

ANALYSIS 7

COLONIAL OUTLOOK CAN'T
FIX CLIMATE ISSUES NOW

MONEY 8

SENSEX SOARS 887 PTS
ON GLOBAL MARKET TREND

SPORTS 12

ASHES COULD REVOLVE AROUND
CONTEST BETWEEN CUMMINS, ROOT

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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'I WANT TO
ACT IN FILMS
UNTIL I DIE'

Page 11

CITING OMICRON, 'MASSIVE THIRD
WAVE' WARNING FROM IMA

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) today urged the government to announce "additional" doses of Covid vaccine for healthcare, frontline workers, and immunocompromised individuals amid concerns over Omicron, 21 cases of which have been detected in India so far. It also demanded that the government expedite the proposal of vaccinating individuals aged 12 to 18 years. At a press conference, the doctors' body said that cases of the latest variant of coronavirus were reported from a number of major states of India, and the tally, which is in double digits, is bound to increase.

SPICEJET TO DEPOSIT \$5 MILLION IN 2
WEEKS OR FACE LIQUIDATION: COURT

Madras High Court has ordered winding up of private carrier SpiceJet Limited and directed the official liquidator attached to the High Court to take over its assets, in a plea filed by a Swiss company over unpaid dues. The airline had failed to make payment of over \$24 million to a Swiss company SR Technics for maintenance, repair and overhauling of aircraft engines, modules, components, assemblies and parts. The order was passed by the high court on December 6, 2021.

JAYALALITHAA EX-AIDE VK SASIKALA
MEETS RAJINIKANTH IN CHENNAI

V K Sasikala, the aide of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa, met actor Rajinikanth at the superstar's house in Poes Garden in Chennai on Monday evening, news agency ANI reported. Sasikala greeted Rajinikanth on his Dadasaheb Phalke award and also enquired about his health, it said. The superstar had undergone a Carotid revascularisation procedure in October this year. In January this year, VK Sasikala, expelled from the AIADMK following an internal power struggle, was released from jail in Bengaluru after serving a four-year imprisonment in a disproportionate assets case.

STEEP FALL IN TRANSFER OF FUNDS
FROM NGOs TO ASSOCIATIONS

The transfer of foreign funds received by parent Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to its associations has witnessed a steep fall in the financial year 2020-21, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai informed on Tuesday. In a reply to a question over foreign contribution to NGOs, Rai said that in the financial year 2020-21 just 69 NGOs transferred Rs 38.91 crore foreign funding as compared to Rs 1314.40 cr transferred by 729 NGOs in the year 2019-20.

Failure to procure paddy by TRS
Govt means no Re 1 rice, says Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The non-procurement of paddy by the Telangana Government amounts to stopping the distribution of one rupee rice to the poor by the TRS Government, Union Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy said.

He made it clear that the State government has to procure the paddy if it wanted to give one rupee a kg rice to the poor.

He said that the Centre faces problems with parboiled rice and had made it clear that the Centre will purchase only raw rice. The Centre has never said that it will not purchase raw rice, Kishan said.

He alleged that the TRS is creating confusion after its defeat in the Huzurabad by-poll and is trying to blame the BJP.

Addressing the media at New Delhi on Tuesday, Kishan alleged that the TRS is intentionally politicising paddy procurement and that TRS MPs are staging dharnas for publicity.



He said that the Centre faces problems with parboiled rice and had made it clear that the Centre will purchase only raw rice. The Centre has never said that it will not purchase raw rice.

— G. KISHAN REDDY
Union Tourism Minister

He made it clear that the BJP is not afraid of the TRS or Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

He reminded that the Chief Minister had signed the parboiled rice agreement saying that Telangana will not give boiled rice to the FCI.

Kishan asked whether the TRS Government is so weak to sign on an agreement if the Centre placed a knife on the neck of KCR.

Address 'historical
injustice': TS to KRMB

Shift Nettempadu, Jurala projects from Schedule 2 to Schedule 3 of gazette

'The projects lie entirely within Telangana area'

ML MELLY MAITREYI

■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has written to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to remove the Nettempadu project as well as Jurala projects from Schedule 2 and include them in Schedule 3.

The state government requested the KRMB to also treat the Nettempadu Lift Irrigation Scheme as a single component in the KRMB Gazette Notification, instead of two components.

The government also wrote that Jurala project and all the components related to it lie entirely within the Telangana area and serve only Telangana area without any common territory shared with Andhra Pradesh.



Further, telemetry has already been implemented in all the outlets from this project. Therefore, Jurala project components are not required to be kept under the direct control of KRMB and this project could be excluded from the Schedule -2 list and included in the Schedule-3, Muralidhar, Engineer-in-Chief, Irrigation, wrote in his letter to the KRMB Chairman.

Eatata should
apologise for
encroaching assigned
lands: Balka Suman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stepping up their tirade against BJP MLA Eatata Rajender after the confirmation by the Medak Collector that Jamuna Hatcheries owned by the Eatata family had encroached on government and assigned lands, Government Whip Balka Suman has demanded that Eatata should apologise for his acts of omission and commission.

Addressing a media conference along with TRS legislators here on Tuesday, Balka Suman said that Eatata who had claimed that he was an honest political leader owed an explanation to the public for encroaching the lands of SCs and STs.

Medak Collector Hareesh had given a detailed account of the lands grabbed by Jamuna Hatcheries had demanded that the lands should be surrendered to the government and assigned lands should be restored to the poor.

IT cos extend work from home

NAVEENA GHANATE

■ HYDERABAD

IT companies in the city are reconsidering their decision to call employees back to office, given the looming Covid-19 Omicron variant threat. Some of the firms had initially extended the option of work from home (WFH) up to February, though employees have been suggesting that April might be the month to again revisit work from office plans.

An employee from Genpact said earlier they had asked that they be allowed to work from office from January; however, it was extended to February.

Some have not announced the next date, but extended work from home.

A Google employee said that initially they were asked to return on January 10, but later the company extended it. The company had not informed the next date of rejoining.

Most companies have certainly extended work from home. Presently they have taken a pause on deciding when they employees



Representational picture

should come back.

Employees from HSBC and Capgemini confirmed that no one was being asked to return to office and that, based on project, they were following a hybrid model. In some projects, employees were being asked to come once a week.

Vivek Goel, Vice President, Marketing, Quixy, said, "We have not mandated return to office yet.

A Google employee said that initially they were asked to return on January 10, but later the company extended it. The company had not informed the next date of rejoining.

In fact, WFH has become an element of a successful strategy for us.

Delivery of F-16 wing reflects heights
of Hyderabad aerospace ecosystem

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lockheed Martin has formally recognized Tata-Lockheed Martin Aerostructures Limited (TLMAL) as a potential future co-producer of fighter wings. IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao participated in the TATA Lockheed Martin Aerostructures Ltd 'Fighter Wing Qualification Ceremony' at Adibatla on Tuesday.

Addressing a gathering at the ceremony, Minister said: "The successful certification and delivery of F-16 wings is a great testimony to the heights Hyderabad Aerospace & Defence ecosystem has grown to in a relatively short span of time."

Lockheed Martin and TLMAL signed an agreement to develop a fighter wing prototype in 2018.



IT and Municipal Administration Minister KT Ramarao at the TATA Lockheed Martin Aerostructures Ltd 'Fighter Wing Qualification Ceremony' at Adibatla on Tuesday.

Through this prototype project, TLMAL demonstrated the capability to perform detailed part manufacturing and delivery of a fully

TRS to boycott
Parliament
session over
farmers' issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the Centre of being "anti-farmer", the TRS announced on Tuesday that its MPs will boycott both houses of Parliament for the remainder of the Winter Session and said it wants the BJP-led government to go.

Shouting slogans against the government and in support of farmers, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MPs staged a walkout from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha of Tuesday. All of them were dressed in black.

Congress losing ground as BJP,
TRS cross swords in Telangana

SNCN ACHARYULU

■ HYDERABAD

In Telangana, in the fight between pink and saffron the tricolour of the Congress is getting blurred.

The saffron party (BJP) is trying to dominate the pink party (TRS) by the 2023 Assembly elections. Caught between these two parties, the Congress is in a state of disorientation. The BJP has intensified its moves to expand its roots in Telangana. The victory in the two Assembly by-elections has given a boost to the BJP and it is now hope-

ful of achieving its goal in the next Assembly elections.

As planned in its Mission 2023 the BJP is concentrating on bagging important leaders. The BJP is now focussing on leaders who were active during the Telangana movement.

TNGOS leader Swami Goud who played a key role in the Telangana movement has already joined the BJP. Now another leader, TNGOS leader Ch. Vital, too has joined the BJP. The founder president of Telangana Employees Union, Vital, played a key role during the

Telangana movement. Journalist Chintapandu Naveen alias Teenmar Mallanna, a strong critic of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, has also joined the BJP.

Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar has given a call to the leaders those who had played a crucial role during the Telangana movement to join the BJP. There is criticism in the TRS since a long time that it had ignored Telangana movement leaders after it came to power. Now the BJP is trying to exploit this.

21,988 residential
units registered
in GHMC limits

P:3

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Margashirsha & Shukla Paksha

Tithi : Panchami 21:25

Nakshatram : Shweta 22:39

Rahukalam : 12:08 pm - 1:30 pm

Yamagandam : 8:00 am - 9:23 am

Varjyam : 2:31 am - 4:04 am

Gulika : 10:45 am - 12:08 pm

Amritakalam : 12:55 pm - 2:25 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham : Nil

HYDERABAD

WEATHER

Forecast: MOSTLY SUNNY

Temp: 28°C

Humidity: 59%

Sunrise: 6:34 AM

Sunset: 5:41 PM

Updated DECEMBER 07, 2021 5:00 PM

TS borrowed Rs 500 cr more

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At the weekly auction of state development loans, six states raised just Rs 8,000 crore, which is 41 per cent lower than the indicated Rs 13,600 crore. Seven of the 13 states that initially indicated their participation in the auction did not raise funds, even as Telangana borrowed Rs 500 crore more than indicated.

After falling marginally for two weeks, the cost of debt-funds for the states jumped again as the weighted average cost of borrowings rose by 37 bps to a one-month high of 6.80 per cent in the auction on Tuesday compared to the last week.

At the weekly auction of state development loans, six states raised just Rs 8,000 crore, which is 41 per cent lower than the indicated Rs 13,600 crore, according to an analysis by Icri Ratings, which said this is the sixth consecutive week of lower-than-indicated issuance.

Aditi Nayar, the chief econo-

mist at the rating agency, said the spread between the 10-year state debt and the G-secs eased to a 24 month-low of 45 bps from 51 bps last week, while the weighted average cost of their borrowings jumped by 37 bps to 6.80 per cent over the past week.

According to another agency Care Ratings, the market borrowings by the states so far in FY22 are 18 per cent less than that in corresponding period of FY21. As many as 29 states/UTs have cumulatively raised (except Odisha) Rs 4,19,900 crore so far this fiscal, down 18.4 per cent over the year from Rs 5,14,600 crore.

According to Care, the weighted average cost of borrowings, across states and tenures, rose to 6.80 per cent, which is a one-month high while the weighted average yield of the 10-year bonds was stable at 6.84 per cent at last week's level.



Beware! Rs 2,000 notes are vanishing!

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of Rs 2,000 currency notes in circulation has decreased to 223.3 crore pieces or 1.75 per cent of total notes in circulation (NIC) in November this year, compared to 336.3 crore pieces in March 2018.

Printing of banknotes of particular denomination is decided by the government in consultation with the Reserve Bank to maintain desired denomination mix for facilitating transactional demand of public, said Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State in Finance Ministry, in a written reply in the



Rajya Sabha.

"As against 3,363 million pieces (mpcs) of Rs 2,000 denomination

banknotes in circulation on March 31, 2018 constituting 3.27 per cent and 37.26 per cent of NIC in terms

'The decrease in circulation of Rs 2,000 note issued after demonetisation is because no fresh indent has been placed for printing of these notes from 2018-19 onwards. Further, notes also go out of circulation as they get soiled/mutilated,' he said.

of volume and value respectively; 2,233 mpcs were in circulation on November 26, 2021, constituting 1.75 per cent and 15.11 per cent of NIC in terms of volume and value, respectively," he said.

Chaudhary further said that no fresh indent has been placed with currency printing presses for the banknote from 2018-19 onwards.

"The decrease in circulation of Rs 2,000 note issued after demonetisation is because no fresh indent has been placed for printing of these notes from 2018-19 onwards.

Public discomfort sends danger signals to AP government!

Palpable discomfort among sections of the public over politically-influenced stances of the Jaganmohan Reddy government on vital issues such as the One Time Settlement scheme relating to housing beneficiaries, growing dissatisfaction among government employees over delay in the implementation of the Pay Revision Commission recommendations, and sub-optimal performance of the state government in tackling the grim floods which had claimed at least 60 lives of people in different parts of the state has sent danger signals to powers that be.

Various sections of people in Andhra Pradesh have felt the pinch over the questionable attitude of the state government. Central to it is a grave fact that there is acute shortage of funds for taking up developmental works. Poor and middle class people who had benefited from



PIN POINT

housing programmes taken up by previous governments over the years have not been spared under OTS. With the state government desperately looking for ways to pool funds even for its routine programmes, anything it contemplates on the finance front becomes suspect. This explains why there are intractable issues with regard to OTS, which initially appeared to have come to the rescue of the government in fund raising. Even those houses that were sanctioned with loans sanctioned during the regime of N.T. Rama Rao appear in the lists meant for OTS. The task of collecting money from the housing beneficiaries under OTS has been entrusted to the staff working in village secretariats. They have been given daily targets for collecting money under OTS. This has sparked other issues relating to certificates needed by

The shocked beneficiaries questioned the propriety of the government in asking money under OTS for the houses that they got from previous governments. Instead of giving money, some of the beneficiaries, in utter frustration, offered to the collection staff asbestos sheets, slab, stones, doors and windows from their houses.

those beneficiaries. Hence, there was chaos when the official staff approached the beneficiaries. The shocked beneficiaries questioned the propriety of the government in asking money under OTS for the houses that they got from previous governments. Instead of giving money, some of the beneficiaries, in utter frustration, offered to the collection staff asbestos sheets, slab, stones, doors and windows from their houses. One angry beneficiary described the implementation of OTS as 'nothing

but performing my marriage with my own wife'. Oral instructions reportedly given by a mandal development officer to lower level staff on fixing of targets for collection of money under OTS seem to have sent shock waves to the housing beneficiaries as well as the general public. This incident came to light when Telugu Desam Party leaders aired audio clips of purported telephonic conversations of that particular officer with lower level staff of the village secretariat. One



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

Minister made a vain attempt to establish that people are voluntarily paying OTS. At last, the government stated that only Rs.4000-crore dues relating to housing loans under OTS would come to the state exchequer, following which the authorities would provide registration for the houses of the beneficiaries. The TDP questioned the propriety of the gov-

ernment in collecting dues from people under OTS, considering that the present regime did not provide land, loans for the housing programmes executed by previous governments. YSR Congress party had assured free registration to those housing beneficiaries, but the YSRC government is committed to collect dues under OTS. Regardless of the merit of the Jagan government's decision, the OTS payment has become an unbearable burden for countless beneficiaries. It has also triggered fears of non-receipt of benefits of government schemes and terminal benefits, including pensions and caste certificates, should they not agree to payment under OTS. Government employees have been raising their voices for the immediate implementation of PRC. Claiming to be a force to reckon with as voters, they boast that they could unseat the present regime. They do hope

that the PRC would be implemented soon. History bears witness to the adamant attitude of employees who went on an indefinite strike that lasted 64 days during the regime of the Congress towering personality in undivided Andhra Pradesh Kasu Brahmananda Reddy in the mid '60s. The State government employees then played a crucial role in the change of guard in the 2004 elections during Chandrababu Naidu's rule as well! Inept handling of the flood situation in various districts of AP has also dented the image of the government. The unprecedented floods claimed 60 precious lives of people in different parts of the state. The breaching of Annamayya project in Chittoor district brought worst ever tragedy for people in its vicinity. The Centre expressed its view that the AP government was not alert enough to handle the grim flood situation and questioned

as to whose responsibility it was to operate the project. Interestingly, AP Irrigation Minister Anil Kumar Yadav went on to claim that Union Minister for Jalshakti Gajendra Singh Shekawat 'lied' in Parliament on the subject. The issue may get political colour once the central expert committee pays a visit to the Annamayya project for inspection, 'case study' or whatever. If it comes out with a list of 'dos and don'ts' on water management, it may sound as disrespect to the AP government. The foregoing issues give room for a lot of embarrassment for the AP government. It may not be easy for it to deflect public resentment. These developments may become hurdles for the ruling party to drum beat its case for retaining power. It is a different matter that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has started planning for retaining power in the 2023 polls.

Cong losing ground as the BJP, TRS...

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, a senior Congress leader of Karimnagar district, Chalmada Laxminarasimha Rao, has announced his resignation from the Congress and is joining the TRS on Wednesday. While the BJP is concentrating on wooing TRS leaders the TRS is concentrating on bagging Congress leaders.

The BJP leadership is happy that its TS unit is going ahead with moves to strengthen the party in the run-up to the 2023 Assembly elections. The Telangana BJP is taking steps to emerge as an alternative to the TRS by strengthening itself. At the same time the TRS is also taking steps to retain its power in the next Assembly elections.

While the BJP and the TRS are slowly getting into election mode the Congress is riddled with infighting. At the national level too, the position of the Congress is not optimistic as its allies are distancing themselves.

Congress camps create tension among TRS candidates, rebels

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

The Congress' party's camps in Karimnagar district for the Local Bodies' quota MLC elections are not only shocking the leaders of other opposition parties but also Congress leaders as the party had not fielded a candidate in Karimnagar district.

However, the Congress has been conducting camps like the ruling TRS. The Congress has been conducting camps for its Local Bodies' public representatives in Manthani and Peddapalli constituencies.

Congress leaders say that these camps are only intended to prevent party voters from voting for TRS candidates as the votes of Congress Local Bodies' public representatives have become crucial with rebels and Independent candidates entering the fray.

Congress votes can change

the fate of TRS candidates as well as rebels if they take a decision on whom to vote for.

However, the main objective of the Congress in conducting camps is to ensure that they do not get attracted to other parties as it will affect the Congress in future.

It is also learnt that the Congress may extend its support to P a n t h a k a n i Sammayya or Inumula Sathesh, who are local body public representatives from the Congress.

The Congress may support one of these two candidates after taking a final decision in a day or two.

Political analysts say that the Congress has been conducting camps only to prevent the victory of rebels in the elections and to avoid their candidates getting the support of the BJP.



The Congress has been conducting its camp to prevent the victory of TRS rebel candidate Sardar Ravinder Singh as the BJP is supporting him.

Political analysts said that the Congress fears that it will weaken further if Sardar Ravinder Singh wins the elections and hence the

Congress has been conducting camps to prevent its votes from going to the TRS or TRS rebels supported by the BJP. At their political camps, all political parties are offering everything from entertainment to money.

Sources said the parties are offering Rs 1 lakh besides spending huge money at the camps to entertain voters. But it is learnt that voters are demanding Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10

lakh and some voters are in touch with opposing parties.

Due to this, camp organisers are tensed thinking whether they will vote for their candidates or not.

The TRS has more votes in the districts of Karimnagar, Adilabad, Khammam, Medak and Nalgonda. But the TRS faces trouble from rebels in Karimnagar, Adilabad and Nalgonda.

The Congress has fielded its candidates in Khammam and Medak districts resulting in camp politics in the five districts.

The Congress is conducting camps on par with the TRS in Karimnagar district. The BJP too has been conducting camps to protect its voters in Karimnagar and Adilabad districts from December 7 onwards.

The Congress camps are creating tension among TRS candidates.

Birthday boy Santosh tweets heart-warming throwback picture

ML. MELLY MAITREYI
■ HYDERABAD

A heart-warming picture of a young man with a lad riding piggy-back on his shoulders went viral on Twitter on Tuesday.

The young man in the picture is Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and the lad is his nephew J Santosh Kumar, MP, who launched the Green India Challenge. The picture was tweeted by the Rajya Sabha member on the occasion of his birthday with the caption: "This birth is mine, but my life is yours".

The rare picture went viral and several Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, TRS cadre and leaders conveyed their birthday wishes through the micro blogging site Twitter and complimented him as 'Green star' for his passion for afforestation and Haritha Haram programmes.

Several of his followers described Santosh Kumar variously as 'a dear nephew of KCR', 'future leader', 'dear brother of KTR', 'lover of nature and greenery' and the like. They wished him a long life with health and happiness and a long stint in public life.



TS borrowed Rs 500 cr more

Continued from page 1

The issuance has trailed the notified amount for the sixth consecutive week as the cash-flow situation of the large states seem to have benefitted from the release of the final GST compensation end-October and the release of a higher monthly tax devolution to the states in November, Icara said, adding of the total funds today, Rs 3,500 crore or 44 per cent were raised in the shorter tenor of 5-9 years, Rs 3,000 crore or 38 per cent in

longer tenors and a just Rs 1,500 crore or 19 per cent were in the 10-year bucket. As a result, the weighted average tenor of SDLs dipped to 12 years today from 13 years last week and the weighted average cut-off rose to 6.80 per cent today from 6.43 per cent in the last auction, led by increase in the weighted average cut-off shorter tenor to 6.67 per cent today from 5.18 per cent last week, Nayar said, adding however, the weighted average cut-off of the 10-year SDL stood at 6.84 today, unchanged from last week.

This is despite the benchmark 10-year Gsecs yield has risen 6 bps to 6.39 per cent today from 6.33 per cent last Tuesday. This reflects factors such as the US Fed chairman's comments regarding accelerating the bond purchase taper, while acknowledging that inflation pressures may not be transitory, the partial rebound in global crude oil prices, and the expectation that while the MPC will maintain status quo in the policy review tomorrow, it will signal upcoming policy normalisation.

Delivery of F-16 wing reflects heights of Hyderabad aerospace ecosystem

Continued from page 1

Through this it supports F-21 offering for procurement of 114 new fighter aircraft - exclusively for India and the Indian Air Force - by proving additional indigenous production capability.

He said: "The repeat investments announced by the leading OEMs, including Lockheed Martin, is a great indicator for the robustness of our ecosystem, which is being lauded as the true hub for

'Make in India' in the defence sector."

KTR said, "Leading global manufacturers from the US, the UK, France, Israel and other nations have chosen Hyderabad to establish their state-of-the-art manufacturing, engineering, training, and innovation centres in India. 'Telangana today has the most active and well-supported Aerospace and Defence ecosystem in India. The sector has witnessed unprecedented growth during the past five years,

anchored on the progressive policies and infrastructure support provided by the State Government".

"Lockheed Martin partnered with TLMAL to build one of the most technologically complex aerostuctures - a fuel-carrying 9G, 12,000 hour, interchangeable/replaceable fighter wing," said Aimee Burnett, vice president of strategy and business development, Lockheed Martin Integrated Fighter Group, adding: "This effort represents

Lockheed Martin demonstrating to India, and to the world, the degree of confidence that exists in our relationships with our partners in India."

Thanking Lockheed Martin and TATA Group for their continued contributions made so far for the growth of Aerospace and Defence ecosystem in Hyderabad, KTR assured all support from the State government for the current and future programmes in Hyderabad.

Address 'historical injustice': TS to KRMB

Continued from page 1

The Nettempadu LIS, originating from Jurala project, had adequate tmc of water earmarked by the Telangana government and it was commensurate with the ayacut envisaged by the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh government. The same fact was conveyed to the KRMB several times, including through a letter written in June 2020 itself. Therefore, the components could be deleted from Schedule 1 and 2 of the gazette notification.

Giving the backdrop of the project, he said the then

Hyderabad State government had proposed three projects to Mahbubnagar through gravity -- Bhima, Tungabhadra Left Canal, Upper Krishna projects. But after 1956, upon reorganisations of the States, the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh government did not pursue these projects with the Union Government and these projects did not reach Telangana ayacut. Thus, later on lift irrigation schemes became inevitable.

Though Jurala project (Stage I gravity 23 tmc, Stage II Lift 28.8 tmc) was proposed by the then government in 1970 because of the severity of the

Telangana agitation. Later on, it was represented to the Tribunal to give first priority to the Andhra projects. Subsequently, the Jurala dam was constructed not with the originally proposed capacity of 30 tmc, but a barrage with 11 tmc capacity was constructed.

But, instead of the originally proposed gravity-based scheme under the Bhima lift scheme, dependable waters to some extent were to be given to the ayacut under the Jurala left canal; yet, no dependable waters were given on the left side. Therefore, the Nettempadu lift scheme was taken up to provide

surplus waters to the left side ayacut. Now the Telangana government was completing the Nettempadu LIS on priority and would allocate water to meet the requirements of the ayacut.

The Telangana government has already represented to the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal to allot dependable waters to all the projects proposed by Telangana. In light of this, the KRMB has been requested to take measures to address the historical injustice meted out to Telangana and remove the Nettempadu project, Jurala projects from Schedule 2 and include them in Schedule 3, Muralidhar said.

TRS to boycott Parliament...

Continued from page 1

Party leader Keshav Rao accused the Centre of being insensitive to farmers' demands, while asserting that the TRS is an opposition party, not a fence-sitter, and it wants this government to go.

"This is an anti-farmer government, insensitive to the demands of the farmers. Today, piles of grains are rotting on the roads in Telangana for the simple reason that the FCI is not lifting the produce," he said, adding that no elected representative likes to boycott Parliament, but the TRS is being forced to do so by the Centre.

"Please be clear that we are against this government. We are an opposition party, not a fence-sitter, and we want this BJP-led government to go," Keshav Rao said while interacting with reporters after announcing that the party will boycott the remainder of the session. The nine Lok Sabha MPs and seven Rajya Sabha MPs of the party will not attend the rest of the session, he said.

Eatala should apologise for encroaching...

Continued from page 1

"These are the people who resort to encroachments and then level allegations against others. At least now the people of Huzarabad should realise the truth about Eatala," Balka Suman said.

Making it clear that the government would definitely initiate action as per law against those who have grabbed government and assigned lands, Balka Suman said the Medak Collector was working sincerely but he was being threatened for doing his job honestly.

The Collector should examine records and point out if any more lands have been encroached in the district, he added.

MLC Puranam Satish condemned the remarks of Eatala Rajender and his wife against the Medak Collector. Earlier, Eatala had challenged the government to prove the allegations of encroachment and now it has been proved that the Eatala family had grabbed 71 acres. He demanded that the BJP should suspend MLA Eatala Rajender for encroaching assigned and other lands.

Criminal cases should be filed against Eatala for encroachments and other irregularities, he said.

On the paddy procurement stalemate with the Centre, Balka Suman deplored the Centre's indifference.

The TS Government had requested the Centre for an annual procurement plan so that it could give it to the farmers. But the Centre has not responded to the protests by TRS MPs, he said.

Lashing out at BJP's Nizamabad MP Arvind for levelling allegations against the TRS Government in Parliament, Balka Suman said that Arvind could not keep his promise of getting the Turmeric Board to Telangana. Is he aware of the good work done by the TRS Government for the state's farmers, he said.

On PCC chief Revanth Reddy, the government whip said that Revanth had no right to criticise KCR who had achieved Telangana. Revanth had never worked for the Telangana movement. As he is involved in the Note for Vote case he has no right to talk about KTR, Balka Suman said.

Varanasi to...

Continued from page 1

Lauding Modi as a hero of Indian culture for fulfilling his resolve to transform the holy city, BJP general secretary Tarun Chugh said in a press briefing that it was almost after 250 years that a renovation and beautification exercise around the famous Kashi Vishwanath temple has been done.

The mega cultural outreach exercise assumes extra significance as the BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh is headed for assembly polls early next year, and the party's work on its Hindutva agenda, including ongoing construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, is a major component of its campaign besides development works undertaken by its governments at the Centre and the state. The inauguration ceremony has been named "Divya Kashi, Bhavya Kashi" (divine Kashi, grand Kashi).

In Varanasi the BJP will also hold a conference of its chief ministers and deputy chief ministers on December 13 and 14 where they will deliberate on their governments' welfare agenda and how to further help people, Chugh said, adding that they will leave on December 15.

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21,988 residential units registered in GHMC limits

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Annual residential property registrations in Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Sangareddy districts stood at 21,988 units during the January to November 2021 period. As per Knight Frank, real estate consultancy, this marks a 16% growth over the January-November period in 2020 for the three districts. Sales in Hyderabad district have grown by 58% YoY during the same period.

The end of the year is typically a slow period in Hyderabad's residential market, with homebuyers preferring to postpone their purchases to the first half of the year which is considered to be more auspicious. This accounted for 41% of the total sales registrations during the year (11 months) while just 16% of the total sales occurred in the September - November 2021 period.

However, as per Knight Frank,



despite this being a traditionally slow period for sales, the September-November period in 2021 recorded above-average growth in YoY terms for all months in this period. This, along with increasing number of enquiries at project sites, shows the growing homebuyer interest in the Hyderabad market.

As per Knight Frank, 66% of residential sales registered during the January-November period

occurred in the under Rs 50 lakh size. A closer inspection reveals that the share of sales of the Rs25-Rs 50 lakh ticket size improved from 31% in 2020 to 34% in 2021, while that of the Rs25 lakh and below category declined to 32% in 2021, compared to 35% previously. As per the real estate consultancy, this signifies the stress still being felt in the lower ticket sizes due to the threat of income disruption caused by the

Residential Sales Deeds Registered in Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Sangareddy				
Month	2020	2021	YoY Change	
Jan	2,847	3,211	13%	
Feb	2,965	2,825	-5%	
Mar	2,104	3,020	44%	
Apr	736	2,032	176%	
May	2,051	893	-56%	
June	2,308	2,171	-6%	
July	2,137	2,105	-1%	
Aug	2,029	2,118	4%	
Sep	277	1,150	315%	
Oct	918	1,119	22%	
Nov	516	1,344	160%	
Total	18,888	21,988	16%	

economic impact of the pandemic. Even in terms of the share of total sales, Hyderabad district has grown from 29% during January-November 2020 to 45% in YTD November 2021. Transacted prices have similarly outperformed, growing by 16.9% in the January-November 2021 period. Knight Frank said, prices had

remained resilient in Hyderabad during the worst of the pandemic in 2020 and have grown steadily in 2021. The weighted average transacted price of residential properties showed a healthy YoY growth of 5.8% in the nine-month period ending November 2021, depicting the underlying momentum of the market. Shishir Bajjal, Chairman and Managing Director, said: "Hyderabad continues to be among the most attractive homebuyer markets, with homebuyer demand and residential prices growing steadily despite the absence of any regulatory interventions such as the stamp duty cuts applied by the Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal governments."

While recent developments such as the relaxation in FSI restrictions is causing apprehensions of potential overbuilding and an overburdening of infrastructure in the city, underlying market fundamentals continue to inspire confidence."



Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan speaking at the inauguration of GeoSmart India Conference-2021

'Geospatial tech key for development'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The developments and advances in geospatial technologies are crucial for sustainable development, Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan said on Tuesday.

The Governor called for better application of geospatial technologies and tools for promoting sustainable development in fields like agriculture.

Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan was inaugurating the 21st edition of the GeoSmart India Conference-2021 on the theme of 'Advancing the Role of Geospatial Knowledge in Indian Economy.'

The conference was organised by the Geospatial World at the HICC, here.

The Governor emphasised the effective use of geospatial technologies in areas like transport, defence, internal security, and infrastructure.

The Governor also highlighted the transformational changes taking place in geospatial technologies like mapping, surveying, remote sensing, and geographical information systems.

"It is high time that we need to explore and apply all these technologies for the all-round development of the country and emerge as the

leader in leveraging these emerging technologies for progress and sustainability," she added.

The Governor hailed the efforts of the Geospatial World for their mission in advocating the use of geospatial technologies.

"The space research, technologies and geospatial infrastructure when combined play a crucial role in contributing to the digital economy. They are empowering tools," she added.

Delegates from across the country representing various organisations working in geospatial technologies attended the event.

DREAM ANGANWADI



Anganwadis are expected to nurture talent among students. Here is the one that fosters creativity among students. Renovated Anganwadi in Mulugu, Siddipet has become a dream come true for students. Additional Collector Siddipet Muzzamil Marriam Khan IAS shared the pictures

Private labs procure RT-PCR kits that can detect Omicron

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With concerns rising about the Omicron variant, private labs in the city are procuring RT-PCR kits which can detect the new variant directly instead of through genome sequencing.

Testing kits look for the presence of a specific gene to confirm the presence of the Coronavirus.

Currently, the Covid RT-PCR testing kits used in city labs have reagents that detect the presence of the 'N' gene and 'ORF 1' gene and not the 'S' gene.

In the case of Omicron, mutations occurred in the 'S' gene of the virus. Consequently, labs are now trying to refurbish their kits as Omicron cases are getting detected in the country.

Dr Amrita Singh, the chief of Lab services at Neuberg Diagnostics said, "Initially RT-PCR kits used to have S-gene detection as well. However, in due course, the testing kits got customised as per the requirements of the disease. In the case of Covid, RT-PCR kits have not only the 'S' gene but many other genes. But too many genes are making it costly. So



the kits were customised. Instead of testing for all suspects we could just do for specific ones which might not pass on the burden to the end-user."

Currently, demand is not very high. Diagnostic centres are checking the kits available and soon orders will be placed. Since these kits have a shelf life of 1-2 years, orders will be placed in phases.

A doctor at a government hospital said, "Genome sequencing can be time consuming and is done only in a few labs. The S-gene RT-PCR kits will be useful. If the S-gene

test is negative, it is Omicron and if it is positive it will be Delta."

Not only private labs even the governments of Telangana, Maharashtra, Kolkata and Karnataka are looking at refurbishing RT-PCR test kits in view of the Omicron threat.

Highly placed sources said that the Telangana Government is likely to procure S-gene RT-PCR test kits to reduce the time taken to identify the Omicron variant. The kits will be initially used for international travellers and their contacts.

Iron part falls on a car from a flyover

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At Kondapur, a car was damaged due to an iron angular falling from a flyover under construction suddenly, on Tuesday. The incident occurred, when Mr. Balakumaran was traveling from Miyapur to Kondapur, near Kondapur circle, suddenly an iron angular fell down on the car directly, damaging the front glass and side mirror totally.

The victim Balakumaran said that "It has fallen on the car, the car was damaged, But I am rescued. If it falls on a bike, then the rider would have been died immediately. It seems, there are no precautionary measures at this workplace, who will be responsible for this?"

He tweeted the damaged car photo and tagged HMDA official Aravinda Kumar and Minister K. Taraka Rama Rao

T-Hub onboards 23 more startups

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

T-Hub on Tuesday announced the launch of the seventh edition of its seed accelerator program, Lab32, with the onboarding of 23 startups. The program guides entrepreneurs to refine their products for market fitness and create maximum economic and social impact in India and elsewhere in the world.

The program, which commenced on Tuesday, will end in March 2022. It comprises demand-driven startups that will solve challenges from emerging sectors such as Sustainability, Edtech, Direct to Consumer, Media, FinTech, AgriTech, Supply chain, Blockchain, Big Data, Cybersecurity and Collaboration Tech.

In a press release, Srinivas Rao Mahankali, CEO, T-Hub,

said, "The Lab32 accelerator program reflects our commitment to support the next generation of entrepreneurs and community leaders. This program is an important step in deepening our relationship with the startup ecosystem within the country. We are excited to bring together founders, investors, and the communities we serve to help accelerate startups at the forefront of innovation. We are hopeful that the program will prepare startups for rapid growth, making them investment-ready."

The startups will continue to receive support even after the program ends and get access to events, deals, advisory and tailored introductions. The short-listed startups are Skillarhi, SmartchargeEV, Zerotech, BeaversIn Technology, Rozgarkart, Pompah, Parking



Mantra, Clicinsight, Patasala, Arrive, Affluence, happy healthy life private limited, Grecolate Technologies, Aspect Technologies, Aarx, Lurnweb, AUGR SHOP, Ira EdTech, Alfabet Learning, Orangeshark, Nexteen, Digital Trace and Squadl.

44 women with fake Kuwait visas nabbed at RGIA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A big racket in work visas was busted by Immigration officials at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here on Tuesday.

The officials said that 44 women tried to go to Kuwait by showing visiting visas to Immigration officials.

Suspecting their

bonafides, Immigration officials checked details and found that the women were carrying work visas also and that the visiting visas were fakes.

An agent from Mumbai had hatched this plan and had cheated the women. The plan was to show a visiting visa at RGIA and to show the work visas in

Kuwait.

The women were told to destroy the visiting visas inside the plane and to keep the work visas with them.

The Mumbai agent had colluded with his agents in Kuwait to implement the plan. Two agents from Andhra Pradesh executed the plan by coordinating with them. They duped the

women and took money from them for consultations. The women hail from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Goa.

Earlier, in another incident, 20 women tried to go to Kuwait like this, and Immigration officials prevented them. The police had arrested two agents in that case six months back.

But the same agents came out on bail and repeated the same fraud. The women who tried to go to Kuwait have now become double victims. The police are going to register cases against them and they have been defrauded of their money by the agents. The women requested the government to secure justice for them.

ACB nabs SI for corruption

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Sub-Inspector of Medipally Police Station in Ranga Reddy district coming under the jurisdiction of Rachakonda Police Station, was caught red-handed on Tuesday at the station while taking a bribe.

S-I Ch. Yadagiri Raju had

demand a bribe of Rs 10,000 from the complainant, Mallika Prashanth, in an accident case.

The complainant approached the ACB and they asked him to give the tainted currency to the Sub-Inspector.

While taking the money from the complainant, the

ACB officials raided the police station and caught the S-I red-handed.

They checked the money with the S-I and confirmed that it was the same currency which was tainted by them.

S-I Yadagiri Raju was arrested and produced in ACB court.

Man smuggling gold in secret pocket, nabbed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Customs officials at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here have booked a person for smuggling gold on Tuesday. The passenger who arrived by flight No: J9-1403 from Kuwait was

carrying 233.20 grams of gold valued at Rs 11.49 lakh. Customs said that person was carrying the gold by concealing it inside a secret pocket of his trouser. After getting a tipoff, Customs officials stopped him and checked his belongings and clothes.

TRESA urges Govt to consider zone-wise transfers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Revenue Employees Services Association (TRESA) has urged the government to take up zone-wise transfers of employees by giving options to them.

TRESA leaders met Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and had discussions with him at BRKR Bhavan as per an invitation of the government.

The TRESA leaders brought several issues besides the issues mentioned in GO No.317 to the attention of the CS for inclusion in the pro-forma.

They said the government

must give options to the employees in district, zonal, multi-zonal transfers of various cadre posts.

The government must include the medical grounds option in the pro-forma along with spouse and PHC categories, they said.

The government must give priority to employees and their families suffering from cancer, neuro, kidney, liver, open heart surgery, bypass surgery and other ailments, the leaders added.

The government must give priority to employees who have more than 45 per cent handi-

cap in the PHC category.

The government must give priority to employees who underwent transfers under 'order to serve' in 2016 when the new districts were created, they added.

The government must include the establishment district along with native district and present working district, they said.

The government has to evaluate the highest strength to strengthen the revenue department. The government must provide promotions to Deputy Collector and Special Grade Deputy Collector which are

pending, they said.

The government has to give postings to leftover Deputy Tehsildars who got promotions as Tehsildars by getting the approval of the DPC. The government has also to prepare new panels of Deputy Tehsildars from 2017-18 onwards, they said.

The government must give a chance for the district transfers of probationary Nayab Tehsildars working at far off places. The government must give transfer options to VROs also and implement the pay scales of VRAs immediately, they added.

Reacting to the issues mentioned above, the CS, Somesh Kumar, assured the TRESA leaders that he will try to consider their suggestions.

TRESA President Vanga Ravinder Reddy, General Secretary K. Goutham Kumar, Associate President Manne Prabhakar, Vice-Presidents Banala Ram Reddy, K. Niranjan Rao, K. Nagamani, Secretary Madhavi Reddy, Organising Secretary Nazeem Khan, Executive members Nirmala, Ramakrishna, Raman Reddy, Kishore, Srinivas Reddy, Santhosh Lal and others participated in the meeting.

Accident suspect visited three pubs before mishap

G RAVI KIRAN
■ HYDERABAD

The police investigating the Banjara Hills accident found that the suspect Rohit had visited three pubs along with his friends before the mishap. He came out from the last pub intending to stay at a hotel.

The accident happened at Road No: 2, Banjara Hills, and two persons working in Rainbow Hospital were killed. After the accident, the sus-



pects tried to escape, but the police chased and arrested them. Keeping in view the three accidents that happened on Monday, police units of the three commissionerates conducted operations to nab

drunken drivers throughout the city. They registered 126 cases across the city in one night.

"We conducted ops to nab drunken motorists throughout the city. We caught 126 drunken motorists who were driving their vehicles. Most of them were youths. We are conducting regular drives like this. We are monitoring all pubs and bars and are checking their closing times," JCP A.R. Srinivas said.

NITI Aayog VC Rajiv Kumar for Bhupalapally today

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR
BHUPALAPALLY

District Collector Bhavesh Misra has directed the district officials to make all arrangements for the visit of Niti Ayog Vice Chairman Dr. Rajiv Kumar who is scheduled to visit the district on Wednesday to discuss productivity, processing, marketing of chilli crops with women chilli farmers at Rytu Vedika in Chelpur of Ghanpur Mandal. He has reviewed the arrangements for Rajiv Kumar's visit with officials here on Tuesday. Later, he inspected the Rytu Vedika in Chelpur.

He asked the officials to install stalls of various government departments on the premises of the Rytu Vedika. The vice-chairman is also scheduled to discuss drinking water, child and women welfare in the state.

PESTering problems for farmers!

Use of pesticides has no effect, crops amounting to crores damaged

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

The farmers have been expressing concern over pests causing damage to chilli crops in Nagarkurnool district. They have apparently taken a lot of pains to raise the crop overcoming the problems of spurious seeds.

They followed instructions of the agriculture officers, but thrips has played havoc with the crop at all stages of cultivation.

They worry about the pest attacking the crops, which are ready for harvesting. Farmers raise red chilli, groundnut, cotton, maize in Kalwakurthy, Atchampet, Kollapur, and Nagarkurnool Mandals in black and red soils. This year, due to heavy rains the groundwater swelled up, and bore wells got recharged. Therefore, farmers raised red chilli crop in thousands of acres under bore



wells especially in Telakapalli, Peddakottapalli, Atchampet, Uppununtala, Amrabad, Lingala, Balmuru, Koderu, Bijinepalli, and Timmajipet mandals. The plant growth was healthy, but there was no flowering. Even if there is

flowering, there was no fructification. Whatever little red chillies formed here and there, the chillies were affected by thrips. The crops were damaged in the vast extent of lands. The application of pesticides seems to have no effect

Price crashes, farmers protest

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Red chilli farmers staged a protest in front of the agriculture market yard here on Tuesday for nearly four hours protesting against the denial of remunerative price to chili farmers, unlike yesterday. Kisan Congress district president Mokka Sekhar Goud said that the traders formed into a syndicate and lifted red chilli at Rs 14,000 a quintal on Tuesday.

Hoping to get Rs 21,000 per quintal as was done on Monday, many farmers brought red chilli to the market. On Tuesday, the market authorities procured red chilli at Rs 21,000 initially and later traders formed into a syndicate to procure red chilli at Rs 14,000 a quintal.

The farmers alleged that the market committee officials are hand-in-glove with the traders. Irrated at traders quoting Rs 14,000 per quintal, the farmers protested in front of the market yard here. Besides Sekhar Goud, Mahila Congress chairperson D



Soujanya and others took part in the protest.

They alleged that the market committee governing body and market committee officials have ignored the market trends and not given proper information to the farmers and accused them of protecting traders' interests. The protesters demanded Rs 21,000 per quintal.

During the protest programme, there ensued an argument between the police and market authorities. The farmers relented with the intervention of the top police officials.

Later, they submitted a memorandum to the district collector seeking a remunerative price for the red chillies. They urged the authorities to cancel licenses of the traderscheating the farmers. They also sought regular inspection of the market committee and market committee informing the latest price to farmers to enable the farmers to bring their produce when the prices are remunerative. District Kisan Congress secretary Sanneella Venkatesh, farmers B Kotaiah, PS Nagaiah and others took part in the protest programme.

Tiger on prowl, kills 3 cattle

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR
BHUPALAPALLY

District Forest Officer Lavanya has cautioned people of the district against venturing into the forest to harm the tiger, sighted by cattle grazers at various places in the district. She advised the people to wait for two more days.

She advised the cattle grazers not to venture into the forest area and people living in villages on the fringes of the forest area not to venture into their fields especially at night. Talking to Pioneer on Tuesday, she said that a tiger is on the prowl in Kataram, Malhar, Mahamuttaram, Mahadevpur mandals quoting feedback from cattle grazers. Vigil on the movements of the tiger in forest areas has been stepped up on the basis of complaints from the people, she said.

She said that the tiger killed a cow on Odipilavancha village outskirts and two

buffaloes on the outskirts of Guduru on Sunday and



Monday. Kataram DSP Bonala Kishan, CI Ranjit Raos on Tuesday inspected tell-tale evidence

that a tiger is on the prowl. The DSP asked the people to take proper precautions. The police department is conducting an inquiry, he added.

Forest department officials are probing into this, she said adding that the tiger is

currently confined to the forest region. If there is no disturbance, it will cross the forest to enter Maharashtra. Therefore, she asked the people



not to harm the tiger. She warned the people of initiating stern action against them if found harming the tiger. The state government will pay compensation for the cattle killed by the tiger. The farmers who sustained loss should apply to the forest authorities along with the post mortem report issued by the veterinary doctors.

‘Grow oilseeds, pulses as an alternatives to paddy’

PNS ■ MEDAK

District Collector Harish has advised farmers to raise castor oil, groundnut, rapeseed oil, gingelly, pulses, vegetable crops, and other dry crops as an alternative to paddy in rabi.

Speaking as a chief guest at an awareness programme in Peddachintakunta in Narsapur Mandal here on Tuesday, he said that the district administration will send farmers on a field visit to study the cultivation of dry crops.

He appreciated the sarpanch

of Peddachintakunta Sivakumar inspecting the development of the village. He appreciated the village park and appreciated the sanitation in ZP high school, a government primary school.

Overall, he lauded the sanitation in the village. Joint Collector Ramesh, district agriculture officer Parasuram, assistant director Surekha, pharmacy training officers Srikanth, Agriculture extension officer Sridhar, farmers' body leaders Yada Goud, Sudhakar Chary and other farmers took part in the programme.



Reach vaccination target, Collector tells officials

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The District Collector Jitesh V Patil has ordered the medical and health officials to achieve the target of complete vaccination in a phased manner even as he advised the people to get the vaccination by casting aside apprehensions regarding it. While inspecting a number of vaccination centers in Kamareddy, the Collector said "Getting vaccinated is very important in the present situation. It gives confidence, health and ensured well being".

There is no point in the fear about the vaccination as it will protect everyone from the impact of the Covid, he stated adding that those who have not come forward for vaccination should come and get it immediately. After that, he spoke to Mandal level officials through video conference seeking their help and coordination to reach the 100 percent vaccination target.

Campaign for MLC election closes

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The returning officer, District Collector Prashanth Jeevan Patil said in a statement that candidates and political parties should stop their election campaign from December 7, by 4 pm, that is 72 hours before the close of polling for the local body constituency MLC elections to be held on the 10th of this month.

He said that under Section (126) of the Representation of the People Act - 1951, political parties and media should not conduct election campaigns, public meetings, and rallies.

He said cinematography, television, and campaign materials related to the election campaign should not be displayed in a way that would inform the public. He said musical concerts and other entertainment should not be held. He said those who violated the election rules could face up to two years in prison or a fine or both.

PD Act invoked against dacoit

PNS ■ MEDCHAL
MALKAJGIRI

CP, Rachakonda invoked PD Act against one Dacoit Mir Akber Ali alias Bahu, Bahubali, and detained him in the Central prison, Cherlapally.

The accused detenu, a resident of Yakathpura of Hyderabad, came in contact with the notorious rowdy sheeter Mohd. Mukram @ Pappu through their common friends.

Recently, the three more offenders Mohammed Abdul Ansar, Akbar Pasha, Syed Sajid belongs to Falaknuma, joined with them.

The five offenders formed as a gang and hatched a plan to extort money from business people on the point of threat in Malkajgiri Police Station limits.

on August 20th he proposed detenu and his four associates went to King's palace hotel in Malkajgiri and threatened the hotel supervisor by showing a knife they robbed Rs. 5000 cash and fed away.

‘Raise crops that suit the soil’

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

District Collector S Venkata Rao has suggested to farmers to raise only those crops that suit the soil and atmospheric conditions in rabi instead of paddy.

Speaking as chief guest at an awareness programme held on Tuesday in Ippalapalli village of Mahabubnagar rural Mandal, he suggested to them to grow pulses crops, oilseeds crops, including

groundnut. Always cultivating paddy would affect soil fertility leading to diminishing yield, he said advising the farmers to rotate crops at least once. Keeping in mind the problems in paddy procurement and also considering the weather conditions, the farmers should incline towards alternative crops, he said. Agriculture scientist Rajamani, Gajulapeta Sarpanch Chandrasekhar, farmer Ramakrishna Rao,

and others spoke. When farmers highlighted their problems in Kharif paddy procurement, the district collector resolved them immediately. Ippalapalli sarpanch Venkataiah, Tahsildar Pandu, agriculture officer Israt Sultana, agriculture extension officer Nagarjuna and others were present.

The district collector got vaccine administered to two villages that did not receive vaccine so far.



Governor to visit Nalgonda today

PNS ■ NALGONDA

State Governor Dr. Tamil Sai Soundara Rajan will participate in various programs at the Nalgonda district headquarters on Wednesday. The Governor will leave Hyderabad by road and will inaugurate the Bhakthanjaneya Santoshi Matha Temple in Nalgonda town. Afterward, she will visit the paddy purchasing centers at Arjala Bavi and Duppala Pally in Nalgonda town. After that, she will go to Hyderabad.



Disability is no hindrance: DC

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

District Collector Dr. Sangeeta has assured the physically challenged to resolve their problems and strive for their welfare.

Speaking at a programme arranged by the Welfare Department in connection with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities here on Tuesday, she appealed to the people with disabilities to forge ahead to lead a dignified life on part with able-bodied persons.

Disability is not a hindrance to enable the people with disabilities to lead a dignified life in society, she said adding that the district administration is implementing many schemes meant for the target group. Government sanctions Asara pensions to them every month. Similarly, women's groups with people with disabilities have been formed, and loans from banks are being released to the groups, she elaborated. In the NREGS, job cards are being issued to people with disabilities and their services are being engaged in various works, she said.



She assured issue of job cards to the fresh workers, she

said. She said that she will take steps to resolve the problems of the people with disabilities at her level. She distributed prizes among the winners of various competitions held on the occasion. District Welfare officer Rauf Khan, DRDO official Sridhar and others were present on the occasion.

BJP leaders' useless talk won't bring development: Kavitha

M L MELLY MAITREYI
■ HYDERABAD

Opening yet another front against BJP leaders, the newly-elected TRS MLC, Kalvakunta Kavitha, joined the party leadership in taking on the BJP and called upon people to support leaders who work for them.

She said that the useless talk of BJP leaders could not bring about development. The Nizamabad Parliamentary constituency is represented by BJP MP Arvind.

Kavitha who laid the foundation for several development projects at Bhimgal in the Balkonda Assembly constituency of Nizamabad along with Roads and Buildings Minister Prashanth Reddy on Tuesday said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had made Telangana a leading State in the country.

There are leaders who merely speak for the sake of politics but people should back those

leaders who work responsibly to ensure their welfare, she said.

The MLC laid the foundation for 18 development projects and inaugurated development projects worth Rs 30 crore in Bhimgal town.

In the last seven years, Telangana is the number one in many sectors and that happened due to the hard work of Chief Minister KCR. He fought for a separate State and after achieving that, he had been working with the same zeal and had launched several welfare schemes for all sections of people, Kavitha said.

While the TRS Government had been striving to make Telangana a leading State, there are others who are just trying to gain political mileage. It is not proper to give the sword to one and ask the other to fight, she said, adding that some BJP leaders were engaging in deceitful talk just for the sake of politics, she said.

She asserted that people would always support sincere leaders and that is why people elected KCR twice as Chief Minister.

Complimenting Minister Prashanth Reddy for taking up development projects in Bhimgal like never before, she said that they would transform Balkonda into golden Balkonda. She announced that Bhimgal town would be beautified and a 100-bed hospital would be set up there soon.

Minister Prashanth Reddy said no other State was implementing welfare schemes like Telangana and asked why the BJP and Congress ruled States were not implementing such welfare schemes.

Earlier, Kavitha was accorded a warm welcome by the people and she interacted with them before laying foundations for development projects.

She later distributed cheques worth Rs 6 crore to Bhimgal town women SHGs.

SI, constable suspended for beating a Dalit youth

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District SP AV Ranganath said that, Nalgonda Two Town SI D. Narsimhulu and Constable SK. Nagulmeera was suspended in the case of beating a youth. Two days ago, SP Ranganath came to know about the incident through social media and media over the beating of a Dalit youth by an SI and a constable at the Nalgonda Two Town police station. DTC SP Satish Chodagiri was appointed as the investigating officer in this case. The investigating officer gathered information from the doctors who treated the victim and some others. He said the SI and constable had been recommended for suspension as they were found to be at fault. On the recommendation of District SP Ranganath, Hyderabad Range DIG V.B. Kamalhasan Reddy issued orders suspending them.

‘Cultivating paddy in Rabi risky’

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

District Collector Dr. Sangeeta has warned the farmers that they will be at risk if they grow paddy during rabi and would have to sell the paddy all by themselves in the absence of the paddy procurement centers as the FCI backed out to procure rabi paddy. The state government is encouraging the farmers to raise alternative crops to rule out any problems to the farmers, she said seeking farmers' support to the government in this regard. Speaking at an awareness programme held at Yadav Nagar in Sultanabad Mandal of the district on Tuesday, the district collector, who clarified the



farmers' doubts, asked the farmers to grow black gram, red gram, gingelly, and

other remunerative crops. She assured the farmers to make available seeds of alternative

crops to them. Only those farmers who are required to honor agreements with seed companies should alone cultivate paddy, she said. She asked the agriculture department officials to make available the seeds sought after

by the farmers by tomorrow. The agriculture department officials will sensitise the farmers on the steps to check to practice crop rotation. In places where there are ponds and there is an assured irrigation facility, the agriculture extension officers will undertake field trips and advise the farmers, she said. District agriculture officer Tirumala Prasad and others took part in the programme.

INDIA CORNER

Rahul demands compensation, jobs for kin of farmers killed during farm laws stir

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday demanded compensation and jobs from the Centre for the next of kin of farmers who died during the year-long agitation against the three farm laws on the borders of the national capital. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Gandhi slammed the Modi government for its inability to maintain data on the death of farmers during the year-long agitation and tabled a list of farmers who were paid compensation and given jobs in Punjab and Haryana. Congress members demanded a statement from the government on the issue and walked out of the House along with NCP and DMK members while raising slogans against the government. "Around 700 farmers died in farmers' agitation. The prime minister apologised to the farmers and accepted his mistake. On November 30, agriculture minister was asked a question - 'how many farmers died in the agitation?' Agriculture minister said he had no data," the Congress member said.



Deshmukh probe: Former Maha chief secretary Sitaram Kunte appears before ED

Former Maharashtra chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte on Tuesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to record his statement in connection with a money laundering case registered against former state home minister Anil Deshmukh, sources said. Kunte, who is currently the principal advisor to Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, reached the agency's office at Ballard Estate in south Mumbai around 11 am, they said. The ED had summoned Kunte earlier also but he failed to appear before it due to his busy schedule, according to sources. The ED had arrested Deshmukh, a senior NCP leader, in connection with a multi-crore money laundering case. Notably, the ED had recently recorded the statement of suspended Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh in connection with its money laundering probe into alleged irregularities in the Maharashtra police establishment.



Bengaluru doctor who recovered from Omicron is Covid positive again

The city-based doctor, one of the two earliest cases of Omicron variant of Covid-19 to be detected in the country, has tested positive for the virus again, while the other, a South African national who flew out of here without informing the authorities, has been booked by the police. The South African, of Gujarati origin, who was quarantined here, later flew to Dubai. "It is true that the doctor who was infected with Omicron variant has once again tested positive for covid-19," a Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike official told PTI. Requesting anonymity, the official said the doctor is under isolation, but was asymptomatic. Meanwhile, police have registered a case against the South African national for flying without informing the authorities in violation of the quarantine norms. The management and staff of a five-star hotel here have also been booked for allowing the infected person to leave without informing the health officials.



Rs 20,353 cr undisclosed credits in Panama, Paradise leaks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday said undisclosed credits amounting to Rs 20,353 crore have been detected with respect to 930 India-linked entities in the Panama and Paradise Paper Leaks. Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary also informed that taxes collected so far amount to Rs 153.88 crore in the Panama and Paradise Paper Leaks. "As on October 1, 2021, total undisclosed credits amounting to Rs 20,353 crore have been detected with respect to 930 India-linked entities in the Panama and Paradise Paper Leaks," the minister said in a written reply. He said tax department takes appropriate actions in case of persons, who are found to be involved in violation of the provisions of various Acts administered by the Income Tax Department like the



Income Tax Act, 1961, and Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015 etc. "Such actions under direct tax law include searches and seizure, surveys, enquiries, assessment and reassessment of income, levy of taxes along

with interest, levy of penalties, filing of prosecution complaints in criminal courts, wherever applicable," he said. In 52 cases of Panama and Paradise Paper Leaks, criminal prosecution complaints have been filed under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and

Imposition of Tax Act, 2015. Further, in 130 cases proceedings under Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015 have been initiated. Some Indian names have been released in the media which are allegedly linked to the Pandora Papers Leak. Chaudhary further said the government has taken cognisance of the same and for the purpose of coordinated and speedy investigation brought the Pandora Papers Leak under the umbrella of Multi Agency group (MAG). The MGA has been constituted under the convenorship of Chairman CBDT, with Directorate of Enforcement, Reserve Bank of India, Financial Intelligence Unit India and Foreign Tax and Tax Research division of CBDT as its members agencies. Further, investigation is under progress, the minister added.

PM Modi inaugurates major fertiliser plant, AIIMS in UP's Gorakhpur

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Before 2014, the country was known for importing urea, and the shortage of fertilisers used to make headlines, but the situation has improved now, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday as he inaugurated a fertiliser plant here. Addressing a rally in Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's home turf Gorakhpur ahead of the assembly elections in the state, Modi said his government stopped misuse of urea, and issued soil health cards to farmers so that they know which type of fertiliser is needed. The prime minister said his government also took steps to hike urea production by reviving closed fertiliser plants.

RLD chief formally announces alliance with SP, flays BJP's politics

PNS ■ LUCKNOW.

Rashtriya Lok Dal president Jayant Chaudhary on Tuesday formally announced his party's alliance with the Samajwadi Party and said if they come to power in Uttar Pradesh next year, the first work will be to build a memorial for 'martyrs' of the farmers' protest. Slamming the BJP government in the state for the recent leak of a government competitive examination question paper and subsequent cancellation of the test, Chaudhary said because of such incidents youngsters are not getting appointments, and they have to migrate and work in other places. The BJP will get a befitting reply from the people in the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls next year as they have understood its politics of hatred, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief said while addressing a rally along with Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav in Meerut. Talking about the alliance, Chaudhary said, "Akhilesh ji and I are together, and I am



making an announcement in this regard. The first work our double-engine government will do is to construct a memorial for martyr farmers, who died during farmers' protest here in the land of Chowdhury Charan Singh." The BJP talks of "hatred" and "our Babaji (Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath) starts with Aurangzeb and ends with the Kairana exodus", the RLD leader said. The BJP during the last assembly elections had claimed that many Hindu

families had migrated from Kairana town in fear of criminals. The claim of migration has been contested by some political parties. "The paper (competitive exam) is leaked, youths are not getting appointments. Youths from here migrate due to lack of opportunities and work in other states. Now this time, people will not fall in the trap of 'nafrat ki baatein' (talks of hatred)," he said. The RLD leader said, "Babaji becomes angry very fast. You have never seen him smiling.

Nagaland calls off Hornbill Festival over civilian deaths

PNS ■ KOHIMA

The cabinet of Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on Tuesday called off the ongoing Hornbill Festival in protest against the killing of 14 civilians by security forces, state ministers said. The state government also decided to write to the Centre demanding the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, they said. The 10-day Hornbill Festival, the state's largest tourism extravaganza held at Naga Heritage Village in Kisama near the state capital, was scheduled to end on December 10. During an emergency meeting, the cabinet was briefed about the action taken following the killing, including setting up of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by an IGP rank officer and grant of ex-gratia to the next of kin of the deceased by the state and central governments, ministers Neiba Kronu and Temjen Imna Along later told reporters. The cabinet has directed the SIT to complete the investigation within a month, they said. Kronu said that altogether 14 civilians have died in the incident, while two seriously injured are undergoing treatment in neighbouring Assam,



Officer of major general rank to head Army's court of inquiry into Nagaland

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army has ordered a court of inquiry headed by an officer of major general rank into the Nagaland firing incident in which 14 civilians were killed, official sources said on Tuesday. Former senior Army officers on Monday called the incident "unfortunate" and "tragic", adding that the botched up operation was likely a result of wrong

intelligence. The sources said an officer of major general rank would head the court of inquiry to probe the operation of the 21 Para Special Forces that took place in the state's Mon district on Saturday evening. The inquiry will focus on the "intelligence" and the "circumstances" on which Saturday's operation was based on, they noted.

and six are being treated in Dimapur. The firing incidents took place in Oting-Tiru area on December 4 and Mon town on December 5. "All activities of Hornbill Festival 2021 should cease in view of mourning announced

for the deceased in the firing incidents in Mon district," Kronu said. After the announcement, the tourism department, the main organiser of the festival, held a solemn closing ceremony at the Naga Heritage Village.

PM's jibe at Samajwadi Party on 'red cap' and 'red alert'

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Taking a swipe at the Samajwadi Party ahead of assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday equated "red cap" with "red alert" for the state. Addressing a public meeting here after dedicating to the nation three mega projects, including an AIIMS and a fertiliser plant, Modi said, "Today, the entire UP very well knows that those wearing red caps are concerned about red beacon ('laal batti') and they are not bothered about your pain and sorrows." "The red cap people want power to commit scams, fill their coffers, indulge in illegal grabbing (of resources) and to give complete freedom to the mafia," he said. Stepping up his attack on



the rival ahead of the assembly polls early next year, Modi said, "The red cap people want to form government to show favour to terrorists and to free them from jail. Hence, you should remember that those wearing red caps are red alert for UP, in other words alarm bells." Red cap is a trademark of Samajwadi Party leaders as well as workers.

TMC leader poses with gun inside govt office

PNS ■ ENGLISH BAZAR

A purported photo of a TMC leader posing with a gun in a government office in West Bengal's Malda district went viral on social media, triggering a political furor on Tuesday. In the purported photo, Mrinalini Mondal Maity, the president of Old Malda Panchayat Samiti, was seen posing with the gun in one of her hands while being on her official chair. Maity is also the president of the district unit of TMC women's wing. Hitting out at the TMC, the BJP alleged that the ruling party has turned the state into a dump yard of explosives. "If she is searched, police will also get bombs and rifles. This is TMC's culture.

Center plans to amend Notaries Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government proposes to amend the Notaries Act to restrict the number of terms a person can practice as a notary to allow more young legal practitioners enter the field, the Law Ministry said on Tuesday. In a statement, the ministry said the proposed amendment bill also seeks to extend power to suspend the certificate of practice in cases of professional misconduct by the appropriate government for conduct of inquiry. The proposed amendment bill also seeks to digitise notarial work undertaken by notaries. As of now the number of terms of renewal of certificates of practice of a notary is



unrestricted after the initial appointment." ... it is proposed to restrict the overall term of notaries for a period up to 15 years (initial term of five years and two renewal terms of five years each) by curtailing renewals of unlimited terms..." the ministry said.

BJP's West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma raises drug menace issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP MP Parvesh Verma on Tuesday raised in the Lok Sabha the issue of drug abuse in the national capital and accused the Delhi government under chief minister Arvind Kejriwal of taking no "concrete steps" to deal with the growing menace. Asking a question in the

House in this connection, the BJP MP said while an increasing trend of substance abuse in the country is a matter of concern, Delhi figures in the list of top five states when it comes to alcoholism and drug abuse. "On the one hand the Delhi government blows its own trumpet saying it has improved the quality of its educational

institutions, on the other hand it leaves children of beggars in streets to die. These children use injection (for drug abuse) which increases the risk of HIV and Hepatitis," Verma said in the Lok Sabha during the Question Hour. He also hit out at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Delhi over its new excise policy, saying it is open-

ing as many as 824 liquor 'Theka' (vends) to increase its revenue even as the national capital figures in the list of top five states when it comes to alcoholism, substance abuse, use of injection for drug abuse. "Trend of the use of party drugs is increasing fast. Bollywood stars, or their children or children of beggars that we see at red lights--all

these are completely involved in drug (abuse)," he said. The West Delhi MP said that Delhi Police in his Lok Sabha constituency has deported more than 300 foreign nationals who were involved in peddling of banned substance, congratulating Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who was present in the House, for this.

Muslims should hand over mosque in Mathura

PNS ■ BALLIA

Uttar Pradesh minister Anand Swarup Shukla has said Muslims should hand over a mosque close to a temple at the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura to Hindus, referring to it as a "safed bhavan" (white structure). In provocative remarks on Monday, he said while the court had resolved the Ayodhya issue, the "white structures" in Varanasi and Mathura hurt Hindus. "A time will come when the white structure in Mathura that hurts every Hindu will be removed with the help of the court," Shukla, the minister of state for parliamentary affairs, told reporters Monday evening.



"Dr Ram Manohar Lohia had said that the Muslims of India would have to believe that Ram and Krishna were

their ancestors and that Babar, Akbar and Aurangzeb were attackers. Do not associate yourself with any building built by them," he added. The minister said, "The Muslim community should come forward and hand over the white structure located in the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi complex in Mathura to Hindus. Time will come when this work will be completed." He said on December 6 (1992), 'karsewaks' had removed a "blot on Ramlalla" and now a grand temple is being constructed there. He was apparently referring to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindutva mobs. Asked about the conversion

of former Shia Waqf Board chairman Syed Wasim Rizvi to 'Sanatan dharma' (Hinduism), he said Muslims should follow and do 'ghar wapsi' (return to Hinduism). "All Muslims in the country are converted. If they see their history, they will find that 200-250 years ago they converted to Islam from Hinduism. We will like all of them to do 'ghar wapsi'," he said, hailing Rizvi for his "courageous" step. "This step is a challenge for Maulanas and Maulvis who live in the country and promote a Talabani mindset," Shukla said. He said India's basic culture is of 'Hindutva' (Hinduism) and 'Bhartiyata' and they are complementary to each other. He termed the Samajwadi

Party, its founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and president Akhilesh Yadav as "anti-Hindu" and accused them of "ordering firing" on unarmed 'karsewaks' in Ayodhya. On Sunday, BJP MP Ravindra Kushwaha had said when the Narendra Modi government can repeal the farm laws keeping in mind the protests by farmers, it can also withdraw the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 to pave way for the construction of a grand temple at Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi in Mathura. Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya had also offered support for a new temple in Mathura.

PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government launched the PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission on October 25 this year to fill the gaps in the healthcare system based on experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Tuesday. The mission aims to develop the capacities of primary, secondary and tertiary care health systems, strengthen existing national institutions and create new institutions to cater to detection and cure of new and emerging diseases, Minister of State for Health



Bharati Pravin Pawar said in written response to a question

in the Upper House of Parliament.

Balancing act

Putin used the Indian soil to take a snipe at the US, putting it in a spot

The summit meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin has tested India's ability to do a balancing act so as not to get caught between the brittle relationship between the US and Russia over Ukraine and the proposed Summit for Democracy. For the record, Modi and Putin reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing ties. Significantly, it was Putin's second visit outside Russia since the pandemic's outbreak, after he visited Geneva this June to meet US President Joe Biden. The New Delhi visit underlined Russia's importance to India as a provider of defence systems. Russia handles over half of all Indian arms imports, technology and joint production agreements. Russia has also agreed to lease a nuclear-powered submarine to India. The icing on the cake is Russia's long-range S-400 ground-to-air missile defence system which initially attracted the displeasure of the United States. It was expected at one time that despite the warm relations between the US and India, Washington might sanction India under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act), which warns of sanctions for any country buying arms from Russia. That has not come to pass yet, but the fact remains that India looked to Russia, and not the US, for its defence needs. In the case of the nuclear-powered submarine, too, it looked to Russia. Interestingly, the AUKUS pact of September will allow Australia to become the first non-nuclear weapons



State to acquire a similar nuclear-powered submarine. Even as Modi and Putin vowed to cement their unique ties, New Delhi realised that Russia used Indian soil to take a snipe at the US. Its Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov recalled that the US tried to undermine Russia-India cooperation on the S-400 deal and tried to make India obey American orders. "We", Lavrov said, witnessed how the US tried to make India "to follow the American vision of how this region should be developed". It appears that Russia used Putin's visit to put the US in a spot by leaning more heavily than required on its friendship with India. That line of thinking is open to interpretation because the US has not followed up on the sanctions threat. After all, it understands the challenges India faces from its neighbours in the west and east. Also, the US and India have their association in the Indo-Pacific in the form of QUAD. Lavrov's statement, however, may have more to do with two areas of current friction between Russia and the US. One is the Russian troop movement near Ukraine's borders amid speculations of a conflict. Lavrov's remarks came just a day before the Biden-Putin virtual summit on the issue. The US has said it will send reinforcements to Nato's eastern flank if Russia invades Ukraine. The second issue is Biden's invite to 100-odd countries to his Summit of Democracy on December 9 and 10. Ukraine has been invited to the summit, but Russia stands excluded.



A view of the snow-covered Himalayan range, in Shimla

Dam it!

Tamil Nadu's ban on *Dam 999* continues since 2011, and on a flimsy narrative

The DMK and its natural allies, the Communists, are always in the forefront to agitate against the violation of the right to free speech. But it is shocking that the Dravidian Government continues to ban a 2011 production, *Dam 999*. The movie, which bagged several national and international honours, was shortlisted for even the Oscars. However, the TN Government banned it citing law and order problems. Though bans were earlier imposed on certain films like *Vishwaroopam* and *Thuppakki* fearing reprisal from a minority community, the issues were resolved within days and those were released to a grand welcome. Meanwhile, the State Government's reason for banning the movie is ambiguous. "The film's story is woven around the Mullaperiyar Dam; the core issues are pending before the Supreme Court. If the ban is lifted, there may be widespread agitation and disruption of peace," states the November 22, 2021, order issued by the Additional Chief Secretary. Film's producer-director Sohan Roy says that there was nothing in *Dam 999* which could upset law and order in Tamil Nadu.

"The movie was released all over the world, except in Tamil Nadu, though we had hired many artists and technicians from that State for the project, including national award-winning designer Thotta Tharini. The film makes no reference to the Mullaperiyar Dam and the storyline was based on the bursting of the Banqiao Dam in China in 1975, which resulted in the death of 2.5 lakh people. I never had Mullaperiyar in my mind when I was shooting the movie," Roy adds. The ban is seen as the "true colours" of the Dravidians, according to noted author and film critic PK Sreenivasan. "History is repeating itself in Tamil Nadu. MG Ramachandran was thrown out of the DMK for questioning the party leadership's stance on a number of issues. We cannot expect anything different from them even now," Sreenivasan comments on the ban issue. The truth is that Tamil Nadu does not like to discuss the Mullaperiyar Dam. The term '999' evokes nervousness in the powers that be there since they know that the 999-year-long agreement is a fraud perpetrated on the people of Travancore by the then Madras Province. How an incident that reportedly happened in China could force the people of Tamil Nadu to violate law and order is anybody's guess. Dams should not be used for damning creativity!



Propaganda around China's 'infallibility'

Under Xi Jinping's leadership, the seeds of Mao's manipulative propaganda tactics have mushroomed like never before in China

In the early days of 'helmsman' Mao Zedong's Chinese revolution, propaganda assumed a key role in shaping the Chinese optics, discourse and popular narrative. In 1958, the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, *People's Daily*, wrote: "...today, in the era of Mao Zedong, heaven is here on earth..." — ironically, this was also the year of the start of the Great Chinese Famine that has been regarded as amongst the greatest manmade disasters in human history, accounting for millions (estimates ranging from 15 to 55 million) deaths. The instinctive cover-up reaction of the Chinese officialdom entailed releasing propaganda posters of Chinese children standing atop surreal green fields of wheat so dense that they could hold their weight — the reality of the 'fields', actually made of deliberately transplanted stalks with a bench to hold the children, was hidden from the masses.

Today, in Xi Jinping's China, the seeds of Mao's manipulative propaganda tactics have mushroomed like never before, and the curation of the 'Chinese Dream' is a zealously guarded effort that brooks no contrarian viewpoint. Xi's barely concealed and insidious efforts to "tell China's story well" comes packaged with the usual spirit of defensive and reactive censorship, heavily massaged headlines, deflections to even outright buying out international opinions eg. *South China Morning Post*. Awkward subjects like the ensuing dissonance in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, Tibet or the Dalai Lama remain subject to editorial manicuring with the requisite smoke-and-mirrors to ensure that the domestic audience does not get 'brainwashed' to what Xi calls "western values of journalism". An important aspect of this control phenomenon is to define the so-called redlines that necessitates the continuing maintenance of the official charade of the Communist Party's supremacy, infallibility and perfection — anyone questioning the same risks immediate threat or, in Chinese context, mysterious disappearances.

Last year, flamboyant Chinese entrepreneur Jack Ma, at



the cusp of the world's largest public offering of his company ie The Ant Group (a flourishing empire including the Alibaba, then valued at well over \$1 trillion), was subjected to a reality check of overstepping the mandated redlines (in this case, criticising Chinese regulatory policies) in Xi's hypersensitive China, and soon disappeared. Since then, Ja Ma has gone under the radar with patchy, dubiously organised and sanitised public appearances, that are typical of China's treatment of anyone blowing the lid off the official narrative. Many others like award-winning photographer Lu Guang, businesswoman Duan Weihong, actress Zhao Wei, artist and activist Ai Weiwei, real estate tycoon Ren Zhiqiang — all followed the patented route of inexplicable 'disappearances'. No criticism of the leader, party or its policies is ever tolerated.

Now, the hardly curious case of former No 1 women's tennis doubles player, Peng Shuai, follows the exact same path. Her crime: Calling out the bluff of so-called discipline, propriety and morality within the top ranks of the CCP by accusing former Chinese Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault. Expectedly, Chinese social media platform Weibo took down Peng Shuai's post and discussions about her



THIS IS THE THIN ICE ON WHICH THE CHINESE SOCIETY, GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY IS PREDICATED; XI JINPING KNOWS THIS, AND THEREFORE AMONG HIS PREDECESSORS, HE PREFERS MAO ZEDONG'S HARD PROPAGANDA APPROACH

sudden disappearance were heavily censored within the controlled realm of Chinese media, and her physical whereabouts remained unconvincingly scanty. Following a concerted effort by the World Tennis Association (WTA), the Chinese Tennis Association issued perfunctory assurances that Peng Shuai was safe and "not under any physical threat". In a throwback to Ja Ma's carefully calibrated 'reappearances' that raised a lot more questions than it addressed, Peng Shuai too has started making what is increasingly getting dubbed as 'hostage videos'. For an internationally active player, there has been an inexplicable curb on access and ability to reach out to her with strangely incommunicado and stage-managed 'sightings', dished out as means of meaningless reassurances of normalcy. Unfortunately, and embarrassingly so for the Chinese, the WTA Tour has suspended its tournaments in China and upped the ante, exactly what the Chinese were seeking to avoid, in their quest to suppress the truth and the accompanying outcry. Crucially, this specific disappearance (unlike countless others) could further sully the Chinese perceptions, weak as they are in the COVID era, to derail the Winter Olympics which are due in a

couple of months. It's not so much about defending Gaoli's personal reputation (who too remains away from public gaze) as much as it is about defending the linear mirage of the 'Chinese Dream' (read, Party's governing capacity and infallibility) and of, therefore, avoiding the dangerous precedent of 'questioning' any of its imperatives. The *People's Daily*, which noted the "heaven on earth" analogy in 1958, launched its English daily tabloid, *Global Times*, in 2009 with the same level of propagandistic enthusiasm — so it noted WTA's action as "pursuit of political correctness", "forcing her to comply in accordance with the imagination and expectations of Western public opinion" and as "politicisation of sports", all the while remaining deflective on the specifics of Peng Shuai's disappearance. This is the thin ice on which the Chinese society, governance and sustainability is predicated; Xi Jinping knows this, and therefore among his predecessors, he prefers Mao Zedong's hard propaganda approach to the relatively reformist approach of Deng Xiaoping. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE PANDEMIC IS PERHAPS INVINCIBLE

Sir — No country, no community, no individual is safe until everyone across the world is safe. The emergence of a new Coronavirus variant has once again brought the spotlight on how unprecedented the pandemic is and how precarious the situation we're all in. We may have come to think that the pandemic is over, but the virus is still with us. As we speak, scientists across the world are scrambling to gather more data on the Omicron variant to understand how dangerous it is in terms of transmission and severity, and whether the currently available vaccines will be effective against it. The World Health Organisation has designated Omicron — the B.1.1.529 lineage of Sars-Cov-2 — as a variant of concern, leading to fears of another global surge in cases.

Dozens of countries have imposed travel bans from South African nations, where the Omicron variant was first identified. Others have imposed stricter measures to curb the spread of the Omicron variant. As on date, at least 38 countries have confirmed Omicron cases. Meanwhile, a number of countries have started booster vaccinations as a preventive measure against the new strain. But the question is: As long as vaccine inequity is not addressed, can the world think of defeating the Coronavirus pandemic and restoring normalcy?

Gautam SR | Bhopal

KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE

Sir — Russian President Vladimir Putin's India visit should bolster bilateral ties between the two countries. Foreign policy is a matter of costs and benefits; no two nations are permanent foes. New Delhi, of course, is not on a slippery slope as far as its military and trade ties with Moscow are concerned. An old and traditional connection cannot go haywire just like that, and that was exemplified in no uncertain terms by Putin's India visit. The 2+2 meeting between the defence and foreign ministers of both the countries was held in a conducive atmosphere. India holds 2+2 ministerial meetings with

Numbers make all the noise



Despite climbing to the third position in the list of most wicket-takers in Test cricket in India and leading the team to victory innumerable times, Ravichandran Ashwin continues to be criticised and compared. He has done remarkably well as an off-spinner for Indian cricket time and again. Whether it is ODI, T20 or Test cricket, Ashwin adjusts as per the format and situation on ground and plays a pivotal role.

He has won the 'Man of the Series' award nine times in his illustrious career. He stands up to the challenge when the chips are down and can perform with the bat as well.

Ashwin came, saw and conquered the cricketing field with a purpose. Ironically, the last wicket of New Zealand cricketer Henry Nicholls was taken by the ace spinner to hasten the end of Kiwi innings in the two match Test series. Ashwin has reached a historic milestone in test cricket. The off-spinner went past Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh in taking 50 wickets in a calendar year for the most number of times. Ashwin is a star spinner and instead of criticising him or comparing his bowling figures with other bowlers, we should remember the times he held the fort and saved the day for Team India.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

the United States, Japan and Australia and, thus, Russia became the fourth country to be accorded that importance. President Putin hailing India as a "great power" should do wonders for healthy bilateral relations.

Military, space, power, energy and infrastructure sectors between India and Russia are all set to be further expanded in the aftermath of President Putin's short but crucial visit. Interpersonal relations between the two have always been above board. There is nothing unusual in differences of opinion between the two friends. Putin kept away from the G20 and rescheduled his Beijing visit amid the pandemic; but kept his word on attending the summit in India. New Delhi, therefore, has to engage Russia on a personal level keeping with its dehyphenation policy on international relations.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

THE BJP SHOULD LEARN TO BE HUMBLE

Sir — There is little doubt that the repeal of the three contentious farm laws that were hastily passed in September last year is a victory for the farming community,

and the triumph justly connotes the popular saying, "Farmers are the backbone of the Indian economy." However, the about turn made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is nothing but a sheer political opportunism with an eye on the forth-coming assembly elections in the key States of UP, Punjab and Uttarakhand, and as well in the wake of the BJP's recent dismal performance in bypolls.

The rollback of the farm laws shows how politically difficult it will be for India to overhaul a sector that supports about 60 per cent of the country's population. The farmers' victory is a tribute to their unprecedented struggle that it not only withstood the multi-fanged State repression, but, in fact, increased its defiant resistance massively for a year. The ruling BJP must have learnt a hard-hitting lesson that a community, which is strongly united for a cause, can never be defeated.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

There is no need to panic. I request you all to maintain social distancing and wear masks.

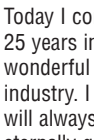


Delhi Chief Minister —Arvind Kejriwal



Right now, the drug companies have set the prices at whatever the market will bear.

US President —Joe Biden



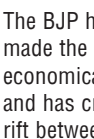
Today I completed 25 years in our wonderful film industry. I am, and will always be, eternally grateful.

Actor —Arshad Warsi



As I have said earlier and saying it again, Virat Kohli is the best Test captain India has ever had.

Former Indian cricketer —Irfan Pathan




The BJP has made the country economically weak and has created a rift between people of different communities.

SP chief —Akhilesh Yadav

FIRST COLUMN

WTO AND COMMON IP FOR COVID VACCINES

Dissent persists on whether a waiver is answer to shortage and inequitable distribution of vaccines



PK VASUDEVA

The WTO's 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12), scheduled to be held in Geneva, stands postponed again because of the outbreak of the Omicron Coronavirus variant. At MC12, whenever it is now held, ministers will be reviewing the functioning of the multilateral trading system, delivering prepared statements, and taking action on the WTO's future work programme. As is known, the Doha Development Round, launched in 2001, has had a very rocky journey with a low level of achievement. Its main success was the adoption of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation at MC9 in 2013. There is, therefore, considerable pressure for a successful outcome at MC12 at a formal meeting of the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on November 18, WTO members agreed to keep actively engaging up until the WTO's MC12 in order to find a common intellectual property (IP) response to Covid-19. Members adopted the oral



status report of the TRIPS council The text provides a factual overview of discussions held at the Council since October 2020, on the proposal by India and South Africa requesting a waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19 and the proposal by the European Union for a draft General Council declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health in the circumstances of a pandemic. On the waiver request, the report indicates that disagreement persists on the fundamental question of whether a waiver is the appropriate and most effective way to address the shortage and inequitable distribution of, and access to, vaccines and other COVID-19-related products. The role of IP in the context of the pandemic has become the centre of attention in the run-up to MC12, and a pragmatic and tangible outcome of these discussions would be a strong and positive signal to the Ministerial Conference and the global community as a whole. The chair of the WTO's agriculture negotiations, Ambassador Gloria Abraham Peralta, told heads of delegations at a meeting on 15 November that she plans to circulate a revised draft negotiation text as soon as possible. The first draft negotiation text was introduced on July 29, with the chair proposing suggestions for a possible agriculture package at MC12. The text encompasses the seven main negotiation topics — domestic support, market access, export restrictions, export competition, cotton, public stockholding for food security purposes (PSH) and a special safeguard mechanism (SSM) as well as cross-cutting transparency issues. The chair emphasized the draft was based on members' discussions as well as her consultations in various configurations and served as a starting point for the final text-based negotiation phase before MC12. The chair also reported to WTO members on the state of play in the negotiations. She said the most recent consultations have focused on engaging members to find convergences on three primary issues: domestic support, public stockholding for food security purposes and, to a lesser extent, market access. Other members reaffirmed that a meaningful MC12 outcome on agriculture will address the compelling issue of food and livelihood security in light of the pandemic and commit members to continuing agricultural reform to make the agriculture trading system fit for purpose. Singapore presented a paper outlining its responses to the questions posed by India regarding an initiative that calls for exempting the World Food Programme's humanitarian food purchases from any export restriction. The initiative has gained wide support from most members and was described by many as a "low-hanging fruit" for MC12.

(The writer is former senior professor, international trade and member, Vivekananda International Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

The Congress faces a host of challenges before 2024

All Opposition parties might be willing to unite under Sonia Gandhi's leadership; however, they have reservations against Rahul Gandhi

Will Congress perish as West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee and others believe? Even in the past, many predicted the end of Congress, but it survived many onslaughts. The latest was in 1998 when Sonia Gandhi emerged, Sphinx-like, to revive it and rule from 2004-2014. The 2019 Lok Sabha results gave Congress 12 crore votes, though seat-wise it got only 52. Even in its second successive defeat in 2019, the party retained a solid block of 20 percent votes. The Gandhi family is complacent, believing that the voters will get disenchanted sooner than later and return to the Grand Old Party. No doubt they live in a fool's paradise as there is an urgent need to revive the



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

party. Undoubtedly, Congress faces a leadership crisis and challenges from many sides. The first is to quell the internal indiscipline and revolt. The group of 23 led by Ghulam Nabi Azad is an example and this disenchantment is prevalent in almost all states. The second comes from within the Opposition bloc. Of late, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's attack, backed by the wily NCP chief Sharad Pawar, has intensified. Now that Mamata has decided to bid for the Prime Minister's post in 2024, she is trying to edge out Congress from the opposition bloc. As a first step, Banerjee is preparing to broad-base her party and also gain pan-national recognition.

Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, and West Bengal, where it ruled in the past, Congress won only 10 out of 286 seats. The party has no representation from 20 states. Further, BJP has taken over the opposition space in Odisha, Tripura, and West Bengal, where Congress was traditionally the main opposition. Also, the regional parties continue to put up a much better fight than Congress. So, what are the options for the party now that there are cracks within the opposition? The first is to think of a long-term strategy and start preparing for 2024. Mamata is

doing precisely that. Congress is involved in short-term quick-fix solutions, often messing up the party's chances as they did in Punjab recently. But before that, the party needs to resolve its leadership crisis, which has been going on since August 2019. The second is that the party needs enormous resources and committed booth committees to compete with BJP. Once these two are addressed, the other things are more manageable. The third is to find ways of uniting the opposition. Sonia Gandhi has the stature to do this as almost all opposition parties might be willing to unite under her leadership, but they have reservations against Rahul Gandhi. If necessary, the Gandhi family should pave the way for some other leader. The regional leaders realize that though they could contain BJP in their states, they do not have a pan-national presence. Even today, therefore, they need a party like Congress; every village has a congressman. Last Sunday, Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamna*, in its editorial, said that pushing the grand old party away from national politics and creating an Opposition grouping parallel to the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) would only strengthen BJP and "fascist" forces. Though Mamata tried to woo the Sena during her recent visit, Sena does not want to lose its government because Congress is its coalition partner in Maharashtra. Rahul Gandhi has been in politics since 2004, but he is not yet accepted as the opposition face. Rahul's efforts to befriend second-generation leaders like Akhilesh Yadav have not succeeded. He needs an image makeover. The fourth and more complex option is to give a call to all those leaders who had left Congress to come back. This idea springs up on and off. Congress has been the parent of many ruling parties like the NCP, TMC, YSRCP. There have been suggestions that such a united party could function under a presidium and collective leadership. But the parent party is hesitant to take such a plunge. A united Congress, than a divided opposition, is a more formidable opponent to BJP.



Citroen to hike C5 Aircross SUV price by up to 3 pc

■ NEW DELHI

Automaker Citroen India on Tuesday said it will increase price of its premium SUV C5 Aircross by up to 3 per cent from January next year to offset the impact of rising input costs.

The effective price increase will be up to 3 per cent on the existing ex-showroom prices of the Feel and Shine variants of the model, the automaker said in a statement.

A continued rise in the cost of commodities and ocean freight costs has necessitated this price increase of the vehicle, it added. The price of C5 Aircross currently starts at Rs 31.3 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi).

Some carmakers have already announced a hike in vehicle prices from next month such as Maruti Suzuki and luxury automakers Audi and Mercedes-Benz.

Sensex soars 887 pts on global market trend

■ MUMBAI

Recovering from a two-session carnage, equity benchmark Sensex rebounded 887 points on Tuesday, led by gains in index majors ICICI Bank, HDFC twins and Infosys amid a positive trend in global markets. According to experts, global equity markets are slightly relieved after studies pertaining to the Omicron strain of COVID-19 suggest that even though it is fast spreading, it is largely milder than the Delta variant.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 886.51 points or 1.56 per cent higher at 57,633.65. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rallied 264.45 points or 1.56 per cent to 17,176.70.

Tata Steel was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, advancing nearly 4 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank, SBI and Bajaj Finance.

On the other hand, Asian



Paints was the sole laggard.

"Markets rebounded sharply after two days of the selloff on account of positive global cues. Investors are following the buy-on dip strategy and thus accumulating quality stocks at a cheaper price," said Arijit Malakar, Head Research (Retail) of Ashika Stock Broking.

Further, he said studies pertaining to the Omicron strain of COVID-19 have shown that it is largely milder than the Delta variant and that provides some relief to global equity

markets.

Additionally, RBI is expected to keep the interest rates steady when the MPC will announce the outcome of its meeting on December 8, Malakar added.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude rose 2.26 per cent to USD 74.73 per barrel.

Centre disburses Rs 2,071cr loan for 4k projects

■ NEW DELHI

The government has so far disbursed Rs 2,071 crore for 4,003 projects under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Tuesday. Tomar, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha, said a total of 8,488 projects have been sanctioned under the scheme so far with a loan amount of Rs 6,098 crore. "Out of which, Rs 2,071 crores have been disbursed for 4,003 projects," he said. Out of 8,488 projects sanctioned so far, a maximum of 1,954 projects were from Madhya Pradesh, followed by 1,424 projects in Andhra Pradesh, 900 projects in Karnataka, 684 projects in Uttar Pradesh, 654 projects from Rajasthan and 555 projects in Maharashtra. About 5,067 projects sanctioned belonged to primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACS), 2,576 projects of agri-entrepreneurs, 685 projects of individual farmers, 61 projects of farmer producer organizations and 53 projects belonged to start-ups, showed the data placed before the Lower House.

Global stocks follow Wall Street higher amid virus fears

■ BEIJING

Global stock markets followed Wall Street higher Tuesday as anxiety about the coronavirus's latest variant eased and China reported stronger November trade figures than expected.

London and Frankfurt opened higher. Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong advanced. Oil prices rose more than \$1 a barrel for a second day.

Wall Street futures were higher after the chief White House medical adviser said Monday the omicron variant might be less dangerous. That might allow travel and business restrictions to ease.

Reports from South Africa, where omicron first was spotted, that hospitals haven't been overwhelmed "is fuelling some optimism" among traders who sold earlier, said Yeap Jun Rong of IG in a report.

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London gained 1% to 7,302.61 and Frankfurt's DAX advanced 1.6% to 15,623.97. The CAC 40 in Paris added



1.7% to 6,982.63.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 future was up 1% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 0.8%.

On Monday, the S&P 500 rose 1.2% while the Dow added 1.9%. The Nasdaq composite gained less than 0.1%.

In Asia, the Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.2% to 3,595.09 after November imports surged 31.7% over a

year earlier in a sign domestic demand might be strengthening.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo gained 1.9% to 28,455.60 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 2.6% to 23,983.66.

The Kospi in Seoul advanced 0.6% to 2,991.72 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 gained 1% to 7,313.90.

India's Sensex rose 2% to 57,871.21. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets gained.

On Wall Street, more than 85% of stocks in the S&P 500 rose Monday, led by technology and banks.

Airlines, cruise lines and other travel companies that stand to gain from avoiding more anti-coronavirus controls advanced after Dr Anthony Fauci said early indications suggested omicron may be less dangerous than the earlier delta variant.

It will still take a few weeks to learn whether omicron is more contagious, causes more severe illness or evades immunity.

MONEY MATTERS

Reliance Capital says corporate insolvency resolution started

Reliance Capital on Tuesday said the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has admitted the case of the company for the corporate insolvency procedure. Shares of the company declined by more than 4 per cent to trade at Rs 14.10 on BSE. Pursuant to order dated December 6, 2021 of the National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai, corporate insolvency resolution (CRIP) has been initiated against Reliance Capital Ltd., the company said in a regulatory filing. Nageshwar Rao Y has been appointed as the administrator of the company, via order dated December 6, 2021, it said further. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Monday admitted the Reserve Bank's plea to initiate insolvency resolution proceedings against Reliance Capital. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had filed an application for the initiation of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against the company last week.



India has exported 9.39L tonnes of sugar so far



Sugar mills have exported 9.39 lakh tonnes of the sweetener till the first week of December during the ongoing 2021-22 marketing year that started from October 1, and are not in hurry to sell further stock in view of sluggish global price trend, trade body AISTA said on Tuesday. About 4.68 lakh tonnes of sugar is in transit, the All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA) said in a statement. Mills have contracted to export 33 lakh tonnes of sugar without the government subsidy so far in the 2021-22 marketing year, it added. The sugar marketing year runs from October to September. Sugar exports this year are being undertaken without the government subsidy. According to AISTA, mills have exported a total of 9,39,435 tonnes of sugar from October 1 to December 6, 2021. "Indian mills are not in a hurry to sell sugar as previous sales are yet to be executed. Also, they do not like the current global prices, which shall have to move up to attract more Indian sales," AISTA said.

Over 2L farmers in Nagaland get Rs 299 cr under PM-Kisan

The Centre has transferred Rs 299.26 crore to more than 2 lakh beneficiary farmers in Nagaland since the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme in February 2019, Parliament was informed on Tuesday. Under the PM-KISAN scheme, a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year is provided to eligible farmer families, payable in three equal installments of Rs 2,000. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, in his written reply to the Lok Sabha, said: "A total of 2,06,523 beneficiaries have been given the financial benefits of more than Rs 299.26 crore through various installments under PM-KISAN Scheme in the State of Nagaland."

Sebi amends delisting rules to make M&A more convenient

■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has amended rules pertaining to delisting of equity shares of a company following an open offer as part of efforts to make merger and acquisition transactions for listed companies more convenient.

Under the new framework, promoters or acquirers need to disclose their intention to delist the firm through an initial public announcement, according to a notification.

If the acquirer is desirous of delisting the target company, the acquirer must propose a higher price for delisting with suitable premium over open offer price.



In case the open offer is for an indirect acquisition, the open offer price and indicative price will be notified by the acquirer at the time of making

the detailed public statement and in the letter of offer.

"The indicative price shall include a suitable premium reflecting the price that the acquirer is willing to pay for the delisting offer with full disclosures of the rationale and justification for the indicative price so determined that can also be revised upwards by the acquirer before the start of the tendering period," Sebi said in a notification on Monday.

In the existing framework, if an open offer is triggered, compliance with takeover regulations could take the incoming acquirer's holding to above 75 per cent or perhaps even 90 per cent.

Steps to protect bonafide decisions of bank: FM

■ NEW DELHI

The government has taken various measures to protect bona fide commercial decisions of banks to alleviate the fear of any unwarranted hardships to officials or senior executives taking key decisions, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday in the Rajya Sabha.

These include amendments to Prevention of Corruption Act (PC Act), 1988, requiring prior permission before initiating investigation against a

public servant, setting up of Advisory Board for Banking and Financial Frauds (ABBF) for first level of examination of suspected frauds of banks and financial institutions in excess of Rs 50 crore, finalisation of Consolidated Staff Accountability Framework etc, she said. The government, in consultation with Central Vigilance Commission, has recently finalised a consolidated Staff Accountability Framework for non-performing assets (NPAs) accounts up to Rs 50 crore, other than fraud cases, she said.



Ather Energy opens 2nd outlet in Surat

■ MUMBAI

Electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy inaugurated on Tuesday its new retail outlet at Vesu (Surat), its second such facility in the state and 25th in the country.

The latest showroom at Surat aims to educate customers about every aspect of the vehicle and witness the engineering and mechanical efforts that go into the making of each Ather scooter, the company said. The company also said it has installed two fast-charging points, Ather Grid at Surat and plans to add 8-10 more to strengthen the charging network and make the transition to electric scooters stress-free and convenient.

Decision to link price of desi coking coal to imported one

■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday said that for higher supply of coking coal in the country and to ensure that it is provided at a cheaper rate, it is considering measures like linking the price of domestic coking coal to the imported dry fuel.

The development assumes significance in the wake of an inter-ministerial panel suggesting formulating an import parity-based pricing mechanism for domestic coking coal factoring the quality parameters.

"For higher supply of coking coal in the country and to



ensure it is provided at a cheaper rate, the decision to yet reduce ash percentage with upgraded technology and the price of coking coal to be linked to imported coal are the measures under consideration," the coal ministry said in a statement.

The committee, headed by the coal additional secretary,

has also suggested the identification of additional coking coal blocks for production by Coal India Ltd (CIL) and the private sector and auction of CBM overlap coking coal blocks.

Recently, the formed inter-ministerial committee, including industry stakeholders, to strategise augmentation of coking coal production in India has submitted its recommendations, the ministry said in the statement. Based on this, the coal ministry has set up the mission coking coal to evolve a road map for increasing production and utilisation of domestic coking coal.

TN govt asked to submit DPR for seaweed park

■ NEW DELHI

The Tamil Nadu government has been asked to submit a detailed project report (DPR) with cost estimates for a multipurpose seaweed park to be set up under a central scheme PMMSY, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala, in his written reply to the Lok Sabha, said, "Yes, Sir. A Multipurpose Seaweed Park has been proposed in Tamil Nadu to promote the seaweed cultivation under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

(PMMSY)."

The Tamil Nadu government has submitted a project proposal. The state government has been asked to submit a Detailed Project Report with cost estimates. Further, the minister informed the Lower House that implementation of the PMMSY has commenced during the middle of 2020-21 and cumulative number of beneficiaries supported under PMMSY so far is 9,42,761. The Centre has approved project proposals worth Rs 5,336.96 crores with a central share of Rs 1,823.50 crores to states and union territories and other implementing agencies.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Tender Notice
Name of the Work: 09 No's of Civil Works: Estimate Cost (Rs. in Lakhs) 662.70 Lakhs; Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids Download Start Date 07.12.2021 @ 05.00 PM; Last Date Receipt of Bids: 14.12.2021 @ 3.15 PM
Name & Address, Officer, Cell No. Sri B. Narasing Rao, Superintending Engineer, Charminar Zone, GHMC, Phool Bagh, Bala Nagar, Ph 9704405314. Total: 06 No's works: 662.70. Further details can be seen @ https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (M)
CHARAMINAR ZONE, GHMC

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Tender Notice
Name of the Work: Various works under Goshamahal Circle-14, GHMC; Estimate amount/ ECV (Rs. in Lakhs) 34.70 Lakhs; Start Date & Time for Receipts of Bids 09-12-2021 @ 11.00 AM. Last Date Receipt of Bids: 17-12-2021 @ 11.00 AM
Name & Address, Officer Executive Engineer-14, GHMC 5th floor Abids Parking Complex, Abids, Hyderabad. Ph 9889930428. For further details can be seen at e-procurement website www.tender.telangana.gov.in
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DIVISION 14, GHMC

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
PANCHAYATI RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT PANCHAYAT ENGINEER P&U DIVISION VIKARABAD
(Email: eepnrbk@yahoo.co.in Contract No. 9440817345)
Short Tender Notice No. T133 to 38/2021-22, Date: 06.12.2021.
No. of works (9) Anganwadi Building Bulna Mid, CC Road SC colony Rampur, SC Community Hall Kodangal, Add. classrooms 2P boys High School Yalst, School Building Akampally, CC Road Sangam Kallan, Improvement Road Junakapally - Bk - 1 & BHLU. Total Est. Cost Rs.88.48 lakhs
Further details can be had from District Panchayat Raj, P&U Division Vikarabad.
District Panchayath Raj Engineer, P&U Division Vikarabad.

Microsoft launches cybersecurity skilling program
Microsoft on Tuesday launched a cybersecurity skilling programme that aims to skill over one lakh learners by 2022 as part of efforts to address the skills gap and empower India's workforce for a career in digital security. The programme is designed to give learners hands-on experience in the fundamentals of security, compliance, and identity, a statement said. Microsoft will conduct these



courses along with its strategic consortium of partners including Cloudthat, Koenig, RPS, and Synergetics Learning, it added. The course modules are designed to support all levels of

learners, regardless of where they are in their cybersecurity journey. "Trust and security are at the heart of who we are as a company, and we work closely with

governments, civil society, and organisations across the world to help them stay secure. Investing in cybersecurity skilling and preparing the next generation of security leaders is a big part of that effort," Microsoft India President Anant Maheshwari said. He added that Microsoft is deeply committed to democratic skilling for all and this programme is a strong step in making cybersecurity skilling accessible and affordable for all. Microsoft has introduced four

new security, compliance, and identity certifications, of which the accredited certification for fundamentals will be offered at zero-cost for any individual who attends the associated training through this initiative, the statement said. Additionally, in collaboration with its partners, Microsoft, offers learners deeply discounted offers on the rest of the advanced role-based certifications to drive deep skills for addressing cybersecurity challenges, it added.

Tanla to provide secure solutions

Tanla and Vodafone Idea on Tuesday announced a pact under which Tanla will provide solutions to secure, encrypt and enhance performance for international messaging traffic on the telco's network. Announcing the alliance, the companies in a joint statement said that India's international messaging market (messages originating outside India and terminating in India) is estimated to be Rs 3,500 crore annually.

Romance is Shaheer Shah's go-to genre for every mood

K RAMYA SREE

Actor-model Shaheer Sheikh, who rose to fame after playing Arjuna in *Mahabharat*, is known for playing intriguing characters on the small screen. His professional and personal life is the most talked about in the telly town. The actor recently welcomed his first child with his wife Ruchikaa. Photographs he shares on social media along with his wife gives one the real couple goals vibes, making it seem like Shaheer is leading the most romantic life of all.

Now, who better than Shaheer Shah to become the face of the latest romance campaign?

Tata Sky Romance is a one-of-a-kind service that will offer a variety of romantic content across Hollywood, Bollywood, and Television, curated for the good old-fashioned romantics. Small screen divas Shaheer Sheikh along with Sana Makbul have been roped in as the faces of the campaign that highlights a quirky way to test one's romance quotient.

Shaheer, who bagged this opportunity, is on cloud 9 as his audiences will enjoy every shade of him.

"Personally, romance is my go-to genre for every mood in life, and to have a platform that curates the hits, classics, and cults of the genre is a gift, I believe everyone will love to have. The gamut includes evergreen Hollywood movies as well as some popular Urdu shows that are known for their romance," shares an excited Shaheer, adding, "Larger-than-life romantic dramas and movies have always been close to my heart. This service will allow audiences to get access to more international content on their TV screens."

For Shaheer, *50 First Dates*, *The Notebook*, and *Descendants of The Sun* are his top three favourite romantic films.

Having spoken much about the actor's favourite genre — romance — wondering about the actor's best on-screen romantic life that has captured a lot of hearts? Let him



answer this for you in detail: "While I have played various characters and been associated with various projects, people still remember

me as Anant from *Navya* and I still receive overwhelming love and appreciation for that. I am extremely happy that my audiences

enjoy every shade of me but they prefer the romantic characters somehow, therefore I thought it would be great to get them a service that allows them to enjoy romantic content from across the West in the language we prefer."

Sharing his experience shooting for this project, the *Pavitra Rishta* actor shares, "It was great fun to shoot for the campaign film. Sana and I really had a good time shooting for the campaign and I am looking forward to seeing what the audience feels about this association."



Larger-than-life romantic dramas and movies have always been close to my heart. This service will allow audiences to get access to more international content on their TV screens.
— SHAHEER SHEIKH

Meanwhile, Shaheer has just finished shooting for *Pavitra Rishta* and *Kuch Rang Pyaar Ke*. He is planning not to take up anything long-term right now he says his fans will see him in a few music videos and a short film very soon.



Slow Slow is a perfect mix of all ingredients

As 2021 draws to a close, the multi-talented actor Abhishek Singh is all set to wow music lovers once again, as he joins forces with none other than the musical sensation Badshah along with the ravishing Seerat Kapoor. Rightfully termed as the dance anthem of 2021 — *Slow Slow* shows the tall, dark and handsome actor in a suave avatar. Abhishek Singh has delighted us with his charismatic presence earlier in stellar music videos and the recent one tops the chart on every aspect. It's great to witness the IAS officer climbing the ladder of success, moving quickly from one achievement to the next. Abhishek surely has become the most sought-after stars to feature in top rated music videos in the country!

An excited Abhishek shares with *The Pioneer*, "It's wonderful to be a part of such an energetic and melodious song — *Slow Slow*. This is the third music video that I have shot for and I am loving the entire experience! Badshah is a dear friend and collaborating with him is truly an honor. We are absolutely confident that the foot-tapping song and its tasteful video will be loved by music lovers all over the world."

Talking about the song alongside Badshah and Abhishek Singh, Tollywood diva Seerat Kapoor shares, "Something else about a team that clicks together like a house on fire! Badshah is born natural and very enthusiastically makes room for everyone on set to feel equally involved, invites creative inputs and above all ensures that the team enjoys the shooting process. Collaborating with him has truly been memorable."

Sharing fun moments on screen, Seerat Kapoor further adds, "Can't think of one! With badshah on set, we don't know which next min the entire team would break into a laughter."

Slow Slow has been creating waves since the moment it was launched. The magical voice of Badshah coupled with the brilliant performance by Abhishek Singh makes this a complete chartbuster!



Dealing with the aftermath of a toxic relationship? Here are some tips

Toxic relationships can be different for everyone. They don't always tart out toxic, so it can be tricky to identify if you are in an unhealthy relationship. Even if you have identified it, it can be really hard to leave the partner for many different reasons.

While everyone's recovery is different, here are some tips on how to heal after a toxic relationship.

- Practice good self-care and take some extra time out for yourself and your emotions. The more you know yourself and practice radical self-acceptance — including the dark emotions that show up, the more love you will have for yourself.
- Be socially active with supportive friends and family members
- Stop blaming yourself for the relationship not working out. Stop living in guilt.
- Learn to forgive yourself. Be kind to yourself and respect yourself. Learn to let go and free yourself from your past.
- Don't be in a rush to jump into another relationship. Take your time. The loneliness you may be feeling is better than being in another toxic relationship. Besides, you may need to work on yourself and deal with the trauma before starting a fresh relationship.
- Healing from heartbreak takes time and a strong, supportive community to help you shed all those layers of shame, self-doubt and feelings of perhaps not being good enough.

(THE AUTHOR, DR VIHAN SANYAL, IS A PSYCHOTHERAPIST)

Impressive debuts of 2021

-SHIKHA DUGGAL

There are so many die-hard fans of cinema; they always have an eye on who's the next fresh talent to step into the industry. Be it an actor, actress or a director. Yes, we are talking about the recognized debuts of 2021 that carried an affective intensity on the film audiences and were continuously in news. Pointing out to a new future, any new debut always adds on more to the cinema's mettle. However, each to its own, every debutante carries their own distinct style too and that's what sets them apart from one another. Let's look at some of the most versatile, latest and promising debuts of 2021

KRITHI SHETTY

Krithi Shetty made a sensational debut in *Uppena*, and the film brought her many coveted offers. She currently is acting in nearly half a dozen movies as per news reports. The makers of her next release on block titled *Bangaraju* have released the first look of Krithi Shetty from the film too and it has garnered so much of positive response. At the moment, the actress is hoping to strike back with another bang!

SANDHYA RAJU

Hyderabad-based Kuchipudi dancer Sandhya Raju, made her feature film debut with *Natyam* that made her a sensation down-south. In the *Namah Shivaya* song, one can see that Sandhya's efforts have paid off watching Kamal's transformation as a Kuchipudi dancer. Sandhya Raju deserved an appreciation for venturing into a territory not many would dare to. Sandhya Raju had taken the mantle to expand her repertoire to Telugu cinema basically.

KETIKA SHARMA

Before actually taking a shot at films, Ketika Sharma enjoyed her professional career as a swimmer at state-level championships. Then her debut movie *Romantic* had managed to get a fair amount of buzz with the teaser and trailer. With crime and fortune that entails the actions of the lead, the climax of the movie left Ketika as the remembered one. And, now her upcoming film *Lakshya*'s trailer left a remarkable impression among viewers too.

VAISHNAV TEJ

Vaishnav's debut film in Telugu, *Uppena*, made fans mega happy. Now, Vaishnav is gearing up for his upcoming project with director Krish. Vaishnav Tej's breathtaking first look for *Kondapolam* film also created a huge buzz on social media, however the film recieved mixed response. Panja Vaishnav Tej sported a rather intense expression that was remembered by the fans! But his former romantic love story featuring Krithi Shetty as the female lead, became a blockbuster giving a solid debut.

SREELEELA

Sreeleela made her Tollywood debut with K Raghavendra Rao's *Pelli SandaD*, starring popular actor Srikanth Meka's son Roshan Meka. Although the film bombed at the box office, failing to sell as many tickets as it was expected to, Sreeleela with her performance grabbed much attention. The actress has apparently received many offers but she at present she took a break from acting to concentrate on her medicine examinations.

VIJAY KANAKAMEDALA

Young director Vijay Kanakamedala made his Tollywood debut this year with a super-hit crime courtroom drama *Naandhi*. Vijay, did not choose footsteps of entertainers for his directorial debut but made a serious film and impressed both moviegoers and critics alike. And now, if reports are to be believed, Vijay Kanakamedala is in plans to make his second film with Akkineni Naga Chaitanya.

LAKSHMI SOWJANYA

Lakshmi Sowjanya made her directorial debut with family entertainer *Varudu Kavalenu*, starring Naga Shaurya and Ritu Varma in the lead roles bankrolled by Sithara Entertainments. It was so much of a hyped affair because the director ensured promotions to next level. The lead pair of the film were seen attending real weddings as per the theme of the movie goes, something that has never taken place before in telugu cinema. Now she has penned a script for her next that revolves around the concept of identity and the Aadhar card.

SUJANA RAO

The new-comer's *Gamanam* explores how characters in story cope with distress following torrential downpour. She has said that she wanted to explore how flooding affects people in different age groups, from an infant to an elderly person, to represent the circle of life. It is reported that *Gamanam* is a compilation that recounts three stories!

PRAVEEN KANDREGULA

Praveen made his directorial debut Kandregula with *Cinema Bandi*, it took a massive roll on Netflix. Every documentary lover had *Cinema Bandi* rolling on their lips. Praveen pitched the story to filmmaker duo Raj and DK at the NFDC Film Bazaar in 2018. He concedes that the documentary *Supermen of Malegaon* was one of the inspirations! Praveen weaved a wonderful commentary about why Veerababu wanted to make a feature film in the first place and how he discovers that it's easier said than done.





Chinna Jeeyar Swamy giving his blessing to the bridegroom



Adil Mohammad



Ishaan Varma and Sanya Khan

LOCKED FOR EVER

It was an evening filled with joy as Dania Abdul Rahim tied the knot to Khaja Faizan Ahmed, s/o Late Alvia Ahmed, a business man. The happening event took place in Banjara Hills that saw in attendance many elite personalities including Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, AK Khan, Professor Kodandaram, among many others.



Prashanth Reddy, Mohammed Abdul Rahim, Jaffer Hussain Meraj and Arekapudi Gandhi

Iisha



Ramchandra Rao and G. Vivekanand



Kodandaram



Sridhar Babu



AK Khan



Sohail



Aamuktha



Iisha

PARTY

Photos by SV Chary



Anee Master and Shashi Nahata



Hari Kirthana and Sai Nitya



Monika



Nikitha



Sana

SHOPPING TIME

Tollywood dance choreographer and former Big Boss contestant Anee Master, along with Shashi Nahata, Alok Nahata and Anath Nahata, inaugurated Meena Bazaar at Akriti Exhibition held at HITEX Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



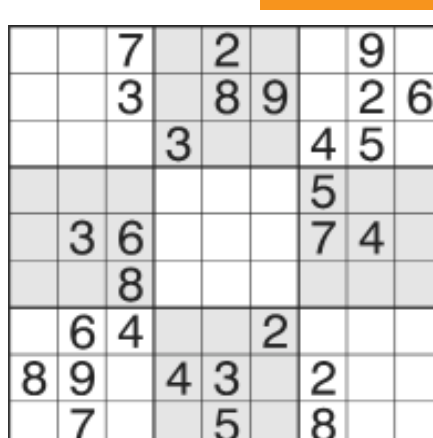
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

ACROSS

- A three-sided figure
- Shoplifter
- A compass direction
- Coming to a finish
- Something worn on a foot
- Shove
- A skateboard has these
- Precise
- Water vapour
- A blown musical instrument
- Titter
- Tried
- Trio
- Picked
- Wee
- Vote into power
- Famous celebrity

DOWN

- Bronze medal place in a race
- Toddler
- Smell with this

SOLUTION

E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	I
L	I	F	T	E	S	C	R	A
E	G	G	S	C	R	E	A	M
C	H	O	N	E	S	I	N	G
T	U	T	O	R	R	A	I	L
I	L	E	S	D	E	S		
O	B	E	Y	S				
N	M	S						
S	I	M	P	L	E			
L	I	C	O	R	E			

‘I want to act in films until I die’



K RAMYA SREE

Tollywood’s heartthrob Shriya Saran is back to entertain her fans on big screens with an intriguing project — *Gamanam* — where she plays Kamala, yet another hard-hitting character. Shriya, who is the mother of a baby girl now, wants to do films that make her daughter proud. Her approach to choosing any character has changed after motherhood, says the *Manam* actress. Shriya who is carrying the same grace and courage she did 20 years ago, explaining in detail the kind of projects she wants to do, says, “My attitude towards movies has changed now. I want my daughter and my family to feel proud when they watch my movies. My soul should feel happy with the kind of characters I play. I don’t want my daughter to feel I do the same kind of roles.” The actress who is very happy to play Kamala in *Gamanam* lost her beloved friend while shooting for the film, yet she remained strong and continued to shoot. She says she feels very proud of her work.

“When the story was narrated to me, I had tears rolling down my cheeks. That’s when I decided to do this movie. I am looking forward to doing such challenging characters,” asserts Shriya, who is happy that she is able to entertain audiences for the last 20 years and wants to continue the same. The actress who precisely remembers shooting for her first film says she could come this far only because of her fans. Shriya, who wants to do movies until she breathes her last, further tells, “During Covid, many people experienced many kinds of difficulties. Many were left without work. Now the film industry is recovering. I want to keep acting and make movies till my last breath. ANR *garu* acted even during his last days for *Manam*. I want to be such an actor who continues to act even during their last days.” The actress in her 20-year-long career has worked with many female directors. When asked the difference between working with female directors and their male counterparts, she explains, “Until now, I have worked with many female directors. I did a movie called *Midnight Stories*, directed by a woman. This is the first time in Telugu that I working with a female

director. Working with them can be very comforting. We can open up about personal issues too with.” The actress finds all three stories in *Gamanam* to be very inspiring. “The story revolves around how people get trapped in a natural disaster escape. This is not a woman-oriented movie,” she says. Shriya apparently learned sewing clothes to make her character Kamala look even more natural in the film. Shriya had her own *mantra* of dealing with pregnancy and post-pregnancy issues. Despite being very active on social media, none figured out that she was pregnant. “Many changes took place since pregnancy. I did workouts and focused on fitness and practiced Kathak. My mom taught me yoga from a young age. Doing yoga improved my health and fitness,” says the actress who feels more responsible after giving birth to a child.



Prabhas donates Rs 1 cr to AP

Actor Prabhas on Tuesday introduced a donation of Rs 1 crore to the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister’s Relief Fund to assist flood victims within the state. Recently, heavy rains lashed Tirupati and its surrounding areas, leaving many distressed. Moved by the plight of the flood victims, earlier, stars resembling Chiranjeevi, Mahesh Babu, Jr NTR and Ram Charan had contributed Rs 25 lakh every to the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister’s Relief Fund. During the devastating rains in Hyderabad and coronavirus-induced lockdowns in 2020, the Telugu movie fraternity had come ahead to assist the needy. While Prabhas donated Rs 4.5 crore, different celebrities too contributed considerably. On the work entrance, Prabhas has romantic drama *Radhe Shyam* set to launch on January 14. The actor lately wrapped up the filming of *Adipurush*. He is presently busy taking pictures for *Project Okay* and *Salaar*.



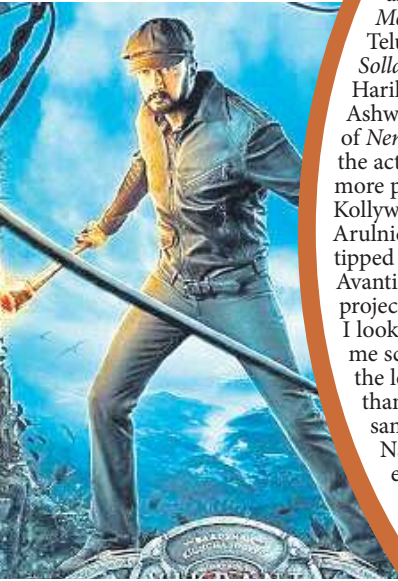
Pooja Hegde says she is a proud Karnataka girl

Kannada cinema lovers on social media are celebrating after their favourite popular actress Pooja Hegde, who made it big in the Telugu and Tamil film industries, stated that she is proud of her roots. Pooja Hegde was in Bengaluru to launch an awards event when she said that she loved the fact that she hailed from Karnataka and the coastal town of Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district. Pooja maintained that she grew up in Mumbai, yet she always insisted

that she was from Karnataka, born and brought up in Mumbai. She said she was very happy to have come from a state that has produced great talent for Indian cinema. Pooja, who made her acting debut in 2016 in the Hrithik Roshan-starrer *Mohenjo Daro*, added that whenever Karnataka is mentioned, people ask her if there is something in the water that produces so many beautiful actresses and good-looking women. A much sought-after actress in Tollywood today, Pooja said she was ready to act in a Kannada movie if she’s approached with a good script. That was music to the ears of her fans in her original home state.

Vikrant Rona gets release date

Ega’s beloved villain Kichcha Sudeep’s fantasy action-adventure thriller — *Vikrant Rona* — finally got its release date. The film will open in theatres on February 24, 2022, worldwide. The movie will be released in 3D format in five languages. Actors Anoop Bhandari, Neeta Ashok, Siddhu Moolimani, Madhusudhan Rao, among others will be seen in significant roles. Jacqueline Fernandez has done a special number for the movie. However, the female lead of the film is yet to be revealed. Speculations are rife that Milana Nagaraj is the heroine of the movie, which is yet to be confirmed by the team. A major portion of the shooting has happened at Annapoorna Studios in Hyderabad. The movie has already created high expectations with its promos and posters will be one of the biggest releases in Sandalwood in the next year.



Avantika Mishra grabs all attention

All eyes are on Avantika Mishra, as the actress bags promising projects in both Kollywood and Tollywood. From a successful model to a shining actress, the journey of Avantika Mishra is nothing but the product of talent and hard work, coupled with graceful looks. The Delhi native, who studied in Bengaluru, represented many popular brands before making her cinema debut with Neelakanta’s *Maaya*. She then played the lead in *Meeku Meere Maaku Meme* alongside Tarun Shetty. After films like *Vyshakam*, *Meeku Maathrame Cheptha*, and *Bheeshma* in Telugu, she is making her Tamil debut with *Enna Solla Pogirai* being directed by debutante Hariharan for Trident Arts production co-starring Ashwin Kumar Lakshminathan. She is also part of *Nenjamellam Kadhal* and *D Block*. These apart, the actress is set to sign on the dotted line for a few more promising projects in both Tollywood and Kollywood. In *D Block*, she is acting alongside Arulnidhi. Directed by Vijay Kumar Rajendran, it is tipped to be a college-based drama. An elated Avantika said, “I am so happy to bag interesting projects which have offered me good roles. All that I look for is challenging characters that provide me scope to perform. I am so happy to receive the love of the Telugu audience and am thankful to them. I am sure I will receive the same from the Tamil audience too, as Tamil Nadu is always known for recognising talent. I will continue to act in both Tamil and Telugu movies.” Ask her whether she has faced any language barrier while acting in south Indian languages, the actress said, “No, not at all. Art has no language. As an artist, it is my duty to make the audience happy no matter what the language is.”



Parthiban wants public to contribute to armed forces



Sating that ‘mother’ and ‘motherland’ were not different from one another, actor Parthiban has made an emotional appeal to the public, asking them to donate generously to the Armed Forces on Flag Day on Tuesday. In a video clip that the actor shared on his timeline on social media, the actor-director says, “December 7 is Flag

Day. Even when someone, who is relatively unknown to you, does you some good, we usually ask them, ‘How are you bro?’ and we look to return the favour in some small way or other.” Pointing out that “our brothers who protect our motherland which is like our mother, must be healthy and prosperous,” the actor urged people to donate generously on Flag Day,

which he said one could also call Philanthropy Day. “How we live as beautiful humans deep inside our hearts is determined by the manner in which we share our wealth. A day that brings out the godliness in us is this Flag Day. Therefore, to help protect the interests of our brothers, let us all willingly donate and participate in this Flag Day,” he said.

Ashes could revolve around contest between Cummins, Root

It will be 181st Test match between the two teams in Australia and 352nd overall. Australia have won 95, lost 57 and draw 28 in 180 previous Test matches played against England at home. Overall, Australia have won 146, lost 110 and draw 95 in 341 Test matches played against England

Australia have won 33, England 32 in 71 Ashes series played between the two teams. The remaining six series ended in a draw. The last series played in England in 2019, were drawn, both teams have won two matches each while one match ended in a draw



AP ■ BRISBANE

One particular contest between bat and ball could shape this Ashes series. Pat Cummins is set to lead the home team, putting a fast bowler's perspective on Australia's test cricket captaincy for the first time since the 1950s. Joe Root is primed to lead England with the bat again in a series he thinks may define his career.

"A bowling captain for Australia and a batting captain for England — two captains going toe to toe will be great," England wicketkeeper Jos Buttler said on the eve of the first test.

Root was already feeling some pressure before it was confirmed that Jimmy Anderson, England's all-time leading test wicket taker, will

miss the first test starting Wednesday at the Gabba.

Buttler said the senior players in the team were ready to step up to support Root, and the return of inspirational all-rounder Ben Stokes would also help.

"We know he's our best player, we want to support him, help him, share that load," Buttler said of Root "He's been in incredible form. He comes here determined to continue that. "It's a massive series for him." Root heads into this series as the leading test batsman in the world, having scored 1,455 runs in 12 tests in 2021 at an average of 66.

But England has lost nine of the 10 tests it has played in Australia since its drought-breaking series win Down Under in 2010-11, mostly by big margins. Root has been on the

last two tours, and was captain for the 4-0 loss in 2017-18.

And then there's England's record at the Gabba, where it hasn't won a test since 1986 and has recorded only two wins since 1946.

Buttler said England was only looking back as far as January, when an injury-depleted India squad clinched a series win by ending Australia's unbeaten record at the Gabba that dated to 1988.

"I don't think we have anything to lose ... (rather) everything to gain," he said. "You know to do that against Australia here, you have to be at your best."

England released a 12-man squad later Tuesday, leaving most speculation over the formation of the bowling attack. Stuart Broad, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood and Ollie Robinson were included as specialist pace

ENGLAND-AUSTRALIA TEST ENCOUNTERS				
Venue	M	Eng won	Aus won	Draw
In England	171	53	51	67
In Australia	180	57	95	28
Total	351	110	146	95
At Gabba	21	4	12	5

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS

England in England:	903-7dec in 335.2 overs at The Oval	1938
England in Australia:	644 in 177.5 overs at Sydney	2010-11
Australia in England:	729-6 dec in 232 overs at Lord's	1930
Australia in Australia:	662- 9 dec in 179.3 overs at Perth	2017-18

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS

England in England:	52 in 42.1 overs at The Oval	1948
England in Australia:	45 in 35.3 (4-ball) overs at Sydney	1886-87
Australia in England:	36 in 23 overs at Birmingham	1902
Australia in Australia:	42 in 37.3 (4-ball) overs at Sydney	1887-88

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES

England in England:	364 Len Hutton at The Oval	1938
England in Australia:	287 Tip Foster at Sydney	1902-03
Australia in England:	334 Don Bradman at Leeds	1934
Australia in Australia:	307 Robert Cowper at Melbourne	1965-66

BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS

England in England:	10-53 Jim Laker at Manchester	1956
England in Australia:	8-35 George Lohmann at Sydney	1886-87
Australia in England:	8-31 Frank Laver at Manchester	1909
Australia in Australia:	9-121 Arthur Mailey at Melbourne	1920-21

BEST BOWLING IN A MATCH

England in England:	19-90 Jim Laker at Manchester	1956
England in Australia:	15-124 Wilfred Rhodes at Melbourne	1903-04
Australia in England:	16-137 Bob Massie at Lord's	1972
Australia in Australia:	13-77 Monty Noble at Melbourne	1901-02

LAST FIVE ASHES SERIES

Season	Venue	Winner	Result
2013	England	England	3-0 (5)
2013-14	Australia	Australia	5-0 (5)
2014	England	England	3-2 (5)
2017-18	Australia	Australia	4-0 (5)
2019	England	Drawn	2-2 (5)

FAISEL FEATURES

THE ASHES 2021-22		
Australia vs England Test Series		
Dec 8-12, 2021	1st Test	Brisbane Cricket Ground
Dec 16-20	2nd Test*	Adelaide Oval
Dec 26-30	3rd Test	Melbourne Cricket Ground
Jan 5-9, 2022	4th Test	Sydney Cricket Ground
Jan 14-18	5th Test	Perth Stadium
*Day and night match		
KBK SportsGraphics		

bowlers, and left-arm spinner Jack Leach was also in the mix. The starting XI will be confirmed at the coin toss.

Cummins revealed his starting XI well ahead of time, giving himself plenty of time to adjust to his new job. That now includes attending the pre-match news conferences and going out for the coin toss instead of marking out his run-up to prepare to bowl.

The 28-year-old Cummins made his test debut as a teenager in 2011 and was elevated to the captaincy when Tim Paine quit last month after media reports he'd been investigated four years earlier by cricket administrators for sending an explicit text to a work colleague.

He said he plans to rely heavily on his experienced deputy Steve Smith, who was replaced as Australia's test cap-

tain by Paine in 2018 after the infamous Sandpapergate scandal in South Africa.

He served a suspension from leadership positions and was the leading batter when Australia retained the Ashes in England in 2019.

"Smithy and I have been really good mates for a long time. When I was 18, I'd sleep on his couch on occasions," Cummins said. "He's a legend of the game. Of course I'll be leaning on him for ideas at times."

"There'll be times when I need a rest — I'll have no problem handing over to him."

Alex Carey was given the wicketkeeper gloves to replace Paine and Travis Head was retained to bat at No. 5.

The Australians haven't played a test since the 2-1 series loss to India in January, while England has played in Sri Lanka

and India and hosted New Zealand and India in series.

But the wet weather and quarantine requirements means neither team is going into the series with a lot of red ball cricket form.

The bulk of the Australian team was involved in the Twenty20 World Cup victory in the United Arab Emirates last month, where coach Justin Langer gave the playing group more control over the preparations.

It's something Cummins wants to carry into the test arena.

"The environment we created at the World Cup is a blueprint," he said. "The relaxed environment, empowering everyone to do it their own way. Tailor the preparation. They're great lessons we learnt the World Cup that worked."

Hardik undergoing rehab in Mumbai, decides to skip Hazare Trophy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Out of favour India all-rounder Hardik Pandya has decided to skip Vijay Hazare Trophy (National One Dayers) starting across the country from Wednesday as he is undergoing an extensive rehabilitation programme in order to regain his bowling fitness.

"The Baroda Cricket Association (BCA) had sent an e-mail to Hardik enquiring about his availability for the Vijay Hazare Trophy. He has rarely played for Baroda in last three years. However he gave a one-line reply that he is currently doing rehab in Mumbai," a senior official privy to developments in BCA told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Asked what is the injury he is carrying at the moment, the official said: "Even the BCA doesn't know. It is understood that he is trying to do some strength and conditioning module for his back which is no longer in best of shape post surgery in 2019," the source revealed.

The official informed that Hardik's elder brother Krunal had joined Baroda's pre-Hazare camp for a week after he was instructed by the state board that attending the camp is mandatory for being part of the final squad.

"BCA told Krunal that he can't just land up during tournaments and he has to be a part of the camp. Then he came and trained with the team for a week," the source said.

If Hardik doesn't play the domestic tournaments, he will not be considered for a comeback in the Indian side for the white ball tournaments. "The current national selection committee has told all the players that all those who are not in the India squad should go back and play domestic cricket — Hazare and Ranji Trophy," the source added.



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian fringe players would get one last chance to impress ahead of the IPL Mega Auction in the Vijay Hazare Trophy one-day cricket tournament beginning on Wednesday. The auction is slated for January and a stand out performance in the 50-over event could lead to a hefty pay package with an IPL franchise.

Bangladesh trying to avoid follow-on with one day left

AP ■ DHAKA

Offspinner Sajid Khan claimed a career-best 6-35 as Pakistan reduced Bangladesh to 76-7 and produced a glimmer of hope of forcing a result in the second and final test on Tuesday.

After day three was washed out, Pakistan resumed the fourth day from 188-2 and declared at 300-4 after lunch. Then spinners Sajid and Nauman Ali got to work until stumps was called an hour early because of bad light. Bangladesh trailed by 224 runs and still needed 25 runs to avoid the follow-on at the end of a dramatic day.

"After the declaration, our target was to give us the best chance to win the game and attack relentlessly and that's what we did," Sajid said.

"Fortunately, there was turn and bounce aplenty. We two spinners bowled in partner-

chise.

The likes of Harshal Patel, Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar, who were not retained by their respective franchises in the IPL, would look to make it count when they represent their respective states in the domestic one-dayers.

The IPL has seen a number of youngsters making it big overnight as it also has served a big platform to represent the country and it would be no different this time around.

In the opening day's action, defending champions Mumbai will take on Tamil Nadu who would be riding high on the confidence of winning Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy recently. All-rounder Shams Mulani will lead



ship. We will try to get the three wickets tomorrow and force them to bat again and win the game." Bangladesh's last hope to

avoid the follow-on was Shakib Al Hasan on 23. Taijul Islam was with him, the tailender yet to score after facing 10 balls.

With the light insufficient to allow any more than just the one over from fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sajid and Nauman bowled relentlessly in a desperate bid to win the rain-hit game.

Rain and bad light have eaten up the majority of the game and just 63.2 overs were possible in the last three days.

Nauman was slightly luckless, ending up without a wicket, but he gave the control that allowed Sajid to rip through the Bangladesh lineup.

Sajid dismissed all but skipper Mominul Haque, who was run out for 1 by a direct hit from Hasan Ali at point.

The Bangladesh batsmen, however, also invited the trouble by playing rash shots as if it was a Twenty20 game.

Harbhajan set to join support staff of major IPL franchise for next season

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh will be seen in a different avatar during next year's Indian Premier League as a key member of the support staff in one of the high-profile franchises. The 41-year-old Harbhajan, who featured in a few matches during the first phase of last IPL for Kolkata Knight Riders, didn't play a game in the UAE leg of the league. Harbhajan is expected to officially announce his retirement from competitive cricket some time next week and after that he will decide on one the offers he has

got to be a part of the support staff of at least a couple of franchises.

"The role could be that of a consultant, mentor or part of the advisory group but the franchise with which he is talking are keen to use his vast experience. He will take active part in also helping the franchise decide on their auction picks," an IPL source privy to the development told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Harbhajan has always shown keen interest in grooming players and that was also his role in the later years with Mumbai Indians where he spent a fruitful decade.

I-League to start on Dec 26, to be played in four venues in and around Kolkata

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

This year's I-League season will kick off on December 26 in Kolkata with a match between TRAU FC of Manipur and All India Football Federation's developmental side Indian Arrows.

The matches will be played across three venues -- Mohun Bagan Ground in Kolkata, Kalyani Stadium and Naihati Stadium.

With three new entrants -- Greenidi Deccan FC of Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan United FC and Kenkre FC of Kolhapur -- this season, the number of teams has increased to 13.

All of them, along with the referees, officials and volunteers, will be housed inside bio-



secured bubbles in four different hotels across Kolkata.

"The AIFF has been a pioneer in Indian sporting ecosystem in hosting sporting events from inside bio-bubbles, and we are happy to continue providing a safe haven for players, referees, and everyone else

involved in running the league," said AIFF Leagues CEO Sunando Dhar in a release.

"We need to thank all our partners, because the logistical and financial effort to house 13 teams in a bio-bubble for an entire season would not have been possible without their

help."

Rajasthan United FC and Kenkre FC have made their way to the I-League by virtue of finishing first and second in the Qualifiers.

As per the tournament format, all the teams will play against each other once in a round-robin format in Phase 1, before being split into two groups in Phase 2 of the league. The top seven teams will make up Group A and the bottom six will make up Group B.

Once the divisions are made after the end of Phase I, the teams of each group will play against each other in a single leg round-robin format. While the teams in Group A will play to determine the champions, those in Group B will be in a relegation battle.

Ruturaj to lead Maha in Vizay Hazare

MUMBAI: Ruturaj Gaikwad will lead a 20-member Maharashtra team in the Vizay Hazare Trophy one-day cricket tournament beginning on Wednesday.

Rahul Tripathi was named Gaikwad's deputy by the selection committee. Maharashtra have been clubbed with Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh in Elite Group D to be played in Rajkot. They play their first match against Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday.

The Squad:

Ruturaj Gaikwad (capt.), Rahul Tripathi (vice-capt.), Yash Nahar, Naushad Shaikh, Azim Kazi, Ankeet Bawane, Shamshuzama Kazi, Mukesh Choudhary, Pradeep Dadhe, Manoj Ingale, Ashay Palkar, Divyang Hinganekar, Jagdish Zope, Swapnil Fulpagar, Avdhoot Dandekar, Taranjit Singh Dhillon, Siddhesh Veer, Yash Kshirsagar, Pavan Shah, Dhanraj Pardeshi.

Organisers say Novak Djokovic set to play in ATP Cup



AP ■ SYDNEY

Novak Djokovic has been named in the Serbian team for January's ATP Cup, an indication that Djokovic could play in the Australian Open a week later despite controversy over his vaccination status.

Organizers on Tuesday said 18 of the world's top 20 players will take part in the 16-country tournament in Sydney from Jan. 1-9, with Djokovic leading top-seeded Serbia. Djokovic hadn't publicly committed to defending his Australian Open title at Melbourne Park or revealed

his vaccination status, with a mandate that he needs to be double-vaccinated to play.

While the ATP Cup doesn't have the same entry criteria, his inclusion for the ATP Cup means he now appears likely to chase a 10th title and 21st Grand Slam singles title at Melbourne Park, which would break a tie for major singles wins with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

To play without being vaccinated in Sydney, the New South Wales state government would have to apply for an exemption for Djokovic and the 34-year-old would have to undergo 14 days of quarantine upon arrival.