi is an iconic figure and is known to people beyond the boundaries of Bengal, he is a very important character in my career. I am working diligently on all the aspects that would make her look believable on screen. After Durga Puja, I will resume my dance classes and dialogue workshop to get into character. She was a fighter in her own right, and so is every single person in our country. Unfortunately, nothing much has changed in the last few years. Women are still being objectified, sexually harassed, emotionally exploited, and financially dependent on their male partners. Being an actress, I had to fight for my position in a 'hero' dominated industry. I can completely relate to Binodini's angst and pain, which she had to suffer for being an ambitious woman in a world created by men. On a lighter note, I also relate to her love for Shri Krishna because I am also a believer in the same deity."

As we all know, the thespian had to leave, incidentally, to which Rukmini felt, "Binodini started her career when she was just a child, so by the age of 23 she felt exhausted and completely burnt out. In today's time, it is very important to balance your personal and professional life. Young actors like Alia Bhatt, Anushka Sharma, and Deepika Padukone are enjoying their marital life along with a flourishing professional careers! Actors like Madhuri Dixit, Neena Gupta, Shefali Shah, and the late Sridevi proved that age is just a number. I do respect Binodini's decision to quit her professional career at the age of 23, but personally, I feel actresses have much more scope of performance in today's time."

Though being a Bengali actress, she is equally fond of Nizami city. She signed off by saying, "Being a foodie, I love the variety of cuisine that makes Hyderabad famous globally. The city is known for its historical

events and its contribution to India's freedom movement. Telugu has one of the largest regional film industries and has recently ruled the hearts of Indian audiences with blockbusters. It would be my privilege to work with ace directors and multi-talented actors from the Telugu industry. I hope we can have a special screening of our film in Hyderabad for the cine lovers and hope that they will also shower love on our dream project."



TEDx Hyderabad 2022 ends on a high note

Excitement was on the rise, as around 1500 enthusiastic city dwellers reached the venue for a day filled with inspiration, conversation, and ideas.

TEX Hyderabad organised its 7th edition in the city, with an inspiring lineup of speakers from various fields this year. The theme for this year was 'Rising', to represent the spirit of rising from difficulties, in line with what the world has been through during the pandemic. Through the TED talks and mesmerising performances, like Albert Einstein once said, "In the midst of every battle comes an opportunity." The event gave an insight into how the right mindset will move us forward for the good of our community, country, and humanity through the TED talks.

Speaking on the event, Viiveck Verma, Curator and Licensee, TEDxHyderabad, said, "In our 7th edition, we wanted to focus on how the world rose from the pandemic like a Phoenix, as the legend goes. We picked 13 terrific speakers who could speak on the concept of 'Rising' through personal experiences. The all-day event gave attendees ample time and space for networking and interacting at the experience centres too. We are proud to be building a community of what we think of as TED-Thinkers, Enablers, and Doers, one idea at a time, for our beloved city of Hyderabad."

The list of speakers for this edition included the most celebrated art director in India, Sabu Cyril, the fielding coach for the Indian Cricket Team, and a left-arm spinner, Sridhar Ramakrishnan, Founder of Wheelchair Cricket India Association, Squadron Leader Abhai Pratap Singh (Retd.), Expert Canine Behaviourist and Trainer, Shirin Merchant, Director of The Copenhagen Centre for Disused Research (COPE), Emmanuel Raju, and musician, dancer, activist, and experimental instrument maker, Parvinder Singh, among others.

Bengali diva Rukmini will be seen playing the biopic of Binodini Dasi. Without missing an opportunity, *The Pioneer* connects with the actress, who shares with us some exclusive insights on the biopic



'Theatre helped me refine how I am, on & off-screen'

TEJAL SINHA

Love has no limits, and knows no boundaries. This is what we get to see in the upcoming *College Romance Season 3*.

On one hand, Bagga and Naira get into a long-distance relationship and have their own struggles, the season also normalises a junior boy dating a senior girl in college, just like a senior boy flirts with a female fresher.

This season marked the entry of the talented actor Eklavey Kashyap, who plays the character of a junior called Harry. As former couple Karan (Keshav Sadhna) and Deepika (played by Shreya Mehta) move on and remain good friends, Harry and Deepika begin dating after a while.

Okay! So we aren't here to tell you the story of the third season. You need to watch it to know the entire story.

But, *The Pioneer* connects with Eklavey, who brings us some behind-the-scenes from the third season of *College Romance*.

Eklavey Kashyap is an actor who has established himself both in India as well as the UK with his performances across films, theatre, web-series and musicals. His recent releases include Voot Select's *Code M S2*, in which he was seen in a pivotal role along with actor Jennifer Winget.

From playing an army character in *Code M Season 2* to this Delhi da Munda in *College Romance Season 3*, we see a significant change in both his character and physical appearance.

Sharing with us his preps, he says, "It is difficult to shed skin from the previous characters and then come into a new character. This part of the job is very interesting and thrilling to me because you have to let go of all the patterns you had prepared for before moving to and walking into a new character. There were a lot of physical changes that I had to make because I had played an army character before *College Romance*. It was very stiff, with copybooks, clockwork, and very staccato, whereas Harry is very cool, calm, charming, and bodily. I had to make tweaks and turn around to be like the character. Even in terms of speaking and language, it's the typical Delhi, North Indian dialect. There are a lot of quirky and relatable dialogues that come with *College Romance*. It was a very tricky challenge that I took up and it turned out really well. I like to believe that (he laughs)."

No doubt, we sometimes crave to re-live our college days. With shooting for the webseries, the *Code M S2* actor got the chance to live his college life once again. To this, he says, "I was honoured and wanted to do the show for a long time or even something like that. Things turned out in a way

that I got to play the character who was being introduced, and my experience was mind-blowing. While shooting in Delhi, it took me back to my college days in Delhi. A lot of similar things came back. It was also easier to get to experience all of it once again. It was a lot of fun, and that is what is the USP of the show, to have fun."

We were curious about Harry's experience working with Shreya Mehta, because he and Deepika started dating this season. To this, he says, "It might seem that Deepika is this tough nut on screen, but in real life she's a sweetheart. She assisted me in assimilating into the overall scheme of things, with the people and the cast. She made me feel very welcome and she was the easiest actor to work with. She also gave a lot of things back in terms of back and forth, like preparing for the character, and she had also given a lot of ideas on how we could improvise and take the dynamics forward, and she was very receptive to what I was giving her as well. She's really good to work with."

No matter what we do, we end up adding a different and unique memory to our memory box. So did Eklavey. He shares a memorable and fun moment from the sets. He says, "I remember we had this whole action sequence. It was like my second time doing action, but this time, it was a different one. In *Code M S2*, there were a lot of guns and other equipment, and here we had different action sequences. We were prepping for it, and what happened is that when we are all in the moment, we kind of forget that we are acting (he giggles) and end up hurting someone. I actually ended up hurting my co-actor and kicked him really hard. And it's been a new learning for me not to get into it too much (he laughs)."

Originally hailing from Panipat with familial

roots in Amritsar, Punjab, Eklavey comes with no filmy connections but a penchant for all things drama and theatre that has truly fuelled his journey to the screens. Having trained at the prestigious Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Shakespeare's Globe in London, Eklavey possesses a thorough understanding of classical texts and techniques. As someone with a strong bent for theatre since college, Eklavey had the great fortune of associating with Dundee Rep Theatre as the lead in their musical *Oor Willie* with over 100+ shows all across Scotland in 2020, truly giving the talented actor a global platform for his craft.

"I started in my drama society in my college and I started enjoying it even more. I decided to do a degree in it and I went to a drama school in the UK, studied drama for a year and worked there after I completed my studies in acting, which was another journey that I look back to and I feel good that it really happened. That opened more doors for me over there as well. I now have a global talent visa, which I am using in the UK. So I can work there for 5 more years and I can work here as well. I always dreamt of being a global actor and that's pretty much what I've been doing in the past 2-3 years and this one where my work is taking over here as well. I have an agent over there. Theatre really helped me in refining how I am on and off screen," he says, adding that he would like to play an antagonist in the future, rather than just nice characters. His upcoming releases include Netflix's *CAT* starring Randeep Hooda and *Sam Bahadur*, a feature film by Meghna Gulzar starring Vicky Kaushal that is in the works.



Eklavey Kashyap, an established actor, not only in India but also in the UK, made his entry into the popular web series, *College Romance*, in its third season. *The Pioneer* connects with the actor, who shares with us some exclusive tidbits about the show, and much more.

OZ CHASE RECORD TOTAL TO BEAT INDIA

PTI ■ MOHALI

India's frailties with the ball were laid bare as Australia gunned down a formidable 209-run target rather comfortably for a four-wicket win in the first T20 here on Tuesday.

K L Rahul (55 off 35 balls) and Hardik Pandya (71 not out off 30) helped India post a daunting 208 for six after Australia put the hosts in to bat.

Australia were dominant in the run chase, romping home in 19.2 overs. Last year's World Cup hero Matthew Wade (45 not out off 21) and Cameron Green (61 off 30) played special knocks to make short work of a stiff target.

It was a formidable total but the way Australia started, an early finish was on the cards.

Opening for the first time in international cricket, Green was in a menacing mood as he hammered comeback man Umesh Yadav for four successive boundaries in his first T20 since February 2019.

The seasoned Indian pacer felt the heat straightaway, and resorted to bowling slower balls in his very first over, which did not work.

There wasn't heavy dew but no swing was on offer for both Umesh and Bhuvneshwar Kumar. The batters were able to hit through the line, making the Indian attack look very ordinary.

The stand out bowler for India, Axar Patel, removed opposition skipper Aaron Finch to get a much-needed breakthrough. However, more carnage was in store as Green, who is not even part of Australia's T20 World Cup squad, toyed with the bowling while Steve Smith enjoyed from the other end.

In the eighth over, he slog swept Yuzvendra Chahal for a couple of sixes and a four for a 19-run over. India dropping Green and Smith also did not help their cause.

At 109 for one in 10 overs,



Australia were running away with the contest before India fought back with three quick wickets, two of those coming via Rohit Sharma's brilliant DRS calls, which sent Smith and Glenn Maxwell back in the hut.

With five wickets in hand, Australia needed 55 off the last 24 balls. However, Australia debutant Tim David in the company of the experienced Wade went ballistic in the death overs to complete a fine run chase.

Two big overs in which Bhuvneshwar leaked 15 and Harshal 22 sealed the home team's fate.

Earlier, Rahul made a statement with a high-quality knock before Hardik smashed an unbeaten 71, which included five sixes. Suryakumar Yadav also played

some breathtaking strokes in his 46 off 25 balls.

Expecting dew, Australia opted to bowl.

Jasprit Bumrah, who was picked for the series after recovering from a back injury, was surprisingly not selected for the series opener. Dinesh Karthik was picked ahead of Rishabh Pant.

After Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli fell cheaply, Rahul and Suryakumar shared a 68-run stand off 42 balls. It was raining sixes when they were in the middle.

Rahul's walk across the stumps to dispatch Josh Hazlewood over the cow corner made his intent clear before he whipped Cameron Green for a massive six over deep square leg.

Suryakumar's style of play is often awe-inspiring and the Mohali

crowd got to see him at his lethal best.

Of his four sixes, his swat over fine leg off a good length ball from Cummins stood out.

India were able to maintain their tempo in the middle overs as Suryakumar picked up leggie Adam Zampa for two successive sixes over long on and deep mid-wicket.

Hardik then took over and pushed India past 200. He was quick to punish anything short from the pacers and his pick-up shot off Pat Cummins in the 18th over was the highlight of his entertaining knock.

He smashed three consecutive sixes off Green in the 20th over including a flat one in the mid-wicket region. The last five overs yielded 67 runs.

All state units must honour domestic players not just international ones: Yuvraj

PTI ■ MOHALI

Former India batter Yuvraj Singh on Tuesday highlighted the need to recognise the achievements of ex-cricketers after being honoured by the Punjab Cricket Association here.

The 40-year-old, who played international cricket for almost two decades before calling time on a glorious career in 2019, turned up at the PCA stadium here alongside teammate Harbhajan Singh.

Two stands named after two of India's greatest cricketers were unveiled here.

The 2011 World Cup hero got a tad emotional when he was asked about the BCCI blazer he was wearing as he entered the premises.

"It's a nice feeling to be back at the PCA Stadium like this. I am wearing the BCCI blazer at my own stadium for the first time. It feels



wonderful to be called by my former parent association and get acknowledged," he said.

"The new PCA president Gulzari Inder Chahal was a cricketer himself and probably knows the importance of recognising former cricketers be it domestic or international. Even the domestic players should be recognised," the

two-time World champion cricketer said.

On the sidelines of the stand unveiling, the PCA also honoured former Punjab cricketers -- Bharti Viji, Mahesh Inder Singh, current India selector Harvinder Singh, Bhupinder Singh Sr and current India batting coach Vikram Rathour.

Yuvraj is one of the most approachable cricketers around and has worked with young players like Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill. Harbhajan is already guiding the current dispensation at PCA.

Asked if he is open to a long-term coaching role, Yuvraj said: "I still work with the players on and off. I have worked with the Punjab Cricketers in the past as well. But I want to see my child growing up. So, I am not sure if I can commit to something full time to the association at this stage," he signed off.

Guptill set to play 7th T20 WC as NZ name 15-member squad

PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

Batting stalwart Martin Guptill is set to play a record seventh T20 World Cup as New Zealand on Tuesday named a 15-member squad, led by Kane Williamson, for the ICC showpiece beginning in Australia on October 16.

The 35-year-old batter found a place in the team, even as the Black Caps made three changes to the squad that featured in the final of the T20 World Cup last year.

Finn Allen and Michael Bracewell will represent in their first senior World Cup and the duo along with Lockie Ferguson will replace Kyle Jamieson, Todd Astle and Tim Seifert respectively, who were part of the last T20 World Cup squad.

Two players who recently declined a central contract -- Trent Boult and Jimmy Neesham also featured in the squad.

New Zealand have a strong pace attack at their disposal consisting of Boult, Ferguson,



Tim Southee, and Adam Milne. Ish Sodhi will lead the spin attack and will be supported by Bracewell and Mitchell Santner.

Glenn Phillips, Daryl Mitchell, Santner, Bracewell and Neesham will provide the perfect balance with their ability to contribute both with bat and ball.

Devon Conway has been named as the front-line wicket-keeper after wearing the gloves in the UAE and in the

recent series against the West Indies.

For Williamson, it will be the third time that he will lead New Zealand in the ICC T20 World Cup.

"It's always a special time announcing a World Cup squad and I'd like to congratulate the 15 players selected today," said New Zealand coach Gary Stead in a release.

"It's especially exciting for Finn and Michael who are set for their first ICC events, while Martin Guptill is preparing for his 7th T20 World Cup - which in itself is an incredible achievement.

New Zealand will open their T20 World Cup campaign against Australia at the SCG on October 22.

Squad: Kane Williamson (c), Tim Southee, Ish Sodhi, Mitchell Santner, Glenn Phillips, Jimmy Neesham, Daryl Mitchell, Adam Milne, Martin Guptill, Lachlan Ferguson, Devon Conway, Mark Chapman, Michael Bracewell, Trent Boult, Finn Allen.

PTI ■ DUBAI

The use of saliva to polish the ball was on Tuesday banned permanently as the ICC announced a slew of changes to its Playing Conditions, which will come into effect on October 1.

The game's governing body also changed running out of the non-striker by the bowler from the 'Unfair Play' section to the 'Run out' section.

The changes were announced after the Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) ratified recommendations made by the ICC Cricket Committee, led by former India captain and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly.

The ICC had earlier barred use of saliva to shine the ball in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Custodian of cricket laws, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in March had completely banned its application in its amendments to the 2022 code.

"This prohibition has been in place for over two years in international cricket as a Covid-related temporary measure and it is considered appropriate for the ban to be made permanent," the ICC said in a statement.

Regarding the position of the new batter at the crease when his teammate is caught, the ICC said: "When a batter is out Caught, the new batter will come in at the end of the striker was, regardless of whether the batters crossed prior to the catch being taken."

The game's governing body also said that "an incoming batter will now be required to be ready to take strike with-

Ban on saliva to shine balls made permanent by ICC



in two minutes in Tests and ODIs, while the current threshold of ninety seconds in T20Is remains unchanged.

Regarding run-outs at non-striker's end, the ICC said the playing conditions will follow "the Laws in moving this method of effecting a Run out from the 'Unfair Play' section to the 'Run out' section."

Earlier, running out a non-striker for backing up too much was considered unfair but such dismissals have often

triggered heated debates on spirit of the game with several players such as off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin advocating for it as a fair mode of dismissal.

Among other changes to the Playing Conditions, the ICC said some part of the striker's bat or person has to remain within the pitch and "should they venture beyond that, the umpire will call and signal Dead ball."

"Any ball which would force the batter to leave the pitch will also be called

'No ball,'" it said.

The apex body also said, "any unfair and deliberate movement while the bowler is running in to bowl could now result in the umpire awarding five penalty runs to the batting side, in addition to a call of Dead ball."

In another change, the practice of bowlers throwing the ball towards striker's end before delivery in an attempt to run-out the batter will not be considered now.

"Previously, a bowler who saw the batter advancing down the wicket before entering their delivery stride, could throw the ball to attempt to Run out the striker. This practice will now be called a Dead Ball," he said.

In another major decision, ICC said the penalty of having one fielder less outside the 30-yard circle in T20s if teams fail to keep up with the scheduled time and are guilty of slow overrate will now be adopted in ODIs as well.

"The in-match penalty introduced in T20Is in January 2022, (whereby the failure of a fielding team to bowl their overs by the scheduled cessation time leads to an additional fielder having to be brought inside the fielding circle for the remaining overs of the innings), will now also be adopted in ODI matches after the completion of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League in 2023."

"I was pleased with the productive contribution of the Committee members which resulted in key recommendations being made. I thank all members for their valuable input and suggestions," Ganguly said.

Women in Blue aim for rare series win in Eng

PTI ■ CANTERBURY

A confident Indian team will back itself to seal its first series victory in England since 1999 with another win over the hosts in the second women's ODI here on Wednesday.

Having endured a woeful 1-2 defeat in the T20I series, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led Indian side raised its standards in all the departments of the game to bounce back in three days' time and defeat England by seven wickets in the series-opener at Hove on Sunday.

England are missing some of their senior players but India looked a much better team in the first game and they would be looking to ride the momentum.

In 1999, the Indian team had won the ODI series 2-1 with Anjum Chopra striking a hundred and a half-century.

It is also a farewell series for the great Jhulan Goswami as India do not have any 50-over assignment till June 2023.

Playing her first game since March, the 39-year-old world record holder for most wickets showed little signs of rustiness and was the most economical among the lot, returning with figures 10-2-20-1.



Indian vice-captain Smriti Mandhana led the batting show with a sublime 99-ball 91, while wicketkeeper batter Yastika Bhatia also struck a fifty, before skipper Harmanpreet finished off the clinical chase with an unbeaten 74.

The captain will be expected to step up

and hope opener Shafali Verma does well as she has not scored a half-century in more than 10 innings now.

England on the other hand will hope that their batters put up a big total as they will rely heavily on in-form Sophia Dunkley, who had a successful T20I series, Dunkley and Alice Capsey

once again looked dangerous in the middle before a one-handed catch by Harmanpreet broke the partnership and triggered a collapse.

If India manage to win the second game, it will be a massive confidence booster for a team trying to find its feet in 50-over cricket.

Mandhana rises to career-best 2nd position in T20Is, ranked 7th in ODIs

PTI ■ DUBAI

Star India opener Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday achieved a career-best world number two rank in T20Is and climbed to the seventh spot in ODIs in the latest ICC Women's Player Rankings, riding on her stupendous show against England.

The left-handed batter had aggregated 111 runs in the three-match T20I series against England. The performance helped her jump two places.

Mandhana, a former top-ranked batter in ODIs, also jumped three slots to number seven after a match-winning 91 in the first ODI against England.

Among other Indians, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has zoomed four spots to ninth place in ODIs, all-rounder Deepti Sharma gained one place to reach 32nd position and wicket-keeper Yastika Bhatia jumped



eight places to 37th following India's seven-wicket win in Hove on Saturday.

Deepti also climbed six places to 12th in bowlers' list.

In the T20I rankings, Kaur (up one place to 14th among batters), new-ball bowler Renuka Singh (up three places to 10th among bowlers) and spinner Radha Yadav (up four places to 14th among bowlers) made notable gains.

All-rounders Sneha Rana and Pooja Vastrakar are in joint-41st position.



Australia confirm Nitschke as full-time women's coach

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former allrounder Shelley Nitschke has been handed a four-year contract as head coach of the Australian women's team, Cricket Australia said on Tuesday.

In her role as an interim coach, Nitschke guided Australia to a historic Commonwealth Games gold medal after the team registered a narrow win over India in the finals of the first ever women's cricket competition at the quadrennial event last month.

An assistant coach with Australia since 2018, Nitschke was in charge of the side since Matthew Mott left earlier this year.

"While I enjoyed my time working as assistant coach, I feel the time is right to step up and lead this group in what's shap-

ing as a new era with a new-coaching group and the retirement of Rachael Haynes," the 45-year-old said on ICC website. "The loss of Rach will no doubt be felt, but it presents a great opportunity for others to put their hands up both from a leadership perspective as well as with the bat and in the field."

Her first assignment would be a T20I tour of India in December before taking on Pakistan at home in January. But the real big test for her would be to defend their title at next year's Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa.

"Our challenge is to ensure the team continues to evolve; we've seen teams like India take their game to the next level and it's important that the players feel they have the support they need to keep getting better every day," she said.

'I try to be socially responsible with the films that I make'

AMARTYA SMARAN

Hitchhiking with a new director and diving into uncharted waters is a zone, in which actor Sree Vishnu is most comfortable. Ever since his debut as a lead actor, he has been quite experimental with all his films. He has starred in films like *Mental Madhilo* (2017), *Veera Bhoga Vasantha Rayalu* (2018), *Brochevaravarura* (2019), and *Raja Raja Chora* (2020), all of which have managed to grab the attention of the audience and critics from different sections.

This time around, the *Thipparaa Meesaam* actor is all set to entertain the audience in his unique style, with his latest flick *Alluri* directed by debutant Pradeep Varma. The film stars Kayadu Lohar opposite Sree Vishnu and Tanikella Bharani, Suman, Raja Ravindra, and Prudhvi Raj (30 Years), will be seen playing some key roles. The Music and cinematography have been handled by Harshavardhan Rameshwar and Raj Thota, respectively.

The film documents the 15 years journey of a cop named *Alluri Sita Rama Raju* from the police department. The makers have taken inspiration from the real-life events, that took place in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state, and fictionalised them to make it more appealing to the audience. The film will be narrated from the point of view of the character and will take the viewers through different phases of Alluri's life.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, the *Brochevaravarura* actor spoke about the film, ahead of its release on September 23. "I am someone who is soft-spoken and not so reactive when it comes to many things in life. After playing the role of Alluri Sita Rama Raju, it has definitely taught me how to be more responsible as a person. Nowadays, when I see something bad happening in society, it makes me very angry and I can't help but react to it," said Sree Vishnu.

In a recent interview, Farhan Akhtar

who directed *Lakshya* (2004) proudly said "The film inspired a lot of people to enroll in the Indian Army".

The *Raja Raja Chora* star tells us that this high-octane cop drama has all the potential to inspire today's youth. He further added, "*Alluri* will be a source of inspiration for all the youngsters. I try to be socially responsible with the films that I make. When someone is in their youth, they are free from the burdens of the everyday world to do whatever they like. If my film creates the same impact that *Lakshya* (2004) created, I will be thrilled. Of course, we can't change someone completely per se, but the film is a fantastic medium to covertly send a message to young minds. I think we have successfully done that with this film."

Talking about the kind of preparation that he did to play the role, the *Alluri* actor explained, "There was no reference as such for me to play the part. So, I thought, whatever I do should come from a place of authenticity. I just followed the script and did what was best for the character. Some people still have doubts whether I have it in me to

pull off the role or not, but I can guarantee them that when they finish watching the film, they'll have witnessed one of the best police characters in a decade."

All actors have their inhibitions and for him, apparently, the problem is with the love scenes that should be enacted in public. "Especially when the director asks me to perform certain intimate scenes over and over again, I get really uncomfortable and shy. I think I should get over that,"

remarked Vishnu.

The actor has got three films lined up to go on the sets with Mythri Movie Makers, UV creations, and another big production house. Besides this, he is planning to make his foray into the Pan-Indian film space with a story set in a European backdrop with actors from different countries. However, with *Alluri*, Sree Vishnu is hoping to reach out to more sections of the audience by selling an image of a versatile actor and gaining their acceptance.



Ahead of the release of Sree Vishnu starrer *Alluri*, *The Pioneer* connects with the actor, who shares with us some exclusive insights about the film, his upcoming projects, and much more.



Naga Chaitanya, Venkat Prabhu's film goes on floors

The combination of Akkineni Naga Chaitanya and Venkat Prabhu has made waves, ever since its announcement. The film has been tentatively titled *NC22*. *NC22* will be Chaitanya's first Telugu-Tamil bilingual film, and will also be affable filmmaker Venkat's first Telugu directorial.

The ambitious project was recently launched with a formal puja ceremony, and the female lead and musicians were also announced. Krithi Shetty will be seen alongside Naga Chaitanya. The legendary father-son duo of Maestro, Isaignani Ilaiyaraaja, and Little Maestro Yuva Shankar Raja are going to score tunes for the film. This is their first film together and a chartbuster album is assured in the combination. This indeed is going to be one of the major attractions.

Naga Chaitanya's fans and audiences were waiting for film updates with bated breath.

Today's dazzling update on the film quenched their thirst. The team is ready to begin filming today at Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad.

The makers also unveiled a stunning poster of Naga Chaitanya, which stunned and peaked everyone's interest.

The poster was designed without revealing Naga Chaitanya's appearance or look. Naga Chaitanya stands tall in the poster, with a few targets aimed at him. The poster's red and black color palette instills a powerful vibe. Srinivasaa Chitturi of Srinivasaa Silver Screen is bankrolling the yet-to-be-titled film. Pavan Kumar will be presenting this ambitious project. Many noted actors will feature in the movie, while popular technicians will take care of different crafts. Abburu Ravi has penned dialogues. The film's regular shoot will commence today. Meanwhile, more updates from the film will be revealed soon.

Alia expresses gratitude on receiving Smita Patil Memorial Award

Actress Alia Bhatt, who is currently enjoying the response to her recently released fantasy adventure film *Brahmastra* as it becomes the highest grossing Hindi film of 2022, has been feted with the Smita Patil Memorial Award.

The actress took to the story section of her Instagram to share the news with her followers. Sharing the certificate of the honour, she wrote on the picture, "Grateful and honoured to receive the Smita Patil Memorial Award. Thank You to everyone (heart emoji)".

Established in 1986 by the Priyadarshni Academy in memory of actress Smita Patil, the Smita Patil Memorial Award is awarded to an Indian actress for her contribution to Indian cinema in the period prior to the ceremony, irrespective of a particular performance. Till 1994, the award was conferred every year to



the actresses. However, since 1994, the committee has been conferring the honour upon the actresses once every two years.

In the past, actresses like Madhuri Dixit, Sridevi, Tabu, Manisha Koirala, Urmila Matondkar and Kareena Kapoor Khan have been honoured with the award. The award committee drew flak in 2016 when it feted Bollywood star Katrina Kaif with the award as certain sections of media and general populace felt that the actress was undeserving of the honour.

Taapsee Pannu was the last actress to be feted with the honour before Alia back in 2020.

S Rajamouli's directorial *RRR*, starring Jr NTR and Ram Charan has created a box office tsunami not only in India but also overseas. Amidst all the appreciation, viewers from the UK alleged that the film portrays Britishers as villains. Recently, after the *RRR* screening in the US, SS Rajamouli reacted to those claims while interacting with the crowd.

The filmmaker was heard saying that the movie has performed well in the UK despite showing the British in a bad light. According to reports in the Indian Express, the director was quoted saying, "At the beginning of the film you see the disclaimer card. Even if you miss it, it's

not a history lesson. It's a story. The audience in general understands it. If a British is playing the villain, they understand that I am not saying all the Britishers are villains. If my



heroes are Indians, they understand that all Indians are heroes."

The *Baahubali* director further added, "In this film, a particular guy is a villain and a particular guy is a hero. They automatically understand. They may not be knowledgeable about everything but their emotional intelligence is very high. Once we understand that as a storyteller,

we don't have to worry about other peripheral things."

Another buzz surrounding *RRR* claims that the film is likely to be nom-

inated for Oscars. If it turns out to be true, *RRR* will be the first Indian film since Amir Khan's *Lagaan* to make a remarkable achievement.

RRR narrates the tale of two real-life revolutionaries Komaram Bheem played by Jr NTR and Alluri Sitarama Raju portrayed by Ram Charan and their fight against the British Raj.

the top OTT Netflix. According to the latest reports, Netflix spent a whopping amount of Rs 57 crore for the digital rights which include Hindi version rights also apart from the Telugu version. The film directed by Mohan Raja is releasing on

October 5 as a Dasara treat. Salman Khan is doing a powerful special in the film which stars Nayanthara, Satyadev, Biju Menon, Anasuya, Gaddar, Murali Mohan, Gangavva, and Puri Jagannath in crucial roles. Thaman is the music director for the film.

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SS Rajamouli sheds light on claims of *RRR* showing the British in a poor light

we don't have to worry about other peripheral things."

Another buzz surrounding *RRR* claims that the film is likely to be nom-

inated for Oscars. If it turns out to be true, *RRR* will be the first Indian film since Amir Khan's *Lagaan* to make a remarkable achievement.

RRR narrates the tale of two real-life revolutionaries Komaram Bheem played by Jr NTR and Alluri Sitarama Raju portrayed by Ram Charan and their fight against the British Raj.

the top OTT Netflix. According to the latest reports, Netflix spent a whopping amount of Rs 57 crore for the digital rights which include Hindi version rights also apart from the Telugu version. The film directed by Mohan Raja is releasing on

October 5 as a Dasara treat. Salman Khan is doing a powerful special in the film which stars Nayanthara, Satyadev, Biju Menon, Anasuya, Gaddar, Murali Mohan, Gangavva, and Puri Jagannath in crucial roles. Thaman is the music director for the film.

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