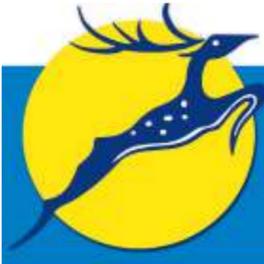


ANALYSIS 7
CAN DOCTORAL DEGREES
MAKE BETTER TEACHERS?

MONEY 8
SENSEX TANKS 764 PTS,
NIFTY SINKS BELOW 17,200

SPORTS 11
MAYANK MAKES STATEMENT
WITH 100 AS INDIA SCORE 221/4

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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KETIKA WANTS TO
SHOW DIVERSITY
IN HER ACTING

Page 12

ONLY FULLY-VACCINATED ALLOWED IN KARNATAKA MALLS, THEATRES

People won't be allowed inside malls and theatres in Karnataka unless they are fully vaccinated. Karnataka today issued a fresh set of guidelines to combat the spread of Omicron in the state a day after the Centre confirmed the detection of India's first cases of the new variant from the state. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai chaired a high-level meeting Friday with officials over the new variant that has triggered a global alarm. Karnataka Revenue Secretary R Ashok, who attended the meeting, said that no one will be allowed to enter malls and cinema halls in the state unless fully vaccinated.

ACTOR KANGANA'S CAR STOPPED IN PUNJAB BY FARMERS SEEKING APOLOGY

Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut's car was stopped in Punjab's Kiratpur Sahib on Friday by protesters demanding an apology for her statements against farmers who had been campaigning against the centre's controversial farm laws that were finally repealed this week. An ardent supporter of the ruling BJP, Ms Ranaut had thrown her weight behind the laws, frequently calling the thousands of farmers camped out on the borders of Delhi for over a year, terrorists, Khalistanis and "anti-social elements".

OMICRON PATIENT 'ESCAPED', K'TAKA TRACKING 10 MISSING PASSENGERS

One of the two persons found positive for Omicron in Karnataka "escaped" after taking a Covid negative certificate from a private lab, the state government said today. The state is also trying to track down 10 people who reportedly went missing from the airport. "By tonight all 10 people who have reportedly gone missing should be traced and they should be tested. Travelers will not be allowed to leave the airport until their report is out," Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashok said after a top level meeting on Omicron. A 66-year-old South African national found to be Omicron-infected "fied", the minister said.

PAKISTAN AGREES TO LET INDIA TRANSPORT WHEAT, DRUGS TO AFGHANISTAN

Pakistan on Friday agreed to let India transport 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat and life-saving drugs as humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan on Afghan trucks through the Wagah border crossing, after a row erupted between the two countries over the modalities of transportation. On Thursday, India said that discussions with Pakistan are going on to finalise the modalities for the transportation of its aid to Afghanistan through Pakistani soil and insisted that no conditionalities should be attached for sending the humanitarian assistance.

North Coastal AP on high alert as Cyclone Jawad intensifies

■ NDRF, SDRF teams deployed in vulnerable areas; many shifted to rehab centres

VKL GAYATRI
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Due to the severe threat from the cyclonic storm Jawad, the district administrations of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam have deployed men and materials to face any emergencies, particularly in the seashore villages and their adjoining areas.

In order to avoid human loss and to minimise damage to property, the government has deployed NDRF, SDRF teams at all the vulnerable areas in the region. The government has already deployed three senior IAS officers to monitor relief and rehabilitation operations in the three districts. The government declared holidays for all educational institutions on Friday and Saturday.

As predicted by the IMD, winds over 100 kmph would sweep across the region at the time of the landfall, so a large number of residents living in thatched houses and sheds have been evacuated to the cyclone relief centres. The officials have also kept ready food, drinking water and medicines at the centres. In view of the nightmarish experiences during the recent floods and downpours in the Rayalaseema region, the government has directed the district administrations to have a strict vigil on the inundated areas and to lift all the people and animals to safe places till normalcy is restored.



ENC braces up to face Jawad

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With Cyclone Jawad moving north-westwards and likely to cross the coasts of north Andhra and south Odisha, the Indian Navy is closely monitoring the movement of the cyclonic storm. The headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command (ENC) and Naval Officers-in-Charge in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha have carried out preparatory activities to combat the effects of Cyclone 'Jawad' and are in constant liaison with the State administrations for rendering assistance if required.

As part of the preparedness, 13 flood relief teams (FRT) and four diving teams are kept on standby to be deployed for assisting in

the rescue and relief operations. Three FRTs and two diving teams have been dispatched to Odisha from Visakhapatnam to augment the existing resources.

Four ships are on standby with Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), diving and medical teams to render assistance in the most affected areas along the Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coasts. Naval aircraft are kept ready at Naval Air Stations, INS Dega in Visakhapatnam and INS Rajali near Chennai to undertake aerial surveys of the most affected areas, casualty evacuation, and airdrop of relief material as required, the ENC said on Friday.

Heavy rains forecast

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The cyclonic storm Jawad over the west central Bay of Bengal is moving north-north-westwards at a speed of 25 kmph and lay centred at about 300 km south-southeast of Visakhapatnam and 470 km south-southeast of Gopalpur of Odisha.

Jawad is likely to move north-north-westwards, intensify further and reach the west-central Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts by December 4 morning.

According to the estimations, the system is likely to recurve north-northeastwards and move along the Odisha coast reaching Puri on December 5 at noon.

The low pressure has concentrated into a depression and later developed as deep depression on Friday.



AP govt employees upset as talks end in stalemate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has once again disappointed the employees' unions without discussing the crucial 11th Pay Revision Committee (PRC) in detail during consultations with representatives of the government staff on Friday. With the meeting ending inconclusively, the employees' unions, led by APJAC and APJAC Amaravati, decided to continue their protests if the government fails to fulfil their demand for announcement and implementation of the PRC report.

The Secretary Level Consultation Committee-Andhra Pradesh Civil Services Joint Staff Council meeting was held at the CM's Conference Hall, at the Secretariat.

The Consultation Committee informed the JSC that as per the Chief Minister's assurance on PRC in Tirupati, the PRC report will be disclosed in 10 days. During the meeting, the PRC and other pending issues of employees were discussed extensively and various suggestions and advice were taken from the unions. The meeting was presided over by

PRC report in 10 days: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has assured the employees that the Pay Revision Committee (PRC) will be announced in 10 days. Some State government employees met the Chief Minister during his inspection of the flood-affected areas of Saraswati Nagar in Tirupati and urged him to announce the report of the Pay Revision Commission and implement the same.

Jaganmohan Reddy told them that the PRC report was ready and assured them that it would be announced within 10 days. This

has raised some hopes in the employees, who have announced that they would take up an agitation from December 10, if there was no response from the government.

Meanwhile, the State government called for a meeting of the Joint Staff Council at the Secretariat in Amaravati on Friday afternoon to discuss the demands put forth by the employees.

A committee of senior IAS officers held negotiations with the representatives of the employees' unions.

Damaged Tirumala 2nd ghat road to be restored soon

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The second ghat road leading to the shrine of Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala that was closed to vehicular traffic after rain-triggered landslides earlier this month-end, a temple official said.

With a view to fixing the issue of landslides besides repair works on the route, TTD Board chairman YV Subba Reddy held a meeting with experts, the official told PTI.

It would take at least 25 days to complete the repair work, he said.



Ensure there is no human loss: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy held a video conference with district collectors of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Vishakhapatnam, East and West Godavari districts regarding the situation in the wake of Jawad Cyclone and discussed the precautionary measures to be taken.

During the review meeting held at the camp office here on Friday soon after his return from a two-day tour of rain-affected districts, the Chief Minister directed the officials to be cautious to ensure there is no human loss and added to keep Rs 10 crore available for each district for relief measures and other works.

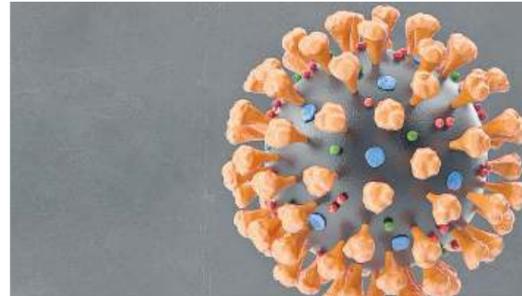
Omicron severity likely to be low, says Union health ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has urged people to 'vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate' in response to widespread and growing concern after India reported its first cases of the Omicron Covid strain.

The government also said "the severity of the disease is anticipated to be low" because of the fast pace of vaccination and a measure of natural immunity acquired after exposure to the Delta variant.

In a brief statement released Friday, the government said "... given its (the Omicron strain) characteristics it is likely to spread to more countries, including India", underlining expectations that more cases of the new strain will be detected in the country over the next few days and weeks. "Omicron cases are increasingly



being reported from countries outside of South Africa and, given its characteristics, (the variant) is likely to spread to more countries, including India... (but) given the fast pace of vaccination in India, and

high exposure to Delta (as evidenced by high seropositivity), the severity of the disease is anticipated to be low," the government's FAQ said.

Consider booster shot for 40 above: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A consortium of 28 laboratories to monitor genomic variations in coronavirus has recommended the centre to consider COVID-19 booster dose for those who are 40 years and older amid the threat of Omicron, a new variant of concern. India has reported two cases of Omicron infection.

"Vaccination of all remaining unvaccinated at-risk people and consideration of a booster dose for those 40 years of age and over, first targeting the most high-risk and high-exposure may be considered, since low levels of neutralising antibodies from current vaccines are unlikely to be sufficient to neutralise Omicron, although risk of severe disease is still likely to be reduced," INSCOG said in its weekly bulletin.

CM visits flood-hit Chittoor, Nellore districts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Friday visited the flood-affected villages in various Assembly constituencies of Chittoor and Nellore districts.

On the second day of his tour, the Chief Minister started from Padmavati guest house to Krishna Nagar, Saraswati Nagar of Tirupati Municipal Corporation and inspected the damaged roads and houses and further interacted with the flood victims. As people brought their concerns to the notice of the Chief Minister, he immediately directed the officials to resolve their grievances at the earliest. Also, the Chief Minister instructed the District Collector to take special measures to create



employment opportunities for the youth who lost their livelihood during floods.

The Chief Minister personally

visited Vijayakumari of Saraswati Nagar, who was severely injured in a road accident and is undergoing treatment, upon her request to

'Delta' plan should work for omicron too: WHO

PNS ■ MANILA

Measures used to counter the delta variant should remain the foundation for fighting the coronavirus pandemic, even in the face of the new omicron version of the virus, World Health Organisation officials said Friday, while acknowledging that the travel restrictions imposed by some countries may buy time.

While about three dozen countries worldwide have reported omicron infections, including India on Thursday, the numbers so far are small outside of South Africa, which is facing a rapid rise in COVID-19 cases and where the new variant may be

becoming dominant. Still, much remains unclear about omicron, including whether it is more contagious, as some health authorities suspect, whether it makes people more seriously ill, or whether it can evade vaccine protection.

Border control can delay the virus coming in and buy time. But every country and every community must prepare for new surges in cases," Dr. Takeshi Kasai, the WHO regional director for the Western Pacific, told reporters Friday during a virtual news conference from the Philippines.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Kartik & Krishna Paksha
Tithi : Amavasya 13:12
Nakshatram : Anuradha 10:47
Rahukalam : 9:21 am - 10:43 am
Yamagandam : 1:29 pm - 2:51 pm
Varjyam : 3:41 pm - 5:05 pm
Gulika : 6:35 am - 7:58 am
Amritakalam : 12:05 am - 1:29 am
Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:44 am - 12:28 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: PARTLY CLOUDY
Temp: 29/21
Humidity: 68%
Sunrise: 06:22 AM
Sunset: 05:34 PM
Updated: DECEMBER 03, 2021 5:00 PM

Medical camps to be set up in cyclone-prone areas

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas (Nani) has instructed the officials of Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, East Godavari and West Godavari districts to set up medical camps in the rehabilitation centres in view of the shifting of people from low-lying areas due to the Jawad cyclone. The minister alerted DMHOs to work in coordination with other departments.

Minister Nani conducted a teleconference with DMHOs and other officials of North Andhra and duo Godavari districts on Friday and reviewed the situation. The minister said that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had instructed him to take precautionary measures in



the wake of the cyclone for the protection of people's lives. He instructed that the authorities should take precautionary measures without following the CM's order without any delay to the people in North Andhra and duo Godavari districts where strong winds

have blown in the south-eastern Bay of Bengal. He said authorities need to act in coordination when evacuating people from the hinterland to safer areas.

Minister Nani directed the medical health department officials to set up medical

camps at the rehabilitation centers. He asked the officials that medical teams should be available and provide medical services in three shifts and directed to senior medical health officials to constantly monitor the management of medical camps.

Minister Alla Nani directed the DMHOs of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, East Godavari, and West Godavari districts, which were most affected by the cyclone, to remain vigilant.

The meteorological department issued a warning of heavy to very heavy rains in the North Andhra and duo Godavari districts and advised people in the hinterland to move to safer areas as there is a risk of power poles and trees collapsing.

ENC braces up to face Jawad...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, the wreath-laying ceremony on the occasion of Navy Day, which was scheduled to be held at the 1971 Victory at Sea War Memorial on Saturday, has been cancelled in view of Cyclone Jawad. Because of the still risky COVID situation, the Operational Demonstration on RK Beach, Vizag Navy Marathon and opening of naval ships to visitors have also been cancelled.

CM visits flood-hit Chittoor, Nellore...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister lauded the efforts of people who had displayed unparalleled bravery in the floods of the Swarnamukhi River which was overflowing with heavy rains and also felicitated Police Constable Prasad and honoured three others - Srinivas Reddy, Madhu, and Reddappa, who played a vital role in flood relief operations.

During his tour, the employees in Saraswati Nagar took the PRC issue to the notice of the Chief Minister, to which he assured that an announcement will be made in the coming 10 days as the process is getting completed.

Later, the Chief Minister headed to Nellore district from Renigunta Airport and visited the flood-affected areas in the district. Firstly, he inspected the damaged R&B road at Devarapalem and the Nellore-Mulumudi-Tatiparthi road in the Nellore Rural Zone. In this regard, the District Collector informed that temporary road restoration works are being carried out at a cost of Rs 18.5 lakh and Rs 50 lakh would be required for permanent repairs. Further, he inspected the damaged Penna river embankment and crops at Jonnawada.

north coastal AP...

Continued from Page 1

Collectors, Special Officers and other senior officials visited and checked all the water reservoirs and deployed senior engineering officials to monitor water levels in the reservoirs 24/7. Sandbags have been shifted to all the vulnerable tanks to arrest the breaches. Special medical teams with all the emergency medicines have also been deployed at the cyclone relief centres.

The officials and employees, who are on leave, have been directed to report immediately. Medical, police, revenue, agriculture, APEPDC and water resources and all other

line department officials have been assigned special cyclone assignment considering each vulnerable village as one unit.

As there is an alert on the possible damage to power lines, electric poles, communication systems and also uprooting of big trees, the NDRF and SDRF teams are ready with power hacksaws to clear the roadways during the system crossing the shore. With the advanced alerts both from the government and IMD, the officials have alerted the people in seashore villages through the public addressing system and started evacuations to the nearest relief centres.

Ensure there is...

Continued from Page 1

He said the special officers should be vigilant and ensure no negligence in relief measures. He instructed the officials to maintain quality in food, drinking water and cleanliness in toilets in relief camps. He said to keep NDRF and SDRF teams ready and added to keep additional teams on standby. He instructed the officials to alert people in low-lying areas and evacuate them if necessary and added to review the current situation of Ponds, Canals and Reservoirs. The Chief Minister instructed the officials to coordinate with irrigation department officials and take up emergency repair works in case of leaks to water bodies.

Chief Secretary Dr Sameer Sharma informed the Chief Minister that they are ready to face any situation in North Andhra and Godavari districts. He said 11 NDRF teams, 6 Coast Guard teams, 10 Marine Police teams, 5 SDRF teams and 18 Fire Service teams have already been deployed in North Andhra districts. In addition to them,

115 JCBs, another 115 tippers were also made available. 232 water tankers, 295 diesel generators, 46,322 metric tons of rice, 1,018 metric tons of pulses, 41,032 liters of cooking oil and 391 ton of sugar were sent to the respective districts. The meteorological department has forecasted heavy rains in coastal areas of the state on the afternoon of May 5.

Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharitha, Agriculture Special Chief Secretary Poonam Malakondaiah, Law and Order Additional Director General A Ravi Shankar, Health Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal, Roads and Buildings Principal Secretary MT Krishna Babu, Revenue Principal Secretary V Usha Rani, Energy Secretary Nagulapalli Srikanth, Finance Secretary N Gulzar, Panchayat Raj Commissioner Kona Sashidar, Civil Supplies Commissioner Girija Shankar, Disaster Management Secretary K Kannababu, Housing Corporation MD Narayana Barath Gupta and other officials were present in the meeting. Chief Secretary Dr Sameer Sharma attended the meeting from AP Bhavan, New Delhi through VC.

Heavy rains...

Continued from Page 1

Under the influence of the Jawad cyclone, heavy to very heavy rains have been predicted in the north coastal districts particularly in the coastal belt. Squally winds of over 100 kmph along and off the coastal belt of Andhra Pradesh started on December 4 afternoon. The sea condition has already been very rough and it will continue till December 5.

The IMD alerted the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha that major damages to the thatched houses, huts and possible damage to vulnerable structures.

AP govt employees...

Continued from Page 1

The representatives of 15 recognised unions of the employees, AP NGO, AP Secretariat Employees Union, State Teachers Federation of AP, AP Teachers Federation, AP United Teachers Federation, AP Revenue Services Association, AP Government Employees Association, AP Treasury Services Association, Presidents and General Secretaries of Gazetted Officers Association, AP Livestock Service Association, AP State Typists and Stenographers Association attended the joint staff council meeting.

AP JAC Amaravati president Boparaju Venkateswarlu, speaking to the media persons after the Joint Staff Council meeting, said that the employees were unaware of the statement made by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on the PRC. He said that the PRC was not the only demand of the employees and there were other pending issues. The gov-

ernment had only called for discussions with the committee of Secretaries on PRC-related issues.

Boparaju made it clear that only if the PRC report was disclosed there could be discussions on it. None of the employees belonging to the unions met the CM in Tirupati, he said.

He further said that their proposed agitation would be called off only if the government agreed to the demands of the employees failing which they would proceed with their plans.

AP JAC president Bandi Srinivas Rao said that as the PRC report was not disclosed by the officials, the meeting concluded without any result once again. A representation with 71 demands of the employees on various issues was handed over to the officials. He said that the meeting was nothing but just a waste of time by the officials. They would not go back on their strike plan until the government gives a clarity on their demands, he added.

APGEA State general secre-

tary G Askara Rao said that nothing new had happened as the PRC report was not disclosed by the. The officials repeatedly asked the union leaders to give their suggestions on various demands of the employees. He pointed out that the government did not follow the protocol of sending the circular to the union leaders to attend the meeting. The officials just sent a two-line WhatsApp message to the union leaders asking them to attend the Joint Staff Council meeting on Friday.

The representatives of various recognised unions K Shivareddy, Venkatramreddy, N Prasad, Ch Joseph Sudhir Babu, M Raghunath Reddy, Kulasekhara, N Venkateswarlu, KSS Prasad, Ch Krishnamurthy, KR Surya Narayana, G Ravikumar, D Ramana Reddy, TV Phani Raju, K Bhavana Rushi, KR Suryanarayana, GM Ramesh, L Suryanarayana, K Ramakrishna, G Mohan Gopala Krishna and others participated.



PRC report...

Continued from Page 1

The government might indicate the percentage of fitment to be given to the employees, irrespective of the recommendation made by the PRC. The union leaders are hoping for the disclosure of at least the main recommendations of the PRC at the meeting.

There are reports that the Jaganmohan Reddy government might not offer more than 27 percent of fitment for the employees, while they are demanding at least 40 percent. A midway solution is expected to be arrived at, sources said.

There would also be clarity on other issues like House Rent Allowance and basic wages for the contract employees etc.

Consider booster...

Continued from Page 1

Short for Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium, INSACOG checks variations in coronavirus across the nation to help understand how it spreads and evolves, and to suggest the best possible public health response.

"Genomic surveillance will be critical for early detection of the presence of this variant (Omicron) to enable necessary public health measures. Monitoring travel to and from known affected areas, and contact-tracing of COVID-19 cases with an epidemiological link to the affected areas has been implemented along with increased testing (with sequencing of confirmed cases)," the consortium said in its bulletin.

SPEEDY RECOVERY



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Friday personally went to the house of R Vijaya Kumari staying in Saraswathi Nagar in Tirupati. Vijaya Kumari was seriously injured in a road accident. The CM asked how the accident occurred, about the treatment she was getting and wished her speedy recovery.

Omicron severity likely to be low, says Union health...

Continued from Page 1

"There is no evidence to suggest existing vaccines do not work on Omicron... vaccine protection is also by antibodies as well as cellular immunity... Hence, vaccines are expected to still offer protection against severe disease and, vaccination with the available vaccines is crucial," the FAQ said.

Existing tests will pick up signs of Covid infection but they cannot offer definitive proof of Omicron. Covid tests "detect specific genes in the virus, such as spike (S), 'enveloped' (E) and 'nucleocapsid' (N) to confirm presence". In the Omicron strain, the S gene is heavily mutated and so "some of the primers may lead to results indicating absence of the S

gene" and this, in relation to other markers, "could be used as a diagnostic feature" to identify the new variant, the government said.

"... for final confirmation of the Omicron variant, genomic sequencing is required," the government warned, echoing cautionary notes on this matter from the WHO.

This caution is also because the S gene is also missing in the Alpha variant. The Omicron variant was first reported from South Africa last week.

It has a reported 50 mutations (compared to Delta), of which 30+ are on the spike protein, which is the target of most current vaccines and is what the virus uses to access to the body's cells.



'Delta' plan should work...

Continued from Page 1

The positive news in all of this is that none of the information we have currently about omicron suggests we need to change the directions of our response."

That means continuing to push for higher vaccination rates, abiding by social-distancing guidelines, and wearing masks, among other measures, said WHO Regional Emergency Director Dr. Babatunde Olowokure.

He added that health systems must ensure we are treating the right patients in the right place at the right time, and so therefore ensuring that ICU beds are available, particularly for those who need them.

Kasai warned: We cannot be complacent.

WHO has previously urged against border closures, noting they often have limited effect and can cause major disruptions. Officials in southern

Africa, where the omicron variant was first identified, have decried restrictions on travelers from the region, saying they are being punished for alerting the world to the mutant strain.

Scientists are working furiously to learn more about omicron, which has been designated a variant of concern because of the number of mutations and because early information suggests it may be more transmissible than other variants, Kasai said.

A few countries in Western Pacific region are facing surges that began before omicron was identified, though COVID-19 cases and deaths in many others have decreased or plateaued, Kasai said. But that could change.

Among the places that have found the variant in the region are Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia and it is likely to crop up in more places. The emergence of omicron

is of particular concern for organizers of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, now about two months away.

Beijing is adopting a series of measures to reduce the risk the virus will spread during the Games, Zhao Weidong, spokesperson for the organising committee, told reporters at a briefing on Friday.

China has adopted a zero-tolerance policy toward COVID-19 transmission and has some of the world's strictest border controls. Games participants will have to live and compete inside a bubble, and only spectators who are residents of China and have been vaccinated and tested will be permitted at venues.

Globally, cases have been increasing for seven consecutive weeks and the number of deaths has started to rise again, too, driven largely by the delta variant and decreased use of protective measures in other parts of the world, Kasai said.

Plea against same sex marriage under Hindu Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A plea came up before the Delhi High Court on Friday seeking that same sex marriage not be permitted under the Hindu Marriage Act as in Hinduism tying of nuptial knot is allowed only between a man and woman since times immemorial.

The plea argued that any changes such as inclusion of same sex marriage in the Customary Law are much easier, convenient and practical in marriages which are a type of contract between the partners as they are very remotely based on religion and more generic in nature.

"Marriages in societies like Hindu are very much part of their religion and derived and associated with their divine entities as well as religious texts and thereby hold significant sentimental values," it said.

A bench of Chief Justice D

N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh listed the application by Sewa Nyaya Utthan Foundation seeking to be impleaded and heard in the main petition for recognition of same sex marriages here for February 3, when all the batch matters will be heard.

The application said the petition seeking same sex marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act is not only against the religious system of Hindu Marriage but is also an act to bring changes abruptly without any reason and this change will impact other aspects like inheritance, adoption and religious ecosystem of the Hindu society that are critically hinged on the religious 'sanskar of vivah'.

The organisation, through Sanjeev Newar and Swati Goel Sharma, said such marriages should either be registered under secular law like Special Marriage Act or must be allowed under all reli-

gious laws such as Muslim Marriage Law and Sikhs' Anand Marriage Act and that it must be made religion-neutral.

"As per vedas (the sourcebook of Hinduism), marriage happens only between a male and a female to fulfil certain worldly and religious duties. In fact, most veda mantras recited during Hindu vivah or describing the ritual of marriage refer to a biological male and a biological female. This has been the practice since times immemorial across almost all Hindu sampradayas without any variation in essence," said the application, filed through advocate Shashank Shekhar Jha.

The application was filed in the pending petition of Abhijit Iyer Mitra who has contended that marriages between same sex couples are not possible despite the Supreme Court decriminalis-

ing consensual homosexual acts and sought a declaration to recognise same sex marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA) and Special Marriage Act (SMA). The application said that as per Hinduism, marriage is not a contract but a religious activity and any attempt to tinker with the HMA in a way that it affects the age-old harmless beliefs of Hindus will be a direct intrusion by secular state into religious rights of Hindus that is guaranteed by the Constitution.

It said any approval regarding same sex marriage under HMA and not in other Personal Laws existing in India will not only discriminate people from LGBT community on the basis of religion but will also be against the Principle of Secularism mentioned in the Preamble of Indian Constitution.

"The HMA applies to everyone who belongs to any

of the forms or developments of Hindu including Virashaiva, Lingayat, Brahmo, Prarthana, Arya Samaj, Buddhist, Jain and Sikhs," it said. It contended that the petition for same sex marriage under the HMA is not reasonable at the time when the same is not permitted in the comparatively new religions under their Personal Laws including Indian Christian Marriage Act, The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, Muslim Personal Law (Shariat Application Act) and Anand Marriage Act.

In the main petition, the central government has opposed same-sex marriage on the ground that marriage in India is not just a union of two individuals but an institution between biological man and woman.

It has also said that judicial interference will cause "complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws".



Damaged Tirumala 2nd ghat road to be...

Continued from Page 1

Since the landslides, traffic was allowed only on the first ghat road amid tight precautionary measures, he said.

From Saturday, the vehicles going to the hills would be allowed to ply more than half of the distance on the second ghat road. After

reaching the damaged place on the second ghat road, the vehicles would be diverted through a link road to the first ghat road to reach the shrine atop the hill, the official said.

Before New Year 2022, the damaged road would be repaired and the traffic restored, he added.

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ENC engaged in domestic emergencies: Vice Admiral

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Eastern Naval Command (ENC) is not only engaged in combat operations but also in all domestic emergencies, particularly in attending the humanitarian services at the eleventh hour, said Chief of ENC Vice Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta.

According to the 2021 Navy Day theme 'Combat Ready, Credible and Cohesive' force, the focus of the ENC would continue to ensure to deploy proactively and respond swiftly to any situation across the spectrum of maritime operations, the Vice Admiral said.

As a part of the Navy Day celebrations, addressing a media conference on Friday, the Vice Admiral said that as per the nation's Act East Policy, the Eastern fleet has showcased the Indian flag at major ports of the Bay of Bengal, South East Asia, Indo-Pacific Region and Australia, Dasgupta claimed.

Terminating the joint exercises with the US, Japanese, French, Royal, Republic of Singapore, and Australian navies, the Vice Admiral informed with the



operations the relations between navies placed significant growth.

The ENC has been at the forefront of combating Covid-19 since its outbreak. The Naval Ships undertook evacuation of 4,000 Indians from other nations besides transported critical Covid relief equipment including Liquid Medical Oxygen containers, Oxygen cylinders, and Rapid Antigen Detection Test Kits by sea from South East Asian nations as part of Operation Samudra Setu II to augment the nation's fight against the

second wave, the Vice Admiral detailed. In addition, Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam repaired and operationalised four Oxygen generating plants in the state and also conducted training for maintenance of Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) type oxygen plants in the country.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations were undertaken in the wake of cyclones Yaas and Gulab and after the recent floods in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Regarding the coming two

major events, the Vice Admiral said that the command is getting ready to host the President's Fleet Review on February 21, 2022, in which nearly 50 naval and coast guard ships and 50 aircraft would participate. Another major event from February 25 ships and delegates from over 45 friendly nations are expected to visit Visakhapatnam to participate in the prestigious event called MILAN which is essentially a gathering of friendly navies for professional interactions, Vice Admiral Dasgupta explained.

Naidu decries 'forcible OTS collections' by govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday slammed the YSRCP Government for resorting to 'forcible OTS collections' from the poor beneficiaries for houses built since the NTR regime. Naidu said the DWCREA groups were being asked to give loans to make OTS payments, which would lead to severe harassment like in the case of 'call money rackets'.

The TDP chief spoke as chief guest at the International Disability Day celebrations held here and deplored that the YSRCP regime did not hesitate to cut the Rs 3,000 social pensions for the differently-abled persons. The officials were using pretexts like current bills, assets, and so on to withdraw the benefit.

Naidu asked what right the Jagannathan Reddy rule had to collect OTS amounts of Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000 from the poor families. How could this Government say it would give patta to houses being owned by poor families for decades? All the people are facing problems because of such decisions.

The TDP chief asserted that the NTR rule was the first to recognise the skill and give priority to the differently-abled persons. The TDP regime also got the credit for increasing disabled pensions from Rs 500 to Rs 3,000. If the TDP came to power in 2019, this amount would have increased to Rs. 5,000 by now.



Lokesh slams govt for 'emptying' DWCREA accounts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Friday strongly criticised the YSRCP government for 'snatching away' funds directly from the accounts of DWCREA women in the name of One-Time Settlement (OTS) registrations for the poor people's houses.

Lokesh said the Chief Minister promised financial stability and women empowerment before the elections but now his regime was giving irrecoverable blows to the poor women members. The poor families were being threatened that their social pensions would be stopped if they would not pay OTS amounts.

In a statement here, Lokesh condemned the manner in which the funds of DWCREA women were being taken away directly from their accounts. Even the Rs 2,000 Cr Abhaya Hastam funds were snatched away. The DWCREA women saved their hard-earned money and kept



it in the Abhaya Hastam scheme for future security. The LIC was removed from this scheme as part of an ulterior plan.

Nara Lokesh asked the poor beneficiaries not to pay the OTS amounts as demanded by the State Government. There was no need to be afraid of the threats and intimidation from the YSRCP regime. The TDP would come to power in the next elections and it would ensure 'free registrations' to all the lakhs of poor families that were in possession of these houses for decades.

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66th annual meet of ISTAM begins

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 66th annual conference of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (ISTAM) is being virtually started at VIT-AP University, from December 3 to 5.

On the occasion, Dr Samir V Kamat, Scientist and Director-General, Naval Systems and Materials at DRDO was the chief guest who inaugurated the conference.

In his address, he said the current generation should work towards making the country self-sufficient and self-reliant on crucial technologies.

Dr G Viswanathan, Founder & Chancellor, VIT Group of Institutions stressed the importance of research in the growth of a nation, and VIT is the top institute in terms of research publications.

Vice-Chancellor, Dr SV Kota Reddy said that VIT-AP University is committed to working towards its goal of becoming a global hub of research and development. The conference has several parallel sessions diligently planned for the benefit of all the participants aimed to bridge the gap between the scholars working in academia and the working scientists.

Dr Radhakrishnamacharya, President, ISTAM, Dr Deepak Kumar Maiti, Secretary, ISTAM, 66th ISTAM Congress convenor Dr PS Rama Sreekanth, Co-Convenor Dr Santanu Mandal, Dr CLV Sivakumar, Registrar, VIT-AP, scholars, faculty and the staff were also present.

Chambers demands development of various sectors in Andhra Pradesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP Chambers has submitted a memorandum to Niti Aayog with various demands including strengthening of food processing and textiles sectors, implementation of industrial corridors and dedicated freight corridors, implementation of south coast railway zone and development of

ports and a major city in the State.

AP Chambers president Pydah Krishna Prasad, president-elect Potluri Bhaskara Rao and general secretary B Raja Sekhar said here on Friday that their team met NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar at APIIC Headquarters, Mangalagiri. They said that they submitted

a representation giving suggestions for the industrial development of the State and discussed various issues being faced in trade, commerce, imports and exports.

They stated that AP Chambers sought strengthening of food processing and textiles sectors in AP as there were a lot of possibilities for these sectors. They said that

they further sought implementation of industrial corridors and dedicated freight corridors and implementation of the south coast railway zone. Mentioning the absence of Central institutions allotted to AP under bifurcation assurances, they stated that AP Chambers urged Niti Aayog to start national-level institutions allotted to the State.

'No truth in reports over missing foreign returnees'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director of the Public Health & Family Welfare Department, Dr. Hymavathi, on Friday strongly condemned the false news that appeared in a section of the media saying 30 foreign returnees had gone missing in AP.

She said that all international travellers as per the protocol are being tested at international airports after deboarding by airport authorities.

She said that there are no international airports as such in Andhra Pradesh and there is no scope for landing directly and added that the Government of AP had already deployed med-

ical teams with help desks at all airports in the State to monitor, screen and test the travellers.

She said the Union government had communicated the list of 30 international travellers who belong to Visakhapatnam district and nearby districts and added that they would be monitored at their homes for maintaining home isolation by State's health teams.

She said a few flights are landing at Vijayawada Airport under the 'Vande Bharat Scheme' and the State health team is screening all such passengers as per the protocol suggested by the Government of India.

Include community-based rehab in anti-trafficking Bill: VIMUKTHI

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

VIMUKTHI, the State-level women's collective of sex workers and survivors of trafficking, and the Indian Leadership Forum Against Trafficking (ILFAT), a national forum of trafficking survivors, have sought Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) in the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Care and Rehabilitation) draft Bill 2021, which will be presented in the ongoing Parliament session.

VIMUKTHI state president M. Meharunneesa, secretary of HELP organisation Ram Mohan Nimmaraju and other

leaders said that since the Bill is expected to be tabled in this Parliament session, the survivors of trafficking have demanded that the Ministry of Women and Child Development define and include provisions of funds for the rehabilitation of survivors as well to investigate cases, often across states and even countries.

The leaders stated that there are key gaps in the Bill that, the survivors of trafficking feel, need to be addressed for a strong and holistic anti-trafficking legislation. They said that their delegation is camped in New Delhi to meet MPs

seeking their cooperation for the inclusion of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and also the smooth passing of the Bill. They said that they met MP Kinarapu Rammohan Naidu, explained about the Bill and sought his cooperation.

The leaders explained that CBR is a practice that emerged in 1978 as part of WHO's response to care for people with disabilities. As a concept and a model, it promotes a decentralised approach to rehabilitation service delivery, whereby it is assumed that community members are willing and able to mobilise local resources.

15 of UltraTech Cements mines get 5-star rating

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Fifteen of UltraTech Cement's Limestone mines located across India have been awarded a five-star rating for sustainable mine management, by the Ministry of Mines and the Indian Bureau of Mines. The five-star certificates were given by Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister of Mines at a recently held ceremony along with the National Conclave on Mines & Minerals in New Delhi.

Of the 15 mines, one is Andhra Pradesh Cement Works located near Anantapur

in Andhra Pradesh and is an integrated cement manufacturing unit of UltraTech Cement.

This was awarded for the last three years (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20), with a total of 30 such 5 Star rating awards. This is the highest number of five-star ratings awarded to any company in India for all major minerals such as Bauxite, Copper, Iron ore, Manganese, Lead & Zinc and Limestone.

Conceptualised by the Ministry of Mines, the Star ratings are based on adoption of best practices for the exhaustive and universal implemen-

tation of sustainable development framework in mining.

A five-star rating, the highest in the rating scheme, is given to mines that performed best on parameters such as scientific and efficient mining, compliance of approved production, zero waste mining, environment protection, steps taken for progressive and final mine closure, green energy sourcing, land, adoption of international standards, local communities engagement and welfare programmes, resettlement and other positive social impacts.

Thirty free paediatric heart surgeries performed in Vja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

About 30 free paediatric heart surgeries were performed during the week at Heart & Brain Institute, Andhra Hospitals as part of the 22nd Paediatric Cardiac surgical camp in association with G Mahesh Babu & Healing Little Hearts, UK team from November 28 to December 4.

A team of 7 UK doctors team from world-famous UK hospitals performed 30 free heart surgeries during this week. The team

includes paediatric interventional cardiologists, Paediatric cardiac surgeons, paediatric cardiac intensivists, perfusionists, paediatric intensive care nurses. The UK team was led by Dr Vikram. K & Dr Dileep from Andhra Hospitals, Dr Ramana Dhannapuni - consultant paediatric cardiac surgeon from the UK, Dr Sukesh Mohta, Dr Azza Kibeida, Kelly, Laura, Paola Lopez, Victoria performed very complex heart surgeries which include TAPVC, Tetralogy of Fallot, Transposition Great

Arteries (TGA), Double outlet right ventricle, AVSD & ALCAPA.

Dr PV Rama Rao, Chief of Children's Services said that our success rate was nearly 100 per cent which was possible only because of the team effort of our Paediatric Cardiology, cardiac surgical team & Paediatric intensive care team from Andhra Hospitals & UK team. He also said the children's heart institute team is successfully performing children heart surgeries regularly for the past 6 years.

ANGRAU bags 11th spot in ICAR ranking for year 2020

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University has secured 11th place in the all-India ranking of agricultural universities for 2020 by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University, Hyderabad, grabbed the 30th rank while Dr YSR Horticultural University,

Venkatramanagudem, got the 49th rank and Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Tirupati, got the 57th rank.

AP State Agriculture Mission Vice-Chairman M V S Nagi Reddy said it was a proud moment. He said that ANGR Agricultural University improved its performance by jumping to 11th spot in the ICAR ranking. The university achieved the 31st place in 2018 and the

13th place in 2019.

He thanked Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for implementing academic activities in a transparent and dynamic way and extending full support to Agriculture, Horticulture and Veterinary universities. He further congratulated Vice-Chancellor Dr A Vishnuvardhan Reddy, all the staff and students for their remarkable contribution in achieving the milestone.

Total solar eclipse today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Planetary Society's India Director, N. Raghunandan Kumar, said that the fourth and last eclipse of 2021 will occur on Saturday.

This eclipse of the Sun will be a total solar eclipse. The eclipse will be visible in Antarctica, extreme South Africa, extreme South Australia, the South Atlantic Ocean, and the Southern Indian Ocean.

The eclipse will be not visible in India. As per Indian Standard Time, the eclipse will occur from 10.59 am to 3.07 pm on December 4, 2021. The greatest phase of the eclipse will be when the maximum part of the Sun will be covered by the Moon at 1:04 pm.

As this is a total solar eclipse, observers in Antarctica will witness the entire disk of the Sun getting covered for one minute 57 seconds at the time of totality, that is, at 1:04 pm. At some places in the southern hemisphere, people will witness the eclipse only partially, either at the beginning or the end of the eclipse.

The timings and visibility of the eclipse and the percentage of the Sun covered by the Moon are dependent on the location of the observer. The streaming will start at 12 pm IST and will end at 2:07 pm IST on December 4, 2021. The live streaming is being supervised by Theo Boris and Christian Lockwood who are part of the JM Pasachoff Antarctic Expedition.

On December 4, the path of the Moon's umbral shadow begins its journey in the southern ocean at about 500 km southeast of Falkland Islands, crosses the Antarctic continent, South Australia, and ends at sunset in the Southern Ocean.

As India is nowhere near or in the path of the shadow of the Moon, the eclipse will not be visible here.

The last solar eclipse which was visible from India occurred on June 21, 2020, which was an annular solar eclipse. This was visible during some phases of the eclipse.

The next solar eclipse visible from India will occur on October 25, 2022, which would be a partial solar eclipse.

Solar eclipses are one of the interesting celestial events visible from Earth. If weather permits the total solar eclipse visible from the Union Glacier in Antarctica will be streamed on YouTube and on the NASA website <https://www.nasa.gov/nasalive>.

Rly hospital completes 100 knee replacement surgeries

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Divisional Railway Hospital, Waltair, a 134-bed medical house, has been undertaking a variety of surgeries since its inception. The hospital on Friday performed the 100th knee replacement surgery. The hospital performed 100 successful knee replacements without any failures and post-operative complications. The hospital performed the first joint replacement surgery on August 12, 2012 and by 2016 completed 25 knee replacements.

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ment to serve railway beneficiaries.

The team comprises Dr. A Gopi Krishna, honorary visiting surgeon (Orthopaedics), Dr. M Mahesh Kumar, Senior Divisional Medical Officer and Dr. T Mahendra, Divisional Medical Officer under the guidance of Dr. M K Ramakrishna, Chief Medical Superintendent did the 100th knee replacement. Divisional Railway Manager Anup Satpathy congratulated the medical team of the hospital on their successful completion of the 100th knee replacement surgery.



Minister promises community hall for the differently-abled

PNS ■ ELURU / ONGOLE / GUNTUR

Minister for Women and Child Welfare Taneti Vanita has said that a community hall would be constructed in Eluru, especially for the benefit of physically-challenged persons.

Participating in a programme organised on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities here on Friday, she called upon people to treat the differently-abled persons as VIPs, give them courage and extend the needed help. She called upon the people to respect the differently-abled persons.

The minister said that a community hall would be constructed in Eluru, especially for the differently-abled persons to take rest whenever they want. She also promised steps to strengthen the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. She said that the YSRCP government was giving loans, laptops, mobile phones, motorised tricycles, and tricycles to differently-abled persons. "Pension is distributed to those who are suffering from



comorbidities," she said, and asked them to avail of the opportunities being provided by the government and lead a comfortable life.

Later, the minister handed over prizes and certificates to those who emerged winners in various games. Joint Collector Padmavati, Physically Challenged Welfare Department AD Jhansi Rani, Disabled People's Organisation president V Yugandar, Visually Challenged Employees Association president Veerabhadra Rao and Disabled Persons Rights National Forum president K Jayaraju were among those who were present.

In Ongole, Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar promised to protect the rights of differently-abled persons. He said that all help would be extended to them.

The Collector said that there were around 64,000 physically-challenged people in the district and the government was making all efforts for their welfare. He called upon voluntary organisations to come forward to extend their help to physically-challenged people. The Collector promised to resolve their grievances at the earliest. He said that every Wednesday, a programme was held especially to resolve the grievances of differently-abled persons.

ZP chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma and SP Malika Garg also spoke. JC K Krishnaveni, Social Welfare DD Lakshma Naik, SC Corporation ED Srinivas Viswanath and DEO Vijay Bhaskar were also present.

In Guntur, a programme was organised on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities here on Friday. Addressing the programme ZP chairperson Henry Christina said that the government has taken all steps for the welfare of disabled persons.

She said that monthly pensions are being disbursed to eligible disabled persons. She said that they would take notice of the issue of providing 4 percent reservations to the physically challenged persons to the notice of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. MLA Undavalli Sridevi said that she treats physically-challenged persons as her siblings and assured them to address their grievances. Differently-abled persons and elderly persons welfare commissioner Mumtaz Pathan also spoke. MLAs M Giridhar also spoke.

Jana Sena will continue to fight for interests of farmers, says Manohar

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Jana Sena Party (JSP) political affairs committee chairman Nadendra Manohar has reiterated that the party will continue its fight to protect the interests of farmers and stand with rain-affected farmers.

Manohar visited rain-affected villages in Kollipara manal in Tenali constituency on Friday. He inspected the damaged crops. He interacted with the rain-hit farmers and enquired about the problems. He demanded that the government complete the enumeration process to assess the loss of crop and disburse compensation to the farmers at the earliest.



Omicron fears spark interest in booster shots

- TS seeks booster dose for healthcare, frontline and persons from high-risk groups
- Harish suggests reduction in time gap between doses

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Amidst focused efforts to achieve 100 per cent inoculation against Covid-19 in Telangana, growing fears over the Omicron variant have sparked among people a lot of interest in booster dose.

Interestingly, this is happening though a majority of the population is yet to take the second dose. Still, queries about ways to get the booster dose have gained traction.

This being so, Health Minister T Harish Rao on Friday approached the Central government for providing booster shots to healthcare, frontline workers as well as persons from high-risk groups.

Official sources in the Health Department said that many people were requesting that booster dose be given unofficially at least. Such requests are coming from people who had been vaccinated, more so from those who have taken the second dose in the sixth month and beyond. These calls have increased over the past one week.

Sources said: "Studies have said that antibodies are wearing off after 6 months. Many of them have taken antibody test and are showing the results asking us to administer a booster dose. Additionally, the medical community itself is emphasising to take booster dose."

A decision on the booster dose and jabs for children will be taken on the basis of scientific advice, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya told Parliament on Friday.

Mandaviya's statement comes a day after Indian SarsCov-2 Genome Sequencing Consortium (INSACOG) suggested that a booster dose be given to those aged above 40 years with high risk.

The INSACOG, in its advisory on Thursday, recommended that boosters (or third doses) "be considered" for



those aged above 40 years. Amid Omicron concerns, Karnataka has suggested booster dose for health care workers.

The nationwide Covid vaccination drive was launched on January 16 and the beneficiaries in the first phase included healthcare workers and senior citizens.

However, states are awaiting guidelines from the Center. Recently Director of Public Health Dr G Srinivasa Rao said: "The minimum gap for a booster dose should be at least 6 months after administering both doses."

It may be mentioned here that timely administration of the vaccine is six months, according to the FDA in the USA.

The Central government is designing guidelines on booster dose. After they frame them, we will inform people about our policy for booster dose," he said.

Dr Sudhir Kumar, Sr Consultant Neurologist, Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, said: "Vaccination of the eligible people should be our top-most priority. Booster dose (third dose of the vaccine) should be given to high-risk people. The Govt of India should release the guidelines for booster dose at the earliest."

Experts comment that people must be wary of not over vaccinating, with the administration optimally utilizing surplus vaccines mainly for people with comorbidities and front-line workers.

Honey-trap: Woman blackmails minor boy for gold and cash

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In what appears to be a case of honey trapping a minor boy, a 33-year-old woman seduced her nephew and got the act of love-making videographed and black-mailed the 14-year-old boy to give her gold ornaments of his mother and cash. Otherwise, she threatened to leak the video. On the basis of a complaint lodged by the boy's mother, the Jubilee Hills Police registered a case under

the POCSO Act. According to the complaint, a 34-year-old woman living in Salar Jung Colony in Tollychowki recently shifted her residence to Gayatri Hills two months ago along with her family. At the time of shifting the family, she noticed that some of her ornaments went missing. She questioned her son persistently. The boy replied to her that he gave some of her ornaments to his aunt who lives in Bangalore.

KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE



MLA Pinnelli Rama Krishna Reddy on Friday inaugurated the Ongole bulls weight pulling competition at Karampudi in Guntur district on Friday. The competition was organised on the occasion of the 'Palnati Veerulu Thirunallu' and 'Palnadu Utsavalu'.

ZP chief inspects midday meals

PNS ■ ONGOLE

ZP Chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma inspected the quality of midday meal being served at ZP High School at Pallamalli village in Chimakurti mandal on Friday. She had the midday meal along with the students on the school premises and she offered a morsel to a girl student. She enquired with the teachers and students about the menu of midday meals and Jaganna Gorumudda.

Later she inspected the classrooms and hygienic conditions being maintained in the school premises. She exhorted the students to excel in their



studies and reach their goals. She said that the government is modernizing the government schools under the Nadu-Nedu programme at par with

Make use of OTS, Minister tells housing beneficiaries

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing Chervukuvada Sriranganadha Raju has said that the One Time Settlement (OTS) offer will get rid of the loan and appealed to the beneficiaries of Jaganna Sampurna Gruha Hakku to avail the opportunity to get complete rights on their houses by clearing the loans.

The minister handed over the loan clearance documents to Y Srinivas at Yendagandi village in Undi mandal on Friday. Srinivas cleared his housing loan under the OTS by paying Rs 5,400. He had to pay Rs 39,000 registration fee as per his property value to get the house registered in his name but he got all the property rights with Rs 10 only as he opted for the OTS.

The minister said that over 39 lakh people have to clear



about Rs 14,000 crore loan amount which they had taken to build houses. The minister said that OTS provides an opportunity to get rid of the housing loan and get their houses registered in their name with a nominal fee.

The minister criticised the opposition parties for making misleading campaigns on the OTS and raising apprehensions among the beneficiaries. He said over 50 lakh people could avail the OTS opportunity.

Covid positive woman who fled airport found in Qutubullahpur, sent to TIMS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman covid-19 positive tourist who arrived here from abroad on Friday gave jitters to the police by escaping from the airport. When she landed at the Shamshabad Airport, the authorities tested her for Covid-19 and she tested positive for the virus.

But before the airport authorities could take her to the hospital, she left the airport. At last, the airport authorities identified her address with the help of her passport and alerted the Jeedimetla Police. The medical and health authorities and the police reached her house, but she disappeared from there. At last, she was found at Qutubullahpur by the police. She was immediately rushed to TIMS.

Shilpa cries during police questioning

Actor Harsha files complaint against her

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor Harsha, who acted in the film 'Sehari', a film produced by Shilpa Chowdary, has filed a complaint against her on Friday.

He claimed that he had given Rs 3 crore to Shilpa Chowdary as a loan and that she has not returned it. The police has registered a case against Shilpa Chowdary based on the complaint.

Shilpa Chowdary is now in police custody. The cops are inquiring about the complaints and the whereabouts of the money paid by the complainants.

Shilpa was questioned by the police from 11 am to 5 pm on Friday. Sources said she cried during the questioning by the police. There are rumours that she sent the funds to Dubai.

Harsha acted in 'Sehari', the movie produced by Shilpa Chowdary. She had close ties with Harsha and had asked him for Rs 3 crore for investment in the real estate business. Believing her, Harsha said he had paid Rs 3 crore to her.

After coming to know about the cases against Shilpa Chowdary, he conducted enquiries and came to know that she had not invested in any real estate project.

High command will take a call on working with TRS: Jagga

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee working president and legislator from Sangareddy T Jagga Reddy on Friday made it clear that the party's high command would take a call before the next elections on whether to work with the Telangana Rashtra Samiti, keeping in view the party's interests.

He was reacting to the joint protests by TRS and Congress MPs in Parliament. Jagga Reddy said that he would welcome any decision of the high command in this regard. The state unit of the party had no powers to take such decisions and AICC chief Sonia Gandhi and former AICC chief Rahul Gandhi's decisions in this regard would be final.

Jagga mentioned that as of now there was no friendship between the TRS and the Congress. The Congress was in fact fighting with the TRS, he observed. Describing the Congress party as 'mother', Jagga Reddy remarked that anybody could come and it (party) would adore even those who had chided the party; it would also feed them if they were hungry.

Jagga Reddy said that the Congress party did not need the good offices of political strategist Prashanth Kishor. Kishor had been speaking



against Rahul Gandhi without having knowledge. He suggested that Kishor should visit the Gandhi Bhavan to know "how many Prashanth Kishors are there"... "Every Congress leader is one Prashanth Kishore," he observed.

Jagga said that the TRS party feared the Congress party, which had 230 votes in the local bodies' quota MLC elections in Medak district; and hence, it had been lodging complaints with the Election Commission. Jagga Reddy sought to know why the TRS party had sent 300 public representatives to north India. "We can also lodge complaints if we want. It is good for the TRS party as it made 100 local bodies' public representatives to have darshan of Tirumala Tirupati Lord Venkateshwara. Thanks to the TRS party for providing darshan of Lord Venkateshwara to the TRS public representatives of local bodies," he commented.

Demolition of TDP worker's shop flayed

PNS ■ NELLORE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy has alleged that the shop of party activist Khayyam Khan was demolished as he participated in the effigy burning programme.

Talking to the media at Venkatachalam on Friday, Somireddy said that the police did not allow him to shift the articles from his shop. The demolition of Khayyam's shop was an act of vindictive poli-



tics. He said that Khayyam had been running the shop at the place for a long time and the

ruling party leaders deprived his livelihood by razing his shop to the ground overnight.

The TDP leader alleged that the police and officials, at the behest of MLA Kakani Govardhan Reddy, deprived the livelihood of TDP activist Khayyam.

"Kakani Govardhan Reddy will pay the price for his unjust acts. The YSRCP leaders are also opposing the misdeeds of Kakani. The YSRCP MLA sated his sadistic pleasure by demolishing the shop of the TDP activist. People's representatives should extend help to all but should not vitiate the livelihood of people," he lambasted.

'Obscene' film posters removed

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Wall posters of some Telugu movies were removed by police after Women's Commission Chairperson Vasireddy Padam complained of obscenity.

The film posters, which were pasted to the wall of under-bridge at the Guntur-Vijayawada bypass road near here, were removed by the police on Friday.

Posters were also removed from the under-bridge opposite AN University.

The Women's Commission



Chairperson has directed the higher police officials to take steps to remove obscene wall

posters. Vasireddy Padma has asked the police to take steps to ensure that such posters do

not appear on the walls and initiate action against those who put them up.

INDIA CORNER

Women officers appointed on board major warships: Navy chief

Women officers have been appointed on board major warships of the Indian Navy, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R Hari Kumar said on Friday.



PM Modi to address rally in Doon today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to kickstart the poll campaign for the upcoming Uttarakhand assembly elections by addressing a rally here on Saturday.



CEO office writes to Delhi Police over fake news on voters

The Delhi CEO office has written to the city police authorities over a 'fake news item' related to voting being circulated on WhatsApp platform.



Maha: Three held for stealing valuables worth over Rs 15 lakh

PNS ■ PALGHAR

Three Nepalese nationals have been arrested for allegedly breaking into a house and stealing valuables worth over Rs 15 lakh in Vasai town of Maharashtra's Palghar district.

The accused were in the process of escaping to Nepal after the theft, but the Vasai police nabbed them after a long chase.

The theft took place at a house in Babola Naka in Vasai on November 28, the official said.

The occupants of the house were away, when the trio allegedly broke into the house and decamped with gold and silver jewellery and cash worth Rs 15.2 lakh, he said.

Opposition, BJP face-off on Parliament premises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday mounted counter-protests outside Parliament where 12 suspended opposition members of Rajya Sabha were on a sit-in demonstration against the action on them.

There were some tense moments as BJP members, carrying placards, marched towards the opposition members near the Gandhi statue in Parliament premises to condemn their 'undemocratic actions' inside the House.

"We are here to highlight the duplicity of the opposition parties," BJP member G V L Narasimha Rao said.

The issue also figured in both houses of Parliament when opposition leaders complained about "hooting" by BJP members to the presiding officers.



In Rajya Sabha, RJD MP Manoj Jha said BJP members "gategashed" the site in Parliament complex where the 12 suspended members were staging a demonstration.

In Lok Sabha, Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury claimed the BJP members hooted the opposition members near the Gandhi statue.

Minister of State for

the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar within Parliament premises raising slogans to save democracy.

The 12 opposition MPs were suspended from the Rajya Sabha on Monday for the entire Winter Session of Parliament for their "unruly" conduct in the previous session in August.

The suspended MPs include six from the Congress, two each from the Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena, and one each from the CPI and CPI(M).

They have been holding day-long protests in front of the Gandhi statue inside the Parliament complex and have decided to continue to do so every day till their suspension is revoked.

Deep depression intensifies into Cyclone 'Jawad'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A deep depression in the Bay of Bengal has intensified into cyclonic storm 'Jawad', the India Meteorological Department said on Friday.

The cyclonic storm is likely to reach the west-central Bay of Bengal off the coast of north Andhra Pradesh and Odisha by Saturday morning.

Thereafter, it is likely to recurve north-northeastwards, move along the coast of Odisha and adjoining Andhra Pradesh and touch the coast around Puri by December 5 noon.

The name of the cyclone -- 'Jawad' -- has been proposed by Saudi Arabia.

A low-pressure area had developed over the Andaman Sea on November 30. It intensified into a depression on



December 2 and further into a deep depression on Friday morning. It turned into a cyclone on Friday noon, the IMD DG said.

Very heavy rainfall is likely to start in north coastal Andhra Pradesh and south coastal Odisha by Friday evening. The intensity of rainfall is likely to increase on Saturday, he said.

A red colour warning has been issued for Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam,

Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram and Jagatsinghpur districts of Odisha.

The IMD has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over West Bengal on Saturday and Sunday, and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura on Sunday and Monday.

'Missionaries converting tribals more dangerous than Naxals'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Christian missionaries who are converting innocent tribals in Chhattisgarh through luring and intimidation are "more dangerous than Naxals", a BJP MP said on Friday.



Amit Shah for his efforts to bring down the violent activities in Bastar, Sai said that due to the pressure exerted by central forces, the Naxals are on the backfoot.

"But, the Christian missionaries who are converting innocent tribals in Chhattisgarh through luring and intimidation are more dangerous than these Naxals," she said.

The BJP MP also said work

is also going to build prayer houses in the ravines of Chhattisgarh.

"I come from Jashpur in Chhattisgarh which has been suffering due to religious conversion since years," she said.

Sai also hailed former BJP MP Dilip Singh Judeo for his "fight against religious conversion" and said he brought back lakhs of families who had left Hinduism to their religion through "mission ghar wapsi".

She demanded that the religious conversion being "carried out by missionaries" should be immediately stopped and a strong law be put in place against so that people do not indulge in such activities.

Meanwhile, also during 'Zero Hour', Parvish Verma, BJP MP from West Delhi, raised the issue of exorbitant

water and electricity bills being handed to people in Delhi with the Kejriwal government claiming that water and electricity was being given to people for free.

He also showed a bundle of papers and said these were bills of water and electricity with some of them going into lakhs of rupees.

Verma alleged that this was a "scam" in which on one hand the Delhi government was claiming that electricity and water had been made free and on the other bills worth lakhs were being slapped on people. He sought a probe into the matter.

Also during question hour, TMC MP Nusrat Jahan Ruhi raised the issue of disinvestment of "profit-making" PSUs by the government.

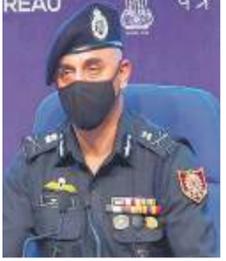
Cyclone 'Jawad': NDRF earmarks 64 NDRF teams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has earmarked a total of 64 teams to tackle the situation arising out of the impending cyclonic storm 'Jawad' that is expected to affect the states of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal this weekend.

NDRF Director General (DG) Atul Karwal told reporters during an official briefing here that while 46 teams have been deployed or pre-positioned in the vulnerable states, 18 teams have been kept in reserve.

According to the deployment map shared by the DG during the press conference, out of the 46 teams, 19 are based in West Bengal, 17 in Odisha, 19 in Andhra Pradesh apart from seven in Tamil Nadu and two in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



All teams have been made available as desired by the various state governments and they will be deployed in consultation with local authorities, the NDRF DG said.

A single NDRF team has about 30 personnel who are equipped with pole cutters, electric saws to clear uprooted trees, inflatable boats and some other relief and rescue gadgets.

possible manner," Karwal said. He said all preparations have been done by the federal contingency force to help the affected states and the citizens.

The DG said 'Jawad' has been categorised as a 'severe cyclone' where the wind speeds range between 100-110 kmph and it is expected that it would not scale up and take shape of a higher category of cyclonic storm.

He said the force was in touch with the integrated defence staff (IDS) for quick airlift of additional NDRF teams to the affected states.

The NDRF head said the national crisis management committee (NCMC) chaired by the cabinet secretary, another panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior officers have already reviewed the situation and these will continue till the cyclone hits the coast on December 5 in Odisha.

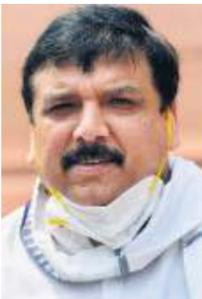
Antilia bomb scare case: Bookie Naresh Gaur moves Bombay HC

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Cricket bookie Naresh Gaur arrested in the Antilia bomb scare case has approached the Bombay High Court challenging a special court's order last month granting him bail, which was later stayed for 25 days.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested Gaur in March this year, accusing him of being involved in the Antilia bomb scare case and in the killing of businessman Mansukh Hiran. On November 20, a special NIA court granted him bail after observing that prima facie, he did not seem to be aware of the conspiracy.

Gaur was the first accused in the case to be granted bail. The special court, however, stayed its own order for 25 days after the prosecution requested for the same saying it wished to challenge the grant of bail before an appellate court.



Hry govt orders closure of schools

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government has ordered closure of all schools in Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonapat, and Jhajjar districts adjoining Delhi due to air pollution.

The government also ordered a ban on all construction activities in the National Capital Region (NCR), except non-polluting activities such as plumbing, interior decoration, electrical work and carpentry.

In view of the "deteriorating air quality" in Delhi-NCR, "all schools in four NCR districts of Haryana adjoining Delhi, that is Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonapat and Jhajjar, shall remain closed till further orders," said the order issued by the additional chief secretary of the

state's Environment and Climate Change Department.

The Delhi government had on Thursday announced the closure of all schools in the national capital till further orders because of an increase in the air pollution levels.

According to the Haryana government order dated December 2, "There shall also be a complete ban on all construction activities, except the non-polluting activities like plumbing works, interior decoration, electrical work and carpentry and those activities exclusively permitted by Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) for NCR and adjoining areas and it shall be strictly implemented in all 14 NCR districts of Haryana till further orders."

Govt actively working to empower persons with disabilities: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday appreciated the stellar achievements and contributions of persons with disabilities to India's progress.

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Modi said their life journey, courage and determination are very motivating.

He tweeted, "The Government of India is actively working to further strengthen infrastructure that empowers persons with disabilities. The emphasis remains on equality, accessibility and opportunity."

Punjab Ex-DGP Virk, industrialist join BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Punjab assembly polls, several prominent people from the state, including former director general of police (DGP) Sarbdeep Singh Virk, joined the BJP here on Friday. Union minister and the BJP's in-charge for Punjab Gajendra Singh Shekhawat welcomed them into the party and said their induction will further strengthen the organisation in the state.

BJP govt has left behind British in terms of atrocities: Akhilesh

PNS ■ JHANSI (UP)

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday alleged that the BJP's policy is "kill and rule" and its government has left behind the British in terms of atrocities on people.

Yadav, who is on a three-day visit to the Bundelkhand region, said that every section of the society is troubled under the BJP rule.

"This government has left behind the British in terms of atrocities. Farmers are crushed to death by vehicles for opposing the government and no concrete action has been taken in the (Lakhimpur Kheri) matter so far. Those who oppose are being put in jail. Their policy is 'maro aur raj karo' (kill and rule)," he told a press conference here. "There has been a rise in fake encounters under this

government. For this, the BJP government has got the maximum number of notices from NHRC (National Human Rights Commission). What can be expected from a chief minister who withdraws cases against himself," Yadav said, targeting Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The SP chief is touring Uttar Pradesh with his "Samajwadi Vijay Rath" ahead of the assembly polls early next year.

Centre issues FAQs on Omicron

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Friday said while there is no evidence to suggest that existing vaccines do not work on the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, some of the mutations reported may decrease the efficacy of the jobs.

It however underscored that definitive evidence for new variant's increased remission and immune evasion is awaited.

The ministry has issued a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the Omicron variant of coronavirus which has been designated by WHO as a 'variant of concern' (VoC). Two

cases of the new variant were reported in Karnataka on Thursday.

From the list of FAQs, the ministry, answering to whether the existing vaccines work against the Omicron variant, said, "While, there is no evidence to suggest that existing vaccines do not work on Omicron, some of the mutations reported on spike gene may decrease the efficacy of existing vaccines."

However, vaccine protection is also by antibodies as well as by cellular immunity, which is expected to be relatively better preserved. Hence, vaccines are expected to still offer protection against severe disease and vac-

ination is crucial. If eligible one should get vaccinated, it said.

On the possibility of a third wave of Covid infection, the ministry said Omicron cases are increasingly being reported from countries outside of South Africa and given its characteristics, it is likely to spread to more countries, including India.

However, the scale and magnitude of the rise in cases and the severity of the disease are still not clear, it said.

"Further, given the fast pace of vaccination in India and high exposure to delta variant as evidenced by high seropositivity, the severity of the disease is anticipated to be low.

Tributes, protest mark 37th anniversary

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel led the state in paying tributes to the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy, termed as the world's worst industrial disaster, on its 37th anniversary here on Friday.

Patel and several religious leaders offered prayers to the departed souls and observed a two-minute silence in remembrance of the victims at Barkatullah Bhawan here.

The leak of methyl isocyanate, a toxic gas, from the pesticide plant of

BHOPAL GAS TRAGEDY



Union Carbide on the intervening night of December 2 and 3, 1984, had killed over 3,000 people and left 1.02 lakh others affected at that time.

Meanwhile, a number of survivors of the tragedy, led by a group of NGOs, gathered near Bhopal Talkies and took out a

march to the now defunct Union Carbide factory, where they held a protest to highlight the demand of medical care, among other things. During the march, the protesters carried placards that read - 'Why are more than 500 women widowed by the Bhopal gas disaster being denied their pension that was promised by (MP) CM?' and 'Why has MP government failed to provide employment to any gas victims or their children while it was sitting on (Rs) 85 crore or \$ 11.6 million amount of money for last 10 years?'



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PAPER WITH PASSION

What's next?

The world's scientific community needs to pool all its resources to avoid another Delta-like chaos

The Omicron variant has brought back the pandemic scare, but the world appears not to have learnt its lessons from the previous waves and lockdowns. The world has seen the Delta variant wreak havoc and Omicron is only beginning to bloom. Next to nothing is known about its capacity to infect and ease of transmission. Yet, a global approach to fighting it is conspicuously absent. South Africa did not waste time informing the world about the detection of patients infected with the Omicron variant. In no time, and without waiting to verify if the new variant really originated from there, the country, and several other African nations, were subjected to travel restrictions by the US, European Union, the UK and a large part of Asia. The variant has now been detected in 30 countries in all and the list is growing. Nobody has any idea if the cases are spreading from somewhere or originating from everywhere. The samples have been sent for genome sequencing and the results will take time coming. The Americans do not know how the variant was detected in California or why the UK reported 32 cases. Of the two cases in India, one is about a patient without any travel history. How is that possible? Unless the world's scientific community pools its resources for a coordinated testing and tracing programme, there is going to be chaos just like during the time of Delta. More than impulsive travel restrictions, the focus is expected to be on intensive testing and tracing.



The second issue where a global understanding is urgently needed is vaccination and vaccine supply. The rich nations and the better among the developing countries are facing the problem of people refusing to vaccinate either because of complacency or issues of privacy. Such people constitute a definite risk to the rest of the population insofar as the transmission is concerned. It is time there is a global debate on making vaccination legally mandatory. If complacency impedes the vaccination process in advanced nations, the lack of vaccines is slowing down the process in the poorest nations of the world, particularly in Africa. Incidentally, India has already cleared all vaccine orders placed by COVAX for supply to African countries, but that alone is not enough. South Africa, along with India, is at the forefront of the global campaign for a proposed temporary waiver of intellectual property rights on COVID-19-related pharmaceuticals. The US has supported the proposal, but the pharmaceuticals and the EU and the UK are not ready. Instead, they want to supply their vaccines – a costly proposition for the poor countries. They also have export restrictions that impede access to vaccine inputs, contribute to uncertainty on delivery timeframes by suppliers, impact clinical trials and impede the movement of samples from global clinical trials to centralized testing sites. Yet, the pharmaceuticals are unmoved. This has led to discrimination between vaccinated and unvaccinated people that the world has to set right fast.

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PICTALK



Indian Navy personnel display their skills during the Navy Week at the Gateway of India, in Mumbai

Celebrity influence to sell products fair?



HASAN KHURSHID

Celebrity endorsements have become an effective marketing tool which can exert greater influence on consumers' attitudes and buying intention

The term 'Hero' denotes a person who is admired for his courage, outstanding achievements or noble qualities. It is generally associated with a war hero. The hero is a character who, in the face of danger, combats adversity through feats of ingenuity, courage or strength. The hero is a role model, looked by others as an example to be imitated. According to Cambridge dictionary, 'hero worship' is a feeling of extreme admiration for someone, imagining that they have qualities or abilities that are better than anyone else's. The concept of hero narratives fulfil important cognitive and emotional needs, including the need for wisdom, meaning, hope, inspiration and growth. The framework called the Heroic Leadership Dynamic (HLD) is to explain how need based heroism shifts overtime from our initial attraction to heroes to later retention or repudiation of heroes. Central to HLD is the idea that hero narratives fulfil both epistemic and energising functions. To energise us, heroes promote moral elevation, heal psychic wounds, inspire psychological growth and exude charisma.

However, gone are the days when 'hero worship' provided the elevation of the human spirit. Today, the concept of role model has shifted from personalities of heroic deeds to film actors, singers, musicians, models, cricketers and other sportspersons, wrestlers and the likes who are simply the professionals in their respective fields but have somehow gained fame and public support. They have no visible role to elevate the human spirits but still, through the vehicle of media resources, have successfully reached to target the impressionable minds, mostly the teenagers to blindly follow them as their role models worthy of veneration. The glamour which they exhibit accelerates their fame and 'star' becomes their pseudonym.

Celebrity endorsement of advertisements make a great impact. However, quite often the endorsements given by celebrities for a particular product are unscrupulous and unreliable as these promoters hardly use the products being endorsed. A few



years ago, the issue of misleading endorsement had cropped up in India, when Maggi noodles were temporarily banned after the food regulator revealed that it contained an excessive amount of lead.

Marketers use celebrity endorsements to make advertisements believable and to enhance consumer recognition of the brand name. Celebrity endorsements as of now have become the most effective marketing tool in advertisements, which can exert a greater influence on consumers' attitudes and buying intention. The millennial generation, especially the college students, are the viable purchasers and brand loyalists. There is a great effect of celebrity-brand congruence and publicity on consumers' choice and buying behaviour. Fans of celebrities quite often seek to imitate or follow the style of their choice celebrities to improve their self-image and self-esteem. As such, they become crazy to purchase the product endorsed by them.

Celebrities cause great influence on the endorsed product. However, for creating such a big influence upon the sale of the endorsed product, they charge heavy amounts from the manufacturers/ businesses. Some celebrities charge up to ₹5.5 crore a day to endorse brands. Several celebrities have also endorsed the co-ownership endorse-

ment model by taking an equity stake in the product brand company. Another form of arrangement is a royalty agreement where the celebrity leases a brand to another company, which is in manufacturing and distribution.

The law of demand states that other factors being constant (ceteris paribus), price and quantity demanded of any good and service are inversely related to each other. When the price of a product increases, the demand for the same product decreases, then increases as the prices fall. However, this rule is changed when not bothering the demand or price of a product endorsed by the favourite celebrity, the consumer out of celebrity influence finds himself forced to buy the product.

Leaving aside the questions of false and misleading advertisements and celebrities' endorsing a product or service without using, experiencing and having knowledge of the product endorsed, the question arises from the principle of reasonableness as well as accounting procedures that the heavy amount paid to celebrities by manufacturer for endorsement in any form is made through business expenses, which ultimately falls on the neck of the consumers.

The phenomenon of marketers' sensitising, informing customers about their prod-

uct/service may be fair enough through reasonable modes but why the intervention of celebrities for recommending a product? How can it be in the consumer's interest, when the choice of the consumer is not the demand of the product but the psychological influence of the endorser? More so, what is the rationale, rule or criteria of celebrities charging heavy amount as fees for endorsement in a most arbitrary, discriminatory, fanciful and unjustified manner? Who decides the quantum of fees and on what measure or basis? The endorsers have been let loose to charge any amount of fees from manufacturers arbitrarily with no legal control.

The question arises whether the heavy cost of endorsement falling upon the neck of the consumer is a consumer rights issue? If yes, then the central authority is empowered to protect, promote and enforce the rights of consumers as a class and prevent violation of consumer rights and unfair trade practices under the CP Act, 2019. The Authority is also empowered to undertake and promote research in the field of consumer rights. It is, therefore, essential to establish that endorsement practice is unfair and prejudiced to consumers interests or rights.

(The writer is a legal journalist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)



THE QUESTION ARISES WHETHER THE HEAVY COST OF ENDORSEMENT FALLING UPON THE NECK OF THE CONSUMER IS A CONSUMER RIGHTS ISSUE? IF YES, THEN THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY IS EMPOWERED TO ENFORCE FAIR TRADE PRACTICES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DELHI'S AIR POLLUTION AND PAKISTAN

Sir — The air pollution in Delhi and adjoining regions is so severe that it is a life-and-death issue; it has serious health implications. The consequences will be very grave if nothing is done to improve the quality of air. When the Supreme Court was hearing the case related to air pollution in Delhi, the Uttar Pradesh Government made the bizarre claim that the smog in Delhi was caused by Pakistan. But for the nightmarish situation in Delhi due to the air pollution, we could have thought that it was comic relief provided by the Yogi Adityanath Government.

The UP Government stretched logic to the limit when it deduced that the toxic air was blowing from Pakistan to cause smog in Delhi, perhaps in a vain bid to pull the wool over our eyes. The 'indictment' of Pakistan as 'the guilty party' prompted Chief Justice NV Ramana to ask in a sarcastic vein if the UP Government wanted the country's top court to ban industries in Pakistan and added, for good measure, that it has no jurisdiction over the neighbouring country. It is absurd to say that Pakistan is responsible for the smog in Delhi; it is common knowledge that emissions from vehicles and industries, road dust, construction activities, garbage burning, stubble burning etc are the major causes for the high levels of pollution.

G David Milton | Maruthanode

E-LEARNING CAN'T COMPARE WITH SCHOOLS

Sir — I tend to disagree with the fact that online classes would enhance the quality of education. On the contrary, students have been facing a lot of issues due to the forced switch over to e-learning from the conventional system of classroom learning. The mandatory shift to online classes has greatly impacted the disadvantaged students living in rural India. Students can easily lose track of their studies in online education, as there are no face-to-face lectures. Until and unless you keep yourself motivated, it takes a long time to complete a course through e-learning.

Though it is imperative to maintain the engagement of students during the

Indian athlete makes a long jump



India's former athlete Anju Bobby George barely needs an introduction. She has won the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics for grooming talent and encouraging young girls in India to take up sports and fight for gender equality. Anju has made India proud by winning such a prestigious award. She dedicated her whole life to the development of women's sports in the country. The 2003 World Championships bronze medalist in long jump has inspired Indian

women to play, learn and grow in sports and bring back laurels for the country. She is truly an inspiration to the women of this country who wish to translate their talent and hard work to success.

We must appreciate her for her exceptional contributions in bringing gender-equity in sports. She has worked hard to promote the importance of women's sports and is a deserving recipient of such an honour. And now, her responsibility has increased and she will continue to show the path to aspiring Indian women sports enthusiasts. Indian women have tremendous talent and will power and if given the right atmosphere, their performance would go up significantly. Lately, Indian women proved the same at the Tokyo Paralympics. We need guides who can refine and mould the raw talent of this nation. And mentors like Anju Bobby George and others can fill this vacuum by bestowing youths with the right inspiration and guidance.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

lockdown, e-learning cannot be smooth and it cannot make up for the academic loss suffered by the students. The most crucial part of a student's life is to learn good communication skills, discipline, social interaction and an optimistic attitude. These qualities can only be achieved when there is a live student-teacher interaction. The most nostalgic part of everyone's life is their school life, which obviously cannot happen in e-learning.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

A DIVIDED OPPOSITION IS GIFT FOR THE BJP

Sir — The TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee declared political war against the ruling BJP and has been trying to stitch alliances with other like minded parties nationwide to that effect. To prove others her credentials as the unchallenged candidate for the leadership position in Opposition camp against PM Modi, she is belittling the role of other potential players, especially the Congress.

Saboteurs

Event managers make our events their own, but some aren't really doing a good turn to anybody

Just a few days back, we wrote in these very columns about the hardships the event managers face, and have faced especially during the lockdown days, but how they are still around with their bubbly spirit and zest to spread smiles, joy and happiness amongst us on our special days. No doubt that this class remains largely unnoticed and unacknowledged, and there were therefore several thank-you messages. But what also emerged was the other side of these performers; it seems they perform not just on stage but there are other arenas, too, before, during and after the booking. There has been more than one instance in the past that a female event manager cut short the duration of her promised appearance at a show because she wanted to spend more time in private with the accompanying DJ. The loss was entirely the host's since he had paid her in advance and now there was neither the stage hostess nor the music player around. Without making much song and dance about this affair, one just prefers to keep things in the right perspective.



The same lady, it now emerges, after apologising and patching things up with her husband, has again taken the high road to merriment. Causing it to occasion with her professional services, or even otherwise, she is learnt in the circles to have a dinner partner in Mumbai's Fort area (when both the parties stay at Mulund and Ghatkopar, and he is no SoBo boy), open to any obvious eye. Nothing illegal about it, only that both of them got acquainted during a trip to their guruji's ashram in Paramdham, Deolali, where this sort of tethering is looked down upon. So it appears to be a vicious pond where things happen to denigrate morality, truth, and societal standards while the garb is to promote happiness, gaiety and joy unto others. But, as it transpires from this case study, these people aren't really doing a good turn to anybody around them, certainly not their families or society at large. The crux here is: There's nothing *naitik* about the whole scheme of things, there is no *Mera Naam Joker* angle here, no sacrifice, only the sensory benefits to accrue from the façade of a smiling demeanour. As 'Ghazal King' Jagjit Singh said, *sarakti jaye hai rukh se naqab, ahista ahista*.

SOUND BITE

We are going to install 1.40 lakh CCTV cameras in phase two of the project in Delhi.



Arvind Kejriwal
—Delhi Chief Minister

The US knows that Putin is putting in place the capability to invade Ukraine in the near future if he desires.

US Secretary of State
—Antony Blinken

While putting on 15 kgs for *Mimi* was a challenge, losing those kilos wasn't easy either.



Actor
—Kirti Sanon

I am delighted to see that the Kerala Government took the initiative to host the senior women's nationals this year.

Former Indian footballer
—Bembem Devi

The PM said that he made a mistake and apologised to the nation. As a result of that mistake, 700 people have died.



Congress leader
—Rahul Gandhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

NOBODY IS SAFE UNTIL EVERYBODY IS SAFE

A year after the first vaccines became available, only six per cent of Africans are fully vaccinated



GWYNNE DYER

The new Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus was discovered by scientists in South Africa and Botswana, the only countries in southern Africa that have the skills and resources to detect a new variant. On November 23, scientists in Botswana uploaded 99 Sars-CoV-2 genome sequences to the Wellcome Sanger Institute in the United Kingdom, which has operated as a clearing house for more than a million such sequences from dozens of countries since March 2020. They noted that three of the genomes seemed different from the usual Delta variant. On the same day a separate team in South Africa uploaded the genomes of seven COVID samples with the same suspicious mutations in the spike protein that the virus uses to infect human cells. Within hours, scientists everywhere could study those genomes on the web, and in 72 hours the WHO declared that we have a fifth 'variant of concern' on our hands. Whereupon the rich countries of the global north instantly slammed their gates shut against travelers from South Africa and nine other



countries in the same region. It's not even clear that this is where the variant first emerged, but never mind all that. Prof Tulio de Oliveira, the Durban-based scientist leading the effort to understand the new variant, pointed out that South Africa has been "very transparent with scientific information...The world should provide support to South Africa and Africa and not discriminate or isolate it." Fat chance. By Sunday South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa was warning that the travel ban "is not informed by science, nor will it be effective in preventing the spread of this variant."

The only thing the prohibition on travel will do is to further damage the economies of the affected countries and undermine their ability to respond to and recover from the pandemic. "Where to start? Perhaps with the fact that there is no country called 'Africa'. For example, there is actually no shortage of vaccines in South Africa, a semi-developed country where the main problem is vaccine reluctance. Internet access is high and mistrust of authority is even higher, so only 27 per cent of South Africans are fully vaccinated. The risk of new variants emerging still exists even in rich countries where the Covid virus continues to circulate widely. In most African countries, and in the poorest Asian countries as well, the risk is very high and will remain so, because they just can't get enough vaccines. A year after the first vaccines became available, only 6 per cent of Africans are fully vaccinated. Twelve billion vaccine doses will have been produced in the world by the end of this month (December), which is more than enough for every human being over 18 years old. But the rationing is mainly done by price, so school-children are being vaccinated and adults are getting a third jab in the wealthy countries, while several billion adults have not yet had their first jab in the global south. And in the meantime, they are also punishing the economies of the poor by imposing knee-jerk travel bans on an entire region of Africa on suspicion of harbouring the Omicron virus — even though we all know that it has already been confirmed in Europe and Asia, and is doubtless present in the Americas too. The right move, even at this late date, is to focus all the world's energies on getting vaccines into the poorest countries: 'nobody is safe until everybody is safe'. Omicron looks like it may be a big problem, and there could be even bigger ones behind it.

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

Can doctoral degrees make better teachers?



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

Michael Faraday did an apprenticeship, and had no degree; Charles Darwin had an 'ordinary' degree in theology and James Joule had no degree at all

It is often said that the quality of higher education in a country rests on the hands of the number of PhDs holder produced by her. With this objective, policymakers of higher education give more impetus to increase the number of doctoral degree holders every year. Even during the accreditation process of UGC-NAAC more thrust is given to the number of PhD holders in an institution. The UGC is also supporting teachers through faculty improvement programs to pursue PhD. Even those who do not have any interest in research also do PhD for the sake of promotions. Does a greater number of PhD holders improve the academic or research culture of a country? Do such people do any good for the academic system?

A debate was triggered earlier this month when Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that making a PhD degree mandatory for the post of assistant professor at universities is "not favourable" in the current education system.

If we analyze the quality of an average PhD holder from a state university or private university, we get a dismal picture of our higher education (with few exceptions). There are many who even do not know how to state a research problem or how to cite references properly. Quality in higher education cannot be attributed to the degree one holds. If the number of PhDs and high impact factor publications is the scale for measuring quality, our country would have produced hundreds of Nobel Laureates and we would have solved many of the problems afflicting our society.

In history we find many eminent scientists without a PhD degree or even a good academic degree. Michael Faraday did an apprenticeship, and had no degree; Charles Darwin, had an 'ordinary' degree in theology; and James Joule, had no degree at all. John Walker, who won the Copley Medal and the Nobel Prize, got a third-class honours degree; and Admiral Henry Jackson, who invented radio communication between ships, did not have a degree either.

In one of the studies published in The Biologist, it is reported that 10 per cent of the distinguished scientists who were listed in the prestigious Fellows of the Royal Society (FRS) never had degrees. Our own great scientist and teacher Sir C V Raman did not have a research degree. Clearly, degrees or grades are not a reliable indicator of the research or academic ability and potential of a candidate. Using degree scores alone would have prevented many world-famous scientists from building successful careers if they had lived today.

Considering the facts from history, the statement of the Union Education Minister is a welcome step for people who value knowledge and wisdom above certificates or degrees.

In higher education what is needed is the transformation of the students to equip them to solve the problems faced by soci-



IF WE ANALYSE THE QUALITY OF AN AVERAGE PHD HOLDER FROM A STATE OR PRIVATE UNIVERSITY, WE GET A DISMAL PICTURE OF OUR HIGHER EDUCATION (WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS). THERE ARE MANY WHO EVEN DO NOT KNOW HOW TO STATE A RESEARCH PROBLEM OR HOW TO CITE REFERENCES PROPERLY. QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION CANNOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE DEGREE ONE HOLDS

(The writer is a science communicator and columnist. The views expressed are personal.)



ety and also to mold them into citizens having good values. Unfortunately, today's education fails to impart these. Academic transformation can be achieved only by updating the latest developments in the subject. Regrettably, most of our teachers are not interested in updating the subject. The students are fed with information of the 70s or 80s or 90s that these teachers learned during their college days and they ask students to write the same for university examinations. Teachers of this group do not even students to refer to standard books.

Many teachers who have taken doctoral degrees have the feeling that they have climbed Mount Everest and they do not need to learn further. They even have a feeling that they should be focused only on MSc and PhD classes as they are superior. Many do not engage themselves with BSc and MSc classes citing workload mentioned in UGC rules, which gives weightage to teachers who are engaged in research. In many affiliated colleges having research centers, BSc and MSc students get less focus from this group of teachers. In university centers the situation is so pathetic that many are not interested even in taking classes, their only focus is research. In many university centers, theory and practical sessions for post-graduate students are carried out by research scholars.

Of course, in science education, research and teaching are two sides of the same coin and we cannot

neglect either one. The attention of teachers is needed for molding undergraduate students as they are fresh and need the assistance of teachers. The students who come for MSc and PhD are people who usually have already a clear set of objectives.

Value-based education can be provided only if a teacher has some connection with society. Most of the present-day college teachers feel they are an elite class. A teacher having more degrees and honors becomes totally excluded from society. During earlier days students had good role models among their teachers. But in today's world even a teacher's life is corrupted with the dismal state of society. Most of the present-day teachers do not like to correct students; they only fulfill their duty as a lecturer providing one hour lecture or giving a test and teacher-student relationship ends just there.

To be a good teacher one needs to be a good student. Only a good student can excel as a teacher. To be a good student means always opening your eyes and ears to the learning process. A good teacher need not be one who holds a PhD degree. The reason in most cases is that once a person is awarded a PhD degree, he feels that his learning process is complete and becomes egotistic. They feel that they are superior superhuman beings and nobody should question them. This creates a negative impact on the academic culture of our students. In science education, this atti-

tude will destroy the questioning nature of students.

To be a good teacher is more difficult than securing a PhD degree. A good teacher should be able to understand the academic level of each student and accordingly deliver the content. It is really more challenging than doing a value lab experiment. In higher education what we lack today is the presence of a good teacher. Only a good teacher can instill scientific creativity in students.

There are many passionate researchers among our school teachers who do not have a post-graduate degree, but still are better researchers compared to PhD holders. We have to tap the resources of such great teachers. But the so-called scientific community will not accept them as they do not have a PhD. The Government should provide opportunities for such teachers to showcase their talents. We need to promote them with an award equivalent to Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize given to researchers. Solutions to problems affecting the community can be solved only if we tap the intellectual ability of so-called non-scientific people who lack a PhD. It is the undue importance we give to the PhD degree that harms the productivity in science. Science should be respected looking at the work one does, not by one's degree. In higher education what we need is good teachers who enlighten our youngsters and create a strong intellectual pool for the country.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THERE IS NO UPA IN INDIA ANYMORE. ONLY THE UNITY OF REGIONAL PARTIES CAN DEFEAT THE BJP IN THE 2024 ELECTIONS.
—WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER
MAMATA BANERJEE



IT CAN BE POLITICAL OPPORTUNISM FOR MAMATA BANERJEE. BUT, FOR US, FIGHTING THE RSS-BJP LINE IS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH.
—CONGRESS LEADER
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Delhi's response to air pollution needs a rethinking

The Delhi-NCR's plan to mitigate air pollution requires better-timed measures with actions being more 'pre-emptive' rather than 'reactive'

The COVID-19 pandemic was an unexpected disruption but air pollution remains the national capital's chronic crisis which recurs on a yearly basis. Year after year, it is a familiar story — farm fires meet firecrackers in November, Delhi-NCR and the Indo-Gangetic plain choke and the annual blame game starts. After a two-month-uproar, come February, everyone moves on.

In 2017, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) was introduced specifically to combat winter air pollution in Delhi. However, the primary issue is that the GRAP measures are reactive and linked to higher levels of measured PM 2.5 and PM 10 concentrations. As a result, the appropriate response measures targeting



TANUSHREE GANGLY MILAN GEORGE JACOB

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sources are usually activated too late. For instance, actions such as private vehicle restrictions, construction bans and school closures kick in only when the fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) levels of 300 ug/m³ — 20-times the World Health Organisation's safe limit — persist for at least 48 hours.

Hot mix plants, stone crushers and brick kiln operations are required to be shut only when air quality crosses the severe mark (250 ug/m³). In 2021, Delhi is better equipped with an early warning system that gives a three-day pollution forecast and a dedicated Decision Support System (DSS) developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology that pin-points sources of pollution. However,



these systems are not in sync with the GRAP.

Delhi-NCR's action plan to tackle air pollution requires a fundamental rethink. More measures need to be 'pre-emptive' rather than 'reactive' as we propose in this four-point plan.

First, the threshold for declaring a public health emergency and restricting highly polluting activities like industrial operations, vehicular movement, and construction has to be brought down from 48 hours of PM_{2.5} concentrations at 'severe' level (>300

ug/m³). The threshold should be improved to 'very poor' (PM_{2.5} > 121 ug/m³) in the next three years and eventually to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards limit of 60 ug/m³ if Delhi-NCR is to ensure clean air round the year. Public messaging should be stepped up at the threshold and citizens should be encouraged to limit their outdoor movements. The messaging should also include air quality forecasts so that citizens can plan activities accordingly. Similar to COVID-19, lockdowns should be acceptable even in the case of chronic crises like air pollution, the long-term impacts of which are much worse.

Secondly, the response measures in the GRAP should be triggered by the early warn-

ing system and in sync with the forecasted source contributions. This means that if 'severe' air quality is forecast for the next two days and the primary contributor is to be local vehicular emissions, then vehicular restrictions should be imposed in the city. For a system that is driven by forecasts, continuous validation of the forecasts becomes equally important. Also, efforts should be made to ensure that the forecasting system captures and reflects on-ground conditions and episodic contributors. Thirdly, the NCR and states of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh should have a common winter response plan, which should be notified under the Commission of Air Quality Management in NCR and adjoining areas Act, 2021.

For instance, a survey from last winter found that power plants and industries accounted for 15 per cent of Delhi's winter particulate concentrations. However, there are no coal-fired power plants within Delhi's jurisdiction. Equally, states in the region resort to using some of their most inefficient plants to fulfill their power needs, on account of perverse incentives that keep efficient plants moth-balled. Therefore, one component of the regional plan must be to ensure that all large-scale industries around NCR comply with minimum efficiency and emission standards.

Fourthly, create a fund that pools resources from the environment damages compensation paid by industries and the green cess paid by

commercial vehicles entering Delhi. Such a fund can compensate the weakest of those affected by air pollution, especially during economic shutdowns. It can provide a safety net to informal sector workers like construction labourers and micro and small enterprises. Further, the fund can also be used to accelerate clean energy transition for Delhi NCR's urban poor, thereby reducing household emissions.

Air pollution is certainly not insurmountable. Look at the examples of London, Los Angeles, and even Beijing for inspiration. These cities have successfully improved the quality of air and thereby, quality of life. With a recalibrated approach to solving for clean air, Delhi too can add itself to the list.

Govt proposes to have national retail trade policy: Parkash

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government proposes to have a national retail trade policy for creating a conducive environment to streamline the growth of all formats of such trade, and stakeholder consultations are being held for that, Parliament was informed on Friday.

Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash in a written reply to a query in the Rajya Sabha said a conducive environment can be created by simplifying rules and regulations.

"The government proposes to have a national retail trade policy for creating a conducive environment for streamlining growth of all formats of retail trade, including by simplifying rules and regulations."

Stakeholder consultations are being held," he said.

Sensex tanks 764 pts, Nifty sinks below 17,200

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex plunged 765 points on Friday, dragged by losses in index-heavyweights Reliance Industries, HDFC twins and Kotak Bank, after India reported its first case of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The Centre on Thursday said two cases of Omicron have been detected in Karnataka. Both the patients are men, aged 66 and 46 years, with mild symptoms. Severe symptoms have not been noted, an official said.

The 30-share BSE index ended 764.83 points or 1.31 per cent lower at 57,696.46. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 204.95 points or 1.18 per cent to 17,196.70.

PowerGrid was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding over 4 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries, Asian Paints, Kotak Bank, Tech Mahindra and Bharti Airtel.



On the other hand, L&T, IndusInd Bank, Tata Steel and UltraTech Cement were among the gainers. According to Gaurav Garg, Head of Research, Capitalvia Global Research, traders are concerned with the uncertainty surrounding the Omicron variant.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Seoul and Tokyo ended with gains, while Hong Kong was in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a positive note in mid-session deals. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude surged 2.38 per cent to USD 71.32 per barrel.

L&T, Kemroc ink pact for distribution of products

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Friday said it has entered into a pact with Kemroc, a global manufacturer of attachments for excavators and backhoe loaders, to distribute the latter's cutting-edge products in India.

The agreement covers Kemroc-developed special attachments, including its patented EK series of chain cutters. These chain cutters are a game-changer in rock trenching and are well accepted across the world, including India.

"Larsen & Toubro...and Kemroc, a global manufacturer of attachments for excavators and backhoe loaders, have entered into a distribution agreement that will facilitate Kemroc products to be distributed and promoted in the Indian market by L&T," the company said in a statement.

'Integrated infra, coordinated efforts in line with PM Gati Shaktis'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry on Friday said integrated infrastructure and coordinated efforts in line with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan will help in augmenting coal production in the country.

The issue was discussed during a meeting, organised under the chairmanship of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, to review the mission of Coal India Ltd to produce one billion tonnes of coal by 2025-26. In October, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a Rs 100-lakh crore national master plan (NMP) for multi-modal connectivity that aims to develop infrastructure to reduce logistic costs and boost the economy.

Coal remains the primary domestic fuel for India as well as the single largest commodity transported across the country, the ministry said in a statement.

"In line with PM Gati Shakti, the development of integrated infrastructure with



coordinated efforts by all infrastructure ministries lies at the heart of further augmentation of coal production and evacuation capacity through multi-modal connectivity," it said.

As discussed in the meeting, rail remains the dominant evacuation mode for coal with an aim to expand its modal share from 64 per cent to 75 per cent by FY 2030.

To cater to the increased coal dispatch in Chhattisgarh and Odisha, 14 railway infrastructure projects are under implementation in line with

Gati Shakti principles. It said that the Ministry of Railways has developed the Freight Operations Information System to monitor the movement of freight trains that also calculates freight and other charges.

A similar facility called the Port Community System (PCS) has been developed by the Ministry of Ports Shipping and Waterways to provide a platform for secure exchange of information between government agencies, terminal operators and traders.

MONEY MATTERS

Rupee falls 14 paise to 75.16 against US\$ on new COVID variant worries

The rupee on Friday slipped 14 paise to close at 75.16 (provisional) against the US dollar, tracking massive sell-offs in domestic equities amid growing worries over the new COVID variant. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 74.98 and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.95 and a low of 75.18 against the US dollar in a highly volatile trading session.



The local unit finally settled at 75.16 a dollar, down 14 paise over its previous close. The rupee on Thursday settled at 75.02 against the US dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent up at 96.21. The rupee has been under pressure over the last few trading sessions as the detection of the new coronavirus variant reignited growth concerns and hurt risk appetite. Besides, unabated foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiments, traders said. Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 909.71 crore, as per exchange data.

Gold prices decline by Rs 196; silver tanks Rs 146



Gold in the national capital on Friday dipped Rs 196 to Rs 46,581 per 10 gram in line with fall in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 46,777 per 10 gram.

Silver also declined Rs 146 to Rs 59,878 per kilogram from Rs 60,024 per kilogram in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,767 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 22.30 per ounce. "Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX were trading down at USD 1,767 per ounce on Friday," according to HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst (Commodities), Tapan Patel.

Govt advises NDDB to bring its subsidiaries under RTI Act

The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has been advised to bring all its subsidiaries, including Mother Dairy, under the RTI Act, 2005, the government said on Friday. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala said the NDDB has been advised "to extend the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005 in Mother Dairy Fruit and Vegetable Pvt. Ltd (MDFVPL) and other subsidiary companies in the interest of transparency, accountability and to increase the trust of consumers."



Mother Dairy is one of the leading milk suppliers in the country. It sells more than 30 lakh litres of milk per day in the Delhi-NCR market. In reply, the NDDB has stated that the decision regarding applicability of RTI Act, 2005 is sub-judice in the case of MDFVPL, the minister said.

Microtek plans to invest Rs 500 crore to boost products



Power appliance maker Microtek is planning to invest Rs 500 crore to boost its electric product business over the next one year, a senior company official said on Friday. The company will primarily make investments in research and development and ramping up the manufacturing of its

products. "We have crossed Rs 250 crore revenue. We are targeting to cross Rs 400 crore revenue and invest Rs 500 crore in the next one year," Microtek International Deputy Managing Director Saurabh Gupta said. As per industry estimates, the domestic electrical equipment market is expected to grow at an annual rate of 12 per cent to reach around 5.4 lakh crore by 2025, he added. "So, there is an immense potential in the market, which Microtek as an Indian company is very keen to tap," Gupta said. The company at present is engaged in the manufacturing of power inverters, solar solutions, electric vehicle chargers, wires and cables etc.

RBI new norms likely to increase NBFCs bad loans by one-third

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The recent clarification by the Reserve Bank of India on non-performing advances (NPA) may increase non-banking financial companies' (NBFC) bad loans by one-third, says a report.

Last month, the RBI had provided clarification on income recognition asset classification and provisioning (IRAC) norms for banks, NBFCs and All-India Financial Institutions.

The clarification included classification of special mention account (SMA) and NPA on a day-end position basis and upgrade from an NPA to standard category only after clearance of all outstanding overdues.

"The RBI's clarification on non-performing advances (NPAs) accounting is likely to increase NPAs by around one-third for non-banking finance companies (NBFCs)," domestic rating agency India Ratings and Research said in a report on Friday.

However, the impact on provisioning could be modest,



given NBFCs are using Indian Accounting Standards (IND-AS) and generally for higher rated NBFCs, provision policy is more conservative than IRAC requirements.

The report said the RBI circular also calls for daily stamping of accounts to count the number of days they are overdue instead of a monthly or quarterly stamping.

This again would result in an accelerated pace of NPA recognition for accounts, it said.

NBFC borrowers, typically where there is cash collection, pay their overdues generally with some delays. Accounts can get into NPA category

just for a day's delay in paying the instalments and once it gets categorised as NPA it will not be able to become standard unless all the arrears are cleared, the report said.

"So, in other words, accounts would get categorised as NPAs at a faster pace and would remain sticky in that category for a longer period of time. Both these accounting treatments would result in higher headline numbers for NBFCs," it said.

It may so happen that NBFCs would disclose NPA numbers as per IRAC norms and stage 3 numbers as per Ind-As separately in their disclosures, the agency said.

UAE agrees to buy French warplanes after Macron visits Gulf

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

France says the United Arab Emirates has purchased 80 French-made Rafale warplanes for 16 billion euros. There was no immediate confirmation of the deal from Emirati officials.

The French Defense Ministry described the deal as France's largest-ever weapons contract for export. French President Emmanuel Macron is in the Emirates on the first stop of his two-day visit to the Gulf.

Macron's two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Saudi Arabia comes a month before France assumes the rotating European Union presidency — and ahead of the French 2022 presidential election where Macron is expected to seek a second term.

Returning from the Gulf with a contract to sell French fighter jets to the Emirates, a deal that Paris and Abu Dhabi have discussed for almost a



decade, would boost France's defense industry after the collapse of a \$66 billion contract for Australia to buy 12 French submarines.

And the red carpet treatment Macron can expect from Gulf political heavyweights would present France as the EU powerhouse in the Gulf and Middle East since Britain's exit from the bloc.

"Macron stands out among European Union leaders with his willingness to be in the

spotlight, to drive the foreign policy and push things ahead," said Silvia Colombo, an expert on EU-Gulf relations at the International Affairs Institute in Rome.

But, primarily, Macron is pursuing French business interests, Colombo said. "He has a very clear idea that he has to go where the business community wants to be, where France can make economic gains."

Macron's keen interest in

forging personal relationships with leaders like Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, and his counterpart in Saudi Arabia, Mohamed bin Salman Al Saud, makes him a welcome guest. Both Gulf leaders value a degree of pragmatism when discussing democracy and human rights — issues on which their countries have been heavily criticized by rights groups and European lawmakers — while pursuing business opportunities.

France has deep ties to the United Arab Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, particularly since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. The UAE opened a French naval base in 2009 at Abu Dhabi's Port Zayed. French warplanes and personnel are also stationed at Al-Dhafra Air Base, a major facility outside the Emirati capital of Abu Dhabi that's also home to several thousand American troops.

'Singapore fits into India's reform process'

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore fits very much into what India will do in the next 30 years as part of the ongoing reform process and building on the past three decades of liberalisation, acclaimed economist and Principal Economic Advisor to the Indian government Sanjeev Sanyal has said.

Speaking at an event organised by a Singapore-based think tank on Thursday, Sanyal said India and its States have a lot to learn from Singapore's development programmes, especially in infrastructure, municipal management, waste and water management, as well as energy conservation.

"All of these are issues which India, at different scales of urban systems, requires to do," he said at the Seventh Lecture on 'After The Pandemic: India's Reforms and Renewal' organised by the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) and the Indian High Commission here. The event was held virtually on Thursday.

Responding to a question



on Singapore's relevance to reforms and redevelopment in India, Sanyal said: "It fits very much into what we are going to be doing for the next 30 years of reforms", particularly in the delivery of services.

"This is a journey (of India) in which Singapore has a lot to do," he said, pointing out the expected developments and implementations of projects by India over the next 30 years as part of the ongoing reform process and building on the past three decades of liberalisation that was started in 1991.

Describing Singapore as an excellent example of development, he said, "We have a lot to learn from Singapore."

US steps up disclosure pressure on Chinese firms

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Chinese companies will have to disclose more information about audits and whether they are controlled by a government or else leave US stock markets under a rule approved by securities regulators.

The rule approved on Thursday by the Securities and Exchange Commission steps up a long-running standoff between Washington and Beijing over how much information companies with US-traded shares must disclose.

Companies that used an auditor in a foreign jurisdiction will be required to confirm they are not "owned or controlled by a government entity" there, according to the SEC. Companies also will be required to disclose additional information in annual reports.

"Trading prohibitions" can be imposed on some companies, the SEC said.

Other governments cooper-



ate with US demands for more financial details from companies to prevent false reporting. But Beijing, citing security concerns, refuses to allow the US Public Companies Accounting Oversight Board to review work of Chinese auditors.

China's government criticized the move and warned it might block American investors from access to fast-growing companies.

The measure is an attempt to "politically suppress Chinese companies" and "contain China's development," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian.

TVS Emerald announces new finance scheme

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Emerald Haven Realty Ltd (TVS Emerald), the real estate division of TVS Group, on Friday announced the rolling out of new finance scheme for its project TVS Emerald Atrium to home-buyers.

The gated apartment project is part of 18-acre community development "TVS Emerald Green Acres" coming up in neighbouring Perungalathur.

According to a statement from the company, TVS Emerald rolled out the limited period finance scheme 10:85:5 scheme which allows home-buyers payment flexibility as



they need not take up a home loan until two years.

An aspiring home-buyer needs to pay 10 per cent as booking charge and 85 per cent of payment after two years on completion of flooring of the purchased unit. The balance 5 per cent can be payable during the possession of the apartment, the statement said.

The scheme can be availed till December 15, the company said.

"We are delighted at the strong, positive response to our new project TVS Emerald Atrium. To fast-track the project and also offer home-buyers a unique value proposition,

we have launched a limited period scheme 10-85:5 scheme," president of TVS Emerald Sriram Iyer said.

"The customer is not required to take a loan or have a financial burden till two years from the day of booking thereby ensuring savings on pre-emi of upto Rs 6 lakh," he said. Spread across 2.5 acre, TVS Emerald Atrium comprises four towers, eight-storied building with spacious 2 BHK and 3 BHK apartments ranging in carpet areas from 567 square foot to 845 square foot. The units are priced at Rs 49 lakh onwards, the statement added.

FDI in food processing dips

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) in food processing sector declined 54 per cent to Rs 2,934.12 crore in 2020-21 as compared to the previous year, the government said on Friday. In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Prahlad Singh Patel informed that the FDI in the food processing sector stood at Rs 4,430.44 crore in 2018-19, Rs 6,414.67 crore during 2019-20 and Rs 2,934.12 crore during the 2020-21 financial year.

CARDI B BECOMES FIRST-EVER CREATIVE DIRECTOR IN RESIDENCE FOR PLAYBOY

Rapper Cardi B has been named Playboy's first-ever creative director in residence. The WAP hitmaker took to social media to share the news, which will see her become the very first person to be creative director in residence of the iconic brand, reports femalefirst.co.uk. Sharing the news on Instagram, she said: "Introducing the FIRST EVER Creative Director In Residence at the legendary @playboy, it's ME!!! Joining the @playboy family is a dream and I know y'all are going to love what we put together."

"I'm starting this party right as the Founding Creative Director and a founding member of Centerfold the new creator-led platform from Playboy coming soon!! We're going to have soooooo much fun."

According to a press release obtained by People magazine, Cardi's role will involve providing "artistic direction" across the Playboy brand.

The release stated: "Cardi will provide artistic direction across co-branded fashion and sexual wellness merchandise col-

lections, digital editorial, experiential activations and more. In addition, Cardi B will serve as the Founding Creative Director and a founding member of Playboy's upcoming creator-led platform, Centerfold."

According to People, Centerfold is expected to launch this month and will be Playboy's social content platform that will offer creators tools to directly interact with fans.

In the release, 29-year-old Cardi said: "It is a dream come true to officially join the Playboy family. I can't believe this is real. For as long as I can remember, I've felt con-

nected to Playboy. It's truly the original platform for uncensored creativity and I'm inspired by its incredible legacy of fighting for personal freedoms. I have so many ideas already — I can't wait! I'm also excited to launch our new creator-led platform, Centerfold. Creators today deserve to express themselves freely and unfiltered. They deserve to feel safe in their creativity and sexuality. And they deserve to own their future."

"This is what Centerfold is all about. For all those creators out there doing bold, revolutionary, truly culture-shifting things, come join me."



to new and exciting ventures. We are all set to begin production soon."

Kandahar is being produced by Thunder Road Films, the producers of the John Wick and Sicario, G-BASE and Capstone Group.

Scottish actor Gerard Butler, well known for Zack Snyder's historical epic picture 300 and the Has Fallen series, stars as an undercover CIA operative named Tom Harris. Harris is trapped in hostile terrain and must work with an Afghan interpreter to successfully evade "elite special forces" in order to reach an extraction point in the titular Afghan city.

Following the success of his titular role in Victoria and Abdul, Ali Fazal will also be seen as one of the leads in Kenneth Branagh's next film Death On The Nile. The film which has been repeatedly postponed is based on Agatha Christie's famed detective novel of the same name.



on his experiences while working for the Defense Intelligence Agency in Afghanistan. The film's production is set to begin soon in Saudi Arabia.

Talking about being part of the project, Fazal says, "I always look forward

Ali Fazal is set to star in his next major Hollywood film. This time around, it's in an action thriller. Fazal will play one of the key roles in the film which also stars Gerard Butler. The film is directed by Ric Roman Waugh, and the filming has already begun.

According to a report by Deadline, the title of the movie is Kandahar, and this will be the first Hollywood production to shoot entirely in Saudi Arabia.

The film helmed by Waugh is based on a screenplay he co-wrote with former military intelligence officer Mitchell LaFortune. The plot is based

Alaya F shares importance of acting in her life

Alaya F who made her promising debut with Jawaani Janeman alongside Saif, has been making headlines for her perfect craft. The young actress burst onto the scene with her award winning performance and ace her acting skills in the film. Alaya rose to fame in a short span of time and now has a huge lineup of films in her canvas, including Ekta Kapoor's U-Turn, Freddy alongside Kartik Aaryan and Anurag Kashyaps untitled next.

Just recently, Alaya mentioned the importance of acting in her life, said, "For me, everything is always about learning and growing. As long as I'm enjoying the learning, I'm very happy. It's the same as acting for me in a lot of ways; it's all about following your instincts, learning from it, refining it, and develop-

ing better instincts to put into practice the next time. It's a lot of trial and error, but I see myself feeling more confident and self-assured each time. That's the best feeling! I'm so grateful that I get to have

so many different roles in one lifetime. I'm even more grateful that I get to pick up so many skills along the way to refine and grow from and grow into every day."

Alaya, as the breakout star of Jawaani Janeman not only won over both audiences and critics with her easy-going charm, but also excelled at hitting the right emotional keys.

Having won Debutante of the Year award with the film, the actress has been becoming the face of brands, making it to the magazine covers and signing for exciting projects.

Netizens are eagerly waiting to see Alaya's versatility in her upcoming films.



Taapsee Pannu's Shabaash Mithu to release in Feb 2022

Taapsee Pannu-starrer Shabaash Mithu, the biopic of Indian cricketer Mithali Raj, is set to release worldwide theatrically on February 4 next year, the makers announced on Friday.

Backed by Viacom18 Studios, the biographical film is directed by noted Bengali filmmaker Srijit Mukherji.

Shabaash Mithu is a coming-of-age tale of women's cricket in India as witnessed by the most successful woman cricketer. It will chronicle the highs and lows, setbacks and moments of euphoria of Raj's life, the official synopsis



of the film reads. Pannu, 34, essays the role of Raj.

Viacom18 Studios announced the release date of the movie on the occasion of the Indian women's cricket team captain's 39th birthday.

"ONE GIRL with HER CRICKET BAT has shattered world records and stereotypes. You've done it all Champ Happy Birthday Mithu @M_Raj03 Partying face

#ShabaashMithu in theatres on 4/02/2022. @taapsee @ActorVijayRaaz @AndhareAjit @priyaaven," the banner's official Twitter handle posted.

The film, written by Priya Aven, went on floors in Mumbai in April and the team wrapped the shooting last month.

Some portions of the film have been shot at the iconic Lord's cricket ground in London.

Seasoned actor Vijay Raaz will be seen in a key role in the film.

Ali Fazal joins Gerard Butler in Angel Has Fallen director's upcoming action thriller

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

- 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 large animal
- Poultry product
- Shriek
- A teacher, usually for one pupil at a time
- Train tracks
- Follows an order
- Car engine
- Very easy to do
- A young sheep
- A building material that sets hard

DOWN

- These are held when people choose their government
- The number in an octet



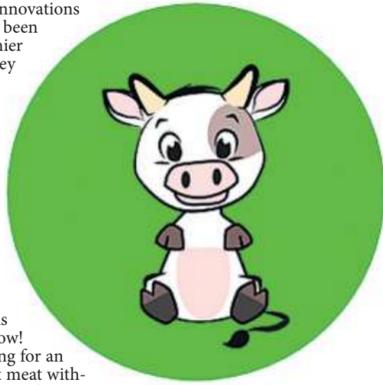
GINGER MEGGS



SHIKHA DUGGAL

This love affair with veganism is increasing day by day. So much so that Hyderabad city will be having its first ever vegan expo market! Wondering what it is? It is no less than a flea market but a marketplace or an exhibition full of cruelty-free products and cuisine. The trajectory of veganism has reached its zenith now. Seattle returnee Rupa Obulreddigari, who also owns Alt Mart, a plant-based start-up, is one of the organisers for this one-of-its-kind event for vegans. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer* ahead of the event, the organiser tells, "The pandemic puts this concept into even greater focus and it will not just be a passionate place for only vegans but also an

through lots of innovations and people have been looking at healthier options when they eat out. As per research, more and more people are choosing a healthier and vegan lifestyle and are looking for healthy alternatives for meat substitutes. Meatless meat, the meat that tastes like meat is the new order now! People are looking for an alternative to eat meat without any guilt. It is said that 79% of millen-



Our daily relishes will be simply available in the form of vegan vigor, such as a vegan ice-cream or vegan 'mysore pak' or vegan donuts. At the event, the non-vegetarians can liberally explore how a vegan lifestyle goes basically. With personal experience, I know there is so much buzz around it already in the city. We definitely want the locals to experience this to understand how compassionate we can be in terms of our food choices towards animals and planet as well." According to reports, at least 50 billion chickens are killed for food. There is even more large livestock that are taken to slaughter houses & almost impossible to count the creatures which

tion is vegetarian now. In just one year, plant-based meat went from something very few Americans had heard of to something that 40 per cent have tried. The USA and Singapore are advanced markets in this. And space is changing rapidly. While there is so much happening in the west, unfortunately, Hyderabad, the city of nawabs, never had an opportunity to witness such a marketplace. That is why this event is planned. She continued, "Many vegan cafes are coming up in Hyderabad also now still we have a long way to go in veganism. I was fascinated to know of minute vegan communities here as soon as I moved back from Seattle to this city. Veganism is also on the rise for health reasons too! A series of surveys and findings reveal that eating quality plant-based food lowers the risk of death by 30%. And a plant-based diet

VEGAN FIRST

nials at least outside India have tried alternative proteins. Alternative plant foods, meat products, innovations in seafood, even in pet foods all are future now. The maiden vegan market will bring vegan and conscious businesses together to put forth a splendid

cruelty-free assortment. All this will be seen in the vegan expo too being held at Phoenix Arena in Hi-Tech City this Sunday. The organiser continues, "It made complete sense to get all the vegan brands from Hyderabad on one platform to explain what veganism is exactly and to also spread awareness about the killing of animals.

are pulled out of seas! All at the cost of the environment. Nearly 20% of the world population

reduces the risk of death from heart disease by 40%." Lastly, Rupa has finally realised the importance of veganism even in her life and is always on the look-out for healthy options after the pandemic.

entry-

way to those who are curious to know more about veganism." She says, "It will be largely a place for those who believe in a more compassionate world, which is animal, health and planet friendly. I am collaborating with Enya, which is another women-led vegan startup. In a personal conversation with the founder of the dairy alternative, it struck us how we must ensure the rise of veganism in Hyderabad city too. It is one of a kind vegan expo that is never held here! Some of the highlights include an open-air ambience, all-day vegan cafe and it is a pet-friendly event. The pet adoption booth will be hosted by People for Animals. The city's upcoming artists will enthrall the visitors with live music too." During the enlightened conversation — words like healthy or plant-based came as the buzz-words smacking us from everywhere. It is a perfect time to go vegan because food habits, eating trends, everything is changing rapidly across the globe. The food industry is going



It will be largely a place for those who believe in a more compassionate world, which is animal, health and planet friendly. I am collaborating with Enya, which is another women-led vegan startup. In a personal conversation with the founder

of the dairy alternative, it struck us how we must ensure the rise of veganism in Hyderabad city too. It is one of a kind vegan expo that is never held here! Some of the highlights include an open-air ambience, all-day vegan cafe and it is a pet-friendly event. The pet adoption booth will be hosted by People for Animals. The city's upcoming artists will enthrall the visitors with live music too.

— RUPA OBULREDDIGARI,



IT'S A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN!

K RAMYA SREE

From swiping right to raising funds, to establishing a multi-million dollar company, this entrepreneur duo is giving us the major business and couple goals.

In conversation with *The Pioneer*, the couple shares their love story that led to building their empire in the entrepreneur world.

It was the beginning of 2018 when the couple — Rahul and Pallavi — swiped each other right. "For a fact, I was the first one Pallavi took 20 seconds to decide whether to Swipe Right or Left and then did it right saying "Shaadi thode hi karni hai". This was the very beginning of us getting to know each other. Right from the beginning, we weren't the normal duo who would ask about what you like and dislike and like find ways to hang out or just text all the time and ask to meet up. When we swiped each other right and it was a "Match" it was a very humble beginning," shares Rahul on how he met his better half.

The couple says they started to get positive vibes from each other from the very first day they started to chat with each other. Pallavi comes from a Finance and Accounting background and Rahul was a Business Analytics back then. They say they were quite happy with what they had got but there was always a spark to do something more, something out of the box and they could just feel it in their conversations.

The couple who used to share tons of information on the startup world and how to start a business finally went on to set up a platform called GetWork on stealth mode. "I got to know Pallavi was working on her own travel-based start-up named "Muskurahatein" and I was so excited to finally meet someone in a strange city who understood the pains of being a solo founder. We just got along so good helping each other to grow," shares Rahul.

He further adds about his entrepreneurial, "For me, GetWork was my life and Muskurahatein was for Pallavi, both of our Startups were in Stealth mode and then later in 2018 I switched to full-time at GetWork while Pallavi pursued entrepreneurship along with her Job, it was for the first time that Pallavi recommended us to one of her

work-clients for some freelance work. This was the first time that we met, over a business proposal. And that was the beginning of an amazing relationship where we used to take out time after office, discuss ideas, put together flyers, makeup google ads, and WordPress website. We both were so supportive of each other and were exploring more than just love. It was the beginning of a firm relationship fuelled with a dream to achieve something bigger than us. We were strangers a year back and now we both were building great stuff and helping each other get closer to our dreams."

The best decision the couple ever made was to work together.

"For a solo founder, finding the right partner, in business and in life, is always as important as the start-up itself. And I found that in Pallavi. She helped in keeping me sane through all these years and now was the time when we put all the pieces together as a strong couple to build the multi-million-dollar business together. It is a dream-like love story that we live every day where we wake up every day as two entrepreneurs in a huge start-up ecosystem to build the Empire that we had always imagined on our vision board. We raised 2 rounds of funding and manage a team of 40+ team members with a client-base of more than 1500+ and we're just getting started," he adds.

Who said, you cannot find the perfect life partner? Who said, the soulmates do not exist?

For Rahul, finding a perfect life partner is more than just love and the fairy-tales that take you to be soulmates for lives. It's the dream, it's the vision, it's the grit and power to do something big-



HD makeup is the makeup you need

time when the concept of HD Makeup or rather a High definition Makeup came into existence. This kind of makeup usually gives a flawless and natural, non-cakey look.

Insight on HD makeup

The only difference between regular and HD makeup is the products used. The products used while doing HD makeup are high-end and the products used are lighter in texture and give better coverage which is generally preferred for the camera. The makeup also blends in seamlessly eliminating the scars that tend to be visible when regular makeup is done. This kind of makeup doesn't look unnatural or fake either.

This is how professionals do it...

The HD makeup is done using brushes and blending sponges which are designed in a way that scatters light falling on the skin, which in turn gives a smooth and soft look. The key here is to blend the products perfectly well to get that natural, even-textured, and

flawless-looking skin.

It's recommended because...

HD makeup is beneficial because it helps hide all the flaws visible on your skin and gives you that natural, non-dramatic look. It is usually preferred by professional models and actors because of the results it tends to offer. Honestly, who wouldn't want to have perfect-looking, naturally glowing skin after doing their makeup, right? That glow will be very evident even in pictures since the makeup looks and feels absolutely smooth. You end up having a blemish-free-looking face.

Here are some product recommendations

- To get that ultra-smooth texture and the perfect finish, try the 'Make Up For Ever' Ultra HD foundation.
- For the ultimate professional and uniform application of the products try the 'TEMPTU Air Perfect Canvas Starter Kit'.

(The author, Pooja Sethiya, is an International Makeup-Artist)



Makeup is all about enhancing your beautiful and god-gifted features using tools like makeup brushes, eyeshadows, and lipstick. Makeup even helps you cover your flaws and makes you feel absolutely confident about yourself. We're all very familiar with the word 'Makeup'. However, the word HD Makeup is something most people do not know about.

The entry of high-definition cameras posed a threat to all the makeup artists since the lenses in high-definition cameras captured and recognised the presence of wrinkles, blemishes, and scars effortlessly. This is exactly the

Mayank makes statement with 100 as India score 221/4

➤ **MAYANK AGARWAL** scored his maiden century against New Zealand in the seventh innings of fourth Test match by making an unbeaten 120 runs off 246 balls with 14 fours and four sixes on the opening day of the second Test match at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on Friday (December 3). The 30-year-old from Bangalore, scored all four centuries, including two double hundreds, in nine innings of seven Test matches at home.

➤ **CHETESHWAR PUJARA** became the seventh Indian top order batter (1-4) to receive 10 or more ducks in Tests. The right hand batter's 10th duck came in the 150th innings of 89th Test match while batting in top order. It was also his first duck in 22 innings of 12 Test matches against New Zealand.

➤ **VIRAT KOHLI** received his maiden duck in 20 innings of 11 Test matches against New Zealand. Overall, it was his 14th duck in 163rd innings of 97th Test match.

FAISEL FEATURES

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Under pressure to prove his worth, Mayank Agarwal made the best statement possible with a superb hundred as India recovered from a sudden top-order collapse to reach 221 for 4 in two extended opening day sessions against New Zealand in the second Test here on Friday.

Agarwal (120 batting, 246 balls), who is all but certain to sit out once Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul come back during the next series (if South Africa then away, if West Indies then home), added to a happy headache for coach Rahul Dravid, on a day when vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane had to be "dropped" because of a hamstring niggle.

Worse, Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli failed to trouble the scorers and it was a hundred that came under pressure with India being 80 for 3 and 160 for 4 at different stages of the game.

Had the Indian team management been forced to play Rahane, the axe was likely to fall on Agarwal and it's never a great feeling to go out there in such a situation.

He was jittery to begin with as a streaky boundary through slips came early on but once he marched down the track to loft

Ajaz Patel (29-10-73-4) for a straight six, his nerves had all but vanished. The boundaries --- 14 in all and four sixes, all off Patel showed his class as he got his fourth hundred in Tests.

In fact, Patel, who was by far the best New Zealand bowler in view, having reduced India from 80 for no loss to 80 for three, did look pedestrian in front of Agarwal at times.

When an airborne Agarwal punched the air after a square driven boundary off part-time seamer Daryl Mitchell, one could sense that pressure weighing a thousand tonnes must have come off his chest.

Agarwal was the first choice opener during the England series but before the first game, he got hit on the head and KL Rahul coming in his place, grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

With Rohit also having his best overseas series as Test opener, Agarwal was confined to the reserves.

He could again be back in the reserves but he made a statement of intent with his strokeplay as he dominated the 80-run fourth wicket stand with Shreyas Iyer (18).

Along with another reserve player in Wriddhiman Saha (25 batting, 53 balls), Agarwal added

another 61 runs before the close of play.

New Zealand had erred in not playing Neil Wagner on a track where there was a lot of bounce on offer.

If Agarwal showed discretion, the same couldn't be said about Shubman Gill (44, 71 balls), who was dazzling till he was around in their 80-run opening stand before Patel snuffed him out.

Gill looked fluent before paying for his impetuosity which led to a mini collapse.

Mumbai-born left-arm spinner Patel also picked up Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli in quick succession with both failing to trouble the scorers. Patel became the second Mumbai-born cricketer after legendary England captain Douglas Jardine to play against India in his city of birth.

He altered the length cleverly and the extra bounce, which is always a speciality of Wankhede, helped him immensely.

He had Gill on the mat when he flighted one to entice him to come out and the ball turned and jumped with keeper Tom Blundell making a hash of a stumping.

However, the very

next ball saw him shorten the length as Gill tried jabbing at it and it turned enough to take the outside edge into Ross Taylor's palms.

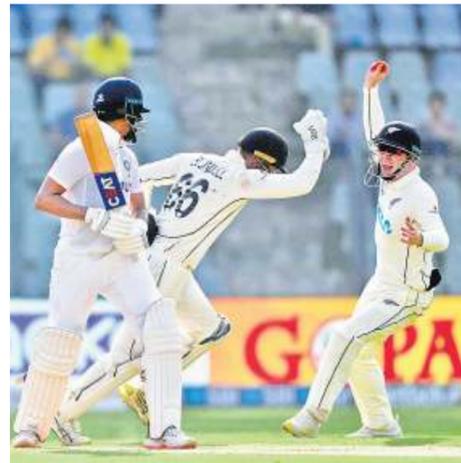
Pujara's confidence has hit nadir after too many failures and he survived a DRS appeal from New Zealand before he jumped down the track to york himself. Patel, very wisely, fired one with an angle straight into his toes and what happened with Pujara often happens with out-of-form batters.

For skipper Kohli, it was a delivery that straightened after pitching as the Indian skipper tried to play a forward defensive stroke. Straight umpire Anil Chaudhary gave him out and Kohli immediately asked for a review.

The replay was inconclusive on whether it hit the bat first or pad and as per rule, TV umpire Virender Sharma went with his on-field colleague, leaving Kohli absolutely livid.

He had a word with leg umpire Nitin Menon and was seen expressing his displeasure.

The TV cameras then caught him standing in the dressing room balcony, visibly upset with the decision, which was a touch and go one.



India vs New Zealand DAY 1

Scoreboard

INDIA 1st INNINGS:

Mayank Agarwal batting	120
Shubman Gill c Taylor b Patel	44
Cheteshwar Pujara b Patel	0
Virat Kohli lbw b Patel	0
Shreyas Iyer c Tom Blundell b Ajaz Patel	18
Wriddhiman Saha batting	25

Extras: (b-9, lb-5) 14

Total: 221/4 in 70 overs

Fall of wickets: 80-1, 80-2, 80-3, 160-4

Bowling (New Zealand):

Tim Southee	15-5-29-0
Kyle Jamieson	9-2-30-0
Ajaz Patel	29-10-73-4
William Somerville	8-0-46-0
Rachin Ravindra	4-0-20-0
Daryl Mitchell	5-3-9-0

MOST DUCK BY INDIAN TOP ORDER (1-4) IN TESTS

PLAYER	M	I	N.O	RUNS	AVG	H.S	100	50	0
Virender Sehwag	98	169	6	8129	49.87	319	22	29	15
Pankaj Roy	43	79	4	2442	32.56	173	5	9	14
Dilip Vengsarkar	99	151	16	5533	40.98	166	15	26	14
Virat Kohli	80	126	7	6348	53.34	254*	23	18	12
Sunil Gavaskar	120	204	13	9843	51.53	236*	34	42	11
Sachin Tendulkar	179	276	27	13507	54.24	248*	44	58	11
Cheteshwar Pujara	89	150	9	6486	46.00	206*	18	31	10

FAISEL FEATURES

Rahul bhai told me to make it 'big': Mayank

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mayank Agarwal knows that he might be confined to the sidelines once KL Rahul and Rohit Sharma are back in the mix but what has helped him stay focussed is words of wisdom from coach Rahul Dravid, who told him to control what's in his domain.

Agarwal, who has been in and out of the squad in recent times, scored a fine 120 under pressure on the opening day of the second Test before which he watched legendary Sunil Gavaskar's batting videos and slightly changed his stance.

"When I was picked, Rahul bhai spoke to me. He asked me to control what is in my hands and said, 'go out there and give it your best,'" Agarwal said at the end of the day's play.

"He had told me 'When you get set, make it big'. I am happy to have capitalised on the start that I had. But that message was very clear from Rahul bhai, that I should make it count," he added.

The Bangalore based opener lamented that it was his misfortune that he got hit on the head during a net session in England and then

there was nothing in his hands.

"It was unfortunate for me to not have played in England, I got hit and there's nothing much I could do about that. I accepted it and continued to work hard and work on my process and my game."

Gavaskar on the day during his commentary session spoke about how he had advised Agarwal to reduce his pronounced back-lift into a shorter one and the opener said that as of now, he is trying to ape the iconic former India captain's side-on stance.

"He told me that I should consider keeping the bat a bit low initially in my innings. I have a tendency to hold it high. I couldn't make that adjustment in this short period of time. When he was saying that, I noticed his shoulder position and basically picked up that I need to be more side on."

On the day, he hit four sixes off left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel, who was New Zealand's best bowler by a distance with four wickets to his name. He said it was a "conscious decision".

"He was bowling exceedingly well. But each time anything was in our half (our arc), the plan was to be a bit more attacking.

Anything that came a little towards us in length, we were going to go for it.

"He had that phase when he tied us down, so it was a conscious decision to make it count when we could or each time he bowled it in our spot," he explained.

For Agarwal, this innings was more about "grit and determination" and he was prepared to look ugly as long as he got results. "That is something I have thought about, but this innings was more about grit and determination, just to stick with the plan, be disciplined. I know I didn't look good sometimes but I got the job done," he said.

India hasn't still reached a commanding score and Agarwal reckoned that the first session on Saturday will be crucial. "How we start is crucial, the focus is that. The first session we want to play it out, the wicket is going to get harder and harder to bat on."



Afghanistan will face pressure from ICC over women's cricket: Ramiz

PTI ■ LONDON

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ramiz Raja has said that the ICC will put pressure on Afghanistan to clarify its position on the ban of women's cricket after the Taliban took control of the government in Kabul. Raja is part of an International Cricket Council working group reviewing the state of the game in Afghanistan.

"Pressure will be put on Afghanistan. I'm sure they will have to decide in the next six months how they deal with the ICC," Raja told Stumped on the BBC World Service.

It is an ICC requirement for full members to also have a national women's team, besides the men's side. But the return to Taliban rule has led to the prospect of women being forbidden to play cricket in Afghanistan. "Like everybody else, we are giving them time. They are in a difficult situation," said Raja. Afghanistan is one of 12 full members of the ICC. Afghanistan's men took part in the T20 World Cup that was played in the UAE and Oman in October and November.

Sri Lanka completes test series sweep vs West Indies

AP ■ GALLE

Spinners Ramesh Mendis and Lasith Embuldeniya took five wickets each to propel Sri Lanka to a crushing 164-run win over West Indies in the second test Friday and a 2-0 series sweep.

Chasing 297 to win, the West Indies reached 65-2 in the second innings at lunch on the fifth day but the tourists were bowled out for 132 in the third session. They lost their last eight wickets for 40 runs.

Embuldeniya had best figures of 5-35 while Mendis recorded 5-66, and collected 11 wickets in the match.

Sri Lanka was still batting when play started on the final day and they declared their second innings on 345-9 in the morning session.

Sri Lanka had scored 204 in its first innings and the West Indies made 253, taking a 49-run lead.

Dhananjaya de Silva was unbeaten on 155 and his overnight partner Embuldeniya was out for 39 bowled by Jason Holder.

De Silva faced 262 balls and hit two sixes and 11



boundaries in scoring his eighth test century.

Left-arm spinner Veerasammy Permaul had the best bowling figures of 3-106 while offspinner Roston Chase took two wickets.

West Indies lost its first second-innings wicket with the total on 15 when captain Kraigg Brathwaite (6) was trapped lbw by Mendis.

Then Nkrumah Bonner joined Jermaine Blackwood

and the pair added 50 runs for the second wicket before Blackwood (36) was caught by de Silva off Embuldeniya in the last ball before lunch break.

When Mendis had Shai Hope (16) caught by Lakmal, West Indies' score stood at 92-3, but it triggered the late collapse.

Bonner top scored for the West Indies with 44.

Sri Lanka won the first test at the same venue by 187 runs.



Axelsen, Tzu Ying named BWF Male and Female Player of the Year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen and Tokyo Games silver medallist Tai Tzu Ying were named the BWF Male and Female Player of the Year respectively in recognition of their stellar runs this season.

It was the first season-ending award in this category for both Axelsen and Tai Tzu Ying -- the All England champions of 2020.

All eight winners were honoured in a virtual broadcast on Friday.

Axelsen was rewarded for his extraordinary run starting from the Barcelona Spain Masters in February 2020.

The Dane made 10 finals in 11 individual tournaments, winning seven of those, including gold at the Tokyo Games. "This means a lot to

me," said Axelsen in a release. "Thank you to my team, my coaches, my friends, my family, my competitors."

This year has been really eventful. A few downs, but a lot of ups, with the Olympics being the biggest win, a dream coming true. This award gives me a lot of motivation to work harder."

Tai Tzu Ying won the All England 2020 and then struck a rich vein of form at the three-tournament Asian Leg in January 2021, making all three finals, and clinching the BWF World Tour Finals 2020.

The Chinese Taipei player then made the final of the Tokyo Olympics, going down in a thrilling match to China's Chen Yu Fei.

"It's a pity I can't be in Indonesia for the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals," said the world No.1.

Medvedev puts Russia back in Davis Cup semifinals

AP ■ MADRID

Daniil Medvedev maintained his perfect record at the Davis Cup Finals to put Russia into the last four.

Medvedev defeated Mikael Ymer 6-4, 6-4 Thursday to give Russia an insurmountable 2-0 lead over Sweden in the quarterfinals of the revamped team event.

Andrey Rublev earlier outlasted Elias Ymer, Mikael's older brother, in a 6-2, 5-7, 7-6 (3) win at the Madrid Arena. With Russia having secured the win after the two singles matches, the doubles match was-



n't played.

Russia will face Germany in the semifinals on Saturday. Serbia and top-ranked Novak Djokovic will face Croatia in the other semifinal on Friday.

It was the third consecutive straight-set victory for the second-ranked Medvedev after group-stage wins over Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta and Ecuador's Emilio Gomez.

Medvedev broke serve twice in the first set and three times in the second against No. 94 Mikael Ymer, Sweden's top-ranked player.

Argentina end France's dream run to book final berth in Junior Hockey WC

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR



Former champions Argentina ended France's

dream run in the FIH Junior Men's Junior Hockey World Cup by registering a hard-fought 3-1 win in penalty

shoot-out of the first semifinal at the Kalinga Stadium here on Friday.

The display from both teams was not worthy of a semi-final but 2005 champions Argentina kept their composure in the shoot-out after the regulation 60 minutes ended goalless.

In the penalty shoot-out, Lucio Mendez, Bautista Capurro and Franco Agostini scored for Argentina while only skipper Timothee Clement found the target for France.

The match ended on a bad note as tempers flared after Lucas Montecot missed

France's fourth attempt, resulting in almost fistcuffs but officials of both teams and on-field umpires rushed quickly to handle the situation.

The first semifinal turned out to be a sedate affair, at least in the first two quarters as both the teams failed to create any clear cut chances from field play. Argentina were by far the better side on display and attacked French goal on quite a few occasions.

The South Americans secured two penalty corners inside the first 10 minutes but, on both occasions, France goalkeeper Guillaume de Vaulcelles denied the opposition.

Qualified for semis, Sindhu loses final group match



PTI ■ BALI

Already Assured of a semifinal berth at the BWF World Tour Finals, India's P V Sindhu on Friday suffered a three-game defeat to top seed Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand in her third and final group A women's singles match here on Friday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, couldn't apply enough pressure on the world no. 10 Chochuwong to go down fighting 12-21 21-19 14-21 in a match that lasted an hour and 11 minutes.

This was Sindhu's third loss to the 2016 world junior champion Chochuwong in seven meetings.

Sindhu thus finished in the second position in group A, behind Chochuwong and her opponent of the semifinal stage will be decided in a draw later in the day. Earlier, Kidambi Srikanth

bowled out of the season-ending tournament after losing to second seeded Malaysian Lee Zii Jia 19-21 14-21 in 37 minutes in his third and final group B match.

It was Srikanth's second loss to the world no. 8 Malaysian, who had defeated the Indian at Hylo Open in straight games.

Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy too ended their campaign though they eked out a hard-fought 21-19 9-21 21-14 win over England's Chloe Birch and Lauren Smith in the inconsequential third and final group match.

Sindhu, the reigning world champion, was quite erratic and couldn't control the rallies against Chochuwong, who rode on her quality of strokes to stay a step ahead.

In the first game, Sindhu erred in her lengths early on as Chochuwong led 5-3. The Indian managed to collect a few points but she never looked in control.

Chochuwong took the initiative and kept things under her control, leading 11-6 at the interval.

The Thai player got rewarded for her angled and crisp returns, while Sindhu lacked consistency as Chochuwong took 17-9 lead.



Bringing real life to reel with *Gamanam*

K RAMYA SREE

With *Gamanam*, an anthology film, starring Shriya Saran, Nithya Menon, Priyanka Jawalkar — Srujana Rao will be introduced to the Telugu cinema as a director. The film, produced by Ramesh Karutoori, Venki Pushadapu, and Gnana Shekar V.S under the KRIA FILM CORP and KALI Productions banners, is making the right noise in the industry, which is gearing up for a theatrical release on December 10.

“The story of this film covers all the events I have been watching since I was a child. There was a pond in my village when I was a child, which

turned into a playground. After that came the buildings. I have been witnessing many such incidents. Initially, I had a different story, but I wanted to make a film that will make a difference. I wanted to show the life circle that exists from birth to death, which led to *Gamanam*,” said director Srujana Rao speaking to the media ahead of the release.

The debutant director feels it's an actor who can bring character to life. Srujana who is also the writer of the film didn't pen any lines keeping in mind the cast of the film. It's only after the entire script was ready, that these top actors came on board. “I did not even know that Shriya was my Kamala until I met her. After narrating half the story, in the back of my head, I fixed that

she should be my Kamala. When the story was over, Shriya had tears rolling down her cheeks as she was strongly touched by the story. Same with Nithya Menon, she gave her nod immediately after the story was pitched to her,” said the director.

Initially, Srujana wanted to make this a small-budget film, but as time passed by it turned out to be a bigger project than she thought.

Apparently, the producers were shocked to hear

that the director wanted Ilayaraja to compose music for the film.

“I asked the producers to arrange for a meeting with Ilayaraja. When I met the music maestro, I felt like I was looking at a God. When I was narrating the film's story, he said,

‘Hey! stop.

Take a photo of me and the director, we are going to do a film together.’ I was shocked,” she said on how Ilayaraja joined this project.



Adivi ‘Majors’ to eye B’wood projects

Actor Adivi Sesh, who has been in the limelight for his upcoming movie *Major*, has reportedly signed a couple of interesting stories.

With his first pan-India movie, the biographical drama — *Major* set to hit the screens on February 11, 2022, he has got much attention from all over.

It is reported that Adivi Sesh, even before his pan-India movie *Major* hits the screens, has been offered to act in a couple of interesting ventures. Among the offers Adivi Sesh has in his kitty, reports believe, there are two Hindi movies.

The *Goodachari* actor also hinted at his Bollywood appearance, as he spoke to the media recently.

“I have zeroed a couple of Hindi movies, which will be made official only after *Major* gets released at the theaters,” Adivi Sesh said.



Major will have a simultaneous

release in Hindi and all South Indian languages. Sesh has prepared his team to kick-start promotions for *Major*, as the release date is nearing. Being it the biography of 26/11 Martyr — Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan, Sesh has done adequate research before stepping into the shoes of a fighter.

“*Major*’ features Saiee Manjrekar, Prakash Raj, Revathi, and Sobhita Dhulipala in the other pivotal roles. Directed by Sashi Kiran Tikka, *Major* is bankrolled by Sony Pictures, GMB Entertainment, and A+S Movies jointly.

Ketika wants to show diversity in her acting

K RAMYA SREE

Lakshya starring Naga Shaurya, directed by Santosh Jagarlapudi, will open in theatres on December 10. The film stars Romantic girl Ketika

Sharma as its leading lady. This is the second release the actress is having in the year.

The actress was approached with the story of *Lakshya* during her last day of *Romantic*'s shoot. Ketika feels happy she was offered roles even before her first project was completed.

“Taking us through her character in *Lakshya*, Ketika shares, “The role played in the *Romantic* film has nothing to do with the character played in *Lakshya*. I did this film because I wanted to show the diversity in

my acting. I played the role of Rita in *Lakshya*. She does as she pleases. I look like the girl-next-door. This movie has all kinds

of emotions. My character is emotional.”

Ketika also shares that she took away many lessons from Naga Shaurya. She considers Shaurya as an actor with immense dedication.

The actress who is a state-level swimmer, shares, “I like sports. My mother is a national-level swimmer. I look for-

ward to a swimming-based movie.”

“I am more like Rita in real life, except for the fact that I do not think much about marriage like Rita in real life. People like me are hard to bear. It's hard to keep up with the people who do what comes to mind,” laughs the actress, who also learned archery for this film.

“Santosh has a lot of clarity. He knew exactly what he wanted. We are very confident about the movie's outcome,” adds Ketika, who also sang a song in *Romantic*. She is also in plans to dub for her characters in future projects.

Ketika is presently busy with her third film alongside Vaishnav Tej, whose title is yet to be revealed. The film is said to be a family entertainer.



Upasana celebrates sister's pre-wedding bash at Prajwala Foundation



If there is one thing that life teaches us is that happiness means nothing unless shared with people. Then there are those that feel grateful because they have enough to share. For Anushpala Kamineni, Vice President, Apollo Brands, and Armaan Ebrahim, professional racing driver and co-founder of X1 Racing League, and their families this joy is indescribable.

The more empathy they show, the more they believe they evolve as human beings. Wellness and social impact entrepreneur, Upasana Kamineni Konidela shared her sister Anushpala's wedding festivities at the Hyderabad-based non-profit - Prajwala Foundation. She

organized food and festive clothing for 350 present inmates aged between 3 years and 45 years. Since 2018, Upasana has made it a yearly commitment to foster care and positivity for these girls. Run by Sunitha Krishnan, the 26 years old, Prajwala Foundation is a pioneering anti-trafficking organisation that has rescued over 24,000 women and girls. Upasana takes her family's legacy forward, who unconditionally and lovingly work towards healthier humanity through their philanthropic ventures.

Varun Tej's *Ghani* likely to get postponed

Telugu actor Varun Tej is all set to allure the audience with his upcoming movie titled *Ghani*. However, there is a buzz that the release of the sports drama, which is supposed to hit the screens during the third week of December, has been postponed.

Now that the makers of *Ghani* are plotting for a postponement, sources believe the movie would hit the screens in March 2022. *Ghani*, which is supposed to clash with Nani's *Shyam Singha Roy* on December 24, is said to be postponed due to obvious reasons.

It is reported that the makers of *Ghani* and *Shyam Singha Roy* have come to a consensus in order to avoid the clash in theatres.

As both the

movies deserve to get enough attention from the audience, analysts, who had a brief discussion with the makers, indicated that solo releases would favour the movies with a good amount of attention, as well as box-office collections.

So, the makers of *Ghani* seem to have backed off, postponing the movie release, to avoid a box-office clash.

With this, Nani's *Shyam Singha Roy* gets a clear line, as it's going to be a solo release for the film. The fresh release date of *Ghani* is yet to be finalised by the makers.

Helmed by Kiran Korapati, *Ghani* is a tale of a boxer's transformation.

Varun Tej has worked hard for the movie, as he also underwent a physical transformation, to fit into the role.

