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WANG'S WALK SIGN OF
CHINA'S DESPERATION

MONEY 8
FM TO MEET HEADS
OF PSBS ON APR 23

SPORTS 12
DC RETURN TO
WINNING WAYS

HYDERABAD, MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



POOJA HEDGE, TO
GROOVE IN F3
FOR A SPL SONG?

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US PRESIDENT BIDEN AND PM MODI TO HAVE VIRTUAL MEETING TODAY

US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi would meet virtually on Monday, the first of its kind between the two leaders that would coincide with the maiden India-US 2+2 dialogue under the Biden Administration, the White House said on Sunday. President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. will meet virtually with Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India on Monday, April 11 to further deepen ties between our governments, economies, and our people, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki announced. During the virtual meet, Biden and Modi will discuss cooperation on a range of issues, including ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

IMRAN KHAN TRIED TO SACK ARMY CHIEF GEN BAJWA BEFORE OUSTER

As the people of Pakistan woke up to a new dawn on Sunday, the details of the gruelling and murky political activities in the preceding day and night have emerged, showing the country may have averted a damning showdown between ousted prime minister Imran Khan and the powerful Army. According to various media reports, Khan made a botched attempt to replace Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa in order to bring someone more pliant and sympathetic to his idea of foreign conspiracy and cling on to power.

CONG WOMEN WING LEADER HECKLES IRANI ON FLIGHT OVER INFLATION ISSUE

All India Mahila Congress acting president Netta D'Souza on Sunday fired questions on price rise at Union Minister Smriti Irani when the two came face-to-face on IndiGo's Delhi-Guwahati flight, with the minister objecting to being 'accosted'. IndiGo said the incident is currently under investigation. D'Souza on Sunday posted a short video of the incident on Twitter where she asks Women and Child Development Minister Irani about the rising prices of cooking gas and petrol. The minister - who was sitting in the first row of the plane - is heard asking D'Souza to not block the way so that people behind her can de-board.

RUSSIA HITS UKRAINE FROM THE AIR AND SEA

The governor of the region that includes Ukraine's fourth-largest city, Dnipro, says the airport was hit twice by missile attacks on Sunday. The Ukrainian military command said Russian forces also keep shelling Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, and have kept up their siege of Mariupol, the key southern port city that has been under attack for nearly six weeks. The Russian Defense Ministry says it's air-launched missiles hit Ukraine's S-300 air defense missile systems in two locations, while sea-launched cruise missiles destroyed a Ukrainian unit's headquarters in the Dnipro region. Neither side's military claims could be independently verified.

Yechury re-elected as CPI(M) General Secretary

PNS ■ KANNUR

Senior CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury was re-elected as the General Secretary of the party for the third consecutive time here on Sunday.

Speaking to the delegates after being re-elected to the top post at CPI(M)'s 23rd Party Congress, Yechury said the principal task of the party was to isolate and defeat the BJP, which is pursuing the Hindutva communal agenda of the fascistic RSS.

He said isolation and defeat of the saffron party was essential not only for our forward march for human liberation but to safeguard India as a secular democratic republic.

The Party Congress also selected 17-member polit bureau and 85-member central committee to lead the party for next three years. Senior leader from West Bengal,

War over vari in Delhi

CM KCR to lead the protest to bang the Centre on paddy procurement

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Ministers, MLAs, MPs, MLCs and other elected public representatives belonging to the TRS party as well as party leaders will stage a day-long 'Maha Dharna' on Monday in protest against the BJP government at the Centre for "discriminating against TS in paddy procurement".

TRS supremo Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao is likely to lead the protest demanding that the Union government should announce a uniform national food grain procurement policy.

The protest will be staged at the Telangana Bhavan and the demonstration is expected to begin at around 9 am on Monday.

The protests will begin after the participants pay tributes at the statues of the Telangana Thalli, Dr BR Ambedkar and the Telangana Martyrs' Memorial arranged at the venue.

The Maha Dharna perhaps will



File photo

Tikait to participate in TRS protest

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) spokesperson Rakesh Tikait has extended support to the Telangana Rashtra Samithi's (TRS) protest in New Delhi on Monday and said that he will participate in the demonstration demanding that the Central government should procure the paddy produced in Telangana.

He said he will participate in the demonstration demanding that the Central government should procure the paddy produced in Telangana.

be the first protest of this magnitude that a State government stages in the national capital.

Besides 'exposing' the Centre's discrimination towards Telangana in paddy procurement, funds allocation and other issues, the TRS is likely to

TRS will fight for all farmers' interests: Kavitha

TRS leader MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha said on Sunday that the TRS, under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao, would fight for the interests of all farmers. Ahead of the mass protests being staged by the TRS on Monday, she spoke to the media. Kavitha, who was inspecting the protest site, reaffirmed that the policies of the Centre were a threat to national food security and that the TRS would fight for the interests of farmers.



er and anti-people policies'.

The TRS leadership is planning an assault on the BJP for ushering in 'divisive politics' in the name of religion, region, language and culture, instead of addressing issues like inflation,

Covid has not gone, is changing forms and resurfacing: PM Modi

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the coronavirus has not gone away and keeps resurfacing, and cautioned people not to let their guard down in the battle against the pandemic.

Nobody knows when the 'bahu-rupiya' (one that changes form) COVID-19 will resurface, Modi said, adding that administering nearly 185 crore doses of vaccines to control its spread was made possible due to public support.

He was addressing via video conferencing the Mahapatrasav programme of Maa Umiya Dham at Vanthali in Gujarat's Junagadh district, as part of the 14th found-

ation day celebration of the temple of Maa Umiya, considered as the deity of Kadva Patidar community.

The PM urged devotees of Maa Umiya to turn to natural farming with the aim to save Mother Earth from the scourge of chemical fertilisers.

He also asked people to a pledge to participate in creating 75 'Amrit Sarovars' (lakes) in each district as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, being organised to mark 75 years of India's Independence.

"Corona (COVID-19 pandemic) was a big crisis, and we are not saying that the crisis is over.



BJP's Rythu Deeksha in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The ruling TRS is staging a Vari Deeksha on Monday at the New Delhi Telangana Bhavan demanding that the BJP-led Central Government should purchase paddy instead of rice.

The BJP is also staging a Rythu Deeksha at the Indira Park Dharna Chowk in Hyderabad on Monday and their slogan is "KCR...purchase paddy or get down from the seat."

Telangana BJP General Secretary Gujjula Premender Reddy Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar, State Executive Committee Members, MLAs, MPs, former MPs, former MLAs and other leaders would participate in the Deeksha.



Premender Reddy said in a statement released on Sunday that the Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, V. Muralidharan, would also participate in the Rythu Deeksha along with BJP Vice-President DK Aruna and OBC Morcha President Dr K. Laxman.

He said that the Centre has made it clear that it will purchase the entire paddy produced by the farmers of Telangana.

The BJP brought it to the attention of the state government, but the TRS has been doing injustice to farmers in the name of protests for its political interests.

BLOOD SOAKED FLAG



Pope Francis holds the Ukrainian flag that was sent to him from the town of Bucha, where tied bodies were shot at close range and a mass grave and other signs of executions were found, during the weekly general audience at the Paul VI Hall at the Vatican.

Covid patients report health issues even after one year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Patients suffering from long covid are reporting symptoms even after a year. A study conducted on long covid patients shows that over 85 per cent of patients still showed symptoms even after a year.

Long Covid is a condition in which individuals affected with the coronavirus do not recover for several weeks or months.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer', Kavya, a Covid-19 survivor from Hyderabad said, "I was infected with Covid in August 2020 and I lost my sense of smell. It took me almost 14 months to get it back. Initially, I used to enjoy not being able to smell but soon I realized

Long Covid is a condition in which individuals affected with the coronavirus do not recover for several weeks or months

it is not a good sign in the long run. I was told to start smelling things, try to recollect the smell and refresh my memory. After a certain period of time, I was also told by many people that it was a psychological issue.



Komatireddy Venkat Reddy star campaigner for Congress in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Congress leader from Telangana got a party post a few days after the April 4 meeting of TPCC leaders with former AICC chief Rahul Gandhi.

The leader, Bhongir MP, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who was the reason for the meeting between Telangana Congress leaders and Rahul Gandhi, got the party post six days after the meeting in New Delhi.

AICC chief Sonia Gandhi appointed Komatireddy Venkat Reddy as the star campaigner in Telangana on Sunday with immediate effect. AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal released the note regarding this to the media on Sunday.

Usually, the Congress high command appoints Star Campaigners only during elections. But for the first time, the party has appointed a Star Campaigner in TS although there are no immediate elections.

In fact, the TPCC has a Campaign Committee and Madhu Yashki Goud is its Chairman.

'CM Bommai outsourced law & order to Sangh Parivar'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly Siddaramaiah on Sunday slammed Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai for the hooliganism by Hindu outfits and alleged that Bommai has outsourced the law

and order department to Sangh Parivar.

In a series of tweets, the former chief minister hit out at Bommai for not initiating action against the Hindu outfits who are on rampage attacking Muslim shopkeepers around the Hindu temples.

"Basavaraj Bommai has outsourced the law & order dept of govt to Sangh Parivar, & the goons of Sri Rama Sene are appointed on contractual basis. This is a disaster for Karnataka," the Congress leader tweeted.

French nationals in Puducherry, Chennai cast vote in Presidential elections

PNS ■ PUDUCHERRY/CHENNAI

French nationals residing in the union territory of Puducherry (a former French colony) and Chennai voted in the country's Presidential elections, on Sunday.

As many as 4,564 French citizens from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry are eligible to exercise their franchise in the first round of the polls in France, official sources said. The polling began at 8 AM and would go on till 7 PM. "France offers its citizens abroad



who are over 18 years of age and have registered to be in the electoral list in the Consulate General of France here to vote in person in

the country of residence, an opportunity to vote in the Presidential election,

No one can match TS inclusive model: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KTR said on Sunday that no one can match the inclusive growth model of KCR after Telangana won 19 National Panchayat Awards in various categories instituted by the Centre.

"Be it rural development or urban development, no one can match the inclusive growth model of Telangana. My compliments to Panchayat Raj and RD Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao and his team for bagging 19 awards and a special compliment to the Siricilla Zilla Parishad," said KTR on Twitter.

The Centre had announced 19 National Panchayat Awards on the occasion of National Panchayat Raj Day, of which 14 awards are in Gram Panchayat Divisions, four in Mandal



Parishads and one in Zilla Parishads for Telangana.

After the announcement of the National Panchayat Awards for the State, Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao Tweeted, "No other state can match Telangana. Many thanks to KCR for guiding the department and congratulations to the people's representatives and officials for their excellent work," said Minister Dayakar.

Large crowds with no masks take part in Shobha Yatra

DEEPIKA PASHAM ■ HYDERABAD

Around a lakh people gave up masks and participated in the Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra on Sunday. Around 30 per cent of the people were seen carrying masks but unfortunately, they did not use them.

As yatras were banned in the last two years due to the covid-19 pandemic, people came in large numbers to attend this year's yatra.

"Many devotees are coming this year. We all felt happy as we had missed the last two years. We could control the public inside temples. They all sat patiently till the end of the pooja," a purohit named Yethindra said.



The Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra started at 11 am in Hyderabad to mark the Sri Ramanavami festival. The Bhagyanagar Sri

Ramanavami Festival Committee had made all arrangements this year. The procession started from the Sitaram Bagh Temple in Mangalhat.

The evening procession may end by 10 pm at the Hanuman Gymnasium in Koti.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Tithi: Dashami: Apr 11 03:16 AM to Apr 12 04:30 AM
Ekadashi: Apr 12 04:30 AM to Apr 13 05:02 AM

Nakshatram:
Pushya: Apr 10 04:31 AM to Apr 11 06:51 AM
Ashlesha: Apr 11 06:51 AM to Apr 12 08:35 AM

Rahukalam: 7:39 AM to 9:12 AM
Yamagandam: 10:44 AM to 12:17 PM
Varjyam: 08:34 PM to 10:17 PM
Gulika: 1:50 PM to 3:22 PM
Amritakalam: None
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:52 AM to 12:41 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny
Temp: 38°C
Humidity: 56%
Sunrise: 6:08 AM
Sunset: 6:27 PM
Updated: APRIL 10, 2022 5:00 PM

Monday Mirchi

Protocol violations haunt officials

Politicians may come and go with the elections, but officials who choose not to go by the rule book often get into trouble. A case in point is the lot of those officials who are caught in the crossfire between the Governor and the TRS government for not following protocol. The Collector, SP and EO, basically officials who had avoided Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan's visit to Yadadri and other places, may have to face the music from the Union Department of Personnel and Training now. Bureaucratic circles are dismayed over protocol violations and are speculating on how these breaches may add fuel to the proposed change in cadre rules and give an edge to central government. The Governor herself sympathised with officials who had been asked not to talk to or visit her. Some officials believe that the Central government might really make changes in protocol to avoid making Collectors scapegoat.

'Anna' a jinxed word?

Any bureaucrat would feel privileged and honoured if a Chief Minister addresses him as 'Anna'. That is not the case in Andhra Pradesh now. These days when Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy starts addressing any senior bureaucrat as 'Anna', it is no longer considered a reverential or endearing term. The official concerned looks petrified and peers behind assuaging the hard feelings of another. They reason that Jagan, in the initial days after coming to power, used to call former chief secretary LV Subramanyam as 'LV Anna'. After a few months, Subramanyam fell out of favour and eventually he was sent packing. Subsequently, Jagan began addressing ex-DGP Gautam Sawang as 'Sawang Anna'. Everyone knows what happened to him. Today, nobody talks about Sawang, who, as the state DGP, was all over the media almost everyday. So, senior bureaucrats feel 'Anna' is a jinxed word now.

Scaring kids of the high and the mighty

The recent raid at Pudding and Mink pub stood out for the daring manner in which it was executed by the police, knowing that kids of not only netas but also those of IAS and IPS officers were involved in the rave party. Naturally, some of the officials tried to contact the who's who of the Telangana Police. None of them took the calls deliberately. The calls started from around 3-00 am and the phones kept ringing until 8:00 am. A little bird told us that higher officials of the department felt that it was very important for the police to scare the rich kids. The strategy evidently worked; for, a few of them even left the country after the raid out of fear of bringing disrepute to their high-profile parents.

Tweet only if it sounds sweet

Tweet only if it sounds sweet. This seems

to be TSRTC MD VC Sajjanar's policy when it comes to posting on Twitter at #TwitterforGood literally. He posts everything that the corporation does for its employees and people, provided it sounds positive. One of the recent posts was about distributing ORS packets to employees due to scorching heat. But far more important things that the public may want to know like hike in ticket prices, rounding off of ticket prices are nowhere to be seen in his announcements. It looks like the RTC MD does not want any person to be critical of the hike in ticket prices. Instead of explaining how imperative it was to effect hike in the ticket prices, the corporation MD chose the easier option of obviating negative comments.

Short cut to getting prominence

Some bureaucrats let their own work speak for itself, while others praise their political boss' work as a short cut to get prominence. The other day, when AP Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy launched the new districts, State Planning Secretary G Srkr Vijaykumar lavished praise on Jagan. He claimed, much to the discomfiture of his peers, that right from the days of the Indus Valley civilisation to the present times, though many kings and chief ministers had ruled, none had taken up administrative reforms like those ushered in by the CM. So, Jagan's name will be etched in history, he said. His bemused colleagues understood how, after a brief hiatus, Vijaykumar is back in the limelight. Until a few months ago, he was seen everywhere around the Chief Minister, raising eyebrows. Soon after the CM announced his plans to have three capitals, a study was conducted by an expert panel, led by GN Rao. Globally reputed consultancy firm BCG was also involved. Vijaykumar was then all over as if he was the sole representative of the state government. But for reasons none could fathom, he suddenly disappeared from the radar. He reappeared with the government's new proposal to have 13 additional districts to complement the existing 13. What beats officials is that it was the Planning Department that worked on the government's proposal for some time.

Spin off of creating new districts

Whatever be the benefits of administration, the creation of additional 13 districts has brought some couples among IAS/IPS officers in proximity. They are very happy. For example, East Godavari district was divided into three districts. Krutika Shukla was appointed as Kakinada District Collector and Himanshu Shukla was appointed as Konaseema District Collector. The Collectors are wife and husband. In the same way, Mallika Garg was appointed as Prakasam district SP and Vakul Zindal was appointed as Bapatla SP. They are wife and husband. Some other couple too have been appointed in such a manner that they can live in proximity.

—Yours truly

TRS deeksha in Delhi is looting deeksha, says Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's deeksha on Monday in New Delhi is just a looting deeksha, former TPCC chief Ponnala Laxmaiah said here on Sunday.

He said that there is no meaning in KCR's deeksha as he had given a written assurance that he will not give booted rice to the Centre during Rabi. He said that KCR is conducting the deeksha to hide his deals with rice millers. He said that farmers will face injustice if KCR delays purchasing paddy in the name of deekshas.

He said that farmers are now selling paddy to rice millers for a mere Rs 1,350 per

quintal as the government had failed to purchase paddy resulting in a loss of Rs 12,000 per acre for farmers.

TPCC Working President Mahesh Kumar Goud also said that KCR staging a dharna in New Delhi is nothing but deceiving farmers.

He said that the state government had not made any clear statement on the procurement of paddy. The state government has not opened paddy procurement centres in the State so far, he added.

The farmers are selling their paddy to rice millers at very low prices as the government had not opened procurement centres, he said.

Mahesh alleged that rice millers had colluded with the

Will try hard to bring Cong to power

Responding to his appointment as the Congress' Star Campaigner in Telangana, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that he will try his best to discharge the responsibilities of a Star Campaigner. He said that he will launch public movements regarding people's problems by exposing the failures of the TRS government. He alleged that the TRS government is handing over the Rs 2,000 crore worth government land located in Shaikpet to a private company. Komatireddy said that he was happy as the Congress high command had appointed him the Star Campaigner on Srirama Navami. He said, "All these days I was confined to Nalgonda district. I will tour Telangana to bring Congress to power and expose Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. We will take a decision on the steps needed to bring the party to power in Telangana after discussing with the high command. I will try hard to recoup the lost sheen of the Congress in the state."

government spawning a Rs 4,800 crore scam. He said that the Chief Minister must open

paddy procurement centres immediately if he had any sincerity.

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy...

Continued from page 1

A Congress leader said that giving positions to leaders will reduce differences of opinion among leaders. So the AICC started giving posts to Telangana Congress leaders.

The appointment of Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who had earlier attempted to bag the post of TPCC chief as the Star Campaigner in Telangana may clear the way for Nalgonda MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy to get the AICC General Secretary post. Uttam Kumar Reddy and some leaders from Telangana have been trying hard to get the AICC General Secretary post. Uttam had been seriously trying to get the TPCC chief's post as his TPCC chief tenure was over.

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy also tried to get the AICC General Secretary post. However, the party made him the Star Campaigner of Telangana.

Yechury re-elected as CPI(M) General...

Continued from page 1

Ram Chandra Dome was elevated to the polit bureau from the central committee and has become the first Dalit representation in PB ever.

Two new faces - LDF convenor A Vijayaraghavan from Kerala and All India Kissan Sabha president Ashok Dhawle - have also been selected to the polit bureau of the CPI(M).

Meanwhile, senior leaders S Ramachandran Pillai, Biman Bose and Hannan Mollah were dropped from the PB as they crossed the upper age limit of 75 years. However, all three of them are now special invitees to the central committee.

Among the 85-member central committee, 17 are fresh faces, while 15 are women members.

State ministers K N Balagopal, P Rajeev, former MP C S Sujatha and Kerala women's commission chairperson P Sathidevi are the new entrants to the central committee from Kerala.

The five-day-long national conference of the Left party will come to an end today with a massive rally at Kannur.

'CM Bommai outsourced law & order to Sangh Parivar'

Continued from page 1

"An act of Mareecha in the name of Rama!! It is the Ravanaas who are dictating Mareechas, & those Ravanaas should also be punished," he further said.

He said if Bommai is still the Chief Minister of Karnataka, he should get the goons of Sriram Sena 'kicked into jail for vandalising shops of Muslim traders in Dharwad. If Bommai is incapable of doing this, it is better to resign for the benefit of Karnataka, he added.

He was referring to the vandalism by Hindu activists who destroyed watermelons of

Muslim vendors at Nuggikeri Anjaneya Swami temple on Saturday saying that they cannot do business of Hindu temple region.

The Hindu outfits had also petitioned the temple management citing a government rule that non-Muslims cannot do business inside Hindu temples. When there was no response, they reportedly went on the rampage.

"The goons of SriRama Sena have presented the picture of @BJP4India's 'Rama Rajya'. In reality, this is Ravana Rajya in the name of Rama," Siddaramaiah said.

Noting that the attack by goons of Sriram Sena is not just on the Muslim traders, but also an attack on farmers growing water melon, Siddaramaiah expressed his apprehension that if these goons continue to wander on the streets, they will try enter all the houses.

The former Chief Minister even charged Bommai of being insecure of his position and having no control over his cabinet. In an attempt to save his chair, he has pledged the govt & his integrity with Sangh Parivar, he alleged.

"Bommai has failed to shut the foul mouths of communal

anti-heroes like C T Ravi (MLA and BJP national general secretary), N Ravikumar (MLC) from commenting on the investigation by Police Commissioner. These statements demoralise the entire Police department," Siddaramaiah said.

Highlighting that Karnataka is known for peace and harmony, in which he took pride, the former chief minister said the attack on Muslims by wings of Sangh Parivar and BJP has embarrassed Kannadigas in front of the whole world.

He also said that Kannadigas will never excuse the acts of vandalism.

Covid patients report health...

Continued from page 1

So I worked on it persistently and now I have the sense of small back with me. I didn't realise that its impact would last a year or more."

Similarly, there are many patients who have been continuously reporting symptoms like fatigue, muscle pain, headaches, cough and difficulty in breathing for more than a year.

According to statista.com, till February 2022, there have been over half a billion people across the world who have been affected with Covid-19. Among them, about 25-50% of them are experiencing long covid symptoms.

Covid has not gone, is changing...

Continued from page 1

It may have taken a pause, but we never know when it will resurface. It is a 'bahurupiya' disease. To stop this, nearly 185 crore doses (of vaccines) were administered, which surprised the world. This has been made possible due to your support," he said.

The PM also said the devotees of Maa Umjiya should undertake a project to take care of the health of malnourished children and anemic mothers at the village level.

"The Maa Umjiya Trust, which manages the temple, should organise competitions at the village level promoting good health of children, he said.

"The devotees of Maa Umjiya should ensure no child suffers from malnutrition, irrespective of which community he/she

belongs to. If a child is strong, then the community and the country will become strong," he said.

The prime minister also said the awareness against female foeticide has resulted in the country's daughters showing their might in the Olympics. "Who will not take pride in our daughters?" he added.

Modi also requested people to support the government's campaign to save Mother Earth through adoption of natural farming, and continue the work to conserve water.

"We will have to save Mother Earth...We have got a governor (of Gujarat-Acharya Devvrat) who is totally committed to natural farming. He has addressed farmer meetings at the taluka level, and lakhs of farmers have turned to natural farming," he said. People should support

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel by responding to his call for the same, he said.

Modi also asked people to undertake water conservation by creating 75 'Amrit Sarovars' in each district by digging, deepening, and renovating the existing water bodies.

"Let us undertake the project of 75 lakes in each district...It's not a big deal for you all who have made lakhs of check dams. Imagine how big a service this will be," he said.

The PM said people who have faced severe water crisis should not give up the practice of water conservation, regardless of the success achieved in this field.

"This is something that needs to be undertaken every year before monsoon by deepening of lakes and cleaning of water channels to conserve water," he said.

Large crowds with no masks take...

Continued from page 1

The participants had a joyful experience with the loud music. One of the participants, Rahul Shiva, said, "This Ram Navami Shobha Yatra held after two years is much more energetic and enthusiastic than ever. The massive crowd's Jai Shri Ram reverberated in the city of Bhayyanagar."

The people here truly have tremendous devotion. I am short of words to describe the gigantic multitude of Ram Bhakts. This year it's not just a Shobha Yatra but a massive crowd of Hindus from every

corner of the city, he added

"This is my first time at the Ram Navami Shobha Yatra and I'm amused by the incredible crowd. The huge rallies and music systems lift the morale of everyone making every bhakt tireless," another participant said.

The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad had traffic restrictions from 11 am to 10 pm on Sunday. Traffic was restricted in several lanes at that time. Vehicles were diverted on some routes and told to take alternative routes. Goshamahal and Sultan Bazaar traffic police stations also faced restrictions. The procession passed

Police use drones to keep tabs...

Continued from page 1

All officials on duty have the responsibility to ensure that the procession is held peacefully, the CP said. "We asked them not to organise non-permitted processions but we came to know about them in Amberpet and in Begumpet as the High Court had permitted them. Our taskforce teams took part in the arrangements in large numbers. Other departments like electricity, fire, RTC, and GHMC worked well to check all roads and services. The officials also discussed with Muslim representatives as they may be moving in large numbers for Ramzan prayers" he added.

through Bartan Bazaar, Siddambar Bazaar Mosque, Shankar Sher Hotel, Gauliguda Kaman, Gurudwara, Putlibouli

Chowrasta, Kothi Andhra Bank and finally reached the Hanuman Gymnasium in Sultan Bazaar.

BJP's Rythu...

Continued from page 1

He said that farmers are selling paddy for Rs 1,400 a quintal instead of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 1,960. Premender said that the state government should take responsibility for this and demanded that the government should start procuring paddy immediately or quit.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹245
Without Skin	₹265
Broiler at Farm	₹135

EGG RATES ₹/100

HYDERABAD	355
VIJAYAWADA	393
VISAKHAPATNAM	400
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹3.55

SC agrees to hear plea challenging AP Reorganisation Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea related to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

The plea contended that the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act was passed by both houses of Parliament in a 'controversial' manner.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana was told by advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for a petitioner, that though the challenge to the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, one of the key aspects of the petition, has become infructuous with the passage of time, there are other important issues which needed to be adjudicated upon.

"This case is regarding the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh."

War over vari in Delhi

Continued from page 1

unemployment, remunerative incomes for farmers and national development.

All arrangements have been made for the demonstration with seating arrangements provided for about 1,500 elected public representatives belonging to the TRS.

A 40-foot-dais has also been constructed from where the Chief Minister, TRS working president and Minister KT Rama Rao, TS Cabinet Ministers and other elected representatives will stage the protest.

Hundreds of TRS elected representatives have already reached New Delhi by flights and trains. Artists and TRS social media warriors have also gone to New Delhi to participate in the dharna.

Apart from TRS' elected

representatives, leaders representing various other political parties, farmers' unions and other civil organisations are expected to participate in the demonstration.

Many of these organisations have already announced their support for the protest, which is being considered as one of the largest farmers' protests in recent times after the protests organised against farm laws that were repealed later.

Meanwhile, the surroundings of Telangana Bhavan have turned pink with streets in the national capital adorned with flex boards and cut-outs of K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Rama Rao, Ministers and others, apart from TRS flags.

The massive hoardings of the Chief Minister carry Telangana's demand for a uniform national policy on food

TRS will fight for all farmers' interests: Kavitha

Continued from page 1

Applauding the efforts of KCR, the former MP said that it was sheer grit of the CM that made 'barren Telangana a prosperous and productive land,' and now that is ready to serve the rest of the country.

The Telangana Chief Minister's daughter said that no government had prospered at the cost of farmers in India.

grain procurement.

Around 150 hoardings have been installed near Parliament, carrying punch

Tikait to participate in TRS protest

Continued from page 1

He also pitched for a uniform procurement policy that is being demanded by the TRS. Appreciating the Telangana government's Rythu Bandhu scheme, Rakesh Tikait said it was an ideal scheme that needed to be replicated across the country.

Like in Telangana, 24-hour power supply should be extended to the farming community in all States across the country, he said.

Due to the Centre's 'anti-farmer' policies, the farming community was facing a lot of inconvenience.

The slogans on the posters protesting the Centre's discriminatory policy towards Telangana and its farmers are in both English and Hindi.

The Centre should announce the Minimum Support Price for all agriculture products produced across the country, he said. "We will extend support to any initiative taken up by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao for the welfare of the farming community," Rakesh Tikait said.

Recalling that the Centre had repealed the three farm laws after the farmers' agitation, the BKU national spokesperson demanded that the Centre should announce ex gratia payment of Rs 25 lakh to the kin of those who had died during the agitation.

The slogans on the posters protesting the Centre's discriminatory policy towards Telangana and its farmers are in both English and Hindi.

French nationals...

Continued from page 1

referendums, legislative elections, European elections and election of Councillors of French citizens abroad," a release said.

While the Puducherry region has two polling booths housed on the premises of Consulate General of France and in the French school Lycee Francaise, Karaikal and Chennai have one polling station each.

A number of young and elderly voters turned up at the booths in the forenoon Sunday. A 22-year old voter told PTI that she was doing a course in a college affiliated to Pondicherry University and this was the first time that she was exercising her franchise.

Elderly women were also part of those who cast their votes at a booth in the French Consul General office. A 81-year old woman was seen being helped by an autorickshaw driver to reach the polling booth.

Meanwhile, a large number of people who are eligible to cast their vote exercised their franchise in Chennai.

Consul General of France, Lise Talbot Barre visited Alliance Francaise of Madras-The Indo-French Cultural Centre in Chennai and inspected the arrangements made for holding the polls.

The Alliance Francaise premises is the only polling booth in Chennai while voting is being held in Puducherry (two centres) and Karaikal (one), sources said.

CONTAMINATED WATER ISSUE AT MADHAPUR

Locals become panicky as number of victims rise

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tensions have risen again in Madhapur as locals of Guttala Begumpet are worried as the number of victims of polluted water has been increasing day by day. The number of victims of contaminated water in Madhapur's Vaddera Basti has risen to 89 so far. Doctors said 13 people have been admitted to the hospital with vomiting and diarrhoea since Saturday night.



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On April 7, local people of Guttala Begumpet complained of vomiting and diarrhoea problems after drinking contaminated water. A day after the incident, 58 victims were treated at Government Hospital at Kondapur. Later five among them were shifted to Gandhi Hospital as they were suffering from increased kidney related problems. However, 26 victims were discharged from the hospital. There are also young children among those receiving treatment.

government has taken steps to provide better medical services to the affected people, who are being treated at hospitals. Telangana State Municipal Administration Minister KTR and Health Minister Harish Rao and the medical teams are paying special attention to the health of the people and doctors are working hard to provide better medical services, he said.

On Sunday, locals are panicked as the number of victims is steadily rising. They claim that contaminated water is the main cause of their illness.

"We are also arranging meals for the relatives of the victims who have been undergoing treatment at the hospitals for the last three days and will take care of the people in all possible ways," he said.

Meanwhile, Madhapur Division Corporation V Jagadishwar Goud said that the

No taps for 69 connections at Vaddera Basti: HMWSSB

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board officials said on Sunday that there were no taps (pipes) for 69 water tap connections at Vaddera Basti in Guttala Begumpet. During an inspection of the tap connections at Guttala Begumpet by the Water Board MD Danakishore, the authorities suspect due to lack of tap connections the drinking water might have been contaminated.

Water Board officials went house to house in the wake of the recent illness of people at Vaddera Basti in Guttala Begumpet and got to know that more than half of these were found to have toilets next to tap connections. And this might have led to the pollution of water. Upon learning of the main cause of the problem the water department staff immediately tightened the taps and made necessary repairs.

TS registers 13 fresh Covid cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana state on Sunday recorded 13 fresh corona virus cases taking the total positives in the state to 7,91,498. No deaths due to the infection were reported in the last 24 hours and the toll remained at 4,111, a health department bulletin said on Sunday. Hyderabad accounted for the highest number of 10 cases. A total of 31 people recovered from the disease on Sunday taking the cumulative number of recoveries till date to 7,87,173. The active cases stood at 214, the bulletin said. A total of 10,905 samples were tested on Sunday and the total number examined till date was 3.43 crore. The fatality case rate was 0.51 per cent and the recovery rate 99.45 pc.



ENACTING MYTHOLOGICAL ROLES



(Top) On the occasion of Srirama Navami, folk artists at Mini Shilparamam at Uppal in Hyderabad on Sunday, Minister Talasani Srinivasa Yadav performing puja at Sanathnagar temple in the city on Sunday.

Medchal segment to get 50,000 tap connections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

State government has been developing infrastructure to boost drinking water supply in municipal corporations and municipalities in and

around GHMC. As part of the exercise, in Medchal constituency alone, works are under way to provide 50,219 new drinking water connections. These works are being executed under the ORR

Phase-II project in Medchal Constituency at an estimated cost of Rs 240.11 crore by the HMWSSB. The Board will charge only Re.1 per new connection and works are underway at a brisk pace,

officials said. "Though the deadline to complete the works in Medchal is 2024, we are trying to complete it by mid-2023," said P Ravi Kumar, Director (Technical), HMWS&SB.

Man set ablaze by friends 2 days ago, dies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 25-year-old man was set ablaze by two persons at Erragadda in S.R Nagar police station limits two days ago and he died while undergoing treatment on Sunday morning. The victim was identified as Adil (25), a resident of Krishnanagar. On the day of incident, he was called to the premises of Institute of Mental Health Erragadda. He was allegedly set ablaze by Mohd Bin Ali (30) and Azhar (25), over some disputes between them, the S R Nagar police said. The victim sustained burns in the attack on Friday night and was shifted to OGH for treatment where he succumbed to burns while undergoing treatment on Sunday. The police took the two persons into custody.

City people can enjoy indoor skydiving from April 17



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GravityZip, said to be the country's first indoor skydiving arena, was unveiled at Kokapet on Saturday with Principal Secretary (IT) Jayesh Ranjan as chief guest and Cyberabad Police Commissioner M Stephen Raveendra as the guest of

honour. The arena is an initiative by GravityZip Sports Private Limited, started by Ramana Meda and Sushil Meda. It aims at providing a reliable and controlled indoor skydiving experience in a safe environment with multiple levels of protocols and contingencies built-in, says a press release.

More skills essential for job aspirants to achieve goals

DEEPIKA PASHAM ■ HYDERABAD

Pandemic made students and professionals to be ahead in skilling. As non IT streams are garnering more space there might not remain a clear bifurcation between IT and non IT in future.



"The outcome of the digital revolution was that the youth was equipped with necessary domain skills but lacked the necessary soft skills and tech insights to help them get placed more amicably."

"The outcome of the digital revolution was that the youth was equipped with necessary domain skills but lacked the necessary soft skills and tech insights to help them get placed more amicably. Skilling is the new mantra, and in keeping with the changing times, learners and professionals think it is essential to witness an advancing literacy to witness an advancing leap in the workforce," says Girish Singhania, CEO, EduBridge. Though educational institutions empower learners with requisite domain skills, in the real-life space, the use of

domain skills requires the due application of logic, creativity, and analytical insights to get the ball rolling. These attributes are perpetuated by some of the EdTech institutes, empowering learners to carry themselves more confidently and resolve issues that arise in the workspace. One of the non-IT employees Nikheel says, "See Degrees teach us a lot but it is our responsibility to be skilled and

updated. During the pandemic I read about the certification courses in risk Management and I started planning for a certificate course in risk management. This certification will help me to boost my career and growth in my next level promotion." IT and the Digital is the need of the hour but it is also the support from non-IT streams which helps for growth in IT. Asking about the pro-

files students are opting in non-IT, Girish says, "Opportunities to non-IT learners and professionals are limitless. Business Intelligence and Data Analytics, Digital Marketing are hot segments that even young professionals from non-IT streams are foraying into. Cloud computing and architecture have made a defining presence for non-IT goes with no need for coding or IT background."

Adivasi girls hold workshop on gender violations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

One day workshop was organised by spectacular girls, a collective of Adivasi girls from Harimendorf hostel for post-matric girls at Adikmet, Hyderabad on Sunday. The workshop on the topic 'Gender related violations' was conducted at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram and was supported by the Department of Women Development and Child welfare, Government of Telangana. This informal group aspires to engage with social issues. The collective has invited Vyjayanthi Vasanta Mogli a transgender person and Human Rights and RTI activist and Sushma Gumpenapalli, an advocate practising at High Court of Telangana, Hyderabad as the speakers.

TSIC invites applications for Social Impact Bootcamp 2022

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) has invited applications for the upcoming Social Impact Bootcamp (SIB) 2022. TSIC has called for profit and not-for-profit social startups which are addressing at least one Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to apply for the programme. The Bootcamp week will start off with a session on Theory of Change, week 2 will have a session on Customer and Stakeholder discovery, week 3 includes a session on Social Impact Strategy. This will be followed by one demo

day for NGOs and another demo day for Profit startups. The first social impact Bootcamp was first held in 2020.

The present one is a 4-week long mentoring programme for social startups and enterprises that are solving some of the most pressing challenges we are facing today while contributing towards reaching the SDGs. The mentoring programme will culminate in a demo day where the startups will have the opportunity to pitch to impact investors and government officials. The last day to apply for the programme is May 15.

300 students graduated from Roots Collegium

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Roots Collegium's 31st Graduation Day held on Saturday and 300 students graduated from the batches of 2020 and 2021. The graduation ceremony couldn't be held in the last two years due to Covid. Gangula Kamalakar, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies and Consumers Affairs was the chief guest. Addressing the 600 plus audience comprising students, faculty, parents, he said a doctor can make a mistake, an engineer can make a mistake. But if a public representative or a politician makes a wrong decision and makes a mistake it affects thousands. It will be fatal. Take for instance the current state of affairs in Sri Lanka. "I am pleased to note that Roots Collegium, which began



Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakar, Prof R Limbadri, Chairman of TSICHE and others during Graduation Day programme of Roots Collegium

just with 19 students in 1991, strove for the qualitative growth of 15,000 students' lives in the last 31 years. Its current strength 1,400 is a testimony for its success," Kamalakar said. Prof R Limbadri, Chairman of Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSICHE) said Roots Collegium is unique out of 1,080 colleges in Telangana. It is a pioneer in lib-

eral arts and business management. He advised students to have a multi-disciplinary approach. You must keep abreast with changes, the way educational institutions too are changing by adding departments such as Innovation and entrepreneurship which were never heard before, he told students. Sudhakar Rao, Director ICAFI Group and Varun

Agarwal, COO of My Money Karma also spoke. Giving his welcome address, BP Padala, Chairman of Roots Collegium said good education liberates one from ignorance, arrogance, and helplessness. Education is travelling from darkness to light. He advised outgoing students to have clarity of thought, honesty in execution and never giving up.

Repairs to main pipe: No water supply in city areas today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Supply Board (HMWSSB) on Sunday said that the water supply at some places in the Hyderabad metropolis will be disrupted for 6 am on Monday to 6 am on Tuesday. The water board officials will carry out repairs at Lakshmi Garden in RC Puram and Suman College in Madinaguda to prevent leaks in the 1500 mm dia main pipe from Patancheru to Hyderguda in connection with Phase-2 of the Manjeera Water Supply Scheme, which supplies water to various parts of the city. Repair work will continue for 24 hours and water supply will be disrupted in some areas such as Biramguda, Aminpur, RC puram,



Deeptisrinagar, Madina guda, Gangaram, Chandanagar, Miyapur, KPHB Colony, Kukatpally, Bhayanagar Colony, Pragati Nagar, Nizampet, Bachupally, Bollaram and Hydernagar. Officials said water would be supplied to the areas under the Erragadda and Banjara Hills reservoirs with low pressure for the 24 hours. The officials urged the people to use water sparingly in areas where water supply is disrupted.

Lack of staff & equipment impeding surgeries

SIDDHARTH KUMAR SINGH ■ HYDERABAD

In a recent review meeting with regard to tertiary care hospitals of the state, Finance and Health Minister Harish Rao urged the hospital superintendents and HODs to perform more surgeries in government hospitals. Speaking to the Pioneer, Dr Rajkumar, Medical Superintendent, District Hospital, Wanaparthy said, "It is a good idea from the government, but the major problem is lack of equipment in government hospitals especially in districts without which it is not possible to perform surgeries. In orthopedic departments, many hospitals have good equipment, but there are no technicians. The government should focus



on increasing the staff. We have been witnessing an increase in surgeries at government hospitals compared to previous years, but there are issues which need to be resolved after which we can see a rapid rise." Many doctors have also said that the number of surgeries in government hospitals is increasing but it is slow. The

increase is because of the government's move to appoint specialised doctors in district hospitals. Several doctors appreciated the continuous monitoring of the health situation in the state by the Health Minister. Another doctor from Government Hospital Korutla, said, "Before talking about surgeries, the government has to talk

Many hospitals have good equipment, but there are no technicians. The government should focus on increasing the staff. There are some hospitals where there is an orthopedic surgeon, but there are no setups like X-Ray, traction table bed without which a surgeon cannot perform a surgery. Giving one operation theatre and telling doctors to perform 100 surgeries is not the right way.

about manpower in hospitals and also the type of facilities being provided. Giving one operation theatre and telling doctors to perform 100 surgeries is not the right way. There are some hospitals where there is an orthopedic surgeon, but there are no setups like X-Ray, traction table bed without which a surgeon cannot perform a surgery. If all

the equipment is provided, performing a surgery is not a big thing. Another issue is the non-availability of certain implants. For example - in orthopedic surgeries and on many occasions, patient needs a rod implant, in many hernia cases, the patient requires a mesh, and all these need to be supplied by the government to the hospitals.

City-based start-up launches foldable electric bicycle

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary IT, Industries and Commerce launched the first foldable electric bicycle "Hornback" at Lemon a private hotel in Banjara Hills in city on Sunday, Hyderabad. After launching the vehicle, he appreciated the innovation and creativity of the team, he proposed inclusion of 'e-bicycles' into the Telangana E Vehicle Policy. Globally the demand and adoption of e-vehicles has been on upwards trend. E-bicycle segment is the fastest growing segment in the e-vehicles market. Jayesh Ranjan, assured support to the Hyderabad based young

entrepreneurs, founders of Kachbo Design, Nishith Parikh and Rajkumar Kewat, to establish full fledged manufacturing units for 'Hornback' in Telangana in near future, says a release. Kachbo has multiple patents registered for HornBack on the mechanisms they designed. The e-bicycle can go at reasonably high speeds required for urban commuting. The battery can be swapped with ease which makes it ready-to-go, always. In its folded state, it takes less than half the space of a regular bicycle. It can be conveniently wheeled into all forms of public transport, and can be fit in car boots or elevators with ease.



Principal Secretary (IT) Jayesh Ranjan riding electric bicycle

Thousands witness celestial wedding

Minister for Endowments A Indrakaran Reddy presents Mutyala Thalambalu to deities on behalf of the State government



Minister for Endowments A Indrakaran Reddy and Minister for Transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar along with devotees at Badrathi temple on Sunday

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Sri Rama Navami celebrations were organised at the historical Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Devasthanam on a grand scale. Fervour and gaiety marked the festival which was performed in the presence of a large number of devotees after a gap of two years.

The celebrations were a low-key affair for two years because of coronavirus pandemic. Celebrations were confined to indoors of the temple. Only a limited number of people attended the celebrations.

The rituals associated with the celebrations began early in the morning amid chants of Vedic hymns. Later, the festival

deities were taken from the main temple to the decorated Mithila stadium. Priests performed 'Vishwakshena puja' and other rituals. At 'Abhijit Lagna' the wedding ceremony was performed. Minister for Endowments A Indrakaran Reddy, Minister for Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar and Minister for Women and Child Welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod offered silk clothes and Mutyala Thalambalu to the deities on behalf of the State government, a tradition followed since the times of Bhakta Ramadasu. Bhadrathi Kothagu dem District Collector Anudeep Durishetty, District Superintendent of Police super-

vised the arrangements. The Ministers and the legislators expressed happiness over the arrangements made by the district administration. Volunteer organisations distributed buttermilk packets to devotees.

Zilla Parishad Chairman K Kanakaiah, Bhadrachalam MLA Podem Veeraiah, Endowments Commissioner V Anil Kumar, District Collectors of Khammam and Kothagudem, VP Gautham and Anudeep D and Superintendent of Police Sunil Dutt were among those present. Lord Rama's coronation ceremony will be conducted at the temple on Monday. Governor Tamilisai Soundara rajan is expected to attend the ceremony.

Lord Rama's wedding performed at Vemulawada temple with religious fervour

The celestial wedding of Lord Rama with His consort Goddess Sita was held at the Vemulawada Sri Rajarajeshwara Swamy temple on Sunday in connection with Sri Rama Navami celebrations on a grand scale with tradition and gaiety amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by the pundits. As the rituals went on, the devotees witnessing the event were overwhelmed with devotion and gave the slogan 'Jai Sriram.' As the Lord Rama tied the mangalsutra around the neck of the Goddess the crowd erupted in joy. The celebrations commenced at the appointed muhurat of 11.55 a.m. at the temple in front of the Temple Trust's meeting hall. The intensity of the rituals picked up pace as the muhurat approached. The wedding was celebrated in Abhijit Lagna. Prior to the commencement of the rituals associated with the celestial wedding, the priests conducted special pujas to the deities - aradhana services and suprabhat services. An air of devotion permeated



Devotees thronging the Sri Rajarajeshwara Swamy temple to witness Sri Rama Navami celebrations at Vemulawada on Sunday

the atmosphere in the temple. Temple executive officer Ramadevi, former MP Ponnamp Prabhakar, Congress leader Aadi Srinivas, BJP district president Pratapa Ramakrishna, Municipal chairperson Ramateertapu Madhaviraju, junior civil judge Prateek, DSP Chandrakant, DCC president Nagula Satyanarayana and others took part in the event.

Minister participates in Sri Rama Navami fete

Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao and his wife Usha on Sunday participated in Sri Rama Navami celebrations at several temples in Palakurthy constituency in the erstwhile Warangal district. Addressing the devotees, after visiting Valmiki Sitha Ramachandra Swamy temple, the Minister said the government has been allotting crores of rupees for the development of temples in the State. He also inaugurated high mast light in the village. Later, he participated in Sri Rama Navami celebrations at Patimidi Gudi, Dubba Thanda, Thorru Aryavaishya Sangam, Vivekananda Association and Teachers Colony.



Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao and his wife Usha taking part in Sri Rama Navami celebrations in Palakurthy on Sunday



Large number of devotees take part in celebrations

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Nearly 3,000 devotees thronged the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy temple here on Sunday to witness Sri Rama Navami celebrations.

People from neighbouring districts of Warangal and Ranga Reddy also participated in the seven-day Brahmotsavams. The special rituals were performed by temple priests Samudhrala Yadhagira Charyulu and other priests.

Nalgonda District Collector Prashant Jeevan Patil offered silk clothes and thalambalu to the temple. Bhuvanagiri MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and District Superintendent of Police Rema Rajeshwari were present.

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Samithi offered drinking water. Samithi conveners K Krishna Babu and J Sandeep Reddy, Sevadal Convener P Vishveshwar, and others participated.

Award for SRM varsity Vice-Chancellor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prof V S Rao, Vice-Chancellor of SRM University, Andhra Pradesh, was conferred with EduStar India's Most Impactful Vice-Chancellor award. The prestigious award ceremony was held on April 9 in Delhi,

under the aegis of Daily Indian Media and Star Brands. The event aims to recognise the contributions of vice-chancellors and chancellors to higher education in India. About eight per cent of the vice-chancellors of Indian private universities were present at the ceremony.

Despite Balineni's assertion Jagan retains Adimulapu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Despite assertion from outgoing minister Balineni Srinivas Reddy, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had decided to retain education minister Adumulapu Suresh in the new cabinet. Balineni Srinivas Reddy and Adimulapu Suresh both belonging to Prakasam district were part of Jagan's first cabinet.

As part of the Cabinet revamp Jagan had indicated that Srinivas Reddy will be dropped and Suresh will be retained due to some social equations. However, Reddy asserted that if he is dropped from the cabinet Suresh should also be dropped as continuing one from the district will send wrong signals to the party cadre.

Srinivas Reddy had also expressed displeasure so openly that Jagan's top aide and government advisor, Sajjala

Ramakrishna Reddy had visited Srinivas Reddy's residence on Sunday afternoon to placate him.

Ramakrishna Reddy had explained to Srinivas Reddy about the circumstances that had led to retention of Suresh and that he would be given importance in the party. Interestingly, while there were some initial reports that Adimulapu Suresh was not part of the new cabinet at the last minute his name was included in the place of Thippeswamy of the Chittoor district.

It is learnt that Suresh was retained for his outstanding performance in Nadu-Nedu programme in the school education department that had transformed the government schools across the state. Jagan is expected to use the good work of Nadu-Nadu as a trump card in the upcoming polls.

'Regularise services of junior panchayat secretaries'



Congress leader G Harshvardhan speaking at a media conference in Mahabubnagar on Sunday

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

TPCC former spokesperson G Harshvardhan Reddy on Sunday demanded that the government regularise the services junior panchayat secretaries by April 12. Speaking to reporters here, recruitment of junior panchayat secretary was made on April 11, 2019. At the time of recruitment, an agreement was made that the services of the secretaries would be regularised in three years. The secretaries would successfully complete their three years of service by April 12 this year, he said. The government should honour its commitment, he observed. District Congress unit media cell convener C J Benahar was present.

VH blasts GHMC for demolishing cricketer Shravani's house



Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao at a sit-in along with sports woman Shravani's relatives outside her demolished house in Hyderabad on Sunday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao lashed out at the GHMC for demolishing woman cricketer Shravani's house. Hanumantha Rao urged Municipal Administration Minister K T Ramarao and Sports Minister V Srinivas Goud to do justice to Shravani immediately.

He said that Shravani will play cricket and bring laurels to the State if the two Ministers respond immediately as she has to participate in the South Zone Women's T-20 Cricket Tournament commencing on April 15 in Pondicherry. He would meet both the Ministers - KTR and Srinivas

Goud - in case they did not respond on the issue. He also urged KTR to respond to the issue immediately on Twitter.

The Congress leaders staged a sit-in outside Shravani's demolished residence on Sunday along with Shravani and her family and other political leaders demanding that the State government should do justice to Shravani immediately. Speaking on the occasion, he made it clear that he would continue his fight till cricketer Shravani got justice.

He alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu, who extended financial assistance to other players, is not responding on Shravani's case as she is a Dalit.

Pharmacists' JAC flays Drug Control officials for failing to enforce relevant laws

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Convener of Telangana JAC of pharmacists Vakita Ashok Kumar has alleged that the Drugs Control Department officials have been behaving as though "white-collar criminals" and debilitating the professional practice of the pharmacists.

Addressing media here on Sunday, he alleged that the highly educated officials are not able to enforce the relevant laws on practice of the profession of pharmacists.

The officials have forgotten that the practice of the business of pharmacists has equal importance on a par with other professionals like doctors and lawyers, he said.

Can anyone hire a doctor's degree and run a hospital or can anyone run the office of a lawyer hiring the law degree and appear in courts, he wondered.

He alleged that the laws related to practice of pharmacy in Telangana are not being enforced. Medical shops have



Convener of Telangana JAC of pharmacists Vakita Ashok Kumar

been selling steroids and antibiotics across the counter with the help of the hired pharmacy certificate, he said expressing concern over the same situation prevailed during the Covid-19 pandemic period too. He expressed concern over many people experiencing several new health complications, including the dreaded black fungus.

When a letter was addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue, there was no action on the implementation of the laws related to pharmacy practice in spite of the PMO giving orders in this regard.

He alleged that the full-scale pharmacy council was

due to be constituted for the past eight years. He alleged that some drug inspectors earn bribes ranging between Rs 20,000 to Rs 30,000 to award licenses to medical shops and walking all the way to banks. Officials were well aware of the fact that the medical shops are being run with the help of the hired pharmacy certificates. Director General Preeti Meena issued orders to implement Rule 65 (2), but medical shops have been ignoring the orders, he lamented.

When Telangana pharmacists' JAC affiliated to call on Preeti Meena, she gave appointment but evaded meeting the leaders.

He alleged that there are middlemen in the DCA office who would get licenses to run medical shops issued for consideration and threatened to meet the ACB and Vigilance officials with all evidence to enforce implementation of the relevant rules.

JAC general secretary Srinivas, co-convener Blaraju and others were present.

Two siblings electrocuted

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Two siblings were electrocuted when they came in contact with a live wire at Cherlopalli village in D Hirehal mandal on the night of Saturday. The deceased Ramachandra (45) and Ganganna (43) were farmers.

Vinod dares BJP leaders to stage dharna in New Delhi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Planning Board Vice Chairman, B Vinod Kumar, has asked BJP leaders to stage a dharna at New Delhi and prove their sincerity towards farmers.

He asked BJP leaders to stop shedding crocodile tears and using deceiving words.

He also suggested that the BJP leaders can learn by standing with farmers instead of provoking them. Speaking to the media at New Delhi on Sunday evening, Vinod Kumar said that Telangana BJP chief Sanjay and Union Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy had provoked farmers to cultivate paddy in the

Yasangi season stating that they will take the responsibility of convincing the Centre to procure the paddy. However, the BJP leaders are now roaming around free. He said that the people were observing the conspiring attitude of the BJP and will teach a fitting lesson at an appropriate time.

Cong pledges support to farmers' demand for MSP

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee secretary Patel Ramesh Reddy on Sunday pledged to support the agitation by paddy farmers in support of their demand for remunerative price for their produce. The Congress activists, led by Patel Ramesh Reddy, staged a 48-hour

protest at Suryapet Agriculture Market Yard on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the middlemen were dictating terms to the farmers. The rice millers, who procured paddy at Rs 1,800 a quintal on Friday, had reduced the price to Rs 1,200 a quintal on Sunday. The Congress leader criticised the Suryapet Agriculture Market Chairman for failing to

visit the market to ensure that the farmers get the minimum support price. The District Collector on Friday visited the Market yard and assured the farmers that steps would be taken to ensure a minimum support price for their produce. He recalled that Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, when he was the Chief Minister, had set up IKP centres to enable the farmers to

sell their produce and secure the minimum support price.

He demanded that Minister for Energy G Jagadishwar Reddy intervene and ensure that the farmers secure remunerative price for their produce. The police, however, thwarted the protest by the Congress activists by whisking them away to police station.

Govt urged to release funds for Pranahita Pushkarams

SRINIVAS KARENGALA
■ JAYASHANKER
BHUPALAPALLY

In the first ever River Pranahita pushkarams, in Telangana State, occurring at Kaleswaram where the confluence of three rivers - Pranahita, Godavari and Saraswati (subterranean) - takes place from April 13 to 24. But, the State government is accused of not making suitable allocations to make all arrangements

for the once in a 12 year event at the venue.

The devotees urged the government to allot sufficient funds for the event. They recall how the rulers of undivided AP regime had allocated at least Rs 9.5 crore for the event. The then regime provided amenities for the people thronging the place for the event like development of cement roads, pushkar ghats, providing drinking water and improvement of sanitation and so on. Since Pranahita Pushkarams is the first of the event to take place in New State of Telangana, it is predicted that the government authorities will make



suitable arrangements on a grand scale. In the run up to the event, the government officials conducted series of review meetings and sent proposals to the government seeking funds. Even as the event is approaching, there are no signs of government making any allocations to it. In fact, only three days are left for the commencement of the event.

The response of the government is said to be lukewarm in making arrangements for the event at Kaleswaram. The response from the government for requisition of Rs 4 crore funds to make necessary arrangements at Kaleswaram is almost zero. However, five days ago the District Collector Bhavesh Misra sanctioned Rs 49 lakh to implement pushkar works on ad hoc basis. The Rural Development department is building 110 toilets at a cost of Rs 35 lakh, including 40 at the main pushkar ghat, 10 at the VIP ghat, 20 at the Village Park and parking place, 20 near

Harita Hotel and 20 near the burial ground.

In all 10 water tanks with each capacity of 2000 litres will be deployed at various places in Kaleswaram.

Moreover, an additional 15 water tankers, which went out of service, would be deployed after getting them repaired.

Arrangements are under way to provide tap water near Godavari river and Kaleswaram temple vicinity. A battery of taps are being provided at Pushkar Ghat to

enable the devotees to take shower. Tents would be erected and pandals would be raised to protect the thronging public from sweltering heat of summer.

The local devotees are expressing apprehension over the scope of outbreak of epidemics due to utter insanitary conditions prevailed at Pushkar Ghat. This is attributed to paucity of funds to get the garbage cleared.

River Pranahita which flows into Telangana from Maharashtra enters Telangana at Tummidihetti in Asifabad district. It winds its way to merge with River Godavari at Kaleswaram in Bhupalapalli district passing through via Arjunagutta in Kotapalli Mandal of Mancherla district. Because of Mukteswaraswamy temple, the number of foothills of devotees would be very high in Kaleswaram compared to the arrival of devotees taking a plunge in River Pranahita at other places.

Kaleswaram Pushkar Ghat will witness lakhs of devotees not only from Telangana but also from AP, Maharashtra,

Chhattisgarh. It is predicted that at least 1.50 lakh tourists would arrive here. However, the official sources say that the devotees would have to make do with the paucity of the services if the crowd turn out is overwhelming. Officials proposed to widen the narrow VIP Pushkar Ghat at Kaleswaram, but the government is accused of not allocating funds for the purpose. That was why no measures to widen the VIP ghat were taken up. The number of ad hoc toilets being provided in the last minute and the dress changing rooms for women are said to be highly inadequate. The state government has been accused of being insensitive to undertake roads leading to Kaleswaram.

In sharp contrast, the neighbouring Maharashtra government took conduct of Pushkarams as a matter of prestige. To organize the event on a grand scale, the government there released Rs 10 crore. Pushkar arrangements are underway on a grand scale at Nagararam village in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.

Guv to visit tribal habitations in Bhadradi-Kothagudem district

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Tamilisai Soundara rajan will visit remote Pusukunta tribal habitations and other places in Bhadradi-Kothagudem district on April 11 and 12.

As part of her pilot project aimed at improving the nutritional status of the people belonging to the primitive tribal groups, the Governor will launch a series of initiatives at Pusukunta and Gogulapudi, the two adopted tribal habitations of the Kondareddi tribe.

On Monday, the Governor will attend the traditional celestial Pattabhishekam ceremony at the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy temple in Bhadrachalam temple town. Later on the same day, she will attend the traditional Seemantham ceremony of tribal women organised by the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashramam at the Veerabhadra function hall at Bhadrachalam.

The Governor will also visit the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Blood Bank and will

On Monday, the Governor will attend the traditional celestial Pattabhishekam ceremony at the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy temple in Bhadrachalam temple town.

review the functioning of the IRCS' Bhadradi Kothagudem district branch.

On the same day, she will visit the Jagadambasahita Jayalingeshwara Swamy temple at Nacharam village of Dammaipet mandal and offer prayers.

On the second day of her tour, the Governor will visit Pusukunta Kondareddi tribal habitations in the district and will interact with the tribal group people of Pusukunta and Gogulapudi habitations to know their issues first hand and will undertake a series of initiatives. Later, the Governor will visit the Heavy Water Plant at Manuguru.

INDIA CORNER

19 more Sri Lankan Tamils take boat ride, reach India

As many as 19 more Sri Lankan Tamils, including 6 women and 5 children, fled their country using a boat and arrived near here early on Sunday, officials said. Following reports that a group of Lankan Tamils late Saturday night reached Arisalmanai area off Dhanushkodi, about 19 km from here, police personnel including the marine sleuths found and took them to the Mandapam camp. The Tamils told policemen that they travelled by boat from Sri Lanka and were dropped off Dhanushkodi. The Tamil people, including 8 men, said they could not make ends meet in their country in view of the economic crisis and the current political instability. After the crisis unfolded in the island nation, 10 Tamils fled their homes and had come to Tamil Nadu and so far 29 people have arrived here till date. Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from the UK in 1948.



DU to set up two firms to raise money from alumni, funding for 'innovation'

The Delhi University (DU) will set up two not-for-profit companies to seek funds from its alumni and to promote innovation, university Vice Chancellor Yogesh Singh has said. As the university enters its centenary year, Singh said there should be policy reforms. In the centenary year, we should come towards policy reforms to make DU a better place. How can we make DU a happening place? We are doing investments and have asked for a loan from HEFA, he told PTI in an interview last week. The university's Executive Council last month had approved a loan of over Rs 1,000 crore from the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) for infrastructure development and creation of capital assets. The VC said that they are creating a Section 8 company for generating funds for the company. The Section 8 company will ask for funds from alumni and from companies under their CSR activities.



Fake call centre duping US nationals busted in MP; 7 held

Madhya Pradesh police have busted a Gwalior-based fake call centre which was allegedly duping US citizens under the pretext of offering them loans, and arrested seven people in this connection, an official said on Sunday. The call centre, located in Anand Nagar area of Gwalior, was being run by a man from Ahmedabad in Gujarat and his associate, Additional Superintendent of Police Rajesh Dandotia said. They hired local youths who used to pose as employees of a US-based company and offer loans to American nationals, he said. These youths would allegedly get security numbers and other bank details of the US nationals and collect international gift vouchers from the customers as a commission, the official said. Seven people, including a woman, were arrested on Saturday under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act, he said.



In Jammu&Kashmir, it is no longer 'glamorous' to become terrorist

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is on the cusp of a transition as it has lost the "glamour" that was once associated with it, Army commander Lt Gen D P Pandey has said, adding "white collar terrorists" are now desperately trying to lure into their ranks adolescents who may not yet have the maturity to judge right from wrong.



Lt Gen Pandey, the General Officer Commanding (GoC) of Kashmir-based XV Corps, said those aged between 20 and 25 have understood that "violence leads to nowhere" and thus the number of new terror recruits is nearing an all-time low. In addition, 330 terrorists were killed or surrendered since January last year, he said. People in general are fed up with terrorism, the Army commander said and expressed hope that the day is not far when the remaining support to terrorists in Kashmir Valley will vanish as well.

He said the society has started developing some allergy towards the idea of terrorism and it is no longer glamorous to become a terrorist. "Terrorism is on the cusp of a transition and the day is not far when the remaining support for terrorism in the valley will also vanish," he said. "Security forces have been working on a two-pronged strategy -- bringing down the recruitment of local youths and ensuring depletion in terrorist cadres. We have been able to bring down the local recruit-

ment by one-third during 2021," Lt Gen Pandey told PTI in an interview. Sharing data of counter-terrorist operations, he said 330 terrorists have been killed or surrendered since January last year -- the highest in a decade-and-a-half. The number is significant when seen in the backdrop of falling recruitment and infiltration from across the border in the last four years. Only 142 people joined the terrorist ranks in 2021. "As many as 171 terrorists -

- 151 locals and 20 Pakistanis -- were killed in 2021, while 45 terrorists, including 10 Pakistanis, have been eliminated till now this year. As many as 87 terrorists were apprehended or surrendered in 2021 and 27 terrorists this year," he said. "The killing of terrorists off late has been possible because of human intelligence...people are fed up with terrorism," he said. Lt Gen Pandey referred to the killing of SPO Ishfaq Ahmad and his brother Umer Jan by terrorists at Chhattabugh village in central Kashmir's Budgam district on March 27 and said "a sea of people participated in their funeral procession". The brothers were shot by terrorists near their home. The Army commander, who is set to relinquish the post in June this year, had visited the bereaved family to express his condolences and assured the family that the security forces would soon arrest those involved in the dastardly

attack. "The massive participation of people at the funeral of the SPO and his brother is the change. It is increasing by the day and people have also been asking 'akhir kabtak' (how long). The voices may be few today but I am sure that it will snowball into a big movement against terrorism," the Army officer said. Lt Gen Pandey surprised many by visiting north Kashmir's Sopore town -- once a hotbed of terrorism -- on Monday and wished citizens on Ramzan. While interacting with people, Lt Gen Pandey mentioned that Kashmir is on the cusp of a positive change. The situation is peaceful with a marked improvement in all key security parameters -- local terrorist recruitment, law and order situation and strike calls. He prodded the youth to follow the right path leading to an upright life and inspire others to join the path of peace and progress.

'Agri reforms key; repeal of 3 farm laws a setback for farmers'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stressing that reforms are necessary for the agriculture sector, Niti Aayog member Ramesh Chand on Sunday said the repeal of three farm laws has come as a 'setback' to higher price realisation by cultivators and could be a factor in achieving the goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022. He also suggested starting fresh consultations with the states for resuming the agriculture reform process, adding some people have already approached Niti Aayog with a call for effecting the reforms. "You see, reforms are important for the agriculture sector. Some farmers were opposing it (three farm laws)...I think immediately what needs to be done is restarting fresh consultations with the states," the Niti Aayog member, who oversees farm policies at the government think tank, told PTI in an interview. "Already people are approaching us that reforms are needed. But in what way, in what form, in what shape,



that I think we need to wait for some time," he added. Chand was replying to a question on whether the stalled reforms for India's farm economy will get another push after BJP's victory in four states -- Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur -- in the recently held assembly elections. Asked if it was possible to double farmers' income by 2022 without implementation of the three agriculture laws, he said reforms were needed to enable cultivators to get better prices, so if reforms are not happening, certainly that is a setback for higher price realisation by the farmers.

"So upto that extent there will be a setback to that goal (doubling farmers' income by 2022)," he opined. The Narendra Modi-led NDA government has set a target of doubling farmers' income by 2022. The Centre on December 1, 2021 notified a legislation to repeal the three agriculture laws against which thousands of farmers had protested for over a year. These three farm laws were -- Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. To a question on the agriculture sector's growth, he said it will be around 3 per cent in the 2021-22 financial year. Chand added that he expects farm sector growth to improve in the current financial year if monsoon and other conditions remain favourable and do not turn adverse.

border tourism will help boost security

Amit Shah inaugurates Nadabet 'Seemadarshan' project in Guj

PNS ■ BANASKANTHA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that 'border tourism' will help boost border security and connect citizens to BSF personnel, instilling a feeling of respect towards them. Shah was speaking after inaugurating the 'Seemadarshan' tourism project at Nadabet along the India-Pakistan border in Gujarat's Banaskantha district. The project has several attractions, including the 'Beating Retreat' ceremony, on the lines of the exercise held on the Wagah-Attari border in Punjab. Shah said such a tourism project here in Gujarat will help generate employment and stop migration of people from border villages. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken several initiatives to develop border infrastructure with an aim to enhance border security and the Seemadarshan project is one of them, he said. "The border tourism will help boost border security, increase people's respect

towards the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel and help connect people with the security force. I am sure this project will achieve all these three goals," Shah said. The beating retreat ceremony here will become a major attraction for tourists, said Shah, who was accompanied by Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. Shah said Prime Minister Modi had dreamt of developing border tourism and also took several initiatives to develop infrastructure with the aim to enhance border security. Praising the BSF's contribution towards the nation's security from both external and internal enemies, Shah said the country is safe, developing and moving rapidly at the global level because of the BSF jawans who are deployed in harsh conditions, thousands of kilometres away from their families. "The BSF holds several medals and carries with it stories of supreme sacrifice. The entire country takes pride in the bravery shown by the BSF," the Union minister said.

Cong leaders to meet to prep for Chintan Shivar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the party's drubbing in the recent assembly elections in five states, top Congress leaders will soon meet at a 'Chintan Shivar' to deliberate on measures for reviving the organisation at the grassroots level and address fresh challenges. Sources said the party has convened a meeting of its general secretaries and in-charges on Tuesday to work out modalities for the conclave, which is likely to be held in Rajasthan. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel have already offered to host the Shivar in their respective states, and the party leadership may settle for Jaipur in Rajasthan, owing to its proximity to the national capital. During the last meeting of the Congress Working Committee, when the party leadership faced fresh demands for organisational overhaul in the wake of defeat in five states, it was decided that the party will hold another CWC meet after the

Parliament session and finalise details of the Chintan Shivar. The major brainstorming session will chalk out a strategy for course correction to reverse the trend of electoral defeats as the party is now in power in only two states of Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and is part of the ruling coalition in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. The Congress leadership wants every Congress leader to openly discuss the shortcomings and corrective measures to be taken to help spread its ideology and make it fighting fit electorally in the next poll season, party sources said. The party is already fighting internal challenges posed by leaders of the G-23, and Congress president Sonia Gandhi has asked them to air their grievances for resolution at a party platform like the upcoming brainstorming session. Her aim is to bring about unity at all levels of the party, which she has stressed several times in her dialogue with leaders, in order to see a strong organisation to take on the might of the BJP, they said. The continuous tussle

between the old guard and the younger generation has also taken a toll and the issue is likely to be discussed, the sources said. The party is also taking steps to address fresh challenges posed in view of the victory of the Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab, after which Arvind Kejriwal's party is seeking to spread its wings in other parts of the country and is seen as vying to displace the Congress as the principal rival to the BJP. The Congress is already gearing up for assembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh later this year, besides other state polls and the Lok Sabha election in 2024. It has already accepted that it could not effectively "expose the misrule" of BJP state governments in four states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur, due to shortcomings in its strategy. Congress president Sonia Gandhi has also said that she is ready "to make every sacrifice" in the interest of the party.

Case against teacher for molesting student

PNS ■ BEED

Police have registered a case against a teacher for allegedly molesting a 10-year-old girl at a school in Maharashtra's Beed city, an official said on Sunday. The incident took place at the private educational institution on Friday. The 33-year-old teacher allegedly molested the Class 4 student in a classroom and then warned her against informing about it to anyone, the official from Shivaji Nagar police station said. The victim later informed her family members following which her father and other relatives went to the school and demanded an explanation from its management. They also thrashed the accused in the school, the official said. Later, local police reached the school and pacified the girl's family members. Based on complaint filed by the victim's father, the police registered a case against the teacher under Indian Penal Code Sections 354 (molestation) and 354-A (sexual harassment), as well as provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the official said.

Will take everyone along, says Brar

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amrinder Singh Brar, the new chief of the Punjab Congress, promised to take every party leader and worker along to strengthen the organisation in the state, where the faction-ridden party was ousted from power in the recently held Assembly polls. New Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader in the state, Partap Singh Bajwa, said he will fight tooth and nail for the rights of Punjab and its public. Former Punjab minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu, who has been appointed as the working president of the state Congress, and Deputy CLP leader Raj Kumar Chabbawal too said the entire state unit will work as a team. Amrinder Singh Brar, also called Raja Warring, was appointed the party's new Punjab chief in place of Navjot Singh Sidhu by Congress president Sonia Gandhi. Warring, who was the transport minister in the last Congress government, won the Assembly elections from the Gidderbaha constituency. Sidhu was asked to tender his resignation after the party's debacle in the elections.



Bajwa, a former Rajya Sabha MP, was elected as an MLA from the Qadian Assembly constituency. "I promise to work alongside every worker & leader of the party to strengthen the party & carry forward the ideology," Warring said in a tweet after his appointment as the Punjab Congress president. "I am grateful to Hon'ble Congress President Smt Sonia Gandhi ji & Shri @RahulGandhi ji for bestowing upon me the responsibility of President of @INCPunjab," tweeted Warring. In his tweet, Bajwa thanked Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi for his appointment as the legislature party leader.

Raw jute stock limit reduced to facilitate supply to mills

PNS ■ KOLKATTA

The Centre has further reduced raw jute stock limit for balers and traders in a bid to increase supply of the raw material to mills at a time when major foodgrain producing states are facing a shortage for the environment-friendly packaging material, industry stakeholders said on Sunday. In a recent notification issued by the Office of the Jute Commissioner, the maximum stock limit has been brought down to 500 quintals for jute balers from 750 quintals and 50 quintals for traders from 150 quintals, they said. This is the second such move that the authorities have



taken in the current year. "In January, the government reduced the raw jute limit to 750 quintals from 1,500 quintals. Now, the same has been brought down to 500 quintals. It is not a viable quantity for a baling unit to run its operation smoothly," Jute Balers Association secretary A K Palit told PTI. Balers are major suppliers of

raw jute to mills. The ongoing raw material crisis has led to "closure of nearly 15 mills and units that are still running have reduced utilisation and are making losses", a source in the industry claimed. The Centre has put a ceiling on the stock limit with an objective to prevent hoarding of raw jute in the market and ease supply of the commodity to mills at a reasonable price, the industry stakeholders said. The price of raw jute continues to hover around Rs 7,000-7,200 per quintal, but the government will pay Rs 6,500 per quintal as the raw material cost for gunny bag production, they claimed.

Study links high pollution to biofuel burning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The devastating second COVID-19 wave in Delhi saw unusually high air pollution despite a lockdown during the March-May period which could be attributed to exceptionally high biofuel burning at crematoria and higher-than-normal frequency of dust storms, according to a new study. The study conducted by researchers from the National Institute of Advanced Science, Bengaluru; Delhi Pollution Control Committee; Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune; Utkal University and Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology has been published in the multidisciplinary journal Chemosphere. Led by scientist and senior



meteorologist Gufran Beig, the research explained the reasons for the worsening air quality instead of improvement under lockdown by using India's first air quality forecasting framework model of SAFAR. It revealed that an un-

counted emission source was playing a leading role in high air pollution after balancing off the impact of curtailed lockdown emissions. The hidden source of emission is believed to be associated with additional carbonaceous biofuel burn-

ing related to crematories, whose emissions could not be accounted for in modeling. "The model failed to reproduce some observed unusual features mainly related to an unaccounted hidden source of emission which was related to biomass burning at the crematorium in all likelihood," the paper read. The sudden increasing trend in PM2.5 followed the steep surge in infection counts and the peak mortality period (around 400 deaths per day) was directly coinciding with peak levels of PM2.5, it showed. The study modelled the emission as per the wood required for cremation (around 300-400 kg per pyre) for open pyre and accounted for the chemistry of crematoria flue gases which contain

higher percentage of organic, inorganic matter and particulate dust material. The increased carbon rich PM2.5 and PM10 further aggravated the severity of COVID-19 patients and vulnerable population adding to the misery. The impact lasted longer as carbonaceous PM2.5 have relatively longer life to remain suspended in the air, it said. The researchers further found that other peaks in the later part of lockdown were related to the north-westerly winds which often brought dust particles from the desert region to Delhi. The frequency of such dust storms was unusually higher than normal, probably due to free and faster flow of dust without much resistance under the lockdown period.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

At the brink

With political vagabonds playing around its Constitution, Pakistan is in peril today

Pakistan is in peril. It is not about who will succeed Imran Khan. Somebody surely will. Merely swearing in another Prime Minister is no solution. Never has the country's democracy been so shabbily treated and misused to the point of being ignored completely. Even the militarists shied away from cocking a snook at their Constitution. Imran did that with impunity and little remorse. That is the issue. A country can come out of a political crisis. It can weather an economic crisis. Can it survive an attack on its Constitution? The worst thing is, such a realisation is perhaps farthest from people's thoughts today. The focus is on the I-won-you-lost school of politics. The focus is on keeping elections in abeyance so that a Government, however short-term — the National Assembly is set to dissolve in August 2023 — can come to power. The focus is on returning as fast as possible to dynasty politics. That is one blame Imran escapes. Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N president and Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly, is presenting himself as the Prime Minister-in-waiting. He calls for a gathering of dynastic forces after Imran's exit when he says "neither I, nor Bilawal... will interfere" as the law takes its course. He is saying he will carry no vendetta against Imran. What is important is to include Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, chairman of the Pakistan People's Party, in the "we".



Bhutto, as if on cue, welcomes people to "purana" (old) Pakistan. That is all that the two families are interested in. Restoring the status quo. They want to get back to enjoying power like in the past. Imran broke the party in 2018 and now it is time to pick up the pieces. Imagine the mockery of Pakistan's tottering democracy if Shehbaz takes over the hot seat. He is an accused in a money laundering case and was in jail till the courts released him on bail. He is the brother of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, whom the courts disqualified from holding public office and sentenced to prison in the Panama Papers case; now in London on expired bail. The more corrupt or morally compromised the leader, the easier it is for the Pakistani military to control such a person. Then are the minor issues of the FATF threat for terror financing, local jihadi bodies that find shelter in Pakistan, the regressive communal and blasphemy laws, the cracking economy and Pakistan's diplomatic faux pas that no leader ever took seriously. Simply put, Prime Ministers come and go but they neither govern nor subscribe to the rule of law or governance. The former cricketer was once asked by his President to return to captaincy. He repaid the trust with the World Cup. He belied the trust the second time, ruling by rhetoric, conceding ground to the regressive far right, gunning for the Opposition, trusting in populism and pursuing a non-existent Islamist welfare State.

PICTALK



Devotees at a Shobha Yatra on the occasion of Ram Navami, in Hyderabad

PTI

Shooting from the lip

Rahul's intentions may not be devious, but his utterances often land him in the soup

Recently, Rahul Gandhi spoke at the book launch of 'The Dalit Truth' at Jawahar Bhawan in the Capital. We don't know if it is a coincidence or part of a design that whatever Rahul talks about turns controversial. Rahul's 35-minute keynote address was well received by the audience. He spoke passionately but gave enough ammunition to his opponents and, at the end of it, made more enemies than friends.



He has been targeted for saying how the Government is arm-twisting Opposition leaders. He also invited flak for what he told the Dalit boys after the Una incident. Rahul said that the Government was intimidating its political opponents by using the ED and CBI; it was snooping on them through Pegasus. So the politicians with skeletons in their cupboard (and there would be many!) have been 'managed' and marginalised. He then spoke about how the Congress had offered the chief ministership of Uttar Pradesh to Mayawati for an alliance but the offer was declined for no ostensible reason. The contentious claim could be correct but presenting it thus is tantamount to saying that she is corrupt. Instead of hitting the Government, his arrow hit Mayawati. That must have made her uncomfortable.

Thoughts, if not articulated, often lead to such disasters. With Rahul Gandhi, it happens much too often. Rahul also narrated the Una incident, where Dalits were beaten up naked. He said they were beaten "like a dog". He also said that he wanted to understand how a man who can pat animals and kill cockroaches and insects with bare hands couldn't touch a human being. That did not sound proper. Though the intent wasn't wrong, it sounded awkward — comparing Dalits with cockroaches and animals is not the done thing. That has been his problem all along. He is not articulate enough and doesn't care about it. He would just not work on his speeches. Rahul says what he feels like, without caring for repercussions. He went on to say that he went to see the Dalit boys who had consumed insecticide after the Una incident, adding that had his sister been beaten like that, he would have killed the perpetrators with a knife rather than committing suicide. This was again an emotional outburst and not a call to defy the law of the land, which it has been made out to be. But then that is Rahul Gandhi: straightforward, fearless and speaking his heart out, come what may.

Jaipur's Loathing & Fear: JLF memories



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH

The Jaipur Literature Festival conjures up a lot of images not only for the mind's eye but also for the soul and intellect of the attendees

So, it's a dark and somewhat hot night. The Rambagh Palace was beautified as a fair Rajput maiden, ready to receive the who's-who of literature. After all, it was the opening dinner for the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF). With a 'friend of the festival' pass neatly tucked in my pocket, the company of ambassadors, "kings", "princes" and the elite of Jaipur awaited me. Amidst them was a silver-haired magician. Sanjoy Roy's craft had conjured up the JLF many years ago.

The JLF brings beauty and brains to Jaipur, and after-parties are where you get to really meet them off guard. Intoxication, glib flirting and snobby men; no Jaipur after-party is complete without these, and I stuck around till 4 am. Night one was over, and I passed out.

Day One began early. I was at the JLF grounds around 10 am, sipping coffee, still waking up. What struck me was the Palestinian media advisor, wearing a blue linen suit and an undiplomatic personality. I said a 'Hail Mary' for the future of Indo-Palestinian relations, and moved on to the sessions. And guess what I found: More diplomats!

Wearing a modern black bandhgala (traditional Indian-wear), over 6'3" tall, German ambassador Walter Lindner towered over everyone around him. He was proactively Russia-bashing and calling the Ukraine-Russia conflict as "Putin's war". But a young Caucasian woman broke his spell: "Why is Germany accepting Ukrainian refugees and not Syrian or middle-eastern ones?" A Russian agent in the crowd? Nope, but a defiantly truthful agent! But my 'geo-politics' quota was over. I swerved towards Remo, the musician, who was talking about his life and book. Half an hour in, Remo proved his singing was better than his talk.

Behind the main stage, there was a cloistered space aka the writer's lounge. Naturally, it had the best booze, gossip and food. So I entered and was soon joined by a middle height, bluish jacket-wearing man. This writer-



looking-man actually was Turkish Ambassador Firat Sunel, there with his daughter. We chatted about Turkey, the Ottomans, new-age politics, Indo-Turkish relationships and the heartthrob of many Indians — Ertugrul. But our candid conversation was soon to end; the Sunels left early to prepare for his book reading. The JLF music night was on, but I stuck to the bar and conversations. Brushed shoulders with Shashi Tharoor on my way out and headed for the after-party.

Now Day Three was super fun, not because I was hitting the "coffee pot" since 10 am but because I was to hear Mak Dizdar, one of the greatest Bosnian poets translated into Hindi. For an hour or so, I was floating in Dizdar's world and his Bosnia, narrated through the words used by Firaq, Iqbal and Ghalib. However, Mak was no showstopper, though Manoj Bajpayee was. His session was overcrowded, so I caught up with him in the lounge. My question — what was the future of Hindi culture? Where does the hinterland culture go for laurels? His



THE JLF BRINGS BEAUTY AND BRAINS TO JAIPUR, AND AFTER-PARTIES ARE WHERE YOU GET TO REALLY MEET THEM OFF GUARD. INTOXICATION, GLIB FLIRTING AND SNOBBY MEN; NO JAIPUR AFTER-PARTY IS COMPLETE WITHOUT THESE

reply suited him as well as his chic brown leather shoes: "There is a scarcity of platforms. There are now places like this (JLF) which give us platforms, and we deeply appreciate it. Today, we work in Hindi films, yet people of the industry don't know Hindi. But nevertheless, people all over the Hindi belt are organising films and art gatherings. But the media doesn't show it. It will take time, but it's happening."

By the time the day ended, I had digested many sessions covering electoral bonds to UP elections and even heard a former election official say, "You need money and muscle to win elections." Now,

Day Three was Shashi Day, with Tharoor participating in three-four sessions, pulling thousands of people to the venue. Far from being a Fargo of distortions, Shashi did share his views on India and other topics and was flanked by hundreds for selfies and book signings. As the day was ending, Tharoor's words were still buzzing in my head: "India denied to someone among us today, will be denied to all of

us tomorrow. We must never give up, despite setbacks."

The next two days dealt with issues such as climate change, music and the usual *joie de vivre*. To sum up, I met up with Sanjay Roy again, and asked him about the secret to his energy. Surprisingly, it wasn't coca or caffeine, but meditation done every morning. Roy had also collected a group of young men, who were at the heart and soul of his organising abilities. What was his message? "It's young people that can bring about a change; our generation has failed both the planet and the newer generation. The only question for young people is — can they continue to be curious? Can they continue to ask questions about the world?" the wizard had spoken and my time was up. It was a long ride to Delhi, and still little time to filter through the memories of the five days at the JLF.

(The author writes on agriculture and environment, and is a former Director — Policy & Outreach, National Seed Association of India. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JAGAN SHOULD KEEP HIS COOL

Sir — Jagan has stunned many of his admirers when he said that no one can pluck his hair, indirectly a derisive slang in Telugu. Normally a composed man, particularly after becoming the CM, Jagan is being cornered allegedly by unfair allegations of one part of the media and all Opposition parties put together. Ironically, the Congress is subdued, maybe because of its insignificance in Andhra's politics in particular. When he is pushed to *dharmasankat*, Jagan is now referring to characters from Hindu mythology so that people understand the uncanny nature of how illogically he is being targeted by his foes.

Already wounded by courts, financial mess, power problems and fuel hikes, Jagan naturally expects moral support from one and all besides going on with politics. He should know that along with him, there are many CMs who are sailing in identical boats if not the same one. These days, no one in the Opposition is interested in giving suggestions, only in finding faults. Jagan has to move on in spite of and not because of any help from Opposition parties without losing his cool. That is the stark reality. Kodali Nani is enough for him to be vituperative instead of himself stepping into the former's shoes.

D Nagarjuna | Hyderabad

WORKING TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

Sir — Even though we greatly rely on our environment, we are damaging it by exploiting our natural resources. Our negligence can have a harsh effect on the planet's environment. The constant use of fossil fuel-powered vehicles for transportation and incandescent bulbs is detrimental to the environment. We should concentrate on reducing our carbon footprint. First of all, people should try to choose clean transportation options. Public transportation is the right option. Small cars must be prioritised because of their energy-efficient nature. Instead of taking short-haul air trips, people should cover these distances by

Challenges for new Pak Govt



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's ouster extends Pakistan's unenviable record of political instability: No PM there has completed a full term since 1947, although Imran is the first to be removed through a no-confidence vote. Though the weeklong drama preceding the trust vote plunged Pakistan in a constitutional crisis, Imran's downfall had been in the making since last year when he crossed swords with the all-powerful army. The united Opposition in Pakistan, after weeks of tackling obstacles,

has succeeded in its objective of toppling the Imran Khan Government. The Opposition, of course, has cause to celebrate, but maybe not for long. Removing Imran is probably only the first in a long list of challenges that Pakistan's new leader will have to face.

The front-runner for PM post, Shehbaz Sharif, or whoever is elected as Pakistan's new PM, will inherit the same issues that Imran's Government was facing. These include crippling debt, rising inflation, militancy and unsteady relations with foreign powers. The new Government will need to stave off multiple challenges on domestic and foreign relations levels. With his claim that the US was involved in a conspiracy to topple his Government, Imran has directly contributed to the new Government's long list of problems. The new regime will have to fix its relations with the US, which is a key arms supplier. The incoming Government needs to put in hard efforts to undo the damage.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

public transport like trains and buses. Also, there is the need to instal energy-efficient products at homes. LED bulbs are the best option because an eight-tonne watt LED bulb provides the same bright light as a 60-watt incandescent bulb and uses approximately 90 per cent less energy than a traditional bulb. Similarly, passive solar heating is the best equipment for homes as it accumulates sunlight and releases it in the absence of sun. Our small steps will help us save the environment to a large extent.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

THE DRUG MENACE IN TOLLYWOOD

Sir — The ₹2000-crore Telugu film industry, Tollywood, which boasts of the country's second biggest entertainment industry after Bollywood, was taken aback by the spate of drug scandals within a year. Several Telugu film personalities, affluent school and college students, many bureaucrats and their next of kin are in the grip of drug mafia. Hyderabad, no doubt, is

known for its thriving IT sector but the ugly picture of drug mafia is also making an insidious entry. In fact, not a single day passes when ganja, cocaine, hash and other banned intoxicants are not seized. Ganja comes from Andhra and cocaine from Goa and Mumbai.

Recently, the police raided a posh pub at a luxury hotel in Banjara Hills, where around 150 youth were caught using drugs. But they were let off due to their close connection with a few IPS officers, politicians, businessmen and other powerful sections of society. This ugly underbelly is a threat to the nation's security. But nothing worthwhile can be achieved unless the police strike at their roots, ie their sources of supply. Cooperation of all the States from where the contraband arrives is needed to bring the culprits to book.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Naimital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUNDBITE

There will be subsidies available for the purchase of an e-cycle, which can travel up to 45 km on a single charge.



Delhi Transport Minister — Kailash Gahlot

We don't believe it's in India's interest to increase imports of Russian energy.



White House spokeswoman — Jen Psaki

I don't need to do Hindi films. I can do a Telugu film, it'll be seen all over.



Actor — Mahesh Babu

I feel it's unfair to keep fans away from the India-Pakistan contests.



Pakistan Cricket Board chairman — Ramiz Raja

What can the BJP do to us? They are misusing Central agencies to harass us.



Shiv Sena MP — Sanjay Raut



FIRST COLUMN A NEW WORLD ORDER?

Assessing hegemonic stability theory



ISHAAN SAXENA

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has rekindled the debate regarding the nature of international relations. The brutal conflict which has inflicted tremendous destruction seems to have emboldened the perspective that we may witness more global conflict in this century. There was global outrage when gory scenes of bodies lying scattered on the streets came to light. What has become a source of contention is perhaps the realism school of thought. The realists describe a rather gloomy picture of the international economic order. Countries want to wield power and force for personal gains. They claim that the international economy is anarchical in nature. There is a growing clamour call that a concerted effort needs to be made to curtail the burgeoning military might of Russia and China. But a more pertinent question is that can these two states undermine the posi-



tion of the United States? A theory which deserves mention here is the Hegemonic Stability Theory. It argues that a superpower is an indispensable prerequisite for a stable international regime. The theory does underscore the importance of a unipolar world which the world did not witness from the aftermath of World War II till the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now we live in a unipolar world with the United States assuming the role of the world's global police. The US dollar continued to enjoy supremacy and America's culture has penetrated most countries. A liberal international economic order is a reality. But can Russia and China ever compete with the United States? Can they build world class universities? Will their currencies ever enjoy supremacy like the US dollar? Will globally reputed companies ever mushroom in these countries? The communist government in China is already cracking down on the unbridled rise in capitalism. It seems implausible that any sort of dialogue with Russia will lead to any constructive outcome. Vladimir Putin seems determined to reignite the glory of the Soviet era. Is he planning an endless war? Diplomatic overtures to restore normalcy and mitigate the crisis may not result in anything constructive. But the Hegemonic Stability Theory will surely stand the test of time. America will have to carefully balance how it confronts these two nations. The approach will have to be nuanced. The view that America is the world's dominant force was challenged during the rapid exit from Afghanistan last year. The end of the Cold War era contributed to the rise of constructivism. It is a widely held belief that individuals and non-state actors played a prominent role in achieving the end result; a unipolar world. Ideas and actions of individual leaders play a pivotal role in politics. A number of world leaders have joined hands in displaying support for Ukraine. An arms race will slowly begin to emerge. The Pentagon has already urged the Congress for more money and has not precluded the possibility of a global conflict. Given the internecine nature of nuclear warfare, it seems improbable that conflict could be elevated to those levels. The dominance of America's military prowess will be challenged. The US has already warned China of severe consequences if it assists Russia. Trade disruptions seem an eventuality. Terrorist organizations could regroup in an attempt to rupture fragile relations. India has chosen its traditional approach of calling for peace and diplomacy to mitigate the extent of the conflict. It is only a matter of time before we will be forced to take a firm stand at this critical juncture. Indo-Russian ties are deeply rooted in history. But at times, they also need to be reassessed as a direct result of the changing nature of international relations.

(The writer is a socio-economic commentator. The views expressed are personal.)

Wang's walk sign of China's desperation

Russia's neutrality in the South China Sea dispute and its understanding of Sino-Pak collusive threat to India can help limit China's sphere of influence



NIKSHTHA KAUSHIKI

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi's tour of four South Asian countries in the backdrop of the Ukrainian crisis and the Sri Lankan economic crisis displayed its sheer desperation for the future of OBOR. President Vladimir Putin has brutally cut short President Xi Jinping's 'China Dream', resulting in a blockade of the Russian route. The persistent problems of Central Asia make the situation dicier for Beijing. Within South Asia, the Sri Lankan economic and political turmoil has made small countries like Nepal more apprehensive of Chinese intentions. The consequences of the Sri Lankan balance of payments crisis owing to its decision to sideline international creditors have accelerated the process of balancing against Beijing.

The South Asian countries except for Pakistan now acknowledge the financial implications of Chinese loans. For instance, Myanmar has started pushing back against the Chinese tactics and has moved strategically closer to India. Against this backdrop, Wang's visit had the objective of assuring the Chinese leadership and the international community of its goodwill in South Asia just before the 20th Party Congress.

For Afghanistan, Wang continued Beijing's policy of having official talks with the U.N. designated terrorist Sirajuddin Haqqani, the supposed "interior minister". Post the South Asia tour after the Third Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the Afghan issue, Beijing displayed a strategic inclination to give legitimacy to the Taliban by sidelining its human rights abuses. The sidelining of India on the Afghan issue is indicative of its sinister objectives. It is here that the US could have played a play a divisive role through its strategic flirting. Beijing is wary of its sea routes and is searching for alternate routes via Pakistan and Iran. The development hints at the upcoming 'normalisation' of the relations, and an extension of the BRI corridor might follow. With Iran already by its side because of an anti-American stand, the strategic experts are wary of a possible new axis of non-democratic regimes in India's vicinity which perhaps can reshape the Asian power dynamics unless skilfully managed. Nevertheless, it is not very likely to expect Tehran to forgo its Shia factor in favour of Afghanistan and Pakistan in return for the lucrativeness of the infrastructure development.

There is little that China has to offer to Pakistan, which is neck-deep in its debt trap. Islamabad owes China \$24.7 billion, or 27 per cent of its external debt. Apart from its projection as a 'fortress of Islam' or a Muslim brotherhood leader with nuclear weapons, the political turmoil finds no takers. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) makes things worse for the CPEC Projects passing through Gwadar. Any amount of force used either by Pakistan or China could raise the human rights issue at an international level. Instead, the sword of blacklisting hangs over the coun-



try, especially with its 'democratic coup' that the world is witnessing. The mess gets all the more complicated with the different foreign policy approaches of Bajwa and Imran Khan. It is perhaps for the first time that the tussle between the civilian and military results in differing aligning positions, making the developments quite intriguing. In either case, economic sanctions on Pakistan due to its proximity with Russia, human rights violations, increasing Islamic fundamentalism or upsetting the US can result in another route blockage and closure of another chapter of Beijing's 'CPEC dream'. Also, it is essential to recall that the US has contributed immensely in terms of military supplies. Any disruption in the supply of their spare parts can tactically benefit India.

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)



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Further, in the case of Nepal, no new BRI Project loans were announced despite Beijing's displayed readiness for China-Nepal Cross Border Railway (CNR) project, connecting Keyrong in Tibet to Kathmandu. The focus remained mainly on technical cooperation and bilateral trade. Concerning India, Beijing's clumsy geopolitical approach in which it criticised India at the OIC conclave in Islamabad and simultaneously extended an 'olive branch' through unannounced and unplanned visits did more harm than good to the image of China. Its dicey strategic communication on the issue of LAC ensured that for the coming few months or perhaps years, the stalemate between the two would continue.

The visit is not a change of heart for India but a strategy-change due to the practical constraints of its "no limit" agreement with Russia. China

has well understood that it cannot antagonise the West and India at the same time when it cannot simultaneously put into effect the sanctions on Russia. The current momentum can be best described as "to secure peace, is to prepare for war", as was asserted by Carl Von Clausewitz. India hence should be mindful of the Chinese strategy.

Through his visits, Wang sought to highlight first the diverging perceptions of South Asian countries about one another in the region and second, amongst the Quad members, by trying to see whether New Delhi was hesitant or not to host the Chinese Foreign Minister at this crucial point of time. China could have highlighted an Indian refusal as India's arrogance owing to its strategic proximity to the Quad members. As the Quad members understand the dynamics of India-Russia, especially about its defence supplies, the acceptance of India's stand on Ukraine ensured that Wang's visit had no substantial outcomes, which probably can leave Xi Jinping running out of options as it has become all the more pertinent for China to maintain friendly relations with the democratic countries. The acceptance can play an essential role in India's favour in the triangular dynamics between Russia, India and China.

Although a tricky one, the Ukrainian crisis has been managed well by the government, consequent to which most of the powers today look up to India for its support and possible solution. Despite India's absence in various resolutions against Russia, the announcement of Japan aiming to invest \$42 billion over the next five years in India speaks volumes of India's geopolit-

ical importance. If one is ready to ignore the rise in fuel prices, the crisis, in a nutshell, has increased India's strategic hedging capabilities towards Washington and Moscow. India's decision will also push the trade and economic initiatives against Chinese economic leverage, such as the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, U.S.-Japan Competitiveness and Resilience Partnership, G-7's Build Back Better World initiative and the E.U.'s Global Gateway, without leaving much response opportunities for Moscow.

From a defence perspective, considering Russia's neutrality in the South China Sea dispute and its understanding of the Sino-Pak collusive threat to India, a new effort can be made to limit China's sphere of influence. Thus, new tactical strategies have to be formulated. With peace on Russia's eastern borders, India, the US, and other like-minded powers can attempt to create and strengthen a double military barrier system to contain Chinese wolf-warrior diplomacy. The inside ring can probably consist of China's contemporary rivals like Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The outer ring can consist of Australia, India, the US, and Japan, wherein there is active military intelligence coordination, apart from other cooperative defence activities that increase the interoperability of military platforms.

As China's strategic leverage decreases, so do Xi's re-election chances. Such a development makes it a fertile ground for China to increase its belligerence. The recent cyber-attacks on the power grid near Ladakh are an example and hence the country should remain alert.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

HOW CAN ONE FACE EVEN HIS OWN FAMILY MEMBERS AFTER BEING CALLED A TRAITOR?
— PAK OPPOSITION LEADER SHEHBAZ SHARIF



IF OUR OBJECTIONS ON SHEHBAZ SHARIF'S (NOMINATION) PAPERS ARE NOT ADDRESSED, THEN WE WILL RESIGN TOMORROW.
— FORMER PAK MINISTER FAWAZ CHAUDHRY

Providing an enabling policy atmosphere

The mere presence of tax incentives can signal the importance of CSOs in a society and encourage philanthropy within society

Many countries across the world provide tax incentives for donations made to civil society organisations (CSOs) as a policy measure to help these organisations as well as acknowledge the critical roles they play in society. India too provides tax incentives for charitable donations and has done so for several decades. However, very little discussion takes place, especially in India, on how such incentives work, whether they are effective and what can be done to make policies more enabling for CSOs.

An original study produced by the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy, Ashoka University in research partnership with Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.



INGRID SRINATH, MALINI CHAKRAVARTY, SURAJ JAISWAL
Srinath is with Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy, Ashoka University. Chakravarty and Jaiswal work with Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.

ing on twelve countries, including India, sheds light on some of these questions.

Tax incentives do have a positive impact on the level of donations, the study finds. They help increase the amount donated by existing donors, and sometimes encourage non-donors to start donating. While the extent of influence tax incentives has on donations by average donors is small, it can be significantly high for large and wealthy donors.

Also, tax incentives for charitable donations have a 'signalling effect'. That is, independent of whether donors avail tax incentives, the mere presence of tax incentives can signal the importance of CSOs in a society and create a wider norm of philanthropic giving within society.



The study also finds that tax incentives are likely to influence donor behaviour, depending on whether they are perceived to be easy to understand and access and seen as being 'fair' by the majority.

How do India's tax incentives compare to that of other countries? Factors such as tax rates, the form in which incentives are given, the tax incentive rate, etc., determine the generosity of tax incentives offered for charitable donations. That is what incentivises donors. Developed countries such as

the UK, the US, France and Singapore have relatively more generous tax incentive structures. India's tax incentive structure falls in the middle with it being somewhat more generous compared to other developing economies such as Bangladesh, Brazil and Mexico.

A unique feature of India's tax incentives for charitable donations is that it is the only country (among the countries studied) where donations to select government entities also attract incentives. More importantly, tax incentives offered for these entities are far more generous than those offered for donations to CSOs. While the entire amount donated to certain government entities can be claimed as deduction, only half the amount donated to NGOs can be claimed as deduction.

Further, the maximum amount that can be claimed as deduction is as high as 100 per cent of annual income for donations made to select government entities and funds, compared to a mere 10 per cent when donating to NGOs.

Understandably, this skewed tax incentive structure tilts the scales in favour of government entities and away from CSOs, which are far more dependent on such donations. The absence of taxes that target the wealthy relatively more, such as wealth tax and inheritance tax, also makes India's tax incentives for charitable donations, less appealing for high-net worth individuals and large donors.

The Union Budget 2022-23 was an important occasion to take certain steps for providing

a more enabling policy atmosphere for civil society organisations (CSOs) in India.

Arguably, one of the many challenges that CSOs face is raising enough resources for carrying out their work effectively. This problem has compounded further due to the quantum jump in resources required to deal with the multiple socio-economic crises induced by the pandemic and growing constraints on international funding.

In such a scenario, tax incentives for charitable donations become even more critical for CSOs. Increasing incentives for donations to CSOs to bring them at par with what is offered for donations to many government entities and funds could go a long way in easing the situation. Even China,

which is not known to have very favourable policies for the charitable sector, has raised the generosity of its tax incentives offered for charitable donations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as has the USA.

For the government, providing more generous tax incentives comes with the risk of losing tax revenue. In order to avoid that, the government could have considered re-introducing taxes that affect the wealthy and provide tax incentives for donations on these. This one measure could have helped in inducing more donations from the wealthy as well help the government raise more revenue. The Budget was an ideal opportunity to bring in these changes, but that was missed.

MONEY MATTERS

Over 350 mobile towers to be set up in Meghalaya

Over 350 mobile towers will be set up in Meghalaya to ensure that all villages come under mobile network, officials said on Sunday. Meghalaya has 6,839 villages of which 1,164 villages are not covered by any mobile network, they said. The chief secretary recently reviewed implementation of the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) scheme aimed at providing mobile internet services to 1,164 remote and uncovered villages in the northeastern state at a cost of Rs 726.65 crore, officials said. BSNL has approved setting up of 352 mobile towers to ensure that the uncovered villages get coverage, they said. "BSNL has approved setting up of 346 additional mobile towers in remote villages across Meghalaya besides six mobile towers along NH 42 and NH 51," a senior BSNL official told PTI.



Nepal suspends Central Bank Governor amid forex woes

In a rare move, the Nepal government has suspended the country's Central Bank Governor Maha Prasad Adhikari over disagreements with Finance Minister Janardhan Sharma and for not doing enough to pull the economy from doldrums. Adhikari, the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) Governor, was suspended on Friday after the government formed a panel headed by former Supreme Court judge Purushottam Bhandari, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. Adhikari was appointed as Nepal's 17th governor on April 6, 2020 under the previous regime headed by former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. This is only the second instance that a sitting governor, who enjoys a five-year tenure, was suspended. According to sources, differences had emerged between Adhikari and Sharma in the wake of the dwindling forex reserves and the current state of Nepal's economy.



Gold imports surge to US\$ 46.14 bn in 2021-22

India's gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), rose by 33.34 per cent to USD 46.14 billion during the 2021-22 fiscal on account of higher demand, according to official data. Gold imports were worth USD 34.62 billion in 2020-21. The surge in gold imports during the last financial year contributed to the widening of the trade deficit to USD 192.41 billion, against USD 102.62 billion in 2020-21. India is the world's second-biggest gold consumer after China. The imports are largely driven by the jewellery industry. The gems and jewellery exports during 2021-22 grew by about 50 per cent to about USD 39 billion. India's current account deficit widened to USD 23 billion or 2.7 per cent of the GDP in the October-December quarter, according to the RBI data.



CREDIT EXPANSION

FM to meet heads of PSBs on Apr 23

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to meet heads of public sector banks (PSBs) on April 23 to review performance of the lenders and progress made by them on various schemes launched by the government for revival of the economy battered by the pandemic. This is the first full review meeting after presentation of Budget 2022-23. Banks would be urged to sanction loans for productive sectors to accelerate revival of the economy, sources said.

According to sources, there would be a comprehensive review of various segments and progress in government schemes including Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).

In the Budget, ECLGS was extended by a year till March 2023. Further, the guarantee cover for the scheme was expanded by Rs 50,000 crore to Rs 5 lakh crore. The coverage, scope and extent of benefits under ECLGS 3.0 pertaining to



hospitality, travel, tourism and civil aviation sectors were expanded.

Also, the credit limit for eligible borrowers was increased to 50 per cent of their fund-based credit outstanding from 40 per cent earlier. The enhanced limit is subject to a maximum of Rs 200 crore per borrower. Since its launch in

May 2020, loans worth Rs 3.19 lakh crore have been sanctioned till March 25, 2022. About 95 per cent of the guarantees issued are for loans sanctioned to micro, small and medium enterprises.

The meeting to be held in New Delhi would set the agenda for the current financial year which has just started. During

last financial year, no PSBs faced any loss in the April-December period and clocked a collective net profit of Rs 48,874 crore during the period.

PSBs earned a combined net profit of Rs 31,820 crore in 2020-21. However, there were collective losses for five straight years during 2015-16 to 2019-20. The highest amount of net

loss was registered in 2017-18 at Rs 85,370 crore, followed by Rs 66,636 crore in 2018-19; Rs 25,941 crore in 2019-20; Rs 17,993 crore in 2015-16 and Rs 11,389 crore in 2016-17.

During 2009-10 to 2014-15, PSBs were earning profits on their books.

To improve financial health of PSBs, the government implemented a comprehensive 4Rs strategy -- recognition of NPAs transparently, resolution and recovery of value from stressed accounts, recapitalising of PSBs, and reforms in PSBs and the wider financial ecosystem -- for a responsible and clean system. Comprehensive steps were taken under the 4Rs strategy to reduce NPAs of PSBs.

As part of the strategy, the government has infused Rs 3,10,997 crore to recapitalise banks during the last five financial years -- from 2016-17 to 2020-21, out of which Rs 34,997 crore were sourced through budgetary allocation and Rs 2,76,000 crore through issuance of recapitalisation bonds to these banks.

For 3rd quarter in row, startup funding crosses \$10 bn in Q1

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The startup ecosystem has created as many as 14 unicorns in the first three months of 2022, and for the third consecutive quarter, they have received over USD 10 billion across 334 funding deals, says an industry report.

Creation of 14 more unicorns takes the overall tally of startups with over USD 1 billion valuation in the country to 84 now, according to a PwC India report.

This is the third consecutive quarter ending March 2022 when the fund inflows into the domestic start-ups ecosystem have crossed over USD 10 billion in fresh funding. The quarter also has seen as many as 14 startups becoming unicorns, the report said, adding the total fund inflow in Q1 stands at USD 10.8 billion.

According to the agency, the quarter saw maximum funds flowing into software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies, grossing more than USD 3.5 billion. Unicorn creation con-



tinued to flourish with 14 startups attaining the coveted status in Q1 with the SaaS sector accounting for the largest share creating five unicorns.

Amit Nawka, the startup leader at the consultancy, told PTI that despite uncertainties in the global economic environment, the domestic startups have continued to attract capital, particularly in the growth capital stage. He further said as more startups mature, talks around corporate governance are now becoming mainstream and it will become increasingly important for the startups to

design a corporate governance roadmap that is in sync with organisational growth aspirations. The quantum of investments into SaaS ecosystem has a threefold increase in the last three years, he said, adding the pandemic has only boosted this ecosystem globally, given the rising importance of remote working, productivity and overall digital transformation. The past year has seen the advent of 15 SaaS businesses in the unicorn category amongst in the country, including Darwinbox, Fractal, Uniphore, Hasura and Amagi Media Labs.

BMW eyes 'mega year' in India post Q1



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

German luxury automotive group BMW is expecting a 'mega year' in India in 2022 having clocked 25 per cent rise in four-wheeler sales and 41 per cent jump in two-wheelers in the first quarter despite challenges of semiconductor shortage, war in Ukraine and shutdowns due to COVID-19 in China, according to a senior company official. The BMW group has also lined up 24 products to be introduced in India this year -- 19 in the four-wheeler segment, including the all-electric sedan i4 in May, and five motorcycles through its BMW Motorrad division.

In the January-March period, the BMW group had posted one of its best quarters in India with a 25.3 per cent jump in four-wheeler sales at 2,815 units. The BMW range of sedans and SUVs clocked sales of 2,636 units, while the MINI luxury compact car sold 179 units. The group's two-wheeler sales grew by 41.1 per cent at 1,518 units during the period. "The supply is currently little restricted.

Electric vehicle retail sales zoom over three-fold in FY22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electric vehicle retail sales in the country witnessed over three-fold jump last fiscal with two-wheeler off-take leading the segment, according to data compiled by automobile dealers' body FADA. Total electric vehicle (EV) retails reached 4,29,217 units in 2021-22, a rise of three-fold from 1,34,821 units in the financial year 2020-21, the industry body said. Total

EV sales had stood at 1,68,300 units in the 2019-20 fiscal, it noted. According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), electric passenger vehicle retail sales stood at 17,802 during the last fiscal, up over three-fold from 4,984 units in FY21. Home-grown auto major Tata Motors led the segment with retails of 15,198 units and a market share of 85.37 per cent in the vertical.



Shell to set up LNG stations, bullish on gas market in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global energy giant Shell will foray into retailing LNG for long-haul transportation like trucks, with its first filling station coming up in Gujarat this year as it bets big on the Indian gas market, a senior company official said. Shell operates a 5 million tonnes a year liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facility at Hazira in Gujarat and has a small network of petrol pumps. It is now looking at the LNG for trucks/buses market as a growth avenue. "We are looking to develop our own LNG sites and retail stations in the country," Nakul Raheja, country head of Shell Energy India, told PTI.

JSPL plans to set up India's second coal gasification plant at Raigarh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

JSPL has plans of setting up a coal gasification plant -- the second in the country -- at its Raigarh plant in Chhattisgarh, company's MD V R Sharma said.

The company is already using the coal gasification technology to produce steel at its plant in Angul, Odisha.

The 2 million tonne per annum production capacity plant, inaugurated in 2018, holds the distinction of being India's first and the only plant producing steel from 'swadeshi' coal using the coal gasification technology.

"As part of our mission to promote diversification of usage of coal, we will be setting one more coal gasification plant at our plant in Raigarh,"



the MD said adding it will be second such plant in the country.

When asked about the likely investment for the project, he said, "It will be pre-mature to quote any figure. We are evaluating it and will reach a final investment figure soon."

Explaining the gasification process, Sharma said coal is converted into syngas which can further be used for producing power, petrol, diesel and other petroleum products.

Syngas can be also used in sponge iron making, by the glass and ceramic industry

and even in cooking. Further, India can produce the cheapest hydrogen through the coal gasification route, the MD said.

Replying to a question related to the capacity of the proposed gasification plant, he said it will be of similar capacity being operational at Angul. "Our government is promoting and encouraging use of alternative use of energy across various sectors like auto etc. In steel, our aim is to produce at least 50 per cent steel of our capacity through such green technologies which are environment-friendly," Sharma said. The MD had earlier said India has coal reserves for another 300 years and the domestic industry should use coal through the gasification process.

4 of top-10 firms lose over Rs 1 lakh cr in m-cap

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of four of the 10 most valued firms tumbled Rs 1,05,848.14 crore last week, with IT majors TCS and Infosys emerging as the biggest laggards.

While the market valuation of Reliance Industries, TCS, Infosys and Bajaj Finance declined, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, HUL, SBI, HDFC and Bharti Airtel emerged as the gainers with a combined



addition of Rs 51,628.12 crore. Among the four firms, the valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

tumbled the most by Rs 40,640.76 crore to stand at Rs 13,49,037.36 crore. Infosys' market capitalisation (m-cap)

tanked Rs 36,703.8 crore to reach Rs 7,63,565.13 crore. The market valuation of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) eroded by Rs 25,503.68 crore to Rs 17,70,205.42 crore and that of Bajaj Finance dipped by Rs 2,999.9 crore to Rs 4,45,810.84 crore.

In contrast, the m-cap of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) jumped Rs 24,048.06 crore to Rs 5,12,857.03 crore and that of ICICI Bank climbed Rs 12,403.56 crore to Rs 5,24,180.57 crore.

Govt spent Rs 100 L cr on infra development, social sector in 8 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has spent around Rs 100 lakh crore on infrastructure development and social sector programmes over the last eight years, government sources said.

Citing an RBI report, sources said that the total developmental expenditure by the central government was a whopping Rs 90,89,233 crore (Rs 90.9 lakh crore) during 2014-15 to 2021-22.

Earlier this month, former finance minister P Chidambaram had pointed out that the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi collected Rs 26.5 lakh crore from fuel tax collections between 2014-2021 but the total outgo on free food grain, cash allowances to women, PM-KISAN and other cash transfers is no more than Rs 2,25,000 crore which is less than the annual fuel taxes collected by the Centre alone.

The numbers posed by the former finance minister fall way short of the mark as developmental expenditure was nearly four times, government sources said. Sharing details of expenditure, sources said, this included more than Rs 26



lakh crore in the form of capital expenditure to modernise infrastructure and create productive assets, Rs 25 lakh crore for food, fertilizer and fuel subsidies, and Rs 10 lakh crore on social services such as health, education, affordable housing, etc.

It is clear then, that the collections from the fuel tax have been put to good use as developmental expenditure, sources said, adding, it is unfortunate that a former Finance Minister would miss out these basic data points. Talking to Twitter, Chidambaram had last week said that in the eight years of the Modi government, the

central government collected Rs 26,51,919 crore as fuel taxes.

"There are approximately 26 crore families in India. That means from every family the central government has collected, on average, Rs 1,00,000 as fuel tax!" the former Union finance minister said.

"Ask yourself, what did an average family get in return for paying this huge amount as fuel tax?" Chidambaram said. Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending upon the incidence of local taxation.

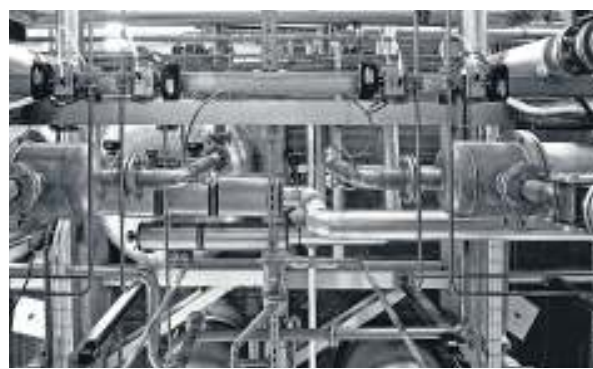
Goodluck India to invest Rs 200 cr : CMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Steel products maker Goodluck India will invest Rs 200 crore over the next two-three years to expand capacity, its Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) M C Garg said.

BSE-listed Goodluck India has five manufacturing units at Sikandrabad (Uttar Pradesh) and one in Kutch (Gujarat) with a total installed capacity of 3,40,000 tonnes per annum.

"We are in an expansion mode and will invest Rs 200 crore over 2-3 years to increase our capacity to 5,00,000 tonnes as demand for our products



from customers is continuously rising," Garg told PTI in an interview. The company manufactures a wide range of

engineered steel structures, precision/auto tubes, forging for defence and aerospace, CR (cold rolled) products and GI

(galvanised iron pipes) pipes. These products are used by automobile manufacturers, infrastructure companies, industries like engineering, oil and gas, among others, he said. Replying to a question on funding for the expansion, Garg said the company will be using some of its own funds and "the remaining portion will be arranged through various sources including bank funding." On the issue of rising steel prices, he said hot rolled (HR) coil is the main raw material which Goodluck India uses to manufacture goods and the rate of steel has almost doubled to Rs 80,000 a tonne from the

levels witnessed one year back.

Garg said his company also has plans to acquire certain steel products making assets in the long run. "We do have such plans. Options are always open. We will look for assets post completion of the expansion project," he said.

Sharing further details, Garg said the company has crossed Rs 1,100 crore worth exports in financial year 2021-22, and the current order book stands at Rs 800-900 crore.

At Rs 1,100 crore, the exports were 130 per cent more compared to Rs 475 crore in the 2020-21 fiscal, he added.

'I still cannot write a script without addressing social issues'

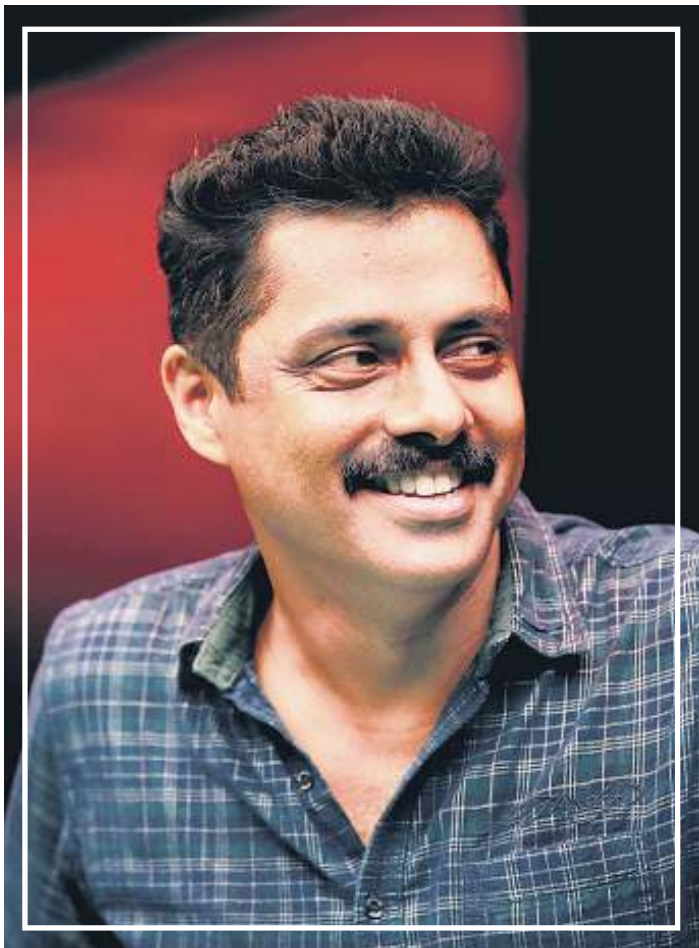
SL Puram Jayasurya, the director, who is known for movies like Speed Track, Angel John, and Youtube trending Jack & Daniel, which has garnered more than 47 million views in six months, speaks with *The Pioneer* about his journey as a director, what paved his way for scriptwriting and upcoming work

When did your journey as a director begin?

I started my carrier as an assistant director with legendary south Indian filmmaker Mr Fazil, who happened to be a multilingual director. So naturally, I got a chance to work in Telugu, Tamil as well as in the Malayalam industry. This helped me a lot to understand the different styles of making, the usage of technology, and the treatment based on cultural differences present in these states. Later, I switched over to the director's card by directing Speed Track, my first movie with star actor Mr Dileep. It was the first complete sports movie in the Malayalam film industry ever. Well, begun is half done. I changed genre to fantasy in my second movie *Angel John*, with legendary actor Mr Mohanlal. Finally *Jack and Daniel*, the third one, again with Dileep and Pan Indian actor Mr Arjun, was an action movie. Nowadays, it's a trending movie on youtube with a historic achievement of more than 45 million views in just six months.

You are a postgraduate in English Literature. Did that anyway bring out your love for scriptwriting?

Yes, naturally literature helped to develop my span of imagination and writing skills. But when we talk about scripting, it was Fazil Sir's school, I mean the days with him, that molded me as a



scriptwriter. Scripting is a technique that is derived from aesthetically joining literature and visual sense to maintain the stream of consciousness. Moreover, my heritage was a boon to me.

Your father S L Puram Sadanandan was a renowned screenplay writer. What did you get to learn from his experience in the industry?

My father had a drama troupe

named Suryasoma, where I got an immense chance to observe his writings and directing skills. His dialogues in drama as well as in cinema were extremely sharp and powerful when dealing with social evils which in turn influenced my writings and thought process. I still cannot write a script or anything without addressing social issues. But in every aspect cinema has changed a lot. In some way, I am blessed to witness the transition process in cinema.

Does direction and screenplay writing go hand in hand?

Both are easy for me. Being a writer-director, I have good control over the length and budget of my movies. I can change or correct a script aesthetically to meet its budget at any point in its making process. Director and screenplay writer are not twin brothers, but they are lovers and I enjoy them.

According to you, how much has directing changed over the years?

The direction has changed a lot with the development of technology. The advent of computer-generated imagery has increased the span of visualisation to be more effective and easy. Previously, the screenplay was considered to be an annex of literature. Dialogues were the prime means of communication. But now it is not. Now cinema has its language, ie, visuals. As a director, I can create any range of visual treats with the help of technology if the script demands it. Today's velocity of life also has a great influence on cinema in its editing rhythm and cutting pattern.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

In the next five years, I hope to see myself in world cinema. Nowadays, Malayalam cinema has been privileged to become Indian cinema and in turn, Hindi cinema has transformed to the status of world cinema. Now the gateway is open. There are a lot of platforms too. So, only our effort is needed to prove the class.

What are your upcoming projects?

A couple of films are under planning which includes a Tamil as well as a Hindi movie.



From life

to canvas

K. RAMYA SREE

Art is born of the observation and investigation of nature, said the very famous Marcus Tullius Cicero once, and this saying stands as a perfect testament to Maredu Ramu, an artist from Peddapalli, Nagarkurnool, Telangana.

The artist started to paint, depicting the events happening around him, especially those of nature. He is famous for his landscape paintings, which tend to be in acrylic on canvas or charcoal on paper. Ramu's paintings give lasting glimpses of urban India. On one hand, we see tradition and, on the other hand, we see modernisation growing in it. On his canvases, the whole transition of thought, the physical changes, and the architectural changes of an urban setting can be seen. He traces these changes by showing the constructions, the concrete developments, and the advertisement hoardings.

The reason we got in touch with Ramu is that he is one of the two Teluguites, who were selected for the National Art Camp held at Lalit Kala Academy, Chennai recently. Beginning with his journey, when this small-town boy, coming from an agricultural family, first moved to Hyderabad in 2001, he remembers the city is much smaller and more peaceful than the concrete jungle it is today. In his two-decade-long journey, Ramu's paintings always spoke of the five elements of nature. "When I moved to Hyderabad, it was beginning to

develop as a global city. I took it as an example and painted what was happening around me. I took incidents from day-to-day life and put them on canvas. Through my work, I don't have a message or a story to tell. I paint situations and am inspired by the happenings around me. I also have different elements on my canvas, such as birds and concrete," he says, going on to describe his path to becoming a professional painter. "Since childhood, I was inspired by movies by Chanti, Chinna Babu, and others. I used to see these wall paintings and get inspired by them. My family thought I would become something else, but I became an artist. I never thought I would become an artist, but it came to me naturally as I was inspired by the beauty of nature. I started as a signboard artist. Having taken professional courses in art, I started to paint what was happening around me, and today that has evolved into a professional career for me." What sets Ramu apart from other artists is that he has a very realistic approach and has composed his thoughts very intelligently. For instance, he used the beautiful sky, half construction, and half hoardings in one frame in one of his paintings, which was sold for a huge sum.

Having done multiple shows and being part of various exhibits, for Ramu, his recent exhibitions in

Delhi and the Chennai Art Show remain the most memorable.

Sharing his most memorable painting to date, Ramu said, "Last year, I did an installation in Kerala. It's about women who come from different places, and my art tells how strong a woman needs to be in life to deal with situations happening around her."

When asked why he chose to depict the five important elements of nature, Ramu said he is doing this to educate people to protect the environment for future generations. "We are exploiting the pancha-boothalu. Unknowingly, we are harming the lives of future generations. Natural disasters are taking place because of it. In this generation, when you ask someone what they want to become, they would name a doctor, an actor, or an engineer, among others, but nobody would say they would want to become a mother. Our nature is our mother, and we need to protect the mother. I take these incidents and put them on canvas."

Having been part of numerous art exhibitions and having hosted many solo exhibits, Ramu wants to bring a change among the people of the country to protect mother earth, and THAT is his expression of art.

Share your spark!

Parkinson's disease (PD) is a growing concern because of the rising prevalence and the ageing population. Around three in 1,000 people have this disease. The cells producing dopamine in the brain start dying and result in overall slowness of body movements. Usually, it affects people more than 40 years of age, and men are more commonly affected than women.

Every year April 11 has been dedicated to Parkinson's disease, to increase awareness and promote research in this field. Let us all unite to share the missing spark in people living with PD by understanding their pain and pepping them to fight the disease.

On World Parkinson's Day today, Dr Abhinay M Huchche, consultant neurologist, SLG Hospitals lists some prevention tips while also talking about symptoms and more. "Caregivers for PD people often ask me this question: 'Doctor, how can I prevent getting this disease? I often tell them the 'be active formula' i.e. "Stay active mentally, physically and socially," says the doctor listing out its early symptoms: "Loss of smell, feeling anxious and depressed, constipation, acting out dreams, and constipation are some of the early

symptoms of Parkinson's disease. They may have shaking of one side of the body, slowness in walking, and a blank face (with lack of emotions)."

Tips for people with Parkinson's disease:

- Have an exercise programme daily coordinated by the neurologist & physiotherapist
- Keep socialising with your friends and people with PD and laugh out loudly
- Avoid daytime napping as it may disturb the night's sleep
- Try meditation and other relaxation techniques to ward off anxiety and negative thoughts
- Regularly follow up with your neurologist
- Caregivers should be patient, cool, and stop being restless
- Caregivers should care for themselves as well to prevent a burnout
- Safety precautions at home and in the bathroom to prevent falls and injuries
- Join the PDMSD society India to get motivated and help people with PD
- Take good care of your Bloods sugars, blood pressure & periodic checkup
- Integrated care including neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, and physiotherapist is the key.



The untapped potential of liquidity on tap for gig workers

Blue-collar gig is here to stay and growing fast. According to a recent marquee study, the gig economy is estimated to serve up to 90 million jobs, and add up to 1.25% to India's GDP or over \$250 billion in volume of work over the next decade. A lion's share of this growth is expected to come from key sectors like logistics, retail, manufacturing, construction, and home services.

A large fraction of gig workers faces salary shortfalls with little to no access to unsecured credit. Our own data shows that above 75% face regular earnings shortfalls. According to recent market surveys, even among the salaried worker cohort, 90% received their salaries once a month, while 20% exhausted funds within 10 days, 40% by mid-month, and 85% by the end. The problem is likely far more acute for hand-to-mouth blue-collar workers with significant exposure to financial and health shocks without a safety net. Access to early earnings and earnings-linked credit is therefore instrumental to the welfare of gig and contract workers. Extending credit against accrued or forecasted earnings can solve low-income workers' liquidity problems and prevent them from entering debt-traps, where their only alternatives are payday lenders,

unregulated and informal schemes, and often expensive fly-by-night credit operators. Even having to borrow repeatedly from friends and family can be an intense psychological burden. Further, shorter earnings-linked credit schemes are more appropriate for this segment and can be offered at scale, compared to larger ticket and longer-term loans which require very different risk economics.

There is also increasing evidence of demand for earnings-linked credit among Indian workers. Recent studies show over three-fourths of workers feel positive about the concept, whereas over a quarter say they would use it if offered. Interestingly, for almost 60% it would be a factor in choosing their next job. For the blue-collar workforce, there is also ample global evidence to high-light financial inclusion benefits. Workers with access to earned wages access tend to replicate weekly payouts, with consistent usage primarily for essential expenditures like bills and groceries. Roughly three-quarter of users cites benefits in the form of reduced mental stress and improved financial confidence, and over half report improvements in their ability to budget. There are also broader social benefits to be had, ranging from an increase in quality

of life to reduced reliance on debt and emergency income sources.

Assuming 100 million gig & contract workers in the organized sector with average annual earnings of Rs 120,000, we are staring at \$160 billion in annual payouts processed. This is a huge emerging market for Fintechs that can build new risk engines leveraging continuous stream work data along with seamless customer experiences deeply integrated into existing employer-employee workflows. On the other hand, while there may be HR concerns related to administrative overheads, employee attrition, and legacy data and payroll infrastructures that exist in the Indian context, a pronounced cultural shift is underway as enlightened employers understand the deep long-term advantages of how such financial wellness benefits can address complex challenges of employee engagement, productivity, and retention.

Spearheaded by digital gig companies, we are likely to see a massive transformation in this



sector in the next few years to come. (The writer, Badal Mallick, is the co-founder & CEO, of KarmaLife)

what's brewing?



● Vijay Madduri



● Akhila



● Shashi Kauravla

QUALIFIED RECRUITMENT

Shashi Kauravla and Ravi Goli from Silicon Valley, along with Aimlytics CEO Mr. Vijay Madduri and Technology Head Chandra, launched Qualifyde.com, an end-to-end recruitment platform with expert AI enablement, in Hyderabad.



● Avanitha



● Chandra



● Sukanya and Disha



PARTY

Photos by SV Charly



● Manish Dayya and Chetan



● Chaya



● Franclan and Sultan Saud Mirza



● Shreemayee

WORLD OF INFLUENCERS

Stallions Marketing, in association with Marks Media Communication, is all set to bring together one of the biggest confluence of influencers at the Third Edition of DIA (Digital Influencer Awards-2022), presented by Freedom Rice Bran Oil. The most awaited and recognised awards in the digital influencer world are those that recognise the efforts of digital influencers and content creators across social media platforms.



The wait is finally over! The Suchirindia Foundation has announced the winners of its 29th national and state-level science talent search examination award. A signature Suchirindia initiative, the award aligns with Suchirindia's vision to encourage young minds to dream bigger and think smarter. The awards uphold the foundation's 29-year-long tradition of discovering and recognising young talents through its unique examination covering a multitude of subjects.



City's popular digital influencers and fashion enthusiasts graced the inauguration ceremony of the Lepakshi Furniture Factory outlet in Nacharam on Sunday.

FUN

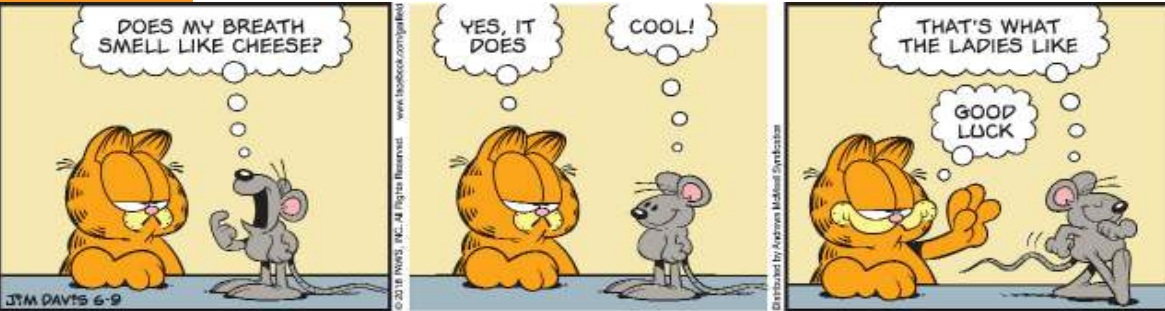
ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



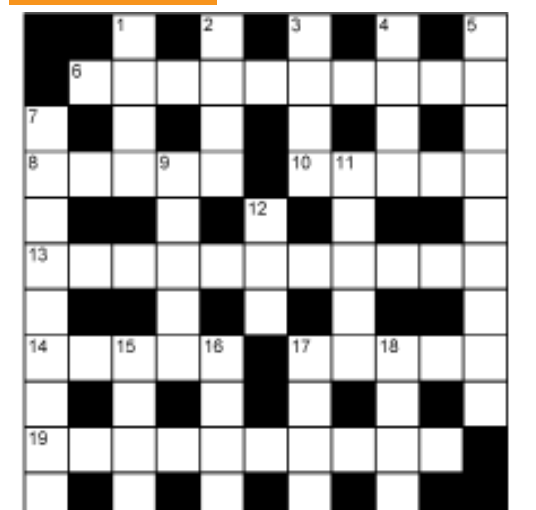
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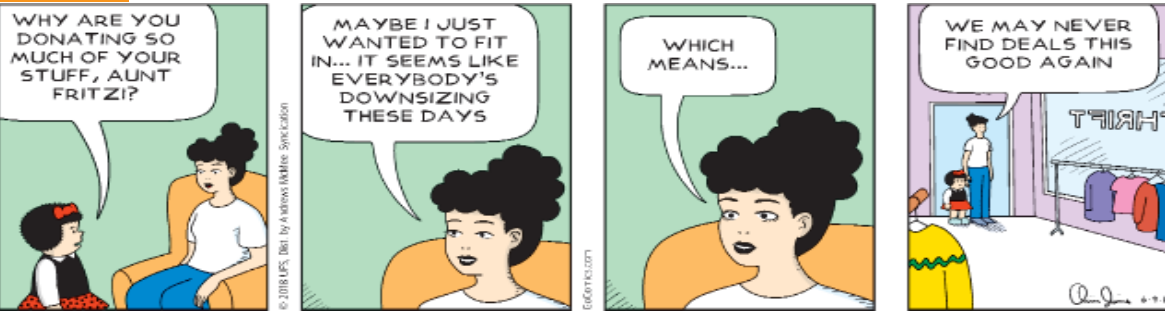
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Not finished
- Chewed up and swallowed
- Tongans live in this country
- Someone who works with wires, lights, switches
- A name for a doll
- Have a quarrel
- These are published daily

DOWN

- To do something very well
- Happen
- Snoop
- Important rules
- The barks of a small dog
- Mountains
- A young woman

SOLUTION

S	I	S	T	E	R	W	A	N	D
O	G	E	R	E	M	A	N	D	
S	R	A	K	R	E	M	A	N	K
T	E	A	R	I	N	G	E	R	E
J	D	E	E	G	E	R			
I	A	N	T	L	E	R			
G	W	A	S	E	O				
S	W	O	R	D	S	V	E	L	O
A	R	E	T	I	G				
M	E	N	T	I	S	S			



Pooja Hedge, to groove in F3 for a spl song?

If the ongoing buzz in the media is to be believed, *Beast* girl Pooja Hedge will be seen shaking a leg in a special song in the forthcoming comedy-drama *F3* with Venkatesh Daggubati and Varun Tej. An official confirmation regarding the same is awaited.

According to reports, when Anil Ravipudi

approached Pooja Hedge about a special song for his future directorial, the *Radhe Shyam* actress gave her nod, and she would be seen dancing alongside Varun Tej and Venkatesh in *F3*.

F3, starring Mehreen Pirzada and Tamannah Bhatia, is a film about troubles that develop as a result of the main characters' ambition to acquire more money. Sunil also plays a key role in *F3*. Sonal Chauhan, who starred in Balakrishna's *Dictator* and *Pandaga Chesko*, will make a cameo appearance in Anil Ravipudi's magnum opus.

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's unique action thriller *Ramarao On Duty*, directed by first-timer Sarath Mandava and produced grandly by Sudhakar Cherkuri under SILV Cinemas LLP and RT Teamworks, is carrying enthusiastic reports, thanks to the action-packed teaser and posters.

Ramarao On Duty begins musical promotions

Now, it's time for the musical promotions. The film's first single, *Bulbul Tarang*, composed by Sam Cs, is out now. *Ramarao On Duty* is full of action with elements for all the sections. The song shows the romantic side of Ravi Teja, who looks like a child with his actions in the song. He is so charming in the song, as is Rajisha. Their sparkling chemistry makes this song more captivating.

Bulbul Tarang is a beautiful and harmonious number that is instantly catchy with Sid Sriram giving life with his soothing voice. The song has lyrics by Rakendu Mouli, who has done a great job of showcasing the love of Ravi Teja for Rajisha. The song is going to top the music charts for sure, and it will be an ideal start for musical promotions.

Based on real incidents, Divyasha Kaushik played the other heroine, while Venu Thottampudi, in his comeback, will be seen in a vital role in the movie. The cinematography of the movie is by Sathyan Sooryan, ISC, while Praveen KL is the editor.

Ramarao On Duty is slated for a grand release worldwide in theatres on June 17th.



Dulquer Salmaan, Hanu Raghavapud's film titled *Seetha Ramam*

A specialist in making unforgettable romantic entertainers in his style, director Hanu Raghavapudi is making a war backdrop film that narrates a beautiful love story between a soldier played by

Dulquer Salmaan and his love interest, Mrunalini Thakur. The film, produced by Ashwini Dutt and Priyanka Dutt under Swapna Cinema and presented by Vyjayanthi Movies, turns much bigger with Rashmika Mandanna playing a

very special and significant role as Afreen. On the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami, the makers have revealed the title of the movie. The film gets an apt and epic title — *Seetha Ramam*. Going by the title glimpse, Rashmika Mandanna's character has shades of Lord Hanuma. It's Lord Hanuma who helps Rama bring back Seetha in the Ramayana. In this beautiful love story set in a war backdrop, it's Rashmika who is on a mission to help Lieutenant Ram and his Seetha. The video begins with the voiceover of Sumanth, who plays a vital role in the movie.

It's a treat to watch all the performers together on screen, and Dulquer, Mrunalini, and Rashmika bring authenticity to their respective characters with their wonderful portrayals. While it's astonishing to see Rashmika in such an atypical role, Dulquer and Mrunalini's pairing is fresh and adorable.

The technical side of *Vue* is definitely worth a treat, and



this is a breath of fresh air when it comes to presentation. PS Vinod's camera work is remarkable, while Vishal Chandrasekhar's background score is full of life and the production values are top-notch.

Seetha Ramam is being made simultaneously in Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam languages. The title glimpse hypes our curiosity about the film, which is in the final phase of shooting.

Hombale Films collaborates with RCB

Hombale Films, the makers of the *KGF* franchise and *Salaar*, a leading film production company, has signed an exclusive partnership with the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) to collaborate on sports and film entertainment.

The tie-up aims to usher in a confluence of glitz, glamour, movies, and sports served up with lifestyle content.

The association marks the amalgamation of two of the most loved entities in Bengaluru, to give fans a high-voltage thrill along with a roller coaster of emotions and energy.

The long-term vision of this association is to bring about an integration of sports, entertainment, and movies to produce a 3-year special multi-format content.

Speaking about the association, Vijay Kirangandur, Founder, of Hombale Films, said: "Movie-making has been my passion. As a cricket lover and a Kannadiga, cricket has always enticed me. This association comes as natural



as both Hombale Films and RCB were born in Bangalore and have been engaged in creating massive entertainment and ensuring thrills for our fans."

"We are very excited about this collaboration that we have been working on for a while now, and 2022 just got a lot bigger and more royal for us. We look forward to integrating, creating, and celebrating royally. We will work together to evolve and create magic for our fans in movies, sports, lifestyle, content, and other areas."

Speaking about the partnership, Rajesh Menon, Vice President & Head, Royal Challengers Bangalore, said, "We

are delighted to strike this partnership with Hombale Films, a pioneering production house born in Bengaluru to thrill the nation, just like RCB. Cricket and films are two of the most popular cultural signposts in India, and joining hands with Hombale Films is a natural extension of our long-term vision of integrating cricket, entertainment, and films. This partnership will leverage two Bengaluru giants to collaborate for innovative, multi-layered, multi-format, co-branded content."

The association is expected to usher in a new era in the fields of film entertainment and the sports industry.

Allari Naresh's *Itlu Maredumilli Prajaneekam* caricature grabs eyeballs

Allari Naresh, one of the seasoned actors in Telugu, was last seen in *Naandi*. The actor will next be seen in the movie titled *Itlu Maredumilli Prajaneekam*.

Itlu Maredumilli Prajaneekam marks Naresh's 59th movie and is billed to be a story based on forest dwellers. An intriguing poster was unveiled by the makers, which features a caricature depicting a group of forest dwellers standing in front of a half-dried river in the deep jungle.

While the poster increases curiosity about the storyline, it also hints at the strong subject that will be showcased in the movie. The movie is produced by Hasya Movies and Zee Studios, while AR Mohan will be directing the movie. Anandhi will be seen as the



heroine, while Vennela Kishore and Chammak Chandra have prominent roles in the flick. Abburi Ravi is penning the dialogues, while Sricharan Pakala is the film's music director.

Raam Reddy cranks the camera, and Chota K Prasad is the editor.

Brahma Kadali is the production designer. Venkat R is the stunt master.



Pragya Jaiswal gets trolled for promoting alcohol brand

Pragya Jaiswal, who was last seen in the action movie *Akhanda* alongside Nandamuri Balakrishna, has posted a video on her social media promoting an alcohol brand. She was seen advertising for a whisky that is quite

popular among the general public. She captioned it, "Loving this partnership with the World's No. 1 Bourbon! 'Drink Responsibly—This material is exclusively for those over the age of 25.'" Ever since the post went on air, she became a target for trolls. She is being trolled heavily on social media for promoting an alcohol brand. Critics have chastised her for prioritising the business's compensation cheque over ethics and social duty.

Hansika to star in a unique robotic love story

Director M Rajesh's upcoming web series, which will feature actors Hansika Motwani, Mugen Rao, Shanthanu, and Ashna Zaveri in the lead, has been titled *MY3*.

The rom-com series is a one-of-a-kind robotic love story that will be available on the OTT platform Disney+ Hotstar.

Karthik Muthukumar is the cinematographer of this series, which will have music by Ganesan and editing by Ashish. The series is being produced by Trendloud.

Says Hansika, "It's an honor to be a part of this series. It's a sweet and delightful moment to be working with director M. Rajesh. I am excited to be collaborating with him after our movie *Oru Kal Oru Kannadi*."

"This is my first web series and I am excited and eager to be working with powerhouse talents like Mugen and Shanthanu. This series will be a 100 percent laugh-riot for the audience. Get ready to witness a unique and one-of-its-kind rom-com from director Rajesh."

Actor Mugen Rao said, "I am a great fan of director Rajesh Sir and his works. I laughed a lot watching his movies. I wanted to do something like that, and fortunately, I had the opportunity given to me by Disney+ Hotstar. This is a huge offer for me. This series will offer a delightful and entertaining experience for the audience."

Director M.Rajesh said, "It's completely a new and fresh experience for me to direct a web series. The screen experience of audiences has gone through a big transformation now as well. *MY3* will be a refreshing

experience for the audience. It's a rom-com series that will reflect the lives of present-day youngsters."



The team of Pawan Kalyan starrer *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* conducted a pooja on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami on Sunday before beginning the shoot. "On this auspicious day of *#SriRamaNavami*, let us celebrate the symbol of chivalry and virtue by adhering to truth and Dharma," the team tweeted.

The film is a period action-adventure drama, directed by Krish Jagarlamudi. The film depicts the life of legendary outlaw Veera Mallu and stars Pawan Kalyan in the titular role, alongside Nidhi Agerwal, Arjun Rampal, and Nargis Fakhri. It is produced by A. Dayakar Rao and presented by A. M. Ratnam.



There are still 11 league matches to go. We've got to get on a roll. We've seen in this tournament teams get on a losing roll or winning momentum. It's just a matter of (getting) first win — ZAHEER KHAN

DC return to winning ways

Kuldeep exacts sweet revenge against KKR as Shaw, Warner & Khaleel also shine in 44 run win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Opens Prithvi Shaw and David Warner's fearless batting laid the foundation as Delhi Capitals out-batted Kolkata Knight Riders by 44 runs to notch up their second win in the IPL here on Sunday.

On a batting belt, KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer's decision to put Delhi Capitals in backfired as they piled up 215 for five riding on half-centuries from Shaw (51 off 29 balls) and Warner (61 off 45 balls).

In reply, KKR were all-out for 171 in 19.4 overs and it was left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav's evening at the Brabourne Stadium as he exacted sweet revenge against a franchise that didn't treat him too well during his stint as his career came to a halt.

The scoreboard pressure was always telling and Kuldeep (4/35 in 4 overs), who is proving to be an asset for Capitals, decisively swung the match in the Rishabh Pant-led side's favour, getting opposition skipper Shreyas Iyer (54 off 33 balls) stumped with a left-arm wrist spinner's googly. Iyer had no clue as he came down the track and the ball turned away after pitching.

Pat Cummins didn't play any manic knock as a Kuldeep leg-break ended his stay and then he took a magnificent skier off his own bowling to cap off a superb evening under lights.

Left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed (3/25 in 4 overs) bowled fast and sharp at the onset and in the end Andre Russell (24 off 21 balls) had too much to do with too little time left and result was a one-sided victory for DC. At the start, Shaw and Warner feasted on a quality bowling attack before DC survived a scratchy middle-order show to reach a healthy 215 for 5.

If Shaw-Warner added 93 to set



the platform, Shardul Thakur (29 not out off 11 balls) and Axar Patel (22 off 14 balls) added 49 in just 3.2 overs to finish the innings in style.

Warner and Shaw were facing one of the most lethal pace attacks of this edition but to their advantage it was perhaps the best batting track.

There was a layer of green but it was more about holding the surface which had even bounce for anyone wishing to hit through the line.

Umesh Yadav (1/48 in 4 overs) had his first bad outing in this IPL, while Warner also launched into Pat Cummins (0/51 in 4 overs) with two



boundaries over cover as 50 came in four overs.

It's a rarity to have 10 fours and two sixes being hit in the Powerplay as Iyer looked clueless.

Cummins was pulled for six by Shaw, while Warner slog swept Varun Chakravarthy (1/44 in 4 overs) over mid-wicket for a six. Sunil Narine (2/21) was reverse swept as both spinners were introduced within the Powerplay after pacers got severely punished first up.

It was Chakravarthy, who breached Shaw's defence to give his team first breakthrough but skipper Pant (27 off 14 balls), promoting

pointstable

Po.	TEAM	M	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
1.	KKR	5	3	2	0	6	0.446
2.	GT	3	3	0	0	6	0.349
3.	RCB	4	3	1	0	6	0.294
4.	LSG	4	3	1	0	6	0.256
5.	RR	3	2	1	0	4	1.218
6.	DC	4	2	2	0	4	0.476
7.	PBKS	2	2	2	0	4	0.152
8.	SRH	3	1	2	0	2	-0.889
9.	MI	4	0	4	0	0	-1.181
10.	CSK	4	0	4	0	0	-1.211

boundarymeter

4s	545
6s	288

himself up the order, didn't let the momentum slip away as he and Warner added 55 in just 4.1 overs.

Pant was audacious as usual, hitting those fallen reverse sweep off spinners and a straight six off Cummins.

Warner completed his first half-century of this edition with a six off Russell before Pant was dismissed by a slower bowled by the Jamaican all-rounder.

Once Pant was dismissed, Warner's shots lacked a bit of sting and Narine was very steady as he slowly brought KKR back into the game, dismissing Lalit Yadav and Rovman Powell in quick succession.

It was left to Axar and Shardul to show their batting prowess that helped DC reach a par score on this track.

Hetmyer's 59 takes Rajasthan to 165-6

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star West Indies batter Shimron Hetmyer smashed an unbeaten fifty as Rajasthan Royals recovered from a mid-innings slump to post 165 for six against Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL game here on Sunday.

Hetmyer, who was dropped at 15 by Krunal Pandya, lived up to his Rs 8.50 crore price tag as he blasted six maximums and a four in his unbeaten 36-ball 59 to lift RR to a decent score at the Wankhede stadium.

Jos Buttler and Devdutt Padikkal added 42 runs in first five overs but they lost three wickets in a 15-ball burst to be reduced to 67 for four at one stage.

Hetmyer and Ravichandran Ashwin then rebuild the innings with a 68-run stand off 51 balls before the latter was strategically retired out by the RR camp in the slog overs.

The West Indian paced his innings well before going for the shots at the back end.

Earlier, Avesh Khan produced the first breakthrough with his first ball and then a two-wicket burst by Krishnappa Gowtham saw them reduce RR to 67 for four on a track where the ball was holding.

Jason Holder went for runs too many but managed two wickets, while Ravi Bishnoi too didn't have a good day, which included a drop return catch from Paddikal in his first over.

Opening the innings after being sent into bat, Jos Buttler smoked Holder for a maximum before sending the next one across the short fine leg but he was castled by Avesh in the first ball of his spell.

Paddikal, who replaced Yashvini Jaiswal at the top, lived dangerously before paying the price for a reverse sweep as his top-edge landed in the safe hands of Holder, handing Gowtham a first-ball wicket.

The left-handed batter survived an LBW appeal in the first over off Dushmantha Chameera before being



dropped by Bishnoi.

Paddikal punished Bishnoi for bowling short, producing two good-looking shots through the covers for two boundaries.

The spinner then dropped an easy caught and bowl chance to add insult to injury.

Avesh then drew the first blood, uprooting Buttler's middle stumps with his first delivery as RR reached 44 for 1 in the Powerplay overs.

Sanju Samson played two nice shots before being stuck on the pads by a full toss from Holder as RR slipped to 64 for two.

Ashwin was promoted up the order and he along with Hetmyer rebuild RR's innings.

Krunal Pandya dropped a dolly at long-on in the 14th over to hand a reprieve to Hetmyer and the West Indian made LSG pay as he launched into compatriot Holder in the 18th over.

He clobbered him over deep mid-wicket to bring up the 50-run stand, before sending one fine down the leg-side and then plundered him down the ground as Holder bled 18 runs.

In a strategic move, Ashwin, who smashed two sixes off Gowtham, was retired out to allow Ryan Parag come into the crease in the slog overs.

Rawat a future star in making: Du Plessis



PTI ■ PUNE

Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Faf du Plessis is mighty impressed with teammate Anuj Rawat in this IPL so far and feels the young wicket-keeper-batter is a "future" star in the making.

Rawat, a left-handed batter, has opened with Du Plessis in

all the matches for RCB so far this IPL season.

But his best came only in their last outing on Saturday when the 22-year-old slammed a 47-ball 66 to be adjudged the Player-of-the-match in RCB's successful 152-run chase against five-time champions Mumbai Indians.

"The way he's playing at the

moment is beautiful... He's a very good player for the future," Du Plessis said after their seven-wicket win over MI at the MCA Stadium here.

"Comes down the wicket, shows intent, he's a very good player for the future. That's what makes the young guy so good for us at the moment."

Rawat made a lacklustre IPL debut for Rajasthan Royals against Kolkata Knight Riders in 2021 when he was out for a golden duck, which happened to be the only match for the son of a farmer from Ramnagar in Uttarakhnad.

Rawat made his Ranji debut for Delhi in 2017-18 and it was only in the next season he impressed with his maiden hundred — a 183-ball 134 — that helped Delhi recover from being 36/5 and seal a nine-wicket win.

In the last Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy domestic T20 tournament, Rawat struck 15 fours and 10 sixes from just five innings, while in the one-dayers he had the best average for Delhi — 58.33 — with a strike rate of 108.69.

RCB snapped up the youngster, shelling out ₹3.4 crore at this year's IPL mega auction.

Unbeaten Gujarat Titans take on inconsistent SRH

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Gujarat Titans, who have become the team to beat in their debut IPL season, would aim to build on a dream start against an inconsistent Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Monday.

Three consecutive wins in the IPL have given Gujarat Titans the momentum and they showed against Punjab Kings that they can win from any situation.

Skipper Hardik Pandya will need to showcase his tactical acumen against Sunrisers, who earned their first win against CSK but still are placed in the bottom half of the points table.

Gujarat have found different match-winners in every game while Sunrisers, who got a win after a horrendous start to their campaign, would like to keep improving with every game.

At the DY Patil stadium, focus again will be on young Shubman Gill. He has been in prime form and posted his

Hyderabad vs Gujarat
Live from 7:30 pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1



highest IPL score against Punjab Kings. The elegant right-hander would however need support from Matthew Wade, who has the ability to play big shots and Sai Sudarshan, who also chipped in with a useful knock in the last game.

In the last outing against Punjab, Rahul Tewatia found his mojo with two sixes and emerged as the match-winner.

Titans are up against death overs specialist Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the raw pace of Umran Malik, the yorkers of T Natarajan and classical off-breaks of Washington Sundar.

Add to it the variations brought in by lanky South African pacer Marco Jansen, the batters could encounter a tough time.

Gujarat's bowlers on the other hand have been right on the money.

Hardik's four overs can change the complexion of the game while another pacer who can

wreak havoc is Lockie Ferguson. Mohammad Shami too has been impressive with the new ball.

The other important cog in their wheel is Rashid Khan, who is capable of running riot and can pose challenges to his former team SRH.

For the Sunrisers, after failure in the first-two games, skipper Kane Williamson got a start and would be keen to score a big one against Gujarat.

SRH opener Abhishek Sharma reposed the faith shown in to him and made a match-winning 75 on last Saturday when the team chased a tricky 155 in 17.4 overs. He would also like to continue from where he left.

Rahul Tripathi's role will also be crucial and ditto for Nicholas Pooran and Aiden Markram.

The three need to show consistency and show their mettle while taking responsibility in the middle-order. Sundar has the ability to play cameos.



RCB pacer Harshal Patel bereaved

PTI ■ PUNE

Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Harshal Patel has left the IPL bio-bubble following the death of a family member.

PTI has learnt that Harshal exited the bubble after getting to know about the tragedy in the family right after the game against Mumbai Indians.

Harshal has been the star performer for RCB over the past couple of seasons and took two wickets on Saturday night in the team's seven wicket win over MI.

"Unfortunately, Harshal had to leave the bio-bubble due to a death in his family. It was his sister. He did not take the team bus back to Mumbai from Pune," said an IPL source.

ICC Chairman Barclay to complete his term

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ICC board on Sunday convinced its chairman Gregor Barclay to complete his term till end of October before the global body starts its nomination process to find a new chairman where the Indian cricket board could play a massive role.

In another significant development, Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ramiz Raja's proposal for a four-nation tournament has been unanimously rejected by the board, putting an end to speculations of multiple India versus Pakistan matches on neutral venues. The other notable development was BCCI secretary Jay Shah being inducted into the ICC cricket committee.

The two-day board meeting which concluded in Dubai on Sunday was a win-win one for the



Indian cricket board as Barclay's continuation till October gives it ample time to strategise whether it will field a candidate for the top post in the month of November.

"There has been no discussion on re-nomination of Barclay. But he will finish his current two year term as a chairman till end of October. So the process of nominat-

ing a new chairman only starts in November," an ICC Board member said.

Originally, there was a possibility that the re-nomination or nomination would have happened in the month of June but that changed after deliberations between the member boards.

The decision also helps the BCCI buy time as they are likely to have their AGM in September after which the composition of the national parent body will be clear.

RAMIZ'S PROPOSAL SHOT DOWN BY BOARD

PCB chairman Ramiz Raja's ambitious proposal of conducting a four-nation tourney comprising India, Australia, England under the aegis of the ICC was unanimously rejected by the all-powerful board even though there was a projected revenue of \$750 million for five

years.

"In any case, ICC's Financial and Commercial Affairs Committee (F&CA) was against this proposal. As we know that the MPA (Members Participation Agreement) doesn't allow any member nation to host more than tri-nation, organising four-nation every year would have in any case devalued ICC's own marquee events," a board member said.

Another sensitive issue which board members are talking in hushed tones is whether Raja will remain PCB chairman for long after Imran Khan was removed from Prime Minister's position.

PCB chairman is a political appointee as Pakistan PMs are always Patron-in-chief of the board. Hence Raja, an appointee of Imran Khan, might be forced to tender his resignation in current political climate.

SA build on big lead against B'desh

AP ■ PORT ELIZABETH

South Africa batted aggressively in their second innings after securing a 236-run first innings lead on the third day of the second Test against Bangladesh at St George's Park in Gqeberha on Sunday.

Sarel Erwee made 40 not out as South Africa reached 84 for two at tea, an overall lead of 320 runs.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who took six for 135 in the first innings, took both wickets at a cost of 31 runs.

Bangladesh were bowled out for 217 in their first innings, losing their last five wickets for 25 runs. Musfiqur Rahim (51) and Yasir Ali (46) put on 70 for the sixth wicket but the innings folded rapidly after Yasir was caught and bowled by Keshav Maharaj.



low-on. He and Erwee scored at better than five runs an over in an opening stand of 60 before Elgar missed a reverse sweep against

Taijul and was bowled. Keegan Petersen made 14 but was leg before wicket to Taijul in the last over before tea.