

ANALYSIS 7
BJP MUST REVIEW ITS
GOVT'S HIJAB RESPONSE**MONEY 8**
50% OF INDIA LEADERS FEEL
UNSURE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WORK**SPORTS 12**
WT20 AUDITION
CONTINUES WITH SL SERIES

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

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JANHVI KAPOOR
TURNS DOWN
ANOTHER
T'WOOD OFFER?

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EUROPE BRACES FOR FURTHER STRIFE AS UKRAINE CRISIS DEEPENS

Europe braced for further confrontation Wednesday and Ukraine urged its citizens to leave Russia after tensions escalated dramatically when Russia's leader got the OK to use military force outside his country and the West responded with a raft of sanctions. Hopes for a diplomatic way out of a new devastating war appeared all but sunk as the U.S. and key European allies accused Moscow on Tuesday of crossing a red line in rolling over Ukraine's border into separatist regions with several calling it an invasion.

ZVEREV KICKED OUT OF MEXICAN OPEN AFTER ANGRY OUTBURST

Third-ranked Alexander Zverev was thrown out of the Mexican Open for violently smashing his racket on the umpire's chair moments after losing a doubles match. The incident took place after Zverev and Marcelo Melo lost to Lloyd Glasspool and Harri Heliövaara 6-2, 4-6, 10-6 on Tuesday night in Acapulco. Zverev struck the umpire's chair three times, sat for a moment, then got back up and yelled at the umpire that he destroyed the whole (expletive) match and struck the chair once more with his racket as the umpire climbed down. The umpire had pulled his feet back at one point for fear of being hit.

ENERGY AGENCY: METHANE EMISSIONS HIGHER THAN COUNTRIES CLAIM

The International Energy Agency said on Wednesday that emissions of planet-warming methane from oil, gas and coal production are significantly higher than governments claim. The Paris-based agency said its analysis shows emissions are 70 per cent higher than the official figure provided by governments worldwide. If all leaks were plugged, the methane captured would be enough to supply all of Europe's power sector, it said. The findings underline the urgent need for enhanced monitoring efforts and stronger policy action to drive down emissions of the potent greenhouse gas, it said.

MEA HIGHLIGHTS INDIA'S BUDDHIST LINKAGES WITH ASEAN AND EAST ASIA

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednesday celebrated the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' by inaugurating projects reflecting Buddhist linkages with the ASEAN and East Asian countries. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is an initiative of the government to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of India's Independence. As part of the celebration, books of Buddhist 'Jataka' tales translated into Thai, Korean, Vietnamese and Chinese languages were unveiled, the MEA said. A comprehensive video of e-ITEC courses offered by the MEA on Buddhist teachings was shown during the event.

'WILL PUT THE COUNTRY ON THE RIGHT TRACK'

 Ready to sacrifice my last drop of blood for Nation: KCR**NAVEENA GHANATE**
■ HYDERABAD

Upping the ante on his proven credentials to play an enlarged role in national politics, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has said that he would fight for the country until his last drop of blood.

He was speaking at the inaugural of the Mallanna Sagar Reservoir on Wednesday.

KCR said, "Come what may, to put the country on the right track,

There is an evil in this country. Due to this, the country is going on the wrong track. Some are fuelling communal sentiments all over the country

if need be, I will sacrifice even my last drop of blood. I will set right the country and march forward."

The Chief Minister said that for the sake of the country's progress and development he was going ahead in national politics. For this, he underlined, he would utilise all the strength that God had given him and his intellect.

"There is an evil in this country. Due to this, the country is going on the wrong track. Some are fuelling communal sentiments all over the country," KCR said.

Emphasising the need to end this, KCR said, "Differences are created on caste and communal basis and if this continues, nobody will invest in this country."

The Chief Minister gave a call to people to raise their voice against those spreading the cancer of communal and caste hatred.

KCR said that during a meeting, some of his friends expressed concern about their children studying in Bengaluru. He said, "When I met my IAS friends, some of them told me that their children are frightened to go back to educational institutions in Karnataka."



A boost to Telangana's economy

Chief Minister dedicates Mallanna Sagar to the Nation

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Wednesday dedicated the Mallanna Sagar reservoir constructed as part of the Kaleswaram Project in Siddipet district to the nation. India's biggest man-made reservoir Mallanna Sagar is all set to boost Telangana's economy. This reservoir will act as the growth engine of Telangana's economy by meeting the irrigation and drinking water requirements of

13 districts in the State, including Hyderabad. Speaking to irrigation officials, the CM instructed Special Chief Secretary (Irrigation) Rajat Kumar to construct an irrigation complex of international standards on 100 acres. He also asked ministers Harish Rao and Srinivas Goud to develop the Mallanna Sagar region as an international tourist spot and as an international marriage destination centre.

HC ASKS TELANGANA GOVT File counter on cadre allocation of 13 officers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday heard the petition regarding allocation disputes between IAS and IPS officials filed by the Centre seeking quashing of the Central Administrative Tribunal orders.

The court asked Telangana to file a counter on the allocation of CS Somesh Kumar, in-charge DGP Anjani Kumar and 11 others in cadre rules.

The allocation of Abhishek Mohanty as Chittoor SP was heard by CJ Satish Chandra's bench. The CAT had ordered that Abhishek

Mohanty be relieved from AP and absorbed into TS. But as the TS government was not responding, Abhishek Mohanty reached out to CAT again which issued a contempt notice to Somesh Kumar.

With the exception of Abhishek Mohanty, 13 IAS and IPS officers were working at the place of their choice based on CAT orders, said the AP government.

The IAS officials include Somesh Kumar, Harikiran, Anantha Ramulu, Mallela Prashanthi, Vakati Karuna, Vani Prasad, Ronald Ross, Sreejana and Shivshankar.

2



'Pampering only Gajwel seat is not justified'

RTI query reveals Rs 431 crore released over the last seven years**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The Forum for Good Governance has urged the Telangana government to identify backward constituencies in the State based on ground realities and constitute Area Development Authorities on the lines of the Gajwel Area Development Authority for "balanced, inclusive and uniform

development of the State".

The FGG's plea stems from the revelation following its RTI query that over the last seven years an amount of Rs. 431 crore was released to the Gajwel Area Development Authority for taking up developmental works.

For the overall development of the Gajwel Assembly Constituency (in the erstwhile Medak District), the Gajwel Area

Development Authority was created.

As per the reply to the RTI query, of the Rs 431 crore released, only a sum of Rs 261.41 crore was utilised. For 2021-2022, the Collector proposed Rs 150 crore, of which Rs 100 crore has been released and Rs 3.25 crore has been spent so far.

2

Maha Minister Malik arrested in money laundering case

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday arrested Maharashtra Minority Affairs Minister Nawab Malik in a money-laundering case probe linked to the activities of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim, his aides and the Mumbai underworld, officials said.

2

DGP warns communal elements of strong action

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana police will take firm action against communal elements and those who are trying to create communal flare-ups in the State.

In-charge DGP Anjani Kumar said that no individual or group will be allowed to take the law into their hands.

During a review meeting of the three commissioners, Anjani said, "It is the responsibility of every individual and group to inform the police in case of trouble. The police



will take action immediately.

2

5 cases booked, 7 held for attacking

The Rachakonda police have registered cases against five persons who were involved in riots and the illegal transportation of cattle which created communal tension in the Karmanghat area of Meerpeta in Saroonagar PS limits.

2

PREZ POLLS

Testing times for AP CM Jagan

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

YSR Congress President Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will soon face politically testing days.

While Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is very aggressive in welding together an anti-BJP front at the national level, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy is maintaining silence on the issue.

However, if opposition parties field a common candidate against the BJP candidate in the forthcoming presidential polls Chief Minister Jagan will have to take a



stand on whether to support the opposition candidate or the BJP candidate.

2

65% of tech firms are for hybrid work model

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In another indicator of a return to office, 65 per cent of companies want 100 per cent employees back, but in a hybrid model.

As per the survey conducted by Hysea, 15 per cent of companies want all employees back to work on all working days. Hysea says the hybrid work model is here to stay based on a majority of the responses.

"If schools operate fully, then there is a possibility of more employees returning to Hyderabad and offices," says the survey.

Most of the companies have either already written to their employees or are planning to write soon asking them to return to office.

Nearly 45 per cent of the respondents felt that the productivity issue was the main driver for the return to office policy and was followed by client and business imperatives (22 per cent).

A significant 33 per cent of companies felt employee morale, lack of collaboration, bonding, and L&D reasons as drivers to return to office.

2

Is Long Covid a parallel pandemic?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It's almost two years since the corona pandemic began. We have seen variants coming in, creating havoc and then things going back to normal. Long Covid is something which has got people talking again. Many are calling it a parallel pandemic. According to WHO, Long Covid can be defined as a condition which occurs in individuals with a history of probable or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection.

They say the condition usually starts three months from the onset of Covid-19 and lasts for at least two months and cannot be explained by an alternative diagnosis.

2

Bharat Biotech files Rs 100 crore defamation suit**P:2**

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:**Tithi:** Ashtami: Feb 23 04:56 PM

to Feb 24 03:04 PM

Navami: Feb 24 03:04 PM to

Feb 25 12:57 PM

Nakshatram:**Swati:** Anuradha: Feb 23 02:40 PM

to Feb 24 01:31 PM

Jyeshtha: Feb 24 01:31 PM to

Feb 25 12:07 PM

Rahukalam: 1:56 PM to 3:23 PM**Yamagandam:** 6:41 AM to 8:08 AM**Varjyam:** 06:47 PM to 08:18 PM**Gulika:** 9:35 AM to 11:02 AM**Amritakalam:** 03:50 AM to 05:20 AM**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 12:06 PM to

12:52 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny**Temp:** 33°C**Humidity:** 32%**Sunrise:** 6:42 AM**Sunset:** 6:16 PM**Updated:** February 23, 2022 5:00 PM

2



Testing times...

Continued from page 1

In national politics, non-BJP Chief Ministers like K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Mamata, Stalin, Uddhav Thackeray and others are very active in setting up an anti-BJP front.

But no one is mentioning the name of Jagan in the proposed new front. In the past, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata had said that AP Chief Minister Jagan is like her brother and had expressed the hope that he will join the anti-BJP front.

The main opposition party Congress will naturally support the opposition candidate against the BJP candidate in the presidential election.

In that case, if Jagan takes a decision to support the opposition candidate he will have to face the charge that he had joined hands with the Congress which harassed him by filing cases against him.

TS among top 4 states in GSDP growth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At 13.6 GSDP growth rate, Telangana State is among top four States after Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura in the country, said Planning Vice Chairman B Vinod Kumar.

As per the report, according to provisional estimates, Telangana State's GSDP at current prices in 2020-21 was Rs 9,80,407 crore.

Although the secondary and tertiary sectors contracted by 2.1% and 3.9% respectively at constant prices, they still fared better than the much steeper contractions at the national level. In 2020-21, Telangana State was the 6th highest contributor to the country's GDP at both current prices and constant prices.

Secretary Ramakrishna Rao,

Maha Minister Malik arrested...

Continued from page 1

The 62-year-old NCP leader was taken into custody shortly before 3 PM after he was questioned for about six hours at the ED office in south Mumbai's Ballard Estate area. He was brought there by the agency at around 8 AM. Malik raised a clenched fist, smiled and waved towards the waiting media personnel before he was taken away for a medical checkup by agency officials in a vehicle escorted by CRPF personnel and local police.

He told the media from inside the vehicle: "We will fight and we will win. Will expose all."

Officials said his statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and he was arrested under the same provisions as he was "evasive" in his replies.

65% of tech firms are for hybrid...

Continued from page 1

In another positive indicator for return to office, around 56 per cent of offices are fully functional and employees are allowed to work from the office while 28 per cent of offices are open in a limited way for critical hands.

Many employees are working remotely from outside Hyderabad and we cannot force them to return unless schools open in completely offline mode. As long as

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹236
Without Skin	₹256
Broiler at Farm	₹116

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	340
VIJAYAWADA	375
VISAKHAPATNAM	400
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹3.40

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TSIC incentives for innovations, start-ups with rural impact

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TSIC has launched a scheme providing incentives for innovations and start-ups with a rural impact.

As per the Government Order (GO) issued in July 2021 by the ITE&C Department, the Telangana Government will support innovations and start-ups that have a rural impact with Rs 30 lakh worth seed, prototype, pilot, and procurement grants.

Named the Telangana State Innovations for Rural Impact Incentives (TSIRII) and hosted by the Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC), they aim to augment market-viable innovations/start-ups that have a grassroots impact through financial support.

The incentives will cover proof of concept to prototype,



The Telangana Government went a mile ahead and released a GO dated July 27, 2021, making TSIC the nodal agency to extend incentives for innovations and start-ups with rural impact with an initial corpus of Rs 30 lakh.

prototype to MVP, MVP to market-ready, and for product trials and pilot projects.

One of the major criteria is that the innovation or start-up should either be based in the state or should be devised fully within the state. The complete set of criteria can be

found on <https://teamsic.telangana.gov.in/tsiri-incentives/>

The applications received will be evaluated by the Grassroots Advisory Council established by TSIC, which also looks after the application process and release of funds.

Dr Shanta Thoutam, Chief Innovation Officer said, "In the last few years, of the many support mechanisms established for innovations with rural impact, we have realised that financial support was a common demand from all of them at every stage, that is for an idea to become a prototype and likewise a product to a pilot study.

The Telangana Government went a mile ahead and released a GO dated July 27, 2021, making TSIC the nodal agency to extend incentives for innovations and start-ups with rural impact with an initial corpus of Rs 30 lakh. We with expertise in grassroots innovation believe that specific support would help innovators and start-ups to efficiently disseminate their solutions for improving rural lives."

Healthy lifestyle, dietary habits crucial to control cancer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Healthy life style and dietary habits are very crucial to control and reduce the burden of cancer on society, according to leading cancer biologist Rana P Singh.

Singh made the comments during a two-day symposium organised by the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on recent trends in cancer prevention and interception.

"Healthy lifestyle and dietary habits are very crucial to control and reduce the burden of cancer on society," he said.

Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Professor Santishree Pandit, highlighted the need for multidisciplinary research to contribute to the growing knowl-

edge of cancer prevention and therapy.

She also stressed an in-depth exploration of traditional medicine including Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy in the field of cancer research.

Rajesh Agarwal, Interim Chair, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceuticals Sciences, University of Colorado Denver, USA called for the attention to plant flavonoids, such as silibinin which has shown strong growth inhibitory effects on skin cancer, with strong translational potential for human skin cancer chemoprevention. The symposium was also supported by the government's Department of Science and Technology.

A boost to Telangana's economy

Continued from page 1

'Will put the country...

The situation there is such that girls have been at home for about a month now." "In this country, if all States have to develop, the work of the Government at the Centre should be virtuous. Bengaluru has become the Silicon Valley of India. Hyderabad is second," he added. "Hyderabad exported IT products worth Rs 1,500 billion. International flights are landing at the RGI Airport. Every day about 580 flights land at RGIA. Go to any nook and corner of Telangana, you will find that an acre costs more than Rs 20 lakh. There is every chance of our farmers becoming rich. Industries are coming to Telangana. Along with IT, we are creating employment in other sectors too. Telangana has the lowest unemployment rate," the Chief Minister said.

land."

The CM said that it was a moment of pride for everyone to see a fertile Telangana along with Telangana state, which was achieved after a long struggle.

The CM reminded that Mallanna Sagar would provide drinking water not only to Siddipet district but also to Hyderabad. The Mallanna Sagar Project, a key part of the Kaleswaram Major Irrigation Project, has a 50 TMC capacity reservoir.

The CM said that vested interests had filed around 600 cases against the Kaleswaram

Bharat Biotech files Rs 100-cr defamation suit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following a Rs 100-crore defamation suit filed by vaccine major Bharat Biotech International Limited against The Wire, the Additional District Judge at Ranga Reddy District Court on Wednesday directed the news portal to take down 14 articles published on its website against the company.

The Court took note of the fact that the government has approved the vaccine and that the firm is the only candidate which can manufacture the vaccine for children aged between 15 and 18 years. The



Court said that the defamatory articles published on the website would lead to vaccine hesitancy.

The Court also restrained

the portal from publishing any defamatory articles on Bharat Biotech and COVAX-IN. The case was filed against 12 members of The Wire.

Civil police officer sacked for passing info about RSS workers to SDPI

PNS ■ IDUKKI

A civil police officer (CPO) of the Kerala police has been dismissed from service for allegedly leaking confidential information about RSS workers from the police database to members of the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI).

"We have issued a show-cause notice to the CPO. His explanation was not satisfactory and he was dismissed," a deputy superintendent of police said. Police came to know of his links with SDPI after some of its workers were arrested in connection with an assault on a bus conductor here. The examination of the phones of the arrested SDPI workers revealed that one of them had the CPO's number and he was in touch with the officer. This was communicated to the higher-ups and that led to the dismissal.

'Pampering only...

Continued from page 1

The FGG requested the Chief Secretary to constitute development authorities for other under developed constituencies.

Stating that FGG welcomed Government's initiative for development of any part or region of the State, M. Padmanabha Reddy, its Secretary: "It is the responsibility of the Government to address the aspirations and uplift of the people living in most backward regions of the State such as Kumaram Bheem Asifabad, which stands second most backward districts in the entire Country (as per NITI Aayog assessment)".

Reddy amplified: "The aim of the Government should be uniform development across the state and removal of inequalities among the various parts of the state. The special focus should be on improvement of the backward areas. The Gajwel constituency is already well-placed in overall

development and is in a far better position when compared to the constituencies mentioned above. Starving the backward constituencies of funds and pampering one Gajwel Constituency is not justified."

The Assembly constituencies like Asifabad, Khanapur, Both, Alampur, Achampet, Dornakal, Yellandu etc. are some of the most under developed constituencies in the State with majority of population belonging to SC and ST communities, according to FGG. Many villages in these constituencies lack road connectivity, hospitals, schools and potable drinking water. The so-called development of Telangana State had bypassed these Assembly Constituencies, the FGG said.

Reddy said: "Unfortunately the concerned legislators are not able to raise their voice either on the floor of the House or outside. They are content with chanting the regular welfare measures of the Government".

File counter on cadre allocation...

Continued from page 1

IPS officers Anjani Kumar, Abhilasha Bist, Santosh Mehra, AV Ranganath and Abhishek Mahanti have been given CAT orders in the past.

The Bench asked why it was not following the rule followed for all other officers. The Bench was alerted that the remaining petitions were pending with Justice Ujjawal Bhuyan.

The AP lawyer pointed out to the court that the Telangana government was not the only one taking Abhishek Mohanti into office.

The High Court has directed that CAT should not take up the contempt petition filed by Abhishek Mohanty as the trial was pending in the High Court. The hearing on the IAS and IPS separation disputes has been adjourned to March 24. It may be mentioned here that Abhishek Mohanty who belongs to the unreserved category outsider officer had opted for the Telangana cadre. Out of the 62 unreserved category outsider officers, 27 officers were to be allocated to the newly created Telangana State.

DGP warns communal elements...

Continued from page 1

History-sheet and communal-sheet will be opened against violators of the law."

A stern warning was issued to mischief-mongers and miscreants by the DGP Anjani Kumar. Telangana has been progressing fast and none will be allowed to tarnish the state's image by creating communal flare-ups, he said.

Following the clash between cattle vigilantes and transporters, DGP Anjani Kumar, the three police commissioners, ADG Intelligence, ADG Law and Order, IGP CI cell, IGP Nagi Reddy and other senior officers held a review meeting at the DGP's office to review the incident at Rachakonda last night. CP Rachakonda has already registered five cases in this regard and many suspects have been taken into custody.

5 cases booked, 7 held for attacking

A Sub-Inspector, a driver and some others were injured in the skirmish over transportation of cattle for slaughter. A few police vehicles were also damaged. Rachakonda Police said the suspect Mohammad Yousuf who runs a beef shop in Bhavani Nagar and his son purchased two buffalo calves and three other calves from Nalgonda and hired a vehicle to transport them from Mali X Roads to Hyderabad. When they reached Meerpet, the complainant Koti Mayuresh requested them to stop the vehicle, but they refused. The cow vigilantes started following them in their vehicle, overtook the vehicle carrying the cattle, stopped them in front of the Hindustan Marble Shop and questioned them. This led to the father-son duo abusing and attacking them with iron rods. During the fight the driver of the vehicle transporting the cattle suffered a head injury. Cops said that on seeing this, the complainant panicked and ran away with his friends to the nearby Hanuman Temple at Karmanghat to save their lives. The father-son duo called three others and they chased the complainant and his friends into the premises of the Hanuman Temple, Karmanghat, outraging religious feelings and attacked them with an intention to kill. Police said the complainant and his friends suffered simple bleeding injuries in the attack. Seven suspects were apprehended and were sent to judicial custody at the Cherlapally Jail.

Bahadurpally lands auction pre-bid gets good response

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The auction of 101 plots in 40 acres in the lay-out being developed by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) in Bahadurpally is getting good response. In this regard, the pre-bid meeting held at Mekala Venkatesh Function Hall in Bahadurpally on Wednesday was attended by 120 enthusiasts.

Renupurushottam, Additional General Manager, MSTC, a central government agency, explained the formalities required to participate in an online auction (e-auction)



Pre-bid meeting in progress at Bahadurpally, on city outskirts, on Wednesday

to be held on March 14-15. On this occasion, HMDA officials clarified that HMDA will provide infrastructure such as 80 feet, 60 feet, 40 feet roads, elec-

tricity and underground drainage in the layout within a year and a half. They recalled that their lay-out surroundings were already highly devel-

oped, with things like the two villa ventures and Mallareddy Engineering College.

Officials said the lay-outs designed by HMDA in the last few months have been well received by the people and the public confidence in HMDA has doubled in the last two years through the sale of Kokapeta and Uppal Bhagayat plots.

HMDA will be auctioning 324 plots at Bahadurpally and Thorur in March. About 101 plots in Bahadurpally and 223 plots in Thorur are being sold through e-auction in the third week of March.

E-auction for the Bahadu

rpally layout is scheduled for March 14 and 15, while the same for Thorur will be conducted on March 14, 15, 16 and 17.

HMDA will develop the layout on an area of 117 acres in Thorur in Rangareddy district. A pre-bid meeting will be held on the 25th February at the Thorur site.

HMDA Chief Engineer BLN Reddy, Secretary P Chandraya, Estate Officer Gangadhar, Chief Accounts Officer Vijayalakshmi, Planning Officer Yashwant Rao, Superintendent Engineer Yusuf Hussain were present at the pre-bid meeting.

Inorbit Durgam Cheruvu Run on March 6, registrations open

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Inorbit Mall of Hyderabad has reopened registrations for the second edition of the 'Inorbit Durgam Cheruvu Run 2022' (IDCR 22) being held on March 6.

This year it is being organised on a much larger scale with Covid-19 sports-safety measures in place.

IDCR 2022 will be flagged off from the Inorbit Mall in Hyderabad and will follow the trail of the Durgam Cheruvu Bridge over one of Hyderabad's most beautiful landmarks.

Early last year, the mall had successfully hosted the first edition of IDCR 2021 powered by PUMA along with YouTooCanRun which saw the participation of around 1,200 people including 50 specially-abled runners. A corpus of Rs 6 lakh was raised to arrange tablets for underprivileged girls. This year, the cause-driven



For representational purpose only

marathon will partner with NGO Nirmaan to provide skill development and employment opportunities to persons with disability in the service sector.

Runners who register before February 28 for the run can avail an early bird discount of up to 25 per cent on their applications that is, participants can register for the 5-km run for Rs 599, 10-km for Rs 999 and 21-km for Rs 1,199.

This covers all costs excluding taxes. They can also cus-

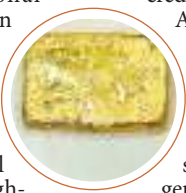
tomise their BIBs with any name of their choice. Sports brand PUMA has confirmed its partnership with IDCR '22 for the second consecutive year and all registered participants will get a goodie bag comprising an assured gift voucher worth Rs 1,000 and a T-shirt worth Rs 1,799 from PUMA.

YouTooCanRun, a professional sports management company that promotes running for good health, is managing the race.

975 grams gold seized at RGIA

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Customs officials at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Shamshabad on Wednesday, booked gold smuggling case against a person who arrived at the airport from Imphal and seized gold weighing a total of 975 grams and valued at Rs 50 lakh. The passenger has arrived at RGIA by



Indigo flight 6E187. The passenger was questioned by the customs officials on receiving credible information from

Air intelligence unit. Later, they searched his belongings and found the gold in his rectum in paste form. The gold was seized and the passenger was apprehended for further questioning. Further investigation is in progress.

Man held for rape and murder of girl friend

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Madhapur police on Wednesday arrested Lalu Prasad, accused in the rape and murder of a rag picker at the Madhapur Hi-Tech City outpost, following a complaint from a constable patrolling the area. Police have arrested the accused under the IPC section of 302. The constable has stated that on the day while patrolling at Izzatnagar area, he found

some gathering at a dilapidated police outpost located at MMTS Railway Station, Hitech City. When he reached there, he found an unknown female dead body aged about 35 years in a pool of blood inside the outpost. The accused stated that he had a relationship with the young woman earlier for some time. Later she was in cohabitation with Naresh @ Chinna. As such he killed the young woman due to sexual jealousy.

The accused further stated that the deceased had relations with him prior to having the same with Chinna. He also admitted that he took her to unused out post, raped the woman by tying her hands with his kerchief and hit her head to the floor till her death with bleeding from ears.

The accused Lalu Prasad @ Lalu was earlier involved in a case of HB by night in the year 2014 and convicted for three months simple imprisonment.

Kia dealership gets NGOs to handover cars to owners

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vihaan KIA, a KIA car dealership firm in Hyderabad, got 4 NGOs to handover 40 newly launched Kia Carens cars to their respective owners.

"Generally celebrities are invited to do such honours,

but we wanted to do it in a different way and called 4 service organisations as they are real life celebrities. Our customers too were delighted in receiving the keys from representatives of these NGOs," said Suneel Vadlamudi, MD, Vihaan KIA.

The dealership also donat-

ed Rs 15.5 lakh to all of the 4 NGOs as a part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The NGOs involved in this celebration are Amma Nanna Anaada Ashramam, Surge Impact Foundation, Samruthi Trust and Kriyasaangh Society.

Advocates beat up each other in court

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A lady advocate was rushed to the hospital after she was attacked by her male counterpart in the Malkajigiri Court premises on Wednesday. They have been identified as Prasanna Naidu and Mekala Srinivas Yadav. Prasanna Naidu had contested Greater Hyderabad Municipal Commission (GHMC) elections as a BJP candidate from Malkajigiri division while Srinivas Yadav is an activist and an advocate reportedly associated with the TRS party. It has come to light that both of them have been in a long political tussle. Lately, Prasanna had been sharing very critical posts related to Srinivas on her social media which may be the reason for the dispute. Allegedly, when both of them encountered each other in the court premises on Wednesday, they started abusing each other and then physical abuse started where Srinivas yadav beat up Prasanna Naidu. The matter was brought to the notice of the magistrate where they were advised to approach the police for further action. The matter has been notified to the Neredmet Police Station.

NHM contract staff seek 30% pay hike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Health Mission (NHM) Contract and Outsourcing Employees Union of the Telangana state has written a letter to the Commissioner of NHM asking for a 30% pay hike as per the PRC.

"The contract and outsourced employees are facing a huge problem in making both ends meet due to the low pay. In this regard we have written a letter hoping that our



demands are met," said M Narsimha, president of the union.

The NHM Employees Union demands a 30% hike for all the contract and outsourced

employees. They have also requested for maternity leaves to be included.

In Telangana, there are 3 types of workers namely Regular, Contract and Outsourced. Regular workers are government employees, Contract workers are hired by the government on a contract basis, and Outsourcing workers have middlemen between them and the government. There is no direct link between an outsourced worker and the government.

New 500-bed girls hostel opens in OU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A new 500-bed century hostel for girls was inaugurated on the Osmania University campus by Prof. D Ravinder, Vice Chancellor of the university on Wednesday.

It is located near the Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE) and built with a cost of Rs 37.5 crore from the

University and RUSA funds. The new structure has reading rooms, a spacious dining hall and a state-of-the-art kitchen.

The University has taken the initiative as they observed substantial increase in the intake of girls in various colleges and existing hostels being overcrowded.

On the occasion, the ground breaking cere-

mony was performed for the construction of a separate girls swimming pool of international standards with the support of the Khelo India Programme.

Prof. P. Laxmina Rayana, OU Registrar, Prof. B. Reddy Naik, OSD to VC, Chief Engineer, CPWD, NN SS Rao, senior officials of the University were present.



26 SNDP works progress at brisk pace

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC is making special efforts to provide protection to the people living in low lying areas in the city due to floods or heavy rains and address the problem on permanent basis. Works are progressing in full swing through the Strategic Nala Development Programme (SNDP).

Presently, 26 works are progressing at brisk pace under GHMC limits. The officials have taken steps to complete the process of tenders with regard to other 11 works this month and plan to start the works in March. As many as 32 works are in



SNDP works in progress at Bandlaguda and Ramanthapur in GHMC limits

progress out of the total 60 works proposed in the GHMC limits and in surrounding municipalities. The proposed works include 23

works in the adjoining municipalities and 37 works in GHMC limits which include 8 works in Secunderabad zone, 3 in

Kukatpally zone, 10 in LB Nagar zone, 7 in Charminar zone, 7 works in Khairatabad zone and 2 works in Sherlingampalli zone.

GHMC 'model' markets face neglect

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Despite spending crores on the city's model markets, many are still in a state of neglect.

GHMC officials are delaying giving street vendors a space to sell their goods. Due to lack of maintenance, most markets are not working now. Only a few model markets have been completed in the city. The public wants the authorities to open the existing model markets to street vendors.

"The construction of 38 model markets in 2016 and 2017 were taken up and were completed in a few months but vendors were not interested in trading there as



they were built in the sparsely populated areas of Miyapur and Mayur Nagar. Millions of rupees were wasted," said Palle Murali, a resident of Miyapur. The model market which is available for street vendors in Gachibowli has not opened since months. The market is now full of wild plants, alcohol bottles and

garbage. Ravi, who lives next to the market, said that the market opens only once in a while and people refuse to come to the market as it is on the city's outskirts. "Model markets are neglected in the city. Why didn't the GHMC build the model market in Division 129 as proposed by MLA Challareddy," Santosh Vegiraju, a resident said. With existing model markets in the city facing neglect, the public has started asking the government why the GHMC is planning to build more markets in the city. "Model markets opened before elections and depending on location they can be of use to the public.

TGUGCET entrance test on March 6

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The date for Telangana Gurukul Undergraduate Common Entrance Test 2022 (TGUGCET) has been announced. The exam would be conducted on 6th March 2022 in 70 designated centres

for admission into the first year of BA/B.Com/BBA/B.Sc courses in Telangana Social and Tribal Welfare Residential Degree Colleges for women and men. The applicants can download the hall tickets from 26.02.2022 to 05.03.2022 from the website.


National Science Week progressing at ICMR-NIN

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

National Science week was launched at the ICMR National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) in Hyderabad on Tuesday and progressing on Wednesday. The science festival is scheduled to be held from 22-28 February. The festival is planned at 75 locations across the country.

The weeklong festival has various stalls, displays, posters and live demonstrations by reputed scientific institutes of the country. These institutes include NIN, ICMR, ISRO, DRDO, INCOIS, NARFBR, CSIR-NGRI, CFTRI, and Department of Atomic Energy. "This festival will give the younger generation a lot of insight into what is happening in the country in terms of science and technology. Every nation's progress completely depends on the advances they make in sci-

ence and technology. There is a long way to go" said Dr BVHS Murthy, DG-MSS, DRDO, the chief guest at the event. One such stall by the ICMR has a live demonstration of a machine which detects Covid-19 using RT-PCR method. Another stall displayed explained the importance of millets and how replacing millets in our everyday life will benefit our health. ISRO has displayed Chandrayaan-2, Mangalyaan and their various launch vehicles whereas DRDO has displayed their latest Guided Laser system and many Surface to Air missile systems such as BrahMos, Prithvi and Akash missiles. February 28 is celebrated as National Science Day, to honor the discovery of the Raman Effect in 1928 by C.V. Raman. The festival is being held on the account of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav which commemorates 75 years of India's Independence.




TELANGANA GOVERNMENT PROVIDES A RARE OPPORTUNITY

TO OWN ENCUMBRANCE-FREE OPEN PLOTS

BAHADURPALLY LAYOUT


Medchal District
Well connected to NH 765 (Narasapur Road) & NH 44 (Nagar Road).
Between ORR Exts 5 (Dundigal) and 6 (Kandukoya)



- IT Giant Tech Mahindra Training Centre (3 Km)
- Malla Reddy University (1 Km)

THORUR LAYOUT

Hayath Nagar Mandal, Rangareddy District
Well connected to NH 65 (Hayathnagar) & Nagarjuna Sagar SH (Rajapur).
Between ORR Exts 11 (Peddamberpet) and 12 (Bonguram).



- Black Topped Roads with footpaths
- Connectivity to the city with Metro Network from L.B. Nagar

HIGHLIGHTS

- 100% Encumbrance-free land with clear title owned by Government
- Multipurpose Plots ready for immediate construction
- No need for any change of land use
- Layouts are centrally located
- The works for well developed infrastructure like Internal Roads, Street Lights commenced and will be completed in 18 months
- Planned, Government Layout with open space for Parks & other amenities

e-AUCTION SCHEDULE		
	Bahadurpally	Thorur
Date of Notification	14.02.2022	14.02.2022
Last date and time for registration	18.02.2022 upto 5.00 pm	19.02.2022 upto 5.00 pm
Last date for payment of pre-bid EMD	11.03.2022 upto 5.00 pm	11.03.2022 upto 5.00 pm
Pre-Bid Meeting	23.02.2022 & 04.03.2022 at 11.00 am (venue details will be shared on https://auctions.hmda.gov.in)	25.02.2022 & 06.03.2022 at 11.00 am
Organized site visits	18.02.2022 & 07.03.2022	25.02.2022 & 06.03.2022
Date of e-auction	14.02.2022 & 16.02.2022	14.02.2022, 16.02.2022, 18.02.2022 & 17.02.2022
Minimum open price per sq yard	Rs. 25,000/- per sq yard	Rs. 20,000/- per sq yard
Minimum bid increment	Rs. 500/- per sq yard or multiples thereof	Rs. 500/- per sq yard or multiples thereof
Extent of the plots	Upto 600 Sq. yds	Upto 1,00,000/- per plot
Pre-bid EMD amount	Upto 600 Sq. yds: 3,00,000/- Above 600 Sq. yds: 5,00,000/-	Rs. 1,00,000/- per each plot

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BID

- Any individual or group of individuals (Citizen of India above the age of 18 years), Company (Private/ Public/ Limited Liability Partnership), Proprietary Firms, Partnership Firms/ LLP, Trusts, Registered Societies, Financial Institutions, Banks, NBFC, Real Estate Funds, Public & Semi-public Undertakings of State Govt. or Central Govt., Govt. Departments, Joint Venture Consortium.
- The bidder must be eligible to build/ own commercial/ multi-purpose properties in India and must be competent to enter into contract.
- FDI upto 100% is permitted on automatic route as per DIP - GoI.
- Foreign companies which have established a branch office or other place of business in India, in accordance with RBI, GoI / FEMA / FERA regulations, can acquire any immovable property in India, which is necessary for or incidental to carrying on such activity*

* <https://www.mei.gov.in/images/pdf/acquisition-and-transfer-of-immovable-property-in-india.pdf>

1. Details along with site-wise e-brochures are available at HMDA website: auctions.hmda.gov.in

2. For further details and queries contact:
HMDA: 9154843213
7702743488
e-mail: daoemu@gmail.com/
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MSTC: 9177067332
9650554645
e-mail: kanuraag@mstcindia.co.in/
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Issued By: Commissioner, I & PR Department, Government of Telangana

Police seize PDS rice, arrest two persons

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

Ramagundam Task Force police and Bellampally two town police in a joint operation on Wednesday seized 70 quintals of rice meant for distribution to cardholders through Public Distribution Programme.

The police intercepted a van in which the rice, which was estimated to be worth of Rs 1.40 lakh, was being smuggled to Maharashtra. The police arrested two persons. Four more persons are absconding, the police said. The arrested persons, when questioned, were quoted as saying that a person, named Kiran Kumar, had hired them to transport the rice to Maharashtra. The truck carrying the rice had originated from Mandamari village, the police said.

Task Force Circle Inspector A Mahinder, Sub-Inspector Latchanna, two town police Sub-Inspector Jeevan and the staff conducted the operation.

Telangana budget to accord priority for education, health

State Planning Board Vice-Chairman B Vinod Kumar indicates priority areas for the government in the forthcoming budget

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Education and health will be given priority in the forthcoming Telangana State budget. Revealing certain details, B Vinod Kumar, Vice-Chairman of State Planning Board, said, "Education and health areas are priority this time. We have taken up Mana Vooru and Mana Badi scheme on a priority basis. We want to establish a medical college in Mulug, Bhupalpally and Kothagudem. The focus is on providing full-fledged medical facilities in remote areas. We are successful as far as power, irrigation and the social sector are concerned.

Our priorities are these two sectors and decide whether we need to take loans or not. We are talking to those who want to invest here, we are thinking about it."



Vinod along with Finance and Planning Special Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao, Government Financial Adviser G R Reddy and Director, Department of Statistics Dayanand unveiled Telangana State Statistical Abstract - 2021 on Wednesday.

Speaking about increasing debts, Rama Krishna Rao said,

"Debt should be looked at from repayment capacity. Our GDP and growth rate we should look at. Golden rule in public finance is to ensure that debt is kept on capital expenditure. The debt has been used for projects like Kaleshwaram, roads and Mission Bhagiratha. The latest budget of centre highlights

The latest budget of centre highlights same that that capex is more, which is leading to development and creation of more jobs. Under FRBM we are reasonable well.

same that that capex is more, which is leading to development and creation of more jobs. Under FRBM we are reasonable well. There is no State in the country which has not taken debts, including Central government."



Mahabubnagar SP R.Venkateswarlu distributing uniform kits to police personnel in Mahabubnagar on Wednesday

SP distributes uniform kits to armed personnel, home guards

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Superintendent of Police R Venkateswarlu stated that he would strive for the wellbeing of the police officials so that they can discharge their duties effectively. A programme was held at police headquarters here on Wednesday to distribute uniform kits to armed personnel and home guards and commendation certificates to the police officials for their outstanding services.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, SP R Venkateswarlu lauded the services of those police per-

sonnel who have discharged their duties for security arrangements in Suryapet district and also in other districts successfully. He advised the police personnel to make use of the available time to reduce pressure due to work. They have to behave responsibly with the family members and try to reduce unnecessary expenses, he said.

The SP expressed happiness over the functioning of district police personnel. The officials have to perform their duties effectively and in addition, identify the problems being faced by their juniors

and try to solve them.

The SP distributed kit articles to armed personnel, special police teams and home guards. Commendation certificates were issued to 61 police personnel for their outstanding services on various occasions. He said that good work by the police personnel will have recognition. He advised them to provide good education to their children.

Administrative officer B Layanya, inspectors Suresh, Raju, Srinivas, Applanaidu, Police Association president Venkataiah and others were present.

‘Plant saplings in Rajiv Swagruha township’

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

District Collector S Venkata Rao on Wednesday directed the Municipal officials to promote greenery in Rajiv Gandhi Swagruha Sarika township. The project would be taken up at a cost of Rs 50 lakh, he said.

After the visiting the township, the Collector gave several suggestions to the civic authorities to plant saplings in a big way. The administration will sell open plots in the township through auction between February 14 and 17. He directed the officials keep the township clean and tidy. He asked the officials to use boundary stones to mark the



Mahabubnagar Collector S Venkata Rao visiting Rajiv Swagruha township in Mahabubnagar on Wednesday

boundaries of each plot.

Additional Collector Tejas Nandlal, Mission Bhagiratha Superintending Engineer

Venkataramana, Housing Executive Engineer Venkataraman and others were present.

‘Mana Vooru-Mana Badi’ will improve quality of education’

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Minister for [Roads and Buildings Vemula Prasanth Reddy on Wednesday pointed out that Mana Vooru-Mana Badi scheme is aimed at providing quality education to children in rural areas on a par with the corporation educational institutions.

Participating in Mana Vooru-Mana Badi review meeting here, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was determined to extend quality education to children on a par with corporate schools. A total of 351 schools were identified for development in the first phase of the programme. Not less than 60 per cent of students would be benefited in the first phase itself, he said.

Govt diverts Rs 2 cr out CDF for Mana Vooru-Mana Badi

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

The State government has issued orders to the district administrations to spend Rs 2 crore out the Constituency Development Fund (ACDF) for the development of schools under Mana Vooru-Mana Badi programme. It directed the authorities not to accept any proposals from legislators under the CDF scheme.

It is significant to note that the government had announced an increase in CDF from Rs 3 crore to Rs 5 crore. Now, it has been decided to divert Rs 2 crore out of the CDF for the development of schools. Apart from it, it has also been decided to utilise 40 per cent of funds allotted to the local bodies for the development of schools.

The government released Rs 12.42 crore to Zilla



Parishads and Mandal Praja Parishads in December last year. This was the first in the history of the State that such large amounts of funds were released to local bodies. The Zilla Parishads were allocated Rs 6.25 crore and the Mandala Praja Parishads Rs 6.17 crore. The government order, however, did not specify how to

spend the funds and for which schemes should be taken up with the funds. Now, the government came out with a proposal to allot 40 per cent of these funds for the development of schools. Zilla Parishad Chief Executive Office Yellaiah said the Zilla Parishads and Mandal Praja Parishads should allot 40 per

of its funds for Mana Vooru-Mandal Badi programme.

The government released Rs 3 crore under CDF scheme in 2018-19. But the funds were not released in 2019-20. The government had allocated the funds for curbing Covid-19 pandemic.

The government released funds six months ago. The MLAs were happy over the government releasing funds. They sent proposals for various developmental works to the district administration. All the MLAs, except Sangareddy legislator, wanted to take up several developmental works. It was proposed to take 36 works in Patancheru, 38 in Narayakhed, 60 in Jaheerabad and 31 in Andole, besides former MLC V Bhupal Reddy sent proposals for 46 developmental works.

13th century Bhairava sculpture found in Nalgonda

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A beautiful sculpture of Bhairava carved out of black basalt stone was unearthed at Gollagudem, a colony on the outskirts of Nalgonda town, according to Sivanagi Reddy, archaeologist and CEO of the Pleach India Foundation.

Based on the information given by Paduru Satyanarayana Reddy, a resident of Gollagudem, Dr Reddy examined the sculpture which was found on a vacant plot belonging to Satyanarayana Reddy on Tuesday.

Dr Reddy said the idol of Bhairava found in two pieces was attached together and wears a Dhamaru. A Sula, Khadar and bowl were found in his four hands and it had a waistband comprising a garland of skulls.



The sculpture in Tribhanga posture reflected the Kakatiya style of art and iconography based on which it was dated to the 13th century AD. He added that Satyanarayana Reddy wanted to hand over the sculpture to the District Archaeological Museum at Pangal. Dr Reddy appealed to the officials concerned to shift the historically important idol to the museum to ensure its safety and to properly display it after labelling its details.

Become good citizens by leaving criminal path, prisoners told

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Suryapet town police officials and sub-jail officials have an interaction with the accused persons who are in remand and also with prisoners in the sub-jail on Wednesday.

Addressing on the occasion, CI Anjaneyulu stated that the interaction meet was held as per the directions of SP S Rajendraprasad. He said several inmates have come there by committing offences in a sudden spurt of anger. Such persons have to introspect themselves, realise their mistakes and change their behaviour. The prisoners have to keep themselves away from any types of crimes in future. All the departments and officials have been using latest technology and as such the



Police and jail officials interacting with prisoners in Suryapet on Wednesday

criminals cannot escape from being punished by the law, he said.

Sub-jail superintendent Upender Rao, in his address, said that the jail officials have been making efforts to bring changes in the attitude of the

prisoners. The state government has been trying to transform the prisoners as good citizens and provided necessary facilities. The prisoners have to change their criminal attitude and try to become good citizens, he said.

Sridhar Babu confident of Cong coming to power

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALA PALLY

Former Minister and MLA D Sridhar Babu on Wednesday expressed confidence that the Congress party would come to power in 2023 Assembly elections.

Speaking at a meeting after inaugurating the party office here, he exhorted the party activists to work unitedly to strengthen the party. District Congress Committee president Prakash Reddy, party in-charge for Bhupalapally constituency Gandra Satyanarayana were present.

The people in Telangana State would not believe in Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's statements. The Congress party alone can ensure the develop-

ment of the State. The people in the State were vexed with the TRS government and the Congress party would come to power in the next elections, he predicted.

He further said the KCR government in the State and Modi government at the Centre had adopted anti-people policies. The people would teach these leaders a bitter lesson, he said.

Mahadevapur ZPTC member Gudala Aruna, Mutharam ZPTC member Lingamalla Sarada, Kataram MPP member Panthakani Sammaiah, Congress party town unit president, councillors Datla Srinivas, Mahinder, Komuriah, Mahinder, Ravinder, Ranjit, Rajanikanth and Pippl Rajender were present.



Former Minister D Sridhar Babu speaking at the Congress party meeting in Bhupalapally on Wednesday

Prez poll may enable Naidu to make comeback

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The forthcoming presidential election may open a way for TDP supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu to make a political comeback.

Chandrababu has only 20 MLAs and three Lok Sabha MPs but that may help his political future as they can prove valuable in the presidential election.

After the last Lok Sabha elections, Chandrababu tried his best to restore ties with the BJP. But the BJP leadership was not ready to join hands with Chandrababu as it thought that he was not a reliable partner and as the YSR Congress which is in power in Andhra Pradesh is indirectly supporting them.

In national politics, while welding together the anti-BJP front no party is mentioning Chandrababu's name. In the past, Chandrababu used to control the wheels of national politics. But now both the ruling front and the opposition do not bother about Chandrababu. At the state level too, the BJP is not ready to have an alliance with the TDP.

Bankers urged to extend loans to priority sector

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALA PALLY

Bhupalapally MLA Gandra Venkataramana Reddy on Wednesday suggested to bankers that they sanction loans to various sections of people in time and help boost the economic development.

At bankers meeting, held here under the presidency of Additional Collector T S Divakar, lead bank manager Srinivas said annual credit plan of the district for the year

2021-22 was fixed at 1,730.77 crore. The banks had so far disbursed Rs 634.65 crore. He expressed the hope that target would be reached during the last 40 days of the financial year. The MLA sought the cooperation of bankers in helping the

poor people. The banks should disburse loans to the poor people in time. The banks should extend loans to farmers and self-help groups. The banks should display the benefits to oil palm farmers at every bank. The Central and State govern-

ment announced several sops for farmers to overcome dependence on imports. He suggested to the officials of the Animal Husbandry Department to visit the villages and ensure that milch animals are distributed to farmer on subsidy.

Rally to create awareness on TB held

PNS ■ KAZIPET

As part of the week-long programme for eradication of tuberculosis (TB), Sarvaprema Welfare Society in Fatimanagar organised an awareness rally from Kazipet Cross Roads to Kazipet Railway Station on Wednesday.

District TB Control Officer Mallikarjun flagged off the rally. Addressing the participants, he regretted that many people lacked awareness on the disease. It led to several persons losing their lives after being infected with TB. "Though it is a contagious disease, it can be cured if the patient takes treatment for six to nine months," he said.



Members of Sarvaprema Welfare Society of Fatimanagar taking out rally in Kazipet on Wednesday on awareness to eradicate TB

He further said that as part of National TB Eradication Programme (NTEP), it is aimed to eradicate the disease by the year 2025. As part of the programme, the rally was organised. Medicines are available at government hospitals at district and mandal level for the treatment of the

disease free of cost, he said. Sarvaprema Society president T Balaswamy Reddy, secretary H Prabhakar, staff Satyaprakash, Ravikumar, Rajender, Bhaskar Reddy, Vijayakumari and Vijayababu, besides students of St. Anns College of Nursing, participated.

MGM Hospital faces shortage of doctors, equipment

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The MGM Hospital in Warangal, which is regarded as a premier super specialty hospital in north Telangana region, has been facing numerous problems, including fund crunch, shortage of doctors etc. In addition, patients have been facing inconveniences due to alleged corrupt practices adopted by some staff.

Due to lack of proper equipment for diagnosis, and due to non-availability of doctors, patients have been facing difficulties for the past six months. The state government has been ignoring to address the issues at the hos-

pital, it is alleged. In the name of outsourcing employees, several lakhs of rupees are being wasted. The government has not appointed adequate staff to the hospital, it is reported.

With the implementation of GO No. 317, around 50 nurses have been shifted from MGM hospital to other hospitals. Now, the MGM has been facing shortage of nurses. There are no sufficient number of doctors, professors and other staff at the 10 super specialty departments. Gastroenterology and diagnosis and other departments have been facing shortage of medical staff. Six X-ray machines are not functioning and only two are in working



condition. The medical staff have been facing difficulties to make stitches (sutures) after surgeries due to lack of prop-

er sutures.

The MLAs and other people's representatives have not been inspecting the hospital

regularly, it is alleged.

The hospital requires 26 professors, but only 15 professors are working.

Similarly, out of the eight assistant professors needed for the hospital, only three are working. There are no appointments for dentists or physiotherapists. There is 40 percent shortage of doctors at casualty.

Altogether, 1,426 employees are needed for proper functioning of the hospital, however only 788 are working. Allocation of adequate funds in the budget and appointment of adequate staff, both medical and paramedical categories are the main demands from the people.

INDIA CORNER

Forest official flags illegal camping in Uttarakhand's Shivpuri

Illegal camping activities along the banks of the Ganga are being run at Shivpuri near here in violation of a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order, a forest official said. Narendranagar Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Rajiv Dhiman has written a letter regarding this to Tehri Garhwal District Magistrate Iva Shrivastava and asked her to take appropriate action. Shivpuri is not in the list of 25 spots identified in reserve forest and civil areas that have the permission for carrying out camping activities, the forest official said. The NGT order prohibits such activities within 100 metres on either side of the river. Thirteen spots in the reserve forest area and 12 in the civil area located beyond the restricted 100-metre area have the permission to run camping activities. When contacted, Tehri Garhwal DMI Shrivastava said effective steps are being taken to stop camping activities in Shivpuri.



4,700 cases being probed by ED, only 313 arrested since 2002

The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Wednesday that 4,700 cases are being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as on date, and only 313 people have been arrested for the alleged offences since the enactment of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in 2002. The total amount covered by interim orders of no coercive action passed by the courts in such matters is approximately Rs 67,000 crore, the government told a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar, that in money laundering cases relating to Vijay Mallya, Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi, the ED has confiscated around Rs 18,000 crore by the orders of the courts following due procedure. The apex court is dealing with a batch of petitions concerning the interpretation of certain provisions of the PMLA.



J-K BJP president meets former NC leader Bukhari in Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina on Wednesday met former Minister Mushtaq Ahmad Shah Bukhari here, a day after he resigned from the basic membership of National Conference over the issue of Scheduled Tribe status for Pahari speaking community. The meeting gave rise to speculation that Bukhari, a two-time MLA from Surankote constituency of Poonch district, is joining the saffron party even as Raina said he enjoys family terms with the elderly politician and his meeting with him was just a courtesy call. In a related development, a video has gone viral on social media purportedly of a telephonic conversation between NC president Farooq Abdullah and a party worker on the issue of Bukhari's resignation with former chief minister making it clear that the party has been projecting the demand of Pahari community.



Dynasts ignored problems of Muslim women due to vote bank politics: PM

PNS ■ BARABANKI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hit out at rivals, saying they only bothered about "vote-bank politics" and did not pay attention to the "mountain-like" problems faced by Muslim women due to evil practices like triple talaq. Addressing an election rally for Barabanki and Ayodhya districts, he claimed that the opposition parties are rattled as the poor people, who have benefited from various welfare schemes including free ration during coronavirus pandemic, are carrying the BJP's victory flag. Increasing the safety and dignity of daughters has always been the priority of the double-engine government, the prime minister said and highlighted the large-scale recruitment of women in Uttar Pradesh Police as well as in the paramilitary

forces and the army. "Today, daughters are giving protection to the country and society by becoming commandos in maximum numbers. Around 6-7 years ago the number of women police personnel in our country was only 1.10 lakh. Now the number of women police personnel has reached above 2.25 lakh," he said. He also took a swipe at opposition leaders for claiming that they can understand people's pain more than those who have no family, saying for him, UP and the entire country is family. "Those who say that they have families, I want to ask

these dynasts why didn't they worry about the pain of my Muslim sisters and daughters and their families when they were forced to return to their father's home. "The dynasts always bothered for their 'vote bank' but shut their eyes on the mountain-like problems

faced by the Muslim women due to triple talaq practice. "It is our government which has freed these Muslim sisters from the vicious cycle of triple talaq," he said, adding it not only helped women but also their families. Asserting that it was his go-

vernment that for the first time addressed the issues of small and marginal farmers, the prime minister said "we have transferred more than Rs 800 crore in the bank accounts of farmers in Barabanki district only". Claiming that the interest of farmers is central to his government, Modi said that a national vaccination programme especially for cattle worth Rs 13,000 crore is underway. The vaccination programme is focused on diseases in cattle like foot and mouth disease. The government has started a Govardhan scheme where plants are being set up to manufacture biogas using animal dung, he said. This will help farmers to earn from the waste of their cattle and get high-quality organic fertiliser for their farms, he added.



Rajasthan Budget focuses on health, education

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday presented the Budget for the year 2022-23, with the main focus on sectors like health, education, infrastructure, social security and tourism. Presenting the Budget in the Rajasthan Assembly, Gehlot during the almost three-hour-long speech announced the launch of the Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme with an aim to provide 100 days of employment in urban areas. The Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme is in the lines of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), for which a Rs 800 crore budget has been proposed. Another major announcement in the budget is to implement the old pension

The Indira Gandhi Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme is in the lines of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), for which a Rs 800 crore budget has been proposed.



scheme from next year for all employees appointed on or after January 1, 2004. "We all know that the employees associated with government services should feel secure about the future, only then they can make their invaluable contribution towards good governance during the service period. Therefore, for all the employees appointed on or after

January 1, 2004, I propose to implement the old pension scheme," he said. Gehlot also proposed to increase the health cover under the state government's much ambitious Chiranjeevi Health Insurance Scheme from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh per year per family. He also announced that IPD and OPD services will be free-of-cost in state-run hospitals.

Jayant plays PM for linking Ukraine to UP polls

PNS ■ NOIDA

Taking a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) president Jayant Chaudhary on Wednesday said the people of Uttar Pradesh should no longer seek relief or development from the government as the PM has brought the issue of Ukraine to the state polls. Chaudhary, whose RLD is fighting the UP assembly polls in a tie-up with the Samajwadi Party, referred to Modi's speech in Bahraich on Tuesday during which he made a reference to the eastern European nation. Currently tension is high between the neighbouring nations amid apprehensions of Russia invading Ukraine. In his speech, Modi had said turmoil is prevailing in the world, India needs to be stronger and for difficult times, a tough leader is needed. "Modi bringing in Ukraine to Uttar Pradesh elections 2022. Says tough times need tough leaders'. So convenient! Now Uttar Pradesh voters shouldn't ask for relief from spiralling electricity, petrol, diesel costs and for plan for economic development and jobs," the RLD chief tweeted. Chaudhary also appealed to voters of the 59 assembly constituencies where voting took place on Wednesday to "vote for change" and drive out "those against farmers". The districts where the polling is being held are Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Hardoi, Unnao, Lucknow, Rae Bareilly, Banda, and Fatehpur.

HC directs SEC to examine ground situation in municipalities going to polls in WB

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court Wednesday directed the State Election Commissioner to examine the ground situation in each of the 108 West Bengal municipalities going to polls on February 27, and take a decision on deployment of paramilitary forces. A division bench presided by Chief Justice Prakash Shrivastava, hearing petitions including one by a state BJP leader, said if the commissioner decides against deploying paramilitary forces, then he will be personally liable to ensure that violence-free and fair elections take place. Directing the commissioner of the SEC to collect information on conditions prevailing in municipalities where polls are scheduled, the bench,



also comprising Justice R Bharadwaj, asked him to hold a joint meeting with the home secretary and the DGP within 24 hours. The court asked the commissioner to take a decision in writing "by mentioning the relevant circumstances in support of his decision to deploy/not to deploy the paramilitary forces," in each of the 108 municipal-

ities. Praying for direction to the SEC to deploy paramilitary forces for the February 27 polls, the petitioners had alleged that a state of terror is prevailing and in almost 10 per cent of the municipalities going for polls, ruling Trinamool Congress candidates have won uncontested as nominations were not allowed to be filed by other contestants.

Don't lower guard despite flattening Covid curve: Venkaiah Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday underlined the importance of basic amenities such as safe drinking water and sanitation in preventing diseases and contributing towards the overall well-being of people. He also cautioned that with the flattening of COVID-19 pandemic curve, people should not lower their guard and continue with the practice of washing hands frequently. Addressing the National WASH Conclave-2022 after inaugurating it virtually from Chennai, the vice president said children should grow up in an environment that is healthy - physically and emotionally. For this, he wanted



preventive healthcare measures such as safe water, sanitation and hygienic practices to begin from anganwadis and primary schools, an official statement from the Vice President Secretariat said. The three-day virtual conclave on Water, sanitation and

hygiene (WASH) is being organised by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, in association with the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, UNICEF and other development partners. The conclave is

focusing on advancing water, sanitation and hygiene at panchayats. Observing that taking forward WASH agenda to the gram panchayats is critical as they are at the core of rural water supply, Naidu stressed the need to ensure institutional strengthening of panchayats for effective service delivery to the last mile. This is a key aspect of governance which I always emphasise efficient last mile delivery of services in every field holds the key to fast-tracking all-round development, he asserted. The vice president said that as a nation, we need to ensure that every household gets all the basic facilities - the most essential of them being WASH related.

PLEA ON VACATION OF GOVERNMENT BUNGALOW

HC asks Sharad Yadav to respond

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Wednesday sought response of former Janata Dal (United) President Sharad Yadav on the Centre's plea seeking to vacate a stay on vacation of government bungalow occupied by him in the national capital as he was disqualified as Rajya Sabha MP in 2017. A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh also allowed the Centre's plea seeking an early date of hearing and directed the registry to list the matter relating to



his disqualification on March 15, looking into facts of the case and the urgency involved. The court said the

response, if any, shall be filed by Yadav and Shri Ram Chandra Prasad Singh, leader of JD(U) in Rajya Sabha, by

March 13. It also impleaded the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs as a party to proceedings after Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain submitted that the central government has direct interest in the matter as he was holding government accommodation even after being disqualified as a Member of Parliam. The court was hearing applications filed by the ministry in a pending petition by Yadav in which he has challenged his disqualification from Rajya Sabha in 2017.

‘Akhilesh betrayed people by dropping cases against terrorists’

PNS ■ PRATAPGARH

Launching a scathing attack on Akhilesh Yadav, BJP national president J P Nadda on Wednesday said the Samajwadi Party chief betrayed the people of Uttar Pradesh by withdrawing cases against those booked under terrorism charges. "Akhilesh Ji, these days, is seeking votes and talking about development. Till now, he had only developed his family, but now he has realised that Uttar Pradesh should be developed. He will not bring vikas (development), but vinash (destruction) in the state, he said at an election meeting here. The BJP leader also asked the audience, Did 200 riots not take place during the five-year rule of the Akhilesh Yadav government?

"Akhilesh Ji, these days, is seeking votes and talking about development. Till now, he had only developed his family, but now he has realised that Uttar Pradesh should be developed."



Referring to the withdrawal of terror cases against two men belonging to Azamgarh and Jaunpur in connection with the 2007 bomb blasts in Gorakhpur and at court compounds in Ayodhya, Lucknow and Varanasi, he said, "I am posing these questions to Akhilesh Yadav. When he comes here, media should seek an answer from him. Sharpening his attack on the SP chief, Nadda said, "Can you

let such a person who releases terrorists be the chief minister? The case of CRPF camp attack in Rampur was also withdrawn in 2012 the then CM gave shelter to terrorists, saved them and withdrew the cases against them. Akhilesh, in the order withdrawing the case, had said that it was done for communal harmony -- I have never seen such a patriotic person, this is how you are serving Uttar Pradesh. Is it not betraying the people?" he said. The BJP president added that it is the responsibility of the people to make such people sit at home. Taking potshots at the Congress, he said the Indian National Congress (INC) is no longer bharatiya or rashtriya, but has been reduced to a party of bhai-behen, in an apparent reference to the brother-sister duo of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi. Crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for going to the masses with his report card and talking about the promises fulfilled by him, Nadda said the saffron party started this trend of candidates talking about the development work undertaken by the Modi government. "Have you heard any other party candidate talking about the work undertaken by them? Only BJP has this strength. Other parties can only talk about how they have helped their families, houses and relatives, but not the people," he said.

Assam tea garden workers face survival crisis

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Over 40,000 tea garden workers in upper Assam are being allegedly forced to live in dilapidated homes without access to proper healthcare and education due to an over three-year delay in fulfilment of welfare promises made by their employer -- a major global conglomerate facing fraud and forgery charges. The workers from adivasi communities are employed in 14 tea gardens of the 182-year-old Assam Company India



Limited (ACIL), which was acquired by billionaire B R Shetty-owned BRS ventures in

2018 after approval from the National Company Law Tribunal. The ACIL, however,

refuted the allegations, saying the management was committed to improving the lives of workers and blamed the COVID-19 pandemic for the delay in the implementation of the proposed welfare plan. BRS ventures acquired the stressed ACIL in 2018 after it submitted in the NCLT a resolution plan that along with the purchase money it will also spend Rs 150 crore within six months of acquisition for the welfare of garden workers. The plan involved renovation of staff quarters, building

a multi-speciality hospital, drinking water facilities, labourers welfare, gratuity and proper provident fund according to the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. This act becomes mandatory for the government and the private companies to adhere to it when they venture into this sector. The workers claimed that they were given written assurances by the company about the elaborate welfare plan that it had chalked out for them and also included promoting tourism in the region.

See you!

Installing CCTVs in schools has positive and negative sides; both of these impact children

Some parents and teachers are challenging the Delhi Government's decision to install CCTV cameras in classrooms in Government-run schools. The Delhi High Court has admitted a petition in this regard and sought the Government's response. How can the Government do that without first obtaining consent, the petition asks? The argument is the presence of cameras and storage of the data on private servers violates the right to privacy. Constant monitoring can have a psychological impact on children. There is the danger of the data being abused through morphing and illegally disseminating it on social media. The parents have a case. Irrespective of the pros and cons of surveillance, they cannot be installed without consent; and not in classrooms even with consent. That is a clear breach of privacy. In the West, the Government would have been sued by now. Having said that, how can the Government, the police, or the school authorities ensure the safety and security of children in schools? Remember the Ryan International School incident in Gurugram in 2017? A seven-year-old student was found with deep neck injuries outside a washroom. He died later. The police found most of the school's CCTV cameras were not functional. The same year, a student shot dead a classmate in a Haryana educational institute over an argument. How the country-made pistol made it into the classroom remains a mystery. In 2020, a 14-year-old student shot dead a classmate in Bulandshahr over who will sit where. Again, the weapon was not detected in time to prevent the crime.



The proponents of CCTV cameras give the example of the United States where schools have turned into surveillance zones because of unchecked violence. Mass shootings on campuses are common and, currently, around 80 per cent of public schools use security cameras, hoping to detect weapons and altercations and bullying. Cameras are now a critical tool for safety and behaviour management in American schools and for holding students accountable for their behaviour. In the UK, research shows students in schools, including in classrooms and toilets, are as frequently monitored as passengers at airports or inmates in prisons, raising a host of privacy issues. Not just in Delhi, internationally too, the Governments and schools are taking to surveillance technology at a frenetic pace. The CCTV system is beneficial, but not at the cost of privacy. The authorities can install these systems around the perimeters of schools, complement them with metal detectors and frisking to ensure that weapons and other dangerous materials are not brought in. Tighter procedures to break up fights can help nip any violence in the bud. However, they cannot be installed in classrooms and toilets where students reasonably expect privacy. The cameras disrupt the classroom atmosphere and signal mistrust of students. They impact relationships. And they fail to detect bad intent. When they intrude into the privacy of a classroom, they are self-defeating and a poor substitute for a trusting atmosphere that marks a healthy classroom.

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PICTALK



Vehicles tread slowly on a snow-covered road during snowfall, in Srinagar

PTI

Happy campaign

Manipur is a welcome change from the rut of in-your-face, loud electoral canvassing

Far from the madding crowd of the Hindi belt and hinterland, Manipur seems like an oasis of responsibility, sense and sensibility. This reference is specific to the Assembly election, circa 2022. There are problems peculiar to the region. Despite the Government's much-touted 'Jal Jeevan Mission' and its 'success', Prime Minister Narendra Modi was seen beating his own "double-engine" Government's drum for providing over 3 lakh households with tap water. In 2022! The State had put a 2022 deadline for 100 per cent potable drinking water supply. There certainly is improvement as compared to the Congress regime, but the crisis is still far from resolved. Despite efforts to fast-track piped water supply, many areas even in Imphal face an acute water crisis. Modi held a rally in Chief Minister N Biren Singh's constituency Heingang and urged people to again vote in the "double-engine" Government. Earlier on Friday last, Union Minister Smriti Irani was seen shaking a leg with traditional dancers of Manipur during her visit to Imphal where she had gone canvassing for BJP candidate Okram Henry Singh.



However, the Congress, which is seeking a return to office, is not amused. On the earlier Congress Government's "tardiness" in providing piped drinking water, former Chief Minister Ibobi Singh said Modi was lying. "He's is not God...They were in power only for five years and we were for 15. We had set up the infrastructure," the three-time Chief Minister said. The hustle-bustle, name-calling and dirty campaign trails apart, election campaigning in Manipur is not noisy and replete with expletives or loud language, but — quite interestingly — a ritual where all parties hoist and worship their flags. Assembly elections are scheduled in Manipur on February 28 and March 5, ahead of which candidates are holding such ceremonies. Once associated with royalty, the flag-hoisting ceremony, *firal chingkhapta*, has become an essential part of the campaign. Candidates hold the ceremony at home on an auspicious date and time. There's a prayer by the local priest and blessings by community elders. People from around the place come bearing rice, sweets, fruits, vegetables, flowers and gifts in general and place them under the flagpole. "We bring whatever we cultivate in our fields for the candidate we support. We give this to show the candidate that we will vote for him," explained a local. Pleasingly different, isn't it?

The blame doesn't lie only with Putin

Russia has its own reasons to do what looks like an 'attack on a sovereign country' to western nations, especially the United States



MANAVENDRA PRASAD

The end of a conflict often sows the seeds of the next one. If the cause of World War II in a large part can be attributed to the terms of the settlement of the First World War, one of the causes of the Cold War can be traced to the settlement of World War II. The geopolitical changes as a result of the end of the Cold War have led to many other conflicts in the last three decades. The unravelling of communism across the globe, as well as the collapse of Yugoslavia, to the current crisis in Ukraine are apt examples.

We have yet another Ukraine crisis at hand. The western media, which tends to dominate global narratives, has painted Russia the intransigent bully. The health of Russia's democracy and Putin's grip on power has buttressed this image. With the Chinese backing the Russian volubly, this perspective has got shriller. However, it is important to understand why Russia is threatening Ukraine, and what has forced its hand.

Ukraine's sovereignty is suspect; historically, it has rarely been an independent nation. Ukraine literally means, in Slavic, borderland — a geographical area. It has been 'the ukraine' for Russia for all of its known history. Russia and Ukraine both trace their roots back to the first East Slavic State, Kievan Rus, which stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea. With deep social and cultural ties with Russia, for Russians, it is also about undoing the injustices of the collapse of the Soviet Union — large parts of the Russian territory and many Russians under the control of an untrustworthy Ukrainian Government. Russia's ancient connections with Ukraine make it a special relationship. For Russian nationalists, Ukraine is an immutable component of the greater Russian empire.

In Russia's eyes, the West promised back in the 1990s that Nato would expand "not an inch to the east" but did so anyway. Latvia, Lithuania and



Estonia, three former Soviet republics, are part of Nato; so are many more Warsaw Pact countries. There are combat units in Poland and the Baltic republics while missiles are deployed in countries such as Poland and Romania. Now Ukraine too desires to join Nato.

Western powers seek to protect Ukraine's right to seek membership in Nato, which must have an "open door" to any country that wishes to join. However, this ever-encroaching American strategy to encircle Russia with hostile Governments has serious concerns for Russia's security. With the Warsaw Pact long dead, it is not out of place to ask, 'What is the *sine qua non* for Nato?'

Russia has long been uncomfortable with Ukraine's approach towards European institutions, both Nato and the European Union. It is a fair demand for the West to guarantee that Ukraine will not join NATO. For Russia, it is a make-or-break situation and it can't

“THE WEST PROMISED BACK IN THE 1990S THAT NATO WOULD EXPAND 'NOT AN INCH TO THE EAST' BUT DID SO ANYWAY. LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND ESTONIA, THREE FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS, ARE PART OF NATO; SO ARE MANY MORE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES

help intervening lest it loses Ukraine permanently. That will be one more from amongst the former Soviet Union republics.

Russia is seeking an immediate resolution to its concerns but the West is focused on discussions and negotiations which could potentially drag on for years while more countries are pried from Russia's immediate sphere of influence and enhancing its security concerns. Additionally, given Russia's self-image and a strong sense of independence, it does realise that its partnership with China is only tactical and is unlikely to be an alliance of equals. Both Russia and China are happy using each other only to meet their immediate geopolitical goals. Russia will look to maintain its strategic elbowroom and it wants to avoid getting into too tight an embrace with China; hence the need to achieve its goals on priority with the current support from the Chinese. Therefore, it is unfair to

blame Putin for the current crisis that confronts Europe and the rest of the world. It is time that the West made a note of the big picture — the real threat to the US-led world order comes from China, and not Russia. Fortunately, there is recognition of this view amongst large sections of the European leadership — it was not long ago that the German Navy Chief resigned for his remarks about Russia and China.

Russia, quite like India, will always want to exercise strategic autonomy. It is unlikely to kowtow to any other power however larger it might be. For the West, it is time to get over the 'Putin the bully' fixation and reassess its actions. The West should make a genuine effort to address Russia's concerns. Maybe it is time to abolish Nato altogether and look to create an Indo-Pacific Treaty Organisation, with Russia at its vanguard.

(The writer works as a public policy consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RUSSIA IS PLAYING HARDBALL

Sir — This refers to 'Eyeball to eyeball' (February 23). The Russian invasion of Ukraine started as President Vladimir Putin ordered forces into two separatist regions of eastern Ukraine. But it appeared to dash the slim hopes of averting a major conflict in Europe that could cause massive casualties, energy shortages on the continent and economic chaos around the globe. The move paved the way to provide them military support, antagonising western leaders who regard such a move as a breach of world order, and set off a frenzied scramble by the US and others to respond. Putin has justified his decision in a far-reaching, pre-recorded speech blaming Nato for the current crisis and calling the US-led alliance an existential threat to Russia.

Sweeping through more than a century of history, he painted today's Ukraine as a modern construct that is inextricably linked to Russia. The Russian State media released images of people in Donetsk launching fireworks, waving large Russian flags and playing Russia's national anthem. Over 14,000 people have been killed since the conflict erupted in the eastern industrial heartland in 2014, shortly after Moscow annexed Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. With this Russian invasion of Ukraine, the matters are leading to a disastrous situation.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WATCH THE KIDS ON THE ROAD

Sir — A shocking 11,160 children under the age of 14 died in road accidents in 2019. Motor vehicle accidents were the top reason. On an average, 31 children were killed due to road mishaps in 2020. These numbers point to the vulnerability of children to road accidents. The Centre, by amending Rule 138 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, has taken the right step towards securing the lives of children. By this amendment, the Road Ministry has made it mandatory for all children between nine months and four years of age to sport helmets and safety harnesses on two-wheelers.

Violating the rule will attract a fine of

Don't shirk work, please



With election duties assigned to them, personnel from most of the Government departments and agencies were apparently on a long 'hiatus'. But now, with the dust kicked up over the February 14 Assembly polls having finally settled down, it is time they returned to their desks and commenced work in earnest. The services of departments which concern themselves with the upkeep of public utility services round the year will be the most sought after, with many complaints from the public going unattended

due to the shortage of staff. While it becomes difficult to understand how a whole State can come to a complete standstill with the impending elections, it is all the more concerning to know that the maintenance of a skeleton crew to man the day-to-day activities of respective departments is a managerial art that most of the senior Government officers appear to be ignorant about.

No task can be so demanding that the Government thinks nothing of pulling out personnel from key departments catering to public services and posting them elsewhere. It is as if the administration doesn't have 'contingency' plans in place to provide for such situations. Just as the 'exigencies of duty' necessitates a change of roster for various Government agencies and departments, like for elections; providing faultless and timely public services should also invite the same sort of keenness from the authorities concerned.

Pachu Menon | Margao

₹1000 and cancellation of driving licence for three months. To be operationalised in one year, this time modification has the potential to be a game changer if properly enforced. Children riding pillion with their parents, sandwiched in between or standing in front of either parent at the wheel, is disturbing as well as dangerous. By the new rule, it is possible that there will only be two people on the two wheelers thereby adding additional safety, and comfort, mechanism. It is another matter that pothole-filled roads and drunk drivers equally endanger the lives of children. Rash driving near schools is another matter of concern.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

TREAT MANUAL SCAVENGERS HUMANELY

Sir — This refers to 'Manual scavengers fall prey to unscrupulous contractors' (February 22). Four manual scavengers dying of asphyxiation while on duty in Saidabad, Kondapur and Manikonda in Hyderabad is most deplorable and distressing. Incidents of death of manual scavengers are

rampant and on the rise. Gullible and naive manual scavengers are falling prey to fraudulent and unscrupulous contractors and accepting tenders. They are losing their lives while cleaning human faeces from under the manholes. It is not fair and justified to know that due to fund crunch, the Telangana Government has not yet provided compensation to manual scavengers victims of many bereaved families.

The State must cut down on sanctioning orders of funds on the eve of festivals in order to avoid fund crunch. Sewers-cleaning machines have already been launched and introduced in Telangana. The State Government must provide scavenging cleaning sewers machines to the GHMC authority to replace and mitigate the manual scavengers and speed up the process to provide compensation to the rest of manual scavengers victims of the bereaved families.

Zubair Khan | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Manipur is the gateway to trade and business with the rest of east Asia.

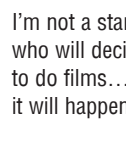


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I've authorised additional movement of US forces to strengthen our Baltic allies.

US President — Joe Biden



I'm not a star kid who will decide to do films...and it will happen.

Actor — Nia Sharma



I'm not exposing the (journalists) name for now. But if it recurs, I will not hold back.

Indian cricketer — Wriddhiman Saha

The small leaders of BJP tell small lies; those bigger tell bigger lies.




SP president — Akhilesh Yadav

FIRST COLUMN

MOVING TOWARDS A TECH EVOLUTION

Its continuity differentiates it from similar past revolutions




VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Throughout the recorded history of mankind there are several references to technological marvels and breakthroughs. They have come in the form of building constructions, weapons of warfare and handling of water flows and other sectors. The evidences are available from the Andes area, river valleys such as Tigris/Euphrates, Indus/Ganga valleys, Yangtze region in China, and more. Be it the Inca civilization, that of Mayas or the pyramids of Egypt and some of the temple construction of India, there are many technological marvels. Some of them are yet waiting to be fully deciphered and replicated. The unique thing about all these experiences is — most of them could not replicate themselves. There was no continuum, and it came to an abrupt break, illustratively, some of the features of the temple architecture of peninsular India are still fully to be explained. How pyramids came up without any current evidence of cranes remains a marvel. How these powerful intellectual traditions came to an end is not known. But come to an end they did. The unique feature of the present 'industrial revolution' is not only that it has a technological base, but that revolution is a continuing one and has gradually spread to more areas. It is not only continuous and continuing but the spread is widening and deepening. That is what makes the technological dimension of this industrial revolution a unique one in human history. It is this continuity which puts it apart from other previous similar revolutions.

The current technological revolution has often meant faster, diversified and constant upgradation. It has given rise to a whole new technological expertise. An expertise which is required not only at the operational end where more and more people are covered but at other levels also. The other levels include an almost continuous upgradation of technology. Of this the mobile phone is a good example. Ever so frequently the technology reaches a new threshold and the commands become more complex or simple. Whichever way one looks at it, they keep changing. This simply means a technology is impacting every day lives on a continuous basis almost everywhere. Its not possible to ignore this process because even in one of its manifestations, let us say digitalization - it has been adopted as a governance instrument almost universally. This leaves the technologically uneducated individual - not just in the backwaters, but in wilderness. The person can attract clauses of legislation in areas wherethey may not simply have the ability or opportunity to adopt or even upgrade. It may need access to resources, of purchasing an instrument for which he may not even have the capacity. When daily living is itself a matter of doubt because of deficiency of resources available at an individual level, what can be the hope of looking at technological literacy let alone technological upgradation? Concerns like the one outlined above need to be flagged as important policy concerns which need to be built into the larger civil society debate. Excessive admiration and observation of technological compulsions may create divisions in the society which will ultimately need a response. However, it is much better to anticipate them. The above narrative amongst other thing, intends to focus on an urgent need of policy realignment and refocussing of the protocols of progress. This has become more evident during the pandemic. There are several country cases from South Sudan to Singapore which needed to be addressed, analyzed and understood to ensure that the evolutionary growth of the human race continues to be more uniform and manageable. That is a much-needed requirement of the future for which action must begin now.

(The writer is an acclaimed management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)



UP: Can an ascendant SP alter 2024 course?

The BJP in its run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections should not be taken lightly. It has organisational and official strength to bounce back

With four phases over, elections in Uttar Pradesh go east, including to Amethi, Ayodhya and Gorakhpur. Here, the number of migrant workers who were subject to ill-treatment during the first Covid-19 lockdown is the highest. The mood here is influenced by rising prices in the region which already has high poverty levels. They have been hit hard periodically, since after demonetisation.

Stray cattle are a big issue. In the east like in the west, they devastate farm produce and there is no way to resolve the problem. The "gomata" approach of the BJP after coming to power has swelled the number of its adherents. Linguistic minorities like Bengalis and Punjabis are



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

largely with BJP.

Efforts of Congress leaders Priyanka Vadera and Rahul Gandhi to activate the party and a possible tacit tie-up with Samajwadi Party can make some difference to opposition numbers. BSP has committed Jatav votes but other Dalits may split among various parties. The Hathras gang-rap may realign Valmikis who previously voted BJP. So may the Unnao incident in central UP.

Since 1985, UP has not re-elected an incumbent government. If Yogi succeeds, he would establish a record. The BJP is not leaving it to chance. Even during the 2017 poll, the state did not see so many top BJP leaders campaigning. Home Minister Amit Shah is continuously visiting and is said to be the organising mastermind. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed over 11 large rallies till the beginning of poll process attacking communal "samajwadis". The latter say that is keeping SP in the reckoning.

Deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya contesting from Sirathu near Allahabad faces hostile crowds like many ministers like Shrikant Sharma, Suresh Rana, Sangeet Som did in the west. Sharma was jeered all over in Mathura. Former central minister Mahesh Sharma was shooed away from his home village in Bulandshahr for not visiting the area. In all these incidents, the BJP workers remained silent spectators. The SP-RLD had interestingly pitted Pallavi Patel, a good orator and sister of central minister Anupriya Patel of Apna Dal against Maurya cornering him in the constituency.

Would it change the voting pattern that was overwhelmingly for BJP in 2017? Not easy to say. The state government's reported diktat to government employees to coerce postal ballot voters has reportedly caused consternation. There is a SP-RLD push back on account of this while the poll staff have now distanced themselves from parties.

The BJP is surprised the



way SP leader Akhilesh Yadav has done his social engineering. This has led the SP penetrate hitherto impregnable areas like Agra and Mathura in the west and as well as many other seats in the east. The diligent home work of Akhilesh helps SP by having a wider alliance with caste groups beyond the Yadavs and his family members. Similarly, Jayant Chaudhury had spread his wings and emerged as more than a Jat leader in the aftermath of the year-long kisan agitation. The kisan, Gujar, Pal, Baghel, Prajapati and similar smaller caste groups have moved to SP-RLD.

There is also a conflict between who takes the credit for welfare programmes. The SP-RLD combine accuses BJP of grabbing credit for programmes introduced by SP and other governments.

Even Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath himself is said to be roughing it up in Gorakhpur as his disciple Sunil Singh on SP ticket faces him and alleged erstwhile area strongman, Hari Shankar Tiwari's family opposes.

But there is a different aspect to it all. The minority votes lining up for SP-RLD have fuelled a counter-pas-sion for BJP's Hindutva, Ayodhya, Vindhyavasini temples and Krishna temple in Mathura. An Aligarh professor Sajjad said before the polls in western UP that overtly the minorities, Jats and farmer groups appear to be together but they may not be as cohesive as they appear. The voting

may not reflect the overt mood.

RSS leader Indresh Kumar has activated his Rashtriya Muslim Manch to woo the Christians and Muslim minorities groups in Lucknow, Amroha, Moradabad and now even in Goa, Uttarakhand and Manipur to help BJP. Kumar has had separate meetings with Muslim women and his media coordinator Shahid Sayeed says the women who benefited by triple talaq annulment are with BJP. Many also have received PM Awas houses.

The BJP in its run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections should not be taken lightly. It has organizational and official strength to bounce back. Its leaders say that even with lesser seats than 325 now it would have enough to be in power.

BJP must review its Govt's hijab response

If the party really wants to empower Muslim women, it has to do a lot more: Ending violence and discrimination, besides educating their girls

The BJP's top leadership needs to review whether the way their Karnataka leaders have handled the hijab row is working in or against the party interest. At the first glance, it seems the party has lost some of the goodwill it had earned among Muslim women by passing the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights) on Marriage Act, popularly known as the triple talaq law, two and a half years ago. Even the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, the organisation of Muslim women that had collaborated with the Modi government on the drafting of the law and full-throatedly supported it—ignoring the ridicule of the liberals and leftists for not seeing the party's real design which was not to protect the Muslim woman from the tyranny of instant divorce but to pull down a part of the fort of the Muslim Personal Law—has expressed opposition to the Karnataka government's decision to bar hijab-wearing girls from classrooms.

With what tremendous enthusiasm had the BJP rushed the triple talaq law through Parliament! It did it, it claimed, for the empowerment of the Muslim woman!! Prime Minister Modi tweeted: "Parliament abolishes Triple Talaq... This is a victory for gender justice... It will contribute to women empowerment... India rejoices today!"

And truly, after the law was passed, the number of complaints from Muslim women about instant divorce amazingly dropped. But the BJP's Muslim women's empowerment juggernaut stopped there. It needed to go beyond. The abolition of triple talaq deterred the Muslim husband from divorcing his wife by uttering 'Talaq' thrice, but it did not stop him from getting rid of her by uttering 'Talaq' once and not revoking it over a waiting period of three menstrual cycles or three lunar months. The man was still on top. The woman could do nothing. She would be out of his home and out of his life after 90 days. He would pay her the sum of 'mahr' (dower he agreed to pay her at the time of marriage) and the maintenance for 90 days. That was all he needed to do under the law and say goodbye.

The BJP should have taken one more step after abolishing triple talaq: they should have scrapped the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights On Divorce) Act 1986 which was passed by the Rajiv Gandhi government to override the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case entitling the divorced Muslim wife to maintenance from her husband not only for the waiting period but for life. The BJP had alleged that Rajiv Gandhi had succumbed to the pressures of the mullahs. It stirred up Hindu passions to build up a huge support for itself on the issue. But even though it has been in power at the Centre for eight years it has not done away with



MUSLIMS MUST BE ENCOURAGED TO LIVE IN AREAS THAT HAVE A MIXED POPULATION. THIS CAN HAPPEN ONLY WHEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOVERNMENTS DO NOT ALLOW COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS TO TAKE PLACE IN THE FUTURE

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



Hijab is a matter of choice. Some Muslim girls wear it, others do not. Even if the BJP sees it as regressive and forced upon girls by their parents or the Wahabists, it should allow it. The party must realize that by barring hijab-wearing girls it would be driving them deeper into the clutches of the forces of orthodoxy. The BJP's aim should be to help more and more Muslim women get an education. Education will lead to employment. Employment will take them to workplaces. Exposure to a dynamic multicultural environment will make them think anew about orthodox cultural practices. It could lead to more Muslim women marrying men from other faiths—something that is not happening in India—adding to the growing number of religion-neutral or bi-religious couples and contributing to making of a culturally healthy India, as it happened in the US.

The BJP must realize that the average Muslim girl lives in an environment of fear and insecurity. Rape of Muslim women has been common in riots. Communal violence and prejudices have driven large numbers of Muslims to live in ghettos. In the ghettos, patriarchy and orthodoxy rule. Men, deriving power from the responsibility to protect the women of their families, force them to wear a burqa and hijab when going out so as to not attract attention towards themselves. They are not very keen to give girls higher education, for that would mean going far from the ghetto and more risks to their security, leaving aside the risk of their 'corruption' with 'modern, western' education.

The Muslim ghettos must melt. Muslims must be encouraged to live in mixed neighbourhoods. This can happen only when political parties and governments do not allow communal violence and discrimination against Muslims to take place in the future.

If that happens, Muslim girls will feel more secure, and more and more of them will come to schools and colleges. Even their parents would have no ground to deny them education. Even if they want their girls to go to their classes in hijab, so be it. At least the girls will be getting an education. That will open new doors for them. That will take them to different worlds.

Will the BJP ensure there is no violence and discrimination against Muslims? Will it give full attention to the education of Muslim girls and leave the future of hijab to the future? Or does it want people to believe that its responsibility for Muslim women's empowerment ended with the triple talaq law? Are we asking too much of the Great Saviour of Muslim women?

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE HAVE NEVER SAID THERE WOULD BE A FRONT WITHOUT THE CONGRESS. WE SAID TO TAKE THE CONGRESS ALONG.

— SHIV SENA LEADER

SANJAY RAUT



THESE LEADERS HAD COME TOGETHER AGAINST BJP BEFORE THE 2019 POLLS, BUT NOTHING HAPPENED.

—BJP LEADER

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

50 pc of India leaders feel unsure about the future of work: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With the pandemic bringing unprecedented changes in work life, a report has revealed that 50 per cent of India leaders agree there is a need to plan for multiple possible futures around the workplace and workforce.

However, the cost pressures, competing investments or priorities, lack of systems and data, and organisational culture are the biggest inhibitors faced by India leaders in creating a more fit for future workplace, according to PwC India's People and culture first: Transformation journey in the future of work report.

"About 50 per cent of India leaders agree there is a need to plan for multiple possible futures around the workplace and workforce but cost pressure and the fear of setting a precedent holds them back from taking action," said the report.

It also revealed that the future of work involves tapping into talent virtually in tier II and III cities on the one hand, and leveraging the gig economy on the other.

PwC's global Future of Work and Skills report is based on a survey of nearly 4,000



business and HR leaders across 26 territories and from organisations across diverse sectors, of which 210 leaders were from India.

The report further revealed that 48 per cent of leaders in India agree it is very important to identify the potential risks associated with replacing human work with technology but are reluctant to create a culture of transparency.

About 54 per cent of India leaders realise the importance of identifying the skills needed to keep pace with the changing times, however, they are reluctant to take action due to competing priorities, it

added. "Earlier workforce challenges centred around broader areas of organisational design and capabilities woven in with organisational culture. But with the changing nature of the workplace, the challenges seem to be more employee driven, both globally and locally," PwC Partner and Leader, People and Organisation and HR Transformation, Chaitali Mukherjee noted.

At this juncture, she pointed out that it is important for all organisations across the world to prioritise leadership capabilities in order to orchestrate changes and move the

needle in business.

Over the past two years, the pandemic has compelled leaders to question their choices on many aspects affecting their organisations, right from people to culture to technology, she said. "They have realised, as our report indicates, that along with strategic organisational intent and system optimisation, they also need to proactively act on workforce initiatives, build capability in a well-considered way, and, among other things, work towards making their culture more resilient in order to be future ready," Mukherjee added.

Financial security gains prominence post-COVID : Max Life survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's awareness towards life insurance grew significantly over the last two years due to COVID, and the need for financial security has gained priority among people, according to Max Life's annual flagship survey.

Launching the 4th edition of the India Protection Quotient (IPQ) survey on Wednesday, the life insurer said the 'Protection Quotient' of urban India has moved up 3 points to 50, witnessing a gradual rise from previous IPQ editions.

The trend line reflects a steady growth in the country's overall financial protection that has led to prioritizing financial security over all other aspects.

As per the survey, with the COVID fears receding now, the policyholders in urban India have re-aligned their long-term objectives of children's education and retirement planning. The survey was conducted online during December 10, 2021 to January 14, 2022 with as many as 5,729 respondents across 25 Indian cities.

India Ratings pegs FY22 GDP growth at 8.6 pc on data revision

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India Ratings has revised downwards its GDP growth forecast for 2021-22 to 8.6 per cent from the consensus 9.2 per cent projected earlier.

The National Statistical Organisation (NSO), which has forecast 9.2 per cent real GDP growth for the year, will release the second advance estimate of national income on Monday.

According to an India Ratings analysis, NSO is likely to peg the FY22 real gross domestic product growth at Rs 147.2 lakh crore. This translates into a GDP growth rate of 8.6 per cent, down from 9.2 per cent forecast in the first advance estimate released on January 7, 2022.

The major reason for the likely downward revision is the upward revision of FY21 GDP to Rs 135.6 lakh crore in the first revised estimate of national income for FY21, which was released on January 31, 2022, the agency said.

As a result, GDP for FY21 is improved to (-) 6.6 per cent from the provisional estimate of (-)7.3 per cent released on May 31, 2021. Besides this, the second revised estimate of national income for FY20 stood at 3.7 per cent compared



to 4 per cent projected earlier while the third estimate retained FY19 growth at 6.5 per cent.

The growth rates of GDP drivers from the demand side namely private final consumption expenditure, government's final consumption expenditure, gross fixed capital formation have undergone a change due to these revisions, and quarterly GDP growth numbers are also expected to undergo a change this year.

As FY20 growth has been revised downwards, the agency now expects GDP growth of all the four quarters of FY20 to be lower than present estimates. This would mean a likely upward revision of FY21 and downward revision of FY22 quarterly GDP numbers.

Accordingly, the agency esti-

mates Q1 and Q2 of FY22 may decline by 90-110 basis points than estimated earlier and the Q3 and Q4 may come in at 5.6 per cent and 5.1 per cent, respectively, down from 6 per cent and 5.7 per cent estimated earlier.

It takes about three years to finalise the final GDP data for a year. It starts with the first advance estimate and then is followed up with the second advance estimate, then provisional estimate, the first revised estimate, second revised estimate and finally the third revised estimate, Sunil Kumar Sinha of the agency said.

A glance at the revision of GDP data from the initial to the final estimate for fiscal years 2015 to 2020 suggests that the magnitude of the revisions has been generally low.

MONEY MATTERS

Regulation coming to put onus of cyber crime reporting



The government is coming up with a regulation that will make organisations hit by any cybercrime incidence to disclose it before the government, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Wednesday. While speaking at the launch of the IBM Security

Command Centre for Asia Pacific region set up in Bengaluru, Chandrasekhar said about 100 million-odd cyber incidents have been reported by the Indian-CERT (Computer Emergency Response Team) so far and India is reportedly the second-most attacked country as far as cyber crime is concerned. "You will soon hear in the next few days that new regulations going out there that put the onus on organisations to report these crimes and not just push it under the carpet. It is important that at any given point, government and government agencies have absolute clarity on the threat matrix that is around and is active in the cyber space in India," Chandrasekhar said. He added that it is a priority of the government to make cyberspace safe and trusted. "We are investing heavily on capabilities. The internet must be safe, trusted and open, and intermediaries that operate on the internet must be accountable to the consumers," Chandrasekhar said. IBM India Managing Director Sandip Patel announced the setting up of the company's second Security Command Centre and first-of-its-kind in the Asia-Pacific region, for training cybersecurity response techniques through simulated cyberattack designed to prepare everyone from C-Suite through technical staff.

Rupee rallies 25 paise to 74.59 against US dollar



The rupee appreciated by 25 paise to 74.59 against the US dollar on Wednesday due to a pullback in the greenback and crude oil prices after Western countries imposed several sanctions on Russia for sending troops into separatist-held regions in Ukraine. At the interbank

forex market, the local unit opened at 74.64 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.54 and a low of 74.73. The rupee was quoted at 74.59 at 1530 hrs, registering a gain of 25 paise over its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee depreciated by 29 paise to close at 74.84 against the US currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined 0.17 per cent to 95.86. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.90 per cent lower at USD 95.97 per barrel. Investors hoped that Western sanctions on Russia after Moscow's troop movements near Ukraine border might soften Vladimir Putin's defiant tone and leave some room to avoid war. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday signed decrees to recognise Ukraine's regions of Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics as independent, escalating the tension in the region and increasing fears of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. In retaliation, the US, the EU and Japan announced a host of sanctions on Russia. The meeting between the US secretary of state and Russian foreign minister that was scheduled for Thursday too has been cancelled. "SPOT USDINR pair continue to witness volatile sessions as tensions between Russia and Ukraine continue to dominate sentiments across global markets," according to Emkay Global Financial Services.

TVS Motor crosses 10-lakh two-wheeler export mark in current FY

TVS Motor Company on Wednesday said it has crossed the 10-lakh two-wheeler export milestone in the current financial year. The company said it has achieved this significant export milestone in a financial year for the first time. The key exports include the Apache series, HLX series, Raider and Neo series, it added. "The one million export mark is a significant milestone for TVS Motor Company. This further underscores our path towards being a global player in personal mobility solutions," TVS Motor Company Joint Managing Director Sudarshan Venu said. The company is excited to continue building on this positive momentum as it expands into newer geographies with attractive products and new first in segment, technology offerings, he added.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Tender Notice (Through 'e' procurement)
NIT.No.49/EE/GHMC/DIV-31/2021-22 Dated: 22.02.2022
Tenders are called vide NIT No. 49/EE/GHMC/DIV-31/2021-22 (Item No.01) Dt: 21.02.2022. Through 'e' procurement for (01) work with an estimated cost of Rs. 6.85 Lakhs. The sale of bids will open on the website 'e' procurement market place from 2.00PM on 23.02.2022 onwards. Last date for submission of bids is 26.02.2022 at 2.00PM. Sale of bids closes one hour before the submission time. Further details can be seen on the website <https://tender.telangana.gov.in> Self-Executive Engineer
DIPR.No.21755-PP/CL/Advn/1/2021-22 Chandanagar Division-21, SLP Zone: GHMC.

BharatPe sacks co-founder Grover's wife over fin irregularities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BharatPe has sacked its head of controls Madhuri Jain Grover - wife of embattled co-founder Ashneer Grover - for alleged financial irregularities ranging from producing fake invoices to billing the company for personal beauty treatment and trips abroad.

While a company spokesperson confirmed the termination, sources with direct knowledge of the matter said BharatPe has cancelled all the 244 unvested and 56 vested employee stock options (ESOPs).

Madhuri Grover did not immediately respond to an email sent seeking her comments.

She was last month sent on leave within days of her husband announcing a three-month leave of absence following allegations of using abusive language against Kotak Mahindra Bank staff and



fraudulent practices. Ashneer Grover has denied all allegations. BharatPe engaged risk advisory firm Alvarez and Marsal to conduct a governance review. Sources said that review found that Madhuri Grover allegedly shared confidential information that was used by her father and brother to create and raise invoices on the company under the camouflage of certain third parties. She is alleged to have billed the company for personal expenses including those

towards 'laser genesis and clearlift' face treatment in April 2021 as well as televisions (a LED TV and a Sony Bravia 65-inch) and a fridge for her residence. Other allegations against her include US and Dubai trip for family members being charged back to the company, inflated purchases of marketing and branding products, fake quotes procured from friendly parties and salary of main and personal staff being paid from the company.

Moody's says global oil, LNG prices will rise sharply

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices are likely to see a sharp rise in the event of a Russia-Ukraine conflict, which would have negative implications for net energy importers, Moody's Investors Service said on Wednesday. Moody's Investors Service Managing Director Michael Taylor said trade effects are likely to arise from the import diversion and diversification, although there may be opportunities for commodities producers in Central Asia to increase supply to China. Supply chain bottle-

necks will also be aggravated, adding to inflation pressures in the region.

Tensions have been escalating between Ukraine and Russia in recent weeks, and on Monday Moscow decided to recognise two separatist regions of eastern Ukraine as independent and deployed Russian troops there.

"The global price of oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) is likely to rise sharply in the event of a conflict, which will be positive for the relatively few exporters in the Asia Pacific region and negative for the substantially greater number of net energy importers.



Govt to soon decide on appointment of Sebi Chairman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will soon take a decision on the appointment of Sebi Chairman as the extended tenure of incumbent Ajay Tyagi will be ending this month. Sources said senior bureaucrats and former members of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) have applied for the position. The finance ministry had invited applications from eligible candidates in October 2021 for the post of Sebi Chairman and the deadline for submission of the applications was December 6, 2021. It is not yet clear whether Tyagi will get another extension or a new appointment will be made. On Tuesday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said "the process of calling for application has already happened.

IndianOil becomes retail biz partners for Dabur; LPG

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dabur on Wednesday announced a partnership with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), as part of which the state-owned refiner's LPG distributors will become retail business partners for the homegrown FMCG major.

This partnership will provide direct access to Dabur's range of products to around 14 crore Indane LPG consumer households across India, according to a joint statement.

"As part of the tie-up, IndianOil's Indane LPG distributors will become retail business partners for Dabur and will help sell the entire Dabur range of products directly to the crores of Indane LPG consumer households through their network of deliv-



ery personnel, creating customer delight," it said.

A technological and system integration is being carried out by IndianOil and Dabur to connect the entire value chain, especially Indane LPG users, it added.

"This initiative will help

Dabur to leverage IndianOil's unmatched reach to Indian households," it said.

Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra said this partnership of two of the oldest and largest Indian brands should be able to unlock significant value for both companies.

India can do \$0.5 trn green energy exports: Ambani

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India shapes its energy transition to cleaner fuels, billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Wednesday said technological advancements will make India a global new energy leader, exporting half a trillion dollars worth of clean energy in two decades.

Ambani, who is helming a transition to green hydrogen production at its oil-dominant conglomerate, said India is today one of the most attractive opportunities for renewable energy investment anywhere in the world.

But the transition to clean, emission-free energy cannot happen overnight and India's dependence on coal and



imported oil will continue for the next 2 to 3 decades, he said.

"But, we must have a plan to eliminate that in the next 2-3 decades," he said. "Hence, in the near and medium-term, we

will have to follow low-carbon, and no-carbon strategies of development."

And technology will help lower the costs of new and clean energy, he said speaking at Asia

Economic Dialogue.

Ambani said the climate crisis is an existential crisis and energy transition will determine geopolitical transition in the 21st century.

Europe overtook India and China to emerge as the world leader when wood was replaced with coal. Similarly, with the emergence of oil, the US and West Asia outgrew others. "When India becomes not only self-sufficient in green and clean energy, but also a large exporter, it will help India emerge as a global power," he said. This transition will create green jobs as well as result in massive foreign exchange savings.

As a nation that is more than 85 per cent dependent on coal

and oil for its energy needs, India has put its focus on making electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar and wind a bulk of its power usage and replacing polluting fuel with carbon-emission free hydrogen. It has unveiled a new policy to use renewable electricity to split water to make hydrogen, which can be used as fuel in an array of industries - from refineries to steel plants and can be used as an automotive fuel as well. While the last two decades saw India's emergence as an IT superpower, the next 20 years will mark its emergence as a superpower in energy and life sciences, Ambani, who is the chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries Ltd, said.

Gold falls Rs 126, silver almost flat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices fell by Rs 126 to Rs 49,960 per 10 grams here on Wednesday amid a decline in international prices along with gains in the rupee, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 50,086 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver was almost flat on Wednesday at Rs 63,939 per kg, compared with the previous close of Rs 63,916 per kg. The rupee recovered 25 paise to 74.59 to a dollar. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Spot prices for 24 carat gold at Delhi fell by Rs 126 with decline in COMEX gold prices along with rupee appreciation.



Empowering

women to travel solo

-SHIKHA DUGGAL

It's not always necessary that something threatening or even unpleasant should happen when a woman is on solo travel. Because these beliefs exist in our Indian society, women must be on the lookout for warning signs! It is widely acknowledged that travelling alone is dangerous for women. There is so much safety advice specifically catered to women only. But, you know what? We spoke to Minal Mathur, founder of Adventure Women India, who has never experienced real danger while traveling. There is only one real cost to travelling alone as a woman, and that's the constant need to evaluate potential dangers. Rubbishing these baseless statements, she started Adventure Women India in Hyderabad and in more cities with over 1.45 lakh members — a community that encourages many like-minded women travellers who have not yet explored travelling solo or with women's groups to curate their own travel plans.

Deciding where and when to travel and making all the necessary arrangements is a tall order, but the women of this community initiative are doing it all by themselves. If they can, why can't others? The founder initiates a sparkling conversation with us: "During my thirties, when women are subjected to not being on top of their A-game, I started to explore solo traveling. It was becoming a thing around town! From then on, my solo travels just started getting hotter and hotter day by day. Apart from the joy it gets you, I was witnessing many positive transformations in me. You start contemplating how to use your finances, you motivate others, you become well-informed and you shun those apprehensions that women can't travel alone. We can, we have and we will continue to. We formed a private Facebook community group and there were so many like-minded women out there who joined us instantly. They wanted to make the most of solo travel. Facebook brought an exemplary outreach to us and, hence, it was a pleasant start to

Adventure Women India."

Tapping into this accomplished traveller was no less than a treat. She keeps an open mind and finds solo travelling a more liberating experience than ever. "I made this a women-centric programme with my co-founder because with all the household chores back at home or even if a few women are in their leisure period, they don't have the liberty to travel across seas. Whether married or unmarried, her responsibilities to look after others just don't have an end to them. From personal experience, without having to compromise on the preferences of your family, my ladies should explore the places we truly wish to by just making full use of the opportunity to glance inwards. Sometimes an office-goer also needs a break; she needs her me-time. If the concerns of safety and confusion on where and how to plan your trip have held women back from pursuing their solo travel dreams, then Adventure Women India has got your back." From empowering to exciting women, she is on an expedition to make solo travel for women a rewarding experience of their lifetime. She continues, "My very first solo trip was to a place called Nagtibba. It was a challenging trek! I didn't even



know what trekking was. How do you do it? All I knew was that I had visualised myself hiking all this time and this was my chance to do so. My husband wasn't getting leaves from the office, while in my subconscious mind I was wondering, 'Do I really have to wait for a company? I am free, my health is running on an amazing note, and I am financially secured to take up this trip alone — so can I do it alone?' And, I finally did it. That trek was an eye-opener for me. From doing the bookings, reaching the destination, finding an organiser, preparing a check-list, maintaining a fitness regime to climb a mountain, I didn't need a man to do all of that for me. It wasn't about those two days in my life. It was more about the prep time. It's a small price to pay for the freedom to plan a trip exactly how you want it, when you want it."

That said, travelling alone isn't always easy because choosing the right destination can be exhilarating when you are responsible for all the research, travel planning, and packing. But Minal Mathur, along with her group, wasn't ready to back off. She adds, "We were about to almost miss our train once, yet we continued to travel on our own terms. Barriers will never stop, regardless of gender. Once, our bus broke down in the middle of a valley, and there was hardly any electricity. I am irked that anyone still thinks a woman setting off alone might feel intimidated. We are proving them wrong." These aren't just unsubstan-



tiated claims; statistics show that this is true for solo female travellers across the country. A large percentage of solo travel for women in India has gained that added momentum, making properties invest in women-centric tours, and we see hostels are geared towards creating safe spaces for women to live amid a community setting. As more hostels and homestays offer special arrangements for solo female travellers, this trend is primed for further growth in the year ahead.

Concluding on a hearty note, she shares, "Solo travel for women is an idea that has gained popularity but hasn't been adopted wholeheartedly by many in our country. There is a long list of concerns that surround solo female travellers, with safety topping the list. But, during the lockdown phase, several people craved company. There are known influencers in our community programme who travel with us; they are inspiring women to step out of their la-la land without any co-dependency. It's time for us to find a like-minded travel buddy and just explore! If not an exhaustive trek, plan for a one-day excursion — just rejuvenate and discover yourselves."

Putting Telangana on world map



The incessant reflection on why A-listers from our country only wear International labels at International film festivals or fashion weeks forced the city's fashion designer, Aruna Goud, to make up her mind to get a Hollywood actress to wear an Indian label and create an inextinguishable buzz on every news channel! Her aspiration came alive when her design in lilac was flashed all over the media after being worn by a French actress! What grabbed their eyeballs? The very headline that was making the rounds was that "Telangana's designer makes it to Cannes", and that must-have, without a doubt, developed innumerable feelings of pride amongst locals for what Aruna achieved. And now, she becomes the only Indian designer who showcased her collection at London Fashion Week, which was held at St. John's Church, Hyde Park.

An engineering graduate, Aruna finds originality to be the most vital facet for a fashion designer to get out there. Heavily inclined towards the creative arena, she formerly decided to do a diploma in fashion and the arts while pursuing what she loves doing most-inventing. "Every individual is beautiful in his or her own way. The garment may not signify the individual, but the way he or she carries it along with their personality does the trick."

That's the bonafide beauty of fashion! I was on tenterhooks that whoever was going to wear my label should have the elegance and self-assurance to carry it through the festival and on the ramp. It has been my dream to make it to Cannes! The Red Silk Carpet magazine also helped me showcase my work on this platform. All the production work for my designs starts from Hyderabad," the business-woman tells us. At the moment, she is not just a fashionista but the proprietor of Indian Glam Fashion Week and, as mentioned, London Fashion Week too. While she is working tirelessly towards achieving uncountable heights internationally, creating history for the greater good, Aruna also felt that the lilac colour would symbolise youthfulness and tranquility. She was totally in awe of the fact that she got to represent Telangana state as the only woman whose garments were worn by a global star. She couldn't seamlessly hold her happiness. She adds, "Now that I have realised my daydream, my next stop is most likely to be Colombo! I am all set to showcase my work at the Brides of Sri Lanka event, where I have been invited as an international designer. I yearn for most of the well-known faces in Hollywood to wear my label."

While Goud specialises in Indo-Western wear and bridal wear, she intends to take her couture up many notches from here, especially during Paris Fashion Week! She also feels it's not obligatory to follow the crowd's vision, and that is why she tried breaking that stereotype of not watching actresses like Deepika Padukone, Sonam Kapoor, or Kangana Ranaut wearing intercontinental attire and instead managed to make a French star wear the Indian label. Aruna is in a fashion furor; she is on the route to breaking free from the shackles of pigeonholes on her way.



Divyenndu hustle in the night shoots for an entire month

One of the most talented actors of the Indian cinema, Divyenndu is known for his hard-working and dedicated nature. He has given the audience various superehit characters to remember him by. The actor is working towards another one as he shoots nights for his upcoming project. Talking about his difficult shoot schedule

Divyenndu shares, "I am mostly doing night shoots since the show is based on the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. I have been shooting at nights the entire past month and covering up on my sleep in the days which has been exhausting and I can undoubtedly say that it is the toughest shoot of my life till date." On working with a cast like R Madhavan, Kay Kay Menon, and Babil Shah Divyenndu adds,

"But it is definitely all worth it because as an actor, it is a satisfying feeling to be a part of such an important story and be able to work with such an amazing and talented team of co-stars." Divyenndu is all set to be seen in YRF's debut web series, *The Railway Men*, and also has his film, *Mere Desh Ki Dharti* releasing soon. As per reports, he will also be part of Imtiaz Ali's project.



Malayalam actor Lal roped in for Balakrishna's *NBK107*



Nandamuri Balakrishna's upcoming movie will have Malayalam actor Lal on board to play an important role. Tentatively titled *NBK107*, the movie is currently under production.

Now, the latest news is that the Malayalam director and actor Lal is playing a crucial role in this action drama. Lal has appeared in multiple South Indian movies, and his last Telugu appearance was in the Prabhas-starrer *Saaho*. It is reported that the makers have readied an interesting role for the talented actor.

NBK107, on the other hand, has Kannada

popular actor, Duniya Vijay, while actress Varalaxmi Sarathkumar will essay a powerful role as well.

Shruthi Haasan is playing the leading lady in this much-anticipated upcoming movie, which is produced by Naveen Yerneni and Ravi Shankar under the Mythri Movie Makers banner. Thaman will provide the music for *NBK107*.

Being directed by *Krack* fame Gopichand Malineni, Balakrishna and his co-actors are currently shooting for this film in Sircilla, Telangana currently. Balakrishna's first-look poster from the movie was released a couple of days ago, which amplified the buzz around the movie.



RRR
makers all
set for second
phase of
promotions

The second phase of promotions for S.S. Rajamouli's much-awaited magnum opus *RRR* will kick off soon.

As per reports, the pro-

ducers of *RRR* have made plans to resume the promotions, as the release date of the Ram Charan and Jr NTR-starrer is approaching on March 25.

Apparently, Rajamouli and his team, along with actors Ram Charan, Jr NTR, and Alia

Bhatt will start promoting the movie from March 1. A big event is being planned in Dubai for the same.

Apart from the events, the team will be interacting with the media and the public during their visits to important cities.

Ram Charan, Jr NTR, Alia Bhatt, and Rajamouli had earlier promoted the film big time in December 2021 and January hoping that the film would release on January 7, as planned.

As a result of the third wave of Covid along with the shutting down of theatres in states such as Maharashtra and Delhi, along with night curfews, and other adversities, the film was postponed.

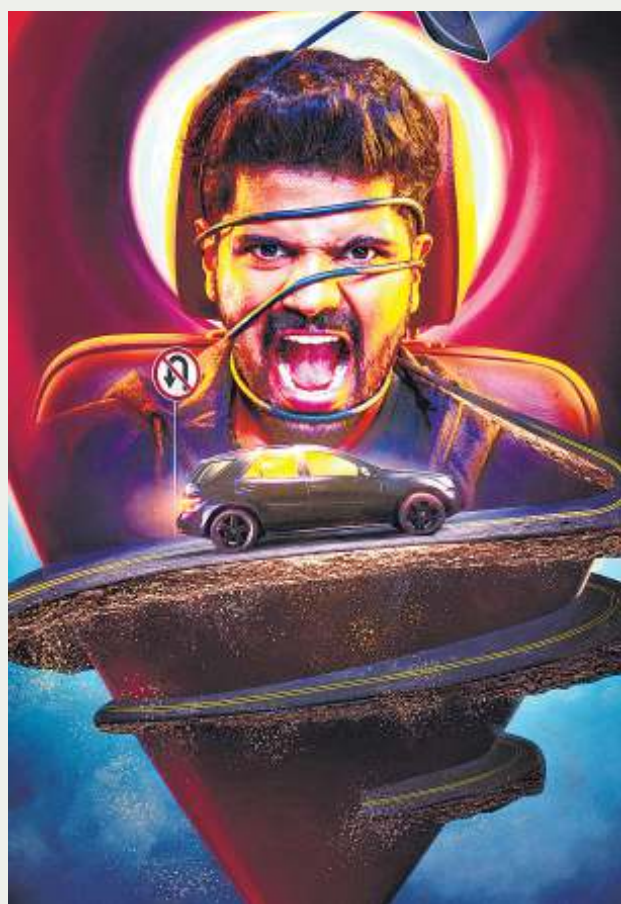
Now that *RRR* will hit the screens on March 25, the team will promote the movie yet again.

Dongalunnaru Jagratha, says Sri Simha Koduri

After Oh Baby and Saakini Daakini, Suresh Productions and Guru Films are coming together for their third film that will feature singer MM Keeravani's younger son actor Sri Simha Koduri in the leading role.

Debutant Satish Tripura is directing this upcoming thriller. The makers of the film released the first look and the title poster of the film, on the occasion of the lead actor Simha's birthday on 23rd February, 2022. Titled *Dongalunnaru Jagratha*, the film will see Simha as a petty thief. The first look poster, which depicts Simha imprisoned in a chamber, is interesting. He can be seen screaming while being tied to a chair with the cord of a CC camera, next to a photo of a car on the road. Actress Preethi Asrani plays the female lead, while actor Samuthirakani will be seen in a pivotal role in the film. Kaala Bhairava provides music for the film.

The film is written and directed by Satish Tripura. Dagubati Suresh Babu and Sunitha Tati produced the film under the banners of Suresh productions and Guru films. Manzar Studios is co-producing the film.



Ram's Warriorr eyeing July release?

Energetic hero Ram, who lined up some interesting flicks, is presently busy with Lingusamy's directorial venture, a high-octane action movie, *Warriorr*. The film is

a bilingual entertainer that marks Ram's Bollywood debut.

While the film's shooting neared completion, we hear that the filmmakers are even finalising their release dates. Insiders say, the film will be released on

July 1.

Kriti Shetty is the leadin lady, while Aadi Pinisetty is the antagonist. Akshara Reddy has a significant role to play. Devi

composed the music for the film, and Srinivasaa Chitturi is financing it through his Srinivasaa Silver Screen brand.

Kiran looks as massy as he can get. Kiran Abbavaram, who is awaiting the release of Sebastian PC 524, has announced a new project. He unveiled a first look poster from the flick, in which he appears to be rather stunning. Nenu Meeku Baaga Kaavalsina Vaadini is the title of the film. In the title poster, Kiran looks all massy and he is dressed up in a vibrant ensemble. Kaarthik Shankar is directing the film, which is being produced by Kodi Divya Deepthi. The film's music was composed by Mani Sharma. Further details about the film will be released soon.



Janhvi Kapoor turns down another T'wood offer?

Janhvi Kapoor, who made her Bollywood debut with *Dhadak*, is waiting for a big hit to turn her career graph around.

Earlier, there were reports that the actress turned down Puri Jagannadh's *Liger*, which was later grabbed by newbie Ananya Pandey.

If the ongoing buzz is to be believed, the actress has apparently turned down another

Tollywood offer starring Ram Pothineni and directed by Boyapati Sreenu. We know that the makers of the film have approached Janhvi about her Telugu debut, but she has declined the offer.

However, insiders close to the actress say that she intends to make her Telugu debut only with a Jr. NTR or Ram Charan film, or a Vijay Devarkonda production.



Actors Ram Karthik and Hebba Patel have joined forces for a new-age entertainer, *Telisia Vallu*, under Syringe Cinema banner. The film, directed by Viplav Koneti, has music by Sri Charan Pakala, while Anant Nag and Ajay Nag are the cinematographers. The makers of the film released the first look of both its actors from the film. They looked so authentic and natural that curiosity about this film increased amongst the audience. The film, whose editing is done by Dharmendra Kakara, has already completed shooting and is busy with post-production work. The makers say that the VFX will stand out in the movie. More details will be revealed soon.



WT20 audition continues with SL series

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

With the number of claimants increasing heading into T20 World Cup, there will be no let-up in India's willingness to experiment or their intensity in the three-match T20 series against Sri Lanka, beginning here on Thursday.

Coming off a 3-0 whitewash of the West Indies, the in-form Indians will look to do an encore against the visiting Sri Lankans, and the Rohit Sharma-led squad has a realistic chance of achieving that.

But the endeavour to complete another clean sweep will not mean a climb-down from their keenness to give enough game time to as many players as possible in the lead-up to the World Cup, which will be held in Australia in October-November.

The absence of the team's established players, such as Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant as well as KL Rahul, in the upcoming three T20 Internationals will definitely translate into more opportunities for the likes of Ishan Kishan, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sanju Samson.

Kohli not there means Shreyas Iyer will get a chance to settle down, play more overs, score some useful runs and stake a claim for one of the middle-order slots, though the for-



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mer India captain will come back to claim his number three spot heading into the World Cup.

The duo of Gaikwad and Iyer failed in the third T20Is against the West Indies and they would hope that they impress against Sri Lanka.

One of the highlights over the last week was Venkatesh Iyer's ability to finish off matches and if he is able to continue in the same vein against the islanders, while managing to improve his bowling, the Indian team management will have

a world-class all-rounder at its disposal going into the showpiece Down Under.

Now that Suryakumar Yadav has been ruled out of the series alongside Deepak Chahar due to injuries, Venkatesh will assume added responsibility when it comes to batting in the back 10.

Sanju Samson has also been drafted into the squad and it would be interesting to see whether the management gives him a go in the playing XI.

Spinner Ravi Bishnoi also impressed in his maiden T20I series and he will look to march ahead with the same momentum.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has come back into the team to bolster the bowling attack and, along with Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Siraj, will comprise a formidable pace bowling unit.

Bhuvneshwar will take confidence from his fine showing against the West Indies, especially in the death overs.

Recently, head coach Rahul Dravid had said that he and Rohit are pretty clear about the team for the marquee tournament in Australia in less than eight months' time.

"I think we have got a fair idea between Rohit and myself and the selectors and the management," Dravid had said after the 3-0 clean sweep over the West Indies.

"I don't think there's a set formula to it. But we're pretty clear about the balance and the combination (for the T20 World Cup). We are just structuring a little bit of the team around it and also balancing individual workloads as well.

"We have got a pretty fair idea of the kind of skills we're looking for in Australia, with the kind of guys who are in running. Not everything is set in stone but we want to give everyone a fair chance to stake their claim for those spots," Dravid had said.

As far as Sri Lanka are concerned, the side suffered a 1-4 defeat at the hands of Australia and was let down by batting time and again.

Skipper Dasun Shanaka would hope that their batting gets its act together against India.

The bowling will need to recover fast as star leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga has been ruled out of the series after failing to recover from

Suryakumar ruled out of Sri Lanka T20Is

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

In-form India batter Suryakumar Yadav was on Wednesday ruled out of the three-match T20 International series against Sri Lanka owing to a hairline fracture on his hand. The series starts here on Thursday and Yadav's injury was confirmed to PTI by a BCCI source before the Board issued an official statement.

Yadav, who was adjudged Player of the Series in the preceding T20Is against the West Indies, is the second Indian player to be forced out of the Sri Lanka series after pacer Deepak Chahar.

Chahar was ruled out of the games in Lucknow and Dharamsala after picking up a hamstring injury.

"Deepak sustained a right quadriceps injury during bowling

while Suryakumar suffered a hairline fracture during a fielding attempt in the third and final T20I against the West Indies in Kolkata on Sunday," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in the statement.

"They will now head to the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru for further management of their injuries," he added.

Sri Lanka all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga will miss the upcoming T20I series against India after testing positive for COVID-19.

"Wanindu Hasaranga, who was in isolation after contracting COVID-19, has once again, returned a positive result when a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) was conducted on the player yesterday (February 22). A PCR test too confirmed the result," SLC said in an official statement.

Sri Lanka: Dasun Shanaka (Captain), Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, Charith Asalanka (Vice-Captain), Dinesh Chandimal, Danushka Gunathilaka, Kamil Mishara, Janith Liyanage, Chamika Karunaratne, Dushmantha Chameera, Lahiru Kumara, Binura Fernando, Shiran Fernando, Maheesh Theekshana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Praveen Jayawickrama, Ashian Daniel.

Every Test match is important because of the WTC points: Mayank Agarwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a splendid performance with the bat against New Zealand and South Africa, Mayank Agarwal was named in the 18-man squad for the upcoming Test series against Sri Lanka.

Speaking ahead of the first Test, which begins from March 4 at the Punjab Cricket Association IS Bindra Stadium, Mohali, Mayank Agarwal highlighted the importance of the series and explained why the team's mentality is to win every Test match.

"I am very excited to be part of the squad and part of the Indian Test team. I am really looking forward to contributing to the team's success," Mayank said.

"Every Test series is of utmost importance because of the World Test Championship. Each Test carries points. The collective thinking of our team is to pick up a win in every match that we play and try to get the maximum points we can from all the Test matches," the 31-year-

old added. Mayank went on to explain why he enjoys opening the batting, but also added that he is open to bat lower down the order, if and when the team requires him to do so.

"The role of an opener is key in Test cricket because, in a five-day game, it is the openers who set up the day for the batters to follow. It's something that I have done all my life. I really enjoy doing that. With that being said, I don't just always want to open the batting. I am also comfortable batting at any position the team wants me to bat, at any given situation," Mayank said.

Sri Lanka, over the past couple of decades, have garnered a reputation of possessing a solid spin-bowling attack, especially in the longest format.



New captain Rohit happy to groom India's future leaders

AP ■ LUCKNOW

Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said he was happy to help train possible successors following his recent appointment as India's cricket captain across all formats in place of Virat Kohli.

The star batsman was named Test captain on Saturday -- he was already white-ball skipper -- but since he will turn 35 in April pundits do not expect his tenure to be a long one.

India's cricket board has identified three possible candidates all in their 20s to follow him eventually -- Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant.

"I won't have that much of a role of telling them each and everything, obviously they are all mature cricketers but someone



needs to be around them to help and guide them in difficult situations and (I am) more than happy to do that," Rohit told his first press conference after taking over the Test job. "We were groomed by

someone else, so it's a natural process. If you talk of Bumrah, KL, Pant, they have a big role to play in India's success at the same time they are looked upon as leaders as well."

Delhi Capitals confirm Agarkar's appointment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India pacer Ajit Agarkar was on Wednesday officially appointed as the assistant coach of IPL franchise Delhi Capitals.

As reported by PTI on Tuesday, Agarkar will join the team after his completing his commenting duties for India's home series against Sri Lanka beginning on Thursday.

"I am very excited to be part of Delhi Capitals squad for this season," Agarkar said, on the development in a team statement.

He is looking forward to work with captain Rishabh Pant and head coach Ricky Ponting.

"I have been lucky enough to be a player and to be returning in a different capacity. It's obviously very exciting. We have a young and terrific squad

led by one of the most talented players in the world - Rishabh Pant. "And the coach Ricky Ponting has been a legend of the game. Looking forward to working with them, can't wait to get started and creating some special memories."

The 44-year-old, with 288 ODI and 58 Test wickets to his name, has represented Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Daredevils in the IPL. He joins the Delhi Capitals coaching staff of Ponting, Pravin Amre (Assistant Coach) and James Hopes (Bowling Coach).



PTI ■ QUEENSTOWN

India will be desperate to gain some momentum heading into the World Cup but for that, their bowlers will have to raise their game as they seek to stop New Zealand from completing a 5-0 whitewash in the fifth women's ODI here on Thursday.

Having lost all matches played here so far, including the lone T20I, the Mithali Raj-led side is finding it difficult to stem the rot and faces the ignominy of a one-sided series defeat days ahead of the World Cup.

The series defeat is India's fourth in the last one year, having lost to South Africa, England and Australia earlier.

While the batters did raise their game in the second and third ODIs with a much-improved performance, the bowling unit has let the team down throughout the series, something that Mithali admitted was a concern heading into the World Cup.

"Definitely have been trying a

few combinations with the seam and spin attack. Bowling attack is a concern going into the World Cup," Mithali said.

"We are adapting to the conditions and to the open ground and the breeze. We have not been very consistent in our bowling spells."

The Indian team hasn't performed as a cohesive unit. While the bowlers failed to defend 270 plus targets in two games, the batters were unable to chase 276 and 192 in 20 overs in the fourth ODI. The fielding has also been sub-standard.

With as many as three players in extended Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) for the first half of the tour, India continued to experiment with their line up.

With pressure building up on Harmanpreet Kaur, who has managed just 33 runs in the three ODIs and was also expensive with the ball, the visitors left out the vice-captain



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from the playing XI in the fourth ODI.

Shafali Verma is also yet to fire. The youngster has only struck one fifty in the series and was out nought in the last game.

The spin department, save Deepti Sharma, has been inconsistent while the pace attack has lacked teeth to trouble the opposition batters. Overall, the Indian bowlers have struggled to adapt to the con-

ditions.

The positives for India include teenage wicketkeeper Richa Ghosh's good form. The 18-year-old scored back-to-back half centuries in the second and fourth ODI and is India's second highest run-getter in the tournament behind Mithali.

With Richa and the reliable Taniya Bhatia, India have two solid wicketkeeping options heading into the World Cup.

In the absence of Smriti Mandhana, who missed the one-off T20 and three ODIs because of extended MIQ, Sabbhineni Meghana performed well at the top.

Deepti is the series' leading wicket-taker with eight scalps, while veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami (5), who has played only two games, also figures in the top four.

With the World Cup around the corner and just two warm-up matches against South Africa and

the West Indies after the game on Thursday, India will badly need some momentum heading into the marquee event.

New Zealand, on the other hand, will be delighted with how the series has panned out.

Their top batters have been impressive, with Amelia Kerr and Suzie Bates hitting a hundred each while Amy Satterthwaite has scored two fifties.

The lower-order has also shown it can finish games, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat in the third ODI.

Kiwis eye historic victory in 2nd SA Test



AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand go into the second Test against South Africa on Friday on the cusp of clinching the series and reclaiming the mantle of number one in the world.

A draw in Christchurch would give New Zealand a historic first series win against South Africa in 17 attempts, while victory would not only complete a 2-0 series sweep but it would see them dis-

lodge Australia at the top of the world rankings.

The notorious bowl-first green wicket at Hagley Oval has been a happy hunting ground for New Zealand with eight wins from 10 Tests

But Kyle Jamieson -- who has taken 24 wickets in four Tests at the ground -- said winning the toss was not necessarily an advantage.

"When we've batted first we've been able to see through tough

periods and come outside the other side, so while it's a bit important I don't think it necessarily determines the outcome," he said.

New Zealand won the toss in the first Test and rolled South Africa for 95 and 111, while scoring 482 in their one turn at bat.

While they downplayed the importance of the toss, Henry Nicholls, who scored 105 in New Zealand's colossal innings-and-276-run victory, said familiarity

with the ground was important.

"From a batting point of view, we know it's tough but when you have that experience that's the perk of having home advantage," he said.

New Zealand have maintained the same squad for the second Test which meant no room for Trent Boult, who missed the first Test for the birth of his third child, and provided another opportunity for Matt Henry.

Henry produced the third-best bowling figures in New Zealand Test history with seven for 23 in the first innings, took two more in the second innings and hit an unbeaten 58 with the bat.

Rather than hang their heads after the first Test, South Africa have wound back the clock to their New Year series against India where they lost the first Test and bounced back to win the remaining two.

"It's about reminding the guys that as a team, we've overcome a lot," said Temba Bavuma.

"We know how it is to come back, how it is to come from behind when our backs are against the wall. We do have what it takes from a character perspective to do what we need to do."

Afif, Mehidy help B'desh sink Afghanistan



AP ■ CHITTAGONG

Afif Hossain and Mehidy Hasan shared a record 174-run seventh-wicket stand as Bangladesh recovered from a top-order collapse to beat Afghanistan by four wickets in the first one-day international of a three-

match series in Chittagong on Wednesday.

Afif hit an unbeaten 93 off 115 balls while Mehidy added 81 not out, helping Bangladesh reach 219-6 in 48.5 overs, after Afghanistan left-arm pace bowler Fazalhaq Farooqi's opening-spell burst reduced the hosts to 18-4

inside five overs.

Spinners Mujeeb Ur Rahman and Rashid Khan took one wicket apiece to leave Bangladesh struggling at 45-6 before Afif and Mehidy turned the tide.

Earlier Mustafizur Rahman took 3-35 with Shoriful Islam (2-38), Shakib Al Hasan (2-50) and Taskin Ahmed (2-55) all making an impact as Bangladesh bowled out Afghanistan for 215 runs.

Despite the modest target, Bangladesh were in all sorts of trouble when Farooqi dismissed openers Tamim Iqbal (eight) and Liton Das (one) in the third over before nabbing Mushfiqur Rahim (three) and debutant Yasir Ali (zero) in the next.

Things turned worse for Bangladesh after Shakib Al Hasan dragged onto his stumps off Mujeeb Ur Rahman to depart for 10 and Rashid dismissed Mahmudullah for eight to leave Bangladesh in a precarious situation.

But Afif, who hit 11 fours and a six in his career-best knock, and Mehidy ensured there was no further damage.

Mehidy struck nine fours in his third ODI fifty, also his personal best innings, which came off 120 balls.

Their partnership surpassed Imrul Kayes and Mohammad Saifuddin's 127 seventh-wicket record for Bangladesh, set against Zimbabwe in 2018.