



**VOTE FOR CAR**

JAI TELANGANA!

JAI JAI TELANGANA!!

## VOTE FOR TRS FOR CONTINUED PROGRESS

HYDERABAD DEVELOPMENT REPORT

**Rs. 67,149 Crores Spent for City Development**



### FREE DRINKING WATER

20,000 Litres tap water free for every house from December



### DOUBLE BED ROOM HOUSES

One Lakh Double Bed Room Houses to fulfil the dreams of every poor person



### 24 HOUR POWER SUPPLY

We are providing 24 hr power supply to domestic users and Industries



### BASTI DAWAKHANA

Best Free Medical Services to People in 350 Basti Dawakhana



### STRATEGIC ROAD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Construction of new roads, Flyovers Junctions Development through SRDP Permanent solution to Traffic Problems



### GREEN HYDERABAD

Development of 934 Parks, Theme Parks, Colony Parks etc Under Green Hyderabad



### BEST LAW AND ORDER

Vigil with 5 Lakh CC Cameras Police Command Control Center



### BRAND HYDERABAD

Huge Flow of Investments, Employment to lakhs of people



### HYDERABAD METRO RAIL

Public Transport System with global standards. Biggest PPP Project in the world



### ANNAPURNA CANTEEN

Meals at Rs. 5/- only to poor people. Extending to more people soon

**We appeal to you to vote for Car Symbol  
Support TRS Candidates**

# VOTE FOR CAR

Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Greater Hyderabad





# Monday Mirchi

## Parties out to debrief seasoned babu

With the exit of PV Ramesh from the Andhra Pradesh government, it is now the turn of political parties to do their best to woo him into their fold. Being a senior IAS officer with vast experience in both state and central services, apart from a rewarding stint at the United Nations, PV Ramesh would naturally be a prize catch for political parties. A little bird told us that the real intention behind this sudden interest in Ramesh on the political turf is to debrief him for 'exposing' Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. Ramesh may or may not be game for this, but he has been Jagan's aide all through this one and half years and served as additional chief secretary even after his retirement. Much to the chargin of then chief secretary L V Subramanyam, Ramesh was pampered by the Chief Minister. Political parties believe that Ramesh, having been the man Friday of the CM during the initial days, must be having juicy information related to the YSRCP government. By serenading him into their fold, every political party can uncork confidential information that Ramesh may have bottled up during his heyday. Although Ramesh has not yet bared his next move, his 'desire' to take a plunge into politics has become a hot topic of discussion among political circles. Many political parties except ruling YSRCP learnt to have extended some fancy offers to lure him.

## A book the PR boss longs to read

Catering to what people want has been crucial for media. Most people, young adults mainly, are spending a lot of their precious time to know personal matters of celebrities. Yet, many of those who are neither famous nor notorious wonder why so much of today's news concerns trivia pertaining to celebrities and political bigwigs. I&PR Commissioner Arvind Kumar has been trying to figure out the logic, if any, behind media priorities. He recently expressed his desire to read a book on this curious subject. He apparently wants to dig into why the media highlights 'non-issues' concerning celebrities, their lifestyle etc; why the media is not focused or less cognizant of 'real' issues, which, from his standpoint, concerns masses -- poverty, gender justice, health, social disparities and economic issues. Unfortunately such a book, according to him, has not yet been published. He says he would certainly read if such a book ever gets written. Is the PR boss re-setting agenda for media houses? What he perhaps doesn't understand is that in today's world spin doctors and PR personnel, whether in public or private service, thrive largely by orbiting celebs and political leaders. And, these celebs and leaders know how to package real issues. And a little bird told us that could be the reason for his total concentration on municipal administration and for not giving enough time for the I&PR wing.

## Protocol, PMO and CMO

A protocol is a protocol, whether it is at PMO or CMO, and everyone knows (or is expected to know) his or her priorities, warrant of precedence, emcee, A-list guests, reception committee and related trappings of political power and institutional formality. One tends to believe that, protocol, being a system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations, does not give room for politics. This was not the case when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bharat Biotech facility in Hyderabad on Saturday. For the first time, TS top officials found themselves in cold sweat as the PMO allowed only the Telangana CS, DGP, Cyberabad CP, Medchal district collector, apart from the air force station authority, to welcome the Prime Minister. This is because normally the Governor, Chief Minister, Union ministers welcome the PM when he is on an official visit to a State. With CM being politely told by PMO to stay away, these officials could neither skip the PM's arrival nor dare go to the airport in the absence of CM. Incensed Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Rao took a decision, past 10-30 pm on Friday, to allow the apolitical invites to attend the PM's reception. From 4-00 pm on Friday, when the CS got to know about the re-write of protocol, till 10-30 pm, when KCR gave his nod, the officials were sweating, despite the nip, according to their bemused subordinates.

## Bureaucrats who are past masters remain important

Governments and ministers may change, but bureaucrats who become past masters in the domains assigned to them cannot be easily blown away by the winds of change. In AP, senior bureaucrats Satish Chandra and G Sai Prasad seem to belong to this ilk. Both the babus were part of the CMO in the previous N Chandrababu Naidu regime and considered the members of Team Naidu with awe-inspiring power and authority across the state. They often came under intense fire from opposition party YSRC and were the punching bag for YSRC Rajya Sabha member V Vijaysai Reddy. After YSRC came to power, everyone thought that both the bureaucrats would be sidelined. They both were of course transferred and kept waiting for many months without any posting. Later, Satish Chandra was given charge of the School Education Department and Sai Prasad was made chairman of the AP Solar Power Corporation Ltd. Naysayers belatedly got to know that the two departments are crucial for CM Jagan, particularly because of Nadu Nedu programme and the state government's plan to install 10,000 MW of solar power in the state. The success of the two officials in implementing the two crucial programmes explains why they are the envy of their peers.

—Yours truly

# RTC to operate addl buses to AP; plans to increase revenue

PNS ■ ADILABAD

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has recently made proposals to operate buses on new routes from Telangana to Andhra Pradesh with aim to increase revenue.

Currently, the TSRTC is running ten buses from various depots in the erstwhile Adilabad district. During a recent visit to Hyderabad, Karimnagar Zone Executive Director PV Munishekhara, gave green signal and directed the officials to send proposals to APSRTC for approval.

Accordingly, proposals have been made to run buses from Manchiryal to Eluru, Bhainsa to Ongole, Nirmal to Vinjamur in Prakasam district and Nirmal to Nellore. RTC officials said that they would run buses on those routes after getting necessary approvals.



ting necessary approvals.

At present, the RTC is operating four services from Adilabad to Guntur, four services from Asifabad to Pamur in Prakasam district, four services from Nirmal to Ongole, four services to Udayagiri, Kandukur and Pamur in Prakasam district and one service from Bhainsa to Guntur.

However, these bus services are always congested as construction masons and labourers from AP rely on them for travelling to their respective destinations.

The RTC is gradually recovering from the adverse effect of Covid-19. RTC officials are delighted as occupancy ratio is gradually increasing allowing them to run more and new bus services.

In all, around 600 buses used to ply in the region every day before the pandemic broke out. Of these, 349 buses were from RTC, while the remaining 251 were hired buses. These buses used to regularly cover 2.58 lakh km and carry 15 lakh passengers to their destinations, generating revenue to the tune of Rs 85 lakh to Rs 90 lakh.

The RTC incurred severe losses as bus services were suspended from March 23 to May 18 this year as part of lockdown imposed due to Covid-19.

Though bus services resumed on May 19, occupancy ratio remained very low due to several factors including social distancing and others. However, the number of bus services has been increasing gradually.

Initially, the occupancy ratio was 35 per cent when bus services were resumed which later increased to 55 per cent. Currently, the occupancy ratio has reached 69 per cent and is expected to increase further due to the current wedding season.

As many as 520 bus services covered 2.20 lakh km carrying 60,000 to 65,000 passengers to their destinations till Thursday.

The number of bus services will be increased to 560 to which 40 more buses would be added. The company is currently earning up to Rs 75 lakh and is expected to grow in line with the increased services.

The number of bus services to AP is likely to increase. We are currently increasing the number of buses in the region keeping in view the increasing occupancy ratio. Efforts are being made to rotate 600 buses in the region on a regular basis, said Ramesh, DVM, Adilabad.

## Modi's Hyd visit, a...

Continued from Page 3

Rama Rao also said Modi's visit to the facility reaffirms and endorses the fact that Hyderabad is a vaccine capital of the world and thanked him as, according to KTR, it indirectly indicates that the Telangana government has supported the expansion of life sciences ecosystem in the city.

"In any state there are some protocols. If they are followed it is good for the system. Whether it is CM KCR or whoever the CM is or whoever the PM is, there has to be respect between the institutions. It is good for the nation," Rama Rao told reporters.

"CM (KCR) should have been invited. When he was ready to go and welcome the honourable Prime Minister,

what is the harm in it. He did not lose any respect. It is they who lost their respect," he added.

The minister said Modi should ensure that the vaccine industry is helped by expeditious regulatory clearances and clear whatever hurdles are there in the process of development of COVID-19 vaccine.

"Let me also thank him because it indirectly also says that this Telangana government has supported the expansion of life sciences ecosystem in Hyderabad. His visit itself is a testimony that good work is being done here," he said.

Replying to a query, he said though he does not want to "belittle" the PM by saying that has other intentions behind his visit, the trip to the city can be seen in the political lens.

Continued from Page 3

Whoever wants to oppose it politically let them do it.

I have never said the farmers protest is political and would never say (that it is political)."

Shah has already appealed to the protesting farmers to shift to the Burari ground in the national capital to stage their protests and said the Centre was ready to hold discussions with them as soon as they move to the designated place.

Replying to a query, Shah also criticised AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi over his reported remarks on the action the NDA government had taken over charges that Pakistanis, Rohingyas and Bangladeshis were illegally

staying in Hyderabad.

Shah demanded that Owaisi give in writing that those staying illegally be removed and government initiate action against them.

"When I take action they (Owaisi and other parties) create ruckus in the Parliament. Have you not seen?" he asked.

"Let them once give me in writing to expel Rohingyas and Bangladeshis then I will initiate action.

It should not just be a speech limited to elections.

When there is discussion over the matter in the Parliament, who takes their side? the people of the country know it," Shah added.

Hitting back at Shah over his comments, Owaisi said, "He's the first Minister in history who needs an MP's letter

## Farmers reject HM talks offer

Continued from Page 3

The farmers' decision came after a meeting this morning, shortly after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, showed support for farm laws in his radio address Mann ki Baat, saying the 'agricultural reforms' have 'unshackled' the farmers and given them 'new rights and opportunities'.

to do his job.

"His own party created these imaginary illegal intruders in Hyd & now he wants my approval to go after them? Like '400k termites' in Assam they exist only in Shah's childish imagination & only for elections," he tweeted.

## Domestic help held for theft

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Domestic help who committed theft from a retired scientist has been arrested by Kushaiguda police on Sunday.

The accused persons were identified as Eerasarapu Sampath Kumar, 19, and his parents Eerasarapu Venkatesh, 50, and Eerasarapu Maheshwari, 45.

According to the police, Sampath who started working as domestic help in 80-year old retired scientist Dhooika Anand Rao's residence since

August this year left the job in October, stating that he met with an accident.

Rao, who found his ATM missing went to bank to apply for new one was shocked after finding that his bank balance was Rs 7 lakhs against Rs 18 lakhs. After verification of bank statement he got to know that someone has withdrew the amount using his ATM.

Rao approached Kushaiguda police and lodged a complaint suspecting the role of his former domestic help. The police booked a case.

## TS logs 805 new cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana recorded 805 new Covid-19 cases and four related fatalities taking the total tally of infections to 2,69,223 and the death toll to 1,455, the state government said on Sunday. A total of 10,490 patients were under treatment, it said in a bulletin, providing data as of 8 PM on November 28. Out of the fresh cases, 131 were reported from the GHMC, followed by 82 from Medchal-Malkajgiri, 58 from Ranga Reddy and other districts.

# Shed hypocrisy and make a people-friendly Constitution

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

This year too, like every year, November 26 was 'celebrated' as the Constitution Day. On this day, right from the Presidents of India to the Presidents of mofussil courts read out the Preamble before select gatherings and thus, express their solidarity and allegiance to the Constitution of India, which is rightly considered as Geeta, Quran or Bible of our 'democratic' set-up. Again, in order to remind the people, called 'citizens', several dozens of seminars or webinars were conducted by various stakeholders in democracy, particularly the judiciary and the executive.

Indeed, this is a solemn occasion to ponder the book called, Constitution of India, which is the beacon light of our democracy. All laws, rules, and procedures enacted by Parliament and State Assemblies and Councils must conform to the provisions of the Constitution. And, if not, they could be challenged in the High Court or the Supreme Court, which has the power to declare them ultra vires or beyond the powers of the concerned legislative body. The executive or administration is bound to enforce the laws in letter and spirit.

True, the Greek word for democracy, demokratia is made of two words, viz. demos (people) and kratos (rule) meaning the rule of the people. That is why the 16th President of America, Abraham Lincoln described the democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Any country wedded to the principles of democracy, therefore, has to abide by this time-tested definition. Further, as the people are born and ultimately die and new generations replace them from time to time eternally, their hopes and aspirations also vary with the passage of time. In other words, the book containing the spirit of democracy ought to conform to the changing dreams, expectations, hopes and aspirations of the current generations; hence, it should be dynamic and not static. The American Constitution has been amended 27 times in last 231 years, while we have amended our Constitution 103 times in last 70 years. However, it does not mean that there are shortcomings in our

Constitution that have compelled us to amend it for so many times. It simply means that the successive governments of the day have been awake to the hopes and aspirations of people and, therefore, in order to comply with the people's wishes they deemed it proper to amend the Constitution. Therefore, there is nothing to be ashamed of if the people (meaning, the majority, of course) want a change in the Constitution and it is affected by Parliament of the day. Further, according to this logic, there is nothing and cannot be anything like 'the basic structure' of the Constitution, which cannot be changed. After all, the Constitution is just an instrument and nobody, except the people themselves, have power to sharpen, modify or discard it. The times change and so also the demands of the times. What was good, better or best yesterday

may not be the same today. The thought process of the people, real masters of the country, changes according to the socio, economic, political dynamics and the geo-political changes across the globe. Therefore, it is high time our elected representatives changed the numbers of their glasses and respond to the dreams, hopes and aspirations of the people by going to any extent to fulfill them. Today the parties in power have the necessary mandate of the people to amend the Constitution, and still if they fail to do so because of any reasons whatsoever, the present and future generations of people will not excuse them.

**High Court can grant bail: SC on Art 226**

Delivering the judgment in the much-hyped case, Arnab Manohar Goswami Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors (Crl.Appeal No.742 of 2020), the apex court has held that a high court should not foreclose itself from the exercise of the power of granting bail when a citizen has been arbitrarily deprived of his personal liberty in an excess of State power.

"In an application under Article 226, the High Court must be circumspect in exercising its powers (to grant bail) on the basis of the facts of each case," observed the bench, comprising Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justice Indira Banerjee, government to exercise vigilance on hitherto uncontrolled digital platforms. Indeed, if the amended law is used judicially and without malice or prejudice, it can usher in 'Swatch Digital Bharat'.

**AG bats for intermediate courts of appeal**

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal has suggested setting up of four Courts of Appeal with 15 judges each in different directions so as to reduce the burden of the Supreme Court of India, which has at present, a backlog of 75,000 cases.

## COVID vaccine trial...

Continued from Page 3

However, the SII on Sunday rejected the charges as "malicious and misconceived" and said it will seek damages in excess of Rs 100 crore.

The man was administered the shot at Chennai's Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (SRIHER), one of the trial sites on October 1.

A law firm on his behalf has now sent a legal notice to Director General of ICMR, CEO, Serum Institute of India Private Limited, Pune, Drugs Controller General of India, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, CEO, Astra Zeneca UK, Professor Andrew Pollard, Chief Investigator of Oxford Vaccine Trial and Vice Chancellor of Sri Ramachandra Higher Education and Research.





# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

SESH TO  
HEADLINE HIT 2

Page 11

## Amit Shah vows to end 'Nizam culture' in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister and top BJP leader Amit Shah on Sunday assured that the party would make Hyderabad a global IT hub, a modern city and free from "Nizam culture" if voted to power in the December 1 civic polls.

He also exuded confidence that Hyderabad would have a BJP Mayor after the GHMC polls and that the saffron party would form the government in Telangana after the next Assembly elections.

Addressing a press conference here on the last day of campaigning for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, Shah

appealed to the people to give an opportunity to the BJP and said his party would make ready all infrastructure to ensure Hyderabad becomes a global IT hub.

He promised good governance and implementation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government's policies in Hyderabad as he accused KCR (as Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao is popularly known) and the TRS regime of

indulging in corruption and failing to fulfill their promises.

"I want to assure the people of Hyderabad that we want to free the city from Nizam culture...we will make Hyderabad a global IT hub and a modern city, where none will be appeased and no injustice shown to anyone.

We will begin this new work culture," Shah said.

The BJP, he said, will take Telangana from dynasty led parties to democracy, an apparent reference to AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi party or KCR's party TRS, and also from corruption to transparency.



○ Union Home Minister says CM KCR would know about the Centre's help if he would come to the Secretariat

○ Shah said that saffron party would definitely win the next Assembly elections and form the government in Telangana State

## Modi's Hyd visit, a testimony of TS' achievement: KTR

'KCR should have been invited'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister and TRS president K T Rama Rao on Sunday took exception to the state Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao not being invited to receive the Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he visited the city on Saturday.

In this regard, Rama Rao said the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers were not individuals but institutions, and they need to be respected by each other, adding Chandrashekhara Rao should have been invited to receive Modi.

The Prime Minister on Saturday, as part of his three-city tour to take the stock of COVID-19 vaccine development, visited a facility of Bharat Biotech located at Genome valley here and reviewed the progress of Covaxin, a vaccine candidate for COVID-19 being developed by the company.



## High-voltage GHMC campaign ends

Parties 'pump in' booze, money; DBT, Jan Dhan accounts come in handy

L VENKAT RAM REDDY  
■ HYDERABAD

A battle royale is on the cards with the high-octane campaigning for the GHMC elections by TRS, BJP, Congress and the AIMIM coming to an end at 6-

00 pm on Sunday. All the parties are taking the GHMC polls as a prestige issue and leaving no stone unturned to win the elections. The major political parties viz. TRS, BJP, AIMIM and Congress crossed swords during the election campaign with their

verbal wars, challenges and counter challenges, allegations and counter allegations against one another. The GHMC election campaign turned out to be a showdown among major parties viz. TRS, BJP and AIMIM.



Bengal Guv may soon ask TMC to prove majority in House: BJP MP

5



Bandi alleges 'exodus' of Hindus from Old City areas

4

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month &amp; Paksham:

Kartik &amp; Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi: Purnima: 02:58 pm

Nakshatram: Rohini: Full Night

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 07:56 am - 09:19 am

Yamagandam: 10:42 am - 12:04 pm

Varjyam: 11:41 pm - 01:27 am

Gulika: 01:27 pm - 02:50 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 04:59 am - 06:45 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:42 am - 12:26 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny

Temp: 28/16

Humidity: 67%

Sunrise: 06:29am

Sunset: 05:40pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated November 29, 2020 5:00 PM

## Shah offers prayers at Bhagyalakshmi temple P4



Union Home Minister and BJP's top-level leader Amit Shah, who offered prayers at Charminar Bhagyalakshmi temple on Sunday, greeting people and party men.

## Farmers' protests not political, says Shah

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With thousands of farmers continuing their protest against the Centre's new agri laws, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said they were meant for the welfare of farmers and called their agitation apolitical.

Speaking to reporters, he said, "The new farm laws are meant for the welfare of farmers. After a long time the farmer is going to come out of a locked system."

## Farmers reject HM talks offer

New Delhi: Punjab farmers, who are protesting against the Centre's new farm laws, rejected Amit Shah's proposal for an early discussion on their grievances, conditional to their moving to a designated protest site. The farmers said the government should have approached with "an open heart" and not put preconditions.

## UoH professor dies by suicide

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 40-year-old professor at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) allegedly died by suicide on Sunday at his home in the varsity's quarters here, police said.

The deceased was a professor in the Department of Medical Sciences in the UoH, also known as the Hyderabad Central University.

He was from Una district in Himachal Pradesh and resorted to the extreme step reportedly due to some family disputes, they said.

## COVID vaccine trial volunteer alleges side effects; DCGI probing

■ SII rejects charge, files case against him

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An Oxford COVID-19 vaccine trial participant in Chennai has sought a compensation of Rs five crore for allegedly suffering serious side effects from the shot, a claim which is being investigated by the Drugs Controller General of India and the institutional ethics committee at the trial site.

A senior ICMR official said



that a preliminary assessment has not indicated any causal link between the alleged

adverse events shown by the volunteer and the 'Covishield' vaccine.

The 40-year-old business consultant, who was a volunteer for the third phase of the vaccine trial conducted by Serum Institute of India (SII), has alleged he suffered a virtual neurological breakdown and impairment of cognitive functions, and has sent a legal notice to SII and others.

SAVE HYDERABAD  
CHANGE HYDERABAD

VOTE BJP

THEY PROMISED  
AN INTERNATIONAL CITY

BUT DROWNED  
PEOPLE  
IN FLOODS

DEFEAT DECEPTION - ROOT OUT DYNASTY  
LET'S TOGETHER BUILD A TRULY INTERNATIONAL CITY

PEOPLE FOR CHANGE  
BJP FOR PEOPLE

ELECT BJP CANDIDATES IN GHMC ELECTIONS

POLING DATE : 01-12-2020, 7:00 AM TO 6:00 PM





# BJP looks to cement its position further



## Shah offers prayers at Bhagyalakshmi temple

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday offered prayers at the Bhagyalakshmi temple abutting the historic Charminar ahead of his participation in the BJP campaign for GHMC elections. The campaigning for the December 1 local elections will end on Sunday evening.

Accompanied by top BJP leaders, Shah had 'darshan' at the temple and made his offerings amid chanting of hymns by the priests. The temple management committee felicitated him on the occasion. After spending around 15 minutes in the temple, Shah waved and flashed victory signs at a large number of party workers who had gathered near Charminar.

The area around the historic monument was turned into a virtual fortress as police put up barricades on approach roads. Tight security arrangements were in place with the deployment of a large number of policemen, including personnel from central paramilitary forces.

The temple was decked up for Amit Shah's visit. Hundreds of BJP workers carrying party flags gathered near the monument

**Shah had 'darshan' at the temple and made his offerings amid chanting of hymns by the priests. The temple management committee felicitated him on the occasion**

on the occasion. Supporters of actor Pawan Kalyan-led Jana Sena Party were also seen. As the area is communally sensitive, the security agencies made special arrangements for Shah's visit. Top officials supervised the arrangements to avert any untoward incident. Only selected BJP leaders were allowed into the barricaded area around the Charminar.

Shah was accompanied by Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy, state BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar and senior party leaders. BJP General Secretary Bhupendra Yadav, party's OBC Morcha President K Laxman, party MPs and state legislators were also present.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The election campaign for any municipal body in the country has not been so shrill as it has been for Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), which is all set for polls on Tuesday. The campaign saw a bitter war of words with leaders of the main contenders for power engaged in no-holds-barred attack on their opponents.

With central leaders and top leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) too plunging into the electioneering to take on both ruling TRS and its friendly party MIM, the Hyderabad civic polls have turned into a high-octane battle. Upbeat over the victory in the Bihar Assembly elections and in bypolls in various states including Dubbak seat in Telangana, the BJP has entered the fray firing on all cylinders. For the saffron party, elections to the 150-member GHMC is not merely a 'gully' election but a semi-final in the run-up to the 2023 Assembly battle. Claiming to have emerged as the main



opposition party replacing the Congress, the BJP is aiming for power in Telangana to begin what its leaders call saffronisation of entire south India.

With a considerable support base among the urban electorate, the BJP hoping to reap rich dividends in a municipal body with over 74 lakh voters, covering 24 Assembly seg-

ments and five Lok Sabha constituencies. With Secunderabad Lok Sabha seat already under its belt, it is looking to cement its position further. What made the GHMC polls fiercer is the history and unique character of Hyderabad, the fastest growing metropolis and a leading information technology destination. With sizeable Muslim

population, the city is considered stronghold of the MIM, which is trying to expand its base across the state.

The MIM is also buoyed over its impressive performance in recent Bihar elections, where it won five seats. The party, which is holding the Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat for nearly four decades, expanded

**With a considerable support base among the urban electorate, the BJP hoping to reap rich dividends in a municipal body with over 74 lakh voters**

itself in recent years to increase its tally of Assembly seats in Hyderabad to seven. It also established itself as a force in Maharashtra by winning Aurangabad Lok Sabha seat and a couple of Assembly seats. As the BJP entered the GHMC fray with full steam amid the MIM's plans to have pan-India presence, the campaign saw many fireworks. Both the sides attacked each other, using some harsh words, calling names, throwing barbs

and challenges.

The rabble rousers had a field day during the 10-day electioneering as they went all out to ensure polarization of votes. They used words like "surgical strikes, razakars, terrorists, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Bin Laden, Babar and biryani" to attack each other. Perhaps the most controversial comment came from state BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar, who is also a member of Parliament. "If BJP wins GHMC polls, surgical strikes will be carried out in the old city to drive out Pakistani supporters and Rohingyas," he thundered at an election rally and even alleged that illegal immigrants have been enlisted as voters. MIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi hit back. "If there are illegal immigrants here, what was Home Minister Amit Shah doing. Was he sleeping?" he asked. Amit Shah, who joined the campaign the last day, launched a counter attack on Owaisi and asked him to give in writing that Rohingyas should be deported.

## BJP, MIM have secret pact, alleges Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC working president and Malkajigiri MP A Revanth Reddy on Sunday alleged that BJP and MIM are using GHMC elections to create communal differences. Addressing the media on Saturday at Gandhi Bhavan, the Congress MP found fault with TRS government for stating that it had spent Rs 67,000 crore from 2014 to 2020. "The TRS assured that it will construct one lakh double bed room houses, super specialty hospitals and transport system in outskirts in 2016 elections, however, it failed to fulfil even a single assurance. Moreover, the TRS removed the manifesto from the website," he alleged. "The government failed to



provide proper facilities to the people during the Corona pandemic. The government transformed Gachibowli stadium building as a hospital for Corona treatment. However, there is no control over the private hospitals which are collecting lakhs of rupees for Corona treatment," he alleged. "The government didn't show the

details of the funds it received to contain the spread of Corona. The government failed to reveal the details of those who died in the recent floods. Several colonies are still reeling under the flood impact. Illegal constructions and encroachment of nalas increased after KCR became the Chief Minister of the state, he

claimed. Targeting BJP, Revanth alleged that the saffron party entered into a secret pact with MIM. "BJP created insecurity among the Muslims by visiting Bhagyalakshmi temple time and again. Muslims, who thought to defeat MIM, would cast their vote again to MIM with BJP's acts. BJP and MIM should reveal as to why they didn't speak when KCR government destroyed Secretariat's Nalla Pochamma temple and Mosque," he alleged.

Revanth alleged that KCR weakened the Congress by inducting 12 Congress MLAs MLCs and others. Alleging that the TRS leaders looted Rs 400 crore from the money distributed to flood-hit people, TPCC working president alleged that KCR spit venom

when the people looked at Congress at that juncture. Questioning the BJP leaders to reveal as to what they have done to the people though they gave chance for two times, Revanth said that the Shah has to come to the state to assess the loss due to floods as the Department is with him. Moreover, the Centre didn't give a single rupee, he alleged.

Finding fault with the Prime Minister for not inviting him following the protocol, Revanth questioned the BJP leaders to reveal whether they will violate the law being in power. Why the TRS didn't prepare an action plan to purify the Musi River, he asked by stating that thousands of crores of rupees are lying in Swachh Bharath scheme.

## Only Cong can defeat communal forces: Shabbir

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir said that only Congress party was capable of not only defeating communal forces, but also bringing development. Shabbir Ali took part in a series of padayatra, road shows and street corner meetings in across the city. Shabbir Ali said that the GHMC elections have completely unmasked the TRS, BJP and MIM and exposed the reality that they could go to any extent to win elections. He said that all the three parties pursued a common agenda of instilling fear and hatred among the people.



## FINAL SHOWDOWN

The high-decibel and acrimonious campaign by political parties for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation ended on Sunday at 6 PM, setting the stage for the December 1 'Battle for Hyderabad'. As many as 1,122 candidates are in poll fray for 150 wards in GHMC, constituting 24 Assembly segments with over 74.67 lakh eligible voters. Top BJP leaders, including its president J P Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah campaigned in the run-up to the polls, while TRS working president shouldered the responsibility for his party.



## BJP tarnishing Hyd's image, says TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister G Jagadish Reddy said the BJP was trying to bring disrepute to Hyderabad by making provocative and baseless statements. He was speaking at an election rally on the last day of the election campaign for the GHMC elections.

Jagadish Reddy said the BJP leaders were attempting to create trouble for people by making senseless speeches against the TRS government. "BJP leadership's downfall at the Centre is not so far, if people of Telangana stay focused to teach the saffron party a lesson. However, Hyderabadis never paid attention to the BJP's false promises and election tactics. BJP leaders who turned a deaf ear to the plight of the city flood victims are now making a beeline to the city just to seek votes, he said.

## Bandi alleges 'exodus' of Hindus from Old City areas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP State president Bandi Sanjay, alleging exodus of Hindu families from the old city, on Sunday said the BJP, if it comes to power in GHMC, will drive away the illegal immigrants from Myanmar, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan and resettle the Hindus in their homes.

"Within 24 hours of winning the GHMC, we will give 15 minutes time to the police to take action," he said, adding that once the old city is rid of Rohingyas, Hindus will be taken back and provided shelter at the place they want and resettle them.

Interacting with Doctors at Begumpet here on Sunday, Bandi expressed apprehension over the spread of Muslims in the new city. "The Muslims, who have come up



to Amberpet and Abids, will soon reach Musheerabad and Secunderabad. Why is the population of Hindus declining in the old city? What has happened to the Hindu families that used to live in Shah Ali Banda, Uppuguda, Laldarwaja, Gowlipura and Chatarnaka?" he asked, and wondered who destroyed their properties and drove them away from the old city.

"Minister KT Rama Rao thinks Hyderabad is peaceful,

but it is not. While the TRS denies the presence of Rohingyas in the city, the police commissioner has confirmed their presence. MIM leaders inaugurate shelters for Rohingyas. If we are not united, then the entire GHMC area will become a Muslim majority place," he said, adding that Hindus are being persecuted by MIM in the old city. "TRS and MIM have joined hands to terrorise Hindus in the old city and thereby gain political edge over BJP. They have succeeded in showing a lesser number of Hindus in the voters list by physically driving away Hindus from their homes, and destroying their houses," he alleged. He further said that if voted to power in GHMC, the BJP mayor will give full freedom to the police to cordon and search the old city and drive away the illegal immigrants.

## Opposition confining itself to mudslinging, says Vinod

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Planning Board vice-chairman B Vinod Kumar said the Opposition parties have failed to explain their action plan for resolving issues pertaining to development of Hyderabad during the GHMC poll campaign that concluded on Sunday. He felt that they were confining themselves to mudslinging and stoking communal hatred.

Speaking to mediapersons at Telangana Bhavan on Sunday, Vinod Kumar said the TRS leadership had clearly

explained to people about its achievements in the past five years in Hyderabad and also promises for next five years of GHMC. But the Opposition parties, especially BJP, confined itself to divisive politics and hate speech, he said. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Hyderabad city and several Union Ministers participated in poll campaign. But there was no announcement or assurance to support the flood-affected city of Hyderabad," he said.

The Planning Board vice-chairman said while the TRS

government focused on its development agenda for Hyderabad, the BJP and AIMIM leaders resorted to mudslinging in an attempt to provoke the TRS cadre. He reiterated that Hyderabad was put on a growth path and there were no riots or law and order issues in the past six years under leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao. "I urge people not get swept away in emotions and think wisely before they cast their vote. They must decide how they want the city in future," he added.

## Uttam accuses KCR of running 'Hitler-style propaganda'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday strongly condemned TRS, BJP and MIM for using GHMC election campaign to instill fear and spread hatred among people instead of debating real issues. On the last day of GHMC election campaign, Uttam addressed a series of road shows across Hyderabad and also addressed a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan.

Uttam described the GHMC campaign as the 'worst ever campaign for a municipal elections' which witnessed Nazi style propaganda carried out by TRS-BJP-MIM to suppress real public issues. In "Mein Kampf,"



Hitler wrote that propaganda "must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over."

"In GHMC polls, KCR spearheaded the hate campaign by making remarks that

"Hyderabad did not face any communal riots" since six years. He created an artificial scare into the minds of common people of a possible communal rift. BJP and MIM then joined the chorus with com-

munal statements. Allegations and counter-allegations were made for a week with TRS, BJP and TRS leaders capturing almost the entire media space. KCR concluded the campaign with the threat "If you don't vote for TRS, the city will lose its peace," he said.

Uttam said that the people should look at the sequence of statements by the TRS, BJP and MIM leaders to understand the reality. They instilled fear among Hyderabadis either to discourage them from participating in elections or vote in their favour, he said adding that it was highly unfortunate that the mainstream media gave too much prominence to those speeches. He said that the BJP leaders

insulted the history, culture and people of Hyderabad. "Union Home Minister Amit Shah did not visit Hyderabad when more than 100 people died in floods. But he came to campaign for GHMC elections. Similarly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi enacted the drama in the name of visiting the Corona Vaccine facility in Hyderabad. He behaved as if the scientists wouldn't have made vaccines if he (PM Modi) wouldn't have visited them. UP has worst law and order situation in the country with Dalit women being subjected to various atrocities. But UP CM visits Hyderabad proposing change in city's name," he said.



# PM: New farm laws have begun mitigating farmers' problems

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid protests by a section of farmers against the recently enacted farm laws, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Sunday that these reforms have opened doors of new opportunities for peasants and bestowed on them new rights.

In his monthly 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast, Modi said the farm laws have begun mitigating the troubles of farmers in a short period of time since their enactment in September as he cited the example of a Maharashtra farmer who used their provisions to get the money a trader had promised but not paid to him in time.

New dimensions related to agriculture and related fields have emerged as the recently enacted farm reforms have opened doors of new possibilities for farmers, he said.

"The demands, which were made by farmers for years and regarding which every political party at some point of time had made promises, have been fulfilled... These reforms have not only freed them of various shackles but also given them new rights and new opportunities. These rights have begun mitigating farmers' problems in a very short span of time," he



## Agitating farmers decide to stay put at Delhi borders

**Chandigarh:** Farmers protesting against the Centre's three farm laws on Sunday decided not to shift to the Burari ground in the national capital and stay put at the Delhi borders. Thousands of farmers continued to protest at the Singhu and Tikri borders on the fourth consecutive day on Sunday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to the farmers to shift to the Sant Nirankari ground in Burari that was offered to them for peaceful protests and said the Centre was ready to hold discussions with them as soon as they move to the designated place. "We have

decided that we will stay put at the Delhi borders. We will not go to Burari," Bharatiya Kisan Union (Dakaunda) president Buta Singh Burjigill said over the phone. The decision was taken by representatives of several farmers organisations, he said. Farmer leader Harmeet Singh Kadian, who is the president of BKU (Kadian), too said that the protesters will not shift to the Burari ground. Reacting to the Union home minister's appeal, Kadian told reporters near the Singhu border that the Centre should not impose any condition for holding talks with the farmers.

said. The prime minister's remarks come at a time when thousands of farmers, mostly

from Punjab, have dug in their heels at Delhi's border points and hundreds have gathered at

## Centre treating protesting farmers like 'terrorists': Raut

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Rauton

Sunday said farmers protesting against the Centre's new agri laws are being treated as if they are 'terrorists', and it is sad that they are not being allowed to enter Delhi. The government should consider the farmers' demands sympathetically, Raut told reporters here. Thousands of farmers, protesting against three agriculture laws enacted by the Centre, have gathered at border points of the national capital as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march. "It is sad they are not being allowed to come to Delhi and are being treated as if they are terrorists and have come from outside the country. The government should consider the demands of farmers sympathetically," Raut said. "Farm laws is one issue. Consider all other demands sympathetically. Different

states are not doing well. It is up to the Centre to step in and help them," the Rajya Sabha member said. Replying to a query, Raut claimed farmers were being dubbed as 'divisive' because they come from Punjab. "Do you want to create instability by reminding the Punjab farmers of the Khalistan movement period?" he asked the Centre. Thousands of farmers continued their protest for the fourth consecutive day on Sunday, staying put at the Singhu and Tikri border points, with farmer leaders deliberating upon their future course of action about proposed talks with the government. With many roads and entry points of Delhi being blocked, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had appealed to the farmers to shift to the Burari ground, and said the Centre was ready to hold discussions with them as soon as they move to the designated place.

the city's Burari ground to protest against the new farm laws. The central government has reached out to them, underscoring its willingness to hold talks with them. It has also asserted that concerns

expressed by some farm bodies about the new laws are misplaced, asserting that existing support measures like the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and state-run 'mandis' will remain in place.

# Congress MP Karti flays 'hero worship' of Rajiv case convicts

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Congress MP Karti Chidambaram on Sunday opposed 'hero worship' of Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convicts and wondered why there was no talk about those who were killed alongside the former Prime Minister in 1991.

The Lok Sabha MP from Sivaganga, referring to the seven convicts said, "do not make them heroes, they are not heroes," and asked whether the 15 other victims were not Tamils.

Also, he sought to know, "what about justice for them?" Tagging a clip of his interview to News18 Tamil Nadu channel on his Twitter handle, Karti regretted that the so-called pro-Tamil outfits- that support the release of the seven convicts- have never spoken about the victims.

Rajiv Gandhi and 15 others



**The Tamil Nadu Congress Committee had said political parties demanding their release was unacceptable**

were killed in a blast triggered by a woman suicide bomber Dhanu at an election rally in Sriperumbudur near here on May 21, 1991.

The ruling AIADMK, main opposition DMK and almost all other parties support the release of the convicts, V Sriharan alias Murugan, T Suthendraraja alias Santhan, A

G Perarivalan alias Arivu, Jayakumar, Robert Payas, Ravichandran and Nalini.

The AIADMK government recommended their release in 2018 and the matter is pending with Governor Banwarilal Purohit. The TN Congress Committee had said political parties demanding their release was unacceptable.

## NAXAL TRIGGERED IED BLAST

# CoBRA officer killed, 9 commandos hurt

PNS ■ RAIPUR

An officer of the CRPF's jungle warfare unit, CoBRA, was killed while nine commandos were injured after Maoists triggered an IED blast in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Saturday, security officials said. They said the improvised explosive device explosion took place in the Chintalnar forest area of the district at around 9 PM and the injured personnel were evacuated by an IAF helicopter at around midnight.

Assistant Commandant Nitin P Bhalarao, 33, succumbed to injuries in the early hours of Sunday.

Nine commandos, including the team leader second-in-command rank officer Dinesh Kumar Singh, were injured in the incident, they said.

Seven commandos are being treated at a hospital in

Raipur, while two are being given medical care at a unit hospital at Chintalnar, located in the south Bastar area of the state, they said.

Sukma district is located at a distance of about 400 km from here. The injured troops belong to the 206th battalion of the CoBRA. A joint team of the CoBRA and local police was out for an area domination exercise when the blast took place, the officials said.

The team was scouting the area for the proposed induction of some new battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force and establishment of their new camps in this area and that is when the IED went off, official sources said.

Five more CRPF battalions are expected to be inducted in Chhattisgarh for anti-Maoist duties after the Union home ministry recently gave its approval.

# Bengal Guv may soon ask TMC to prove majority in House: BJP MP

PNS ■ KOLKATA

With voices of dissent in the TMC getting shriller, BJP MP Saumitra Khan on Sunday took a jibe at the ruling dispensation, claiming that the governor will make such an unconstitutional move? An elected government cannot be treated this way... and the overwhelming majority of MLAs are with the chief minister. The TMC has the support of 218 legislators in the Assembly," Roy asserted.

Khan, who is also the state president of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), said on the sidelines of a programme in Jalpaiguri that the current turmoil and the brewing discontentment in the ruling party have brought to the fore the question if the party still enjoys the support of adequate number of legislators in the House.

"The way the MLAs have been dissenting and leaving Trinamool, the governor may all of a sudden ask the CM to prove majority... There is a possibility," Khan said. Several ministers in the Mamata Banerjee cabinet are ready to switch over to the BJP, he stated.

Reacting to Khan's comments, veteran TMC MP Sougata Roy said BJP leaders like him know nothing about



the Constitution and its provisions. "How could Khan know first-hand that the governor will make such an unconstitutional move? An elected government cannot be treated this way... and the overwhelming majority of MLAs are with the chief minister. The TMC has the support of 218 legislators in the Assembly," Roy asserted.

The ruling TMC in Bengal had been trying its best to keep its flock together, as several key leaders, including party heavyweight Suwendu Adhikari, have, of late, openly aired their grievances against the dispensation. According to BJP state president Dilip Ghosh, the TMC lacks the courage to expel Adhikari, who recently quit from the state cabinet, as "the party fears that it might

face extinction soon. Ghosh also alleged that leaders of the ruling party, who had almost never stepped out of their homes and offices, are now being "forced" to venture out to get an idea about ground realities, ahead of 2021 Assembly polls. "The month of December appears crucial for TMC, as the party is facing extinction with people abandoning the ship. The TMC lacks the courage to expel anyone. It has not been able to expel Suwendu Adhikari," Ghosh maintained.

The Mamata Banerjee party also did little to address the woes of legislator Mihir Goswami, who recently joined the BJP, the state BJP chief said, adding that more such developments are likely in the coming days.

## INDIA CORNER

### Man shot dead over Rs 200 in UP's Aligarh

A 30-year-old man was shot dead in a crowded market in Civil Lines area here after he allegedly refused to lend Rs 200 to an acquaintance, police said on Sunday. Ansar Ahmad, a father of three, owned a tyre repair shop at Shamshad Market under Civil Lines Police Station and was killed on Saturday by Asif, police said. The accused is a drug addict and managed to flee the spot after committing the crime, Superintendent of Police (City) Abhishek Kumar told reporters. According to police, Asif had on Saturday approached Ahmad wanting to lend his motorcycle, however, the request was turned down. Later in the day, the accused again landed at Ahmad's shop and demanded Rs 200 from him. As soon as the victim refused, Asif took out a country-made pistol from his pocket and before any of the bystanders could react, shot Ahmad in the head.



### Maha: Bank ATM gutted in Thane; no casualty

An ATM centre of a nationalised bank has been gutted in a fire that broke out in the premises in Badlapur town of Maharashtra's Thane district, a civic official said on Sunday. No one was injured in the blaze that erupted at the ATM located at Kulgaon in Badlapur around 9.30 pm on Saturday, Thane Municipal Corporation's regional disaster management cell chief Santosh Kadam said. A fire engine from Badlapur was rushed to the spot and the blaze was brought under control around 10.15 pm, he said. The ATM centre was completely gutted in the fire, the official said. The cause of the fire was not yet known, he added.



### Minimum temperatures dip in parts of Rajasthan

Night temperatures dipped by a few degrees in parts of Rajasthan, where Mount Abu was recorded as the coldest place with a minimum temperature of 1 degree Celsius, the Met Department said on Sunday. In the plains, Churu registered a minimum temperature of 4.1 degrees Celsius. Sikar, Bhilwara, Pilani, Dabok and Vanasthali recorded minimum temperatures of 5, 6.8, 6.9, 8.1 and 8.5 degrees Celsius, the weather office said. The cold conditions would remain the same during the next 24 hours, it added.



### 28-yr-old pregnant woman found murdered in her home in UP

A 28-year-old pregnant woman was killed with a sharp-edged weapon in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot on Sunday morning, police said here. The body of the woman, who was four-month pregnant, was found lying on a cot in a room of her home by her husband, SHO, Raipura police station, Sushilchandra Sharma said, adding that the incident took place in Khajuriha Kala village. The SHO said the husband of the deceased has lodged a complaint against a woman and a young man of the same village, and a case was registered. However, no reason for murder has been mentioned in the police complaint, he added. The body of the deceased has been sent for a post-mortem examination, the police said, and added that no one has been detained so far.



# Online coaching 'all-weather friend' of students: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 lockdown came as a "shock" for Sakshi Sharma as coaching classes and schools closed abruptly amid her preparations for the NEET medical exams, leaving her worried that she could have to wait for a year to take the test again.

However, after some days into the lockdown, Sharma and her friends had found an alternative in online classes, which experts say will remain "an all-weather friend" not only for students preparing for competitive exams like the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), but for also imparting education in general in the COVID-19-induced new normal.

"It (the lockdown) came as a

shock... I and many others like me had no idea what to do. We were in the midst of preparing for the exam and the thought of wasting a year was terrifying. But my friends and I immediately shifted our focus to online coaching and were well prepared by September," Sharma, who hails from Chandigarh told PTI over phone.

She took the NEET in September, after the exam, for admission to MBBS, BDS and other undergraduate medical courses, was deferred twice from its scheduled date of May 3 to July 26 and then to September 13 by the National Testing Agency in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Centre had announced a 21-day nationwide lockdown from March 25 to check the spread of the coronavirus.



However, from June 8, the government started gradually easing restrictions under 'Unlock'.

The number of those enrolling for virtual classes has witnessed an exponential rises and the trend is likely to stay, the experts from the education industry said.

Like NEET, other examina-

tions that were scheduled in the months of April and May were also initially postponed, but later the Centre decided to conduct them amid strict COVID-19 measures to ensure students do not miss an academic year.

"The coronavirus pandemic brought various sectors to a grinding halt and students were stuck in a limbo," Kapil

Gupta, founder and CEO of NEETprep, a prominent online coaching centre, said.

"Left with little choice, the jittery lot switched to online learning which was not affected by the lockdown," he said referring to Sharma and her friends taking to virtual classes for NEET.

Immediately after the lockdown, students were anxious as they had been studying for months and did not want to lose the momentum before exams. But at the same time they were cautious of attending classrooms due to the COVID-19 scare, Gupta said.

"This is why online classes are a boon because suddenly they (students) did not have to worry about wearing a mask or maintaining social distancing... Online coaching has

become a big hit especially among those preparing for NEET and JEE exams by proving to be their saviour during the COVID crisis," he said.

Gupta said while the COVID-19 situation has definitely provided an opportunity to online platforms to gain a bigger reach in a short period of time, in the long run, it would be important for those offering this service to present themselves as a credible alternative not only in terms of cost but also efficacy.

"I believe it is established that the quality of content (lectures or questions or mock tests) is much better than classroom coaching but on the aspect of enforcing discipline amongst the students without a physical classroom is a challenge," Gupta said.







FIRST COLUMN

## What of India's 'Act East' policy?

By rejecting the RCEP membership, we have given China a free hand to integrate its economy with Asian nations. Maybe India should look West now



SANJIB POHIT

The "Act East" policy, with a focus on an extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific Region, has been the cornerstone of India's diplomacy in the current decade. While it was originally conceived as an economic initiative, in recent years, it has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions, including the establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. India has upgraded its relations to a strategic partnership with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Singapore and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has, thus, forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific. Further, apart from the ASEAN, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), it has been actively engaged in regional fora, such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and the Indian-Ocean Rim Association (IORA). The "Act East" policy has laid emphasis on India-ASEAN cooperation for our domestic agenda on infrastructure, manufacturing, trade, skills, urban renewal, smart cities, Make in India and other initiatives. The objective is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

As a follow-up, India has entered into Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and comprehensive economic engagements with many Asian countries. Notable among them are RTAs with the ASEAN, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, APTA (Bangladesh, China, Korea, Laos and Sri Lanka) and South Korea.

However, India decided against joining the mega trade bloc or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It is a free trade agreement (FTA) between the Asia-Pacific nations of Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. These 15 countries account for about 30 per cent of the world's population (2.2 billion people) and 30 per cent of the global GDP (\$26.2 trillion) as of this year, making it the biggest trade bloc in history.

The fear is that India's agricultural and manufactured goods will not be in a position to stand up to competition from cheaper imports from abroad. Of course, lobbying by multiple associations protecting the interests of processed agricultural product and manufactured goods makers plays a significant role in the policymakers' decision. In contrast, India's service sector, which no doubt would have benefited by gaining access to the large market, could not play its cards well. In the end, the belief that India's merchandise trade deficit (already negative with ASEAN and other Asian countries due to the existing RTAs) will further worsen, tilted the balance in deciding that the country's interests would be best served by not joining the RCEP.

In the long run, this decision will hurt India in a big way. Let me flag up the issues on this count. First, when you have RTAs with some members of the RCEP it will be a Herculean task to stop merchandise from third countries being routed through these nations with whom we have an existing pact. For instance, imports from China may be routed through ASEAN members like Vietnam and Malaysia with whom we have RTAs. Of course, one can argue that the "rules of origin" clause will stem this flow. However in reality, the "rules of origin" clause is not effective enough to curtain third country imports.

Second, India is missing the golden opportunity to be a part of the global value chain. If multinational corporations (MNCs) are thinking of shifting their value chains from China to other countries, they would go for any member of the RCEP like Vietnam and so on. This will be a win-win situation as they will have access to a large market and also benefit from the economies of scale of production. The same holds true for new investment from the European Union or US firms. The usual argument that India has a demographic dividend and MNCs will come here to make a production base falls flat. Given the income inequality, a significant part of the population does not have jobs and thereby income to purchase consumer goods. Gains from the demographic dividend are realised only when people are employed or else it becomes a burden on society.

Third, the service sector, where India has a comparative advantage, would be at a disadvantage because of this decision. Fourth, this decision should have been made based on long-term gain and not based on a higher trade deficit in the short run. By joining the group, Indian industries may suffer in the short-run. But in the end, they will be more competitive, which will open up opportunities in the world markets. It will be a win-win situation for the consumers, too, as they will have access to a variety of goods at a cheaper price. Alas, there is no one to lobby for the consumers' interests.

Fifth, is it realistically possible to "Act East" without entering the mega trading bloc of the East? By rejecting the RCEP membership, India has given China a free hand to integrate its economy with Asian countries. Maybe India henceforth should look West.

(The writer is Professor, NCAER. The views expressed are personal)

THE PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER IS FANNING THE PROTEST. HIS OFFICE BEARERS ARE LEADING IT. TRIED TO CONTACT HIM BUT GOT NO RESPONSE.  
—HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER  
MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR



I WILL NOT EVEN ANSWER THE HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER'S PHONE CALLS NOW BECAUSE OF THE WAY HE HAS ACTED WITH THE POOR FARMERS.  
—PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER  
CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH

# A wake-up call

Let not the recent incident at Nagrota meet the fate of similar encounters in the past. It should ring warning bells and lessons should be learnt from it



ANIL GUPTA

The recent encounter at Nagrota, near Jammu on National Highway (NH) 44, in which four heavily-armed Pakistani terrorists were gunned down by the Indian security forces, has once again exposed the fact that the "Deep State" in Pakistan continues to rule the roost with the singular agenda of bleeding India through a thousand cuts. Similar encounters had taken place on the same highway in the past, too. Pakistan continues to use the International Border (IB) sector as a preferred route of infiltration not only for terrorists but also for narco-terrorism, as it provides the twin advantage of movement into Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Punjab. Also, the *modus operandi* adopted in most cases is near identical. After revocation of Article 370 in J&K, Pakistan's desperation to create trouble has increased manifold. With the Indian Army adopting a very strong counter-infiltration grid on the Line of Control (LoC) and an equally impenetrable counter-terrorism grid inside the Valley, the Pakistan Army has shifted its focus to the IB sector with a comparatively higher success rate.

Pakistan is going through the worst phase of its history. Ever since its formation, the country has suffered the dilemma of identity. Regional loyalties have surpassed national ones, leaving the Pakistan Army alone as a symbol of national identity. This has been exploited by the Army to its advantage by becoming the virtual ruler. To ensure its continued hold over the nation's defence and foreign policy, the Army has created a myth of India being an existential threat. At the same time it has promoted Kashmir as an unfinished agenda of the Partition and as our jugular vein. Despite Islamabad's obsession with Kashmir costing it dearly, both economically and strategically, it refuses to relent. Terrorism continues to remain an instrument of its State policy. Kashmir continues to be the *raison d'être* for the continued supremacy of its Army.

Politically and economically, Pakistan is on the verge of collapse. Prime Minister Imran Khan is the target of a domestic rebellion against his Government by the conglomeration of 11 Opposition parties under the banner of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). Even Imran Khan's mentor, Chief of the Army Staff General Bajwa, and his ISI chief are not being spared by the public. This has unnerved the Army as it is quite conscious of its image among the people. But that aura is gradually eroding due to the involvement of senior Army officers in corruption. While the common man is finding it difficult to survive, the Army is eating up a large slice of the national budget. The economy is in the doldrums. Saudi Arabia, a liberal donor till now, is unhappy with Imran Khan due to his growing proximity with Turkey. Pakistan is neck deep in debt and is resorting to borrowings to service it. Unemployment and inflation are common and Imran Khan is doing nothing to resolve these issues. His total surrender to China is also being resented by Pakistanis.

Pakistan is close to an implosion at this stage due to the growing turmoil in Balochistan, increased unrest in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, revolt in Pakistan-Occupied J&K and Gilgit Baltistan and the growing dissent in Sindh due to the ongoing protests by the PDM. Attempts to integrate Gilgit Baltistan as its fifth province and holding of elections there have been met with stiff opposition from the locals. The results of the elections are being contested as fudged. The Balawaristan Movement for an independent Gilgit-Baltistan is gaining momentum.

With the Pakistan Army under tremendous pressure from China to tie down the Indian Army, the time-tested Pakistani formula of creating an India

“UNFORTUNATELY, THE BORDER REMAINS OUR WEAKNESS, WHICH IS BEING EXPLOITED BY THE ENEMY. MANY QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ANSWERED BY THE BSF WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GUARDING THE IB. WHY IS IT THAT THE TUNNELS ARE DETECTED ONLY AFTER INFILTRATION HAS TAKEN PLACE? WHY IS NO ACTION TAKEN TO PIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LAPSES? WHY ARE NO PROACTIVE MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT SIMILAR FAILURES IN THE FUTURE? IS IT LACK OF RESOURCES, PROFESSIONALISM OR SINCERITY?”



bogey at home has been put into practice to generate an anti-India public opinion. Repeated unprovoked ceasefire violations and attempts to push in terrorists have become a norm. Apart from attempts to distract public attention at home, these are also being used to keep Kashmir in the focus of the international community as a potential flashpoint.

Pakistan's nuclear blackmail has been exposed and is no longer being used as a threat by its leadership. So it has increased its dependence on terrorist activities in India and the "Deep State" is involved in spreading its tentacles in other parts of the country apart from Kashmir. However, Kashmir for the time-being continues to remain its main focus because of the realisation that with the passing of each day peacefully, Pakistan is losing its relevance there. That was the main reason behind infiltrating a heavily-armed group with about 750 kg of RDX to create mayhem in Kashmir on the eve of the District Development Council elections in J&K.

Plus, China is egging Pakistan on to keep the pot boiling in Kashmir. It needs a hold in Gilgit-Baltistan and does not want to part with Shaksgam and Aksai Chin. Hence, irrespective of the success achieved by us at Nagrota, Pakistan is not going to relent. We have to be proactive and make the cost of such attempts as prohibitive for the "Deep State" as possible.

Unfortunately, the IB sector remains our weakness, which is being exploited by the enemy. Many questions need to be answered by the Border Security Force (BSF) which is responsible for guarding the IB. Why is it that the tunnels are detected only after infiltration has taken place? Why is no action taken to pin responsibility for the lapses? Why are no proactive measures taken to prevent similar failures in the future? Is it lack of

resources, professionalism or sincerity?

The Government has spent crores of rupees to equip the BSF so that it can stop infiltration, including the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) to overcome the difficulties of the terrain. Not very long ago BSF officers had displayed to the media a tractor modified for tunnel detection. There were also claims of importing tunnel detection equipment. What happened to all that and why is that equipment not being used?

The BSF has been provided with seismic sensors and any underground disturbance is meant to be picked up by them. Definitely, the digging of a 150 metre-long tunnel should have been picked up by these sensors but it wasn't. Are these sensors non-functional or have they not been sited and deployed tactically? Incidentally these tunnels serve a dual purpose and the BSF knows that apart from sneaking in terrorists, these are also used for smuggling narcotics. Plus, what was the need to make the detection of the tunnel public? Rather it should have been booby-trapped and kept under surveillance. We have to accept that there are major chinks in our armour as far as guarding the IB sector is concerned and the enemy is exploiting these to its advantage.

Knowing the enemy's compulsion to keep Kashmir on the boil, strict measures need to be taken to prevent Islamabad from treating the IB sector as a preferred route for infiltration. First and foremost, the BSF needs to reconsider its pattern of deployment of ambushes at night. Apart from avoiding predictability, it needs to give up the pattern of deploying in a single line without depth. For day patrolling, it needs to be provided with detection equipment.

A "no gap pattern" deployment of CIBMS has to be ensured, including

liaisoning with neighbouring units to cover gaps. The fact that the terrorists trekked on foot for nine km undetected and thereafter boarded a truck on the NH and travelled up to Nagrota unchallenged is a matter of concern and exposes the gaps in the surveillance and vigilance of depth areas and the NH. Hence, armed highway patrols have to be activated. Mobile checkpoints have to be established to avoid predictability. Cameras need to be installed 24x7. There is an urgent and inescapable need for full body scanners at select places on the NH.

There is a valuable asset of ex-servicemen in these areas. A Border Defence Volunteer Force to strengthen the depth area surveillance and patrolling should be raised for utilising the services of these ex-servicemen. They should be deployed on either side of the NH, up to a depth of five-10 km, depending on the distance of the IB from the NH. It will strengthen the hands of the local police.

A serious review of command and control of all border guarding forces on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the IB is an urgent requirement. To have greater coordination and effective command and control, these need to be placed under the Ministry of Defence and the local Army formation. The present system has been found wanting time and again. Let not this aspect of national security become a victim of turf wars. Let not the recent incident at Nagrota meet the fate of similar encounters in the past. It should ring warning bells and lessons should be learnt from it. Pakistan is not going to change, we will have to change ourselves if we want to have a zero tolerance policy against terror.

(The author is a Jammu-based veteran, political commentator, columnist, security and strategic analyst)

# Through the eyes of 'the other'

The term is used to define 'the self' in contrast. But 'self-Orientalism', ironically, looks towards assumed Western authority for validation



NADEEM PARACHA

In philosophy and literary criticism, the term "the other" means an entity which is constructed to define the self. According to J Miller in *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Quantitative Research Methods*, "the other" is the opposite of the self. Both are perceptions though, constructed by an individual, community or the State. For example, the Nazis in Germany perceived the Jews as being racially inferior compared to the pure Aryan races. So the "imperfect" Jews were constructed as "the other" to define the "perfection" of the Aryans (white Germanic races). The self in this respect can be an individual or an ide-

ology belonging to a perceived social, religious or political whole that can only be defined in contrast to "the other" which is either explained as being inferior, different or even threatening to the whole. The nationalist idea which led to the creation of Pakistan was almost entirely based on this. Muslim nationalism in India could only be defined in contrast to Hindu majoritarianism, "the other", which was explained as being "culturally different" and politically threatening to the Muslim community of the region.

In the same way, Hindu nationalism cannot be defined without the construction of the Muslim other. The self in this context can only reassure and strengthen its perceived self-image by assuring the assumed dissimilarities of "the other". Scholars such as Edward Said and the post-modernist philosopher Michel Foucault severely castigated the self as an agent of conformity. To bolster the power and self-image of social and political conformity (of an elite), it demonised non-conformists as "the other". To Said, the act

of European colonialists of imagining the colonised native as an uncouth, entirely sensual and overtly emotional being was an act of enhancing the self-image of the superiority of the European self in contrast to the oriental other.

In his 1961 book, *Madness and Civilisation*, Foucault argues that the conventional idea of madness was a "social construct" imposed by a conformist elite upon those who refused to conform. Years later, Foucault went on to praise the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran by deriding Western powers for demonising Ayatollah Khomeini as "the other". According to the Lebanese author Kim Ghattas, in her book *Black Wave*, Foucault did not retract his support for Khomeini even when he established an authoritarian theocracy and ordered the execution of hundreds of Iranian men and women.

On the other hand, according to the critics of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Said clubbed together a diverse array of colonised peoples of Africa and Asia

as a homogenous whole and then defined this abstract totality in contrast to a ruthless European colonial set-up. In other words, to define a perceived homogenous self, he created "the other" in the shape of a colonial European elite, which was dismissed, in a rather binary manner, as being an entirely evil entity. This is understood as "Occidentalism."

This can imply that "the other" is not always passive. But on occasions, rather ironically, it strikes back, not by overturning how it is being perceived and demonised by a conformist collective-self, but by actually becoming exactly that. Foucault praised Iran's revolution as a "spiritual" event which was not understood by the "non-spiritual" West. He believed this was why the West was demonising Khomeini as being fanatical and mad.

Yet, in response, Khomeini intensified this image of him as a way to differentiate "Islamic Iran" from the secular West. He moulded a collective Islamic self in Iran in contrast to a Western secular other. This often

leads to what is known as "self-Orientalism" or when "the other" begins to behave exactly how a collective self portrays and perceives it as being.

The idea is either to own the characteristics and labels given to it by the collective self and weave them into an aggressive ideology against the collective self, or to own these labels and present them as being as superior as that to the collective self. Khomeini owned the label given to him by Western governments of being "a fanatic" and used it to intimidate the West, and on the other hand, normalise it as an ethos in Iran. Muslim radicals around the world followed suit.

Things in this respect are even more intriguing in India. For decades, self-Orientalism in India meant producing cultural and spiritual products that were designed according to how "mystical, magical and spiritual" India was perceived in the West. This play was good for business and public relations. But "the other" was missing. This made Indians seem entirely passive

and, as the historian Markus Daechsel demonstrates in his book *The Urdu Middle-class Milieu in Mid-twentieth Century India*, this image was problematic and too "effeminate" for Hindu nationalists, especially compared to the "masculinity" of some forms of Muslim nationalism.

After 2014, once Hindu nationalists gained an overwhelming majority in the Parliament, they began to create a "masculine" self-image and a collective self in contrast to "the other": i.e. the Indian Muslim community. Ironically, decades earlier, by creating a Hindu other to define his idea of Muslim nationalism, this is exactly what Jinnah was warning about. So, in a way, Hindu nationalists eventually decided to own and then flex the label that Jinnah gave them.

That of being hegemonic and a threat to India's Muslim community. Self-Orientalism is often used by tourism industries to cater to the "Orientalist" perceptions of the West. But even if some practitioners of Self-Orientalism pose as being anti-colo-

nial and authentic (as in being non-Western, or more spiritual), they are usually overtly conscious of how the West is perceiving them. During the 2013 elections in Pakistan, campaign commercials of Imran Khan's Centre-Right party, the PTI, showed a Pakistani being gladly welcomed by an immigration officer (in a blonde wig), presumably in a European country. Here the post-colonial self was seeking validation from a post-colonial Western other.

Sometimes indigenous acts are performed just to gain traction from Westerners. In 2003, the former chief of Jamaat-i-Islami, the late Qazi Hussain Ahmad, said there was nothing wrong in behaving or looking religious "because the West is more appreciative of this." This is an example of how self-Orientalism looks towards the West for validation. An image was adopted (of religiosity) to attract attention (and maybe praise) of "the others" by confirming to the perceptions of a "pious Muslim."

(Courtesy: Dawn)



# Protesting farmers have not ‘properly understood’ new farm laws’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog Member (Agriculture) Ramesh Chand has said protesting farmers have not fully or properly understood the new farm laws, asserting that these legislations have potential to increase farm income in a big way.

He further said that the motive of the three new farm laws is exactly the opposite of what the protesting farmers have understood.

In an interview to PTI, Chand said, "The way, I am reading these farmers, who are protesting, it looks like that they have not fully or properly understood these three laws."

"If these new farm laws are allowed to be implemented, there are very high chances of big increase in income of the farmers and in many states, it may even double," he said while replying to a question on whether the government is still confident of doubling farm income by 2022.

The Narendra Modi-led NDA government has set a tar-



get of doubling farmers' income by 2022.

On September 27, President Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to the three farm bills -- The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020; The Farmers (Empowerment and

Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020; and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020.

Elaborating further on farmer contentions, the Niti Aayog member said protesting farmers are saying that the

Essential Commodities Act (ECA) has been removed and full freedom has been given to stockists, black marketers, etc. "If you look at what actually has been done is, there is a modification done in the Essential Commodity Act. According to that modifica-

tion, a criterion has been laid when Essential Commodities Act can be imposed, and that is if there is a 50 per cent increase in prices of cereals, oil seeds and pulses, then it can be imposed," Chand explained.

"Or if there is 100 per cent increase of price of onion and potato then Essential Commodities Act can be imposed," he added.

Citing an example, the Niti Aayog member said that on October 23, the Centre had invoked the Act when onion prices were rising.

It was required, he said adding "states were told to put stock limit". Similarly, allaying fears of protesting farmers about contract farming, he pointed out that there is a big difference between corporate farming and contract farming.

"Corporate farming is not allowed in any states in India... and contract farming is already happening in many states and not even a single incidence has come where land of farmers has been taken over by private companies," Chand said.

## Finmin asks PSU general insurers to cut flab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry has asked public sector general insurance firms, especially National Insurance, Oriental Insurance and United India Insurance, to rationalise branches and cut down avoidable expenses to improve their financial health, sources said.

Earlier this year, the Union Cabinet decided to halt the merger process of three state-owned general insurance companies due to weak financial positions of these three companies. Instead, the government approved fund infusion of Rs 12,450 crore to meet regulatory parameters.

The finance ministry has asked these companies to cut the flab by rationalising branches and rein in other avoidable expenses like guest houses, etc, sources said.

Besides, sources said, they have been asked to expand their business through digital medium. As part of capital infusion exercise, the government also approved raising authorised share capital of National Insurance Company Ltd (NICL) to Rs 7,500 crore and that of United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIICL) and Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL) to Rs 5,000 crore each.



**It has asked these firms to cut the flab by rationalising branches and rein in other avoidable expenses like guest houses, etc, sources said**

the balance Rs 6,475 crore in one or more tranches.

The government in Budget 2020-21 had made a provision of Rs 6,950 crore for capital infusion in these three insurance companies in order to maintain the requisite minimum solvency ratio. Three PSU general insurers, with their large underwriting losses of Rs 14,443 crore, together have been responsible for the overall losses of over Rs 7,118 crore in 2019-20. NICL, with a combined ratio of 160.8 per cent and underwriting losses of Rs 5,759 crore, has suffered losses of Rs 4,108 crore while OICL (141 per cent, Rs 4,197 crore) and UIIL (132 per cent, Rs 4,487 crore) have been hit with losses of Rs 1,524 crore and Rs 1,486 crore, respectively in 2019-20.

## INDIA CORNER

### Corrugated packaging box makers facing raw material cost shock

The corrugated paper box industry is facing a crisis as prices of raw material have shot up by 30-35 per cent threatening to turn the business unviable, an industry official said. In India, there are about 350 automatic corrugators and more than 10,000 semi-automatic units across the country and the segment generates direct employment for about 4,00,000 people. The corrugated industry said the unprecedented steep escalation of price of Kraft Paper by the paper mills is the major hurdle while consuming industries are not willing to pass on the cost making their business unviable. The prices of both domestic and imported waste paper prices have gone up by Rs 4,500-5,000 per tonne in the last couple of months. China has proposed a ban of waste paper imports from January 2021 and as a result, the Chinese paper mills are stocking up the waste paper supplies available in overseas markets.



### Awign raises funds from Michael and Susan Dell Foundation

Tech-led jobs platform Awign said it has raised funds from existing investors Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, Unitus Ventures and Eagle10 Ventures that will be used to finance its expansion to more cities and introduce new services. The company however did not say how much money was raised in the latest pre-series B funding round. Till now, it has raised about USD 4.9 million, including the latest round. Set up by Annanya Sarthak, Gurpreet Singh and Praveen Sah in 2016, Awign has worked with over 1.5 lakh people, and grown 25x in the last 2 years. Currently, it manages a diverse fleet of trained gig workforce across more than 7,000 pin codes in India. Gig workers are independent and temporary workers. They enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies to provide services to the company's clients. This has confirmed the outlook Awign had about rapidly deploying demand-based gig jobs across the country, he added.



### FPIs net buyers for 2nd consecutive month in Nov

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) remained net buyers for the second consecutive month in November by pumping in a whopping Rs 62,951 crore in Indian markets. For equities segment, this is the highest quantum of money invested ever since the FPI data has been made available by the National Securities Depository Ltd. According to depositories data, FPIs invested a net Rs 60,358 crore into equities and Rs 2,593 crore in debt segment, taking the total net investment to Rs 62,951 crore between November 3-27. In October, FPIs were net buyers to the tune of Rs 22,033 crore. Global investors are preferring to invest in emerging markets more than developed markets as the potential upside is much higher in emerging markets, said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.



### Five of top 10 most valued firms lose together Rs 91,699 cr m-cap

The combined market valuation of five of top-10 most valued firms declined by Rs 91,699 crore last week, with heavyweight Reliance Industries emerging as the worst hit. While Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Infosys, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Bharti Airtel suffered losses in their market valuation, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever Limited, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Bajaj Finance were the gainers. RIL's market valuation tumbled by Rs 60,829.21 crore to Rs 12,23,416.97 crore. The market capitalisation of HDFC plummeted Rs 13,703.75 crore to Rs 4,05,996.11 crore. Bharti Airtel's valuation declined Rs 11,020.23 crore to Rs 2,52,755.97 crore and that of ICICI Bank went lower by Rs 5,090.54 crore to Rs 3,26,225.04 crore.



## BIDS FOR DHFL TAKEOVER

### Adani: Forfeit deposit of those against recovery of public money

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani's roads-to-mining group has indicated that it can improve on its Rs 33,000 crore takeover offer for collapsed housing lender DHFL and has sought forfeiture of deposits of bidders seeking to vitiate auction by questioning maximum recovery of public money.

In an email written to the administrator, who is running the DHFL auction under insolvency process, the Adani Group said it has followed due process scrupulously and its intent has always been to provide an unconditional offer and potential value maximisation for all the stakeholders and at the same time ensuring an expeditious consummation of the process".

In the email, uploaded on DHFL data room and seen by PTI, the Adani Group said it was pained at some bidders resorting to media to sensationalise issues with an aim to prevent value maximisation



for the lenders and depositors.

Four entities -- Adani Group, Piramal Group, US-based asset management company Oaktree Capital Management and SC Lowy -- submitted bids for DHFL in October but lenders, who are getting DHFL auctioned to recover unpaid loans, wanted suitors to revise their bids as original offers were low.

The Adani Group, which had initially bid only for DHFL's wholesale and Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) portfolio, in the revised offer

submitted on November 17 bid for the entire book, offering a total of Rs 30,000 crore plus interest of Rs 3,000 crore, a source in lenders consortia said. This was more than Rs 28,300 crore offered by Oaktree, the source said adding the US firm's conditional bid had outlined that it would hold back Rs 1,000 crore on insurance claims.

Piramal quoted Rs 23,500 crore only for the retail portfolio of DHFL while Hong Kong-based SC Lowy bid Rs 2,350 crore for SRA.

Soon after, rival bidders cried foul over Adani's bid, saying the group had submitted the bid past the deadline and that it cannot expand on its original plan.

All the three rival bidders sought disqualification of Adani, the source said.

In the November 22 email, the Adani Group said it had originally put in an expression of interest or EoI for both Option 1 and 2 (full book and part of the portfolio).

## JSW Steel acquiring land for steel plant in Odisha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic steel major JSW Steel is in the process of acquiring land at Jagatsinghpur in Odisha where it has proposed to set up a 13.2 MTPA greenfield steel plant, a top company official said. Speaking to PTI, JSW Steel

Director - Commercial Marketing and Corporate Strategy Jayant Acharya said it is the same site near the port of Paradip where POSCO was keen to set up a 12 MTPA steel plant. The Odisha government and POSCO had signed a MoU in this regard in 2005.

## IndoStar Capital to exit corp lending biz

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Alternative asset manager Brookfield and private equity player Everstone promoted non-banking finance company IndoStar Capital Finance is looking to fully exit from corporate lending business by March 2022, its executive vice-chairman and chief executive R Sridhar said.

The company has been

reducing its corporate book over the last two years, and has brought down the portfolio by close to Rs 3,500 crore.

"From a portfolio size of Rs 6,000 crore in 2018, the corporate book is down to Rs 2,500 crore as of date, which is a reduction of around 60 per cent (We have collected Rs 3,500 crore). By March 2022, the wholesale and corporate book will become zero,"

Sridhar said. The company will continue to focus on and expand its retail segment, he said. Currently, retail segment contributes 73 per cent to the company's total book, while balance 27 per cent is from corporate segment.

In the retail business, the company focuses on vehicle finance, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and affordable housing finance.

# Covid widens socio-economic gap: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women-led micro businesses in India has exacerbated the vast socio-economic gap, finds a survey.

The survey suggests that governments, banks and other financial institutions must immediately follow effective gender-sensitive policy responses to improve the situation.

The findings are based on a collaborative study by Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME) and LEAD at Krea University, Andhra Pradesh which seeks to capture the impact on micro



enterprises in India during the COVID-19 crisis through a survey. LEAD is a non-profit research organisation.

The survey started in May

and will be concluding in January. The gender specific results were for the data collected between July to August, covering about 1,800 micro enter-

prises. The regions and states covered in the survey include North India (Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh), South India (Tamil Nadu), and West India (Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan).

The study monitors key trends on the impact of the crisis and government-mandated lockdowns on business livelihoods, employment, and the income of nano and micro businesses.

According to the 6th economic census, women entrepreneurs own over 8 million enterprises in India or about 13 per cent of the total units.

According to the survey, women-led micro and small

businesses are particularly at risk because they include smaller companies working in lower-margin markets and are more prone to face instability than micro businesses led by men.

Women usually operate with structural and systemic constraints in addition to cultural norms and restrictions. So, the ability to take risks, make mistakes and, more importantly, to fail, is not a liberty licensed to women.

Notably, 43 per cent of women-owned enterprises in the survey fall in the category that reports less than Rs 10,000 profit a month whereas only 16 per cent of those owned by men fall in this category.



## 5G prospects compelling for India: Qualcomm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has a big market that needs to upgrade and set up for 5G offtake, and the government and policy makers can trigger growth of the telecom space by releasing spectrum, including 5G, in adequate quantity and at affordable prices," a senior official of Qualcomm has said.

5G would positively impact India's telecom market, the second largest in the world and "still growing", as increased data consumption and heightened adoption of technology due to the pandemic has prepared the market for the advent of next-generation technology, said Rajen Vagadia, VP and President, Qualcomm India and SAARC.

"The case for the immediate rollout of 5G networks in India is a compelling one. It is no longer a choice, but a prerequisite for the country's growth and development," Vagadia told PTI.

India regulators will have a big role to play in ensuring that 5G in India is deployed to its "full potential".

As the world's second

largest telecom market, India holds huge promise for growth, Vagadia said.

"The government and policy makers can trigger growth of the Indian telecom market by releasing spectrum, including 5G, in adequate quantity and at affordable prices," he said in an email interview.

Since networks are congested, it is "prudent" to make the spectrum across all bands including mmW (millimetre wave) available for immediate deployment, starting with trials, he said.

5G will completely redefine mobile experiences and enable generations to benefit from it, the company said.

Tech titan, Qualcomm, is a wireless technology innovator and fuelling the development, launch and expansion of 5G.

"We are driving conversations at all levels of the ecosystem to catalyse the commercial reality of 5G in the country -- from telco, education, healthcare, automotive, medicine to manufacturing," Vagadia said.

India has a big market that needs to upgrade and set up for 5G growth, he pointing out.

## Housejoy on track to clock Rs 150 cr GMV in FY21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tech-led home construction, maintenance and beauty services provider Housejoy has seen a strong growth in its business, driven by segments like construction and beauty, and is on track to close the financial year with Rs 150 crore in GMV, a top company official said.

Speaking to PTI, Housejoy founder and CEO Sanchit Gaurav said the company has crossed pre-COVID numbers by a significant stretch in certain categories like home cleaning and virus fumigation, while the festive season spurred demand in segments like beauty services.

"We have been growing at 20 per cent month-on-month profitably and have recovered to pre-COVID numbers overall post the lockdown. We have expanded to 10 new cities for our on-demand and construction business," he said.

The company had clocked Rs 135 crore GMV (gross merchandise value) in FY20, and is on track to close the current fiscal at Rs 150 crore in GMV, Gaurav added.



## NOT 'ROWDIES' ON ROADIES, THIS TIME

Who says you can't make meaningful friendships on a reality show? Four friends from different walks of life, across four different towns, meet at a common point - the country's biggest youth-centric reality show, *Roadies*! The longest-running show whose foundation was laid down by the monozogotic Raghu Ram and Rajiv Lakshman and is today airing its most unique season titled *Roadies Revolution* hosted by none other than one of the biggest television personality Rannvijay Singha, celebrating the undying zeal of roadies coupled with their willingness to bring about tangible progress in society.

There's so much more to friendship than just having fun together. The word sacrifice, as huge as it sounds, I applied it for the bond of friendship that you'll see in the coming episodes. For instance, Vipin doesn't only support me but also makes sure he brings immense positivity in my life through the amazing comic timing that he has. All of us try to overlook each other's mistakes without a pinch of ego and are not pretentious at all! I can simply be myself, and they won't judge me, so pretending is never the rule amongst us", shares Zabi over a telephonic conversation. Zabi started working for animal rights when he was 13 years old and at the age of 16, he started his own shelter. When he was 18, he convinced his college to open a shelter for animals. So far, he has saved more than 3,000 animals. Nearly everyone says they love animals, but a young guy like Zabi has taken his love for animals to a whole new level with the help of the Telangana government, and we

by Jayant, there wasn't a moment when any of them belittled him due to his financial background but instead, put up with any role to keep him happy. "They support me through my hardest times, I often don't have to speak words, they just understand me through my emotions. Zabi is that tight-knit friend who keeps us together at all times! I never imagined making such beautiful bonds, that too on a reality show. They encouraged me to nourish my passion for dance and expand my good Samaritan deeds off privileged under-privileged students through the *Roadies Revolution*. They truly made me realise what's my worth and all I can send them, is my genuine love", Jayant says.

Remember the hilarious 'Land kara de' viral video, that had a guy appeal to the paragliding pilot to land him to safety? Yes, that guy's Vipin Sahu, and he's

believes Vipin. Donating a lumpsum amount of his monthly salary to the needy is what attracted the other three friends to build a strong companionship with Vipin, apart from his hilarious jokes that also made the gang leaders roll. He shares saying, "*Roadies Revolution* didn't mean contestants who start a revolution but about ones who're already creating one. I was selected, and in the culling process, I found Zabi. Oh, what a man! He radiates positivity to another level, you just can't sulk in front of him, because he won't let you. Be it Zabi's, role of an animal activist, Abhimanyu being a mental health advocate, and Jayant training the poor, - the distinctiveness of all of us, brought us together. With time, our friendship is getting much stronger. Their presence in my life, my reality has become much more beautiful."

Vipin Sahu was successful in changing his stature in the social media world, and is now at a better place with three solid friends!

"It all happened out

the third bosom friend that openly shared his darkest secrets, joys and sorrows to Zabi, Jayant and Abhimanyu. To eradicate the repute of being just 'The Parachute Viral Guy', Vipin came to *Roadies* with an ongoing revolution that he's a part of, in his city. Monthly giving is the best way to help our poorest brothers and sisters,

think it's pretty great.

Talking about the second musketeer of the beautiful clan, Jayant just doesn't consider the other three as friends but as his own siblings. In a push to end domestic violence, he auditioned for *Roadies* and called for firm action to stop abuse against women, after he witnessed his alcoholic father beat up his mother all his life. He couldn't take anymore and chose to take action, but little did he know he would be returning home with three amazing companions that he will call friends for life. As narrated



Zabi, Jayant, Abhimanyu and Vipin hailed the show with true honesty, trust and immense understanding between them! Creating a rift amongst them amid a reality show, politics was the last thing anyone could have tried, as the bond they share both on-screen and off-screen today, stands out from the rest, with each one of them having a unique charm.

Zabi Khan from Hyderabad, who entered the show with a revolutionary movement of providing spaces for abandoned, stray and disabled animals, cannot imagine a life without his three friends that he found on the show. "My world seems to be incomplete without them today, we look out for each other on the show and that's what makes us a unique group.

The concept of 'Reality show' brings to our minds drama, entertainment, and/or fights! And a show like *Roadies* is infamous for profanity, challenges and is inciting at times. But here's an adorable group of four, who walked into the show from different places, with meaning and purpose. The four friends, Zabi, Jayant, Abhimanyu and Vipin, who're melting people's hearts with their bond, talk to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL, about what brought them together, how they pick each other up and more



## Is your dog happy?

Every dog has his or her own individual personality. This personality goes beyond the common labels used for each breed, for instance, Labradors are often described as being 'friendly and outgoing'. But all Labradors may not necessarily exhibit the same likes, dislikes and behavioural traits. Understanding and catering to your dog's individual personality is a great starting point for creating a healthy and happy lifestyle for him or her, says Rashi Narang, Founder, Heads Up For Tails. She points out few points for pet parents to keep in mind:

**NUTRITION:** A healthy and balanced diet is the keystone of good health. A dog's nutritional needs are influenced by their breed, lifestyle, age and specific health conditions. The diet will alter as your pet grows from puppyhood to adulthood and then again at the senior stage. It's best to keep your pet on a species appropriate diet and consult a vet or a certified canine nutritionist to make sure your doggie is getting all the necessary nutrients.

**EXERCISE:** Many of the breeds that we have as companions today like labs, beagles and cocker spaniels were originally bred as working dogs.

They used to accompany their owners on hunts or fishing expeditions with specific roles to play. Today, these breeds still have these instincts and so, need both physical and mental exercise as an outlet for their abilities. A dog that is well-exercised is rarely destructive or 'naughty'. Besides their walks, you can give your dog puzzle games to exercise their minds. Tough chews (not rawhide) can also be relaxing as chewing releases stress and anxiety. You can connect with a behaviourist to understand what games you can incorporate into your pet's daily routine. Fun interactive games also help strengthen the pet-parent bond.

**GROOMING:** Daily grooming is often ignored by pet parents but is an important component of a pet's life. Having a well brushed, healthy skin and coat helps your pet feel more comfortable. Besides a daily brushing with an appropriate brush, make sure their ears and teeth are cleaned routinely as well. Rather than using harsh chemicals for tick and flea prevention, we recommend using natural products that are gentler on your pet's skin and overall health. When used consistently and in conjunction with a nutritious diet, these can be very effective.

## Films inspiring you to be better

Films are a great way to relax and unwind but they are also a really important way to connect, learn, and draw inspiration. With WFH making lives tough for a lot of us, *The Pioneer* lists a few films that portray strong female characters you can't afford to miss out on!

Hundreds of films are made about men and their jobs, but working women are not often portrayed. Not only are films a great way to inspire, they also function as a fun and informative tool to teach the young ones life lessons. When you see someone on-screen doing something that you aspire to do in your life, it gives you the motivation and confidence to keep working on yourself. Here is a list of some brilliant films for all the young women out there looking for inspiration and confidence

### MARDAANI

We've seen loads of men in a police uniform, from *Singham* to *Dabangg*. But how many policewomen have we seen on the big screen? *Mardaani* is not just another light-hearted flick with jokes galore but is a hard-hitting gorgeous piece of cinema that goes into a lot of deep-rooted issues and systematic crimes in the country.



The protagonist is a strong, shockingly fierce, and determined woman who makes you want to aim to be the best as well. "There is a dearth of stories on women that are sincerely told, while tapping onto the right insight of their problems and journey. So, somewhere I think, *Mardaani* as a universe, is tapping into the core of being a woman, especially in a patriarchal society," writer of *Mardaani*, Gopi Puthran had said.

### TUMHARI SULU

If life is your cup of tea, *Tumhari Sulu* is the perfect film to watch. The story follows the life of a simple housemaker who turns her household upside down by taking on the role of a radio jockey. Full of laughter and tears, the film promises to take you on a wholesome journey. Working women in Indian households often face impossible choices and unsupportive families. This film takes you on a tour of all the pitfalls of that life. Director Suresh Triveni has given the housewife a positive and a fresher interpretation with his film *Tumhari Sulu*. "After a long time, *Tumhari Sulu* looks at the story of a housemaker choosing to balance both her home and her career. She doesn't mind handling her household chores. I love calling her an enthu cutlet. She adds value to her life by participating in various



contests which gives her a sense of acknowledgment and fulfillment. We rarely see a positive portrayal of a homemaker-cum-career oriented woman. That is why people connected with Sulu so much," the director reportedly said.

### MISS INDIA

The film traces the journey of Samyukta, a young middle-class woman who has entrepreneurial dreams and moves to the U.S and launches a tea brand called *Miss India* bolstered by the support of her grandfather. She takes on another Indian-origin entrepreneur played by Jagapathi Babu who sells coffee. The movie hints at a mass masala style face-off between the two rivals. "It helped me observe how a successful business-woman conducts herself and speaks to the point," said Keerthy Suresh, via a virtual



press conference.

### GUNJAN SAXENA: THE KARGIL GIRL

If you are looking for some action, the perfect film to get your adrenaline pumping is *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*. Recently released the film took inspiration to a new level. Some career paths are often closed to women for various reasons. Some families do not want their daughters to take on a masculine role. Some jobs just do not have space for growth when it comes to women. This film is a blast of inspiration for all those women who want to take over any such job descriptions. If you're dreaming of that defense forces life, this is the film to watch.

### GAME OVER

Taapsee Pannu plays Swapna, a stay-at-home video game professional. Something is eating away at her when the first encounter happens. A memory of a physical assault appears to be the cause and

then she finds herself getting panic attacks, especially in the dark. Her therapist assured her this is a reflex reaction triggered by the realisation that it was around this time in an earlier year that she was assaulted. *Game Over* is as crisp and to-the-point as a thriller can get with a strong women-centric role. Also, it is inventive, intelligent, does not take the viewers lightly and above all, is terrifying. "Life is what you are going to make of it, you should have the will power to live and not just survive. We all have two lives, the second one starts when you have only one left. That's what was written in that envelope I'm holding and when I read it for the first time it hit me hard. It made me believe in living in the moment so much. Not that I was much of a planner before that. *Game Over* was again more than just a movie, more than just a story for me, and for everyone who understood the meaning behind it," shared Taapsee via a post on social media.



PARTY

A TREAT FOR SHOPOHOLICS

Aakriti Elite's Exhibition and Sale at Hotel Taj Krishna, Hyderabad, attracted quite discerning eyeballs. Word-of-mouth got many other women also to check out various collections on sale, at the 3-day exhibition from November 27 - 29.



● Lakshmi



● Aruna



● Geetha Rajput



● Kalyani



● Sangeetha Kosuru



● Sashi Nahata

Cloud over India's entry in Live Action Short Film category at Oscars

The Sayani Gupta-starrer, *Shameless*, by writer-director Keith Gomes, is one of the films from India eligible for qualification in the Live Action Short Film Category at the 93rd Oscars.

Just days after the Film Federation of India selected Malayalam film *Jallikattu* as India's official entry to the Oscars 2021, Gomes and his team shared that their film *Shameless* is the official Indian entry in the Live Action Short Film category at the 93rd Oscars.

Each year, the Film Federation of India selects the Indian official entry for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film.

In the case of short films, five Indian shorts are eligible for Oscar qualification.

With over 2000 entries, ShortsTV had hosted the third edition of the Best of India Short Film Festival earlier this month.

The jury had declared short *Natkhat*, featuring and co-produced by Vidya Balan, as the winning film of the third edition. This made the film eligible for an Oscar nomination.

Following the announcement, Vidya had told IANS: "This is great news. Not something I had thought of, but I am very happy."

However, the other finalists of this edition are also eligible for Oscar consideration.

These other short films are:

Gomes' *Shameless*, *Sound-Proof* by director Aditya Kelgaonkar, *Safar* helmed by Pratyusha Gupta and director Dheeraj Jindal's *Trapped*.

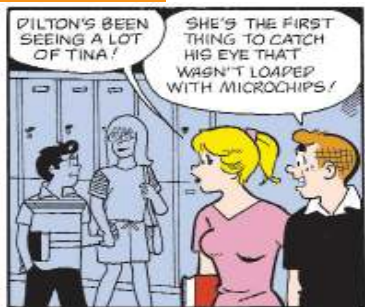
"Best of India Short Film Festival has established itself as a leading industry festival spotlighting inimitable, original work and give Indian talent a chance to bring home an Oscar. It has paved the way for Indian filmmakers to take their art to Oscars and provided them a platform to showcase their films to a global audience through ShortsTV, the world's only dedicated platform for short entertainment," said Carter Pilcher, Chief Executive of ShortsTV.

The Oscars shortlist will be unveiled on February 9, 2021, and nominations will be announced on March 15.

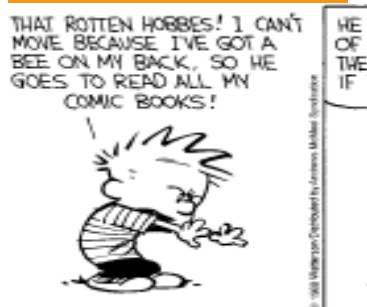


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



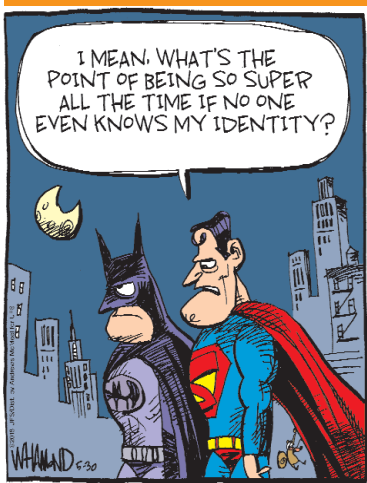
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



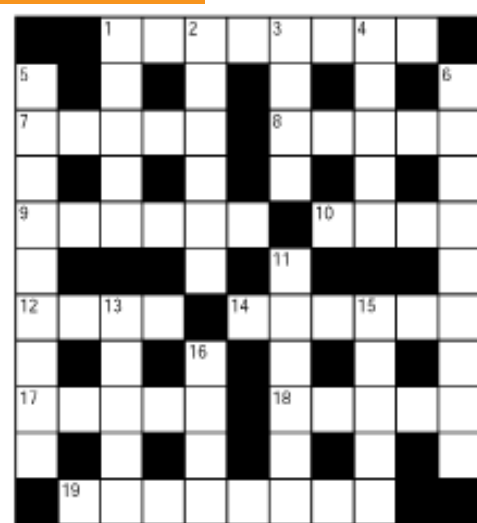
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Observing
- 5 A green pointy vegetable
- 7 A thrown weapon
- 8 A large stream
- 9 The writer of a book
- 10 A small green creature
- 12 Weapons
- 14 Purchased
- 17 Beneath
- 18 Railway coaches pulled by an engine
- 19 Soft shoes worn indoors

DOWN

- 1 Grind this up for flour
- 2 Extreme fear
- 3 Difficult

SOLUTION



SUDOKU



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

Rules

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



# Sesh to headline *HIT 2*

With Vishwak Sen's date diary filled to the optimum, producers of *HIT 2* got the nod of Adivi Sesh to front it. Script-wise, *HIT 2* will be an independent film, film's producer Prashanti Tipirneni tells NAGARAJ GOUD

In a significant development, we have learned that Vishwak Sen is no longer part of Sailesh Kolanu's *HIT 2*. While the actor's initial agreement was to reprise his part in the sequel as well, his busy schedule meant that he had to make way. According to a source close to him, he has close to eight new projects in his kitty after he wraps up *Paagal* and with Sailesh set to start *HIT* Hindi remake once he completes *HIT 2*, it was a mutual decision that he doesn't board the project.

Adivi Sesh, who has delivered

multiple super hits in a row, will be spearheading *HIT 2* now. "Vishwak's dates were a bit tight, so we had to approach Sesh, who gave his consent immediately after the narration. Script-wise, *HIT 2* will be an independent film and it will roll in March next year," Prashanti Tipirneni, one of the producers of the project, told *The Pioneer* when contacted.

Sesh, who is extremely choosy with his projects, is right now filming for *Major*, which in another two months will be wrapped up. In *HIT 2*, he will be seen as a cop who will be investigating more dangerous cases.



## KS Ravikumar to act in web series



Tamil-Telugu filmmaker KS Ravikumar, who has made cameo appearances in most of his directorial ventures, is making his Telugu debut as an actor with an upcoming untitled web series, *The Pioneer* has exclusively learnt. To feature Viswanth in the lead, the series, according to a source, is a full-length comedy entertainer and rolls next month in Hyderabad. K Vivek is debuting as a director with the project, a production venture of MLV Satyanarayana.

The source adds, "Vivek is directing from a script of Rajdooth directors Arjun-



Carthyk. Viswanth will be seen as a Casanova, while Ravikumar will be playing his father. The latter has

a full-length role, prompting him to hop on board. The fun emerges from Viswanth's characterisation and spills over to eight episodes the writing team and the director have conceived. Each episode will run into 30-40 minutes."

The source goes on to mention that after they wrap up the shooting, the makers want to approach a prominent OTT platform to release it.

— NG

## Varudu Kavalenu moves to Dubai

After being shot in Hyderabad for over a month, the filming of Naga Shaurya and Ritu Varma-starrer *Varudu Kavalenu* has now moved to Dubai. On Sunday, Shaurya was clicked by the paparazzi as he entered Shamsabad airport to travel to Dubai.

A source says, "It's a new mini schedule of three days and the shoot will commence from Monday. Debutante director Soujanya Medarametla is planning to shoot some introduction sequences of Shaurya in this brief outing, which doesn't require Ritu Varma."

A pure love story which traces the journey of a guy and girl, who are honest and live by principles, *Varudu Kavalenu* is a production venture of Sithara Entertainments. The likes of Nadiya, Murali Sharma, Vennela Kishore, Praveen, Ananth, Kireeti Damaraju and Rangasthala Mahesh are playing supporting roles, while Vishal Chandrasekhar is composing music for the project.

## Kriti as Sita in ADIPURUSH?

Although names like Anushka Sharma, Kiara Advani and Keerthy Suresh were banded about to play Sita in Prabhas-starrer *Adipurush*, it looks like Kriti Sanon has landed the project. According to reports emerging from Mumbai, producer Bhushan Kumar and director Om Raut after considering many names have zeroed in on Kriti to play the part. Besides the fact that she did a couple of Telugu films, it is said that her first-time pairing with Prabhas and height sealed the deal for the actress.

While her calendar is chock-a-block with multiple projects, reports say that Kriti didn't want to miss an opportunity to be a part of a project of this scale and immediately adjusted dates. She will join the sets towards the end of January in Mumbai.

Meanwhile, reports further state that Sunny Singh, who shot to fame with films like *Pyar Ka PUNCHAMA* and *Sonu Ke Titu Ki*

*Sweetie*, has been signed on to play Laxman in the project. The official confirmation of both the Hindi actors is awaited though.

*Adipurush*, a screen adaptation of a chapter from Indian epic Ramayana and revolves around the triumph of good over evil, will be shot in Hindi and Telugu simultaneously and later dubbed into Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and other foreign languages.

Saif Ali Khan will be seen as Lankesh, an intelligent demon who is menacing, lethal and brutal, all at the same time. A 3D action-drama high on visual effects, it is a joint production venture between Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Om Raut, Prasad Sutar and Rajesh Nair.

## Sai Tej's Xmas gift

The makers of Sai Tej-starrer *Solo Brathuke So Better* over the weekend announced that the film will release as a Christmas gift-December 25, making it the first Telugu film featuring a notable actor to have a theatrical bow after the pandemic shut theatres for more than eight months.

Sai Tej, talking about the release, said, "We all know the kind of situation we are facing this year. It is in this context, we are ready to entertain the audience again. This Christmas, be ready to laugh as an entertainer packaged with romance, fun,

comedy, and emotions in equal measure will greet you in cinemas."

In the film, Sai plays a student who is averse to the idea of being in a relationship, leading him to form a club called SBSB (*Solo Brathuke So Better*). Nabha Natesh, on the other hand, plays a spunky young girl who challenges Sai's steely resolve to stay single. The film, which is a Thaman musical, marks the directorial debut of Subbu.

The digital rights have already been pocketed by ZEE group and it will release on ZEE5 app exactly a month after the theatrical release.







## Amberpet residents complain of 'stinking' drinking water

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's ruling party Telangana Rashtra Samithi's recent promise of free drinking water to woo the voters in GHMC election did make several citizens happy. But, while free water is one thing, the citizens of Amberpet constituency are asking for clean water.

Several residents of the area complain of receiving drinking water that is mixed with drainage water and the problem has been persistent. A resident of Patel Nagar, said, "It's not a one off thing. This has been happening for so many days. Every other day we get



stinking and dirty water from our taps. We have to call the local water board authorities to fix it. Despite many complaints no permanent solution to problem has been implemented."

Another resident of Amberpet, P Munir Ahmed Jaber, who is contesting from the area on Congress' ticket, says, "Even as I am walking on the road now, the drainage is flowing on the footpaths. This water gets mixed with the drinking water pipe and the same water comes in our taps. I have promised the citizens that if I win this work will

be done on priority."

Confirming the information, Kushal Kumar, an officer with Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board in the area shares, "Yes, the issue is being dealt with. The recent floods increased the problem. However, we are looking into it. In certain areas, the lanes are very narrow, and the sewage lines are a little old and have some holes. So, when the drainage gets full, the water gets mixed. However, we attend to such issues as soon as they are brought to our notice."

## Birla Mandir graces Hyd's skyline

The glistening white structure dotting the skyline of modern Hyderabad, Birla Mandir is located towards the southern end of Hussain Sagar Lake in Hyderabad. It situated atop the Kala Pahad which is a twin hillock of Naubat Pahad. The Birlas built the Hyderabad temple in 1976 and constructed it with white marbles imported from Rajasthan. The hillock is at a height of 280-feet situated on a 13-acre plot.

The construction took almost a decade to complete and was consecrated in the same year by Swami Ranganathananda of Ramakrishna Mission. Birla Foundation, known for constructing other similar temples across the country is the patron of Birla Mandir at Hyderabad too.

The temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu present in the form of Sri Venkateswara. One can find the kirtanas of Tyagaraja, Annamayya, and Ramadasu reverberating against the backdrop of a blue sky in the morning. The temple combines the architectural styles of Utkal (Oriya) and South Indian style. The Rajagopuram represents South Indian archi-



tectural style while the tower over the main shrine also called the Jagadananda Vimanam represents the Oriyan style. The temple also boasts of finely sculpted marbled images depicting the great epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The 42-feet high sanctum sanctorum (garbha gudi) is an impressive replica of the Venkateswara temple at Tirumala.

The presiding deity is made of granite, 11-feet tall. Swami Venkateswara's consorts Padmavati and Andal



are worshipped in adjoining separate shrines. The Birla Mandir complex also houses a temple dedicated to Buddha along with fresco

paintings describing his life. The temple also has separate shrines for other gods such as Shiva, Ganesh, Saraswati, Hanuman, Brahma, Lakshmi

and Saibaba.

In the evening, Birla Mandir presents a spectacular sight upon illumination. A trip to Hyderabad is considered incomplete without Birla Mandir by tourists for the last three decades. An enchanting Birla Mandir trip is a trip to remember and combines excellent architecture and workmanship and is a place for solace and spirituality.

To enjoy the history and architecture of Birla Temple, a visit to the temple is a must during night. At night, this whole place gleams with soft lighting, creating the combined effect of composed and pure God welcoming visitors from their dark surroundings. There is a mezzanine sit-out where people sit on heels and rest before leaving. Visitors can also take delight in visiting large store on their way out, which sells interesting religious books and various pieces of art related to this temple. The mandir has around 8,000 to 10,000 devotees and on weekends it increases to more than 20,000 devotees. During festivals like Dusshera, Ugadi, Ekadashi, Sankranti, etc, more than 50,000 devotees visit the temple.

## SEC directs 'outsiders' to leave GHMC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

State Election Commissioner Partha Sarathi has warned that SEC will impose two-year jail term and fine if contestants conducted campaign during silence period. Speaking to the media, Partha Sarathi directed the outsiders to leave GHMC limits and that a ban has been imposed on selling liquor from 6 pm on November 29 to 6 pm on December 1.

Out of total 74,67,256 voters within GHMC limits, 38,89,637 are male voters and 35,76,941 are female voters, while the remaining 678 are others.

He said that elections would be held in 9,101 polling stations and 22,272 live webcasting had been set up.

He stated that they had directed the officials concerned to sanitise the polling stations before the day of polling. Special queues will be arranged for elderly and differently-abled people who could not get postal ballot.

In all, 1,122 candidates are in the fray to test their fate in 150 divisions. TRS-150, BJP-149, Congress-146, TDP-106, MIM-51, CPI-17 and CPM-12, while the remaining 415 are independents and others.

## Tight security in place for D-Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the high-voltage election campaign in poll-bound Greater Hyderabad coming to an end on Sunday evening, the Hyderabad City Police have intensified the surveillance with monitoring four lakh CCTV cameras throughout the Commissionerate limits.

According to the security analysis, there are around 4,979 polling stations in the Commissionerate which are classified into four categories - normal, sensitive, hypersensitive and critical polling stations.

Accordingly, there are 2,146 normal, 1,517 sensitive, 1,138 hypersensitive and 167 critical polling stations.

Briefing the media about the security arrangements, Hyderabad City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar said, "Six Armed



Police Teams were deployed at Critical Hypersensitive Police Centers and 293 pickets were established in hypersensitive polling stations. Around 22,000 police personnel were deployed in the Hyderabad Commissionerate limits in

view of GHMC Elections for 89 wards under Hyderabad Commissionerate."

In addition to that striking force, emergency response teams were deployed and 406 mobile parties were formed for constantly monitoring and 29

border check posts in Hyderabad Commissionerate limits. As per the orders of the State Election Officer, the leaders of the respective parties who came from other places should leave Hyderabad after 6 pm this evening.

## High-voltage GHMC campaign ends

Continued from Page 3

As campaigning came to a close, the parties are now trying to keep up the momentum and top it with liquor and cash distribution.

The parties are 'pumping' in booze, money in last-ditch efforts to woo voters ahead of the polling day -- December 1. Candidates are

trying to bribe voters online as well. Digital gateway payment mobile apps make it easier for candidates to distribute money online without coming under the lens of election authorities or police.

Depending on the 'tough fight' put up by rivals, the candidates are offering sums ranging between Rs 1,000 to Rs 3,000 per vote. Liquor

shops witnessed a huge rush on Sunday as people scrambled to get hold of bottles of branded liquor offered by candidates free of cost after striking a deal with shop owners. As liquor shops remain closed from 6 pm on Sunday to 6 pm on December 1, people thronged liquor shops throughout the day to pro-

cure stocks. Most of the shops displayed 'No stock boards' by evening with stocks evaporating in no time.

To get a carton of liquor, all one had to do was to produce a signed slip, bearing a serial number, coded stamp and signatures of an office-bearer of the political party concerned.

## Hyderabadis not keen on 'Bhagyanagar'

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA  
■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad has a great legacy to its name from the time of its establishment. The kingdom which was the most developed Princely State in British-ruled India, has emerged as a city that is a leader in the IT sector in India.

However, this GHMC election, several politicians have been trying to convince people to change the name of this glorious city to Bhagyanagar. But, it seems like the residents of Hyderabad are not happy with this discussion.

Several people have been tweeting about how they don't want a change in the name of the city. Giving an insight about the history of the city's name, celebrated historian, Dr Mohammed Safiullah, says, "Hyderabad will celebrate 430 years of its foundation next year. And in





these years, it was called Hyderabad for 417 years. There is no concrete proof to show that it was ever called Bhagyanagar. Then why talk about it now."


He adds, "The irony is the demand to change the name

of this city is coming from people who have never lived here. The people of this city haven't and will never demand this." Not just the prominent citizens, but even the students don't want this change. Balmoori Venkat,

State President of National Students' Union of India, says, "This is a pretty cheap political move. We now know that where ever BJP starts campaigning they try to polarise the voters in the name of religion. But, no one wants a

 **Nvijaykishore (@nvijaykishore)**  
Hyderabad has an international recognition. If changed to #Bhagyanagar, it will lose to other metropolita globally as there is no name for Bhagyanagar. Maybe that is what they want. To fall behind Lucknow

 **Tamanna (@tamannakhanaj)**  
#Bhagyanagar I have a question! After changing the name of Hyderabad to bhagyanagar Do you provide employment, decrease poverty, 15 lakh to each, women safety, Development??? Try to gave explanation if you're a BJP supporter if you read above question!

 **EXPLORER (@Archer\_0296)**  
Even if BJP won the majority seats, it still need the state assembly approval to change the city name. I don't know people were that dumb to think BJP can change the name, if it wins mayor seat. Right now BJP got only 2 seats in Telangana assembly. #Bhagyanagar

name change here. Hard luck for them, this city knows better than to vote in the name of religion. Internationally,

Hyderabad has a brand name. Why even think about changing it, especially when the city is doing well."

## Amit Shah vows to end 'Nizam

Continued from Page 3

an apparent reference to Owaisi's (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi) party or KCR's party TRS, and also from corruption to transparency. Shah also demanded to know if KCR had the courage to openly tell the people about his party's 'secret' alliance with AIMIM. He also listed out various developmental works and projects implemented and sanctioned by the Centre, adding It is the promise of BJP... what we promise, we fulfill. According to Shah, TRS and AIMIM were the biggest obstructions in making Hyderabad a global IT hub. "...the way Hyderabad

was flooded in the recent rains...

no work was done for clearing storm water drains and desilting them... the manner in which encroachments are increasing and growing due to the blessings of a party...

AIMIM is the partner of TRS and on whose directions illegal constructions happen.

People here are angry and upset with TRS and Owaisi's alliance," he alleged.

On TRS leaders' charges that no central aid was given for relief work in Hyderabad, which was hit by heavy rains and floods in October, Shah said approximately Rs 500 crore was given.

He also alleged that KCR neither visited flooded areas with legislators or MPs nor held a meeting of the GHMC.