ANALYSIS 7

GENDER INEQUALITY IN

INDIAN LABOUR MARKET

BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI **DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA** *LATE CITY VOL. 3 ISSUE 137 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable 'I'M ENJOYING **EXPLORING** VARIOUS GENRES, CHARACTERS' Page 11

www.dailypioneer.com

POPE FRANCIS MEETS FATHER OF AYLAN KURDI, DROWNED SYRIAN TODDLER

Pope Francis on his last night in Iraq Sunday met the father of Aylan Kurdi, the drowned Syrian Kurdish toddler who became a symbol of the plight of migrants. The photos of Aylan's tiny body, washed up on a Turkish beach in 2015, shocked the world and brought renewed attention to the deadly sea route many migrants take to reach the West. After holding his last public event on Sunday, the 84-year-old met Aylan's father Abdullah in Arbil, the capital of Iraq's northern Kurdistan region. In a photograph published by the Vatican, the Pope is seen raising his hand as if offering a blessing while looking intently at Abdullah, who has

'HIGHEST RESPECT FOR WOMEN': CHIEF **JUSTICE SAYS RAPE HEARING MISREPORTED**

OIL PRICES SURGE AFTER

ATTACK ON SAUDI OIL SITE

hief Justice of India, Sharad A Bobde, today said the comments he made during a hearing of a rape case last week were completely misreported to imply disrespect for women. The Supreme Court, he said, had always accorded the "highest respect to womanhood" and the judiciary's reputation was in the hands of its lawyers, the "Bar". "We did not ask him (rape accused) to marry. We asked 'are you going to marry?' We did not say 'marry'," Chief Justice Bobde said Monday. On March 1, the top court was hearing the bail request of one Mohit Subhash Chavan, a technician with the Maharashtra State Electric Production Company, accused of raping a schoolgirl.

'INDIA WILL BE NAMED AFTER PM MODI ONE DAY': MAMATA

ainting PM Narendra Modi as a self-absorbed leader who Prenames stadiums after himself and has his photographs printed on coronavirus vaccination certificates, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said the day is not far when the country will be renamed after him. "The Prime Minister has named a stadium after him. He has put his photographs on COVID vaccination certificates. He is making ISRO send his picture to space. A day will come when the country will be named after him," Mamata, said. Responding to PM Modi's barbs from

Woman leader's

TRS woman leader Aruna made

controversial remarks causing

embarrassment in the party cir-

cles at the International Women's

Day celebrations held at

Telangana Bhavan on Monday.

While addressing the celebrations, Aruna blamed the TRS

party leadership saying that the

leadership was giving three to four positions in a family neglect-

ing other hardworking leaders

who were striving for the party since 2001. She said that the lead-

ers, who got positions, were happy. But none will know the problems

faced by the leaders like her dur-

ing the separate Telangana move-

ment, she remarked. Stating that

leaders like her were waiting for the

last 20 years, she said "what we have

to do if the party is giving positions

Telangana State Government will

organise 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' on a grand scale amidst

festive and peaceful ambience

wide celebrations to mark the

ahead on a progressive path and in

the development of the nation,

Telangana has a major partnership.

ing with the officials on Monday

after he attended the video confer-

Chandrasekhar Rao held a meet-

Parties bank on caste meetings

to unknown leaders."

remarks shock

TRS leaders

PNS HYDERABAD

a day before at a rally in Kolkata's famous

Brigade Ground, Mamata said the PM had

"turned Brigade into B-Grade".

MUTHOOT SHARES DROP AFTER **CHAIRMAN FELL TO DEATH IN DELHI**

RNI No. TELENG/2018/76469

HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW

Established 1864

Published From

hares of Indian non-banking financial firm Muthoot Finance Ltd fell the most in two months on Monday, after group chairman MG George Muthoot died over the weekend, with reports saying he fell from his fourth floor house. The financier, grandson of the gold financing company's founding chairman, is credited with growing the company into a pan-India name and scaling its presence beyond Kerala. George took charge as chairman in 1993, overseeing its expansion into more than 4,500 branches and growing its market capital eight folds in the past decade

TRS young turks hopeful of

There is a view in some of these circles that

'CM-in-waiting' KTR.

who is also the IT

Minister, might not

wait any longer to

become the Chief

Telangana.

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao participates in a video conference organised by Prime

Minister of Telangana

The results of Assembly polls in

the five states would be announced on May 2, 2021. Depending on the results and BJP's performance,

i.e. "hava (chadna or utharna)", the

Chief Minister may take a call,

According to vasthu pundits, the

auspicious days to take up any new

work will start from 5th May

according to TRS circles.

KTR's coronation in May

Although Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) president and Chief

Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao

(KCR) has put his foot down on

the chorus in party circles at var-

ious levels to make his son and

TRS working president the next Chief Minister of the State, spec-

ulations over the imminent change

of guard continue, especially

among younger elements within

the party. There is also pressure on

KCR from family members, it is

There is a view in some of these circles that 'CM-in-waiting' KTR,

who is also the IT Minister,

might not wait any longer to become the Chief Minister of

Telangana. So, after the results of

Assembly elections in five states,

particularly West Bengal, KCR is

likely to take a decision on mak-

ing KTR the Chief Minister of

Hold 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav'

on a grand scale, orders CM KCR

Minister Narendra Modi on Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotstav

ence addressed by Prime Minister

Narender Modi and gave a road

map to the officials on the celebra-

tion of 75 years of Independence.

for organising the 75-week celebra-

tions beginning from March 12,

2021, to August 15, 2022. He constituted a festival organising com-

mittee headed by Government

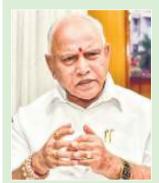
He also sanctioned Rs. 25 crore

learnt from TRS sources.



his head bowed.

Lotus will bloom fully in West Bengal



K'taka govt gift: Six-month child care leave for women staff



Govt working on formulating standards for **AYUSH products**

TODAY

Month & Paksham: Magha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Ekadashi: 03:01 pm **Nakshatram:** Uttara Ashadha: 08:41 pm

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work) **Rahukalam:** 03:23 pm – 04:52 pm

Yamagandam: 09:29 am - 10:58 am **Varjyam:** 12:45 am – 02:22 am 12:26 pm - 01:55 pm **Good Time:** (to start any important work) **Amritakalam:** 02:17 pm − 03:53 pm **Abhiit Muhurtham:** 12:03 pm - 12:50 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy **Temp:** 34/18 Humidity: 31% Sunrise: 06:29 am Sunset: 06:24 pm **Current Weather Conditions**

FM confirms sale of Vizag Steel, no plan to revive it

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

against the move to privatise Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday made it crystal clear that the Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs (CCEA), in its meeting held on January 27 this year, has accorded in-principle approval for 100 per cent disinvestment of Government of India's shareholding in Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) along with RINL's stake in its subsidiaries/joint ventures through strategic disinvestment by way of privatisation.

Despite protests raging in the state

She also indicated that the Union government would not concede the proposal offered by the AP government to revive the steel plant stalling the disinvestment process.

On Monday, she replied to a starred question posed by Andhra Pradesh MPs MVV Satyanarayana and Goddeti Madhavi in the Lok

Giving the reason in detail, she said, strategic disinvestment of Government of India's equity will lead to infusion of capital for optimum utilisation, expansion of



capacity, infusion of technology and better management practices. This will result in higher production, productivity and expansion of direct and indirect employment opportunities.

On the stakeholder and job related concerns, she explained: "While deciding the terms and conditions of the strategic sale, legitimate concerns of the existing employees and other stakeholders are suitably addressed through appropriate provisions made in the Share Purchase Agreement (SPA).

In reply to another question whether the Centre intends to support AP for reviving the steel plant, she said: "The State



Government does not have any equity in RINL. However, the State Government is consulted in specific matters as and when needed and their support is also solicited in the matters that require their intervention."



Where is *Sab ka saath...* **Minister** Sathyavathi Sab ka vikas? asks KTR

PNS HYDERABAD

TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao has reiterated that there was no cooperation from the Centre, though the State has been showing wonderful growth for the last six years. He alleged that the Centre has kept the assurances mentioned in the State Re-organisation Act aside and besides, it was doing injustice to ITIR, Railway Coach Factory and Bayyaram Steel Plant. The Centre, which was giving step-motherly treatment for several sectors, has given a raw deal to the educational sector too. The Central Government didn't sanction a single educational institution to Telangana though it had announced many institutions like IIM, NIT, medical colleges and



others at the national level. Though the Centre was making many promises, none was realized. "Is it Sab Ka Saath...Sab Ka Vikas? And is it the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Team India spirit," he ques-



Rathod tests corona positive

The Tribal, Women and Child Welfare Minister Sathyavathi Rathod tested Corona positive on Monday. She was admitted to Yashoda Hospital and doctors treating her in a special isolation ward. Minister Sathyavathi participated in the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate MLC election campaign on Sunday on behalf of TRS candidate Palla Rajeshwar Reddy in the Mulugu constituency. Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and several other leaders participated in the campaign along with Sathyavathi. Now, the TRS leaders who accompanied her in the cam-

completion of 75 years of independence soon. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said that the role played by the Telangana region during the days of India's freedom struggle was unique and at present, Telangana as a separate State was forging

PNS HYDERABAD

paign are in tension.

HYDERABAD

K VENKATESHWARLU

Political parties are using all means at their disposal now to attract voters in the ongoing MLC Graduates' seat elections. Having conducted meetings with associations of lawyers, doctors, journalists as well as meetings with students, government employees and teachers, they are now conducting congregations of people belonging to particular

castes to garner votes. The ruling TRS party is the front-runner in organizing such meetings. The party has already conducted meetings with lawyers, doctors, journalists, students, employees and other sections of voters in various forums. As of now, TNGOs, Urdu Teachers Association, TUTF, CPS employees and several other unions have declared that they would extending their support to TRS party candidates.

The BJP too has conducted various meetings with women's and other organizations to woo voters.

The TRS has conducted meetings with Padmanayaka Velama Community at Nalgonda, Khammam and Warangal and has sought votes of the community for its candidate Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, who is contesting the MLC elections from Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal Graduates constituency.



Advisor K.V.Ramana Chary and

with Principal Secretaries of GAD,

Finance, Cultural Affairs, Municipal

Administration, Panchayat Raj and

Education, Director, Municipal

Administration and Commissioner, Panchayat Raj as members and

Humpy, Indian Sportswoman of the year

PNS NEW DELHI

Koneru Humpy, the reigning world chess champion in the rapid format, was on Monday won the second edition of the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award.

Once the youngest ever chess Grandmaster at the age of 15, Humpy bagged the award after receiving the highest number of votes from the fans.

A 40-member jury had nominated Humpy, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, sprinter Dutee Chand, shooter Manu Bhaker and hockey skipper Rani Rampal for this year's honour, last month.



Shah calls Kishan, enquires about Bhainsa clashes

PNS HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday spoke to his deputy G Kishan Reddy and enquired about the incident and the prevailing situation at Bhainsa town in Telangana where prohibitory

orders under Section 144 of CrPC were imposed following a clash between members of two commu-

"Hon'ble Home Minister Sri @AmitShah Ji called me to enquire about the Bhainsa(Telangana) incident & the prevailing situation,

Kishan Reddy, Union MoS (Home), tweeted.

Reddy said he spoke to Telangana DGP Mahendar Reddy again who told him that the situation was under control.

Will renewed focus on sheep distribution help TRS? the Yadava community based on of the deceased MLA. But it was not to be. The meeting ended without

Ruling TRS may field a BC candidate for Sagar

HYDERABAD

Even as the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) seem to have stepped up its efforts to cajole and pacify with reasonable success the sections that have been cut up with it - namely the unemployed and government employees in the election to two MLC seats from the Graduate Constituency, it is also making moves to get maximum support for its candidate in the Nagarjuna Sagar by-election.

The Joint Action Committee of employees over the last two days have been announcing their support for the ruling party's MLC candidates after assurances by incharge ministers that all their concerns will be addressed by the TRS government. Some employees are wary that antagonising the ruling party may not be in their interest when it has over three years of term

Though the ruling party is yet to name its candidate for the by-election necessitated by the death of sit-



ting MLA Nomula Narsimhaiah, indications are that the party leadership is in favour of fielding a candidate hailing from the backward class community, particularly from the reports of the surveys it com-

The Election Commission is expected to announce the schedule for the by-election any time soon and the political parties plan to continue the ongoing election campaign tempo of the two MLC seats for the Assembly by-poll too.

There were expectations that when Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao addressed a public meeting at Halia in Nalgonda district in February, he might indicate the party candidate for the by-election. Many felt the party may choose a family member

decision of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao during a highlevel meeting on Budget for 2021-22 convened by him at Pragathi

any hint.

Bhavan on Saturday to give another 3.7 lakh units of sheep to the Yadava and Kuruma communities under the sheep distribution scheme supports the prevailing view in the party circles that the TRS may field a BC candidate in the by-election.

Observers, however, say that the





⊣he multitude that turned up at the Brigade Parade Brigade Ground in Kolkata during Sunday's rally addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cheered lustily when the PM said that the Trinamool Congress would be checkmated as people of the State longed for transformation. The Prime Minister observed that who had the winning edge in the contest was clear, with the battle largely confined to 'corrupt and violent' Trinamool Congress and 'progressive' BJP.

Several internal surveys have predicted landslide victory for the BJP. A clear wave among people is perceptible because of corruption and the anarchic rule of the Trinamool Congress.
When the TMC replaced

the 34-year-old Left party rule, people had anticipated change. They never expected the state's administration to take a turn for the worse under Mamata. The Mamata administration is worse than that of the Left party rule, which was a byword for triggering fear psychosis, bloodshed, rampant corruption and high-handedness. Mamata, with her despotic rule, caused

Several scams surfaced in the last 10 years of her rule and many atrocities have been reported. The Narada sting operation, done in 2019, exposed how 11 ministers of TMC and several party leaders received kickbacks from a

fake fertiliser company. Further, the link between the TMC, Sarda Group and the Rose Valley Group in defrauding the people to the tune of Rs 40,000 crore through chit funds, deposits and microcredit operations was exposed. Anyone familiar with West

Bengal politics can easily understand how Mafiosi real estate, liquor and contractors - have been ruling the roost. Ill-gotten money, running to crores of rupees, has been channelized into elections. Contractors, who had formed a ring, grabbed projects relating to the execution of infrastructure development and other WB govt buildings.

The unprecedented rise in realty prices in Kolkata and the use of sub-standard building material to the point of

The unprecedented rise in realty prices in Kolkata and the use of substandard building material to the point of deteriorating the quality of the projects executed added additional dimensions to corruption

deteriorating the quality of the projects executed added additional dimensions to corruption. The death of 27 persons in the 2016 Vivekananda Flyover collapse stands as a testimony to this. Investigation into the episode led to the conclusion that a real estate firm, which had run into losses to the tune of several crores, was awarded the contract and the firm executed the project below the set standards.

Mamata's regime did not implement any projects to create employment. She did nothing more than extorting money from youth clubs set up for the unemployed. The focus of her administration was to take steps to increase her vote banks and appease Muslims.

Mamata's regime has seen many communal clashes. She gave free hand to taxi drivers' and auto-rickshaw drivers unions. There is none to question them whether they violated the traffic or collected exorbitant fare from travellers. She gave licences to petty street vendors. There is none to question them even if they encroach on the streets. The Trinamool Congress received kickbacks even in the distribution of compensation among the victims of Cyclone

According to an estimate, 20-40 per cent of the amount sanctioned under various welfare schemes would reach the



Y SATYA KUMAR **BJP National Secretary**

Bannerjee's nephew Abhishek Bannerjee playing a crucial role in collecting the kickbacks.

The law and order situation is worse in West Bengal compared to that in other states. Even during daytime, people cannot move freely outside feeling secure. The attack on JP Nadda, BJP national president, and bomb attack on West Bengal Labour Minister at a railway station stand as a testimony to the worsening law and order situation.

State Governor Jagadeep

Dinakar, in his reports to the team to question the Police Commissioner. Centre on the deteriorating law and order, TRULY said that West to a dharna against **SPEAKING** the CBI probe. The Bengal had become home to incident demonstrates that she would go to any terrorists. Even senior Congress leader Adheer Ranjan

Chowdhury termed the law and situation in West Bengal as "unsafe" and sought NIA investigation. In a state, whose CM is a woman; there is no safety for women. Recently, TMC activists assaulted an 85year-old woman and rained blows on her for her fault of declaring her open support to When the Centre effected to them. They sling mud on the transfer of three IPS offithe national parties that the

responsible for lapses in prounaware of the sentiments of viding security to JP Nadda, the locals. The local parties appease minorities and resort Mamata refused to surrender their services to the Centre. Earlier, when a CBI team visited West Bengal to examine the role of the Kokata City Police Commissioner in the chit fund scam, the local police did not allow the CBI

Lotus will bloom fully in West Bengal Moreover, Mamata Bannerjee resorted

> extent to protect the corrupt. In the rule of regional parties, people feel that their identity, culture and interests would be protected. The regional parties would compete in development with other states and extend them transparent administration. But, the leaders of the regional parties, in the run-up to the polls, campaign against the national parties to deal a blow

> to vote bank politics. Today, the administration by regional parties is riddled with anarchy, corruption, nepotism and favouritism and the practise of caste politics. The only aim of the leaders of

> leaders of these parties are

these parties would be to loot people. The situation in West Bengal has reached a crescendo. But, Narendra Modi would not allow the regional parties to play their gimmicks.

BJP does not conform to any particular region but reflects the sentiments and culture of people. It is the only party that can protect the regional interests and at the same time give importance to national perspectives. The BJP is a party that will never work for narrow consideration and personal aggrandisement of its leaders. That is why the wind is favourable to the BJP in West Bengal and TMC heavyweights are willing to take shelter under the BJP. Sarala Murmu, TMC nominee for the Habibpur Assembly constituency, resigned from the TMC and joined the BJP along with 18 other leaders of the party, which is an indication of the writing on the wall.

BJP leaders receive overwhelming support from people everywhere. Thousands of people have taken part in the rallies addressed by JP Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah. The day is not far when Lotus will bloom fully in West Bengal.

FM confirms...

Continued from page 1

It may be noted that AP Chief Minister had written a letter to the Union government sug-gesting a slew of measures to revive the steel plant.
CM Jagan Mohan Reddy

had suggested that the steel plant is spread over 20,000 acres of land, out of which about 7,000 acres is lying unused. That land could be converted into layouts and sold as plots. The money thus accrued could be pumped back into the plant. This would eliminate the need for sale of the steel plant

He had also mentioned that short-term loans, along with long-term loans, could be converted into equity, taking off repayment pressures and interest burden.

"Conversion of these loans into equity and listing RINL, Vizag, on the stock exchange, giving banks the exit option, may also be explored to ease the burden of debt servicing and improve financial sustainability," the Chief Minister had suggested.

He also wanted the Centre

to allocate captive iron ore mines in neighbouring Odisha as the state had rich reserves.

TS cops invoke Section 144 in Bhainsa, following group clash

PNS HYDERABAD

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) were imposed in the communally sensitive Bhainsa town of Nirmal district where members of two communities clashed, police said on Monday.

The situation is under control and peaceful, they said, adding a total of 12 people including a policeman and one journalist were injured after the two groups pelted stones on Sunday night following arguments between two bikers over a road rage issue.

Nine among the injured were treated in a local hospital in Bhainsa and one referred to a hospital in Nirmal and two others were shifted to Hyderabad and they all were now doing fine, police said.

Nirmal district (in-charge) Superintendent of Police Vishnu S Warrier said prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (banning assembly of more than five



people was promulgated to control the situation), was promulgated. Additional forces from neighbouring districts were deployed and the situation was under total control and peaceful, the senior police official said.

Police said as of now four cases were registered and more will be booked based on complaints. Police said they were also in the process of taking those who were involved in the violence into custody. Two houses,

four vegetable shops were damaged besides one car, four twowheelers, and few auto-rickshaws were burnt during the clashes which broke out after two bikers engaged in heated arguments over a road rage issue and beat up each other following which members of two communities gathered and indulged in stone pelting in a lane, police said.

Police rushed to the spot and dispersed the crowd. Meanwhile, the Telangana

criminal cases against circulating Bhainsa violence videos

n view of videos projected as of violence in Bhainsa being circulated widely on social media, the Rachakonda police have warned of booking criminal cases against those sharing such videos. In a statement, the police said antisocial elements were found to be spreading rumours along with videos in social media and trying to fan communal violence in the city. The police have also asked admins of WhatsApp groups to keep a watch on posts in groups and to immediately delete controversial posts. The police have asked public to call Dial 100 and seek clarification on any news.

police warned of booking criminal cases against elements found spreading rumours along with videos in social media and trying to fan communal violence in Hyderabad city.

Koneru Humpy...

cials who should be held

Continued from page 1

"This award is very precious, not only to me but to the entire chess fraternity. Being an indoor game, chess doesn't get as much attention as sports like cricket in India. But with this award, I hope, the game will draw people's attention," Humpy, the Cairns Cup holder, was quoted as saying in a BBC release.

"I could win over the years because of my willpower and confidence. A female player should never think about quitting her game. Marriage and motherhood are just a part of our life and they should not change the course of our lives," added the 33-year-old, who is now mother of of a four-year-old daughter. BBC Director General, Tim Davie hosted the virtual awards ceremony and announced the winner.

This year's Lifetime Achievement award went to the veteran athlete, Anju Bobby George, the only Indian athlete to have won a world championship medal in long jump in 2003.

"I have been blessed throughout my fulfilling journey.

Will renewed focus on sheep...

Continued from page 1

Soon after the Halia public meeting, it was the Congress Party alone that has announced the candidature of its veteran leader K Jana Reddy while the BJP and TRS are still assessing the ground situation and considering various factors to name their candidates.

For Jana Reddy and the Congress Party, Nagarjuna Sagar had been a traditional stronghold and Jana Reddy, the seven-time MLA lost to TRS candidate Nomula Narsimaiah by over 7,000 votes in the last Assembly elections in 2018. Thus the Congress vote base is still intact and in recent months, the party leaders shed their complacency and stepped up their campaigns on people's issues and concerns through various modes by going to masses including padayatras and their aggressive criticism of TRS rule.

upcoming MLC election on lysts say.

March 14 - Chinna Reddy in Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy and Mahabubnagar graduate constituency and Ramulu Naik in Warangal, Khammam and Nalgonda constituency put the party back in fighting mode after its poor performance in the recent GHMC elections.

Thus the ruling party wants to field a candidate with enough community backing to take on Congress Party's Jana Reddy who already have started taking potshots at the TRS government picking holes in ts schemes like Mission Bhagiratha. The BJP too, though has many aspirants vying for the party ticket backed by different party leaders, is keeping its cards close to the chest and may woo local TRS leaders unsuccessful in getting the party ticket.

One by-election outcome will not change stakes for the ruling party but all the political parties are keen to win in Its candidates for the the perception game, ana-

Hold 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' on a grand scale...

Continued from page 1

Department of Culture as Member Secretary. He directed the Chief Secretary to issue a Government Order to

Earlier, the Prime Minister in his address in the video conference explained the importance of the event and said celebrations would be organised across the country and directed that every State should organise events for 75 weeks to inculcate patrio-

The Chief Minister decided that the 'Azadi ka Amrut

tions will be held at Public Gardens in Hyderabad and at Police Grounds in Warangal on March 12. While

the chief guest at Warangal. The inaugural will be marked by hoisting of National Flag, march past by police, releasing of balloons into the air and other patriotic programmes, he said and added that all the events should be organised keeping in mind the Covid-19 regulations.

Chandrasekhar Rao will be

the chief guest at the

Hyderabad event, Governor

Tamilisai Sundararajan will be

freedom fighters and martyrs and on the lines of impressive National Flag at Sanjivaiah Park, throughout the State, such flags should be hoisted at 75 important places. The occasion should be utilised to promote national spirit among the people across the State, KCR said.

Chandrasekhar Rao also said that competitions at various levels in essay writing, kavi Sammelans, elocution and painting events be organised on patriotic themes as part of 75-week long celebra-

Woman leader's remarks shock...

Continued from page 1

When she was continuing her tirade against the party leadership, some women leaders pulled the mike from Aruna and made her to sit by force.

MLCs K Kavitha, Akula Lalitha, GHMC Mayor Gadwal Vijayalaxmi, party senior leader Thula Uma and several corporators attended the meeting while TRS Women Wing Chief Gundu Sudharani presided over the meeting. Some TRS leaders observed that Aruna's comments were pre-planned. Wait how the party leadership reacts to the unexpected comments from a party functionary.

Shah calls Kishan, enquires...

Continued from page 1

"Spoke to @TelanganaDGP yet again, during which he apprised me & assured that the situation is now under control & that the offenders will be nabbed soon," Kishan Reddy

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) (banning assembly of more than five people) were imposed in the communally-sensitive Bhainsa town in Nirmal district where members of two communities clashed, police said on Monday.

The situation is under control and peaceful, they said, adding 12 people including a policeman and one journalist

were injured after the two groups pelted stones on Sunday night following arguments between two motorcy-

cle riders over a road rage issue. Kishan Reddy had earlier asked the top police official to arrest the culprits at the earli-

Meanwhile, Telangana Municipal Administration Minister and working president of ruling TRS K T Rama Rao urged state Home Minister Mohd Mahmood Ali and the DGP to take stern action to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice.

The Telangana government would not tolerate lawlessness in any form, Rama Rao, son of Minister Chandrasekhar Rao, said.

Parties bank...

Continued from page 1

The ruling party conducted a meeting also with the Brahmin community and sought their support for its candidate and former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's daughter Surabhi Vani Devi contesting from the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahabubnagar constituency.

BJP leaders too participated in meetings of caste-based organizations. BJP national vice-president DK Aruna took part in the Reddy Community meeting held at Gundla Pochampally on Sunday night. While speaking about the poor of Reddy community, DK Aruna sought Reddys' votes for the BJP candidates contesting in Graduates MLC elections.

Political parties are banking mainly on caste organizations to ensure the victory of their candidates. TRS and BJP leaders would participate in a few more meetings of caste organisations for seeking their support, it is learnt.

TRS young...

Continued from page 1

In the month of May the renovated Yadadri temple, dream project of the Chief Minister, will also be inaugurated. The Chief Minister KCR is likely to inaugurate the Yadadri temple around the first week of May. Later, he may concentrate on change of guard in the state. In fact, along with Yadadri temple, the construction of the new Telangana Secretariat buildings is also among KCR's pet projects. But due to legal and other issues, the construction of the Secretariat buildings will take

some more time. Scotching speculations about KTR becoming the new Chief Minister, KCR recently warned that those raising the subject would be stonewashed (bandakesi kodatha). That threat applied even to Ministers and MLAs forming part of the 'Make KTR CM chorus. To lay it on thick, KCR declared (like he did previously in the Assembly), that he would continue as Chief Minister for the next term also

HYDERABAD **BULLION RATES** ₹ 45, 820 (10 gm)



RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin ₹199 Without Skin ₹226 Broiler at Farm

RATES ₹/100 401 **HYDERABAD** VIJAYAWADA 393 VISAKHAPATNAM 505 RETAIL PRICE

Where is *Sab ka saath.*. . Sab ka vikas? asks... since the formation of

Continued from page 1

Saying that there was a bad opinion about the educated voters as they won't turn out for voting, KTR urged the graduate voters to cast their vote in a big way to erase it.

TRS Working President KTR addressed the heads of various educational institutions and teachers' associations at St. Mary's Pharmacy College, Secunderabad. He highlighted the progress of the education sector in Telangana under the rule of KTR gave an account of

developmental works initiated

by the TRS government in the

educational sector. He men-

tioned that the TRS govern-

ment has set up various educa-

tional institutions in the State

Telangana. To provide quality education to the students belonging to the marginalised sections, the government has set up 672 gurukulas.

The Center has done injustice to Telangana even in the educational sector, he added. The Minister for IT also said

the government was spending about Rs 1.20 lakh on each student in 970 gurukulas of the State and a total of 4.30 lakh students were pursuing their education here. The TRS Government has allocated Rs 350 cr to construct permanent buildings to 240 Gurukulas and was providing post-matric scholarships to 15 lakh students in the State.

In the last 6 years, the State Government spent about Rs 12,800 cr on fee reimbursement. Also, the government had cleared arrears of Rs 1800 cr towards fee reimbursement accumulated for four years before Telangana state's formation. It has revised mess charges from school to university level which has benefited 18 lakh students. KTR also said "the govern-

ment has set up 53-degree

colleges, 11 polytechnics in the State in the past six years. In 65 years, only five Government medical colleges were established. But within six years, we set up five new government medical colleges." About 3,850 students were given overseas scholarships. With a budget of Rs 250 cr, the government has set up study circles at the district level which were being utilized by the aspirants of civil services examination in the State. To strengthen the educational sector, the government has filled 1.33 lakh jobs of which 19,200 posts were of teachers, said KTR. He lashed out at the BJP and Congress parties for mudslinging despite providing many jobs in the government

The government has taken many revolutionary policies like TS-iPass and succeeded in attracting major investments to the State. Through the policy, 15,000 companies were set up creating about 15 lakh jobs in the region. Huge investments were brought to the State through TS-iPass, he said and appealed to the graduates to cast their vote for S Vani Devi in the upcoming Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahabubnagar MLC elections.

Minister Sathyavathi Rathod tests corona...

Continued from page 1

About 111 corona positive cases were registered by 8 pm on Sunday out of total tests 19,929 conducted. One person died on Sunday with Corona. The total number of positive cases reported till Monday is 3,00,011. On ed with negative and 2,96,562

However, some leaders got tested and found negative reports. Telangana has reported 1642 deaths as of Monday.

Sunday, 180 persons got testpersons got cured and discharged till now.

NOTIFICATION FOR APPLICATIONS FOR EMPANELMENT OF SQMS NIT.No.3/50C/53/50M(05)/2021

NRT Microscopic Process of the Control of the Contr Programme. Further details shall be obtained from website http://preditelangara.gov/in or in person from this office on any-working-day-from 10.30 am to 500 pm. **Officer Name, Address:** Office of the Engineer-in-Chief PR, SRTIDN Bhavan, Emurranal Colony, Hyderabad -500062 e-mail: sqc:tenda@gmail.com

SO/- STATE QUALITY COORDINATOR, TSRRDA & CHIEF ENGINEER, PR.

R.O. No. :9724-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2020-21

NIT.No.39/SE/SLPZ/ GHMC/2020-21 Name of Work: Providing of walking track, benches and arch type name board in Circle-21, SLPZ, GHMC. (1 Item) (maintaince) Estimate Amount (in lakhs): Rs. 83.00 Lakhs Start Date/ Last date & time for receipts of

Bids: 08.03.2021 3.00 PM, 18.03.2021 3.30 PM Officer Name, Address and Cell No: SE, SLPZ, GHMC Cell No. 7995077950 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER R.O. No.: 9734-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2020-21

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Women still struggle to balance work from home, work at home

HYDERABAD

The new normal life has brought a lot of changes in our day-to-day life. Working from home for long hours has definitely impacted both men and women but working women says they are still struggling to strike a balance between 'work from home' and 'work at home' since the pandemic started.

Many women employees faced new challenges while working from home during pandemic. From working with laptops in the kitchens while cooking to working in the car while on their way to buy groceries and thinking about what to cook for the next meals during the online meetings they have done it all during the pandemic to fullfil their work and home responsibilities.

On the occasion of Women's day, The Pioneer spoke to few working women to know about the new challenges faced by working women during pan-

A Pravalika an IT professional from Hyderabad said,



"With this pandemic the IT companies make us stretch a lot without giving any OT for us due to which it has become really stressful for us. Until and unless the pandemic started we never had such long work from home until and unless there was any business emergency so initial days were quite difficult for us as work from needs micromanagement and even now there is no boundary for where it ends. Earlier, when we were working from office we atleast had tea breaks and lunch breaks but working from home is not at all leaving us any

breaks or breathing time. And whenever we complained of extra working hours or demanded OT we were told by our offices that we should be thankful that we have a job during pandemic.'

She adds, "Coming to managing work from home, it has become really difficult to manage both because of the gender roles we have defined in our country that only women should cook and take care of household chores despite how much office work we do. That's why majority of the working women finished their cooking

down it became even more difficult to manage household chores without any help. Majority of the times my zoom calls were on speaker while cooking in the kitchen.'

Sahithi, an IT Employee said, "Initially it was good as my parents were at home and we got lot of time to spend together. Later things changed when we started working for neverending extended working She adds, "Also women are

of the working mother even shared that her child stopped spending time with her as she was so busy with extended working hours that's why comfacing pressure of managing household chores and kids alone because of defined gender roles. Parents with toddlers even faced more challenges. There were women who just quit the jobs as they couldn't manage both household chores, office work or were not able manage the kids due to lack of help which is really sad. Because of extended working hours we are working late nights and whenever there is work our manager approach us even post 11pm or 12am. Majority of our calls and meetings are scheduled post 6pm.

Telangana made rapid strides in the field of agriculture: CS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, the state of Telangana has made rapid strides in the field of agriculture, said Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar at a meeting organised at BRKR Bhavan on Monday where six start-up companies presented their solutions for the agriculture sector.

The area of cultivation has increased from 1.31 crore acres to 2.11 crore acres. Telangana has the highest areas of paddy in the entire country extending to 51 lakh acres in Rabi

been taken various measures for improving agriculture. In this context the agri-tech startups will play key role in the development of agriculture in the state.

The government itself can become a partner, consumer and first customer of the start-

ups.
The Chief Secretary wanted the start-ups to make use of the resources available with the agriculture department and come out with specific pro-posals which would provide end to end solutions in the farm sector and would be beneficial to the farmers in the state. Chief Secretary said that

culture based tech start-ups in the state, the government has started this initiative to identify start-ups and to give further opportunities so as to bring a digital transformation in the rural ecosystem.

There are plenty of opportunities for the start-ups to collaborate with the government, he added.

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, ITE&C, B Janardhan Reddy, Secretary Agriculture, Dr Praveen Rao, VC, Agriculture University, Kalpana Sastry, CEO, Agri Hub PJTSAU and representatives of Agri Start UPs participated in the meeting.



Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar addressing a meeting with agriculture-based start-up companies at BRKR Bhavan on Monday. The companies presented their solutions for the issues faced by the agriculture sector

CITY LIGHTS

Guy conferred with T-20 Global Women of Excellence award



Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday was conferred with the Top-20 Global Women of Excellence-2021 award through virtual mode from the Illinois, the United States of America. The Governor accepted the prestigious award from Puducherry Raj Nivas and stated that she was humbled and was

immensely honoured by the recognition. Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan thanked the US Congressman Danny K Davis-headed Multi Ethnic Advisory Task Force for bestowing her with the honour. The award was presented to the Governor as part of the 9th Annual Congressional International Women's Day Gala at Naperville, Illinois, Chicago on March 7th, at 5 pm (Illinois time). In her acceptance speech, the Governor stated that the award would double her responsibility to intensify her work towards the gender equality and

Hyderabad Police trace over 500 mobile phones this year

The police are going the extra mile to bring smiles on the faces of those in misery over losing their mobile phones, and restoring the handsets after tracing them. Since the beginning of the year, the Hyderabad City Police have handed over around 500 mobile phones to their owners after tracing the gadgets. The phones of various brands were tracked down by police teams and recovered before complaint of a lost mobile phone, we put it on tracking and using technology track down the phone. Once it is recovered, we hand it back to the owner after due verification," said Akram Baba, Detective Inspector, Bowenpally police station. All brands and specifications of the mobile phones are tracked down by the crime teams of different police stations. Phones, according to the police officials, are mostly lost due to the carelessness of the owners. "If there is snatching or robbery, then immediately a case is registered and the offender will be nabbed and the property will be recovered. In case where the gadget is missing, the owner is asked to make a complaint on Hawkeye application and the instrument is tracked," said D Bhikshapathi, Additional Inspector, Amberpet police station. Phones lost within the State are tracked down easily using technology while it takes time if the gadget is taken by the offender out of the state.

SBI provides women congenial, safe environment: OP Mishra



State Bank of India, Hyderabad Celebrated "International Women's Day" in grand manner at Local Head Office, Koti, Hyderabad, to celebrate the achievements of women from all backgrounds and walks of life. B.Bala Naga Devi, IPS, ADGP. Homeguards, Telangana State.

Dr. Chandramukhi Sunehra, Consultant Cardiologist, Care hospitals and Dr. Saajida Khan, Audio Engineer & Musician, were the guests of honour for the event. This year, the theme for the International Women's day "Choose To Challenge" focuses on collective action to challenge gender bias, stereotypes & discrimination in our communities to bring a meaningful change for a more equitable world. The event was inaugurated with the lighting of the lamp by OP Mishra, Chief General Manager along with the guests of honour. The inauguration was followed by inspiring speeches and rendering of songs, by the women staff. On this occasion, OP Mishra honoured the guests for their achievements in their respective areas of profession and for their contribution to society.

Dr Srinivasa Rao admitted to hospital for cardiac evaluation



elangana Public Health Department Director Dr G Srinivasa Rao was admitted at Apollo Hospital in Jubilee Hills, for cardiac evaluation on Monday. He was admitted to the hospital on Monday morning and is undergoing tests and treatment. His health condition is stable. He is likely to be discharged in a day or two. He has been

working tirelessly since the first Coronavirus case was registered in the state. It seems he was under a lot of pressure. Dr Srinivasa Rao, who has been busy for many days raising awareness about Covid and receiving treatment in hospitals, has recently started overseeing the distribution of the vaccine

TS Guy's interaction with Raj Bhavan staff turns emotional

laptops. Not only us but major-

ity of the women who moved

to their hometowns and were

staying with joint families were

forced to finish all the house-

hold chores along with work

from home. Thankfully my

husband helped me a lot but

what we understood during

pandemic is that not everyone

is blessed and din't get any help during work from home. One

panies should come with strict

working hours so that we can

maintain a work life balance

even while working from

said, "Working from home is

still a 24*7 challenge for work-

ing women. I don't remember

relaxing or eating food on

time or eating with family. No

family time except for few

weekends because apart from

calls and meetings we also

have to work on what we have

committed. As maids were

Pavani, a working mother

PNS HYDERABAD

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan's interaction with the women employees of the Raj Bhavan, here, turned out to be an emotional affair.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday interacted with the women staff members of the Raj Bhavan, here, through video conference from the Raj Nivas, Puducherry, where she is currently holding an additional charge as the Lt.

A couple of employees turned emotional and their eyes got moistened with tears as they told the Governor that they were 'missing' her assuring and affectionate presence, here, and that they were feeling 'bored' in her absence, here. Moved by the emotional interaction of the women staff members, Dr. Tamilisai



Soundararajan too said that she was 'equally missing' the Raj Bhavan, Hyderabad, and the staff members.

Some of the older employees who work at the Main House, the residence of the Governor inside the Raj Bhavan, expressed their concern about the hectic work that Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan is carrying out as the Governor of TS and as the Lt. Governor of Puducherry.

They were worried whether their 'amma' was getting

enough rest or not due to her busy schedules and untiring work and services.

All the employees have heartily congratulated the Governor on receiving the prestigious honour of "Top-20 Global Women of Excellence-2021 Award" presented at the 9th Congressional International Women's Day Gala at Illinois, US. They have also conveyed

their happy women's day wishes to Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan.

Six-year-old girl sexually assaulted by minor boys PNS HYDERABAD

A six-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by two minor boys in Warangal district of Telangana, police said on Monday.

The incident happened on

February 24 but a complaint was filed on March 6 by the girl's parents after their daughter complained of pain, the police said.

The boys were relatives of the girl and stay in her neighbourhood. They took her to an isolated place and allegedly assaulted her, the police said based on the complaint.

The two were booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, a senior police official said.

The girl was sent for a medical examination on Sunday, he added.

Telangana reports 111 new virus cases

Telangana's Covid tally crossed the 3 lakh mark on Monday with the state reporting 111 new cases during the last 24 hours. The fresh cases pushed the cumulative tally to 3,00,011.

The state crossed 3 lakhmark a week after it completed one year of the pandemic. It was on March 2 last year that Telangana had reported first Covid case. The state crossed the 1 lakh-mark in August and 2 lakh-mark in October.

Meanwhile, one more person succumbed to the virus during the last 24 hours taking the death toll to 1,642.

The fatality rate remained 0.54 per cent against the national average of 1.4 per cent. While 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to Covid, 55.04 per cent had comorbidities. The drop in the daily Covid count was due to fewer tests conducted over the weekend. According to the daily media bulletin released by the

health department, 19,929 tests

were conducted during the

last 24 hours. This was 50 per cent less than the number of tests being conducted on week days. A total of 16,082 samples were tested in government labs and 3,847 in private labs. The cumulative number of tests rose to 89,84,552. Samples tested per million population

The daily testing target for the state is 5,600 as per the WHO benchmark of 140 tests per million per day.

International Women's Day celebrated in grand manner

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

International Women's Day was celebrated in a grand manner across the city on Monday with several organisations, government institutions and agencies coming forward to highlight the efforts, struggles and achievements of women and also their role in effecting important changes in society.

The celebration of the occasion by the Hyderabad City Police saw a crèche for children of women working at the City Armed Reserve headquarters being inaugurated by Vasundhara Sinha, Chief Commissioner, Income Tax in the presence of City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar.

A cricket match was also held at the headquarters wherein women teams of the Hyderabad Police participated. Film actress Manchu Lakshmi, who also participated in the match, presented awards to the winners.

Speaking on the occasion, Anjani Kumar said women police personnel were doing patrol duties as well now to

maintain peace in the city and were excelling in all fields

of the police functioning.
At the Tourism Plaza, Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi participated in the celebrations along with Minister Gangula Kamalakar and MLC K. Kavitha. Earlier in the day, she inaugurated an exhibition of handlooms and crafts at Saptaparni, Banjara Hills, organized by the WICCI Telangana Handlooms Council.

In South Central Railway, General Manager Gajanan Mallya handed over Certificates of Merit to women employees for their leadership skills and work displayed during Covid-19 pandemic. L&T Hyderabad Metro Rail also held programmes highlighting the role of women pilots in the

Hyderabad Metro operations. IRISET celebrated the day at its campus in Secunderabad. Tanuja Abburi, Founder of 'Beyond Pinks' delivered an interactive lecture on on the theme 'Choose to Challenge'. The GHMC, TS Tourism Development Corporation too organised celebrations.



SORRY STATE

climbed to 2,41,390.

Errum Manzil or Iram Manzil is an extensive and beautiful gem of a palace existing in Hyderabad. It was built in the year 1870 by a nobleman, Nawab Safdar Jung Musheer-uddaula Fakhrul Mulk. The architecture of the palace is in Indo-European Baroque style. "Every other heritage structures in the city is undergoing renovation. Why not this?" the

residents question. There is so much we could do here. Children's play area, Sunday Markets. Art and Cultural activities and others.



CHANGE IN CURRICULUM

IB students cry foul over dual-route approach for exams

PNS HYDERABAD

Students from schools in Hyderabad, which offer International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum alleged impact on mental health and other factors due to an irrational decision taken by their curriculum.

According to the students, the IB curriculum announced that they will be following a dual-route approach for the May 2021 examinations, where students would either be grad-

ed on a combination of external coursework (that are mandated as part of the curriculum) and their Predicted Grades for the non-exam route, and external coursework and final examinations for the exam

The International Baccalaureate (IB) recently has confirmed that they will offer a dual route for the May 2021 Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme examination session

The dual route system comprises of two pathways to grade the students.

The first one is the exam route where exams are conducted in the school and the students are required to write them with no choice being provided to them.

Whereas the non exam route or the 'assignment route' uses the student's predicted marks and the marks they obtained in their assignments to grade

Hyderabad based IB curriculum school said, "The IB claims that both methods as part of the dual-route are equally fair, and students around the world feel that one route for everyone would be more effective if this is the case. We have been learning online for a year, and expecting us to write exams immediately would not only be damaging to our mental health and reduce our overall perfor-

mance due to reduced quality

One of the student from a of learning, but would also put family members and others at risk while there is an "equally fair" alternative available. India has been one of the countries most damaged by the pandemic, and with increasing cases it is unfair that countries with significantly lower caseloads get their exams can-celled. Exams are being cancelled in regions around the world, but India still continues to go ahead with examina-

He further "Although CBSE examinations continue to happen, it is a completely different case of unjustifiable for the IB to continue to conduct examinations, especially after remaining silent for almost a year regarding final exams. Firstly, the IB's portion reduction to compensate for online learning was minimal (compared to a 33% reduction by other Indian boards such as

BUDGET 2021-22

Higher allocation likely for horticulture sector

■ HYDERABAD

In line with its emphasis on creating livelihood and remunerative income generation, the government may focus on the horticulture sector in the next budget

The department requires Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 1,500 crore a year to promote horticulture crops in the State on the lines of neighbouring Karnataka and Maharashtra.

Earlier, the horticulture crops were promoted in East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh due to lack of adequate irrigation facilities in the Telangana region.

Now that the State has enough irrigation resources and quality supply of power, along with ideal climate and soil, this is the time to invest and increase income from horticulture significantly, government sources said.

"At present, horticulture crops are grown only in eight per cent of the cultivable area in the State and yet they contribute to 25 to 30 per cent of agriculture income. If more funds are allocated to horticulture crops and oil palm cultivation through incentives, subsidies, infrastructure for storage of perishable products and other needed interventions like food processing from the govern-



ment, horticulture crops could be promoted in a big way to become a money-spinner, officials said.

A presentation was made to the Chief Minister that of Rs 80,000 crore revenue from agriculture, horticulture crops accounted for Rs 24,000 crore during 2020-21 and the revenue from agriculture is expected to touch Rs 1 lakh crore in 2021-22 and of it horticulture crops share will be about Rs 30,000 crore.

The Chief Minister directed the Agriculture and Horticulture department officials to formulate a special horticulture policy to give a boost to vegetable, fruits and oil seeds like oil palm cultivation giving hope to special attention in the next budget.

The government was spending Rs 15,000 crore on Rythu Bandhu scheme mainly for farmers cul-

"Many women draw

inspiration from Rani

Rudrama Devi, who

kingdom, challenging

the kings. The role of

movement is pivotal,

women's participation

in present Telangana

women in all works she will

take up in the future. She

alleged that women are facing

a lot of troubles as there is no

encouragement from their own

families. Due to discrimination,

women are not giving priority

to their aims and dreams she

She met several brave

women on the occasion of International Women's and

felicitated them. She said that

women don't want crowns, but

want recognition for their sac-

rifices. Women are not getting

due respect in separate Telangana and asked Chief

Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao

to tell as to why it is happening.

Meanwhile, Sharmila launched

a website for her proposed

political party.

society," she questioned

but what is the

ruled the Kakatiya

tivating agriculture crops like paddy, maize and cotton after giving free water and power. Even if 10 per cent of the amount is spent to give incentives and subsidies to labour intensive horticulture crops, which require high investment and thus carry more risk, involve more hard work, micro irrigation, drip irrigation

ate higher incomes. Paddy and wheat crops were promoted soon after the green revolution to ensure food security and now there was five lakh crore tonnes of surplus paddy production in the world and five crore tonnes in the country. "It is time to diversify into horticulture crops. Palm oil worth Rs.1 lakh

facilities, mulching sheets, seeds

and seedling subsidy, support for

farm mechanisation, it will help

the sector to expand and gener-

The department reauires ₹1,000 crore to ₹1,500 crore a year to promote horticulture crops in the **State on the lines** of neighbouring Karnataka and **Maharashtra**

crore was being imported in the country and oil palm has to be cultivated in one crore acres across the country to meet the demand," sources said.

Oil Palm may well emerge as the future crop of Telangana and the eco-friendly crop once planted will give yield for 25 to 30 years. If one acre of paddy would require 15 lakh litres of water, it will be enough for oil palm cultivation in four acres.

Centre, too, should do its part and give a 100 per cent grant for horticulture crops, without the present 60:40 ratio to help the horticulture sector. Under the present system, if the State failed to release its share, the Centre, too, would not release its grant, sources added.

Male votes to be decisive in Khammam dist

PNS KHAMMAM

The number of male voters surpassed female voters in Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda districts graduate constituency of the Legislative Council, hence, would be decisive in the outcome of the elections, according to political analysts.

In fact, there are over 87,172 voters in 21 mandals of Khammam district. The contestants have been campaigning intending to attract male voters as the male voters are more compared to female voters in the con-

stituency.
Out of the 87,172 voters,
55867 are males and 31,295 are females. There are 10 other voters in the district. They have stepped up their efforts to woo the male and female voters in the constituency. Furthermore, their strategy targeted youth voters.

The contestants used to highlight what their respective parties have done to improve the lot of women and highlight only those schemes to capture their votes.

As the male voters are more in the MLC polls, the contestants have been finalising their strategies to woo them. The contestants have been sending messages to the male voters furnishing details of the serial number of the voter, polling booth num-ber and any other relevant data to them.

TRS leaders 'intimidating' voters in MLC polls: Uttam

TRS leaders were intimidating the voters to make them vote in favour of the ruling party's candidates in the MLC elections for Graduates constituencies, alleged TPCC President N Uttam Kumar

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Uttam Kumar Reddy said that TRS leaders were adopting illegal means to win the MLC elections. The ruling party leaders, including ministers, MPs and MLAs were threatening the voters of Graduates' constituencies with dire consequences if they don't vote for TRS candidates.

He said voters were being pressured to take oaths that they would vote for the TRS in the MLC polls. He said that the Congress has gathered the videos of such illegal oath-taking events across six districts and they were being submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI) seeking action.

He demanded that the ECI take stern action against the malpractice of forcing the voters to swear in advance that they would vote for the ruling party. He said inaction by the ECI in this regard would lead to a suspicion that the Commission was in collusion with the TRS to manipulate the MLC elections.

He alleged that TRS minis-



TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Monday

- Voters were being pressured to take oaths that they would vote for the TRS in the MLC polls, alleged TPCC President N Uttam Kumar Reddy.
- He said that the Congress has gathered the videos of such illegal oath-taking events across six districts and they were being submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI) seeking action

ters were openly threatening teachers unions of action if they don't support the ruling party. He said that by indulging in unethical and immoral practices to win MLC polls, the TRS was insulting all the graduates.

The ruling party is giving an impression that the graduates of all categories were not free to cast their vote in favour of their candidate/party. He said all graduates should take this as a prestige issue and defeat TRS and BJP in MLC elections. He said that the Congress was contesting the

MLC elections on the issue of unemployment and problems of government employees. "We want to assure the government employees and also the unemployed youth that the Congress party would fight for their cause under all circumstances," he said adding that the Congress party's victory in MLC elections would put both the TRS government in Telangana and the BJP government at the Centre under pressure and they would immediately resolve all the pending issues fearing erosion of their base.

was happy to note that women are excelling in all spheres of

activity on par with males in

the present world of cut-throat

thanked the MLA and his

spouse for organising the

event on such a grand scale.

A student, who was selected

for CRPF --Swapna --was

felicitated on the occasion.

Later, Bollarum Government

High School student

Kalpana, who impressed

vice-president M Venkaiah

Several woman employees

competition.

'Injustice being done to women in TS'

PNS HYDERABAD

The TRS has failed in providing equal opportunities to women, alleged YS Sharmila. She reminded that many women held positions during her father and former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy's regime. However, the TRS government has given opportunity only to two women in the Cabinet.

She demanded that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao tell as to why the imbalance and step-motherly treatment is being meted out to women. She said that the women rendered injustice in all sectors from Legislature to employment and made it clear that there should

While participating in the International Women's Day celebrations at Lotus Pond here on Monday, Sharmila said that women played a vital role in achieving the separate statehood for Telangana, she recalled. Telangana is a centre of political awareness and Telangana women are not second to none in that regard, she opined.

"Many women draw inspiration from Rani Rudrama Devi, who ruled the Kakatiya kingdom, challenging the kings. The role of women in any movement is pivotal, but what is the women's participation in present Telangana society," she questioned. She alleged that inequality is still prevailing in the State, which achieved based on injustice," she said.

She alleged that women are facing injustice in the State, which was achieved with the participation of women also. She made it clear that she will provide opportunities to



Former Chevella MP Konda hammer and tongs against the TRS government for its failure to fulfil the poll promises. Continuing his tirade against the government, he made sensational remarks against TRS party and party chief K Chandrasekhar Rao and recalled how he had suffered when he was sailing with the TRS as he was cheated by the party chief.

Participating in the MLC opportunity twice.

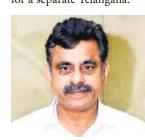
appealed Mahabubnagar, Rangareddy, Hyderabad graduate voters to exercise their franchise to Congress MLC nominee G Chinnareddy. He reminded that Chinnareddy was the first person to sow the seeds for a separate Telangana.



PNS ■ PARIGI

Vishweswar Reddy went

election campaign in Parigi on Monday, he alleged KCR had failed to render justice to all section of society though he had promised to ensure justice to people belonging to all walks of society. He ridiculed KCR for giving appointments to the Ministers while Prof Nageswara Rao was given the



Support girls from school days, exhorts Sunitha Prabhakar Reddy said that she

PNS PATANCHERU

State Women's Commission chairperson Sunitha Lakshma Reddy called upon people supporting girls from school level to excel in all spheres of activ-

She expressed concern over society placing curbs on women alone. She said that Minister Chandrasekhar Rao has emphasized the development of women through schemes like KCR Kit, Kalyana Lakshmi, SHE teams, Bharosa centres and a V Hub to encourage woman entrepreneurs. She said that the State government has been striving for women's empowerment.

International Women's Day

PNS HYDERABAD

On resumption of RTC services

as part of unlocking the lock-

down period, the RTC did not

resume 45 women's special buses

running in 20 main routes of the

city causing severe inconve-

nience to women, especially

employees. Depending on the

commuter rush, the RTC used

to run at least 100 trips of ladies

special buses per day. The nor-

malcy has been returning to the

city, but the special services for

women are not resumed caus-

În cities like Mumbai,

Bangaluru and other metro

ing them inconvenience.



State Women's Commission chairperson Sunitha Lakshma Reddy flanked by women taking part in International Women's Day celebrations at Patacheru on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Monday

lined up for the day from the morning to evening as part of the celebrations. She distrib.

MP K Prabhakar Reddy, his sion. She appreciated Gudem Yadamma Mahipal Reddy for Rhunal Reddy his spouse Gita conducting the International celebrations held here under the aegis of local MLA Gudem morning to evening as part of the celebrations. She distrib-Mahipal Reddy and his spouse uted prizes among winners of Reddy, and many more women Gudem Yadamma here on various sports competitions elected representatives in the

Failure to resume RTC women's spl

city services causing inconvenience

cities, there were special trans-

port services meant for women,

but it was not the case for

women in the city. Prior to the

pandemic, the MMTS used to

have special coaches reserved for

women. A special train MMTS

service Matrubhumi used to be

operated exclusively for women.

services remained suspended.

The only saving grace is reserv-

ing some coaches for women

travelling by Metro Rail. But the biggest public transport – the Telangana Sate RTC – has

ignored the convenience of women. Of the 25 lakh that

commute by city buses every

For over one year, the MMTS

She was taking part in Monday. Various events were held on the occasion. Medak constituency graced the occaupal Reddy his spouse Gita

day, women constitute at least 10

lakh. It was shameful to suspend

the special services for women

after running them for several

Hundreds of women used to

travel to Nampalli, Lakdikapul

and High Court region from

Vanastalipuram area. Similarly,

ladies special services used to

run up to DGP office from

Nagaram, Kushaiguda and ECIL

areas. Earlier there was a guarantee of running these special

services for women, but now

women are forced to travel by

ordinary city services and auto-

rickshaws to reach their work

conducting the Women's Day celebrations. MP's spouse Manjula

son Lalita Somireddy, MI Sushma, Pravina, ZPTCs and others took part in the event.

Naidu with her handwriting, was felicitated on the occavice-chairman Prabhakar, market committee vice-chairperson Harika Vijaya Kumar, DSP Bhim Reddy, municipal chairper-

Konduru Ravinder Rao, chairman of NAFSCOB, TSCAB and Karimnagar DCCB, looks on as a bank employee addressing the staff to mark the International Women's Day in Karimnagar on Monday

Karimnagar DCCB wins accolades for appointing more women

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The Karimnagar DCCB had won accolades for appointing more than 40 per cent of women in various sections, including the branch managers, said Konduru Ravinder Rao, chairman of NAFSCOB, TSCAB and Karimnagar DCCB.

The NAFSCOB chairman was the chief guest at the International Women's Day celebrations organised under the aegis of NABARD at DCCB main office in Karimnagar on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that majority of the bank branches in the district were totally manned by women employees.

Hailing the women employees for doing their the job with responsibility and dedication, he said that the women staff also played a crucial role in the recovery of bank loans and emerged as pillars of the KDDCB emerging as the number one cooperative bank in the country. The women employees have proved that they were second to none in discharging their duties.

Karimnagar DCCB CEO N Satyanarayana Rao called upon the women bank managers of

various branches to encourage the womenfolk to take up small scale industries and other selfemployment activities for empowerment. Stating that presently the women SHGs were taking loans to the tune of Rs 10 lakhs, he informed the women officers to encourage the women to take up entrepreneurship for real empowerment.

District Cooperative Officer Srimala said that the womenfolk have proved that they can discharge any duties with responsibility as was evident with the performance of the Karimnagar DCCB in the district. She said that the womenfolk were ready to take up any challenge and excel. TSCAB deputy general manager and nodal officer Annapurna was also all praise for the women employees of the DCCB.

Presiding over the programme, NABARD DDM P Ananth urged the women bankers to encourage the traditional artisans such as handloom weavers, pottery and others to turn into entrepreneurs in the wake of demand for their products on par with the Nirmal toys. On the occasion, the DCĆB chairman and NABARD DDM felicitated all the women employees with a

Corona threat looms large on inter-state border

SRINIVAS KARENGALA

■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Corona positive cases are on the rise in Maharashtra in the second wave. Despite the declining number of Corona positive cases across the country, Maharashtra

is in the grip of Corona. Over 3,000 to 4,000 Corona positive cases were reported in Maharashtra in the last fortnight, which shares the border with Jayasankar Bhupalpally district. People in the district are worried that Corona cases are likely to increase in the district as well in other parts of Telangana with the arrival of traffic from Maharashtra.

The district administration and medical and health department officials are not focusing on the inter-state bridge at Kaleshwaram for those entering the district from Maharashtra. But, the Telangana government

has not issued any directive. It is learnt that the district administration and the medical and health department are not taking any However, CITÜ district secretary Chakrapani has directed the authorities concerned to set up check posts at the Kaleswaram inter-state bridge.

Sri Kaleshwara-Mukteshwara Swamy temple is located in Kaleshwaram in Mahadevpur mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalapally district. Mahashivaratri festivities will be conducted in Kaleshwaram on March 10, 11 and 12. More than 30,000 devotees from Maharashtra attend the fete every

At present, the authorities in Kaleshwaram do not seem to have taken precautionary measures to prevent Corona. Locals are still demanding that the government make appropriate arrangements

Maharashtra and Telangana inter-state bridge is located at Kaleshwaram in Javashankar Corona cases are on the rise in Maharashtra Officials not focusing on the inter-state border in Jayashankar Bhupalapally

in view of Shivratri celebrations. In the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra, the government has imposed a ban on alcohol. Hence, hundreds of people cross the inter-state bridge every day and buy liquor, essential commodities, garments, farm equipment and ve their cars, tractors and bikes for servicing in Kaleshwaram, Mahadevpur, Kataram and Palimela areas in the district.

Locals Kedari Praveen, Aita Ramesh Reddy, Manohar and Srinivas fear that the arrival of traffic from Maharashtra will pose a threat to the local people as there is no check post at the border bridge.

"The District Collector should respond and keep the officers of the departments concerned at the check post and conduct Corona tests. Only those who show the Corona test certificate should be allowed to enter Telangana," said Ajmira Raghuram Naik, sarpanch of Kothpally in Kataram mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalapally district.

"We have not received any instructions from the State government, or the medical and health department officials so far. In order to set up a check post on the inter-state border, we must get permission from the higher authorities and the government. So, we are not able to take any action. We will set up a check post within two days after receiving orders from the government," said Dr Sudhar Singh, District Medical Health Officer, Jayashankar Bhupalapally district.

Women's Day celebrated in a unique manner

PNS PEDDAPALLI

Karimnagar district wore a festive look on Monday as several institutions celebrated International Women's

Ófficials at the NTPC-Ramagundam celebrated the day in a unique manner by distributing the saplings to women colleagues in all departments of the organi-

The NTPC Ramagundam and Chief General Manager Sunil Kumar launched the initiative by presenting a sapling to the head of human resources depart-ment M Vijaya Lakshmi and greeted her on the occa-

Encourage entrepreneurship among women, exhorts PM

In a unique initiative, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday marked International Women's Day by purchasing several products that celebrate their "enterprise, creativity and India's culture".

Women are playing a leading role in India's quest to become 'aatmanirbhar', he tweeted, urging people to commit themselves to encouraging entrepre-

neurship among women.
Sharing details of the products he bought, Modi noted that the exquisite hand embroidered shawl made by artisans of the Toda tribe of Tamil Nadu looked wonderful and added that he bought one. This product is mar-

keted by Tribes India, he said. He also bought a handcrafted Gond Paper Painting and said art by tribal communities is spectacular and the painting merges colours and creativity.

The prime minister bought a



traditional Naga shawl, and said India is proud of the Naga culture which is synonymous with brav-

ery, compassion and creativity. 'Khadi is closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi and India's rich history. Bought a Khadi Cotton Madhubani Painted Stole. This is a top quality product and is closely associated with the creativity of citizens,"

"I am eagerly awaiting to receive Classic Palm Craft Nilavilakku made by women based in Kerala. It is commend-

"I am surely going to use this

handmade Jute file folder from

West Bengal. Made by tribal

communities of the state, you all

must have a jute product from

West Bengal in your homes,'

Modi tweeted. The prime min-

ister said that people have seen

him wear a Gamusa very often

and added that it is extremely

comfortable

able how our Nari Shakti has preserved and popularised local crafts and products," he added. Modi used the hashtag of "Nari Shakti" (woman power) in his tweets.

Gamusa made by various self-help groups of Kakatipapung

Development Block.

Earlier, he had greeted women on the International Women's Day, saying India takes pride in their many accomplishments.

"It is our government's honour to be getting the opportunity to work towards furthering women empowerment across a wide range of sectors," he said.

Last year too, the prime minister took an innovative approach to mark the day as he had handed over his social media accounts to women who inspire to share their stories, messages, life and

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Prez, PM, Ministers all praise for women

New Delhi: President Ram the women of our nation. It Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union ministers and leaders of political parties conveyed their wishes on Monday on the occasion of International Women's Day, extolling the role of 'nari shakti' in various fields.

Prime Minister Modi greeted women on the occasion of the International Women's Day and said India takes pride in their many accomplishments. He said it was his government's honour to work towards furthering women empowerment in the country across a wide range of sectors. "Saluting our indomitable #NariShakti on International Women's Day! India takes pride in the many accomplishments of

is our Government's honour to be getting the opportunity to work towards furthering women empowerment across a wide range of sectors," he tweeted. President Kovind also took to Twitter to wish on the occasion and called for collectively resolving to promote gender justice and eliminate inequality between women and men.

"On the occasion of International Women's Day, greetings and best wishes to all fellow citizens. Women in our country are setting new records and achievements in various fields. Let us collectively resolve to promote gender justice and eliminate inequality between women and men," Kovind

Will continue to protest against rising inflation, says Cong

PNS NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said it would continue to protest against rising inflation and high prices of petroleum products, and would demand a discussion on the issue in Parliament.

The first day of the second part of the Budget Session of Parliament in Rajya Sabha was virtually washed out due to the uproar created by the Congress. Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said he had given a notice to the chairman under rule 267 for a discussion on rising prices of petrol, diesel and LPG, due to

which farmers, women and common people are upset, but it was disallowed. "We wanted to raise the anger among people against the rise in prices and wanted to raise it in Parliament. But the govern-

ment did not agree to it as it was

not ready. "We will continue to

raise our demand, and our agitation for raising the voice of the common man will also continue in Parliament,"he told

Kharge said when the Congress party raises such issues, it is not given time to raise them in Parliament.

"We want that time be given to us to raise such issues concerning the common people in Parliament and are fighting it in the house. Other parties also are with us and are cooperating with us on this issue. We will continue to raise our demand and protests in Parliament to raise issue concerning the common people,"he said.

INDIA CORNER

Women farmers take centre stage at protest sites

housands of women farmers held protest marches and delivered speeches at the Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur protest sites at Delhi's borders on International Women's Day. Noting that women contribute significantly to the country's farming sector, the organisers have laid out elaborate plans to let women farmers manage the



stage, arrange food and security and share tales of their struggles on the occasion. "The stage is being managed by women, the speakers are all women and the issues that are being discussed are of both farming and women farmers more specifically," farmer leader Kavitha Kuruganti told PTI on Monday. "The discourse of the debate is focusing on women farmers. The debate is also on the contribution of women in this movement," said Kuruganti, who is also a member of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha. She added that the participation of women has increased significantly with the arrival of "thousands of women". Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at the Delhi border points for over 100 days, demanding the repeal of farm laws and a legal guarantee on the minimum support price for their crops

Rajasthan Police SI suspended on rape charge

Batla House encounter:Court

convicts Indian Mujahideen man

prosecution duly proved the case beyond reasonable doubt. The judge

said that it was "duly proved that Ariz Khan and his associates caused

murder of police official and fired gunshot on the police official." The

court will hear arguments on the quantum of sentence on March 15.

Batla House encounter in Jamia Nagar in south Delhi. A trial court in

July 2013 had sentenced Indian Mujahideen terrorist Shahzad Ahmed

to life imprisonment in connection with the case

Inspector Sharma of the Special Cell of Delhi was killed during the 2008

police sub-inspector was Asuspended on Monday on the charge of raping a 26-year-old woman in Rajasthan's Alwar district, an official said. A case of rape under Indian Penal Code (IPC) section 376 was registered against police subinspector Bharat Lal (52) on a complaint lodged by the woman Alwar SP Tejaswini Gautam said. The SP said the accused was arrested and suspended on Monday. The woman had gone to police station to lodge a case against her husband as he wanted a divorce. The woman wanted

Convicted Ariz Khan, allegedly associated with the

terror outfit Indian Mujahideen,

inspector Mohan Chand Sharma

encounter. Additional Sessions

Judge Sandeep Yadav said the

and other offences in connection

for the murder of Delhi police

with the 2008 Batla House

evidence produced by the



police to stop him from getting a divorce. According to the woman's complaint, the accused SI raped her for three days at a quarter inside police station, the SP said.

VEHICLE NEAR MUKESH'S HOME

NIA takes over case

PNS NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over the case of a vehicle laden with explosives being found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai, an official spokesperson said on

The NIA took over the case following orders from the Ministry of Home Affairs, he said. The agency is in the

process of re-registering the case, the spokesperson added.

The Scorpio, with 20 gelatin sticks inside, was found near Ambani's high-rise south Mumbai home on February

Police had said the vehicle was stolen from Airoli-Mulund Bridge on February

Hiren Mansukh, the owner of the vehicle, was found dead in a creek in Thane on Friday.

SC seeks states' response on quota to specific class

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court sought responses from states on Monday on a question of "seminal importance" whether legislatures were competent to declare a particular caste to be socially and educationally backward for grant of quota.

The top court will examine the question of interpretation of the 102nd amendment to the Constitution dealing with reservation to a particular community, named in the list prepared by the

The 102nd Constitution amendment Act of 2018 inserted Article 338B (deals with the structure, duties and powers of National Commission of Backward Class) and 342A (power of the President to notify a particular caste as Socially and



Educationally Backward Class (SEBC)) and the power of Parliament to change the SEBC list.

The issue of interpretation of 102nd amendment arose before a five-judge constitution bench while examining a batch of pleas on the validity of the Maratha reservation law and the legal issue of whether a state legislature is competent enough to declare a particular caste to be socially and educationally backward for

grant of quota. The bench, headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan, said it would also hear arguments on the issue of whether the landmark 1992 judgement in the Indira Sahwney case -- also known as the Mandal verdict, which caps the quota at 50 per cent -- should be re-looked

and referred to a larger bench.

The bench, also comprising justices L Nageswara Rao, S Abdul Nazeer, Hemant Gupta and S Ravindra Bhat, said it would commence the hearing from next Monday and asked the states to file a brief note of written submissions on the

"We have considered the submission of different parties and are of the view that the interpretation of 102nd amendment of the Constitution is of seminal importance and, therefore, notice has to be issued to the states," the bench said.

Anti-conversion Bill passed by **MP Assembly**

PNS BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Assembly on Monday passed by voice vote a bill that checks religious conversions through marriage or by any other fraudulent means.

The bill earlier replaced the ordinance, cleared by the cabinet in December and promulgated in January, which had provisions of 10 years imprisonment in some cases and hefty fine for violators.

On March 1, state Home Minister Narottam Mishra presented the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill 2021 in the House.

After a discussion on the bill, it was passed by voice vote in the Assembly on Monday.

K'taka govt gift : Six-month child care leave for women staff

PNS BENGALURU

On international women's Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurapps on Monday announced a proposal to provide six-months child care leave to women employees of the Government.

He also announced a grant of Rs 37,188 crore for women oriented programmes.

Presenting the 2021-22 budget in the Legislative Assembly, he proposed upgradation of Anganwadis situated in Bengaluru and other cities into creches for the benefit of urban working

Action would be taken to open creches in two major government offices in each district centre, the Chief Minister said, announcing a slew of initiatives benefiting women.

"Women employees of the state government will be given a total of six months child care leave along with maternity leave which is already in existence. This will be a supplementary step towards the wel-



fare of women who are a very important part of the administrative machinery," he said.

Yediyurappa announced loan facility of up to Rs two crore at a subsidised rate of four per cent through Woman D e v e l o p m e n t Board/Karnataka State Finance Corporation to women entrepreneurs in the service sector.

The government also announced support through Panchayat Raj institutions for the establishment of 6,000 micro enterprises for rural women self-help groups under 'Sanjeevini'; to benefit 60,000 women.Technical support to

small enterprises of women was announced by the government which also proposed encouragement to 25,000 women through 2,260 micro enterprises. The government also proposed to provide market to the products manufactured by women self-help groups and women entrepreneurs, organisation of annual fares at divisional level and implementation of e-market

Yediyurappa announced commencement of 'Vanitha Sangathi' programme for providing BMTC (Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation) bus pass at concessional rate to women labourers of garment sector in Bengaluru at an expenditure of Rs 30 crore.

It also proposed re-examination of various laws and rules for creation of conducive environment for women taking up employ-

Action was also proposed to incorporate gender budget and child budget in the Panchayat Raj system.

Showcase our achievements to world: PM

PNS NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the celebrations for India's 75 years of independence should reflect the spirit of the country's freedom movement and showcase its achievements to the world since 1947. Speaking after the first meeting of the 259member high-level national committee headed by the prime minister to commemorate 75 years of India's independence, Modi said public participation should be the basis of the celebra-

The members of the committee include former president Pratibha Patil, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, 28 chief ministers, artistes like Lata Mangeshkar, A R Rahman, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, senior BJP leader L K Advani, almost all Union ministers and several gover-

Removed from school for refusing to donate for Ram temple'

PNS BALLIA

A teacher here has alleged that he was removed from an RSS-run school after he refused to donate Rs 1,000 for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, a charge denied by the institution.

Yashwant Pratap Singh, who worked as an "acharya" (teacher) at Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Jagdishpur locality, also claimed that the school has withheld his eight months' salary.
Singh said he was given a receipt book for the collec-

tion of funds for the temple. He deposited around Rs 80,000 collected for it, he

Singh claimed that he was pressured to donate Rs 1,000 for the temple when the district "pracharak" of the Rasthriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS), Satyendra, came to the school. When he refused, the

school authorities "misbehaved" and removed him denying the allegations.



from the school, Singh alleged, adding that he has given a written complaint in this regard at the district magistrate's office.

Singh said he will approach a court if justice is not done

Meanwhile, school princi-pal Dhirendra said all employees were given receipt books for the collection of

funds as per their capacity. "Singh also took three receipt books willingly but

later did not deposit them. He himself resigned," he said,

Change in 'Gangubai Kathiawadi' film title sought

aharashtra Congress MLA Amin Patel on Monday demanded that the title of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming movie "Gangubai Kathiawadi" be changed, claiming it maligns the name of Kathiawad city. The film features Alia Bhatt as Gangubai, one of the



most powerful, loved and respected madams from Kamathipura, Mumbai's red-light area, during the 1960s. Speaking in the state Assembly, Patel, who represents heMumbadevi constituency in south Mumbai, said the Kamathipura area has undergone changes. "It is not the same like it was in 1950s. Women there are excelling in different professions. The film's title also maligns the name of Kathiawad city. The name of the film should be changed," said the MLA, whose party is an ally of the Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra government. Patel urged the state government to intervene into the matter. The film, which will open in theatres countrywide on July 30, has been adapted from one of the chapters of noted author Hussain Zaidi's book "Mafia Queens of Mumbai".

In 'love' with same girl, 2 cousins end life

PNS ■ KOTA (RAJ)

Two cousins suspected to be in love with the same girl allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a train in Rajasthan's Bundi district,

police said on Monday.

The incident took place near Gudla village on Sunday night and they have identified as Mahendra Gurjar (23) and Devraj Gurjar (23), residents of Keshavpura village under the Dablana police station in Bundi district, police said.

Area SHO Lakhanlal Meena said both had got a



name, Asha, engraved on their

Pictures and details in their mobile phones suggest that both were in love with the same girl, he said, adding that whereabouts of the girl are yet to be ascertained.

Prima facie, the two cousins committed suicide. However, no suicide note has been recovered, the SHO said.

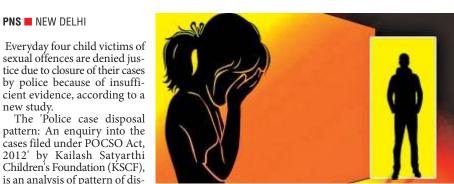


new study.

The 'Police case disposal pattern: An enquiry into the cases filed under PÓCSO Act, 2012' by Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF), is an analysis of pattern of dis-posal of POCSO cases by police from 2017 to 2019 and is based on the data and infor-

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The study has been released

mation published by the



'No justice for child victims of sexual abuse'

been closed by the police after the occasion International Women's Day. investigation without filing the chargesheet," the study point-"It has been observed that between 2017 and 2019, there

As the data shows, sexual has been an increase in the number of cases that have crimes are increasing in the

"While the government recognised the need for a special law and introduced a special legislation to deal with crimes against children viz., Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO), it is disappointing to see its poor implementation on the ground," the study noted.

As many as 3,000 POCSO cases registered and investigated fail to reach court for a fair trial every year and four child victims of sexual abuse are denied justice every day due to the closure of their cases by police because of insufficient evidence or lack of a clue, the study said.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Future perfect?

Is Tikait using the farmers' agitation to carve a place for himself in the Assembly or LS polls?

iding the crest of farmers' protests, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait is putting in his best efforts to find a firm ground for his political future, if his latest utterances are anything to go by. By saying that the "Government has gone to Kolkata and we will meet it there only", he has made it clear that he will continue raking the farm laws issue to the BJP's discomfiture wherever and whenever an opportunity presents itself. This might irk the BJP a bit but it's certainly no reason for worry as Tikait most likely will not find any resonance in the West Bengal elections unless he gets to share the platform with the State's big guns or openly sides with the TMC or the Congress against the saffron party. Tikait is up in arms against the Centre and the BJP;



however, many a time what is seen on the surface is nothing more than eyewash, especially in politics. An overambitious leader who has had no political career might be used as a "safety valve" by the Centre to defuse the farmers' anger. The nation witnessed how the Centre, despite all its might, failed to prevent the farmers from storming the Red Fort on the Republic Day. It was only after this incident that the protest's focus shifted from Punjab's growers to the cultivators of western Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Haryana, and Tikait acquired the centre stage while the more belligerent farm leaders from Punjab were gradually sidelined. Tikait then went through a gamut of

manoeuvres including breaking down during a speech, threatening to hang himself if the farm laws weren't repealed and of marching to Parliament with 40 lakh tractors, besides making many other inciting comments to keep the protest alive.

The political stint of Tikait — the son of legendary farmer leader Mahendra Singh Tikait who held sway over Jat farmers in western UP and founded the BKU and the Bahujan Kisan Dal — has been rather unsuccessful. He ended up at the sixth spot in the 2007 UP Assembly elections (though he was backed by the Congress) and lost his deposit in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls when he fought on the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) ticket from Amroha. Tikait is basically consolidating his position among Jat voters, the community he banks upon, in western UP. He is probably eyeing the 2022 UP Assembly or the next Lok Sabha elections. However, the jury is still out on whether he will float his own party or contest on another party's symbol. If he forms his own party, it would be a severe setback to the RLD and the Congress who also count on Jat votes. The BJP naturally would have an advantage as the votes against it would split. On the other hand, seat-sharing may not be easy if he decides to join hands with the RLD or the Congress as the traditional parties will not like him to be in the driver's seat. As of now, Tikait would like to use the farmers' protest to get a leg up in his political career. However, the NDA Government's "pro-corporate" and "anti-farmer" image is unlikely to help the BJP but its strategists would know what it means to win the Hindi heartland.

PICTALK



Himachal Pradesh Police's women officers celebrate International Women's Day, in Shimla

Institutionalised racism

What did Prince Harry Windsor and Meghan Markle's interview to Oprah Winfrey teach us?

et us make no bones about it; the interview that Prince Harry Windsor and Meghan Markle, the now effectively excommunicated members of the British Royal Family, gave American television personality Oprah Winfrey was a way for them to remain in the limelight. It shone brightly at them and it also reminded many of us who either watched the entire interview or even snatches of it on social media that Miss Winfrey



remains a master at herf art. It is extremely difficult to feel sorry for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. They are, and remain, extremely wealthy and privileged individuals, one by virtue of his birth and the other through the Hollywood hype machine. This interview is just a precursor to an upcoming series on streaming platform Netflix, which ironically also broadcasts a very lightly fictionalised story of Harry's grandmother's life, 'The Crown'. But it was difficult to not feel sorry when Meghan and Harry spoke about the racism that they faced when the potential skin tone of their then unborn child, a son now known as Archie, was brought up. Neither of them mentioned who it was that spoke

to them about this, whether it was a family member or a member of the royal household bureaucracy, but this again highlights that even an evolved family or institution can remain horribly rooted in a racist past.

The British Royal Family might reign over a realm that is uniquely multi-racial and multi-ethnic, but racist undertones still exist in Britain. Of course, this is not a problem unique to the country as the 'Black Lives Matter' that followed the brutal murders of black individuals by white members of the American police force highlighted that even eight years of having a black President hadn't changed the racist mindsets of many Americans. And while racist undertones in India seem to be more subdued, make no mistake because they do exist. The attitude of the average Indian to African students or even those from the North-East is downright racist and, worse, casteism is still widespread. Many of us might have evolved with regards to our views on matters such as race and caste, but the institutionalisation of those views over centuries will take much longer to eradicate, not just in the British Royal Family but across the world.

100 days of revolt, & still raring to go



As the farmers' protest against farm laws enters the summer season, they brave high temperatures and the paucity of basic necessities

s an orange sun hung over the Tikri border; Rakesh Tikait along ⊾with other leaders was addressing the gathering of farmers on the 99th evening of the farmers' revolution. To mark the 100th day, plans were to be made. Farmers were preparing to block the National Highway into Delhi for five hours; a task they did well and peacefully. Tikait gave a call again to farmers around the nation "to be prepared for the harvest" and to bolster the revolution simultaneously. Speeches ended and a selfie frenzy began. The young, the old, the media and the police, all wanted to be in this moment as it was special in the history of the world. Winter, spring and now summer, yet the farmers' revolution lives on.

But far from the maddening crowds, the revolution had got a new friend. Against public advice, he kept ramming into the yellow police barricades, try-ing to enter Delhi. I caught him red-handed. Shyly, he ducked and began to look at the carrot shavings. His mind was yet to understand why humans used barricades. The suspect was big, blackish and middle aged. His curved big black horns made him stand out; he was an Indian humped bull.

The advances in farm machinery and artificial insemination have made the indigenous bull redundant. Most farmers sell off the male calves at birth and the remaining ones roam the streets of cities and townships scavenging on garbage. The more lucky ones are sold to slaughterhouses to meet death quickly. There is also a special class of bulls that is part of the artificial insemination industry; they are bred and dishonoured by sophisticated instruments, robbing them of their spermatozoa. Today the Indian bull, far from being Shiv's 'Nandi', is a nariah and first victim of industrial agriculture. With less than (RO) plants within the one per cent bulls working the farms, India flaunts a large dairy and cattle-rearing sector. The Indian species are so intermixed industrial effluents.

with foreign breeds, mainly Jersey and Holstein, that it's hard to tell what is indigenous anymore. Many farmers fear that the story of the Indian bull will be their story, too, if the three farm laws and a neocompany raj enter India. Only with minimal farmers and maximum fossil fuel-based machines will the fields be cultivated.

The more immediate challenge to the revolution is, of course, the increasing heat political and physical. Temperature variations have already started affecting people's health. With hotter days ahead, the entire encampments are modifying their tents. Many farmers are now constructing high bambooand-canvas tents for better air circulation. The supply of drinking water and perishable items like milk is becoming slightly problematic. Food wastage may also increase due to insufficient refrigeration facility. Farmers have mobilised another round of fundraising for installing reverse osmosis encampments at Tikri border because the groundwater is highly contaminated with



WHILE ALL EYES ARE ON BENGAL THE FARMER LEADERS ARE **EXPANDING THEIR** BASE TO THE STATES OF RAJASTHAN, MADHYA PRADESH AND UTTAR PRADESH. THE MORALE ON THE GROUND AT THE REVOLUTION SITES HAS NEVER BEEN HIGHER

also going for a summer makeover. Much of the encampment at this border is on the Asian Highway2 (AH2). Surrounding it are Ghazipur's garbage mountain, posh apartments and an open sewage canal that flows underneath it. The summer will bring mosquitoes and diseases. Both the sites will have to be prepared to combat vector and water-borne diseases. As these fears grow, a farmer from Jind died by suicide at the Tikri border. An

avoidable death! The farmers' revolution has transformed from an agrarian movement into a united opposition to the totalitarian Government. The BJP has suffered electorally in Punjab and Haryana and a strict boycott of the BJP and its leaders is in place in these States. While all eyes are on Bengal, the farmer leaders are expanding their base to the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. the revolution sites has never been higher. Because the encampments have become a camaraderie is the only cure for hate. Many of these farm- personal.)

The Ghazipur border is ers have stepped out of their region for the first time, yet they quickly learnt to work and endure suffering together. The movement is more disciplined than earlier and the farmers are

ready to continue resisting. Penance has been the path to spiritual awakening Jesus on the cross or Buddha starving under the Bodhi tree — and the farmers are also suffering for the sins of our world. A bullet may bring them death as a slaughter may begin any day but they hope their deaths will not be in vain and shall wake up a sleeping world. It will bring together farmers and citizens all over the world to rise against this evil. Despite the odds, the farmers are hopeful.

Our world and democracy is at a dangerous crossroads — Earth and millions of farmers on one side and Big Ag and corporate tyranny on the other. If Indian farmers win, democracy of the world lives; otherwise, The morale on the ground at Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World' awaits us all.

(The author writes on agriculture and environment, breeding ground for hope, and is the Director - Green *India. The views expressed are*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WOMEN SHOULD RISE AGAINST TORMENTORS

Sir — Each year, March 8 is celebrated as International Women's Day. It goes without saying that women have proved their worth in all spheres and their progress is beyond any doubt. Indian women, too, have shown men that they are second to none. But we need to introspect that why we still have to talk about women empowerment and gender equality.

We have not achieved these things and the reality is very disappointing. Daughters are committing suicide daily in our country as they are forced by their husbands and in-laws to meet their demand for dowry. Many people in villages still hesitate to send their daughters to schools and marry them off at an early age. Even in big metros, women are faced with discrimination of various types at the workplaces and at their homes. They are sexually abused and harassed at the hands of their male colleagues, while at home they are subjected to domestic violence. The situation of women in politics is also not much better. There are very few women in politics as compared to men and they are not enough to pressure the Government to make laws more favourable for the women.

The fair sex is rather treated unfairly in our country and working women in traditional domains of men are looked down upon by their peers. When will this situation change? What are the responsibilities of NGOs, States, the Centre and civil society with respect to improving the condition of women? When will women rise against their tormentors?

Bal Govind | Noida

TAKE ALL SHOTS WITHIN STIPULATED TIME Sir —As COVID-19 cases are again on the rise in India, it is time to accelerate our vaccination drive. The Government must involve more private hospitals and set up mobile clinics for vaccination. The States and Centre must deploy their ambulance services for getting people inoculated. The elderly should have the facility of calling ambulance home for taking them to the nearest centre for getting the jab. Further, Sir — If the massive crowd at the Prime

No cakewalk for Mamata



(March 8). Mamata choosing to contest from Nandigram shows her nervousness and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) not giving tickets to many sitting MLAs and Ministers shows that Didi no more has confidence over her old guards. Mamata banking on new faces might cost dearer to the TMC in the Assembly elections. She is already distraught by a spate of defections when many of her close confidants left the party at such crucial juncture. Suvendu Adhikari has made the

a door-to-door vaccination drive should be conducted not only in big cities but also in towns and villages.

Vaccination is a safe and effective way to prevent disease and save lives — now more than ever. Today there are vaccines available to protect against at least 20 diseases. Further, there should be no crowding at the vaccination centres and arrangements for potable water and toilet facilities should be made available to all, especially the elders.

We must also not forget that safety precautions are the key to keep Coronavirus at bay and wearing of masks and sanitising ands is essential

Those who have taken the shot must take the subsequent doses within the stipulated time, else it might prove futile and defeat the very purpose.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

BJP LIKELY TO WIN BENGAL ELECTIONS

matters worse for her and winning from Nandigram will not be a cakewalk for Mamata as the Adhikari clan holds significant influence

However, Mamata's chances of winning the battle of prestige at Nandigram are quite good but it will definitely affect the TMC's performance elsewhere. The TMC's rule has been fraught with corruption and its Ministers were neck-deep in malpractices and nepotism. She should have controlled her MLAs, party workers and Ministers before the elections. Tightening noose when elections are round the corner will not improve the party's image, rather it would prove counterproductive. Those who have been denied tickets may not campaign for the party whole-heartedly and may even go against it. The BJP, on the other hand, is putting all its weight behind campaigning and winning the elections. Top party leaders are holding rallies. sabhas and road shows on war footing.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

Minister's rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata is anything to go by, the indication is clear that the TMC is going and BJP is coming to power in West Bengal. Further, the schemes of the Centre will give BJP an edge; however, the recent rise in the prices of fuel and LPG cylinder will have a bearing on the BJP's vote bank.

The Centre should not have allowed the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG to touch the sky. The rise in LPG prices especially worries women a lot and, despite the Centre's Ujjwala Yojana, might affect the BJP's vote

What will happen cannot be exactly predicted but it seems that the people of West Bengal are fed up with the rule of Mamata Banerjee and will most likely vote her out of power.

Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Women in our

country have always played a great role in nation-building and in upholding national integrity, peace and harmony. Women have always beer





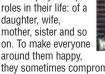
The Government has signed an advance purchase agreement for 8.5 million additional doses, enough to vaccinate

New Zealand PM

Jacinda Ardern

4.25 million people against COVID.

Women play multiple



they sometimes compromise their real self — Sunny Leone



Indian women's ODI vice-captain — Harmanpreet Kaur

The social organisations could also contribute to ensure comfortable commuting and convenient

process



Union Minister

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FIRST COLUMN

INDIA MUST NOT LET CHINA WOO HASINA

Ties between New Delhi and Dhaka would benefit both countries and Modi's trip should take this forward



KALYANI SHANKAR

rime Minister Narendra Modi's forthcoming visit to Dhaka on March 26 is quite significant as it will be his first foreign trip after the COVID-19 outbreak. It is expected to consolidate bilateral ties as Bangladesh is a gateway to southeast Asia and part of Modi's 'Act East' policy. In the last six years, the Prime Minister has established a rapport with his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina. There have also been frequent ministerial and official-level visits and continuous interaction between New Delhi and Dhaka. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar visited Dhaka last week to pave the way for the Prime Minister's visit as part of Bangladesh's celebrations of 50 years of independence. It also marks a decisive victory of the Indian Army over Pakistan. Coincidentally, Modi's visit is just before the first phase of the Assembly polls in West Bengal and Assam, which share common borders with Bangladesh. The enormous improvement in bilateral ties in the recent years led Hasina to call it a "golden period."



Yet, the steps taken in the domestic sphere during Modi's second term are causing concern to Bangladesh, even though New Delhi contends that it is a domestic matter. These measures include the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the passing of the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the creation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

During Modi's trip, the two leaders are expected to discuss bilateral issues, especially the matter of Teesta river water sharing. Despite achieving breakthroughs in several areas in India-Bangladesh ties, both countries are yet to resolve the issue and Teesta has emerged as an emotive matter in Bangladesh and West Bengal. Dhaka has been pushing New Delhi to settle it early as Teesta water is vital for irrigation during the dry season in the northern part of Bangladesh. The Modi Government had successfully persuaded West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the tricky Land Boundary Agreement and the enclaves' resolution, but Didi has stuck to her guns on Teesta, Jaishankar. during his recent Dhaka visit, said, "The position of the Government of India has not changed." However, it is a political necessity for both sides to find a solution soon. A deal would help New Delhi get more political leverage over China's growing influence, particularly in the Bay of Bengal region. It will also help Hasina politically. Meanwhile, a desperate Dhaka has turned to Beijing and a massive project funded by China has been adopted to manage the Teesta river.

On the domestic side, illegal immigration has been a political and electoral issue for the BJP since 1996 when its national executive in Bhopal passed a resolution on it. Even the 2019 manifesto said, "We will continue to undertake effective steps to prevent illegal immigration in the north eastern States." The other issue is that of Rohingya refugees. Millions of Muslims from the Rakhine province of Myanmar, following the Tatmadaw's crackdown in 2017, fled to Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries, including India. New Delhi is caught in a dilemma between two close strategic neighbours, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Connectivity is another important area where both the countries are focusing, and many new projects are on the way and New Delhi has come to Dhaka's rescue by exporting nine million vaccines as part of its COVID diplomacy. On its part, Bangladesh is all set to graduate out of the Least Developing Countries with its GDP growth of eight per cent. New Delhi must keep up the partnership that allows for economic growth, defence cooperation, connectivity and improved developmental parameters for both nations. A collaboration between India and Bangladesh would benefit both countries. New Delhi must not lose the moment to take the ties forward.

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed

Gender inequality in Indian labour market



It is not only participation in higher education that will provide a broad solution but skills training relevant to the market demand is also necessary

Pvery year on International Women's Day the world celebrates the achievements of women in social, economic, cultural and political spheres. Not many are aware that this special day for women began as a labour movement in 1908, when 15 000 comes prescribed through New York when 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter working hours, better pay and the right to vote. March 8 was taken up as the official International Women's Day in 1975 by the United Nations. This year's theme was centred around celebrating the tremendous efforts of women/girls in shaping a more equal future and also in aiding recovery from the pandemic. However, it is imperative to highlight the gaps that remain and the way forward to address them successfully.

Gender inequality in the labour market, particularly in the context of developing nations, is one area of concern that still poses a great challenge, particularly in a country like India. Historically, women have been denied many opportunities due to deep-rooted biases in the social system. These eventually lead to labour market inequality as such discrimination is not limited to the domestic arena only but extends beyond the household. The underlying factors that cause such discrimination in India are the sex ratio at birth, life expectancy at birth, the infant mortality rate, the under-five mortality rate, the maternal mortality rate, nutritional deprivation, inequality in literacy rates and the gender gap at the highest level of political decision-making. These inequalities have direct implications for labour market outcomes in terms of women's participation in economic activities. Even with similar educational attainments and skill sets as men, women are denied opportunities, which leads to significant differences in status of work, income and occupations. Despite the introduction of many affirmative policy actions, such exclusionary approaches remain.

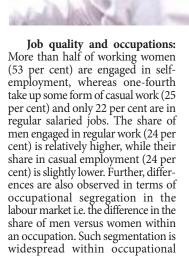
Inequality in the labour market: While some studies have noted an improvement in employment conditions for women, with rising salaries and more participation in quality or decent jobs, other studies have highlighted jobless growth and declining participation in the labour market in the past decades. The pandemic severely hit economic activities of those who were at the lower rung of the occupation hierarchy, particularly women working in the informal economy. They were out of jobs for a significant period of the outbreak and those who managed to hold on to one had to face wage cuts. This has further precipitated the vulnerability of

Employment and education/skill level: Globalisation has led to an increase in women's participation in the labour market in India. But there is still a huge gender gap, with only 18 per cent of women employed as compared to 47 per cent men. It is often argued that women are engaged in mostly low-skilled, low-paid work under precarious work conditions. Education and skill level play a key role in access to the labour market and in the quality of work one gets.

Almost half of the working women (42 per cent) are illiterate compared to 19 per cent men, and around 77 per cent are educated up to the upper primary level as compared to 62 per cent men. There is a significant difference between the higher education level of working women and men, i.e. 23 per cent of women as compared to 38 per cent of men are educated above the secondary level.



GLOBALISATION HAS LED TO AN INCREASE IN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE **LABOUR MARKET** IN INDIA. BUT THERE IS STILL A HUGE GENDER GAP, WITH 18 PER CENT OF WOMEN **EMPLOYED** AS COMPARED TO 47 PER CENT



groups.

The occupational distribution by gender shows that women (28 per cent) are relatively more involved than men (22 per cent) in low-paid and unskilled jobs, such as elementary occupations (domestic helpers, cleaners, street vendors and garbage collectors), services (personal care, housekeeping and salespersons) and as office and customer service clerks. Women (10 per cent) are also underrepresented in high-skill and well paid jobs, such as those of professionals, technicians and associate professionals, as compared to men (13 per cent). Additionally, the percentage of women (92 per cent) engaged in informal employment in the country is higher than men (88 per cent).

Unemployment, NEET and inactive people: The overall employment level among women (five per cent) is less than their male (six per cent) counterparts. The unemploy-

ment rate among young (15-29 years) women is not only significantly high (18 per cent) but also greater than men (17 per cent). The trend also shows a sizable increase in youth who are not in employment, education and training (NEET), among whom a large proportion is that of women. More than half of young women (55 per cent) are in the NEET category with only 13 per cent of young men featuring in it. Additionally, 84 per cent of young women are inactive as compared to 41 per cent of men. The inactive youth include those who face employment difficulties and may drop out of the labour force when jobs are hard to find, whether for study, leisure, illicit activities or due to inertia. Women face many social and economic hurdles which limit their participation in the labour market and this may lead to labour market inactivity.

Factors aiding inequality: There are many factors that contribute to labour market inequality. Mehta and Awasthi (2019) analysed various factors through an econometric decomposition exercise. Their study revealed four important factors: Educational qualification or skill level is one of the most important factors contributing to inequality, as individuals with high education or skill level can access better jobs or have higher chances of getting a decent job; access to a decent quality job or a regular formal salaried job, which provides better and secure income, while casual work is irregular and low paid; gender, as various socio-economic con-

ditions and other restrictions cause women to have a lower labour force participation rate and lastly work experience, as people with experience are more likely to get better access to the labour market. There are other factors such as social groups, income level or poverty and rural and urban location which play a key role in gender inequality in the labour market.

The way forward: Rising inequality in the labour market is a reality, with the differences between the male and female population growing wider. Though, over the years, female presence in regular or high-skilled and better-paid jobs has improved but still a large number of them are engaged in low-paid and unskilled jobs. In recent years, the growing enrollment of young women in secondary and tertiary-level education has resulted in them being better-skilled employees and their proliferation in decent employment. This trend is seen particularly in the services sector, especially in financial services and information technology. Hence, apart from a gender-friendly environment, it is necessary to make education up to the secondary level universal and free.

However, the growing number of women in the NEET category and the higher unemployment level among educated or skilled women is negating the advances made through such measures. Therefore, it is not only participation in higher education that will provide a comprehensive solution but skills training relevant to the market demand is also necessary.



The writer is senior faculty

at Institute for Human

Development, New Delhi.

The views expressed

BENGAL TRUSTED DIDI FOR 'PORIBORTON'. SHE BROKE THE TRUST. I HAVE COME HERE TO MAKE YOU BELIEVE IN 'ASOL PORIBORTON'. —PRIME MINISTER

NARENDRA MODI





HE SAYS THERE IS NO 'PORIBORTON' IN BENGAL. BEFORE POLLS IT IS *UJJWALA* AND POST POLLS IT TURNS INTO 'JUMLA.' THIS CANNOT CONTINUE. —WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

MAMATA BANERJEE

Govt land monetisation will boost infrastructure development

The proposed SPV meant to carry out the monetisation should take essential steps for making land assets of PSUs free of any hindrances

Trban development in India is largely obstructed by the lack of availability of land at affordable prices, a key prerequisite for infrastructure development and housing. According to the Numbeo database for 2021, Mumbai is among the top 10 cities with the highest price-toincome ratios. The reason for the high price of land available for infrastructure development or residential stock in India is directly linked to the complexities of the land acquisition

process. With a number of loopholes in its current design, it has been largely debated by various researchers and policymakers. Making matters worse, the lack of clear land titles and the need for obtaining approvals and clearances from civic authorities impedes the progress of a

As it has been a long-



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Applied Economic

Research.

The views expressed

standing problem, it is imperative to seek solutions and adopt appropriate policy models to address it. Taking cue from China's journey can prove helpful. The improved infrastructure quality has been a fundamental source of China's economic growth, which currently stands on a par with the advanced economies.

As per the World Bank's Infrastructure Index for 2018, Beijing appeared in the top 20 ranks alongside other advanced economies with a score of 3.75. India, in contrast, was one of the low-scoring countries on the index at 2.91. This fast-paced development of the Chinese economy forces one to think about its model of infrastructure development.

Of the many steps taken by the Chinese Government, a significant effort relates to monetisation of public land to develop infrastructure. According to

an estimate by Chinese researchers, the Government allocated 1,38,267 hectare of land in 2010 for infrastructure, which was around 20 per cent of the total State-owned

Financial support in the form of this land allocation can be gauged by the fact that had State Governments purchased the same at market rates, they would have ended up paying 1,292.8 billion yuan, amounting to 31.8 per cent of their total revenue in 2010. This model can be replicated and adopted by India by making unutilised land with Government departments and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) available to private players for infrastructure development or housing construction,

thereby filling the existing gap. The Union Budget 2021-22 has proposed monetisation of land belonging to the



Government-owned companies and PSUs by way of direct sale, concessions or other suitable means. The plan is to launch a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in this pursuit. The decision is likely to free up a large extent of land for building infrastructure and affordable housing projects. According to various estimates available in public domain, the

Government agencies is over 5,00,000 HA, of which, over 1,60,000 HA is held across various airports, seaports and the railways. Approximately 11.8 lakh acres is owned by the Railway Ministry, out of which about 1.26 lakh acres is not in any kind of use. For the proposed land monetisation, it is pertinent to ensure preparation on various fronts. First, record of lands with plot

land held by various

ownership and boundaries should be available in an updated form, without any disputes or any other encumbrances like lease terms of the PSUs. Though States are making substantial progress in digitising land records, there is still a long road ahead for improving its quality, as has been exhibited by National Council of Applied Économic Research

(NCAER) Land Records and

Services Index (N-LRSI) in its 2020 and 2021 editions. The proposed SPV meant to carry out the monetisation process should take the essential steps for making land assets of PSUs free of any hindrances.

Canada's experience can offer some useful lessons in designing an SPV — Canada Lands Company — identifies and purchases surplus properties (including Governmentowned land) at market prices. It further manages the purchased properties and finally

sells it to private entities. Since 1995, it has developed 2,000 affordable housing projects. Second, land prices valuation, which has proved to be a major roadblock for loan acquisition procedures, should be determined through a detailed analysis of market rates and potential gains from the

proposed project. Lastly, Central and State

Governments should take the necessary steps to limit the requirement of multiple approvals required to kick off an infrastructure or real estate project. This comes across as the biggest bottleneck as observed from heaps of land parcels lying unutilised in the States' land banks as private companies avoid the tedious approval and clearance processes that are necessary to secure

With increasing requirements of infrastructure resources and housing stock in Indian cities, there is an urgent need to optimise land resources. If adopted with adequate measures, Government land monetisation can be an efficient policy step that captures real estate value of unutilised public land, augments revenues of local, Central and State Governments and also mitigates problems posed by escalating land prices.

Govt working on formulating standards for AYUSH products

The government is working on formulation of stan-dards for AYUSH dards for AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) products with an aim to augment its international trade by ensuring quality of goods and services, an official said.

The official said that with globalisation and increasing usage of traditional systems of medicine, the need for international standards for AYUSH systems has become imperative.

"Development of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Sowa-rigpa, and Homoeopathy) standards is poised to augment international trade by ensuring quality of products and services besides bringing benefits to consumers in terms underway for different Indian Standards (BIS) is of reducing costs, enhanc- herbs



ing performance and Ashwagandha and Giloya. improving safety," the official added.

Four Indian standards have already been published on the glossary of ayurvedic terminology and medicinal preparations, and the similar process is

"Work is going on for formulation of Indian standard on Yoga Mat-specifications. Besides these, formulation of several other Indian Standards is in the pipeline," the official added.

BIS has also requested Further, the Bureau of sensitise the friendly counincluding also looking at discussing tries for supporting India's

Four Indian standards have been published on the glossary of ayurvedic terminology and medicinal preparations, and a similar process is underway for different herbs

proposals in ISO, including creation of the committee in the ISO.

Commerce and AYUSH ministries have already decided to work together to set up an export promotion the Ministry of AYUSH to council to boost export of AYUSH products from

Sensex, Nifty eke out gains; energy, IT stocks save the day

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty eke out gains on Monday after two sessions of decline as investors snapped up energy, IT and pharma shares.

After fighting multiple bouts of volatility during the session, the BSE gauge Sensex settled 35.75 points or 0.07 per cent higher at 50,441.07. Intraday, the index rose as much as 667 points, but pared most of its gains tracking weakness in global

markets.
The NSE Nifty ended with a gain of 18.10 points or 0.12 per cent at 14,956.20.

On the Sensex chart, L&T, ONGC, HCL Tech, NTPC, Axis Bank and Infosys were major gainers. On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Auto and HDFC twins emerged as top laggards.

In other Asian markets, equities suffered losses amid sustained volatility in view of concerns over rising bond yields. Though, Asian shares had started the session on Arabia reported drone attack high, cheering the US Senate on its oil facilities. passing a USD 1.9 trillion

Foreign investors had stimulus bill for Covid-19 offloaded equities worth Rs 2,014.16 crore on a net basis Investor nerves also calmed a bit after the US in Indian capital markets on Friday, according to labour department reported exchange data.

stronger-than-expected jobs On the forex market front, the rupee tumbled 23 paise to Meanwhile, global crude close at 73.25 against the US dollar on Monday. oil prices climbed after Saudi



Adani Energy commissions 100 mw wind power plant

PNS NEW DELHI

Adani Green Energy on Monday said its arm Adani Wind Energy Kutch Three Limited (AWEKTL) has commissioned a 100 megawatt (MW) wind power plant located at Kutch, in Gujarat.

With the successful commissioning of this plant, the company has an operational wind generation capacity of

The commissioning was Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) said in a statement adding that this is the fifth project commissioned before

schedule by the company over the past 12 months.

The plant has Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the SECI at Rs 2.82/kwh. AGEL has a total renewable

capacity of 14,815 MW including 11,470 MW that have been awarded and are at different stages of implementation. Like all its other assets, the newly commissioned plant would be managed by the Adani Group's 'Intelligent Energy Network Operation AGEL complete centralized visibility and an ability to manage its renewables assets on a pan India basis.

Google unveils \$25 mn grant for NGOs, social enterprises

with the International

Standardization (ISO) for

creation of a dedicated

technical committee for

AYUSH/ traditional medi-

Organization

cine systems.

PNS NEW DELHI

Google.org, the philanthropic arm of the tech giant, on Monday said it will provide USD 25 million in grants to non-profits and social enterprises globally, including in India, that are working on empowering girls and women.

The company, which has committed support one million rural women entrepreneurs in India, also stated that its Internet Saathi digital literacy training programme has benefitted over 30 million women across the country.

"In India, in the past few years, we have invested more than USD 40 million alongside the entrepreneurs, the innovators, the non-profits who are doing amazing work. We announced another million dollar initiative building on that work in particularly to help getting digital skills to those who are most vulnerable, including women," Jacquelline Fuller, Vice President at Google President of Google.org said in a virtual briefing.

She added that one of the first initiatives under that effort is led by the NASSCOM



Foundation, wherein the organisation is getting a USD 500,000 grant from Google.org to support one lakh women agri workers.

(Nasscom Foundation) are going to reach one lakh women farmers and provide digital skills and financial literacy. Learning these skills has been shown to increase their incomes by about 30 per cent," she said.

Talking about the new USD 25 million grant, Fuller said al impact challenge aimed at non-profit organisations that are working towards helping women and

"We are providing USD 25 million, it's an open call. So any non-profit or social enterprise anywhere around the world can apply. And the winners will get funding up to USD 2 million per organisation. We're also going to provide Googlers, so there'll be expertise, whether that's in software engineering or user experience, or even marketing to come alongside and help bring these projects to fruition," she said.

Fuller noted that while more and more women are represented in the workplace, the COVID-19 pandemic has had gender-regressive effects.



500 women drivers in its EV fleet

PNS MUMBAI

COGOS Technologies plans to employ and train 500 women drivers in its electric vehicle fleet by the end of this year.

Announcing the plan on the International Women's Day on Monday, the company said it has already trained and inducted as many as 50 women on a pilot basis as part of the initiative.

"We understand the immense potential of women in the workspace to ourselves to aid in their process of achieving their full potential.



relief package.

data for February.

COGOS to train

Logistics services startup

MONEY MATTERS

Gold prices down Rs 122, silver up Rs 587



Gold prices on Monday fell by Rs 122 to Rs 44,114 per 10 grams in the national capital, in line with weak international market trend, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at Rs 44,236 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. Silver, on the other hand,

rose by Rs 587 to Rs 65,534 per kg as compared to the previous close of Rs 64,947 per kg. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Spot prices for 24 karat gold at Delhi fell Rs 122 in line with weak in COMEX (New York-based commodities exchange) gold prices." In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,699 an ounce and silver was however up at USD 25.31 an ounce.

Rupee slumps by 23 paise to 73.25 against US dollar



Monday closed down by 23 paise at 73.25 (provisional) dollar as rising crude oil prices and strengthening of the American currency in the overseas market weighed on

investor sentiment. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 73.13 against the greenback and witnessed an intraday high of 73.29 and a low of 72.93. It finally ended at 73.25 against the American currency, registering a fall of 23 paise over its previous closing. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 73.02 against the American currency.

FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Non-structural measures should be given priority

A Niti Aayog report has suggested effective and long-lasting strategies for flood control and management that involve structural and non-structural measures along with the use of modern technologies. The report stressed on

adopting less expensive nonstructural measures like flood forecasting, flood plain zoning, flood proofing to accommodate high spat of water in majority of the places.

The report of the committee constituted for Formulation of Management Works in Entire



Country and River Management Activities and Works Related to Border Areas (2021–26) further said the room of the river should be provided by taking up the measures like creating wet-

lands, lakes and check dams. help of some scalable models.

The committee, headed by Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar, proposed National Water Model for India which can be built with the

Delhi's economy estimated to contract by 3.9% PNS NEW DELHI

The economy of Delhi is estimated to contract by 3.92 per cent in the current financial year, according to Delhi Economic Survey 2020-

In real terms, the contraction in Delhi's gross state domestic product (GSDP) is expected at 5.68 per cent in 2020-21 compared to contraction of 8 per cent at national level, said the report.

The per capita income also went down from Rs 3.76 lakh in 2019-20 to Rs 3.54 lakh in the current fiscal year.

'50% account holders under PMJDY women'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry on Monday said about 55 per cent of the total account holders under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), a flagship scheme of the government to promote financial inclusion, are women.

Sharing details of various schemes with special provisions for the emancipation of women on the occasion of International Women's Day, the ministry said these plans have financially empowered women to lead a better life and chase their dreams of being an entrepreneur.

As of February 24, 2021, 23.21 crore accounts, out of the total 41.93 crore accounts



opened under the PMJDY scheme, belong to women account holders, the ministry said in a statement.

With regard to the PMMY, it said, about 68 per cent or 19.04 crore accounts with an amount of Rs 6.36 lakh crore (as of February 26, 2021) have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under the scheme since its inception.

Agency quoted an anonymous

official in the Ministry of

Energy as saying that a drone

flew in from the sea and struck

an oil storage site in Ras

Tunura, the port run by Saudi

Arabia's state oil company,

Aramco.

Nokia profit dips as it sees challenges in US mkt for 5G



SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd (SBI Card) on Monday said it plans to raise up to Rs 2.000 crore through the issuance of debt securities in one or more tranches. A meeting of the board of directors of the company is scheduled to be held on Friday (March 12) to consider and approve raising of funds by way of issuance

of non-convertible debentures, aggregating to Rs 2,000 crore, SBI Card said in a regulatory filing. The funds will be raised in one or more tranches over a period of time, it said. Stocks of SBI Card were trading at Rs 1,068.15 apiece on BSE, up 0.93 per cent from its previous close.

Tata shareholders approve hiving off PV biz into new entity



ata Motors on Monday said its shareholders have approved hiving off its passenger vehicles business into a separate entity. On March 5, the shareholders of the compa ny voted to consider and

approve the transfer of the passenger vehicles business unit to TML Business Analytics Services Ltd as a going concern on a slump sale basis for a lump sum consideration. The company had said that its passenger vehicles business has been valued at Rs 9,417 crore. In a regulatory filing, Tata Motors said total 2,15,41,38,392 votes were polled out of which 2.15.32.39.294 were in favour of the resolution, translating into 99.958 per cent of the total votes, while 8,99,098 votes (0.042 per cent) were against. In terms of public institutional shareholders, total 68,86,10,054 votes were polled with all of them in favour and none against the resolution

5 courts confirm arbitration award

Courts in five countries including the US and the UK have given recognition to an arbitration award that asked India to return USD 1.4 billion to Cairn Energy plc - a step that now opens the possibility of the British firm seizing Indian assets in those countries if New Delhi does not pay, sources said.

Cairn Energy had moved courts in nine countries to enforce its USD 1.4 billion arbitral award against India, which the company won after a dispute with the

over a retroactively applied capital gains tax.

Of these, the December 21 award from a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Netherlands has been recognised and confirmed by courts in the US, the UK, Netherlands, Canada and France, three people with knowledge of the matter

Cairn has started the process to register the award in Singapore, Japan, the United Arab Emirates and Cayman Islands, they said.

Oil prices surge after attack on Saudi oil site

Oil prices pressed higher Monday after strikes on major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, shook energy markets already rattled by a decision by oil producers last week to not lift out-

Brent crude, the international standard, surpassed \$70 per barrel for the first time in over a year, gaining \$1.14 to \$70.47 a barrel. It surged \$2.62 on Friday.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil added \$1.10 to \$67.19 per barrel, up 1.7%, falling back from bigger gains earlier in the day. It jumped \$2.26 to \$66.09 per barrel on Friday.

Prices have been recovering



plunging last year with the onset of the pandemic.

The devastating winter freeze that hit Texas and other parts of the southern United States last month knocked out production of roughly 4 million barrels per day of U.S. oil, pushing prices above \$60 a bar-

Last week, with oil prices ris-

expecting the OPEC cartel and its allies to lift more restrictions and let the oil flow more freely. But OPEC agreed to leave most restrictions in place, despite growing demand. The strikes on Saudi sites

have increased in frequency and precision in recent weeks, raising concerns about Saudi Arabia's air defenses and the expanding capabilities of the Iran-backed rebels across the border in Yemen.

A Saudi-led coalition launched an air campaign on war-torn Yemen's capital and on other provinces Sunday in retaliation for missile and drone attacks on Saudi Arabia that were claimed by the

Iranian-backed rebels

It claimed the strike did not cause any damage. Saudi Aramco, the kingdom's oil giant that now has a sliver of its worth traded publicly on the stock market, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Ministry of Energy denounced the strike as "an act of sabotage" targeting not only Saudi Arabia "but also the security and stability of energy supplies to the world."

the pioneer erabad

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> > Tuesday March 9, 2021

Here's an interesting peek into the investing choices of women investors from Hyderabad and Telangana

recent survey conducted to understand the investing habits of Indian women investors found that even after 70 years of our independence,

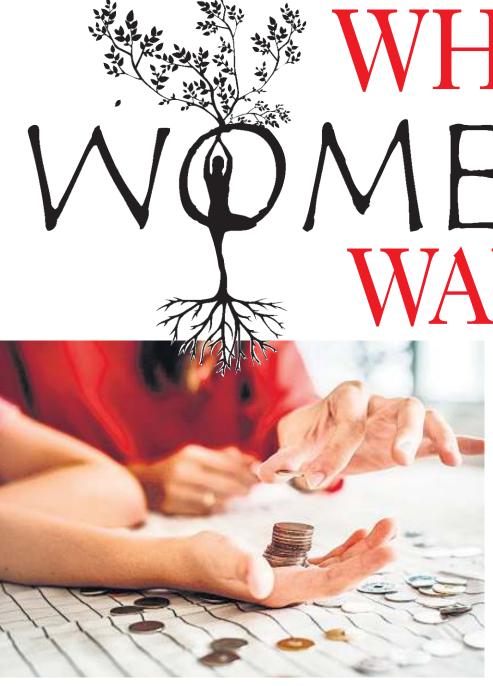
70 years of our independence, women's participation in the decision making regarding investing is very low.

In the run-up to International Women's Day on March 8, 2021, the survey by Groww, an investment platform, was sent to more than 2.5 lakh women and fetched more than 28,000 responses over three days. Of the total respondents, 4.7% were from Telangana, and 4% were from Hyderabad alone. The study's objective was to understand the qualitative aspects of women's investing habits, their goals, and how they view the process of wealth creation in general. On the results, Lalit Keshre, CEO, Groww said that while

the results weren't satisfactory, there is hope. "The encouraging insight from the survey is that among the women who are investing, a majority of them take their own decisions. Even though many of them discuss their financial choices with their families or partners, the final decisions are their own. It's a remarkable shift from preconceived notions that men were the primary decisionmakers even when it comes to

managing women's wealth."
He hopes to reflect the shift in investment preferences, goals, mindsets, and roadblocks for women investors with this urvey. The survey also cap tured how age, income, geography impact these differences."

He added, "What's even more encouraging is that women in the 18-25 age group have emerged as our most independent cohort, where



almost 60% of women in this age group say that they make the ultimate decision on their investments. To encourage more women to invest, on the occasion of International Women's Day, we are introduc-ing Groww Women's Week wherein we'll charge zero brokerage for women investors from March 8 to March 15." Here's a snapshot of the

investment behaviour of women investors from Telangana.

Preferred investment

Amongst all other states, the al fund investors were from Telangana, with almost 88% choosing it as one of their preferred investment options. Stocks was chosen by 52.99% women. While the preference for equity-related investments

is evident, a sizable percentage also invested in traditional asset classes like FD (32%) and gold (24%). Women investors hailing from Telangana gave the highest preference to investments in small saving schemes (12.7%) compared to women from other states. Around 4.48% of women from Telangana are also investing in cryptocurrencies.

Investing to support personal goals

The survey found that investors from Telangana placed the highest importance on personal goals, with as high as 49% investing to achieve them. The second popular goal that women are investing towards, is to support their family (43%). Telangana's women investors are also making early retirement and travelling a priority with 23% and 21 % investing towards these goals respectively.

Independent decision-

Compared to all other states, the women of Telangana emerged as the most independent when it comes to making financial decisions. While 44.78% stated that they consult their friends and families, the ultimate decision making power when it comes to investing lies with them. Around 23.88% said that they are the sole decision-makers on matters related to investing.

The insights reveal that not nly are women investing witl a vision but are also approaching their investments with a balanced and goal-oriented mindset. They are more independent in their decision making and are aware of the riskreturn tradeoffs to achieve their

financial goals.
This shows that not only are women investing with a vision but are also approaching their investments with a balanced and goal-oriented mindset.
They are more independent in their decision making and are aware of the risk-return tradeoffs to achieve their financial

What's holding women back?

On the national level, the survey also captured insights from about 2000 women who do not invest. Of these, 49% stated that lack of knowledge is their main reason for not investing. Further, 32% said that they don't have enough savings to invest.13% of women also felt apprehensive about losing their money in the market. It indeed calls for further awareness and education of women on the importance of investing in building long term wealth.

Owing to the awareness around financial products and the availability of apps that allow people to invest with ease, there has been increased participation from all genders and income groups. In this survey, 25% of women stated that vey, 25% of women stated that consuming financial content online made them take the first step towards investing, and 22% said investment apps like Groww drove them to begin

their investment journey.
Women are increasingly considering investments in equities as an opportunity to build wealth in the long term to meet their personal and financial goals. Investing apps like Groww that offer hassle-free investing and educational resources have been among the most prominent allies in increasing women's participation in investing.

Celebrating the strength of women

n International Women's Day, Amazon Prime Video celebrated the strength of women by unveiling the first look of their untitled upcoming original series star-ring Sonakshi Sinha in the

The first look features the actor playing a tough cop in what will be her digital debut. The series also features Vijay Varma, Gulshan Devaiah and

Sohum Shah. The series is produced by Executive producers Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar along with Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti.

Speaking of the series, director Reema Kagti reveals, "Sonakshi is an actor with the ability to seamlessly fit into every character she plays. She plays a tough cop in the series, and it is a delight to see her sink her teeth into the skin of the character.'



udio has never gone out of vogue as citizens todav are able to learn on the move. With the utility of audio going beyond radio services and entering into the digital realm, people are provided new learning opportunities. Be it news, entertainment or educational information, audio is converting anytime into learning time, considering that accessibility has become ubiquitous and affordable. Since radio, the subsequent advancements in technology moved the audience towards television and personal computers for their everyday needs. More importantly, education and learning through the internet began to take shape in the early 2000s, laying the foundations for an EdTech

industry. Due to the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic, students, schools, training institutions, and colleges now view learning outcomes through a different lens. Within a span of a year, e-learning platforms have dis-rupted the ecosystem. However, as a developing

nation, there are several challenges that we need to cope with. For instance, all the major e-learning plat-forms require high-quality video streaming and internet connectivity so that users are able to avail the resources they have to offer. Unfortunately, several corners of India are vet to see the infrastructure that can present high-bandwidth content for all. Beyond this, people across generations are suffering from various

health effects on account of

excessive screen times as school lectures and live interactions are primarily in the video format. In fact, recent reports sug-

gest that the current average screen time every week is around 6.9 hours, on account of the ample time available during the pandemic. Indians access their internet mostly through their smartphones, and within a year, it has increased by 25 per cent, from 4.9 hours to 6.9 hours from April 2020 onwards. Such trends do not indicate a healthy precedent, and audio could prove to a suitable hands-free alternative. Even for education, video creation and development are arduous processes that require time and effort to achieve quality. We often forget that a majority of competitive exam aspirants hail from tier III, IV cities, and rural areas that lack the resources to afford videobased services. With price constraints and limited access to the latest technologies, the chances of aspirants who wish to crack examinations are hindered. On the bright side, the gap is now being addressed by audio services, through podcasts, audio lectures, and bitesized audio clips on course concepts due to easy production processes and low costs.

Diversity in course offerings and exam

In the last couple of years, we have seen the prolifera-tion of several EdTech apps, delivering different levels of education across all age

Whether you are preparing for government jobs or upskilling to reach greater heights in career, the audio format will continue to influence learning. shares Dushyantt Kohli

groups. Similarly, several audio-based learning apps are offering multiple courses on their platforms, making it ideal for candidates



THE FUTURE

preparing for government exams to be on top in the highly competitive space. Be it courses like current affairs, static GK, History or English. They are delivered by subject matter experts in the audio format, which helps in sequencing audio content for exam preparation and cracking govern-

ment jobs.

Moreover, some of these apps also have versions that cater to feature phone users, which function on low bandwidths and affordable data packs. It makes it easier for users to download or stream content while consuming far lesser data as compared to video services. In fact, exclusive exam preparation content is avail-

able in vernacular languages like Hindi, Bengali, and others as well, reaching a wider audience beyond the big cities.

In addition to this, career coaches and teachers realise the quality, reach and potential of audio-based learning. The students are increasingly expressing a desire to learn from the best, and

short audio content and clips from experts is the preferred format, and it is redefining their approach towards job seeking.

Effectiveness of audiobased learning

Quality learning programmes are often unaffordable even in the realm of digital. Here is where audio is playing a transformative role as it is bringing inexpensive services into the deep corners of the country by merely utilising existing infrastructure. In fact, several players in the podcasting and audio-based educational space are serving millions of students every day, making it an effective medium for consuming good quality

exam preparation content.
The critics often question the efficacy of audio as a medium of learning. They argue that providing both text and audio material for preparation could overwhelm aspirants. However, there is enough evidence from the scientific world that points towards audio's role in improving the cognitive abilities of listeners. The argument is that repetitive listening can lead to better retention of concepts. Analytical reasoning too can be understood through audio, which is contrary to popular notions that audio's role in imparting education is inadequate for attaining

reasoning abilities.
Going by examples from the real world, we can understand how customer care services, doctors and medics, and musicians develop an ear for sound, structure, and form.

Similarly, even in audio-based learning, it becomes easier by replaying audio files and practising concepts by visualisation. This trend is identifiable in India as more and more users are consuming audio content in their native languages, ensuring better retention.

Reasons for audio's resurgence and how the future looks

One of the most impressive aspects of audio that has only been rediscovered during the pandemic is the positive effect of passive listening. Since the lockdown and COVID-19 restrictions were imposed, a majority of citizens remained indoors, relying on all the tools at their disposal to bring their lives back to normal. Audiostreaming services and apps underwent astounding growth, thanks to the increase in content consumption by users while staying home.

It further justifies the fact that people feel comfortable carrying out their daily chores and listen passively to educational content, thereby,

saving precious time. Further to this, it is enabling the conversion of non-study time into learning time, due to hands-free devices that play audio files through voice commands.Therefore, whether a person is preparing for government jobs or upskilling to reach greater heights in their career, the audio will continue to influence learning, and impact even future generations. (The writer is the COO of

Khabri.)

what's brewing?











fashion show was an enthralling affair at the HITEX Exhibition centre.

Actresses Shraddha Das, Zoya Mirza and Vinali Bhatnagar, Miss India – East-2017 walked the ramps along with top models in the latest fashion wears put together by the 9 excellent designers from the city.

Photos by SV Chary







ARCHIE



Nikitha and Sravanthi





CALVIN AND HOBBES



REALITY CHECK





CROSSWORD



GARFIELD

NANCY

THANKS FOR SHARING THAT STORY ABOUT NANCY AND SLUGGO-I COULP TELL THAT SLUGGO WAS A LOYAL KIND OF KID





SOMEDAY -- MAYBE YOU'LL THINK THAT ABOUT ME

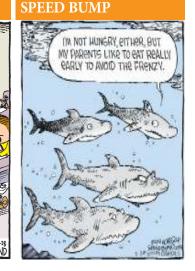
YES - SLUGGO CAN BE

ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES, BUT HE'D TAKE ON AN ARMY FOR A FRIEND...ESPECIALLY HIS BEST GIRL!



"LAZY AND A LITTLE ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES"? YOU'VE GOT

HAVEN'T YOU HANDED IN YOUR POETRY HOMEWORK I HAVE NO EXPLANATION NO RHYME OR REASON



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moon, planets and stars

DOWN

ACROSS

 People in jail 6 The centre of your eye

7 Have a quarrel

10 Flat dishes

12 Mistakes

9 Things to play with

14 The part along the side

or end of something

18 Flour is made from this 19 Scientific study of the sun,

17 A boat with sails

2 Answer 3 A fine glossy fabric

6 Mugs and other things

made of baked clay

8 The least difficult

13 Speed competitions 15 Something you imagine

16 A brother or sister the

same age as you

SOLUTION

while asleep

11 Author







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4 Almost 5 Correct

BIGG BOSS FAME HARIKA **APPOINTED TELANGANA TOURISM**

AMBASSADOR n some great news for fans of *Bigg Boss* Telugu 4 contestant and YouTuber Alekhya Harika, the Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation (TSTDC)

appointed her as its brand ambassador. The appointment was made by TSTDC Chairman Uppala Srinivas Gupta on the occasion of International Women's Day Celebrations.

The official Twitter handle of the TSTDC announced the development and said, "Uppal Srinivas Gupta,



Chairman of Telangana State Tourism Development corporation appointed Alekhya Harika as the new brand ambassador for TSTDC." Uppala Srinivas said, "Appointed our Telangana Mahila, *Bigg Boss* fame, Dethadi Alekhya Harika garu as Telangana State Tourism 'Brand Ambassador' (sic)."

He added, "All the very

best Harika. I am sure that

you will do the justice to the role."

Uppala Srinivas, following International Women's Day celebrations at the TSTDC office, said that from now onwards, Telangana Tourism staff would wear handloom clothes to promote and sup-port handloom weavers in the state. The YouTuber's services would be used by TSTDC to promote tourism in Telangana on different platforms.

Alekhya Harika was one of the top five contestants in season four of Bigg Boss Telugu and the first one to be eliminated from the race in the top five. Harika entered the Bigg Boss house from the fame that she attained through her YouTube channel 'Dethadi', backed by Tamada

She has about 1.6 million subscribers. Alekya garnered fans on social media for her use of the Telangana dialect.

'I'M ENJOYING EXPLORING VARIOUS GENRES, CHARACTERS'

SHREYA SRIKONDA

ctor Naveen Chandra is making news all over for his intense character in Mosagallu, set to release on March 19.
He opens up to share details about the experience of such a big role, saying "I've always wanted to be part of a good story. After struggling for so many years, I've finally gotten to act in scripts written for me and it's a good feeling." Speaking about the movie *Mosagallu*, he exclaims that he was shocked when he heard about the level of the huge scam. "I had an idea about the scam when the news was out, but I hadn't really paid attention to it. When I heard the script I learnt about the scam that involved 2,500-2,800 crores of money, all carried out by two siblings and a cousin. I play the role of the cousin to the siblings played by Kajol and Vishnu. The cousin character can do anything
— he solves the siblings' problems with the systems, police and anything else." He mentions that the character he plays is wild and unexpected, as a man addicted to drugs and is a petty

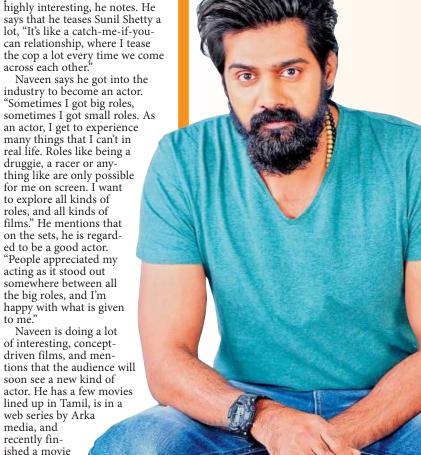
After being approached by the siblings about the scam, he takes it to the next level by assuring them that he would take care of the police, loopholes and every-thing. In his own words, Naveen calls his role a "toxic masculine" character. He mentions how he prepared for the role of a drug addict, saying "His vice is a part of his life, he partakes daily and that becomes normal for him. This nature of his creates a lot of drama in the movie."

He mentions that this could be the loudest role he's done so far. "Only Vishnu's character can control mine, and many times Kajal was taken aback. Director Jeff didn't monitor me so as to get natural reactions to my charter, so Kajal and other actors would get scared at the aggressive scenes." He mentions he didn't try to do any method acting and would go with the flow. The actor talks about how kids would turn to easy ways of making money when they aren't provided with viable employment opportunities. He says the siblings in the movie are affected by their past, and hence turn to crime to lead an amazing, luxu-

rious rest of their life. The American and Indian government's confusion and how the police deal with the scammers is highly interesting, he notes. He says that he teases Sunil Shetty a lot, "It's like a catch-me-if-you-

industry to become an actor. an actor, I get to experience many things that I can't in real life. Roles like being a druggie, a racer or anything like are only possible for me on screen. I want to explore all kinds of roles, and all kinds of films." He mentions that on the sets, he is regarded to be a good actor. "People appreciated my acting as it stood out somewhere between all the big roles, and I'm happy with what is given to me." Naveen is doing a lot

media, and recently finished a movie with Avika Gor. His 2021 seems to be very busy, as he mentions he's been working 6-11 every day. He says, "The success rate of the Telugu film industry in India is big, and there's more competition with all the actors and filmmakers doing a great



iob. The healthy competition is great!" He is looking to make a name for himself as a good actor and says his dream

role

Only Vishnu's character can control mine, and many a time, Kajal was taken aback. Director Jeff didn't monitor me so as to get natural reactions to my character, so Kajal and other actors would get scared at the aggressive scenes.

SEKHAR KAMMULA GRATEFUL FOR FEMALE COLLEAGUES



irector Sekhar Kammula revealed thanked the women who worked for Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi-starrer Love Story. He penned a long message that reads, "My hearty wishes to all the women colleagues, actresses, and choreographers. who worked in our Film "Love Story". I wish them all a very happy working women's day." (sic) He added, "I specially thank all those women who were part of our Jumba group. They were home makers, mothers and working women. They made lot of sacrifices, gave us time and energy even though film was not their career. They never missed a day even during the corona times. Thanku one and all for your incredible support." (sic) He also said that among the women who worked with him, some are going be directors.

he Sree Vishnu — Raiendra Prasad starrer Gaali Sampath has garnered a lot of curiosity. The film, which has actress Lovely Singh playing the female lead. is set to be an out and out entertainer with hilarious comedy as it features two actors with great comic timing in

the lead roles. With none other than writer-director Anil Ravipudi presenting the film, supervising the direction, and providing screenplay, the expecta-tions have shot up. Anil is known for making commercial entertainers with loads of comedy. But the trailer of Gaali Sampath has an equal dose of comedy and drama. Anil Ravipudi himself stated that the film is about a mute person falling into a fit and the film is all about his survival. Survival thrillers have been tried in other languages, but

this will be the first time the genre makes its way into Telugu cinema.

Directed by Aneesh Krishna and bankrolled by Sahu Garapati under Shine Screens and S Krishna, Gaali Sampath is hitting the screens on March 11 on the eve of Maha Shivratri. At a recent preview of the film, noted producers and directors heaped praises on the team.

Producer Dil Raju said he knew the film would turn out to be interesting right when he heard the story. "The entire story revolves around Rajendra Prasad garu, and his skills need no introduction. Actor Sree Vishnu too, comes with a bag of talent. All his films are proof of him being a great performer. I wish Aneesh all the best, this is a beautiful team, expectations are high."

Anil Ravipudi, who's given his all to the film said, "Sai is my best friend who stood by me through thick and thin.

Gaali Sampath, a mix of comedy and drama: Makers

He played a big role in my success today. I always told him I'll back whatever he ventures into and what better way to turn producer than through a film penned by him? I hope Aneesh will continue to do films like these, and I hope the same with the technicians. When we decided on casting Rajendra Prasad garu as the father, we could see no further than Sree Vishnu to play his son. All of the cast has done a great iob. Just like how every film of mine has been loved to bits, I hope the audience will do the same with this."

Talking about how the film is all about the fun and emotional journey of a father and son, director Aneesh Krishna said, "This film is a

beautiful take on the relationship between a father and son. I'm eternally grateful to Anil garu for bestowing me with this opportunity and trusting me with the film. Rajendra Prasad garu has always kept the set lively with his jokes, I cherish every moment I spent with him. You will see Sree Vishnu in a different light this time. We thank everyone that has come here to support and cheer us."

Calling the film a milestone in his life, veteran actor Dr Rajendra Prasad said that this specific role is one of his most memorable ones that people will remember all his life. "My first opportunity, first film led me this far and I'm thankful for all those.

Sai has written a beauti-

ful story for the audience. I had a blast shooting with Vishnu and Lovely. This film is a special gem in my life."

The producer S.Krishna said that Rajendra Prasad was the inspiration for him to write and direct this small story. He spoke about Anil Ravipudi's contribution to the filmmaking process, saying he was present through out the journey. He relayed his thanks to Harish Peddi and Saahu Garipati. "Anish is my friend, he gave extraordinary music for the film. Tammiraju's editing is crisp and Vishnu gave a fantastic performance," he gushed about his team. He spoke about the different con-

cept of the movie, saying

certain elements are sure

to leave the audience teary-eyed. He asked for everyone's blessings to make the film a success.

Speaking about the film and his role, actor Vishnu said, "Remember, in your time of waiting, people say the best is on its way? For me, this film is that. I was excited to share screen space with Rajendra Prasad garu. Despite COVID, he shot the film, following all protocols. I took no formal training in acting, but through this film, I trained under the best and it'll show in my work. People will worship him for his acting during the climax scene, that's how amazing a job he's done."

Energetic star Ram Pothineni was the special guest at the preview. He congratulated and praised the team of Gaali Sampath. He went to the extent of saying the film, including actor Rajendra Prasad, deserve awards.



Dhawan, Rahul battle to partner Rohit Mitali & Co aim to bounce back

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

¬he Indian team management faces a problem of plenty going into the five T20 Internationals against England, an assignment which marks the beginning of the side's build-up to this year's T20 World Cup at home.

There are 19 players available for selection and with two in contention for each slot, the XI for the five games, starting here on Friday, will be an indication to how head coach Ravi Shastri, captain Virat Kohli and bowling coach Bharat Arun are looking at the next six to seven months for the shortest format.

Will they look for a settled combination to first clinch the series and then experiment or will they field absolute rookies in the squad looking at the bigger picture?

For a team that's so closely followed, the result does matter and that's why one can expect a settled first eleven for the first three games since all matches are at the same venue on similar kind of tracks.

The roaring comeback of Rishabh Pant will lead to a lot of interesting developments at the top of the order.

Pant's inclusion means that KL Rahul, who till a few months back was the first choice keeper-opener, is unlikely to don the big gloves.

Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma were a settled white ball opening pair till recently but Rahul's emergence as a potent white ball specialist has spiced up the competition.

Dhawan recently had a score of 150 odd in the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Delhi and when it comes to Rohit, there's nothing to be discussed. So where does the team manage-

ment fit in Rahul, who has been a successful IPL opener? Will he be slotted in the middle-order as Dhawan's game is not suited to batting lower

These are two pertinent questions and in the answer, will be a follow-up



With skipper Kohli himself coming in at No 3 and two game-changers like Pant and all-rounder Hardik Pandya expected to play the big shots at Nos 5 and 6, where does it ideally leave Rahul?

The only place he can be slotted is No 4 but Shreyas Iyer and Suryakumar Yadav are also jostling for face Eng in Test PTI MUMBAI BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Monday announced that the Indian women's team will be pitted against England in a one-off Test match, which will be held later this The last Test match that Mithali Raj and her team played was against South Africa women at Mysuru in December, 2014 and it will be another traditional format game after six

Currently, the 'Women in Blue' are playing the five-match ODI series against South Africa in Lucknow after almost 12 months of COVID-19 enforced break. This series will be fol-

lowed by a T20 series.

India Women to

Shah took to Twitter to make the announcement on the International Women's Day.

"On the occasion of International Womens Day, I'm pleased to announce that TeamIndia, @BCCIWomen will play a one-off Test match against @ECB_cricket later this year. The "women in blue" will be donning the whites again," tweeted Shah. However, Shah did not announce

the venue of the Test on the occasion but it is expected to happen during the women's team tour of UK and tentatively some time in June or July.

The women's team is coached by former India all-rounder WV Raman.

Similarly, in the pace department, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, once upon a time India's best white ball exponent, is coming back after a long lay-off and will be engaged in a two-way fight with Deepak Chahar and Shardul Thakur.

For Bhuvneshwar, his experience and being a better bowler at the death compared to Chahar holds him in good stead but he hasn't played a lot of cricket save a few Mushtaq Ali

Ditto for Chahar, a potent outswing bowler but more of a onetrick pony with lack of variations during the back-10.

Shardul is a crafty bowler who can swing it at brisk pace and among the three can use the long handle to the

Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel are the three spinners expected to feature in the playing XI on the sluggish Motera

In another three-way fight, Thangarasu Natarajan, with his variation of yorkers, stands a better chance to start off compared to Navdeep Saini.

Two players, who will only get a look-in if someone is injured or forcefully rested are Ishan Kishan and Rahul Tewatia as the two simply can't be fitted anywhere.

In all, there are too many good players and very little space to fit all of them with three sure-shot picks — Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah already resting or recuperating from injury.

Once they comeback, it will be a bigger selection headache for the management but one that they won't

Arusty Indian women's cricket team will be seeking some rhythm in the second ODI against South Africa here on Tuesday after being out-played by the visitors in the series-opener.

Though captain Mithali Raj and her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur had insisted that rustiness won't be an issue in their first series in 12 months, India clearly looked a side which had not played for a long time in the opener of the five-match series on Sunday.

A better prepared South Africa, on the other hand, were clinical and will be hard to beat in the coming games.

After the game, Kaur realised the players needed some time to gel as a unit. Barring Kaur, Raj and Deepti Sharma to a certain extent, none of the batters could apply themselves on a decent batting surface.

A lot of them were guilty of poor shot selection as pointed out by Kaur after the game. The spinners, who

are traditionally consid-India's ered strength, hardly troubled the South African duo of Lizelle Lee and 21vear-old Laura Wolvaardt, who put up the highest ever opening wicket stand against India to run away with the

some positives, however, such as Raj scoring a gritty half-century and pacer Jhulan Goswami showing she is still among the best in the business. Both the veterans were playing their first game since November 2019.

Kaur too looked good in her 100th ODI but would have liked to convert the start into a big score.

Opener Smriti Mandhana struck three delightful fours before falling to a loose shot and would be backing herself to bat long on Tuesday.

Few of them got starts but couldn't convert. The bowlers need to be more consistent with lines and lengths, maybe they weren't consistent because they're coming back after a long break," Raj acknowledged after the match in which India could post only 177 that South Africa chase down in just 40.1 overs.

Pacer Monica Patel was handed her debut on Sunday and more caps can be handed out in the second game with the management keeping one eye on preparations for the World Cup next year.

Pulling off one back against South Africa seems like a daunting task considering the way they played in the open-

er. They looked a team high on confidence havblanked ing blanked Pakistan at home recently.

Their pace attack led by Shabnim Ismail was impressive and Indians will have to find a way

LAPORTA BACK AS PRESIDENT

MADRID: The president of Barcelona when Lionel Messi began playing in Spain will also be in charge when the club tries to convince the star to stay. Joan Laporta was elected Barcelona president again on Sunday, inheriting a club in crisis and facing daunting problems that include a huge debt and the possible departure of Messi when his contract finishes at the end of the season. "The fact that the best player in the world came to vote today, along with his son, is proof that Leo loves Barça, Laporta said, "Together we will convince him to stay," Laporta defeated businessman Victor Font and longtime board member Toni Freixa, the other two candidates who were among the more than 110,000 members eligible to

SPURS BEATS PALACE 4-1

LONDON: Gareth Bale and Harry Kane both scored twice to help Tottenham make it three PL wins in a row and boost its top-four hopes after a 4-1 victory against Crystal Palace. The duo combined twice with Kane the architect for both goals by Bale before the England captain hit a wonder strike and then created history with another in the 76th minute. Son Heung-min assisted Kane's second and it was their 14th goal combination in the PL this season to beat the previous record of 13 set by Alan Shearer and Chris Sutton for Blackburn in the

RUBLEV REIGNS IN ROTTERDAM

ROTTERDAM: Andrey Rublev extended his phenomenal winning run at ATP 500 events to 20 matches on Sunday when he defeated Marton Fucsovics 7-6(4), 6-4 to win the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament. The World No. 8 also stretched his winning streak in ATP Tour championship matches to seven victories. Rublev saved all four break points he faced to capture his fourth straight title at ATP 500level after one hour and 50 minutes

MANIKA, SATHIYAN IN 2ND ROUND **DOHA:** India's Manika Batra and Sathiyan Gnanasekaran

on Monday went through to the second round of the WTT Star Contender table tennis tournament in Doha. Manika, ranked 63 in women's singles, beat Chinese Taipei's Hsien-Tzy Cheng 3-0. Manika held her own to beat her opponent in straight sets 11-5, 11-9, 11-9. The 2018 Asian Games bronze medallist will face Japanese world No. 3 Mima Ito in her round of 16 match on Tuesday. Meanwhile, world No. 37 Gnanasekaran had a more tricky encounter against France's 40th ranked Emmanuel Lebesson, winning the match 3-2. Gnanasekaran lost the first two games but then came back to take the match 9-11, 7-11, 11-7, 11-4, 11-4. He will face Japanese world No. 5 Harimoto Tomokazu in the round of 16 on Tuesday

ATANU, TARUN, DEEPIKA IN RECURVE SQUAD

PUNE: Seasoned Atanu Das and Tarundeeep Rai among men and Deepika Kumari in the women's section will headline the Indian recurve archery contingent during this year's Tokyo Olympics. After the final selection trials (Trial 3) at the Army Insitute of Sports in Pune, a six-strong squad which has three male and equal number of female archers was selected for the quadrennial extravaganza. Besides Atanu and Tarundeep, the other archer in the Indian men's team is Pravin Jadhav, while Ankita Bhakat and Komolika Bari complete the women's squad.

INDIA BEAT GREAT BRITAIN 3-2

BELGIUM: Striker Mandeep Singh struck a brace as the Indian men's hockey team eked out a close 3-2 win over Great Britain to end their Europe tour on an unbeaten note here on Monday. Harmanpreet Singh's strike in the very first minute and two goals by Mandeep in the 28th and 59th minutes helped India remain undefeated on the tour. For Great Britain, James Gall (20th) and striker Adam Forsyth (55th) were the goal scorers. The last few minutes was a battle of nerves as both the teams lived up to the billing, but it was Mandeep who rose to the occasion as his late strike helped India cap off their first assignment of 2021 with a 3-2 win

Tndia will play their inaugural against New Zealand at Stadium from June 18-22, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly confirmed on Monday.

Ageas Bowl," Ganguly replied to a rv from PT

India qualified for the marquee clash after beating England 3-1 in a just-concluded Test series. Southampton, with its slowish

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

▲World Test Championship final Southampton's Ageas Bowl

Initially, the final was supposed to be held at the Lord's but Southampton, with a five-star facility inside the stadium, will make it easier for both the ICC and the England and Wales Cricket Board to create a bio-bubble for the

WTC final in Southampton: Ganguly track, puts India on even keel with New Zealand as spinners will

If one closely follows the pattern

But when it comes to a three-way

of picking the playing XI, Surya, a sen-

timental favourite, will have to wait for

his turn as Shreyas has done nothing

battle between Rahul, Shreyas and

Surya, the Karnataka man beats the two

toire of strokes and ability to shift gears.

Mumbai boys hollow with his reper-

come into the game at the venue. "I will go for the World Test Championship and hopefully we can get past New Zealand in the final. New Zealand will be there before us and they will play a couple of Test matches (against England)," Ganguly told "India Todav' channel.

He lavished praise on the "Yes, the final will be held at team for its stupendous performance in both the away series against Australia and home against England.

Massive achievement? "Oh yes, specially after what players have gone through to be in



in and day out. It was remarkable. Right from IPL till now. What they have achieved is fantastic," he told the channel.

Ajinkya Rahane, first in Australia and Virat Kohli in England, the head coach, support staff, everybody. (Rahul) Dravid who does a

lot of work behind the scenes with these boys. To see that day in Brisbane was outstanding," he Ganguly believes that Rishabh

Pant is a match winner in the mould of Virender Sehwag, Yuvraj Singh and Mahendra Singh Dhoni. "I have seen him for past two

vears and I have belief in matchwinners. A player, who on his day will win you games. Pant is one

Sydney Test, if he had been have won us that game too. He is like Dhoni, Sehwag and Yuvraj, who can win matches alone," said the former India captain.

He was mighty impressed with Pant's game sense during his under pressure hundred at Motera. ..And look at how he played

in Ahmedabad. His game sense while facing the second new ball against James Anderson, who has bowled well in the series. He counter-attacked and changed it." He also lauded National

Cricket Academy head Rahul Dravid, whose behind the scenes work has helped in creating a solid bench strength.

'That's why I say done a great job. Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur did so well in Australia and we won the final Test without Jasprit Bumrah.

Eng leadership power lies with Morgan: Vaughan | Windies win third

Former captain Michael Vaughan has argued that England Test skipper Joe Root should also get to pick his best players irrespective of ECB's rotation policy, just like limited overs leader Eoin Morgan "gets what he wants".

In a column for Telegraph, Vaughan wrote England fielded a weakened team in the four Tests against India with the likes of Jos Buttler and Moeen Ali returning home in the middle of the series only to be back for the limited overs leg of the tour.

"It is very clear where the leadership power lies in English cricket - it is with Eoin Morgan and not Joe Root.

"I am pretty sure that Morgan went to the selectors and Ashley Giles and said he wanted his best team at all times this year in Twenty20, so he could build for the World Cup in



India in October. He has his wish," the Ashes winning skipper wrote.

"I understand rotation. Nobody argues against the fact players need breaks from Covid bubbles but the frustration for me as a lover of the game's longest format is why has our Test team been weakened this winter, yet the Twenty20 side is at full strength? "When you win a World Cup as captain you are bombproof. I experienced it

when I won the Ashes. Do you think Ed Smith is going to say 'no' to Morgan? No chance,' Vaughan said referring to England's World Cup triumph in 2019 under Morgan's leader-

ship.
Vaughan fears that Morgan being too powerful could end up harming English cricket.

"But it is dangerous for so much power to be invested in one person because it is rare they see the bigger picture. As much as he is a brilliant captain, it is wrong for Morgan to always get what he wants because understandably he will prioritise what is good for his team, and inevitably that will be at the

expense of something else. "But at some point the management around him - Giles and Tom Harrison - have to take into account what is right for all England sides, not just one format, and level up the balance of

T20I, seal series

 ${F}^{abian}$ Allen hit three mighty sixes in the 19th over to help the West Indies to a series-clinching, three-wicket win over Sri

Lanka in the third Twenty20 international. Chasing Sri Lanka's modest 131-4, the West Indies were again constrained by Sri Lanka's spin attack and came to the 18th over at 105-7, needing 27 runs from 18 balls.

Captain Jason Holder, cool and with a plan in mind, blocked out the 18th over, the ast from dangerous spinner Wanindudu Hasaranga, save for a six from a free hit which helped break the mounting tension. With 20 runs needed from the last two

overs, Allen hit sixes from the first, third and last balls of the 19th over from Akila Dananjaya to get the West Indies home with an over to spare to clinch the series 2-1.

Allen hit 21 runs from six balls and also took 1-13 from four overs to earn player-ofthe-match honors. He said there was no panic in the West Indies dressing room, even when it's biggest hitters failed to fire. Sri Lanka chose to bat on winning the toss on Sunday.

Bajrang will now be back in the

"I am looking for a training stint

national camp but wants to train

outside before the Asian champi-

onship, scheduled to be held in

abroad. Let's see if it happens because restrictions are back in

Europe because of rising virus

cases. Travelling is not easy these

Kazakhstan from April 9 to 11.

DP, Samarth's another hundred takes K'taka in semis



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young opener Devdutt Padikkal sent a strong message to the national selectors before England ODIs as he slammed his fourth consecutive List A ton as Karnataka beat Kerala by 80 runs in a quarter-final game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Monday.

Karnataka rode on skipper Ravikumar Samarth's knock of 192 off 158 balls and a strokefilled 101 by 20-year-old lefthanded Padikkal (off 119 balls) to post an imposing 338/3 and then bundled out the opposition for 258. Kerala's decision to put Karnataka into bat backfired badly, as Samarth and Padikkal toyed with their attack with a massive 249-run partnership for the first wicket.

He completed his century in 112 balls and was aggressive right from the start, while Padikkal hammered 10 bound-

aries and two maximums. It was a Samarth-Padikkal show as Karnataka were going strong at 196/0 after 35 overs duck.

having laid the foundation for a mammoth total.

While Padikkal continued his fabulous show in the national ODI tournament and in the process scored his 4th consecutive List A century and became the first Indian to do so, Samarth surpassed veteran Wasim Jaffer's unbeaten 170 to register the highest score in a ⁷ijay Hazare knock-out match.

For Kerala, right-arm medium pacer Basil NP (3/57) was the pick of the bowlers, while others had an off-day.

GUJARAT IN SEMIS

Skipper Priyank Panchal's stroke-filled 134 and an equally impressive show from the bowlers set up Gujarat's massive 117-run win over Andhra in the second quarter-final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Gujarat rode on Panchal's 134 to post a competitive 299 for 7 and then bundled out the opposition for 182, to make it to the semi-final. India Test star and Andhra captain Hanuma Vihari was out for a five-ball

Olympic-bound Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia pulled off a two-pointer in the last 30 seconds of the Gold medal bout to defend his title at the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event, a result that propelled him back to world numper one rank.

Up against Mongolia's Tulga Tumur Ochir, Bajrang was trailing 0-2 till the final moments of the 65kg final but managed to level the scores, 30 seconds from the final whistle. Since the last scoring point

came from the Indian, he was declared the winner on criteria on Sunday night. Bajrang's leg defence seemed to be a particularly improved aspect of

forced by the coronavirus pan-The 27-year-old though

said he needs to work more on his defence as he is eyeing a medal at the Tokyo Games. "I found that my leg

defence has improved compared to where it was before the break. I have got better but it still needs more work. I also need to be better on my attacking moves," Bajrang told PTI.

Asked about his strug-Asked about his strug-le in the final against the Mongolian, one of the gle in the final against the three men's Indian wrestlers to have quali-

said it indeed was tough. "Look, the 65kg category is extremely competitive. The Mongolian has qualified for the Tokyo Games. He is not a weak opponent. All the wrestlers in this category have the same aim of

doing well in days. You have to fill a lot of forms, download apps, fill too much infor-Tokyo, so all are tough and we mation." are all almost at same level," he said. "It is such a sport, that you go up and

Bajrang was placed second in the rankings before the event and is now on top of the table in the 65kg category with 14 points. down. I am just glad

The fresh rankings are based on results of only this tournament that I am back to the which means that Gold-medallists mat and competing," get the top spot.