

ANALYSIS 7

CONG, SAVARKAR AND  
THE KARAT SYNDROME

MONEY 8

5G SERVICES STARTED IN 50 TOWNS ACROSS  
14 STATES/UTS AS ON NOV 26: MOS DEVUSINH

SPORTS 11

INDIA STARE AT  
CLEAN SWEEP

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



FIRST LOOK OF RAVI  
TEJA FROM WALTAIR  
VEERAYYA ON  
DECEMBER 12

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CAN'T ACT ON JUDICIAL OFFICER'S  
SEXUALLY EXPLICIT VIDEO: WHATSAPP

Messaging platform WhatsApp on Friday told the Delhi High Court it cannot take action in relation to the circulation of a "sexually explicit" video of a judicial officer with a woman unless specific mobile numbers are provided and an appropriate order is passed. WhatsApp's made the statement before Justice Yashwant Varma who was hearing a lawsuit by one of the aggrieved parties whose identity was earlier allowed to remain concealed by the court. The lawsuit sought a permanent injunction restraining publication and telecast of the "purported video dated 09 March 2022" which surfaced on November 29.

OLDEST DNA REVEALS LIFE IN  
GREENLAND 2 MILLION YEARS AGO

Scientists discovered the oldest known DNA and used it to reveal what life was like 2 million years ago in the northern tip of Greenland. Today, it's a barren Arctic desert, but back then it was a lush landscape of trees and vegetation with an array of animals, even the now extinct mastodon. "The study opens the door into a past that has basically been lost," said lead author Kurt Kj r, a geologist and glacier expert at the University of Copenhagen. With animal fossils hard to come by, the researchers extracted environmental DNA, also known as eDNA, from soil samples.

61 INDIAN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS  
MAKING IMPACTFUL CONTRIBUTIONS

An impactful group of 61 young social entrepreneurs either from India or persons of Indian origin have founded 49 companies making impactful contributions to society, according to a list created by US-based Indiaspora. Launched this week through virtual sessions, one of its kind lists includes Indo-Canadians Alwar Pillai and Abid Virani from Fable Tech Labs, Pooja Viswanathan from Braze Mobility, Indian-American Vivek Kopparthi from Neolight, Indo-Singaporean Mayur Singh of Green Collective SG and Indian founders Anto Philip of Under 25 and Anshul Tewari of Youth Ki Awaaz.

6 ANTIQUITIES STOLEN TILL DATE FROM  
ASI STRUCTURES IN ODISHA: GOVT

Six antiquities have been reportedly stolen till date from the ASI-controlled structures in Odisha, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. Union Minister for Culture G Kishan Reddy said this in a written response to a question on the number of antiquities that have been untraceable or stolen or missing from structures in Odisha that are under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). It was also asked as to what steps have been taken by the Ministry of Culture to recover those antiquities, and whether there is non-adherence to the verification of the antiquities every year in Odisha by the ASI.

MANOHAR'S TAUNT TO SAJJALA

# Name 'reunited' AP capital

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Political Affairs Committee chairman Nadendla Manohar, ridiculing Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy's comments on 'reunification' of the State, has asked him to name the capital city if the State is reunited as he hoped.

“The YSRCP leaders are determined to make Visakhapatnam the capital city, and at the same time, they say they welcome the State reunification. If the State is reunited, which will be the capital city? The YSRCP leader should first answer this.”

Addressing a press conference in Vizianagaram on Friday, Manohar said that the YSRCP leaders were making absurd comments to divert the attention of people from issues. Nadendla Manohar dared Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy to name the



capital city if the State is reunited, as he anticipated.

Instead of making such unscrupulous statements it is better for the YSRCP leaders to focus on resolving issues of people, he stated.

“The YSRCP leaders are determined to make Visakhapatnam the capital city, and at the same time, they say they welcome the State reunification. If the State is reunited, which will be the capital city?”

The YSRCP leader should first answer this,” he stated.

The YSRCP leaders are making such unworthy statements only to divert the attention of people from the issues. The State's financial position is in such a pathetic state that salaries could not be disbursed to the employees, he regretted, alleging that to divert the attention of people from such issues, the YSRCP leaders were raising such state reunification.

CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

## 10 NDRF, SDRF teams deployed in Andhra

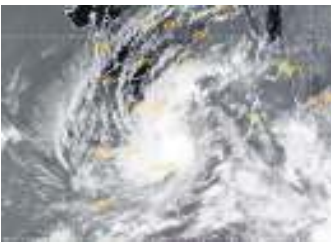
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ten teams of NDRF and Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Response Force have been deployed in south coastal districts of the State following a heavy rainfall alert by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a top official said on Friday.

According to the IMD, heavy rainfall is predicted over several parts of the State as cyclone 'Mandous' over the Bay of Bengal is expected to cross the coast between the Union Territory of Puducherry, and Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, tonight

“As of now, there are no heavy rains. Collectors of the six districts which are expected to receive heavy rainfall due to the cyclone have been alerted and control rooms also been opened,” B.R Ambedkar, director of the State Disaster Management, said.

“Five NDRF and another five SDRF teams have been kept ready.



We are also ready to evacuate people in case of emergency,” he further said. Cyclone alert messages have been sent through common alert protocol (CAP) to as many as 89 lakh subscribers spread across the six districts which are likely to be affected due to heavy rains during December 8-10, according to official information.

The Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday held a meeting here on Mandous with the officials concerned.

## Sharmila begins fast demanding nod for her padayatra

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

YSRTP president YS Sharmila launched a fast-unto-death at her party office in her Lotus Pond residence on Friday making it clear that she will continue her hunger strike till the police gives permission for her padayatra. Coming to know of the move, the police deployed a huge force near the YSRTP office.

Sharmila expressed anger at the fact that despite the High Court's permission for her padayatra, the police are not giving permission. She said the hunger strike will continue until the padayatra is allowed.

The deadline of 48 hours, requested by the Warangal CP to examine Sharmila's application for permission for her padayatra has been completed, but no statement came from the police.

Making it clear that she is not an arrow of anyone Sharmila said that she has no understanding with any political party in the state.

**Guv honours, 'Veer Naris', battle-disabled soldiers**  
P2

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Dwitithya: Dec 09 11:34 AM to Dec 10 01:48 PM  
Trithiya: Dec 10 01:48 PM to Dec 11 08:15 PM  
Nakshatram: Ardra: Dec 09 02:59 PM to Dec 10 05:42 PM  
Punarvasu: Dec 10 05:42 PM to Dec 11 08:36 PM  
Rahukalam: 9:23 AM to 10:46 AM  
Yamagandam: 1:31 PM to 2:53 PM  
Varjyam: 07:09 AM to 08:57 AM  
Gulika: 6:39 AM to 8:01 AM  
Amritakalam: None

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

Forecast: Thunderstorm  
Temp: 26°  
Humidity: 87%  
Sunrise: 6:25 am  
Sunset: 5:35 PM  
Updated: DECEMBER 9, 2022 5:00 PM

## Vizag to host 3 conferences

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the G-20 summit, three conferences will be held in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. This was disclosed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference with with Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors of states on Friday.

Preparations for the G-20 summit to be held in India were discussed in the videoconference which was attended by CM Jagan and Governor Biswabusan Harichandan participated.

Prime Minister in his remarks

**Preparations for the G-20 summit to be held in India were discussed in the videoconference which was attended by CM Jagan and Governor Biswabusan Harichandan participated.**

stated that India's G20 Presidency belongs to the entire nation, and is a unique opportunity to showcase the country's strengths.

## 35 chit fund firms found violating rules: IG

Forensic experts to conduct checks in Margadarsi headquarters

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Registration & Stamps Commissioner and Inspector General V Ramakrishna has said that during the inspections conducted in the state, irregularities were found in 35 chit fund companies and legal action will be taken against them. He said that according to the Chit Funds Act, every company has to provide six types of information assets, liabilities, expenses, receipts, investments, and reserve funds every year.

He revealed the details to the media after a workshop organized for the Deputy and Assistant Registrar officers here on Friday at the office of the Registration and Stamp Commissioner and Inspector General in Edupugalla, a suburb of Vijayawada.

IG Ramakrishna said that there are 587 branches of about 423 chit fund companies in the state, through which 6,868 chit groups are working with an annual turnover of Rs.638.99 crores. He said that there are about 2.48 lakh chit account holders. He said that a workshop has been organized to create awareness about chit-fund companies among the public and also to guide

the officials on chit funds law. He explained that classes were conducted on how to detect violations, issue show cause notices, how to audit seized assets, checklists etc. He said that expert auditors and forensic auditors have been appointed as advisors. He further said that the Officials from DRI also came and created awareness.

The IG said that he has seen the Margadarsi Chit Fund advertisement regarding checks in the Margadarsi and if the advertisements are given without giving information, they cannot be taken into account.

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MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM  
■ GUNTUR

The villages located in the island villages in River Krishna in Repalle constituency have turned into illegal poker dens and a ruling party leader and his younger brother are allegedly involved in the gambling racket.

Several island villages in River Krishna have come in handy for gamblers and took advantage of their isolated location. The island villages can be reached only on boats.

Makeshift sheds were erected in the villages for gamblers to carry out their activities. Some of the villages do not have road connectivity and the organisers



**Some of the villages do not have road connectivity and the organisers arrange boats for the gamblers to reach there. It is alleged that a ruling party leader and his brother are extending patronage to the poker gambling clubs. Though the people of Repalle know that poker gambling is being organised in a big way, surprisingly, the SEB officials have taken no cognizance of it.**

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Though the people of Repalle know that poker gambling is being organised in a big way, surprisingly, the SEB officials have taken no cognizance of it.

BRS SUPREMO KCR ON FORMATION DAY

## Ab ki baar Kisan sarkar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS supremo Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said 'Ab Ki Baar Kisan Sarkar' is the only agenda of the BRS.

Addressing party workers on the party's Formation Day at Telangana Bhavan KCR said, "For the welfare of the country's farming community and all other sections development, BRS is moving forward with the slogan 'Ab Ki Baar Kisan Sarkar' (This time farmers' government)."

KCR asserted that he would formulate new national policies to correct the failures of current rulers and to ensure the comprehensive development of this country. KCR said that needs India needs policies to facilitate progress in economic, water, power, agriculture, environment, weaker sections, women empowerment, health, and education sectors.

He said that retired judges, former bureaucrats and experts have been engaged for this.

KCR said the BRS office in New Delhi will be inaugurated on December 14 at Sardar Patel Marg. The new office under construction in New Delhi would be completed by next April from where the party will function.



## Chaos in RS over Uniform Civil Code Bill

### Move To Block It Rejected

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chaos ensued in the Rajya Sabha on Friday as the Bharatiya Janata Party's Rajasthan MP Kirodi Lal Meena introduced The Uniform Civil Code in India Bill, 2020 in the Rajya Sabha as a Private Member Bill amid fervent opposition. The Code seeks to do away with religion-based personal laws.

Three motions were placed to oppose the Bill, stating that it would disintegrate the country and hurt its diverse culture. Yet, they were defeated through votes by 63-23.



After stiff opposition from several parties, Union Minister Piyush Goyal argued that it is the legitimate right of a member to raise an issue

which is under directive principles of the constitution. "Let this subject be debated in the House...at this stage to cast aspersions on the

government, to try to criticise the Bill, is uncalled-for," he said. Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar then put the bill to a voice vote where the ayes were a majority with 63 votes against 23 opposing it.

CPI(M) MP John Brittas referred to a Law Commission report, which said a Uniform Civil Code is neither necessary nor desirable.

DMK's Tiruchi Siva said the very idea of Uniform Civil Code is opposed to secularism.

Samajwadi Party's RG Verma also opposed the bill, saying it's opposed to provisions of the Constitution.

## Woman kidnapped in Hyd, hours before her engagement

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A young dentist was kidnapped by a group of goons from her residence in Adibatla in Rachakonda Police Commissionerate on Friday. The woman's parents said that around 100 youths barged into their house, destroyed furniture and forcibly dragged away their daughter Vaishali. The family was making preparations for the woman's engagement.

The youths also attacked the relatives and neighbours of the kidnapped dentist who tried to stop them.

The Rachakonda Police have set up teams and are searching for the woman using CCTV footages.

Additional Commissioner of Police Sudheer Babu reached the spot and said, "The police have set up teams to investigate this case.



# Gujarat mandate magic of ‘Modi model’ of development

At a time when some political parties in the country are resorting to the nastiest of tricks to continue in power for a second or third term in a row, Bharatiya Janata Party has won people's mandate in Gujarat for a record seventh term with its quintessential inclusive development approach - Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas. This mantra, scrupulously followed by the Modi sarkar at the Center and by all BJP-ruled states, including Gujarat, worked wonders for the party with a difference.

The Bharatiya Janata Party secured an absolute majority, with 52.5% vote share, and a record-breaking 156 seats in the 182-seat Gujarat Assembly, breaking the previous record of 149 seats - won by the Congress in 1985.

What makes this mandate even more extraordinary is its pro-incumbency nature for a party that has been in power continuously for the past 24 years.

A quick scan of the detailed results tells us that the BJP's candidates bagged 90% of the seats reserved for SCs and STs. Twenty four out of 27 segments reserved for Scheduled Tribes candidates went to the BJP. For instance, the BJP's Mohan Konkani won Vyara, a tribal seat that the Congress had won for four consecutive terms in the Tapi district, by defeating the sitting MLA Punabhai Gamit. The Vyara seat is considered a key Assembly seat because it gave Gujarat its first tribal CM, Amarsinh Chaudhary.

Of the 13 Assembly segments reserved for Scheduled Castes candidates, the BJP won 11. In the Vadodara city seat, the BJP's sitting legislator Manish Vakil won with 1,30,112 votes, while Congress candidate Gunavantray Parmar got only 31,907 votes. BJP's Ishwarbhai Parmar, the sitting MLA from Bardoli, won with 1,18,140 votes over Congress's Pannaben Patel's 28,478 votes. These are overwhelming majorities, to say the least.

Region-wise, the BJP's performance was no different. It won more than two-thirds of the available seats from every region. It won 46 of the 54 Saurashtra and Kutch seats, 22 of the 32 seats in North Gujarat, 55 of 61 Central Gujarat seats, and 33 of the 35 seats in south Gujarat. This was a truly pan-Gujarat mandate.

Most significantly, 17 of the 19 segments which have a significant Muslim presence and are considered 'Muslim-dominated' by pollsters went for the BJP. For instance, the BJP's Sangitaben Rajendra Patil emerged victorious from minority vote. This time even that fig leaf was denied to them, as the AIMIM did not get a substantial vote share. In all the seats it contested, the AIMIM got fewer votes than the victory margin of the BJP candidates.

The BJP continued its dominance in urban areas by winning 63 per cent of votes as against 58 per cent in the 2017 elections. The party received 48 per cent votes in rural assembly seats as against the Congress' 30 per cent. While the BJP increased its vote share in both urban and rural seats, the biggest seat gains, as compared to the 2017 elections, came from the rural and urban (semi-urban) areas. This notable trend of increasing support from rural voters could be seen in the recent Munugode by-election too.

The people of Gujarat witnessed how the BJP government built the State meticulously on all fronts and appreciated it in the form of votes. The world's largest canal - Narmada canal - which brought water for the draught-prone and water-scarce Gujarat, the relocation of the Tata Nano project, which highlighted the Ease of Doing Business for investors, the recent selection of Gujarat by Vedanta for its Semiconductor and Displays manufacturing venture, the Gift City which has the potential to make Gujarat a global financial services hub, symbolise the all-round development in agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors.

Himachal Pradesh's result also deserves a mention here.

Though the BJP could not reverse the past 40 years' "riwaz" of changing the ruling party, it came very close to doing so, by reducing the victory margin for the Congress to less than 1% (0.9%). I am sure after the next win, the "riwaz" will be reversed.

Attributing the BJP's thumping victory in Gujarat to a factor other than Modi's holistic approach to inclusive development is unwise and uncalled for. I am sure the voters of four North East States, along with Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Telangana - which go to polls next year - will also vote for the BJP to ensure double-engine government.

*(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)*

## ARMED FORCES FLAG DAY CELEBRATED

# Guv honours ‘Veer Naris’, battle-disabled soldiers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan presided over the Armed Forces Flag Day celebrations at a programme held at Raj Bhavan here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Harichandan said that the Indian Armed Forces hold a special place in the hearts of all Indians and the Armed Forces Flag Day is one such special occasion to salute their valour, devotion to duty and professionalism of the highest order, against the external and the internal threats.

The Governor said, "The Armed Forces personnel fought many wars thrust on us by our adversaries and made supreme sacrifice at the altar of duty. They not only protect our frontiers but also in difficult situations like internal disturbances, natural calamities etc by coming to our rescue and the nation owes a debt of gratitude to them."

He appealed to the people to come forward and donate liberally to the Armed Forces Flag Day fund, which will be utilized for the needs of the Ex-Service personnel and their families.

The Governor felicitated Veer Naris D Ishwarya, wife of Lance Naik late K Devendran of Chittoor district, V Lakshmi, wife of Naik late Ramarao of Sriakulam district, P Satyakala, wife of Sepoy late Ch Ramakrishna of East Godavari district and B Mamatha, wife of Sowar late D Kiran Kumar Reddy. The Governor also felicitated battle disabled soldiers Naik Subhan Sheik, Sepoy L Balaji



and Gallantry Award Winner Sepoy Anjaneyulu Dooda and II World War Veteran N/ORD N. Nagabhushanam, with a Memento and a cash grant of Rs 25,000 each.

The Governor has also felicitated V Prasanna Venkatesh, Collector, Eluru district, P Prasanthi, Collector West Godavari district and KVS Prasada Rao, Zilla Sainik Welfare Officer, Eluru & West Godavari districts for achieving the highest collections for Armed Forces Flag Day Fund in 2021. He also presented certificates of appreciation to officials of Sainik Welfare Department in recognition of their dedicated services for the welfare of Ex-Service personnel and dependents. Earlier, Governor Harichandan handed over a cheque of Rs 1 lakh towards contribution to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. The Officers and Staff Members of Andhra Pradesh Raj Bhavan have also come forward to donate to the Flag Day Fund.

Inspired by the appeal made by the Governor, V Prasanna Venkatesh, Collector, Eluru District, Chalasani Babu Rajendra Prasad, Bhogewara Rao, donated Rs 1 lakh each to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund.

Taneti Vanitha, Minister of Home, Disaster Management and Sainik Welfare, Lt. Gen KG Krishna (Retd.), PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to Governor, Harish Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary, Home Department, Brig. V Venkata Reddy (Retd) VSM, Director of Sainik Welfare, several serving and retired defence personnel, attended the programme.



KISHORE POREDDY

Limbayat with over 52 per cent of the vote share to substantially disprove the myth that Muslims are not with the BJP. The usual observation by opposition parties, especially Congress, on such results is that AIMIM has split the

35 chit fund firms found violating rules: IG

Continued from Page 1

He affirmed that legal action will be taken if any company does not provide the required information and any organization should give records wherever it does business. He revealed that Chit companies are collecting deposits in the name of security, improper payment of interest, and non-maintenance of separate balance sheets were identified in the inspections.

He said that all the companies are giving the requested information except the Margadarshi hence a special audit will be conducted on the Margadarshi. He said that auditors and forensic experts will go to Margadarshi's headquarters and conduct inspections. He stated that the officials have asked for the details to know the financial status of the Margadarshi company but still the company did not provide any information. He questioned how reasonable it was for Margadarshi company to give the details in Telangana or Karnataka while doing business in Andhra Pradesh.

Ramakrishna said that the responsibility of providing the information is on Margadarshi and it should cooperate in this matter and the officials will initiate action according to the law if the company fails to provide the required information.

# Robotic technology needed in farming: MVS Nagi Reddy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MVS Nagi Reddy, Vice Chairman of AP Agriculture Mission, has said that the government's objective is to ensure that the farmers are happy and their produce should get a Minimum Support Price (MSP). Advanced robotic technology is needed in the field of agriculture, he said.

He was addressing an interactive programme organised under the auspices of the AP Agriculture Mission on Friday presided over by Krishna District Collector Ranjith Basha and representatives of agriculture and allied sectors.

Nagi Reddy said that as per the instructions of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, he is visiting all the districts across the State. The YSRC government is supporting the farmers better than the neighboring states and to provide MSP to the farmers' produce. He recalled that in 2019 a record 80.13 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was produced and said that it would be broken during the current season.

He recalled that in 2019 a record 80.13 lakh metric tonnes of paddy was produced and said that it would be broken during the current season. He said that the government is ready to procure 40 to 45 lakh tonnes of paddy and the farmers should be ready. He asked the officials to resolve the issues with patience and



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and horticulture crop was registered under e-crop. Ninety-three per cent of e-KYC work was done and efforts are being made to complete the remaining 7 per cent, the Collector.

The collector said that during the last three years 1.5 lakh farmers were given Rs 425 crore under the Rythu Bharaosa scheme besides Rs 120 crore under crop insurance and Rs 28 crore under crop loan with zero interest. A total of Rs 700 crore benefit was done to the farmers in the district during the last three years, the Collector said.

Horticulture Officer J Jyothi, Animal Husbandry Officer Dr Chandrasekhar, Fisheries Officer Srinivas Rao, Sericulture Officer Satyanarayana, Micro Irrigation Officer Vijayalakshmi and others were present.

## Gambling thrives in island villages

Continued from Page 1

The illegal poker gambling dens are also set up by the organisers in Macherla and a large number of poker gamblers come from Hyderabad to play poker every day, sources added. There are allegations that illegal poker gambling clubs have mushroomed in Repalle, Guntur city, and Macherla with the connivance of police.

The ruling party leader and brother are earning crores of rupees by organising illegal poker gambling dens in the district, it is alleged. They are collecting huge money in the name of goodwill to become members of illegal poker gambling clubs.

Repalle TDP MLA Anagani Satya Prasad recently wrote a letter to the Chief Minister on illegal poker clubs in the constituency and urged him to take steps to close them.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹205
Without Skin	₹215
Broiler at Farm	₹190
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	462
HYDERABAD	460
VISAKHAPATNAM	460
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.62

# Pawan Kalyan's ‘Varahi’ courts controversy

Continued from Page 1

He said that he had seen the photo of the olive-green vehicle on social media.

"No private vehicle will have the olive-green colour as the Indian Army is using the colour for its vehicles. If Pawan Kalyan's 'Varahi' comes out with the olive-green colour they will object to it," the transport commissioner clarified.

Prasad Rao Rao further said that the vehicle chaises would clarify whether it is a transport vehicle or a goods vehicle. Before purchase, the purchaser should tell whether the vehicle would be used for transport purposes and goods transport purpose.

"If it is a transport vehicle, it should not

be converted as goods vehicles. If it is a goods vehicle, it should not be converted as a camp van," transport commissioner Prasad Rao made it clear.

At the same time, he also clarified that the 'Royal Enfield' motorcycle colour and design are different. "TDP founder N T Rama Rao also used the olive-green vehicle but in those days there were no such restrictions," he said.

Former minister Perni Nani objected to Pawan Kalyan's 'Varahi' vehicle stating that olive-green vehicles are used only by the Indian Army.

The law says that using olive-green vehicles by individuals is prohibited. "If Pawan Kalyan wants the olive-green colour to his vehicle, he can not get the vehicle regis-

tered," he said. He ridiculed Pawan Kalyan by asking him to paint the vehicle with 'yellow' colour. Minister for Water Resources Ambati Rambabu also ridiculed Pawan Kalyan stating that "Take breath but not package". Earlier, in a series of tweets, Pawan Kalyan asked whether rules are there for only Pawan Kalyan.

"Am I allowed to wear this shirt 'YCP'? At least," he said. "1st you have stopped my films; in Visakhapatnam, you didn't let me come out of the vehicle & hotel room & forced me to leave the city. In Mangalagiri you didn't let my car go out, then didn't let me walk & now the color of vehicle has become an issue. OK, shall I stop breathing?? Next, he tweeted tagging an olive-green car and a motorcycle.

## 10 NDRF, SDRF...

Continued from Page 1

He said adequate precautions should be taken by the authorities from time to time. The officials informed the Chief Minister that rain was predicted in the districts of Nellore, Tirupati, Chittoor and others.

Meanwhile, the educational institutions in Chittoor district were declared holiday due to heavy rains. The families of fishermen at Tadakupam in Sullurpet constituency were shifted to safer places. As torrential rains induced by cyclone lashed on Friday, Tirupati district Collector K Venkata Ramana Reddy said 24x7 control rooms were set up across all mandal headquarters and district headquarters.

Speaking to media here at his chamber, the Collector said officials and people have been alerted and called for more caution in coastal mandals of Chilkur, Kota, Vakadu, Sullurpet, and Tada mandals. Since heavy downpour has been recorded since morning at KVB Puram, he advised fishermen to not go fishing at any cost. 126 relief camps ready with shelter, food, drinking water, medicines and arrangements made to shift diabetic, pregnant women and challenged persons in advance.

Among others Roads & Buildings and Panchayat Raj departments to identify cyclone prone roads, NDRF teams kept ready at Guduru, and Naidupeta, 203 fishermen who sailed to sea brought back safely, revenue divisional officers supervising relief operations at Tirupati, Sullurpet, Guduru.

# Ab ki baar Kisan sarkar

Continued from Page 1

Former judges, economists, sociologists and intellectuals are working out to formulate modalities, KCR said.

"If the people of India give us the opportunity, the BRS will supply 24-hour electricity hours even to remote villages across the country. We will provide Dalit Bandhu to 25 lakh families every year. The BRS will initiate the method of people winning politics. Dictatorship in governance should end. The federal spirit should continue. Autonomy should be implemented. As special action plan would be implemented to ensure the progress of Dalit Bahujans and weaker sections," KCR said.

"Like Telangana, we will develop India on a mega scale. No other country in the world has excellent water resources and arable land like India. With these facilities, India should have become the food basket of the world. Conspiracies are being hatched to turn youth into fanatics. This needs to be changed. It should start from BRS. As part of this, the BRS should spread its ideology and create awareness among people," KCR said.

He said the BRS stands for the progress of the country. "Let us implement new policies in place of the 'evil' policies followed by the Central Government," he said.

Stating that politics is not about a party winning and losing elections, KCR said, "People should win elections. People's representatives should win. The BRS is formed to bring in transformation. If someone does not light the lamp of consciousness, darkness will continue in this country. The BRS is the light that illuminates the darkness."

The agriculture sector is being neglected. In this background, this country needs a New Agriculture Policy. "It is unfortunate that water wars are going on despite having surplus water. The wars between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka for Cauvery water needs to be settled.

The continuing water wars and misguided tribunals need to be improved. For this, this country needs a New Water Policy," KCR said.

He said that like Telangana's Haritha Haram India needs a new environmental policy.

"Telangana was achieved because we put facts before the people. With the same spirit, when all facts can be brought before the people the pink flag will be hoisted on Delhi's Red Fort. History has proved that wherever the seeds of revolution are sowed success is possible," KCR said.





**WELFARE OF MINORITIES**

# Naidu promises to restore all schemes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has said that he will take the responsibility for protecting reservations for Muslims by fighting on behalf of Minorities and will restore all welfare schemes after coming to power. The TDP chief interacted with Muslim Minorities at Ponnur on Friday as part of the 'Badude Badudu' programme.



Naidu said that when the TDP came to power in 1983, within two years, in 1985 itself, Minorities Corporation was formed. Urdu was recognised as a second official language, Haj House was set up in Hyderabad, and Urdu University was established in Hyderabad and after the State bifurcation, another Urdu University was set up in Kurnool. Naidu further claimed that TDP provided 'Ramzan Tofa' for over 10 lakh Muslims and even 'Sankranthi Kanuka' was extended to them. He alleged that the other schemes started by TDP for the welfare of Muslims were cancelled by the Jagan Mohan Reddy

government. Naidu questioned why Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy could not continue the 'Pelli Kanuka' scheme though he had promised Rs 10 lakh under the scheme. He stated that there is no need for the basic qualification of SSC either to become a Minister in his Cabinet or to become an Advisor to the Government but to be eligible for the 'Pelli Kanuka' scheme the beneficiary should have a basic qualification of SSC. Chandrababu promised to revive all the schemes

for Muslim Minorities once the TD is back in power. Naidu called upon the Muslim community to react to false cases registered against anyone. "Tomorrow you may have to face the same situation if you do not react now," he observed. Chandrababu Naidu expressed serious concern that the wakf lands are being illegally occupied and promised to save the wakf properties once the TDP is back in power and the pensions too will be paid on time.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

# Survivors, victims facing stigma: VIMUKTHI

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

VIMUKTHI, the State-level forum of survivors of trafficking and victims of commercial sexual exploitation, has said that 88 per cent of the women rescued from human trafficking and victims of commercial sexual exploitation are still defamed and dishonoured, besides facing stigma.

M Apoorva, president of VIMUKTHI, said that they were facing huge challenges and living pathetic lives, without a helping hand that con-

soled them and shared their problems. VIMUKTHI conducted a meeting here on Friday on the occasion of International Human Rights Day. "People don't even realise that we, too, are human beings and are entitled to enjoy our rights," Apoorva said.

HELP, with the support of Sanjog, conducted a survey recently, which found that 88 per cent of the survivors and sex workers were facing social stigma. Sadly, the major sources of stigma were immediate family members (parents and partners



- 37 per cent, relatives - 16 per cent and neighbours - 27 per cent).

She added that 63 per cent of the survivors didn't receive any support from their families when they experienced stigma. The cooperation and trust of

family members and support from peers were what they needed most to combat stigma.

The leaders of VIMUKTHI demanded that AHTUs needed focus on preemptive actions and investigations to improve conviction rates and indictment of traffickers in source areas. They sought Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approaches by the State and financial inclusion and protection to reduce debt traps. They further said that the victim compensation needed significant improvement.

# Spa owners warned against illegal activities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dealing sternly with violations and illegal activities at the spas, District Collector S Dilli Rao has ordered the officials concerned to take immediate action on the cases registered so far. Reviewing the status of the cases along with Police, Task Force, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation and ICDS officials at the District Collector's office on Friday, Dilli Rao said that if the city neglects to pay special attention to anti-social activities in the name of spa culture, there is a possibility of spreading bad culture here in Vijayawada



as in cities like Mumbai and Kolkata. He said that according to Sections 18 and 19 of the ITP Act 1956, strict measures should be taken and the police, task force and labour departments should form teams and register cases and hold a review meeting every 15 days. He instructed that action should be taken on cases registered against massage centres.

The District Collector expressed his anger that there are 30 to 40 massage centres in the district but some of the spa centres are involved in unethical activities as it is clear that women are being lured into immoral activities through spa culture. He said that cases were registered against 10 centres indulging in such actions. He instructed that cases should be registered against the owners of the buildings that are rented to such centres and the buildings should be seized. The women caught in the centres should be shifted to women's homes and sheltered after being counselled.

# SSC fee date fee extended

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director Of Government Examinations Andhra Pradesh D Devananda Reddy informed the HeadMasters and Principals of the Schools that the SSC, OSSC and Vocational Public Examinations March and April 2023 that due dates for remittance of examination fees and submission of online applications through www.bse.ap.gov.in website are extended.

According to the Director, the last date for Head Masters to pay the SSC examination fee of Rs 125 will be December 20( without late fee) and they can pay from December 21 to 26 with a late fee fine of Rs 50, from December 27 to January 2 with a late fee of Rs 200 and from January 3 to 9 with a late fee fine of Rs 500.

The last date for Online submission of normal rolls along with other documents will be December 12, the submission of hard copies to DEOs by HMs will be from December 21 to January 9 and the submission of hard copies by DEOs to Directorate of Govt Examinations by January 11.

# RGUKT students to be trained in blockchain technology

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The management of RGUKT-Nuzvid has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Bengaluru-based Straw Hat Private Limited company in order to boost the students' software technology skills. RGUKT-Nuzvid Director Prof GVR Srinivasa Rao said that the company's primary focus was on training students in blockchain technology trust-based applications. He explained that the MoU initially lasted for three years under which the company would instruct third-year BTech students from all branches on blockchain technology with the aid of its blockchain experts.

Prof Srinivasa Rao said that for all enrolled students, the

programme would last three months and to raise awareness on the opportunities in the field of blockchain, the company would host workshops and hackathons during the training. He further said that 25 students who completed training were eligible for an internship programme, which was available for a year and paid Rs 25,000 per month. He said it was a golden opportunity for the students of RGUKT as after the internship, an assessment test would be conducted, and those who passed it would be hired for a Rs 12 lakh-per-year package.

Dr Obulapathi Challa, CEO of Straw Hat Private Limited, Dr Lakshman, Dean of Academics, Vasu, Placement Officer and other officials participated in the programme.



# 7 kids operated upon for cleft lip and cleft palate

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Seven kids were operated on successfully for cleft lip and palate at the TTD-run BIRRD (T) Hospital on December 7 and the doctors' teams were complimented by TTD EO Sri AV Dharma Reddy.

According to BIRRD Special Officer Dr Reddeppa Reddy, the operations included cleft lip and cleft palate. Among the patients, some are even months-old children, who were admitted on

December 5, operated upon on December 7 and got discharged on December 9 without any complications.

Lohitha, Thanvish, Nagahema, Nagalakshmi, Rekha, Jahnavi and Naveen underwent surgeries successfully.

Dr Preetham Shetty and Dr Deepesh N Rao, visiting professors from Bangalore, along with the plastic surgeon of the Hospital Dr Jhansi, operated upon the above patients and discharged them on Friday.



# PROBE INTO TAHSILDAR'S DEATH DEMANDED

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Revenue Joint Action Committee (APRJAC) has urged the government to conduct a thorough inquiry into the suicide of Pedabayalu Tahsildar Srinivasa Rao in Alluri Sitaramaraju District. APRJAC state chairman VS Divakar and other leaders said they were shocked with the suicide incident and deeply saddened over the tragic incident. They expressed condolences to family members of Srinivasa Rao.

The APRJAC leaders deplored that there is news about the officials putting pressure on Srinivasa Rao in the

recent review meeting in Paderu and further the project office abused the tahsildar. The leaders said that in view of this news, APRJAC demanded the government conduct a thorough investigation and prosecute and punish the officials who verbally abused and put unbearable pressure on Srinivasa Rao. They said that revenue officials and employees are overburdened due to huge regular work and now their work pressure had largely increased abnormally due to land survey works. The APRJAC demanded appointing separate staff for the surveying works and to initiate measures to reduce the work burden.

# Collector asks EE to remove JJM pipelines in private layouts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has directed Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWS & S) officials to conduct an inquiry regarding the construction of pipelines under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) at the unauthorised layouts at Nunna of Vijayawada Rural mandal.

As per the direction of the Collector, RWS & S Vijayawada Division Executive Engineer (EE) Ramalingeswara Prasad and Deputy Executive Engineer (DEE) Dayanand inspected the pipeline works at Nunna on Friday.

'The Pioneer' had published the news item 'Nunna panchayat violates Jal Jeevan Mission rules' on Friday, on the basis of

which Collector Dilli Rao ordered the inquiry. For this work, an amount of Rs.30 lakh was diverted to private real estate ventures, where there were no houses.



According to sources, EE Ramalingeswara Prasad and DEE Dayanand inspected the

construction of pipelines, and how they undertook the work without taking permission from higher authorities. Also, they found that there were two unauthorised layouts near the Polavaram Right Main Canal and the pipeline works had been taken up in the interests of YSRCP leaders. They asked the RWS & S

Vijayawada Rural Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) Swetha about the construction of the JJM pipelines.

The two officers physically inspected the two layouts, where pipelines had been laid without the permission of the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA). As per the rules and regulations, the JJM tap connections should be given to households only.

But the Nunna panchayat officials laid pipelines at private real estate ventures and the inquiry officers found that it was totally wrong.

EE Ramalingeswara Prasad directed AEE Swetha to remove the JJM pipelines laid in the private ventures. And they sought a detailed report from her.

# Inter-degree colleges cricket tourney begins at Loyola

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao inaugurated the Siti Cable Founder Potluri Ramakrishna Memorial Inter-Degree Colleges Cricket Tournament at the Andhra Loyola College Grounds in Vijayawada on Friday. He paid rich tributes to Potluri Ramakrishna by garlanding his portrait.

Later, he inaugurated the tournament and enthusiastically played cricket along with media people. Siti Cable Managing Director Potluri Saibabu introduced the players to Collector Dilli Rao.

Speaking on the occasion, Dilli Rao said that conducting



tournaments is useful to find the players' talent.

He suggested to the students to play with sportsman spirit

and receive a win or loss equally. He congratulated Siti Cable MD Sai Babu for conducting the cricket tournament.

# Submarine Day celebrated in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The 55th Submarine Day was commemorated on 08 December 2022 to mark the formation of Indian Navy's submarine arm with the commissioning of its first submarine, erstwhile INS Kalvari, on 08 December 1967. The Commanding-in-Chief, Vice Adm Biswajit Dasgupta, AVSM, YSM, VSM conveyed his best wishes and appreciated the tenacity, professionalism and dedication of submariners.

A Wreath Laying Ceremony was held at the Submarine Cenotaph at INS Virbahu, the mother base of Indian submarines, which was commissioned on 19 May 1971. Rear Adm AY Sardesai, Flag Officer Submarines laid wreath to pay homage to submariners on 'Eternal Patrol' who made the



supreme sacrifice in the line of duty to the nation. Rear Adm R Vijay Sekhar, NM. Project Director Ship Building Center also paid homage.

The ceremony was attended

by Commanding Officer Satavahana, Commanding Officers of submarines and Officers-in-charges of associated units.

# 'Kaushal' a great platform for rural students: Governor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswabasan Harichandan has said that the Kaushal competition serves as a great platform to bring out the hidden talents of rural students. He said that Vinjana Bharati had been patronised by great Indian scientists like Dr Raghunath Mashelkar, former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, Dr Anil Kakodkar and many others.

Delivering his message as chief guest at the State-level 'Kaushal-2022' award ceremony

held at the School of Planning & Architecture auditorium here on Friday, the Governor recalled the slogan 'Jai Jawan- Jai Kisan' coined by former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, that ushered in the Green Revolution, 'Jai Vignan' slogan given by Late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee after the conduct of the landmark Pokhran nuclear test and 'Jai Anusandhan' slogan given by present Prime Minister Narendra Modi, by orienting the country towards Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

The State-level Kaushal competition was organised by Vinjana Bharati, Andhra Pradesh chapter of Bharatiya Vijnana Mandali and the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Science and Technology. The competition was conducted exclusively for students of government schools and 55,012 students from 2,431 schools from all 26 districts participated. The Governor presented the awards to the winners and congratulated the students for their active participation in the

competition.

RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to Governor; S Suresh Kumar, Commissioner of School Education; PS Avadhani, president, Bharatiya Vijnana Mandali; Prof S Ramesh, Director of School of Planning & Architecture; Dr Y Sreenivas Rao, Director, NSTL; KS Sastry, National Governing Council member, Vignana Bharati, and Prof Kailasa Rao, vice-president, Vinjana Bharati, were among the dignitaries who attended the programme.



# Two Vande Bharat Express trains for AP in New Year

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The South Central Railway (SCR) has allocated two new-generation Vande Bharat Express trains for the state of Andhra Pradesh as per a notification sent by the Indian Railways. To this extent, the South Central Railway has received a notification from the Railway Ministry.

The first Vande Bharat Express train will be launched between Secunderabad Railway Station here and Vijayawada which will be operational from the new year 2023. The official date will be finalized soon after the railway authorities complete track upgradation. The train will start from Secunderabad to Vijayawada via Kazipet. It will later be extended to Visakhapatnam.

The second Vande Bharat train will operate between Secunderabad and Tirupati. South Central Railway wants to

run this train from Secunderabad to Tirupati via Vijayawada.

A decision has to be taken on this train route based on the feasibility and stock availability. Union Minister for Tourism, Culture and Development G Kishan Reddy had also made a request for the train to Tirupati considering the number of pilgrims travelling to the temple town of Tirupati.

Each Vande Bharat has a total seating capacity of 1,128 passengers, equipped with automatic doors; a GPS-based audio-visual passenger information system, onboard hotspot Wi-Fi for entertainment purposes, and comfortable seating.

The Vande Bharat Express can run up to a maximum commercial speed of 160 kmph. Currently, the train on the Secunderabad-Vijayawada track via Kazipet can run at a maximum speed of 130 kmph.



# 18 girl students of hostel fall ill, hospitalised

PNS ■ ELURU

As many as 18 girl students of the government hostel in Chintalapudi fell ill due to suspected food poisoning and they were admitted to the area hospital for treatment. Joint Collector Arun Babu suspended hostel warden Nayomi Rani holding her responsible for the incident.

According to official sources, after having dinner in the hostel on Thursday night, 18 girls developed stomach pain and started vomiting. They were admitted to the Government Area Hospital in Chintalapudi. After medical treatment, all except two girls were discharged.

However, the two girls were shifted to the GGH here for better treatment and they are



also recovering, he said.

District Collector Prasanna Venkatesh visited the girls in the hospital here on Friday. He inquired with the doctors about their health condition and the reasons for the ill health.

Talking to the media, the Collector made it clear that

there is no need to worry about the health condition of the girls and that they were recuperating. He said that 18 girl students in the hostel, which is affiliated with the ZP high school, in Chintalapudi fell ill after having dinner on Thursday and were admitted to the hospital. He said the food

samples were sent to the laboratory for testing.

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that an officer has been appointed to inquire about the reasons for the incident and action would be taken against those responsible officials for the incident as soon as the report of the food samples and the inquiry officer is received. The Collector was accompanied by District Hospital Services Co-ordinator Dr. AVR Mohan, Hospital Superintendent Dr. Vijay Kumar, and RMO Dr P Srinivas. Meanwhile, officials informed that after holding a preliminary investigation on the incident, Joint Collector P Arun Babu suspended hostel warden Nayomi Rani holding her responsible for the food poisoning incident.



## Collector presented with appreciation letter

PNS ■ ELURU

Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan presented an appreciation letter to Eluru district Collector

V Prasanna Venkatesh for contributing the highest fund at the Armed Forces Flag Day celebrations programme held in Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada.

The Governor felicitated and appreciated Collector Prasanna Venkatesh on the occasion. Home Minister Taneti Vanita, and Secretary of Home department Harish Kumar Gupta were among those who were present.

# Centre urged to provide fair prices for aqua products

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Narasaraopet MP Lalvu Srikrishnadevarayalu has appealed to the Central government to take steps to provide remunerative prices for the aqua products as the industry is facing a slump and also ensure that exports to China are resumed.

MP Sri Krishnadevarayalu speaking in the Lok Sabha on Friday said that the aqua industry is in slump in AP and the aqua farmers are not incurring losses due to steel fall on products. The MP pointed out that AP produces 70 percent of the total aqua products of India. He told the Lok Sabha that the shrimp prices have scrambled during the last two months leaving the aqua farmers in lurch.

The MP said that AP produces Rs 25,000 crore worth of aqua products per annum and



it is imperative for the Centre to take immediate steps to check the falling prices and provide remunerative prices to the farmers.

He informed the House that China has rejected aqua products being exported from India citing the Coronavirus crisis which affected about 30 percent of aqua farmers in the state. The exports of aqua products to China have not been approved, which led to the closure of several process-

ing units in AP, he told the House, adding that Vietnam and Indonesia are also facing such a situation but the two countries could reach an agreement with China to export their aqua products.

Sri Krishnadevarayalu appealed to the Commerce and Industries Ministry of the Central government to speak with the officials concerned with China to resume the export of aqua products from India.

# 9 red sanders logs seized, four smugglers arrested

PNS ■ KADAPA

YSR district police have arrested four red sander smugglers and seized 19 logs, two motorcycles, 3 mobile phones, 4 axes, and hacksaw blades.

Superintendent Of Police KKN Anburajan told the media here on Friday that on a tip-off, the police arrested smugglers near Ramachandrapuram village of Vontimitta Police Station limits and were identified as Gundala Penchalaiah, Kalapati Janu, both belonging to Railway Koduru town and Puli Lakshmiakar and Guggilla Reddaiah of Rajampet in



Annamayya district. During the arrest, the smugglers tried to pelt stones and attack the police personnel with axes, the SP said.

SP Anburajan appreciated police personnel for arresting the red sander smugglers. The SP said that stringent action would be taken against those

involved in the felling and smuggling of red sanders and warned of invoking PD Act against those who involve in the red sander smuggling.

The Superintendent Of Police appreciated the efforts under the supervision of Additional SP (Admin) Tushar Dudi IPS, DSP Kadapa B.Venkata Sivareddy, Faction Zone DSP Chenchu Babu, Task Force Inspector Nagabhushanam, Ontimitta C.I Purushottam Raju, Reserve Sub Inspector Pothuraju, Sub Inspector Madhusudhan Rao, and the team in nabbing the smugglers besides securing the seizure of red sanders logs.

# Minority welfare schemes reviewed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Minority Affairs Secretary Mukhmeet S Bhatia, on Friday, reviewed the minority welfare schemes being implemented in the State with the officials of the State Minority Welfare Department. On the occasion, various welfare schemes implemented by the Central and State governments for the minorities were reviewed.

In particular, the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) and Pre Matriculation, Post Matriculation, Merit-cum-Means Scholarships and Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarships offered by the Central government for minorities were reviewed. Bhatia reviewed the Jagananna Vadesi Vidyadevena, Overseas Education Scheme and YSR Shadi Thofa schemes implemented by the State government for minorities. Similarly, Navaratnalu programmes

implemented by the AP Minorities Finance Corporation for minorities and the Waqf Board programmes were also examined.

He also reviewed the programmes being implemented by the Andhra Pradesh State Christian Minorities Finance Corporation. The Secretary advised the officials to do their best for the uplift of the minorities by properly implementing various welfare schemes of the Central and State governments.

State Minority Welfare Department Secretary A MD Imtiaz, State Minority Welfare Department Director Dr GC Kishore Kumar, Additional Secretary B Rose Lata Bhai, Assistant Secretary T Srinivasulu, APSMFC VC and MD Sheikh Shareen Begum, APSCMFC MD J Elisha, APSWB CEO L Abdul Qader, Urdu Academy Director Dr Ayub Hussain, CEDM Director Sheikh Mastan Vali, APSNDFS MD Dr Mohammad Mastan and others were present.



# Minister reviews situation

PNS ■ NELLORE

Minister for Agriculture Kakani Govardhan Reddy has said that all steps were being taken to avoid loss of life and property due to the Mandous cyclonic storm.

The minister reviewed the precautionary measures being taken in the district with district Collector KVN Chakradhar Babu and CH Vijaya Rao here on Friday.

The minister said that educational institutions declared holidays on Saturday and Sunday. The fishermen were warned to



venture into the sea for fishing.

The minister directed the

officials to take up crop register programmes on a war footing. He also directed the officials to release water from the Somashila and Kandaluru reservoirs gradually to avoid inundation.

Steps should be taken to replace the uprooted electric polls. The minister ordered the officials to keep ready generators, electric hacksaw machines and other machinery as a precautionary measure. He said that a toll-free 1077 was set to provide information regarding the Mondous storm.

# No end to CBI investigation into YS Vivekananda's murder!

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Political circles are bristling with criticism that the probe into Vivekananda Reddy's murder, which had taken place ahead of Assembly elections, is still being prolonged unduly.

Did the CBI, which took over the investigation into the case, take into consideration the contradictory statements issued by Vivekananda Reddy's daughter Sunitha? Did CBI take into consideration the investigation report submitted by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the then Telugu Desam party government, to probe the murder?

Did the interrogation of hundreds of witnesses by SIT and nacro test conducted in leading laboratories prove futile?

Suspicions are raised as to why the CBI has not chosen to respond to some media reports on the issue. Will the CBI conclude the probe into the case soon or not? Whether a strategy of keeping the case alive till the next elections is being finetuned to pose problems to the ruling YSRC? Does CBI want to ensure that the bail given to the three accused is cancelled?

The apex court's directions in the case of the bail for one of the accused, Yerra Gangireddy kicked off a fresh debate on the case among the political circles.

According to the political grapevine, the investigation into the murder case is likely to continue for some more time going by the latest developments in the case.

Those in the know of the things expressed over the way the investigation is being conducted by the premier investigation agency, CBI, as it is not able to conclude the investigation into the case even two and half years after it took over the probe. Politicians and former IPS officials expressed surprise over the probe dragging on.

Those, who used to hail the CBI to skies, are also disappointed over the undue delay in completing the task and ensuring that the trial begins.

Political circles have been questioning why the CBI chose to ignore the narco analysis, polygraph and brain mapping tests conducted on the accused. Questioning them again is nothing but an exercise to buy time, according to critics. Former IPS officials alleged that the way the investigation is being conducted raising more doubts.

The SIT report could prove to be useful for the CBI to conclude its probe into the case early. The CBI investigation seems different from the one conducted by the SIT.

but the angle of the investigation by the CBI begged to differ, say>Mainly, the CBI did not take contradictory statements issued by Sunitha initially and later.

There were no disputes in the joint family that has over 700 members. Moreover, she went on record by saying that her father worked hard to make Y S Jaganmohan Reddy the Chief Minister of AP. She made the statement while addressing the media at Press Club in Hyderabad on March 27, 2019.

Sunitha said that her father worked hard to make Avinash Reddy MP till the last day of the elections. However, after a few days, she levelled allegations against Avinash Reddy. But, the CBI ignored these contradictory statements. Former IPS officials were perplexed over the CBI ignoring these statements made by Sunitha.Sunitha demanded that the police question the then TDP Minister Adinarayana Reddy, but later she did not insist on it.

Former IPS officials expressed their surprise over the CBI ignoring the SIT report, which mentioned about the second marriage of Vivekananda Reddy and property disputes.

Surprise is being expressed over the CBI line of investigation not touching these aspects at all. Vivekananda Reddy who is firm on giving due share to his second wife and a respectable place for the second wife in the family triggered disputes, according to deposition before the SIT.

Vivekananda Reddy's family members stripped him of his cheque power out of the foresight that he may give a share to his second wife. As a result, Vivekanand Reddy faced many financial troubles, the SIT reported in its report.

Sunitha went on record on August 8, 2021, stating that her father was done to death. But she is being questioned why she did not complain about it to the police the same day.

To a question on how did she get Vivekanand Reddy's murder photos and letters on July 28, 2020, and August 8, 2021, Sunitha made contradictory statements? The CBI considering such irrational statements is being criticised.

She went on record saying that her husband showed her father's photos on his mobile phone.



Soon, she contradicted her own statement saying that it was wrong. The CBI, probing the case depending on Sunitha's statements, was a butt of criticism. The political circles say that the CBI ignored this vital line of investigation. In fact, the truth behind the murder case can be unearthed by probing the case in this direction. Ignoring the family disputes in the probe is being criticized.

Surprise is being expressed over the CBI framing new rules in probing the case. The CBI filed a case against Viveka's PA Krishna Reddy who complained about the murder to the police. The CBI is accused of creating a new style of investigating the case.A suspect in the murder case, Prameshwar Reddy, was admitted to a hospital on March 13, 2019, for treatment of chest pain. But, he slipped out of the hospital secretly and met TDP MLC B'Tech Ravi who stayed in Harita Hotel in Kadapa. The hospital video camera recorded he was speaking on phone to someone at 3 am on March 14. So

far, the CBI did not probe into it to the chagrin of one and all.

Personal Assistant Krishna Reddy did not hand over Viveka's mobile phone and the letter written by him before he was murdered. Only after the arrival of Sunitha and her husband in Pulivendula, the PA handed the mobile phone and the letter to the couple. The CBI also did not probe into this, kicking off several doubts in the minds of the people.The CBI apparently did not question Sunitha and her husband for having deleted messages from the mobile phone and why did the letter and mobile phone were not handed over to the police. The critics felt it very strange.

Watchman Ranganna, who initially pleaded ignorance about who had committed the murder, after a gap of two years to the surprise of one and all, told the CBI while deposing before it that he was an eye-witness to the murder. The CBI did not question him about what stopped him from going out and told it to one and all.

Interrogating Ranganna on scientific lines, the SIT subjected him to a polygraph test on August 1 and 13 at the Central Forensic Laboratory in Gujarat and again subjected him on August 3 and 5 to a brain mapping test and Narco analysis test.

When questioned him whether he was threatened, he replied to the SIT in the negative.Brain mapping tests and Narco analysis test and polygraph tests play a crucial role in the investigation of crime. Any investigating agency will take them as a yardstick. While subjecting him to these tests, Ranganna denied any threats. But, while deposing before the CBI he answered the questions as desired by the CBI, fuelling doubts in people's minds.MP Avinash Reddy mounted pressure on Viveka's PA Krishna Reddy to give false evidence on the involvement of Bhaskar Reddy in the case, which led to a volley of criticism in the case.

The CBI did not question suspect Y G Rajeshwar Reddy about his role in the case, fuelling many suspicions in the case. He spoke to Viveka's driver and also went up to his house of Viveka. He spoke to Sunil Yadav on the night of the murder, according to to call data, but the CBI did not investigate this.

The CBI used approver Dastagiri according to its whims and fancies and obtained statements and registered cases against him. The criticism tarnished the image of an investigating agency like the CBI.In the statements issued by Dastagiri on August 25 and

30, he did not mention the names of Devireddy Sivasankar Reddy and Yerra Gangireddy. The political circles allege that the CBI was trying to frame people in the case who have nothing to do with the incident.

Going by how the CBI mounted pressure on DSP Vasudevan and CI Sankaraiah to obtain statements from them as it desired, all the 161 statements recorded by the CBI as fabricated, according to criticism.The CBI failed to prove its version over Rs 40-crore deal struck to eliminate Viveka. The CBI failed to prove that at least Rs 4 crore has changed hands during the two and half years of its investigation.Dastagiri told the CBI that he distributed Rs 1 crore given to him among many persons, but the CBI failed to prove that Sunil Yadav or any other person distributed money to the suspects, it is regarded as another failure on the part of the CBI.The CBI documented money saved by Munna by selling his property as a 'supari' amount. The CBI failed to mention in the charge-sheet crucial aspects like when did Munna deposit the money in his locker, and how many times did he operate the locker. It allegedly establishes the lack of seriousness on the part of the CBI in probing the case, according to criticism from the political grapevine.

Registering the case against Yerra Gangireddy is being viewed with suspicion right from the beginning, according to criticism.Internal protocol data records establish the fact that Gangireddy was very much at his house on the fateful night when Viveka was murdered. Similarly, another accused Umasankar Reddy was also at his home on the fateful night. Surprisingly, the CBI maintains that the duo was at the residence of Viveka on the night of the murder.

The CBI is rejecting the investigation carried out by the SIT along scientific lines, indicating a major conspiracy behind this.The CBI is probing the case even putting the snails to shame. Whose interests is it trying to protect? Which party the CBI is trying to protect? Is it trying to harass any party at all?These questions are on the lips of every political leader. The political circles see CBI's plan to harass the ruling YSRCP by stretching the probe till the elections. Former IPs officials say that the CBI's line of investigation is harmful to its image.

The political circles appeal to the CBI to make introspection as its style of functioning targeted to send back those who are out on the bail in the case.



INDIA CORNER

## Assam: Special casual leave for govt employees to spend time with parents

For the second consecutive year, the Assam government has approved special casual leave to its employees to spend time with their parents. The employees can avail two days special leave on February 9 and 10 next year, an official release said on Friday. The special leaves will be clubbed with regular holidays of second Saturday and Sunday on the following two days, thus enabling the employees to spend four days with their parents, it said. The detailed rules and modalities for applying and availing the special leaves will be informed through a special web portal, the release added. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in his first address on Independence Day after assuming office in 2021, had announced this initiative for state government employees so that they may spend time with their parents and parents-in-law. It was later approved by the state Cabinet. The first such leaves were given on January 6 and 7 this year.



## Climate change, eco-degradation major cause of rights violations: NHRC

Climate change and environment degradation is emerging as a major cause of many human rights violations and all stakeholders need to contribute in the interests of growth and development of all equally, the NHRC said on Friday. "Today amidst various new concerns of human rights, climate change and environment degradation is emerging as a major cause of many human rights violations across the globe for which all stakeholders, nationally as well as internationally, need to contribute in the interests of growth and development of all equally," the National Human Rights Commission said on the eve of Human Rights Day. Human Rights Day is celebrated globally on December 10 every year since 1950 in commemoration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations in 1948. The day is observed to remember and strengthen the tenets of UDHR that every human being, regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or other position, is born equal and has inalienable rights to life, liberty, dignity and equality.



## 4 college students suspended for dancing in burqa during event

Four engineering college students in Mangaluru were placed under suspension for allegedly dancing to the tune of a Bollywood item song wearing burqa with their video going viral. The management of St Joseph Engineering College in the city took swift action against its students after a few social media users termed the dance as 'obscene and inappropriate', college authorities said. The college administrative board suspended the students after an internal inquiry. College principal Rio D'Souza said the management has immediately suspended the students who belong to the Muslim community. "The dance in the video has taken place after the official programme was over. The college does not support any act inside the campus that jeopardises the harmony between various communities," a statement from the college said. The programme had taken place in the college on Wednesday evening during the inauguration of a students' association. After the programme got over, a few students of the college got on to the dais and danced wearing burqas.



# Govt seeks House nod for additional spending of Rs 3.25 L cr this fiscal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Friday sought Parliament nod for net additional spending of over Rs 3.25 lakh crore in the current fiscal, which includes over Rs 1.09 lakh crore towards fertiliser subsidy payout. This additional spending is over and above the proposed amount in Budget 2022-23. As per the Budget, the government estimated a total expenditure of Rs 39.45 lakh crore for 2022-23, as compared to Rs 37.70 lakh crore for the previous fiscal. Besides, approval for Rs 80,348.25 crore has been sought for meeting expenditure of the food and consumer affairs ministry mainly towards giving free foodgrains to the poor.

Approval has also been sought for expenditure of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas towards payments of LPG subsidies to oil marketing companies and LPG connections to the poor under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, among others totalling to Rs 29,944 crore. As per the first batch of supplementary demands for grants tabled in Lok Sabha by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, approval is being sought for gross additional expenditure of about Rs 4.36 lakh crore. Of this, proposals involving net cash outgo aggregates to over Rs 3.25 lakh crore and gross additional expenditure, matched by savings of ministries/departments or by enhanced receipts,



aggregates to over Rs 1.10 lakh crore. The first batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2022-23 includes 75 Grants and 6 Appropriations. The additional expenditure also includes Rs 13,669 crore and

Rs 12,000 crore for meeting spending requirements of Telecom and Railways Ministries, besides about Rs 10,000 crore for transfer to GST compensation fund for giving compensation to states and UTs. Approval has been sought for Rs

46,000 crore additional expenditure by the Rural Development Ministry, which includes Rs 4,920 crore for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme (MGNREGS). In addition, the government's capital expenditure (capex) has been enhanced by about Rs 31,000 crore for the current financial year. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had raised capex by 35.4 per cent for the financial year 2022-23 to Rs 7.5 lakh crore, from Rs 5.5 lakh crore in the previous year. For meeting additional expenditure under capital outlay on Indian Railways (commercial lines), the supplementary demands for grants has proposed Rs 12,000 crore.

## Shortage of 1.35 lakh personnel in three services: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The three services are reeling under a shortage of 1.35 lakh personnel with the maximum number of vacancies of 1.18 lakh in the Army, according to details provided by the government in Lok Sabha on Friday. The total shortage in the Indian Navy (sailors) was estimated at 11,587 till September 30, Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt said in reply to a question. He said the number of vacant posts in the Indian Air Force (Airmen and Non-Combatant) as on November 1, 2022, was 5,819. The number in the Army was till July 1 and it included junior commissioned officers and other ranks. "A total of 40,000 vacancies have been advertised for



JCOs/OR in the Indian Army. A total of 3,000 vacancies have been advertised for Agniveers in the year 2022 in the Indian Navy. 3,000 vacancies have been advertised in the Indian Air Force as Agniveer-vayu in the year 2022," Bhatt said. He said all the recruitments at the level of jawans are being done under the Agnipath scheme. Noting that on average, 60,000 vacancies occur in all three services every year, out of which approximately

50,000 vacancies are for the Army, the minister said due to the suspension of recruitment rallies in the last two years because of the COVID-19 situation, there was a shortfall of 1,08,685 jawans in the Indian Army at present. With the improvement in the COVID-19 situation and the start of the recruitment, these vacancies are expected to come down in coming years, he added. To a separate question, he said approximately 45,906 acres of defence land under the management of different services and organisations of the defence ministry is presently lying vacant. In response to another question, Bhatt said the government has undertaken the modernisation of the defence airfield infrastructure in two phases.

## Farmers protest at Jantar Mantar, seek legal guarantee for MSP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Scores of farmers affiliated to the All India Kisan Congress on Friday gathered at the Jantar Mantar here to demand legal guarantee for MSP and compensation for the kin of farmers killed in last year's agitation against the Centre's three farm laws. The Congress' unit for farmers also accused the BJP-led central government of not cooperating with farmers and renegeing on its promises made to them following which, the year-long stir at Delhi borders was suspended. The contentious farm laws were scrapped by Parliament in November last year. Speaking to PTI, Hargobind Singh Tiwar, joint coordinator of the AIKC, said, "Central government is neither cooperating with the farmers nor addressing their issues. It's been over a year since the anti-farm laws protest ended, but the government's promise of ensuring MSP for farmers has not been



fulfilled yet." "The centre should immediately release the compensation for the families of farmers who sacrificed their lives while fighting for their rights. It is unfortunate that the centre does not even have the list of those farmers who lost their lives. How will they even release the compensation?" he said. Minimum support price (MSP) scheme must be implemented soon. The country still does not have a proper law for farmers which can directly benefit them, he rued. Holding flags of the Congress party and raising slogans of "jai jawan, jai kisan", farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and some southern states have gathered at Jantar Mantar.

## Collegium's tentative decision cannot be brought in public domain: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea seeking disclosure of the details of a collegium meeting held on December 12, 2018 under the Right to Information Act, underlining a "tentative decision" of the multi-member body cannot be brought in the public domain. A bench of Justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar said only resolutions drawn and signed by all collegium members can be said to be a final decision. Tentative resolutions drawn upon discussion and consultation among the members cannot be said to be final unless they are signed by all of them, it said. "Collegium is a multi-member body whose tentative decision cannot be brought in the public domain," it noted. The top court said it cannot place reliance on media reports



and the interview of a former member of the collegium, and it doesn't want to comment on statements made by the former judge. In a resolution passed on January 10, 2019, the collegium, whose combination was changed due to the retirement of Justice MB Lokur, said in its meeting on December 12, 2018 only consultations were held on certain names but no final decision was taken. The top court passed the

verdict on a petition by RTI activist Anjali Bhardwaj against a Delhi High Court order dismissing her plea seeking the agenda of the Supreme Court Collegium's meeting held on December 12, 2018 when certain decisions were purportedly taken on the elevation of some judges to the apex court. On December 2, the top court had said the existing collegium system should not be derailed on the basis of statements of "some busybody",

asserting the top court is one of the most transparent institutions. Amid divisions within the judiciary and its festering dispute with the government over the system under which existing judges appoint judges to constitutional courts, it had said the court does not want to comment on what a few former apex court judges, who were once members of the Supreme Court collegium, are now saying about the mechanism. On December 12, 2018, the collegium headed by then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and comprising Justices Lokur, AK Sikri, SA Bobde and NV Ramana (all retired) had purportedly taken certain decisions with regard to appointment of judges to the top court and proposals for transfer of chief justices and judges of high courts but those resolutions were not uploaded on the SC web site.

## Amit Shah to meet Maha, K'taka CMs on Dec 14 over border row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will meet the chief ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka here on December 14 to soothe tempers on the border dispute between the two states, NCP leader Amol Kolhe said here on Friday. Kolhe was speaking to reporters after a delegation of parliamentarians of the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) -- Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress coalition -- met Shah to air their grievances on the border dispute. The MVA delegation also complained to Shah about the "insulting references" to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari and some other BJP leaders. "The home minister gave us a patient hearing and assured the MVA parliamentarians that he will call chief ministers of Maharashtra and Karnataka on December 14 and work towards finding a cordial solution to the issue," Kolhe, the



Lok Sabha member from Shirur in Maharashtra, told reporters here. On Thursday, the MVA parliamentarians had written to Shah warning that the Karnataka-Maharashtra border row had reached a stage where it could erupt into full-blown violence and had sought his personal intervention. In a letter to Shah, they claimed that "high-handed" actions by Karnataka had "hurt the sentiments" of the Marathi-speaking people in the border districts at a time the matter was in the Supreme Court. Kolhe said the MVA delegation also sought strict action against those leaders and constitutional authorities who had made "insulting references" to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

## Bhupendra Patel quits as Gujarat CM, set for another term

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel tendered his resignation along with his entire cabinet on Friday to pave the way for formation of a new government in the state after the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) landslide victory in the Assembly elections. The BJP registered a historic victory in Gujarat by clinching 156 seats in the 182-member House. Patel, accompanied by Gujarat BJP chief C R Patil and



party's chief whip Pankaj Desai, handed over his resignation to Governor Acharya Devvrat at the Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar. This is just a formality as the party has already announced that Patel will be the next chief

minister of the state ahead of the polls. On Thursday, the state BJP chief had once again announced the Patel would continue to occupy the top post in the state and his swearing-in ceremony would be held on December 12. "The governor had accepted the resignation of the chief minister and his cabinet. Till the formation of the new government, Patel will remain as the caretaker chief minister," Desai told reporters outside Raj Bhavan.

## BJP MLAS MEET TO PICK GUJARAT CM

### Rajnath, Arjun Munda, Yediyurappa to be central observers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior BJP leaders Rajnath Singh, B S Yediyurappa and Arjun Munda were appointed on Friday as central observers for the meeting of the party's new MLAs in Gujarat to pick the next chief minister. The BJP registered a historic victory in Gujarat on Thursday by clinching 156 seats in the 182-member House. The BJP has called a meeting of its newly elected legis-



lators on Saturday morning to elect the legislature party leader who will be the next chief minister. The BJP has announced earlier that Bhupendra Patel will continue as its chief minister in the state.

## Gehlot welcomes SC's observation on National Food Security Act

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court's recent observation that it is the central government's duty to ensure that foodgrains reach the last man under the National Food Security Act. He said the Rajasthan government has been demanding that the Centre expand the scope of the NFSA on the basis of the current population. "It is our culture that nobody goes to sleep empty stomach," the Supreme Court said on December 6 and asked the central government to see to it that foodgrains under the NFSA reach the last man. The court was hearing on its own a public interest matter related to the plight of migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant



lockdowns. Sharing a news report on the court hearing on Twitter, Gehlot said, "We welcome this comment of the Supreme Court. It has been our constant demand from the Centre that the scope of the National Food Security Act be expanded on the basis of the current population. It is the responsibility of every government to provide food to all citizens." The Rajasthan government pro-

vided food to all during the pandemic with the resolve that "no one should sleep hungry", he said. "Even today there are about 900 Indira Rasoi operating in the state where a full meal is available for Rs 8 in which the state government gives a subsidy of Rs 17 per plate," the chief minister said. The government notified the NFSA on September 10, 2013 with the objective of providing food and nutritional security by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. The Act provides for coverage of up to 75 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population for receiving subsidised foodgrains under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

### SOLUTION TO CANCER CRISIS IN INDIA

## Indian-American doctor offers 'Panchamrit'

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

An eminent Indian-American doctor has offered a five-point solution, which he calls Panchamrit, to address the cancer crisis in India. Prominent among them include declaring cancer a notifiable disease, subsidising cancer screening, and establishing a command-and-control centre. "We should get accurate cancer incidence and prevalence data, like in the US. Cancer should be considered a notifi-

able disease. This will help to identify high-density areas and how to allot resources," Dr Dattatreya Nori told PTI in an interview. Recipient of the 2015 Padma Shri award for his contributions to the field of medicine, Dr Nori noted that since the establishment of the National Cancer Institute of India in 2018, significant progress has been made. But this is not enough, he asserted. Compared to the US, we have a late start in creating NCI hence the important pro-



grammes have to be put on a fast track and accelerated path. Worried about the status of cancer disease in India, Dr Nori said he has shared his solution mechanism to decision-makers in India. Observing that the Central

Government and most of the State governments have subsidised cancer care for cancer treatment, he said that these programmes should also include subsidised cancer screening. This will incentivise people to go for free cancer screenings. Recommending the establishment of a cancer command and control (CCC) centre in India, Dr Nori said that this should be the apex body of all the issues related to the fight against cancer in India. The cancer command and control

centre should collect five-year data from the Medicare database from each state and central programme and develop cancer geographical distribution. "Using this data, a CANCER ATLAS should be developed which should show cancer info for every district, State. This should update every five years. This should be a major source of information for all central, state and local authorities to develop their programmes and prioritise their resources," Dr Nori said.

### NEP can build new India that Vivekananda envisioned: TN Governor

PNS ■ COIMBATORE

The New National Educational Policy (NEP) could build a new Bharat (India) and technical and upgraded knowledge like Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Intelligence is necessary for students and development of soci-

ety, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi said on Friday. Inaugurating the Avinashilingam Institute Academic and Administrative Development Centre of Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science for Women, Deemed University through virtual mode, Ravi said, "Our growth

is deeply rooted in our origin and that is to be evoked and taken from Vedas and tradition," he said adding that the centre is based on the vision of Swami Vivekananda. Ravi, who cancelled a visit to the city due to cyclone, said oneness is the aspect that builds and enriches education.







FIRST COLUMN

DIGITAL NOMADISM: AN INSPIRATIONAL TREND

Organisations should enter into agreements with nomads



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Businesses have witnessed unprecedented trends during Covid times. One area that has seen a major revamp is the place of work for employees. The pandemic gave wings to an already fledgling idea of digital nomadism and changed employees' workstations forever.

Apart from the office, a digital nomad can work remotely from any place like a beach, a library or even a foreign country while traveling. According to a survey conducted by MBO Partners, this trend is fast rising. In the US alone, the number of digital nomads increased by 50 per cent to 11 million in 2020 and is expected to grow to a massive 35.7 million by 2025. It is interesting to note that the composition of this group changed from freelancers, independent consultants and entrepreneurs to regular, traditional, office goers with 9-5 work hours.

But who are these digital nomads? A research by Harvard Business Review finds that an average digital nomad is a digitally savvy, well-educated and highly skilled individual employed in tech industry, the creative arena, digital marketing and so on. Although digital nomadism became popular during the pandemic, this trend does not show any signs of slowing down. There are some ways in which employers can cater to this demand for flexible remote working facilities.



Firstly, the flexible policies that can provide freedom to employees can help companies attract talent. Many companies like Airbnb, 3M and Lift have taken cue and have developed and implemented adaptable remote working policies. The second most important requirement to promote digital nomadism is strong technological investments. To allow employees data access, many companies are using cloud-based technologies.

Thirdly, it is easier for companies with open office design concepts to step ahead and transform into a culture of digital nomadism. Although it is difficult for traditional companies with fixed 9-5 working hours and hierarchical seating arrangements to take a leap into remote working, companies which already open work spaces with different and new design elements like lounges, game rooms, project rooms and hotdesks, can help transition from flexible work style to nomadic work style.

So are companies in general ready with their policies to attract digital nomads? It is found that in spite of the growing trend of digital nomadism, only few organisations have formally designed policies for them. Therefore, digital nomads generally travel without their organisations knowing about it. In most cases, the immediate supervisor would have this information, but due to lack of concrete organisational policies would just turn a blind eye. However, this lack of clear policies can leave a firm open to any litigation or regulatory risks.


Generally, a person working in a particular location comes under the jurisdiction of that state/country, and the laws and regulations of the country apply to her irrespective of the location of the employer. So being present in another state or country, there is a possibility that digital nomads unintentionally end up creating the presence of the employer as a permanent establishment exposing it to an array of legal, regulatory, taxation laws and rules. Organisations should realise that the trend of digital nomadism is here to stay. To attract and retain employees, organisations should enter into agreements with digital nomads to clearly specify the terms and conditions of remote working.

Social media is playing an important role in the rise of digital nomadism. Owing to their strong social media presence, digital nomads communicate about their experiences through vlogs, blogs and Instagram accounts, making their lifestyle coveted. Although digital nomadism started out as a choice, it is more of an aspiration now. Organisations must adapt quickly and include the requirements of employees who want to enjoy being free to travel.


*(The author is an associate professor at Amity University)*

# Highlight of COP27 was ‘Loss and Damage Fund’


## Increasing climate risk around the globe requires a more strategic and broader approach to incorporate optimisation of consumption



JAIDEEP MUKHERJEE



VAISHALI MISHRA



GAURAV BHATIANI

(Jaideep and Vaishali work with Smart Power-India) and Gaurav is with RTI International (India).

for making significant progress on climate finance, including the delivery of the promised \$100 billion per year to assist developing countries. With collaboration, the UN negotiations stuck to the consensus-based approach, as reaching an agreement will require “inclusive and active participation from all stakeholders”.

Increasing climate risk requires a more strategic and broader approach to incorporate optimisation of consumption. Doing more with less, adopting circular economy principles and removing incentives for inefficient equipment, business models and lifestyles need to be at the forefront and centre of the conversation.

Inspiration needs to be drawn from the words of

Mahatma Gandhi that “the world has enough for everyone’s needs, but not everyone’s greed”. This applies not only to energy, but also conserving water, building materials, transportation, food and textiles. Definitive progress was made on the long-standing carbon market process, but many operational decisions were postponed for future negotiations.

Further, the negotiations remained confined to a relatively narrow agenda on fossil fuels and therefore missed the opportunity to comprehensively address all sources of GHGs.

While COP26 focused on mitigation, the highlight of COP27 was creation of the ‘Loss and Damage Fund’ to support most vulnerable


countries impacted severely by climate disasters. Countries in Asia (India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Philippines), Africa (Kenya, Malawi, Chad, Niger), Pacific Islands (Fiji, Tuvalu, Kiribati) and Caribbean Islands (Haiti) are amongst the most vulnerable and impacted.

An area of particular attention is the inadequacy of current climate financing models. Global climate finance remains below the third of annual requirements. At COP27, negotiators deliberated on setting a ‘new collective quantified goal on climate finance’ in 2024, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries.

With millions of people in developing nations lacking access to reliable energy and



# Cong, Savarkar and the Karat syndrome



M NAGESWARA RAO

Since the 1980s, Communists have been sneaking into the Congress and allegedly toxifying the minds of the top leadership in the party and the Govt

India's independence movement produced freedom fighters from a kaleidoscope of ideologies, from the radical left to the civilisational right. The freedom that we enjoy today is the result of their cumulative efforts and collective sacrifice. Therefore, every Indian should feel proud of those sons of motherland who gave up the prime of their youth, underwent tremendous hardships, atrocities, and humiliation, with the sole aim to free the motherland from the foreign yoke.


Our current ideological incongruence with theirs should never be a barrier in being grateful and reverential to them. It is, however, understandable that some center-left establishmentarians who came to power immediately after independence could not outgrow their personal animosities. But that is long past. Why should the third generation leaders after independence abhor Hindu-right leaders of the freedom movement who suffered more than the most?

In Hindu thought, except the supreme Brahman even the manifested gods are not perfect, what to speak of humans. And freedom fighters like any human beings had their own follies and defects in their persona. Further, before the might of the State even the strongest break down. Many top leaders of all ideological shades too had at times cozier up to the colonial rulers to avoid adverse personal consequences. And as the British were most brutal to the freedom fighters from the Hindu-right, some of its leaders had to buckle to survive, for you can't fight war unless you are alive. Therefore, maligning them by selectively highlighting certain of their deeds out of context is both unfair and ungrateful.

In any case, what is it that we gain by vilifying those who fought for our freedom? Inexplicably, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is the most prominent Hindu-right freedom fighter who remains the prime target of left-liberals. He was an atheist, a prolific writer, an ideologue, a powerful orator, and a firebrand revolutionary leader. He wrote ‘The Indian War of Independence-1857’ for its 50th anniversary and ‘The Essentials of Hindutva’ among many others. The British banned the former book even before it was published.

For waging war against the colonial government, the British sentenced him to 50 years of imprisonment and transportation for life. He was lodged in the infamous Cellular Jail in the Andamans. The punishment there was inhuman. It ranged from hard labour to extra hours on the grinding mill, to standing handcuffed for a week, to bar-fetters for six months, to confinement in solitary cells, to four days of starvation diet and to cross bars for 10 days, a punishment which compelled the victim to keep his legs apart.

Savarkar endured all that inhuman torture for 11 long years, which others could not even imagine to be for 11 min-



AS OPPOSED TO THE PRAGMATISM OF HIS PREDECESSOR HARKISHEN SINGH SURJEET, PRAKASH KARAT IS EXTRAORDINARILY RIGID IN IDEOLOGY AND VIRULENTLY ANTI-HINDU. NO WONDER, DURING HIS ERA, THE CPI(M) HAD THE SHARPEST DOWNFALL FROM WHICH IT COULD NEVER RECOVER

*(The author is a former Director, CBI. The views expressed are personal)*



utes. Based on his mercy petitions, which was a legal avenue available for all, he was shifted to Ratnagiri Jail and then released to be confined to only Ratnagiri district for 15 years. Was there any prominent leader of freedom movement from any ideological stream who underwent the kind of inhuman sufferings as did Savarkar?

Indira Gandhi celebrated Savarkar. In 1970, her government issued a commemorative postage stamp on him. In a letter of May 20, 1980 for his birth centenary, she said that Savarkar's daring defiance of the British Government has its own important place in the annals of freedom movement. “I wish success to the plans to celebrate the birth centenary of this remarkable son of India,” she said. In 1983, Indira Gandhi got a documentary film on Savarkar made through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. She also gave a grant to the Savarkar memorial in Mumbai. This is a representative example that the old Congress not only did not have any ill-will towards Hindu right or Savarkar but they also celebrated the contribution and sacrifices of the latter.

With the waning of Communism in post 1980s, many leftists sneaked into Congress pastures, bringing their visceral hatred for anything Hindu, including Savarkar, and toxified minds of Congress leadership, including Rahul Gandhi. Their hidden agenda is to transform the Congress into a new Communist party.

For several decades the RSS-BJP used to loathe Gandhi, Nehru, and

several Congress leaders of freedom struggle, but it did not give them any political dividends. As they needed to deepen their political acceptability, they course-corrected and started appropriating leaders from other ideological streams. They built the world's tallest statue of Sardar Patel. They incorporated Gandhi and Ambedkar in their pantheon. They eulogise Indira Gandhi as Maa Durga.

They fete PV Narsimha Rao to gain cross political legitimacy for their own brand of reforms. They installed a statue of Bose under the India Gate canopy. After appropriating Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Jaya Prakash Narayan, they are now even celebrating anti-Hindu Periyar and Jyotiba Phule. Sooner than later, they will also appropriate Nehru. The list is getting longer despite feeble protests of the Congress against BJP stealing their icons.

The results of the general elections, from 1951 to 2019, show that a party (not a coalition) could secure absolute majority only when Hindus consolidate for it. From 1951 to 1971, Hindus were solidly with the Congress for its inclusivity. Emergency distanced them but marginally. The dismal failure of the Janata Party experiment brought them back to the Congress in 1980. The last time Congress secured absolute majority was in 1984 as Hindus hugely consolidated in the wake of tragic assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi.

Thereafter, it secured a near majority in 1991 due to Hindu consolidation in the phases of election

that took place after the terrible assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. The UPA rule from 2004 to 2014 badly alienated Hindus from the Congress as it was widely seen for the first time as anti-Hindu. As a result, Hindus massively rallied behind the BJP as never before, giving it absolute majority for the first time in its history in 2014 and repeated it in 2019. More importantly, the election data indicate that historically Hindus reposed faith in the Congress more than in any other party when it was centrist and not anti-Hindu.

Here is a lesson for the Congress. Prakash Karat is a top apparatchik of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and was its national chief from 2005 to 2015. As opposed to the pragmatism of his predecessor Harkishen Singh Surjeet, Prakash Karat is extraordinarily rigid in ideology and virulently anti-Hindu and had no personal skin in the electoral game. No wonder, during his era the CPI(M) had the sharpest downfall from which it could never recover.

To recap, while on the one hand, Congress is losing its icons to the RSS-BJP, on the other its diatribe for no rhyme or reason against Hindu-right and historical personalities like Savarkar is pushing Hindus away from it. Why is the Congress in self-destructive mode?

Because the Congress leadership is in the intellectual grip of left-liberals, who have no skin in the electoral game. They are doing to the Congress what Prakash Karat did to the CPI(M).

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

HE (CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL) IS A ‘NAMOONA’ FROM DELHI WHO IS A SYMPATHISER OF TERRORISTS. — UP CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH



ELECT THE BJP IF YOU WANT ABUSES, HOOLIGANISM, CORRUPTION AND UGLY POLITICS, BUT SUPPORT US IF YOU WANT SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, ELECTRICITY, WATER AND ROADS. — DELHI CM ARVIND KEJRIWAL



MONEY MATTERS

## Sebi clarifies on 'schemes of arrangement' for entities

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday clarified on the framework pertaining to 'schemes of arrangement' for entities that have only listed their debt securities. Scheme of arrangement is a court-approved agreement between a company and its shareholders or creditors. Sebi, in November, had put in place operational guidelines pertaining to "scheme of arrangement" by entities who have listed their debt securities - non-convertible debentures (NCDs) or non-convertible redeemable preference shares (NCRPS). Under this, the entity that has listed NCDs or NCRPS and which intends to undertake a scheme of arrangement or is involved in a scheme of arrangement would file the draft scheme with stock exchanges for obtaining a no-objection letter, before filing such scheme with any court or tribunal. Further, the exchange would have to forward such draft schemes to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).



## SBI board to take call on raising capital via bonds

State Bank of India (SBI) said its board will meet on December 14 to decide on raising capital through Tier I bonds. As per a regulatory filing, SBI said it will seek approval for raising of Additional Tier 1 (AT 1) capital by way of issuance of Basel III compliant debt instruments in INR and / or any other convertible currency through a public offer or private placement to Indian and / or overseas investors up to March 31, 2024. The fundraise would help the bank grow its loan book. Earlier this week, SBI announced that its personal banking advances, excluding high value home loans, have crossed the Rs 5 lakh crore-mark. The country's largest lender took a year to book the last Rs 1 lakh crore of advances, as against over 15 months for the previous Rs 1 lakh crore and over 30 months for the Rs 1 lakh crore before that.



## Govt selects 67 entries with Rs 42,500 crore investment potential under PLI scheme

The government has selected a total of 67 entries with an investment potential of Rs 42,500 crore under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for specialty steel. The proposed investments are expected to generate 70,000 job opportunities and add 26 million tonnes of specialty steel capacity in the country. A total of 79 applications were received from 35 small and large steel-making companies with investment commitments totalling Rs 46,000 crore to add downstream capacity of 28 million tonnes (MT) by 2030, the steel ministry said in a statement. After several extensions, the final window for participation in the PLI scheme closed on September 15, 2022. "Sixty-seven applications from 30 companies have been selected. This will attract committed investment of Rs 42,500 crore with a downstream capacity addition of 26 MT and employment generation potential of 70,000," the ministry said. Applicants include all major steel players like Tata Steel, JSW Steel, JSP, AMNS India and SAIL, a senior steel ministry official had earlier told.



# 5G services started in 50 towns across 14 States/UTs as on Nov 26: MoS Devusinh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

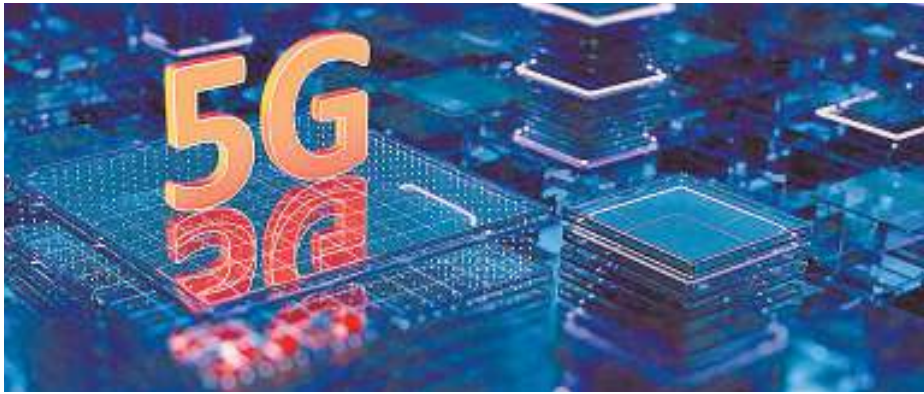
The fifth-generation or 5G telecom services have started in 50 towns distributed over 14 states/union territories as of November 26, Parliament was informed on Friday.

The Minister of State for Communications, Devusinh Chauhan, in a written reply in Rajya Sabha noted that telecom operators have started providing 5G services in the country from October 1, 2022.

"Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have started providing 5G services in the country from 01.10.2022 onwards and as of 26.11.2022, 5G services have started in 50 towns distributed over 14 States/ Union Territories," Chauhan said.

The minister was responding to a question on several glitches in 5G services and poor network.

Further, he said that as per



the bid document for auction of access spectrum and license conditions, the minimum roll-out obligations are required to be met over a period of five years in a phased manner from the date of allocation of spectrum. The government has taken several policy initiatives to facilitate faster and smooth rollout of telecom network

(including 5G) and expansion of telecommunication infrastructure in the country. These include making sufficient spectrum available for mobile services through auction, allowing spectrum sharing and trading among others.

To another question, Chauhan said that Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL)

floated tender in October 2022 for its requirement of one lakh 4G sites.

"BSNL floated the Expression of Interest (EOI) on January 1, 2021 for the Proof of Concept (PoC). The PoC has been completed with few pending points. 5G Non Standalone Access (NSA) upgrade has also been kept as a deferred feature

in BSNL's EOI," Chauhan said.

Moreover, the government has reserved spectrum for BSNL for providing 5G services, he said. To a separate question on the losses of BSNL and MTNL (Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd), the minister said that since inception, the total net loss of BSNL is Rs 57,671 crore while that of MTNL is Rs 14,989 crore as on March 31, 2022.

"The reasons for losses of BSNL and MTNL are high employee cost over the years, debt burden, stiff competition in the market and lack of 4G services (except on a limited basis in certain areas)," the minister said.

BSNL and MTNL have become EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation) positive since the financial year 2020-21, as a result of 2019 revival plan.

## G20 Presidency offers India great opportunity to showcase its strength

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said India is one of the fastest growing economy in the world and stressed that the G20 Presidency offers the country a great opportunity to showcase its strength to the world.

India on December 1, officially assumed the presidency of G-20, a grouping of developed and developing nations.

"We have a dream to make the Indian economy a 5 trillion dollar economy. India is one of the fastest growing economy in the world and there are a lot of opportunities available in India, the road transport and highways minister said.

He was addressing the 14th Annual International Conference on 'New Horizons Beckons' organised by Bahrain Chapter of ICAI (BCICA1). Today a lot of



investors across the world, he said, are keenly interested to invest in India.

The large pool of young and talented engineers are the biggest strength for India, the minister said. Currently, the size of the Indian automobile industry is Rs 7.5 lakh crore and within five years, it will be

scaled up to Rs 15 lakh crore.

"We will be the number one manufacturing automobile hub in the world," the minister stressed.

Stating that the Indian economy is progressing and developing well, he said that the country is the destination for good investment.

## All-India average wholesale prices of wheat up 22 % so far this year: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Average wholesale price of wheat rose 22 per cent across India to Rs 2,721 per quintal in November from Rs 2,228 per quintal in January this year, the government data showed.

In a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha, agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said, "The prices of agricultural produce including wheat are determined by the demand and supply conditions in the market, international prices etc."

As per the data, all-India monthly average wholesale prices of wheat stood at Rs 2,228 per quintal in January, Rs 2,230 in February, Rs 2,339 in



March, Rs 2,384 in April, Rs 2,352 in May, Rs 2,316 in June, Rs 2,409 in July, Rs 2,486 in August, Rs 2,516 in September, Rs 2,571 in October and Rs 2,721 per

quintal in November. Prices of October and November are provisional. The Centre had imposed a ban on wheat exports in May to control prices.

## MIAL sets up 6 fast EV charging stations at Mumbai airport

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai International Airport said on Friday it has set up six fast Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations at the facility as part of its plan to become carbon neutral. These public charging stations, installed at Terminal-1 and Terminal-2 will cater to both the passengers as well as the guests visiting the CSMIA, Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) said in a statement.

It also said that Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport Ltd (CSMIA) has commissioned these charging facilities at the multi-level car parking at Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 as well as on the airside.

## Sensex surrenders early gains as IT stocks crack

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex declined nearly 390 points on Friday, pressured by heavy selling in IT and energy stocks despite a positive trend in global markets.

Rising crude oil prices and relentless foreign capital outflows further weighed on sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened strong but came under severe selling pressure to close 389.01 points or 0.62 per cent lower at 62,181.67. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty declined 112.75 points or 0.61 per cent to 18,496.60.

HCL Tech was the top loser in the Sensex pack, skidding 6.72 per cent, followed by Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Wipro, TCS and Reliance

Industries.

On the other hand, Nestle India, Titan, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's, IndusInd Bank and ITC were among the gainers, advancing up to 2.24 per cent. "Today's downfall in the domestic market was sparked by IT stocks extending their losses after warning of a potential slowdown in business on global recession fears. This was further aggravated by banks losing their grip as PSBs suffered heavy sell-offs."

"However, global bourses were largely positive, although the Fed is expected to raise interest rates by 50 basis points next week," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. On a weekly basis, the Sensex lost 686.83 points or 1.09 per cent, while the Nifty shed 199.50 points or



1.06 per cent. "Markets seems to be consolidating for last few sessions as participants are lightning their position ahead of crucial US Fed meeting next week. US PPI data to be

released later on Friday as well as US CPI data on 13th December would be keenly watched as they would influence the Fed's interest rate decision.

## TVS Motor's Singapore arm to acquire EV tech

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TVS Motor Company on Friday said its Singapore-based subsidiary has inked a pact to acquire Electric Vehicle (EV) related technology and assets in Germany.

The company, through its wholly-owned subsidiary TVS Motor (Singapore) Pte Ltd (TVSM Singapore) has signed an agreement to acquire the assets, TVS Motor Company said in a statement. TVS Singapore will be acquiring the assets through its subsidiary BBT Vermögensverwaltungs GmbH (name proposed to be changed to Celerity Motor GmbH), it added.

## Gold falls Rs 30; silver jumps Rs 558

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices fell Rs 30 to Rs 54,305 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid appreciation in rupee, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 54,335 per 10 grams.

Silver, however, jumped Rs 558 per kg to Rs 67,365 per kilogram. The rupee appreciated 19 paise to 82.19 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday on broad dollar weakness and a firm trend in domestic equities. "Domestic market gold prices were a bit negative following a stronger rupee," said Dilip Parmar,



Research Analyst at HDFC Securities. In the international market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,791.9 per ounce while silver was up at USD 23.07 per ounce. "Gold and silver price inched higher amidst the fall in dollar index, as the

investors focusing on key US inflation data and Federal Reserve's rate hike decision due next week," Navneet Damani, Senior VP Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said.

## Forex kitty soars US\$ 11 bn to US\$ 561.16 billion

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves soared by USD 11.02 billion to reach USD 561.162 billion for the week ended December 2, Reserve Bank data showed on Friday.

This is the fourth consecutive week of rise in the reserves. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had grown by USD 2.9 billion to USD 550.14 billion. For the week ended November 11, the forex kitty had jumped by USD 14.72 billion in its second fastest weekly acceleration ever.

In October 2021, the country's foreign exchange kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments.

Foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, increased by USD 9.694 billion to USD 496.984 billion during the week to December 2, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI on Friday.

## Rupee gains 10 paise to close at 82.28 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 10 paise to close at 82.28 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, tracking the weakening of the American currency in the overseas market.

Forex traders said muted domestic equities and foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiments and restricted the gains.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.30 and touched an intra-day high of 82.08 and a low of 82.33 against the greenback.

It finally settled at 82.28, registering a rise of 10 paise over its previous close of 82.38.

Forex traders said investors awaited the outcome of a slew of central bank meetings next week for additional clues on the pace of rate hikes.

"Focus will now be shifting to the FOMC policy statement. The central bank could raise

rates by 50 bps and maintain a less hawkish stance," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex & Bullion Analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"We expect the USD-INR (Spot) to trade sideways and quote in the range of 82.20 and 82.80," Somaiya added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.06 per cent to 104.71.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures rose 1.22 per cent to USD 77.08 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 389.01 points or 0.62 per cent to end at 62,181.67, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 112.75 points or 0.61 per cent to 18,496.60.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital markets on Thursday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,131.67 crore, according to exchange data.



# NTT India to invest US\$ 2 billion in data centres

PNS ■ KOLKATA

NTT India has earmarked around USD 2 billion to boost information and communications technology infrastructure in the country over the next three-four years, aiming to tap the rise in data consumption, a top company official said.

New data centres, cloud computing, submarine cable landing stations and solar parks are key areas where NTT India's capex is planned, he said. "We will invest USD 500 million annually for the next four years in India. This is over and above the USD 800 million we have already infused in the last two years into ICT infrastructure,"

NTT India MD & Sr EVP (Global Data Centres & Marine Cables) Sharad Sanghi told PTI. He was speaking on the sidelines of the ABP Group-organised INFOCOM 2022.

The Indian arm of Japanese IT services major NTT Data Inc is also exploring the idea of setting up a submarine cable landing station in Kolkata, Sanghi said. The company will roll out submarine cable landing stations, which are physical locations where one or more submarine telecommunication cables connect to land-based power and networking infrastructure, in Mumbai and Chennai by next year.

"Globally, all the NTT group companies offering various ser-



vices are being merged effective from October 1 as NTT Data Inc. In India, internal operations will be managed by a single company under NTT Data Inc.

However, separate legal entities here will continue to exist,"

he said, when asked about the impact of its global consolidation in India. NTT is the biggest data centre player in India, having launched the country's first homegrown public cloud computing, the company official claimed. "At present, we

have 12 data centres in India with a 150-MW IT load, spread over 2.2 million sq ft. We have decided to build nine more data centres, which will double our capacity," he said. On renewables, the company official said NTT India would install 350

MW of solar energy, as the power load of its data centers are expected to touch 400 MW in a few years. "We already have about 100 MW of installed solar power in Maharashtra, and have signed agreements to the tune of 350 MW with various solar power companies," Sanghi said. In Kolkata, he said the company has procured 7.5 acres of land at Silicon Valley' in New Town, where a hyperscale data centre campus will come up in phases. Elaborating on the submarine cable landing stations, Sanghi said:

"Currently, the process for landing in Mumbai and Chennai is under progress and it will be completed by 2023.



# Varun Sharma wants to be known by his characters' names before his own


After five years in Hindi film industry, actor Varun Sharma, who is popularly known for his roles as Choocha from *Fukrey* and Sexa from *Chhichhore*, said that his biggest win would be being known by his characters' names more than his own.

Talking about his most loved character Choocha, that's also become his colloquial name, the actor said, "Our common madness is what drove the film and while shooting it this time around, I realised, we haven't changed a bit. The energy of the *Fukrey* set is still as mad and unmatched."

"There is such great love for my characters like Choocha (*Fukrey*) and Sexa (*Chhichhore*) which is so beautiful for me. I want to be known by my character names more than my own name and that will be my biggest win. It's the toughest to put a smile on anyone's face and I am glad I make people laugh."

Now that the actor is busy with *Cirkus* promotions, he said, "I am ending the year with the biggest film of my life. It's a special experience working with Rohit Shetty Sir and Ranveer Singh. With *Fukrey* finishing 5 years now in the midst of *Cirkus* promotions, I am just amazed at how far life has come and how much love has come my way."

"I am eternally grateful for it all. My comments section of the post is flooded with requests for the third part. I've finished our shoot and the film will be out soon. The film is a piece of our hearts and I can't wait for the world to watch it."



# Makers of *Pathaan* to drop first song *Besharam Rang* on Dec 12

The makers of *Pathaan* are all set to drop the first song *Besharam Rang* from the film on December 12. The track is set to present Deepika Padukone at her best and showcase the chemistry between her and Shah Rukh Khan.

Director Siddharth Anand reveals, "Yes, it is true that the first song of our film is releasing on Monday. It's called *Besharam Rang* and it will present two of the biggest superstars of our generation Shah Rukh Khan and Deepika Padukone in their hottest avatar yet."

He adds, "For us, this one is the party anthem of the season that people have been waiting for and I'm confident that it will stay a party anthem for many, many years to come. So, I want to tell the fans and audience to patiently wait for the song when it releases on Monday morning! The wait for this one will be worth every second from now!"

Padukone and Khan are one of the biggest on-screen pairings in the history of Indian cinema given their epic blockbusters *Om Shanti Om*, *Chennai Express* and *Happy New Year*. The two sizzled in Spain as leaked photos from the sets of *Besharam Rang* took the internet by storm.

The duo shot this hugely mounted song in Mallorca. They then headed to Cadiz and Jerez in Spain where they wrapped the schedule on March 27.

*Pathaan* is set to release on January 25, 2023 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.



# Michelle Yeoh To star in *Wicked* movies as Madame Morrible

Actress Michelle Yeoh has joined the star-studded cast of Jon M. Chu's *Wicked* movies.

The *Everything Everywhere All At Once* star will play Madame Morrible, the headmistress of Crage Hall at Shiz University, reports 'Variety'.

Chu's two-part feature adaptation is headlined by Ariana Grande as Glinda and Cynthia Erivo as Elphaba. The Universal Pictures films are set for release on Christmas in 2024 and 2025.

*Wicked* is a prequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, telling the story of how Elphaba turned into the Wicked Witch of the West and how Glinda became the Good Witch.

"We decided to give ourselves a bigger canvas and make not just one *Wicked* movie but two," Chu wrote in a statement when the studio announced the adaptation would come in two parts.

"With more space, we can tell the story of *Wicked* as it was meant to be told while bringing even more depth and surprise to the journeys for these beloved characters."

'Variety' also exclusively reported that 'Bridgerton' star Jonathan Bailey will play Fiyero and Broadway veteran Ethan Slater, who scored a Tony nomination for *SpongeBob SquarePants: The Musical*, will take on the role of Boq.

Jeff Goldblum continues to be in talks to play the Wizard, but a final deal has not been signed, according to sources.



# Brendan Fraser Rejected *George Of The Jungle 2* over Disney's low offer

Actor Brendan Fraser's 1997 comedy favourite *George of the Jungle* spawned a 2003 direct-to-DVD sequel in which Fraser was replaced by actor Christopher Showerman. Several characters comment on the actor switch in *George of the Jungle 2*, with one joking that Disney was too cheap to hire Fraser for a second time.

Fraser recently confirmed to Entertainment Weekly that he was approached for *George of the Jungle 2* but turned down the offer because of the salary, reports 'Variety'.

"I think *George* got a remake, and they built a joke into it that the studio was too cheap to hire me, which wasn't inaccurate," Fraser said.

"I was approached. I can't remember what I was doing at the time, but I felt like I wanted to go do *The Quiet American* instead with Michael Caine, and shoot the first Western film in Vietnam ever, directed by Phillip Noyce, to tell an infinitely American story," Fraser continued.

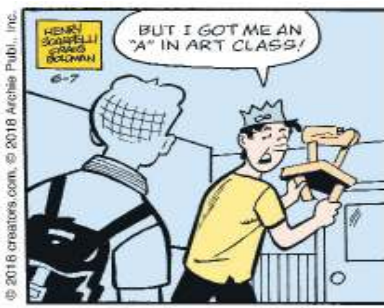


"I'm always making diverse choices, and, hopefully, that keeps me and an audience interested. With a bit of distance, I think they've all cumulatively led up to the place I'm in now."

Without Fraser, the *George of the Jungle* franchise went straight to DVD and more or less flamed out. Choosing to go do *The Quiet American* instead was a smart move, as the 2003 drama earned critical acclaim and netted Michael Caine an Oscar nomination for best actor.


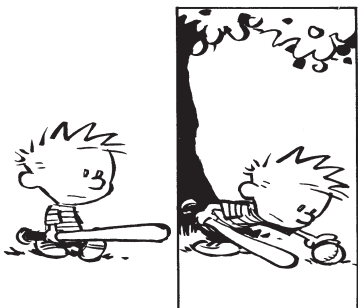
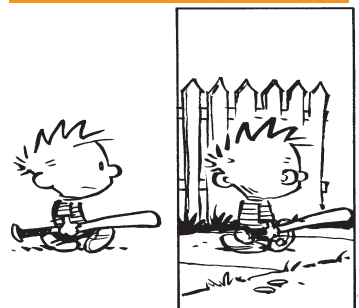







## ARCHIE






## CALVIN AND HOBBS






## GARFIELD




## NANCY




## GINGER MEGGS



## REALITY CHECK



## SPEED BUMP



## CROSSWORD

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### Yesterday's solution

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

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

## ACROSS

- Baking instructions
- Factual
- Play this with two sticks
- Rub to a shine
- Young hen
- Fake document
- Extra-intelligent person
- Finished
- Playthings
- Almost

## DOWN

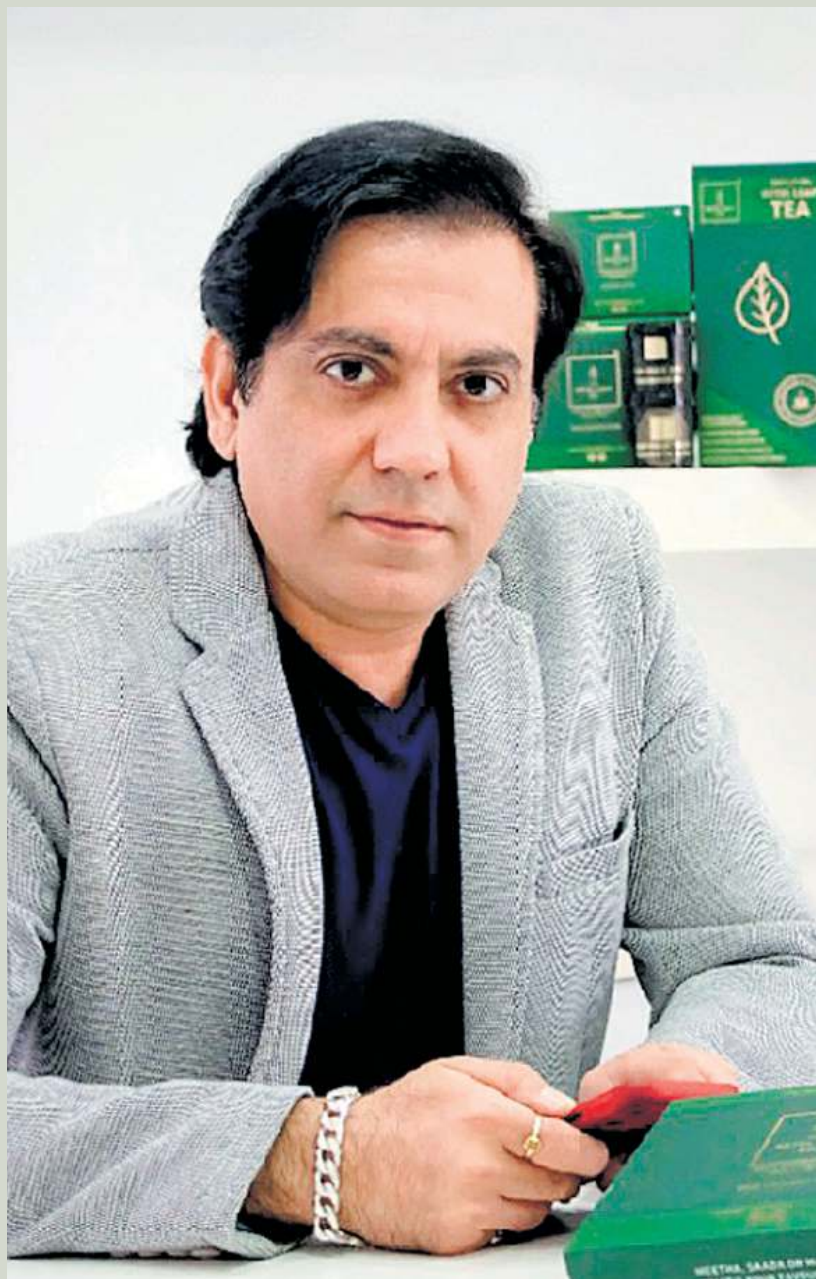
- Travel by horse
- Captured
- Water from the sky
- Breathe out

### SOLUTION

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H	A	L	E	V	E	P	L	A
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F	O	R	T	U	N	A	T	E



## Riding the wave of modernity while keeping tradition in mind



TEJAL SINHA

The love that the Indians have for the age-old tradition of having paan or betel leaf is inseparable. The tradition of paan has a history of over 5000 years. Be it ancient Indian mythology or Ayurveda, it can be found everywhere with its effective medicinal values.

In fact, one of Bollywood's most iconic songs from *Don* by Shahenshah of the B-Town Amitabh Bachchan says, "Khaike paan Banaras waala khul jaaye band akal ka taala" (After eating the Banaras paan, the mind's lock opens).

You might have guessed by now what we are going to talk about today. But, hey, no! We're not going to talk about the history or benefits, but take you through the journey of how Prem Raheja's real-life incidents made him come up with the age-old tradition of paan with a modern twist.

Around six years ago, Prem envisioned the idea to start The Betel Leaf Co. But we wondered, how did he get the idea? He begins to share, "Prior to this, I had a couple of other businesses due to which I had to travel across the world. Due to the different timings and odd hours of a meal, I suffered from a severe bloating issue which was uncomfortable most of the day. When I came back, I went to a dietitian/nutritionist. They had later

come to the conclusion to have some basic changes in diet and bring in food. One of the dietitians had also suggested that I have a paan after every meal, and that's actually where the journey started."

It was similar to how we do not get the same food taste at every restaurant, it was the same when we go to have paan. And, every time that he was not personally present, they would simply put in any ingredient that was not supposed to be used. This made him want to have a saada paan, but he had to reverse the customization.

In a nutshell, even if women want to have paan, which is a male-dominated purchase, they cannot just go and buy it, as was also the case in Prem's case. And, also with the improper packaging of paan, it triggered him to come up with The Betel Leaf Co.

"The most important question that was raised was how do we take it to the people in a more comfortable place with a better experience. Then we bought various flavours because we are simply not in the business of deciding what food people eat, but can we relive this whole Indian tradition of bringing out the paan, which in the past the Rajas Maharajas gave paan to only people who enjoyed their dinner with."

They offer over 45 flavours, including chocolate, coffee, and rasmalai. In

The tradition of eating paan or betel leaf has a long history. In fact, having paan also has various health benefits. In regards to this, *The Pioneer* connects with Prem Raheja, founder of The Betel Leaf Co., India's first online FSSAI-certified paan delivery company that redefines the traditional Indian dessert paan into a new avatar. He talks to us about his association with Hyderabad and more in this week's segment of Hyderabadond.

HYDERABOND

fact, their products also include paan-infused chocolate bars and ice creams, with an aim to bring the essence and benefits of paan to the whole family. But that's not it! Tea lovers, they have something for you all too. Headquartered in Bengaluru, they have stores in different cities, including Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Mumbai, Gurgaon, and Delhi. How could we not remember the experience in the city of pearls? And during this, we found out that Prem has always been associated with Hyderabad.

"We started the business in Hyderabad over 13 months back, and we currently have three stores: Sindhi Colony, Banjara Hills and Hitech city. We chose Hyderabad because my maternal side family has been in Hyderabad and I spent most of my childhood summer holidays in Hyderabad. As a kid also, we saw that the city had a great paan eating crave and I've had the maximum number of paans even as a kid here. So, what

better than going into a city which has its heritage and Hyderabadis known for the city of nawabs and what can be more appropriate than the city. It's been an exciting journey," he says and continues, "Every city, every consumer is different. In Hyderabad, we didn't experience different questions from people but definitely kind of recognition that we've got from the city which knows its paan really well."

"Hyderabad is a fabulous city, and there's a lot of opportunities and more visibility that it can give us in terms of recognition, consistency, customers wanting to re-order with us, and being an important part of the weddings. If the love and motivation that we've got here weren't there, we wouldn't open three stores in such a short span."

In terms of future expansion, they intend to not only open over 100 stores by December 2023, but also to open international markets and experience centres in every major city in the country.

## 'I've learned to keep my eyes and ears open to new things'

AMARTYA SMARAN

DJ-turned-singer Sahil Sharma aka Zaeden is on a roll with all his releases doing extremely well on popular streaming services.

The music producer started off his career pretty young and worked his way up to reach the top spot. Zaeden has been a constant at the Tomorrowland Festival and has grown immensely popular in the indie music scene with multiple collaborations with various successful artists. Upon its release, his 2021 album *Genesis 1:1* opened to a great start. With his level of consistency, it looks like the millions of views on the singer's YouTube channel (Zaeden) aren't going to slow down soon.

*Lagda Na* has a special place in Zaeden's heart as it is his first Punjabi song. Throwing oneself into uncharted waters is a trait that's unique to the *Lagda Na* singer and every time he did that in his career, he's always succeeded.

"Working on a Punjabi song was always in the pipeline for me, the main aim for me was building towards the right track to transition from the Dreamy Bedroom Pop vibe that *Genesis 1:1* is to the Urban Punjabi, R&B vibe of *Lagda Na*. Working with Stunna on this track was a breeze, he understood the idea so well and it shows how the track has a very groovy, smooth flow, packed with excellent lyrics written by Prince The Artist Singh and me. The team on this really glued all the elements together," told the singer.

Explaining to us why it took him so long to come up with an original Punjabi song, the *Genesis 1:1* creator commented, "It's always been an experimental process for me when it comes to music, more than experimental I feel like it goes through a rigorous personal quality check process and when it makes it through that I eventually get more ears to catch reactions to it. It's the same with making new Punjabi music. I've been listening to a lot of it and making a lot of tracks, so hopefully, the Punjabi music gap will start filling up very soon."

Not being able to find the right kind of motivation and inspiration is a nightmare for any artist. It is difficult to make do with such situ-

ations where everything looks dull. Now, how does Zaeden find artistic inspiration and who are his idols? "I have grown up listening to a lot of music by Kishore Kumar. Thanks to my dad who is a singer himself and a huge fan of Kishore Kumar. I was and still am a big fan of desi music coming out of the UK - Jay Sean, Raghav, Juggy D, Rishi Rich, I've heard a lot of that music while growing up. As a singer, these artists have hugely influenced me and have played a big part in my musical choices. I think it's a mix of my industry friends and some personal favourite artists but my source of inspiration is never the same. I've learned to keep my eyes and ears open to new stuff, so it's a mix of a lot of elements and experiences," said the music producer.

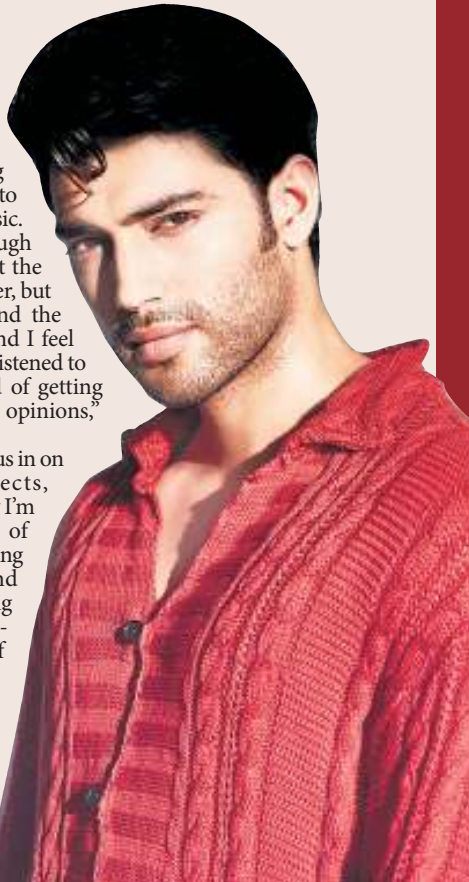
From aspiring to be an artist to witnessing huge crowds at his concerts, Zaeden has experienced it all, but the best is yet to come.

He is all set to share the stage along with well-renowned artist Post Malone on December 10 at the Zomato Feeding India Concert. Sharing how excited he is about the event, the young music sensation expressed, "It just makes me feel blessed honestly. While starting off, I had no idea that I would reach where I am today. I was just a normal boy making music in his bedroom, fascinated by the journey of all the musicians whose music I heard back then. Getting to perform and travel around the world is something I always dreamed of which fuels my energy to keep creating more music and working hard toward fulfilling my personal goals. I'm extremely excited about getting the opportunity to open for one of the biggest international artists in the world! The artist lineup looks insane. Partnering with Feeding India is also super special as it supports a really important cause of eradicating malnutrition and hunger in India. This opportunity to perform at the concert not only feeds my aspirational soul but also feeds my soul on a human level and I'm really looking forward to this experience."

People are often a little too glad about a few decisions that they've taken over others. Our guest says switching from a DJ to a full-time singer was one of the best choices he's made as an artist. "When I decided to switch from a DJ to become a singer, everyone around me had a lot of apprehensions with regards to my career.

But now that I look back, I'm proud of the fact that I took the risk of switching from DJing and producing music to singing and writing music. The decision was a tough one to make as I was at the prime of my DJing career, but I believed in myself and the music I was making, and I feel very proud today that I listened to my inner voice instead of getting influenced by others' opinions," opined the singer.

In conclusion, letting us in on his upcoming projects, Zaeden says, "Currently I'm working on a bunch of new music, experimenting with new sounds, and exploring some exciting collaborations with several artists I've dreamed of working with. Hopefully, they will all be out soon and you'll be the first ones to hear it! As for my next album, I don't have a date yet but I'm definitely working toward it."



DJ-turned-singer Zaeden has been one of the most loved new-gen singers. In an exclusive talk with *The Pioneer*, Sahil Sharma aka Zaeden opens up about his first Punjabi song, his artistic inspiration, and performing at the Zomato Feeding India Concert today.

## Busting myths around infertility

Getting pregnant can be overwhelming for every couple. However, the attempts to conceive take them on a roller coaster of emotions. Many men and women struggle to get that happy news and wait for the day to see two pink lines on the pregnancy test strip. That's when questions about infertility conceal the mind.

Infertility is a highly complex condition that surrounds a lot of confusion. Doctors having differences in opinions makes it even worse for couples to understand what they are going through in their life.

In medical terms, infertility is considered when a couple attempts to conceive for a complete year, yet fails to get pregnant. When the woman is older than 35 years of age, this time reduces to six months for diagnosis and a woman who is above 40 years of age requires an immediate evaluation.

**It is a woman's problem**

This is one of the most common terms we hear in our society - infertility is only associated with women. According to the facts - around 32% of infertility cases are associated with problems in men, 32% with disorders in women, 17% are attributable to both and 19% of cases are unexplained. Generally, in today's modern era, it happens when both partners do not consume a diet that offers sufficient nutrients for eggs to mature and form a zygote.

**There's no biological clock ticking**

In the fascinating world of social media, people easily get influenced by what they see. The majority of women from high-profile societies who get pregnant after 40 years of age and show up on social media have used an external conception method. There are significant risks associated with women's and

babies' health if they are in advanced reproductive age. A woman's egg production and quality start to decrease after 30 years of age. It is imperative to move according to the biological clock.



**Infertility is psychological**

Couples trying to conceive for a long but not getting that good news encounter stress. It is certainly common for infertility to cause stress but that does not make it a psychological problem.

Scientifically, it is not the root cause but it can impede the process of conceiving. Thus, the couples need to relax as infertility further causes anxiety, depression and other disorders that can make the pregnancy even harder.

**Having one child means infertility cannot occur in future**

If a couple already has a child that does not mean they can never experience infertility in the future. Even though they conceived naturally during their first pregnancy, they still can experience infertility in later pregnancy. Many couples who plan for their second pregnancy can face problems in conceiving the second time. Hence, it is always necessary to follow a healthy diet and physically active lifestyle because infertility does not only affect the ability to get pregnant, but it also leads to certain conditions that affect the couple's physical and mental health.

**Every infertility has the same solution**

Family planning and conceiving bring down to the personal choices of couples. With the easy accessibility to IVF centers, it has become a common myth in society - IVF is the only solution to infertility. That's absolutely a myth. Every couple has a different story, bodies, reproductive abilities and different stages of infertility. It can happen due to many reasons and IVF cannot prove to be the sole or right solution for every infertile couple.

(The writer, Dr. Pooja Choudhary, is the senior consultant- obstetrics & gynecology, (MBBS, MD) at Apollo Cradle & Children's Hospital - Nehru Place, New Delhi)



# INDIA STARE AT CLEAN SWEEP

PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

A struggling Indian team, severely depleted by a spate of on-field injuries and fitness-related problems, will be determined to avoid the ignominy of a clean sweep against Bangladesh in the final ODI of the three-match series here on Saturday.

Bangladesh, riding on two contrasting yet brilliant knocks from Mehidy Hasan Miraz, have already sealed the series after winning the first two matches but if Litton Das' men can blank the 'Men in Blue' 3-0, it will be a historic first in the country's cricket.

Not only will it be an icing on the cake for the hosts but also significantly dent the visiting team's confidence ahead of the Test series, starting at this very venue in less than a week's time (December 14).

For India, there were 20 cricketers originally available for this series since there was a very short turnaround time between the first ODI in Bangladesh and the last game in New Zealand as some players in both squads were common.

But call it a cruel twist of fate as within a week things have gone from bad to worse and they only have 14 fit and available players to choose from for the final game.

Such has been the plight that Kuldeep Yadav has been flown into Chattogram on SOS basis as the Indian bowling attack looks thin on experience. The left-arm wrist spinner with 118 wickets from 72 ODIs will be the most experienced bowler in the line-up.

Regular skipper Rohit Sharma sustained a left thumb dislocation and has flown back home. Up and coming pacer Kuldeep Sen suffered a back injury after playing his first international game. Seamer Deepak Chahar continued his saga of breaking down in almost all the series he has played since his comeback



from a long lay-off.

Add to this, Axar Patel suffered a hit in the ribs and missed the first game while Rishabh Pant, who flew all the way from New Zealand, reportedly had a niggle and had to be rested for excessive workload prior to this series. In fact, there will be two forced changes in the playing eleven with Rohit and Chahar already unavailable.

It is there to be seen whether India bring in Ishan Kishan into the playing XI as an opener or stand-in skipper KL Rahul, who is now a

designated middle-order batter-keeper in this format, decides to promote himself just like during the tour of South Africa.

The other option is continuing with Virat Kohli-Shikhar Dhawan combination and get someone like Rahul Tripathi, who can also bowl some cutters at mid 120 clicks, in the playing XI. If the team management goes for a pure batter rather than a utility player, then the stylish Rajat Patidar could get his first game for India.

In case of Chahar's replace-

ment, there isn't a back-up pacer available and the team might not have an option but to fall back to all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed, who could be the sixth bowling option.

India's five-pronged bowling attack will be Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umran Malik, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel.

With no Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja, the Indian bowling unit's performance at the back-end has been far from impressive.

While a full-strength Bangla-

desh will start as favourites in the final game, the bigger worry will be KL Rahul, the skipper.

His record, save in the ODI series win against a below-par Zimbabwe, has been dismal and the last thing he would need is another clean sweep defeat against his name after the tour of South Africa.

Till now, there has been little or no indication that Rahul is a long-time future India captain, not having displayed any above average leadership acumen in the matches that he has captained so far.

## I've been working on my power-hitting: Sundar

PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

He is not the quintessential power-hitter. But, keeping in mind the Indian team's requirements ahead of next year's World Cup, Washington Sundar is working 'specifically' on how to hit the ball long and hard.

Known to rely more on timing and placement, Washington has also played a few blinders, the most recent coming in the tour of New Zealand. And who can forget his 14-ball 40 against Rajasthan Royals in the IPL, representing Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"That's the role I have been getting in the last few years or so. That's what that particular position demands, and I have working quite specifically that way.

"Whatever positions demand me to do, I have been practising that way. I have been working in those specific manners," Washington said on the eve of the third ODI against Bangladesh.

Washington is happy that his hard work is reaping dividends.

"I am glad that all the hard work has been coming good in the last few months or so. Hopefully, I will continue to do really well in the coming months and years as well."

The all-rounder, who has picked up five wickets in the two preceding matches of the series which India have already lost, is looking to be the player for all situations and positions.

"It was a great opportunity for me in last game. With the World Cup next year, I want to be the player who could play in any situation, in any sort of combinations, and wherever the team needs. To win games, wherever they ask me to play, I will play. That's the kind of player I want to be.

"I want to be able to contribute to my potential, contribute in a way that the team gets to win most of the games, and eventually, be very, very successful in the World Cup. I just want to be in the present and keep doing well,



keep getting better in every aspect of the game."

India lost both their matches in Bangladesh from winning positions, having the hosts at 136 for nine in a chase of 187 in the opener and then reducing them to 69 for six before letting them off the hook to make 271 for seven in the second match.

"To be honest, we had our opportunities in both the games. First game, they needed about 50 runs to win with one wicket and we had a good opportunity. And even the last game, we had a good opportunity.

"In the first innings, they were 70 for six and with the way Shreyas and Axar were batting, we were going to win quite convincingly and Rohit bhai, the kind of knock he played, it was unreal.

"It was just about winning those critical moments, probably doing one or two things better here and there. We will look to end the one-day series on a high."



## India 'A' crush B'desh 'A' by an innings & 123 runs

PTI ■ SYLHET

Left-arm orthodox spinner Saurabh Kumar ran through Bangladesh 'A' batting line-up as India 'A' clinched the two 'Test' series with a commanding innings and 123-run victory in the second and final game here on Friday.

With his performance, Saurabh has staked a strong claim to replace an injured Ravindra Jadeja in the Indian Test squad for the upcoming series against Bangladesh, starting December 14.

Having conceded a mammoth 310-run first innings lead, Bangladesh 'A' performed even worse in their second innings, being shot out for a paltry 187 in 79.5 overs.

In the first innings, Bangladesh were a shade better, scoring 252 and India replied with a massive 562, riding on skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran's superb 157.

Saurabh, who also had a five-wicket haul in the second innings of the drawn first 'Test', took 6 for 74 in 30 overs to become one of the architects of the series win.

The Uttar Pradesh spinner also finished with a haul of 15

scalps in two games to emerge as the top wicket-taker in the series. Bangladesh 'A', with seasoned former skipper Mominul Haque in their ranks, were expecting to bat it out for three sessions and eke out a draw.

However, Mominul (6) was smartly snapped up behind stumps by keeper Kona Bharat in the fifth over of the morning and there was no looking back for India 'A'.

Opener Shadman Islam (93 not out) did fight it out and also had a 54-run fourth wicket stand with Shahadat Hossain (29) but Saurabh broke that stand with Yash Dhull taking a catch.

Navdeep Saini (2/54 in 16 overs), who was given an extended spell because of his possible call-up to the senior squad, then got two wickets in three deliveries to send half of the home side packing. He first trapped Jaker Ali leg-before and then had Yashasvi Jaiswal pouch Mohammed Mithun in the slips to reduce Bangladesh 'A' to 145 for 6.

Saurabh then quickly polished off the tail to set up a nice win as Umesh Yadav (2/34 in 15.5) completed the proceedings.

## Call on Rohit's availability for Test series to be taken later: Shah

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A call on injured India captain Rohit Sharma's participation in the upcoming two-match Test series against Bangladesh, starting December 14, will be taken later, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Friday.

Rohit had suffered a blow to his thumb while fielding in the slips during the second ODI against Bangladesh in Mirpur on December 7.

"The BCCI Medical Team assessed him and he underwent scans at a local hospital in Dhaka. He has flown to Mumbai for specialist consultation and will miss the final ODI. A call on his availability for the upcoming Test

series will be taken later," Shah stated in a press release.

While the BCCI will wait for an update on Indian skipper's availability, it can be safely concluded that with a dislocation as well as stitches, it will be near impossible for Rohit to train and then play a five-day match starting Wednesday. It is also not just about batting but also fielding.

With India having a packed schedule of white-ball games throughout January, whether the risk will be taken in a Test series against Bangladesh is there to be seen.

The BCCI has also instructed injury-prone pacer Deepak Chahar and rookie Kuldeep Sen to report to



National Cricket Academy (NCA) for assessment of their hamstring and back injuries respectively, informed Shah.

"Fast bowler Kuldeep Sen complained of stiffness in his back after the first ODI. The BCCI Medical Team assessed him and he was advised rest from the 2nd ODI. Kuldeep has been diagnosed with a stress injury and is ruled out of the series.

"Fellow fast bowler Deepak Chahar sustained a left hamstring strain during the 2nd ODI and is also ruled out of the series. Both Kuldeep and Deepak will now report to NCA for further management of their injuries," Shah stated.

## Australia thrash India in 1st Women's T20I

PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Opener Beth Mooney made short work of a 173-run target with a belligerent 57-ball 89 to power the Australian women's team to a convincing nine-wicket victory over India in the first T20 International here on Friday.

Mooney smashed 16 fours during her stay in the middle, and was helped by Tahlia McGrath's unbeaten 29-ball 40, which included four boundaries and two sixes. Australia thus took a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier, the experienced Deepti Sharma blazed away to an unbeaten 15-ball 36 to power India to 172 for five.

Sharma smashed four successive boundaries in the final over, bowled by Megan Schutt to boost India's run rate after Richa Ghosh (36 off 20 balls) and the returning Devika Vaidya (25 off 24) added 56 runs for the fifth wicket.

Chasing a stiff target, the formidable Australian opening pair of skipper Alyssa Healy and Mooney gave Australia the start it needed,



adding 73 runs in just under nine overs.

Healy and Mooney played some wonderful shots during their scintillating partnership to put the Indian bowlers under pressure.

Making matters worse was a dropped catch by Radha Yadav at backward point off Renuka Singh, giving Mooney a life when the batter was on 4. Medium pacer Renuka was then hit for three successive fours by Mooney, even as her captain struck the first six of the Australian innings.

If the dropped catch was

not enough, India's fielding overall was poor.

Vaidya, playing her first T20I since her debut in 2014, effected the first breakthrough when she had Healy caught by Harmanpreet.

The loss of the skipper, for a 23-ball 37, failed to disturb Australia's momentum as Mooney found an able ally in Tahlia McGrath.

It was as good as over for India after Mooney took 18 runs in the 15th over to bring the equation down from 55 runs off 36 balls to only 37 runs in the last five overs.

## Ahmed's 7-114 on Test debut helps Pak rein in Poms

AP ■ MULTAN

Unheralded Abrar Ahmed bagged a rich haul of seven wickets in a dream debut as Pakistan's spinners kept England's aggression in check on the first day of the second Test on Friday.

The 24-year-old mystery spinner grabbed 7-114 and got plenty of help from the dry wicket at Multan Cricket Stadium to dismiss England for 281 inside the first two sessions.

England got rid of both Pakistan openers — Imam-ul-Haq and Abdullah Shafique — early before captain Babar Azam's unbeaten 61 carried the home team to 107-2 at stumps when bad light stopped play with 10 overs still remaining in the day.

Saud Shakeel, who scored a gritty half century in Pakistan's 74-run defeat in the first Test at Rawalpindi, was not out on 32.

Ahmed was surprisingly left out from the first Test despite picking up 43 wickets in this season's first class tournament. He mystified England with his sharp googlies and car-



rom balls with only Ben Duckett (63) and Ollie Pope (60) scoring rapid half centuries.

Leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood made a forgetful Test debut at Rawalpindi, but finished off the tail just before tea to end up with 3-63 after Ahmed's brilliance constantly posed challenges to England's aggression.

Duckett and Pope both

scored half centuries in the first session before falling to Ahmed as the legspinner became only the second bowler in the history to pick up five wickets before lunch in his debut Test and England reached 180-5.

Left-arm spinner Alf Valentine of the West Indies was the other bowler to do so when he debuted against England at Manchester in 1950.

## BWF World Tour Finals: Prannoy stuns world No.1 Axelsen

PTI ■ BANGKOK

Already out of reckoning, top Indian shuttler HS Prannoy stunned world number one and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen in three games to end his BWF World Tour Finals campaign with a memorable win here on Friday.

The tie was already inconsequential for Prannoy, seeded third in the tournament, as he had lost his earlier two Group A matches but the Indian pulled



off a shock 14-21, 21-17, 21-18 win over the top seed Dane in 51 minutes to at least end his campaign on a high. This was Prannoy's second career win over Axelsen, whom he had beaten during the Indonesia

Masters last year. The career head-to-head record is, however, in favour of Axelsen at 5-2.

On Thursday, Prannoy had lost to China's Lu Guang Zu in his second Group A match to bow out of the semi-final race. The 30-year-old from Kerala had lost 21-23, 21-17, 19-21 in a gruelling 84-minute contest.

The top two players in each group will make it to the knock-out stage. Prannoy is the lone Indian competing in the season-ending tournament.

## Head, Labuschagne centuries put Oz on top

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne posted big hundreds in a 297-run partnership to set Australia on course for a declaration in the second Test on Friday before Michael Neser took two wickets under lights to consolidate the home team's dominance in the day-night match against West Indies.

Head's 175 and Labuschagne's 163 helped Australia to 511-7 before stand-in skipper Steve Smith declared the innings just before the second interval on Day 2.

Opener Tagenarine Chanderpaul resisted the Australian bowling attack for 98 deliveries, scoring a defiant unbeat-



en 47 as West Indies struggled to 102-4 at stumps.

Paceman Neser (2-20) had West Indies skipper Kraigg Brathwaite (19) and No. 3 Shamarh Brooks (8) caught behind and Nathan Lyon took a return catch to dismiss Jermaine Blackwood (3) and become the leading all-time wicket-taker at the Adelaide Oval, surpassing the great Shane Warne's career haul of 56.

Allrounder Cameron Green chimed in late with the wicket of Devon Thomas (19) before Chanderpaul, in his second Test, and night-watchman Anderson Phillip (1 not out) navigated the final four overs to stumps, with the West Indies still trailing by 409 runs. "We had them out

there for nearly two days, then took advantage of the night session," said Neser, one of two injury-enforced changes to Australia's bowling attack after a 164-run win in the first Test at Perth. Offspinner Lyon moved to 57 wickets at the Adelaide Oval in his 12th test and is expected to play a greater role as the pitch deteriorates this week.

"He's a great athlete," Neser said. "He's been performing for many years now — it's great to see him getting milestones."

Labuschagne also had a milestone moment earlier Friday when he surpassed 3,000 career Test runs in his 51st innings, a rate second only to Australian legend Donald Bradman.





# Pooja Hegde to join the shoot of Mahesh-Trivikram's film from Dec 15

After starring opposite superstar Mahesh Babu in *Maharshi*, actress Pooja Hegde will once again be seen playing the female lead opposite the *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* actor in his upcoming flick. The film will mark the third film where Mahesh Babu and Trivikram Srinivas had joined hands after *Athadu* and *Khaleja*. After *Aravinda Sametha Veera Raghava* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramulo*, this will also be the 'Beast actress' third film directed by Trivikram. According to the latest developments, the latest schedule of

the film will start next week. Pooja Hegde will join the shooting from December 15 in Hyderabad. The director has already given confirmation to the producers about the dates. For quite sometime now, there were several rumours related to the shooting of the film doing rounds. According to the sources in the unit, there is no truth in the news that the shooting has been stopped due to a lack of consensus between the hero and the director regarding the story. The news is not true. The shoot was interrupted due to the deaths of Mahesh's father Krishna and mother Indira Devi a few days ago.

# First look of Ravi Teja from *Waltair Veerayya* on December 12

Megastar Chiranjeevi and Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja are working together to create a storm at the box office with the highly anticipated movie *Waltair Veerayya* which is being directed ambitiously by director Bobby Kolli (KS Ravindra). Chiranjeevi's first look, title teaser, and also first single increased the buzz on the movie.

Here comes an update about Ravi Teja's first look in the movie. The makers released a power-packed pre-look poster to make the announcement regarding Ravi Teja's first look. Holding a baby goat in one hand and holding an axe in another hand to drag the cylinder, Ravi Teja is all set for the action.



"Mass Is Coming," reads the poster. The first look of Ravi Teja will be out on December 12th at 11:07 AM.

Shruti Haasan is the leading lady opposite Chiranjeevi in the film and songs are currently being filmed on the lead pair in Europe. Music for the movie is scored by Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad.

The film is produced on a grand scale by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar of Mythri Movie Makers, while GK Mohan is the co-producer.

Arthur A Wilson cranks the camera, whereas Niranjan Devaramane is the editor and AS Prakash is the production designer. Sushmita Konidela is the costume designer.

While the story and dialogue were written by Bobby himself, Kona Venkat and K Chakravarthy Reddy penned the screenplay. The writing department also includes Hari Mohana Krishna and Vineeth Potluri.

*Waltair Veerayya* will be hitting the screens worldwide on January 13, 2023.



# People who mocked me are now following me: Ashmita

YouTube, actor and dancer Ashmita has taken content creation to a whole new different level with her YouTube channel Ashtrix.

She has now added another feather to her cap, with her upcoming series *A1 from Day 1*. A preview show of the same was hosted in the city, which was graced by Ashmita and her family. While Ashmita and her husband Sudhir play the lead roles in it, Sudhir has also written and directed the series.

Ashmita said, "I ventured into digital media at a time when my career as an actress is at its peak. I am busy with TV serials and many movie opportunities are coming my way. I was also posed with questions on why YouTube now? I also heard

comments about who would watch it. But I am happy that all those who mocked me then started YouTube channels and are following me. The success of Ashtrix is largely due to the support of my husband Sudhir. A notion that a woman's career ends with marriage and children makes no sense to me; I don't believe in it."

Sudhir stated, "The journey of Ashtrix is very memorable. What began with a small team has now become a brand in itself. When we came up with the idea of starting *A1 from Day 1* webseries, we tried for opportunities, but we felt rather than trying for opportunities, it is better if we create it. Hence, we started subscription for the series as we have complete trust in our project."



# 'I have not been banned in Kannada'

Actress Rashmika Mandanna has been the target of trolls for quite some time now, after she had said that she did not watch *Kantara*, back then. Not just this, she was also trolled for her troubled relation with Rishab Shetty, who rose to fame for his acting and direction amid the stupendous success of *Kantara*. Recently the Pushpa actress opened up in a media gathering about the trolls and said, "I just have love for them. I don't know what else I'm supposed to say about it. It's left to

them. I was asked if I had watched the film within 2 or 3 days after its release. I had not seen it then. When I saw the film, I messaged the team (*Kantara*) and I also got a nice 'thank you' as a reply." For those caught unaware, Rishab was the director of Rashmika's debut film *Kirik Party*. Addressing the apparent fallout between the two, Rashmika said, "See, the world doesn't know what is happening on the inside. We can't always put a camera on our personal life and show it. We are not these people who will release messages also. What people say about our personal life doesn't matter. What they are saying about us professionally is what we will take and work on it." When further prodded if she was banned by the Kannada film producers, she quipped, "So far I have not been banned," she said. She will next be seen in *Varisu* with Tamil superstar Vijay. The film will release in cinemas in January during the Pongal festival.

# Jagapathi Babu onboard for Aayush Sharma's *AS04*

Adding to the grandeur of Aayush Sharma's upcoming film *AS04*, the actor welcomes South Indian star Jagapathi Babu to the action-entertainer.

Emerging as one of the most anticipated and awaited films of the upcoming year, the cast of Aayush Sharma's *AS04* has been joined by veteran Telugu and Tamil actor Jagapathi Babu for a pivotal role, the announcement for the same was made by the lead star Aayush Sharma on his social media on Friday morning.

Aayush Sharma welcomes Jagapathi Babu to *AS04* saying, "I am an ardent follower of cinema across languages and have always admired Jagapathi Babu sir's work. He is an incredible actor and enjoys a huge fan-following not just down South but nationwide as well. The moment that the script was ready, I was very certain I wanted to request Jagapathi sir to be a part of the film because we only could envision him playing this role. Can't wait to unveil a totally new side of him in *AS04*. I am truly blessed to have gotten the opportunity to not only share screen space with him but also learn from him every time we are on sets together."

Talking about his association with Aayush Sharma for *AS04*, Jagapathi Babu said, "*AS04* is a very interesting film, despite being guided by an extremely exciting and refreshing approach, it is predominantly held by the fundamental traits of a typical Indian masala genre, making it a promising entertainer. I am immensely glad Aayush and the team of *AS04* approached me, and I discovered the gem of a performer that Aayush is, the hard work, dedication and knowledge that he brings to the table is truly remarkable and I am truly enjoying every moment of working with him."

Earlier recently, Aayush Sharma unveiled a glimpse into *AS04*, which marks his fourth film in Bollywood, on his birthday. With his

unmatchable swag and enigmatically charming persona, Aayush Sharma packed a punch with his stylized action in the teaser. Followed by the announcement, was the unveiling of his co-actor, wherein Aayush launches Former Miss India United Continents 2015, debutante Sushri Mishraa. Aayush is not only making headlines for his back-to-back projects but also the style of his announcements, as the actor adapted the South Indian style of title reveal for the tentatively unnamed films.

Currently being filmed in Mumbai, *AS04* will hit the screens next year.

Produced by KK Radhamohan, under the banner of Sri Sathya Sai Arts, the yet untitled action entertainer *AS04* stars Aayush Sharma as the lead, co-starring debutante Sushri Mishraa. Directed by Katayan Shivpuri, the film is slated for release in 2023.



# Blurr: A Gruesome-thrilling entertainer

Review:

AMARTYA SMARAN

Zee5's *Blurr*, based on Spanish horror and psychological thriller Julia's eye marks Taapsee Pannu's debut as a film producer. Helmed by director Ajay Bahl, written by Pawan Sony and Ajay Bahl, the adaptation stars Taapsee Pannu in a dual role while Gulshan Devaiah, Abhilash Thapliyal, Sorabh Chauhan, Kritika Desai, et al can be seen playing other important roles.

The movie starts with Gautami (played by Taapsee Pannu), a blind woman seemingly in a distributed state questioning in a high pitch with rap music overlapping her speech. We can sense that something is wrong and then the camera cuts to the nooze. The story is about twin sisters Gayatri and Gautami; both struggle from a degenerative eye disease and while the opening scene plays out the narrative shifts to a heated conversation between Neel and Gayatri. Whilst the latter argues that she needs to go see her twin sister, her

partner Neel calms her down.

The couple reach Gautami's residence and find her dead. Even here, Neel unflinchingly asks her to calm down, a trait which occurs on multiple occasions. While the cops reassure that Gautami's demise is due to suicide and not a planned murder, Gayatri sets out her own journey to solve the mystery despite her progressive vision loss catching up.

Kudos to cinematographer (Sudhir K Chaudhary) for enhancing the overall viewing experience of the film. As the camera lurks and lingers around the actors, sometimes slowly pushing in to reflect the inner state of the characters and at other times hanging around to reveal the claustrophobic eerie locations and rooms. The intentional use of a grim colour palette works really well in the context of the story while the sleek editing ramps up the pace at the right moments. Director and writer Ajay Bahl structures the narrative rather interestingly by informing the audience about the deceased sister through Gayatri's inquisitiveness

to solve the puzzle. The point of view shots play out really well in showing Gayatri's gradual vision loss.

One of the most spine chilling scenes plays out in the first act of the film in a centre for the visually impaired where Gayatri is caught eavesdropping on the blind women. The patients creepily surround her and after finding out who she is, they warn her of the presence of another man in the room. From this moment on, it's a constant classic cat and mouse chase between the known and unknown.

When she completely loses her vision, some of Gayatri's nightmares metaphorically give us a hint of her separation anxiety. When Gayatri suspects someone might have entered the house, her caretaker says, "Maybe some animal must have entered!". The dialogues cleverly keep us guessing throughout the film. You can't help but empathise with her character. You want her to naturally triumph over evil. Taapsee plays the character with utmost conviction and

the restrictive narrative device used by the director allows her performance to come through in the best way possible. Gulshan Devaiah as the caring nurse of Gayatri charms you like a snake with his performance. As the story unfolds, the music intensifies and so does our anxiety. The art and sound departments deserve a special shoutout for making the immersive experience worth the time. The film delivers what it promises, the thrilling elements find their way in the most unusual ways and loom over us long after the film ends. If you are a sucker for thrillers of any kind, *Blurr* is for you. Remember to watch it on a bright Saturday afternoon. I say afternoon because if you watch it at night, those creepy chills are guaranteed. The film has a lot of gruesome sequences, jump scares, twists and turns, and above all, *Blurr* is technically sound with some extraordinary performances from the lead cast.

Rating: 3/5

