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MONEY 8

438 INFRA PROJECTS SHOW COST OVERRUN OF RS 4.3 LAKH CRORE

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ASALANKA'S UNBEATEN WIN AGAINST B'DESH

HYDERABAD, MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2021; PAGES 12-13



the pioneer



SVP, BHEEMLA NAYAK TO OPT OUT OF SANKRANTI RACE?

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PM TO VISIT ITALY, THE UK FROM OCT 29 TO ATTEND G20, CLIMATE SUMMITS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to pitch for a united global approach in dealing with the situation in Afghanistan and combating challenges of climate change and the coronavirus pandemic at the two-day G-20 Summit in Italy beginning October 30, people familiar with the development said on Sunday. The prime minister will be travelling to Rome and Glasgow from October 29 to November 2 to attend the 16th G-20 Summit and the World Leaders' Summit of COP-26 respectively, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

GOVT DRAWS UP PLANS TO PROMOTE SITES ASSOCIATED WITH NETAJI

The Centre has drawn up plans to promote sites across the country associated with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose through curated tours as part of events to commemorate the anniversary of the formation of the Azad Hind government, officials in the tourism ministry said. On October 21, 1943, Bose had announced the formation of the provisional government of Azad Hind in occupied Singapore. He had launched a struggle to free India from British rule under the banner of the provisional government in exile during the latter part of the Second World War.

EDIBLE OILS: CENTRE TO HOLD MEETING WITH STATES TODAY

The Centre on Sunday said it is monitoring the prices of cooking oils as demand rises during the festive season and will hold a virtual meeting with states on October 25 to review action taken by them on its stock holding limit order. On October 10, the Centre had imposed stock limits on traders of edible oils and oilseeds, barring certain importers and exporters, till March 31, in a bid to control domestic prices and provide relief to consumers. State governments and union territories were to decide the stock limit to be imposed on edible oils and oilseeds after taking into account the available stock and consumption pattern of that particular state or UT.

FOREIGNERS TAKING UP GUJARAT VARSITY'S ONLINE COURSES ON VEDAS

Keen to learn more about Vedas, Upanishads, Kautilya's Arthashastra and the progress made by ancient Indian science and technology, people from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Tanzania and Australia have joined online courses launched recently by a state university here in Gujarat, officials said Sunday. The Gujarat Technological University (GTU) -- a state university catering to subjects such as engineering, architecture, management, pharmacy and computer science -- has received enrollment from a total of 889 students for its first batch of 12 online certificate courses of three-month duration related to ancient Indian knowledge systems.

'Thaggedele': This plenary is going to be special for TRS

K VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

Telugu cinema's famous dialogue 'Thaggedele' may aptly describe the TRS plenary being held on October 25 at the HICC.

TRS leader Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has been conducting the party's plenaries on a grand note every year like the TDP's plenaries. However, this time the party decided to conduct the plenary on a grander note to mark the party's two-decade journey.

Although it has been a tradition to organise the party's plenary on April 27 every year to mark its foundation day, this year's plenary assumes significance as it marks the completion of two decades after the formation of the TRS in 2001. If one checks TRS history, it can be seen that the TRS never compromised on conducting plenaries and public meetings grandly. Continuing this tradition, the party has made elaborate arrangements to transform Hyderabad into a pink city with the flags and flexies of TRS.

TRS leaders have displayed flexies featuring KCR and KTR and other party dignitaries across the



A view of the stage for TRS' plenary today

Food items to be served

Chicken Dhum Biryani, Mutton Curry, Natukodi Pulusu, Paya Soup, Boty Fry, Egg Masala, Rumali Roti, Alu Capsicum, Bagara Rice, Veg Biryani, White Rice, Guthi Vankaya, Chamagadda Pulusu, Bendakaya Kaju Fry, Dal Rice, Palakura Pappu, Pachi Pulusu, Mudda Pappu, Sambar, Ulavachar, Vankaya Chutny, Jilebi, Double Ka Meeta, Ice Cream etc.

city, giving more priority to the Hitex Exhibition Center.

Since the inception of TRS in 2001, the party has been conducting plenaries continuously except

in 2019 and 2020 due to the Lok Sabha elections and the corona pandemic respectively.

Harish, campaign managers told to keep off

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TRS high command has asked the party's in-charges and coordinators, including Finance Minister T Harish Rao, campaigning in Huzurabad in connection with the by-poll not to attend the party's plenary meet being held on October 25 at the HICC.

The TRS brass made it clear that party leaders working in Huzurabad must not take breaks to participate in the plenary and asked them to continue their campaign as only three days is left for it to end. In fact, the TRS plenary invitation committee didn't send invitations to them.

With this diktat, the leaders participating in the campaign have to confine themselves to Huzurabad.

Most farmers supporting Centre's agri-marketing laws, says Tomar

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Union Minister for Agriculture Narendra Singh Tomar on Sunday said most farmers and their unions were supporting the three agri-marketing laws brought in by the Centre.

Speaking to reporters in Bhopal before leaving for campaigning in Gudikheda and Pandhana, part of the Khandwa Lok Sabha seat, where a bypoll is scheduled on October 30, he said the three agricultural laws have been brought in for the benefit of the farmers.

"Most farmers and their unions are in support of these laws. However, some people have difference of opinion."

Pak beats India for the first time in a World Cup

PNS ■ DUBAI

Pakistan brought to an end India's near-three-decade domination of them in the world stage in the most convincing fashion, embarrassing their arch-rivals by 10 wickets in the Super 12 stage of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

Intent on breaking their run of losses, Pakistan restricted India to 151 for seven after electing to field in the T20 showpiece's blockbuster game.

Pakistan then made light work of

the target of 152, completing the win with 13 balls to spare.

Skipper Babar Azam stroked his way to 68 while his opening partner, Mohammad Rizwan, smashed 79 as the Indian bowlers struggled to contain the two batters.

Earlier, captain Virat Kohli led from the front with a half-century as India recovered from a disastrous start to post a challenging total. Besides Kohli's 49-ball 57, Rishabh Pant slammed 39 in 30 deliveries.

Sent into bat after the coin landed in favour of Pakistan skipper

Babar Azam at the toss, India were off to the worst possible start as they lost both their prolific openers Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul within three overs with just six runs on the board.

Doing most of the initial damage was the lanky left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi (3/31 in 4 overs), who had Rohit trapped in front of the wicket for a duck and then bowled Rahul after the batsman had run three singles. Kohli and Pant then joined forces to add 53 runs in quick time before the latter was caught out.

Revanth asks BJP leader Bandi Sanjay to quit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC chief A. Revanth Reddy has asked Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar to resign as he is not in a position to question the BJP's Madhya Pradesh state in-charge P. Muralidhar Rao. He said that there is not even a photo of Bandi Sanjay in the BJP flexies displayed in Sanjay's own village.

"How can Bandi Sanjay do justice to the people as he is not in a position to question Muralidhar Rao. Muralidhar didn't even

include Bandi Sanjay's photo on the flexies displayed in Sanjay's own village," Revanth said.

He alleged that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has been standing by P. Muralidhar Rao.

Addressing the media in Huzurabad constituency on Sunday, Revanth alleged that the police are split vertically on caste lines. It is atrocious that the DGP's phone is also under the sur-

veillance of the government.

Police officials Narsing Rao and Venugopal Rao belonging to the Chief Minister's caste are kept under the DGP's surveillance. Narsing Rao has been keeping tabs on the DGP and Venugopal Rao on Congress leaders' families.

Revanth alleged that the TRS government has been troubling Congress leaders using retired

100 cr vax doses claim 'false': Raut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut has alleged that the claim of administration of 100 crore vaccine doses against COVID-19 in the country was "false" and not more than 23 crore doses were given to eligible citizens so far.

Addressing a party meeting at Nashik in Maharashtra on Saturday, Raut said he would give proof that the 100 crore vaccination claim was "false".

"How much will you lie?" the Rajya Sabha member asked, without taking any names.

"In the last fortnight, 20 Hindus and Sikhs have been killed, 17 to 18 soldiers have been martyred, China is creating problems in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, but we are celebrating 100 crore vaccination, which is not true," the Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson claimed.



"The rise in fuel prices is also a factor. It has led to an increase in transportation cost." Hence, from December 1, the price of a matchbox would be increased to Rs 2 (MRP) from the present Rs 1, he said.

"After about six months we may review the situation. In 2007, the price was increased from fifty paise to Rs 1 per matchbox."

However, Sethurathinam said the count of matchsticks in a matchbox would be increased to 50 from the present 36. "When you pay Rs 2, you will get 50 matchsticks." The price increase would help tackle the situation that has arisen due to the rise in production cost and the decision to go for a hike was taken after discussions with all associations, he said.

About five lakh people are dependent on the matchbox industry directly and indirectly and 90 per cent of the workforce is women, he said. Tamil Nadu is a leading manufacturer of matchboxes and Kovilpatti, Sattur, Sivakasi, Thiruthangal, Ettayapuram, Kazhugumalai, Sankarankoil, Gudiyattam and Kaveripakkam are the major production centres.

Approximately, there are 1,000 matchbox units which includes small and medium sized matchbox manufacturers as well.

TTD Chairman Subba Reddy meets Sharmila

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An unexpected guest appeared at YSRTP chief Y S Sharmila's padayatra on Sunday. The guest was Andhra Pradesh's YSRCP senior leader and TTD Chairman Y V Subba Reddy.

Y V Subba Reddy is Sharmila's uncle. Subba Reddy came to Nagaram located in Maheshwaram mandal in Rang Reddy district from Amaravathi early in the morning.

CRUISE DRUGS CASE

'NCB official demanded Rs 25 cr from Shah Rukh'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

An independent witness in the cruise drugs seizure case on Sunday claimed that an official of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and some other persons demanded Rs 25 crore from Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan to release his son Aryan

Khan in the case. Prabhakar Sail, a witness in the case, told mediapersons that NCB officials also asked him to sign nine to ten blank papers. However, an NCB official denied the allegations, terming them as "completely false and malicious".

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Ashwin & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Panchami Full Night
Nakshatram : Mrigashirsha 28:10
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 7:41 am - 9:07 am
Yamagandam : 10:33 am - 12:00 pm
Variyam : 7:21 am - 9:10 am
Gulika : 1:26 pm - 2:52 pm
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 6:13 pm - 8:02 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:37 am - 12:22 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly sunny
Temp: 30/20
Humidity: 61%
Sunrise: 6:10 am
Sunset: 05:50 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated OCTOBER 24, 2021 5:00 PM

A matchbox to cost Rs 2, carry more sticks

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Effective December 1, the price of a matchbox would be Rs 2 from the present Rs 1 and this is in view of a rise in production cost, triggered by an increase in price of raw materials, the industry body said on Sunday.

Consumers would, however, get more matchsticks in a box when they buy it at Rs 2, up from 36 matchsticks to 50 per box.

The proposed price increase comes after a gap of 14 years, Secretary of the National Small Matchbox Manufacturers Association, V S Sethurathinam said.

The price of raw materials has increased leading to a jump in cost of production, he said adding "we have no other option but to increase

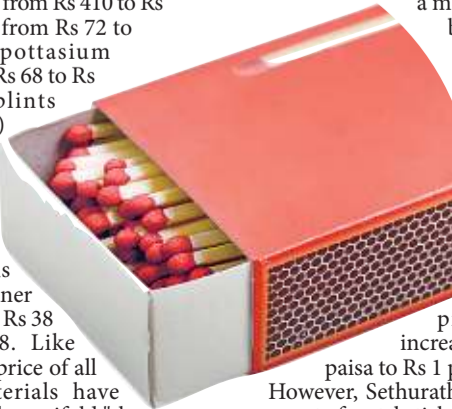
the selling (Maximum Retail Price) price." The price of all the 14 key raw materials have increased. "A kilo of red phosphorus has increased from Rs 410 to Rs 850, wax from Rs 72 to Rs 85, pottasium chlorate Rs 68 to Rs 80, splints (sticks) from Rs 42 to Rs 48.

Outer box Rs 42 to Rs 55 and inner box from Rs 38 to Rs 48. Like this, the price of all raw materials have increased manifold," he told PTI.

"The rise in fuel prices is also a factor. It has led to an increase in transportation cost." Hence, from December 1, the price of a matchbox would be increased to Rs 2 (MRP) from the present Rs 1, he said.

"After about six months we may review the situation. In 2007, the price was increased from fifty paise to Rs 1 per matchbox."

However, Sethurathinam said the count of matchsticks in a matchbox would be increased to 50 from the present 36. "When you pay Rs 2, you will get 50 matchsticks." The price increase would help tackle the situation that has arisen due to the rise in production cost and the decision to go for a hike was taken after discussions with all associations, he said.



FB 'struggles' with hate speech, celebration of violence in India

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Internal documents at Facebook show "a struggle with misinformation, hate speech and celebrations of violence" in India, the company's biggest market, with researchers at the social media giant pointing out that there are groups and pages "replete with inflammatory and misleading anti-Muslim content" on its platform, US media reports have said. In a report published on Saturday, The New York Times said in February 2019, a Facebook researcher created a new user account to look into what the social media website will look like for a person living in Kerala.

Monday Mirchi

Hyderabad to get a woman CP

Politically and administratively women are important, though gender equality in all respects remains a distant dream. On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his 'Mann ki baat' hailed the contribution of women in the Armed Forces and said that the strength of women joining the police force had more than doubled, including that of security forces, to over 2.15 lakh from 1.05 lakh in 2014. A few days back, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said women had always been and would always remain 'equal contributors within the Armed Forces in India'. The other day the Congress announced that it would give 40% tickets to women in the UP Assembly elections slated for early next year. Nearer home, in what is seen as an effort to increase gender diversity quotient, a woman officer is likely to be appointed as Commissioner of Police of either Hyderabad or Rachakonda. It seems the current CPs may not be getting a chance to play their role again and one of them is likely to head ACB. An IPS officer who had returned from Delhi and was recently empanelled as ADG could be the Commissioner.

When a babu sounded like a neta?

In a defining moment of sycophancy ahead of the Emergency, then Congress president Dev Kant Barooah proclaimed, perhaps to the delight of former prime minister Indira Gandhi, 'India is Indira. Indira is India'. Former MP and founder of Swatantra Party Piloos Mody, going a step further, described Indira as the 'only man in her cabinet'. It appears that all these babus in TS are not averse to brown-nosing their way to the top. When Telangana celebrated administering three crore Covid vaccine doses, what stood out in the show was a bureaucrat's speech with political overtones. When points of the event were circulated, some doctors were quick to point that certain phrases sounded like those of a politician. Praising CM and crediting KTR has become second nature to such babus. Very rarely officials take credit for any big initiative to which they might have contributed significantly. Words like "valuable guidance, visionary leadership, directions, instructions and the like" are often cited as the motive force in every message intended for public consumption.

From many posts to one

At times, delivering against the odds may recoil on a babu, who otherwise may become a darling of the masses. Until recently, Krishna Aditya was Collector of Mulugu as well as Jayashankar Bhupalpalle and also ITDA PO. By default, he was the lone IAS officer in the region. No sooner did reports emerge on how Krishna Aditya had been "doing wonders as collector of both districts single-handedly", a new collector was appointed for Bhupalpalle. Until Saturday,

Aditya was the only IAS officer in Mulugu, but the government posted Ila Tripathi as Additional Collector (local bodies) Mulugu. The chronology of the events raises eyebrows, but vacancies need to be filled eventually is the rationale offered in some circles.

Government hospitals and VIP patients

It is fine if high-profile politicians and administrators choose to go to government hospitals for treatment on a regular basis. It would help boost public confidence in government institutions. It makes news too because, despite having the capacity to go to corporate hospitals, they opt for services provided by a government facility. In the past, ESL Narasimhan, when he was Governor of TS and AP, went to Gandhi Hospital as any common patient for treatment of pain on his right toe. Now, Khammam District Additional Collector Snehalatha, who was nine months pregnant, went recently to the government hospital in Khammam and underwent tests. She was advised by the doctors there to go for an operation. The Additional Collector agreed and gave a birth to baby girl. The media may go gaga in such cases calling the VIP patient 'model', this and that, but what people will not fail to notice is the response the aam aadmi gets in the same hospitals when he goes for treatment. If there is a difference in service delivery, people will pan service to VIP patients with photo-op as PR spin.

It won't be regarded as exemplary healthcare. For, when the common man goes to such hospitals, the problems start right at the entrance. All said and done, Khammam District Additional Collector Snehalatha has done something really appreciable.

Loyalty beyond a limit can be bad

Political heavy weights can sometimes unwittingly upset the plans of officials who are too loyal to them. With the transfer of GVMC Commissioner G Srijana, rumours are rife that it will cut to size a senior YSRCP leader, who wields a lot of influence in north Andhra. It was only to move Srijana that two more changes were made by the government and a G O issued. It is learnt that too much loyalty towards the top leader of the ruling party cost both V Vinay Chand and Srijana their jobs. A few days ago 2008 batch IAS officer Vadrevu Vinay Chand was transferred from his position as Vizag Collector to a lacklustre position in Aroyyasi. With Vizag labelled as the executive capital of the state, and with the city being the only metropolitan one in Andhra Pradesh, loyalty matters when it comes to officials. Mind you, loyalty to powers that be. That way, Srijana has been fortunate enough to get a somewhat decent posting as Industries Director.

—Yours truly

Kishan Reddy assures frontline Covid warrior status for journos

PNs ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and the North-East, G. Kishan Reddy has assured journalists that he would try to get frontline warrior status for journalists as they had discharged their duty risking their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Participating as chief guest at the Indian Journalists' Union (IJU) national executive held at the Tourism Plaza hotel in the city on Sunday, he recalled how journalists visited hospitals along with him to gather news.

He said that he would raise the IJU meeting's decision with the PM and get frontline warrior status for journalists.

He expressed concern over false news becoming viral with the growth of social media in the country. He asked journalists to write news as it is. Kishan said the Centre is



implementing special measures for development of the North-East.

Andhra Pradesh Information and Public Relations Commissioner Vijaya Kumar Reddy said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, who is trying to bring about development of all sections of society with the help of Nava Ratnas, had taken measures to ensure the welfare of journalists. IJU President K. Srinivas Reddy presided over the meeting.

Devulapalli Amar, media advisor to the Government of AP, Srinadh Reddy, the Chairman of the AP Press Academy, Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation MD Manohar, Dubbaka MLA Raghunandan Rao, former IJU president S N Sinha, IJU General Secretary Balwinder Singh, Telangana State Working Journalists' Association President Nagunuri Sekhar, Secretary Virahat Ai and the leaders of IJU attending the meeting.

Kishan launches bipolar air disinfectant, purifier

Hyderabad: City-based Jaitra Devices and Systems LLP on Sunday announced the launch of its device 'Bipolar Air Disinfectant and Purifier'. The device can inactivate pathogens like SARS-CoV-2, Norovirus, Influenza, Legionella virus, Rhinovirus, Varicella zoster virus, TB bacteria, Staphylococcus bacteria, E Coli bacteria, Pseudomonas bacteria, Bacillus cereus bacteria, fungi and molds, according to a press release from the company. The purifier was unveiled by Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER)

G Kishan Reddy at an event here. The bipolar ionisation technology has been used to eliminate pathogens in food in the US since the 1970s, the release said. In the present age, the bipolar ionisation technology has been proven to be a potent tool against the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). "During the COVID-19 pandemic, it's our country's manufacturers who extended support by supplying PPE Kits, Oxygen Concentrators, Ventilators etc. Anti-COVID-19 devices like 'Bipolar Air Disinfectant and Purifier' will help us breathe clean air free from viruses and bacteria and fungi.

TTD Chairman Subba Reddy...

Continued from Page 1

Subba Reddy had a meeting with Sharmila and it ended after an hour in Sharmila's bus.

Sources said Subba Reddy met Sharmila as a messenger of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Senior YSRTP leaders Konda Raghava Reddy, Thudi Devender Reddy, Vaduka Rajagopal, Sayyad Mujthaba Ahmed and Mathin Mujaddadi welcomed Subba Reddy.

It is learnt that Subba Reddy enquired about how Sharmila's padayatra is going on. Jagan had sent Subba Reddy to know about the condition of his sister Sharmila during the padayatra. Subba Reddy also enquired about the response Sharmila is getting from the people. They also discussed the padayatra timing and other issues.

'Thaggedele': This plenary is...

Continued from Page 1

It may be recalled that the TRS conducts plenaries every year and the last one was held in 2018 at Kompally.

However, the party decided to conduct its 20th anniversary plenary and the Telangana Vijaya Garjana at Warangal on November 15 with 10 lakh people on a grand note.

The party has been taking the plenary as an important one in view of the Huzurabad by-poll.

It is common for political parties to have new leaders coming and old ones exiting. Many changes have taken place in the TRS with the entry of leaders from other political parties.

Changes took place in TRS very fast after the formation of the Telangana state. Many leaders from other political parties joined it making it a pucca political party rather than a movement.

The party has invited 6,500 public representatives to its

Harish, campaign managers told...

Continued from Page 1

It is learnt that the TRS high command took this decision to ensure that the high voltage campaign would not be disturbed as the party considers this election as one of the most important in its history.

Finance Minister T. Harish Rao, Civil Supplies Minister

Gangula Kamalakar, Welfare Minister Koppula Eshwar, MLAs, MLCs and other leaders are busy with the campaign in Huzurabad. However, there is no certainty on whether anyone mentioned above would participate in the plenary or not. Sources said some leaders may spend some time at the plenary and leave for Huzurabad immediately.

plenary. This includes Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, MPs, corporation Chairmen, ZP Chairmen, MPPs, ZPTC Members, corporators and others. The plenary would start at 10 am on Monday and passes have already been issued to invitees. Rajya Sabha Member J. Santhosh Kumar visited HICC and examined the arrangements. He said that the 20-year journey of the TRS under the leadership of KCR

was something to be proud of and that the plenary would be held in a grand manner.

The organisers are also setting up a special gallery for women delegates. They have also arranged cultural programs to cheer up the participants. Songs about government schemes will be sung by singers. Photos regarding TRS inception and the TS movement will also be displayed at the venue.

Revanth asks...

Continued from Page 1

Recalling that the Nizam used Kasim Razvi to suppress the people, Revanth alleged that Chief Minister KCR was using Finance Minister T. Harish Rao as his Kasim Razvi to threaten the people of Huzurabad constituency.

Harish has been behaving like Kasim Razvi and is trying to make people vote for the TRS by threatening them. He said that Harish Rao's role in Telangana is that of Kasim Razvi.

Revanth said that Harish Rao has been taking the lives of Telegana's youth by provoking them. He said that there would be trouble inside the TRS soon and that would break KCR's heart.

Lashing out at the TRS allegations that Congress candidate Balmoor Venkat Narsing Rao is a non-local, Revanth said that KCR is a non-local in Gajwel, Harish Rao a non-local in Siddipet and K T Ramarao a non-local in Siricilla.

Top Army commanders to review India's security...

Continued from Page 1

The people cited above said Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane and the top commanders will review the country's combat readiness in eastern Ladakh where Indian and Chinese troops have been locked in a bitter standoff for 17 months, though the two sides have completed disengagement at a number of friction points.

They said the Army commanders are also likely to discuss the possible impact of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan on the security of India and the region.

The second Army Commanders' Conference of 2021 is scheduled from October 25 to 28 at New Delhi. Army Commanders' Conference is an apex level biannual event which is held in April and

October every year," the Army said in a statement.

The conference is an institutional platform for conceptual-level deliberations, culminating in making important policy decisions for the Indian Army.

"The apex leadership of Indian Army will brainstorm on current and emerging security and administrative aspects to chart the future course for the Indian Army in the backdrop of the situation along the borders and challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic," the Army said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to address and interact with the top commanders of the 13 lakh-strong Army.

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief

Marshal VR Chaudhari are also scheduled to address the senior leadership of the Indian Army on avenues for promoting tri-service synergy, the Army said.

The Army commanders are also expected to deliberate on various reform measures recommended by separate internal committees, the people said.

They said the discussions on the situation in eastern Ladakh and ways to further bolster India's military preparedness in the region are likely to dominate the conference.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5 last year following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas and both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

FB 'struggles' with hate speech, celebration...

Continued from Page 1

"For the next three weeks, the account operated by a simple rule: Follow all the recommendations generated by Facebook's algorithms to join groups, watch videos and explore new pages on the site.

The result was an inundation of hate speech, misinformation and celebrations of violence, which were documented in an internal Facebook report published later that month," the NYT report said.

"Internal documents show a struggle with misinformation, hate speech and celebrations of violence in the country, the company's biggest market, said the report based on disclosures obtained by a consortium of news organisations, including the New York Times and the Associated Press.

The documents are part of a larger cache of material collected by whistle blower Frances Haugen, a former Facebook employee who recently testified before the Senate about the company and its social media platforms.

The report said the internal documents include reports on how bots and fake accounts tied to the country's ruling party and opposition figures were wreaking havoc on national elections.

The NYT said that in a separate report produced after the 2019 national elections, Facebook found that over 40 per cent of top views, or impressions, in the Indian state of West Bengal were fake/inauthentic. One inauthentic account had amassed more than 30 million impressions.

PM Modi's personal efforts led to...

100 cr vax doses claim 'false'...

Continued from Page 1

Various central laws were implemented in Jammu and Kashmir as the focus of the BJP government is to ensure development and prosperity of every citizen of the union Territory, he said. "Efforts are on to ensure gas connection to every household along with electricity and water tap connections."

He said PM Modi sanctioned Rs 35,000 crore for the completion of various hydroelectric projects, which shows his priority and the love for the people of J&K.

Shah referred to the opening of medical colleges, setting up of nursing training institutions and AIIMS and said 500 stu-

dents used to complete their MBBS degrees earlier but now 2,000 students are pursuing medical courses in J&K with the sanctioning of seven new colleges.

Referring to the inauguration of the new campus of IIT-Jammu, the home minister said he was surprised to witness such a beautiful campus. He lauded the efforts of the Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan who was also present there along with Union minister Jitendra Singh and Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

Shah said he talked to the directors of IIT, IIM and AIIMS Jammu and asked them to set up a satellite campus for training of local youths so that

more of them get admission in these institutions.

He said he talked to the 35,000 youths who got jobs, education and skill upgradation under various centrally sponsored schemes and expressed hope that their active involvement would take J&K to new heights.

The home minister also talked about various achievements under rail and road projects and said the people of Jammu used to take their children to Delhi to enjoy a metro ride but "they do not need to go there anymore as we are bringing Metro to Jammu and Kashmir within next two years".

He talked about the Delhi-Katra expressway, sanctioning of Rs 700 crore

for a new airport and said the government is also planning to set up helipads in all district headquarters to promote religious tourism.

Shah also praised the Prime Minister for the "successful campaign" against the coronavirus and said people were apprehensive how India will tackle the situation after the outbreak of the pandemic in view of weak health infrastructure.

"Modi fought the virus in the best possible way which led to the minimum loss of life," he said.

Shah said Jammu and Kashmir is the only place in the entire country where all the people are covered by Ayushman Bharat PM-Jay Sehat scheme.

Most farmers supporting Centre's agri...

Continued from Page 1

We discussed this issue with them earlier with sensitivity, and whenever they will bring proposals in future, the Centre will definitely discuss them," Tomar said.

In reply to a question about the shortage of DAP compost, he said there was a "slight shortage of DAP fertilizer because we import it and prices have also gone up". "When the prices of DAP had increased in the last season, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a decision to provide subsidy of Rs 1,200 per bag to reduce the burden of farmers. Now, prices of DAP fertilizers have increased at the international level and it has been decided to subsidise it at Rs 1,650 per bag," he informed.

He said DAP was being made available and being supplied but added that farmers must continue to look at other options as well.

| CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG | |
|--------------------|------|
| Dressed/With Skin | ₹227 |
| Without Skin | ₹247 |
| Broiler at Farm | ₹127 |

| EGG RATES ₹/100 | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| HYDERABAD | 380 |
| VISAKHAPATNAM | 470 |
| VIJAYAWADA | 441 |
| RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD) | ₹3.80 |

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Telangana gets its act together to check growing drug menace

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The decision of the Telangana government to crackdown on drug abuse comes in the wake of growing menace of consumption of cannabis, opium and other psychotropic substances in Hyderabad and some other parts of the State.

The large-scale seizure of ganja in different parts of the State in recent weeks besides the recovery of heroin while being smuggled in also point to the disturbing trend of Hyderabad emerging as a centre for peddling and consumption of narcotic drugs.

The availability of ganja and other substances in some parts of the city and their consumption at the parties in and around the city has also sent alarm bells ringing.

A ganja-fuelled party busted at Shamshabad two days ago indicates the alarming trend. The party was thrown by a 21-year-old real estate agent on her birthday at a club. She was arrested along with five friends who were consuming ganja.

The police conducted the raid on the party following a tip-off. This came a couple of days after Chief Minister K Chandrababtu Naidu asked the police and excise department to deal with the menace of drugs with an iron hand.

The Chief Minister on October 20 convened a high-level meeting and directed the police and excise officials to declare an all-out war against drug abuse and drug trafficking in the State.

In what comes as another indicator of disturbing trends, migrant labourers, youth, auto

Raids on merchants selling weed paraphernalia

DAVE BENNETT SILVERY ■ HYDERABAD

In a bid to rid the consumption of banned narcotics in the state, police officials are taking all measures to deplete ways that consumers can procure the drug. The 'Ganja mukt Hyderabad' campaign by the Hyderabad City Police has so far targeted marijuana suppliers and consumers in the city.

While so far, officials are in the process of identifying only the supply chain of weed, in the latest move, officials have begun raids on merchants selling products that users use to consume the drug. According to the Police, orders were received to conduct raids and seize shops that sell OCB (Odet-Cascade-Bolloré) paper, used for rolling and smoking marijuana and other paraphernalia like bongs, hookah pots, weed cigarettes, etc. While officially the police keep denying



and claim the situation to be under control, their actions prove otherwise. The shift in focus from raiding weed sales hotspots to now pan shops and other merchants also points to the dedication in the way the Police are dealing with the deteriorating situation. In operations conducted over the weekend, the

hookah pipes and pots. The 38 cases were booked under 188 IPC, 70-B City Police Act and COTPA Act cases in LB Nagar, Chaitanyapuri, Saroonagar, Vanasthalipuram, Meerpet, Neredmet, Medipally, Ghatkesar, Pochampally Police Stations. Officials warned all the pan shop owners to not sell such stuff and further violation would result in more severe action. In a similar operation, 346 pan shops were raided in Hyderabad Police Commissionerate by 17 special parties. During the surprise checks, 76 persons were caught, banned gutka worth Rs 2,00,000 was seized and 76 cases were booked. Similar raids were conducted by the Cyberabad Police at Rajendra Nagar and Mailardeppally Police station limits where gutkha and ganja was seized. The Police said that more such raids were in store and would be a continuous effort until the state is rid of narcotics.

drivers and Hamalis (porters) are found to be consuming ganja.

The officials say ganja is being cultivated in Andhra-Odisha region and it is supplied to Telangana through Chintur and Bhadrachalam and later to Karnataka and Maharashtra states. They say ganja is also being produced and supplied from Chhattisgarh.

"We will be working out a coordinated strategy with neighbouring states and increase the surveillance by setting up more checkposts, espe-

cially, on the inter-state borders," a senior police official said.

A day before the high-level meeting held on October 19, Hyderabad Police arrested one of the kingpins of the ganja supplying gangs, identified as Vanapalli Naga Sai, from Narsipatnam in AP and seized 40 kg ganja from him.

On the same day, police in Sangareddy seized 240 kg of ganja which was smuggled from Visakhapatnam.

Police in Hyderabad alone have seized 1,500 kg of ganja

this year till September and arrested 128 persons involved in 82 cases of smuggling ganja. The arrested peddlers include two foreign nationals booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Director General of Police M Mahender Reddy asked police officials to take stringent measures to identify the hotspots of the ganja consumption centres and control them.

Analysts say the problem of drug abuse and drug trafficking in the state is multi-layered

and the departments concerned will have to work at different levels to curb the menace.

Bulk of the ganja being seized in the state in recent months was being transported from other states but there are certain pockets of the State where it is being cultivated.

Village sarpanches will be asked to inform the Excise officials about the ganja cultivation in their villages to ensure that the accused don't receive benefits of the Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bhima schemes.

Quick reporting of cyber crimes by victims ensures recovery of funds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The widespread use of electronic devices that enable internet access has increased the exposure of individuals and organizations to Cyber Crimes. In the recent years there has been a massive jump in the number of cases registered under Cyber Crime and Telangana contributed to over 10 per cent of cyber crimes reported across the country during 2020, stated in a report released by the NCRB.

In spite of heavy losses due to cyber frauds that occurred in Cyberabad limits, immediate reporting by cyber victims through the helpline numbers has led to freezing of Rs 55,64,301 in the fraudster accounts, which will eventually be refunded to victims. Most of the victims are falling prey to cyber crooks due to lack of awareness and their poor knowledge on digital technology. Prevention is the first step in countering cyber crimes. The primary tool for



cyber crime PS, Cyberabad on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Youtube etc. Awareness Videos featuring popular personalities and also Police officers were recorded and circulated through social media accounts.

Cyber Crime PS, Cyberabad in coordination with SSCS has been conducting awareness sessions at corporate offices and also conducted interviews with investigating officers regarding cyber crime modus operandi. One to one sessions were conducted at FM Radio stations by investigating officers to clarify the doubts of citizens regarding cyber crimes and registration of complaints.

The Cyberabad Commissionerate has launched emergency helpline number: 155260 facilitating citizens to report cyber frauds immediately to mitigate financial losses.

The launch of the helpline number has been spread to every nook and corner of the State.

such prevention is undoubtedly education aimed at establishing greater awareness and knowledge regarding cyber-crime in the society. As part of this

Cyberabad Commissionerate has led many awareness programmes. The Cyberabad cyber crime Police has been actively conducting awareness programmes at educational institutions, corporate offices, shopping malls, theaters, bus stations and villages, etc.,. Posters and memes stating the different cyber crime modus operandi were posted and circulated on official accounts of

Three held for smoking ganja

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Prohibition and Excise Department sleuths arrested three persons for possessing and consuming ganja at Vattepally in Falaknuma on Sunday.

The arrested persons are identified as Mudassar Ali, 23, Syed Ghousseuddin, 29, and Aslam, 29. The officials seized 10 grams of ganja, a cigarette and three mobile phones from them. The remaining three persons were produced before the court and remanded.

CP suspends Narsingi CI, SI for 'corrupt practices'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police Commissioner, Stephen Raveendra, placed under suspension two police officials after allegations of corruption were leveled against the two officials from the Narsingi Police station.

M Gangadhar, Inspector of Police and K Laxman, Sub-Inspector, were placed under suspension for their alleged involvement in land settle-

ments and other civil disputes. Top police officials received complaints about the inspector being involved in a land dispute, where he then used his official position to intimidate and give the disputed land to a third party who he allegedly has a partnership with.

The suspension order was given by the commissioner following a detailed inquiry by the Madhapur ACP, Ch Raghunandan Rao.

KISAN RAILS SCR transported 1.6L tonnes of agri produce since launch

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway (SCR) has successfully operated more than 500 Kisan Rails, since the first such service was launched in South India in September 2020, SCR officials said on Sunday.

These 500 Kisan Rails have been operated from different railway stations of the zone covering the three states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra. Till date, More than 1.6 lakh tonnes of agricultural products have been transported to different parts of the country, majority being to the Eastern, Northern and North Eastern states.

The Kisan Rail concept was announced in the Union Budget 2020-21 to double the income of agricultural community. The initiative has been successfully started by the Indian Railways to provide the safe, secure and fast mode



of transportation with least Enroute damages to the agricultural products. In addition, 50 per cent concession in the freight charges are being accorded for transportation of the agricultural products by Kisan Rails.

South Central Railway's first Kisan Rail was flagged off on September 9, 2020 from Anantapur station of Andhra Pradesh state, which also happens to be South India's first Kisan Rail, while Telangana's first Kisan Rail had com-

menced on February 8, 2021 from Warangal station. Kisan Rail from Maharashtra State over SCR jurisdiction started from Nagarjol station on January 5 this year.

Officials said the Kisan Rails over SCR have witnessed huge success, right from the date of their introduction and have been instrumental in transporting different varieties of vegetables and fruits, especially to different destinations located in farther states of the country.



FUN AND FROLIC

Madhulika Choudhary believes in the message of self-change for a better environment and that is what she wants to imbibe in the people of the city. Having taken up the cause of several lakes in the city from 2016, she is still fighting to keep the lake ecosystem here in place. Explaining that the biodiversity has played a big role in Lord Ram's win over Ravana, a dance show was performed at Nekkampur Lake on Sunday. Meanwhile, several schools and colleges participated in cleaning drive at Mushki Cheruvu, which created fun atmosphere.

T'gana records 135 new Covid cases, 1 death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Sunday recorded 135 new Covid cases and one related fatality taking the total positives in the state to 6,70,274 and the toll to 3,947.

The number of active cases stood at 3,950, a state government bulletin said. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation reported the highest number of 64 cases followed by Rangareddy 11 and Karimnagar 9 districts. Twelve out of the 33 districts recorded zero cases.

A total of 26,842 samples were tested on Sunday. Cumulatively, the number of samples tested was 2.73 crore.

A total of 168 Covid recoveries were reported on Sunday taking the total number of recoveries to 6,62,377.

The recovery rate and case fatality rate in the state was 98.82 per cent and 0.59 per cent, compared to the national average of 98.14 per cent and 1.3 per cent.

2 drug peddlers held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two ganja peddlers were arrested by the Hyderabad Police on Sunday at Habeebnagar. The police seized 900 gm of ganja from the arrested persons.

Arjun Singh and Rama Krishna were arrested while they were trading ganja with another peddler named Dinesh Singh at Dhoolpet. Dinesh is the main supplier. He was supplying ganja to Rama Krishna through Ajay.

India-Pakistan match sparks betting fever

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Betting fever has gripped the city due to the India-Pakistan Cricket match. In Hyderabad, many youths were involved in betting on Sunday. Crores are

changing hands in the betting network. As there is a huge craze about India-Pakistan Cricket matches betting is also high voltage. Managements with influence are running the show without any interrup-

tion at bars and hotels. Online apps are also supporting the betting network. Many public and private sector employees too are involved in this dangerous gambling. Everything from ball to ball,

individual scores, individual bowler's performance, scores and the final verdict are betting points. Most people who place bets are betting in favor of India and Indian players.

Rising fuel prices make households in city budget-conscious

Festive shopping: Online delivery preferred choice among Hyderabad, says survey

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A majority of households in Hyderabad and other top-10 cities of the country are spending during the ongoing festive season, but the rising prices of petrol and diesel and increased prices of essentials have made them more budget or value-conscious, according to a survey released on Sunday.

Online platform LocalCircles' its 'Mood of the Consumer' national survey covering over 61,000 households from Hyderabad and nine other cities, claim to have seen a huge improvement in consumer sentiment.

According to the survey, the percentage of households planning to spend during festive season 2021 jumped from 30



per cent in May 2021 to 60 per cent in September 2021, as Covid cases drastically reduced and economic certainty improved in these four months. "Most households have been sharing in the past 30 days the

concerns related to rising prices of fuel and essentials and their focus on budget when shopping during this festive season in the various online communities on the LocalCircles platform," LocalCircles founder

Sachin Taparia said.

He said that due to this, residents of seven of the top-10 cities rated budget as their top shopping criteria in the survey. "Budget is the top criteria for households of Bengaluru, Chennai, Gurugram, Kolkata, Pune and Ahmedabad; while for households in Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai and Noida 'Safety' is more important. 'Convenience' is also quite an important criterion for Noida, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad households," the survey said.

The survey found that at least one of two residents in the top-eight cities out of the 10-top surveyed are doing the majority of their festive shopping by ordering online or locally for home delivery.

LocalCircles said that based on the inputs received, while the majority of households in Mumbai and Kolkata are likely to visit stores and markets as their primary channel for festive shopping, in other top cities, most households are likely to order the majority of what they need for home delivery.

"The key standout cities were Hyderabad (75 per cent), Noida (72 per cent), Pune (67 per cent) and Chennai (60 per cent), where over 60 per cent of the respondents said they prefer purchasing most of what they need to be delivered to them instead of going to stores and markets.

Smartphones, consumer electronics, white goods and appliances, home renovation,

and devices upgrade are some of the big-ticket purchases that residents in the top-10 cities are planning to make during the festive season.

All households in Hyderabad and Noida, 83 per cent in Gurugram, 80 per cent in Bengaluru, 57 per cent in Mumbai, and 48 per cent in Chennai are likely to purchase products under smartphones and consumer electronics.

In the foods and grocery category, during the festive season, all households of Hyderabad are likely to spend on dry fruits, traditional sweets, chocolates, bakery products, etc, the survey report said.

Residents in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune, and Noida surveyed are all likely to purchase apparel.



Intermediate Ist yr exams from today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The first-year intermediate public examinations for second year students are set to commence from Monday. A total of 4,59,228 students are expected to take the examinations which will conclude on November 3.

The exams will be conducted from 9 am to 12 noon and students will be allowed into centres one hour prior to commencement of the examination. Candidates have to fill their details on the OMR sheet between 8.45 am and 9 am and students reporting after 9 am will not be allowed into the centre.

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TS

BIE) has made elaborate arrangements including constituting 1,768 exam centres across the State.

A total of 25,258 invigilators have been deployed for the examination duties besides 1,768 chief superintendents and departmental officers were appointed. The Board also deployed 70 flying squads for the exams.

Given the pandemic situation, the Board has appointed only personnel who have been fully vaccinated. Wearing of face masks is mandatory for students and staff in the examination centres. Isolation rooms have been arranged in all centres for students suffering from any suspected Covid-19 symptoms.

Hooch finds its way into T'gana

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The sale of hooch is going on unchecked in Mahabubnagar and in Narayanapeta district and is also being smuggled to Karnataka although there is a ban on hooch there.

Hooch is transported in auto-rickshaws, sachets and plastic cans. Officials are accused of looking the other way if adequate bribes are paid.

In Narayanapeta district, Maktal, Krishna, Hindupur, Gudeballur, Marikal and Dhanwada there is brisk sale of adulterated toddy.

The toddy is adulterated with alprazolam, diazepam and sometimes even with banned chloral hydrates.

Hooch is going to Karnataka



through Kankurti and Zilalpur. Due to the addition of chemicals the consumers

sleep quickly. Hooch smugglers are cashing in on this.

Excise and Enforcement authorities conduct raids now and then, but there is a gener-

al lack of seriousness to check the hooch trade. Even if the officials conduct raids, the smugglers avoid detection as they are tipped off by insiders.

The adulterated toddy often create complications like loss of memory, kidney damage and serious withdrawal symptoms. Due to withdrawal symptoms, the demand for hooch is high.

However, local Enforcement officials are accused of not getting tough on hooch smugglers as they get bribes. The officials stay in their place of posting only for two or three days a week and look after their personal matters the rest of the time.

The public here has been appealing to officials to check hooch distillers and to save the lives of people.

Harish Rao leaves indelible mark on Huzurabad constituency in 100 days

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Finance Minister and TRS troubleshooter T Harish Rao has left an indelible mark on Huzurabad Assembly constituency, working 18 hours a day, motivating the party rank and file and meeting with at least 6,000-7,000 people during the past 100 days.

When he came to the constituency for the first time on July 7, he was welcomed by the party activists with a motorcycle rally. He has been monitoring the poll campaign drawing up poll strategies from Singapuram guest house.

He became quite popular with the youth with his characteristic style of functioning like patting the back while



speaking with others, addressing strangers by their names, attracting people with his speeches while campaigning in villages. His style of working won him fans in Huzurabad constituency, too. He asked party workers to go back to their villages and indulge in political work rather than making a beeline to his guest house since dawn.

He monitors the progress in the work by party activists from time to time and assigns them more work. Unlike other leaders, Harish Rao earned the trust of party rank and file and made them feel that he would pave the way for their bright future if they completed the tasks given to them.

The minister has cultivated his own intelligence network with trusted lieutenants to obtain the feedback on working of party leaders.

As per the party strategy, over 4,500 in-charges have been appointed at the rate of one for 50 voters to prompt the people to vote for the TRS. They have to safeguard the TRS vote bank and keep tabs on the strategies of the rival parties.

'Government hospitals offering corporate-level health services'

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Government hospitals in Telangana were offering quality health services on par with the corporate hospitals, thanks to the efforts put in by the State government, Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar said on Sunday.

He said the Chief Minister K Chandrashankar Rao wanted the public health facilities in the State to serve as the lifeline for the poor by providing the best treatment to them. Ajay Kumar called on Additional Collector, Snehalatha Mogili, who delivered a girl child at Maternal and Child Health (MCH) wing at the Government District Hospital. It might be noted that the Additional Collector was admitted to the District Hospital and on Friday delivered the child. Speaking on the occasion the minister lauded



Snehalatha, her husband, Manugur ASP, Dr. Shabarish P for choosing the government hospital for delivery.

The decision of the officials elevated respect for government hospitals among the common people and Snehalatha and Shabarish have left an example for people from all walks of life, Ajay Kumar said. He carried the newborn child in his hands and congratulated the couple. Ajay Kumar recalled that

Khammam District Hospital received Kayakalp award three times and secured a place in the list of top performing District Hospitals in the country as per a recent performance assessment report released 30 by NITI Aayog, ZP Chairman L Kamalraj, Mayor Punukollu Neeraja, Agriculture Market Committee Chairperson D Lakshmi Prasanna, DM&HO Dr. Malathi, SUDA Chairman B Vijay Kumar and others. accompanied the Minister.

Lovers consume poison, end lives

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A pair of lovers has committed suicide in the Thettekunta village of Thirumalagiri mandal here on Sunday.

The deceased persons were identified as Mattapally Kondal, 21, and Sandhya, 19, a resident of Thettekunta village in the district. Kondal and Sandhya were in a relationship since years. Their elders did not agree to their marriage even though the two belonged to the same caste. Sandhya's parents recently started searching for another match.

The disappointed lovers ended their lives by consuming pesticide two days ago on their village's outskirts. Locals rushed them to hospital, but both of them died Sunday while receiving treatment.

Thirumalagiri Police registered a case.

South Korean researchers' team to study Mudumal menhirs site

PNS ■ NARAYANPET

Efforts to conserve ancient Menhirs site at Mudumal got a shot in the arm with a team of researchers from South Korea evincing interest to study the site of historical importance.

The team of Sejong University in South Korea visited the menhirs site at the invitation of Jai Makthal Trust chief Sundeep Kumar Makthala who is spreading the cause of conserving the ancient site, its promotion as a tourism site and subsequently getting UNESCO World Heritage Site tag for the site. The team consisting of professors and students announced that they will study the ancient site and make efforts in getting the UNESCO WHS tag for the popular place in rural Telangana.

The ancient humans at the menhirs site used sky-chart



which is used to identify and locate constellations and astronomical objects. The Jai Makthal Trust led by Sundeep Makthala is working at ground level to preserve the place. The Trust, on one hand, is creating awareness among locals about the importance of the ancient site and the need to protect the same and on the other hand, is working with various stakeholders to get the UNESCO WHS site tag for the site. Sundeep Makthala has been organised study tours for

school teachers and students of government schools at his own expense for some time now. He has also represented the Union Minister Kishan Reddy and State Minister G Srinivas Goud to take up measures to protect the ancient heritage site. The team of researchers from Sejong University based in Gwangju province of South Korea included professors and students. The team had six members - Kim Seungsik, Kim Yeonji, Beon In Ho, Lee sh Mi, Euggyeoung, Jeong Hwu.

Seminars on legal services held in town

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Combined Nalgonda District Legal Services Authority secretary and senior civil judge G. Venu organised seminars on legal services in various villages in Nalgonda mandal on Sunday as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration and to mark the United Nations Day.

The judge said that human civilisation can only thrive if it is governed by law. He said that legal services should be approached when any legal issue arises and that those who take the law into their own hands and commit further crimes should be imprisoned. The LSA has stated that the goal of the law is to ensure justice for every citizen, and to educate the public on women's rights under various laws, free legal aid and Lok Adalat issues.

Former MLA wants CM to stop privatisation of SCCL

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

The KCR Government will face the wrath of SCCL workers if SCCL is privatised, former MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao said here. The government is duty bound to pressure the Centre against privatising SCCL, he added.

Sambasiva Rao was speaking as chief guest at the AITUC workers' meeting held at the Bhaskar Rao Bhavan in Godavarihikani on Sunday. He described the SCCL as the heart of Telangana. The BJP Government at the Centre brought the Coalmines Special Provisions Act of 2015 and invited tenders to privatise 83 coal blocks of Coal India and four of SCCL.

If the SCCL is privatised, the KCR Government would have to face the anger of SCCL workers, he cautioned the government. The Centre has been resorting to anti-worker policies and rendering injustice to workers by amending labour

laws, which were enacted after long struggles by the working class.

Privatisation of coal blocks would be detrimental to Telangana, he said, accusing the KCR government of failing to stop the anti-labour policies of the Centre.

He demanded that the State government should take remedial measures to stop the privatisation of SCCL coal blocks. He said the SCCL Workers' Union General Secretary Sitaramiah had said that protests would be staged in front of all government departments on October 26 asking SCCL to take up coal mining operations again.

Memoranda would be submitted to SCCL officials. He appealed to SCCL workers to make the protests a success.

Sambasiva Rao said that an all-party meeting would be held at Godavarihikani with the cooperation of SCCL unions on October 31 to oppose the privatisation of SCCL.

Bandi: Appoint a Dalit as TRS president

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

TRS Telangana President Bandi Sanjay has dared Chief Minister K. Chandrakeshwar Rao to appoint a Dalit as TRS president if he is committed to Dalits.

Campaigning for BJP candidate Eatala Rajender at the Rachapalli village of Huzurabad here on Sunday, he said that the credit of giving 100 crore doses of vaccine free of cost to the people goes to Prime Minister Modi.

KCR is spending sleepless nights fearing a serious political blow, he said, appealing to the people to vote for the BJP on October 30.

On November 2, triple R (Raja Singh, Raghu Nandan and Rajender) will make KCR see film in front of the Pragati Bhavan, he said.

He said that KCR is sending Rs 20,000 for every voter in Huzurabad. However, TRS leaders are pocketing Rs 15,000 and giving only Rs 5,000 to a voter in Huzurabad.



He said the Centre gave huge funds to Rachapalli and Mallannapeta villages and dared TRS to file a case against him, if he was wrong.

He said the Centre is funding PDS rice, roads, drainages, community halls, the planting of saplings, vaccines, toilets and crematoria, but TRS leaders are claiming that the state government is funding all these.

TRS leaders are holding the plenary knowing well that the TRS will draw flak in Huzurabad, he said. Ever since TRS was founded 20 years

ago, KCR continues to be its president and is going to be elected president again. His son is the working president, Harish Rao is the standing president, KCR daughter Kavitha is the sitting president and Santosh Rao is the sleeping president of the TRS, he said. The CM had cheated Dalits promising them the CM's and deputy CM's posts and is denying Dalit Bandhu benefits to them, Sanjay said.

The Centre procures paddy from farmers and pays 2 per cent commission to the TRS

Government, he clarified.

Over 1,400 sacrificed their lives for Telangana, he said, expressing concern over the unemployed committing suicide.

He sought to know what sacrifices KCR, Harish Rao, KTR, Kavitha and Santosh Rao had made for Telangana.

Sanjay appealed to the poor to vote for Rajender to ensure his victory in Huzurabad and to bring KCR to his knees.

Eatala Rajender was expelled from the TRS as he had raised the problems of Dalits with the government, he pointed out.

While Eatala Rajender worked day and night for Covid patients, the CM was celebrating at his farmhouse along with family, Sanjay said.

The people have realised that the TRS rendered injustice to Rajender and would defeat the TRS, he said.

Former MP Chada Suresh Reddy, former MLA NVSS Prabhakar, BJP leaders Hussain Naik, Tirupati Reddy and others attended the meeting.



Bravesh takes charge as Collector of Bhupalpally

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Bravesh Mishra took charge as Bhupalpally district Collector on Sunday following orders by the Chief Secretary on Saturday appointing him as Collector.

Bravesh Mishra was ITDA Project Officer before the posting.

Soon after assuming office, the new Collector reviewed welfare and development programmes in the district. He reviewed Palle Pragati, Pattana Pragati, Medical and Health

Department activities, activities of the Education Department, the law and order situation, Praja Vaani and the Dharani portal.

Bhupalpally RDO Srinivas, Collectorate Administrative Officer Mahesh Babu, Office Superintendent Ravi Kumar, Section Officers Sunil, Jalapati Reddy, Bhupalpally and Ghanpur Tehsildars Iqbal and Satish Kumar, District Panchayat Officer Asha Lata and Public Relations Officer Ravi Kumar presented bouquets to the Collector.

School Innovation Challenge a grand success: Collector

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Hanumakonda Collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanth has called upon the people to make the School Innovation Challenge a grand success.

Unveiling the poster at the Collectorate here on Sunday, he said that the School Education Department, the Telangana State Innovation Cell, Unicef and the Inquilab Foundation have been conducting the programme by giving training to students.

District Education Officer Narayana Reddy said that 133 schools had submitted 345 innovative ideas at the School Innovation Challenge held last year.

AITUC appeals to CM to solve the problems of cotton growers

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

AITUC national secretary Suravaram Vijayalakshmi has appealed to Chief Minister K Chandrakeshwar Rao to resolve the problems of the cotton seed growers of Nadigadda, who, she alleged, are caught between seed processing companies and organisers.

Speaking as chief guest at the ILO workshop held at the TNGOs' Bhavan at Gadwal on Sunday, she said that the cotton growers of Nadigadda were caught in a debt crisis. She appealed to the CM to come to their rescue.

The cotton farmers were caught between the processing companies and organisers, she



alleged, expressing concern over the growing number of child labour cases in Nadigadda region.

She alleged that women agricultural workers did not get suitable wages and their

minimum rights were not protected at work place. Therefore, the government and district machinery should take the initiative to solve problems of the agricultural workers and their families, she demanded.

Three rescued from drowning

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Three persons of a family, including two women, were rescued by local youth from drowning in the Godavari River at Kaleswaram here on Sunday.

TS Genco Power Project employee Tirupati Reddy of Bhupalapally and his family had come to Kaleswaram for a visit. While taking a dip in the Godavari they were about to drown due to a deep gorge when local youth, including expert swimmers, rescued them.

Besides the swimmers, photographers Nagula Sekhar and Ganesh Naik also jumped into the river to rescue them.

Telangana government is killing RTI Act, says Gudur Narayana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party state senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy on Sunday flayed the government for its attempts to kill the Right to Information Act in the state.

In a media statement, he said that Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar has been playing the role of executioner on behalf of the TRS government in killing the RTI Act. He said that the government is hell bent upon to deny the benefits of RTI Act to the people of the state.

Narayana Reddy said that a recent order issued by the Chief Secretary to government departments would be a death knell to the Act in the state. He said the CS's instruction that replies to RTI queries need clearance from the secretaries of the departments would lead to inordinate delay in issuing the replies to queries of RTI. Comparing the Chief Secretary with the members of Cheddy Gang which burgles the houses in the knight hours and escapes from the police, he said that the CS has been following the tactics of that gang



to save the government. He explained that the Cheddy Gang members would wear only knickers and roam with bare tops. They apply oil to their bodies so that they could slip away from the grip of the police.

In the same way the Chief Secretary has provided enough opportunity for the erring officials and public representatives of the ruling party to escape from the clutches of the law.

He said that the Chief Secretary might have been acting at the behest of Chief Minister K Chandrakeshwar Rao who does not believe in transparency. He said that the Chief Minister does not want

the people to know the facts and want them to know only whatever the government says.

Narayana Reddy said that the Chief Minister has been pampering the Chief Secretary and getting all the dirty jobs done through him. He said that though Somesh Kumar does not belong to state cadre he was appointed to the top post in the administration.

He said that due to the instruction of the CS, replies would be delayed by months together and it would water down the spirit of the RTI Act. The government and officials would have an opportunity to escape from the punishments.

He said that several RTI and social activists have been exposing the failures, misdeeds and corruption of the officials and public representatives of the ruling party in the past seven years. He said that lapses in Dharani portal, corruption and intervention of TRS leaders in construction and allotment of double bedroom houses, lopsided implementation of various schemes and other misdeeds of the government have been exposed by the RTI activists.

SCCL employees told to brace up for struggle

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

The SCCL Workers' Union affiliated to the CITU, at its state committee meeting which is under way at the Shramik Bhavan in Godavari, appealed to the workers to tighten their

belts to launch struggles for the implementation of the assurances made to them by the Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrakeshwar Rao.

He, at the time of previous elections, gave several assurances to the CITU state president

and secretary, Tummla Raja Reddy and Manda Narasimha Rao, but failed to implement them, the meeting felt.

The promises include houses to the workers and introduction of more coal blocks to create jobs for the youth among

other things.

Unable to get permission for new coal blocks, the BJP government decided to auction two coal blocks in Mancherial district, they said.

At a time the SCCL is getting a raw deal, the TRS govern-

ment got busy with Huzurabad by-elections, paying no attention to the colliery, they felt.

The increased political interference in the SCCL is causing loss to the colliery, they said, demanding that the CM pay Rs 12,000 crore.

INDIA CORNER

Oneness biggest strength of Indian culture, says Gadkari

Oneness is the biggest strength of Indian culture and it was this aspect that made it capable for us to become a 'vishwa guru' or world teacher, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said at an event here on Sunday. Speaking on 'Global Challenges to Communal Harmony and the Role of India' at an inter-religious conference organised by the Lokmat media group to mark the golden jubilee year of its Nagpur edition, the senior BJP leader also said Indian culture was truly secular. Respecting all cultures, religions, communities, ideologies was the speciality of Indian culture, which is not associated with any 'dharma', he said. 'Oneness is the biggest strength of Indian culture and this is what makes us capable of becoming a vishwa guru, which was predicted earlier by Swami Vivekananda,' he said. The Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said the demand of human life was diversity but there was hatred against diversity due to our lack of understanding as well as stress. He said, therefore, there was need to walk together and respect one another as all communities are important.



Success of Covid vaccination drive shows India's capability: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the success of India's Covid vaccination drive shows its capability and noted that the country is moving ahead with new energy after crossing the 100 crore vaccine doses milestone. In his monthly Mann Ki Baat broadcast, Modi hailed healthcare workers for the vaccine milestone and said he knew that they would leave no stone unturned to vaccinate the people of the country. The success of our vaccination drive shows India's capability and the strength of 'sabka prayas' (collective effort) mantra, he said. Modi said the country is moving ahead with new energy and enthusiasm after crossing the 100 crore Covid vaccine doses milestone. On October 21, India achieved a major milestone in its vaccination programme against COVID-19 as the cumulative vaccine doses administered in the country surpassed the 100-crore mark. In his Mann Ki Baat radio programme, Modi also said India has always worked for world peace and this is seen in the country's contribution to the UN Peacekeeping forces.



Amit Shah reaches Jammu; inaugurates new campus of IIT

Amid tight security, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday arrived here and inaugurated the new campus of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu, officials said. Shah, accompanied by Union ministers Jitendra Singh and Dharmendra Pradhan and Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, reached Jammu airport from Srinagar and started his engagements with the inauguration of the new campus of the IIT-Jammu, they said. Shah is on a three-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, his first after the Centre revoked the erstwhile state's special status and bifurcated it into union territories on August 5, 2019. They officials said the new campus of IIT-Jammu, built at a cost of Rs 210 crore, has all the facilities like hostel, gymnasium, indoor games, along with higher education for the students. After inaugurating the new campus of the IIT-Jammu, Shah reached the Bhagwati Nagar area to address a public rally. Heavy rains lashed Jammu on Saturday, casting a shadow on the scheduled public meeting of the Union home minister. However, with improvement in the weather, the local unit of the BJP and the administration worked overnight to ensure the success of the rally.



Cong decries rising fuel prices, Rahul calls it 'tax dacoity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday slammed the Centre over rising fuel prices with former party chief Rahul Gandhi taking a dig at the government, saying the "tax dacoity" on petrol prices is rising and there would be some respite from it if elections take place somewhere. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also attacked the Centre over rising prices of petrol and diesel, alleging that the Modi government has created records in "giving trouble" to people.



has made big records in giving trouble to the public. Highest unemployment: in Modi government. Government properties being sold: in Modi government. Petrol rates increased the most in a year: in Modi government," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. Taking a swipe at the government, Rahul Gandhi, in a tweet in Hindi, said, "Tax dacoity over petrol prices is rising. There would be some respite from it if elections take place somewhere."

He used the hashtag 'TaxExtortion' with his tweet. Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also took a dig at the government by tagging the same media report shared by Priyanka Gandhi and tweeting, "Aache Din" (good days). Petrol and diesel prices on Sunday were hiked for the fifth straight day by 35 paise per litre each, pushing pump rates to a new high across the country. The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 107.59 a litre and Rs 113.46 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 104.38 a litre, while in Delhi, it costs Rs 96.32 per litre.

10 additional judges of Punjab & Haryana HC elevated as permanent judges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ten additional judges of the Punjab and Haryana High Court were on Sunday elevated as permanent judges, the law ministry said.

The Department of Justice in the ministry issued a list of additional judges elevated as judges. Those elevated include three women additional judges.

Usually, additional judges are appointed for a period of two years before being made judges.

According to October 1, 2021 figures available on the law ministry website, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has a sanctioned strength of 85 judges, but is functioning with 45 judges.

The 10 additional judges whose names have been notified are Justices Suvir Sehgal, Alka Sarin, Jagrupreet Singh Puri, Ashok Kumar Verma, Sant Parkash, Meenakshi I Mehta, Karamjit Singh, Vivek Puri, Archana Puri and Rajesh Bhardwaj.

The Supreme Court collegium, in its meeting held on October 7, had approved the proposal for the appointment of the additional judges.

'Senior advocates must render pro bono legal aid to poor'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge justice U U Lalit Sunday called upon senior advocates to render pro bono legal aid to the poor and marginalised sections to ensure that they get quality access to justice.

Justice Lalit, who is the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority, was speaking at a function organised by Karnataka State Legal Services Authority in association with the District Legal Services Authority, Kalaburagi on 'Actualisation of Rights and Entitlements in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals-2020'.

"Merely training the panel lawyers will not be sufficient. The solution to the problem is that some of the senior advocates must take legal aid as a matter of choice and keep on appearing for matters pro bono so that the man who comes through the door of legal aid service clinic is assured that it is not going to be a matter which is botched up and a quality legal aid will be extended to him," Justice Lalit said.

Stressing the importance of empowering the poor and downtrodden, he said legal aid to the poor does not mean



it is of poor level and it has to be of better quality and standard.

Stressing the need to empower women, the judge said women should be empowered to such an extent that she may run shoulder to shoulder with everyone of us.

Justice Lalit commended the efforts of the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority with respect to the establishment of the off-campus legal services clinics and release of a graphic novel to spread legal literacy in the state.

The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) and the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA) have been performing instrumental role in bringing justice to the

doorstep of citizens by creating legal awareness amongst the common citizens.

As part of NALSA Pan India Awareness and Outreach Campaign and on the occasion of UN Day which is celebrated globally to mark the anniversary of the UN charter coming into force on 24 October in 1945, the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority in association with the District Legal Services Authority, Kalaburagi organised the programme.

The programme was attended by judicial officers, members of the local bar, law students, teachers and around 300 members of the Banjara Community (known colloquially as Lambanis).

First Zika virus case reported in UP's Kanpur

PNS ■ KANPUR (UP)

A Zika virus case has been reported in this district of Uttar Pradesh, a health official said on Sunday. He said a warrant officer in the Indian Air Force (IAF) was diagnosed with the infection on Saturday, the first in Kanpur. Chief Medical Officer Nepal Singh said that the IAF officer was suffering from fever for the past several days and was admitted to the Air Force Hospital in the district. Following mysterious symptoms in the case, the blood sample was collected and sent to Pune for proper examination which confirmed that the patient was Zika virus positive, he said, adding the report was received on Saturday.

India's first aircraft carrier begins trials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) Vikrant set sail on Sunday for the second sea trials, ahead of its planned induction into the Indian Navy by August next year. The 40,000-tonne aircraft carrier, the largest and most complex warship to be built in India, successfully completed a five-day maiden sea voyage in August. Following the first sea trials, the Navy had said that the performance of key systems of the warship was found to be satisfactory. "Indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant sailed out on Sunday from Kochi for the second sea



trials," said an official. The warship has been built at a cost of around Rs 23,000 crore and its construction propelled India into a select group of countries having capabilities to build state-of-the-art aircraft carriers. The warship will operate MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31 helicopters, MH-60R multi-role helicopters.

Congress govt used farmers as vote bank: AAP leader

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Congress government in Punjab never fulfilled promises made to farmers and used them as a vote bank, alleged state AAP MLA Kultar Singh Sandhwan on Sunday.

Sandhwan, who is his party's farmer wing president, said like former CM Amarinder Singh, the Charanjit Channi-led government neither waived farmers' debt nor "compensated" them for crop loss.

"The Congress government has never fulfilled its promises made to the farmers and used them only as a vote bank," he said.

J-K COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATION

Arrested Pak terrorist killed, 3 security personnel injured

PNS ■ JAMMU

An arrested Pakistani terrorist was killed, while three security personnel were injured on Sunday when militants opened fire on a joint search party of the Army and police inside a forest in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Heavy firing and explosions were reported from Bhatta Durrian forest of Mendhar which along with nearby forest areas adjoining Surankote (Poonch) and Thanamandi in Rajouri district is witnessing a massive search operation, the officials said.

The operation, which saw nine Army personnel losing their lives in separate ambushes in Surankote and Mendhar on October 11 and 14, entered the 14th day on Sunday.

A police spokesperson said two policemen and an Army jawan along with a prisoner Zia Mustafa, a Pakistani terrorist affiliated with the Lashkar-e-



Toiba (LeT) were injured in firing by terrorists in Bhatta Durrian forest this morning.

"Detenu Mustafa was taken to Bhatadurian for identification of terrorist hideout during the ongoing operation in which three Army jawans and a JCO were martyred (on October 14)."

"During the search when the team approached the hideout, terrorists again opened fire on the joint team of police and Army personnel in which two policemen and an Army jawan sustained injuries," the

spokesperson said. The police said Mustafa also sustained injuries and he could not be taken out from the site due to heavy fire.

"During the subsequent operation additional reinforcements were sent and the body of Mustafa has been retrieved from the encounter site," the spokesperson said, adding the operation (to neutralise the hiding terrorists) is in progress and legal process has been initiated in connection with the killing of the Pakistani terrorist.

Kerala wins award for city with most sustainable transport system

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala has won the award for the 'city with the most sustainable transport system', state Transport Minister Antony Raju said on Sunday.

The award, which will be presented on October 29 at Delhi, has been given in recognition of the projects implemented -- like Kochi Metro, Water Metro and e-mobility -- to enhance the transport facilities in the city of Kochi, the minister said. The formation of the Kochi Open Mobility Network, which digitized and integrated various transport facilities, also helped to win the award.

The award would be presented in Delhi by Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri, Raju said.

The award is given in recognition of the transport facilities in various states and Union Territories of India.

43 pc teachers unhappy with online mode of teaching in pandemic: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 43 per cent of teachers said they were not satisfied with online teaching during the pandemic while nine per cent of them expressed complete dissatisfaction with the mode of education, according to a survey.

A total of 220 school teachers participated while 20 people, including eight teachers, were interviewed for an online survey published in the Delhi Commission for Protection of

Child Rights' (DCPCR) first journal -- Children First: Journal on Children's Lives. A majority of teachers (43 per cent) expressed that they were not satisfied with teaching online and nine per cent of the participants were not at all happy with it, the survey said.

The key issues that the teachers identified as the teaching went online due to the pandemic were absenteeism (14 per cent), children with special needs not being considered (21 per cent), low attention span of

students (28 per cent), emotional issues expressed by the students (19 per cent), and no assessment or assignment completion by the students (10 per cent).

The participating teachers and students also stated that online emotional support and group engagements by the counsellors and social workers helped children to be more expressive and participatory in online education.

The teachers stressed that the involvement of parents

became necessary in school education because only they have regular access to children and can directly engage with them during this period.

The students who participated in the study expressed that they missed many school activities, including meeting friends, interacting with people, celebrations, and friendships. Some of the participants also expressed that they are overloaded with academic exercises, according to the survey.

Lakhimpur Kheri: Ashish Mishra contracts dengue

PNS ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP)

Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, arrested in connection with Lakhimpur Kheri violence, has contracted dengue and shifted to the district hospital, an official said on Sunday.



Bhatnagar along with his team examined Ashish.

"The samples (of Ashish Mishra) collected Saturday night tested positive for dengue. His sugar levels were found to be critical. Some changes were also observed in the ECG. This demands treatment under observation by expert doctors at the district hospital," he told reporters on Sunday.

Ashish, who was taken in police remand, was sent to the district jail Saturday evening for treatment at its healthcare facility. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Arun Kumar Singh said.

Ashish, along with three others, was taken in two-day police custody on Friday evening for further interrogation in the case.

Chief Medical Officer of Lakhimpur Kheri, Shailendra

Ganga's quality improves to bathing standards: NMCG DG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ganga's water quality has significantly improved since 2014 with the entire length of the river having more dissolved oxygen than the prescribed minimum level, and 68 out of 97 monitoring locations compliant with bathing standards in terms of biochemical oxygen demand, a senior official said.

In an interview to PTI, National Mission for Clean Ganga Director General Rajiv Ranjan Mishra said 32 out of 53 locations monitoring biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) were compliant with the primary water quality criteria for bathing in 2014, whereas in 2021 the total monitoring stations increased to 97, out of which 68 monitoring locations were found compliant with BOD criteria for bathing.

BOD represents the amount of oxygen consumed by bacteria and other microorganisms. The greater the BOD, the more rapidly oxygen is depleted in the stream, which means less oxygen is available to higher forms of aquatic life.

Mishra said the dissolved oxygen level of the Ganga has also improved.

"At present, the entire length of Ganga has more dissolved oxygen (DO) than the prescribed minimum level of 5 mg/l. The river water quality has shown improvement between 2014 and 2021," he said. The water quality of Ganga is assessed as per primary water quality standard for outdoor bathing in terms of dissolved oxygen (=5mg/L), BOD (=3mg/L) and faecal coliform (FC) (=2500 MPN/100ml) and (pH) (6.5-8.5).

68 out of 97 monitoring locations



Mishra said the steps taken to improve the water quality include abatement and control of source pollution by establishment or upgradation of wastewater treatment plants for the towns located on Ganga main

stem and its tributaries, construction of crematoria, surface cleaning activities, solid waste management on the riverbanks and floodplains and refraining trash from drains falling into river Ganga by installation of

trash racks at the mouth of drains.

"The outcome of these projects has started showing significant results and the water quality of river Ganga will further improve as more and more projects are operationalised," he said.

Mishra said in Uttarakhand up to Haridwar, the river is meeting class A criteria, which is the highest level i.e., it meets DO, BOD and FC criteria.

"The NMCG's efforts towards cleaning of the river have been targeted towards meeting bathing quality criteria for river water. Out of the 351 polluted river stretches identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in India, no stretch of river Ganga falls in the top three priority categories," he said.

Noting that the cleaning of river Ganga is a continuous

process, he said many initiatives have started yielding results and the water quality of the river will further improve as more and more projects are commissioned.

Mishra said during the Covid-triggered lockdown, there was visible improvement in the quality of Ganga water.

"It mostly happened due to the shutdown of industrial activities and also no solid waste disposal on ghats as people were not able to visit the ghats and other public places. But at the same time, we also have to realise that the sewage generation continued to take place, which was treated at sewage treatment plants (STP), several of them came during the last few years. They were monitored closely and ran without any disruption," he said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

New Kashmir

Amit Shah has extended his hand; it's now time for the youth to reciprocate

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is on his first visit to Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370. From his point of view, he pressed all the right buttons on his first day in Srinagar. He wants calm in the region that is like a becalmed ship in the last two years. Shah kicked off the visit by chairing a security meeting. Two aspects of the Valley's disquiet were jarring: Continuing violence despite heavy security presence and radicalisation of local youth. The Minister was worried that the unending violence was undoing the Government's efforts to stabilise the situation. He was probably told in return that with the terrorists targeting ordinary individuals, it was difficult to give protection to every citizen. The toll has already crossed 30. Shah later interacted with people at the Raj Bhavan, addressed youth and visited the house of a slain police officer. His wife was given a Government job. As outreaches go, the visit is a serious outreach campaign of the Centre in Kashmir by the Home Minister himself. It comes at a time when recent violence is threatening to stall Delhi's attempts at rapprochement, the usual pressures from the international community and the snide remarks from Pakistan. The Government would not want the ongoing exercise of constituency delimitation to be delayed. It has perhaps set an agenda for itself wherein the constituencies would first be subjected to delimitation, favouring the Jammu region as Kashmir complains or rectifying its under-representation as Jammu counters, after which elections would be held.



The formation of the next Government will reveal which region has an edge and that may determine future State politics. Like he announced in the Parliament, Shah also said in Srinagar that the return of statehood would be taken up thereafter. The Government is of the view that the Kashmiri youth should be persuaded to join the national mainstream as the region returns to a new normal. Nearly 70 per cent of the State's population is under the age of 35. Shah said he was in Srinagar to make friends with the Kashmiri youth, assuring them of all help for education, employment and development. It is not yet known how these youth have reacted to the Home Minister's persuasion. That is the key. They are being asked to forget all of the past and embrace a "new era in Kashmir". The "era" was brought in on the back of decisions like the internet ban and curfew that were necessary to foil a plot to provoke Kashmiris, as the Home Minister explained. Tourism is flourishing and there is no curfew now, he said, even as Srinagar was enveloped in one of the toughest security blankets with the use of drone cameras, detention of hundreds of people, including youth, and seizure of hundreds of motorcycles in preparation for the Minister's visit. Shah amplified his aspirations in earnest. It is up to the aspirations of the youth to match his.

PICTALK



Women perform rituals to celebrate Karva Chauth, in Jammu

Educate to achieve attitudinal changes



JS RAJPUT

The NEP 2020 recommends the integration of academic and vocational knowledge, which indicates the impact of Gandhian education philosophy

The strength and resilience of Indian democracy receive widespread appreciation. For the outside world, it is amazing that a Prime Minister loses House confidence by one vote, and accepts it without even asking for a recount. But the fading away of the Independence struggle-generation has led to severe erosion of values, the impact of which is visible all around. The violence and murder in Lakhimpur Kheri, lynching of a young Dalit person in Rajasthan and the barbaric killing of a young man at the Singhu border are among the instances of avoidable loss of life in a civilised society. Is it not a shame that blatant discrimination is practised even in *ex gratia* payment to victims? This is not the democracy that MK Gandhi and numerous other luminaries fought for. Selfish motives, shortsighted goals and vested interests are denting India's image globally. Gandhi found everything in India attractive as "India has everything that a human being with highest aspirations could aspire for". He found India "fitted for religious supremacy of the world", and that India is a *karmabhumi*, not a *bhogbhumi*. He was convinced that India's mission was different from that of others.

On October 20, 1927, he said about Hindu dharma: "I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me inasmuch as it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but also to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in other faiths." Gandhi did not mean that "everything in India that attracted" him included abhorrent practices like untouchability, dowry, child marriages, and much more. He loved India, its diversity, its culture, and lamented its downfall over the centuries because of foreign invaders and internal deficiencies. He was very clear in his priorities for resurgence of a new India: Education for all, dignity for all. As one goes through his writings that indicate his vision for India, political freedom was only



one of the steps towards a new democratic India; freedom from hunger, poverty and ill-health was the prerequisite in the march towards equality, transparency, brotherhood and human dignity. His was a unique endeavour, the essence of which could be comprehended in that immortal sentence: "My life is my message."

This was the level of transparency he had set for those who were to take over the reins of power after India's Independence. He preached only what he could practice. His approach, as is well known by now, attracted global interest only because he became a unique example of courage, bravery and commitment to conviction. Billions the world over were convinced during his lifetime that only the Gandhian way could extricate mankind — and our planet — from the clutches of distrust, bigotry, racism, caste prejudices, terrorism, fundamentalism and much more that jeopardised the very human existence. The global foundation for a world of peace was to be laid in the pragmatic implementation of the universalisation of education which, Gandhi thought, was the only ray of hope for the suffering masses. The *Hind Swaraj* he penned in 1909 is now being perused with much



SADLY, NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO BRING FORTH A MODEL OF EDUCATION ROOTED IN INDIAN CULTURE AND, AT THE SAME TIME, COMMITTED TO NEW KNOWLEDGE. THIS FORMULATION WOULD BE COMPLETE WHEN SYNCHRONISED WITH GANDHI'S WRITINGS

more respect and sincerity.

Violence must totally vanish from Gandhi's land. One is convinced that the solution lies in reverting to Gandhi and re-articulating his thoughts in the current idiom. While those in power have the obligation to find immediate solutions, the long-term strategy must focus on education, right from the early days to universities. Attitudinal transformation can be possible only through Gandhian vision, the essence of which he had presented to the nation in the 'Basic Education', which he thought was his most significant contribution. Why Gandhi was so enamoured by this idea? He wanted education to draw the best out of "head, hand and heart". This, he thought, was the best way to transform a lay learner into a full-grown personality. It is indeed laudable that with literacy below 20 per cent at Independence, India is touching 80 per cent and, that too, when population growth has been more than three times. It has also led to certain aberrations in teaching and learning, most prominent being the concentration on "head", and near-total neglect of "hand and heart". The consequences are before us. The 75-year experience must put the system on

the right path.

The manner in which the National Education Policy-2020 lays focus on character building, value inculcation and recommends the integration of academic and vocational education clearly indicates the impact of Gandhian education philosophy. Sadly, the philosophy that Gandhi and his colleagues had articulated was simply ignored by the earlier decision makers. No effort was made to bring forth a model of education rooted in Indian culture and, at the same time, committed to new knowledge. This formulation would be complete when synchronised with Gandhi's writing in the *Young India* issue of June 3, 1926: "The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled license is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to self and one's neighbours."

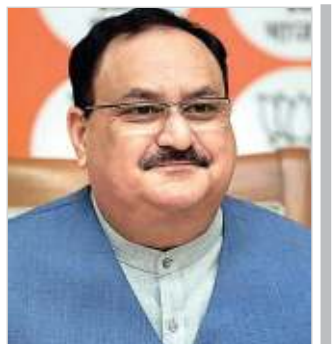
To re-emphasise, education must concentrate on preparing men and women of character and commitment who practise integrity, honesty and selfless service as their dharma.

(The author works in education, social cohesion and religious amity. The views expressed are personal.)

Under fire

The Oppn is sharpening its claws to take on the BJP, especially in Punjab and Goa

The BJP is coming under increasingly ferocious attack from various quarters ahead of next year's Assembly elections in five States. The ruling party at the Centre has its Government in UP, Uttarakhand and Goa and is a governing alliance partner in Manipur while Punjab currently has the Congress Government at the helm. In Punjab's politics, there is a lot of churning going on, especially in the Congress. Going into the elections, it is one of the few States where the beleaguered party is still considered to be on a better footing than its rivals. The open, long-drawn power struggle between Navjot Singh Sidhu and then Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has not really done the Congress any good turn. Following the acrimonious duel, the party high command was forced to opt for Dalit leader Charanjit Singh Channi as the Chief Minister. All eyes are now on the leadership to see how the forced change and the sulking Captain affect its fortunes: Will it manage to retain power despite the



bad blood within and anti-incumbency, or whether the AAP will concretise its hold or if the BJP will turn out to be the dark horse?

According to poll pundits, the BJP faces a tough competition only in Punjab and is set to romp home comfortably in the other four States. However, there is a silent storm brewing against it over the coastal horizon of Goa, too. While TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee has since July's 'Martyrs' Day' event started making an outreach to the electorate there, her nephew and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee has now made a shriller pitch for the party's all-out debut in Goa, saying they will register a win in the State. The AAP is also pulling out all the stops in both Punjab and Goa to fulfil Arvind Kejriwal's aspiration to go national. However, all said and done, the impact of the BJP's mammoth poll machinery can't be underestimated, whenever it starts rolling full throttle. There already is speculation in the media that Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant may be replaced soon for the party to contest the election on a clean slate. Besides, hundreds of the RSS cadres have fanned across the State and are working silently to ensure that the BJP stages a comeback. Time will tell which party's calculations hit the bull's-eye at the hustings.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AI CAN'T TAKE OVER JOURNALISM

Sir — As industries are being affected by the age of automation, it is feared that journalism could be next. But this ever-busy field needs more human power for reporting and publishing news and stories than machines. The profession involves much more than mechanisation. Publishing houses might soon opt to switch journalists with Artificial Intelligence robots and applications to minimise human hands. But clearly, AI involved works can account for only about 10 per cent of the total function in journalism. Another key aspect of journalism is that it involves a lot of emotional intelligence. For example, a journalist visiting a flood-ravaged area or a fire-affected spot and speaking to people who are rendered homeless, can never be compared with a robot's workmanship.

It is important to remember that journalism is more than just the sum of its parts and the profession's human character cannot be automated, as journalists provide more than just information. As former journalist and professor at the University of Minnesota Rodrigo Zamith aptly sums up, "Accuracy requires proper verification. Robots cannot get it right every time."

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

ALL EYES ON THE JUDICIARY

Sir — Eventually, a ray of hope came from the Supreme Court for Kavita Lankesh, who has been waiting since four years to get justice for her slain sister Gauri Lankesh from the judiciary in the cold-blooded murder case. The brave and outspoken Gauri Lankesh was silenced to death by perpetrators for her anti-Hindutva ideology and for her trenchant critics. It was also an attack on the freedom of speech and expression and fourth pillar of democracy — the media. The delay in the process of trial speaks volumes about the loophole in the lethargic police system and court proceedings which is an ordeal and complicated rigmarole.

The Supreme Court has definitely restored faith of people on judiciary, hav-

Centenary of an era



Undoubtedly, he lived for the common man and sketched for the common man. He voiced his opinion through one of his eternal characters — *The Common Man* — who said nothing but his silence spoke volumes. The cartoons he drew, especially *The Common Man* series, are eye-openers for everyone. It depicted the follies and foibles of not just the politicians and bureaucrats but the society as a whole. No other cartoonist comes near RK Laxman when it comes to picturing the common man's difficulties.

A recipient of the Padma Vibhushan, the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay, Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism by CNN IBN and a long list of laurels and honours, it is high time that our Government honours this great Indian with something greater. A museum, an institution or an award in his name would be a very good tribute to the legendary cartoonist who lived and breathed for the commoner.

M Pradyu | Kannur

ing rejected the Karnataka High Court order of the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act (KCOCA) case against one of the prime accused, Mohan Nayak, who was a stooge of an organised crime syndicate masterminded by Amol Kale and Rajesh D Bangera in the Kannada journalist's murder. Hope this case will now get a steady closure with course correction without any further delay, ensuring justice to Gauri Lankesh, her family and reinstate faith of the journalist fraternity in the judiciary.

Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagrakote

FARMERS' PROTEST OR FARM LEADERS'?

Sir — It refers to the suspension of Yogendra Yadav from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) for a month for his meeting with the family of a deceased BJP worker who was among the eight killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident. Undoubtedly, meeting the family members of a deceased opponent is a part of human culture, which was not tolerated

by the others in the SKM. It is time that the SKM makes it clear whether it has authorised Rakesh Tikait to negotiate with the State Government, or otherwise he should also be suspended from the SKM.

Firstly, any such agitation of farmers should be led only by those who are real farmers. If real farmers would have been involved in the agitation, no vegetables would have been available during such a long agitation. There would have been an acute shortage in food supplies and the prices of grains and pulses would have gone up drastically. The Central Government should access the details of assets and incomes of all those who are leading the farmers' agitation so that anything fishy may be exposed. The extra-luxurious mini-townships developed on the agitation sites speak volumes about the genuineness of the farmers' agitation.

Madhu Agrawal | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

India has always worked for world peace. This is seen in our contribution to the UN Peacekeeping forces.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

We urge the US side to be cautious in words and deeds on the Taiwan question.



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson — Wang Wenbin

With our vaccination awareness drive, the agenda is to encourage maximum people to get their vaccine.



Actor — Sonu Sood

It is not something that we are proud of as a team. Obviously just plain to see, 55-odd for an international team is unacceptable.



West Indies skipper — Kieron Pollard

I have never seen such chaos and anarchy as what is playing out in the Punjab Congress today.



Congress leader — Manish Tewari



FIRST COLUMN LEBANON IS A SHIP WITH MANY HOLES

Lebanon has gone from being a middle-class country to a very poor one in last five years



GWYNNE DYER

Off the Lebanese coast about 60 km north of Beirut a 104-metre battleship stands vertically, with her bow and some 30 metres of her length plunged into the mud. The seabed is 140 metres down, but you can even scuba-dive on the stern if you are a technical diver. The ship is a bit like Lebanon, for reasons I'll explain later.

Five years ago Lebanon still looked like a middle-class country with a lot of poor people. Now it looks like a very poor country with a few rich people. Indeed, even the civil war of 1975-1990 did less damage to the economy, though it destroyed several hundred thousand lives and much of the country's infrastructure. The current disaster's roots are in that war. It drove the Lebanese back into the relative safety of their own sectarian communities, Christian, Sunni Muslim, and Shia Muslim, and warlords arose to protect those communities. By the end of the war in 1990, they were the new political and financial elite, with well-paid militias to enforce their will on their own communities — and they didn't go back to their day jobs. They became a corrupt and nepotistic club.

That system was visibly coming apart by the 2010s. There simply wasn't enough money to share out among the elites. Lebanon pro-



duces almost nothing, not even enough food for its own people, and its imports are paid for with remittances, foreign aid, and loans. With not enough money coming in to sustain their immense patronage networks, the elites started taxing the poorer sections, and in 2019 something snapped. Suddenly Beirut's streets were full of protesters demanding fundamental change.

Lebanon is a former French colony, so French President Emmanuel Macron flew in and offered the Lebanese government £11 billion in return for structural reforms that would root out the corruption at the heart of government. But the elites who benefit from that system are the government, in practice, so of course they said no, thanks. Then came the massive explosion in Beirut's port district last year. That got the International Monetary Fund involved, offering Lebanon huge loans if the corrupt system is reformed, but it's likely that the government will turn them away again.

It's getting close to the edge. Last Thursday Hezbollah staged a mass protest in Beirut, demanding the removal of the judge presiding over the inquiry into who was responsible for importing the 2,750 tonnes of fertiliser that caused last year's port blast. When the march entered a Christian district at least one sniper opened up on it. Seven Shias died, and the crowd (some of whom were armed) tried to storm Christian neighbourhoods in retaliation. And still the Lebanese political class refuses to bend.

So why does that political class resemble the captain of HMS Victoria, the defunct battleship that did a nose-dive in 1893? Because the officer commanding the British Mediterranean Fleet, Vice-Admiral Sir George Tryon, was one of the most stubborn men in history. He ordered a very complex manoeuvre in which two parallel lines of battleships would make simultaneous U-turns towards each other, winding up going in the opposite direction but with the parallel lines much closer together. And he got the distance wrong.

Everybody else on the bridge could see the ships were actually going to collide, and several of them spoke to Tryon about it, but he ignored their advice. The ship that was going to ram him also queried his orders, but he persevered. So they collided, and the admiral went down with his ship.

Think of Lebanon's political class as Admiral Tryon, and the country as HMS Lebanon. Technical divers only.

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

Artificial Intelligence in counter-terrorism



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

Security agencies need unhindered data access to predict future radicalisation apart from the spread of fake news that supplements ulterior agendas

In 2015, the IS declared its expansion to include the Khorasan region, which includes the modern political boundaries of Iran, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Since early 2020, the IS-K has been regularly publishing its 'Voice of Hind' in the Kashmir Valley to radicalise the youth and destabilise the Valley. The scope of the IS-K has expanded to India and Bangladesh. The killings of non-Kashmiris and Hindus in the Valley, apart from the pre-planned vandalising of the Durga Puja pandals in Bangladesh, point out the increasing tentacles of IS-K working in tandem with the Taliban. The developments call for the incorporation of new methods in the domain of counter-terrorism.

The most prominent measure that can be adopted is the pre-detection of the people with terror intent. The current usage of drones, sting operations and informants do not suffice under the prevailing circumstances. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can immensely help the forces and reduce their vulnerabilities. AI technologies are being used actively by many nations for policing and counter-terrorism operations with offensive weaponry. The objective here is to make accurate predictions and adopt an approach to 'what will happen' rather than 'what happened?'. The government should recognise the legal entity of the AI technologies for counter-terrorism operations. It should become legally obligatory for the telecommunications service providers to mirror the conversations of suspected terrorists in sensitive zones such as Kashmir, Punjab and West Bengal, apart from the other border areas.

Security agencies should have unhindered data access to predict future radicalisation apart from the spread of fake news that supplements the ulterior agendas. Tracking the financial transaction information and the travel patterns of suspected individuals apart from identifying sleeper cells that purchase dual-use explosive materials are some of the methodologies followed. To enhance the efficacy of the existing methods and check further radicalisation apart from the exposure to other hybrid warfare tactics such as fake news, the surfing data of institutes of higher education should be monitored.

New indigenous platforms supporting the Google and Yahoo search engines that identify potential recruits through scanning their internet browsing history should be encouraged. These surveillance centers and their servers should be under the strict vigil of the central police forces or the armed forces. Google has developed the redirect method, which uses search algorithms, keywords, and phrases frequently used by people with violent tendencies.

The second step for pre-detection can involve reversal through psychological and mindset change through soft counter-radicalisation measures that can be locally tailored through AI. Such novelty has to be brought about in counter-terrorism operations. For instance, Saudi Arabia has



THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY IS BEING USED ACTIVELY BY MANY NATIONS FOR POLICING AND COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE ACCURATE PREDICTIONS AND ADOPT AN APPROACH TO 'WHAT WILL HAPPEN' RATHER THAN 'WHAT HAPPENED'?

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



a holistic counter-terrorism program since 2005 that consolidates even the "correct notions and concepts of Islam". 'Sakina' programme is one such example of Saudi Arabia.

According to the reports, one of the most preferred recruitment platforms of IS is Facebook and Twitter, wherein the IS, through its tweets and re-tweets, can create a closed online micro-community around the recruit or the targeted recruit. As the communication between recruit and the handling agency develops, end to end encryption platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram are used for private 'dark' conversations to compel the individual to commit violent crimes.

The problem lies in 'one standard encryption' policy throughout the country, making no distinction between an 'operational' area and a 'peace' area. A counter move can perhaps be possible wherein sensitive areas are out of bounds for these encrypted platforms due to national security. Privacy perhaps should only be allowed in 'peace' areas where there are no immediate threats to national security. As new threats such as Talibanisation of Pakistan and re-radicalisation of the Valley emerge, it becomes imperative for the government to adopt novel law enforcement tools to counter them.

At the level of land-based counter-terror operations, where troops operate at the level of small teams, methods have to be revolutionised. Besides the satellite data providing real-time intelligence, thermographic cameras can be installed in the forests apart from

surveillance from UAVs. In the bordering villages, various AI-enabled cameras with monitoring at two undisclosed locations (to avoid sabotage) can immensely help the security forces. Cameras fitted with Facial Recognition (FR) features can help locate any suspicious 'entry' in sensitive areas.

In the cities, especially around the festivals, crowd scanning with multiple AI tools for locational tracking and thwarting terrorist attacks can be done. In some critical areas, the government can also introduce identity cards with biometric chips that have data of iris, facial expressions, and fingerprints.

The tools of AI can be customised even for regular policing in case the terrorists intermingle with the crowd. For instance, China uses Hikvision and Cloud Walk while the US depends upon Pred Pol in cities like Los Angeles for counter-terrorism and policing. Also, gunfire detection software-Shot Spotter is also used by the American agencies to detect shooting by using acoustic sensing technology to deter crimes.

Even the minute details of the number and the types of weapons in possession of the terrorists and other anti-national elements can be ascertained if specific biologically inspired AI surveillance mechanisms involving high-speed data processing can be used for preventive search operations and threat elimination. The same technologies can also be effectively used during counter-terrorism operations to overview, monitor and report the operational developments of the ter-

rorists to the security agencies.

Third, the Indian industries using 'dual use' AI should be brought within the domain of a new initiative of 'civil-military interface' in which certain companies can be roped into implanting AI technologies to the existing indigenous weapons under the supervision of DRDO. For instance, indigenous guns or rifles can be experimentally mounted with low weight AI cameras or biometric systems with an ability to detect and eliminate potential terrorists if they use a ring of human shields to 'escape' or launch attacks on the forces.

For this, establishing an AI intelligence cell in the armed forces and civilian intelligence agencies with active coordination can probably solve the issues in implementing such novel methods. Agencies have to be working in tandem with detailed distinctions and overlaps of their duties and responsibilities to ensure that there is no 'conflict of interest' which can potentially hamper the counter-terrorism strategies. The larger aim of the AI intelligence cell of the Indian army should be to increase its own operability domestically and develop an ability to be able to work with the AI divisions of our allies such as Israel, the US, and Japan apart from the others. Finally, equal importance has to be given to the increasing role of perception management through regular media briefings by the army to raise the social acceptance of the government security measures. Citizen surveillance and alertness also have to be encouraged to thwart the terrorist attacks.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

VOTING FOR THE CONGRESS AND THE LEFT FRONT WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT FROM OPTING FOR THE NOTA (NONE OF THE ABOVE) BUTTON.

—TMC LEADER
ABHISHEK BANERJEE



THE TMC DOES NOT WANT TO FIGHT THE BJP, WHICH IS WHY IT IS ATTACKING THE CONGRESS. IT IS CLEAR NOW.

—CONGRESS LEADER
ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY

A new vision of the education system

New ways to improve the standard of education need to be adopted for a work culture of intimacy, involvement and best work practices

In the last few years, there has been visible signs of the higher education system favouring the West and the US and is yet to become a truly global phenomenon. India has emerged as the global hub of education with an inclusive quality, equity and access and new vigour and insights.

The global education system has started respecting the level of insight our education system has. There have been attempts to find a common ground to solve upcoming global challenges. Perhaps the pangs of the pandemic has made the world realize the urgent need for an alternative to the particularistic grounds of prowess which so far resulted in the supremacy of the economically prosperous system over the rest.



SUDHIR HINDWAN

(The writer is a professor and expert on strategic affairs. The views expressed are personal.)

Some important ways to improve the standard of education need to be adopted for a work culture of intimacy and involvement and best work practices. The best thing about the National Education Policy is that it has recognized the need to expand and equip for all the best practices by creating an umbrella of professional fair treatment and recognizing the diversities and thereby bringing everyone together.

The strength of higher education system lies in creating its internal dynamism by ensuring inclusive growth. Human and financial relations and dealings are not as simple as they appear and require constant monitoring by competent authorities. The provisions of Multidisciplinary



Education and Research Universities (MERUs) on par with IITs and IIMs, the National Research Foundation, the National Educational Technology Forum and Indian Institutes of Translation and Interpretation would create an environment for students to reach their best by encouraging academic excellence, embracing new information and opening new job-oriented courses. Besides, it would help in understanding social responsibility.

There is always a scope to improve course contents through academic discourse by bringing about changes through cognitive discourse. One is seeking multiple options in order to help form an integrated team consisting of meritorious members for holistic development of social sciences. Two, introducing new innovative mechanisms in social sciences designed to help students identify career goals available in that field.

Three, more integrated academic programs and services that provide supplemental support to both teaching and learning in diverse disciplines making it more relevant with present circumstances. Four, growth and enrichment of students and the community, both inside and outside of

the classroom through community development exercises. Five, more research centres to ensure academic excellence in all disciplines. Six, exclusive intellectual skills designed to prepare students to engage in nuances of socio-economic and political issues related to global order.

There is a need to link school education with college and thereafter, research. Students must be sensitized through webinars which are low cost and quite intense interactive experiences. The role of mass media in political and social mobilization can be ensured through active participation of students in communicating initially with fellow students and then with the masses at large. Increasing participating

of students through myriad baskets of activities has to be ensured. This practice can gradually be transformed into community-wide physical activity campaigns to help the new generation understand the benefits of physical activities and coordination and cooperation to make them strong, energetic and sensible. There is a need to provide an ambience of contiguity, working in unison, harmony and critical thinking through multidisciplinary scholarly culture for educational impetus. It is expensive as it only requires a positive attitude towards contribution and reiterating our commitment towards the nation.

A new culture of liberal literature is necessary to nurture a feeling of self-less service.

This would ensure that students contribute ideas and engage with them in a creative environment.

Academicians are the epitome of sacrifice and inspiration whose relentless drive brings out the best in their students. Students can be taught how learning the essential precepts through practical teaching mechanisms can make them reflective. The philosophy of the academics should be to ensure that even the rural and left-out segments of the student population are guided to enter the mainstream of life. The mentors ought to broaden the horizon of comprehension and supplement the practice of argumentation with more inclusive and wholistic approach.

India to seek undelivered Qatar gas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will bargain for supply of undelivered gas quantities of past years when it negotiates renewal of its multi-billion dollar LNG import deal with Qatar, an official said.

Petronet LNG Ltd's 7.5 million tonnes a year liquefied natural gas (LNG) import deal with Qatargas is ending in 2028. Renewal, if any, has to be confirmed 5 years ahead of that.

Talks for renewal will start next year and will be conditioned on Qatargas delivering in 2022 the 50 cargoes or shiploads of LNG that weren't taken in 2015, Petronet Director-Finance V K Mishra said. India in 2015 had not taken delivery of the cargoes as it renegotiated the pricing of the long-term supply contract after prices hit double-digit.

Qatar had then agreed to revise the pricing formula subject to India buying an additional 1 million tonnes per annum of LNG.

438 infra projects show cost overrun of Rs 4.3 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 438 infrastructure projects, each worth Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns totalling more than Rs 4.3 lakh crore, according to a report.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above.

Of the 1,670 such projects, 438 reported cost overruns and 563 were delayed.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1,670 projects was Rs 21,66,048.11 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 25,96,907.70 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of Rs 4,30,859.59 crore (19.89 per cent of original cost)," the ministry's latest report for September 2021 said.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till September 2021 is Rs 12,54,512.40 crore, which is 48.31 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.



However, the report said that the number of delayed projects decreases to 380 if delay is calculated on the basis of latest schedule of completion. Further, for 808 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of the 563 delayed projects, 100 have overall delay in the range of 1-12 months, 120

have been delayed for 13-24 months, 216 for 25-60 months and 127 projects have delays of 61 months and above. The average time overrun in these 563 delayed projects is 47 months. Reasons for time overruns as reported by various project implementing agencies include delay in land acquisition, delay in obtaining forest and environment clearances, and lack of infrastructure support and linkages.

Petrol, diesel prices hiked for fifth consecutive day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices on Sunday were hiked for the fifth straight day by 35 paise per litre each, pushing pump rates to new high across the country. The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 107.59 a litre and Rs 113.46 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 104.38 a litre, while in Delhi, it costs Rs 96.32 per litre.

This is the fifth consecutive day of the price hike. There was no change in rates on October 18 and 19, prior to which prices were hiked by 35 paise per litre each on four straight days.

While petrol has already hit the Rs 100-a-litre mark or more in all major cities of the country, diesel has touched that level in over one-and-a-half dozen states and UTs from Jammu & Kashmir to



Tamil Nadu. West Bengal on Sunday became the latest state to have the nation's most used fuel above that level.

Purulia, Krishnanagar, Baharampur and Cooch Behar districts of the state had diesel above Rs 100-a-litre mark.

Prices differ from state to state, depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Petrol price has been hiked on 21 occasions since

September 28, when a three-week-long hiatus in rate revision ended. In all, prices have gone up by Rs 6.4 a litre.

Diesel rates have been increased by Rs 7.70 per litre in 24 hikes since September 24.

Prior to that, the petrol price was increased by Rs 11.44 a litre between May 4 and July 17. The diesel rate had gone up by Rs 9.14 per litre during this period.

Dish TV Rs 1K cr rights issue critical for survival of biz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dish TV's Rs 1,000 crore rights issue is critical for the survival of the DTH company that needs funds to upgrade technology and replace old set-top boxes with the new-age smart connected boxes otherwise its subscriber base would shrink, a top company official said.

Dish TV is facing competition from the rapid growth of new distribution platforms like OTT and increased penetration of the free DTH platform of public broadcaster Doordarshan, and needs funds to upgrade and convert all its existing STB into smart boxes offering multiple services, the official, who wished not to be named, said.



Rentals of retail space up 11-17%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rentals of high-street retail are inching back to pre-COVID levels in Delhi-NCR on the back of revival in business, as rents in upscale Khan Market, South Extension and Connaught Place have risen 11-17 per cent during July-September compared to the previous quarter, according to Cushman and Wakefield. "Rentals inching back to pre-COVID levels as market activity strengthens," global property consultant Cushman and Wakefield (C&W) said in its report 'Marketbeat - Delhi-NCR, Retail Q3 2021' (July-September). The Delhi-NCR market recorded improved retail activity during the September quarter, the consultant said, adding that early signs of recovery could be seen with a pick-up in retail leasing.

"With rentals inching back to pre-COVID levels and accommodation on commercial terms narrowing, the only direction for retail in the coming months is upwards," said Vibhor Jain, Managing Director, North, Cushman & Wakefield. "Increased vaccination and a low caseload have certainly played an important role in the return to normalcy and higher consumer confidence," the report said. In South Extension I & II, the rent rose by 16.7 per cent quarter on quarter (Q-o-Q) to Rs 700 per square feet during the third quarter of the current calendar year.

Connaught Place in central Delhi saw an increase of 11.1 per cent in rentals to Rs 1,000 per square feet. The annual increase in rentals in these three locations were same in percentage terms.

Reliance's green energy biz taking shape, may contribute 10% of EBITDA in 5 years

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has made a wave of partnerships to give shape to its green energy business that spans solar, battery and hydrogen investments and could contribute almost 10 per cent of the company's pre-tax profits in five years, a report said.

The oil-to-retail conglomerate announced a wave of partnerships with REC, NexWafe, Sterling and Wilson, Stiesal and Ambri for total costs of USD 1.2 billion.

"With these investments, Reliance has acquired the expertise and technology port-



folio to start to build a fully integrated end-to-end renewables energy ecosystem through solar, batteries and hydrogen," brokerage Bernstein said in a report. "Reliance will commercialise the acquired technologies and set up manufacturing plants in India."

Reliance is expected to continue to invest in technol-

ogy such as fuel cells and key materials for the clean energy sector.

"Based on our assumptions, we believe the new energy business could contribute almost 10 per cent of the company's total EBITDA by FY'26 assuming all the factories are constructed and ramped up on the company's timeline," it said.

"This will make Reliance a highly diversified conglomerate spanning E&P, refining, petrochemicals, clean energy, telecoms, retail and internet, although we suspect that the company will be split up given the inefficiency of such a corporate structure."

A country can provide subsidies if it maintains stocks at sustainable level: India's proposal in WTO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A member country of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) can provide subsidies to its fishermen if it maintains stocks at a biologically sustainable level, according to a proposal submitted by India last month.

India has also proposed that a country engaged in distant water fishing (fishing beyond 200 nautical miles from its sea shores) cannot provide fishery subsidies for 25 years from the date of entry into force of the fisheries subsidies agreement, an official said. Fishing in distant waters or in some other coun-

try's territory is a major problem when it comes to maintaining fish stocks at sustainable levels. Such activities lead to depletion of fish stocks in the oceans and this happens because of use of highly mechanised vessels or boats for industrial fishing. This agreement is under discussion among the 164 WTO members

in Geneva. The aim of these negotiations is to discipline subsidies with the overall objective to have sustainable fishing and to eliminate IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing subsidies and prohibit subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.

'Hit' HZL managing despite coal policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The prioritisation of domestic coal supply to the power sector has to "some extent" hit Hindustan Zinc but the company has cushioned itself by tying up imported dry fuel supply till March, a top official of the Vedanta group firm said.

Coal India, which accounts for more than 80 per cent of domestic coal output, has been prioritising fuel supply temporarily to the power sector in view of the low stock position at thermal power plants.

The annual coal consumption of Hindustan Zinc is around 2 million tonnes and it uses the mix of both import-

ed and domestic fuel at its smelters, HZL CEO Arun Misra told PTI in an interview. When asked if the domestic supply of coal to the company has been hit due to the prioritisation of coal to the power sector, "We would see more consumption of imported coal... in another two or three months of time domestic coal should be available in sufficient quantity."

"In terms of price... it is for the first time it has been impacted on the cost side. The cost increase is also because of availability of coal mix," the CEO said when asked about the impact of coal shortage on the company.

Goyal for reducing import dependence

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Piyush Goyal has called for developing 100 Indian textile machinery champions recognised across the world and reducing import dependence of the sector through concerted efforts between the textile engineering industry and the government.

Goyal also asked textile machinery manufacturers to get out of command-and-control mindset and work through plug and play to make the textile sector vibrant in name and spirit, the textile ministry said.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry, Textiles,



Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, made the remarks while interacting with textile machinery manufacturers in a video conference on Friday. A total of 15 textile machinery manufacturers of foreign regions, 20 leading

indigenous textile manufacturers and seven textile machinery and associated industry associations participated and submitted their view points.

The interaction was aimed at devising possible strategy to

develop a facilitating ecosystem for growth of the textiles engineering industry (TEI) in India under the Make in India programme.

He said that the National Capital Goods Policy is a manufacturing sector policy devised by the Government of India aimed at increasing the production of capital goods from the 2014-15 value of about USD 31 billion to USD 101 billion by 2025.

Goyal urged the textile industry to focus on speed, skill and scale and get into innovative partnership. He called for developing 100 Indian textile machinery champions recognised across the world, the statement said.

Corporate quarterly earnings key factor to watch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing quarterly earnings will be the major factor driving market trends going ahead and benchmark indices may face volatility this week amid derivatives expiry, analysts said.

Markets will also track global equities for further direction, they added.

Santosh Meena, head (research) at Swastika Investmart, said, "If we talk about the cues for this week then the next batch of earnings season and the October month F&O (futures and options) expiry may cause volatility in the market."

Meena added that the market will react to earnings of Reliance Industries and ICICI



Bank on Monday. Tech Mahindra, Ambuja Cement, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Adani Ports, L&T, Bajaj Auto, ITC, Maruti Suzuki, DLF, Indigo and Tata

Power will come out with their earnings during the week, Meena said.

Siddhartha Khemka, head (retail research) at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said:

"On Monday, investors will react to Reliance and ICICI Bank results along with global cues."

ICICI Bank on Saturday reported its highest-ever quarterly profit on a standalone basis at Rs 5,511 crore for the September 2021 quarter, on the back of healthy loan growth across verticals, aided by a fall in bad loans.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries on Friday reported a 43 per cent jump in its September quarter net profit, as its businesses from oil to retail fired on all cylinders, growing both sequentially and on a year-on-year basis.

Yesha Shah, head (equity research) at Samco Securities,

said: "The market may struggle to hold its footing this week and is likely to stay range-bound. With the monthly expiry this week, market volatility may linger."

Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark declined 484.33 points or 0.79 per cent.

"In the week ahead, domestic markets will continue to track Q2 results for further direction. Any, further inconsistency, as seen in recent numbers, can lead to further fall in the short term," Vinod Nair, head (research) at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Trading in the markets will also be influenced by movement in rupee, Brent crude oil and foreign institutional investors.

'India high cost environment for airlines'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India continues to remain a high cost environment for airlines to operate in and it is critical to empower the AERA further to safeguard the interest of passengers, said Philip Goh, Regional Vice President for Asia Pacific of global airlines body IATA.

AERA decides what tariffs can major Indian airports charge an airline or a passenger for a particular period after considering the airports' expenditure and revenue projections for that period.

Money Matters

Apollo Tyres introduces Vredestein brand in India

Strengthening its product offering further in the Indian market, Apollo Tyres has introduced its European tyre brand Vredestein in the country to cater to premium cars and superbike segments. The home-grown tyre major is eyeing around 30 per cent market share in the segment over the next two years with the Vredestein range which would be locally produced from the company's plants in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In the later stage the company may leverage its association with global OEMs to have Vredestein ultra high performance tyres as OE fitment.

JSW Steel plans to levy surcharge steel products

To offset the rising input cost, domestic steel giant JSW Steel is planning to levy a surcharge on sale of its steel products to its long-term OEM (original equipment manufacturer) customers, according to a top company official. JSW Steel will be the first company to introduce the concept of surcharge to the domestic steel market. There is a huge pressure on the cost of production. Cost of per tonne steel production went up by 19 per cent or Rs 6,600 per tonne quarter-on-quarter in July-September 2021, Seshagiri Rao, Joint Managing Director and Group CFO, JSW Steel, said.

Honda all set to foray into EV segment next fiscal

Two-wheeler major Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) is gearing up to launch its first electric product in the country in the next financial year, a top company official has said. The company, which sells popular models like Activa and Shine in the country, aims to start feasibility run of the electric scooter with its dealer partners at the end of the festive season this year. In an interaction with PTI, HMSI President, Managing Director and CEO Atsushi Ogata said the company has decided to foray into the segment after having a detailed discussion with its parent firm -- Honda Motor Company in Japan.

FPIs remain net sellers in Oct, pull out Rs 3,825 cr

Foreign portfolio investors have turned net sellers in Indian market by pulling out Rs 3,825 crore in October so far. In the past two months, huge buying was witnessed in the debt segment when FPIs had Rs 13,363 crore in September and Rs 14,376.2 crore in August. However, so far, in October, FPIs have pulled out Rs 1,494 crore, depositories' data showed. From equities, FPIs took out Rs 2,331 crore. V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said, "FPIs have sold software stocks worth Rs 5,406 cr in the first half of October even though the second quarter (Q2) results of software companies were good."

Omega firm looks to enter drone market with Rs 75 cr

Omega Seiki Mobility, part of the Anglian Omega Group, is looking to enter the fast-emerging drone market with an investment of around Rs 75 crore and is open to onboard a partner as it aspires to become a global player in this space, group chairman Uday Narang has said. The company may hit the market with its unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as early as December, with potential customers expected to come from both public and private sectors, he said. The new national policy notified by the government in August this year for the segment makes it easier and cheaper for individuals to own and operate drones in the country.

THE GRIT OF A FAMILY MAN

SHIKHA DUGGAL

All the Punjabis out there must be very familiar with the word 'Tabbar', on the other hand those who aren't familiar with it, must know that it means "family" in Punjabi. Every line will be crossed for the family—bringing this into realism, is creator and writer of the web-series *Tabbar*, Harman Wadda. He is certain that this story of an ex-police constable with a saga around drugs in the state will show how one can go to any extent to save his or her family. When we got in touch with Harman to know more about this much-talked series in town, he shares, "I ensure that whatever I write is genuine and valid. The world I wanted to create had to be close to reality or there is no point in narrating this story. Honestly, I didn't write in the fear of getting into some controversy ever! It's a fresh point of view which is deep-rooted in Punjab that is making people fall in love with the show and its characters even more."



It was told to us that the team of Sony Liv, Ajay G Rai, Ajitpal, and Harman had a long discussion before they finalised the title *Tabbar*. He reveals that it took long to finalise this name due to its exclusivity and uniqueness. They also wanted to give the



show a stroke of its nativity! The lead character of the show, Pavan Malhotra, had been going gaga over the script. He told a news portal that understanding the culture, the language, the little details that are unseen yet, add to build a quality, which is very important for an actor. The script was his Bible, but taking it to the next level by adding certain nuances came from adding a lot of thought by the writer.

On trying to know from the playwright himself why he thinks of only penning the story around a Sikh family, he enlightens, "Since my childhood, I have seen Sikhs being displayed as loud funny characters in all Bollywood movies. This thing always bothered me. That's why, from the very first day, I decided to make my protagon-

ist a Sikh man. Or else, what's the fun of writing a story based in Punjab if the character doesn't justify its legitimacy? Also, the whole family portrayed by Supriya maam, Gagan, and Sahil is as real as it can get. We had finalised Pavan sir way before we saw *Grahan*. He was tailor-made for this role. The day he read the script and shared his views on Omkar's character, I knew he was going to do complete justice to the role, and trust me; he did way more than I had imagined."

Harman believes the greatest gift for any writer is when he sees the actors being true to the characters that he has carved with so much love and affection. In the case of *Tabbar*, the creator was totally fanatical seeing Pavan Malhotra and Supriya Pathak's powerhouse performance! Deeming them as prodigy, he witnessed that they didn't need

dialogues to express their emotions. With *Tabbar* keeping you at the edge of your seat, he finally talks about the kind of liberty that a writer can take, when strong topics like drug consumption is involved: "Undeniably, it is a sensitive topic and as a writer, I know I don't and I can't mess around with facts. The plot should be truthful enough when it comes to social themes. If I try to exaggerate, it will clearly display false narrative since audiences aren't a hoodwink whom you can con. Even if we try to show certain inadequacies of a state, I do my best to glorify its benevolence too and I managed to do so when it came to Punjab state." Taking serious note of the increasing incidents of drug use, the creator is looking to clamp down on this susceptible yet vital topic through his web-series *Tabbar* in the most receptive manner.

Need of the MOMENT

PARIDHI KHAITAN TALKS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING, CITING INDIA'S VAST RESERVE OF UNTAPPED POTENTIAL



India is the world's second-most populated country, with a majority of its people between the age group of 10 to 24. This means that the country is at a relative advantage as young adults constitute a greater percentage of job seekers, thereby having the potential to boost its economy. However, for the past decade, India's youth unemployment rate has been hovering around the 22 per cent mark. Almost 2 million graduates and half a million postgraduates are unemployed in India. Various reasons can be attributed to the number of educated yet unemployed youth in the country such as recession, demand-supply mismatch, but the skill gap is perhaps the greatest contributor to this pressing national problem.

Accessibility and quality of education

Despite having thousands of educational institutions in the country, there are at least 35 million children aged between six and 14 years in India who have no access to formal education. India being an agrarian economy has more than 70 per cent of its people living in villages. Most children living in rural areas are expected to support their families for meeting their livelihoods. Girls, especially, are dissuaded from going to school and are compelled to master household chores. Furthermore, the condition of schools in some rural areas is challenged with serious concerns such as ill-equipped staff, insufficient funds and lack of hygienic facilities, etc.

There is a desperate need to bridge the divide between urban and rural schools and their ability to impart technical and industrial skilling. While a few technical and engineering institutions aim to provide practical training to their students to make them job-ready, they are not necessarily accessible to all.

Bridging the skill gap

The current job market requires students to acquire practical skills on top of their theoretical knowledge. However, almost 80 per cent of the new job seekers get little to no opportunities for skills-based education. The talent acquisition process, wherein practical knowledge-based skills and experience are valued above academic degrees, is becoming more selective than ever before. In rural areas, attaining higher education is highly challenging, hence the presence of vocational training programmes proves to be advantageous as it provides industry-relevant education and hands-on skilling where students can acquire various soft and hard skills. Proficiency in basic office software tools such as PowerPoint, Excel, and Word, competency in communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving are some of the fundamental requisites for job seekers.

Broaden your horizons

Vocational training programmes are extremely crucial to partake as they offer a sneak peek into the real-world work scenario and help students make informed career decisions using a

practical approach. These programmes are designed for most industry sectors. Such vocational training programs facilitate students to make better career decisions.

A viable alternative

Vocational training addresses the affordability and accessibility challenges faced by rural children. It also empowers women belonging to low-income groups by improving their job prospects. Besides carpentry, welding, automotive repair, heating, and air conditioning, tailoring, and beauty care, vocational training programs also cater to various 21st century ready sectors such as healthcare, education, IT, financial services, retail, tourism, etc. Students passionate about such new-age sectors need not enrol themselves in highly expensive degree courses but can just attain the necessary skills through diploma courses at very affordable fees.

Foreign exchange

There was a time when students had no other choice but to move out of India to acquire specialised job skills. The lack of relevant facilities and exposure triggered high migration rates. The advent of global online vocational training programmes has bridged this limitation in the country. Today, Indian students can pursue these courses at affordable rates from the comfort of their homes. This has improved the retention rate of talent in the country.

Initiatives by the government

Under the Skill India Mission



launched in 2015, the Government of India has upskilled about 1.7 crore youth by January 2021, intending to train Indian youth to become self-reliant and financially stable. Various development courses like training workshops sponsored by ISRO and AIIMS (New Delhi), among others, were made available to youth under this program.

It is with schemes like these that India can bridge the skill gap and make educated youth industry-ready. But selecting the right vocational course for a student can be tricky. Making career choices influenced by family or peer pressure could sabotage the benefits these vocational courses are meant to offer. Choosing the right course, based on individual skills and interests, is the only way to succeed.

To ensure one doesn't falter in making the right choice, more and more students today are opting for digital career counselling. Such services bring together technology-based digital platforms and industry professionals with in-depth domain knowledge and know-how of various careers to help individuals make well-informed choices.

(The author is the MD of ProTeen, an online career guidance platform.)

Over the last one-and-a-half-year, people have been vocal about both mental and physical health in relationships. Even while miles away from one another, people kept checking on the health and well-being of their loved ones. However, one issue, i.e., breast cancer has been affecting women throughout the world, and it still needs much more focus and attention.

According to the World Health Organisation, in 2020 itself, there were 2.3 million women diagnosed with breast cancer in the world. A report published by National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP) estimates that breast cancer cases are likely to increase by nearly 20 per cent.

Throughout the world, the tenth month of the year is recognised as the month of 'Pink October' to raise awareness about breast cancer. The month should also be a celebration of encouraging the women in our lives to take the first step in this journey of staying in 'Pink of Health'.

'happn', an international dating app, conducted an in-app survey to understand how Indians discuss health issues like breast cancer with their partners. The survey gave a glimpse of whether health issues are impacting the life and relationships of singles. **41 per cent of users are not aware of examinations related to women's health**

Users shared that they did not encourage the women in their life (mother, sister, friend etc.) to go for checkups for issues related to health. Sixteen per cent of the respondents confessed that they did not remind women in their life to take examinations for their own health. It is important to note that regular self-examination is likely to detect breast lumps early. One in eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. If it is detected in time, it will be cured in nine out of 10 cases. **49 per cent of users said, "Breast Cancer is not an impediment when in love."**

A disease like breast cancer is likely to affect the confidence and self-esteem of women who are diagnosed



MANY INDIANS UNAWARE OF EXAMINATIONS RELATED TO WOMEN'S HEALTH

with the same. With the change in the body, they might feel scared, less confident, and unloved at times. However, when questioned if breast cancer can be a deal-breaker for men, 49 per cent of them shared that it is not a problem. **55 per cent believe talking about physical and mental health is no longer a stigma.**

The past year provided users with an opportunity to be open about their health issues—both mental and physical. Fifty-five per cent of users agreed that they are comfortable talking about such issues even when they still explore the relationship. Thus, establishing how the new generation is not shying away from breaking the taboo and stigmas around the notion of keeping one's health issues secret. **40 per cent of users believe that a couple's everyday life can be affected by some health problems**

A minimal headache can disrupt our whole routine for the day, so relationships are bound to be impacted by the health problems of our part-

ner. Users shared that health issues can bring a little bit of tension and worry in the relationship with their partners. Health issues can be overwhelming for couples; thus, it becomes essential to voice your concerns to your partner. Sharing what you feel will provide you with clarity and make your partner your biggest support system.

Women reclaiming their space

Mahatma Gandhi said that 'India will be free when the women feel safe to walk in the streets of India in the midnight'. Despite various attempts and safety measures, not many women today can confidently travel, or roam around tension-free alone, at night. Though a lot of things are changing, this is still a challenge.

The Hyderabad Runners Society, a large group of passionate runners, apart from enjoying the sport of running, are actively involved in promoting running as the preferred choice of fitness. Known to bring about a positive change in the attitudes of the general public of Hyderabad city towards health, wellness, and running, on Saturday, they partnered with Starlight Strides and She Safe. As part of their joint vision for the promotion of women's safety and empowerment, they organised a Women's Night Run, as a way to encourage women to reclaim their own safety and empower themselves with strong resilience to be vocal

on safety matters. SCSC is an organisation that promotes awareness on personal safety and security, reduces crime, and works towards enhancing safety and security in Cyberabad and IT Corridor, making business bio-network a safe business destination in the world through robust surveillance systems and patrolling.

The second edition of the run was held at the University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli. "The event attracted more than 750 women runners from all walks of life doctors, nurses, runners, housewives, SHE teams, students, sanghamitras, and margadarshaks," informed Pratyusha of SCSC. The event was opened by Ekam band, a sister duo Veda and Sloka with a popular medley, followed by an enthralling zumba moves.

The Vice-Chancellor of University of Hyderabad and Deputy Commissioner of Police C. Anasuya, Head of Women and Child Safety Wing, Cyberabad presided as the chief guests. Race Director Sonali General Secretary, and SCSC Krishna Yedula, among others, graced the occasion.





● Dia



● Nikita



● Kruthika



● Santhi Kathiravan



● Lalitha



● Keerthi



● Nisha Singh Rajput



● Sushila Bokadia

WHAT'S 'TRENDZ'ING

The ongoing Trendz Lifestyle Expo at Taj Krishna was formally inaugurated during the weekend by socialite Sushila Bokadia along with upcoming Tollywood actress Nisha Singh Rajput. The three-day expo has works by renowned fashion designers and the best artisans across the country, presenting products and apparel from Kolkata, Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, etc., said organiser Santhi.

PARTY



● Lahari Shari



● Mahesh



● Lakshmi



● Lavanya

GOODNESS OF ALMONDS



Dr Prabha Shankar, Secretary of the All India Exhibition, and Azhar Khan, MIM leader, were seen inaugurating the Badam ki Jali stall by Rehmath and Mehboob, at Exhibition Grounds, Nampally, during the festival mela. The store seemed to be a big hit among customers!

PIZZA PARTY

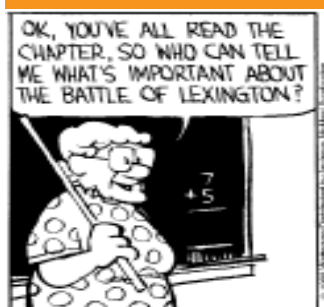
Big Boss fame Lahari Shari launched the Duskfall Pizza store in the city on Saturday! Hyderabad-based NRIs from New Zealand, Mahesh & Lakshmi Uppuluri, who are passionate about the food industry, started their first Pizza store in Madhura Nagar. Foodies, keep an eye out for this place!

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



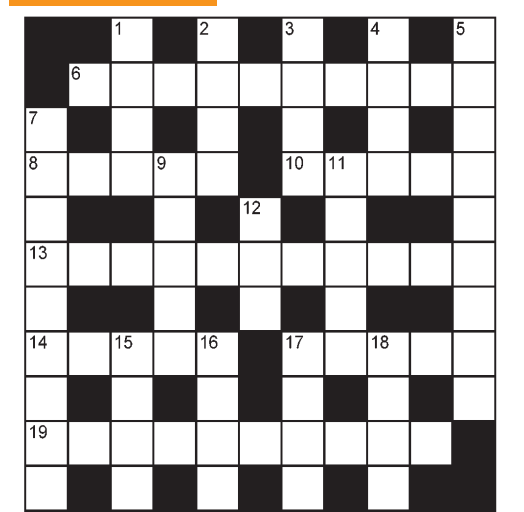
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 7 | 9 | 4 | | | | | |
| | | 8 | | | | | | 5 |
| 5 | | 7 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 1 | | |
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| 4 | | | | 3 | 8 | | 6 | |
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Yesterday's solution

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

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

- 6 An old record-player
- 8 Set fire to
- 10 Has a conversation
- 13 A very rich person
- 14 Someone who cares for the sick and injured
- 17 Part of a flower
- 19 Not willing to be friends

DOWN

- 1 Boast
- 2 Leave out
- 3 Small mark
- 4 This covers a sheep
- 5 Find these on a beach
- 7 A light metal
- 9 Raised land smaller than mountains

11 Not asleep

- 12 Say "yes" with your head
- 15 A flat squarish thing used like a boat
- 16 Wicked
- 17 Mix red and white to make this colour
- 18 Story

SOLUTION

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | T | A | M | P | I | S | C | O | L | D |
| U | S | E | E | V | I | | | | | |
| R | O | S | E | E | M | B | E | R | S | |
| E | I | W | P | R | H | | | | | |
| E | S | C | A | P | E | D | | | | |
| F | T | R | D | S | | | | | | |
| A | O | C | T | O | B | E | R | | | |
| S | S | H | E | R | C | S | | | | |
| T | U | N | N | E | L | G | I | F | T | |
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| R | A | I | G | S | C | O | M | E | D | |

GINGER MEGGS





F3 to hit theatres on February 25 next year

If anyone knew how to make the best of the time during the two lockdowns, it was Anil Ravipudi. The director-producer finally got enough time to write and fine-tune the script of *F3* during that time and he utilised it to the fullest. With production going on at a brisk pace, the makers of the film announced the release date to be February 25, 2022. Looks like the team is confident of the film doing wonders whenever it is released, and doesn't need a festival or holiday weekend for it to do well.

F3, a sequel to the blockbuster hit *F2*, stars the same cast of Venkatesh Daggubati, Varun Tej, Tamannaah Bhatia and Mehreen Pirzada. The film is shaping up well as it is in the hands of pro-

ducers Dil Raju and Shirish who are said to be allocating all the resources necessary. We're told that the fun and glamor dose has been upped in *F3*, to meet the sky-high expectations of the sequel.

Glamorous diva Sonal Chauhan too has been zeroed in to play the third leading lady, while Sunil will be seen playing a vital role. It's eye-pleasing to see so many actors on screen and the makers promise to double the entertainment this time with *F3*.

Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad renders the soundtrack for the film which is currently being shot in Hyderabad with the entire cast.

SVP, Bheemla Nayak to opt out of Sankranti race?

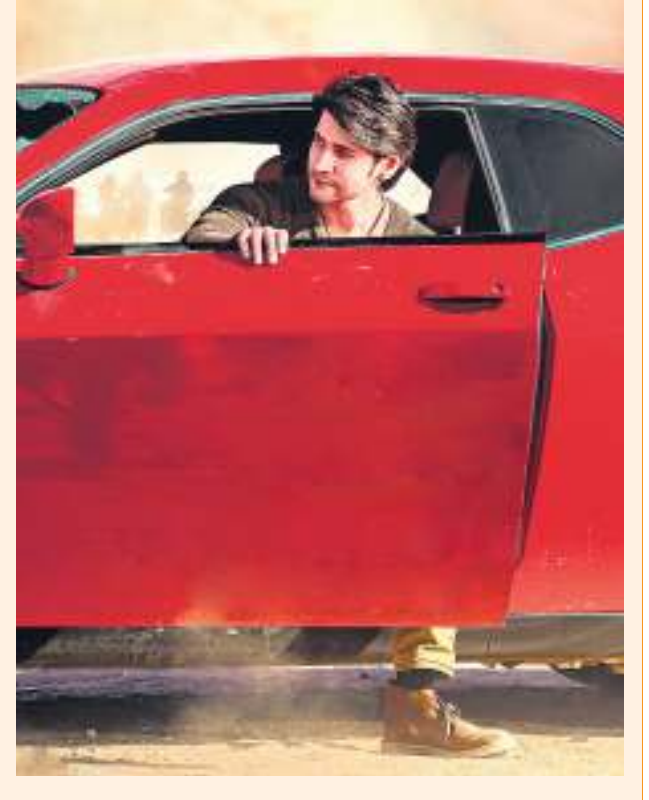


With two big pan-Indian projects — Rajamouli's *RRR* starring Ram Charan and NTR and Prabhas' *Radhe Shyam* coming to theatres for Sankranti — January 7, 2022 and January 14, 2022, respectively, it is being heard that Mahesh Babu's *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* and Pawan Kalyan-Rana Daggubati's *Bheemla Nayak* — which were originally slated for the Sankranti release, are likely to give the festive competition a miss.

The latest buzz is that Pawan Kalyan and Rana starrer *Bheemla Nayak* will move to March 2022, and Mahesh Babu's *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* will opt for an April release. Both the films are in the last leg of production.

They are to complete their shooting formalities by December. Sources tell us that the makers will announce their new dates after the second or third week of November.

Directed by Parasuram, *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* is currently filming some key scenes in Spain, while *Bheemla Nayak* is progressing at a set in Hyderabad.



Dabbo Ratnani shoots Ram Charan

Dabbo Ratnani, as we know, is one of the most popular celebrity photographers in the Indian film industry. Every year, people await his calendar shoot that features various Bollywood stars. It is no surprise that many actors aspire to pose for Ratnani.

Ratnani, who predominantly worked with Bollywood, has now started working with south Indian stars too. He was seen clicking some amazing pictures of Telugu stars like Mahesh Babu, Jr. NTR, and Vijay Deverakonda, and now, Ram Charan Tej joins the list. Both Dabbo and Charan have collaborated for a photo shoot recently. The former

shared the BTS pictures of this shoot and expressed his happiness of working with Charan. "#btswithdabboo Absolutely Fabulous @alwaysramcharan. @dabbooratnani," he captioned the pictures.

Charan is seen in a stylish red blazer, red t-shirt, and white trousers. He looks dapper in the BTS pictures and fans are eagerly waiting to see the original photoshoot pictures.

On the work front, Charan is currently busy with the works of *RRR*, which is set for release on January 7, 2022. He is also working with Shankar for an untitled political drama. Recently, the actor also announced a film with Gowtham Tinnanuri.

Nivetha conquers Mt Kilimanjaro



her wrapped in the national flag at the peak. She captioned her post as "Tallest free-standing mountain in the world. I made it."

Kilimanjaro is not only Africa's tallest peak but also the world's tallest free-standing mountain, meaning it is not part of a mountain range. It is a dormant volcano situated in northeastern Tanzania at 5,895 meters (19,340 feet). The highest point on it is called Uhuru, the Swahili word for "freedom."

The mountain is also known for its snow-capped peak.

On the work front, the *Ninnu Kori* actress is currently working for two films: *Meet Cute* and *Shakini Dhakini*.

Vakeel Saab actress Nivetha Thomas shared her excitement on social media after she made it to Mount Kilimanjaro. The actress took shared a mesmerising picture of herself online which sees



Varudu Kavalenu is a beautiful love story to be watched in theatres: Pooja Hegde



Starring Naga Shaurya and Ritu Varma in the lead roles, *Varudu Kavalenu*

marks the directorial debut of Lakshmi Sowjanya. The film, presented by PDV Prasad and produced by Naga Vamsi Suryadevara under prestigious production house Sithara Entertainments, is all set for release on October 29 in theatres. Producers of the film have been sur-



prising people with a unique round of promotions.

The makers held the Sangeet event of *Varudu Kavalenu* on Saturday night at a star hotel in Hyderabad. Pooja Hegde, who is basking in the recent success of *Most Eligible Bachelor*, graced the event as the chief guest.

Speaking at the Sangeet event of *Varudu Kavalenu*, Pooja Hegde said, "Today I'll keep it short. First of all, thanks for having me here. It is rare to have a heroine as a chief guest for a filmy function. I'm elated. I'd like to thank producers Chinna Babu garu and Naga Vamsi for this. The credit goes

to them. Haarika & Hassine Creations is like my home banner. Chinna Babu garu treats me like his family member. Women's representation in the direction department is relatively less in the industry. *Varudu Kavalenu* is directed by newcomer Lakshmi Sowjanya. It is a beautiful love story. I wish great success to the film and hope it brings good profits to producers.

I hope director Lakshmi will have a bright future. Everyone suffered due to the pandemic. So watch *Varudu Kavalenu* only in theatres. With the same energy and josh, I'll meet the film's team at the success bash."

Aadavaallu Meeku Johaarlu team in Rajamundry



The team of the upcoming film *Aadavaallu Meeku*

Johaarlu are currently in Rajamundry in Andhra Pradesh, shooting for their new schedule that began on

Sunday. The film stars actors Sharwanand and Rashmika Mandanna in lead roles. The makers of the film recently launched the first look of the film on the occasion of Dussehra. *Aadavaallu Meeku Johaarlu* marks Sharwanand's first collaboration with Rashmika Mandanna and director Tirumala Kishore. Sharwanand plays a guy-next-door kind of role, while Rashmika Mandanna will be seen in a meaty

role. The title, which means 'Hats off to women', suggests the importance of female characters in the movie. The movie also stars Khushbu, Radhika Sarathkumar and Urvashi.

Popular cinematographer Sujith Sarang is handling cinematography, while Sreekar Prasad who won several national awards is the editor.

Sharwanand's recent release *Maha Samundram* is currently in theatres. Rashmika is shooting for multilingual *Pushpa: The Rise* and gearing up for her Bollywood debut *Mission Majnu*.



After having a fair share of success as an actor, Bandla Ganesh ventured into production and proved to be successful at that too, with hits like *Gabbar Singh*, *Baadshah*, and *Temper*. After a few films, he stayed away from Tollywood for a few years, to focus on his political career.

As that didn't take a good shape, Ganesh is now back into films. Last year, he made a comeback to acting, by playing a small role in Mahesh Babu's *Sarileru Neekevvaru*, and just a few months ago, he announced that he would soon be making a film with Power Star Pawan Kalyan.

Bandla Ganesh announces biopic of spiritual guru

Now, the actor-producer announced that he will be making a biopic on the life of spiritual guru Sri Ganapathy Sachidananda Swamy. Ganesh had also visited the Sachidananda Ashram and to have a darshan of the Swamy. He later posted a picture of him with Swamy on Twitter.

"I will only make the biographical film of *Appaji*. He allowed me to do it. No one can stop anyone's luck," tweeted Ganesh along with the picture.

It has to be seen who will direct this film and who will reprise the role of Sachidananda Swamy. Fans won't eagerly await further updates from Bandla Ganesh on this movie.

Meanwhile, he is currently busy with the works of his upcoming film *Degala Babji*, in which he plays the lead role.



IT WAS NOT THE EASIEST TARGETS TO CHASE BUT ONCE BATSMEN ARE SET, ANY TARGET CAN BE CHASED

— DASUN SHANAKA, SRI LANKA CAPTAIN

KOHLI'S 50 TAKES INDIA TO 151

PTI ■ DUBAI

Skipper Virat Kohli wasn't at his fluent best but his 57 off 49 balls was the saving grace in India's middling score of 151 for seven against Pakistan in their opening Super 12 match of the ICC T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

His 29th half-century in T20 Internationals wasn't as good as some of his other innings but considering that he diffused a potentially troubling situation created by Shaheen Shah Afridi's (3/31 in 4 overs) menacing opening spell, this knock was significant. Shaheen also did his bit at the death, removing the Indian skipper in the penultimate over.

Kohli got support from Rishabh Pant (39 off 30 balls) during a 53-run stand but had to do the bulk of heavy lifting in a pressure cooker scenario, something he has been accustomed to for the past one decade.

His innings had five fours and a six as India managed a score which would give the bowlers at least something to



fight for on a track that can't exactly be called batting-friendly. In an India-Pakistan game,

one should always add "20 invisible runs", simply because of the weight it carries.

Shaheen, one of the most exciting fast bowlers produced two unplayable deliveries at the

biggest stage under pressure, which any batter would have found difficult to negotiate.

The most difficult delivery from a left-arm fast bowler is the one that holds the line just when the batter had committed for the angle. In the case of Rohit (0), before he could adjust his footwork, he got one that was pitched on block hole and straightened. It caught him plumb in-front.

KL Rahul (3) thought that the ball will straighten but it shaped in to breach his defence and disturb the off-stump.

Suryakumar Yadav (11) did get a six over backward square leg off Shaheen and a boundary off Imad Wasim (0/10 in 2 overs) but Hasan Ali bowled one back of the length which he edged while trying to cut and a diving Mohammed Rizwan behind the stumps pounced it. Pant joined Kohli as the Powerplay score read a disastrous 36 for three. They added 53 runs in 6.4 overs to get some momentum back in an exciting stand dominated by the left-hander.

The Indian captain did

show Shaheen, who is the boss as he made room by shuffling towards leg-stump and lofted him straight into his team's dug-out for a six.

For Hasan Ali, he reserved an exquisite square drive before he let Pant take over the show, having partially stabilised the initial rot. Watching that there is a fielder placed at '45', Pant first played a lap shot off leg-spinner Shadab Khan (1/22 in 4 overs) and then back-cut Mohammed Hafeez from the middle-stump to get two boundaries. But the real fun was when he smoked Hasan for two one-handed sixes.

Shadab had the last laugh as a mistimed slog sweep turned into a return catch. Kohli, who was playing the second fiddle then took charge as he attacked Hasan with a pull-shot and a then played a cover drive as 10 runs came off the 16th over.

However, Pakistani bowlers didn't err much at the death to keep the score under check, credit for which should go to Harris Rauf (1/25 off 4 overs).

Scoreboard

| BANGLADESH (BATTING) | SRI LANKA (BOWLING) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mohammad Naim (62) | Chamika Karunaratne 3 (12, 1 wkt) |
| Mushfiqur Rahim (57) | Binura Fernando 3 (27, 1 wkt) |
| Liton Das (16) | Lahiru Kumara 4 (29, 1 wkt) |

Total 171 (4 wickets, 20 overs)

| SRI LANKA (BATTING) | BANGLADESH (BOWLING) |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Charith Asalanka (80) | Shakib Al Hasan 3 (17, 2wkt) |
| Bhanuka Rajapaksa (53) | Nasum Ahmed 2.5 (29, 2wkt) |
| Pathum Nissanka (24) | Mohammad Saifuddin 3 (38, 1wkt) |

Total 172 (5 wickets, 18.5 overs)

Scoreboard

| INDIA (BATTING) | PAKISTAN (BOWLING) |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Virat Kohli (57) | Shaheen Afridi 4 (31, 3wkt) |
| Rishabh Pant (39) | Hasan Ali 4 (44, 2wkt) |
| Ravindra Jadeja (13) | Shadab Khan 4 (22, 1wkt) |

Total 151 (7 wickets, 20 overs)

| PAKISTAN (BATTING) | INDIA (BOWLING) |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| In Progress | |

Total

pointstable

| Group A | | | |
|--------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Team | Matches | NRR | Points |
| England | 1 | +3.970 | 2 |
| Sri Lanka | 1 | +0.583 | 2 |
| Australia | 1 | +0.253 | 2 |
| South Africa | 1 | -0.253 | 0 |
| Bangladesh | 1 | -0.583 | 0 |
| West Indies | 1 | -3.970 | 0 |

| Group B | | | |
|-------------|---------|--------|--------|
| Team | Matches | NRR | Points |
| Afghanistan | 0 | +0.000 | 0 |
| India | 0 | +0.000 | 0 |
| Namibia | 0 | +0.000 | 0 |
| New Zealand | 0 | +0.000 | 0 |
| Pakistan | 0 | +0.000 | 0 |
| Scotland | 0 | +0.000 | 0 |



LIVE THE GAME

Match 17 | ICC T20 WORLD CUP 2021
Oct 25, 7:30 pm IST
Scotland vs Afghanistan
Sharjah Cricket Stadium
ICC Rank 8 vs 14
Head-to-Head in T20s
Scotland: 6 Played, 0 Won, 6 Lost
Afghanistan: 6 Played, 6 Won, 0 Lost
173 Highest Total vs 210/5
In T20 World Cup
Scotland: 1 Played, 0 Won, 1 Lost
Afghanistan: 1 Played, 1 Won, 0 Lost
156/5 Highest Total vs 170/5
K&K SportsGraphics

Asalanka's unbeaten win against B'desh

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Young left-hander Charith Asalanka smashed an unbeaten 80 off 49 balls while fellow southpaw Bhanuka Rajapaksa made a quickfire half-century as Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh by five wickets in their T20 World Cup Super 12 Group 1 match here on Sunday.

Sri Lanka suffered a mid-innings mini batting collapse but recovered in time to chase down the target of 172 with seven balls to spare, thanks to brilliant half centuries from Asalanka and Rajapaksa (53 off 31 balls) with the duo stitching 86 runs in quick time for the fifth wicket in just 8.4 overs.

The 24-year-old Asalanka, who has played just eight ODIs and four T20Is before Sunday's match, held the Sri Lanka innings together, hitting five

fours and as many sixes in his entertaining unbeaten knock.

Coming in the 10th over, the 30-year-old Rajapaksa smashed three fours and as many sixes in his 31-ball innings as Sri Lanka reached 172 for 5 in 18.5 overs.

However Bangladeshi would certainly be disappointed with their shoddy outfielding as Litton Das dropped regulation catches of both Rajapaksa and Asalanka denying his team a shot at victory.

Bangladesh got the breakthrough with the fourth delivery itself as left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed got rid of opener Kusal Perera (1) who failed to read a flatter and quicker delivery and was clean bowled.

Despite the early jolt, Sri Lanka were on the ascendency with Asalanka getting the

boundaries with ease. He hoisted Nasum for two sixes in the third over and then punished Mahedi Hasan for another maximum to take Sri Lanka to 54 for 1 at the end of powerplay.

But Shakib Al Hasan triggered a mini batting collapse with two wickets — that of Pathum Nissanka (24) and Avishka Fernando (0) — in four balls.

Mohammad Saifuddin then dismissed Wanindu Hasaranga (6) as Sri Lanka lost three wickets in 10 balls for the addition of nine runs.

Sri Lanka were 80 for 4 at the halfway mark and set-batter Asalanka, who reached to his fifty off 32 balls, kept them in the hunt. He was going great guns by hoisting Mahmudullah for two sixes in the 14th over.

Sri Lanka needed 46 from

the final five overs but Asalanka and new batsman Rajapaksa decisively titled the balance of the game in their favour. Rajapaksa smacked three sixes in a sensational show of batting pyrotechnics in the 16th over bowled by Saifuddin from which Sri Lanka took 22 runs.

Earlier, opener Mohammad Naim and Mushfiqur Rahim cracked impressive half centuries to steer Bangladesh to a competitive 171 for four.

Joining forces in the eighth over when their side was struggling at 56 for two, Naim and Rahim stitched a quick 73-run stand in 8.3 overs to keep the momentum going.

Naim hit six boundaries in his 52-ball 62-run knock while Rahim remained unbeaten on 57 from 37 balls with the help of five fours and two sixes.



Shakib becomes T20 World Cup's highest wicket-taker



PTI ■ SHARJAH

Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan on Sunday became the leading wicket-taker in the history of T20 World Cups, surpassing former Pakistan skipper Shahid Afridi when he dismissed Sri Lanka's Pathum Nissanka during their Super 12 match here. Shakib entered the game with 39 wickets in 28 matches. Having produced a match-winning spell (4/9) against Oman in the preliminaries, Shakib, one of the world's leading all-rounders, found himself among the wickets in the team's first Super 12 game, against Sri

Lanka.

Afridi picked 39 wickets in 34 matches. Shakib went past Afridi's record when he used his vast experience to get the better of Nissanka with a flighted delivery.

Two balls later, Shakib bowled Avishka Fernando for his 41st wicket in the tournament.

With Bangladesh having made the Super 12s and guaranteed to play at least five matches, it was only a matter of time before the left-arm spinner bettered Afridi's record.

Shakib is also the current highest wicket-taker in T20Is.

OTHER SPORTS

Chelsea, Man City win big without playing a striker in EPL

AP ■ LONDON

Chelsea and Manchester City didn't field a recognized striker between them for their Premier League games.

It didn't stop them combining for 11 goals in ominous displays by the two title contenders.

Missing injured strikers Romelu Lukaku and Timo Werner, Chelsea still powered to its biggest win of the season — 7-0 against Norwich — with playmaker Mason Mount scoring a hat trick.

City doesn't have an out-and-out striker in its squad after failing to sign a like-for-like replacement for Sergio Aguero in the offseason but that isn't stopping the champions scoring freely this season.

A 4-1 victory at Brighton, secured mainly thanks to

two goals by Phil Foden, followed a 5-1 win at Club Brugge midweek in the Champions League. It was the sixth time in 14 games in all competitions that City has scored three or more goals.

Chelsea will spend another week leading the league — it is two points ahead of City and four clear of Liverpool, whose game in hand is at Manchester United on Sunday — and the strength in depth in the squad should ensure Thomas Tuchel's team maintains a title challenge this season.

There have been 16 different scorers for Chelsea in all competitions this season, with Callum Hudson-Odoi, Reece James and Ben Chilwell also netting against last-place Norwich alongside Mount's first Premier League

Harmanpreet stars in Melbourne Renegades' win

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India's T20 skipper Harmanpreet Kaur dished out an all-round performance to guide Melbourne Renegades to a comfortable seven-wicket win over Sydney Sixers in the Women's Big Bash league on Sunday.

The 32-year-old took two wickets for 17 runs in her four overs to restrict Sydney Sixers to 118 for 4 and then blasted an unbeaten 35 off 29 balls, studded with one four and two sixes, to script a successful chase in 17 overs.

Harmanpreet, who had recently returned to action after recovering from a shoulder injury, was adjudged the player of the match.

Young Shafali Verma, however, had a disappointing day as she



was dismissed for a golden duck by Melbourne skipper Sophie Molineux (1/18).

Shafali's teammate in Sydney Sixers Radha Yadav had a decent outing as she scalped one wicket for 12 runs in two overs but wasn't enough to stop the Renegades. Yadav also took a sharp

return catch to dismiss Courtney Webb (23).

In another match, Poonam Yadav endured a tough time as she bled 19 runs for no wicket in her 2 overs but her team Brisbane Heat won the match by 5 runs over Adelaide Strikers in a rain-hit game.

Vardhan, Balu qualify for main draw of tennis Nationals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former champion Vishnu Vardhan and Sharmada Balu recorded easy wins over their respective opponents to qualify for the men's and women's singles main draws of the Fenesta national hard court tennis championships, here on Sunday.

Vishnu foiled the bid of talented Ajay Malik 6-2 6-1 while Sharmada Balu beat Kiran Kalkal 6-1 6-2 in her match.

"It was a good match, I am very happy with the way I played. I think in the last three matches, this is the best I have played. Court 1 is my favourite here at the DLTA. I am indeed happy to be playing the Fenesta Open again, in the main draw," said Vishnu.

Also making it to the men's singles main draw were Parikshit Sommani and big-hitting Siddharth Vishwakarma.

Parikshit outplayed Jagmeet Singh 6-3, 6-2 while Lucknow's Siddharth got the better of Lohith Aksha Bathrinath 6-2 6-4.



Vishwakarma said he was taking it step by step.

"It was a good game. I was a bit nervous as I started playing after a long time," he said.

In other final round qualifying matches, Shruti Ahlawat beat Anjali Rathi 6-2, 6-1 while Sudipta Sen beat Ishwari Anant 6-3, 6-0.

Farhat Alean Qamar won 6-3 6-3 against Sonashe Bhatnagar while Sehali Arora beat Radhika Yadav 6-4, 6-0.

"I struggled a bit in the beginning but was able to pull through. Overall, I am happy with my wins over the last two days and am in the main draw," said Sharmada Balu.