

**ANALYSIS 7**  
EXTENDING SYMPATHIES  
TO THE NEW LAUREATE**MONEY 8**  
SENSEX RALLIES 453 PTS  
TO NEW PEAK; NIFTY AT 18,100**SPORTS 11**  
DC SET 136-RUN TARGET FOR  
KKR IN 2ND IPL QUALIFIER

VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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PRAGYA  
JAISWAL  
CONTRACTS  
COVID, AGAIN  
Page 12**PAWAR BACKS AKHILESH YADAV'S SP  
FOR 2022 UP ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS**

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said his party will back the Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party in the next year's Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections to take on the BJP. Pawar also said the NCP will consult the SP if the Maharashtra-based party decides to contest a few seats in UP. Talking about the recent killing of four farmers in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri district, Pawar said from the very first day, the BJP took a stand that there is no truth in the killing of farmers. "Yogi Adityanath cannot absolve himself of the responsibility of not taking action against the crime," he told reporters.

**SUPPLY FROM MAHANADI COALFIELDS  
CROSSES 5.1 LAKH TONNES A DAY**

State-owned CIL arm Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd on Wednesday said it has further increased its business operations, with an average daily coal despatch crossing 5.1 lakh tonne in the current month, as it also keeps a close watch on the stock situation of dry fuel in thermal power plants in Odisha. The statement comes at a time when various plants in the country are facing coal shortages. "Odisha-based miniratna Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd has further augmented its business operations with an average daily coal despatch crossing 5.1 lakh tonnes," the Coal India arm said.

**MANMOHAN SINGH ADMITTED TO  
AIIMS WITH WEAKNESS AFTER FEVER**

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here Wednesday evening after he complained of weakness following a fever, sources said. They said the 89-year-old Congress leader had a fever on Monday and had recovered, but he turned weak and was on fluids. The former PM was admitted to the cardioneuro unit of the AIIMS and is under the care of a team of cardiologists led by Dr Nitish Naik, Singh's personal physician for years. The Congress said the former prime minister is stable and is undergoing routine treatment.

**ONE-SHOT SPUTNIK LIGHT VAX SHOWS  
70% EFFICACY AGAINST DELTA VARIANT**

The Russian Direct Investment Fund and Gamaleya Center on Wednesday said one-shot Sputnik Light vaccine demonstrates 70 pc efficacy against infection with the Delta variant of coronavirus in the first three months after vaccination. Gamaleya Center has submitted an article analysing efficacy of Sputnik Light vaccine against the Delta variant to the medRxiv preprint server for health sciences, RDIF said. The analysis was conducted based on data from 28,000 participants who received a single dose of Sputnik Light, compared with a control group of 5.6 million individuals who were not vaccinated.

# Modi unveils Rs 100 lakh-cr master plan to boost growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched a Rs 100 lakh-crore national master plan for multi-modal connectivity that aims to develop infrastructure to reduce logistic costs and boost the economy.

PM Gati Shakti targets to cut logistic costs, increase cargo handling capacity and reduce the turnaround time, Modi said at a function to launch the plan.

The plan aims to lend more power and speed to projects by connecting all concerned departments on one platform, he said, adding the infrastructure schemes of various ministries and state governments will be designed and executed with a common vision.

Modi said taxpayers' money in the past was 'insulted' through a lethargic approach to development work, with departments working in



silos and there was no coordination on projects.

Development, he said, is not possible without quality infrastructure and the government has now resolved to develop it in a holistic manner.

Gati Shakti joins different

departments for the coordinated development of projects from road to railways, aviation to agriculture, the Prime Minister said.

Stating that high logistics cost in India at 13 percent of GDP was impacting competitiveness in exports, he said PM Gati Shakti is

aimed at reducing logistic cost and turnaround time.

This, he said, will give a boost to India as an investment destination.

The Prime Minister said the speed and scale that India is witnessing under his government was never seen in the previous 70 years of Independence.

Giving examples, he said the first inter-state natural gas pipeline was commissioned in 1987. From then to 2014, 15,000-km of the natural gas pipeline was built. Currently, more than 16,000-km of the new gas pipeline is being constructed.

"What was done in 27 years, we are doing in it in less than half that time," he said.

In five years prior to the BJP government coming to power in 2014, 1,900-km of the rail line was doubled, while in the last 7 years 9,000-km of rail line doubling has happened.

2

**15 remain in fray  
Badvel bypoll**

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Fifteen candidates, including three of the main political parties, remained in the fray for the October 30 by-election to the Badvel (SC) Assembly constituency in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh that will witness a triangular contest.

The process for withdrawal of nominations ended on Wednesday when four independent candidates withdrew their papers.

The ruling YSR Congress apart, the BJP and the Congress fielded their candidates for the by-election caused by the death of sitting legislator G Venkata Subbaiah in March this year.

2

# AP aims numero uno slot in Centre's LEADS Index report

SNV SUDHIR  
■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh is aiming to become the number one State by 2022 in the LEADS Index Report published annually by the Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry and to sustain the rank for the rest of the policy period.

The LEADS index is a composite indicator to assess international trade logistics across States/UTs based on a survey of stakeholders conducted by Deloitte for the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Speaking at the launch of the PM Gati Shakti State function here Wednesday, Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy said

that the AP Government has constituted a high-level State Logistic Coordination Committee (SLCC) headed by the Chief Secretary.

The SLCC comprising Special Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries of key infrastructure departments has been assigned the task to prepare a Master Plan for state and city centric logistics, and to provide actionable program strategies to align state policy with the national logistics policy.

Gati Shakti will be a National Infrastructure Master Plan which will lay the foundation of a holistic infrastructure, and will lead to an integrated and holistic pathway for our economy. Right now, our means of transport and infrastructure facilities are disjointed, he said.

He also added that Gati Shakti will also go a long way in making local manufacturers globally competitive. This will also develop new possibilities for the creation of future economic zones. In this decade, speed will form the basis of India's transformation, he added.

"Andhra Pradesh has always been in the forefront of economic growth in India contributing 4.6 per cent of India's GDP and 5.8 per cent of India's exports in FY 20-21. The state government is preparing a policy document to promote professionalism and excellence in logistics services and to create employment opportunities," the Industries Minister said.

2

# Power utilities seek 20 coal rakes from Centre to tide over crisis

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Facing a power crunch the electricity generating utilities of Andhra Pradesh have been asking the Centre to allot 20 rakes of coal to the thermal stations in the state and to revive the non-working pit head coal plants without PPAs (Power Purchasing Agreements) or coal linkage on an emergency basis.

AP Energy Department officials pointed out that the coal shortage in the country, the rise in coal prices and the surge in grid demand have led to a power crunch.

Officials said that power purchase rates had shot up to Rs 20 per



unit from an average price of Rs 4 to Rs 5 earlier due to high demand and low supply across the country

triggered by the coal shortage.

2

# Isolated populations more vulnerable: CCMB

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Isolated populations in India are more vulnerable to Covid-19, as per a genomic analysis done by CSIR-CCMB.

Researchers, in their genomic analysis covering several Indian populations, found that populations that carry similar long DNA segments (homozygous) in their genome are most likely to be more susceptible to Covid-19.

The researchers also assessed the ACE2 gene variants that make individuals susceptible to Covid-19. They found that the Jarawa and Onge



populations have a high incidence of these mutations.

Dr Kumarasamy Thangaraj from

CSIR-CCMB, who is presently Director of CDFD, Hyderabad and Prof Gyaneshwer Chaubey of BHU,

2

**CJ VISITS DURGA TEMPLE**

Soon after taking oath as the Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra visited the Kanaka Durga temple along with his family on Wednesday. Justice Mishra was accorded a ceremonial pooram kumbha swagatam, a traditional welcome by the priests and officials of the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamyvarla Devasthanam. The temple chief priest performed special puja and blessed the Justice Mishra and his wife. Later, the couple was presented a portrait of Goddess Kanaka Durga and laddu prasadam.

# Guv administers oath to PK Mishra as Chief Justice of AP High Court

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the AP High Court. Governor Bishwabhusan Harichandan administered the oath of office to Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra at a function held at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Wednesday. The event was attended by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and several judges of the AP High Court. The Governor Harichandan and CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy greeted the Chief Justice. The event was attended by the Municipal Administration Minister Botsa Satyanarayana, Endowment Minister Vellampalli Srinivas, Chief Secretary Dr Sameer Sharma, Judges of the AP HC, High Court officials, and other government officials.



Justice Mishra replaces outgoing Chief Justice Arup Kumar Goswami and is the third Chief Justice of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. Justice Mishra

was presently serving as acting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court.

2

# All issues will be resolved, Sajjala assures govt staff

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior officials of the Finance Department and the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) held discussions with the representatives of the AP NGOs Association and the Joint Action Committee of Teachers and Employees on Wednesday.

After the meeting Andhra Pradesh Government Adviser Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said that the employees' long pending issues will be addressed soon and that the



PRC for government employees would be resolved by October-end.

He assured that from November 1, government employees would get salaries on the first of every month.

He said that after YS Jagan Mohan Reddy took over as Chief Minister of AP, preference has increased for employees. He recalled that even before asking for interim relief (IR), the CM had implemented it for the employees.

2

# Night curfew in AP from 12 am to 5 am till October 31

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday decided to extend the night curfew in the state till October 31.

Medical, Health and family welfare department principal secretary Anil Kumar Singhal on Wednesday informed that the curfew will be in force from 12 am to 5 am till October 31 following strict Covid protocol. The decision was taken after a thorough review of the Covid-19 situation and keeping in view the number of positive cases.

2

# Akademi scam accused behind FD fraud in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Another Fixed Deposits Receipts (FDR) scam has come to light in two government-run corporations in the state after a similar scam was unearthed in Hyderabad at the Telugu Akademi.

The mastermind behind the Telugu Akademi FDR scam, a realtor named Chunduri Sai Kumar, is suspected to be behind swindling the fixed deposit funds of the Vijayawada-based government-run corporations, the AP Warehousing Corporation and the AP

Oilfed. It has now been revealed that the Telugu Akademi scam accused had swindled around Rs 15 crore from the FDRs of these two corporations.

After the Telugu Akademi scam came to light a few days ago and the Hyderabad police arrested a few suspects, higher officials of both the above Vijayawada-based corporations had deployed accounting teams to check their FDs after a tip off from Hyderabad cops.

2

**Jagan determined to make women financially self-reliant: Adimulapu**

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month &amp; Paksham:

Ashwin &amp; Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Navami 18:51

Nakshatram : Uttara Ashadha 09:35

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

Rahukalam : 1:29 pm - 2:56 pm

Yamagandam : 6:12 am - 7:39 am

Varjyam : 1:32 pm - 3:07 pm

Gulika : 9:07 am - 10:34 am

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 11:00 pm - 12:35 am

Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:38 am - 12:25 pm

VIJAYAWADA  
WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny

Temp: 34/26

Humidity: 66%

Sunrise: 6:08 am

Sunset: 05:55 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated OCTOBER 13, 2021 5:00 PM





# TS mulls experts panel before takeover of projects by KRMB

ML MELLY MAITREYI  
■ HYDERABAD

Notwithstanding the gazette notification on jurisdiction of River Boards set to take effect from Thursday, the Telangana government on Wednesday set up a subcommittee to advise it on the proposal sent by the Krishna River Management Board to take over Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar and other projects and systems under them as part of implementing the notification.

The subcommittee — comprising experts, CWC officials and others — has been asked to submit a report on the proposal sent by the KRMB pertaining to various operating rules, administrative and operational procedures to be followed with regard to the irrigation projects to the Telangana government by October 30.

The subcommittee will be headed by Engineer-in-Chief C Muralidhar and will have Mohan Kumar, Chief Engineer, ISWR as convenor, according



to a GO issued by Rajat Kumar, Irrigation Department Special Chief Secretary.

Other members of the subcommittee are M Srikant Rao, Chief Engineer, Irrigation, Nalgonda, MA Raoof, Member, Technical Advisory Committee, Ghanshyam Jha, engineering expert, Chetan Pandit, hydrology consultant and V Ravinder Rao, senior advocate.

Sources said that the subcommittee will study the 'Draft Rule Curves' and operation

protocols of the Jurala Project, Srisailem dam and Nagarjuna Sagar dam and advise the government on the follow up action to be taken with regard to the gazette notification.

Telangana officials said that these decisions could not be taken overnight without due consideration and analysis and how it would impact the interests of the State.

"One should not read too much into the notification on jurisdiction of KRMB and GRMB coming into effect from

October 14. The KRMB authorities themselves said that this was a transition phase and even without the implementation of notification, the Board has been performing a regulatory role even before the gazette notification," officials said.

The KRMB in its meeting with Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Irrigation officials on Tuesday had said the gazette notification would come into force from Thursday and it would regulate five projects and 29 outlets and hydel power stations in the first phase and it requested them to hand over the projects, men and material.

The State has to give its formal consent to the KRMB and issue GOs to let it take over the identified projects. Once the subcommittee gives its views on the proposal sent by the KRMB, the Irrigation officials would have to present them to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao who would be very much interest-

ed to know about the implications, sources said.

These are not simple issues to resolve for the State when the movement for Telangana statehood was launched for fair share in water resources, funds and jobs.

Implementation of gazette notification could impact the State's utilisation of river water under the Bachawat Award.

Telangana State had represented to the Centre several times that it should first resolve its concerns including re-allocation of Krishna water by constituting a new tribunal, illegal diversion of water by neighbouring AP for its projects without approvals or water allocation. It also explained that the Srisailem project was basically for power generation and submitted the documents related to it.

Sources said that handing over irrigation projects to the Centre through KRMB and GRMB was fraught with risks for both the States in the long run.

## 3 capital cities will lead to severe crisis, says CPI

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The CPI has warned the Jagan government that the three capital cities concept would lead the state to a severe crisis, and urged the CM to reconsider the proposal.

On the 666th day of the stir opposing the shifting of the executive capital from Amaravati to Visakhapatnam Wednesday, a programme named "Aatimiya Sammelanam @ 666 days" was organised at Mothadaka village. Addressing the gathering, CPI State Assistant Secretary Muppalla Nageswara Rao feared that if the three capital cities concept was implemented that would push the state into an unsolvable crisis.

He demanded that the three

capitals should be located in Amaravati itself. "If Amaravati is continued as the capital city of AP that will change the future of the state," he said.

He said Amaravati, if continued as capital, would play a vital role in making AP a financially strong state and called upon protesters to launch protests across the state.

"The CPI will take part in the padayatra on November 1 to Tirumala from Amaravati," the CPI leader announced.

Former MLA Y V Anjaneyulu, JAC convenor Sudhakar, Press Club President Nimmaraju Chalapati Rao and Telugu Rythu Guntur Parliamentary constituency convener Rajasekhar Reddy and JAC leaders attended the meeting.

## 15 remain...

Continued from Page 1

The main opposition Telugu Desam Party opted out of the contest as the YSRC fielded the widow of the deceased legislator for the contest.

Dasari Sudha, a practicing doctor, is the YSRC candidate. Former MLA P M Kamalamma is the Congress nominee. Kamalamma represented the constituency from 2009-14.

The BJP fielded youth leader Panathala Suresh for the Badvel contest. Suresh unsuccessfully contested the 2019 election from Railway Koduru constituency in Kadapa district.

Much to the relief of its ally, the Jana Sena Party said it would back the BJP candidate in the fight.

## AP aims numero uno slot...

Continued from Page 1

He also said that to achieve the status of Indian Maritime Gateway to the East, it is necessary to not only look inward but also outward. Hence, State interventions are planned to facilitate both trade within and with neighboring States.

The targets the State wants to achieve are completion of the East Coast Freight Corridor Railway route connecting Kharagpur to

Vijayawada falling in AP territory by 2022, development of two Multi-Modal Logistics Parks during the policy period, upgrading ports to handle an additional cargo of 350 MT per annum from the 2020 baseline, and completion of the inland waterway between Vijayawada and Muktyala on the Krishna River by 2026.

The State also wants to increase capacity utilisation of existing non-major seaports

by five percentage points each year to achieve 70 per cent utilisation by 2026 from the 51.6 per cent in 2020.

It also wants to set up an Integrated Command & Control Centre with advanced data analytics capabilities to monitor and measure freight movement performance and to double annual freight loadings in the South Central Railway zone from 94.33 million tonnes in the year 2020 to 188 million tonnes by 2026.

## No relinquishment of Bhavani devotees at temple this year

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Durga temple authorities have taken a key decision on the relinquishment (mala viramana) of Bhavani devotees that will be held from October 14 to 17.

Temple trust board chairman Pyla Somi Naidu on Wednesday informed that this year a separate place is not allocated for 'Irumudi', so the devotees have to perform the relinquishment programme in their respective places. He said that thousands of Bhavani devotees are expected to visit the temple for the relinquishment from October 14 to 17 and all arrangements have been made by now. Tonsoring for Bhavani devotees is arranged at Sitamma Vari Padalu and queues are also arranged. Arrangements are made for the Bhavanis to return through Kanakadurga Nagar after the darshan of the deity and the devotees are urged to cooperate with the authorities, said Somi Naidu.

Temple EO D Bramarambha said that they have already

spoken to the Guru Bhavanis that the relinquishment of Bhavani devotees is not allowed this year. Any offerings to the goddess by the devotees can be given later or can be sent online.

She said that on the auspicious Moola Nakshatra day, around one-and-a half lakh devotees visited the temple for darshan.

Guru Bhavani N Ganesh said that there are about 25 lakh Bhavani devotees from six states.

Every year, relinquishment of Bhavani devotees is done at Durga temple. However, it is stopped due to the Covid situation.

The Bhavanis should abide by the decision of the temple EO and Trust board members and stop coming to the temple for relinquishment. He said that the information was already sent to Guru Bhavanis, and that Bhavani devotees shall come and take darshan of the goddess following Covid guidelines and relinquishment shall be done at their respective places.

## Night curfew in AP from 12 am to 5 am till Oct 31...

Continued from Page 1

The government has made it clear that up to a maximum of 250 people will be allowed to attend functions, meetings, religious gatherings and weddings in accordance with the Covid rules.

Any violation will attract action under Sections 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code and other applicable laws.

The collectors, police commissioners and superintendents of police shall enforce these orders in the state scrupulously, said the principal secretary AK Singhal.

## All issues will be resolved...

Continued from Page 1

Advisor Sajjala told reporters later that it was a fact that employees were not getting their salaries on time due to the financial crisis.

"Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the revenues of the state had come down considerably, and this resulted in a severe financial crisis, which in turn impacted the payment of salaries to employees," he said.

Sajjala said that employees were the pillars of the government. Without them the government cannot function. They are part of the CM's family, he added.

He said the Jagan Government has been giving a lot of importance to employees. Without even waiting for a request from them, the CM had granted interim relief for them pending implementation of PRC recommendations.

He assured that all issues of the employees including PRC implementation will be resolved by month-end. The government will continue discussions with the employees and will solve their problems.

The Advisor said the government would give top priority to the payment of salaries to employees on time.

## Power utilities seek 20 coal...

Continued from Page 1

At the same time, the average power demand surged to 190 Million Units (MUs) in October 2021.

It was only 160 MUs in the same month last year. Even though the total installed capacity is 5,010 MW, the APGENCO is now generating only 2,300 MW-2,500 MW of thermal power due to the severe coal shortage.

Some units of the Rayalaseema Thermal Power Plant (RTPP) have been shut down due to the coal shortage and the Krishnapatnam and Dr. Narla Tata Rao Thermal Power Station (NTTPS) are also generating much less power than their installed capacity due to the same reason.

Andhra Pradesh has an installed capacity of around 18,533 MW, of which 8,075 MW are from solar and wind power generators, which does not serve the purpose of base load due to their inherent

nature.

Even though the state has an installed capacity of 908 MW in gas power plants, gas is available only for generating 100 MW. The Hinduja National Power Corporation Limited (HNPCCL) thermal power plant of 1,040 MW is sub-judice in a case pending before the Supreme Court.

State Discoms have availed 50,000 MUs from their long-term resources out of a total consumption of 63,070 MUs, that includes power from thermal, hydel, wind, and solar power plants, and Central generating stations.

Officials said that the APGENCO's thermal plants received only 24,000 tons of coal on an average per day in September 2021 against a requirement of 70,000 tons per day. This has improved to 40,000 tons per day as per a request of the Andhra Pradesh government recently.

"The fall in coal production across the country in the last

two years, the steep rise in world coal prices and the surge in AP grid demand recently have led to a power crunch in our State," a senior official said.

Officials also said that the state government is taking all steps to overcome the coal crisis and to avoid inconvenience to consumers.

The officials added that the utilities which have saved around Rs 2,300 crore through best practices and cost effective power purchases in the last two years are now forced to buy power at high prices from the open market at Rs 14 to Rs 20 per unit to continue 24x7 quality power supply.

The officials also said that the state government has done a lot to support the sector in the last two and a half years. The state government released Rs 34,340 crore to support power utilities during the last two years. The government paid Rs 9,160 crore to the Krishnapatnam power plant alone.

## Guv administers oath to PK Mishra as Chief Justice of AP...

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra along with his family members reached Vijayawada airport in Gannavaram from Visakhapatnam on Tuesday evening. He was received by High Court judges Justice Amanullah, Justice D Ramesh, Justice Seshasai, Justice Suresh Reddy, Justice Battu Devanand, AP Chief Secretary Dr Sameer Sharma, DGP Gautam Sawang, Governor's Special

Secretary RP Sisodia, District Collector Srinivasulu, High Court Registrar General Bhanumathi, High Court Protocol Registrar Muralidhar, and other officials welcomed him at the airport.

Justice Prashant Kumar was born on August 29, 1964, at Raigarh in Chhattisgarh. He studied B Sc and LLB in Guru Ghasidas University in Bilaspur. He enrolled as an advocate on September 4, 1987, and practiced law at district court at Raigarh, in the

High Court of Madhya Pradesh in Jabalpur and in the High Court of Chhattisgarh in Bilaspur.

He was designated as senior advocate by the High Court of Chhattisgarh in January 2005. Justice Mishra served as additional advocate general for Chhattisgarh from June 26, 2004, to August 31, 2007, and as Advocate-General from September 1, 2007, till the elevation as a judge of High Court of Chhattisgarh on December 10, 2009.

## ACB arrests TSSPDCL AE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An assistant engineer (AE) of Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TSSPDCL) has been caught by the sleuths of Anti-Corruption Bureau while accepting the bribe on Wednesday in Nagole.

The accused identified as Bhukya Madhukar has demanded Rs 15,000 bribe from a private electrical contractor — R Pradeep Kumar Reddy — to give a report on the completion of work. Later, the contractor approached the ACB officials who caught Madhukar red-handed while taking bribe. The ACB officials have arrested the accused Madhukar and produced him before the Principal Judge of the ACB court.

## Modi unveils Rs 100 lakh-cr master plan to boost...

Continued from Page 1

Similarly, against 3,000 km of railway line electrification in five years prior to 2014, 24,000 km rail line doubling has happened in the last 7 years.

From 250-km of metro in 2015, the metro rail network has expanded to 700-km and work is on another 1,000-km, he said, adding 1.5 lakh village panchayats have been connected with optic fibre network in last 7 years as compared to only 60 village panchayats in five years prior to 2014.

Vessel turnaround time at ports has been reduced from 41 to 27 hours and attempts are being made to reduce it further, he said, adding 4.25 lakh circuit km of power transmission line have been laid against 3 lakh circuit km in five years prior to 2014.

Renewable energy has expanded the times, he said.

PM Gati Shakti plan involves the creation of a common



umbrella platform through which infrastructure projects can be planned and implemented in an efficacious manner by way of coordination between various ministries/departments on a real-time basis.

With more visibility and availability of information and data on a real-time basis, there will be efficient implementation of infrastructure projects, less information asymmetry between ministries, reduction in working in silos as well as fewer delays due to lack of coordination between various

government agencies.

The Prime Minister said that over the years, the signage 'work in progress' became the symbol of lack of trust.

Progress requires speed, eagerness and collective efforts and today's 21st century India is leaving behind old systems and practices, Modi said.

"We have not only developed a work culture of completing the projects within the stipulated time frame but efforts are now being made to complete the projects ahead of time," he added.

The Prime Minister stated that the subject of infrastructure in the country has not been a priority for most political parties and this is not even visible in their manifesto.

Now, the situation has come that some political parties have started criticising the construction of necessary infrastructure for the country, he said.

Although it is globally accepted that the creation of

quality infrastructure for sustainable development is a proven way, which gives rise to many economic activities and creates employment on a large scale, the Prime Minister pointed out.

He expressed satisfaction that now the focus is on avoiding delays due to lack of coordination. Modi said now the collective power of the government is being channelled into fulfilling the schemes.

"PM Gati Shakti Master Plan not only brings together the government process and its various stakeholders but also helps to integrate different modes of transportation. This is an extension of holistic governance," he said.

To increase the income of the farmers and fishermen of the country, the infrastructure related to processing is also being expanded rapidly.

The Prime Minister expressed hope that with the development of quality infra-

structure, India can realise the dream of becoming the business capital.

Just as JAM (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile) trinity revolutionised the access of government facilities to the people, PM Gati Shakti will do the same for the field of Infrastructure, he added.

"It's a 21st century India and the government systems are moving forward...Today's mantra is - work for progress, wealth for progress, plan for progress and preference for progress.

"We have not only developed a culture to complete the projects within the specified time frame but are also trying to complete them before time," Modi said.

Private players too were not aware that where roads, canals and power plants were coming up and solutions for all these problems will come from PM Gati Shakti national master plan, the Prime Minister said.

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**BADVEL BY-POLL**

# Srikanth Reddy predicts landslide victory for YSRCP

**PNS ■ KADAPA**

Chief Whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy predicted that the YSRCP would win the Badvel by-poll with a huge majority and dismissed the allegations being made by the Opposition party. Speaking to the media at the party office in Badvel on Wednesday, the Chief Whip said that the YSRCP would seek votes explaining all the government programmes to every household and the people would receive the party well.

He said Badvel constituency witnessed a massive development after Dr Y S Rajashekar Reddy became Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh. He reminded that it was YSR who completed the Brahman Sagar project and gave water to seven mandals in the constituency and built 30,000 pucca houses. He said Congress and TDP

have completely neglected the constituency in the last 14 years.

The Chief Whip said it was after YS Jagan Mohan Reddy became the Chief Minister, drinking water is being supplied in Badvel Municipality on a regular basis and added that the Chief Minister had taken measures to ensure Brahman Sagar is filled, once water is released from Srisailem reservoir.

Srikanth Reddy denied the allegation of opposition parties that YSRCP would indulge in irregularities in the bye-poll and said opposition is making baseless allegations knowing the defeat. He said YSR Aasara scheme is not implemented in the constituency due to election code and would be implemented after the by-election.

The Chief Whip said the state government has sanctioned Rs 132 crore for the construction of roads in Badvel Municipality and added that other

roads would be constructed after these works were carried out.

Meanwhile, 15 candidates left in the fray in the Badvel bye-election and the withdrawal of nominations ended today. Three candidates withdrew their nominations today while 9 nominations were rejected for various reasons by the election officials. The candidates who are in the fray include Dr Dasari Sudha (YCP), PM Kamalamma (Congress), P Suresh (BJP), O Obuleshu (Telugu Janata Party), G Ramesh (Navataram Party), P Nagaraj (India Prajalandham Party), P Pedda Chinnayya (Mana Party), Sudarshan- (Jana Sahayaka Party), S Manohar (Mahajana Rajyam Party), Venkateswarlu (Navrang Congress Party), while other people contesting independently are K Narasimhalu, D Chinna, Ratnam, Rajesh, T Hariprasad.

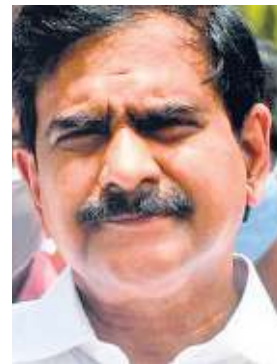


## TDP demands all-party meet on KRMB resolutions

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

TDP former Minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao on Wednesday accused the Jaganmohan Reddy Government of harming the rights and interests of AP farmers by not bargaining for a better deal at the latest meeting of the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB). Devineni Uma questioned the rationale behind bringing Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar under the purview of the KRMB while giving exemption to the Jurala project. Over 150 TMC water would be taken away from Jurala which would badly harm the future prospects of drinking and irrigation water in Rayalaseema. Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy should open his mouth on this injustice.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader asked whether CM



Devineni Uma demanded that the Government call for an all-party meeting to discuss the harmful consequences of the KRMB decisions. While the Chandrababu regime took all precautions to prevent injustice to AP farmers, the Jaganmohan Reddy rule was causing irreparable loss to them.

The TDP leader deplored that the Jaganmohan Reddy regime did not defend the rights of AP farmers at the latest KRMB meeting. The AP irrigation rights were surrendered to the neighbouring State. Just because he got election funds and support from the neighbouring State, the AP CM was giving undue benefits to them at the cost of AP drinking and irrigation water needs. Jagan Reddy was more interested in protecting his lands and properties located in other States rather than the wellbeing of AP people.

Jaganmohan Reddy was deliberately allowing the neighbouring State to get a better deal since its Chief Minister had extended help during the elections. The irrigation principal secretary and other officials did not argue for the rights of the AP farmers. They simply gave their approvals in front of the KRMB without questioning the injustice being done to AP.

## ‘Opposition trying to mislead public’

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Asserting that the entire State is celebrating Dasara alongside Aasara Utsavalu, Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishna Das said that the opposition has been trying to mislead people with cheap politics.

Addressing a press conference here Wednesday, the Deputy CM said that people from all sections, including women, are benefitting from the government's welfare schemes.

He said that it was fortunate to have YS Jagan Mohan Reddy as Chief Minister as he strives for the empowerment of women, and has promised to repay outstanding loans amounting to Rs 25,512 crore in four phases.

So far, the government has



credited almost Rs 12,000 crore in two phases and large scale celebrations of Aasara are taking place in all districts.

He said that opposition leaders are unable to digest

this, and was playing cheap politics by airing false propaganda through their media channels.

People have witnessed good governance in the last 27

months, and has supported YSRCP in all the elections giving a clear majority, he said.

As TDP leaders have failed to impress the public in the recent polls they are blaming the government out of frustration, he said, adding that the opposition should act responsibly.

The Deputy CM praised the Chief Minister for bringing in reforms like establishing village and ward secretariats, rythu bharosa centres, English medium schools, new medical colleges and for promoting social justice by prioritising weaker sections.

He said that TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu had turned Amaravati into a business and emphasised that decentralisation was the need of the hour.

## LOKESH DECRIES ‘DEVOTIONAL LAPSES’ DURING JAGAN’S VISIT TO TIRUMALA

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

TDP General Secretary MLC Nara Lokesh has asked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy not to tarnish the divinity of the Tirumala Hill Temple with his ‘fake devotion’.

Lokesh strongly objected to the manner in which TTD Chairman SV Subba Reddy's wife chanted ungodly prayers during the CM's visit. How could she chant that Govinda was there to protect Jagan Mohan Reddy? This was a big lapse in the traditions of the Seven Hills Temple, Lokesh said.

In a statement here

Wednesday, Lokesh asked why Jagan was not bringing his wife along with him to the TTD Temple if he really had faith in the Lord.

The TTD Chairman should realise that it was not right for him to cause disgrace to the Tirumala deity if he really had faith. Lokesh said that many lapses had taken place in devotional activities at the Tirumala shrine ever since the YSRCP came to power.

Lokesh said that SV Subba Reddy should have prevented aberrations in temple services if he considered it a great opportunity to serve God.

If the TTD Chairman con-

siders Jagan Mohan Reddy as God for giving him the high post, he should put up photos of the CM and worship him at home. But Jagannama Smarana in place of Govinda would be totally unacceptable, Lokesh added.

Lokesh said the CM was known for giving one ‘babay’ the blow of an axe. Another ‘babay’ Subba Reddy should introspect before hurting the traditions atop Seven Hills, he added.

Jagan should realise that shaking off ‘akshintalu’ (turmeric rice) and checking the smell of ‘prasadam’ would not amount to true piety, Lokesh said.



## Goddess appears as Durga Devi on day 7 of Dasara

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The presiding goddess appeared as goddess Durga Devi on the seventh day of the Dasara Navaratri celebrations here atop Indrakeeladri hill on Wednesday. Durga Devi is mentioned in the Vedas as a supreme power.

The meaning of Durga in Sanskrit is a fort, or a place which is very difficult to reach. And one more meaning of Durga is Durgatinashini, meaning the one who removes your sufferings. Hindus believe that Durga Devi protects her devotees from the evils of the world and removes their sorrows.

She is Simha Vaahini, which means lion is her vehicle; she is Trinayani, which means she is a three-eyed goddess. So, Durga Devi appears on Ashtami day to kill

Mahishasura with three eyes and eight arms while holding many weapons and wearing a red colour saree and beautiful jewellery made of gold, ocean pearls and precious stones. On Durgashtami day, people pray to Durga Devi with red flowers, cloths and read Durga Saptashati or Devi Mahatmya and offer Pulagam or Kadambam Annam as prasadam.

Endowments Minister Velampally Srinivasa Rao visited Kanaka Durga Temple on the occasion. He said that the goddess's blessings will be showered on the people abundantly. On Moola Nakshatra day, thousands of devotees visited the temple and darshan was allowed to all the devotees who visited the temple. The minister thanked the Revenue, Police and temple officials for the arrangements.



## Jagan determined to make women financially self-reliant: Adimulapu

**PNS ■ ONGOLE**

Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh reiterated that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had determined to make the women of the State as financially self-reliant by implementing welfare schemes for them.

The Education Minister was participating in a programme organised for the disbursement of cheques under the second tranche of ‘YSR Aasara’ scheme at Yerragondapalem village on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Suresh said despite financial constraints, Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government is implementing all the welfare



schemes assured by him during the padayatra.

Chief Minister aimed at making the women as financially self-reliant and crediting the money under various schemes into their bank accounts directly. Jagan has personally seen

the difficulties of women during his padayatra and assured to implement various welfare schemes for their uplift and he has started implementing all the schemes after coming to power,” the Minister said.

Joint Collector (Aasara

welfare) K Krishnaveni said that Yerragondapalem mandal had received Rs 1.82 crore worth benefits under Shree Nidhi scheme and Rs 2.88 crore under YSR Aasara scheme. DRDA project director Babu Rao and local leaders were present.

## AIIEA wants cancellation of LIC listing in stock market

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

All India Insurance Employees Association (AIIEA) General Secretary Srikanth Mishra has objected to the withdrawal of government investments in the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). He has also demanded immediate cancellation of the LIC's listing in the stock market to protect the LIC.

Addressing the media here on Wednesday, the AIIEA General Secretary said the AIIEA is

deeply disturbed over the way the government recently secured passage of the General Insurance Business Nationalisation (GIBNA) Amendment Bill in Parliament.

He alleged that the Bill was passed through strong arm methods in blatant disregard of the commitment given earlier to Parliament and the nation that the government will retain at least 51 per cent of the stock in the four public sector gener-

al insurance companies.

Srikanth Mishra said that already the Centre had sold Air India and now it is trying to sell LIC which owns assets worth Rs 38 lakh crore and stood top in the insurance sector globally. He said that 22 private companies had entered the insurance sector in the last 21 years, but the LIC continued to be the market leader with a market share of above 70 per cent. He said the LIC is a strong

government company in the insurance sector with 42 crore policies and it is contributing towards the development of the nation in various ways.

Srikanth Mishra said the AIIEA has decided to convene a national-level meeting at New Delhi for the protection of LIC.

He asked the government to stop selling its shares in public sector companies, cancel the listing of LIC in the stock market and to nullify the anti-worker provisions in the amended labour laws.



## ‘Govindaraja’ rides atop Surya Prabha Vahanam

**PNS ■ TIRUPATI**

Spiritual ecstasy marked the procession of ‘Surya Prabha Vahanam’ at the hill shrine of Lord Malayappa Swamy.

Lord Malayappa blessed devotees on the seventh day morning of the ongoing annual Srivari Navaratri Brahmotsavam on Surya Prabha Vahana in Sri Govindarajaswamy Alankaram at the Kalyana mandapam on Wednesday at Tirumala.

Legend says that the Sun God, the key architect of life, is dragged by seven horses with Anura as his charioteer. Sun God is being represented for blessing with good health.

Lord Venkateswara rides the Surya Prabha Vahanam after

the first rays of the Sun reach the earth. The priests wait at the corner for the festivities to commence after the Sun's rays reach the shrine. Initially, the priests conduct poojas to the Sun God and prepare for the procession to carry the deity.

It is the common belief that the darshan of Sri Malayappa on Surya Prabha Vahanam would provide long life to devotees and also a relief to them from all illnesses.

Tirumala pontiffs Pedda Jeeyar Swamy, Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, TTD EO Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, TTD board member Smt Prashanti Reddy, Additional EO Sri AV Dharm Reddy, CVSO Sri Gopinath Jatti, Srivari temple trustee DyEO Sri Ramesh Babu and others were present.



## After Covid, vendors at Tirumala hit by strict rules for darshan

**S BHANU PRAKASH ■ TIRUPATI**

The drop in the number of devotees visiting Lord Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic has left the hawkers, roadside vendors and small traders in dire straits. They solely depend on the pilgrims for their livelihood. The persisting uncertainty induced by the Covid situation has pushed hundreds of small traders, hawkers and workers at Tirumala to the brink.

After struggling to survive the last year as the pandemic broke out, they were pinning hopes on

the return to normalcy when the second wave dashed their dreams. Now, when the situation has improved, the rules set for the devotees visiting Tirumala by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) have once again hit their businesses.

As per the rules, the devotees coming with online special entry tickets or SSD tokens should possess either two-dose vaccination certificates or come with a Covid-19 negative test report. The test report should have taken three days before reporting on the day of their darshan. The conditions have gradually decreased the footfall of pilgrims in Tirumala. Only darshan tick-

et holders are allowed to enter Tirumala from Alipiri. Given the situation, the devotees who have booked darshan tickets are also cancelling them. Meanwhile, the pilgrims without darshan tickets who are visiting Tirumala for fulfilling their vows of tonsuring are stopped at Alipiri and are not allowed to come to Tirumala.

At present, only 25,000 to 30,000 darshan ticket holders are allowed to enter Tirumala in a day whereas earlier, nearly one lakh pilgrims used to visit the abode of Lord Venkateswara every day. The drop in the number of pilgrims has affected thousands of small traders, hawkers and workers. They are



hard put to eke out a living and support families. Many migrated to Tirupati in search of other livelihoods or labour.

Around 1,100 families live in

the Balajinagar locality, a majority of whom have given their land to the TTD as part of the implementation of its master plan. The breadwinners of most of these

families are either petty traders or small-time shopkeepers trading in knick-knacks and other products the visiting devotees would need. Apart from them, there are around 1,000 hawkers -- licensed and unauthorised -- who depend on the pilgrims for their survival. Hundreds of workers and hawkers would go to Tirumala daily to carry on their activities. Out of the 1,600 shops and over 300 stalls at Tirumala, only 5 per cent are open now.

“Many of us have procured licences for our business. Now, we cannot even opt for other businesses without the prior approval of the TTD. And none knows when the situation will be

normal again. We have no clue how to run our families. We urge the TTD officials to relax the rules and to allow pilgrims coming without darshan tickets to Tirumala to visit local temples,” say a group of petty vendors in Tirumala.

“Even as the Tirumala temple has been reopened for the darshan, only 25,000 people are allowed to visit the temple daily and people visiting Tirumala without tickets are stopped at Alipiri Toll gate. This has affected our livelihoods, even after unlocking the Tirumala after Covid pandemic. Almost all of us shut down our businesses after realising that we will not be

in a position to pay even rentals and electricity bills,” says Anand Kumar, a shop owner.

Meanwhile, TTD Trust board chairman Y V Subba Reddy said so far, there had been no complaints from the pilgrims with regard to darshan, other arrangements or the rules set for darshan. There were no instances of pilgrims with Covid-19 symptoms coming to Tirumala, because of the stringent screening everywhere. Devotees are requested not to come to Tirumala without a proper ticket, vaccination certificate or RTPCR test certificate done three days prior to the darshan date.





# SP asks cops to check ganja, liquor smuggling



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police Malika Garg has directed the cops of Santhanthalapadu police station to take strong action to check the smuggling of ganja, liquor and sand, and to hold meetings with village defence committees to protect temples.

SP Malika Garg was conducting an inspection at the Santhanthalapadu police station Wednesday. She inspected the reception counter, checked records and enquired about the duties of women constables.

The SP directed the staff to respond promptly to Disha SOS calls and Dial 100 calls. The SP inspected the

process of registering cases from the time of filing of the FIR to the time of filing the final charge sheet in the CCTNS. The SP told officers to quickly complete investigation of UI cases.

The SP told officers to hold meetings with village defence committees regarding protection for temples and to ensure that prominent temples have CCTV surveillance.

The SP directed officers to keep a close watch on habitual criminals.

The SP ordered them to take strong steps to curb the sales of gutka, khaini and other banned tobacco products. The SP told them to respond immediately to Spandana complaints.

## STAY AWAY FROM DRUGS, SP URGES STUDENTS

PNS ■ ELURU

Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma has advised students to stay away from vices like drug abuse. He was speaking at an awareness programme organised on the ASRIMS Medical College campus here on Wednesday. The medical college students were sensitised on the dangers of drug abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP explained to the students how drugs ruin the lives of those addicted to it. "Drugs are a menace to the world. The lives of several youngsters, who would have bright futures, have been ruined

after they became addicted to drugs," he said.

The SP said that awareness programmes against drugs are being conducted in educational institutions across the district. The SP warned of stringent action against those who are found consuming or possessing drugs.

He sought the cooperation of the public to make West Godavari a drug-free district. He asked the students to send a WhatsApp message to 95503 51100 or dial 100 to provide information about drugs. DSP O Dilip Kiran, Inspector A Srinivasa Rao and other officials were present at the programme.

# Include modernisation of tanks in Rs 400 cr- water project: Minister

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The Citizen Association has appealed to Minister for Energy Balineni Srinivasulu Reddy to incorporate the modernisation of Pelluru, Pernamitta and Koppolu irrigation tanks in the Rs 400 crore-drinking water supply project. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has sanctioned Rs 400 crore to take up a mega project to supply drinking water to Ongole city and surrounding villages.

Ongole city and surrounding villages face acute drinking water scarcity during the summer days. On the appeal of Minister Balineni Srinivasulu Reddy, the Chief Minister sanctioned Rs 400 crore for the project.

Citizen Association president Dr.Kolla Madhu, in a letter to Minister Balineni Srinivasulu Reddy, suggested that the three irrigation tanks, located at Pelluru, Pernamitta and Koppolu, should be modernised to contain a huge quantity of water to supply drinking water to the city.

He explained to the minister that the Pernamitta tank is located in an area of 110 acres. If the tank is modernised, it can hold more water benefiting 50,000 people in the surrounding villages. The Koppolu tank is located in 120 acres and if modernised, drinking water could be supplied to 50,000 villagers. The Pelleru tank is also



ernised to contain a huge quantity of water to supply drinking water to the city.

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spread over 100 acres.

Madhu urged the minister to ensure that modernisation of the three irrigation tanks should be incorporated in the Rs 400 crore- project.

He also suggested that the three major irrigation tanks, if modernised, could be developed as tourist destinations.

He urged the minister to visit the three irrigation tanks and take steps to send the necessary proposals to the engineers.



## Temple decorated with Rs 5 cr currency notes

PNS ■ NELLORE

A temple in Andhra Pradesh has been decorated with currency notes of over Rs 5 crore as part of the ongoing Dasara celebrations.

The deity at Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari temple in Nellore district has been decked up with currency notes worth Rs 5.16 crore.

Over 100 volunteers worked for several hours to decorate the temple with notes of the denominations of Rs 2,000, Rs 500, Rs 200, Rs 100, Rs 50, and Rs 10.

The organisers adorned the deity with garlands and bouquets of origami flowers made from the currency notes of various denominations and colours.

The currency notes of different colours have added to the beauty of the temple attracting devotees from various places.

A large number of devotees worship the deity in the 'avatar' of 'Dhanalakshmi',



the goddess of riches, during the navratri celebrations.

According to Nellore Urban Development Authority (NUDA) chairman and member of the temple committee Mukkala Dwarakanath, the committee recently completed renovation works

of the temple at a cost of Rs 11 crore.

"Since this is the first celebration after the completion of the renovation works which took four years, the committee decided to decorate the deity with currency notes," he said.

Members of the committee and devotees collected new currency notes and hired the services of artists to take up the unique decoration.

The committee also plan to decorate the deity with 7 kg gold and 60 kg silver as part of the Dasara celebrations

However, this is not the first instance of a temple getting decorated with currency notes. Kanyaka Parameswari temple in Telangana's Jogulamba Gadwal district was decorated with currency notes amounting to Rs 1,11,11,111.

In 2017, the temple committee had made the offering in a similar arrangement with the currency notes amounting Rs 3,33,33,333.

## SHORT TAKES

### Archer felicitated for winning silver medal in NTPC contest



**VIJAYAWADA:** Archer Manoj Kumar, BA (Psychology) first-year student at SRR and CVR Government Degree College in Vijayawada, bagged the silver medal in the recently concluded 40th

NTPC Senior National Archery Championship held in Jamshedpur in Jharkhand state. A programme was organised at SRR and CVR College on Wednesday to felicitate Manoj. Principal Dr K Bhagya Lakshmi, Physical Education Department Head of the Department (HOD) Dr M Koteswara Rao, Dr D Yugandhar and college staff spoke. College principal Bhagya Lakshmi praised the archer and said that Manoj Kumar was the pride of the college, Vijayawada as well as Andhra Pradesh. She specially thanked Cherukuri Satyanarayana, who is a coach at Cherukuri Volga Archery Academy and Andhra Pradesh Archery Association secretary. The principal further stated that her college has been encouraging sports and games along with education, because certificates for sports and games are additional qualifications for both higher education and jobs. Several sports persons who are settled in different government departments were trained in her college, she added.

### Cops arrest eight robbers



**GUNTUR:** The police officials arrested eight robbers and recovered Rs 7,000 cash, mobile phone and a motorcycle from them. Speaking to the media persons here on Wednesday, Deputy Superintendent of Police J Prashanti said that the

arrested eight persons, belonging to two separate gangs, had been committing robberies and snatching mobile phones on the highways for the last few months. After a person lodged a complaint with the Nallapadu Police that the robbers robbed Rs 7,000 cash and fled on his motorcycle, the police officials kept a vigil and arrested the eight of them. All the gang members are below 20 years of age and they are addicted to vices. They had committed crime to earn a quick buck to support their vices. Prashanti warned of stringent action against the accused if found indulging in such crimes.

### Police save lives of couple



**ELURU:** The swift action by the police officials saved the lives of a couple at Rajula colony at Jangareddygudem village on Wednesday. According to the police, after receiving information from the neighbours that a couple attempted to suicide by consuming

pesticide, the police officials led by Sub Inspector Sagar Babu rushed to Vijaya Durga apartment complex, where the couple lives. The police broke open the doors and shifted the couple to the government hospital. They were undergoing treatment in the hospital. The swift action of police officials was appreciated by all.

### Vizag to host IndiaSkills South-'21

**VIJAYAWADA:** The National Skill Development Corporation is organising regional-level competitions (IndiaSkills South-2021) in collaboration with APSSDC from November 30 to December 5 at different locations in Visakhapatnam. The APSSDC officials stated that Visakhapatnam is hosting the competition for the first time, and it gives a great opportunity to all Andhra Pradesh candidates to showcase their skills. The officials informed that competitions would be held in 52 skill trades. Six states will participate in this event with around 500 competitors. The participating states are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry ( UT), Tamil Nadu and Telangana. The officials informed that the competition would be held in Andhra University, MSME Technology Center, SDI, Arilova, Sun International Institute for Tourism and Hotel Management, Government ITI (Old) and Varun Motors in Visakhapatnam. As many as four officials from every state, 52 domain experts, over 100 jurors and 50 SSC representatives, and around 30 MSDE and NSDC officials will be present. The chief ministers of states, Central ministers, other state ministers and ministers from AP, and APSSDC and other department officials would attend the programme.

### PM Gati Shakti a good initiative: AP Chambers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The members of the Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers) took part in the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan launch event that was held virtually on Wednesday.

Potluri Bhaskara Rao, president-elect, and B Raja Sekhar, general secretary, represented AP Chambers and attended the launch event from APIIC Towers, Mangalagiri. The National Master Plan is proposed to bring the coordinated efforts of 16 ministries and departments under the PM Gati Shakti. It seeks to address the lack of coordination between different departments that can save a lot of time and cost, and reduce the troubles faced by citizens.

AP Chambers welcomed PM Gati Shakti and said that it is a good initiative by the Prime Minister that can address the logistics problems in the country and help the nation to become an alternative manufacturing hub to China.

P Bhaskara Rao and B Raja Sekhar, along with Y V Eswara Rao, general secretary, AP Lorry Owners Association, later met the Commissioner of Industries, J V N Subramanyam and explained to him the difficulty faced by the industry because of the True-up Charges levied by the DIS-COMS and submitted a representation to him.

## SP Kaushal launches GECOTS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Superintendent of Police, Krishna district, Siddharth Kaushal launched Grave Economic and Cyber offence tracking system (GECOTS), which was set up for quick investigation of cases and to provide better services to the people, at Vijayawada on Wednesday .

GECOTS, which is linked to the dashboard, helps the Superintendent of Police to get the details of the cases, level of investigation, pending cases and other details.



The SP will have better access on cases related to cheating, cyber crime, grave cases including murders, rape, economic offences, progress of the cases, arrests and others. Speaking on the occasion,

Siddharth Kaushal said the GECOTS will take the police more closer to the people. He said the district police give top priority for the speedy investigation of cases and apprehend the culprits.

## Port Trust initiates works under PM's Gati Shakti programme

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) has initiated several works under the Prime Minister's new programme -- Gati Shakti. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Rs.100 lakh crore-project for developing holistic infrastructure in various industries in the service sector.

The Visakhapatnam Port Road Company Limited (VPRCL), an SPV of VPT and NHAI, has taken up road connectivity to Visakhapatnam Port of about 12.47 km. It will facilitate smooth movement of cargo traffic between Port and NH-16 and also cater to the local traffic between Visakhapatnam city and Gajuwaka. Phase-I of the work was completed in 2006 and it was developed to four-lane in 2017. Now, it is proposed to be developed as a six-lane at an estimated cost of Rs.275 crore. NHAI has

entrusted the preparation of the Detailed Project Report with a consultancy and it is in progress. The port has taken up the work of providing electronic interlocking for operation of points and signals through object controllers of North, South, North West and South West cabins connecting centre EI of R and D Yard at an estimated cost of Rs.28 crore.

Electrification of 23 ETKM Port Railway lines has been completed in the first phase. The second phase of 38 TKM of electrification Port railway lines has been divided into three parts. The tenders are under evaluation and the work will be awarded in November. Electrification of private sidings of VGCB, VSPL and HPCL is completed and other private siding operators are requested to take up the electrification works. With electrification, the trains can be directly placed into the sidings by electric locomotives

without interchange at R and D yard by which detention will be reduced and the turnaround of rakes improves.

The VPT is in the process of constructing covered sheds on 20 acres at an estimated cost of Rs. 210 crore with the financial assistance of Sagarmala Development Company Limited. The project has been contemplated to maintain environmental hygiene while handling dusty cargoes and to meet the statutory requirements of the Pollution Control Board and the National Green Tribunal.

The VPT is also developing a truck parking terminal on 20 acres at a cost of Rs.52.32 crore near the Exim Park area. The facility will provide space for 600 trucks. This project has been contemplated to provide a shelter for cargo carrying trucks and to avoid parking of cargo vehicles on the operational roads, which hamper free flow of traffic.

## US CNO on a three-day visit to Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Admiral Michael Gilday, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), US Navy accompanied by Linda Gilday arrived in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday for a three-day official visit.

Admiral Gilday interacted with Chief of Eastern Naval Command, Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh. Various issues of common interest to both navies were discussed.

Later, Michael Gilday was given a guided tour of facilities at Naval Dockyard,



Visakhapatnam. The CNO paid homage to naval personnel who have made the

supreme sacrifice in the line of duty to the nation at the 'Smaram Sthal' Memorial in Naval Dockyard.

Admiral Gilday is scheduled to embark the USN Carrier Strike Group participating in Ex Malabar, along with Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh, Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh and other US-India delegates on October 14.

Linda Gilday would interact with the committee members and ladies of the Navy Wives Welfare Association (NWWA) (Eastern Region) and will also visit the NWWA facilities during her stay.

## Indian culture always accords respect to teachers: V-P

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stressing the importance of the foundational role played by teachers in shaping the lives of children and youngsters, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said on Wednesday that Indian culture always accorded respect and reverence to gurus.

The Vice President presented an award instituted in memory of his teacher, Poluri Hanumajjanakirama Sarma, to Kovela Suprasannacharya here for his contributions in the field of poetry and literature, an official release said.

Naidu appreciated the awardee for introducing a new trend in Telugu literary criticism and for incorporating the views of Indian thinkers, who fought against discrimination in certain sections of the society.



Naidu said everyone should always remember and remain grateful to their teachers and gurus for their guidance and mentoring in shaping their careers.

The award, instituted at the personal initiative of the Vice President by the Telangana S a r a s w a t h a Parishath, seeks to recognize contributions to the Telugu language.

Lauding the Parishath for its efforts in preserving and propagating the Telugu language, Naidu reiterated that the medium of instruction should be in the mother tongue up to primary school or high school. Similarly, local language should be used extensively in the administration and judiciary as well.

The Vice President also released two books titled - 'Amritotsava Bharathi' and 'Sri Devulapalli Ramanujarao'.

## Plea to set up cargo facilities at Visakhapatnam airport

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh Air Travelers Association, Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Airport Advisory Committee jointly urged the government and airline services to set up cargo export facilities at Visakhapatnam airport. In the absence of the facilities, they are taking the cargo from Chennai and Hyderabad airports.

The three agencies convened a meeting in the presence of Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha member M V V Satyanarayana on Wednesday. During the meeting, the stakeholders opined that there was huge potential for air cargo from Visakhapatnam. Due to the lack of connectivity and facilities including packing, additional warehousing storage, different temperature storage compartments for perishable cargo, the exports are being routed through Hyderabad and Chennai.

Wide-bodied aircraft to load bulk cargo is also needed at Visakhapatnam airport, the members opined. The meeting



also said that in the absence of direct international flights, exporters shift the cargo to Chennai and Hyderabad airports by road.

Those who attended the meeting said that around 1,200 tonnes of cargo per month is being moved by road to Hyderabad and Chennai airports for onward export. Improving the facilities at Visakhapatnam airport and connectivity will make doing business easier and boost trade and employment.

K.Srinivasa Rao, Director, Visakhapatnam Airport Authority, and M V V Satyanarayana MP promised to take up the issues to those concerned. AP Air Travellers Association members Dr K Kumar Raja, O Nares Kumar and D S Varma were present.



# CBI, ED & NCB being misused to target Oppn: Sharad Pawar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday claimed that central agencies, including the CBI, the Enforcement Directorate and the Narcotics Control Bureau, were being misused to target the opposition. Referring to the Income Tax department's raids on entities linked to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, the NCP president while addressing a press conference here said personnel of the agencies have been conducting raids for the sixth day on Wednesday, which is very unusual.

"Central agencies, including the ED, CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) and NCB, are being misused," he claimed.



He also said the Mumbai Police's Anti-Narcotics Cell has done a better job than the NCB. The NCP, which shares power in Maharashtra with the Shiv

Sena and Congress, had earlier said it will face the onslaught of central agencies on its leaders and workers will full vigour. The I-T department had

raided entities linked to relatives of Ajit Pawar, a senior NCP leader, in the state. Senior NCP leader and former state minister Anil Deshmukh is also facing probe by central agencies on multiple charges.

The NCB recently conducted a number of raids, including on some high-profile people. Apart from the recent drugs bust onboard a cruise liner off the Mumbai coast, that led to the arrest of Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan, the NCB last year investigated a drug case linked to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput and several other matters related to narcotics involving high-profile people.



## Alliance with Samajwadi Party first priority, says Shivpal Yadav

PNS ■ AGRA

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party president Shivpal Yadav on Wednesday said that his first priority is to form alliance with Samajwadi Party in the upcoming UP assembly polls but he did not rule out the possibility of a tie-up with other "secular" parties.

The PSP national president also claimed that the Samajik Pariwartin Rath Yatra that began on Tuesday in Vrindavan, Mathura, would conclude at the birthplace of the lord Rama in Ayodhya after going through 75 districts in the state.

# Top JeM terrorist commander killed in Pulwama encounter

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Top terrorist commander of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) Sham Sofi was killed in an encounter with security forces in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, police said.

Acting on specific inputs about the presence of terrorists in Tilwani Mohalla Waggad in the Tral area of Awantipora, in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, security forces launched a cordon and search operation there, a police official said.

He said an encounter broke out after the militants opened fire at the security personnel, who retaliated.

In the exchange of fire, a militant was killed, the official said. Inspector General of Police (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar said the slain terrorist



ist has been identified as Sham Sofi who was a top JeM commander. "Top JeM Commander 'ter-

rorist Sham Sofi killed in Tral 'Encounter,' the IGP said on Kashmir Zone Police's Twitter handle.



## NIA arrests 9 terror associates after multiple raids in J&K

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The NIA has arrested nine terror associates during searches at 18 locations in Jammu and Kashmir after registration of a case over a conspiracy launch attacks in the union territory and other major cities including New Delhi, an official said on Wednesday. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had registered the case on October 10 and initiated an investigation.

An NIA spokesperson said a total of nine people were arrested -- five on Wednesday and four a day earlier -- after multiple searches in different districts of the valley over the past two days. The NIA identified the five accused arrested on Wednesday as Mohammad Haneef Chirali and Arif Farooq Bhat of Srinagar, Hafeez of Budgam, Owais Dar of Pulwama and Mateen Bhat of Shopian.

"The NIA conducted searches at two locations in Srinagar and seized electronic devices and incriminating jihadi documents," the spokesperson said on Wednesday. The NIA also said during the day that four accused people -- Waseem Ahmad Sofi, Tariq Ahmad Dar, Bilal Ahmad Mir alias Bilal Fafu and Tariq Ahmad Bafanda, all residents of Srinagar -- were arrested during the searches carried out at 16 locations in Srinagar, Pulwama and Shopian districts on Tuesday.

# Siddaramaiah and Yediyurappa junk Kumaraswamy's claims of 'secret meet'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Chief Ministers Siddaramaiah and B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday rubbished JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy's claim that both leaders have had a secret late night meeting.

Kumaraswamy had yesterday claimed that the recent Income Tax raids on a person, who is said to be close aide of Yediyurappa, was an attempt by the BJP leadership to "control" him, following his alleged meeting with Siddaramaiah.

Congress stalwart Siddaramaiah challenged Kumaraswamy and said he will retire from politics, if it was proved that such a meeting took place. On the other hand, BJP veteran Yediyurappa termed it as



"far from truth and meaningless". "I had gone to meet Yediyurappa on his birthday. I had not met him personally as Chief Minister or as the Leader of Opposition. I have not met him (personally) till today. We both were in the same hospital when we were infected by Corona, even then we had not

met," Siddaramaiah said. Speaking to reporters in Kalaburgi, he claimed it is Kumaraswamy who repeatedly met Yediyurappa, when he was the CM.

"Let him (Kumaraswamy) prove that Yediyurappa and I have met, I will retire from politics.... While in opposition I

will never meet those in the ruling party, nor go to their office or house, it is the principle I follow.....it (Kumaraswamy's claims) is blatant lies," he added. On the other hand, Yediyurappa, who took to social media to reject claims about his meeting with Siddaramaiah, without naming Kumaraswamy, said he has never compromised on the ideology he believes in and his only aim was to bring BJP back to power in Karnataka.

"Other than my birthday on February 27, 2020, I have not personally met Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah. I have no need to have such a meeting. We in the party are working to bring BJP back to power in the state," Yediyurappa tweeted.

## Vijayan says K-Rail project inevitable for development; UDF walks out of Assembly

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday categorically rejected the concerns raised by the opposition UDF against the proposed semi-high speed rail project, saying that the over Rs 63,000 crore initiative is inevitable for the infrastructure development of the state and his government has a transparent approach in this regard.

The Congress-led opposition members strongly argued in the state Assembly that the mammoth project, named K-Rail project, would cause huge financial burden and severe environmental damage to the state and would not be beneficial for common men.

# Abortion allowed till 24 weeks of pregnancy for select women

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has notified new rules under which the upper limit for termination of a pregnancy has been increased from 20 to 24 weeks for certain categories of women.

According to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Rules, 2021, these categories include survivors of sexual assault or rape or incest, minors and women whose marital status changes during an ongoing pregnancy (widowhood and divorce) and women with physical disabilities.

The new rules also cover mentally ill women, cases of



foetal malformation that has a substantial risk of being incompatible with life or if the child is born it may suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities to be seriously handicapped and women with pregnancy in humanitarian settings or disaster or emergency situations as may be declared by the government.

## NHRC-SHRCs meet to explore new areas of collaboration

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Representatives of the NHRC and State Human Rights Commissions (SHRC) on Wednesday met here to explore new areas of cooperation and share the best practices for promotion and protection of human rights, officials said. The meeting began in the morning at the Vigyan Bhawan in the presence of NHRC chairperson justice (ret'd) Arun Kumar Mishra.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) marked



its 28th foundation day on Tuesday.

The NHRC-SHRCs interface meeting is taking place here to "explore common and new areas of collaboration for the promotion and protection of human rights," a senior official said.

# Video links Cong unit chief to scam; goes viral

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Congress in Karnataka on Wednesday found itself in a tight spot after a video showed a purported conversation between the party media coordinator M A Saleem and former Lok Sabha member V S Ugrappa attributing the Congress State president D K Shivakumar's involvement in a scam when he was a Minister.

Taking strong exception to the clipping that went viral, Shivakumar said he cannot deny that the conversation did not take place and rejected the content of the conversation.

Acting swiftly, the party expelled Saleem from the party for six years and served a show-cause notice to Ugrappa, who is Congress spokesperson, seeking an explanation in three days.

The conversation is said to be related to the scams in the Irrigation Department in which Shivakumar was allegedly involved when he was Irrigation Minister in the coalition government of Congress-JD(S), which ran for 14 months and collapsed in June 2019.

However, Ugrappa clarified Saleem was only briefing him what the BJP people have been talking about the raids carried



out by the Income Tax (I-T) Department since October 7 against three major contractors executing irrigation and highway project on 47 premises in four States, including Karnataka and Maharashtra.

# Court extends actor Leena Paul's custody

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has extended the custodial interrogation of actor Leena Maria Paul till October 16 in a money laundering case related to extortion of Rs 200 crore from a businessman's wife here.

Special Judge Parveen Singh also extended the ED custody of Paul's husband Suresh Chandrasekhar, an accused in 21 cases, by 11 days after the couple were produced before the court on October 12 on expiry of their 3-day custodial interrogation granted earlier.

The couple allegedly

duped former Fortis Healthcare promoter Shivinder Mohan Singh's wife Aditi Singh. The probe agency had sought the extension of couple's custody by 11 days each.

"After perusing the record, I find that to establish the money trail of the proceeds of crime and to confront the accused with the statements of other accused, further custodial interrogation of the accused is required. However, I do not find any grounds for sending accused Leena Maria Paul to ED custody for 11 days," the judge said.

# Bengal zamindars' descendants follow Puja tradition

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The yellowing house with high ceilings and shuttered French windows covers an entire bloc on S N Banerjee Road in Janabazar area in the heart of Kolkata.

Turn around the corner, and one comes across a gated, high arched tunnel-like driveway into the palatial building which opens into a huge courtyard leading to a broad flight of stairs ending in a 'Thakur Dalan' (open hall of worship).

Dominating the 'dalan' framed by Corinthian columns is a tall Durga idol in dazzling traditional attire. As if on cue, the 'dhakis' (drummers) start playing and the womenfolk of the household begin ululating and blowing their conch shells.

This is the Durga Puja at Rani Rashmoni's palace, one of the oldest zamindar (estate owner) houses in this metropolis, which Mark Twain once described as a city of palaces.

Kolkata's palaces still boast of zamindari-style Durga Puja celebrations more than two centuries old, while mansions in outlying districts have even older celebrations.

Though the 'bonediana' (aristocratic traditions) has somewhat dimmed as these powerful families have lost their huge estates after the country's Independence and some split into multiple factions, nevertheless, the spirit of joie de vivre (joy of living) remains strong in these puja gatherings.

"Durga Puja here started in



1792. Unlike other idols, our Durga has 'Tapta Kanchan' (molten gold) colour.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa, among others, has blessed our courtyard," Prasun Hazra, a

descendant of the Rani Rashmoni family, said. Rani Rashmoni is known for

taking on the might of the East India Company in opposing attempts to tax Bengal's fishermen, and also establishing the massive Dakshineswar Kali Temple on the city outskirts and patronising Ramakrishna, whose disciple Swami Vivekananda set up a missionary order in his name.

Around 4.4 km away, stands Shovabazar Palace, the site of the city's two oldest family pujas.

The Durga Puja of the 'Choto Tara' (cadet branch) of the princely family founded by Maharaja Naba Krishna Deb, a rich zamindar who was a close confidante to Lord Robert Clive and Governor-General Warren Hastings, is a closed-door family affair and visitors are allowed only by prior appointment.

INDIA CORNER

### Woman Army officer found hanging at military training institute in Pune

A 43-year-old woman officer of the Indian Army was found hanging at her official accommodation in the premises of the Military Intelligence Training School and Depot (MINTSD) here in Maharashtra on Wednesday, police said. The Army and the police suspect it to be a case of suicide. The incident came to light in the morning when the staff had gone to serve tea to the Lieutenant Colonel-rank officer. She was found hanging with a dupatta around her neck, an official said. According to the police, the Lieutenant Colonel had come to the MINTSD for training. She had some domestic issues and had filed for a divorce, said Namrata Patil, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone V). "We have launched a probe into the death," the DCP said. In a statement, the Army authorities have said that an incident of likely suicide by an officer has occurred in the premises of Military Intelligence Training School and Depot, Pune. The officer was undergoing a course at the institute, it said. A case with the civil police has been registered and the Army is providing all assistance in the investigation, the release said.

### Savarkar never apologised to British, claims Shiv Sena's Raut

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday said Veer Savarkar had never apologised to the British, a day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh claimed that the freedom fighter had written mercy petitions to the British on Mahatma Gandhi's request. Talking to reporters in Pune, Raut said freedom fighters who languish in jail for more than ten years can adopt a strategy thinking they can do something after coming out of jail instead of remaining inside. In politics or while serving imprisonment, a different strategy is adopted, Raut said. "If Savarkar had adopted any such strategy it cannot be called an apology. Savarkar might have done that (adopted a strategy). This cannot be called an apology. Savarkar never apologised to the British," he said. Raut, who had demanded Bharat Ratna for V D Savarkar on many occasions, said the freedom fighter, a Hindutva icon, has always been an ideal for his party. When asked about Rajnath Singh's statement on Savarkar, Raut said he was not aware of it. Rajnath Singh on Tuesday hailed Veer Savarkar as a staunch nationalist and India's first military strategist in the 20th century and said it was on Mahatma Gandhi's request that he wrote mercy petitions to the British and people from the Marxist and Leninist ideology wrongly accuse him as a fascist.

### Govt withdraws travel advisory on Covid checks for those arriving from the UK

The government has withdrawn a travel advisory that added COVID-19 related additional checks and restrictions on those arriving from the UK after the British government ordered discontinuation of mandatory testing and quarantine norms for those vaccinated with Covishield travelling from India. In an official memorandum issued on October 11, the health ministry said that based on the evolving scenario, it has been decided that the revised guidelines stand withdrawn and the earlier guidelines on international arrival issued on February 17 shall be applicable to all travellers arriving in India from the UK. Earlier this month, India had said that all British nationals arriving in India from the UK will have to undergo a mandatory 10-day quarantine if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. India's had made this announcement after the UK recognised Covishield vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India but retained the 10-day quarantine period for fully vaccinated travellers from India.



## Bailed out

After its decision to ban Chhath puja, the Delhi Govt writes to the Centre seeking guidelines

Politics, as expected, mars the festival season, more so in Delhi. The ruling Aam Aadmi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party are locked in a fistfight over people's participation in the Chhath Puja, scheduled for November 10. Both have deliberately dragged the "uttaranchalis" -- people of Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh -- into the imbroglio. In 2020, when the country was under the deathly spell of the COVID-19 pandemic, politics took a back seat as the Union and State Governments banned the public celebration of all festivals. Neither the AAP nor the BJP or any of the fringe religious outfits thought of politicising the festivals. This time around, the pandemic situation has improved, and politics has reared its head once again. It began with the Delhi Pollution Control Committee on September 29 ordering a complete ban on the sale and bursting of firecrackers till January 1, 2022.



Rajasthan and Haryana followed suit though Uttar Pradesh is still silent on the issue this year. As the fireworks issue is directly linked to pollution, parties saw little scope for deriving political mileage. The Supreme Court, too, said it could not endanger people's right to life by allowing the use of crackers containing chemicals.

The Delhi Government followed up the cracker ban with an order that the Chhath Puja will not be allowed in public places, public grounds, riverbanks, and temples. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) cited the pandemic and advised

the people to celebrate it at home. Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal chaired the DDMA meeting in which, apart from Delhi ministers, AIIMS Delhi, senior officers of NITI Aayog, ICMR, and the NDMA were present. Strangely, the same DDMA lifted restrictions on large gatherings for Ramleela and Durga Puja, though with safety protocols in place. Crowds were allowed at these events if they adhered to social distancing and other COVID appropriate norms. The BJP, which was agreeable to the Delhi Government permitting crowds at Ramleela; however, protested the ban on Chhath Puja. It raised the bogey of "uttaranchali" people of Delhi and lodged several protests. As politics heated up in the national Capital, Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, wrote to the Centre asking it to issue Chhath guidelines. Perhaps aware of the political implications of angering the sizeable population of "uttaranchalis" in Delhi, Sisodia recalled that Chhath is a historic festival and sought Central guidelines in order to facilitate these people to celebrate it. Did he forget, conveniently, that his Government had banned the celebrations and that the meeting was attended by the Lt Governor and Central COVID task force members? Or was he obliquely shifting the responsibility to the Centre? In any case, the safety guidelines during festivals have long proved ineffective because they are illogical. There is no way of a crowd maintaining social distancing, for instance.

### PICTALK



Devotees at the Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple, in Tirupati

# Lakhimpur Kheri— Was it avoidable?

A protest must have a specific purpose and an endpoint resolution of conflict. It cannot be an open-ended exercise free of any stipulations

The Lakhimpur Kheri incident in which 8 people lost their lives during the farmer's protest was a colossal tragedy that was avoidable. Paradoxically, it was also a calamity waiting to happen. A political cauldron of noxious ingredients had been brewing for some time. Dogged stubbornness and thoughtless provocative utterances had heightened the tension; the bottled-up frustration of a jaded and over-stretched protest was waiting to explode. A frontal collision was inevitable.

The spark came on October 3 when a cavalcade of Union Home Minister of State Ajay Mishra allegedly ploughed through a group of protesting farmers killing four of them. Angered by the killing it is alleged that the protestors went on a rampage, dragged the BJP members out of cars and mercilessly beat 4 of them to death.

Details of this gruesome incident are murky. As per an FIR lodged by Jagjit Singh, a farm protestor, "We were holding a peaceful protest at Maharaja Agrasen Inter College ground...when the Union MoS for Home Ajay Mishra's son Ashish came in an SUV along with two other four-wheel vehicles, with arms and weapons, at a high speed. Ashish Mishra, while sitting on the left side of the Mahindra Thar car, fired shots and crushed people while moving forward."

This version is contested by Ajay Mishra who claims, "Stones came flying at the vehicle when it was on the way to receive the chief guest, the driver lost balance...and some could have died in that accident. My driver and three BJP workers who were in the vehicle were chased and attacked with rocks, sticks and swords...they were lynched."

He had earlier denied that his son was at the scene of the incident. Which of these two conflicting versions is true is difficult to ascertain at this stage. However, a series of sequential videos that surfaced online suggest that pelting of stones was the initial trigger for this mayhem.

Nevertheless, a proper enquiry is warranted so that the guilty may be tried and punished



as per the law. Accordingly, CM Yogi Adityanath has announced a judicial inquiry headed by a retired judge to look into the incident.

In parallel with a call for an enquiry, however, a dangerous and mischievous narrative is being played out in certain sections of the media that is disturbing and concerning; a partisan description that tends to favor one side over the other and places a premium on one set of lives in comparison to the other - all with an intent to put the Government in the dock for an offence, the culpability of which is yet to be determined.

A well known newspaper avers: The BJP Government has a playbook...vis a vis popular protest...Let the issue fester, and try to tire out the protesters, while actively seeking to delegitimise them, by labelling them "anti-national" and calling them other names. Then, if matters escalate, bring out the barricades and the force. Treat it like a law-and-order issue in a police state, and don't let leaders of the Opposition come to the site of the protest or the violence, to do what is surely their job as politicians and people's representatives.

First to invoke presumptuous theories to pre-deter-



THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE FAULTED FOR KEEPING THE OPPOSITION AWAY. THE INTENT WAS TO CALM THE SITUATION AND MAINTAIN PEACE

mine guilt in a sensitive case like this devious. Second, by using the phrase, 'bring out the barricades and the force' to describe the BJP's modus operandi, the editorial has sealed the BJP's guilt without a trial. Such statements uttered without evidence are reckless and misleading.

Additionally, the Government cannot be faulted for keeping opposition leaders away. The intent was to calm the situation and maintain peace. In fact, it was done at the behest of farm leader Rakesh Tikait who feared that the politicians were there to exploit the situation as indicated by some news reports.

Coming to the million-dollar question: Was this incident avoidable? Dissent and protest are an integral part of democracy. However, one must also realise that protest is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. A protest to be valid must have a specific purpose and an endpoint resolution of conflict. It cannot be an open-ended exercise free of any stipulations. A prolonged directionless protest becomes a fertile ground for frustration, violence and even killings as illustrated by this incident; anti-social elements are also

likely to take advantage of the situation.

Justice Khanwilkar of the Supreme Court on October 1, when responding to a farmer's outfit seeking permission to hold a protest in Jantar Mantar rightly posed this question to the farmers "You are saying you want to protest, protest what? The Act has been stayed by the Court. The Centre has said it will not be implemented." Referring to the deaths in Lakhimpur, the honorable judge had also stressed the lack of accountability: "When such events happen, no one takes responsibility!"

And this is not the first time that violence has overtaken the farmer's protest - January 26 is still fresh in our minds. The farmers' protest has outlived its utility. Prolongation inadvertently provided a fertile milieu for this ugly altercation. With a little good sense, it could have been avoided. It is time to call off the protest to prevent more Lakhimpurs. Concomitantly, all those guilty for each of the 8 deaths, whoever they may be, must be arrested and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

(The writer is an academic and political commentator. The views expressed are personal.)

## SOUND BITE

Nevertheless, I congratulate Fadnavis. Because of him I remembered that I was the CM for four times.

NCP president —Sharad Pawar

VT-4 Tank is another symbol of Pakistan-China strategic cooperation and defence collaboration. Its introduction will boost our capabilities.

Pakistan Chief of Army Staff —Qamar Javed Bajwa

I did a lot of research at my level for *Rashmi Rocket*, apart from what was going on at the scripting level.

Actor —Taapsee Pannu

My advice to Rishabh Pant is to play with freedom and have that air of arrogance and confidence.

Former Australia cricketer —Shane Watson

Only two or three per cent of farmers in Punjab are part of the agitation. Most people in Punjab are peace loving.

BJP national general secretary —Dushyant Gautam

## Blood and gore

Kashmiris wake up to ferocity again after two years of silence in the Kashmir Valley

Autumn, the golden season of Kashmir that paints the Valley in the shades of chinar's fallen leaves, is turning 'red' this season. The rustling of fallen chinar leaves has been overshadowed by the 'bloodletting' in different parts of Srinagar. Palpable tension is in the air. The targeted killings of members belonging to minority communities a few days ago, has once again triggered a fresh wave of insecurity among the larger population of Kashmiri migrants and non-locals staying in different parts of the Valley to earn their livelihood. A large number of them have immediately shifted their families to safer locations in Jammu and are waiting for the situation to return to normalcy before rejoining their duties. After the abrogation of Article 370, the overall security scenario in Kashmir Valley seemed to be improving. The Union Territory administration was focusing on hard selling 'Kashmir' as the favorite tourist destination. However, the recent targeted killings in the Valley have raised questions over the safety and security of locals as well as tourists.



It has also triggered outrage from the Opposition leaders who blamed the Centre administration for not being able to curb such attacks.

The year started with the killing of a famous Punjabi jeweller in the heart of Srinagar. It was followed up with the killing of the son of a Dhaba owner in a high security zone. The trend continued and in response, top commanders of different terrorist outfits were neutralised. Adopting a shift in their strategy, the Pakistan-based terrorist groups are employing 'hybrid terrorists' to disrupt the stability and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the forthcoming Assembly polls. Majority of these hybrid terrorists are not on the radar of the security forces, making their job more difficult to track down their footprints. With the recent killings of Makhan Lal Bindroo, a street vendor from Bihar's Bhagalpur, school teacher Deepak Chand and principal Supinder Kaur in the Valley, the terrorist handlers have attempted to create a communal divide aimed at triggering a fresh round of exodus. We have to fight these beasts. Whether this violence is a statement by the much dreaded Taliban remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the National Investigation Agency has detained over 500 people after civilian deaths in the area. The culprits will eventually be held; however, in the meantime, the Kashmiriyat must speak up for the victims.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### IT'S ALL FAIR IN POLITICS

Sir — The old adage 'all is fair in love and war' perhaps should go now with an addition — 'all is fair in love, war and politics' — given that politics after the independence has undergone a sea-change vis-a-vis its broad objective of leading the country in the right direction, safeguarding its boundaries and serving all its people and their political leanings. Ironically, this comprehensive goal has narrowed down to a mere *raison d'être* of attainment of power — be it either by hook or crook — harboured by the political parties who shrink from doing what is right for various political reasons.

With the Assembly polls in six States drawing closer, the tempers are higher and the political activities getting more hectic in the most politically significant Uttar Pradesh, in particular, where the ruling regime is busy with the damage limitation exercise following the recent Lakhimpur Kheri violence. The incident could not have come for all the Opposition parties at a more opportune time as they have found a common plea to castigate in unison the Government in a bid to brighten their respective electoral prospects in the upcoming elections. In politics, with scenes changing kaleidoscopically has become a new norm and any prediction may fall on stony ground.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### SOFT DRINKS ARE HARD ON HEALTH

Sir — Amitabh Bachchan once disclosed at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmadabad about him not advertising for cola drinks after a student drew his attention towards the harmful ingredients in such drinks. Even the cola companies voluntarily stopped selling colas in schools worldwide in view of increasing obesity in school-going children. The Indian Government should not only ban advertisements but also ban the sale of colas. Earlier, too, soft-drink manufacturers were asked to remove an oil from their products which was found to be harmful for health. It is noteworthy that such drinks are prohibited in Parliament canteens.



## Vaccine on the way

If the Drugs Controller General of India accepts the recommendation of the Subject Experts Committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO) to grant the emergency use authorisation for Covaxin among children in the 2-18 age group, it will mark a new phase in the process of vaccinating the population against COVID-19. Vaccinating the paediatric population will take the ongoing nationwide immunisation drive one stage further. The green signal which the Drug Controller is currently considering, if (and when) given, will

make Covaxin the first COVID-19 vaccine anywhere in the world for administering to children as young as 2 years. Scientific rigour should determine if India's first indigenous Covid-19 vaccine proves to be safe and effective in children as in adults. The clinical trials data must be placed in public domain so as to instil confidence in the general public, especially parents, that children can be inoculated with Covaxin against COVID-19. It is understood that Covaxin now recommended for children and adolescents is the same as the one currently being used among adults. It must be confirmed that Covaxin is equally good for children despite their distinctness in terms of anatomy and physiology by virtue of them being children. Clinical trials data that the vaccine has produced similar results in children and teenagers in the process of growing up and grown-ups must be sound enough to ensure that no risk is taken.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

It is time that the Union Government, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) and soft-drink manufacturers introduce healthier options which not only replace cola-drinks in India, but also dominate global-market by breaking the monopoly of harmful cola drinks in tune with ambitious 'Make in India' vision. Children should also be made aware of healthier drinks like *lassi*, *chhachh*, coconut water etc. It may be recalled that almost half a century back, a famous rose-drink manufactured by a private confectionary company registered at Gwalior was a popular drink for persons of all ages.

Madhu Agrawal | Delhi

### RESPECT IS GREATER THAN WORSHIP

Sir — A murderer takes a life, but a rapist destroys a life. "Sexual intercourse done by a man with a woman without her valid consent is rape" as defined under the Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code. Sexual assault is the most heinous crime against women. The aftermath of rape

draws a woman towards a life of fear, depression, suicidal complex and social stigma. Rapes have increased manifold as per the statistics given by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). According to it, one rape is reported every 15 minutes. Even children are not spared which is such a shame on humanity.

There are various reasons behind the increase in such cases. Women are not safe outside and not even inside their own home. The sluggish judiciary is an important reason where many victims and survivors must wait for years for a glimpse of justice. Through education, gender sensitisation and legal awareness is possible, which are indispensable to control crime against women. In a country where we worship goddesses in different avatars, women, too, should be loved, cared, respected and protected.

Swagatika Sahoo | Raghunathpur

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## FIRST COLUMN

### CHANGING INNOVATION LANDSCAPE IN INDIA

India needs a futuristic approach to trigger innovation at the base of the pyramid



MOHIT GAMBHIR

Innovation in India has always been human centric. We innovate to resolve the problems of mankind, and to create a better life for the common people. Today, the scope of innovation and entrepreneurship spreads across all facets of life. Students, researchers and intellectuals are actively pursuing innovation and entrepreneurship as career options. India should move from coveted innovation to the open innovation model. Open Innovation model is a futuristic approach to instigate the innovation and entrepreneurship at the base of pyramid — at the level of society and educational institutions. The growth of new India can only be achieved by making open innovation pervasive and fuelled by the right kind of training, skill upgradation, reskilling, and apt infrastructural support at school and institutional level. As an interventional initiative, Ministry of Education has established an innovationcell at the All-India Council for Technical Education in 2018. Since then, the Ministry



of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) has taken multiple policy and program initiative to establish the world's biggest open innovation model at global stage. The Cell works on four pillars of excellence: Policy intervention; handholding of HEIs and schools, faculty and students; impact assessment and facilitating national and international platforms for Indian and global students. Initiatives like the Innovation Council in higher educational institutes has been purposed to streamline the ground level ecosystem and handholding of ideas from students.

The beginning of Smart India Hackathon, Toyathon, Singapore-India Hackathon, ASEAN India Hackathon between 11 countries, SAMADHAN Challenge, Ideathon for pandemic, Drug Discovery Hackathon, and Innovation Contest has set the foundation for world's biggest open innovation model and it is scaling at a rate where India could assimilate its new age innovative and aspirational human resource. As India is working relentlessly towards a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, it must look for alternative career opportunities in term of innovation and entrepreneurship. Inculcating the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship in our youth is a challenging job and it cannot be simply achieved by flooding the market with investment opportunities, subsidies and grants. It requires a keenly calibrated system of innovation management, especially championing open innovation management at school and higher education level. For impact assessment, MIC has started Atal Ranking for Institution's on Innovation Achievements to measure the major indicators at the higher educational institute level. At industry and ecosystem level, NITI Aayog has started India Innovation Index on the line of Global Innovation Index by adapting non-traditional approaches for measuring innovation such as patents per million of population, publication in scientific journals, percentage of GDP spending on research. Empirical evidence suggests that innovation enables social welfare. Health innovations like penicillin use, transplants, and artificial limbs have saved and improved the quality of life of millions. Satellites, television and radio technologies are being used for the welfare of farmers and in disaster management. Modern farming equipment, fertilizers, Grameen Bank, microfinance and crop insurance schemes have raised agricultural productivity, improving food security and freeing up labour which can participate in other industries.

Nothing can progress without innovation and everything of today exists because of yesterday's innovation and invention. We need to innovate to accommodate evolving situations and needs and prepare a wonderful place to live in, not only for us but for our future generations as well.

(The writer is Director in the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education. The views expressed are personal.)

# Extending sympathies to the new laureate

Abdulrazak Gurnah has been grappling with his African identity and how it relates to the history of migrations and colonialism in East Africa



BALAKRISHNAN SATYAM

The French poet, Rene Proudhomme, who was the first Nobel Literature laureate in 1901, wrote in his famous 'The Broken Vase': Thus often does the hand we love, barely touching the heart, wound it. Then the heart cracks by itself and the flower of its love dies.

He's speaking of a delicate and vulnerable aspect of us, and how easily it can dry up. Literature has always been about sensitivity and sensitization. It nourishes and rekindles the soul to fellow feeling. In the hurly-burly of our daily lives, and competitiveness and ambition, and the pursuit of profit, we are indifferent to the outcome for others, to their sentiments, or even their deprivation. There is an inherent conflict among us as we focus on our goals, and marginalise others whose interests don't hold concern for us.

But there are witnesses compiling every injustice, recording every protest, and kindling people's memories about glory and decline. A few of these observers serve not only to voice the experience of the victims, but give us insights on how humanity at large can live more sensitively. Their words stir us, find their way inside to lash at our conscience, and refocus our thinking on what it is to be essentially human.

Another Frenchman, especially famous for declining the Nobel prize for Literature, Jean Paul Sartre, declared: 'Hell is other people'. There is a constant challenge to try to understand and empathise with others, further aggravated by differences in language, custom, and traditional beliefs. It is here that writers often build bridges by establishing commonalities and explaining away differences.

As the celebrated 1950 Literature laureate, Bertrand Russell, said at the Stockholm Concert Hall, "...sympathy is a genuine motive, some people at some times are made somewhat uncomfortable by the sufferings of some other people. It is sympathy that has produced the many humanitarian advances of the last hundred years."

There are many literary prizes, so how is the Nobel Prize for Literature different, apart from perhaps, having the largest bounty? Because it is given out at the same time as awards in sciences — it accords the same prestige and acclaim to novelists, poets, and futurists as is enjoyed by biochemists, astrophysicists and developmental economists.

It also reflects the Nobel Foundation's outlook of recognizing a broader contribution to modern human heritage. Rudyard Kipling was the youngest to win it at 42, but generally the prize recognises much older writers with eight or more books behind them. In terms of sheer number of copies sold, and cultural impact, Harper Lee could have been considered for her 'To Kill A Mockingbird', but that's not how this prize is awarded — for one, that was her only novel, till she



THERE ARE MANY LITERARY PRIZES, SO HOW IS THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE DIFFERENT APART FROM, PERHAPS, HAVING THE LARGEST BOUNTY? BECAUSE IT IS GIVEN OUT AT THE SAME TIME AS AWARDS IN SCIENCES — IT ACCORDS THE SAME PRESTIGE AND ACCLAIM AS IS ENJOYED BY BIOCHEMISTS, ASTROPHYSICISTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL ECONOMISTS

(The writer is a Creative Director, advertising faculty, and an amateur epistemologist. The views expressed are personal.)



published a sequel several decades later with nothing in between.

The committee has also not looked towards any trailblazing authors in the sci-fi category despite it being the fastest evolving genre as technology itself has been racing at the speed of Moore's Law. What the jury does seem to endeavour to do is to cast its net far and wide to ensure authors from many corners of the world are considered.

Possibly the most interesting reference to Zanzibar in the world of literature was in 1968, when Brunner wrote an imaginative sci-fi novel titled, "Stand on Zanzibar". The book's title refers to how large an island could hold the planet's population if everyone had to get just enough standing space. Brunner's speculation was that the Isle of Man (about 600 sq. km) wouldn't suffice in the future and that by 2010, it would take a Zanzibar (about 1600 sq.km) to hold everyone. The theme of his Hugo award-winning novel was overcrowding, which is a common urban fear when there is an influx from faraway lands.

Which brings us to this year's Literature laureate, Abdulrazzak Gurnah, born in Zanzibar in 1948. Being on an important trade shipping route in the Indian Ocean, besides Bantus, there are people of Omani, Yemeni, southern Iranian, and even Indian descent. At the same time, it has been known as a hub of the slave trade where Arabs sold natives from Malawi and Mozambique to visiting ships.

When the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 overthrew the traditional oppressors, Gurnah fled as a teenager and started his life anew in the British Isles. So, he has experienced how complex and burdensome our identities can be.

In the early pages of his novel 'Desertion', he says about a character, Hassanali: "He could not disguise his anxiety and people who had known him all his life knew this about him, and made a joke out of it. They said it was something to do with his jinsi, his ancestry. Indian people are cowardly, they said, hopping about like nervous butterflies. His father was not timid. He had been a hothead in his youth, who sang and danced and raced the streets with anyone, and he was the Indian in his jinsi. It was God who made him like this, nothing to do with jinsi, and who was he to argue."

Gurnah has been grappling with his African identity — as a Tanzanian (Zanzibar opted to merge with Tanzania after the Revolution) — and how it relates to the history of migrations and colonialism in East Africa. He has taught in Nigeria, which also has ethnic as well as acute communal strife. And he's known since his mid-teens what it is to adapt to life in a European culture.

As the last few years have caused waves of migrants out of West Asia and North Africa, and very recently, Afghanistan — the travails of the uprooted and the kinds of baggage they bring into their new places of residence will

be in the spotlight.

Exiles who had to flee from their native lands are already distrustful of fate, and suffer to some extent from PTSD. Their attention is split between what's still going on in the places they have departed from, and the challenges in their new environment. They haven't the preparation that a graduate student has had before he or she lands up overseas on a good campus. Such exiles find themselves usually in less friendly locations than a university. Gurnah has been lucky in that regard.

The expatriate experience is very different depending on one's age at arrival, line of work — whether a specialist in demand or unskilled, level of affluence, and aptitude for networking. Openness towards the way of life in the adopted country does help in integrating better, and gaining acceptance. An exile could have a sense of betrayal of their native culture when they move closer to a sense of belonging in their land of arrival.

In the future, we might think differently about the elements of identity, given the limitations that our instinctive ones about language, ethnicity, creed, and district have. We'll then identify Literature laureates less by language of writing or nationality and instead emphasise their literary genre and individuality more. We'd then also be narrowing the 'gulf between cultures and continents' that the Nobel citation refers to in 2021.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

LIES WERE SPREAD ABOUT SAVARKAR. IT WAS MAHATMA GANDHI WHO ASKED HIM TO FILE MERCY PETITIONS. —UNION DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH



THE BJP IS PRESENTING DISTORTED HISTORY. IF THIS CONTINUES, THEY WILL MAKE SAVARKAR THE FATHER OF THE NATION. —AIMIM CHIEF ASADUDDIN OWAISSI

# Healthcare infrastructure needs a check-up

Data passing through the hospital systems and databases must be digitised and harmonised to truly transform the healthcare infrastructure

Reports of shortages of hospital beds, ventilators, medical equipment and doctors and nurses to cope with growing cases of COVID-19 infections have thrown into sharp focus the need to accelerate digital transformation of healthcare infrastructure worldwide.

Modern medicine has been enriched by genomics, telemedicine, virtual reality for surgery and many biopharmaceutical advances. But behind the many medical advancements, true digital transformation of health infrastructure — hospitals, blood and vaccine banks, centres for dialysis, ambulatory surgery, imaging and radiology — is slow.

Unlike for other sectors, digital transformation to



HARSH VARDHAN

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enable Internet of Things (IoT), 5G connectivity, and artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) is much more complex for healthcare.

Healthcare infrastructure innovation has been and remains curtailed by three main issues: firstly, compliance with regulatory standards at national and international levels; secondly, multiple forms of medical data, from patient records to X-rays, CT scans and other analogue or digital data; and thirdly, reluctance to change which prevents a clear digital dashboard to allow administrators to respond, plan and predict in real time.

Many hospitals with sophisticated equipment have yet to fully capture and update medical records to enable clin-



ical decision support and real-time hospital workflow, let alone combine them seamlessly with long-term care and disease management.

How can planners and administrators improve information technology (IT) infrastructure to prepare for a true digital transformation for the healthcare sector? Several key steps can kick-start or accelerate the process. The first is to build or enable real-time data

capture at every touchpoint of healthcare hardware. This means installing sensors, and embedding IoT and high-speed communication throughout each facility down to the last piece of equipment.

The second is to break down information silos once and for all. Data passing through the hospital systems and databases must be digitised, harmonised and shared, from patient records, X-rays and CT scans to data on the functioning of each piece of equipment and machinery within the infrastructure.

This roadblock has eluded decades of effort by IT consultants and systems integrators. A protocol of "golden data" in a common format will enable visibility of the entire healthcare enterprise.

Third, the same visibility can facilitate interoperability of different healthcare systems — electronic patient health records can be analysed alongside COVID-19 infection trends and the demand for vaccines and the cold-chain infrastructure needed to store or deliver them.

Fourth, healthcare assets, be it CT scanners, operating rooms or ventilators, have to be tracked on usage and location levels. This can help predict breakdowns, plan for maintenance and help the next shift of medical staff to locate them.

Fifth, such tracking will support more vital C-suite decisions such as scenario planning which can calibrate potential equipment shortage, availability of spares, and service-level agreements with

suppliers with hospital manpower planning. By standardising protocols for maintenance — helped by cloud-enabled real-time data — productivity will improve.

Sixth, there are lessons to be drawn from a concept known as inventory technical management practised by MRO service providers. Those who are more digitally enabled have upscaled to the next level — flexible pooling of inventory to prevent duplication and to share hardware more intelligently.

Finally, the guardians of healthcare hardware can take tentative steps in AI/ML without sacrificing medical outcomes. These include sensors that can monitor health data of each patient more frequently than checks by nurses, and the

use of chatbots to allow nurses or junior doctors to ask questions when certain patient symptoms occur or to check when a piece of equipment needs to be sent for servicing.

Through AI/ML, healthcare hardware can be "trained" to self-correct. It can learn prescriptive maintenance through protocols that can predict failures and recommend actions to take. Over time, each major piece of equipment can instruct itself on when to prepare for maintenance, the possible risks, and the pre-emptive measures it should take.

Covid-19 has triggered a once-in-decades shift in the thinking behind healthcare administration. It is time for the hospital to get out of the sick bed and embrace digital transformation.



# Sensex rallies 453 pts to new peak; Nifty at 18,100

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex soared 453 points to touch a new closing high of 60,737 on Wednesday, tracking gains in index heavyweights Reliance Industries, ITC and Infosys amid a positive trend in global markets.

After scaling a record peak of 60,836.63 during the session, the 30-share Sensex settled 452.74 points or 0.75 per cent higher at 60,737.05, taking its winning run to the fifth consecutive day. Similarly, the Nifty rallied 169.80 points or 0.94 per cent to 18,161.75. It touched an intra-day record of 18,197.80.

M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, zooming over 5 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, ITC, L&T, Tech Mahindra, Titan and Tata Steel.

On the other hand, Maruti, HUL, Nestle India, Axis Bank and SBI were

among the laggards.

"Domestic equities remained steady and witnessed sharp up-move with benchmark Nifty and Sensex recording fresh all-time highs amid mixed cues from global equities," said Binod Modi, Head Strategy at Reliance Securities. Sustained rebound in financials and Reliance Industries supported broader indices. Tata Group stocks were in focus especially Tata Motors after company announced USD 1 billion investment from TPG in Electric Vehicle division valuing EV business strong at USD 9.1 billion.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Seoul ended with gains, while Tokyo was in the red.

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

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude fell 0.54 per cent to USD 82.97 per barrel.



## Gati Shakti to transform governance: KM Birla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla on Wednesday said that PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan for infrastructure "embodies and combines" some unique features that mark a paradigm shift in governance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday unveiled Rs 100 lakh crore Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multi-Modal connectivity that aims to develop infrastructure to reduce logistic costs and boost the economy.

"To me, Gati Shakti embodies and combines some unique features that mark a paradigm shift in governance," Birla said while participating at the event.

Using the most modern technology, Gati Shakti brings all stakeholders on one platform, he added.

"Such breaking of silos within the government is indeed a dream come true for all of Industry," he said, adding that

the platform approach also increases transparency all around and helps resolve bottlenecks quickly.

According to Birla, the outcome-based approach of Gati Shakti marks a departure from the traditional approach to planning.

"There is great emphasis and granularity in specifying targets in terms of outcomes and not merely outlays," he said.

Birla said that he cannot imagine any such government programme anywhere in the world with such large scale, and technology enabled real-time monitoring of development projects.

"This is yet another example where India is setting a global benchmark for digital governance," he said.

Noting that building and managing high-quality infrastructure is a national enterprise, he said that roads and rivers do not respect state boundaries.



## Exim Bank targets USD 7 bn financing of project exports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) targets to achieve financing of USD 7 billion of project exports over the next five years with the government announcing fund infusion of Rs 1,650 crore in the National Export Insurance Account (NEIA) to boost project exports.

The NEIA Trust, set up by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in March 2006, provides export credit insurance cover for promoting medium and long-term project exports from India.

The corpus infusion will enhance the project export possibility having cover by NEIA by about Rs 33,000 crore over the next five years (equivalent to USD 4.5 billion), the bank said in a statement. "The capital infusion will help tap huge potential of project exports in focus markets. The Bank has currently supported 31 projects valued at USD 2.74 billion in 14 countries under the Buyer's Credit under NEIA programme," it said.

## India retains 3<sup>rd</sup> position in RE investment attractiveness index

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has retained the third rank in the Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index released by consultancy firm EY.

India remained at the third position in the 58th edition of EY's 'Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index' (RECAI), which ranks the world's top 40 markets (nations) on the attractiveness of their renewable energy investment and deployment opportunities, an EY statement said.

With the environment, social and governance (ESG) measures soaring to the top of the agenda for companies and investors, RECAI also highlights that corporate power purchase agreements (PPAs)



## Govt scraps basic customs duty, cuts agri cess

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday scrapped basic customs duty as well as slashed agri cess on crude varieties of palm, soybean and sunflower oil till March 2022, a move which will help cool prices and increase domestic availability in the festive season. The duty cuts will be effective from October 14 and will remain in force till March 31, 2022, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said in a notification.

Crude palm oil will now attract agri infrastructure development cess (AIDC) of 7.5 per cent, while the rate will be 5 per

cent for crude soyabean oil and crude sunflower oil. Post reduction, the effective customs duty on crude varieties of palm, soyabean and sunflower oil will be 8.25 per cent, 5.5 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively. Besides, the basic customs duty on refined varieties of sunflower, soyabean, palmolein and palm oil has been slashed to 17.5 per cent each from 32.5 per cent at present.

"The government has slashed import duties on edible oils because of high retail prices in the domestic market and the festive season," Solvent Extractors' Association of India Executive Director B V Mehta said.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Delhi GST officers bust fictitious exporter network

GST officers in Delhi have busted a network of fictitious exporters and arrested one person for fraudulently claiming input tax credit of Rs 134 crore. The Finance Ministry said that based on risk analysis, M/s Vibe Tradex, engaged in export of Pan Masala, chewing tobacco, FMCG goods etc, was identified for scrutiny. "The officers of Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Commissionerate, Delhi East, carried out the detailed analysis and unearthed a network of fictitious exporters who were availing and utilizing fake Input Tax Credit (ITC) of Rs 134 crore under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) with an intent to claim IGST refund fraudulently," the Ministry said. The network of fictitious exporters was being operated by Chirag Goel. On an extensive analysis of the e-Way Bills generated by two supplier firms/ companies owned by his associate, who is at large, it was found that the vehicles for which the e-way Bill were generated for purported supply of goods were being used in distant cities namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and had never entered Delhi during the said period.

### Sony gets exclusive rights to broadcast with Bundesliga

Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) on Wednesday said it has signed a two-year pact with Bundesliga International, a subsidiary of DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga, for exclusive media rights to broadcast the premier German football league, Bundesliga in India and the subcontinent. The agreement includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan, the company said in a statement. The deal which has already commenced will run until the end of the 2022-23 season and fans can catch the live action from Bundesliga on SPN's linear sports channels and on-demand OTT platform, SonyLIV, it added. Commenting on the development, SPN Chief Revenue Officer, Distribution and Head - Sports Business Rajesh Kaul said, "The Bundesliga is among the most popular club football leagues in the world and boasts of a strong fan following in India, making it a perfect addition to Sony Pictures Network's portfolio of elite international events." He further said, "We are looking forward to working with Bundesliga to serve our viewers in India and the Indian subcontinent with the best coverage of Germany's leading football competition."



### Retails sales near pre-COVID levels with 96% recovery

Retail sales in September this year were at 96 per cent of the pre-pandemic levels of the same month in 2019 as the sector shows signs of recovery. Retailers Association of India (RAI) said on Wednesday. As compared to September 2020, there was a 26 per cent growth in sales last month, led by strong growth in South India at 33 per cent, followed by East at 30 per cent, and 26 per cent in West. NORTH India also registered a growth of 16 per cent, according to RAI's Business Survey- Round 20. "Retail businesses across regions are nearing recovery indicating consumer sentiments are positive across the country," RAI said in a statement. Category wise, consumer durables and electronics; food and groceries and quick service restaurants (QSR) have fully recovered and are indicating double digit growth on pre-pandemic levels, it added. "Sports goods and apparel, and clothing have also started to pick up pace as socialising and offices resume and some level of normalcy returns," RAI said, however, adding categories such as beauty and wellness which include salons, footwear and jewellery are yet to catch up to the pre-pandemic levels of sales.

## Royal Enfield to undertake bike expedition to South Pole this year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mid-sized motorcycle maker Royal Enfield on Wednesday said it will undertake a motorcycling expedition to the South Pole to commemorate 120 years of the brand.

The company, which is a part of Eicher Motors, said it would mark 2021 with an ambitious attempt to push the boundaries of motorcycling possibilities. The expedition, which would feature the company's Himalyan bike, would attempt to reach the South Pole from the Ross Ice Shelf via the Leverett Glacier. "120 years is a long legacy for the brand, and we are very happy to have made it count. Over these years, we have created and nurtured a thriving culture of riding and exploration around the world.



This pursuit of exploration has been a quintessential part of our DNA, and 90° South is another chapter in our series of extraordinary, epic motorcycling rides," Royal Enfield Managing Director Siddhartha Lal noted. In the past, rides like Himalayan Odyssey have paved the way for motorcycling adventure in the Himalayas and an epic expedition like this to the South Pole will further inspire people to become adventurers again, he added.

A test of endurance and perseverance for man and machine,

this expedition is the first of its kind attempt to traverse the 770km long route to the South Pole on a motorcycle, Lal stated. To begin from Cape Town, South Africa, on November 26 2021, the expedition will witness two Royal Enfield riders - Santhosh Vijay Kumar and Dean Coxson - attempting to reach the geographic South Pole, from the Ross Ice Shelf, via the Leverett Glacier, to the Amundsen-Scott Pole station.

Royal Enfield has already conducted rides across the globe- ranging from riding on the highest motorable pass in the world, to reaching the Base Camp of Mount Everest in Tibet; from riding over the most inaccessible mountain pass at Daulat Beg Oldi, Karakoram, to riding across the desert at Kutch.

PNS ■ BEIJING

China's exports rose at a slightly faster pace in September while demand for imports of iron ore and other commodities eased as a property construction boom cooled and authorities enforced curbs on energy use.

Customs data showed exports rose 28.1% to \$305.7 billion. That was slightly faster than the 26% increase logged in August, and

above economists' forecasts. Imports rose 17.6% to \$240 billion, less than the previous month's 33% increase.

This year's trade figures have been distorted by comparison with 2020, when global demand plunged in the first half after governments shut factories and shops to fight the pandemic. Chinese exporters reopened after the ruling Communist Party declared the virus under control

**"China's foreign trade performance is leading the field among the world's major economies, and China has seen an increase in its international market share," said Li Kuiwen, a spokesman for the customs agency.**

in March 2020, while their foreign competitors still were hampered by anti-virus curbs.

"China's foreign trade perfor-

mance is leading the field among the world's major economies, and China has seen an increase in its international market

share," said Li Kuiwen, a spokesman for the customs agency.

"Taking into account the impact of the high base of foreign trade in 2020, the growth rate of imports and exports may fall in the fourth quarter of this year, but the overall upward trend of China's foreign trade will not change, and rapid growth throughout the year is still expected," Li said.

## Shriram Housing gets Rs 300-cr equity

PNS ■ MUMBAI

To oil its fast-paced expansion and the resultant expansion of its loan book, affordable segment-focused Shriram Housing Finance has secured an additional Rs 300 crore equity capital from the parent Shriram City Union Finance, taking its total equity capital to about Rs 1,100 crore. The company has set a target of crossing Rs 5,600 crore of assets under management (AUM) target by March,

as it had already crossed the Rs 4,000-crore mark in July and the new growth capital will help it expand the balance sheet faster.

For the Shriram Group's housing finance company, this is the second round of equity capital infusion; and with this, the total equity infusion in FY22 so far stands at Rs 500 crore and since the launch at Rs 1,088 crore. The capital infusion will enable the mortgage lender to expand its balance sheet faster by growing its loan book.

## Puravankara to invest Rs 420 cr for two projects

### Residential projects in Mumbai, Bengaluru

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Puravankara Ltd will invest around Rs 420 crore for construction of two residential projects in Mumbai and Bengaluru and is targeting over Rs 1,250 crore sales revenue over the next four years from these properties on the back of rising housing demand. The company on Wednesday launched two projects -- 'Provident Palm Vista'

located near Shil Phata, Mumbai with one million square feet of saleable area and 'Tivoli Hills' located near Devanahalli, Bengaluru having a total saleable plot area of about 1.4 million square feet. "We are introducing our affordable housing brand 'Provident' in Mumbai market. We will build this project in JDA (Joint Development Agreement) model," Puravankara CEO Abhishek Kapoor told PTI. The

company's economic interest in the 'Provident Palm Vista' project is nearly 69 per cent.

In this project, Kapoor said the company is likely to sell units in a price range of Rs 40-80 lakh. Earlier this year, Puravankara re-entered the Mumbai market to develop a premium mixed-use project in the city at a cost of Rs 450 crore. The group had developed real estate projects in 1970s under a different brand.

## July-Sept investment in realty sector up 17 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Institutional investment in real estate increased 17 per cent year-on-year to USD 721 million in the July-September period, driven by better infusion of funds in housing, data centre and warehousing projects, according to JLL India.

Institutional flow of funds includes investments by family offices, foreign corporate groups, foreign banks, proprietary books, pension funds, private equity, real estate fund-cum-developers, foreign funded NBFCs and sovereign wealth funds. It also includes anchor investors in REITs.

Property consultant JLL India said the data has been compiled as per available information in the public domain. The investment period has



been captured on the basis of term sheet signed or transaction announcement and not from the actual transfer of capital. Investments in data centre sector have been included in the investments.

The consultant said that institutional investment post-

ed 17 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth during Q3 2021 (July-September) as investors continued to conduct deals despite the resurgence led uncertainty and disruptions. However, the investment fell by 47 per cent on a sequential basis.

According to the data, institutional investments in residential sector remained flat at USD 211 million during the July-September period. Data centre and mixed use projects received USD 161 million and USD 137 million funding, respectively, as against nil in the year ago period.

Office segment saw a sharp decline in investments to USD 100 million in July-September from USD 405 million in the year-ago period.

"Office space transactions have been muted due to a likely delay in the due diligence process and investors gauging the unfolding of work from the office scenario," the consultant said.

Warehousing and land got USD 94 million and USD 18 million, respectively, in Q3 of

2021 calendar year as against zero investments in the corresponding period of the previous year.

"Close analysts of investments during Q3 2021 reveals that it has been more balanced with the residential sector accounting for 29 per cent of the total investments, followed by alternative sector - Data Centre (DC) accounting for 22 per cent share. The mixed-use project of residential and commercial accounted for 19 per cent of the total investments," said Lata Pillai, Managing Director and Head, Capital Markets, India, JLL.

As per the data, Mumbai with increased investments in the DC industry and capital flow in select residential projects led the investment pie with a 39 per cent share.

## India Digital Trade Facilitation Forum launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global digital payment solutions provider PayPal and the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade on Wednesday launched the India Digital Trade Facilitation Forum -- a platform to provide education, training, and capacity building to MSMEs and help scale their businesses across global markets. The focus of the forum orbits around educating, guiding, and raising awareness among MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) about marketing, scaling, digitalisation and exports through masterclasses led by subject experts, a release stated.

## 'AgriReach' app to check quality of from produce

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers can now check the quality of wheat and other agri-commodities just a click away with the use of a mobile app 'AgriReach', officially launched by Agri logistics firm Sohan Lal Commodity Management Pvt Ltd (SLCM) on Wednesday.

The mobile quality check app allows the user to get on the spot assessment of the commodity's sample for free within minutes without depending on a third party, it said. Initially, the app will be avail-

able in Hindi and English as well as a few vernacular languages such as Gujarati, Tamil, and Kannada. Gradually, it will be made available in all vernacular languages and even international languages, it added.

Addressing a virtual press conference, SLCM Chief Executive Officer Sandeep Sabharwal said, "This app is going to be a game-changer as it empowers farmers to check the quality of their commodity just a click away and get the report within minutes. This will enable farmers to get a better price."





## Salman Khan's *Antim* to hit theatres on Nov. 26

**S**alman Khan has announced that his upcoming action thriller film *Antim: The Final Truth* will be released in theatres worldwide on November 26. Directed by Mahesh Manjrekar, the movie also features Aayush Sharma, Salman's brother-in-law. Salman shared the date

announcement and a motion poster of his new film on Twitter. "#Antim releases in theatres worldwide on 26.11.2021," the actor wrote on the microblogging site. The film is described as a "gripping tale of two powerful men" with polar opposite ideologies; one a cop and the other a gangster, played by Salman and Aayush,

respectively. *Antim* will be distributed globally by Zee Studios. "It has been a gr8 & cherished association with ZEE and @punitiongoenka over the years having done many films *Race3*, *Loveyatri*, *Bharat*, *D3*, *Radhe* & now *Antim*. I am confident he will take Zee to much greater heights in the coming years," Salman further

said in the tweet. *Antim* will face off with *Satyameva Jayate 2*, starring John Abraham, at the box office. Salman's last release *Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai* was released on May 13 on account of Eid al-Fitr as premium video on demand on Zee Plex through ZEE5 in India, with a theatrical release overseas.

## *Squid Game* becomes Netflix's biggest original show debut with 111 million views in 27 days



**H**it South Korean show *Squid Game* has officially become Netflix's biggest original series launch, the streaming service said on Wednesday. The nine-part thriller, in which cash-strapped contestants play children's games with deadly consequences in a bid to win 45.6 billion won (\$38 million), has become a worldwide sensation for Netflix since its launch less than a month ago.

The dystopian drama has inspired countless memes, Halloween costumes of the ubiquitous green tracksuits worn by contestants and real world recreations of the various games. It has also sparked a debate within South Korea about toxic

competitive societies and prompted new interest in the country's culture and language around the world. "*Squid Game* has officially reached 111 million fans — making it our biggest series launch ever!" Netflix posted on Twitter. The series reached that total in just 27 days, since its release on Sept. 17, easily outpacing UK costume drama *Bridgerton*, which was streamed by 82 million accounts in its first 28 days. Netflix gives limited information on viewing figures for its platform and cuts the data it does provide in various ways. The 28-day debut figures it released for *Bridgerton* and other shows included any account that watched an episode for at least two minutes.

Netflix co-CEO and Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos told a tech conference in California last month said the streaming service was surprised by how popular *Squid Game* has become. The series was so popular that South Korean Internet service provider SK Broadband sued Netflix to pay for costs from increased network traffic and maintenance work because of the

surge in viewers. And a South Korean woman was in talks with the US firm about compensation after she was deluged with thousands of prank calls and text messages when her phone number was inadvertently highlighted as a key plot point in the series. Netflix has it would spend more than \$500 million on content produced in South Korea this year.

## PC takes time off *Citadel* shoot, goes sightseeing in Spain

**P**riyanka Chopra went sightseeing with her mother Dr Madhu Chopra in Spain and has shared photos from their day out. Taking to Instagram Stories, she shared pictures of them as they posed outside historic sites and enjoyed a walk by the beach.

In one of the photos, Priyanka is wearing a white shirt, black skirt and her hair is tied in a bun. Madhu is wearing a black floral dress and carrying a red handbag. Priyanka's dog Diana is also with them in the photo. They are standing in front of a large gate of a historic building.

Priyanka is currently in Valencia, Spain, where she is shooting for her upcoming series, *Citadel*. The spy series is executive produced by The Russo Brothers and will also star Richard Madden of *Game of Thrones*. The crew recently flew into Spain for a new shoot schedule. Pictures and videos of Priyanka arriving in a private jet with her co-stars were also shared online. Before Spain, the crew had been shooting for the show in London since earlier this year.

Besides *Citadel*, Priyanka



has a number of projects in the pipeline. She will soon appear in *The Matrix: Resurrections* with Keanu Reeves. She also has *Text For You* with Sam Heughan of *Outlander*, an untitled wedding comedy with Mindy Kaling, the Sangeet project with Nick Jonas and *Jee Le Zaraa*, with Alia Bhatt and Katrina Kaif. Priyanka also turned Broadway producer with Douglas Lyons' Broadway comedy *Chicken and Biscuits*. Currently, in previews, the play will officially open at Circle in the Square on October 10 and will run through till January 2.

## OMG 2 shoot stalled as 7 test Covid+

**A**lthough the cases pertaining to the Coronavirus pandemic might have witnessed a drop in the past few weeks, the life-taking virus still wreaks havoc and is affecting work on a large scale. Recently, the shooting of Pankaj Tripathi and Yami Gautam starrer *Oh My God 2* got stalled after seven members from the team reportedly contracted the virus over the past five days. According to a news agency, the shooting of the film was taking place in suburban Mumbai. As the matter came to light, film producer Ashwin Varde

reportedly stalled the shoot of the upcoming film for two weeks. An insider close to the development told the leading portal that a unit member had tested positive last week. In adherence to the safety norms, the member immediately practiced home quarantine, with the rest of the unit undergoing tests. Later, everyone had tested negative, after which the shooting resumed. But soon after two days, three people started showing symptoms. The shoot was promptly put on hold, and a fresh round of tests was organised. After testing, it was found

that six people had contracted the virus. The insider further mentioned that both Pankaj and Yami have tested negative along with the film's director, Amit Rai. Just to be cautious and curb the spread, the makers did not waste any time in calling off the shoot. According to various media reports, the shoot is expected to resume by October-end. Akshay Kumar and Ashwin Varde are co-producing the upcoming social comedy. The two producers are much excited about the project as they have been working for almost a decade to get the right script for the sequel. The producer duo

gave a green signal to the film's sequel after ensuring it is better than the first one. A few days back, the reports of Akshay Kumar joining Ashwin Varde's production for *Oh My God 2* were surfacing. However, Paresh Rawal will not be a part of the film. The 2012 film *OMG: Oh My God!* starred Paresh Rawal and Akshay Kumar in the lead role. The film also had Mithun Chakraborty, Om Puri, Puja Gupta, Mahesh Manjrekar, Govind Namdeo, and Poonam Jhaver in pivotal roles. The film's plot revolved around an atheist who questions society for



their belief in God. He sues God after his antique shop gets destroyed. When he



realises Lord Krishna helped him in winning the case, his faith restores.

## FUN

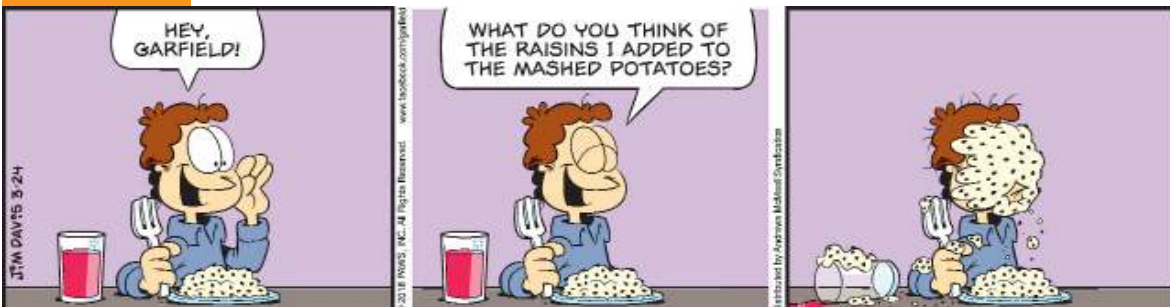
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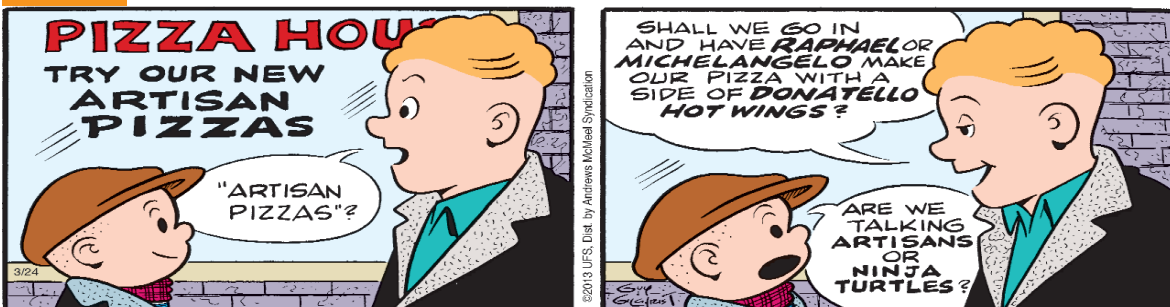
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



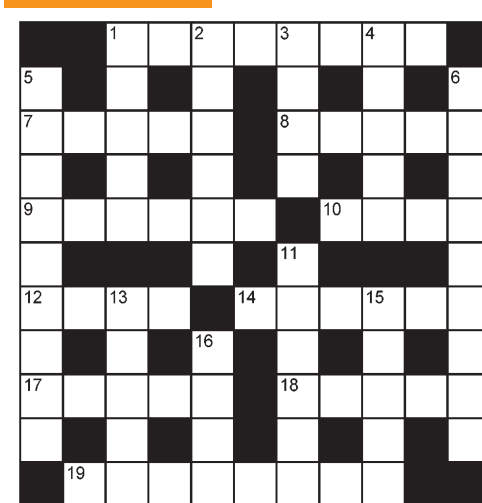
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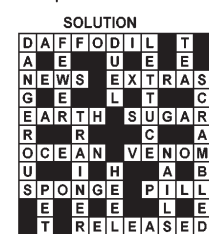
### CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 1 A Dutch building with sails
- 7 A warm thick cover for a bed
- 8 Prepared
- 9 Breathe in
- 10 Say this to make a person or animal go away
- 12 Small rodents
- 14 The language spoken in Paris
- 17 Loud sound
- 18 Not decorated
- 19 Sightseers

- 5 The things you need for doing something
- 6 A musical instrument that you hit with a small hammer
- 11 Make wine from these
- 13 The capital city of Egypt
- 15 Gets closer
- 16 Expensive



### DOWN

- 1 Use scales to do this
- 2 A stinging plant
- 3 A female horse
- 4 A dog's lead

### SUDOKU



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

### 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.





# EASING MOBILITY TO HELP WOMEN —‘RIDE’ HIGH—

RACHEL DAMMALA

Women being able to travel safely with no apprehension, by themselves, is still a dream for a huge section of women in India. And to say it is the case only for women in rural India, is a misconception. Making travel easier and safe for women has more benefits than one can think of. Beginning with an increase in opportunities, having a stable career, timely access to medical help, approaching challenges fearlessly, and being able to perform better at one's job, are some of the many benefits of women being able to travel fearlessly from point A to B. Aiming to make this a reality is a Hyderabad-based NGO Moving Women (MOWO), in association with Shell Foundation (U.K), through their campaign Moving Boundaries.

As part of the campaign, Jai Bharathi, founder of MOWO, is touring India on

her motorbike for 40 days, covering 20 cities to create awareness and encourage women to learn driving. She started from Hyderabad on October 11, and will be covering places like Bangalore, Chennai, Kochi, Goa, Pune, Mumbai, Surat, Ahmedabad, Udaipur, Jaipur, Amritsar, Srinagar, Chandigarh, New Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad, Patna, Guwahati, Kolkata, Ranchi, and Bhubaneswar, among others.

As she seeks to promote awareness on the importance of women acquiring the power of driving and traveling safely to expand their horizons in all aspects of their life, we ask Jai what got her started on the campaign. "When women are seen riding a motorbike, it automatically sparks interest, especially in women. I have had women in the past walk up to me and tell me how they feel inspired to learn how to ride a scooter themselves, but they do not know where and how to get started. So you see, this not only garners attention, but creates aspira-

tion and starts a dialogue. With this, our goal is to encourage more such women to learn driving. We offer to teach them or direct them to sources that do," Jai tells us.

Jai talks about how, still, women in India face restrictions in their mobility. "They are unable to travel long distances to get a decent education or take up jobs which involve complex or unsafe commute, which results in a restricted pool of job opportunities."

She who is excited to meet and inspire women of different strata, will hold workshops to make driving an aspirational and achievable employment choice too, for women. Asked if she is worried women in rural India may not be as open to something like this, as people in urban India would be, she says, "I was of the same opinion until a year ago. What changed my opinion was when we got an invitation to teach women how to ride from Narayanpet district. Despite the invitation, I was apprehensive about hav-

ing a good number join, but to my surprise, on the very first day, we received 144 applications!"

Explaining how learning to ride can change the lives of these people, she cites an example. "A very shy tailor in Narayanpet would depend on her husband to pick and drop her to work, to her cus-

tomers place, the marketplace for raw materials, and more. After she learnt how to ride a scooter, she no longer has to wait for her husband's time to get her work done. She goes to work, her customers and secures raw materials for her work as she pleases, and this has helped her get better, more effective at her job, and earned her better pay. All such women need is a push in the right



direction and they're ready to soar," shares Jai.

On how different their campaign and the design of their course is, from any driving school, Jai elaborates, "It's great if women can get to learn

at any given driving school, but what some may see as a problem is that most driving schools are for four-wheelers. They're also taught by men, which some may not find comfortable. Our course is focussed on motor driving, and it's different in many ways in that, we start with getting them comfortable with the vehicle, teaching them how to put a center stand, traffic rules, help them secure a learner's license and only after they get that, use a helmet and elbow guards, etc. does our actual training start. We also don't ride pillion behind the learner, because that carefully removes the dependency on the teacher, and it shifts to themselves. Our trainers stand right beside the riders and make the process more effective. We also learn in groups, community learning makes people share their stories, inspire and encourage each other."

Before she signs off, we ask her what the organisation plans to do and see in the near future and she shares, "At the end of the day, it's not me or my organisation that I want women to come to, but anybody doing the same job. The goal is to have more women joining the force that they will no longer find it difficult to travel from place to place."



## Ayurveda can help diabetics keep heart problems at bay



Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), including heart attack and stroke, are the leading cause of death across the world, claiming approximately 18.6 million lives every year. Out of these, around one-fifth are Indians. These numbers are severe and the repercussions of illness, even more.

Numerous causes can lead to CVDs such as unhealthy food habits, environmental changes, extreme stress, other health diseases and more. Recent studies have also revealed that diabetes is also one of the leading causes of heart problems. According to this research, people with diabetes are 2-4 times more prone to developing a heart-related problem. That's because high blood sugar can damage blood vessels and

the nerves that control your heart. For a country like India, this should be an alarming factor for two primary reasons. First, a major portion of the diabetic people in the country is unaware of it (undiagnosed diabetes). Second, India has the largest working population that's currently dealing with severe stress and environmental changes, both major causes of heart diseases and diabetes.

Now, fighting these evils is essential for a healthy life and what's a better solution than our holistic ancient practice — Ayurveda.

A plethora of studies have been conducted by the Ministry of Ayush that divulge how Ayurveda can be helpful in the prevention of diabetes and in turn, Cardiovascular diseases. Here are some of the best



recommended Ayurvedic practices:

### Adopting healthy dietary and lifestyle options

Your food (Ahara) and lifestyle (Vihara) habits have a direct impact on your physical health. Hence, it is crucial to adopt habits that keep you healthy. Changes in food habits like eating more fruits and vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains while reducing processed food can help in decreasing the risk of heart diseases or keep them from worsening.

Lifestyle (Vihara) changes like following an active rou-

tine, maintaining an optimum/healthy weight and not consuming alcohol, quitting smoking, etc., will help in fighting heart diseases to a great extent.

### Yoga

Being physically active makes your body more sensitive to insulin (the hormone that allows cells in your body to use blood sugar for energy), which helps manage your diabetes. Physical activity also helps control blood sugar levels and lowers your risk of heart disease. Therefore, for preventing and managing heart diseases (Hridroga), try to

get at least 150 minutes per week of physical activity, such as brisk walking or Yoga.

Yoga has various asanas such as Surya Namaskars and Pranayama that can help in keeping your blood pressure, blood glucose levels, and heart rate low.

### Managing stress

Stress is becoming a leading cause of heart diseases. Since people are nowadays constantly exposed to high stressors at work and home, it's essential to keep the stress level low.

According to Ayurveda, Meditation can help in man-

aging and reducing stress. Chanting and breathing exercises can also help in reducing your blood pressure and lowering your heart rate.

### Ayurvedic supplements

Ayurveda has a rich amount of supplements to prevent and manage Cardiovascular Diseases. For instance, Ayurveda recommends a traditional combination of Karela, Amla, Jamun, and Guduchi.

These supplements help in regulating carbohydrate metabolism which helps keep the blood sugar levels in check.

Make sure you consume these supplements after consulting with an Ayurvedic doctor for ideal results. You can also opt for various therapies that Ayurveda has to offer like the Saman Therapy for management of CVDs and Rasayana Therapy for prevention.

(The writer, Dr. Anand Dwivedi, is an Ayurvedacharya with 33 years of experience, Expert at Kapiva Academy of Ayurveda.)

## Cyber security month: Tips to keep cybercriminals at bay

The current business landscape has evolved manifold, over the past couple of months. Majorly caused due to the pandemic, the change has severely impacted the way we consume and share data. This, coupled with the continuation of the remote working model, has led to the creation of multiple transactional points, making it easier for cybercriminals to plan and execute their attacks.

The increase in the incidents of cyber-attacks has become one of the biggest challenges for businesses in India. In fact, as per a recent study by India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), cyber-attacks in India rose by almost 300% in 2020 as compared to 2019. This study also stated the main cause for this increase to be due to the shift to a remote working model.

It is true that most businesses are now initiating plans to make the shift to a hybrid style of working. However, to be in a better position to safeguard their data against threats, they will need to keep data security at the centre of their decisions. They will additionally need to make adequate changes to their existing security policies to protect their mission-critical data.

Keeping this in mind, here are 5 safety tips for businesses to keep in mind, this cyber security month:

●**Setting up a VPN access:** A virtual private network (VPN), is an internet security service that can securely connect and move data between an employee based outside office premises, and a company's internal network or public internet. Not only does it encrypt data transfers in transit, it also masks the user's location. By setting up a VPN service, businesses can ensure utmost security for their critical data.

●**Running a password audit:** It becomes extremely important for any business to ensure that its remote employees are resetting their devices' passcode regularly. Incorporating the need to consistently change passcodes as a part of the business's security policy, can help reduce the risk of continuous data attacks. Additionally, using a two-factor authenticator and advising employees to set tough passwords can add more layers of protection to the business data.

●**Deployment of data protection software:** Viruses are one of the most common forms of cyber-attacks that take place. To ensure protection from the same, it is important to have up-to-date protection software installed, inclusive of virus checkers, firewalls, device encryption, etc.

●**Encouraging the use of cloud services:** Making the shift to the cloud for storing all confidential information can help a business protect, as well as manage their data better. Employees should be encouraged to use cloud-based applications that are verified by security teams, whenever possible.

●**Backing it up:** To prevent or avoid any data loss in case of a cyber-attack, businesses should direct their employees to use online backup services/approved external drives to back up their data. In a situation where data loss occurs, access to data backup can ensure the smooth functioning of business operations.

●**The road ahead**  
As we continue to manoeuvre through this data era, it is important to note that a smooth return to normalcy is not only in the hands of business leaders, CIOs or security officers; it is also in the hands of the employees. Working closely, while being physically distant, and taking preventive measures to protect the businesses' data, can help businesses to safeguard their data against any external threats.

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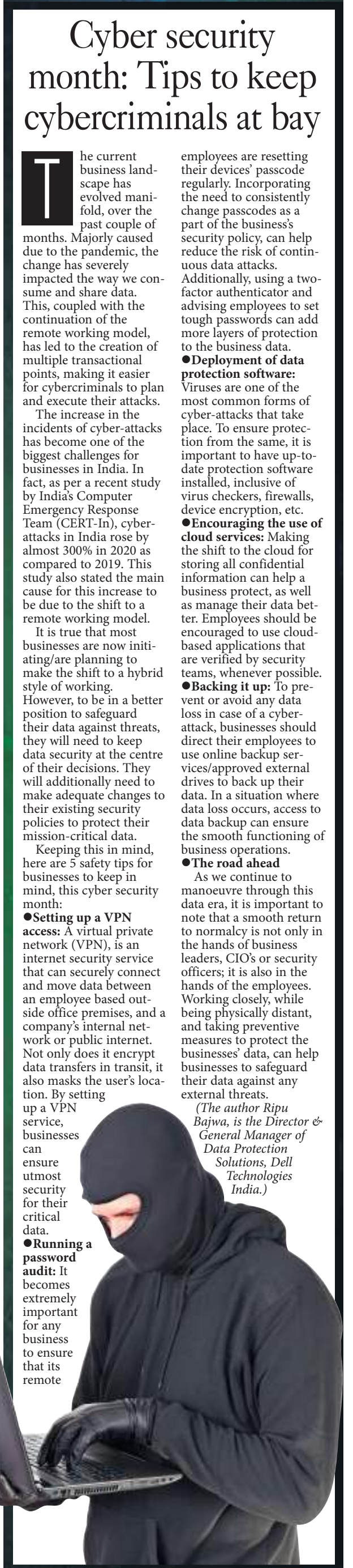
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(The author Ripu Bajwa, is the Director & General Manager of Data Protection Solutions, Dell Technologies India.)





# DC set 136-run target for KKR in 2nd IPL Qualifier



PTI ■ SHARJAH

Kolkata Knight Riders, led by mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy, produced a clinical bowling display on a slow pitch to

restrict Delhi Capitals to 135 for 5 in their IPL Qualifier 2 here on Wednesday. Sent in to bat, DC batters struggled on a sluggish pitch with the KKR bowlers bowling a tight line and length.

Opener Shikhar Dhawan top-scored with a 39-ball 36 while Shreyas Iyer remained not out on 30 off 27 balls. Chakravarthy took two wickets for 26 runs while Lockie Ferguson and Shivam Mavi got one each.

After seven dot balls in the first two overs, DC took 12 runs from the third with Shaw hoisting Shakib Al Hasan for a big six.

Dhawan joined the party in the fourth over, smacking two consecutive sixes off Sunil Narine as DC amassed 14 runs from the veteran West Indian.

Chakravarthy broke the dangerous-looking partnership by having Shaw LBW with his first delivery of the day with the batter playing a wrong line to his googly.

Ferguson was impressive as he conceded just nine runs from his first two overs as DC reached 38 for 1 at the end of Power Play overs.

After a quiet period during which Mavi, Narine and Chakravarthy bowled a tight line and length, Dhawan got a boundary in the 10th over to reach 65 for 1 at the halfway mark.

With odd ball skidding low, it was getting difficult to get runs and DC were dealt a blow when Mavi, who was bowling beautifully, got rid of Marcus Stoinis who was playing only his second match in the UAE leg.

With pressure building on the DC batters, Dhawan fell in the 15th over while going for a big shot. He could only get an outside edge off a Chakravarthy delivery for Shakib Al Hasan to take a diving catch at backward point.

DC were 83 for 3 in the 15th over when captain Rishabh Pant (6) came in and he disappointed in a crucial match as he went for a big shot the next over only to balloon a Ferguson delivery for Rahul Tripathi to take a regulation catch.

There was no lack of drama as Shimron Hetmyer was caught by Shubman Gill off Chakravarthy in the 17th over but it turned out to be a no ball.

DC managed to score 36 runs in the last three overs to put up a decent total in the end.

## Shardul Thakur replaces Axar Patel in India's main squad for T20 World Cup



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fast bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur on Wednesday replaced Axar Patel in India's squad for the T20 World Cup to be held in the UAE and Oman from October 17.

The 29-year-old Thakur has impressed with his 18 wickets in the ongoing IPL for Chennai Super Kings. With this, India completed the announcement of its final squad for the marquee tournament. Teams are allowed time till October 15 to finalise changes.

"The All-India Senior Selection Committee after a discussion with the team management has added Shardul Thakur to the main squad. All-rounder Axar Patel, who was part of the 15-member squad will now be on the list of stand-by players," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement.

With pace all-rounder Hardik Pandya not bowling during the IPL because of fitness issues, the selectors wanted a cover for him. The Mumbai Indians star's workload management is a major concern for the team management.

"The selectors felt that they were one pacer short and also with Hardik Pandya not bowling, they needed an all-rounder in the main squad," a source close to the selection committee told PTI.

"Axar remains in stand by and if Ravindra Jadeja gets injured, he will again be back in main team. Till Jaddu (Jadeja) plays, Axar won't be required."

As reported by PTI, the selectors also included Harshal Patel among the net bowlers for the Indian team.

"The following cricketers will join the team bubble in Dubai and assist Team India in

their preparations: Avesh Khan, Umran Malik, Harshal Patel, Lukman Meriwala, Venkatesh Iyer, Karn Sharma, Shahbaz Ahmed and K. Gowtham," the statement said.

Among the stand-by players, Railways leg-spinner Karn Sharma, who is part of the CSK right now, was a surprise inclusion.

Considered a close confidante of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has been roped in as mentor of the national side for the World Cup, Sharma is retained year after year by CSK without playing too many matches as it is believed that he has been the franchise's "Lucky Mascot"

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal could not find a place despite an impressive IPL with Royal Challengers Bangalore. He claimed 18 wickets in 15 matches. India will open their campaign on October 24 against Pakistan.

## BCCI extends date for buying ITT for new IPL teams



IANIS ■ MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has further extended the date for purchasing the 'Invitation to Tender' (ITT) document for the two new Indian Premier League (IPL) teams -- which will be added from the 2022 season -- to October 20, 2021.

A BCCI statement said that interested parties can purchase the ITT document on receipt of payment of the "non-refundable tender fee of Rs 10 lakh plus any applicable Goods and Services Tax". All other terms contained in the Invitation document shall be applicable, said the BCCI. The IPL Governing Council had on August 31

this year announced the release of tender to "own and operate" two new IPL teams, which will compete in the 2022 edition of the lucrative tournament.

Subsequently, the date was extended to October 10 and now the date has been further extended by 10 days.

"Interested parties are requested to email at [ittipl2021@bcci.tv](mailto:ittipl2021@bcci.tv) to get further details for purchasing the ITT. The email requesting the ITT should have the subject line 'ITT for the Right to Own and Operate One of Two Proposed New IPL Teams,' said a BCCI statement.

"Any interested party wishing to submit a bid is required to purchase the ITT. However, only those satisfying the eligibility criteria set out in the ITT and subject to the other terms and conditions set out therein, shall be eligible to bid. It is clarified that merely purchasing this ITT does not entitle any person to bid," the statement added.

## Fan-inspired Team India jersey for T20 World Cup unveiled



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Claiming to be inspired by the fans, the Indian cricket team's jersey for the upcoming T20 World Cup was unveiled on Wednesday, days before the country opens its campaign with a much-awaited clash against arch-rivals Pakistan in Dubai.

The tournament will be held from October 17 to November 14 in the UAE and Oman. The new shirt, called the 'Billion Cheers Jersey', has been inspired by

fans and was unveiled by MPL Sports, the official kit sponsor of the Indian men's, women's, and Under-19 teams.

"This is the first time in the history of Indian cricket that fans have been memorialised on a jersey. It carries their chants and cheers from iconic past matches, transformed into unique soundwave patterns," stated a release from ML Sports

The jersey comes in shades of prussian blue and royal blue.

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said, "The Indian cricket team enjoys support not just in India but around the world, and there's no better way to celebrate their excitement and energy than through this jersey." "This will undoubtedly provide the team with the much-needed enthusiastic support in their quest to emerge as the T20 champions of the world."

We are also pleased to see that MPL Sports continues to deliver merchandise that is widely affordable and accessible."

The board's secretary Jay Shah echoed the view.

## Amandeep leads 10th leg of Hero WPGT

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Amandeep Drall lived up to her top billing with a flawless 4-under 68 that put her on top of the leaderboard at the end of the first round in the 10th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Wednesday.

After day one at the Chandigarh Golf Club, Amandeep was one shot ahead of the highly rated amateur Avani Prashanth (69), who had four birdies against one bogey.

Kapurthala golfer Amandeep leads the combined Hero Order of Merit for 2020-21 despite missing out on the last few legs of the Tour because of busy schedule in Europe.

Both Amandeep and Avani had a bogey-free 3-under 33 each on the back nine. They also had a birdie each on the front nine, but Avani also dropped a shot on the ninth, while Amandeep stayed error-free.

Avani was the winner of the third leg and runner-up in the seventh leg in 2021. Amandeep is yet to taste a win in 2021, though she had two in 2020. She was runner-up to Avani in the third leg, so she has a score to settle with the youngster.

Seher Atwal and Jahanvi Bakshi also carded under par rounds of 1-under 71 each to be Tied-third. Seher and Jahanvi had contrasting rounds producing similar scores.

## Narine won't be added to West Indies World Cup squad: Pollard

PTI ■ SHARJAH

West Indies skipper Kieron Pollard says they will resist the temptation of adding Sunil Narine to their T20 World Cup squad despite the spinner's sublime form in the ongoing IPL, where he played a key role in Kolkata Knight Riders reaching the Qualifier-2. The 33-year-old Narine reminded the fans of his vintage past with his four-wicket haul and impact batting in the eliminator against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Monday. He has taken 11 wickets in eight IPL matches since the league's resumption in the UAE.



He went wicket-less against Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad and in an earlier

match against RCB but took three wickets in the team's two-wicket defeat to Chennai Super Kings. However, he has not played any international cricket since August 2019, forcing defending champions West Indies to ignore him while announcing their World Cup squad on grounds of fitness.

The ICC deadline to make changes in the squad ends on Friday. "If I add my two cents or my words on how his non-inclusion came about, then it could be spun - just like how he's bowling on these Sharjah wickets - in all different directions," Pollard told ESPNcricinfo.

## Golfers Aditi, Tvesa and Diksha to play in New York leg of Aramco Series

IANIS ■ NEW YORK

Indian golfers Aditi Ashok, Tvesa Malik and Diksha Dagar will compete at the third leg of the Aramco Series in New York beginning this week. Only Tvesa has played both earlier legs in London and in Spain, while Diksha was in the winning team in London and missed the event in Spain.

Aditi, fourth at the Olympics, will be playing the Aramco Series for the first time this season. Tvesa has had numerous solid finishes this season, but Aramco Series events have not given her a good finish. Diksha Dagar was part of the winning team in London and was

T-12 in the individual standings.

A stellar field includes Olympic champion Nelly Korda with her sister Jessica, Lexi Thompson, Lizette Salas, Angel Yin, Alison Lee and Lindsey Weaver. Others including Danielle Kang, Cheyenne Woods and Natalie Gulbis will be getting a taste of the Series for the first time.

The top Europeans are Catriona Matthew, Emily Kristine Pedersen, Charley Hull, Anna Nordqvist, Sophia Popov, Bronte Law, Caroline Masson and Anne Van Dam. The two individual winners from London (Marianne Skarphord) and from Sotogrande, Spain (American Alison Lee) are also in the field.

## Ronaldo scores hat trick, Denmark qualifies for World Cup

AP ■ PARIS

Another hat trick for Cristiano Ronaldo, another win -- and qualification for the World Cup -- for Denmark.

And yet more crowd trouble in a game between England and Hungary.

There was a sense of familiarity to the World Cup qualifiers in Europe on Tuesday, not least in Faro where Ronaldo extended his men's record tally of international goals to 115 by scoring the 58th hat trick of his career for club and country in Portugal's 5-0 win over Luxembourg.

Denmark became the second European nation to qualify for next year's tournament in Qatar, after Germany on Monday, by securing an eighth straight



win in group play by beating Austria 1-0.

The decisive win -- sealed by Joakim Maehle's second-half goal -- came at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen where star playmaker Christian Eriksen collapsed in June during a European Championship game. It is still unclear if Eriksen can resume his career to play at the World Cup in 13 months' time.

England is likely to be there, but was made to wait before booking its place after being held to a 1-1 draw by Hungary at Wembley Stadium.

Events on the field were overshadowed by clashes between police officers and Hungary supporters at the start of the match, sparked -- according to police -- by a visiting fan making "racially aggravated" comments toward a steward.

## SINGLES

### NEYMAR'S TEAM URGE HIM TO PLAY WCUP

Sao Paulo: Neymar's Brazil teammates are still hoping the 29-year-old striker will remain with the national team after next year's World Cup, despite saying the tournament in Qatar could be his last. Neymar said in an interview aired this week that he doesn't know whether he will be able "mentally to endure" more international soccer after the 2022 World Cup and that he's approaching the tournament as if it is his last. His teammates rallied around the Paris Saint-Germain player on Tuesday, saying they understand the pressure Neymar faces as Brazil's biggest star. "We want him to stay with us for many years," midfielder Fred said. "But it is hard to talk about someone else's head. Sometimes people face a huge pressure."

### FIFA ASSESS PUNISHMENT FOR CROWD UNREST

Zurich: FIFA is analyzing the crowd unrest and assessing punishments after condemning disorder involving Hungary and Albania fans in separate World Cup qualifiers. At Wembley Stadium in London, Hungary supporters fought with police in the stands just after kickoff on Tuesday as officers sought to arrest a spectator on suspicion of racially abusing a steward. Hungary drew 1-1 with England. Another Group I game in Tirana was suspended for around 20 minutes. Karol Swiderski had just scored for Poland in the 77th minute when he was apparently struck by a bottle thrown from the Albania fans. Poland's players walked off but returned to the field and held on to win 1-0. .

### HIMA DAS TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID -19

Ace Indian sprinter Hima Das, who is making a comeback from a hamstring injury, on Wednesday revealed that she has tested positive for COVID-19 but is stable in isolation. Das, 21, reported to the national camp at National Institute of Sport (NIS) in Patiala recently. "I would like to inform everyone that I have been tested positive for Covid-19. I am stable and at the moment in isolation. I look forward to utilising this time to recover and come back stronger than before," Das tweeted. "A gentle reminder for everyone to stay safe and wear mask." Das could not make the cut for the Tokyo Olympics after missing the 200m qualification mark of 22.80s as she clocked 23.21s in the Federation Cup in March this year.

### INDIA REACH THOMAS CUP QUARTERS

Aarhus (Denmark): The Indian men's badminton team hammered Tahiti 5-0 to enter the quarterfinals of the Thomas Cup for the first time since 2010 but the women's team suffered a crushing 0-5 defeat against a strong Thailand in its last group match here. It was the first defeat for Indian women after beating Spain (3-2) and Scotland (4-1). The women's team has already reached the quarterfinals. The men's team, on Tuesday, recorded its second straight 5-0 win, having beaten the Netherlands with an identical margin.

### AIFF NAMES 28 INDIA PROBABLES

New Delhi: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Wednesday announced 28 probables, including Dheeraj Singh Moirangthem and Aniket Jadhav, for the national team's qualifying campaign for next year's AFC U-23 Asian Cup. India have been drawn alongside Oman, Kyrgyz Republic, and hosts UAE in Group E of the Qualifiers, with the matches set to be played between October 25 to 31 at the Fujairah Stadium in Fujairah, UAE. The AFC U-23 Asian Cup is scheduled to be held in Uzbekistan. The Blue Colts are set to assemble in Bengaluru on October 17, before leaving for the UAE on October 20 for their matches.





# Godfather to rope in Britney Spears & Salman?

**T**elugu megastar Chiranjeevi has an attractive slate with multiple interesting movies lined up. As Chiranjeevi's *Acharya* helmed by Koratala Siva is gearing up for release soon, his other projects are progressing well too.

The official remake of Malayalam super hit *Lucifer* is titled *Godfather*. This Mohan Raja directorial is to feature Chiranjeevi, who would reprise Mohanlal's role.

Now, if reports are to be believed, the makers of *Godfather* are planning to bring Hollywood's pop sensation Britney Spears on board to croon a racy song for Chiranjeevi. Bollywood star Salman Khan too may make a cameo appearance in this movie.

But there is no official confirmation regarding Britney Spears' song for *Godfather* and Salman's appearance as well.

Touted to be an intense political drama, Thaman S. will compose the music for *Godfather*.

## ALA VAIKUNTHAPURRAMULOO HINDI REMAKE LAUNCHED, TITLED SHEHZADA

**W**e know that Kartik Aaryan has been roped in to reprise Icon star Allu Arjun's role in his hit film *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo*. On Wednesday, the makers of the film Allu Arvind and Naga Vamsi of Sitara Entertainment officially announced that the film's Hindi version is titled *Shehzada*, with the caption '*Duniya ka Sabse Gareeb Prince!*'

Taking to social media to announce the film, Kartik Aaryan wrote, "*#Shehzada Duniya ka Sabse Gareeb Prince @kritisanon #RohitDhawan.*" The film will release in theatres in November 2022.

Producer Bhushan Kumar shared via a statement, "I've been wanting to mount a big scale family action-packed musical film for a long time, I'm excited to be teaming up with Rohit Dhawan, Allu Arvind and Aman Gill on this film, I'm eagerly looking forward to the magic Kartik, Kriti, Pritam and the rest of the team will create in *Shehzada*."

Kriti Sanon is playing the role of Pooja Hegde, Manisha Koirala is reprising Tabu's role, while Ronit Roy Bose is playing her husband in the Hindi version.

Kriti and Kartik earlier worked together in *Luka Chuppi*.

One of the biggest hits of 2020, *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo* featured the viral hit *Butta Bomma*, and coincidentally, Kartik had earlier performed on the song in a video, winning praise from Arjun.

This is Kartik Aaryan's third film to be announced this year.

Directed by Trivikram Srinivas, the Telugu film sees a young man who seeks validation from his father who is critical of almost everything he does. His world turns upside down when he realises that he was switched at birth with a millionaire's son.

## Pragya Jaiswal contracts Covid, again

**A**ctress Pragya Jaiswal has tested positive for Covid for the second time. Pragya, who is fully vaccinated, tested positive for Covid on Sunday. Taking to Instagram, Pragya shared a post that read, "Not the most exciting news to wake up to on a Sunday morning, but I've tested positive for Covid after being fully vaccinated and having had Covid once before. I have isolated myself and am following all safety protocols under the advice of my doctor's. Humbly requesting all those who have been in contact with me in the last ten days to please take care and take the necessary precautions. See you on the other side."

She shared the post with the caption, "I have mild symptoms & nothing to really worry about hopefully...See you all very soon"

On the work front, the actress is gearing up for the release of her *Akhanda* with Balakrishna and Srikanth.

She also awaits the release of her upcoming film, *Antim-The Final Truth*, which marks her Bollywood debut.





## PUSHPA: DSP-SRIRAM DELIVER A SOULFUL HIT WITH SRIVALLI

**T**he much-anticipated song and collaboration between music director Devi Sri Prasad and popular singer Sid Sriram has finally delivered a beautiful number for the film *Pushpa*.

The newly released song, called *Srivalli* starts on the best melodious tone, and only gets better as you continue listening to it.

DSP's tune and composition are pleasant and have that perfect repeat value.

Sid Sriram's magnificent vocals elevate the song, the duo complements each other very well.

Chandrabose's deep, and meaningful lyrics take the song to another level. He beautifully encapsulates the love track between Pushpa Raj - Allu Arjun, and Srivalli, played by Rashmika Mandanna. The lyrical video gives a brief glimpse into the love story of the lead actors, set against a rustic backdrop. The video also features a sweet and simple dance performance by Allu Arjun, and it depicts his desperate attempts to win Srivalli's heart.

*Pushpa: The Rise* is releasing in theaters on December 17 this year. The Sukumar directorial is in the final leg of production. Mythri Movie Makers and Muttamsetty Media are producing it. The film will release in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.



## BIRTHDAY GLAM

**T**he makers of the upcoming film *Radhe Shyam* on Wednesday released a new poster featuring a gorgeous Pooja Hegde. The poster was released to mark Pooja's 31st birthday celebration. "The Queen of every heart! Here's wishing our #Prerana a very Happy Birthday! (sic)," UV Creations, which is bankrolling the romantic drama, tweeted. The film will release in theatres on January 14 for Sankranti. The film that stars Prabhas as the lead will have him play a full-fledged romantic role after a long gap.

## Avika Gor enjoys producing her next project

**A**ctress Avika Gor has just wrapped up the shoot of her first and as-yet-untitled production venture. The *Uyyala Jampala* actress said that being a producer has made her a more humble actor. Avika was shooting in Goa for the maiden production venture and called it an "amazing experience."

"It's been an amazing experience as it's my first production. We shot in Goa for over 10 days and the whole vibe was so different," said the actress, who rose to fame with her role as Anandi from the television show *Balika Vadhu*.

The 24-year-old actress did not divulge much about the film or the cast. She shared: "I think being a producer has made me a more humble actor and it has also helped me grow as a person. I feel extremely proud of myself and can't wait to get this movie completed and released soon."

On the acting front, Avika was seen in the Telugu language thriller drama *Net*. She will next be seen in the Telugu film *Thank You*.



## Panchathantram teaser: Brahmi, Swathi return to the big screen

**O**ver the last few years, we've seen small-budget films weaving magic on the big screen. *Panchathantram* looks like one that will join this list. Touted to be an anthology dealing with five different stories, the teaser of this movie was unveiled on Wednesday.

Actor Satya Dev lent his voice for the teaser. He introduces the characters and the world of *Panchathantram* to us. The teaser looks beautiful visually and the background score is soothing.

It was fresh to see actors like Brahmanandam and Swathi Reddy back on the screen after a long time. Both of them play pivotal roles in it.

*Panchathantram* features an ensemble of the cast that includes Samuthirakani, Rahul Vijay, Shivatmika Rajasekhar, Naresh Agastya, Divya Drishti, and Vikas. The film is directed by debutant Harsha Pulipaka. Akhilesh Vardhan and Srujan Yabolu have bankrolled the project under their respective banners Ticket Factory and S Originals.

