

**ANALYSIS 7**  
MAYAWATI AND HER  
COMMITTED VOTEBANK**MONEY 8**  
TOTAL 9,849 URLS BLOCKED IN 2020:  
CHANDRASEKHAR**SPORTS 12**  
KOHLI REMOVED FROM ODI CAPTAINCY AS  
ROHIT BECOMES NEW WHITE-BALL CAPTAIN

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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VASISHTA SIMHA  
ON TURNING  
PASSION INTO  
CAREER

Page 11

# GENERAL RAWAT DIES IN CHOPPER CRASH

Rawat's wife Madhulika and 11 others also died on the spot □ General Rawat's body to be brought to Delhi

□ A sole survivor of the crash - Group Captain Varun Singh □ Rajnath Singh will make a statement in Parliament today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

General Bipin Rawat, India's first Chief of Defence Staff, and his wife died today after a military chopper crashed in Tamil Nadu, killing 13 on board. The only survivor, an Air Force Group Captain, is being treated for severe burns.

"With deep regret, it has now been ascertained that Gen Bipin Rawat, Madhulika Rawat and 11 other persons on board have died in the unfortunate accident," the Indian Air Force (IAF) tweeted.

The person being treated at the military hospital in Wellington is "Group Captain Varun Singh", said the Air Force.

The IAF had confirmed a little before 2 pm that an Mi-17 V5 helicopter with General Rawat on board had "met with an accident near Coonoor, Tamil Nadu".

The helicopter crashed shortly after it took off from the Air Force base in Sullur at 11.45 am, Coimbatore, for Wellington in the Nilgiri Hills.

The General was heading to the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington to address the faculty and students.

It was making its descent and would have landed in 10 more minutes when it came down, barely 10 km from a road. The Air Force has ordered an Inquiry into what happened.

Videos showed steaming wreckage scattered on a hillside and rescuers struggling through smoke

and fire to locate bodies. Charred bodies were pulled out from under mangled metal and fallen trees.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, briefed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, called a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) at his residence. The Defence Minister and Army Chief MM Naravane visited General Rawat's home in Delhi long before the official announcement.

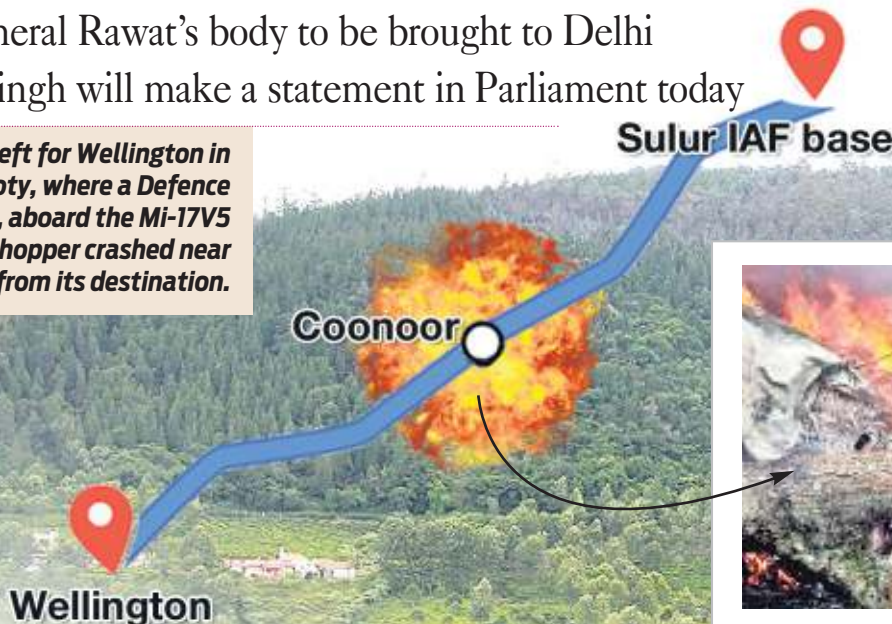
The Defence Minister called General Rawat's death an "irreparable loss" to the country and the forces.

General Rawat, 63, took charge as India's first Chief of Defence Staff in January 2019. The position was created to integrate the three services - the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

## Defence Minister visits General Rawat's home

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Army Chief General MM Naravane visited General Bipin Rawat's home today. Their visits came after a chopper carrying Gen Rawat crashed, killing 13 people.

**At 11.45 PM, General Rawat left for Wellington in Udhamandalam, also known as Ooty, where a Defence Services Staff College is located, aboard the Mi-17V5 chopper with 13 others. At noon, the chopper crashed near Coonoor, 14km from its destination.**



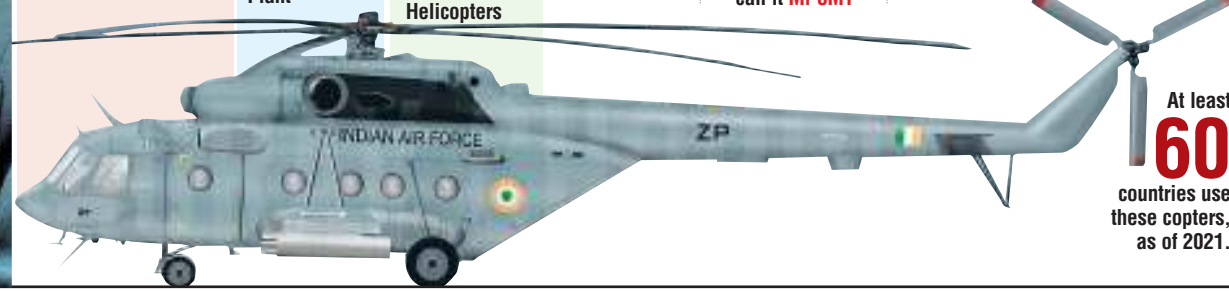
## What is the MI-17 V5 Helicopter?

**AIRCRAFT TYPE**  
Military transport helicopter, multiple variants have armed assault capabilities**DESIGNED BY**  
Mil Moscow Helicopter Plant**BUILT BY**  
Kazan Helicopters, a subsidiary of Russian Helicopters**1975**  
First Flight

The designation Mi-17 is for export; Russian armed forces call it **Mi-8MT**

The **Mi-17V-5** is one of the world's most advanced transport helicopters, designed to transport cargo inside the cabin and on an external sling.

**At least 60**  
countries use these copters, as of 2021.



## Stop move to auction 4 Singareni coal blocks

□ **CM KCR writes to PM Modi** □ **Says it will impact thermal power generation in TS** □ **SCCL catering to the needs of thermal power plants in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states**

ML MELLY MAITREYI  
■ HYDERABAD

In the light of a decision taken by the Union Government with potential to disrupt thermal power generation in TS, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to stop the proposed auction of four coal blocks in Singareni

coal mines by the Union Coal Ministry.

KCR wrote to the Prime Minister in the wake of all workers' unions of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd giving a call for three-day strike from Thursday opposing the Centre's move to auction four of Singareni's coal blocks.

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Police personnel, the first responders, looking for survivors at the wreckage of the chopper at the crash site.

## Outstanding soldier, true patriot: PM Modi

Paying rich tributes to Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday that he was an outstanding soldier and a true patriot who greatly contributed to modernising India's armed forces and security apparatus. Gen Rawat's passing away has saddened him deeply, the prime minister said. In his condolence message, Modi said he was deeply anguished by the helicopter crash in which Rawat, his wife and other personnel of the armed forces died. They served India with utmost diligence, Modi said, adding that his thoughts are with the bereaved families. "Gen Bipin Rawat was an outstanding soldier. A true patriot, he greatly contributed to modernising our armed forces and security apparatus. His insights and perspectives on strategic matters were exceptional. His passing away has saddened me deeply. Om Shanti. 'As India's first CDS, Gen Rawat worked on diverse aspects relating to our armed forces including defence reforms. He brought with him a rich experience of serving in the Army. India will never forget his exceptional service,' the prime minister tweeted.



## Rs 1,464 cr due from FCI to TS

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) owes an amount of Rs 1,464 crore to the Telangana government.

As per data from the central government, payments outstanding to the tune of Rs 1,751.79 crore are to be made for central pool procurements to Telangana. Of these, Rs 1,464 cr is from FCI, while Rs 247.15 crore is state's claim under DCP. Of the Rs 247.15 crore, only admissible amount will be paid.

Responding to a question in the



Lok Sabha, Minister of State Sadhvi Nirajna Joyti said, "Payment to States for central pool procurement

of food grains i.e. wheat, rice and coarse grains is made by the Food Corporation of India (FCI)/Department of Food and Public Distribution on the basis of admissible claims made by state government and its agencies which is an ongoing process".

Telangana is DCP State, where-in procurement is undertaken by the State government through its agencies. Only the surplus rice, after meeting State's requirement, is delivered to FCI in central pool account for movement to deficit-consuming States.

## Chittoor native Sai Teja dies in crash

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A resident of Kurabalakota in Chittoor district was among the victims of the IAF helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu. The deceased, B Sai Teja, hailing from Eguva Regada village, was serving as Lance Naik in the Indian Army.

The accident happened while Sai Teja was on duty as Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat's Personal Security Officer. He joined as SPO to Rawat about seven months back.

Sai Teja joined the Army as a sepoy in 2013 from the Bengaluru regiment. He cleared the para-commando examination while serving as a sepoy the following year. He was serving as Lance Naik in the 11 para. He was training people in the Bengaluru Sepoy Training Center



until last year. Sai Teja is survived by wife Shyamala, 4-year-old son Mokshagna and 2-year-old daughter Darshini.

2

## 37 polling stations for MLC elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel has said that 37 polling stations have been set up for elections to six MLC seats pertaining to five erstwhile districts under the local authorities' constituencies on December 10.

At a video conference with the District Collectors, Police Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, and other officers, Shashank Goel reviewed the polling and security arrangements from Buddha Bhavan here on Wednesday. He said that polling should be held in a transparent, impartial, and fool-proof manner. Polling will be held from 8 am to 4 pm on the day.

2

## Burning bodies in misty Western Ghats numb people with disbelief

PNS ■ COONOOR (TN)

A kind of a thud and 'something' whirring from nowhere was the first sign that something has gone seriously amiss. Humble tea estate workers, in their serene Western Ghats village in Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu were quickly overwhelmed with a sense of foreboding.

Soon, it was sheer disbelief that gripped them in their modest hillside colony when they saw a frightening bright blaze emerging from the misty woods amid clanking of metal objects. Though it was a little past noon, fog still shrouded the hills on Wednesday.



2

## 5 girl students of govt school allege gang-rape by teachers

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Fifteen teachers, including the principal of a government school in Rajasthan's Alwar district, were booked after five girl students accused them of gang-rape.

Police, who conducted preliminary investigation at their village, suspect it to be a case of "revenge" and "witness harassment" by a former teacher of the school, who was arrested last December on charges of molesting three girl students.

They said the complainants have refused to undergo medical examination.

"A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to probe the matter thoroughly," Superintendent of Police, Bhiwadi, Ram Murthy Joshi said. He said the principal and

14 teachers, including five women, were booked under the Indian Penal Code and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) after the girl students registered three FIRs at Mandhan police station in Bhiwadi, Alwar, on Tuesday night.

"Entire staff of the school has been booked in the FIRs. The family members of the girls have refused

to get medical examinations conducted. Their statements will be recorded in the court and a thorough investigation will be held," Joshi said.

Speaking about the possibility of "witness harassment", he said, "I went to the village and spoke to the villagers and family members.

2



## 37 polling stations for MLC elections

Continued from page 1

Goel instructed officials to take precautions to prevent any kind of problems and ensure adherence to the Covid protocol. He made it clear that mobile phones and cameras would not be allowed into polling stations.

In all, 5,326 voters representing local authorities' constituencies would exercise their franchise. In all the polling stations, web-casting and videography facilities would be provided, he said.

The CEO told officials that a person should be allowed to vote only when voter identity card or any one of the 11 identify proofs stipulated by the Election Commission was produced.

In every polling station, a help desk should be set up and ANMs made available. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 14.

# 23.8% kids use phones while in bed: NCPCR

## Study highlights need for more community playgrounds

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Nearly 23.8 per cent use smart phones while they are in bed, as per a study commissioned by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). The study says 37.15% of children, always or frequently, experience reduced levels of concentration due to smart phone use.

NCPCR recently conducted a study on 'Effects (Physical, Behavioural and Psycho-Social) of using mobile phones and other devices with internet accessibility by children' with sample size of 5,000 from rural and urban areas in all the zones of the country.



Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Zubin Irani, in a written reply in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday,

said: "As per the study, 23.80 per cent of children use smart phones while they are in bed, before going to sleep which

increase with age; this has adverse impact on children".

Use of smart phones at inappropriate times can have detrimental impact on health and well-being of children. One such impact is reduction in level of concentration among children. As per the study, 37.15% of children, always or frequently, experience reduced levels of concentration due to smart phone use.

As per information received from NCPCR, based on the findings of the study, it recommends a bigger portion of land in the communities needs to be identified as a playground for children that will encourage the children to involve themselves in games and sports.

# Highlights of an outstanding career

Here's your 5-point peek into General Rawat's career

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

General Rawat has had an illustrious career in the defense services spanning over four decades that saw him rising in ranks to be appointed the first joint chief of the tri-services. The CDS is a one-point advisor to the government on matters related to the military and functions with the main aim of integrating the three services - the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. He was appointed the 27th Chief of the Army Staff in 2016 amid a controversy over his seniority. He had superseded two senior officers to occupy the Army chief's position. He then rose to become the CDS in 2019. The government had amended the Army rules to extend the age of superannuation from 62

years to 65 years, paving the way for his appointment to the post.

He is credited with being instrumental in reducing militancy in Northeast India. The 2015 cross-border operation into Myanmar in which the Indian Army successfully responded to an ambush by NSCN-IM militants was conducted under his supervision. He was also part of the planning for the 2016 surgical strikes, in which the Indian Army went across the Line of Control into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. General Rawat was reportedly monitoring the developments from South Block in New Delhi.

General Rawat was a veteran in counterinsurgency and high-altitude warfare, having served in difficult terrains

including the Northern and Eastern commands. He has also served as General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-C) Southern Command. During his long career, he served across the country in various roles. He commanded a company in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir. As a Colonel, he commanded the 5th battalion 11 Gorkha Rifles in the Eastern sector along the Line of Actual Control at Kibithu in Arunachal Pradesh. As a Brigadier, he commanded 5 Sector of Rashtriya Rifles in Sopore, Kashmir. He has also been part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force and has commanded a multinational brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he was twice awarded the Force

Commander's Commendation.

General Rawat has been decorated with many honours for his service, including the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, Yudh Seva Medal, and Sena Medal.

General Rawat is an alumnus of the St Edward School in Shimla and the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla. He was commissioned in the Fifth Battalion of the Eleven Gorkha Rifles in December 1978 from the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun. He was a recipient of the prestigious 'Sword of Honour'. General Rawat also attended the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, USA.

## Stop move to auction 4 Singareni...

Continued from page 1

In his letter, KCR stated that SCEL had been producing 65 million tonnes of coal every year and playing a key role in catering to the needs of thermal power plants in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu States.

Post bifurcation of combined AP, the maximum demand for power in TS was 5,661 MW in 2014 and by March 2021, it went up to 13,688 MW. So, it is essential to supply coal uninterruptedly for the generation of thermal power.

Based on Singareni's needs, the State government had issued several mining licences which the Centre was aware of and the Union Coal Ministry also had given the green light.

KCR urged the Prime Minister to instruct the Union Coal Ministry to stop the auction of JBROC-3, Sravanpally OC, KoyaGudem OC-3 and KK-6 UG block under the Union Ministry's Trench 13, as it would adversely impact the needs of States under the Singareni jurisdiction for coal. He urged the PM to allocate these blocks to the Singareni Company.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹210
Without Skin	₹200
Broiler at Farm	₹112
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	550
VIJAYAWADA	463
VISAKHAPATNAM	402
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹5.50

# Burning bodies in misty Western Ghats numb people...

Continued from page 1

Although neither workers nor their family members could comprehend what was unfolding, they and some local people were the first to reach the location, where the Air Force helicopter, with Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, his wife and 11 other people on board, crashed.

However, they could not get very close as the fire raged destroying all that it could in the wooded vicinity. The location of the mishap is a forest area, close to a tea estate and mountain chain and valleys.

Eyewitness accounts said hearing 'something like a boom' and then 'clanking of objects,' while the fire raged for well over half an hour, destroying the copter, killing its occupants and reducing huge trees to ashes.

The helicopter crashed in a forest area, pretty close to a tea estate. The main, motorable route to this area is only

through the tea estate. It was the local people and workers who saw what happened immediately after the crash," a senior state police official in Chennai told PTI quoting preliminary inputs.

"The Defence authorities could throw light on the crash," he added.

Eventually, when some people managed to reach close by, they could just not believe what they saw.

When they spotted a 'burning thing' they initially thought that it could be the branch of a tree, and on inching closer, the stench of the flesh that was still ablaze made them realise what it was a 'burning and burnt' body of a man crushed under the heavy branch of a huge tree that fell down in the impact of the crash.

When they saw another partially burnt body near bushes, apparently of a young soldier, they got an indication of the gravity of the situation. With only some shreds of his olive

green uniform over a part of his upper torso, he was just lying flat on the ground, lifeless.

Another army man, who apparently sustained severe burns was lying in a prone position and was obviously dead. People, however, had no clue about the identity of the victims.

According to local people, some occupants of the helicopter may have got thrown out in the impact of crash, which they say happened "as the rotor blade of the chopper hit a huge tree due to poor visibility while on the ascend."

People in Nilgiris district are accustomed to man-animal conflict and wild animals entering villages and destroying crops and even killing people.

The spectacle of burning bodies, and the stench of flesh and helicopter crash is something they have never seen nor could easily forget for many years to come.

## Chittoor native Sai Teja dies in crash

Continued from page 1

His parents are agriculturists. His family did a video call this morning at 8:45 and he spoke to his wife and children. The family is in a state of shock. They received a confirmation from the Army headquarters about his demise.

Sai Teja visited his hometown on Vinayaka Chaviti last. For children's education, Sai Teja had moved his family to Madanapalle. Born in 1994, Sai Teja studied degree in Ongole. Sai Teja's brother Mahesh Babu is also serving in the Indian army and posted at Himachal Pradesh.

## 2 from Punjab among 3 found murdered in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three people, including two hailing from Punjab, were found murdered in Nizamabad district of Telangana, police said on Wednesday.

The incident happened in a shed in Dichpally mandal around midnight on Tuesday, they said adding that unidentified persons murdered the trio, who were in the age group of 28-45 and were harvester mechanics. The motive behind the killing was under investigation, the police said.

Two of the deceased were from Punjab and the other from Sangareddy district of Telangana. The trio was hit with a hammer, Nizamabad Commissioner of Police Kartikeya said adding the bodies bore blunt injury marks. The senior official said they were working on clues and formed a special team.

A case was registered.

# Will Mamata or KCR initiate talks on Federal Front?

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

After West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee hijacked Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's idea to form a front to defeat the BJP in the next Lok Sabha elections the focus is now on whether KCR or Mamata will initiate talks on the issue.

In fact, before the last Lok Sabha elections, KCR had initiated talks with like-minded parties over the formation of a Federal Front against the BJP and the Congress.

KCR met Mamata twice regarding this. KCR also discussed it with former PM Deve Gowda, the chief of Janata Dal (Secular), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and others.

KCR felt that the talks could continue after the Lok Sabha elections. But against KCR's expectations, the BJP won a majority in the Lok Sabha and formed a government on its own.

Later, KCR started moving closely with the BJP-led government. Now Mamata has

taken the initiative to form a third front against the BJP.

She has discussed the matter with Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav. Like Mamata, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has also strongly criticised the Congress.

When KCR initiated talks on the formation of a Federal Front Mamata Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav and Sharad Pawar said that without Congress support it is not possible to defeat the BJP and that the Federal Front should be formed under the leadership of the Congress.

But KCR wanted the Federal Front to be formed with anti-BJP and anti-Congress parties. But now their opinions have changed. While Mamata and Akhilesh moved away from the Congress the TRS is moving closer to the Congress.

The meeting organised by the Congress on floor coordination was attended by TRS MPs. But Trinamool Congress MPs and MP Asaduddin Owaisi did not attend the meeting.

Later, the TRS clarified that they attended the meeting to

apply pressure on the Centre on paddy procurement.

Against this backdrop, it is interesting to see whether KCR or Mamata would speak first on forming a front against the BJP.

Sources said that Prashant Kishore of I-PAC is more interested to form a third front against the BJP and the Congress than Mamata. Prashant is reportedly mediating with the TRS and the YSR Congress to get their support for Mamata.

Prashant Kishore has direct access to YSR Congress President and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

During the last Assembly elections, Prashant Kishore worked for the YSR Congress and is now working for the next Assembly elections. But Prashant Kishore has no connections with the TRS or its supreme KCR.

Sources said that when the TRS Working President KT Rama Rao was in New Delhi recently Prashant Kishore met him for the first time and it was just a "courtesy meet".

Prashant Kishore is likely to intensify moves for the formation of a third front to support Mamata Banerjee.

## CDS CHOPPER CRASH

## Mi17V5 is advanced transport helicopter with IAF since 2012

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Mi17V5 helicopter, which crashed with Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Bipin Rawat and 13 other people onboard on Wednesday, is an advanced military transport chopper that has been with the Indian Air Force (IAF) since 2012.

Manufactured by Russian Helicopters subsidiary Kazan, the helicopter has an onboard weather radar and is equipped with the latest generation of night vision devices.

It also has the new PKV-8 autopilot system and a KNEI-8 avionics suite. It can carry a maximum take off weight of 13,000 kg and maximum payload weight of 4,000 kg.

India had in 2008 signed a deal with Russia to induct 80 Mi17V5 medium lift helicopters for strengthening its chopper fleet for humanitarian and disaster relief missions and transport operations.

The contract was later expanded for delivery of 151 Mi17V5 helicopters.

The first batch of these helicopters came to India in September 2011.

In February 2012, the IAF

had formally inducted Mi17V5 helicopters from Russia to enhance its operational capabilities including carrying troops and cargo to high altitude areas.

The helicopter is fitted with a self-defence system against heat seeker missiles, heavily-armoured cockpit, vital systems and components.

"The Mi-17V-5 military transport helicopter is designed to carry personnel, cargo and equipment inside the cargo cabin or on an external sling, drop tactical air assault forces and reconnaissance and sabotage groups, destroy ground targets and carry the wounded," said Russian government's defence exports company Rosoboronexport.

According to the company, this helicopter can achieve a maximum speed of 250 km per hour.

The helicopter is fitted with advanced TV3-117VM engines.

It is the most technically advanced helicopter of Mi-8/17 family of helicopters, and incorporates the best engineering solutions from previous generations of helicopters.

## 5 girl students...

Continued from page 1

It appears to be a case of witness harassment on the basis of primary investigation.

"Last December, a former teacher of the school, who is currently under suspension, was arrested on charges of molesting three girl students. The case is under trial and the police have filed a chargesheet in the court. All the staffers, who have been booked in the FIRs last night, had given statements against their colleague, who recently got bail," he said.

The SP said according to preliminary investigation, the teacher persuaded the family members of the five girls to register cases against the school teachers and that he accompanied them to the police station and waited outside as the girls lodged complaints.

Station House Officer of Mandhan police station Mukesh Kumar said the girls, who are minors, have alleged that the male teachers used to rape them with the help of their female colleagues.

One of the FIRs was based on the complaint of two sisters who study in the school, second FIR has also two victims and third case mentions one girl, according to the SP.

# Telangana clocks 205 new Covid cases, one death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Wednesday reported 205 new COVID-19 cases, pushing the tally to 6,77,546, while the death toll rose to 4,002 with one more fatality.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

(GHMC) accounted for the most number of cases with 79, followed by Hanumakonda (19) and Medchal Malkajigiri (14) districts, a state government bulletin said, providing details as of 5:30 PM today.

It said 185 people recovered from the infectious disease.

The cumulative number of recoveries was 6,69,673.

The number of active cases was 3,871.

It said 38,085 samples were tested and the total number tested till date was 2,88,80,078.

The samples tested per million population were 7,75,929.

## Omicron cases must be treated only in designated facilities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of Omicron cases being detected in a few places in the country, the Union health ministry on Wednesday wrote to states and union territories, stating that patients of the new coronavirus variant have to be treated in designated Covid facilities with separate isolation area.

It has to be ensured that no cross infection takes place and adequate precautions are taken by healthcare workers in these facilities to prevent transmission among other patients and healthcare workers, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in a letter to states and union territories (UTs).

Bhushan advised them to regularly review and ensure that samples of positive cases of international travellers and their contacts as well as from emerging hot spots are promptly submitted to INSACOG labs for genome sequencing according to protocol.

Further to contain spread, it is imperative that states and UTs follow a mission mode and focused approach of quickly tracking primary and secondary contacts of positive cases and facilitate testing for them, he said.

It is critical to track all contacts of such cases, quarantine them without delay and test them according to guidelines, Bhushan said.

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# Stop drunks at liquor joints; not on roads, say people

G. RAVI KIRAN  
■ HYDERABAD

"Please don't stop vehicles but stop the liquor and the drunks," this is what the public says about the special operations of the police against drunken driving. The four accidents caused by drunk drivers within 48 hours have thoroughly exposed the police.

Once a person comes out of a liquor joint drunk and starts a vehicle then the chances of an accident is more. Stopping them somewhere in the middle will not prevent accidents. The way of stopping drunk driving by the police must be changed, says the public.

They suggest that the serving of liquor should be stopped at 10 pm and that drunks must be prevented at the bar or pub itself from driving.

On Monday, a drunk hit two pedestrians on the road with his car. In the afternoon, another drunk hit a two-wheeler and killed a couple. Another drunkard hit four hotel staffers on the road in the evening at In-Orbit mall. On Tuesday midnight, a drunken actress hit a motorcyclist injuring him.



■ The police should camp at liquor joints and monitor them. They should check whether drunks are driving or has a driver. If a drunk tries to drive, he or she should be stopped.

■ Liquor must be served only till 10 pm.

■ The managements of liquor joints should have a system to get details of customers' transport arrangements. If he/she has a vehicle without driver, he/she should not be served liquor.

These incidents happened while the drunk and drive operation to stop drunken driving by the police was going on. The police are conducting such ops regularly and registering cases. The courts are penalising drunk motorists with fines or jail depending on severity of the case. But there is no let-up in accidents caused by drunks.

Social activist M. Srinivas said, "On one side you are encouraging liquor sales and then you are registering cases against drunken motorists.

Why not deploy police in front of pubs and bars, so that they can check whether drunkards are going to drive. If a drunk tries to drive, the cops can stop him."

One more suggestion also came on this issue. D. Ramnath, a private sector employee said, "Liquor joints should set a condition. Whoever comes to have liquor should be asked to reveal their transport arrangements. If they came on their own vehicle without a driver or a non-drinking companion then they

should not be given liquor. Just like during New Year celebrations, the management must provide a sober driver for a charge."

The government should consider these suggestions from the public. In addition to enforcing Motor Vehicle Acts and court orders, the government should direct the police to prevent accidents by changing the liquor serving time, monitoring the transportation of drinkers at pubs and bars and by not serving liquor to persons who don't have drivers.

## Brightcom Group acquires digital marketing firm MediaMint

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Brightcom Group Ltd, a company in the ad-tech industry, has announced the signing of a share purchase agreement to acquire 100 per cent shares of Vuchi Media Private Limited, operating under the brand name of MediaMint.

MediaMint is an end-to-end digital consulting and digital operations provider specialising in Ad Operations, campaign management, creative services, data analytics, platform support, dev ops, and other operations.

The Brightcom Group acquired MediaMint for around Rs 566 crore in cash and stock. Of this, Rs 360 crore will be paid in cash at closing, Rs 170 crore as BCG stock, and Rs 36 crore will be paid six months after closing.

MediaMint's revenue for FY22 March is expected to be Rs 187 crore. After the acquisition, MediaMint will continue to serve its clients.

MediaMint's leadership team, including Neelima Marupuru, Anush Kumar, Jason Riback and Aashay Paradkar, will continue to



guide the growth of the business. Aditya Vuchi, co-founder, will stay on for six months to ensure smooth transition.

Tempus Legal is the legal counsel and EY the exclusive financial advisor to the Brightcom Group in this

transaction.

Sathguru Management Consultants acted as the sole transaction consultant for MediaMint.

The advertising and technology sector worldwide is witnessing massive growth due to the accelerating shift to online marketing due to the pandemic.

Brightcom's management is expanding its backend capabilities to increase its capability to capture new opportunities and execute the strategic needs of clients globally.



### A FESTIVAL OF DANCE

It was a festival of dance and music. Students belonging to different areas performed in the dance forms to the delight of every one. Under expert guidance they achieved perfection

## Funds for Kakatiya Mega Textile Park through 'Challenge Method'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Financial assistance for the Kakatiya Meda Textile Park will be given based on challenge method by the Central government. The Government of Telangana had submitted a memorandum to the Union Government seeking financial assistance of Rs. 1,000 crore for the textile park in Warangal district of Telangana.

The Central government said that under the PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Scheme, the proposals received from the states will be evaluated based on Challenge Method. The Government of Telangana had proposed the location of the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park, Warangal for PM MITRA Park.

Responding to question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Textiles Darshana



**The Central government said that under the PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Scheme, the proposals received from the states will be evaluated based on Challenge Method.**

Jardosh said that under PM MITRA, the Government had approved setting up of seven parks in Greenfield/Brownfield sites to develop world-class infrastructure, including plug and

play facility, with an outlay of ₹ 4,445 cr for a period of seven years upto 2027-28.

She said, "The PM MITRA Parks Scheme shall be implemented on pan-India basis and is intended for holistic

development of textile sector. States of Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana have expressed interest so far. The evaluation of proposals received from the states will be on the basis of Challenge Method."

## Actress Lahari's car hits motorcyclist

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A car driven by television actress Lahari hit a motorcyclist on Tuesday midnight. The motorcyclist was injured in the mishap.

Lahari was driving a car and it hit the motorcyclist from the back. She didn't see the motorcyclist. The motorcyclist fell down and was injured.

After getting information about the accident from locals, the police reached the spot and took the motorcyclist to the hospital. They questioned actress Lahari regarding the accident.

Later, the motorcyclist decided to compromise and actress Lahari accepted to pay his medical treatment expenses.



## Two girls born in RTC bus get lifetime free travel offer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TSRTC extended lifelong Free travel to the two babies born in TSRTC buses. Two girls born on running TSRTC buses get free bus travel for life

It is a moment of pride to bring two lives on board, said Managing Director TSRTC VC Sajjanar, IPS.

They are born to frequent travellers – two baby girls, recently, born on the moving Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) buses, had received free lifetime passes from the corporation as their 'birthday' gifts.

While the first girl was born on November 30, near Peddakothapally village in a bus belonging to Nagarkurnool depot, another woman gave birth to her daughter on board on the afternoon of December 7 near Siddipet. The bus belongs to the Asifabad depot.

These two women unexpectedly went into labour

## Raheja group constructs new floor for Kondapur district hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Harish Rao inaugurated an additional floor at the Kondapur district hospital on Wednesday.

The new facility was built and equipped by the K. Raheja corporate group's community impact arm, the K. Raheja Corp Foundation, to help the government strengthen health-care facilities.

The hospital, which earlier had only a ground and two upper floors, spread across 67,071 sq.ft., now has a third floor and 22,357 sq.ft. of additional space with 118 beds, making it a 89,428 sq.ft. hospital.

This will enable the hospital to provide 218 beds with facilities to treat more patients. The new floor has facilities for emergency care, nurses' stations, doctors' room, etc.

This new floor has been provided facilities by the government to provide oxygen support and ICU beds.

The floor was designed and constructed in a record time of 60 days due to the shortage of beds and medical infrastructure during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic's second



wave.

Speaking at the inaugural function, Harish asked the K. Raheja group to take up the building's maintenance.

"We are glad to see companies stepping in to support local communities by ramping up medical infrastructure. Their business parks are an integral part of the community, creating jobs for our State, and we are happy to see the initiatives being taken to support the local community," the Minister said.

Addressing the function, Vinod Rohira, the CEO of

MindSpace Business Parks REIT, said, "We are happy to use our expertise to construct this additional floor for the hospital. At the peak of the corona pandemic, the State faced an acute shortage of beds and medical facilities, and we worked with the government to meet the challenges. This initiative is part of our endeavour to work with local authorities to strengthen medical infrastructure. This project will act as a catalyst to build a better ecosystem which will provide improved health-care."

## Minor girl goes with friend, alleges rape by his friends

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

One minor girl was raped by five youngsters in Medipally area. The girl belongs to Sultan Bazar and she has gone with her boyfriend without informing her parents. The parents have lodged a complaint as a missing case. The girl was traced by the Police and she has alleged that the boy friend and his friends have raped her several times.

The girl was missed on 30th November and traced on Tuesday by the Police. The girl has alleged that the boys have sexually assaulted her. The Police have registered a case on the boys under POCSO act. The Police are investigating further. The girl is a resident of Sultan Bazar and the accused belongs to Amberpet area. The Police have stated that they have registered the case under the charges of rape, POCSO and kidnap.



onboard to their respective destinations and the TSRTC crew members and fellow passengers helped the women to deliver their babies.

Later, the TSRTC crew coordinated with officials of the Health department and rushed the mothers and newborns to the nearby government hospitals in 108

Ambulances for further treatment. They are said to be doing well. Appreciating the quick response and support of the TSRTC crew and passengers, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of TSRTC VC Sajjanar, IPS, said he was pleased to offer newly-borns free lifetime passes for their travel on the TSRTC buses.

## 'Accidents reduced drastically in five years'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Around 39 lakhs of cases were noted under violation of traffic rules for not wearing a helmet in the year 2021 in the Hyderabad Police Commissionerate.

The Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad Mr. Anjani Kumar has explained the details of the accidents with a comparison for the last five years in a press meet on Wednesday. He has stated that the accidents were reduced drastically in the last five years. The efforts of the traffic police



have succeeded in preventing the accidents, he added.

As per the reports, total accidents were 1657 in 2021 and 1843 in 2020. In 2017, five

years back 2367 accidents happened. Deaths happened in 237 cases in 2021, 248 in 2020 and in 2017 the number was 303. In 2021, in 237 cases, deaths

happened. Out of them 178 were because of over speed, drunk & drive 13, Careless & Negligence were 24 cases. In these cases, most of the vehicles involved were goods vehicles.

The cases of traffic violations registered in 2021 are 39 lakhs for not wearing helmet, Violation of stop line 75,000, Triple riding on Bikes 1.12 lakhs, Over speeding 76000, entering No Entry area 17,350, signal jumping 40274, cell phone driving 34191, drunken driving 21041 and without number plate cases were 28320.

## TS Guv, Union Minister Kishan Reddy condole Rawat's demise

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi and leaders of BJP and Congress expressed grief over the demise of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and other military personnel in an IAF helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday.

Paying tributes to Rawat, the Governor said his role and contribution in modernising the Indian military and shaping it as one of the strongest in the world are invaluable.

In a Raj Bhavan press communique, the Governor said her thoughts are with all the bereaved families.

## RBI approves P2P lending platform OxyLoans.com

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

SRS FinTech Labs Pvt. Ltd, a Hyderabad based fintech start-ups, peer-2-peer (P2P) lending platform, OxyLoans.com, has been approved by the RBI as an NBFC P2P.

Addressing a press conference in the city on Wednesday, Radhakrishna Thatavarti, founder and CEO, who has 20 plus years of experience in working for software companies and clients in the area of banking and financial services said the landscape of this sector in the Indian financial industry has suddenly changed.

I have reasons and instances to believe that P2P Lending is taking the lead in India's FinTech space, he added.

SRS FinTech owns the P2P lending platform OxyLoans.com. In India, out of 100 loans, only 17 are dis-

bursed by banks and the rest are disbursed by friends, family, and private lenders. People-to-people financing and lending platforms have a great future.

Peer-to-peer lending (P2P lending) is the process of lending money to individuals or businesses through online services that match lenders with borrowers.

P2P lending is a very old in India and the RBI has issued guidelines and has granted licenses to 21 firms. P2P lending is an established business in the West.

The sector has the potential to "disrupt the financial sector." I see the complete chit funds market moving to P2P lending which is more authentic and participation is high, Radhakrishna added.

It also has the potential to throw many surprises. That is because this sector promotes

alternative forms of finance which the traditional form of finance is unable to serve. It is a people to people financing and lending platform, Radhakrishna Thatavarti said.

RBI guidelines add a lot of good to the industry. Highlighting the potential of P2P lending platforms, Radhakrishna said that the Lending Club of USA disburses USD 1 billion US every month, that is, Rs 7000 crore through a P2P lending platform. Nearly USD 2.5 million is disbursed every hour through P2P lending platforms all over the world, he said. P2P lending is making it easier in many areas where banks or other financial institutions fail to be of any service.

P2P lending is attracting greater attention of borrowers and lenders among millennials, Radhakrishna said.



## Governor visits paddy centers in Nalgonda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Wednesday visited a couple of paddy procurement centers in Nalgonda district.

The visit came amid an ongoing war of words between ruling TRS and BJP and the state government seeking an annual target for paddy procurement in Telangana from the Centre. The Governor visited paddy procurement centers at Duppalapally and Arjalabavi villages and interacted with the farmers on procurement procedure, progress and facilities, a Raj Bhavan press communique said. She asked farmers about the yield they were getting and the availability of bags for packing.

She asked officials about the facilities provided to farmers, the procedure being followed for procurement, the



progress in the procurement, and other aspects related to procurement. The officials explained to the Governor about the progress in the procurement process and the facilities provided to farmers at the IKP procurement centers.

Earlier, the Governor inaugurated a renovated Sri Bhakthanjaneya Sahitha Santoshi Matha temple at Sher Bungalow area in Nalgonda, where she took part in special

puja and other traditional rituals. The TRS and BJP in Telangana have been engaged in a war of words over paddy procurement in the state.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, along with his cabinet colleagues and other TRS leaders, held a dharna here last month, demanding that the Centre specify the annual target for paddy procurement in a year from Telangana.

## ‘Prepare list of beneficiaries for completed 2BHK houses’

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Sangareddy District Collector Hanumanta Rao has asked the officials concerned to prepare the list of eligible beneficiaries under the 2BHK housing programme. He told the officials that the implementation of the 2BHK housing programme should be transparent and only the eligible should get the housing units and wanted them to implement the programme without any hiccups. He was reviewing the progress of the housing programme with housing, R and B and

Panchayat Raj department officials here on Wednesday through video conference. He asked them to make arrangements for the celebration of house-warming by preparing the list of beneficiaries for the



completed houses.

In Dhakur village of Andole constituency 104 units were ready for house-warming, similarly 216 are ready in Andole Nagar Panchayat, 108 in Vaddera and Hamali colonies, 72 are ready in Munipalle, 130 in Jukkal of Narayanakhet constituency, 312 units are ready in Rahamat Nagar of zaheerabad, 265 are ready in Fasalwadi in Sangareddy. Moreover, the colonies have other amenities like electrici-

ty, drinking water, roads, drainages, septic tank, and so on. He asked the officials to prepare the list of beneficiaries for these 2BHK houses.

The list of the eligible/ineligible should be displayed immediately. The people should raise, objections if any to the list, should alert the authorities in time, he said asking the authorities to display a notice to this extent in the notice board for the benefit of the villagers.

## Several indisposed upon consuming hooch

PNS ■ MEDAK

Several persons have complained of severe health complications like dizziness, twisting of the neck after they consumed adulterated toddy at a toddy shop in Gudem gadda in Narsapur Mandal of the district on Wednesday. They have been rushed to the government hospital at Narsapur where the doctors provided the first aid to them and later referred them to Government Hospital at Sangareddy and to a private



hospital in Narsapur for further treatment. The residents of Gudemgadda blame it on the consumption of adulterated toddy.

## KTPS employees boycott duties

PNS ■ JAYASHANKER BHUPALAPALLY

In response to a call given by the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers (NCCOEEE), employees of the Kakatiya Thermal Power Station (KTPS) employees of units-1 and 2 on Wednesday boycotted their duties, wore black badges, and proceeded in a rally to the main gate of the KTPP main gate and protested in support of their demands.

They protested against the Centre privatising the public



sector power companies. The JAC of the employees who addressed the demonstrators alleged that the Centre has been trying to dispose of the PSU power units, which play a crucial role in the economy, to big players in the private sector to pave the way for privati-

sation of the PSU power units. In fact, the PSU power units benefit crores consumers, agriculture, and industries supplying power without any hiccups and playing a crucial role in the country's economy through Electricity Act Amendment Bill and demanded the electric-

ity employees to resist the bill.

The Bill is going to affect over 50,000 energy department employees, over 1.90-crore consumers. It would lead to diminishing job security leading to increased accidents. The people are going to be overburdened with power charges. They demanded the Centre to withdraw the Bill and privatisation of the power distribution companies Bill in Parliament. They threatened to step up their agitation all over the country if the government did not withdraw the controversial Bill.

## BJP likely to intensify moves against TRS, Amit Shah calls meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP has decided to intensify its moves against the TRS as part of Mission 2023. Union Home Minister Amit Shah himself has now entered the field.

Amit Shah is meeting MLAs and MPs from Telangana on Thursday in New Delhi. BJP MLAs have left for New Delhi on Wednesday as per the directions of the party high command. This will be the first time the new BJP MLA, Eatala Rajendar, will be meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Amit Shah's office has informed Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar and Telangana BJP affairs in-charge Tarun Chugh to be available on Thursday.



At the meeting, the BJP leaders are likely to discuss TS politics and chart out counter moves against the TRS Government.

TRS MPs after stalling Parliament proceedings over the paddy procurement issue had boycotted the entire session. Amit Shah will advise the TS BJP leaders to expose the

TRS Government over the paddy issue and explain to the people about the failure of the TRS Government to supply paddy as per the quota decided by the Centre.

BJP leaders think that the TRS created the paddy issue to divert public attention from the TRS' defeat in the Huzurabad Assembly by-election.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will give directions to BJP leaders to intensify moves against the TRS Government to defeat the TRS in the next Assembly elections.

The meeting may discuss the second phase of Bandi Sanjay Kumar's padyatra too.

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy also will attend the meeting which will be held at 9 am at Amit Shah's office.

## Triple murder in Dichpalli

PNS ■ DICHPALLI

Yet another triple murder takes place in Nizamabad district, shrouding the murder of three persons in a mechanic shed beside the national highway in Dichpalli of Nizamabad district in mystery. The police found three bodies in the mechanic shed on Wednesday. Of the three, two harvester mechanics belonged to Punjab, while the other many hailed from Jagityal. The people of the district recall the spine-chilling murder mayhem created by psychopaths and serial killer Mohammad Sharooq alias Javed, who was nabbed by the police three months ago and is now cooling his heels behind the bars.

## Teams run to reach the target

PNS ■ MAHABUNAGAR

District Collector S Venkat Rao has said that the Covid-19 vaccination programme is going at a brisk pace in the district to reach the deadline by December end. Teams have been working up to late in the night till 11 pm to reach the deadline. The vaccination programme is going on at a feverish pitch in three towns and 435 village panchayats. In four days, a total of 89,387 doses were administered in four days. Till Tuesday, over 6.10 lakh persons have been given the first dose, while 2.10 lakh have been given the second dose.

The municipal commissioners, tahsildars have been providing drinking water, food, snacks, transport facility to the medical and health who have been persevering to read



the deadline, he said. Additional collectors, special officers, Mandal level officials have been monitoring the progress closely, he said adding

that the people have been visiting the vaccination centers voluntarily to get themselves vaccinated. Elected people's representatives, sarpanches,

municipal chairmen, ward councilors and other elected people's representatives have been sensitising the people to receive the vaccine, he said.

## DC inspects Covid vaccination pace

‘Why all people not vaccinated and how many yet to be vaccinated?’

PNS ■ WARANGAL

District Collector Dr. B Gopi on Wednesday paid a surprise visit to the Covid vaccination centers in Yellandu, Vardha nnapeta, and Rayaparti in the Vardhannapet Mandal of the district and

inspected the progress of the vaccination programme. First, he visited the vaccination center at Yellanda and Vardhannapeta and sought details from officials there on how many have been vaccinated and how many more are yet to be

vaccinated. Why all people in the two villages could not be covered so far in administering the first dose, he questioned seeking details of the progress of administering the second dose. He told the medical and health authorities

that the 100 percent vaccination should be achieved by December 31. He asked the officials of various government departments to coordinate with the local people's representatives and medical and health personnel. He also appealed

to the people to come forward voluntarily to get themselves vaccinated. He advised them to observe physical distance and wear masks and sanitise their hands as frequently as possible.

Later, he took part

in a farmers' awareness programme and asked the farmers to raise alternative crops to paddy in rabi and earn more profits. At Rayaparti, he spoke on crop rotation techniques at a programme held at Rytu Vedula.

## ‘Don't neglect your future’

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

Local MLA Durgam Chinniah and ACP of Bellampalli Yedla Mahesh on Wednesday distributed volleyball kits, T-shirts, blankets among the aged of 17 villages as part of the Police Mee Kosam programme held at Kannepalli. The ACP observed that some youth have no goal in



their life and get addicted to mobile phones, liquor, and drugs to spoil their lives. While some students have been showing the symptoms of

deviant behavior at the high school level, some others, irrespective of their age, have been exploring vices to get the thrill out of them, he pointed out. He

asked the youth not to destroy their future by getting addicted to vices while offering to support the youth in pursuing education and finding them employment. Offering the police department's support to youth in the police recruitment, he wished that many youths should get selected to the department from this region.



INDIA CORNER

Info on farmers' deaths maintained by state govts: Centre in Parliament

The government on Wednesday told Parliament that information related to number of farmers who died during the protest at Delhi borders since last year is maintained by "respective state governments". Minister of state for home affairs Nityanand Rai told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply that "police and public order are state subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. The information in this regard is maintained by the respective state governments." He was asked a question on the number of farmers who died during protests on the borders of Delhi from 2020. The reply of the minister added that the "respective state governments deal with matters relating to compensation in such cases (death of farmers)." The reply stated that the 'Delhi Police has informed that an amount of Rs 7,38,42,914 (up to 20.11.2021) has been spent to provide security at various sites of the farmers protest.'



Sena MP Priyanka send legal notice to BJP MLAs for defaming her

Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi on Wednesday said she has sent a legal notice to BJP leaders Ashish Shelar and Atul Bhatkalkar and a singer for "spreading lies" about her comments on Veer Savarkar, in a bid to "defame" her and the party. Chaturvedi has also sought an apology from the JP MLAs and singer Bharat Balvalli, failing which she said she will initiate criminal and civil defamation proceedings against them. Taking to Twitter, the Sena leader said on December 2, Shelar in a press conference, claimed that she had insulted Savarkar. Chaturvedi said she did not make any comment against Savarkar and that Shelar's "false accusations" have led to her loss of reputation. "I have sent a legal notice for defamation through my lawyers to @ShelarAshish @BhatkalkarA and Bharat Balvalli for spreading deliberate lies in a bid to defame me, malign me and my party @ShivSena.



BJP opposes local bodies polls sans OBC seats, writes to Maha SEC

BJP MLA Ashish Shelar on Wednesday asked the Maharashtra State Election Commission to not go ahead with the polls in local bodies scheduled on December 21, saying conducting them will amount to doing injustice to Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Shelar's request came against the backdrop of the Supreme Court staying these polls on the seats where there is the reservation of up to 27 per cent for the OBCs. Maharashtra State Election Commissioner U P S Madan had on Tuesday announced that elections to zilla parishads, panchayat samiti and gram panchayats will be held as per schedule except on the seats reserved for OBCs in light of the Supreme Court verdict. This decision of the poll body has attracted criticism from various political parties. While staying these polls on the seats where there is the reservation of up to 27 per cent for the OBCs, the SC had also made it clear that the election process for the other seats would continue.



Rajnath Singh briefs PM on chopper crash

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is monitoring the situation after an Indian Air Force helicopter with Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, his wife and several other officers on board met with an accident on Wednesday near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu.



He briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the crash and the Indian Air Force chief has been asked to reach the site. There was no immediate word on the condition of Rawat.

The defence minister is likely to make a statement on the incident in Parliament. Official sources said the Mi-17V5 helicopter got airborne from Sullur for Wellington and there were 14 persons on board the chopper including the crew. Four bodies have been recovered from the site of the crash, they said. The Chief of Defence Staff was on his way to the Defence Staff College in Wellington. The IAF said a Court of Inquiry has been ordered into the accident.

Concerned ministry to share information

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union I&B Minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday said information about the helicopter accident in Coonoor in Tamil Nadu will be shared by the ministry concerned at an appropriate time. "The entire information about the accident that has taken place will be shared by the concerned ministry at an appropriate time," Thakur told reporters when asked about the helicopter crash involving Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat. An Indian Air Force helicopter with Rawat on board crashed on Wednesday near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu, the IAF said.

'No proposal under consideration to make Law Commission statutory'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Law and Justice has told the Supreme Court that there is no proposal under consideration to make Law Commission a statutory body. The submission has been made in response to a plea filed by lawyer Ashwani Upadhyay seeking direction to the Centre to declare Law Commission a "statutory body" and appoint the panel's chairperson and members. The Ministry submitted that the petition filed by Upadhyay is frivolous and not maintainable being devoid of merits. "The petitioner has not



come with clean hands and has raised an issue which clearly falls out of the doctrine of separation of power and the government is presently seized of

the matter regarding the appointment of Chairperson and Members of the Law Commission," the ministry said in an affidavit filed in the top court. "It is submitted that the 22nd Law Commission was constituted on February 21, 2020, and the appointment of Chairperson and Member is under consideration with concerned authorities. "However, no proposal is under consideration to make Law Commission a statutory body," it said. The top court had earlier issued notice to the Centre on the plea of Upadhyay, who made the ministries of Home

Affairs and Law and Justice as well as the Law Commission of India as parties. The plea had said the cause of action arose on August 31, 2018, and is continuing when the tenure of the 21st Law Commission ended but the Centre has neither extended the tenure of its Chairperson and Members nor notified the 22nd Law Commission. "Although, on February 19, 2020, Centre approved the constitution of Twenty-second Law Commission it has not appointed the Chairperson and Members till date," Upadhyay had said in the petition filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey.

Chhattisgarh: Three killed in road mishap

PNS ■ BILASPUR

Three persons were killed when their motorcycle collided with a car in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district on Wednesday, police said. The accident took place on Ulsapur flyover under Sakri police station limits around 1.30 am, an official said. The victims, who worked for a caterer, were heading home to Bilaspur town from a wedding, when the motorcycle they were travelling on collided

with a car, he said. The impact of the collision caused the victims Moha mmad Basheer (50), Ranjeeta alias Sangeeta Banjare (35) and Kumari Bai (57) to be thrown off the two-wheeler and fall of the flyover, the official said. Bangare died on her way to a hospital, while the others succumbed to their injuries during treatment, he said, adding that a case has been registered against the car driver, who has been arrested.

Bomma expresses shock over IAF helicopter crash

PNS ■ BANGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai expressed shock over the Indian Air Force helicopter carrying the Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat meeting with an accident near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday. He said search and rescue operations are underway at the place where the accident



occurred. "I am deeply pained to hear the Army helicopter carrying the Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat meeting with an

accident. I am trying to get more information," Bommai told reporters here. "This is the most unfortunate incident. The nation is in a state of shock," he added. The IAF helicopter with Gen Rawat on board met with an accident near Coonoor and four people were killed in the mishap that happened reportedly due to low visibility due to foggy conditions.

HC seeks ED stand on PFI plea against money laundering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Wednesday asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to respond to a plea by Popular Front of India (PFI) challenging a money laundering case registered by the agency in 2018 and the consequent proceedings. Justice Anu Malhotra issued notice on the petition and granted four weeks to the central agency to file the reply.



PFI lawyer Adit Pujari claimed that over 150 summons have been received by several of its members from across the country for a "roving and fishing inquiry" in the

case by ED. The judge, listing the case for further hearing on February 4, said she "expected that the CCTV cameras of the respondent (ED) will remain functional at the time of recording of statements". Pujari said the present ED probe arises from a National Investigation Agency (NIA) case concerning the alleged training of youngsters in Kerala for carrying out anti-national activities.

Court orders framing of charges against gangster

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has ordered framing of charges against alleged gangster Parvesh Mann and four others for allegedly running an organised crime syndicate and extorting money from the traders and businessmen here. Additional Sessions Judge Praveen Singh directed to put the accused persons on trial for an offence punishable under stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA). "I find that prima facie the prosecution, by the evidence before the court, has established that there exists a grave suspicion that there is an organized crime syndicate led by accused Parvesh Mann of which accused Ajay Mann, Sachin Mann, Yudhveer and Sahil Dahiya are members and are engaged in the commission of an organized crime," the judge said in an order passed on December 3. The prosecution claimed that the regular crime review of Delhi NCR revealed that "dreaded gangster Parvesh Mann has become a symbol of terror and lawlessness in the area of Outer and West Districts of Delhi including neighbouring districts of Haryana."

Bill to bring clarity on retired judges' pension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a bill which seeks to bring clarity on the age of retired judges to determine when they will get enhanced pension. The High Court and

Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021 seeks to amend two laws for this purpose. Before the passage of the bill, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju told the House that the measure does

not in any way affect the salary and pension of judges but only inserts a clarification. The bill seeks to rectify an anomaly to end any confusion, he said. The bill was later passed by a voice vote.

'AFSPA clamied too many lives'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Naga Peoples Front (NPF) MP Lorho Pfoze on Wednesday flagged in the Lok Sabha the alleged sufferings faced by the Northeastern states of Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh due to the imposition of the AFSPA and said too many lives have been lost due to it. Pointing to the Nagaland incident in which 14 civilians were killed, the MP from Outer Manipur, during the Zero Hour in the House, said the "cruel, brutal murder of 14 civilians" took place at a time when there were celebrations going on in the state of Nagaland.

Logjam continues in Odisha Assembly

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Logjam in the Odisha Assembly continued for the seventh consecutive day on Wednesday with the House witnessing four back-to-back adjournments as the legislators of ruling and opposition parties indulged in sloganeering and placard war over the Kalahandi woman teacher's kidnap-murder case. The House plunged into chaos as soon as it assembled for the Question Hour. Opposition BJP and Congress members trooped into the well of the House, demanding removal and arrest of Minister of State for Home DS Mishra for his alleged link with the prime accused in the case. Legislators of the saffron camp, donning black scarves, beat gongs and waved posters, in which the main accused in the case could be seen on the campus of Naveen Niwas, the residence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, with the BJD supreme standing at a distance. "This picture shows how powerful was the prime accused and his influence in the ruling party.

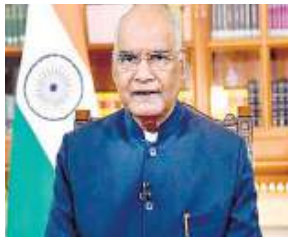
GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA Revenue (LA) Department FORM - C													
(Under Section-11 of the Act where 10A Exemption is given) (See Rule 612)													
Gazette No. GHMC-228 No.A/188/NALA/2021													
NOTIFICATION													
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, that a total of 1385.33 Sq. Yds land is required in the Kandlakota Village, Bandlaguda Mandal, Hyderabad District to facilitate for Proposed 15 meters wide Nala (including Buffer Zone of 2.0 M on Both sides) from Sunny Garden to Shivaji Nagar;													
Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Kandlakota Village, Bandlaguda Mandal, Hyderabad District land measuring more or less 1385.33 Sq. Yds of Standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition:-													
Sl. No.	Boundaries No.	Type of Title	Type of Land	Extent in Sq. Yds.	Name & Address of person interested	North	South	East	West	Trails	Structures	Remarks	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
LEFT SIDE PROPERTIES													
1	18-1-292/15	Owner	-	32.50	Pentamma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	18-1-292/15/B	Owner	-	21.00	Bramhachari	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	18-1-292/17/A	Owner	-	31.11	S. Sakku Bai	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	18-1-292/18/A	Owner	-	40.95	G. Srinivas Goud	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	18-1-292/18	Owner	-	31.11	Shoba Bai	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	18-1-292/19/B	Owner	-	68.44	S. Bin Krishna	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	18-1-292/22/B	Owner	-	70.00	M. Balaram	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	18-1-292/30/B	Owner	-	71.55	Sunitha	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	18-1-292/1	Owner	-	35.00	Sharada	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Plot No.40)													
10	18-1-292/39/A	Owner	-	37.33	P. Yadanamma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	18-1-292/42	Owner	-	57.55	D. Umash	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	18-1-292/1	Owner	-	16.44	Owner/occupier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	18-1-292/43	Owner	-	13.41	World Astar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	18-1-292/44	Owner	-	14.00	Owner/occupier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	18-1-292/44	Owner	-	16.66	P. Anjamma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	18-1-292/43	Owner	-	21.30	Sandi Lingamalaiah	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	18-1-292/48/1	Owner	-	16.94	P. Murthala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	18-1-292/45	Owner	-	24.11	P. Binamma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	18-1-292/46	Owner	-	44.72	Satyamma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	18-1-292/47	Owner	-	6.87	M. Chandrakala	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	18-1-292/47	Owner	-	16.75	S. Prathiba	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part													
22	18-1-292/47	Owner	-	78.33	M. Malabiah	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	18-1-292/22	Owner	-	23.88	S. Saralash	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24	18-1-292/1	Owner	-	16.66	World. Mujahid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
39/1A													
25	Opp.18-1-292/30/1	Owner	-	40.04	Owner/occupier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
26	Opp.18-1-292/31/1	Owner	-	108.33	Khalieda Ather	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
27	18-1-292/1	Owner	-	102.38	World. Ashraf Ali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28	Plot No.38 Sy.No.1, H.No.18-1-514/B/38	Owner	-	52.77	Shabbir Baig	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
29	18-1-514/B/41/B	Owner	-	52.77	World. Muzaffaruddin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
30	Plot No. 43, Sy No. 11	Owner	-	49.11	Nasreen Begum	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
31	Opp.18-1-514/53/2, Back Side Plot No. 43	Owner	-	68.05	Owner/occupier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
32	18-1-514/53/2	Owner	-	41.66	World. Rafique	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
33	18-1-514/53/1/B	Owner	-	61.61	Syed Ahmed Hussaini	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total					1385.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
This Notification is made under the provisions of Section-11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 [Central Act No.30(2013)], as amended by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.													
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Collector, & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Special Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer i.e., Special Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition, GHMC, Hyderabad and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in Section -12 of the said Act.													
Under Section 11 (4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale / purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such Notification without prior approval of the Special Collector.													
Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested/affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this Notification as provided under Section 15 of the Act before Special Collector/ Authorized officer.													
Sd/- Special Deputy Collector (LA), GHMC, Hyderabad.													
Sd/- Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad.													
DIPR R.O. No. : 895/LA/PP-Advt/Agency/2021-22													

'Missile Vessel Squadron gets 'President's standard'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday awarded the 'President's Standard', a rare honour for its distinguished service, to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron, the unit that had bombed and sank Pakistan Navy's vessels in the 1971 war. The President said the honour is the testimony to the services rendered by the past and present officers of the squadron.

The year also marks the fifty years since the inception of the Missile Vessel Squadron, also known as the 'Killers', which over the past five decades have maintained the capability of delivering a credible offensive punch from the sea. "The timing of this award could not have been more befitting as our nation is celebrating 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh'. The presentation of the Standard is a testimony to the



exceptional service rendered by officers and sailors, past and present, of this squadron to our nation," President Kovind said at the ceremony.

Based in Mumbai, the Missile Vessel Squadron has participated in Operation Vijay, Operation Parakram and most recently, during the heightened security state following the Pulwama attack in 2019 deployed within striking distance off the Pakistan coast. The 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron was formally established at Mumbai in October 1991 with ten Veer Class and three Prabal Class missile boats. However, the genesis of

'Killers' dates back to the year 1969, with the induction of OSA I Class missile boats from the erstwhile USSR to bolster the strength of the Indian Navy. These missile boats were transported to India on heavy-lift merchant ships and commissioned in early 1971 at Kolkata. They were baptised by fire in the same year during the Indo-Pak war of 1971 where they played a decisive role in the outcome of the war.



## Self-service?

### Biden's two-day 'Summit for Democracy' is mainly aimed at countering China's rise

US President Joe Biden's global initiative, the Summit for Democracy, is a two-day affair beginning December 9. He wants the summit of 100-odd countries to commit to opposing authoritarianism and corruption, besides respecting human rights. Aware of its inconsistent democratic record, the United States also proposes to scuttle criticism of the summit by focusing on free media, free and fair elections and strengthening democratic reformers. However, stitched into the summit's agenda is President Biden's larger geopolitical objective. The rallying together of over 100 "democracies" is for him to send a message to China on two counts. One, register the summit as a symbolic global opposition to China's "authoritarianism". Two, bind the summit behind the United States in a maze of common, "democratic" interests to counter China's rise. China has already sought to politicise the summit by declaring itself a democracy by saying there is "no fixed model of democracy; it manifests itself in many forms". It even organised an "International Forum on Democracy" to upstage the American exercise. The fact that China, a one-party country with a rubber stamp Congress, controlled media and devalued human rights, can stolidly claim allegiance to democracy reflects two things. One, that China is bristling because, like Russia, it is excluded from the summit while *bete noire* Taiwan has received the invite. Two, China is well aware of Biden's geopolitical narrative behind the summit. Even before the summit begins, a debate is raging on the politics behind



the US exclusion/inclusion process while finalising the invitee list.

The US was careful not to publicise any criteria for selecting countries, but the inclusions and exclusions expose the politics. Taiwan's case, for example, drives the point home. It is a democracy no doubt, but the US does not recognise Taiwan and it is there because China is not. Pakistan, whose human rights record is frequently questioned and its army's interference in the functioning of the elected Government is well noted, is in. It is being explained that the US considered Pakistan's inclusion a must because India was invited. In the case of Africa, Latin America and Europe, too, the politics of exclusion prevailed. Having said that, the US got one thing right. Democracy is on the defensive and authoritarianism is on the rise. The summit proposes to rectify the pattern, but its approach is debatable. Focusing on fighting corruption or simply opposing authoritarian traits is not the way; strengthening and defending democracy is. Democracy needs to be defended on its own merits, and not by countering authoritarianism. This is a matter internal to democracy. Democracy is primarily under threat from its own regimes, with civil liberties being devalued, freedoms and rights trampled upon, and dissent quelled. These practices need to be reversed first. The summit would do well to focus more on extracting a commitment from the "democratic" invitees — or help those who are faltering — to re-learn to uphold liberty, open governance, dissent and participation.



A boy gives water to a bulbul sitting on his hand at a city street in Kolkata

PTI

## Ah Taj!

### The brackish Yamuna's toxic gases are impairing the white marble, a study says

Back in the day, Rabindranath Tagore wrote: "Only let this one teardrop, this Taj Mahal, glisten spotlessly bright on the cheek of time, forever and ever." Unfortunately, however, nothing remains forever and one day Taj, too, would be wiped off the face of time. And if the modern-day Governments don't wake up, it could be sooner rather than later. Yes, it is sad but true that the Taj is dying a slow death; not a natural death but due to the pollutants and toxins present in our environment. Generally, industrial and vehicular pollution are seen as the culprits for the white marble turning yellow and the corrosion but a new study suggests that it is not just industrial units that harm the iconic structure but also the Yamuna on the banks of which the Taj Mahal stands. Major damage to the marble is being caused by the toxic gases emanating from the Yamuna. It may still look good in pictures but an almost black river flows behind the monument and its stink can't be missed even from a distance. Published recently in the *International Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* by four conservation experts, the study suggests that hydrogen sulphide released from the polluted waters has a more corrosive impact on the monument than the sulphur dioxide emitted by Agra's factories.



The Taj Mahal is a must-visit for tourists. It is a money-spinner for the Government, yet no one ever cared about the river that flows near it and its foul smell has for years been corrupting the breathtaking experience. The majestic Mughal architecture is among the 'New Seven Wonders of the World' and a signature monument of India. Its claim to fame is the white marble which lends it a magical look. The gas from the Yamuna is slowly but surely discolouring it. The finding assumes significance as the initiatives to protect the Taj from being affected by pollution have largely been concerned with tackling industrial and vehicular pollution, while the Yamuna's pollution didn't get as much attention until five years ago. Crores of rupees have gone down the drain with no result. It is high time to clean the river, which will not only mitigate the damage to the monument, but also give a new lease of life to its fauna. The pollution can be controlled by treating the sewage water entering the river but, before that, political will is needed to weed out corruption for checking pollution.

# It was an albatross around Pak's neck

## Helping to separate the eastern wing from the rest of Pakistan was a blunder for us as Bangladesh can prove to be a launch pad for terror



PRAFULL GORADIA

A number of Indians have written articles celebrating the country's joint victory with Bangladesh in 1971. I have no quarrel in principle with commemorating any triumph, including one on the cricket or hockey field. Although a victory over Pakistan is an intra-sub-continental affair and therefore rather like a para-civil war and not an international triumph. We have not enjoyed such an achievement since Chandragupta Maurya defeated Seleucus, the appointee of Alexander the Great over Bactria in 317 BC.

That is a quibble contrasted with the blunder of helping to separate the eastern wing of Pakistan from the rest of the country. International realpolitik would have suggested that the eastern wing with a majority of the country's population was a millstone around Pakistan's neck. First and foremost, the population of the eastern wing was larger than the western's. Two, the Bengalis appeared prouder of their language than their religion, whether Islam or Hinduism. In fact, Bengal was a reluctant applicant to Pakistan. Fazlur Rahman and Sir Abdul Rahim were negotiating with Sarat Bose to keep the province united to be a third separate dominion over and above Hindustan and Pakistan. Jinnah was encouraging them because a Muslim-majority dominion would mostly side with Pakistan, especially with a Muslim Premier, forever. The Communist Party was also backing this third option.

What East Bengal — now Bangladesh — meant to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reflected in the fact that he had never visited it before March 19, 1948. When he did, he addressed the Dhaka University only to tell its students that Urdu would be the sole national language of Pakistan, angering his audience. On March 21, he warned a large crowd at the Dhaka Race Course against what he called the forces of subversive conspiracy bent on destroying Pakistan's unity. Feeble protests were heard from the crowd. Far louder voices of protest were to be heard only days later. The Qaid had through his Dhaka speech set



East Bengal on a course that was to lead, over the next 24 years, to the breakup of Pakistan and the rise of East Bengal as the independent republic of Bangladesh.

Moreover, Ayesha Jalal, the Cambridge scholar who has authored a volume titled *The Sole Spokesman*, called East Pakistan a rural slum, meaning worthless except for growing rice, which the locals ate, and raw jute with no mills to weave it until later. And, of course, in the Sylhet district there were some tea plantations. But it must be said that the jute and tea earned some hard currency in foreign exchange, more than what the western wing earned in 1947-48. Nevertheless, the tall, fair west Pakistanis looked down upon the easterners as dark, short and inferior. The least one did was to look upon the New Medinawalas (Aligarh University students) where the sub-continental 'brotherhood of Islam' were to gather. In that potential fortress of Islam, could one *momin* look at another *momin* of the east with such contempt? Yet he did until he was rid of the dark, short brother/sister in 1971, in his heart of hearts



THERE HAVE BEEN HIGHS IN INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS IN BANGABANDHU'S TIME AND SIX BSF MEN'S HEADS ON BAMBOOS WERE THE LOWEST. WHEN MORARJI DESAI CAME TO POWER IN 1977, HE SAID, 'WE HAD ONE PAKISTAN BUT INDIRA GANDHI HAS GIVEN US TWO'

good riddance.

West Pakistanis were smug besides being contemptuous. One example was Field Marshal Ayub Khan, at the peak of his power, amalgamating all of west Pakistan into one province with Khan Sahab, the brother of Frontier Gandhi, as the Chief Minister. He called it west Pakistan. Instead, he should have subdivided east Pakistan into, say, four provinces. So that the eastern wing would have united to vote for the Awami League in 1971 and won all the seats except two and be in a position to vote out the whole of the western wing. The crisis had thus begun with Mujibur Rahman claiming to be the Prime Minister-in-waiting. How could short, black people rule over the tall, fair people? The western wing considered this an abdominal thought and therefore sent Lt General Tika Khan to devastate the Bengalis.

In the late 1990s and during the regime of Begum Khaleda Rahman, Bangladesh awarded India with six chopped heads of its Border Security Force personnel on bamboos like *shikared* animals across the border.

Indians were so dreaded that they took the beheaded heads of their soldiers with equanimity! There have been highs in Indo-Bangladesh relations in the years of Bangabandhu and these six heads on bamboos were the low. When Morarji Desai came to power in 1977, he said that "we had one Pakistan but Indira Gandhi has given us two".

Our relation with Dhaka appears to be warm since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power but recently Bangladesh rewarded India by desecrating 92 temples there and killing a few local Hindus. It is possible that the mischief was resorted to by one or more terrorist groups and had nothing to do with the majority party, the Awami League. Nevertheless, the rioting proved, once again, that Bangladesh can prove to be, from time to time, a haven and launch pad for terrorism. What did India gain by freeing Bangladesh from the yoke of Islamabad? If not infiltrators, terrorists?

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TIES WITH AN OLD ALLY COULD HELP

Sir — Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent visit to India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bolster up the economic ties and improve the defence infrastructure, giving stimulus to the 'Make in India' initiative. The two countries have remained distant from each other in the last two years which created a jinx in the bilateral relations between them. India was partly left alone to deal with emerging threats from China and increased dependence on the US as a compulsion. The differences remain obvious between US President Joe Biden and PM Modi despite much hyped diplomacy.

The formation of the Quad to counter Chinese expansion in the Indo-Pacific region and US alienation from Afghanistan had enabled China to foster a close bond with fledgling Taliban and Pakistan to display its hegemony towards India and Taiwan and other Quad nations. Russia, an old ally of India, has always stood the test of time which it has proved time and again. India, on the other hand, is one of the largest importers of Russian weapons. One hopes that bilateral relations between the two vibrant leaders PM Modi and President Putin will grow and benefit the interests of both the nations.

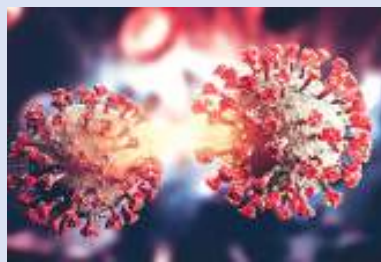
Janga Bahadur Sunuwar | Bagrakote

### BRIBERY NEEDS TO BE ERADICATED

Sir — Corruption is a worldwide bane that affects different stratas of the nation. Almost five per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of developing countries is drowned by the menace of corruption. The developed nations are reeling under the onslaught of corrupt practices of their administration. Education, health, economy and law are but a few spheres of a nation that have crumbled due to excessive corruption. It is common knowledge that corruption in a Government structure is a hurdle on the path of development and progress.

American author John Steinbeck has rightly said, "it is not just power that

## Vaccination is the best bet yet



In the wake of surging cases of the Omicron variant in India, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) warned of another wave of infections and urged the Government to announce additional doses of the vaccine for those who urgently need it. The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has not made any recommendations so far. The emergence of the Omicron variant reminds us that the pandemic is not over and that the vaccination programme cannot continue without reviewing the situation. Many countries have scaled

up administration of booster shots. Many countries are using vaccines different from the ones used for earlier doses of vaccination as booster shots. However, India needs to analyse the data before taking a decision on this. If mixing up vaccines gives better results, the Government will have to acquire additional vaccines.

A decision on whether children should be included in the vaccination programme is yet to be taken. The Serum Institute of India that manufacturers Covishield, has not released the trial data of vaccine for children. The Government needs to ensure that adults are vaccinated with two doses before rolling out vaccines for children. Booster shots must be incorporated into the current vaccine programme. Steps must be taken to speed up the second dose of vaccination. Booster shots need to be given to those who need it without further delay. We must learn lessons from the havoc the pandemic created and take preventive measures in time.

Venu GS | Kollam

corrupts, but the fear of losing the power that corrodes the corrupt". It can be said that power doesn't corrupt people, but people corrupt power. Bribe is a chronic problem and deeply rooted in our system. It won't go away easily, but if we wish to see a corruption-free India, the issue of bribes has to be settled. The youth has an important role in acting as a catalyst of change because it is an age where the mind is generally free of corrupt ideas. One also cannot undermine the role of parents and teachers in inculcating the right values in young minds.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

### OCEANS ARE NOT DUMPING GROUNDS

Sir — It is distressing to note that sewage water flowed into the beautiful Marina beach during the recent incessant rains in Chennai and turned the blue waters to a brownish hue. Not only the Marina, oceans worldwide are con-

stantly under the threat of adulterations and, in fact, have been reduced to 'rubbish dumps' with millions of tons of litter ending up in the sea. According to the United Nations Environmental Program, up to 12.7 metric tons of plastic make their way into the oceans in a year.

We need to serve as educators and ambassadors of a lifestyle in the water. Needless to say that waterways are crucial for the existence of human beings. Together we must develop a passion for the ocean and have the moral obligation to keep it clean and safe. Said the renowned Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh, "The heart of a man is very much like the sea, it has its storms, it has its tides and in its depth, it has its pearls too."

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

All the anti-BJP parties should be brought together to bring about a wider alternative front. People want a change.

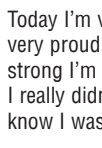


NCP spokesperson —Navab Malik



The West would impose strong economic and other measures on Russia if it invades Ukraine.

US President —Joe Biden



Today I'm very very proud of how strong I'm because I really didn't know I was.



Actor —Samantha Ruth Prabhu



The Paralympic athletes are provided all requisite facilities on a par with other sportspersons, besides their special needs.

Union Sports Minister —Anurag Thakur

If your child wants a good education then your elder brother will help you. Channi *sahib* will not help.



Delhi Chief Minister —Arvind Kejriwal



FIRST COLUMN

HYBRID IMMUNITY  
COULD BE THE KEY

Omicron has about 30 mutations and is many times more transmissible than the Delta variant



VIKAS BHATIA

The human body can ward off many infections on its own with its innate immunity. Besides, it develops immunity against contagions after exposure to them. Some pathogens have the potential to cause severe disease, disability, and even or death. Vaccines help the body develop robust immunity against such contagions. During the last two years, SARS-Cov-2 has claimed millions of lives. India too suffered a devastating second wave that affected millions of people across the country. Post this wave, India now has a huge proportion of the population that has developed what we call 'hybrid immunity', a combination of immunity developed after exposure to the viral infection and vaccination. Studies show this form of immunity can provide greater protection against COVID-19. In fact, it has also been observed that people who were exposed to the infection and then took one dose of the vaccine also



have developed a fairly good level of immunity against the virus. Recent national serosurvey shows that more than 80 per cent population of the country, including children, have antibodies against COVID-19. The vaccination statistics show that more than 85 per cent of adults have received the first dose of vaccine and more than half the country's adult population is now fully vaccinated. This hybrid immunity in the population can protect it against severe disease caused by the virus, including new mutants such as Omicron. The Omicron variant, which was first reported in South Africa, is now present in more than 40 countries.

The variant has about 30 mutations and is said to be many times more transmissible than the Delta variant, which caused the severe second wave in India and other countries. The Omicron variant has become a cause of great concern across the world, with many countries imposing restrictions and taking severe measures to contain its spread. India too needs to be cautious. The initial evidence suggests though the virus is highly transmissible, it is not causing severe disease or death. It is so far causing a milder form of the disease with symptoms such as cold, cough, and mild fever. But we cannot let our guard down. Countries have been finding innovative ways to protect themselves. For example, in Germany, one cannot enter a restaurant until fully vaccinated. People across the world have also realized the importance of following personal protective measures such as wearing masks, maintaining a safe distance, avoiding overcrowded locations, and sanitising their hands regularly. If the past viral outbreaks are anything to go by, we find that a virus dies its natural death provided we keep ourselves safe and be patient till it does. I strongly feel that we can win this battle against this deadly virus if we fight it collectively. So, while the government is doing its job by providing vaccines free of cost to the population, preparing the healthcare infrastructure to deal with a sudden surge in the number of patients, and screening those who can be possibly infected, it is the duty of people to take both the doses of vaccine and follow COVID-appropriate behaviour to avoid rapid spread of the disease.

(The writer is a doctor and Director, AIIMS, Bibinagar. The views expressed are personal.)

# Mayawati and her committed votebank



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

Mayawati is working to stitch a social umbrella that will include Brahmins, Dalits and Muslims. It would be a mistake to dismiss her in this election

Campaign activities have now gained momentum in Uttar Pradesh where elections are slated for early next year. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is visiting the districts and making direct communication with the public. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is inaugurating projects and Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with BJP national president JP Nadda is making forays into different areas. Leaders of different opposition parties have also started working on their strategy to counter the ruling BJP government.

After Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the focus is on Akhilesh Yadav who is also drawing massive crowds wherever he is going. People wait for hours, even till midnight, to get a glimpse of Akhilesh. Even Congress national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi is drawing good crowds enthusing hopes among the party mandarins that Congress may spring a surprise in this election.

In all election surveys, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is being given the number three position after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Samajwadi Party (SP). Congress is being projected as the number four party in every election survey. Despite, BSP being projected as a third position no one can rule out the importance of Mayawati in UP politics. The political pundits believe that rejecting Mayawati in these elections would be a great mistake as she and her party can still prove to be a dark horse in this election.

Recently, many senior leaders deserted BSP, and the majority of them joined Akhilesh's party and the rest, BJP. This has not affected Mayawati as she claimed that those who left BSP had gone alone, thus signifying that the cadre is still with her. Bahujan Samaj Party has a committed a vote bank of over 20 per cent. Mayawati wants Muslim votes in UP. The party has successfully carried out Brahmin Sammelans across the state. She is insisting on maintaining the old base of Dalit and Brahmin votes in BSP. In such a situation, BSP can surprise everyone at the Hustings.

In various election surveys conducted in the state, BJP has been projected to get 41 to 44 percent of the votes, while SP, as per surveys, is likely to get 32 percent votes, followed by BSP (15 percent), Congress (6 percent) and others also six percent. In terms of seats, pollsters have projected that BJP would get 241 to 249 seats and SP's share would be between 130 and 138 seats. The surveys say that the BSP may end up getting between 15 and 19 seats and the Congress between 3 and 7 seats. All the election surveys have given more or less the same projections which show that there would be a direct contest between SP and BJP. The surveys have ignored BSP.

These surveys have not amused Mayawati as she contends that such sur-



WHAT HAS MADE THE BSP LEADERS CONFIDENT IS THE GROUND SUPPORT THAT THE PARTY ENJOYS. THEY HAVE A POINT BECAUSE THE BSP'S VOTE SHARE HAS REMAINED ALMOST THE SAME DESPITE THE BJP WAVE. IN THE 2017 ELECTIONS, THE BSP GOT THE HIGHEST 22.7 PER CENT VOTES AFTER THE BJP, WHEREAS THE SP GOT 21.8 PER CENT VOTES IN THAT ELECTION

(The writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow edition. The views expressed are personal.)



veys do not affect her party. She has also demanded that Election Commission should ban such surveys because she believes that they are being carried out to influence some parties' fortunes. She alleged that a large amount of money exchanged hands during these surveys. According to leaders close to Mayawati, the voters of BSP do not participate in the election surveys and they keep silent and are supposed to throw surprises in the elections. The think tank in BSP believes that UP elections would witness a direct contest between BJP and BSP, not SP as projected by many surveys. The belief in Mayawati's camp is that BSP will give a tough fight to BJP on every seat.

What has made BSP leaders confident is the ground support that the party enjoys. They have a point because BSP's vote share has remained almost the same despite the BJP wave. In the 2017 elections, the BSP got the highest 22.7 per cent votes after BJP, whereas SP got 21.8 percent votes in that election. Similarly, in the Lok Sabha elections held in 2019, BSP had won ten Lok Sabha seats with 19.26 percent votes. Samajwadi Party that on the other hand contested election as an ally of the BSP got 17.96 percent votes and could win only five seats. Even evaluation of the previous results shows that the vote share of BSP in the 2012 assembly elections was slightly above 25 percent. This was 5 percent less than the party's

30 percent votes polled in the 2007 elections when Mayawati had formed the government in UP. This 5 percent shift in vote share in 2012 led SP to get 224 seats and Akhilesh Yadav was sworn in as Chief Minister while BSP's seats came down to 80. In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the party got 27 percent votes and 20 seats. So, in terms of vote share, the BSP has been consistent.

In the case of Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav has stitched caste alliances with small parties. Rumours are that many senior leaders from BJP, including some Cabinet rank ministers, are likely to leave the party and join SP. Akhilesh's alliance with Om Prakash Rajbhar Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), Mahan Dal of Keshav Prasad Maurya, and Apna Dal (K) of Krishna Patel in eastern UP and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) of Jayant Chaudhry in western Uttar Pradesh would pay a rich dividend. There is a belief among SP leaders that despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi withdrawing the contentious farm bills, the Jats will support the RLD which in turn will help the Samajwadi Party.

But, what could prove detrimental for Akhilesh is his relations with his uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav. Despite extending an olive branch and waiting for his 'bhatija' to announce seat-sharing with him, Shivpal was cold-shouldered by Akhilesh. It is no secret that

Akhilesh does not have political acumen that his father Mulayam Singh Yadav has. Akhilesh is not suave as his father and does not have the appeal all over the political spectrum, again like his father. The alliances he had made are not natural alliances and are made more for electoral gain. Take the example of Mahan Dal or Apna Dal, which are basically Kurmi caste-dominated parties. The Kurmis and Yadavs, both intermediate castes, are at loggerheads at the ground level. Similarly in western UP, Jats and Muslims generally are not on the same page. Muslims are SP's vote bank while Jats had voted for BJP and RLD in previous elections. In this election, will the Jats and Muslims vote jointly?

The BJP leaders are seeking votes on the basis of work being done by both the Yogi and Modi governments. They are emphasizing the virtue of 'double engine' government. The Congress is trying to find a toe hold in UP. The focus is on Priyanka Gandhi. The enormous task before her is to build a party structure at the ground level. In this scenario, it is not prudent to ignore BSP. Mayawati is working to stitch a potent social engineering umbrella that will include Brahmins, Dalits and Muslims. She has the confidence that she will be able to bring all dominant caste together. In this scenario, it would be a mistake to dismiss Mayawati in this election.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE CONGRESS IS NOT IN THE COMPETITION. IT IS HERE ONLY FOR ADVERTISEMENT. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT IT GETS ZERO SEATS.  
—SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF  
AKHILESH YADAV



AKHILESH YADAV MIGHT BE AN ASTROLOGER THAT HE FEELS THE CONGRESS WILL WIN ZERO SEATS; WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS.  
—CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY  
PRIYANKA GANDHI

# Menstrual leave: Pathologising gender rights

Is menstrual leave a symbol of care for women or a concealed propaganda to make them look inefficient to be employed in demanding jobs?

Gendering human rights has become passé in India. However, female teachers' demand for of menstrual leave every month in Uttar Pradesh has raised eyebrows. The teachers say poor public transport and those filthy toilets in schools add to their woes during the periods. Last year, food delivery company Zomato announced up to 10 days' paid 'period leave' per year for women and transgenders, kicking off debates about gender equality and ghettoising women.

Suffice to say, umpteen dimensions have been discussed about menstrual or period leave recently. Even a Menstruation Benefits Bill, 2017 is in the pipeline. A menstrual period leave enables the working women the option



KG SOFI UTTAM DINESH CHAKRABORTY

(Sofi Dinesh and Chakraborty are assistant professors at Amrita University, Kochi, and Jaipuria Institute of Management, Lucknow, respectively. The views expressed are personal.)

to take paid or unpaid leave from their workplace if they are unable to attend to their work because of this biological norm. The need for this kind of a policy emanated from the fact that some women undergo a condition called dysmenorrhea or extreme pain during first few days of their menstrual cycle, which also debilitates their productive efficiency.

Such leave is not new in India. Kerala had granted menstrual leave to its female students as early as 1912. A leave policy to help women during their menstrual cycle first came up in Russia in the 19th century but it was later withdrawn in 1927 because it brought with it issues of gender discrimination. In 1947, Japan's labor force brought a



law that provided menstrual leave to its women workforce, but the necessity for such a law is still highly debated in Japan. It is still debated whether menstrual leave is a symbol of care and concern for women at workplace or a concealed propaganda to make women look inefficient to be employed in high demanding jobs.

In India where talking about menstruation is still considered a taboo, will a menstrual leave policy benefit its intended stakeholders, that

is women? Will working women from non-metropolitan areas be able to shed their inhibition and talk to their male bosses menstrual leave? In a country where even the media shies away from advertising napkins, how can policy makers expect women to talk openly about availing menstrual leave at their workplaces? These are pertinent questions that call for paving the way for social and attitudinal change.

It is good to see people, especially employers, opening up to the idea of talking about a taboo topic like periods and extending empathy to women employees in the menstrual age. Showing empathy to women employees who genuinely undergo physical discomfort during first two days

of their menstrual cycle can be considered as an act of humanitarian concern and definitely, it has nothing to do with feminism. It is also highly subjective since women differ in their physical discomfort during their menstrual cycle with few of them undergoing extreme mental and physical agony, and a lucky few do not have any obvious physical discomfort at all. At the same time, providing period leaves only widens the gender gap and also deepens the level of discrimination against the fairer gender at workplace.

Women in Indian culture have always been portrayed as a symbol of endless patience and courage. Homemakers are a poignant testimony to the above statement. They in particular have

never let their menstrual cycle come in the way of their duties towards their families. Empathy from family members during their menstrual phase is the only support they seek at such times. However, the idea of offering period leaves to women is not a solution to the myriad problems that women encounter at their workplaces. In that respect, men too have their share of psychological and physiological worries that need similar empathetic considerations.

If corporates really want to show that they care for their women employees, they should stop bringing policies that promote gender discrimination and gender bias. Alternatively, corporates can make their employees more

empathetic towards women issues by making them aware of the mental and physical stress that haunt women during their menstrual cycle and motivate them to be more compassionate towards women during their difficult times. This calls for bringing up a culture where subjects like periods are not treated as a taboo and women feel uninhibited to speak about it in their workplace. This is a highly subjective issue, each woman needs a different treatment during this time, and period leave is not an umbrella solution and not mandated too. It should be dealt in an organised and organic manner so that the real sense of women empowerment can be translated into reality in Indian society.



Jio-BP,  
Mahindra Group  
sign MoU for  
EV, low-carbon  
solution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A joint venture of Reliance Industries Ltd and BP of the UK on Wednesday said it has signed an agreement with the Mahindra Group to explore EV and low-carbon solutions, including battery swapping technology options, for electric 3-wheelers. Besides exploring creation of EV products and services, the non-binding MoU signed by Reliance BP Mobility Limited (RBML) and Mahindra Group would look for identifying synergies in low-carbon and conventional fuels, the company said in a statement.

"The MoU also covers evaluating charging solutions by Jio-bp for Mahindra vehicles including electric 3 and 4 wheelers, quadricycles and e-SCV (Small Commercial Vehicles - sub 4 ton)," it said.

# Total 9,849 URLs blocked in 2020: Chandrasekhar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government directed blocking of 9,849 accounts/URLs during 2020, up from 3,635 accounts/URLs in the previous year, under a specific provision of the Information Technology Act, 2000, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

Under the provision of section 69A of the Act, the government directed blocking of 471, 500, 633 and 1,385 accounts/URLs in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

This number stood at 2,799 in 2018; 3,635 in 2019 and 9,849 in 2020, he added.

Uniform resource locator (URL) refers to the address of a unique resource on the internet.

"All the accounts/URLs



that are blocked by the government are based on the requests, received from the concerned designated Nodal Officers of Ministries/States, on specified grounds and following the due process, specified in the IT

(Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009, notified under section 69A of the IT Act," he said. The ministry follows due process in all such directions, Chandrasekhar added.

In response to another query, Chandrasekhar said the government is well aware of the risk and danger posed by growing phenomena of misuse of various media platform and the user harms caused as a consequence.

"...keeping with the mission of having an open, safe and trusted and accountable internet, Government has published, the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the IT Act. These rules have appropriate provisions to deal with such user harms/menace," he said.

He further stated that law enforcement agencies at the Centre and states take appropriate legal action as per provisions of law, and when appropriate, request intermediaries including social media platforms like Google and Youtube to remove content violative of any law.

## ‘Cyber security, frauds main concerns with digital currency’

PNS ■ MUMBAI

As the RBI moves ahead for the launch of the central bank digital currency (CBDC), Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday marked out cyber security and digital frauds as the main challenges in the new system.

Deputy Governor T Rabi Sankar said there are two types of CBDCs - wholesale and retail - and a lot of work has happened in the former while the latter was termed as a "complicated" aspect which will take time.

The RBI had earlier this year announced that it has started work on the CBDC, in line with other major central banks of the world which are looking at a fiat digital currency. According to a report, the RBI is looking to start with pilot exercises on the same front by early next year.

"Main concern comes from the angle of cybersecurity and possibility of digital frauds. We have to be very careful about that," Das told reporters in the post-policy



interaction.

Das recalled that a few years ago, there were concerns with fake currency and similar aspects can play out with the launch of the CBDC, which need to be prevented by putting up the necessary firewalls and a robust security architecture.

Sankar explained that the CBDC will be an electronic version of the current paper-based currency and also

underlined the risks around digital frauds and cyber risks as "major challenges".

"There has been a lot of work which has happened in the wholesale account-based, while retail is complicated and will take time. As and when whichever is ready first, we will release it for a pilot," he added.

Earlier, Das had hinted about a soft launch for the CBDC by the end of December 2021.

## MONEY MATTERS

### IndiGo signs agreement with CSIR-IIP to make SAF

IndiGo has signed an agreement with Dehradun-based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP) to manufacture and deploy sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) globally, the airline said on Wednesday. As per global airlines body IATA, SAF is defined as "fuel that has the potential to generate lower carbon emissions than conventional kerosene on a life cycle basis". In the statement, Ronojoy Dutta, chief executive officer of IndiGo, said, "We have partnered with CSIR-IIP to ensure that we are working towards controlling emissions, and in the process, building supply chains for manufacturing and deploying sustainable aviation fuel in India and globally in the foreseeable future." The carrier said it desired to be an anchor partner to such institutes and oil refining companies in the future to address the core issue of carbon emissions, and take a lead in demonstrating its commitment towards sustainable and responsible growth.

## Sensex zooms 1,016 pts; Nifty reclaims 17,400-mark

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Extending its winning run to the second session, equity benchmark Sensex skyrocketed 1,016 points on Wednesday, boosted by RBI's accommodative stance as well as easing concerns over the Omicron variant.

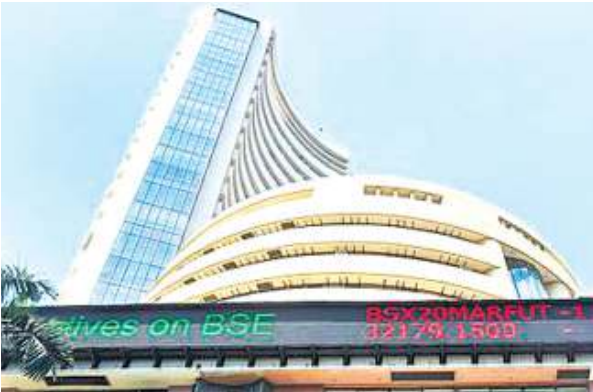
Bulls were enthused by a positive sentiment in global markets amid reports that the new coronavirus strain is unlikely to be more severe than the Delta variant, removing market concern regarding its economic impact.

The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 1,016.03 points or 1.76 per cent to finish at 58,649.68. Similarly, the NSE Nifty rallied 293.05 points or 1.71 per cent to 17,469.75.

Bajaj Finance was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 4 per cent, followed by Maruti, SBI, Bajaj Finserv, Sun Pharma and Asian Paints.

On the other hand, Kotak Bank and PowerGrid were the laggards.

"Positive global cues, coupled with the continuation of an accommodative policy



stance of the RBI by holding rates fired up the bulls even as the central bank decided to enhance the variable reverse repo rate auctions to rebalance liquidity," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

The bullish undertone was reflected in the sectoral indices and advance-declines as the market breadth was healthy with small and midcaps too participating in the rally, he noted.

After the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained status quo on the interest rate and decided to continue with its

accommodative stance, most of the rate sensitive stocks ended in the green.

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to leave repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent for the ninth time in a row as well as continue with its accommodative stance. Further, RBI retained its growth projection at 9.5 per cent for the current fiscal.

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

Stock exchanges in Europe were, however, largely negative in mid-session deals.

## UP, Delhi, K'taka leading states in EV sales: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Karnataka have emerged as top three states in terms of registration of electric vehicles in India, the government said on Wednesday.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said that 870,141 electric vehicles have been registered in India.

Uttar Pradesh (255,700) has the highest registered electric vehicles, followed by Delhi (125,347) and Karnataka (72,544) come in that order.

The fourth and fifth spots are grabbed by Bihar (58,014) and Maharashtra (52,506).

Gadkari said the Ministry of

Heavy Industries formulated a scheme namely Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME India) Scheme in 2015 to promote adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles in the country with an aim to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. At present, Phase-II of FAME India scheme is being implemented for a period of five years with effect from April 1, 2019 with a total budgetary support of Rs 10,000 crore, he added.

GST on electric vehicles has been reduced from 12 per cent to 5 per cent; GST on chargers/ charging stations for electric vehicles has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.



## Over 3.54 lakh tonnes of e-waste was collected in FY21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 3.54 lakh tonnes of e-waste was collected and processed in FY21, up from 2.24 lakh tonnes in the previous financial year, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

Based on annual reports submitted by 35 State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) to CPCB, 22,700.33 tonnes of e-waste was collected and processed in FY17, 69,413.619 tonnes in FY19, 2,24,041 tonnes in FY20 and 3,54,540.7 tonnes in FY21, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said in a written reply to a query in the Lok Sabha.

"Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) is the policy-maker for management of e-waste in the country, and has notified the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016.



GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Proclamation Tender Notice

NIT No. 50/EE-6/CRZ/GHMC/2021-22

01: 09-12-2021

Name of the Work: Partition Work, Estimate Cost (Rs in lakhs): 5.80, Start date, Last date & Time for receipt of bids: From 09-12-2021 10:00:00 AM To 13-12-2021 10:00:00 PM, Name & Address Officer Cell No: Smt. M.V. Radhika, Executive Engineer, Div-6, CRZ, GHMC, Hyderabad. Ph. No. 8008102048. For further details can be seen at [www.bidsprocurement.gov.in](http://www.bidsprocurement.gov.in). Note: 1% EMD should be obtained after the date of tender notice.

B.O. No. : 15677-PP/CL/ADVT/12021-22

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CR-6, CHARMANUR ZONE, GHMC



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT

FORM - C NOTIFICATION

(Under Section-11 of the Act where 10 A Exemption is given)

(See rule 6/12)

Gazette No: GHMC-235

No. A/195/MALA/2021

Dated: 24-11-2021

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, that a total of 1136.79 Sq. Yds land is required in the Bahadurpura Village, Bahadurpura Mandal, Hyderabad District to facilitate for Proposed for properties affected under Construction of Retaining Wall And Culvert from Bahadurpura Kamela To Bahadurpura Junction.

Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Bahadurpura Village, Bahadurpura Mandal, Hyderabad District land measuring more or less 1136.79 Sq. Yds of Standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition.

Sl.No.	Premises No.	Type of Title	Name of the Owner	Extent in Sq.Yds. as requested	Boundaries	Trees	Strata				
1	2	3	4	5	North	South	East	West	Survey	Area	Remarks
1	19-2-227/26/1	Ordnance Complex	-	7.92	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Open Land	-	-	54.24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	19-2-227/20/B/1	-	-	6.38	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	19-2-227/12/A3, Self Complex	-	-	9.50	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	19-2-227/12/C/1, Shaded oil storage parts	-	-	12.80	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Open Land	-	-	29.99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	19-2-227/4/A, Proposed transport Agencies	-	-	57.48	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Open Land	-	-	29.99	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	Open Land	-	-	2.52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	19-2-227/4/A/10, Bombay Shringar Centre	-	-	79.18	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	Open Land	-	-	2.52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	19-2-227/4, Sri Sharada Timber mart	-	-	60.85	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	19-2-227/13, Jahangir Khan commercial complex	-	-	62.21	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	Flora Hotel	-	-	144.72	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Flora Hotel	-	-	85.97	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Reed	-	-	62.81	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	19-4-418/1 to 19-4-418/9, Under Construction	-	-	122.40	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	Open land	-	-	54.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	Open land	-	-	5.86	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	19-4-418/1/17	-	-	25.12	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Open land	-	-	8.86	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22	19-4-418/1/17/1 A	-	-	26.53	SHED (SEMI PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	19-4-418/1/17/1 B	-	-	26.72	RCC BUILDING (PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
24	Machi Ground	-	-	166.67	SHED (SEMI PUCCA)	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL				1136.79							

This Notification is made under the provisions of Section-11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act no.30/2013), as amended by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Collector, & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Special Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer i.e., Special Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition, GHMC, Hyderabad and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in Section -12 of the said Act.

Under Section 11 (4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e., sale, purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such Notification without prior approval of the Special Collector.

Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested/affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under Section 15 of the Act before Special Collector/ Authorized officer.

Sd/- Spl.Dy Collector (FAC), LA, GHMC, Hyderabad.

Sd/- Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad.

DIPR No.897/LA/PP/ADVT/AGENCY/2021-22

## World shares mostly higher as virus fears ease

PNS ■ BANGKOK

Stocks advanced Wednesday in Asia after another broad rally on Wall Street as investors wagered that the new variant of the COVID-19 virus won't pose a big threat to the economy.

Shares rose in Paris, London, Tokyo and Shanghai but fell in Frankfurt as Germany's parliament elected Olaf Scholz as the country's ninth post-World War II chancellor, opening a new era for the European Union's largest economy after Angela Merkel's 16-year tenure.

Scholz's government is taking office with high hopes of modernising Germany and



combating climate change but faces the immediate challenge of handling the country's toughest phase yet of the coronavirus pandemic.

Germany's DAX fell 0.3% to

15,766.51, while the CAC 40 in Paris was flat at 7,065.10. Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 0.4% to 7,365.25.

The future for the Dow industrials and the S&P 500

were both up 0.2%.

Japan downgraded its growth estimate for the last quarter to minus 3.6% from an earlier reported contraction of 3.0%. The change reflected weaker consumer and public demand and trade.

Economists are forecasting a rebound for the world's third largest economy in the current quarter, thanks to recovering activity after coronavirus case-limits plummeted.

Parliament is expected to approve a record stimulus package of 56 trillion yen (\$490 billion), including cash handouts and aid to ailing businesses, to lift the economy out of doldrums worsened by the coronavirus pandemic.

## Meta to skill 1 crore small businesses, 2.5 lakh creators

PNS ■ GURUGRAM

Meta (formerly Facebook) on Wednesday unveiled a new office in Delhi-NCR - one of its biggest facilities in Asia - and announced plans of skilling one crore small businesses and 2,50,000 creators in the country over the next three years.

Spanning 1.3 lakh sq ft, this is Meta's first standalone office facility in Asia. The premises also house the Centre for Fueling India's New Economy (CFINE) that will train small businesses and creators.

The new Meta office is designed with an open floor plan and an unfinished look, similar to the headquarters in Menlo Park in the US. The new office in the city will house various teams from Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp.

Meta said this is meant to inspire collaboration and the consciously exposed concrete pillars and wires on the roof are meant to reflect its startup



roots. The company has unveiled its first office in the country in Hyderabad in 2010.

India's not just the largest country for Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, it's also where in many ways, the future of the internet is being shaped. We see this office as an opportunity for us to build a space that does not just house our largest team in the country, but will also be a space that deeply engages with the world

outside," Facebook India (Meta) Vice President and Managing Director Ajit Mohan told reporters here.

He added that CFINE - a multifunctional centre - will bring together all its products and efforts and its mission will be to use technology and tools being built by the company to fuel growth for creators, small businesses and entrepreneurs in the country.

"Over the next three years,

we will attempt to train and skill 1 crore small businesses and 2,50,000 creators through the centre. We realise this is no small task, but we recognise that we have an obligation to rise to the unique opportunity presented by the forces of technology transforming India," Mohan said.

He further said: "This is an opportunity in line with the openness of India's internet and the fundamental democratic values that drive institutions that we have benefited from".

Earlier this year, the government announced rules that require large social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer in the country.

They will also be required to have a physical contact address in India published on its website or mobile app, or both. The

## Retail inflation expected to ease to 5 pc next fiscal

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Retail inflation is likely to ease to around 5 per cent next fiscal on the back of government measures to ease supplies, reduction in fuel prices and prospects of good crops, the Reserve Bank of India said on Wednesday. For the current fiscal year to be ending on March 31, 2022, retail inflation is expected to be around 5.3 per cent, the RBI said. The reduction of excise duty and VAT on petrol and diesel will bring about a durable reduction in inflation by way of direct effects as well as indirect

effects operating through fuel and transportation costs, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said while announcing the bi-monthly policy decision. "The inflation trajectory is likely to be in line with our earlier projections, and price pressures may persist in the immediate term. Vegetable prices are expected to see a seasonal correction with winter arrivals in view of bright prospects for the rabi crop. Cost-push pressures continue to impinge on core inflation, though their pass-through may remain muted due to the slack in the economy," Das said.

## Alembic gets USFDA nod for generic hypertension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Alembic Pharmaceuticals on Wednesday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market Selexipag tablets, used to treat high blood pressure, in the American market. The company said it has received tentative approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) for its abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) for Selexipag tablets in strengths of 200 mcg, 400 mcg, 600 mcg, 800 mcg, 1,400 mcg, and 1,600 mcg.

Alembic's product is the generic equivalent to the reference listed drug product (RLD) Upratri.



## Where there's love, there's a Hyderabad!

The pandemic must have impacted our meetings in the office or our enjoyable outings but it didn't stop us from building new connections online. In a very recent survey, it was revealed that Hyderabad city has emerged to be the chattiest city of the country when it comes to dating. Where there is love, how can we Hyderabadis stay behind? While millions of emojis were used in the app's bios, the side eye saw a whopping 40 per cent increase in usage. Members showed a mixed bag of optimism throughout the year.

Home-grown dating app called TrulyMadly says that blossoming dating apps are just the new beginnings for the tech community. There are reports stating how Gen Z enjoyed both virtual meet-cutes and post-vax IRL dates. A significant number of Indians took to video dating on Tinder where Hyderabad reigned supreme as the chattiest video dating city, followed closely by Chennai and Bengaluru! "The pandemic further fuelled the need for having a serious, long-term partner because you were confined to your home. So, we have actually seen that people, who earlier had some inhibitions about joining the platform, shunned them and came on board. They need a safe place to meet new people. We're seeing that, even today, when things have opened up, people prefer to have first dates on Zoom. Dating apps are not an app for hook-ups or one-night stands where you have to meet a stranger tonight. Those were the apps that were negatively impacted. Users anyway meet offline for the first time after some chemistry has been established after talking over the digital medium. Now, that has become default behaviour," explains the founder of a dating

app. On the other hand, Bumble, in its latest survey, has revealed that post the second wave of the pandemic, the youth of the nation is coming out with a new sense of clarity and confidence in taking control of their dating lives. People are expressing their thoughts. The survey also stated that one in five people living in big cities like Hyderabad want to get married and settle down. "You can be a highly intelligent person with a good job but the strate-

be seen sometimes on such dating apps. Don't allow a dating app to be a mode of extorting money from you," warns Anil, the founder of End Now Foundation, Hyderabad. VJ Bani has also confessed that she is all about big gestures and is a huge



Contrary to what breaking norms of what Bollywood conventionally shows, Bani has made the first move in a relationship.

She is very open to the idea of women making the first move because why not! Bumble these days is all about helping single Indians navigate conversations and challenges around dating post the pandemic in 2021 as it facilitates unfiltered, meaningful conversations around dating truths in India. Popular dating app WOO also users to display a badge to state that they are vaccinated & the users gave a positive response to this due to pandemic related issues. It's now a trend all over. The dating apps also jumped in to give offers like free access to premium users on the basis of super likes, vaxxed or boosts. The dating app QuackQuack has come out with a survey about the online dating trends of 2021 on how maximum individuals preferred pairing up with those belonging to a different location altogether. Samarpita Samaddar from Bumble said about the data in the latest survey, "If the last two years have taught us anything, it's that people are being more mindful of what they are looking for in a partner and more intentional about dating at their own time and pace. As we head into the new year, there is a sense of hope and excitement around dating, both virtual and IRL, as India lifts restrictions. With over 70 percent of single Indians looking to 'reset' their dating lives, 2022 looks like a big year for romance."



gies a fraudster on a dating app will use are very sophisticated. Beware that there are many pitfalls to online dating too. From fake profiles, selfish motives, psychopaths or people only looking for sexual relationships can

romantic in real life, "I'd rather do too much than do nothing at all". Sharing a real-life instance, she says, "Once I was just finishing up a shoot and wrapped, I booked myself a ticket and literally flew 42 hours to spend like 36 hours and I just wanted to go see him and ask him how is he doing?". Bani mentions that she would never date somebody who doesn't lift because it's got so much to do with lifestyle, it impacts the way you eat, what time you sleep and if you are with somebody who doesn't understand this, it becomes a really big issue.

## 4 tips to protect your online biz from fraud

Holidays for many online businesses are a pleasant time where they can spend summing up their achievements of the year, planning long-term prospects, and gifting employees, clients, and loved ones. Unfortunately, during the end of December online fraud reaches its peak. Online businesses have to keep a subtle balance in order to provide their customers with the opportunity to use financial products online via web and mobile applications and at the same time take efficient risk prevention measures.

Here is a to-do list to protect your online business from holiday fraud.

- Seasonally scheduled scammers do not have sophisticated technical skills and many companies manage to stop them at the stage of standard initial online verification of the application. Companies should apply a more conservative approach connected with new applications, evaluation policies, and rules, which will save business from possible financial losses during this period.
- Online companies should pay attention to the applications with high-risk markers — attempts of device or internet connection manipulation, as well as user's behaviour. Such measures will allow filtering out of applications coming from devices with emulators, randomizers and will be able to determine the network infrastructure of professional fraudsters. In the case of digital lending, it will help to reduce the share of excessively active borrowers who usually keep trying to apply for a large number of loans often manipulating application data (for example identity theft i.e. using application information of genuine people sometimes even known to them).
- Online companies should approach the valuation of frequency characteristics in a more conservative way. Different frequency characteristics are also a very important parameter for risk assessment in the holiday season, for example, the number of risky applications from the same device or IP address, for a limited period of time or simply for the entire observation period. Usually, the risk increases along with the frequency, since this may indicate the risk of credit shopping or the risk of fraud, especially if such activity is supplemented by manipulation with other data.
- Many companies may fear the risk of profit decline filtering "good" customers along with online scammers. However, in this case, a more precise adjustment of the financial product for the end-user will be of great use. By giving special offers and taking into account the needs of regular customers, the company can mitigate the situation and reduce losses caused by online fraud.

It is imperative to understand that fraudsters do not treat every industry equally. They often pick and choose an industry to focus on based on the time of year or what businesses are seeing more transactional activity. At times, fraud attempts are simply conducted randomly to target a vulnerable business that may be seeing a higher number of transactions. (The author, Manish Thakwani, is the Head of Business Development (India) at JuicyScore, a company that develops anti-fraud and risk management solutions, presents)

## TROUSSEAU FOR VERY BRIDE

Finding the dream wedding dress to get hitched in isn't easy. Luckily this wedding season, brides in India got the chance to Say Yes To The Dress as Discovery+ brings iconic international franchise to the country. From stunning silhouettes to unbelievable designs, get ready to witness the whims and fancies of a brides-to-be as they see their dream outfits coming to life. Recently, Discovery+ launched the trailer of Say Yes To The Dress India that oozes fashion, drama, entertainment, and emotions whilst celebrating and showcasing the various cultures and traditions of India.

This eight-part series uncovers the fascinating tales of brides from diverse cultures with different tastes who are in search of the most important dress they will ever wear. While some envision their dream attire to be extravagant and bold, others take the traditional route, thereby showcasing every bride's unique style. Different wedding functions and events will be adding to the diversity of the bridal looks whilst highlighting their cultural influence on the outfits. No matter how varied the brides are, one thing that is common for all of them, is an extensive mix of colours, latest trends, designs and fabrics — all a true reflection of Indian Bridal fashion. Making the experience further dreamy, Discovery+ collaborated with India's most celebrated fashion designers, including, Neeta Lulla, Abhinav Mishra, Varun Bahl, Natasha Dalal, Sandeep Khosla, Zara Umrigar, Shubika, Angadi Saree, Monica Jade, Seema Gujral, Sanjay Garg, Kar Leo, Ashdeen, Anju Modi, Dilnaz, Heena Kochhar and Rahul Mishra. Not only will they help the brides choose the outfit of their dreams for different occasions but also curate it for them. The excitement doesn't end there, the series will be hosted by Divyak D'Souza, who has been in the fashion industry, as a consultant, fashion editor, bridal stylist and has styled Bollywood celebrities like Farhan Akhtar, Chitrangada Singh, Raveen Tandon and many more. With his background Divyak is a pro at helping brides with every aspect of shopping for a wedding dress, from researching designers to dealing with overbearing entourages and what not.

As a prelude to the show launch, discovery+ launched the wedding song of the year *Sajna* composed by Badshah and Payal Dev coupled with the catchy choreography done by Punit J Pathak. It crossed 12 Million views on YouTube in merely 5 days. Moreover, it has been trending across social media ruling radio waves as well with 2.5 Million audio streams. On making her

OTT debut for her Bridal wear fashion line, designer Natasha Dalal says, "Designing has always been a passion, and there couldn't have been a better opportunity to make my OTT debut. Say Yes To The Dress is a highly appreciated show around the globe and being a part of it is an amazing experience! Creating a dream outfit for a bride is such an honour for me. Every bride is unique and watching her eyes sparkle when she sees her dream outfit unfold in front of her makes up for all the effort that goes into the process of bringing it to life. I'm excited to be part of this show as it manages to give everyone a glimpse of how a bride feels just before saying Yes To The Dress!"

"I have been following this reality show for a while and it's great that such a format is coming to India. Dressing brides for their special day and curating their dream ensemble has always been the best form of experience. Whilst the journey of curating an outfit for the bride is thrilling, it's a matter of great responsibility, as we are helping someone create their most special memory. They trust the designer with all their heart to translate their wishes and desires. However, the most challenging part is to convince and break through the stereotypical expectations of bridal trousseau but at the end the result is always so emotionally beautiful. A wonderful team creates magic and ease of a happy shoot and working with Discovery+ was a great experience. All in all, it was fun, exciting and engaging to document the bridal designing process," shares designer Neeta Lulla.

"I feel that when one is connected with nature he/she is connected to oneself! That's how I felt being a part of this franchise, it made me feel so connected to myself and my surroundings. One challenge that I faced while helping the brides is the colour palette, brides usually tend to get confused while picking a colour on their big day. Having said that, every bride is different and so is their perspective. However, the overall experience was fantastic and I feel really grateful to be a part of such a hit international franchise and I would love to work with them in future too," says designer Abhinav Mishra.

"I am thrilled to be a part of this legacy show which is finally coming to India. Having been in the fashion industry and bridal styling space for years now, this show is right up my alley. Styling real brides is all about managing expectations and respecting the emotions that go into picking the dress of her dreams. Understanding the bride's thought process and helping her find her ideal bridal look is going to be challenging yet exciting," shares Divyak D'Souza, show host.

It won't just be plain-sailing and there may be some tears too, for these women who are searching for the most priceless dress they'll ever wear.



## Indian medalists who brought glory in 2021

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The Olympics and Paralympics come with a lot of pomp in the country! One moment of showdown telecasted on the national television and the next moment you are the most popular and widely-known sportsperson of the year. The 2021 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics 2021 also brought in some similar kinds of famous waves. Not just the sportsperson soars on popularity but swells every local's chest with ample pride too. The last Olympics also gave us some winning competitors who became 'desh ki jaan'. Let us get to know them again now.

### ● MIRABAI CHANU

India returned with their first Olympic medal in weightlifting in two decades at the Tokyo Games, but five months later there appeared another medal at this year's Tokyo Olympics. Mirabai Chanu ended India's 21-year wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics by clinching a silver medal in the 49kg category to open the country's account! While picking firewood with her siblings, she used to lift a lot more than what her elder brother could. She didn't know about weightlifting at the time, but her mother saw the talent.

### ● NEERAJ CHOPRA

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra made history on August 7, 2021, by winning India's first-ever gold medal in athletics at the Tokyo Olympics. With a best throw of 87.58 metres, the 23-year-old took first place in the men's javelin throw final. Apart from being a gold-capped Olympian, he belongs to a family largely involved in the agrarian sector based out of the Khandra village near Panipat. Neeraj has also commenced an ambitious outreach program that is organized with the view of a newer, healthier and fitter India. It is being conducted to connect India's ace athletes with school children!

### ● AVANI LEKHARA

Even Avani Lekhara became a household name after her win.

The Jaipur girl, who was rendered a paraplegic following a car crash when she was 11, became the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic gold. August 30, 2021, is another date she is unlikely to forget.

Lekhara, who turned 20 in November, bagged gold in the 10 mt air rifle standing event in the SH1 category at the Tokyo Paralympics. She followed it with a bronze in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 event, making her the first Indian woman to win multiple medals at the Paralympics.

### ● KASHISH LAKRA

The Indian contingent at the 2021 Asian Youth Paralympic Games secured three more medals as they continued their impressive display at the event. The Tokyo Paralympian Kashish Lakra secured a gold medal for India in the club throw while Laxit bagged a bronze medal in the javelin throw. No less than 750 athletes from as many as 30 nations participated. The participants were all aged less

than 23. There are in total nine sports in which the athletes can participate. Despite tough competition, Kashish kept her cool and displayed her mettle. The young athlete had very recently bagged the honor of being the youngest athlete to qualify for the Tokyo Paralympic Games 2020 and this victory will certainly be another prized feather in her hat.

### ● BHAVINA PATEL

Bhavina Patel arrived at the Ahmedabad airport, she received a grand welcome with drum rolls. It was the first time in her career that she had received such a huge welcome. She finally had her moment in the sun after she clinched historic silver in the women's single table tennis, class 4, at the Tokyo Paralympic Games. She became the first-ever Indian paddler to win a medal at the Paralympics. She said her singular goal has always been to go there and give it her best shot. She was also among the 35 athletes who received the prestigious Arjuna Award.







● Mohammed Abrar Hussain Khan



● Mohammad Mahmood Ali



● Jaber Patel and B. B. Patil

## A SPECIAL NIGHT

The Wedding Ceremony of Mohammed Khamaruddin's daughter with Mohammed Abrar Hussain Khan, son of Alhaj Mohammed Shabbir Hussain Khan, went on in a grand way at King's Kohinoor Convention in Mehdiapatnam. Mohammed Mahmood Ali, the home Minister, B.B Patil, MP, Farooq Hussain, MLC and Jaber Patel, the President of India Arab Friendship Foundation were all the special guests at the wedding.



● Nilofer



● Zarah



● Rukhsar



● Farooq Hussain and Ateeq Siddiqui



● Prathima



● Karuna Gopal



● Lohitha



● Dinesh Jain



● Surya

Photos by SV Chary

PARTY

## ALL THAT GLITTERS

PMJ Jewels adds sparkle to Hyderabad with a new showroom in Kompally! Karuna Gopal of the Foundation of Futuristic Cities, Kiran Shinde and Vincent Braganza of PMJ jewels were at the inauguration.

## TECH TALES

OdinSchool, a part of GreyCampus, announced the launch of their educational initiatives to bridge the gap of skilled data science professionals in India. The Women-In-Tech Scholarship aims to help women overcome financial barriers and build strong careers in Data Science. Considering that women constitute less than 20% of the workforce in Data Science in India, OdinSchool has designated INR 1 Crore to encourage aspiring women to break into this exciting domain. The top eligible candidates receive up to 100% scholarships. Vijay Pasupulati, CEO and Co-founder of GreyCampus said, "The Academy and the Women-In-Tech scholarships are a huge opportunity for all candidates who are looking to get ahead in their careers."

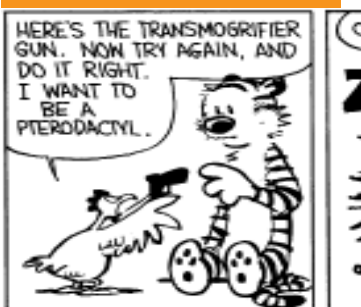


## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



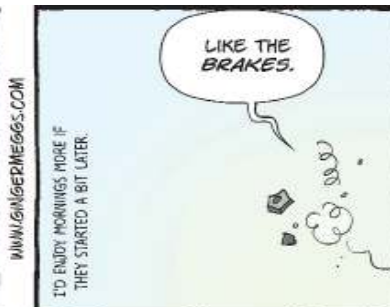
### GARFIELD



### NANCY



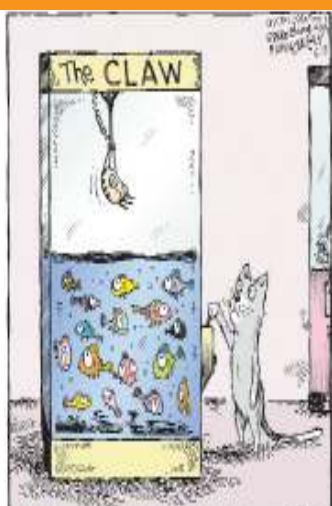
### GINGER MEGGS



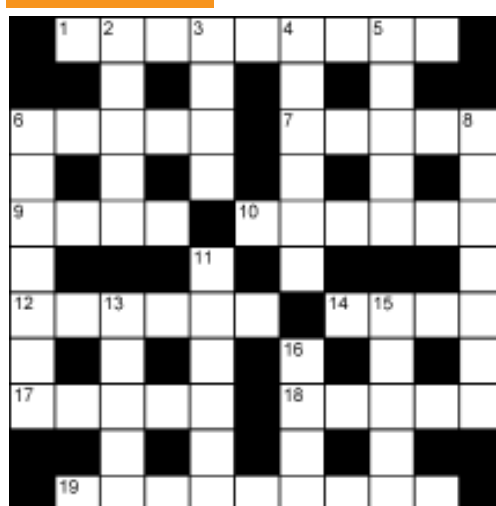
### REALITY CHECK



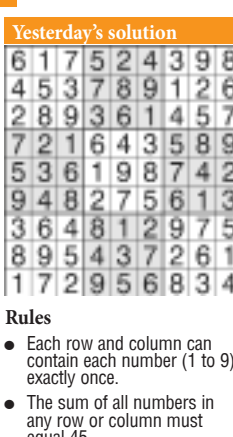
### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



**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 pain in your mouth
- Speed competitions
- Intoxicated
- Passenger's payment
- Plan
- Do again
- Bathroom powder
- Rub out
- Woolly animal
- A huge seabird

- A bone where your leg bends
- Take a photo with this
- A gem from an oyster
- Parts of countries or places
- Consumer

### DOWN

- Happen
- Try out
- Drug-dependent person
- Residence
- Umpire





# Vasishta Simha on turning passion into career

L. NIHARIKA

Vasishta N. Simha, best known for playing negative characters in south cinema, became a noted name in Tollywood after appearing in *Narappa* and *KGF*. The actor is now back with another flick titled *Nayeem Diaries*. It's not just acting, but also the singing prowess that is taking him to greater heights in the cinema world.

In a recent conversation with the media, the actor opened up about his journey from wanting to be a singer to taking up theatre, to becoming an assistant director and now a known actor in south cinema.

"I was born in Hasanali, but my childhood was always on the move. My mother is a government teacher, so I got to visit many places," he said.

All that Simha wanted in life was to learn music from veteran music director and film composer Hamsalekha and work for him. Acting happened accidentally to him while he was doing his graduation from National College, Basavangudi.

About his acting journey, he said, "While I was doing my studies, a guy from my college challenged us to show real talent in a college fest, it somehow provoked me. So I took up the narration part in a skit we performed. Surprisingly, the play won six awards. That intrigued me to explore theatre and arts. Immediately, I enrolled myself in theatre workshops, where I was recognised for my work. I even explored still photography, track maker, AD. Very soon, I bagged two Kannada projects — *Arya's Love* and *Hubbali Hudagaru*. Later, I made my acting debut. An overwhelming moment in my life was when my father patted my back after he watched my film."

Simha says Hamsalekha plays a Dronacharya role in his life. As someone who used to adore him since childhood, it was a blessing for Simha to work with Hamsalekha. Sharing his fan moment with Hamsalekha, he giggled and said, "I was once waiting

for hours just to get the glimpse of Hamsalekha *garu*. I was cheering for him at an event when he was performing. I got beaten up by the bodyguards for trespassing on the property. But I was fortunate enough to meet him and touch his feet."

He further continued, "I visited my cousin's place for a summer vacation, where I saw Hamsalekha *garu's* summer camp hoarding. I registered myself immediately. After a month, he called me. I was extremely nervous to meet him as I was worshipping him like a God since I was a kid. It was an awestruck moment of my life. After our first meeting, *guru garu* said he would teach me music. Without a second thought, I grabbed the golden opportunity to learn music and work from my idol. That's how my singing career started in Bengaluru. I didn't aim so high about my music career, all I wanted was to see my name on an album record or cassette."

Speaking about his latest project, *Nayeem Diaries*, for which the actor underwent prosthetics, he said, "Prior to this film, I played an antagonist in some films, but when I heard the narration of this film, I felt a bit agitated at how spine-chilling the script was. When the story was narrated, I could sense intense emotions involved in his character. Playing my character felt like a feast. I had to put on weight and experience prosthetics for the first time."

The actor who's won an IIFA, SIIMA, and Filmfare award spoke about his philosophy and said, "I believe in an ideology that our little actions pave our path. As an actor, my job is to portray a character. If you do an anti-social film, controversy becomes a hazard. My definition of cinema — it's always been a mirror. A medium

which portrays real stories and spreads awareness, that's how I see it."

On the work front, the actor is excited about his upcoming releases — *Odela Railway Station* and *KGF 2*. He also hinted that he'll be playing a cop role in one of his upcoming projects, which is a murder mystery and environment-based film.



## Stylish fight planned for *Bholaa Shankar*

Director Meher Ramesh announced on Wednesday that the unit of *Bholaa Shankar* with actors Chiranjeevi and Tamannaah as the leads had just completed shooting a striking fight sequence.

Sources close to the unit claim that the film's production is moving at a rapid pace, having begun with a pooja at Annapurna Studios in Hyderabad (November 11).

Meher Ramesh, the film's director, confirmed the news via social media. He said that the unit had not just completed a Stylish Fight Sequence but also had shot a grand song on a large set built for the number.

The director stated that they had also started the second schedule. Meher Ramesh stated, "MEGA Glowing star Chiranjeevi is Meher Ramesh's Mega Massive action entertainer Bholaa Shankar. Completed a Stylish Fight Sequence and a Grand Song in a Large set! KICKSTARTED the 2nd schedule already! It is believed to be a remake Tamil blockbuster *Vedalam*, which featured Ajith and Shruti Haasan in the lead roles. Sources say that the script was modified by the makers of *Bholaa Shankar* to appeal to the Telugu audience."

## Thank You will release in theatres only

The makers of Akkineni Naga Chaitanya and Raashi Khanna-starrer *Thank You* released a new poster on Wednesday. Along with the poster, came an interesting announcement.

Directed by Vikram Kumar, the film, a romantic comedy-drama, is in its final stages of production.

Social media is abuzz with speculations that the film will have a direct OTT release. Putting an end to these rumours, the film's production house Sri Venkateswara Creations backed by Dil Raju, clarified that *Thank You* will release in theatres only.

"*Thank You* movie is now in the final stages of production. We have made this film with immense dedication, and we believe it is an experience to be witnessed only on the big screen. *Thank You* movie will release in theatres just when the time is right," reads the announcement poster.

However, the release date of the movie is not yet revealed. Apart from Raashi Khanna, *Thank You* will also see Avika Gor and Malavika Nair playing some key roles. BVS Ravi has penned dialogues, while Navin Nooli is the editor of the film. SS Thaman will be composing music for this flick.

## Sohel, Ananya team up for *Boot Cut Balaraju*

Actor Soheli who rose to fame after appearing in *Bigg Boss season 4*, is back to entertain his fans in a different way. The actor has signed a film in which he will be seen playing the male lead. Debutante Sree Koneti will be directing the movie, which is tipped to be a wholesome family entertainer. Lucky Media will produce the movie in association with Global Films. Ananya Nagalla who's last seen in Pawan Kalyan's *Vakeel Saab* is the leading lady. The film has been titled *Boot Cut Balaraju*. While Dil Raju sounded the clapboard, Miryala Ravinder Reddy switched on the camera. Anil Ravipudi directed the first shot. Bheems Ceciroleo renders soundtracks and Gokul Bharath cranks the camera. Prawin Pudi is the editor and Vithal Kosanam is the art director. Bekkem Babita is the co-producer and Nagarjun Vadde (Arjun) is the executive producer. Yesteryear actress Indrajya, Vennela Kishore, Brahmaji, Anand Chakrapani, Jhansi, *Jabardast* Rohini, and *Master* Ram Tejas will be seen playing some crucial roles in the film.



## Allu Arjun gifts gold to *Pushpa's* technicians

To be a popular actor is one thing and then to remain in news for all the good deeds is another!

Allu Arjun fondly known as 'Bunny' is all about giving, and giving it all so wholeheartedly. In a recently confirmed news tweeted by Manobala Vijayabalan, a movie trade analyst, it is being said that Allu Arjun has gifted 10 gm of gold to the top technicians of *Pushpa* and honored them with this golden gift for their hard work and efforts for the film! Big news it is!

After keeping fans waiting, the makers of the upcoming Telugu film finally released the trailer on Monday night.

The final cut of the trailer was almost perfect as it is a solid blend of everything that the makers promised the audience since the film went into production. Going ahead and making it to the new for becoming the second most liked trailer yet, it was certain of the big-hearted star to gift his hard-working team with such a considerate gift of all times. Meanwhile, Bunny hasn't disappointed the light boys and other crew members who did their bit for the film to shoot in the remotest locations in the forest region. Allu Arjun has spent around another Rs 12 lakh cash towards these set workers, light men, and set boys.



Producer Dil Raju launched the first lyrical song of *Badmash Gallaki Bumper Offer* on Wednesday. The film has Indrasena, Santosh Raj, Navina Reddy, Marin Philip, and Pragya Nayan playing the main roles. Directed by Ravi Chawli, the film is a suspense comedy-drama. According to the makers of the film, the film will have a twist every 10 minutes.



## Kohli removed from ODI captaincy as Rohit becomes new white-ball captain

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli was on Wednesday removed as India's ODI captain with the national selection committee making

Rohit Sharma the sole white-ball leader of the team till the 2023 50-over World Cup.

In another significant development, Ajinkya Rahane was removed from Test vice-captaincy, a position which was also given to Rohit.

The BCCI announced the 18-member squad for the three Test series which doesn't include all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, spinner Axar Patel, and opener Shubman Gill due to various injuries.

Hanuma Vihari has made a comeback in the main squad while Ishant

Sharma has been able to retain his place despite poor form.

Squad: Virat Kohli (Capt), Rohit Sharma (vc),

KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Shreyas Iyer, Hanuma Vihari, Rishabh Pant(wk), Wriddhiman Saha(wk), R Ashwin, Jayant Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Mohd. Shami, Umesh Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Shardul Thakur, Md. Siraj.

Standby Players: Navdeep Saini, Saurabh Kumar, Deepak Chahar, Arzan Nagwaswalla.



AP ■ BRISBANE

England captain Joe Root won the toss, opted to bat and lost opener Rory Burns on the very first delivery of the Ashes series, a late swinging yorker from Australia pace-man Mitchell Starc.

It set the tone for the opening two sessions Wednesday, which were more like open season for Australia's pace bowling pack.

Pat Cummins took the last three wickets and finished with a five-wicket haul in his first innings as Australia captain. The England innings finished with ominous thunder and lightning starting to the west and south of the Gabba.

Heavy rain and bad light combined to prevent any further play on Day 1.

The overcast conditions rapidly grew more gloomy for the visitors after Starc's early strike, with Josh Hazlewood



dismissing Dawid Malan (6) and Root (0) as England slipped to 11-3 in the sixth over.

When Cummins took his first wicket — star allrounder Ben Stokes (5) caught low at

third slip by Marnus Labuschagne four balls after the first drinks break — England was reeling at 29-4.

Opener Haseeb Hameed defied the attack and helped

England to 59-4 at lunch, but was out for 25 early in the second session when he edged a Cummins' delivery that moved away off the seam and was caught by Steve Smith at second

slip. Ollie Pope and Jos Buttler settled the innings, combining in a 50-run stand to staunch the flow of wickets before both were out in their 30s.

Buttler played an expansive drive for his fifth boundary to reach 39 but was out next ball from Starc, edging behind to Alex Carey as England slumped to 112-6. England added six runs before Pope (35) top-edged an attempted hook and was caught by Hazlewood diving forward near the fine-leg boundary, giving allrounder Cameron Green his first test wicket.

Cummins had Ollie Robinson (0) caught behind and Mark Wood (8) caught at short-leg and the stadium lights were turned on before he had Chris Woakes (21) caught in the deep by Hazlewood to finish off the innings.

Cummins returned 5-38 from 13.1 overs, with Starc and Hazlewood taking two wickets apiece.

PTI ■ MOHALI

### HIMMAT SCORES HUNDRED IN COMFORTABLE DELHI VICTORY OVER JHARKHAND

Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan failed to trouble the scorers but talented Himmat Singh anchored the chasewith a fine century as Delhi easily beat Jharkhand by six wickets in a group C league game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy on Wednesday.

Batting first, Jharkhand scored 263 for 8 with skipper Virat Singh contributing a patient 79 and Kaushal Singh chipping in with 69.

Delhi skipper Pradeep Sangwan scalped three for 46.

In reply, opener Dhawan, who is due to go to South Africa for the ODI series, was snapped by Anukul Roy off Varun Aaron's bowling.

But Dhruv Shorey (64 off 82 balls) and Himmat (113 not out 124 balls) added 127 for the second wicket inside 25 overs to bring things under control.

While Shorey hit seven boundaries, Himmat, considered one of the

## States hustle for Vijay Hazare Cup

best talents to have come out of Delhi stable, had 11 fours and a six to his credit. Delhi did wobble a bit at 183 for 4 but Himmat had company from Khistiz Sharma (43 not out off 39 balls) as their unbroken stand of 81 ensured that they reached home with as many as three overs to spare.

Thakur's five-for sets up seven-wicket win for Vidarbha

Young fast bowler Yash Thakur returned with a career-best five-wicket haul as Vidarbha notched up a comprehensive seven-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in an Elite group A match of the Vijay Hazare One-Day Trophy here on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old from Kolkata snapped five wickets for 53, while Akshay Wakhare (2/51) and Darshan Nalkande (2/37) also chipped in with two wickets each as Vidarbha bundled out HP for 213 in 46 overs at the Dadoji Konddev stadium.

Skipper Rishi Dhawan was the top-scorer for HP with a 50-ball 61.

Vidarbha then returned to overhaul the victory target, reaching 216 for three in just 39.5 overs, riding on half-centuries from Atharva Taide (64) and Yash Rathod (76 not out). Akshay Wadkar also contributed with a 59-ball unbeaten 44.

Gurvinder Singh (2/39) and Mayank Dagar (1/48) were the only bowlers to get wickets for Himachal Pradesh. In another match at Brabourne Stadium, Gujarat produced a clinical bowling display to dismiss Jammu and Kashmir for 171 and then returned to achieve the total in 36.5 overs losing five wickets.

### SHAHRUKH SHINES AS TN OUTCLASSES MUMBAI; BIG WIN FOR KARNATAKA

Big-hitting batter M Shahrulkh Khan starred with a blistering 66 off 35 balls as Tamil Nadu started their

campaign in the Vijay Hazare Trophy One-Day cricket tournament with a superb 54-run win over defending champions Mumbai in an Elite Group B match here on Wednesday.

Sent in to bat by Mumbai skipper Shams Mulani, Tamil Nadu got off to a quick start with newbie B Sai Sudharsan (24 off 24 balls, 4 fours) and captain N Jagadeesan (20) laying the groundwork for a big score.

The dismissal of the two openers in the space of four runs to experienced pacer Dhawal Kulkarni (3 for 45 from 10 overs) saw comeback-men M S Washington Sundar and B Indrajith come together for the third wicket.

The duo added 75 runs with Washington, who is playing after an injury setback, striking three boundaries during his 58-ball 34.

He looked good before being dismissed caught and bowled by Tushar Deshpande (2/57).

Dinesh Karthik, back in the side after missing the Mushtaq Ali tournament, looked to get a move-on and made 32.

The entry of Shahrulkh, who smashed a last ball six to star in Tamil Nadu's triumph in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament, changed the complexion of the game.

### TRIPURA POSTS CRUSHING 210-RUN WIN OVER ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Former Gujarat batter Samit Gohel hammered 135 (128 balls, 10 fours, five sixes) to star in Tripura's comprehensive 210-run win over Arunachal Pradesh in a Vijay Hazare Trophy Plate Group match here on Wednesday.

Batting first, Tripura amassed 336 for 4 in 50 overs with Gohel, captain K B Pawan (64) and Rajat Dey (44 not out) adding substance to the total.

Gohel and Pawan added 133 runs for the third wicket in quick time to put Tripura on the road to a big total. After their big stand, Dey and M a n i s a n k a r Murasingh (34 not out, 11 balls, 2X4, 3X6) added 41 runs in just 15 deliveries to swell the total.

Chasing 337 for a win, Arunachal were never in the hunt and kept losing wickets at regular intervals to be bundled out for 126 in the 40th over.

Former Tamil Nadu spinner Rahil Shah did the bulk of the damage, scalping four wickets conceding just 16 run in 10 overs while Ajay Sarkar took 3 for 15.

In another match, captain Uday Kaul smashed an unbeaten 121 to help Mizoram romp to a seven-wicket win over Bihar.



## Sajid's bowling leads Pakistan past Bangladesh in 2nd test

AP ■ DHAKA

Offspinner Sajid Khan ended with a match haul of 12-128 as Pakistan broke Bangladesh's stubborn resistance to secure an innings and eight-run victory in the rain-hit second and final test on Wednesday.

Bangladesh was forced to follow-on after being wrapped up for 87 in the first innings and was bowled out for 205.

With the light gradually fading, Bangladesh's last-wicket pair of Tajul Islam and Ebadot Hossain resisted for 34 balls to raise a hope of salvaging the test.

But Sajid broke the partnership, dismissing Tajul leg-before to help Pakistan win the game.

Sajid claimed 4-86, the fourth-best individual total by a Pakistani

bowler in an innings, to follow up his first-innings 8-42.

Pakistan declared its first innings at 300-4 after only 63.2 overs were possible in the first three days because of rain and bad light.

The third day was entirely washed out and only 6.2 overs were possible on Day 2.

Resuming on 76-7, Bangladesh was quickly dismissed for 87 and Babar Azam forced the follow-on.

Fast bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi (2-31) and Hasan Ali (2-37) then got into act with the new ball, leaving Bangladesh 25-4. But Bangladesh

raised a bit hope as Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das combined for 73 runs in 25 overs before Sajid rattled the stump of Liton for 45.

Shakib Al Hasan joined Mushfiqur Rahim and added 49 runs before the latter was run out for 48 after trying for a risky single. Shakib and Mehidy Hasan then frustrated the P a k i s t a n i attack and Babar came to bowl, getting the break-through with his offspin as Mehidy went for sweep.



## Indian hockey player tests positive, match against Korea cancelled

PTI ■ DONGHAE (SOUTH KOREA)

A member of the Indian women's hockey team participating in the Asian Champions Trophy here has tested positive for COVID-19, resulting in the cancellation of its match against hosts and defending champions Korea on Wednesday.

Even though the Asian Hockey Federation is yet to come out with a statement, a Hockey India source confirmed that one player has tested positive. The AHF statement is also expected to clear the air on India's participation in the remainder of the tournament.

"Yes, a player has tested positive so today's game against Korea has been cancelled. The AHF will come out with further statement on the matter," the source told PTI.

## Australia and UK join US in diplomatic boycott of Beijing Games

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Wednesday Australia will join the US in a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Games over human rights concerns.

Morrison said it should come as no surprise that Australian officials would boycott the event after the nation's relationship with China had broken down in recent years.

"I'm doing it because it's in Australia's national interest," Morrison said. "It's the right thing to do." He said Australian athletes would still be able to compete.

As well as citing human rights abuses, Morrison said China had been very critical of Australia's efforts to have



a strong defense force in the region "particularly in relation, most recently, to our decision to acquire nuclear-powered submarines."

He said his government was very happy to talk to China about their differ-

ences. "There's been no obstacle to that occurring on our side, but the Chinese government has consistently not accepted those opportunities for us to meet," Morrison said.

Rights groups have

pushed for a full-blown boycott of the games, accusing China of rights abuses against ethnic minorities. The US and Australian decisions fall short of those calls but come at an exceptionally turbulent time for international relations and have been met with a barrage of criticism from China.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Wednesday no UK government minister will attend the Beijing Winter Olympics, calling it "effectively" a diplomatic boycott.

Johnson was asked in the House of Commons whether the UK will join the United States, Australia and Lithuania in a diplomatic boycott of the Winter Games in February over Beijing's human rights record.

## Barty wins 2nd WTA Player of Year; Krejickova gets 2 honors

AP ■ ST PETERSBURG

Ash Barty's Wimbledon title and hold on the No. 1 ranking helped her win WTA Player of the Year for the second time in voting results announced.

Barbora Krejickova was selected as Most Improved Player and shared the Doubles Team of the Year award with Katerina Siniakova on Tuesday. Krejickova was the

first woman since 2000 to win both the singles and doubles championships at the French Open.

Emma Raducanu was picked as Newcomer of the Year after winning the U.S. Open at age 18 and becoming the first player to go from qualifying rounds all the way to a Grand Slam title.

Carla Suárez Navarro is the Comeback Player of the Year after returning from



Hodgkin's Lymphoma to play on tour and represent Spain in the Billie Jean King Cup finals.

Barty also was the WTA Player of the Year in 2019. This season, she led the tour with five titles, including her second Grand Slam championship at the All England Club.

The 25-year-old Australian also finished at No. 1 in the year-end rankings for the third season in a row. Krejickova had never won

a singles title before taking three in 2021, including at Roland Garros, and she rose from No. 65 at the end of 2020 to a high of No. 3 in the singles rankings.

Krejickova and Siniakova were recognized as the Doubles Team of the Year for the second time, after 2018. They won the French Open, the WTA Finals and an Olympic gold medal together this year.

## Aruna aims for gold at Istanbul meet

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A 10-member Indian Taekwondo contingent left on Wednesday for the World Para Taekwondo Championship (G-14) in Istanbul with Aruna Tanwar being the best bet for a podium finish.

The World Para Taekwondo Championship is being organised by the Turkish Taekwondo Federation under the Aegis of World Taekwondo (WT) starting Wednesday till December 13.

"My experience at the Paralympics was crucial for the

upcoming World championships, I thank India Taekwondo for being so proactive and making sure I could participate," said Aruna Tanwar, World No. 4 in the W-49 category.

"It's sad that I had to retire with an injury during the Paralympics but I'm confident of winning a medal for India in the upcoming championships.

The preparations have been great and the camps organized by our federation have set up the entire Indian contingent for positive results," Tanwar said.

## After red cards, late goals, Atletico advances to CL last 16

AP ■ PORTO

Three red cards, on-field brawls, countless chances and a flurry of late goals. A wild, win-or-bust match in the Champions League between Porto and Atletico Madrid had it all.

In the end, it was Atletico celebrating a place in the last 16 of Europe's top club competition with a 3-1 win on Tuesday, emerging from a three-way fight for qualification in the final round of group games.

On a night when Ajax striker Sebastian Haller became an unlikely history-maker, Real Madrid finished top of its group, and Kylian Mbappe and Lionel Messi ran amok for Paris Saint-Germain, much of the focus on the next-to-last night of group play was on the Group B finale as three teams vied to be runner-up to Liverpool. Porto started the night in second place, a point ahead of Atletico

and AC Milan, which hosted Liverpool.

Milan wound up losing 2-1, meaning the winner of the all-Iberian match at the Estadio do Dragao would advance. It turned ugly, unsurprisingly given the stakes, with Porto having two players red-carded after

Atletico had Yannick Carrasco sent off for swinging his arm around an opponent's neck.

Atletico was outplayed for much of the game but was opportunistic in front of goal, with Antoine Griezmann scoring the 56th-minute opener at a corner and both Angel Correa and Rodrigo Paul adding breakaway goals after the 90th minute.

It sparked wild celebrations on the touchline by Atletico's famously passionate coach, Diego Simeone, and striker Luis Suarez, who was forced off injured after 13 minutes. Porto earned the consolation of a third-place finish and a spot



in the Europa League knockout playoffs.

With its victory, Liverpool became the first English team to win all six of its group games in a single Champions League campaign.

Messi and Mbappe had some fun in PSG's group closer. It was anything but fun for Manchester City.

City manager Pep Guardiola selected a strong lineup for the 2-1 loss at Leipzig despite his team being guaranteed as the Group A winner and in the middle of a busy domestic schedule.

Haller's first season in the Champions League has been a historic one.

By converting an eighth-minute penalty for Ajax in its 4-2 win over Sporting, the Ivory Coast striker became only the second player — after Cristiano Ronaldo in 2017-18 — to score in all six matches of a single group stage. He finished with 10 goals in total.

## India win 41 medals at Asian Youth Para Games

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian para-athletes on Wednesday returned from Bahrain after claiming a whopping 41 medals in their best-ever show at the Asian Youth Para Games.

The Indian contingent won 12 gold, 15 silver, and 14 bronze medals at the continental Para youth games held in Riffa city.

India won most medals in athletics with 22 players finishing at the podium -- eight won gold, six bagged silver, and eight secured bronze.

The Indian para shuttlers returned claimed 15 medals with Tokyo Paralympian Palak Kohli,

Sanjana Kumari, and Hardik Makkar claiming three medals each.

In swimming, India won three medals, including one silver and two bronze, while the country also secured a silver in powerlifting.

Over 700 athletes from around 30 countries participated in the continental youth showpiece event that took place from December 2 to 6.

The athletes competed across nine sports - Para athletics, Para badminton, boccia, goalball, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para taekwondo, and wheelchair basketball.

