



## the pioneer

DIGANGANA  
WANTS TO PLAY  
MADHUBALA

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BCCI PLANS E-BIDDING FOR TWO  
NEW IPL TEAMS ON OCTOBER 17

The BCCI plans to have an e-bidding for the two new IPL teams on October 17. The Board is planning to have the bidding on 17th October and it will be an e-bidding," sources in the know of things told PTI on Tuesday. The BCCI had on August 31 invited bids to own an IPL franchise with "Invitation to Tender" available for purchase till October 5. "The Governing Council of the IPL invites bids to acquire the right to own and operate 1 (one) of the 2 (two) new teams proposed to be introduced to take part in the Indian Premier League from the IPL 2022 season, through a tender process," the BCCI had said in a statement.

BJP CLAIMS MAMATA DIDN'T MENTION  
CRIMINAL CASES; COMPLAINS TO EC

The BJP on Tuesday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission, alleging that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did not make a mention about pending criminal cases in her nomination papers for the Bhabanipur by-poll. Sajal Ghosh, the chief election agent of the saffron party's candidate for the constituency, Priyanka Tibrewal, wrote to the EC, raising objections to Banerjee's declaration. "I beg to object to the nomination/declaration filed by Mamata Banerjee... on the ground that the candidate has failed to disclose particulars of the pending criminal proceedings against her," he said.

SATURDAYS WORKING DAYS, SAYS  
KERALA GOVT AS COVID CASES DIP

After withdrawing the night curfew and stringent lockdown measures on Sundays, which were imposed in the wake of rising COVID-19 cases in the state, the Kerala government on Tuesday decided to restore Saturdays as working days, wherever applicable. "All employees are instructed to report for duty (on Saturdays) accordingly," an order issued by the Disaster Management Department said. It said that on August 4, all government offices, quasi government, public sector undertakings, companies, autonomous bodies and commissions were allowed to work from Monday to Friday with full attendance.

KANNADA ORGANISATIONS PROTEST  
AGAINST 'IMPOSITION OF HINDI'

In protest against the "imposition of Hindi", Kannada organisations on Tuesday held a twitter campaign and picketing in front of banks in several parts of Karnataka, on the occasion of Hindi Diwas. The Karnataka Rakshana Vedike organised a Twitter campaign with hashtag #StopHindiImposition from 10 am to 10 pm on Tuesday, while its activists staged picketing in front of banks in different parts of the State. KRV tweeted pictures of its activists staging picketing in Sedam, Chincholi, Ron, Hungund, Hiriyur, Pandavapura, Bengaluru, Vijayapura, Kalaburagi, Chikkaballapura, Thirthahalli, Udipi, Uttara Kannada, Kolar, Mandya and Dharwad.

Council may consider bringing  
petrol, diesel under GST ambit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council might on Friday consider taxing petrol, diesel and other petroleum products under the single national GST regime, a move that may require huge compromises by both the Union and State governments on the revenues they collect from taxing these products.

The Council, which comprises Union and State Finance Ministers, in its meeting scheduled in Lucknow on Friday, is also likely to consider extending the time for duty relief on Covid-19 essentials, according to sources in the know of the development.

GST is being thought to be a solution for the problem of near-record high petrol and diesel rates in the country, as it would end the cascading effect of tax on tax (state VAT being levied not just on the cost of production but



also on the excise duty charged by the Centre on such output).

In June, the Kerala High Court, based on a writ petition, had asked the GST Council to decide on bringing petrol and diesel within the goods and services tax (GST) ambit.

The sources said bringing petrol and diesel within GST would be placed before the Council for discussion in the light of the court asking the Council to do so.

AP to use data  
analytics to identify  
tax evaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Commercial Taxes Department of Andhra Pradesh will use data analytics to pick out tax evaders in the State, Special Chief Secretary (Revenue) Rajat Bhargava said.

Addressing a review meeting on Tuesday, Bhargava asked the Commercial Taxes Department to focus on increasing taxpayer compliance in filing of monthly returns, collection of taxes, due as per returns, collection of arrear taxes and pursuing court cases to their logical conclusion to unlock the revenues held up in the cases.

AP meets capital  
expenditure  
target, can  
borrow more

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Union government on Tuesday granted permission to cash-strapped Andhra Pradesh to borrow an additional Rs 2,655 crore from the open market this fiscal.

Andhra Pradesh, along with 10 other States earned permission for additional borrowing as an incentive after achieving the target of capital expenditure set by the Union Ministry of Finance in the first quarter of the present fiscal 2021-22.

As many as 11 States - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand - have achieved the target set by the Ministry of Finance for capital expenditure in the first quarter of 2021-22.

As an incentive, these States have been granted permission by the Department of Expenditure to borrow an additional Rs 15,721 crore.

Jagan orders 50 percent beds for  
Aarogyasri patients in health hubs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday directed officials to ensure that 50 percent beds should be allotted to Aarogyasri patients in hospitals being set up under health hubs.

During a review meeting held at the camp office here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister said the charges paid under Aarogyasri are better compared to those paid by insurance companies. He added that the hospitals that allot more beds to Aarogyasri patients should be given priority in health hubs.

The Chief Minister said the government will have one member on the hospital boards in health hubs. He said the intention of doctors to serve in their home State will be fulfilled through health hubs and that constant availability of doctors should be made as a criteria for selection of hospitals for health hubs.

Jagan directed the officials to focus on setting up hospitals for organ transplantation in health hubs. He said priority should be given to hospitals that run on non-profit basis and that people should feel that they need not go to other States for medical treatment in future.

The Chief Minister gave the nod to appoint special officers in hospitals from CHCs to teaching



## Zero active Covid cases in 10,541 secretariats

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Officials informed Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday that there were 14,652 active Covid cases across the State and recovery rate was 98.60 percent and positivity rate 2.23 percent.

Briefing the Chief Minister during the review meeting, the officials said that there were zero active cases registered in 10,541 secretariats and 2,699 patients were being treated in hospitals and 854 in Covid Care Centres. They said 91.66 percent of Covid

patients in network hospitals were being treated under Aarogyasri and 71.04 percent of them in private hospitals were being treated under Aarogyasri while the fever survey was completed 21 times.

Keeping the Covid third wave in view, the officials informed that 20,964 oxygen concentrators and 27,311 D type oxygen cylinders were made available and added that oxygen pipeline works are completed in 108 hospitals.

hospitals for maintenance of hospitals.

These doctors would be responsible for building services, facility

management services and biomedical waste management services.

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM  
■ VIJAYAWADA

Letters sent by 20 Union Ministers, including a woman, recommending people of their choice for appointment as the TTD Board members, while keeping the BJP national leadership in the dark, is creating ripples in the party.

This was leaked to the BJP national president JP Nadra who is believed to have ordered a probe into the matter.

The Jaganmohan Reddy government has appointed the TTD chairman, but has not named any board members so far.

According to reliable information, VIPs from various states, including Chief Ministers, have suggested names of 75 prominent persons for appointment as TTD Board members.

As the Board is in no position to ignore even one name, the government is believed to be mulling the

option of constituting the Board with only 45-55 members and appoint the remaining recommended people as Special Invitees.

However, since selection of the Board members is a tricky affair, the government has been putting off a decision on the final list.

According to reliable information, leaders of several national and regional parties, in addition to the Chief Ministers of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Maharashtra, have sent their recommendations to the AP government.

YSRCP sources say that Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Ral and IT Minister KT Rama Rao have sent separate lists.

Some of the Union Ministers sent their recommendations for appointment as TTD Board members without consulting the BJP national leadership.

92.85 percent clear  
EAPCET-2021 exam

■ Five among top 10 rankers from Telangana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As many as 72,488 students who took the EAPCET-2021 (agriculture and pharmacy stream) exam cleared it, with Chandam Vishnu Vivek from Korukonda village in East Godavari district securing the first rank. This is up from the previous year's 80.62 percent students qualifying.

Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh announced the results for admission into agriculture and pharmacy courses and said that the candidates can download their rank cards from Wednesday onwards.

Interestingly, of the top ten ranks, five were secured by candidates from Telangana state.

Unlike EAPCET engineering stream, two girls figured in the top ten ranks in the agriculture and pharmacy stream.

R Srinivasa Karthikeya from Anantapur secured the second rank, B Vishwas Rao from Warangal in Telangana state the third rank followed by G Samiehana Reddy from Ranga Reddy district in Telangana state, K Lahari from Hyderabad, K Chaitanya Krishna and N Divya from Guntur, K Rahul Siddarth from Siddipet in Telangana, T Sai Reddy from Nalgonda in Telangana and G Vidip from Guntur bagging the top ten ranks.

Atchannaidu  
apologises for  
remarks on  
Speaker

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP MLA K Atchannaidu, who appeared before the Privileges Committee of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, formally tendered an apology for his remarks made against the Speaker Tammineni Sitaram.

The Privileges Committee, which met under the chairmanship of YSRCP MLA Kakani Govardhan Reddy in the AP Legislature to discuss the Privilege Motion against TDP MLAs K Atchannaidu and Koonna Ravikumar, summoned them to appear in person before it.

The Privileges Committee had asked them to appear in person as it was not satisfied with the written explanation.

While Ravikumar did not appear before the panel, Atchannaidu is learnt to have given a lengthy explanation to the Committee over the context in which he had made the remarks. He reportedly told the Committee that the press note with his alleged remarks was released to the media inadvertently without his signature.

## No final decision yet on cinema ticket biz

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Faced with severe criticism from various quarters over its decision to sell cinema tickets online, the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government on Tuesday said the proposal was mooted by the film industry itself.

The government was 'only studying' the proposal right now and would take a final call only after deliberating it with stakeholders like film producers, distributors, exhibitors and also actors, Information and Public Relations Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) maintained.

"The online ticket sale will be beneficial to both the people and the government. Cinema goers will not have to buy tickets in the black market and there will be no loss of revenue to the government," the Minister told a press



conference.

Nani pointed out that the government earned tax revenue from cinemas to the tune of Rs 40 crore in 2019-20.

"In January 2020, there were two Telugu blockbusters that grossed a sum of Rs 170 crore in 13 districts of AP. Those two films alone should have con-

tributed a tax of Rs 25 crore, but what the government got in the whole year from all films was only Rs 40 crore," Nani, who is also the de facto Minister for Cinematography, noted.

There are about 1,100 cinema halls across the state with an average seating capacity of 300 each.

"Some bigwigs of the film industry gave a representation to the Chief Minister a few months suggesting that cinema tickets be sold online. Accordingly, we have constituted a committee to study the proposal. We will soon talk to all the stakeholders before taking a decision," the Minister added.

Referring to opposition criticism that the government was seeking to raise more loans showing the cinema ticket sale income, Nani said it was unfounded.

"We have not yet got into the A, B, C, D of this. How can people talk like that?" he asked.

The Minister pointed out that the proposal to sell movie tickets online dated to the year 2002, when the then state government (headed by the TDP) requested the Centre to consider it. The intention behind this was to check tax evasion, he said.

## TODAY

## ALMANAC

## Month &amp; Paksham:

Bhadrapada & Shukla Paksha  
Panchangam

Tithi : Navami 11:16

Nakshatram : Purva Ashadha 28:56

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

Rahukalam : 12:11 pm - 1:42 pm

Yamagandam : 7:38 am - 9:09 am

Varjyam : 3:07 pm - 4:39 pm

Gulika : 10:40 am - 12:11 pm

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 12:19 am - 1:51 am

Abhijit Muhurtham : Nil

VIJAYAWADA  
WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 33/26

Humidity: 77%

Sunrise: 6:02 am

Sunset: 06:19 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 5:00 PM

# Will power bills become a political weapon for opposition?

Domestic power bills, with enhanced 'true up' charges, have delivered high-voltage shock to the common man in Andhra Pradesh. The additional charges are being collected from people for their power consumption in previous years. The Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) has caused this 'storm' by allowing discoms to collect additional charges from consumers to the tune of nearly Rs.4,000 crore in a continuous process that may last eight months. In fact, discoms had proposed the collection of additional charges to the tune of Rs.19, 000 crore. But ERC denounced that proposal and gave its nod for collecting Rs 3,700 crore. Consumers were aghast when they received their domestic power bills for August including a minimum of Rs 400 as additional charges on every connection, even if the consumer had consumed less units than in the previous months. This unexpected additional burden has affected even those sections which had happily benefitted from the welfare schemes of state government. Tenants are clueless about how the authorities would deal with them due to the unusual enhancement of domestic power bills as the discoms have decided to collect additional charges for past consumption as well -- for the period of 2014-19. There are many tenants who may be required to pay true up charges even if they have not been tenants during the entire period of reckoning. Clashes are likely between owners and tenants in some cases. The ERC initially used to elicit the opinions of members of registered political parties in the state. The parties used to send members well-versed in the subject. Former chief minister of



**Aside from TDP's capability to lead an agitation against the hike in power charges, it appears that the widespread resentment among the people could work against the government. The increase in power bills caused by the true up charges would be too heavy a burden on the common man.**



M D RATNA KUMAR  
Senior Journalist

undivided AP K. Rosaiah, CPI-M politburo member were among those who have attended such meetings. But these leaders often cornered the ERC on several issues, including revision of power tariff, on various occasions. Unable to digest such criticism, ERC has stopped the exercise, but is not averse to acting against the interests of power consumers in the state. The state government decided to stop ERC interactions with members of opposition parties, mainly because of the fall-out of media coverage of those proceedings. It is only a matter of time before opposition parties and civil society organizations begin to make the most of public anger over the true up charges. Twenty-one years ago, then Chandrababu regime revised power tariff and put a huge burden of additional charges on people. Then Opposition, led by Congress party, launched an agitation with the support of Left parties in the state. The Congress Legislature Party was then headed by Dr.YS Rajasekhara Reddy, with a strong contingent of 91 members -- the biggest ever opposition in the state Assembly since its inception. That fierce agitation culmi-

nated in an indefinite hunger strike by 90+ MLAs of the entire Opposition in the Assembly. A flare-up of that protest resulted in police firing at Basheer Bagh in Hyderabad on 28 August, 2000. The police opened fire when a rally organised by all opposition parties proceeded to the venue of the MLAs' hunger strike. Three activists were killed in the firing that shook the entire state politically. That was the beginning of the end of Chandrababu

Naidu's rule in the undivided state.

The opposition acted in perfect unity and sustained the negative mood of people towards then TDP government in subsequent years. Finally in 2004, the TDP was decimated.

The TDP had to sit in Opposition benches for two consecutive terms of 2004 & 2009. The TDP came to power in the residuary state of AP only after spending 10 agonising years in the Opposition.

However, in the present circumstances, the principal opposition party - TDP, under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, does not have enough strength in the legislature to take on the YSRCP government headed by YS Jaganmohan Reddy. He has to launch an effective agitation against the true up charges.

None of the YSRCP MLAs can afford to side with the public. The attempts being made by some ruling party leaders to blame the Chandrababu Naidu govern-

ment for the present hike in power charges do not hold water.

In fact, the severity of the burden on people in the name of true up charges is much more than that which the TDP regime had imposed on people in those days. Some say the 'sin' committed by the TDP regime in the combined state of Andhra Pradesh is still haunting the party in the residuary state. Chandrababu then tried hard to crush the agitation against the hike in power charges.

In those days, Chandrababu, with his 29 members in the Lok Sabha, was the darling of media, particularly after he extended crucial support to the NDA government headed by AB Vajpayee.

Chandrababu did not tolerate democratic voices against him, particularly after he retained power in the state by forging an alliance with BJP. In the backdrop of the Kargil war, Vajpayee's image helped Chandrababu retain power in combined AP.

These days Chandrababu prefers to send his son Lokesh to those places where his presence is not warranted. He made a vain bid to go to Guntur district to visit the home of a rape victim, but the police foiled his efforts. This brought some political mileage to TDP.

Aside from TDP's present capability to lead an agitation against the hike in power charges, it appears that the widespread resentment among the people could work against the state government.

The manifold increase in power bills caused by the true up charges would be too heavy a burden on the common man.

It is different matter if he gets welfare benefits worth thousands of rupees from the government. The feeling of gratitude towards the government for its freebies may not last long.

People may respond to the calls of the principal opposition party if they feel that there is need for an agitation to ensure the rollback of true up charges.

## Black Fungus: Six AP districts report zero cases

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Six districts reported zero cases of mucormycosis as Andhra Pradesh added 38 more in the last one week, taking the total to 4,963.

Only one death due to Black fungus was reported in the state in the last week, pushing the total toll so far to 450. According to Health Department data, the State now has 337 Black fungus cases under treatment after a total of 4,176 recoveries.

So far, 2,727 surgeries have been performed on the infected persons, the data showed.

Chittoor district added 12 fresh cases, East Godavari seven, Guntur six, Prakasam five, Anantapur four, Kadapa and Kurnool two each in a week.

Krishna, SPS Nellore, Prakasam, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari registered no Black fungus case in the week ending September 13.

## Atchannaidu apologises...

Continued from Page 1

He formally apologised for his remarks made against the Speaker and said he was withdrawing his comments.

Following this, Govardhan Reddy told the media that Atchannaidu had withdrawn his remarks and that the press note was made public by accident. He said that Atchannaidu's statement would be sent to the members of the Privileges Committee and a decision would be taken based on their views.

Govardhan Reddy said that he was informed that TDP leader Koona Ravikumar was not available and would be given another chance to appear before the Privileges Committee. A decision would be taken on former State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh and TDP legislator Nimmala Ramanaidu, who are also facing privilege notices, at a meeting to be held on September 21.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹259
Without Skin	₹279
Broiler at Farm	₹144

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	426
HYDERABAD	398
VISAKHAPATNAM	425
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.26

# CID sleuths question INCAP former MD in APSFL scam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CID sleuths on Tuesday questioned K Sambasiva Rao, then VC and MD of INCAP and also Vemuru Hari Krishna Prasad, the former technical advisor to the previous TDP government as part of their probe into alleged scam in awarding work tenders of APSFL in 2015.

Last week, the CID had filed an FIR into the case following a complaint from APSFL chairman K Gowtham Reddy two months ago. After a preliminary inquiry, the CID issued notices to Sambasiva Rao, Krishna Prasad and also Tera Software Pvt Ltd MD Tummala Gopichand to appear before the investigation



agency.

Accordingly, Sambasiva Rao and Krishna Prasad appeared before the CID sleuths on Tuesday. Gopichand is expected to depose on a later date.

Both Sambasiva Rao and Krishna Prasad were at the

CID office on Tuesday for more than two hours. "Today they did not ask me anything. They sought some information and posed questions only to Sambasiva Rao. They may seek answers from me at a later date and I'm ready to give clar-

## AP meets capital expenditure target...

Continued from Page 1

For AP, the additional open market borrowing permission granted is equivalent to 0.25 percent of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Additional financial resources thus made available will help the States in pushing their capital expenditure further.

The capital expenditure has a high multiplier effect, enhances the future productive capacity of the economy, and results in a higher rate of economic growth. Accordingly, out of the net borrowing ceiling (NBC) of 4 percent of GSDP for the states for 2021-22, 0.50 percent of GSDP was earmarked for incremental capital expenditure to be incurred by the states during 2021-22.

The target for incremental capital expenditure for each state to qualify for this incremental borrowing was fixed by the Department of Expenditure.

To become eligible for incremental borrowing, States were required to achieve at least 15 percent of the target set for 2021-22 by the end of first quarter of 2021-22, 45

percent by the end of second quarter, 70 percent by the end of third quarter and 100 percent by March 3 2022.

Next review of capital expenditure of states will be undertaken by the Department of Expenditure in December, 2021. In this round, capital expenditure achieved by the states till September 30, 2021 will be assessed.

The third review will be done in March, 2022 on the basis of capital expenditure incurred by the State during the first three quarters of the year 2021-22.

The capital expenditure-linked borrowing ceiling of 0.50 percent of GSDP will be allowed to those States who will achieve actual capital expenditure of at least 45 percent of the target by September 30 or 70 percent of the target by December 31.

There would be a final review of actual capital expenditure by the States in June, 2022. Any shortfall / deficiency in actual capital expenditure for 2021-22 by the State in comparison with the targeted capital expenditure for the year 2021-22 will be adjusted from the borrowing ceiling of the State for the year 2022-23.

## Zero active Covid cases in 10,541 secretariats...

Continued from Page 1

They said the State government is setting up oxygen generation plants in 140 hospitals which have over 50 beds and they will be completed by October. The offi-

cials informed the Chief Minister that 3,50,39,318 people have been administered vaccine of which 1,33,30,206 received the first dose and 1,08,54,556 have been administered both doses.

## AP to use data analytics to...

Continued from Page 1

The meeting was attended by Chief Commissioner of State Tax Ravi Shankar Narayan Sudagani and Special Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh State Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (APSDRI), Ch. Rajeswar Reddy, and other senior officers of the Commercial Taxes Department.

The state Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has been tasked with the exercise of carrying out a sector-wise analysis to determine tax collection, plug the gaps and widen the tax base so as to meet the revenue targets.

Bhargava directed the DRI to work in tandem with the enforcement wing of the CT Department and use data analytics to identify tax evaders.

ifications. There is no scam or financial irregularities in APSFL. After I provide information to the CID, I will clarify everything," Krishna Prasad told reporters after coming out of the CID office.

In the 2015 bidding for work worth Rs 330 crore related to APSFL by INCAP, Tera Soft emerged the successful L1 bidder and grabbed the contract.

The then government in April, 2015 authorised INCAP to take up the project of laying of optical fibre over existing electrical towers and poles under phase-I of Fibergrid project. The aim of the project was to provide optic fibre connectivity to villages and towns across the State.

He asked the authorities of the CT Department to strengthen the audit wing to check the compliance levels in the case of large taxpayers.

"We need to ramp up efforts to widen and deepen the state tax base by moving forward in a systematic manner. Focus should be on unearthing large-scale GST frauds," Bhargava told the officials.

He also reviewed the state-related issues to be raised at the GST Council meeting, scheduled to be held on September 17 in Lucknow.

The State is yet to get over Rs 2,500 crore as GST compensation this year.

Besides, GST rates on liquor, petrol and diesel, solar power equipment and solar power plants would also be discussed at the Council meeting.

## Jagan orders 50 percent beds...

Continued from Page 1

He directed the officials to focus on the designs of newly-constructed hospitals and teaching hospitals to ensure they are in line with the best maintenance practices.

He said bed management, bathroom maintenance, hygiene and food quality and reception services are very important and that medical services in government hospitals should be on par with corporate hospitals with adequate doctors and such services.

The Chief Minister said there should be strict monitoring regarding maintenance of hospitals. He said the services should not be interrupted due to the absence of staff and instructed the officials to take action on staff who are on leave beyond stipulated days.

The officials briefed the Chief Minister on details regarding the family doctor concept. Policies were made to ensure medical services at least two times in a month in each village secretariat through 104 services. They said the family doctors concept will be implemented in 258 mandals from November 15 and will be extended across the state on January 26, 2022.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to use 104 services accordingly keeping in view the population as well and added to prepare SOPs and policies for village clinics.

He instructed the officials to ensure availability of two doctors in each PHC so that one can be available in PHC while the other can provide services through 104 services under family doctor concept. The officials were also asked to ensure completion of construction of new PHCs soon.

## BJP top leadership...

Continued from Page 1

As many as 20 Union Ministers are believed to have sent their recommendation letters.

Irrespective of the party in power at the Centre, the tradition has been that the list of names for appointment as TTD Board members is sent to the State government. Besides this, some Union Ministers who have a good rapport with the Chief Minister too send their recommendations.

The tradition was followed when the UPA was in power and when the TDP-BJP alliance was in power in AP, the BJP national leadership furnished some names. The then chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu accepted the appointment of Bhanu

Prakash, a BJP leader of Tirupati who was recommended by Amit Shah and M Venkaiah Naidu.

The BJP national leadership recommending some names is quite natural, but some Union Ministers bypassing their party leadership to send their recommendations has left the party aghast.

The BJP national president soon got the gist of the matter and when he questioned a Union Minister about it, the latter denied having issued a letter to anyone.

Sources said that Nadda then asked a top BJP leader to go deep into the whole affair and unearth the facts.

Until the matter is resolved, it is unlikely the AP government would make public the final list of the TTD Board members.

## Council may consider...

Continued from Page 1

When a national GST subsumed central taxes such as excise duty and state levies like VAT on July 1, 2017, five petroleum goods petrol, diesel, ATF, natural gas and crude oil were kept out of its purview for the time being.

This is because both the Union and State Government finances relied heavily on taxes on these products.

Since GST is a consumption-based tax, bringing petro products under the regime would have mean States where these products are sold get the revenue and not ones that currently derive the most benefit out of them because of they being the production centre.

Simply put, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar with their huge population and a resultant high consumption would get more revenues at the cost of

States like Gujarat.

With Central Excise and State VAT making up for almost half of the retail selling price of petrol and diesel currently, levying GST on them would mean charging a peak rate of 28 percent plus a fixed surcharge going by the principle of the new levy being equal to the old taxes.

Tax experts said bringing petro products under GST will be a tough call for both the Centre and States as both will stand to lose. BJP-ruled states like Gujarat will be a loser even if a product like natural gas is brought under GST as it gets a lot of revenue from taxing the local production and import of the fuel (LNG).

The Centre will also lose as the majority of the Rs 32.80 per litre excise duty on petrol and Rs 31.80 on diesel is made up of cesses, which it does not share with the States.

## 9 Union Ministers...

Continued from Page 1

Radhakrishnan, a BJP leader from Guntur who has shifted to Chennai, is said to be close to those in power at the Centre and also those who are close to the centres of power.

During the tenure of Bhumana Karunakar Reddy as the TTD Chairman, he was the TTD Local Advisory Committee (LAC) Chairman in Chennai.

Now, it has emerged that at least nine Union Ministers have recommended Radhakrishnan's name for the TTD member's post.

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who recommended Radhakrishnan's name, has written to the AP government stating that he had done so based on 'misinformation', and asked the State government not to take the name into consideration.

Under GST, all revenues will be split 50:50 between the Centre and the States.

The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in its September 17 meeting could also discuss the modalities of continuation of compensation cess beyond June 2022.

This is the first time in 20 months that the GST Council will have a physical meeting. The last such meeting was on December 18, 2019, before the Covid-19 induced lockdowns.

When the GST was introduced on July 1, 2017, amalgamating over a dozen Central and State levies, five commodities - crude oil, natural gas, petrol, diesel, and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) - were kept out of its purview given the revenue dependence of the Union and State governments on this sector.

## 92.85 percent clear EAPCET-2021...

Continued from Page 1

Releasing the results, Suresh said that the exam was held on September 3, 6 and 7 for three days in five sessions in 84 centres.

In all 78,066 candidates appeared for the exam and the results were announced in a record seven days. Soon after the exam, the 'key' was posted online, he said.

To balance the five sets of question papers, a normalisation process was adopted, the Minister said. "Officials of the JNTU-Kakinada, Higher

Education Council, district, police, RTC, medical and other departments collectively did their best in organising the exam following strict Covid guidelines. No candidate was tested positive," said Suresh.

Education Department Special Secretary Satish Chandra, APHRMC Chairman Justice V Eswaraiah, Telugu Academy Chairman Nandamuri Lakshmi Parvathi, APSCHC Chairman Prof K Hemachandra Reddy, Vice Chairman T Lakshamma, Prof K Rammohan Rao, Secretary Prof B Sudhir Prem Kumar and others were present.



A.P. STATE POLICE HOUSING CORPN. LTD.

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION- 6

Tenders for Civil Works are invited for Tender Nos 92 to 93/2021-22, dated 14/09/2021 for 2 works: Last date/time for submission of bids for Tender Nos 92 & 93: 30/09/2021, 5.00 PM. For details, please visit [www.apdpocprocurement.gov.in](http://www.apdpocprocurement.gov.in)

DIPIR No. : 376P/PSH/VT/11/0221-22 Dt: 14.09.2021

94/ CHIEF ENGINEER

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# NIT-AP encourages faculty to focus on bio-energy research

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

National Institute of Technology Andhra Pradesh (NIT-AP) is encouraging its faculty and researchers towards advancements in the field of bio-energy.

Bio-energy is a form of renewable energy derived from living organic materials known as biomass that can be used to meet energy demands. Biomass energy would improve the energy security of developing nations like India.

Towards this, the Institute organised a five-day online faculty development programme on 'Waste to Bio-energy: A Sustainable solution' from September 13 to 17.

The faculty development programme aims to bring advancements in the field of bio-energy through waste utilisation and minimise the dependency on fossil-based fuels to improve energy security.

Addressing the inaugural event, NIT Andhra Pradesh, Director, Prof C S P Rao, said,



"The demand for cleaner and greener fuels is increasing tremendously. India's economy greatly depends on its agricultural production, generating a lot of agro waste which is unutilised thus creating problems for disposal. The demand for transforming such waste to bioenergy/bio-fuels is increasing rapidly. The residues generated after processing can also be utilised further as biofertilizers. With the announcement of new biofuels policy by the Government of India in 2018, India has focused more in the area of bio-energy and has set

a target to achieve 20pc blending of ethanol in petrol and 5pc blending of biodiesel in diesel by 2030. Hence research should be focused more towards utilization of waste for the production of Biofuels/bioenergy."

The five-day Faculty Development Programme was intended to impart advanced knowledge on biovalorisation of wastes to renewable chemicals and bio-fuels for faculties, scientists, and research scholars.

Delivering a lecture on "Biorefinery approach toward Biofuels and Other Value-

Added Products from Biomass Gasification Waste", Prof. Kannan Pakshirajan, of IIT Guwahati, emphasised on bio and chemical catalysts for enhancing the production of bio hydrogen, role of nanoparticles in enhancing the bioavailability of CO, importance of Rhodococcus microbe for bio-oil production. He discussed the various methods employed in measuring the toxicity levels of treated waste water. Biochar production from processed waste water along with its characterisation and application was also highlighted.

## Disha app saves AP woman in New Delhi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Disha app introduced by the YSRCP-led Andhra Pradesh government to protect women and girls at risk is yielding good results not only in the State but also outside it.

According to reports, a young woman Subhashini from Porumamilla village in Kadapa district had gone to New Delhi to write an entrance test. While the woman was travelling in an auto rickshaw, the driver allegedly misbehaved with her.

With the help of Disha app, she alerted the police by using the SOS option. Responding to the call immediately, the Kadapa district police contacted their Delhi counterparts who took timely action.

The Delhi Police, with the help of a local NGO, rescued the woman from the auto driver's clutches and brought her to safety.

The AP police remained in contact with the girl till she was rescued from the auto driver and returned to her native place in Kadapa district.

## 76 found using vehicles with fake 'Press', 'Police' stickers

PNS ■ KAKINADA

In a special drive conducted here on Tuesday, the police found 76 persons using vehicles bearing fake Press, Police and Government Vehicle stickers.

The police conducted a special drive keeping in view the rampant illegal transportation of ganja.

The police received information that the bootleggers are using vehicles with 'Press', 'Defence' and 'Govt. Vehicle' stickers.

In the backdrop, on the instructions of SP M Ravindranath Babu, the police inspected vehicles and found two-wheelers and cars with fake stickers.

The police found that some people were using two-wheelers with 'Press' stickers on the vehicles though they are not related to the media.

The police caught 76 persons, who were moving on vehicles with 'Press' stickers though they were not journalists.

The police shifted the motorists to police stations and counselled them.

They warned them that



criminal cases would be registered if they committed such a mistake again. However, the

police allowed those who had shown an accreditation card or an identity card.

## Opposition parties running false campaign on GO 217: Mopidevi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) Rajya Sabha member, Mopidevi Venkataramana, has alleged that the Opposition parties are misleading fishermen by propagating false information on GO 217 regarding the open auction of fish tanks and said the State government has issued orders only to free fishermen from middlemen and capitalists and improve their living standards.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office here on Tuesday, the MP said the fishermen societies that exist at present are nominal and only a meagre amount is being given to the society members. The State government will be implementing GO 217 to ensure Rs15,000 revenue to each member.

He said TDP and BJP are conspiring against the GO only for their political interests but not for the betterment of fishermen.

The MP said only 27 fish tanks in the Nellore district will be called for open auction as a pilot project and 30 percent of revenue earned through the auction will be credited to the concerned fishermen society



and added that the State the government would look into extending the project to other districts after analysing the results in the Nellore district.

He said the Opposition parties are misleading the fishermen saying that the GO would be implemented across the State and asserted that it is confined to Nellore district at present. He questioned the silence of a section of fishermen community leaders when TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu made comments against them during the previous government.

He reminded that Naidu had given Rs 2,000 as ban period relief for fishermen and increased it to Rs 4,000 prior

to 2019 elections and added that there were pending arrears of ban period relief even now. He said Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had increased ban period relief from Rs 4,000 to Rs 10,000 after coming to power and added that subsidy on diesel had increased from Rs 6 to Rs 9 and the subsidy amount for 3,000 litres diesel of mechanised boats would be credited into fishermen accounts immediately once they buy the petrol.

He said the State government had given a power tariff subsidy of Rs 700 crore per year benefiting 60,000 fishermen.

He also the State government had sanctioned the construction of four fishing harbours in phase one and the works also started and added that land was also allocated for setting up AP Marine and Fisheries University in West Godavari district.

He said while the State government had been implementing various programmes for the welfare of fishermen, but the Opposition parties were indulging in mudslinging on the government for their political interests.

## TDP kick-starts 'Rythu Kosam' from Rayalaseema

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has kicked off its Statewide protests of 'Rythu Kosam Telugu Desam' on Tuesday and demanded that the YSRCP government withdraw its 'anti-farmer' policies. On the first day, the TDP leaders and cadre held rallies and submitted memoranda to officials in Nandyal, Kurnool, Hindpuram, Anantapur and Kadapa parliamentary constituencies.

They raised slogans and displayed placards in protest against the Jaganmohan Reddy regime's total indifference to the rising debts and

problems of the cultivators in the State. The Rythu Kosam protests would continue till September 18.

The TDP leaders and cadre went in a rally to the MRO office in Pattikonda segment and submitted a memorandum on the farmers' problems. Kurnool parliamentary constituency party president Somiseti Venkateswarlu and others were present. Alur assembly segment party incharge Kotla Sujathamma led a rally and held dharna at the



Ambedkar statue. MLC KE Prabhakar organised a rally with farmers from Done old bus stand to Tahsildar office.

The TDP leaders criticised the Government for not providing water under the KC Canal ayacut at Chennur village in Kamalapuram segment.

Senior leader Mallela Linga Reddy along with other party leaders visited the lands and gave a representation to the Tahsildar.

Telugu Rythu State Marreddy Srinivasa Reddy took part in the

protest rally held at Orvakal mandal headquarters in Panyam assembly segment. Nandyal parliament party president Gowru Venkata Reddy and former MLA Gowru Charita Reddy led the protest programme. In Mantralayam segment, the party incharge Tikka Reddy went in a bullock cart rally and submitted a memorandum to the MRO.

In Banaganapalle constituency, former MLA BC Janardhan Reddy and other leaders took part in the party rally aimed at highlighting the damaged crops in the recent rains at Sanjamala village and other places.

## 1998 DSC-qualified candidates urge CM to offer jobs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 1998 DSC-qualified candidates in 1998 on Tuesday demanded that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy do justice by providing them teacher jobs.

Leaders of the 1998 DSC-Qualified Candidates Association - G Mohan Rao, M Pitchaiah, and Sk Khasim Peeran - said that injustice was done to the members of the association as the test results were kept under suspension due to anomalies in the inter-

view processes. They said that the majority of 1998 DSC-qualified candidates were deceived due to an interview scam.

The association leaders said that they had taken the issue to the notice of the then Opposition leader YS Rajasekhara Reddy raised the issue in the then Assembly session. They said that later Rajasekhara Reddy came to power and asked 1998 DSC-qualified candidates to join as Vidya Volunteers and promised to regularise their



services as special teachers. They said that unfortunately Rajasekhara

Reddy died and issues remained pending. They further said that they had once taken the issue to the notice of the TDP government in the year 2014 which appointed a committee to resolve the issue. They said that the committee had recommended jobs to 1998 DSC-qualified candidates but it failed to materialise.

The association leaders said that they had met YS Jaganmohan Reddy during the Praja Sankalpa Yatra and promised to give jobs after

YSRCP comes to power. They tried to meet CM Jaganmohan Reddy several times but the police did not allow them and put them behind the bars.

They said that many qualified candidates died and settled in other jobs and professions in the past 23 years. Recently, they met Advisor to Government (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy who assured to do justice but in vain.

The candidates urged the CM to consider their issue on humanitarian grounds and do justice by offering jobs.

## TDP shedding crocodile tears for ryots: Dharmana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Dharmana Krishna Das has slammed Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu for shedding crocodile tears for farmers through 'Rytu Kosam TDP' campaign and said Naidu has neglected and cheated farmers during his 14-year tenure.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office here on Tuesday, the Minister listed out the promises made by Chandrababu Naidu before 2014 elections and said the previous government did not fulfil the promises and thus people rejected TDP. The State government, under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, had implemented many pro-farmer programmes for their welfare.

He criticised Naidu for ignoring waiver of farm loans, providing nine-hour electricity for agriculture, setting up Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs 5,000 crore and implementation of Swaminathan Committee recommendations. He said Naidu also ignored Veligonda, Galeru- Nagiri, Handri-Neeva and Polavaram projects.

He said the Chief Minister had taken agriculture as priority subject and fulfilled all the promises made for farmers



despite the Covid pandemic. He said the State government had spent Rs 17,030 crore for YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme and modernised 8,358 electric sub-stations at a cost of Rs 1,700 crore to provide nine-hour quality power to farmers. He reminded that the State government had cleared pending arrears of Rs 20,000 crore of the previous government.

He said the Chief Minister had implemented crop insurance scheme for Rs 1, set up Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs 3,000 crore and Natural Disaster Management Fund of Rs 2,000 crore for welfare of the farmers. He warned TDP leaders to stop spreading false information on farmers' welfare and asserted that the State government had been supporting farmers in all possible ways.

## Govt blamed for farmers' suicides

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP MLC Mareddy Ravindranath Reddy on Tuesday blamed the Jaganmohan Reddy Government's policies for Andhra Pradesh standing in the second position in the farmers' suicides in the country.

Ravindranath Reddy, popularly known as B.Tech Ravi, said that the Chief Minister was doing nothing to ensure a better deal in his own assembly segment where farmers were getting just Rs. 4 per kg for banana, Re. 1 for tomato and Rs 15 for 'chini'. These rates were found nowhere else in the country. Pulivendula came to stand top in farmers' suicides in the entire State.

In a statement here, the TDP MLC accused the ruling YSRCP of standing and watching like a silent specta-

tor while the middlemen and agents were exploiting the cultivators. Drought, rising debts and inability to get new loans were forcing the farmers to commit suicides. There was no guarantee that a farmer, who had sown seed for his crop, would stay alive till the harvested crop would reach his home.

Ravindranath Reddy asked why CM Jaganmohan Reddy was not doing 'Odaru Yatra' to the houses of the deceased farmers who ended their lives after getting stuck in debts and losses. The Chief Minister was apparently interested in taking political mileage out of everything without any humanity or concern for the lives of the food producers. The ruling party had only one agenda which was to harass the opposition leaders with false cases thereby to suppress all voices of crit-

icism against the Government's failures.

The TDP leader advised the Chief Minister, Agriculture Minister and the YSRCP leaders to shift their focus from criticism of former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to the need for solving the agricultural crisis. A whole lot of welfare programmes and subsidies given during the TDP regime were cancelled. Now, the farmers were throwing their crops on the roads for lack of remunerative prices for their produce.

Ravindranath Reddy deplored that the ruling party leaders were busy with their corruption and fraud rather than coming to the rescue of the farmers. It was shameful that the YSRCP was bent on criticising the TDP regime only to divert the public attention from its failure to prevent farmers' suicides.

## 28-yr-old man electrocuted in Ganesh pandal

PNS ■ GUNTUR



A man was electrocuted in the Ganesh mandapam at Savalyapuram on Monday night. Police said that the deceased

Potluri Koteswara Rao (28) came in contact with a live electric wire and was electrocuted.

He died instantaneously. With the death of Koteswara Rao, a pall of gloom descended on the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in the village. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the Government General Hospital for post-mortem examination



## Synthetic drugs seized, 3 arrested

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The police seized synthetic drugs, including Tramadol tablets - 25, LSD 25 mg (laughing drug) and MDMA drug 7 grams and arrested three peddlers.

Superintendent of Police Arif Hafeez told the media here on Tuesday that on tip off the police arrested Bhimaneni Bharat, Surya Kumar Reddy and Rajasekhara Reddy. The three were engineering graduates and were buying the

drugs, consuming them and also selling them to others.

The SP said that Bharat bought Tramadol tablets (pain relievers)-25, LSD 70, and MDMA Drug 7 grams (Active purpose) in online.

Later, he sold the same to Surya Kumar Reddy and Rajasekhara Reddy. The drugs are being used in rave parties. The police seized the drugs, Rs 24,500 cash and three mobile phones from them and started investigation.

## DME sends estimates for doubling of PG medical seats in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

At a time when there is an acute shortage of specialist doctors across the State, here is some good news for the medical fraternity to cheer about. The Post Graduate seats are likely to be doubled in the government-run medical colleges in the state. Presently, there are 1,008 PG medical seats in all specialities at government medical colleges in the State. There is a possibility of additional 939 new

seats, according to the AP Department of Medical Education.

The government-run colleges in Guntur, Nellore, Ongole, Kakinada and Srikakulam good number of medical PG seats are likely to be increased.

According to the Director of Medical Education, Dr Raghavendra Rao, an estimate was sent to the government to increase the number of seats for PG medicine. With this, the number would be doubled,

thereby enabling specialist medical services in rural areas across the State. He said as part of the Nadu-Nedu programme, the infra-structure is being improved in the medical colleges and after the increase in PG seats the teaching colleges will be on par with private institutions.

With an increase of 939 PG seats, additional beds will be provided in the respective col-

leges. The actual number of beds in teaching hospitals is 11,274 and the number of unofficial beds has been increased to 13,376 from time to time. The latest estimate is that 7,783 beds are needed and 5,681 beds are to be sanctioned.

In teaching hospitals, units are crucial and each of them has a professor, two associate profes-

sors and three assistant professors. At present, there are 377 units in the teaching hospitals across the State and need 184 additional units. In fact, the number of beds and units should be increased on the basis of population. But, this has not happened in the last seven years. This puts pressure on teaching hospitals as the population grows. This pressure will be eased if the PG seats, beds and units increase.

In order to increase the num-

ber of PG seats, medical faculty has to be increased. The current staffing requires an additional 15 professors, 111 associate professors, and 30 assistant professors. Presently, there are 57 super specialty seats and with the increase in staff 33 additional super specialty seats can be increased. With the increase in units, beds and doctors, there is a possibility of increase in daily out-patient services and in-patient services, according to the DME.

# 13.5 lakh MT paddy yield expected in East Godavari

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Farming operations have picked up pace in East Godavari district after the recent incessant rain. The officials have estimated that paddy yield during the current Kharif season would be 13.5 lakh metric tonnes.

Agriculture officials said that the paddy crop is being cultivated in over 2.22 lakh hectares while the maize, cotton and sugarcane crops are being raised in over 40,000 hectares. The heavy rain helped the farmers complete sowing operations in rain-dependent upland areas.

Agriculture Joint Director Vijay Kumar said that it is estimated that 13.5 lakh MT of paddy produce yield East Godavari during the Kharif season. Since the farmers are facing rodent threat, the agriculture officials are providing the farmers rat poison free of cost. The agriculture officials have sensitised the farmers on



the use of rat poison to eliminate rats.

Vijay Kumar said that the agriculture officials, including Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBK) Deputy Director V R Rama Rao and Assistant Director GV Padmasri are conducting the 'Polam Badi' programmes

in various villages in 68 rural mandals to create awareness among farmers on using modern agriculture equipment and techniques in farming. The farmers are also being taught the water management and use of compost.

Agriculture Deputy Director

Taraka Rama Rao said that the farmers were evincing interest to come to Polam Badi programmes. He said that there are 856 RBKs in East Godavari district. The names of farmers are being enrolled at RBK to purchase their paddy produce after completion of harvest, he said.



## Woman, kid killed as lorry hits scooter

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A woman and her daughter were killed when a speeding lorry knocked down their scooter at Agriculture market yard in Tenali on Tuesday.

Police said that the deceased woman Sk. Hasina Sultana (34) picked up her daughter Sk. Appa (10) at her school and were going home.

A speeding lorry knocked down their scooter, killing them instantaneously. The driver of the lorry fled the scene after the accident.

Locals said that the driver drove the lorry recklessly at high speed which led to the accident. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the Government General Hospital.

# Prakasam Dist Collector asks officials to procure more milk

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Collector Pravin Kumar has asked the officials concerned to take steps to increase milk procurement and encourage milk producers' Self-Help Groups (SHGs) by implementing government schemes.

The Collector held a review meeting here on Tuesday on the implementation of Jagananna Palavelluva programme with the officials of Animal Husbandry and Cooperation departments.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector asked the officials to take steps to enhance the income of dairy farmers.

The Amul project is helping the cattle rearers in rural areas



to earn money.

He said that Amul is offering higher prices than some private dairies.

The Collector directed the officials to take steps to resume milk procurement by the Amul dairy, adding that the arrears

of Amul would be paid within one week.

Joint Collector T S Chetan, DRDA Project Director Babu Rao, MEPMA Project Director T Ravi Kumar, and Animal Husbandry Director Baby Rani were among those present.

## SHORT TAKES

### Hindi Day celebrated

**VIJAYAWADA:** National unity is possible only with Hindi Language, said Hindi Seva Sadan founder and AP Hindi Prachar Sabha secretary S Gaibavali. Hindi Day is celebrated every year on September 14 marking the declaration of the Hindi language as one of the official languages of the Union government of India. On September 14, 1949, Hindi was adopted as one of the official languages of India. Speaking on the occasion, Gaibavali said that Hindi language is spoken by most of the people across the country. He recalled that Mahatma Gandhi looked forward to making all the people of India speak Hindi and we should contribute to his ambition.

### Cases slapped on BJP leader

**KAKINADA:** The police registered criminal cases against a woman BJP leader for allegedly cheating people in the name of Central government assistance under various schemes. The Gokavaram police registered cases against BJP Kakinada Parliamentary party secretary M Gayatri for reportedly collecting money from some people offering financial assistance under various Central government schemes. The BJP sacked Gayatri from the post after criminal cases were registered against her. BJP media spokesperson and former district president Y Malakondiah told the media that Mamidana Gayatri was removed from Kakinada parliamentary party secretary post and also from the district executive committee.

### Newly-wed woman ends life

**HYDERABAD:** A newly-wed woman committed suicide by hanging herself at her residence in Narsingi late on Monday night. The deceased woman was identified as Revathi, 23. Revathi married a man named Rahul seven months ago and the two had moved to Mirchiguda in Narsingi from their native place of Parigi in Vikarabad district, one month ago. Police said that Revathi married Rahul against the wishes of her parents. Based on his complaint, the Narsingi Police registered a case and shifted the body to the hospital for an autopsy.

### Bank staff cheated of Rs 2L

**HYDERABAD:** Unknown fraudsters cheated a bank employee to the tune of Rs 1.5 lakh in the guise of offering loans on Tuesday. According to police officials, the victim, a resident of Saidabad working in the marketing wing of a private bank, had applied for a loan of Rs 3 lakh on an online loan app. Next day, he received a call from an unidentified person claiming to be an executive of a finance firm, assuring the required loan. Police said, after convincing the victim, the person collected Rs 1.5 lakh on the pretext of fees and switched off his phone. Realising that he was cheated, the victim approached the police.

### Odisha man gets life term

**HYDERABAD:** A man from Odisha was awarded life term imprisonment sentence on Tuesday, after he was found guilty of killing his coworker. The arrested person, Mukunda Randhari, 33, is a centring worker from Binjilli in Nabarangpur of Odisha state. On 8 May, 2020, Mukunda beat up his coworker, Jayaram, after a quarrel between the two turned aggressive. The centring contractor of the construction site, P Sudhakar employed Jayaram and Mukund and the duo were staying in the same under construction house. After work had stopped, Sudhakar gave Rs 14,000 to Jayaram and asked him to give half of it to Mukunda.



# Dist panel decries delay in payment of NREGA bills

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The District Development Monitoring Committee meeting has decried the delay in clearing the MGNREGA bills.

The DMC meeting was held here on Tuesday in which MPs Galla Jayadev, Lalu Sri Krishnadevarayalu, Ayodhya Rami Reddy and a host of MLAs attended. The meeting mainly discussed the delay in the payment of MGNREGA.

MLAs Kilari Rosaiah and Alla Ramakrishna Reddy regretted that they did not know how much funds were being extended to the district and how much of them were spent. They said that Rs100 crore worth bills of MGNREGA pertaining to the previous years were yet to be cleared.

MP Jayadev asked the DRDA Project Director for details on how many social security pensions had been weeded out. The Project Director told the MP that he did not have the details. However, Joint Collector Rajakumari said that over 34,000 pensions were put on hold.

MP Sri Krishnadevarayulu, who is also vice-chairman of the district development committee expressed dissatisfaction over the implementation of MGNREGA scheme in Guntur district.

He asked the officials to enhance the number of working days under the scheme. He directed the officials to conduct a workshop on the implementation of the scheme and

asked about the plans for the official formulation for the effective implementation of the scheme.

The MP said that under the Jala Jeevan Mission, all households should be provided with drinking water tap connection. The Palnadu region is in dire need of the scheme, he said.

Guntur district is lagging behind in implementing the scheme when compared to other districts, the MP lamented.

The MP said that 16 Railway Under Bridges in the Narasaraopet Parliamentary constituency would be sanctioned. Krishnadevaraya said that Rs10 crore was granted for the construction of Kondamodu-Perecherla highway.

# SP inspects night curfew implementation

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Urban SP Arif Hafeez inspected the implementation of night curfew at various places on Monday night and directed the police officials to take action against those who were running hotels and other eatery kiosks disregarding the ban orders.

The SP went to some areas on foot in Old Guntur police station limits at RTC bus stand, Ponnuru road, Ali Nagar, Pragati Nagar and Suddapalli Donka Road.

He inspected the documents of vehicles and express anger at those who were running hotels and other shops during the



curfew hours. A family noticed the SP at Suddapalli Donka Road, approached him and expressed their happiness for her presence in their locality.

The SP asked them to bring the prob-

lems of the locality to his notice. He directed the police officials to implement Covid night curfew strictly.

CI Subramanyam and other officials accompanied him.

# Congress favours people from Rseema in TTD governing body

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee General Secretary Rambhupal Reddy demanded that only Rayalaseema people should be considered for nomination to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam governing body, (TTD) trust board.

Addressing a press conference at Press Club, here on Tuesday, the senior Congress leader questioned how and

why Telangana leaders were nominated on TTD board last time, despite their tirade against Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema on issues of water sharing, and development of the region.

He demanded that representatives of Telangana and other states had no room for being on TTD board as those states had not offered any membership to AP in several important temples in their regions.

# Woman arrested for kidnap of 6-year-old girl at Kanchanbagh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Kanchanbagh Police on Tuesday arrested a 26-year-old woman for kidnapping a six-year-old girl on Monday.

The arrested person was identified as Asia Bee, 26, a resident of Shadnagar, said the police who rescued the kidnapped girl safely.

The police officials said that they received a complaint from the Muskan Ali Mirza, 41, a footpath dweller, on Monday afternoon at 1 pm that a 6-year-

old girl was kidnapped from Kanchanbagh.

Mirza, the mother of the kidnapped girl, said that while she was asking for alms near Chanchalguda Central Prison along with her daughter Alfiya, 6, an unknown lady claiming to be one Fatima approached her and informed that she can donate money (Zakat) through a known person at Hafeez Baba Nagar.

"She then took Muskan and her daughter in an auto following which the lady showed a

house with black gate to the mother and told her to go and meet the house owner. Meanwhile, she left along with the girl in an auto," said the police, adding that the mother tried to stop the auto but in vain.

The cops then formed 6 teams and checked the CC cameras to track her movements. "During the probe, it was noticed that the lady changed two autos to reach Shamshabad from Hafeez Baba Nagar and from Shamshabad, she went to Shadnagar by-pass road in an

RTC bus. From there, she went to Farooq Nagar in another auto. She was nabbed from there and officials rescued the girl from her clutches," added the police.

It was revealed during the investigation that Asia Bee was previously involved in a PDS rice transportation case of Kothur Police. The complicity of the accused in the other kidnapping cases will be verified. She was then booked and placed under arrest before being sent for judicial remand.

# Five-day-old boy, minor abducted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An unidentified woman kidnapped a 5-day-old boy after luring his mother at Chandanagar on Tuesday.

According to the Police, Vadde Jyothi, a native of Domalguda in Hyderabad, went to a tiffin centre to have breakfast near the railway station road in Gangaram, along

with her 5 day old child. An unidentified woman came to her and gave her idli to eat and then took her baby by claiming that she would buy clothes and chappal for the kid.

Believing her, Jyothi handed over her baby to the lady. However, after eating, she noticed that the lady disappeared along with her kid. Based on her complaint, the

Chandanagar Police registered a kidnapping case and are investigating. Officials said the search parties have been deployed to trace out the kidnapper and kid.

In another incident, an 11-year-old boy was reported missing from Chandrayangutta on Tuesday. The boy, Shaik Hidayat, stayed with his parents at Ghousenagar in the

Chandrayangutta police station limits. According to the police, he had gone out of the house on Sunday evening saying he was going to a nearby shop but did not return.

After searching everywhere including neighbours and relative's houses, the family approached the police who booked a case and formed teams to trace the boy.

# Hyd police arrest man for cheating Amex of Rs 7 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyber Crime Station Police of Hyderabad on Tuesday arrested one person on charges of cheating the American Express Banking Corporation of nearly Rs 7 crore.

The accused, Mohan Kottilingam Uddanda, 39, a resident of Chandanagar, and a native of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, earlier worked as assistant manager of Invesco (India) Pvt. Ltd.

As per the agreement between the Invesco Pvt. Ltd company and American Express Banking Corporation, the latter had provided corporate cards to Mohan for personnel and official use with Rs 5 lakh limit, along with other documents when he joined in the

office in 2011.

In January 2021, Mohan resigned but did not return the card. With an intention to do fraud he changed the mobile number linked with the card to another number.

Later, the accused along with his friends used the card while on a trip to Goa and later misappropriated an amount of Rs 7 crore withdrawn by presenting 14 cheques of different banks at Kolkata towards withdrawals for using the card, said Assistant Commissioner of Police, CCS, B Srinivasa Rao. The American Express Banking Corporation has filed the complaint with the police, who registered an FIR against Mohan and arrested him.

Mohan was produced before a court and remanded.

# Rs 10L reward for info on accused in six-year-old's rape, murder case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Police on Tuesday announced a Rs 10 lakh reward for any information leading to arrest of the accused in rape and murder of a six-year-old girl.

Hyderabad City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar announced the reward as Pallakonda Raju remained absconding.

He declared a reward to any person who gives information/clue leading to arrest of the absconding accused. The information can be passed to Deputy Commissioner of Police, East Zone on number 9490616366 or Deputy Commissioner of Police, Task Force on 9490616627.

The police also released a photograph of the accused, aged about 30 years.

According to a statement released by the police, Raju is approximately 5.9 feet tall and

has long hair, tied with a rubber band. He is wearing a cap and red scarf around his neck.

The accused has tattoos on his both hands reading 'Mounika'. According to police, he has a beard on his chin and is in formal trousers and a shirt. He is used to taking alcohol and sleeping at pavements and bus stands. The child was sexually assaulted and murdered on September 9 by Raju who happens to be her neighbour in Saidabad.

The body of the girl, who was missing since 5 p.m. Thursday, was found in the house of her neighbor after midnight.

The horrific incident had triggered angry protest from residents on Friday. They staged sit-in for seven hours on Champapet-Sagar Road, demanding immediate and harshest punishment to the guilty. Some of the protestors also demanded that the guilty be killed in an 'encounter'.

INDIA  
CORNER

## 4 drown, 7 missing after boat capsizes in river in Amravati

Four people drowned and at least seven others were missing after their boat capsized in the Wardha river in Maharashtra's Amravati district on Tuesday, police said. Two other boat occupants swam to safety, they said. The incident took place around 10.30 am in Warud tehsil under the jurisdiction of Benoda police station, when 12 members of some families from Gadegaon village along with the boatman were on way to a temple after visiting a waterfall nearby, a police official said. Prima facie, it appears that the boat was unable to sustain the weight of its occupants, he said. The victims had come to Zunj in Warud tehsil for the post-death rituals of a relative on Monday. On Tuesday morning, they all got on to the boat to visit a temple. However, the vessel capsized in the middle of the river, the official said. Two of its male occupants, aged 27 and 35, swam to safety, he said. Teams of the police and district disaster management authority have so far been fished out four bodies, and three of them were identified as boatman Narayan Matare (45), Wanshika Shivankar (2) and Kiran Khandale (25), the police said. Efforts were on to trace the other seven missing people, they said.



## Goods train carrying wheat derails, falls into river in Odisha

At least nine wagons of a goods train running on the Angul-Talcher Road route of East Coast Railways derailed in the early hours of Tuesday and fell into a river, officials said. The wagons carrying wheat plunged into the river around 2.30 am, but the loco pilot and other staff were reported to be safe as the engine remained on the track, they said. Heavy rain in the wake of a deep depression in the Bay of Bengal is likely to have caused the accident on a bridge over river Nandira when the goods train was on its way from Firozpur to Khurda Road, the officials said. Talcher recorded 394 mm of rainfall in the last two days. Following the incident, the ECoR has cancelled 12 trains, diverted routes of eight others and short terminated another, they added. Accident relief trains from Sambalpur and Khurda Road have been rushed to the spot, where senior officials are reviewing the restoration work. "Prima facie, the cause of the derailment appears to be... flash flood. Retaining walls on both sides have been damaged and washout of tracks on approach to the bridge from the Angul side is also noticed," an ECoR official said.



## Venkaiah Naidu expresses delight over India administering 75 crore Covid vaccine doses

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday expressed delight over India administering 75 crore doses of coronavirus vaccine and urged people to shed hesitancy and get inoculated. The country crossed the landmark of administering 75 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses on Monday. More than 71 lakh doses were administered on Monday till 7 pm, according to the provisional data available on Co-WIN portal.



"Delighted to know that we have crossed the milestone of administering 75 crore doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as the nation celebrates the 75th year of our Independence. My appreciation to the health workers, government officials and all others for their extraordinary efforts," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted, quoting Naidu as saying. The vice president appealed to those "harbouring doubts" to shed vaccine hesitancy and get themselves vaccinated as the country moves ahead to achieve the goal of inoculating all eligible people.

UP was run by gangsters before 2017, Yogi jailed them, says Modi

PNS ■ ALIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said Uttar Pradesh was run by gangsters and mafias before 2017, but now things have changed under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and such elements are behind the bars.

He also said that earlier roadblocks were created in the implementation of welfare schemes meant for the poor, but now there are no such hurdles and benefits of these schemes are reaching the needy.

Modi was addressing a function after laying the foundation stone of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University here.

The university is being established by the UP government in the memory and honour of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, the great freedom fighter, educationist and social reformer. It is being set up in a total area of over 92 acres at Lodha village and Musepur Kareem Jarouli village of Aligarh's Kol tehsil.

The university will provide affiliation to 395 colleges of the Aligarh division.

# PM to attend Quad summit in Washington on Sept 24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the first in-person summit of the Quad leaders in Washington on September 24 that is expected to broadly focus on contemporary global challenges including ways to ensure a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

Announcing the prime minister's visit to the US, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said he is also scheduled to address the 'General Debate' of the high-level segment of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 25 in New York.

In Washington, Modi is expected to hold separate bilateral talks with US President Joe Biden and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the Afghan crisis is likely to figure in the meetings.

The last time Modi visited the US was in September 2019 when he and then US President Donald Trump addressed the Howdy-Modi event in



Houston.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be participating, along with Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga of Japan and President Joseph R Biden of USA, in the Leaders' Summit of the Quadrilateral Framework in Washington DC, USA, on September 24," the MEA said in a statement.

It said the leaders will review progress made since their first virtual summit on March 12 and discuss regional issues of shared interest.

"As part of their ongoing efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, they will review

the Quad Vaccine initiative which was announced in March this year," the MEA said.

The Quad grouping comprises the US, India, Australia and Japan.

The US is hosting the in-person summit of the leaders of Quad to boost practical cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region as well as to send a strong signal about Washington's commitment to the grouping.

In March, President Biden hosted the first-ever summit of the Quad leaders in the virtual format that vowed to strive for an Indo-Pacific region that

is free, open, inclusive, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion, sending an apparent message to China.

The MEA said the leaders will also exchange views on contemporary global issues such as critical and emerging technologies, connectivity and infrastructure, cyber security, maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, climate change and education.

"The summit would provide a valuable opportunity for dialogue and interactions among the Leaders, anchored in their shared vision of ensuring a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region," the MEA said.

Modi will travel to New York to attend the UN General Assembly after concluding his engagements in Washington. "The theme for this year's General Debate is 'Building Resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalise the United Nations'," the MEA said.

## India belongs to all: JD(U) to Yogi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country belongs to everybody, be it Hindus, Muslims, Christians or any other community, and political parties should maintain restraint in their comments, JD(U) president Lalan Singh said on Tuesday as Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'abba jaan' remark in a public speech stoked a row.

"Terms like 'unity in diversity' are used for our country. The country belongs to all. No remarks should be made that harm the country," Singh, a co-founder of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, told reporters when asked for his reaction to the BJP leader's comments.

In this context, he also took a swipe at JMM leader and Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for his remarks allegedly aimed at Bhojpuri and Magahi-speaking people of the state. Everybody has a right to settle in whatever part of the country they like, he said.

Addressing a programme in Kushinagar on Sunday, Adityanath had alleged that people did not get ratings before 2017 like they do now.

"Because then, people who say



'abba jaan' used to digest the rations. The rations of Kushinagar used to go to Nepal and Bangladesh. Today, if anybody tries to swallow the rations meant for poor people, he will land in jail," the chief minister had said. 'Abba jaan' is the Urdu term for father.

In his press conference, the JD(U) president, a Lok Sabha MP from Munger, also played down the decision of his party, the biggest BJP ally, to send its senior leader K C Tyagi to a rally being organised in Jind on September 25 by INLD chief Om Prakash Chautala, seen as part of efforts for forming a non-BJP, non-Congress front.

"We are strongly part of the NDA (BJP-led alliance)," he said, and dismissed talks about a third front, saying his party will attend the rally as it is being organised to mark the birth anniversary of Devi Lal.

## Assam govt bypassing crucial clause of Accord for CAA: AJP

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) on Tuesday accused the Assam government of side-lining the "crucial" clause 5 of the Assam Accord, which deals with cut-off date for identification of illegal foreigners by bringing in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

AJP president Luriniyoti Gogoi and general secretary Jagdish Bhuyan, in a press statement, alleged that the BJP party-led government was working to reduce the Assamese people to a minority status in their own state in order to appease "foreigners" who will be turned into voters through provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

"Clause 5 of the Accord specifies the cut-off date for identifying foreigners. But it will become irrelevant when the CAA is implemented. It will tantamount to killing the Assam Accord and its spirit," they said.

This vital clause has been ignored by the government when it recently formed a committee to implement the Accord, they added.

The state government had

on September 7 announced a committee with its ministers and representatives of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which was a signatory of the Accord as member to prepare a roadmap within three months to implement the Assam Accord.

The Chief Minister's Office in a statement the same day had said that the meeting decided to prepare an "implementation framework to implement the provisions of Assam Accord with special reference to Clause 6, 7, 9 and 10".

Clause 5 of the Accord sets March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal aliens from Assam.

The AJP alleges that the contentious CAA violates the Assam Accord as it seeks to provide Indian citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis who came to India on or before December 31, 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after five years of residence here.

The AJP leaders also alleged the percentage of Assamese-speaking population will decreased by 10 per cent over



## After blast, BJP MP says TMC trying to kill him

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Less than a week after miscreants hurled bombs at BJP MP Arjun Singh's residence in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas, similar explosions were reported outside his home on Tuesday morning, with the saffron party leader claiming that members of the ruling TMC were trying to take his life.

Around 9.10 am, bombs exploded on a vacant patch of land, which is just about 200 metres away from Singh's Bhatpara residence, a police officer said.

"We are investigating the matter. Our officers are there," he added.

The NIA on Monday took over the probe into the incident on September 8, which left the gate at the BJP MP's residence partially damaged.

Singh alleged that it was an attack planned by the Trinamool Congress to kill him, his family members and people close to him.

## BJYM plans 20-day campaign to mark PM Modi's birthday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The youth wing of the BJP will undertake various welfare and awareness programmes and host 'Nava Bharat Mela' across the country to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday and his two decades in public service.

The 20-day 'Seva aur Samarpan Abhiyaan' will start on Modi's birthday on September 17 and conclude on October 7, according to a Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) statement.

As part of the campaign, every district unit of the BJYM will organize a unique 'Nava Bharat Mela', publicising the work of the Narendra Modi government over the last seven years. It will also comprise cleanliness drives, organising blood donation camps and quiz contests.

"The BJYM has been marking the birthday of PM Modi as Seva Diwas, hosting exten-

sive service programmes across the country. It has also been organizing manifold welfare activities across the country for a week in the form of Seva Saptah," said BJYM president Tejasvi Surya.

This time around, the celebrations will be extended to 20 days to mark Narendra Modi completing two decades as the head of public office -- 13 years as chief minister of Gujarat and 7 years as the prime minister of India, he said.

"The PM's birthday, which falls on September 17, is a day we spend in rendering service. October 7, the day he assumed office as chief minister, reminds us of his complete dedication to the service of our nation and its people, a quality that has been a feature of these 20-years of Narendra Modi's life," he said.

The 'Seva aur Samarpan Abhiyaan' will be carried out in all districts of the country.

## Sansad TV launch today by Venkaiah, PM, Speaker

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will jointly launch Sansad TV on Wednesday, the Prime Minister's Office said.

The launch date coincides with the International Day of Democracy, the PMO noted.

The decision to merge Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV was taken in February, and the CEO of Sansad TV was appointed in March.

The PMO said Sansad TV programming will primarily be in four categories.

## Bench to hear Deshmukh's plea on ED summons in PMLA case

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said its division bench (comprising two judges), instead of a single-judge bench, would hear the petition filed by Maharashtra former home minister Anil Deshmukh against the summons issued to him by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

A single bench of Justice S K Shinde said the objection raised by the HC registry department that the issues raised in the plea ought to be heard by a division bench is "correct".

Justice Shinde directed the registry department to place Deshmukh's petition for hear-

ing before the appropriate division bench.

Deshmukh filed the petition earlier this month, seeking to quash the five summons issued to him by the ED.

Last week, when the plea came up for hearing before Justice Shinde, Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, brought to the HC's attention a note addressed by the registry department saying the plea has to be heard by a division bench.

Counsel appearing for Deshmukh said the single bench had the jurisdiction to hear the plea. The court said it would consider the issue and pass orders.

The ED had initiated a probe against Deshmukh and his associates after the CBI filed its FIR against him on April 21 on charges of corruption and misuse of official position.

Deshmukh in his plea claimed the ED's action was a result of political vendetta.

The petition also said the agency's whole case was based on "malicious statements" made by dismissed police officer Sachin Waze, who is presently in jail in connection with the case of an explosives-laden vehicle found near the residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani in February this year and the subsequent killing of businessman Mansukh Hiran.

## Amit Shah for all regional languages

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said Hindi is a friend of India's regional languages and all of them should be promoted and encouraged.

Addressing a function on the occasion of Hindi Diwas, Shah also appealed to parents to communicate with their children at home in their mother tongue even if they study in English medium schools.

Otherwise, the children will be cut off from their roots, he said.

"Hindi has no difference with any regional language. Hindi is the 'Sakhi' (friend) of all Indian regional languages," he said.

Shah said all Indian regional languages complement and



complete Hindi and all regional languages must be promoted and encouraged.

Since 2014, more MPs are speaking in their own regional language in Parliament and they are being translated verbatim to English and Hindi, he said and added that this has helped people's representatives

to highlight the problems of their respective areas in the highest forum.

The home minister said people should not only be 'Atma Nirbhar' (self-reliant) in producing goods but also for languages.

He cited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's example of speaking only in Hindi at all

international forums to convey his thoughts.

"Hesitation over Hindi is a

passé," he said. Referring to the New Education Policy (NEP) envisaged by Modi, Shah said it has provisions for promotion of regional and Hindi languages.

On dealing with the pandemic situation, he said India has been successful in handling COVID-19 with minimum damage due to joint efforts of the central and state governments and with the active cooperation of 130 crore population.

The prime minister, whenever he addressed the nation, talked with all stakeholders — doctors, experts and others — in Hindi which resulted in the message reaching the grass-roots level, he said.



## Humane touch

The SC correctly favours suicide by COVID-19 patients to be treated as medical deaths

Continuing to keep a watchful eye on the rehabilitation of those devastated by COVID-19, the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to consider suicides by COVID-19 patients as COVID-19 deaths so that their families can get compensation. Only extreme suffering from the infection could have led to the patients dying by suicide, the court reasoned. The Bench of Justices MR Shah and AS Bopanna made the remarks while examining the Centre's guidelines for issuing COVID-19 death certificates and payment of compensation. The guidelines do not consider deaths due to poisoning, suicide, murder and accident as COVID-19 deaths even if the infection was an accompanying condition. The court was satisfied when the Government said it would re-examine the matter. The court's proposal is certainly a humane gesture but both the Government and the judiciary should first consider the issue in its totality because of the implications involved. To



cut to the chase, any suicide is the result of the victim being forced into taking the step due to extremely frustrating and depressing circumstances. The suicide leaves the family members without a bread winner if the victim was the only person employed and, in dire straits, if they were poor and disadvantaged. Technically speaking, it will be a challenge for the Government to prove that the suicide of a COVID-19 positive patient was owing to the infection and not any other reason. Secondly, several frustrating and compelling factors, as dangerous as COVID-19, force people to commit suicide.

Any Government policy to compensate only families of COVID-19 positive patients committing suicide may be seen to be discriminating against suicides for other, equally terrible reasons. Thirdly, the Government and the courts will need to sensitise the people who continue to think that suicide is merely a crime and which colours their attitude towards the victims. Suicide is a crime under the archaic Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code. The section was not repealed even though its scope was reduced by the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, that said anyone who attempts suicide is presumed "to have severe stress and shall not be tried and punished" and calls on the Government to "provide care, treatment and rehabilitation" of the person in order "to reduce the risk of recurrence" of such an attempt. The humanitarian aspect of the law needs to be popularised to blunt indifference to circumstances that lead to suicides and encourage rehabilitation of survivors or families of victims. Thousands of farmers commit suicide in India because of bankruptcy, indebtedness and crop failure. There is a compensation plan in place for them though farmers who do not hold title to their land, like women farmers in most cases, are not yet eligible for compensation. A rational approach to the matter is perhaps hidden in the question of whether a healthy farmer who committed suicide because he became indebted after failing to save his crop during the COVID-19 lockdown would be eligible for compensation as well.

### PICTALK



A man on a rickshaw wades through a waterlogged street during heavy rain in Nadia, West Bengal

PTI

## Quad unity

Biden's 'shift of focus to China' must show at the Quad Summit if he means business at all

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) was formed with an aim to contain China's growing influence in Asia and ensure territorial integrity in the Indo-Pacific region. After US President Joe Biden quit the unresolved Afghan war in order to "shift focus to China", the dialogue becomes way more important to him than ever. Hence, he is all set to host the first ever in-person Quad Summit at the White House in Washington on September 24 which shall be attended by the leaders of all four member countries — the US, India, Japan and Australia. The dialogue shall focus on areas such as combating COVID-19, addressing the climate crisis, partnering on emerging technologies and cyberspace, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific. Biden has received multiple setbacks because of his soft stance lately, and this Summit could actually help rescue his lost relevance. A virtual meeting of the Quad leaders was also held in March this year, and the members pledged to work closely on COVID-19 vaccines and ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. Quad is, by



all means, the need of the hour for the US, the Quad and the Asean countries, and it is high time that Biden realises what Trump had learned back in 2017. Trump helped revitalise Quad and had called Nato "obsolete" because of its little relevance now. At the inaugural two-plus-two ministerial dialogue with Australia held on Saturday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that Nato was a "cold war term" while Quad looks to the future. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's primary objective was to deal with the USSR and its main constituent Russia, which is economically in a battered state today, while China is economically as well as militarily the toughest rival. On the other side, Beijing's aggressive behaviour towards Taiwan and other surrounding countries and its dominance in international waters is a grave concern. The Taiwan issue is likely to be on the agenda, and it should be. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian lashed out at the upcoming Quad Summit and said, "The relevant countries should abandon the obsolete Cold War mentality and narrow-minded geopolitical rivalry and view correctly and respect people's aspiration in the region." Biden needs to show that he means business. The rising instances of global terror after the developments in Afghanistan and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific must be discussed by the leaders.

## Joe Biden slips with his soldiers

The POTUS, who managed five draft deferments from going to Vietnam, is again found wanting in his treatment of the US soldier in Afghanistan

Joe Biden is the 46th President of the United States, but not one of the 29 who served in the military, in some capacity. He had managed five draft deferments from going to Vietnam and equivocated on the Vietnam War *per se*, whilst politically opposing Richard Nixon's conduct of war. This flip-flop of positions was visible in Biden asserting that he was against authorising the Iraq War in 2002 as he was supposedly "against it from the moment it started", whilst contradicting himself with his vote for the Authorisation for Use of Military Force (AUMF) for the invasion, as the Chair of the Senate Relations Committee. Later, a chance duel against a decidedly racist, sexist and xenophobic Donald Trump (who clownishly and dangerously sought to usurp the imagery of the US military) ensured that Biden was sworn in as POTUS and, therefore, Commander-in-Chief of its Armed Forces. Clearly for many Veterans who traditionally supported the more rightwing Republican Party, Biden was the better of the two bad choices.

For a persistently combat-engaged nation with approximately 19 million Veterans as per the Department of Veteran Affairs, representing nearly 10 per cent of the total US adult population — the opinion of the 'Uninformed' fraternity matters. Biden frequently invoked the memory of his late son in his presidential campaign, Beau Biden, who served and rose to the rank of Major in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. Beau tenanted Iraq from 2008 to 2009 and received a Bronze Star for his services. Biden's "sacred obligation" campaign towards military families entreated that sentiment, "As parents of a service member who was deployed to Iraq, Vice-President Joe Biden and (Dr) Jill Biden understand that it's not just military members who sign up to serve our nation, their families do too." Meanwhile the ham-handed approach of Trump, including upsetting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, as also respected Veterans like Generals James Mattis and H.R. McMaster, swung the mood in favour of Biden — aided immeasurably by Trump's



guffaws and derelictions.

Today, over eight months as the POTUS, Biden has taken one substantial decision in the militaristic realm, ie, withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and his consequential approval ratings have plummeted. While ending the 20-year war in Afghanistan was much sought after, the unheroically defeated and hurried manner (with the casualty from the ISIL-K attack) in which they withdrew has diminished the image and perceptions of the US military, externally and internally. Comparisons of a Vietnam redux are inevitable and odious, and it is only the Veteran who will pay that ignominious price and humiliation over time. Despair is magnified by the unfiltered reality of having amateurly underestimated the speed of collapse, the obvious lack of an operational plan and the embarrassment of having to take permission from the 'enemy', ie, Taliban, to 'evict safely'. Unlike the militarily uninitiated and unconcerned politicians, the US soldier will suffer the additional and unimaginable moral injury in the know of what it has left behind in terms of allies (interpreters, drivers and support staff), and the sure fate that awaits them. The chaotic and mismanaged departure has left the uni-

“WHILE ENDING THE 20-YEAR WAR IN AFGHANISTAN WAS MUCH SOUGHT AFTER, THE UNHEROICALLY DEFEATED AND HURRIED MANNER IN WHICH THEY WITHDREW HAS DIMINISHED THE IMAGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE US MILITARY”

formed fraternity pained, frustrated and shamed, and the blame is coming understandably on the POTUS.

Seemingly, Biden cannot seem to get much right with the 'uninformed' sentiments as he was seen disrespectfully checking his watch as casket after casket appeared during the somber "dignified transfer" ceremony for the 13 fallen US troops who were killed at the Kabul airport.

Many also commented on the inappropriateness of the President repeatedly invoking his late son's name, instead of that of those who had actually fallen under his watch. Many family members of the fallen soldiers refused to meet the President, while some others who did so, did some plain-speaking to his face. The mother of one called Biden "a dementia-ridden piece of crap who doesn't even know he's in the White House". Importantly, it is not a partisan divide as many of these families have equally slammed Donald Trump's ill-timed opportunism in politicising the soldiers' deaths, with many calling it "without honour", "disgusting" and "gross".

Trump with his patent cattiness has sought to spin grieving families predatorially into dangerous territory — insincere and qualified as his support always is, only to those

who back him politically, and smearing those who don't, like the Gold Star family of Captain Humayun Khan. The political tooling of the military is increasingly irresistible in democracies across the world with unwarranted usurpation of the narrative, parading and milking of raw emotions towards electoral harvest — even mature democracies like the US are prone to it.

In an unavoidably comparative sense, most Veterans know that the Commander-in-Chief requires selfless devotion to constitutionality, restraint, depth of character and principled leadership — and, therefore, they may still back Biden over Trump, but the recent handling of Afghanistan has led to the rightful questioning of Biden beyond partisanship. In the world of professional 'uniform', winning a "just war" is important and, if not that, then going down fighting with valour and dignity is the only other option — in Afghanistan, neither of the two was achieved, and the slip is clearly showing for Biden amongst the fraternity. He must be put to question, beyond partisan preferences.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BOOK LAUNCH PROVED COSTLY

Sir — During a pandemic, a certain amount of restraint is expected of everyone. Indian cricket team coach Ravi Shastri, along with the batting coach, fielding coach and physio contracted Coronavirus in England when the team was in the midst of a Test series and on the cusp of creating history. Shastri's book — *Stargazing: The Players in My Life* — has been hitting the headlines with its extracts being published in the media. But was it so important to release a book at a function where outsiders were allowed, and most of them did not adhere to personal protection, is the moot question?

It is said that no prior permission was sought from the BCCI by Shastri. The entire Indian team, too, was present at the book release in London on August 31, two days before the fifth Test at Manchester. The hugely anticipated fifth Test was called off. Obviously, Shastri knows he is not answerable to anybody, let alone the board. After all this, the Indian team's image has taken a beating. This comes at a time when the team seemed to have hit a purple patch.

Ganapathi Bhat | Nagpur

### UNREASONABLY NEET

Sir — The Tamil Nadu Government has passed the Anti-NEET Bill, 2021, in the Assembly to ban NEET exams in the State. The decision to pass the Bill was taken in the wake of the suicide by death of a medical aspirant. With the passing of the Bill, students would get admission to UG medical degree courses based on the qualifying HSC or class 12 marks. TN has been in strong opposition to NEET since its recommendation in 2013. The TN Government's move to ban the exam raises questions about its suitability for admission to medical courses.

Strong arguments have been put forward against the need of conducting the exam. NEET is an assault on the autonomy of private, unaided institutions. It is an example of over-centralisation of education and violates the rights of

## 'Oscar Anna' bids final adieu



With the passing away of Oscar Fernandes, the nation has lost a highly respected politician, a veteran parliamentarian and a Congress stalwart who made significant contributions to Indian politics over the last few decades. Fernandes became a close confidant of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi after the demise of Rajiv Gandhi and remained a disciplined party man throughout his political life. The veteran leader was a five-term member of the Lok Sabha and four served

unaided, private and minority institutions. As most of the institutions are in cities and the fees are very high, poor students from rural areas face disadvantage. Considering all these facts, it is of great importance to arrive at a decision whether the imposition of NEET is fair. If all State Governments conduct admission to medical courses in fair and transparent ways, the imposition of NEET would be unreasonable.

Venu GS | Kollam

### INUNDATED BY HEAVY RAINS

Sir — The schools in Odisha are closed for two days amid downpour; there is record rainfall in Puri and Bhubaneswar. The Odisha Government has shut down schools in 12 districts for two days as rain continues to lash the State for the third day due to a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal. The deep depression after crossing the coast has moved west-northwest and is now lying as a depres-

sion over north coastal parts of Odisha and adjoining BoB. The system will continue to move west-northwest towards Chhattisgarh in the next 24 hours and over southern parts of Madhya Pradesh and adjoining Maharashtra in the subsequent 24 hours.

Heavy rainfall is expected during this period over these States till September 15. Slight breather is foreseen between September 16 and 19 as of now. The rainfall deficiency for Odisha will drop back to normal range from a whopping 30 per cent or even more till August. Some of the districts will possibly shift to surplus for the season. Heavy rainfall over the State will continue for 24 hours and reduce thereafter. It is indeed good news but the damage caused by rains has given the State Government sleepless nights.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

## SOUND BITE

The ED interrogated Abhishek Banerjee for nine hours. We cannot be threatened. We are not the Congress or Akhilesh Yadav or Sharad Pawar.



### West Bengal CM

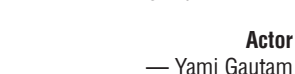
.....Mamata Banerjee

The people of Afghanistan need a lifeline. After decades of war, suffering and insecurity, they face perhaps their most perilous hour.

### UN Secretary-General

.....Antonio Guterres

My love for horror films was one of the main reasons that got me excited to play the part in *Bhoot Police*, where I get 'possessed'.



### Actor

.....Yami Gautam

India did not respect this series and they did not respect Test cricket either in flouting COVID guidelines ahead of the fourth Test.

### Former England cricketer

.....Paul Newman

By making Telangana Dalit Bandhu scheme a success, we will become the ones who laid new tracks for the development of Dalits.



### Telangana Chief Minister

.....K Chandrababhu Naidu

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



# Markets eke out slim gains; Nifty closes at new high

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity indices resumed their climb on Tuesday after a day's pause following gains in IT, bank and engineering stocks amid a muted trend overseas.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 69.33 points or 0.12 per cent higher at 58,247.09. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 24.70 points or 0.14 per cent to its fresh closing record of 17,380.

IndusInd Bank topped the Sensex gainers chart with a jump of 4.07 per cent, followed by HCL Tech, Kotak Bank, Bajaj Auto, Tech Mahindra, L&T, Titan and TCS.

In contrast, HDFC, Nestle India, UltraTech Cement, HUL, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv and Bajaj Finance were among the prominent laggards, shedding up to 1.07 per cent.

"Despite a bullish opening, domestic indices closed flat with a positive bias amid mixed sentiments among global peers. India's retail inflation soft-



ened to 5.3 per cent in August, staying within RBI's comfort zone, which was led by lower food inflation.

"However, the wholesale price inflation accelerated to 11.39 per cent, snapping the two-month easing trend owing to non-food articles. Global markets traded cautiously ahead of the US consumer price index to be released today," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial

Services.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said the markets remained in consolidation mode.

"Though the index has been holding at higher levels, it would be difficult to regain momentum without the banking pack, which is still signalling a mixed trend. Amid all, we reiterate our view to continue with a positive yet cautious approach until we

see any sign of trend reversal," he added.

Sectorally, BSE utilities, consumer discretionary goods, auto, teck and consumer durables rose as much as 1.64 per cent, while metal, FMCG, energy and basic materials finished lower.

In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap indices outperformed the benchmarks, spurting up to 1.09 per cent. Global equities were steady ahead of US inflation data, which would provide clues on the Fed's tapering timeline.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Seoul and Tokyo closed in the positive territory, while Hong Kong and Shanghai ended in the red. Equities in Europe were trading mixed in the afternoon session. Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.80 per cent to USD 74.10 per barrel.

The rupee settled flat at 73.68 against the US dollar.

## Cabinet may approve revised PLI scheme for auto sector today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet is likely to approve on Wednesday the revised production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the automobile sector, which aims at promoting domestic manufacturing and create jobs, according to sources.

The government is believed to have slashed the outlay for this PLI scheme to about Rs 26,000 crore, they said.

Last year, the government had announced the scheme for the automobile and auto components sector with an outlay of Rs 57,043 crore, earmarked for five years.

"The Cabinet may take up the proposal in the meeting tomorrow (on Wednesday)," one of the sources said.

The sources did not disclose the reason for revising the scheme to Rs 25,938 crore, but stated that the focus is now more on battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

# Professionals believe hybrid work is essential for work-life balance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Majority of Indian professionals believe that hybrid work is essential for work-life balance, as this model would allow them to strike the right balance between their personal and professional lives, according to a LinkedIn survey.

According to LinkedIn's "Future of Work" Study 2021, nearly 9 in 10 (86 per cent) respondents think that hybrid work will positively impact their work-life balance.

Moreover, professionals are prioritising their well-being so much so that half of India's workforce believes that work-life balance is just as important as their salary, the survey that covered 1,108 respondents in the age group of 16 to 68, noted.

The survey further said with a majority of professionals continuing to work remotely, 1 in 3 professionals in India is burnt out due to increased workload (35 per cent) and stress (34 per cent) while working remotely in India, the study said.



"To shelter from such distressing times, professionals are prioritising their well-being and finding ways to strike the right balance. In fact, half of India's workforce believes that work-life balance (52 per cent) is just as important as their salary (52 per cent) today," it noted.

The Future of Work perception study was conducted by research firm Censuswide, and surveyed 1,108 respondents in India, who worked in an office before the pandemic and who had to work from home at some point during the pandemic due to COVID-19 restrictions/guidelines. The respondents were surveyed

between July 27 and July 29, 2021. "Long-term remote work has left professionals fatigued in India. This has caused a shift in the idea of what is important in our lives and has led to what we call 'The Great Talent Reshuffle'. Organisations are rethinking their entire work models, culture, and values, while employees are rethinking not just how they work, but why they work.

"At this time, we encourage companies to explore stronger flexible offerings and more mental health time off, as professionals are now seeking a greater balance and more fulfillment in their lives," says Ashutosh Gupta.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Maruti Swift crosses 25 lakh cumulative sales milestone

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Tuesday said its premium hatchback Swift has crossed 25 lakh cumulative sales milestone in over 16 years of its launch in the country. The model, which was the country's leading model in terms of sales in the last fiscal, has transcended its records by clocking cumulative sales of 2.5 million units, MSI said in a statement. Swift had created the premium hatchback segment in the country with its launch in 2005. "With its launch in 2005, Swift heralded the start of the premium hatchback segment in India... million Swift lovers. The No. 1 selling car of FY20-21, the sporty Swift has created a glorious legacy with its scintillating looks and power-packed performance," MSI Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava noted. Swift is not a car, it is a feeling, an emotion and a refreshing new thought process that challenged many notions around hatchbacks, he added.



### Kia Sonet crosses 1L sales mark in less than one year

Kia India on Tuesday said its compact SUV Sonet has crossed one lakh cumulative sales mark in less than one year of its launch in the market. During the same period, the vehicle has also become the fourth highest-selling SUV in the country, the automaker said in a statement. Introduced in September 2020, Sonet has emerged as a breakthrough product in its segment, contributing almost 17 per cent to the segment and 32 per cent to Kia's overall sales, it added. "The Sonet was launched when the auto industry was facing its worst slump in history with the advent of COVID-19 pandemic. The market was battling rock-bottom customer sentiment amidst manufacturing and supply chain setbacks. "We introduced the Sonet in September last year against all odds, and it would not be an understatement to say that it has rewritten Kia's success story in India and has made a stronghold in the segment with its industry-leading features and specifications," Kia India Executive Director and Chief Sales & Business Strategy Officer said.



### Tata Motors inks pact with Tata Power for rooftop solar project

Tata Motors on Tuesday said it has inked a pact with Tata Power to install and operate a 3 MWp rooftop solar project at its passenger vehicle business unit (PVB) plant in Pune. The automaker said it has signed a solar power purchase agreement with Tata Power. The solar rooftop project is expected to generate nearly 45 lakh KWh per year, reducing carbon emissions by around 3,538 tonnes per year, it added. "After the recent inauguration of India's largest solar carport at our car plant in Pune, this project marks a new milestone on our ongoing efforts to reduce our impact on the planet," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicle Business Unit Vice President - Operations - Rajesh Khatri said in a statement. Energy efficiency is at the core of the company's efforts and reducing GHG emissions and the carbon footprint of products play a vital role, he added.



### DRDO contracts Godrej, 9 cos to manufacture O2 generators

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has contracted 10 private sector players, including city-based Godrej & Boyce (G&B), to manufacture oxygen generators. GPE, a unit of G&B, has received the order from the Defence Bio-engineering and Electromechanical Laboratory (DEBEL), a DRDO laboratory in Bengaluru, to manufacture oxygen generators, G&B said in a statement. The second wave of the pandemic exposed the severe shortfall of oxygen across the country, which forced the state agencies to source it from all the available resources across the country to save lives. Oxygen, which is generally used in industrial plants, was ferried through tankers on the road, through railway and also by air. The first batch of medical oxygen generators have been deployed in hospitals across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh, it added. "With the pandemic still rampant with newer variants emerging, the need for medical oxygen has increased exponentially," it said. The system utilises an air compressor to provide compressed air to the oxygen plant which is filtered and dried by a refrigerant air dryer and further filtered before the air is admitted to the oxygen generator through adsorption towers, it added.

## India Inc hiring outlook for Oct-Dec 'most optimistic'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's job market looks bullish with 44 per cent of companies planning to add more staff in the next three months as corporates gear up to bring workers back after the pandemic, a survey said on Tuesday.

According to the latest ManpowerGroup Employment Outlook Survey released by ManpowerGroup India, employers report a Net Employment Outlook of 44 per cent - the most optimistic outlook in seven years.

The Net Employment Outlook is derived by subtracting

the percentage of employers expecting a decrease in hiring activity from the percentage of employers anticipating an increase in hiring activity.

The survey of 3,046 employers indicates many companies

are planning to increase their headcounts before the end of the year, expecting pandemic restrictions to ease and demand for products and services to rise.

"Corporate India is showing healthy signs of recovery and an overall positive sentiment is gripping the market. Many of the deep-rooted structural factors that have sustained the Indian economy over the years like geopolitical stability, diversified economy, demography, etc, are likely to play a pivotal role in the new normal," said Sandeep Gulati, Group Managing Director of ManpowerGroup India.

Hiring intentions improved in all sectors quarter-over-quarter with services, manufacturing and finance, insurance and real estate sectors reporting some of the most optimistic outlooks.

## Supply constraints may push up phone prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Festive season this year is likely to see fewer launches by smartphone companies and prices of existing devices could rise by 7-10 per cent as players are grappling with severe shortage of components, including semiconductor chips, according to industry experts.

Trends like remote work and study-from-home during the COVID pandemic have led to an explosive growth in semiconductor demand that has placed a huge strain on global supply chains around the world. Freight costs in China have also gone up significantly, putting greater stress on device makers.

China accounts for a major chunk of the components supplied for use in electronic goods in the country.

According to Counterpoint Research Director Tarun Pathak, the



shortage situation will continue to impact the mobile phone industry for the next couple of quarters.

"The all-important festive season will be impacted in multiple ways like delayed or fewer new launches, an increase in pricing by 7-10 per cent for existing devices, and fewer offers. However, demand

is likely to stay strong this festive season. Amongst the chip shortage, the 4G chipsets are impacted and this is likely to stay till H2 2021," he added.

Pathak emphasised that demand is likely to stay strong this festive season despite these challenges.

While the 5G chipsets situation is relatively better with

the premium 5G chipsets crunch easing in the second half of this year, the mainstream (mass market) 5G chipsets will be in short supply.

Kanishka Chauhan, Principal Analyst at Gartner, explained that India has a heavy dependence on international foundries in the absence of fabrication facilities (for chip manufacturing) in the country. While orders from the smartphone industry are prioritised over other segments by fabrication facilities given the high volume, that prioritisation has also not protected the industry completely, he said.

"While on one side, the rising chip prices because of the shortage has significantly impacted the bill of materials for smartphone manufacturers, which is now trickling down to the consumers. On the other end, it is also impacting new product introduction plans," he told.

## Srei CEO Rakesh Bhutoria resigns; salary issues persists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Struggling to retain its staff, Srei Infrastructure Finance has suffered yet another blow as its CEO Rakesh Kumar Bhutoria resigned even as the company is going through the debt resolution process with the lenders, sources said on Tuesday. The pandemic induced lockdown severely dented the finances of the Kolkata-based NBFC, leading to an asset-liability mismatch.

Subsequently, the lenders of the company took control of its finances to recover their dues, triggering mass level exits at Srei Group, as salary delays became a routine, and



remunerations of the top-level executives were capped at Rs 50 lakh per annum. The salary cap was removed in April this year. "CEO Rakesh Kumar Bhutoria has resigned from Srei (SIFL).

These top-level employees are now exploring the option of taking legal recourse for release of their salary arrears, which has been held by banks controlling the TRA (Trust and Retention Account)," according to the sources privy to the development. Even as Bhutoria's last working day is yet to be decided, the sources said the company has appointed a headhunter to scout for a suitable candidate for the new CEO. "The headhunter has shortlisted a list of potential candidates, and they have even met the board of the company, as part of the interview procedure," according to the sources.

## Digital niche, super niche skills demand surge

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Demand for talent with digital niche and super niche skills has witnessed a surge since the April-June quarter following growth in the digital economy, mainly fuelled by the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) industry, according to a report.

According to data from business solutions provider Quesq, demand for talent with

digital niche and super niche skills including Full Stack, React JS, Android, Angular JS, and Cloud Infrastructure Technologies, Cyber Security, among others, has seen a surge since last quarter, as technology transformations have become a key priority for organisations.

Further, Gaming (Unity Developers), DevOps (Bamboo, Jira) and Platforms (Salesforce, SAP HANA) have also witnessed an increase in

skill demand, it added. The data for the report is derived from the algorithm built into the company's application tracking system, which maps and matches candidates to positions in the time period of October-March 2020-2021 compared with March-August 2021. While analysing the overall demand for the top 5 skills among tier I cities, the report further revealed that Bengaluru witnessed the highest demand (40 per cent),

followed by Hyderabad (18 per cent) and Pune (18 per cent).

For Full Stack Developers, nearly equal demand was witnessed across Bangalore (42 per cent) and Hyderabad (37 per cent), while demand for Angular JS Developers was evenly distributed across Hyderabad (25 per cent), Bengaluru (21 per cent), Gurugram (21 per cent), Chennai (16 per cent) and Pune (13 per cent), it added.

## India ranks 54<sup>th</sup> out of 55 nations in housing prices appreciation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India ranks 54th out of 55 countries globally in the housing prices index as rates of residential properties fell marginally by 0.5 per cent year-on-year during the quarter-ended June, according to Knight Frank.

India was at 55th position in the previous global housing price index report for the first quarter of this calendar year.

Turkey, with 29.2 per cent



appreciation of housing prices, continues to lead the

annual rankings. New Zealand is at second position

with a 25.9 per cent price rise while the US ranks third with 18.6 per cent appreciation.

The Global House Price Index report tracks the movement of mainstream residential prices across 55 countries and territories worldwide. The index tracks nominal prices in local currency.

Overall, 18 countries in Q2 2021 have reported double-digit growth, while India and Spain were the only countries

to register an annual decline in home prices.

Australia at 16.4 per cent recorded its highest rate of annual price growth since 2003.

"India's mainstream residential prices have largely remained stable with negative bias despite recovery being impacted due to the second wave. Moving forward with the downward trajectory in COVID-19 cases and mass inoculation drive, the sector is expected to

make a healthy recovery with demand for homes only expected to increase in the coming quarter," said Shishir Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director at Knight Frank India.

The report cited that the index is rising at its fastest rate since Q1 2005. The pandemic-induced housing boom continues with prices rising by 9.2 per cent on average across 55 countries and territories in the year to June 2021.

# Sudha Reddy shines at the MET Gala 2021

After a year and a half on hiatus, the Met Gala 2021 arrived on the evening of September 13, and one thing's for certain: It's just as fabulous as ever before. Centering around the theme "In America: A Lexicon of Fashion," the night honored legendary American designers and their impact throughout fashion's history. The Covid-19 pandemic paused most of the world for over a year and a night of celebration like this one is much needed to kickstart a fashion renaissance.

Top names from the global fashion and entertainment fraternity such as Kim Kardashian, Justin Bieber, Jennifer Lopez, Rihanna, Kendall Jenner, Gigi Hadid, Alicia Keys, Rita Ora, Mindy Kaling, Emily Blunt, Pharrell Williams, Serena Williams, Shawn Mendes, Camilla Cabello, Meghan Fox, Jennifer Hudson, Brooklyn Beckham sashayed down the steps of Metropolitan Museum Of Art in their finest best at fashion's greatest night.

One amongst the 400 elite invitees was the wife of India-based billionaire Megha Krishna Reddy, Sudha Reddy who made a head-turning debut at the glitzy do. The charming philanthropist and business luminary paid a tribute to the ingenuity of American style with a spectacular creation put together by ace fashion designer duo Falguni Shane Peacock that was further accentuated with diamond jewellery from the gem maestro Farah Ali Khan.

An avid connoisseur of art and fashion, Sudha Reddy is the first non-film luminary from the state of Telangana to have been invited for the global affair. She was spotted interacting with Anna Wintour, Lil Nas X, Donatella Versace, Karlie Kloss, and Gigi Hadid at the event which is dubbed as the "Party Of The Year", the "Super Bowl Of Fashion", and the "Oscars Of The East Coast". Indian celebrities such as Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone, Isha Ambani, and Natasha Poonawala have graced the previous editions of the event.

Talking about her experience Sudha Reddy shares, "The Met Gala has been one of the most aspirational landmark events in the world of style, one that is keenly admired by fashion greats. Monday evening's intimate gathering was special and memorable. It was an extremely rewarding outing for me as I was able to exchange notes with many notable personalities, some of who are extremely keen to explore socio-economic welfare campaigns in association with the Sudha Reddy Foundation in the future. I am extremely humbled and honoured to have received this opportunity to represent my country at this eclectic fashion parade."

Turns out that Sudha was the only Indian representation at the costume gala, and boy, she did truly represent India with her fashion selection.

Keeping up with this year's theme and maintaining an Indian touch to her outing, the business doyenne sported an opulent military-inspired haute couture look by Falguni Shane Peacock who have dressed major celebrities like Beyonce, Madonna, Katy Perry, and Rihanna, among others. The dress, inspired by the American Revolution, which took over 250 hours of work to be handcrafted, was a bright gold sculptured gown with a dramatic 4-meter metallic train with a medley of hues borrowed from the American flag and was accented with 3D embellishments of Swarovski crystals, sequins and bugle beads along the gown's train.

Acing her over-the-top look, she opted for a matt molten metal beauty look with a pop of cherry-pink lipstick, a futuristic set of pointy bronzed nails, and a classic high bun hairdo. Farah Khan Ali's ornate diamond ear cuffs, Chanel sequined gold stilettos, and the bedazzled Judith Leiber Ganesha clutch served as an exquisite combination to the regal look.

Falguni Shane Peacock stated, "Sudha is a very dear friend and a cherished muse who we have dressed on multiple milestone occasions in the past. It took us numerous sessions and more than 250 hours of labour to put together this remarkable statement piece. We have focussed on a lot on the detailing and we employed the services of our skilled atelier artisans in order to ensure the outfit does full justice to Sudha's eclectic fashion aptitude."

Hailed as one of India Inc's most noteworthy do-gooders, Sudha Reddy propounds the inclusive microcosm of billionaires. Moving from 'cheque philanthropy' to 'hands-on philanthropy', the Sudha Reddy Foundation has socially and economically empowered lakhs of people in Telangana. When she's not spearheading Megha Group Of Industries and TruJet Airlines, she's working towards affordable healthcare and accessible education. Widely celebrated for her charitable disposition, her philosophy is inspired by the late Princess Diana. Interestingly she was the only Indian to be nominated for The Global Gift Empowerment Of Women Award. With a commitment and vision to continually pledge out of her personal wealth, she handed over grants to two charities viz. 'Action Against Hunger and Fight Hunger Foundation' and 'Breast Cancer Research Foundation' in Paris with Elizabeth Hurley in attendance.



## Kareena's response to Kim K's Met Gala look

Kim Kardashian's appearance at Met Gala has left her fans, including Kareena Kapoor Khan, in wonder. Bebo, as she is fondly called by her near and dear ones, wondered what exactly is Kim Kardashian wearing. The actor on Tuesday took to her Instagram stories and shared Kim's photo from the event. "Kya ho raha hai?" Kareena wrote. In fact, Kareena's choice of emojis expressed that she is quite disappointed with the actor-model's Balenciaga look.

Kim was covered from head to toe in black Balenciaga, with even her face covered. The look has obviously started a meme fest. Here's a look at how some people have reacted to Kim's Met Gala appearance: Kim shared her look on Instagram with "Balenciaga Met 2021" as the caption.

## Fardeen set to make a comeback

Fardeen Khan is all set to make his comeback into films after 11 years with Sanjay Gupta's *Visfot*. Last seen together in *Heyy Babyy*, Riteish Deshmukh will join Fardeen in the thriller, which is an official remake of 2012 the Oscar-nominated Venezuelan film — *Rock, Paper, Scissors*.

The thriller will go on floors in a couple of weeks and will put the spotlight on the collision between the city's stark contrasts — the chawls of Dongri and the highrises. Fardeen and Riteish's characters will be seen on opposite sides of the fence. Confirming the news, Sanjay Gupta in a statement said that Visfot will see the two actors in a never-seen-before avatar. "I am really happy that Fardeen and Riteish are teaming up for this extremely special project. My team and I put in every bit of our blood, sweat, and tears to make each of our projects count. This film has been in the works for a while and I'm proud to say that Visfot will roll by the end of the month. We're geared up for this," the filmmaker said.

Son of yesteryear superstar Feroze Khan, Fardeen Khan made his Bollywood debut with *Prem Aggan* in 1998. The actor last appeared in the 2010 romantic-comedy

Scott Disick wrote, "Bruce Wayne" in the comment section. Some of her fans also guessed that maybe it is Kim's way to tell the world that she is getting back with Kanye West. One of the comments read, "Tell us you're back with Kanye without telling us you're back with Kanye." One of the comments also tagged Kim's outfit as "the most awful outfit of all time."

Kim is in the middle of a divorce with Kanye West. In February this year, the two filed for divorce after fielding rumours for a long time. They have four kids — North (7), Saint (5), Chicago (3), and Psalm (2).

On the work front, Kim will appear in the finale season of *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, which is expected to stream on Hulu this year.

Kareena, on the other hand, resumed work. Earlier this week, she was seen on the sets of *Laal Singh Chaddha*, an Amir Khan film, which is an official remake of Tom Hanks' *Forrest Gump*. The film is scheduled for Christmas release this year.




Dulha Mil Gaya. Taking a break from films, Fardeen had put on a lot of weight leading to a lot of criticism from all quarters. In 2018, he made public appearances looking fitter and also showed keen interest in getting back to work. Speculations about his Bollywood comeback began doing the rounds intensively when he was spotted outside casting director Mukesh Chhabra's office, in December last year.


As per reports, Sanjay Gupta has been planning to make Visfot for the last three years. The same will be helmed by director Samit Kakkad and writer-brothers Abbas Dalal and Hussain Dalal will pen the plot and dialogue. The film is expected to release next year.

## FUN

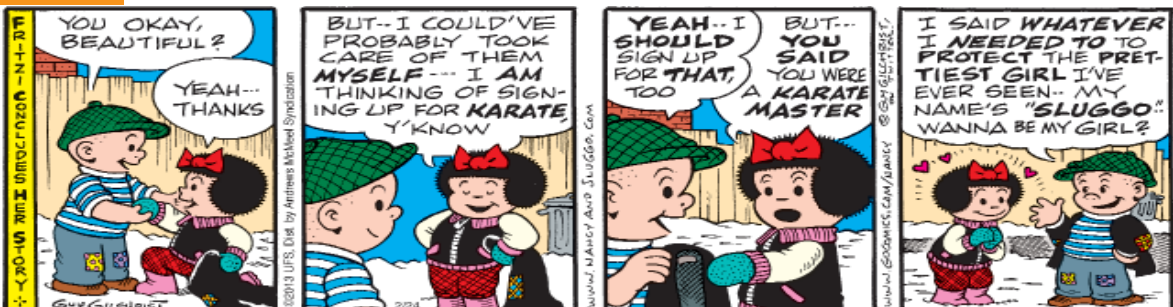
### ARCHIE




### GARFIELD




### NANCY



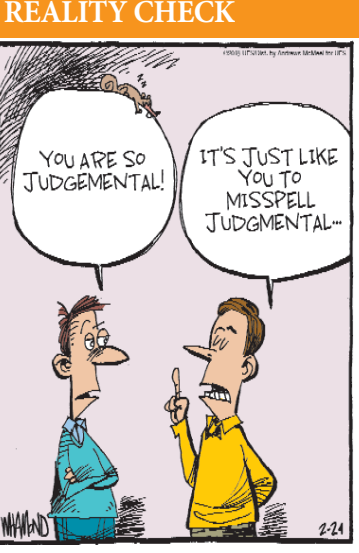
### GINGER MEGGS




### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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.

### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6			7		8
9			10		
12	13		14	15	
17			16		18
19					

**ACROSS**

- Saying again
- These brown fruit grow on a palm tree
- A clothing size
- A hard black fuel
- Beat in a battle
- A fire-breathing monster
- The number in a quartet
- Frown
- Played a part in a play
- Replying

**DOWN**

- More than is needed
- A compass direction
- Had a conversation
- A health professional
- Makes a decision
- Went in
- Go after
- Nut from an oak tree
- Frequently
- This grows on heads

**SOLUTION**

P	A	I	G	O	B
A	L	I	E	S	P
R	V	E	R	E	R
A	N	S	E	R	E
H	I	S	P	A	S
T	E	A	L	I	S
T	E	A	L	I	S
S	K	I	P	I	N



YAMINIKRISHNA  
BANDLAMUDI

Dreams are not what we see when we're asleep; they are rather what make us forgo our sleep. These lines were well lived by the 'Carrom Queen' whose name entered the prestigious Guinness Book of World Records, and was honoured with a doctorate at the very young age of 16. She also has to her credit more than 40 awards, including some prestigious National awards. In conversation with *The Pioneer*, Dr Shaik Husna Sameera, a native of Guntur district, shares about the hard work and journey behind her success.

During her early days, she was as normal as any other child her age. She was 5 when she was enrolled in school, where she played carroms at leisure. When the opportunity to participate in the Junior under-12 sports competition came her way, she jumped and tasted success for the first time. "It was then that I started playing carroms wholeheartedly. I was almost addicted to success. That was the

moment I decided to do something unique from winning regular awards. The carrom board turned into my best friend and I had no time for friends except for education and carroms. My parents stood by me and I never looked back. In 2014, I played carroms for 18 hours, 18 minutes, and 18 seconds with national players in Vizag for the first time. It was then that I started creating an identity of my own," says Sameera. She then went ahead to have a series of victories. In 2015, she played carroms for 20 hours, 20 minutes, and 20 seconds in Hyderabad with 20 national players. She then broke her own record by playing for 34 hours, 45 minutes, and 56 seconds continuously with one national player at Dandamudi

Rajagopalam stadium in Vijayawada in 2016!

Dr Sajida, a proud mom to Sameera, speaks of her daughter, "Being a minor, it was very difficult to play for that long, at a stretch. This was the biggest marathon she has ever played. That was when she had her name enter the Guinness Book of World Record. My daughter was the youngest to receive a doctorate at the age of 16 from the Berkeley University of California, USA in 2016."

Apart from international recognition, the Carrom Queen has played over 30 national games till now. In 2019, she played on behalf of the Airport Authority of India and qualified for the semifinals as well. In 2020, she played for the Senior

## RULING THE CARROM BOARD SINCE 5



Nationals and emerged a runner-up.

"I am now determined to become the World Champion in carroms. It demands extraordinary ability, for which I am striving hard. I have a special coach for the purpose and I maintain a tight schedule, as of now. I must thank my family and college management, who have always supported me in scheduling my exams and coaching classes according to my convenience. As far as education is concerned, I would like to do my Masters in EIFEL, which will fetch me extremely good communication skills, that would help me

in travelling the world in the future," Sameera tells us.

Apart from sports, Sameera is brilliant in science. She established her identity in singing, dancing, and secured a gold medal twice in calligraphy too. Though an all-rounder, she chose carrom as her career and to promote the game by adopting government schools and train children in carroms — for the same, she is looking forward to the government's support. She also urges the Sports Recruiting Managements to include carroms in the list of sports.

Here's hoping all her dreams come true!

## Sushrii learnt how to suture HER WOUND FOR HER ROLE!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The new webseries *Cartel* is still doing so well around town with all the gangsta buzz it has created. After being a part of Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Zero*, Sushrii Mishra, who is also known to be the beauty queen from Odisha, essays the role of Vaidehi Kapoor, a central character in ALT Balaji's action drama *Cartel* and speaks at length about her character and how she actually learnt to check blood pressure and perform stitches for her character. That's how cautiously she went for the role!

"I play the character of Vaidehi Kapoor in the show. She is a junior doctor by profession in the series. She is a powerful, intelligent woman who has a lot going on at her end. However, no one ever knows about her struggles due to the balanced, calm and kind person that she is. Vaidehi and Arjun (played by Tanuj Virwani, another brilliant actor himself), were each other's first love, and the love has only grown over time. Suddenly they part ways, they now meet after years and as the story progresses, my character's arc grows very interestingly from being an absolute outsider who hails from the medical fraternity to be a very integral part of the 'Angre' family developing a unique equation with each character," shares the model turned actress who also represented our country at Miss India Continents 2015!

There were a lot of exciting bits for

Sushrii to join this bandwagon of *Cartel* alongside some really reflective faces from the industry. She loves to keep things accurate. Since she plays a junior doctor, while prepping for the character, she revealed that she met doctors and nurses. She spoke to them to get a more vivid understand-

message coma patients, do stitches, etc!

Being on the set with established actors like Supriya Pathak, Tanuj Virwani, Jitendra Joshi, Rithvik, Girija, and others was such a phenomenal experience for Sushrii. "The character, the story and the star cast -

I was sold! The strength and intelligence which Vaidehi Kapoor has, resonated so much with me that I was just ready to dive deep into the world of *Cartel*. Despite the web-show being in the making for a really long time, it still wasn't exhaustive for me. But, all good things in life take time and when a team of hardworking and talented people come together, you know that no matter how long it takes; the end product will hit milestones," adds the 'Miss Diva' title holder.

With a mixed bag of emotions, the actress dove right into the shooting mode. There were many such memories that she holds onto. For instance, she narrated that she loved the outdoor schedule; there were days when all of them would sit for lunch together. But the fondest ones have to be the times she spent speaking to Supriya Pathak and watching her perform.

Sushrii says she is a luminous actor, even the memory of it fills her heart with warmth and gives her goosebumps, she says!

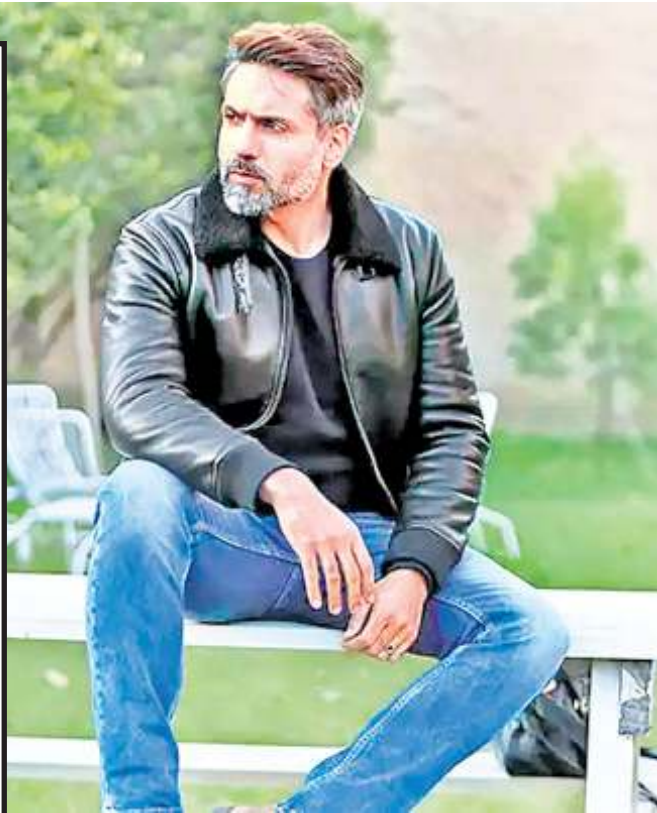
"I have worked hard and given my best. The entire team has invested so much love, energy and time in creating this brilliant piece of work. The show has been receiving rave reviews since its launch and I am so happy to know that it has been received well by the audience and the critics. If you haven't watched the show as yet, please do watch the show and you will be hooked I promise," she signs off!



## All work and no play for Iqbal Khan

Actor Iqbal Khan, who is busy juggling between his Punjabi film and Hindi film schedules, has a jet-setting schedule and has finished shooting for two web series shot in Mussoorie and Rajasthan, both of which are in post-production and will release by this year-end. He is shooting for *Jalsa* helmed by Suresh Triveni starring Vidya Balan, Shefali Shah, and Rohini Hattangadi. The actor who is currently shooting for his first-ever Punjabi film, titled *Rabb Di Mehar*, is quite upbeat about making a debut in Bollywood. "Shooting for *Rabb Di Mehar* has been an incredible experience and I've gotten to meet and work with so many happy, positive and amazing people. Yes, I am missing both Sneha and Ammara, but like they say; the show must go on," says Iqbal. He is so busy that he missed twin birthdays this month of wife Sneha Chhabra and daughter Ammara.

Talking about the same, Iqbal Khan shares, "I am grateful to be shooting this whole pandemic. However, this is the first time in all these years that I was not with my wife and daughter on their birthdays. We are currently shooting on the outskirts of Jalandhar and even mobile connectivity is an issue here. However I could manage to connect with the family over a video call and will make up for all the moments I missed upon returning home. I haven't planned yet what to do due to a hectic schedule, but will do it on the flight back home." — PNS



## Wildflower symbolism on breezy, easywear



In an effort to braid together craft, culture, and textiles, 'Baise Gaba' introduces 'Hireath' — some easy-flowing and fluid garments that imbibe a sense of effortless elegance through unique design detailing. With this latest collection, the curator aims to bring forth pieces of clothing that people relate with, that evoke the feeling of nostalgia and connect people from across the globe!

Taking inspiration from wildflowers that symbolise the joy of being reminded, the collection is a beautiful mix of royal hues and a pastel colour palette of yellow, peach, orange, and powder blue. The colour palette and motifs are inspired by Mughal and Persian paintings, influences that are commonly found in the palaces

of Rajasthan. Championing the craft and techniques of the region they are already known in, this collection also finds a versatile expression of this, for the coming festive season.

The silhouettes range from flowing anarkalis to A-line kurtas, lehengas to shararas, extravagant dresses, and sarees that are apt for women across the globe. Curating cultures that stand at the forefront of their ethos, this time they have focused on the minutest details through the nuances of silhouettes, fabrics, detailing, and so on. The endeavor is to create seasonally agnostic garments that are en vogue and are timeless additions to your wardrobe! It also has the richness of chanderi cotton and modal silk; one of the most ornate fabrics and extremely lightweight and

soft. The lustrous and sheer fabrics of chiffon and organza collectively enhance the intricate details of every piece.

Enhancing the intricate detailing that brings forth a

sense of regal finery, this amalgamation gives the collection a fresh, contemporary, and global spin. Let 'hireath' take you on a nostalgic journey to where your heart belongs!

# Malinga retires from all forms of cricket

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka pace veteran Lasith Malinga on Tuesday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket after terrorising the world's best batsmen for over a decade and a half with his toe-crushing yorkers delivered from a low and distinct sling-arm action.

A white ball legend in his own right and one of the greatest T20 bowlers, the 38-year-old was captain of Sri Lanka's 2014 T20 World Cup winning team. He posted a message on his social media account announcing his decision.

"Hanging up my T20 shoes and retiring from all forms of cricket! Thankful to all those who supported me in my journey, and looking forward to sharing my experience with young cricketers in the years to come," Malinga tweeted.

"I want to give 100 per cent rest to my T20 bowling shoes. While my shoes will rest, my love for the game will never ask for rest," a smiling Malinga added in the video.

Malinga last played a T20I match for Sri Lanka in March 2020 against West Indies in Pallekele.

Malinga, who took a total of 546 wickets across all formats for Sri Lanka, had already retired from Test cricket in 2011 and after that from ODIs as well but continued to

play T20Is for the national side.

He wasn't named in Sri Lanka's squad for upcoming World Cup.

Last year, he had expressed his desire to lead Sri Lanka in the T20 World Cup, which was originally scheduled to be held in Australia in October-November 2020 but will be held next month after a COVID-forced postponement.

"I am looking forward to help youngsters and guide them in the coming years," he said as he thanked his national team and all the franchises that he has played for, including IPL team Mumbai Indians.

Malinga, who has played a staggering 122 IPL matches, has 170 wickets to his credit, the highest in the cash-rich league, with the best bowling figures of 5/13.

He picked up 107 wickets in 84 T20 Internationals, 338 scalps in 226 ODIs and 101 wickets in 30 Tests.

He was the first bowler to bag 100 T20I wickets and finishes fourth in the highest wicket-taker category in the list behind Dwayne Bravo, Imran Tahir and Sunil Narine.

The Sri Lanka pacer had also announced his retirement from franchise cricket in January this year after being released by Mumbai Indians.

Malinga, one of the best T20

bowlers of all time, was a key figure in the teams he played for in the Indian Premier League, the Big Bash League, the Caribbean Premier League and other franchise tournaments.

During his 12-year stint at Mumbai Indians, he was part of MI's four of the five IPL title triumphs but had opted out of the 2020 tournament due to personal reasons at a time when his father was not keeping well.

"The experience that I have gained through the past 17 years will no longer be needed in the field since I have decided to retire from T20I cricket marking my retirement from all formats of cricket," said Malinga in a video on his YouTube channel.

He added, "But I will be continuously supporting the younger generations who strive to uplift the spirit of the game and I will always be there with all who love the game."

A fearsome pacer known for his menacing yorkers, the leading wicket-taker in T20I also has two T20I hat-tricks to his name.

Malinga also picked up three hat-tricks in ODI cricket, with his performance against South Africa in the 2007 World Cup in West Indies etched in history.

"Today is a very special day for

me," he said.

"I want to thank each and everyone who supported me throughout my T20 journey. I want to thank the Sri Lankan cricket board and team members.

And Mumbai Indians cricket team, especially the team owners and officials.

"I would also like to thank the team members and staff at Melbourne Stars, Kent, Rangpur Riders, Kayana Warriors, Maratha Arabians and Montero Tigers. When I played with you all, I got many experiences through my cricketing journey."



## Ulsan - Kawasaki rivalry headlines Asian Champions League

AP ■ SEOUL

Japan and South Korea may have wobbled in World Cup qualification earlier this month but their clubs are dominant in Asian competition. Between them, the two countries have won 10 of the last 15 Asian Champions League titles and also provide seven teams in the Round of 16 of the 2021 tournament.

The eastern zone of the competition starts the knockout stage Tuesday with a clash between two of the title favorites: defending champion Ulsan Horang-i and Japanese champion Kawasaki Frontale.

"I came to Ulsan because I want to win titles," Ulsan midfielder Valeri Qazaishvili told the Asian Football Confederation's website.

"I've heard a lot about Kawasaki and I know they're a very good team who play good football," Qazaishvili said.

"It's a huge advantage for us to have this match at home in Korea with our fans behind us; to play at home is always special."

Both teams are top of their domestic leagues. When the Asian Champions League group stage finished in May, Kawasaki was way out in front at the top of the J League but one win from the last five games has left the club just one point clear and



out of the Levain Cup.

"We really wanted to win in the cup game and progress to the next stage so it is a painful feeling," coach Toru Oniki said.

"We have no time to think about that as we have to look forward to a tough game in Asia against the champion Ulsan and that gives us a chance to put the cup exit behind us."

The other two meetings between clubs from Japan and South Korea feature Nagoya Grampus hosting Daegu FC and Pohang Steelers, three-time Asian champion, traveling to Cerezo Osaka. Korea's Jeonbuk will host BG Pathum United of Thailand.

In the western zone, Tractor of Iran asked the Asian Football Confederation for its game with Al-Nassr of Riyadh to be postponed.

The team is struggling to put together the required 18-man roster as it has been hit by injuries and an outbreak of COVID-19.

## Covid situation had us petrified: McCullum



PTI ■ DUBAI

Kolkata Knight Riders head coach Brendon McCullum says they were "paralysed a little bit by fear" when coronavirus struck the first half of the IPL in India.

It was KKR spinner Varun Chakravarthy and seamer Sandeep Warrier, who first tested positive for COVID-19 in May in the middle of the League, which was eventually postponed. The Purple and Gold brigade led by England white-ball skipper Eoin Morgan had an underwhelming first half. They are languishing at the seventh spot but McCullum is hopeful for a strong showing when action resumes from September 19 in the UAE.

"In regards to the tournament which is upcoming (second half of the IPL phase), we can end it right. We can take the game on and we're in a situation where we need things to go our way," McCullum was quoted as saying by the KKR website.

## E-bidding for new IPL teams planned on October 17

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BCCI is planning to have an e-bidding for the two new IPL teams on October 17 and the bids to buy the sides can be made till October 5. "The Board is planning to have the bidding on 17th October and it will be an e-bidding," sources in the know of things told PTI on Tuesday. The BCCI had on August 31 invited bids to own an IPL franchise with "Invitation to Tender" available for purchase till October 5.

"The Governing Council of the IPL invites bids to acquire the right to own and operate 1

(one) of the 2 (two) new teams proposed to be introduced to take part in the Indian Premier League from the IPL 2022 season, through a tender process," the BCCI had said in a 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 cricket body had said.

"We need to hit the ground running, challenge one another privately, support one another publicly and try and get the best out of one another in the next 4-5 weeks. Who knows where we can go with this.

"There were sometimes throughout the season when I just felt we were being paralysed a little bit by fear," he added.

The virus had wreaked havoc in India at that time, claiming thousands of lives.

The 39-year-old former New Zealand skipper, who started his IPL journey as a player with KKR, is hopeful the team will be able to get rid of the angst that had been built in the first phase of the league.

"I wasn't able to free the guys up enough to understand

that and that's sort of a challenge for me. But it is also a good challenge for the guys as well that they need to push the envelope of their own thinking as well.

"Hopefully we will be able to strip away a bit of the angst which had built up in the first part of the season, just go out there and try and enjoy ourselves.

"That's the ambition that I have got for the franchise and hence why I am unapologetic and unrelenting in my belief that we need to play a braver style of play," he said. Talking about his coaching style, McCullum said, "When we left India (after IPL was called off due to Covid), I think everyone understood me as a coach on how I want our team to play."

## Indian women's team has improved since T20 WC defeat: Mandhana

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Indian women's cricket team opener Smriti Mandhana says her side has improved "massively" since the World T20 final defeat to Australia last year and will be "extra competitive" during the upcoming series here which also features its first day-night Test outing.

India and Australia are set to lock horns in a multi-format series comprising three ODIs, the day-night Test and three T20s, starting on September 21. The Test will be played from September 30 to October 3 in Canberra.

The last time the two sides met was at the women's T20 World Cup final at the MCG last year where the hosts had hammered India by 85

runs to lift the trophy.

"The team has grown massively (since the T20 World Cup)," Mandhana told 'The Scoop' podcast.

The Indian squad finished its 14-day hard hotel quarantine on Monday.

"COVID was a big break after the T20 World Cup and a lot of girls had a chance to go back and understand more about their games, where they lack as an individual and come back stronger."

The stylish southpaw said that after the COVID-19 enforced break, the Indian team is slowly getting back into the rhythm of playing cricket.

"The whole team has worked on their fitness and skills... We are



## Lee takes joint first position with Mithali

PTI ■ DUBAI

India skipper Mithali Raj was on Tuesday joined at the top by South Africa opener Lizelle Lee, whose unbeaten 91 in the opening match against the West Indies helped her take joint-first position in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings.

While Mithali, who retains her number one spot, is now tied in first place with Lee at 762 rating points, with Australia's Alyssa Healy in third place, India opener Smriti Mandhana also held on to her ninth spot.

Lee, who first seized the top position in June 2018 and again reached the summit in



March this year, scored 18 runs in the second match, which also counted towards this week's rankings update.

Veteran Indian pacer Jhulan Goswami and senior spinner Poonam Yadav remained static on fifth and ninth respectively among bowlers, while Deepti Sharma maintained her fifth spot in the all-rounders' list.

mindset. Hopefully the series goes well for the whole team. India have reached Australia after a multi-format series against England in June and July, while

Indian teen star Shafali Verma held on to her top rank in the T20 rankings with 759 points, ahead of Australian Beth Mooney (744) and India T20 vice-captain Mandhana (716).

There was no movement for Sharma (sixth) and Yadav (eighth) in the T20 bowling rankings with the former also retaining her fourth spot in the all-rounders' list.

In T20 rankings for bowlers, England's Sarah Glenn has moved up a slot to second position while New Zealand off-spinner Leigh Kasperek (up seven places to 15th) and all-rounder Jess Kerr (up eight places to 58th) have also moved up the table.

a few players like white-ball skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, teen batting sensation Shafali Verma and Mandhana also featured in The Hundred tournament.

## Pele recovering, set to leave intensive care: Daughter

IAN S ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

The eldest daughter of Brazilian football legend Pele has said that her father is expected to move out of intensive care this week as he recovers from surgery to remove a tumour from his colon. The 80-year-old underwent the procedure at Sao Paulo's Albert Einstein hospital on September 4 after the tumour was found during routine tests. "He is doing well post-surgery, he is not in pain and is in a good mood (annoyed that he can only

eat jello but will persevere!). He will move into a regular room in the next day or two and then go home," Kely said in a post on Tuesday morning (IST). Kely said the three-time World Cup winner has been buoyed by the support of fans from around the world and praised the work of doctors. "He is strong and stubborn and with the support and care of the brilliant team at Einstein and all of the love, energy and light that the world is sending, he will get through this," she added.

## Split captaincy is a good idea, Rohit can lead well: Madan Lal

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian cricketer Madan Lal on Tuesday came out in support of split captaincy theory in India, saying it will "ease the pressure on Virat Kohli." "I guess this could be a nice option. We are in a very good position right now. We are lucky that we have Rohit Sharma in the team and whenever Virat Kohli feels that he wants to concentrate on one or two formats then Rohit can

step in, and he has a lot of experience," Madan told IANS. "So, in a way, I feel it will benefit India. I read that Virat is likely to step down from captaincy (of ODI and T20) as he wants to concentrate on his batting, which is a good idea I guess. India as a team is doing a great job, we have seen that in England (Test series) recently. So, let's see what happens."

There are reports that Team India limited-over side could see a change of leader-

ship after the T20 World Cup next month with Kohli set to take a big call soon. If Kohli decides to give up on the captaincy, then opener Rohit will take over the reins in ODI and T20 cricket.

It was also reported that Virat is planning to take this decision since he wants to concentrate on his batting form which has dipped considerably over the last year. And meetings were also held within the BCCI in this regard.

## Olympic bronze medal is just the beginning: Shamsher

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Forward Shamsher Singh on Monday said winning the Olympic bronze medal was just ticking off one box in the new beginning for the Indian men's hockey team, which aspires to be the world number one side.

The men's hockey team produced an inspiring performance at the Tokyo Games, where it edged out Germany 5-4 to claim a bronze medal, the country's first in the sport in 41 years.

"We still have a lot of targets to achieve as a team. We have ticked off the target of winning an Olympic medal but we have been striving to be the best side in the world in the last few years," Shamsher was quoted as saying in a Hockey india release.

"We are going to

give everything we have in every match we play in the future, especially in big tournaments such as the FIH Hockey Pro League. We are confident that if we keep improving match by match, then one day we will surely be the world number 1 team," he added.

Shamsher said the Tokyo Olympics will always hold a special place "in my heart".

"I am so lucky to be part of an Olympic bronze medal-winning team at such an early stage of my career. I also know that this is just the beginning for us as a team.

"We have the belief that we can do even better in the future and we are going to work towards our goals in the upcoming years."

Asked what is that one thing that helped the Indian

## Yuriy Sedykh, hammer throw world record holder, dies at 66



AP ■ MOSCOW

Yuriy Sedykh, a two-time Olympic champion in the hammer throw whose world record from 1986 still stands, has died. He was 66.

The Russian track and field federation said Sedykh died early Tuesday following a heart attack. "Deeply mourn the loss of Yuriy Sedykh," World Athletics

senior vice president and pole vault great Sergei Bubka wrote on Twitter. "For me, Yuriy was a friend, a wise mentor." Sedykh won gold at the 1976 and 1980 Olympics, but missed the 1984 Los Angeles Games because of a Soviet boycott. He returned to win a silver medal at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and won a world title in 1991.

Sedykh threw a world record 86.74

meters at the European Championships in Stuttgart, Germany, a mark which still stands. At this year's Tokyo Olympics, all 12 finalists in the men's hammer were born after Sedykh set the record.

Sedykh made his huge throw at a time when track and field was starting to realize the scale of performance-enhancing drug use.

Former Moscow anti-doping laboratory director Grigory Rodchenkov wrote in a book last year that Sedykh was "a huge steroid abuser" who benefited from a Soviet cover-up. Rodchenkov said one of Sedykh's samples contained such large traces of the steroid stanozolol that it contaminated laboratory equipment.

Sedykh denied doping. In a 2015 interview with Russian newspaper Sport Express, Sedykh said athletes' big throws in the 1980s were because of better coaching and the Soviet Union's intensive talent scouting program.

After retiring, Sedykh worked in France as a physical education teacher. He was married to another Soviet world record holder, shot putter Natalya Lisovskaya. Their daughter Alexia won hammer gold for France at the 2010 Youth Olympics.

## South Africa interested in hosting FIFA's Club World Cup



AP ■ CAPE TOWN

South Africa is interested in hosting FIFA's Club World Cup in December after Japan withdrew because of COVID-19, South African Football Association president Danny Jordaan.

Jordaan told The Associated Press he would meet with FIFA secretary general Fatma Samoura in Lagos, Nigeria this week to get more details on what kind of bid South Africa must present to the world body to host the seven-team men's tournament. The Club World Cup will feature European champion

Chelsea and the other five continental club competition winners. The league champion from the host country also gets a place.

Japan withdrew last week amid fears the tournament would cause a rise in infections in a country that has just staged the Summer Olympics and Paralympics.

FIFA has yet to comment on the alternative host, with Saudi Arabia also keen to step in. An extended 24-team Club World Cup was due to debut this year in China but it was shelved because the pandemic required the rescheduling of national team competitions in June and FIFA was unable to raise the necessary funding for the planned quadrennial event. So the seven-team format was extended for another year.

The South African Football Association must get government approval to hold the tournament and meetings with the sports minister were also planned, Jordaan said.

# DIGANGANA WANTS TO PLAY MADHUBALA

AMITHA GHATTI

**D**igangana Suryavanshi, who was recently seen in Gopichand and Tammanaah-starrer *Seetimarr* is basking in the success of the film. The actor-singer, who made her Tollywood debut with *Hippy*, is presently shooting for a film with Sundeep Kishan and is delighted that she has her hands full for the coming months. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, the actress, a former *Bigg Boss* contestant, shares that the script of *Seetimarr* underwent many changes after the cast came on board.

When asked what attracted her to say yes to *Seetimarr*, the actress says, "It is a typical commercial role and is very native, which was very attractive. Whatever you shoot and see in the final cut are completely different but for me, it was the role and intensity of my character and the screen time I share has what got me to join the film."

For Digangana, the entire process of *Seetimarr* has been a journey of its own as they started filming for the film before the onset of Covid.

She says, "Although we faced a rough journey with Covid, the theatrical release of the film is something I loved. It was nice to see people go out and watch our film in the theatres."

Adding further, she says, "This film is a memorable one for me because of the amount of time taken in terms of not just me being a part of the film but making the whole film. It started off in a situation where we didn't expect Covid. Anything becoming successful after rising through the rough road is always nice and very precious. I am glad that people have the time to come to theatres and watch the film."

*Seetimarr* is an out-and-out commercial film and is a wave of fresh air for the actress. Taking through her character in the film, she explains, "I play Aakrithi in the film. She is a village sarpanch's daughter (Rao Ramesh's daughter). I play a bubbly quirky role. I found the character to be very stunning as she is somebody who is both smart and innocent and that's a good one to play."

Digangana tells us she likes playing badminton and inline skating. She even tried her hands (or legs, rather) on football and basketball in school, but she was not that great at those. Sharing her experience on working with Rao Ramesh, the actress says, "My first time being on sets with Rao Ramesh sir was while shooting for my introduction scene. That whole day was something that I distinctly remember."

Digangana is extremely fond of biopics and she can't wait to watch *Thalaivi*. When asked whom

would she portray if given a chance to work in a biopic, she was quick enough to name Madhubala. "I think she has an

interesting life journey. Mughal-e-Azam has been one of the very iconic films ever made. If I get a chance, I would love to work on a biopic about her," says she.

On a concluding note, the actress, who is shooting with Sundeep Kishan for her next, says, "All the roles I am going to play now are completely different from each other. It's quite interesting that I have got to play different roles and characters, and that is very exciting."



## Ganesh Bellamkonda plays Swathi Muthyam

**T**hat Ganesh Bellamkonda, the son of producer Bellamkonda Suresh is making his Tollywood debut, is known news. Celebrating the actor's birthday on Tuesday, the makers of the film unveiled the title and first look poster of the movie. Titled *Swathi Muthyam*, in the first look poster, Ganesh is seen in a formal look with a bag on his shoulders.

Sithara Entertainments, who are on a roll with multiple movies in production, are bankrolling this project being directed by debutant Lakshman K Krishna. Varsha Bollamma of *Middle Class Melodies* fame will be playing the female lead in the movie.

Speaking on the occasion, director Lakshman K Kumar said, "This story is about a guy

who has an innocent character like in *Swathi Muthyam*. The film is about life, love and thoughts about marriage and how the opinions change and how life goes on between them. Family relations and emotions are the main assets of this film. This movie will entertain every movie-goer for sure." Presently, the film is under production with a major portion of the shoot already finished. More details will be announced soon.

Naresh, Rao Ramesh, Subbaraju, Vennela Kishore, Harshavardhan, Pammi Sai, Goparaju Ramana, Siva Narayana, Pragathi, and Surekha Vani, will be seen essaying prominent roles in the film, which is touted to be a fun entertainer.

The film has music Mahathi Swara Sagar and cinematography by Suryaa.



## Team Liger heads to Goa

**V**ijay Devarakonda and Puri Jagannadh combo is something fans across the nation cannot wait for. The shooting of their film *Liger*, a pan-India film, is underway. We hear that the team is heading to Goa to shoot a few high-octane scenes.

Vijay Devarakonda is making his Bollywood debut with this film that stars



Bollywood belle Ananya Pandey as the female lead.

Reports are that the makers erected extravagant sets for the scenes. *Liger*, a highly commercial entertainer, has a sports backdrop and revolves around mixed martial arts tournaments.

Actress Ramya Krishna also has a weighty role in the film that is being produced by Puri Jagannadh, Charmee, Karan Johar, and Apoorva Mehta.

**H**elping a family near Srirangapatna, Mysore, Prakash Raj gifted a JCB to the family in need, through his foundation Prakash Raj Foundation. "Empowering a family with a JCB near srirangapatna.. Mysore. a #prakashrajfoundation initiative.. The joy of giving back to life.. bliss (sic)," tweeted the actor.



## Aranya is very close to my heart: Rana

**A**ctor Rana Daggubati says his film *Aranya* is very close to his heart because he has always supported the cause to conserve wildlife and added that the movie gave him a chance to rekindle his love for nature.

"Prabu Solomon (director) insisted we shoot the film at real locations with the best possible natural setting. The movie is very close to my heart because I have always supported the cause to save our wildlife," Rana says. The actor took a brief 15-day training with Kumki elephant trainers to be able to get into his character Bandev's shoes.

"The film gave me a chance to connect with the mighty elephants, adapt to their surroundings, and see why they are called the protectors of the wild. I still remember we had some shots where all the elephants walked together, and we could feel the ground shake," he recalls.

Rana adds, "That was the moment I actually felt their mighty presence. *Aranya* gave me a chance to rekindle my love for nature."

The film will premiere on Zee Cinema on September 18.

