

## NATION 5

4 CR PEOPLE PUSHED INTO  
POVERTY IN COUNTRY: RAHUL

## MONEY 8

MARKET SELLOFF: MCAP OF TOP-10 MOST  
VALUED COMPANIES ERODES

## SPORTS 11

SINDHU CLINCHES SYED  
MODI INTERNATIONAL TITLE

VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



# the pioneer

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'THE WAY RAJ  
& DK TREAT FEMALE  
CHARACTERS  
IS AMAZING'

Page 12

## DOZENS OF TURTLES DIE IN SUSPECTED POISONING AT LAKE NEAR MUMBAI

**D**eliberate poisoning is likely to blame for the death of dozens of turtles at a lake near Mumbai, wildlife experts told AFP Sunday. Conservation workers were alerted to the incident after a local politician asked them to investigate a foul smell around the body of water in Kalyan, about 50 kilometres (30 miles) east of the country's entertainment capital. Suhas Pawar of the Wild Animal and Reptile Rescue conservation group said 57 flapshell turtles had been killed while another six were rescued. He told AFP that locals likely killed the reptiles to stop them from eating fish they were illegally breeding in the lake.

## "MY 'MUSLIMNESS' MADE COLLEAGUES UNCOMFORTABLE": SACKED UK LAWMAKER

**A** British lawmaker has said she was fired from a ministerial job in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative government party because her Muslim faith was making colleagues uncomfortable, the Sunday Times reported. Nusrat Ghani, 49, who lost her job as a junior transport minister in February 2020, told the paper she was told by a "whip" - an enforcer of parliamentary discipline - that her "Muslimness" had been raised as an issue in her sacking. There was no immediate response to her comments from Johnson's Downing Street office, but Mark Spencer, the government's chief whip, said he was the person at the centre of Ghani's allegations.

## BJP'S UP ALLY GIVES 1ST TICKET TO MUSLIM CANDIDATE IN RARE ALLIANCE MOVE

**T**he BJP's ally Apna Dal (S) has announced its first candidate for the Uttar Pradesh assembly polls. The candidate, Haider Ali Khan, is from Suar in western Uttar Pradesh's Rampur district, from where Abdullah Azam, the son of jailed Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan is expected to contest. The announcement came despite no official word on seat-sharing arrangement between the BJP and its alliance partners - Apna Dal (S) of Anupriya Patel and Nishad party of Sanjay Nishad. Haider Khan's candidature from a BJP ally is among the rare instances of the BJP alliance fielding a Muslim candidate for the UP election.

## STONES HURLED AT BJP MP ARJUN SINGH IN BJP-TRINAMOL CLASH NEAR KOLKATA

**C**lashes broke out between BJP and Trinamool Congress supporters in Bhatpara near Kolkata on Sunday as stones were allegedly hurled at Barrackpore MP Arjun Singh when he was attending a programme to mark the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, police said. Two cars, including a police vehicle, were vandalised in the clashes in the hotbed of political unrest in North 24 Parganas district, they said. The BJP MP was rescued and sent to his residence safely, said Joint Commissioner of Police Dhruva Jyoti Dey. A large contingent of police along with senior officers was deputed at the spot, he said.

# AP employees' unions reject talks offer, to serve strike notice today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The employees' unions that are on warpath with the Jagan Mohan Reddy government on Sunday turned down the offer of talks from the ministers and are gearing up to serve strike notice to the government on Monday. It is now understood that the unions will hand over the strike notice to Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma at 3 pm on Monday. Meanwhile, the action plan on the agitation decided by the unions had also been launched on Sunday with the round table conferences held across the State.

Even as the government employees' unions were geared up to serve strike notice on Monday, ministers Botsa Satyanarayana and Perni Nani on Sunday morning had invited them for talks. The ministers asked the unions to withdraw their decision to serve strike notice and hold discussions with



them to resolve issues amicably.

The invite unions that had formed an umbrella organisation PRC Sadhana Samathi had received while holding a steering

committee meeting on Sunday morning.

After a detailed discussion in the steering committee meeting, the unions decided not to participate

in the talks until the government withdraws what the unions termed them as three 'Black GOs' related to the revised pay scales.

The unions had already in the past said they will participate in the talks only if the government withdraws the G Os issued related to the new PRC and they are holding cards close to their chest without any let out.

It may be worth mentioning here that according to the action plan of the unions on January 23 round table conferences will be held at all the district headquarters, on 24th strike notice will be served to the government, on 25th rallies will be held across the state, on 26th symbolic memorandums will be given to the statues of Dr. BR Ambedkar, from January 27 to 30, relay hunger strikes will be held at all the district headquarters.

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# Never witnessed such aggression against govt staff: Union leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP Revenue Services Association president and a key member of the newly formed PR Sadhana Samithi, Bopparaju Venkateswarlu has said that they have not invited any political party to participate in their agitation launched to achieve their demands.

Talking to reporters after the steering committee meeting on Sunday he said agitation doesn't mean they have launched a battle against the government but only striving to achieve their just demands.

He added that the Samithi had decided to set up a monitoring cell that monitors all the developments related to the agitation across the state. He deplored that the false propaganda is being unleashed against the government employees on social media. Venkateswarlu further said that he never witnessed such aggression from the government against the employees.



Bopparaju Venkateswarlu



Bandi Srinivas

He also said that it's not fair to provoke and instigate employees.

Venkateswarlu also cautioned his colleagues not to make or pass any personal comments against anyone. Another key leader of the Samithi K Suryanarayana said that they were not officially communicated about the formation of a committee by the government to hold talks with us. He added that the minis-

ters had invited them for talks on Monday at 12pm.

However, Suryanarayan said they have squarely rejected the talks offer until the GOs related to the new PRC are withdrawn. Another leader Bandi Srinivas confirmed that steering committee members will meet the chief secretary on Monday at 3 pm and serve the indefinite work strike notice.

## Trade unions to intensify stir against strategic sale of Vizag Steel Plant

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakha Utku Parirakshana Committee has decided to intensify its stir further covering all the parts of Andhra Pradesh and to join hands with the nation-wide agitation against the disinvestment of Public Sector Units. Opposing the strategic sale of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, all the trade unions of the plant have formed the Visakha Utku Parirakshana Committee and have been fighting against the Central government's proposal on the disinvestment of the plant for the past 11 months.

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# Govt issues another memo to Treasury dept to process salaries

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has yet again issued orders in the form of a memo to the officers of the State treasury department across the State and also the Pay and Accounts Office on processing the salaries of the government employees according to revised pay scales based on the 11th Pay Revision Commission (PRC). While the latest memo was issued on Saturday, it came to light and surfaced on Sunday.

The Treasury Employees' Union, stating that it is also part of the agitating employees, had refused to process the salaries. Now, it needs to be seen whether the salaries can be processed as per regular schedule or not.

The fresh orders were issued



after Finance Secretary SS Rawat held a video conference with all the officials of the State treasury offices across the State and also the Pay and Accounts Office explaining the procedure. During the video conference, Rawat reiterated that the salaries need to be processed

according to the new PRC.

"The January 2022 salary bills shall be prepared duly fixing the pay as per PRC 2022 only for the government employees, wherever applicable.

2

# AP logs 14,440 more Covid cases in 24 hours

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh reported 14,440 fresh coronavirus cases in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday, reminding the pandemic's peak days during the second wave in May-June last year.

Consequently, the number of active cases climbed further up to 83,610.

The daily positivity rate was about 32 per cent from 46,650 sample tests in 24 hours.

According to the latest bulletin, 3,969 infected people got cured while four more succumbed in the state.

The state Covid-19 chart showed 21,80,634 total positives, 20,82,482 recoveries and 14,542 deaths till date.

Visakhapatnam district reported the highest 2,258 fresh cases,



followed by Anantapuramu with 1,534, Guntur 1,458, Prakasam 1,399, Kurnool 1,238, Chittoor 1,198, SPS Nellore 1,103 and East Godavari 1,012.

Srikakulam registered 921, Kadapa 788, Vizianagaram 614, West Godavari 613 and Krishna 304 new cases.

East Godavari, Guntur, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam districts reported one fresh fatality each in a day.



## Naidu facing biggest ever challenge in his career

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

After his worst ever electoral defeat in Assembly elections and losing relevance in national politics, TDP supreme N Chandrababu Naidu is going to face the biggest challenge in his 40-year political career soon.

The next Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections will decide the future of Naidu, his son Nara Lokesh and the TDP.

There are three big challenges before Naidu in the next Assembly elections.

First, he has to win in his own Assembly constituency of Kuppam in Chittoor district. This time it is not easy for him to win in Kuppam unlike in the past.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and Chandrababu Naidu's arch-rival Panchayat Raj Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy is focussing on Kuppam to defeat Chandrababu Naidu.

2

2

## TODAY

## ALMANAC

Month &amp; Paksham:

Pausa, Krishna Paksha

Tithi : Shreshthi - Jan 23 09:12 AM to Jan 24 08:44 AM

Saptami - Jan 24 08:44 AM to Jan 25 07:46 AM

Nakshatram : Hastha - Jan 23 11:09 AM to Jan 24 11:15 AM

Chitra - Jan 24 11:15 AM to Jan 25 10:54 AM

Rahukalam : 8:16 AM to 9:40 AM

Yamagandam : 11:04 AM to 12:28 PM

Varjyam : 07:08 PM to 08:43 PM

Gulika : 1:52 PM to 3:15 PM

Amritakalam : 04:36 AM to 08:10 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham : 12:05 PM to 12:50 PM

## VIJAYAWADA

## WEATHER

Forecast: PARTLY CLOUDY

Temp: 33°

Humidity: 65%

Sunrise: 6:41 AM

Sunset: 6:04 PM

Updated JANUARY 23, 2021 5:00 PM

## OBTUSE ANGLE



# Transport card supply hit as AP govt yet to clear dues

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

For over a year now, the Transport Department of Andhra Pradesh has stopped issuing PVC cards for various services as it could neither clear the dues to the old supplier nor finalise terms for a new contract, leaving the vehicle users a harassed lot.

Normally, three lakh PVC cards with an electronic chip embedded are issued on an average per month in the state transport offices for new vehicles registered and driver's licenses.



That has stopped for several months now, leading to a huge penalty even as vehicle-users are caught by traffic police personnel, who have been imposing penalties unmindful of the Transport

Department's inability to issue PVC cards for vehicle registration and driver license.

Though the state government has been collecting hundreds of crores of rupees annually from vehicle users for the services, it is yet to clear the Rs 34 crore due to the card supplier, forcing the latter to stop supplies.

In fact, the "extended agreement" (for card supplies) with the old contractor elapsed a year ago but the government is yet to finalise the terms for a fresh tender," sources in the Transport

# Mistakes being rectified now: PM Modi after unveiling Netaji statue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an apparent swipe at previous Congress dispensations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that attempts were made after independence to erase contributions of many great people besides India's culture and values, and asserted that the country is now correcting mistakes of the past.

Addressing a gathering after unveiling a hologram statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at the India Gate on the 125th birth anniversary of the iconic freedom fighter, Modi also said no power in the world can prevent the country from achieving its goal of building



a 'new India' before the hundredth year of independence in 2047.

He also exhorted people to take

inspiration from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's "can do" and "will do" spirit.

He said unfortunately, attempts were made to erase contributions of many great people besides the nation's culture after independence.

"India's freedom struggle involved the sacrifices of lakhs of people, but attempts were made to limit their history. But today, decades after independence, the country is correcting those mistakes," he said.

The prime minister also conferred the 'Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar' for the years 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 in the investiture ceremony. A total of seven awards were presented during the ceremony.

Union government has institut-

ed the annual award to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management.

Modi also asserted that his government prioritised disaster management.

"We have laid emphasis on reform along with relief, rescue and rehabilitation," he said.

"We strengthened, modernised, expanded the NDRF across the country. From space technology to planning and management, best possible practices have been adopted," he said.

2

# Monday Mirchi

## Move to modify IAS cadre rules enthuse sidelined high performers

Although the Centre's move to modify IAS Cadre Rules 1954 has been widely criticised as yet another attempt to usurp the rights of States/UTs, the proposed amendments to the Rules have warmed the cockles of the hearts of performing IAS officers who have been sidelined or restricted to nominal roles by the state governments.

For, they will no longer be at the mercy of the state government. Such less-valued bureaucrats can elect for central deputation and head to Delhi or wherever they thing they will get their due. So, the number of disgruntled bureaucrats will reduce with what looks like opening of Pandora's Box. Although for such bureaucrats the new rules look conducive to career progression, instead of letting them stagnate at the state level, several senior bureaucrats, who had been enjoying good positions all along, have become the voice of the cadre and are opposing the new rules.

## 'Our' man not acting on expected lines

Apnapan is good, though not in administration perhaps. State governments often pin their hopes on state cadre babus posted in Delhi, hoping they would be instrumental in securing approvals for various projects. During a recent meeting with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, TS Minister K T Rama Rao did not shy away from ruing that TS, despite having Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) Secretary from Telugu cadre, has been deprived of projects.

KTR said in a video conference: "Giridhar despite being ours, there has been no benefit". Giridhar Aramane is a 1988-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer. At times, apnapan is felt. A few weeks ago Union Minister Jitendra Singh observed that V. Srinivas, Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, was keen on hosting the national e-governance conference in Hyderabad. The summit witnessed the likes of KTR expressing gratitude to V Srinivas.

## Are they friends of DGP in the first place?

TS DGP Mahender Reddy's self-proclaimed friends are talking ill of him. A mutual friend who happens to be a politician disclosed this. Offering him a political ticket, Dharmapuri Arvind said that they both have many common friends, who are speaking ill of him. IAS babus can perhaps afford to ignore what politicians say. Those in khaki, however, may have to sit up and take notice of those who are calling themselves their friends.

## In defence of the boss

Fortunate is the boss whose lieutenants bristle at false charges made against him and go all-out to defend him. The other day AP Chief Secretary Dr Sameer Sharma did not have to utter a word in self-defence when people threw mud at him. His junior colleagues, SS Rawat and Sashi Bhushan Kumar, who were present at a media conference called by the CS to allay fears of government employees about the revised pay scales, took over when a scribe brought to the notice of Sharma allegations leveled against him by an employees' union leader that he was 'misleading' the Chief Minister.

The counter came from Rawat and company in strongest possible terms. He was furious at the personal remarks made against the Chief Secretary. That is not all. In no time, a statement condemning such personal remarks against the CS was issued by the AP IAS Officers Association.

## Many a slip between the cup and the lip

When it comes to administrative reforms, there is always many a slip between the cup and the lip. At the Centre and in the States/UTs, panels are regularly appointed for ushering in administrative reforms. Things improve only if areas having room for improvement are fixed in right earnest. Few governments implement the recommendations of such panels in letter and spirit. TS Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has appointed a committee on administrative reforms headed by the Commissioner and Inspector-General Stamps and Registrations V Seshadri and comprising CM's secretary Smitha Sabharwal, GHMC Commissioner Lokesh Kumar and Commissioner of women and child welfare Diviya as members. The panel will study the performance of government employees in various departments as well as active participation of government employees at all stages in the government programmes and advise the government in filing the vacancies in various departments. Hopefully, the panel will deliver, presuming its recommendations will be implemented by the government focused on 'Bangaru Telangana'.

The Union government had appointed four administrative reforms committees under the leadership of Morarji Desai, Veerappa Moily, Rajanannan and Sarkariya. In the combined Andhra Pradesh, former chief minister late NT Rama Rao had appointed Upendra Committee on administrative reforms. Former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, apart from constituting such committees, established the Centre for Good Governance. Former CM late YS Rajasekhar Reddy also appointed a committee on administrative reforms. Still, things cry for attention.

## Thunder during rain of promotions

When it is raining promotions, flashes of thunder and lightning are normal. During the recent administrative transfers and postings, there were some goof-ups resulting in heartburn among some bureaucratic circles. For instance, the transfer and posting of Anita Rajendra, Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development, as Director-General of MCR Human Resources Development Institute became a point of heated discussion in bureaucratic circles. For, she was expected to relieve senior IAS officer Harpreet Singh from the full additional charge of the post. Surprisingly, though B M D Ekka of Principal Secretary cadre is the Additional Director-General, Anita Rajendra, four years junior to him, had been posted as D-G. The grave mistake was fixed by another order post haste posting her as the Joint Director-General.

## Thin attendance, remote working

The level of attendance in TS government offices, put at less than 40%, amidst the rising Delta- and Omicron-driven cases of Covid-19, leaves a lot to be desired. For, things are worse than was the case during the first two waves of the pandemic. Today every other senior IAS officer is "in home isolation" or "just recovered after testing positive" for Covid. Media persons are bearing the brunt with one-way communication from the government becoming de rigueur. The scattering of the departments of the Secretariat previously housed in the old complex has complicated matters; forget about Covid-induced curbs. One must be fair to a section of senior bureaucrats, especially in the Stamps and Registration Department and the Chief Minister's Office, since they are working remotely despite the fatigue and discomfort associated with Covid-19 positive patients. This has come as a blessing in disguise for those trying to make the most of the transactions in Sub Registrar offices before the soon-to-be revised market values take effect.

—Yours truly

# Demand to organise Covid testing camps at schools

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Hundreds of teachers and thousands of students studying in municipal schools across the State have tested positive for Covid-19 in the past few days, says Municipal Teachers Federation (MTF) State president S Rama Krishna.

Rama Krishna said on Sunday that there were about 2,115 municipal schools in the State and every day teachers and students were getting infected in tens and thousands, creating panic among their families. He stated that proper sanitisation of classrooms should be carried out as many were getting infected with the virus.



Rama Krishna demanded that the State government conduct classes on alternate days to control the infections.

Schools, where more positive cases are registered, should be closed for four to five days to prevent super-spreading.

# Bose personified selfless devotion to nation: Venkaiah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday paid tributes to Subhash Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary, saying he personified selfless devotion to the cause of the motherland.

He also lauded the central government's decision to install a grand statue of Bose at India Gate.

"We commemorate this day as Parakram Divas to honour Netaji's indomitable courage and selfless service to the nation. The nation is indebted to the iconic leader for his monumental role in the freedom struggle," the Vice President Secretariat tweeted, quoting Naidu.

The vice president also paid floral tributes to Bose in Hyderabad.



"He personified selfless devotion to the cause of motherland. The entire nation fondly remembers and salutes the legendary leader on Parakram Divas today," he said.

The statue is a fitting tribute and a mark of nation's indebtedness to the iconic freedom fighter, he said.

"I also appreciate the decision to start Republic Day celebrations a day earlier this year in honour of the great nationalist," he said.

# Transport card supply hit as AP...

Continued from Page 1

"We net over Rs 200 crore per annum in the form of these charges," a senior Transport Department official said.

The contract for supply of PVC cards ended two years ago but the government extended the agreement with the same vendor, as a 'one-time measure,' for a year as no other bidder came forward. Even the extended contract ended a year ago but the vendor, who delivered over 38 lakh cards, was not paid Rs 34 crore.

"We have a huge pendency (of card deliveries) of over a year and more than three

lakh fresh numbers are added every month. As things stand, it may take a few more months for the entire system to be restored to normalcy," the Transport department official added.

To tide over the problem, Transport Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) came up with a suggestion that a card-printing unit be set up in each transport office to ensure same-day delivery. He also mooted the idea of remitting the fee to the government account in real-time after deducting the vendor's charges.

Top officials of the Transport Department welcomed the Minister's propos-

al as it would assure immediate payment to the vendor and ensure unhindered service delivery to the vehicle users.

The Finance Department, however, disapproved the Transport Minister's proposal and insisted that all fee collected should be directly credited into the government account in full.

When contacted, the Minister told PTI that he has now placed the proposal before Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for consideration as it would be a win-win for all.

"We hope this gets cleared this week and the problem sorted out," Nani said.

# Naidu facing biggest ever challenge in his...

Continued from Page 1

In the recent local body elections, all MPCTC and ZPTCs in the Kuppam Assembly seat were won by the YSR Congress. With this, the ruling YSR Congress has sent danger signals to Chandrababu in Kuppam. This time Chandrababu Naidu has to campaign extensively in the Kuppam Assembly constituency.

The second challenge is to ensure the victory of his son Nara Lokesh in Mangalagiri Assembly constituency. It may be recalled that Naidu and Lokesh had announced that they will contest from Kuppam and Mangalagiri respectively.

In the last Assembly elections, Lokesh contested from Mangalagiri as a minister and was defeated by the YSR Congress. This time, it may be more difficult for Lokesh to win in Mangalagiri as he has no power.

Naidu has more responsibility on his shoulders as he has to ensure the victory of Lokesh. If Lokesh gets defeated his political future will be

endangered. He may also see his image getting dented as he is not able to ensure his son's victory.

The third and the biggest challenge is to bring the TDP back to power. The TDP failed to restore its political alliance with the BJP and so far there is no response from the Jana Sena to its one side love.

The Left may sail with the Congress as part of its national policy. If the TDP contests alone like in the last Assembly elections it is very difficult to come to power. The TDP's track record indicates that defeat is certain if it contests alone.

The only hope for the TDP has its alliance with the Jana Sena. Recent surveys by Delhi-based organisations have revealed that Congress and the BJP will not win even a single seat in AP if Lok Sabha elections are held now.

The surveys also said that the popularity of Jagan has not diminished at all and that the fight will be between the YSR Congress and the TDP in the next elections. The TDP hopes that due to this the Jana Sena may opt for an alliance with it.

## Mistakes being rectified now...

Continued from Page 1

"The grand statue of our Netaji, who had established the first independent government on India's soil, is being installed in digital form near India Gate. Very soon this hologram statue will be replaced by a big granite statue," he said.

It will remind democratic institutions, current and coming generations of their duties and inspire them, he said.

The hologram statue will be powered by a 30,000 lumens 4K projector.

An invisible, high gain, 90 percent transparent holographic screen has been erected in such a way that it is not visible to visitors.

The size of the hologram statue is 28 feet in height and 6 feet in width.

# Omicron in community transmission stage

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Omicron variant of the coronavirus is in the community transmission stage in the country and has become dominant in several metros where new cases have been spiking exponentially, INSACOG said in its latest bulletin.

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

The centre's Covid research body also said BA.2 lineage, an infectious sub-variant of Omicron, has been detected in a considerable fraction in India.

While most Omicron cases so far have been asymptomatic or mild, hospitalisations and

ICU cases have increased in the current wave and the threat level remains unchanged, INSACOG said in its January 10 bulletin that was released on Sunday.

"Omicron is now in community transmission in India and has become dominant in multiple metros, where new cases have been rising exponentially. BA.2 lineage is in a substantial fraction in India and S gene dropout based screening is thus likely to give high false negatives," it said.

S-gene drop-out is a genetic variation like that of Omicron.

"The recently reported B.1.640.2 lineage is being monitored. There is no evidence of rapid spread and while it has features of immune escape, it is currently not a variant of concern. So far, no case has been detected

in India," the INSACOG said.

The INSACOG, in its bulletin of January 3 which was also released on Sunday, also said Omicron is now in community transmission in India and has become dominant in Delhi and Mumbai where new cases have been rising rapidly.

"Further spread of Omicron in India is now expected to be through internal transmission, not foreign travellers, and a revised sampling and sequencing strategy of INSACOG is being worked out to address genomic surveillance objectives in the wake of dynamic changing scenario of virus infection," the INSACOG said.

"COVID appropriate behaviour and vaccination are main shields against all form mutations of SARS-CoV-2 virus," it said.

# Trade unions to...

Continued from Page 1

However, ignoring the protests of the AP Government, people of the State and the trade unions, the Union Government made it clear on several occasions that it would go ahead with the move.

After reviewing the ongoing agitation on various modes, the VUP committee has planned a month-long intensified agitation in January and February. As part of the stir, the committee on Sunday announced that special seminars would be conducted on the issue at Guntur on January 26 and at Tirupathi on January 27. The committee would launch a signature

campaign across the State from February 1 to 7, with the participation of one crore people of Andhra Pradesh. On February 12, a hunger strike will be staged by 365 workers marking completion of a year of the agitation.

The committee has also decided to protest at the BJP offices across the State on February 13 and a State-wide bandh will be called on February 23. They have also declared support for the two-day nation-wide strike on February 23 and 24. The committee has also expressed its willingness to campaign against the BJP in the upcoming elections in the five States including Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

# Demolition of Konda family memorial built on family site

## ■ Konda Surekha breathes fire at Parakala MLA Dharma Reddy

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Kicking off a sensation, former MLC Konda Surekha and her daughter have issued a strong warning to Parakala MLA Dharma Reddy for his fault of demolishing the memorial built by the family for Konda Murali's parents in the family's land.

She along with daughter Susmita Patel, breathed fire on the MLA, and accused him using some cuss words. They said that they were at a loss of comprehension how Dharma Reddy became MLA.

Warning him against asking for trouble, they said that the fall of the MLA was imminent whoever might be supporting him - be it KCR or the KTR. They even

showed no regard to KTR while referring to his name. How the MLA order the demolition of the memorial build in the family's own site.

She cautioned him against provoking the Konda family and said: "It does not augur well for the MLA."

Earlier, Konda Surekha visited the demolished memorial at Agramphad. Enmity with her family would be akin to playing with fire, she said recalling how Dharma Reddy stood in front of her with folded hands to secure contracts. The crowbar blow to the memorial is a blow to the hearts of the Konda family, she said warning him to set his house in order before people extracted his teeth.



CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹199
Without Skin	₹219
Broiler at Farm	₹107
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	437
VISAKHAPATNAM	435
HYDERABAD	415
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.37
(IN VIOUWADA)	

# Liquor merchants allegedly violate licence conditions

PNS ■ MULUGU

Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) outlets are reportedly violating the licence conditions in the district. But the authorities, who are supposed to ensure that the outlet owners abide by licence conditions, seem to have turned a blind eye to violations.



According to informed sources, the IMFL outlets should only sell the liquor to consumer and should not consumption of alcohol on the premises. But most of the outlets have opened eateries to sell non-vegetarian foods. It is an outright violation of licence conditions, the sources asserted.

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# GVL urges Centre to sanction Ekalavya School for Guntur

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Rajya Sabha member GVL Narasimha Rao has written a letter to Union Tribal Welfare Minister Arjuna Munda for the sanction of fully Central government funded Ekalavya Modern Residential School (EMRS) School and a modern sports complex in Narasaraopet parliamentary constituency area.

Narasimha Rao emphasized in his letter that 5 pc of Guntur district's population constitute tribals who are mainly concentrated in Narasaraopet parliamentary constituency. While thanking Union Minister for sanctioning 28 Ekalavya schools to Andhra Pradesh, he said none of them have been allotted to Narasaraopet-Palanadu region in Guntur district with nearly 2 lakh tribal population. He requested Union minister to sanction one Ekalavya school and one modern sports complex for high quality education and sports development of Tribal students in Narasaraopet



parliamentary constituency. Responding to GVL Narasimha Rao's letter, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs stated that Narasaraopet-Palanadu region could not be sanctioned Ekalavya school at present due to the criteria that the block should have at least 20,000 tribal population and a minimum of 50 pc of block's popu-

lation must be tribals. However, he said, these guidelines are likely to be revised in near future and an Ekalavya school can be sanctioned to Narasaraopet-Palanadu region at that time. Responding positively to the proposal for construction of a sports complex for the Scheduled Tribes under the central government's

EMRS scheme, Union Minister noted that if the proposal for the sports complex is forwarded through the state government and Department of Sports, its construction in Narasaraopet parliamentary constituency can be taken up for implementation.

Expressing happiness at the Union Minister's positive response, GVL Narasimha Rao said that he would take the initiative to get sanction for an Ekalavya Model Residential School for Narasaraopet parliamentary constituency and a modern sports complex in tribal dominant Palnadu-Vinukonda regions.

As Central government's representative in the State DISHA Committee, he would ask h the State government to send necessary proposals for the establishment of an Ekalavya school and sports complex at the earliest. "I will strive hard to work for the welfare of over two lakh tribals in Guntur district and for human development of over a lakh tribal youth in the region," said MP GVL Narasimha Rao.

## 'Netaji was a true nationalist' His 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniv observed all over the country

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan paid rich tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary, observed all over the country as 'Parakram Diwas', at a programme held at Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan on Sunday. Governor Harichandan offered floral tributes to the portrait of Subhas Chandra Bose and said that the country remembered the indomitable spirit and selfless service rendered by Subhash Chandra Bose, to the nation.

The Governor said Netaji was a true nationalist, a devout patriot and his love for India was unparalleled in the nation's history and he still lived in the hearts of scores of people of the country. He said the 'Parakram Diwas', celebrated on Netaji's Jayanthi will be an inspiration to the people of the country, especially the youth, to act with fortitude in the face of adversity and to follow in his footsteps, as the day instilled the spirit of patriotic fervour among all.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose inspired young people of



the country with his famous slogan "Give me blood, and I shall give you freedom" and "Jai Hind" and also he was the first leader to call Mahatma Gandhi "Father of the Nation," said the Governor.

Governor Harichandan said it was a matter of immense pride for the people of the country that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made the

announcement that a grand statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose would be installed at India Gate, as a symbol of India's indebtedness to the great leader.

R P Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to the Governor, Sanyasi Rao, Deputy Secretary, and other officers of Raj Bhavan also participated in the programme.

## Alert people on disasters: Collector

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Srikakulam District Collector Srikesh Latkar has said that all the line departments should be prepared to face emergencies during the times of natural disasters. The Collector convened a meeting of officials of all the line departments on emergency response on Sunday. Addressing the meeting, Srikesh Latkar said that before the rescue and rehabilitation works, the forces should alert the people about the disaster. Alerting the people is more important and it would give good results in the rehabilitation works, he added.

People being aware of the situation would minimise loss of life and property. Srikakulam district has a long coastline and is very much prone to cyclone impacts. The line departments, during emergencies, should alert the people of the coastal villages about the impending danger. The Collector congratulated the officers who made various services during the emergencies.

## Value of handloom during freedom struggle recalled



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Brigadier Venkata Reddy, Director, State Military Welfare Department, said that the importance of handloom in the Independence movement was valuable and that every single leader wore handloom garments to express their national sentiments. Reddy said leaders of today's generation also aspire to be an inspiration to the youth by wearing handloom garments. In the backdrop of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations, the Republic Day celebrations were held at the Vijayawada APCO mega showroom with a mix of different elements. Rich tributes were paid to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

APCO Chairman Chillapalli Mohanarao and others hon-

oured freedom fighters at the APCO showroom on Sunday. Freedom fighters Rampilla Narasayamma, Lagadapati Chenchayya, Eluru Ramulu and Bandaru Vimalamma, who were imprisoned during the freedom struggle, were felicitated on behalf of APCO at the showroom. National award recipient Deepala Kaveri's dance performance at Kuchipudi Natyam attracted the guests.

Chillapalli Mohanarao, speaking on the occasion, said APCO would offer a 40 percent discount to the soldiers of the Armed Forces till January 31 to mark the Republic Day celebrations. He said the Andhra Pradesh government was doing a lot for the weavers and was organising these events in view of the inextricable link between the Republic Day celebrations and

handlooms. Chillapalli unveiled a wall poster on handlooms to attract the youth.

Director, Handloom Department, Chadalwada Naga rani said, "We feel fortunate to be able to honour the freedom fighters on behalf of APCO." She said in the spirit of the national movement, the youth should also promote handloom and explained that the varieties required for their tastes were ready at APCO. As part of the programme, Brigadier Venkata Reddy launched a discount scheme for armed personnel. The APCO is currently offering a 30 percent discount on its clothing range and it will increase to 40 percent till the end of January. Indian Army Recruitment Director (Guntur) Shehzad Kohli was the special guest.

## APCO rebate for soldiers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In view of the Republic Day, the Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society Limited (APCO) has started its highest ever discount sale for the benefit of the soldiers of the Armed Forces and their families.

APCO has announced a 40 percent rebate on all its fabrics from January 23 to 29. Additional Superintendent of Police Anil Kumar inaugurated the discount sale at the Balaji Market showroom in

Vizianagaram on Sunday. On the occasion, Anil Kumar praised the APCO management for the initiative. He said that the soldiers and their families deserved the discount.

The organisers felicitated the family members of soldier R. Jagadish, who became a martyr recently. Jagadish's father R. Simhachalam received the honour from the Additional Superintendent of Police. APCO Divisional Marketing Manager P. Someswara Rao, Manager Ram and others were present.



## Khaja Baba Dharga sixth anniv celebrations on Feb 6

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada-Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has said that the YSRCP government is making special efforts for the welfare of Muslim Minorities. On Sunday, the Khaja Baba Dharga committee heads met MLA Vishnu and invited him for the 6th-anniversary celebrations and Ajmir Sharif Urs be held on February 6. The dargah committee heads performed prayers and honoured the MLA.

MLA Vishnu said that the Ajmer Sharif Dargah was established in the Indian sub-continent stands as a symbol of religious harmony imparting love, peace and brotherhood. He said that Khaja Baba Dharga was established in Vambay colony five years ago and was celebrating the 6th anniversary on February 6. Every year the Ajmer Sharif Urs celebrations are held on a grand note with devotion and being a part of the celebration was an honour, said

the MLA. He further said that the blessings of Khaja Baba Dargah chief minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy were implementing the development programmes and welfare schemes to the people. He said that the CM was looking to implement welfare schemes for the needy without discrimination of cases and politics.

Khaza Baba Dargah founder Pathan Umar Khan and committee members and others were present.



## Minister assures subabul farmers of support prices

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Agriculture Kursala Kanna Babu has said that the government will offer a minimum support price to the farmers cultivating Subabul crop. Kanna Babu held a special meeting at the Marketing department's office with the representatives of various paper mills and plywood companies.

The minister said that the problems faced by Subabul farmers should be addressed especially on offering minimum support prices to them.

Minister said that Subabul

and Jamail had asked the representatives of the paper mills that there was a need to increase the support price being paid to the farmers in view of their welfare. Kanna Babu said that the procedures in this regard will be formulated and an appropriate decision will be taken in the cabinet sub-committee.

The meeting was attended by Special Secretary, Marketing Y Madhusudan Reddy, Commissioner Pradyumna, Joint Director Srinivasa Rao, Deputy Director Divakar, representatives of various paper mills and plywood companies.

## 'Jealous' Opposition targeting govt: Ambati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MLA Ambati Rambabu slammed Opposition TDP over Gudivada casino issue and stated that they are running malicious propaganda targeting the State government out of sheer jealousy after seeing the development and welfare.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, the MLA said that the TDP leaders are falsely propagating that Goa culture was brought to Gudivada by targeting Minister Kodali Nani, who was hospitalised due to Covid.

He stated that all the videos that the opposition members are showcasing are from Ramoji Film City which indeed hosts such



dance shows. He questioned the TDP leaders about what had they done when such clubs were being operated during the TDP rule.

Asserting that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has put an end to all clubs since the inception of the government, Ambati said that they were taking stern

action against such unlawful events. He stated that the opposition leaders are intentionally targeting Minister Kodali Nani and thus demanded that they prove their allegations with legitimate evidence.

Speaking on the development front of government proposals to bring one airport in each district, the MLA stated that TDP leaders are using false propaganda, despite knowing the fact that the proposal benefits the State in all possible ways. He reminded that the TDP was obstructing the government by filing cases and creating legal hurdles.

Also, he said that employees should understand the government's situation and appealed to them not to fall into the opposition trap.

## Velampalli inaugurates swimming pool in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Urban development and environmental protection are the goals of the government and the corporation, said Minister for Endowments Velampalli Srinivas Rao. The minister inaugurated the renovated swimming pool at Gurunanak Nagar in the fourth division. The work was completed spending Rs 148 lakh. City Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi, VMC Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh, Deputy Mayors Bellam Durga and Avutu Sri Sailaja Reddy, constituency in-charge Devineni Avinash and others were present.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister

Velampalli said that the swimming pool, walking track and the park were developed with Rs 148 lakh, jointly by the State government and the corporation. He said that they had been undertaking various development works in the city like construction of roads and drains and modernisation of parks in many areas, protecting the urban environment. He said that walking tracks would be set up in many places across the city and parks would be beautified. The minister said as compared to the previous TDP government, the YSRCP government had taken up many development works in the past two-and-a-half



years and the people were closely observing the development works.

Mayor Bhagyalakshmi said that under the leadership of Devineni

Avinash, all the divisions in the East constituency were being developed. The VMC was also working towards various development works in the city

## Tense moments as TDP, YSRCP activists clash; mobs dispersed

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Mild tension prevailed in Amaravati on Sunday as the YSRCP and TDP activists clashed and the police resorted to mild lathi-charge to disperse the clashing activists.

The YSRCP and TDP cadres have been making allegations and counter-allegations on the corruption taking place in carrying out development works in the Pedakurapadu constituency for the last four days on social media.

The YSRCP and TDP cadres started going to a gravel quarry at Lemalle village for an open debate. On the receipt of information,



the police detained some of the TDP activists at their houses. The police also prevented some YSRCP activists from going to the Lemalle village.

However, some of the YSRCP and TDP activists

reached the village and clashed and the police resorted to mild lathi-charge to disperse them. DSP Pothuraju, CIs Rajesh Kumar, AV Shiva Prasad, and Shiva Naga Raju rushed to the village and dispersed the activists.

and ensuring that they were completed on time.

Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh said that at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore, the swimming pool was modernised and the park was developed, complete with a walking track and gym. He said that the swimming pool now had all modern facilities and that the people should make use of them.

Constasy in-charge of Avinash said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and with the cooperation of all, about Rs 350 crore-worth development works had been done in the past two-and-a-half years.

# Dy CM asks youth to focus on jobs in drone-piloting

PNS ■ KADAPA

Deputy Chief Minister SB Amzath Basha has said that the drone piloting segment is creating a lot of employment opportunities and asked unemployed youth to focus on jobs after getting the needed technical training.

The Deputy Chief Minister inaugurated a free drone pilot training programme being organised by the Minority Welfare Department with the coordination of the Centre for Educational Development of Minority in the Urdu Municipal High School here Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister of the State said that the use of drones is expanding rapidly in the modern age in line with the changing times. The use of drones in many sectors such as agriculture, land surveying, mining, and key defense sectors are growing and the need for drone pilot analysts is on the rise. The employment opportunities in the field of drone technology have expanded, he added.

Amzath Basha said that he was pleased to conduct drone pilot free training classes under the pilot project for the first time in the district under the



pilot project for minority unemployed youth from poor families. He said that unemployed youth were going to Hyderabad and Bangalore to get drone pilot training by spending Rs 50,000. The state government has launched the 45-days free drone pilot certificate course here and the government would also provide jobs for them after completing training.

“The state government has taken up the YSSAR land survey using advanced drone technology to resolve land disputes and has already completed land surveys in 51 villages. As there is a shortage of technicians in the use of drones, drone-free training classes will be conducted in all districts under the Skill Development for Unemployed Youth in collab-

oration. The state government is giving a lot of impetus to the drone sector and as a result, there will be a wide range of drones in the coming day”, Amzath Basha said and asked the unemployed youths to avail the opportunity. Drone Institute of Technology Executive Director Tahir Sheik and municipal corporators were present.

# Cop suspended for thrashing Dalit woman

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Superintendent of Police S Senthil Kumar suspended constable Suresh Babu attached to the One town police station in Chittoor for allegedly thrashing a Dalit woman during interrogation in the police station.

Gold pieces of jewellery were stolen from the house of Chittoor district prison Superintendent Venugopal Reddy a few days ago and he lodged a police complaint in

this regard. On suspicion, the police took Uma Maheshwari, who was working as maid service in the prison Superintendent's house, to the police station.

During the interrogation, she was allegedly thrashed severely in the police lock-up. The woman told the media about how she was beaten up in the police station forcing her to confess the crime on January 19. She was also abused with the name of her Caste, she alleged.

However, the police later sent her as her fingerprints did not match with the offense. She was admitted to the government hospital for treatment.

As the incident of thrashing of a Dalit woman by the police in the name of interrogation went viral, the SP ordered ASP Mahesh to conduct an inquiry on the incident and submit a report.

Based on the report, the SP placed constable Suresh Babu under suspension for thrashing the woman.



# Infant gets stuck in rear wheel of bike, dies

PNS ■ KURNOOL

In a freak incident, a three-month-old infant got stuck in the rear wheel of a motorcycle and died at Yerradoddi village in Kodumur mandal on Sunday.

Police said that a woman was riding a pillion on a motorcycle, being raided by her husband. The couple took their infant son to the hospital. While going home on the bike, the woman lost balance resulting in the infant slipping from her lap and going into the rear wheel of the bike. The infant got stuck in the back wheel. The passers-by immediately went to retrieve the boy from the wheel but by the time he had died.

# Double murder case cracked; accused taken into custody

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The police arrested the accused in a double murder case and attempt murder case which took place on January 22 in Nellore and here.

Talking to the media here on Sunday, DSP Nagaraju said that Sheik Rabbani developed illicit intimacy with Nurjahan who deserted her husband. They lived in a rented house here. They started a tea stall in the 60 feet road and Mandla Kashi Kumar was taken as a tea master.

Kashi Kumar developed an illicit relationship with Nurjahan. Sometime later they eloped. Sheik Rabbani



grew a grudge against Kashi Kumar for eloping with Nurjahan. He went to Nurjahan's brother's house in Nellore and saw Nurjahan's sister-in-law Mirabee and stabbed her to death. When Mirabee's son Akbar Alif went to his mother's rescue he was also stabbed to death. Later the accused Sheik

Rabbani came to Ongole and saw Kashi Kumar and stabbed him. He was shifted to the RIMS where he is battling for life. The police arrested Sheik Rabbani at the north bypass junction near Mangamma College and seized the sword which he used to kill the mother and son and stabbed Kashi Kumar.

# Works being carried out despite Covid: Min

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh has said that development works are being carried out overcoming the Covid hurdles and the fruits of welfare schemes are being taken to the poor irrespective of political party affiliations.

The Minister inaugurated a village secretariat constructed at a cost of Rs 40 lakh at Gurijepalli village, and another village secretariat constructed at a cost of Rs 40 lakh at Kasikuntatanda and development works at RTC bus station on Sunday. Later the minister distributed tricycles to sanitation staff for garbage collection. The minister attracted all by pedaling a tricycle at the programme on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, The Minister said that the credit for bringing the administration to the village level with the system of village secretariats goes to state



Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. He said the government administration was taken to the doorsteps of people. The Chief Minister of the state has brought new vitality to good governance; he said, adding that the welfare schemes were being

implemented in a highly transparent manner. He highlighted the renovations of government schools providing facilities at par with the private and corporate educational institutions.

Suresh said that steps were being taken to construct government buildings and roads without compromising on quality. “Yarragondapalem will be developed and all facilities be provided to the people. I will always be available to the public”, he promised.

The minister immediately responded when the villagers brought to his notice that there was a drinking water problem in Gurizepalli village. He assured the villages to resolve the drinking water problem and sanctioned Rs 3 lakh for the same. District Panchayat office GV Narayana Reddy, MPDO Sai Kumar, Tahasilkar Veeraiiah and MPP Kiran Goud, and AMC chairman Murthy Reddy were among those who were present.

# Tackle Covid cases effectively: Minister

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Health Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas has directed the government machinery to take all steps to tackle the spiking Coronavirus cases efficiently and set up Covid Care Centres in every Assembly constituency.

The Health Minister, also deputy Chief Minister, reviewed the preparedness and steps being taken to provide tests and treatment to the Covid patients in the West Godavari district. MP Kotagiri Sridhar was present.

The Health Minister said that the government was ready to tackle any situation efficiently as per the directives of Chief Minister YS Jagan



Mohan Reddy on the Coronavirus prevention and vaccination. The minister said “All steps have been taken to set up a Covid Care Center in each Assembly constituency. Already 28,000 beds have been made available across the state in hospitals”

Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas said that Chief Minister YS

provide treatment to the patients at the village clinics, PHCs, Network Hospitals”, he informed.

The minister said that in the WG district the officials had set up 17 Covid Care Centres in which 880 beds were made available to treat patients. Nodal officers were appointed to monitor the services at the CCCs, he informed, adding that help desk, manager and data entry operators were also appointed to each CCC to monitor the situation.

The Health Minister appealed to the people to wear a mask, use sanitizer and follow physical distance. He also urged the people not to come out from homes unnecessarily during the curfew time.

# Jana Sena demands closure of schools till 2<sup>nd</sup> week of Feb

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party political committee chairman Nadendla Manohar demanded the government to declare holidays to all educational institutions in the wake of the rising of Coronavirus cases.

In a statement here on Sunday, he said that holidays should be given to educational institutions till the second week of February in view of a steep rise in positive cases.

There were officially 4,000 cases in the State when Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh announced it a few days ago.

Now the cases have increased to more than 14,000 per day. Manohar cited that 60 percent of parents in Maharashtra did not agree when the government wanted to open the schools. The fever survey reports are causing concern as the statis-

## Pawan wishes speedy recovery of Venkaiah

**VIJAYAWADA:** Jana Sena Party chief K Pawan Kalyan wished the speedy recovery of Vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu, who tested positive for Coronavirus. “I invoke God to bestow complete health and speedy recovery to Venkaiah Naidu,” he said in a statement on Sunday.

tics say that one in every four suffers from Covid.

Doctors and hospital staff have also been affected by the corona, disrupting medical services. Adequate testing kits are also not available in government hospitals in the districts. The YSRCP government should take into account such realities and take steps to face the pandemic effectively, he said.

# British-era underground tunnel discovered

PNS ■ KADAPA

A huge tunnel has been unearthed near the Buggamalleswara Swamy temple at Bugga Agraharam village.

Chittoor and Kadapa Archeological Department AD Sivakumar said that the tunnel prison dates back to the British period.

The tunnel prison is located near the Buggamalleswara Swamy temple in Bugga

Agraharam in Chintakommodinne mandal.

Bala Nagireddy, a representative of the Nestam service organisation in Maidkur, went to see the Buggavanka project and found a small hole in the ground. He informed the officials. The Britishers might have used the tunnel as a bunker and godown.

The Britishers used to construct such tunnels near to the railway tracks, Shiva Kumar said.



# Corona impact: DS postpones entry into Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The re-joining of TRS Rajya Sabha MP D. Srinivas in the Congress has been postponed again. He was scheduled to join the Congress on Monday but it was postponed due to the raging corona pandemic. Congress sources say that DS is likely to join the Congress during the parliamentary session. Congress leaders are not coming to AICC office these days due to corona. It is learnt that AICC chief Sonia Gandhi had asked DS to postpone his entry into the Congress. It may



be recalled that in united Andhra Pradesh, DS had been a key leader of the Congress. He had also served as the PCC chief for two terms.

After the state's partition, DS said goodbye to the Congress and joined the TRS

in the presence of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. DS served as a Rajya Sabha MP of TRS.

DS decided to join the Congress as a gulf had developed between him and KCR. DS had discussions with AICC chief Sonia on re-joining the Congress a couple of months ago and decided to join on January 24.

Earlier, after meeting Sonia, DS had told the media that he will join Congress immediately. However, DS' plans crashed twice. This time corona made DS postpone his plans again.

# CM condoles death of astrologer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed grief over the demise of popular astrologer Sri Mulugu Ramalingeswara Sidhanti who has a good following for his zodiac-based predictions. The Chief Minister conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

# Modi, KCR to share dais on Feb 5 in Hyd

**SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD**

In the midst of the political slugfest between the TRS and the BJP, the people of Telangana are going to witness a rare scene.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao are going to share the dais in Hyderabad. The rare event is creating interest in political circles too.

After Modi became Prime Minister a second time this is the first time the PM and KCR are sharing a dais. The opportunity was created by Tridandi Chinna Jeeyer Swamy. If everything goes well the event will happen on February 5 at Muchhantal near Shamshabad.

A statue of Ramanujacharya made of gold, silver, copper, brass and tin will be unveiled in Hyderabad on that day under the auspices of Tridandi Chinna Jeeyer Swamy. The statue stands 216 feet tall and is the second-largest seated statue in the world after the Buddha statue in Thailand. In addition, a 120 kg gold statue of Ramanujacharya will be



unveiled inside the statue.

Meanwhile, Chinna Jeeyer Swamy went all the way to New Delhi and personality invited Prime Minister Modi to unveil the statue of Ramanujacharya.

Modi himself said that the statue of Ramanujacharya will be unveiled on Vasantha Panchami day on February 5 and will be dedicated to the nation. China Jeeyer Swamy has also invited prominent personalities like the President, the Supreme Court Chief Justice and Central ministers along with Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Recently KCR skipped some opportunities to avoid meeting Modi. But this time KCR is not likely to skip sharing the dais with Modi as he was invited by Chinna Jeeyer Swamy.

It may be recalled that KCR has faith in Chinna Jeeyer Swamy and have met him many times recently.

# 50 TN red sanders smugglers, woodcutters held

PNS ■ NELLORE

In a major operation, the police and forest officials arrested 50 red sander smugglers and woodcutters all belonging to Tamil Nadu and Puducherry state and seized 50 red sander logs worth over Rs 40 lakh at Gudur toll plaza on Sunday.

SP Vijaya Rao said that on a tip, the police and forest officials raided a place where a large number of red sander woodcutters were cutting red sander trees at Rapuru forest area. When the police went there the smugglers and woodcutters escaped into the forest.

The police conducted a check of

vehicles at the toll plaza located near Gudur and arrested 50 red sander smugglers and woodcutters. The police seized 45 red sander logs worth over Rs 40 lakh, one car, one lorry, 31 mobile phones, Rs 75,000 cash, and a large number of axes and words. Damu, Phalani, Kuppan and Subramanyam were notorious red sander smugglers and they were acting as pilots to the red sander laded lorry. All the arrested belong to Tamil Nadu and Puducherry states. When seeing the police, red sander woodcutters threw axes and other weapons towards the police in which a constable suffered an injury.



# 9 tonnes of ration rice seized

PNS ■ ELURU

The transport officials seized 9 tonnes of ration rice being transported to Yanam illegally at Jeelugumilli RTA check post on Sunday.

RTA officials here on Sunday told the media that on a tip-off the police conducted checking of vehicles. They found 9 tonnes of ration rice being transported in a lorry illegally and seized. The seized ration is worth Rs 1.25 lakh. Cases under sections 6A and 7 (A) were registered.



INDIA CORNER

## Amarinder Singh announces first list of 22 candidates

Former chief minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday announced the first list of his party Punjab Lok Congress (PLC) candidates from 22 constituencies for the February 20 state assembly elections, with ex-captain of Indian hockey team Ajit Pal Singh entering the fray from Nakodar. "We have given a good set of candidates with a clear focus on winnability while ensuring due representation across regions and various sections of the society," the PLC chief, who will contest from his Patiala Urban seat, said here. The PLC has been allotted 37 to contest out of the 117 seats in the state as part of its alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and SAD (Sanyukt), with discussions still in progress on possibly another five seats for the party, he said. Of the 37 seats in the PLC kitty, the maximum of 26 is from the Malwa region of the state. The PLC's share in seat allocation for the Majha region currently stands at seven, while the Doaba region accounts for four seats.



## Centre's move of dropping 'Abide with me' hymn sad: Chidambaram

Objecting to the Centre's decision of dropping one of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymns 'Abide with me' from this year's Beating Retreat ceremony, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday said the government's move has hurt the 'thinking and sensitive' people. 'Abide with me', written by Scottish Anglican poet and hymnologist Henry Francis Lyte in 1847, had been part of the Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950. The Indian Army announced on Saturday that it has been dropped from this year's ceremony. For this year's ceremony, the hymn has been replaced by the popular patriotic song 'Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon', which was written by Kavi Pradeep to commemorate the supreme sacrifice made by Indian soldiers during the 1962 Indo-China war. Talking to reporters in Goa, Chidambaram said, 'Abide with me' is an old hymn that dates back to 1847. It was Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymn. Ever since we became a republic in 1950, the ceremony called Beating the Retreat on the last of the Republic Day celebrations would always end with the march to the tune of 'Abide with me', he said.



## Karnataka achieves 100 pc first dose Covid vaccine coverage: Minister

Karnataka on Sunday achieved 100 per cent coverage of first dose of COVID-19 vaccine among its eligible population, Karnataka Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said. He also claimed that Karnataka became the first state in the country to achieve this feat. "We made it! It took us exactly 1 year and 7 days to achieve 100% first dose coverage! Karnataka is the first state in the country (over 4 crore adult population) to achieve this feat! Kudos to all health workers and district administration on this stellar achievement!", Sudhakar tweeted. According to the data shared by him, Gadag district achieved 105 per cent vaccination of its eligible population with the first dose whereas inoculation coverage in Bidar, Bagalkote and Vijayapura districts, was 104 per cent of the population.



# 4 cr people pushed into poverty in country: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Sunday alleged that over four crore people have been pushed into poverty in the country and that there has been development of only "Hamare Do".

"'Vikas overflow' only for 'Humare Do'. While our 4,00,00,000 brothers and sisters are pushed into poverty," he said on Twitter.

"Each of these 4,00,00,000 is a real person, not just a number. Each of these 4,00,00,000 deserved better. Each of these 4,00,00,000 is India!," Gandhi said, using the hashtag "BJPfailsIndia".

Citing an Oxfam report, he put out a graphic alleging that the wealth two top businessmen has grown by billions of dollars during the year 2021 while over four crore people have gone below the poverty line in India during the pandemic since 2020.



## R-Day parade: Indian Army contingents to display rifles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

How Indian Army uniforms and rifles have evolved over the decades will be on display at this year's Republic Day parade, Major General Alok Kakkar said on Sunday.

Three marching contingents of the Indian Army will wear uniforms and carry rifles from previous decades, while one contingent will wear the new combat uniform and carry the latest Tavor rifles at Republic Day Parade-2022 (RDP-2022) as a part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrating the 75th year of India's independence, he said. There will be a total of six marching contingents of the Indian Army at RDP-22, he said at a press conference.

Each marching contingent at RDP-22 will comprise 96 soldiers instead of the usual 144 so that proper attention can be given to COVID-19 protocol.

The Indian Army's first marching contingent, of Rajput regiment soldiers, will wear the 1950s uniform and carry .303



rifles, Kakkar said.

The second marching contingent, of Assam regiment soldiers, will wear the 1960s uniform of the Indian Army and carry .303 rifles.

The 1970s uniform of the Army will be worn by soldiers of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry regiment, who will form the third marching contingent, and they will carry 7.62 mm self-loading rifles, he informed.

The fourth and fifth marching contingents will be of Sikh Light Infantry and Army Ordnance Corps Regiment respectively, he said, adding

that these soldiers will wear the current uniform of the Army and carry 5.56 mm Insas rifles, Kakkar noted.

The sixth contingent will be of Parachute regiment soldiers who will wear the new combat uniform, which was unveiled earlier this month, and carry Tavor rifles, he stated.

Overall, there will be a total of 14 marching contingents -- six of Army, one of Navy, one of Air Force, four of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), two of National Cadet Corps (NCC), one of Delhi police and one of National Service Scheme (NSS), he said.

## AIADMK takes credit for Hogenakkal project

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu's principal opposition AIADMK on Sunday slammed Karnataka government for opposing the second phase of the Hogenakkal Drinking Water Project, saying the neighbouring state has no moral or legal right to challenge it.

The main opposition party also took credit for implementing the Hogenakkal project (first phase) in Tamil Nadu. The scheme was launched in 2008 during the DMK regime when late M Karunanidhi was the Chief Minister.

Top party leader O Panneerselvam said the Hogenakkal Combined Drinking Water Project, a long time dream of the people of Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts of Tamil

Nadu, was fulfilled by late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. Tamil Nadu is a lower riparian state, the AIADMK leader pointed out, apparently indicating that the state was dependent on water supply by upstream state, Karnataka.

The Karnataka government, which has the habit of releasing only 'surplus water' after all its dams were filled, does not have a right 'morally and legally' to oppose Tamil Nadu's Hogenakkal project's second phase, Panneerselvam said in a statement. The project area falls under Tamil Nadu, he said.

"Tamil Nadu has all the rights to implement this project. This (DMK) government should implement it. The AIADMK will extend its full support (to the government) for the project implementation," he said.



## Over 35k trains cancelled in first nine months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 35,000 trains were cancelled in the first nine months of the 2021-22 fiscal year due to maintenance reasons, the railways said in a reply to an RTI query.

The national transporter also said that during the April to June quarter of 2021-22, it had cancelled 20,941 trains due to "maintenance reasons", in the next quarter it had cancelled 7,117 trains, while in



the October to December quarter, it had cancelled 6,869 trains.

The RTI query was filed by

Madhya Pradesh-based Chandra Shekar Guar. Officials indicated that the highest number of such can-

cancellations in recent history was in 2019, when around 3,146 trains were cancelled due to maintenance work.

In 2014, 101 trains were cancelled due to maintenance work and the number increased to 829 in 2017, 2,867 in 2018 and 3,146 in 2019, according to official figures.

"This shows the amount of work that is required to be done on worn out tracks that have been long pending," an official said.

### MP cops raid govt employee's premises, unearth

The Madhya Pradesh police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) on Sunday raided the premises of a state government employee in Rewa district, and unearthed disproportionate assets worth Rs 1.5 crore from there, an official said. More assets are likely to be found as the raid and the estimation process are underway, said Virendra Jain, Superintendent of Police (SP), EOW. He said that following a complaint about the disproportionate assets and its verification, a raid was conducted at the premises of PWD time-keeper Pannalal Shukla, at Mada village residence and other places.

### Illegal arms factory busted in UP's Muzaffarnagar

An illegal arms factory was busted at Budhana bypass road under Khatoli Police Station area with seizure of a cache of weapons, police said on Sunday. Sixteen pistols, 11 barrels, and several pistol under manufacture were seized and one man was arrested during the raid on Saturday night, they said. The raid was part of a drive the police is carrying out to nab illegal arms manufacturers in the region ahead of the UP polls. An arms factory was busted in New Mandi Police Station area on Friday too with seizure of several arms.

### Naxal involved in killings of several security personnel arrested

A 20-year-old Naxal, who was allegedly involved in the killings of at least seven security personnel, including two Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) officials, was arrested in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh, police said on Sunday. The Naxal, identified as Pandru Padami, was nabbed on Saturday from Toyameta village located under Chotadonger police station limits in the district. Narayanpur Superintendent of Police (SP) Girja Shankar Jaiswal said, Padami is a close associate of Naxals' Amdai Ghati area committee secretary Suresh Salam, he said.

### Bengal guv pays tribute to Netaji,

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankar on Sunday paid homage to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the occasion of his 125th birth anniversary and said his 'life is an inspiration and motivation for all'. Taking to Twitter, Dhankar also stated that a portrait of the revolutionary leader was unveiled at Raj Bhavan on the occasion. "Nation pays homage #NetajiSubhashChandraBose on #NetajiJayanti. Grand statue of #Netaji at India Gate Canopy - a befitting tribute to icon @PMOIndia. His life is inspiration and motivation for all to always keep nation first," he tweeted.

## Healthcare professionals' battle with Covid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid fatigue among healthcare professionals is real, says 39-year-old Dr Samir Khurana, recalling how the pandemic and its severe waves in the last two years have left him and many from his fraternity 'mentally and physically exhausted'.

But for Khurana (name changed) the biggest fear was he becoming the spreader of the infection at home. "It was a huge part of the already stressful and tiring times we were facing," he said.

"I vividly remember the day the first Covid case was

diagnosed at the medical facility in Delhi that I work in. My shift had just begun and we were updated with the report. I wore my personal protective equipment (PPE) and started treating patients," he said.

Khurana, who did not want his or the hospital's name to be revealed, said initially he felt claustrophobic in PPE, but "now it has become my uniform".

"Since 2020, we are constantly on our toes. Covid fatigue is real for healthcare professionals who have been tirelessly working for the past two years," he said.



# New translation reveals Mukherjee panel ignored Renkoji temple's offer

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Tokyo's Renkoji temple gave permission to Indian authorities to conduct DNA tests on ashes said to be those of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, according to fresh translation of a letter which refutes claims that the temple was "reticent", placing doubts on a commission of enquiry's ruling that the 'ashes were not Netaji's'.

A new translation of a letter in Japanese written by the chief priest of Tokyo's Renkoji temple to the Indian government in 2005 revealed that permission was given for DNA test of the remains to the Justice MK Mukherjee Commission.

However, for inexplicable reasons this portion of the letter was not translated and a bland edited English version was attached to the Justice Mukherjee Commission's report on the disappearance of Bose as evidence that "on account of the Temple Authorities reticence...

the commission could not proceed further (on the issue of DNA tests)".

The Commission later used this to conclude that the ashes were not of Netaji's, giving credence to speculations that he may have survived to become an ascetic or prisoner in a Russian prison.

Madhuri Bose, the legendary freedom fighter's grand-niece -- the grand-daughter of his brother Sarat Bose, told PTI, "We recently commissioned the fresh translation after we found inconsistencies in the Mukherjee Commission report and found several paragraphs in the letter written in Japanese missing from the official English version in the Justice Mukherjee Inquiry Report."

The new translation by a Japanese language expert revealed that Nichiko Mochizuki, the chief priest of the Renkoji Temple -- a 427-year-old Buddhist temple, had written "I agreed to offer my coop-



eration for the testing. The same was agreed upon at the meeting with (Indian) Ambassador (M.L. Tripathi (to Japan) last year (2004)" in the omitted portion. The translation could not be independently authenticated by PTI.

"We do not understand why this permission was not made public earlier or why DNA tests were not conducted," said Madhuri Bose, who has served

in the Commonwealth Secretariat and at the United Nations, besides authoring books on the Bose brothers.

The Mukherjee Commission, which tabled its report in Parliament in 2006, had concluded that Bose "did not die in the plane crash, as alleged" by eye-witnesses, including his close confidantes from the INA, and that "the ashes in the Japanese temple were not of

Netaji".

Eye-witnesses, including Col Habib-Ur-Rahman of the INA, had said Bose died in a plane crash in August 1945 in Taipei.

Theories that he survived or was never on the aircraft that crashed gained ground as a result of the report, as also a hypothesis that he may have turned into an ascetic or imprisoned in a Russian gulag.

A movie suggesting that he might have become someone called 'Gumnami Baba' was also made in the recent years, while several news reports indicated he might have been imprisoned by Russian leader Joseph Stalin in Siberia.

"We had great faith in the Mukherjee Commission and we saw a glimmer of hope at one time that the truth about Netaji's disappearance will come out with the final report... However many glaring discrepancies in the report forced us to look at it again," said Madhuri Bose.

## Netaji sent secret letter to Soviet leadership in 1939 asking for help in India's liberation

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Amiya Bose, freedom icon Subhas Bose's nephew, was tasked by his uncle to carry a secret letter seeking Soviet help in India's liberation, which was to be delivered to agents in Britain in October 1939, barely a month into the Second World War. The freedom fighter's nephew, who was searched on landing in Britain by officers from New Scotland Yard, managed to smuggle in the letters -- one of which was handed over to British Communist leader of Indian origin Rajani Palme Dutt and another to a Soviet agent. "My father had recalled that his uncle had summoned him from Cambridge to India in May 1939 and was asked to go on a

'Russian mission'. His father Sarat Bose was in the know but not his mother. He was asked to carry the messages in his overcoat pocket," said Madhuri Bose, the daughter of Amiya Bose and author of the book 'The Bose Brothers', said in an interview to PTI. Amiya Bose had narrated to his daughter that he had told Subhas Bose, whose 125th birth anniversary is being celebrated Sunday, "If I get caught with your message, you would certainly be hanged." Bose had replied he would gladly take the risk. Subhas Bose, also called Netaji by millions of Indians, had held meetings with the Communist Party of India to enlist support in approaching the government of Soviet Russia. Madhuri Bose recalls that Soli

Bativala, who represented CPI at the meeting, agreed to this course of action. Bativala in a hand-written record of the meeting given to Amiya Bose three decades later recounted that Netaji told him, "The strategy I suggest is: We in India launch a full-scale national movement for freedom; at the same time Soviet Russia marches from the North." Netaji apparently told Bativala that "Soviet Russia could be trusted not to take advantage and occupy the country." CPI did not favour upon the scheme with look, according to the Kolkata-based communist, but agreed to see that the message reached Moscow. Accordingly, it was decided that Subhas Bose will send a direct communication through Amiya Bose.

**DOCYARD**  
DR SUSHRUT GANPULE

Consultant — Pulmonologist

JUPITER HOSPITAL, PUNE



## Lung infections can be dangerous



Lungs play an important role in our body hence it is necessary to prioritize lung health. Very often we tend to take them for granted; however, like other parts of the body, they age with time. They lose their strength and become less flexible which results in breathing difficulty.

While our body does protect the lungs by keeping dirt and germs at bay, we can maintain the health of our lungs and reduce the risk of lung disease by adopting certain healthy habits.

### Stay away from smoking

Never smoke and stay away from secondhand smoke as well. Smoking is known to be a leading cause of lung cancer and lung diseases like COPD. Furthermore, it is never too late to quit smoking as lungs begin to heal almost immediately once a person quits the butt. The risk of acquiring lung cancer reduces to almost half to that of a current smoker, ten years after quitting smoking.

### Control your exposure to pollutants

Avoid exposure to indoor and outdoor pollutants as it can damage your lungs and accelerate aging. Lungs can easily stay strong against toxins when they are young and strong, however, with age, they are more susceptible for the damage and become more vulnerable to the disease. Its best to reduce exposure to outdoor pollutants as much as possible including:

**Smoking is known to be a leading cause of lung cancer and lung diseases like COPD. Lungs can easily stay strong against toxins when they are young and strong, however, with age, they become more vulnerable to the disease**

Keeping your home smoke-free is equally important to avoid secondhand smoke exposure.

- ♦ Avoid exposure to biomass which is commonly seen in rural areas. Use LPG or natural gas instead. Use masks wherever exposure is unavoidable.

- ♦ Ensure appropriate ventilation inside homes.
- ♦ Avoid exposure to chemicals like benzene and formaldehyde found in synthetic air fresheners, perfumes and joss sticks (agar-batti).

### Regular exercise

Exercise plays an important role. Staying active keeps your lungs healthy and even improves the symptoms of some long-term lung conditions.

Do any form of exercise like walking, jogging or hitting the gym for a minimum of 30 minutes, five days a week to create strong, healthy lungs. However, if you have pre-existing breathing problems, make sure to talk to your concerned healthcare professional. In these cases specific exercises are required to relieve breathlessness.

### Prevent infections

As we age, any lung infection can be dangerous. It is a common cause of death in elderly. There are certain steps which can be taken to avoid serious lung infection. Keep your hands clean by washing them regularly with soap and avoid touching your face. Avoid crowded places, take appropriate precautions in social gatherings and stay away from sick people. Staying hydrated when sick helps your lungs to work better. It is important to visit a healthcare professional as soon as possible, in case one has fever, Chest pain and phlegm.

### Get vaccinated

All individuals with age more than 65 years should receive a pneumococcal vaccine, people who have other comorbidities can take it earlier. Everyone with a pre-existing lung condition or has a high risk of developing complicated flu should receive flu shot every year.

## WARMFOOD

**RADISH:** Antioxidants including catechin, pyrogallol, vanillic acid, and other phenolic compounds are abundant in radishes. Vitamin C, which functions as an antioxidant to protect your cells from damage, is high in these root vegetables. Chemical compounds found in radishes, such as glucosinolate and isothiocyanate, can help manage blood sugar levels. Radishes include indole-3-carbinol and 4-methylthio-3-butenyl-isothiocyanate, among other chemicals, which assist the liver to detoxify and recover. These same molecules aid in the elimination of toxins via the kidneys. Antioxidants and minerals like calcium and potassium abound in radishes. These nutrients work together to lower blood pressure and lower the risk of heart diseases.



According to the World Health Organisation, glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world. There are plenty of misconceptions surrounding the disease that can leave patients misinformed, says DR SHEFALI PARIKH

In India, glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness with nearly 12 million people affected and nearly 1.2 million people blind from the disease. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world. Glaucoma can affect people of every age however, the risk of the disease increases with age. Glaucoma happens to be a common eye condition that affects the optic nerves of the eyes. These optic nerves are responsible for carrying information from the eye to the brain to get it processed. Thus, when the optic nerves get damaged, it leads to vision loss, and in severe cases, irreversible vision impairment. Unfortunately, there are plenty of misconceptions surrounding the disease that can leave patients misinformed.

**5 of the most common glaucoma myths**

### Glaucoma only affects the elderly

While it is certainly true that people above the age of 60 have greater chances of developing glaucoma as compared to people in their 40s, it can also affect people aged 20-50 as well as infants. For instance, some babies can have glaucoma by birth (called congenital glaucoma), while other children have other eye diseases that lead to secondary glaucoma.

The same is true for adults—one can have an eye condition, for example, uveitis, diabetes which results in secondary glaucoma.

Other types of glaucoma can often manifest in patients between ages 20 and 50 like pigmentary glaucoma.

### Symptoms are visible during the early onset of glaucoma

Open-angle glaucoma, which is the most common form of glaucoma, doesn't exhibit any signs or symptoms until the later stages when vision loss sets in. Even though people may think that the increased eye pressure causes pain, it doesn't. Also, as peripheral vision is generally first compromised very slowly, one may not recognize vision loss until the vision has become significantly impaired. The only way to detect glaucoma is to undergo a comprehensive eye exam.

### Glaucoma can't be prevented

Routine and regular eye exams can certainly aid in the prevention of glaucoma related blindness. While it is true that vision loss due to glaucoma can't be reversed, having regular eye exams by an ophthalmologist that include measurements of the eye pressure can certainly go a long way in preventing blindness due to disease. According to the Glaucoma Experts, it is important to have an exam every two years beginning at age 40 if there are no glaucoma risk factors, and every one year if one is at high risk or over 65.

### Glaucoma testing can be painful

Testing for glaucoma is not at all painful. There are different



Dr. Shefali Parikh,  
Glaucoma Specialist at  
Shreeji Eye Clinic, Andheri,  
Mumbai

**Glaucoma happens to be a common eye condition that affects the optic nerves of the eyes. These optic nerves are responsible for carrying information from the eye to the brain to get it processed**

types of tests for glaucoma. There's also a test known as Goldman applanation tonometry where patients receive a painless eye drop in each eye. The ophthalmologist then directs a blue light onto each eye and looks into an instrument that precisely measures intraocular pressure. This test is also quick and painless. Angle assessment with lenses called gonioscopes is very important to differentiate between two most common glaucoma prevalent in Indian scenarios. Other tests include testing of visual field with perimeter, and scanning of the optic nerve with imaging technology.

### Glaucoma is inherited

Certain types of glaucoma are hereditary, and a family history of glaucoma is a risk factor no doubt. But there are many glaucoma patients who are the only ones in their families who are diagnosed with the disease.

It is also possible that there does not appear to be a strong family history because not every family member has been appropriately examined. Thus, it is important that patients with glaucoma should share their diagnosis with their family members and ask them to have a dilated eye examination.

Stop believing in the myths surrounding glaucoma and work with your eye doctor to preserve and protect your eye health. Glaucoma cannot be cured but definitely the blindness due to glaucoma can be prevented if early diagnosis.

## Make healthy resolutions



With the excitement of the holiday season over, now is the time for us to prioritise a healthy beauty

regimen. DR SACHIN PAWAR shares six resolutions for healthy hair and skin

### Build a good sleep habit

The New year is the perfect time to resolve to develop proper sleep hygiene. Not only does it keep you well rested, getting a good night of sleep is beneficial for both your hair and skin. As you sleep, your body boosts blood flow to the skin, preventing it from sagging and giving a healthy glow. Lack of sleep can also cause hair loss, breakage, damage, and affects hair growth. 7 to 9 hours of sleep every day can help you develop a radiant complexion.

### Vitamin E intake is Vital

Traditionally, festive seasons especially New Year's Eve is all about getting decked up and feasting. Well, make-up may give you the glam look, but there are chances that your skin may end up looking dull if you have not maintained a balanced and healthy diet. For a solution that works from the inside to renew your look on the outside, include a daily dose of Vitamin E. Though Vitamin E is widely available in everyday foods, you can also strengthen the cellular health of your skin and hair by adding Vitamin E supplements like Evion® Forte to your daily routine. The natural antioxidants work at the cellular level to repair, restore, and revive your cells, thus, protecting your skin from damage and supporting the microcirculation and oxygenation of the scalp. Its anti-inflammatory properties can protect your skin from the harsh effects of the sun.

### Sun and Heat Safety

External stresses cause your body to produce free radicals that attack collagen, the protein that allows your skin to stay young and beautiful. This imbalance caused by free radicals is known as oxidative stress. It damages and weakens your skin cells, which leaves your skin looking tired and worn out. Having a skincare routine becomes even more important during this time. Likewise, hair damage—hair that is thin, brittle, dull, or flat—can result from many factors, including environmental factors like UV radiation and pollution. Make sure you prep your tresses with a good heat protectant. The key to having strong and glossy hair, perfect for your new year avatar is combining good hair care with healthy habits.

### Hydrate and Nourish your body

The more hydrated you stay, the fewer wrinkles and improved complexion you'll see. Drinking enough water can help you combat a variety of skin issues and give you glowing skin. A hydrated body also results in hair growth as it reduces dryness in the scalp and promotes the growth of hair from the roots. Let's not forget the importance of nourishment to your body. A healthy body and mind require consuming a daily dose of nutrients, including vitamins and minerals. One of the easiest ways to ensure youthful skin and rejuvenated hair is by incorporating Vitamin E-rich foods into your diet.

The writer is MD Head—Medical & Technical affairs  
— India Cluster, Procter & Gamble Health Limited

## INBRIEF

### First Closed Loop Artificial Pancreas Insulin Pump installed

India's first automatically adjustable, *The MiniMed™ 780G system* which is the world's first Advanced Hybrid Closed Loop (AHCL) system, was successfully delivered and fixed on a 7-year-old boy with type 1 Diabetes at Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre, one of the healthcare groups in Asia devoted to the treatment of Diabetes and its complications. The patient recently diagnosed with type 1 Diabetes is the first one to get the advanced and automated insulin pump fixed in India. *Medtronic's MiniMed™ 780G* made its first ever launch in India, at the hands of Dr V Mohan, Chairman & Consultant Diabetologist, Dr Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre.

Commenting on the first successful delivery of the device, Dr V Mohan said, "It's extremely difficult to manage blood sugar levels in children and teenagers with Type 1 diabetes because of their high activity levels, constantly fluctuating hormones and ongoing growth and development. The 7-year-old boy who was recently diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, was also struggling with blood sugar control with several high sugar and low sugar episodes. The device automatically adjusts and corrects insulin levels 24/7, every 5 minutes, as needed. It also anticipates insulin needs and adjusts insulin delivery, while also correcting highs automatically and protecting from lows."

## Get rid of joint pain this time

Low temperature exacerbates joint pain. Now that the weather is getting colder, it's more necessary to pay attention to your bones, says DR VIVEK MAHAJAN

The number of patients diagnosed with arthritis increases during the winter. It's defined as the swelling of one or more joints, with joint discomfort being the most common symptom, which often gets worse as you get older. The two most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

### Knee Pain

Chronic knee pain is caused by a lack of ligament in the knee bone and bone wear. Knee discomfort is more common in adults over the age of 50. People who are overweight have a higher risk of developing this condition. It is an illness that will be passed down through the generations. Women are more likely to have this condition as compared to men.

### Joints stiffness

In chilly conditions, muscle spasms are more prone to occur, resulting in greater joint discomfort and

stiffness. Cold weather decreases blood circulation in the fingers and toes, exacerbating arthritic discomfort. Low temperatures can cause the joint fluid to thicken, making the joints stiff and difficult to move. Vitamin D levels drop as a result of less sunlight throughout the winter, which can lead to brittle bones and joints.

### Prevent arthritis pain

**Vitamin D:** Joint discomfort might worsen in the winter due to a lack of sunlight, which reduces the body's ability to synthesise vitamin D. It is therefore important to take adequate sunlight even during the winters. If you intend to take Vitamin D capsules, make sure to consult your doctor first.

Exercise on a regular basis: During the winter, people's fitness regimens tend to stall. This can not only cause you to gain weight, but it can also lead to other problems.



Dr. Vivek Mahajan  
Orthopedic and Joint  
Replacement Surgeon  
Indian Spinal Injuries Center,  
New Delhi

Consult your doctor before beginning a fitness programme to alleviate the pain of arthritis. Make it a point to exercise for at least 30-40 minutes every day. In addition, get a good night's sleep of around 8 hours per day.

Dress warmly: Dress appropriately with extra layers of clothing to keep yourself protected. Sitting on a

chilly floor is not recommended by doctors because it may aggravate the pain. Avoid taking the stairs as well, as it puts additional strain on your joints. Even if you're at home, don't walk around without warm socks. Woollen socks should always be worn to protect your feet. Use hot water to relieve arthritis pain.

**Healthy diet:** Try to eat more fruits and vegetables than you normally do throughout the year. Consume only fresh fruits and vegetables. Vitamin B12, found in eggs, yoghurt, and many types of fish, has been shown to help lower homocysteine levels. Homocysteine levels in the blood have been linked to an increased risk of developing cardiovascular complications.

Similarly, vitamin B6 may aid in the reduction of joint inflammation. Carrots, spinach, sweet potatoes, and bananas are just a few of the

many common vitamin B6-rich foods. If you're thinking about taking vitamins or supplements, talk to a doctor first because everyone's needs are different.

It is also critical to avoid alcohol and refined sugars while following a healthy diet. If these things are consumed in large quantities during the winter, it can aggravate the pain.

**Stay hydrated:** Water consumption decreases during the winter. This can cause issues for arthritis patients. Drinking enough water is critical for your body's proper functioning. Being adequately hydrated may help regulate your body temperature, aid digestion, and boost your immune system, among other things.

Furthermore, the extra walks to the bathroom as a result of drinking more water are an easy way to add a little more movement to your day.



Priyanka listens to issues put up by women from her village

Last year, the panchayat elections in Bihar witnessed an increase in the number of women contesting the elections. The voting for the panchayat election took place in 11 phases. While the first phase began on September 24, the last one was held on December 12. As per a report, five to 10 per cent more women than men participated in the panchayat elections in each phase and won. Against a total of 4,17,772 male candidates, 4,74,917 women contested in all the phases.

The Government of Bihar has reserved 50 per cent of the seats in the panchayat election for women to motivate them to enter politics. These provisions have helped in increasing women's participation in decision-making and strengthening women's empowerment. In the recent panchayat election in Bihar, women from different rural areas have ensured their participation through their candidature. Interestingly, women who have studied at prestigious colleges in the country and worked in multinational companies have also contested the elections.

Take the case of 31-year-old Dolly, who completed her MBA from Symbiosis International University in Pune and worked in several multinational companies before deciding to enter the fray in the recent panchayat elections. Not

## POLITICS OF GENDER

SAUMYA JYOTSNA delves into the effects of more women participating in the electoral process in Muzaffarpur, Bihar

only did she participate, but also won by receiving 2,600 votes in her favour and is currently the sarpanch in the Shadi Pur panchayat of Manpur block situated in the Gaya district of Bihar. "I started working after I passed my XII standard in 2008. I wanted to get back to my village and work for its development. With this vision in my mind, I finally left my job in 2018," said Dolly.

In 2014, she got married and has a four-year-old daughter. Her mother-in-law was the sarpanch of Shadi Pur panchayat for eight years but, unfortunately, died during her tenure in November 2018. "The death of my mother-in-law was a huge loss. An educated and responsible person was required to take her place and carry out the duties. This is when I decided to contest in 2018. With everyone's support, I won the election," she expressed. Ever since she has been working towards the development of the village and won the



Sarpanch Dolly with women from her village

panchayat election for the second time.

While talking about her initiatives, she said, "I want to establish a cottage industry in the village so that more women can get work and become financially strong. As women in this village take an active part in agricultural work, they will benefit from this initiative." On the other hand, talking about the challenges, Dolly informed that the biggest one in the village is domestic violence, which needs to be curbed. Although women in the village complain about it, they are afraid to take action. Over

the years, Dolly has been able to bring several positive changes to the village. She has also received the Aparajita Award for Women Empowerment in Excellence of Gram Kachhari by Dainik Jagran for establishing the first digitised village office in Bihar.

Similarly, Priyanka, from Bishanpur Gonahi panchayat in Sonbarsa block of Sitamarhi district in Bihar, is driven towards breaking stereotypes through taking part in politics. However, her journey was not easy. Coming from an average family, her parents did not want to spend on her education and preferred to save money for her dowry. Despite several hurdles, she managed to take tuition and get an education. Even though she had started getting proposals when Priyanka was young, she did not want to get married.

"I told my brother about the situation, who was studying in Delhi. He did not just stop the wedding but

also helped me complete my X standard. I became the first girl from my family to get a first division in the exams," Priyanka informs gladly.

In 2013, she came to Delhi with her brother, completed her XII and got admitted to Miranda House. Coming from a village with a low literacy rate and getting admission to a prestigious college in the country's capital is indicative of Priyanka's grit and spirit. She completed her education in Philosophy. During her course, she came to know about India's first MBA degree holder sarpanch, Chhavi Rajawat, which motivated Priyanka to become one herself.

"In 2017, I got an opportunity to participate in the Gramya Manthan programme — a 10-day rural immersion initiative — by the Youth Alliance of India. And in 2018, I was entrusted by the organisation with the responsibility of Nibada, Kharagpur, Badi Palia and Chhoti Palia villages in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district, where I started a campaign named Sham Ki Pathshala for the children in the villages and did other developmental works," she informed.

Inspired by these works, she returned to her village in April 2020 and started working on awareness. Currently, there are four members in her team, who are running the Chetna Choupal programme under the Gram-Chetna-Andolan initiative. Under the programme, they visit different villages and inform people about social issues. She aims to become the sarpanch of her village and, therefore, participated in the recent panchayat elections. Despite her loss in the election, she did not lose her zeal to work towards developing her village.

Women in decision-making positions not only leads to increasing women's representation but also bridges the gender gap in political decision making. Given the right support and access to resources, these women can undertake outstanding work. And most importantly, society has to do away with conservative notions and discourage those who work relentlessly towards the greater good. As Priyanka puts it, "A woman has to struggle more than a man to get into politics because society wants to only see a woman making bread and this situation is more prevalent in rural areas."

—Charkha Features  
(The author has been a grassroots journalist for five years and is the winner of the UNFPA Laadli Media Award for Gender Sensitivity 2020 and 2021.)



## Change perspective

If we see the 21st century with a new outlook, we will be rewarded with a break from the past, says

RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJ

It's been a couple of weeks since we entered a new year with fresh plans and renewed hopes. We have been reading and watching the intelligentsia sharing their views and visions of what the society in this year would be like. Generally, these talks revolve around the new inventions of science or about social and economic issues.

However important these inventions and issues may be, there is hardly any forum or platform where anyone ever offers ideas, ideology or visions which have such social, political, economic, administrative, cultural and health-related dimensions that represent almost a complete departure from what we know of what has been in the past 20 centuries. They only stretch their human imagination, linked as it is to what we see today and their visions or predictions are, more or less, a knitting-together of the latest researches and findings, projected by their fertile imagination into the future. What they say is not altogether novel nor do they give any scenes of a wonderland that will become a reality.

Similarly, newspapers, magazines and electronic media also give almost the same stuff with only little additions or changes in perceptions, observations or conclusions and they call some of these changes a 'breakthrough'. Perhaps, these are a breakthrough but what will be their overall effect, reflected in the emerging society is hardly discussed with any clarity, certainty and coherence. They just give bits and pieces of information which are disjointed and no one tells how these will fit in the jigsaw puzzle of the new society. They give only grains of information; no one gives an integrated and holistic view of what society in the coming years will be like. No effort has ever been made to synthesise the findings of all branches of knowledge to give mankind the multi-disciplinary sum-up or resume of the whole thing. Perhaps, no human being could do this because no one is well-versed in all the branches nor has anyone the requisite time and acumen. Moreover, the total information provided by all kinds of research, done in all fields of knowledge, is so scant and sketchy that one cannot make out anything concrete about the 21st century, with any certainty. Also, there are many gaps and missing links in the information, so much so that the knowledge of these in future may overturn and invalidate the current beliefs.

If we read the history of Philosophy, Physics, Astronomy, Geology, Biology or Psychology, to give a few examples, we will find that many theories in all the disciplines have been changing and some of them have been changing very frequently and



overnight. So, we cannot say that what we have learnt is accurate and final and will stay unchanged at least in our lifetime. What then can, we, human beings say about the 21st century when we do not know whether a nuclear world war will start or an environmental catastrophe will result in grave devastation of our flora, fauna and humankind or the population explosion and the expanding cities will cause havoc during our lifetime? Again, the so-called new information or discoveries have not yet even been delinked from the old and the obsolete and contradictory theories co-exist as there is no clinching proof of either or the paucity of time and effort to sift the grain from the chaff. For example, there is no universal agreement as to whether the mind or soul is an entity separate from the body or the mind is an epiphenomenon of the brain. The information we have is so inadequate that nothing can be said with certainty that is acceptable to all.

Further, the major and minor events that occurred from the 20th century till today are recorded in history but no human being knows their effects and after-effects thoroughly nor has anyone ever combined and coherently collated these to give a cogent view of what will happen as a cumulative result of these. No one can calculate these. We do not even know for sure whether we are sitting on an active volcano or that, soon, the gates of paradise would be flung open unto us to enter. More importantly, we do not know whether all these events have been part of a well-knit plan that has a meaning and a goal for all of us without a single exception. And, what is most important is that most of us haven't ever thought that there is a plan of retrieval that is being implemented and there is an incognito intervention of Supreme Almighty to impart new holistic knowledge, give a new paradigm and teach new ways of making spiritual efforts to usher a new era that is almost totally different from what we see today. So, let us look at the 21st century from that perspective. No one can neglect or postpone seeing the birth of this golden era in this light. Can we?

Protesters were walking back to their village post-rally when they turned violent. Within a flash of a second, one person began pelting stones and bricks in the demonstration sloganeering against the administration. Others joined him instantly and charged at the police. Crowds turn unruly and dangerous. What transforms peaceful protesters into violent agitators?

Rarely does a single demonstrator, even if provoked, becomes violent. However, crowds easily adopt violence. Why? According to social psychologists, mob mentality turns individuals into conformists. To fit in with the rest of the group, individuals, including law-abiding individuals, become irrational. Driven by the mob's mind they blindly follow others actions.

A single person tends to behave or act independently but that person, in a crowd, loses his inhibitions, defers blame, responsibility, accountability and/or judgment in a crowd. He assumes group identity ignoring his guiding inner voice. In the crowd, he does what he would otherwise term as unlawful.

Moreover, as humans have instinctive responses, their responses intensify by group influences. Such situations can become dangerous. The 'larger the group the greater the amplification of that crowd behaviour'. History and even present times have several examples of a mob killing

## Mob mentality impacts our culture

Osho sannyasin, MA SHASHIN, says an individual might be incapable of violence but a crowd has a different psyche

those who committed blasphemy or were accused of being witches.

Let's understand mob behaviour based on three major psychological theories. The Contagion theory, for example, is where one learns to smoke from a friend. It's nearly a magnetic influence as a non-smoker feels it's okay to smoke. According to the Convergence theory, people with common interests, motivation, and goals align, for example, college students or civil activists protesting against the administration. The Emergent-norm theory explains that mob behaviour results in collective action. People under strain assume a new norm and are stimulated to act both anti-socially and against their rationale. There are many examples of communal riots in our history.

Floyd Henry Allport, the father of experimental social psychology, holds this view: "The origin of crowd response is not by crowd members and the stimulus situation but it is the prepotent trend of the individual himself". The trend escalates with crowd stimulus.

While there can be many

factors leading to unlawful mob behaviour, Jung and Martin explain the cause for crowd behaviour. They say that 'every individual possesses the innate ability for mob behaviour'. The ability is adjusted with socialisation by social conditioning and social training. However, in a crowd situation, humans are possessed by the primitive, unconscious impulses that abort social conditioning and training. So, do humans become more powerful in crowds and give expression to their suppressions? Or are we humans responsible for our conduct regardless of the predisposition to adopt mob mentality for conforming to groups?

Consider this scenario to understand mob mentality. All the villagers draw water from a well. Until one day, the king and his Minister see that all those who drank water from the well have become insane. In a few days, all of them turn mad and they say that the king and the minister are mad. Later, these two confer and later decide that it's best for them to also drink water from the well if they



want to survive in the village.

Further, Jung and Martin say that our suppressions and repressions lead to such behaviour. What is the solution?

Osho says: "When you are angry with someone and you throw your anger at him, you are creating a chain reaction. Now he too will be angry. This may continue for the rest of your lives and you will go on being enemies.

How can you end it? There is only one possibility. You can end it only in meditation, nowhere else, because in meditation you are not angry with someone: you are simply angry."

This difference is basic. You are not angry with someone. You are simply angry into the cosmos. You are not hateful towards anyone. If hate comes, you are simply hateful and the

hate is thrown out. In meditation, emotions are not addressed. They are unaddressed. They move into the cosmos, and the cosmos purifies everything.

It is just like a dirty river falling into the ocean: the ocean will purify it... In meditation, you are throwing yourself into the cosmos to be purified. All the energy that you throw is purified in the cosmos. The cosmos is so vast and so great an ocean, you cannot make it dirty. In meditation, we are not related to persons. In meditation, we are related directly to the cosmos."

"To grow one's own insight, one needs to be deeply meditative, very alert and aware. The crowd lives a kind of sleepy, unconscious life; it makes no effort at awareness; it lives in a mechanical, robot-like."

Osho says: Why do people feel so happy in a crowd? Why does happiness in a crowd become so infectious? Because in a group they fall, they become unconscious. They lose their individuality. Then they are happy, then there is no worry, then there is no responsibility... Beware of mobocracy and be alert.

It would be appropriate to end this in Osho's words: "A group can have a mind — not a soul."

“The wound is the place where the light enters you.” — Rumi

### BACTERIAL BIOFUELS COST REDUCED

Researchers from the University of Kent's School of Biosciences have designed and built equipment that can be used to investigate bacterial biofuel production at a fraction of the cost of commercial systems. This technology was then used to demonstrate that bacterial genetic engineering could be used to enhance biofuel production.



Commercial equipment used to study biofuel-producing bacteria can be prohibitively expensive, which prompted the team to build their own bioreactors that are accessible to most research laboratories. The researchers then used this equipment to verify that one of their genetically engineered variants of Clostridium bacteria could produce the biofuel butanol more rapidly.

These research findings, published in the journals *Access Microbiology* and *Microbial Biotechnology*, reveal that a change to a single gene can result in remarkable changes to how sugars are converted to biofuel products.

### SCIENCE RESEARCH PAPERS SIMPLIFIED

Science research papers are notoriously difficult for an average person to comprehend without drifting away, but an artificial intelligence project aims to change that by summarising the gist in merely a few sentences that are easy enough for a second grader to understand.

A new technology has lowered the bar to the comprehension level of students in second grade. Say hello to t|d|r papers, a research paper summarising AI that describes its motto as "science abstracts a second grader can understand."

At first, the project sounds too ambitious because one can't expect even a season expert, let alone an AI, to explain what a niche quantum tunneling breakthrough is all about to a school-going kid. But it appears that the scientific research community is quite enamoured by the idea.



t|d|r papers

### DON'T MISS IMPORTANT MESSAGES

A new patent application from Apple reveals that future AirPods could let users switch off Active Noise Cancellation (ANC) with just a code word. AirPods Pro and AirPods Max come with Active Noise Cancellation to help users filter out ambient noise for a disruption-free audio experience. However, ANC blocks out pretty much all sounds indiscriminately, which means users sometimes miss out on important messages from their friends and family, something the company is trying to address with its new patent.

Apple's new patent describes the option to use designated code words to switch off noise cancellation on AirPods. Called 'Interrupt for noise-cancelling audio devices,' the new feature would ensure that users get to enjoy the benefits of noise cancellation without worrying that they will miss out on an important message from their family or friends. As part of the plan, the patent proposes that the noise-cancelling headphones or earbuds will scan externally-generated sounds to detect whether somebody is speaking the code-word.



### OCEAN SEA-SALT TO PREVENT WARMING

In an opinion article published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, a team of scientists led by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and The Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) researchers outline a framework for assessing the viability of a method for reflecting sunlight called marine cloud brightening, or MCB. The proposed method would use ocean sea-salt particles to increase the reflectivity of low-lying clouds over certain ocean regions. This is one of a number of proposed methods under consideration as a temporary measure to limit warming.

Climate scientists agree that the most important steps that can be taken to avoid the worst impacts of climate change are to decarbonise the economy, and preserve and restore natural ecosystems that absorb carbon.

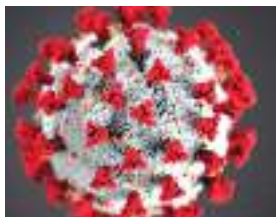


### NEW COVID DRUG WITHOUT SIDE-EFFECTS

Scientists in the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) in Lucknow are trying to develop another drug for Covid treatment without any side-effects. A team led by chief scientist Ravi Shankar, is working on two combinations to provide the safest medication to coronavirus patients.

"Experts say that a combination of antivirals with different mechanisms can be more effective to counter the viral pandemic. We are working on two combinations — Umifenovir with Molnupiravir (an antiviral) and Umifenovir with Niclosamide (anti-parasitic)," he said. Molnupiravir showed reduced hospitalisation during clinical trials, its biggest drawback are the side-effects, he added.

"Now, we are trying to keep a low dosage of Molnupiravir in its combination with Umifenovir which may weed out the side-effects," said the chief



MONEY MATTERS

## HDFC Capital achieves initial close of US\$ 1.8-billion fund for affordable housing

HDFC Capital, a wholly-owned subsidiary of HDFC Ltd, has achieved the initial close of its third fund of USD 1.88 billion (about Rs 13,500 cr) focused on affordable housing. HDFC Capital's target is to finance the development of one million affordable homes in India through a combination of innovative financing, partnerships and technology, whilst focusing on sustainability, the company said in a statement. In order to achieve this objective, the company is in active discussions with leading global investors to raise additional funds to be invested in affordable housing in India. The HDFC Capital Affordable Real Estate Fund-3 (H-CARE-3) is one of the largest funds raised to invest in the residential real estate sector in India with investors committing in excess of USD 1.22 billion towards the first close. It combined with potential reinvestments by the fund creates an estimated total fund corpus of USD 1.88 billion, it said.



## Will continue to see large global markets open more offshoring opportunities: Infosys

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed demand and clients understand that every work does not have to be done onsite, which is expected to open a lot more offshoring opportunities from large global markets going forward, according to a top Infosys' executive. The Bengaluru-based company, which logged a 23 per cent jump in its December 2021 quarter revenue, also said its portfolio of services and capabilities, especially on cloud and digital, are resonating well with clients and it sees a good pipeline for that. "In the long run, if you see, COVID-19, while it had a huge impact on demand, the entire ability for the supply side to deliver in a remote environment really will shine up, and that has opened up the eyes of many of our clients that every work does not have to be done onsite. "It can be done in a near-shore location, it can be done offshore," Infosys Chief Financial Officer Nilanjan Roy said during an analyst call.



## NAEC seeks govt intervention in containing high cost of cotton yarn, fabrics to boost

The Noida Apparel Export Cluster (NAEC) on Sunday sought immediate intervention of the government in containing high cost of cotton yarn and fabrics, saying rising prices are impacting exporters. NAEC president Lalit Thukral suggested control in cotton exports, removal of 10 per cent cotton import duty, and development of a mechanism to regulate the prices of cotton and other raw materials to support the sector. "Apparel industry is facing a severe problem of high cost of cotton yarn and fabrics. During the last couple of months the cotton prices have been hiked up to 80 per cent. The prices of the cotton per candy of 335 kg went to Rs 74,000 from Rs 37,000. In apparel making, 75 per cent of raw material used is cotton," he said.



# Market selloff: Mcap of top-10 most valued companies erodes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The top-10 most valued companies suffered a combined erosion of Rs 2.53 lakh crore in market valuation last week, as the domestic equity benchmarks witnessed heavy selling in line with the global market rout.

Benchmark indices witnessed nearly a 4 per cent cut last week as FPIs booked profits across large-caps and select mid-caps. On a weekly basis, the Sensex lost 2,185.85 points or 3.57 per cent, while the Nifty slumped 638.60 points or 3.49 per cent.

Mirroring the lacklustre trend in the broader market, the combined market capital-



isation (m-cap) of the country's top-10 firms eroded by Rs 2,53,394.63 crore during last week. Corporate major Reliance Industries' m-cap fell

by Rs 40,974.25 crore to Rs 16,76,291.69 crore.

IT bellwethers - TCS and Infosys Technologies - together lost Rs 1,09,498.10 crore

from their cumulative market cap. The m-cap of TCS stood at Rs 14,18,530.72 crore, while that of Infosys was at Rs 7,51,144.40 crore.

Country's top lenders HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and SBI saw a cumulative erosion of Rs 29,239.04 crore in their market capitalisation.

HDFC Bank's valuation dipped by Rs 13,563.15 crore to Rs 8,42,876.13 crore.

The m-cap of State Bank of India (SBI) tanked by Rs 4,863.91 crore to Rs 4,48,729.47 crore and that of ICICI Bank slumped by Rs 10,811.98 crore to reach Rs 5,58,699.39 crore.

The valuation of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) tanked by

Rs 9,938.77 crore to Rs 5,45,622.08 crore and that of Bajaj Finance declined by Rs 27,653.67 crore to Rs 4,45,033.13 crore.

HDFC's valuation slipped by Rs 22,003.75 crore to Rs 4,69,422.38 crore

Telecom major Bharti airtel also witnessed a dip of Rs 14,087.05 crore from its market valuation which stood at Rs 3,81,723.36 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries was leading the chart, followed by Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance and Bharti Airtel.

## India Inc staring at 'integrity crisis', top management ought to act: Survey

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India Inc is staring at an "integrity crisis" in the second year of the pandemic, a survey done by a consultancy firm has revealed.

The global survey conducted by the consultancy firm EY, which saw executives from 100 companies, including chief executives, board members and also mid-management personnel participate, has found concerning details like 59 per cent of the respondents feeling there are executives who would not mind compromising on integrity for short-term gains. Over half of the Indian participants in the survey also said that they did not report a misconduct, which is much higher than the 30 per cent average globally, the survey said. In what can impact the ability to curtail further



frauds, more than a third (39 per cent) of the respondents expressed apprehension about the whistle-blowing channels, saying the concerns raised may not be acted upon.

"It is very important for organisations to guard against risks and the tone has to be set from the top," Arpinder Singh, the India leader for the firm's

forensic and integrity services vertical, told PTI.

He pointed to another finding, wherein 33 per cent of the respondents reported that their own organization has experienced "significant fraud" in the aftermath of the pandemic, and added that India ranks second among 54 countries surveyed on this count.

## CII for additional 1 pc CSR levy in Budget to provide Covid vaccine booster shots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body CII has suggested the government include an additional 1 per cent corporate social responsibility levy apart from the mandatory 2 per cent for one year in the upcoming Budget to encourage corporates to spend on providing Covid vaccine booster shots.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has also urged state governments to lift the pandemic-induced restrictions on economic activity, arguing that the occupancy rate of hospital beds due to the Omicron variant of Covid is well within the manageable level.

"CII suggests that 1 per cent of mandated CSR funds be earmarked for vaccination. We also recommend that an additional 1 per cent be added to CSR requirements in the Budget, for a specified period of 12 months, so that boosters



can be made available to all age-groups," CII President T V Narendran said.

The chamber said it expects Budget 2022-23 to focus on measures for strengthening economic recovery.

CII requested that the government should encourage industry to deploy CSR funding towards providing precautionary shots to the community. Further, the industry is

ready to contribute an additional 1 per cent under the CSR norms to the national vaccination mission, apart from the mandated 2 per cent, and this can be part of the Budget for a period of 12 months only, suggested CII.

"Hospitalisation rates in the present wave stand at manageable levels and therefore, industry feels that Covid-related restrictions can be removed to enable the robust

recovery process to continue," it stated.

In line with the Prime Minister's guidance to state governments to undertake restrictions where required at a localised level, CII has written to state chief ministers to consider curbs at micro containment zones only when hospitalization rates are over 75 per cent, Narendran shared.

With a lower level of hospitalisations seen in the Omicron variant, it is possible to maintain normal economic activities and protect lives and livelihoods, he added.

The CII President emphasised that the investments under National Infrastructure Pipeline and Gati Shakti programme must be fast-tracked and it is expected that the Budget would provide for this.

CII has also written to state chief ministers with suggestions regarding the level of curbs on markets and factories.

## Tata Motors expects growth momentum to continue in 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors expects its growth momentum to continue this year as well as anticipates supply side issues to improve, helping it roll out more units to cater to the enhanced demand, as per a top company official.

The Mumbai-based automaker, which sells models like Punch, Nexon and Harrier, saw its total passenger vehicle dispatches to dealerships rise by 44 per cent to 99,002 units in third quarter (October-December 2021) as compared with 68,806 units in the same period of the previous year.

Last month, it reported a 50 per cent jump in total passenger vehicle sales to 35,299 units as compared with 23,545 units in December 2020.

"We believe so, because every model in our portfolio, we have now seven products and each model has contributed to this growth," Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles



Managing Director Shailesh Chandra told PTI in an interaction. He was replying to a query if the company is confident about sustaining its growth momentum in 2022 as well after ending the last year on a high. "There have been supply side issues which have not allowed us to fully unleash the demand potential that we have for our range of cars. And therefore, I'm confident that we would continue to grow as well (when) the supply side situation improves," Chandra noted. He said the company is

coming with more options in the mass segment in order to expand its customer base. The company's debut in the entry-level SUV segment with Punch last year is one fine example of bringing in models in growing segments.

"We will keep introducing new models in the new growth areas. We have been doing that over the last two years and we are continuing to do that as you would have seen that our intensity of launches was possibly one of the best in the industry," Chandra added.

## Syngene to carry growth momentum to next fiscal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Having raised its revenue growth guidance for 2021-22 to "high teens" on the back of robust performance, integrated research, development and manufacturing services firm Syngene International Ltd is looking forward to carry the momentum into the next fiscal, its Managing Director and CEO Jonathan Hunt said. The company, which serves global pharmaceutical, biotechnology, nutrition, animal health, consumer goods and specialty chemical sectors, has witnessed its discovery services performing "particularly well this fiscal" and expects development and manufacturing services "to see a bit of a pick-up" by the end of this fiscal and into next year.

## Mobikwik expects to double revenue this fiscal, stays cautious on IPO launch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IPO-bound fintech firm Mobikwik is expecting to close the current financial year with 100 per cent revenue growth, a top company official said.

Mobikwik chairperson and chief operating officer Upasana Taku told PTI that the company's initial public offer (IPO) is a monumental opportunity for the company and will not like to hit the market when it is behaving erratically but wait for the market condition to stabilise.



The company, which posted a narrowing of loss to Rs 111.3 crore and revenue of Rs 302.25

crore in the financial year 2021, expects to double the revenue by the end of current financial year.

Talking about the path to profitability of the company, Taku did not mention any definite timeline but said that if the company is able to increase revenue and keep control on the cost then losses can be covered over in a few quarters. "In just two quarters we have already achieved the revenue number of last year. Any investor can calculate what will be business performance for the full year.

## MP wants FM to fix special interest rates for sr citizens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi has urged Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to provide a special interest rate on bank fixed deposits for senior citizens and remove the cap on investments in postal savings scheme and public provident fund. In a letter to Sitharaman, Chaturvedi said lower interest rates on savings schemes have left senior citizens with lower retirement funds and put a severe strain on their pockets, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Global trends, quarterly earnings major drivers for equity market this week: Analysts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity markets will look for directions from global trends, ongoing quarterly earnings and investment patterns of foreign institutional investors (FIIs) in a holiday-shortened week ahead and may encounter volatility amid the scheduled monthly derivatives expiry, according to analysts.

Equity markets will remain closed on Wednesday on account of 'Republic Day'. "This week is a holiday-



shortened one and it's going to be critical due to the list of events and data that are lined

up. First, markets will react to the earnings of two index heavyweights — Reliance

Industries and ICICI Bank," said Ajit Mishra, vice-president (research) of Religare Broking.

Mishra added that currently, the uncertainty around the quantum of a rate hike by the US Federal Reserve is spooking markets the world over and participants expect clarity in the scheduled FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting outcome on January 26. "Amid all, the monthly expiry of January month derivatives contract would keep traders on their toes," he said.

## Devas shareholders to continue seizing Indian assets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Unfazed by the Supreme Court upholding winding up of the company, shareholders of Devas Multimedia will continue to seek seizure of Indian government assets abroad to collect USD 1.2 billion the firm has been awarded by arbitration tribunals for cancellation of a satellite deal but are open for talks to settle the issue, their counsel said.

"The decision by the Supreme Court does not change anything. The Modi government and the Indian courts cannot rewrite the facts. Their flimsy allegations of fraud will never stand up in



courts outside of India," said Matthew D McGill, partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, and lead counsel for several Devas' shareholders. "A better

approach for the Modi government would be to return to the negotiating table, and continue with settlement talks."

Devas shareholders are pursuing

Indian assets abroad to recover the awards and have got a French court order for freezing Indian properties in Paris and got partial rights over funds maintained by India funds in Canada.

"We have already entered liens or obtained seizure and garnishment orders on tens of millions of dollars in Indian state assets," a spokesperson for Devas Multimedia said. "We will continue to identify and seize state assets wherever we find them until India returns in good faith to the negotiating table."

Besides securing a freeze on a Paris property of the Indian government, they have

got a Canadian court order for seizure of about USD 23 million that Air India had with IATA, the spokesperson said.

Last week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the government will use the Supreme Court ruling calling the 2005 Antrix-Devas agreement a fraud to counter seizure of its properties overseas. "The Modi government's strategy is not rocket science. They will use the decision of the Supreme Court to uphold the NCLT liquidation order to attack Devas, around the globe, however, we're ready. Courts around the world will see through these sham proceedings," the spokesperson said.

## NCLAT directs NCLT to decide over SREI's plea against rights issue of Trinity Alternative Investment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has asked the Kolkata bench of NCLT to decide over the plea of SREI Infrastructure Finance against the rights issue of its subsidiary Trinity Alternative Investment Managers.

SREI Infrastructure Finance Ltd (SIFL), which owns 51 per cent equity in the fund management firm Trinity Alternative Investment Managers Ltd, is anticipating dilution of its shareholding in the subsidiary after its right issue. The remaining 49 per cent shareholding is owned by



Payaash Capital Singapore Pte Ltd. A two-member NCLAT bench, while disposing of SREI Infrastructure Finance Ltd (SIFL) petition observed that the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has ordered a status quo and is yet to pass

any order over the plea filed by the non-banking financial company. The appellate tribunal has directed NCLT to take up the matter on February 18, 2022, as scheduled, without any further adjournments and deal with all issues.

# Road to localisation

**I**t is 2022! We are heavily into the era of globalisation and digitalisation, which is akin to living in a global village. The pandemic has already forced businesses to rely on remote working and the ripple effects can be felt on consumer markets as well. Buyers are no longer restricted by geography. People desire, expect, and need access to a variety of information and products, preferably in their native language. It has become increasingly important for businesses to be equipped with tools that help them traverse these global landscapes while providing tailored local experiences to their worldwide buyers. Radhakrishnan Mani shares reasons why localisation will become important next year

## Localisation is not translation

If you think localisation is just a fancy word for translation, you couldn't be more wrong! Localisation doesn't mean translating just your content into local languages. It means adapting to the local region in every aspect. Your content, services, products all should be adapted to the local markets. Translation changes text from one language to another while preserving the meaning. Localisation, on the other hand, adapts everything from content, images, and formatting to design and even payment methods. Localisation makes sure your business is accommodated to cultural, linguistic, political, and legal differences.

## Importance

Communication is crucial if you plan on staying connected to your audience. And effective communication is the key to building a strong rapport. If you plan on taking your business to a global level, localisation becomes even more important from the context of effective communication. Here are a few reasons why localisation would become even more important in 2022:

## Rapid global growth

Entering a new market is not a walk in the park. It is not as easy as launching a Facebook ad targeting a specific location. If you are entering a market culturally distant from your home country, you'll have to overcome several barriers. These include the socio-cultural environ-

ment, political barriers, and technological preferences. Localisation helps you overcome all of these barriers rather rapidly. In short, you'll experience rapid global growth by localising incrementally. It saves you from committing cultural faux passes that could be detrimental to your brand image. And also helps you avoid translation blunders. In fact, a good localisation strategy will help your company get traction faster and better.

## Your business will have a competitive edge

When you enter a new market, you are also signing up for competition with the businesses already present there. And it is never easy going up against brands that are native to the local market. People are much more likely to trust a local business than an outside player. Guess what would level the playing field for you? Localisation!

That was about competing with the local businesses. You'll also have a competitive edge over global businesses that aren't localising their products and services. You get to establish a firm hold in the market.

## Better sales

Suppose you are on a road trip in a

foreign country. Your car has stopped suddenly, and you need to see a mechanic. Which professional would you rather see - a mechanic with lower prices but you cannot communicate properly with them? Or, a mechanic who charges a bit higher but you can communicate with them easily? You are most likely to go with the second option because easy communication irons out so many challenges. It is convenient!

In fact, research has found that 57 per cent of buyers find the ability to get information in a language they easily understand is more important than the price tag. Being able to communicate with your potential buyers promotes trust and loyalty. As a result, they will be more comfortable purchasing from you.

## Increased brand relevance

It seems like a broken record to say that the pandemic has forced several businesses to go online. But that's the truth. Even businesses that were earlier relying on a brick-and-mortar model have gone online. It is becoming increasingly difficult to stand your own ground in this sea of online businesses. Brand rele-

vance is the one factor that would keep you afloat comfortably. Brand relevance is even more important to stand steady amidst trends changing at an unimaginable speed. The process of localization makes your brand more relevant to the audience. You'll be able to better understand your local customer's needs and values, thereby creating products and services that meet those needs. As a result, you'll be able to develop the deepest levels of connection with your buyers and prospects.

## Reduced risk

Localisation is like a safety net that mitigates risks like cultural misunderstandings and mistaking consumer needs. By mitigating these risks, localisation helps ensure your business runs smoothly. For instance, localisation helps you understand sensitivities. Certain expressions and even colors can have negative connotations in a particular region. With the help of localisation, you can steer clear of them.

In short, localization is a powerful tool you should be leveraging in 2022 to drive sales for your business. This is the decade for localisation!



## 5 job portals to help you in finding the right job in 2022

**B**usinesses all throughout the world have been impacted by the spread of the pandemic. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, around 22.7 million jobs were lost in April and May 2021.

(CMIE). As businesses return to normal and hiring activity in India has surged, with August witnessing an 89 per cent year-on-year increase, hiring for specific roles has grown as well, with more movement across the market. There will always be a need for talented professionals to work for the firms as the business grows in the approaching year. Many job portals have grown as a result of this. More than 80% of job postings are filled through the biggest employment portals, according to estimates. As a result, we've compiled a list of the best Job Portals to help you find work. Here is the list of 5 job portals to help you in finding the right job 2022:

### Indeed

Indeed is one of India's most popular job search engines, with users searching for opportunities all around the world. Indeed, is assisting in the provision of employment throughout the epidemic with its Coronavirus Work Tools. You can search for millions of jobs and advance your career using the India Yes online employment marketplace.

### Shine.com

Shine.com was founded in 2008, at the dawn of India's digital transformation, at a time when the need for a transparent and effective online portal connecting job seekers and recruiters was greatest. While other employment portals rushed in to fill the apparent demand, Shine.com's founding team performed a thorough investigation into the current market difficulties and the different ways that technology may be used to address them. This data-driven, tech-driven approach has

paid off handsomely: the portal now has 8,000+ businesses on board, including big corporations like SBI Life Insurance, Deloitte, Infosys, ICICI, and Amazon, and offers over 3 lakh+ jobs to its vast pool of over 4.1 crore registered jobseekers.

### Jobs for her

A platform that connects women to jobs, community, mentoring, reskilling, inspiration, and networking opportunities in order to help them advance their careers. It was founded in 2015 and now links over 2.2 million job seekers with over 7500 firms around the country. Mentorship is also available for women who want to start or resume their careers on the platform. In addition, the brand has over 500 reskilling partners to help women reskill/upskill before entering/reentering the job.

### Monster

Monster is a well-known website for job seekers all across the world, including Indians. It has a well-developed and extensive network of Indian recruiters and job seekers. Both employers and future employees have a wide range of possibilities. It was founded in 1999 when The Monster Board and Online Career Center merged. It is based in Weston, Massachusetts, and is a subsidiary of Randstad Holding, a Dutch global human resource consulting organisation.

### Naukri.com

Platform provides a variety of services, including access to a resume database, listings, and response management tools. Naukri.com served over 76,000 corporate clients in 2017-2018, with over 4, 75,000 jobs live at any given time and over 60 million CVs. In India, the firm has 56 offices in 42 locations, as well as international offices in Dubai, Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Bahrain.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



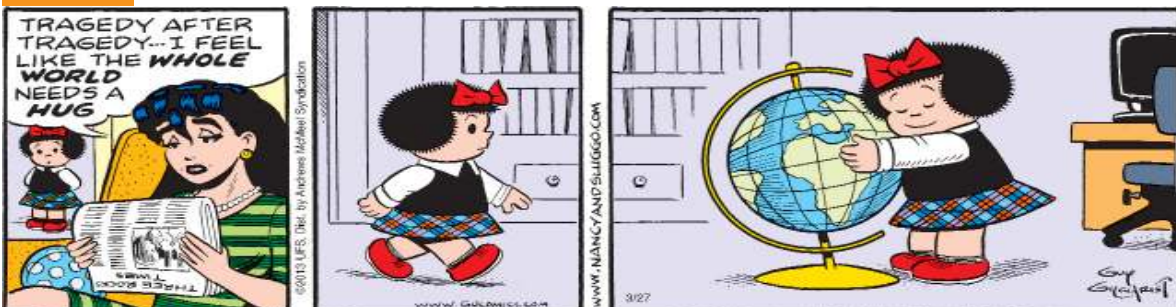
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- A game with a bat and ball
- See old stuff on display here
- A stand for holding an artist's painting
- Metal money
- Opposite of outer
- A person who shows you to your theatre seat
- Least dangerous
- Too
- A red sauce is made from these

### DOWN

- Wear these on your feet
- A large group of soldiers
- School classes
- A very large bird
- These are a kind of fungus that people eat
- World's highest mountain
- A greeting
- The tiniest particle
- We breathe this



### SUDOKU



7	6		3					
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### Rules

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

# Dharma's new boy configuring his own constellations

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Welcome Dharma's new baby, no it's not us who's saying this. Well, it was Karan Johar bidding Dhairya Karwa a warm welcome into this cut-throat industry. But why is this Dehradun kid making headlines? Well, it is because of his OTT feature film *Gehraiyaan* alongside Deepika Padukone. And with whom is Deepika in a relationship in the film? Dhairya's character will be the one! Yes, we understand that our readers are wondering where he's been all this time, and why he wasn't revealed sooner when the *Gehraiyaan* promotions started. The performer showed himself to be the source of all thinking, removing the whys and hows. From the trailer's premiere, we learned that the filmmakers were planning his big surprise! Snatching the big launch by Dharma Productions, then starring opposite a big-hearted star like Deepika Padukone; it just doesn't end there, Deepika ends up calling him an older brother — Dhairya Karwa's stars seem to really align and he seconds our opinion on it. In this fun interview, the forthcoming star begins the conversation on a grateful note, and says, "I am not here attempting to define acting but build on the big opportunity that has been given to me by Karan Johar. Not everyone is lucky enough to be launched by a reputed production house of this country — it's been here since forever and etched its name in the filmography history."

During the virtual trailer launch, the film's co-producer Karan Johar revealed that Dhairya had lied about his height in order to get the role. After this surprising fact that Dhairya didn't see it coming, he couldn't stop laughing with us. He clears it out, "While I was auditioning for the role, I didn't have any idea that I'd be paired opposite the prima donna, Deepika Padukone. She's a tall-heightened woman herself so myself being 6'4" wouldn't have mattered then, I would have told the truth. But, when Karan heard this, he wasn't angry with me and instead burst into laughter. The joke was with Shakun Batra actually — during the script narration, I was slouching before him on the chair to hide my height. I am clarifying it here, if Shakun's going to read this interview, he'll know it now."

*Gehraiyaan* deals with the concept of emotional infidelity but the actor elucidates that they aren't propagating it, they are just showing the characteristics of relationships that happen but none talks about! Shedding light on it, he shares, "We aren't suggesting our audiences to cheat on their partners, just to clarify for the record. It's an observation of modern, adult relationships being shown through

*Gehraiyaan*. We have always seen love and relationships from a very conventional way, through *Gehraiyaan*, we are asking our spectators to not judge anyone in a relationship. Everyone will identify with it, infidelity is prevalent in society and we must talk about it."

Prepared to deal with any criticism that comes his way as a new-comer, Dhairya knows how to pass it on with a pinch of sass! He further reflects, "My character or the movie's theme is not going to normalise emotional infidelity in relationships, especially, through intimacy. Honestly, the plot couldn't have

for it. He shares details, "I was present at the wrap party of 83, people were clicking snap-

*Gehraiyaan* is an observation of modern, adult relationships. We have always seen love and relationships from a very conventional way. We are asking our spectators to not judge anyone in a relationship. Everyone will identify with it, infidelity is prevalent in society and we must talk about it.

moved ahead without showing the bits and pieces of physical intimacy. Contrary to that, our director didn't forget to touch upon the trembling notes of emotional intimacy. For me, intimacy is just not being physically intimate, emotional intimacy should be the foundation of any solid relationship. To help us lead the way, an intimacy coordinator was hired by Shakun! When you get to watch the intimate scenes in the movie, you'll notice how it is dealt with so much sensitivity, care and sophistication. None can call it a vulgar scene because it's a fact, that it isn't there for shop value in the movie but because it's integral to the plot. We aren't going against the norms, it's something already so widespread in society." Moving ahead in the interview, it was categorical for us to ask Dhairya about the camaraderie he developed with Deepika Padukone on sets and he couldn't stop thanking his stars

shots with Deepika. I was standing at a distance and just alluring her beauty. After a moment, not knowing what got into me, I walked up to her and began a conversation with Deepika. Amid conversation, I said that Deepika I am holding myself from clicking snaps with you because I am gearing up to do a movie with you and she was startled! As you mentioned rightfully, my stars were so aligned that I really got a film opposite her in no time. When she met me after four months, she asked me quite clearly that Dhairya did you know that *Gehraiyaan* was being made earlier and I nodded into a no. Universe was listening to me I guess! I just didn't land up in the same film as Deepika, but also starred opposite her — it's a dream set-up."

Dhairya has been signed by one of the most reputed production houses in the fraternity, he stated that they have taken a chance on him and then he's being

paired opposite the top star in movie business — he thinks he is on a roll and illuminates that he'll prove his mettle. Divulging into more on the off-set memories, the actor discloses that all the four primary actors from *Gehraiyaan* were spending a gala time in Goa getting to know each other. He adds, "From doing yoga together to having our meals at the same table — Shakun envisioned that camaraderie between us. Deepika and I have become friends for life now. It's not us, it's really her big-hearted aura that comforted me at all times despite never knowing her. She was so sweet! It's not just me, Ananya and Siddhant had the same perspective to say about her."

With a hint of love triangle, infidelity, chemistry and passion, the upcoming movie will take viewers on a whirlwind of romance and one can't miss the new hottie on the block, that is Dhairya Karwa for you!

## Soha Ali Khan shares skincare tips she learnt from her mother

Growing up, we always look up to our mothers, and try to emulate everything they do. Mothers play several important roles in our lives — a guide, mentor, teacher, friend, and this multifaceted relationship and bond grows along the way. Soha Ali Khan and her mother are a perfect example of that bond. As someone who never fails to give us goals, be it easy nuskahs or family recipes, read on as Soha shares exclusively with *The Pioneer* skincare tips that she has imbibed from her mother, the graceful Sharmila Tagore.

Healthy skin is a direct outcome of what we eat. Our skin's health relies on food intake and maintaining a healthy diet helps the skin in many ways. "Consuming food that is rich in vital nutrients like proteins, vitamins, minerals, good fats, carbohydrates, surely helps, and growing up one constant food item that was always a part of my brother and my daily diet was Almonds. A lot of people in India already believe in the memory-led benefits of regular almond consumption, and that's why they are popular across households. But, I remember mom used to say that almonds have several benefits and regular consumption can also aid in better skin health. This is something that has always stayed with me, and I made sure to include a handful of almonds to my snacking routine every day," shares Soha.

"It's important to recognise almonds as a whole food with multiple nutrient components including alpha-tocopherol (vitamin E) and good unsaturated fats. Almonds are high in alpha-tocopherol, which has antioxidant functions, and may be partially responsible for the effects that we see in both wrinkles and skin tone in post-menopausal women," says she in reference to a recent study by

Raja Sivamani. Moisturise: There are so many ingredients in our kitchen that can be used to create simple concoctions that can be applied on the skin! "My mum always taught me the importance and benefits of using home remedies for the skin. The first thing is to moisturise your skin daily as our skin faces a host of aggressors and is exposed to the rays of sunlight, so it's necessary to nourish your skin and pamper it from time-to-time. I remember having face-masks days where we would try different face packs, sometimes with honey or haldi. My mother insisted that I apply moisturiser every day. Incorporating this habit into my daily routine in my early 20s was the best decision I (well, my mom) made." Let your skin breathe: We often over-layer the skin and that causes more harm than good. Soha suggests a minimalist way of keeping the skin healthy and happy. "Being an artist I often have to wear makeup, and spend a lot of my day in front of the camera and under artificial light. This can lead to a rise in skin irritation and skin inflammation, which is why I use sunscreen and a little kajal while working from home. Our skin needs to breathe and caking it with too many products may cause skin breakouts and acne. Lastly, wash your face thoroughly with a light face wash followed by light dabs of rose water for a refreshed feel," concludes the actress with grace.



Back to working from home? Here are some must-have home essentials

Just when we thought life was getting back to normal, the third wave took over the country and we're back to the work from home era where everyone is once again juggling home and work. Not sure how long this will continue so it's best to figure out ways to make your work-from-home life a wee-bit better! Here are five home essentials that can help you improve your work from home experience.

### Dishwasher

While the eat-sleep-work-repeat schedule continues, one will have to face the entire day's dishes in the kitchen sink at the end of the day. Work may take up a large chunk of your day's time and in the winter months, getting out of the bed can be a struggle. At the end of the day, instead of doing the dishes, a dishwasher can resolve all problems efficiently. An easy-to-use, hassle-free, noise-free and a time efficient machine, it deep cleans the toughest stains with low water consumption. This is an investment that will help you unwind post work, without any worries.

### Smart assistant

Multitasking everyday can be challenging but life can be made easier with your

own virtual smart assistant. With hands-free, voice-controlled interaction, you can just browse the internet for anything at any time you like. Order groceries, get your amazing facts of the day or play some music during your down time at work effortlessly with the smart assistant at your service. You can also set task reminders and more with the best in market smart assistants — Amazon's Alexa and the Google Assistant. Get your hands on the latest tech on any of the online stores.

### Coffee maker

Working from home equals having snacks and beverages at your disposal at any time of the day. Post lunch drowsiness can be conquered over with a piping hot cup of coffee. You can boost your productivity and make your every-day simpler by owning a coffee maker. These appliances do not occupy a lot of space and work as per your convenience. Within minutes, you can take refills and store them in your coffee tumbler for you to enjoy the beverage throughout your e-meeting. The market has a wide variety of coffee makers for you to choose from, based on your needs and convenience.

### Ergonomic work set up

Working long hours in front of the lap-

top/computer screens can be tiring. An ergonomic work set up provides good posture and boosts productivity throughout the day.

Whether you like to be seated in an ergonomic swivel chair or work standing with an adjustable table, an ergonomic posture is a must for maintaining safety and health measures. Ensure you destress your body with a better posture, it's time to modify your workspace. You can take a step towards your health and well-being by investing in a smart table from the likes of products from Flowlyf online or walk into your nearest furniture store to explore the ergonomic furniture range.

### Home gym essentials

Keeping up with your physical health is a must when working from home. With little to no physical activity in today's time, you can opt at-home fitness and keep yourself fit. An exercise bike is a go-to equipment for many working professionals. It is a value purchase which caters to you and your entire family. Available in various price ranges and designs, the exercise bike also fits into smaller spaces. You can now take a step towards your fitness regime by purchasing your perfect exercise bike from stores like Decathlon, Amazon and Flipkart.

# Sindhu clinches Syed Modi International title

SIANS ■ LUCKNOW

Ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu clinched the 2022 Syed Modi International title after beating young Malvika Bansod in the women's singles final at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium, here on Sunday.

The 26-year old Sindhu beat Malvika 21-13, 21-16 in just 35 minutes to win her second title at the Super 300 event. She had won the tournament in 2017 as well.

It was also Sindhu's first BWF title since winning the BWF World Championships in 2019, after losing twice in the finals last year -- at the Swiss Open and the BWF World Tour Finals.

The two-time Olympic medallist raced to a 7-0 lead inside the first three minutes and kept the charge on to pocket the game quite comfortably in 14 minutes.

The second game saw a similar pattern with the world No 7 leading 11-4 at the mid-game interval. Bansod, the world No. 84, mounted a comeback and reduced the lead at 17-12 but the experienced Sindhu went on to seal the match in straight games. Notably, this was the first

**It was also Sindhu's first BWF title since winning the BWF World Championships in 2019, after losing twice in the finals last year -- at the Swiss Open and the BWF World Tour Finals. The two-time Olympic medallist raced to a 7-0 lead inside the first three minutes and kept the charge on to pocket the game quite comfortably in 14 minutes.**



meeting between the 20-year-old Malvika Bansod and PV Sindhu at the international circuit. Bansod, who clinched the All-India Senior Ranking Championships in December, had beaten the London 2012 Olympic bronze medallist Saina Nehwal at the India Open, earlier this month.

Meanwhile, the mixed doubles title went to seventh seeds Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto, who defeated compatriots Nagendra Babu and Srivedya Gurazada 21-16, 21-12 in the 29 minutes final to claim their first Super 300 crown.

The pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Pullela won the women's doubles title after beating Anna Cheong Ching Yik and Teoh Mei Xing. Earlier, the men's singles final between Frenchman Arnaud Merkle and Lucas Claerbout was declared a 'no match'. One of the finalists tested positive for Covid-19 while the other was deemed a close contact and was also withdrawn.

The Syed Modi International 2022 was the second tournament in this year's BWF calendar after the India Open. The Odisha Open Super 100, will be the next tournament, scheduled to be held in Cuttack from January 25 to 30.



## India-Chinese Taipei Asian Cup match is off

SIANS ■ MUMBAI

India had to withdraw from the ongoing AFC Women's Asian Cup football competition on Sunday as the hosts failed to name their team for the match against Chinese Taipei because of injuries and Covid positive tests.

The rules specify that a team should be able to put up a bare minimum of 13 players to compete in a match. The Indians had only 11 players fit and available to play Sunday's match against Chinese Taipei at the DY Patil Stadium here. Of the 23 players in the squad, two players had to isolate themselves as they tested positive on the eve of India's opening match in the competition on January 20.

Sources said on Saturday, the hosts had 13 players that were not down with Covid-19 but two of them were injured. The two injured players could not recover in time and thus a team could not be named for the match against the Chinese Taipei.

"The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has confirmed that the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 match between Chinese Taipei and India at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai could not be played today," the AFC said in a statement on Sunday.

"Following several positive cases of Covid-19, India failed to name the required minimum of 13 players for the Group A match against Chinese Taipei," said the statement.

"In accordance with Article 4.1 of the 'Special Rules Applicable to AFC Competitions during the COVID-19 pandemic' (Special Rules), India was therefore unable to participate in the match and the full provisions of Article 4.1 will apply," the statement said.

Article 4.1 of the 'Special Rules Applicable to AFC Competitions during Covid-19 pandemic' states, "If a Participating Team/Participating Club has less than thirteen (13) Participating Players (including one (1) goalkeeper) available for a Match for any reason (whether or not relating to Covid-19), the relevant Participating Team/Participating Club shall not be able to participate in the Match. Such Participating Team/Participating Club shall be held responsible for the Match not taking place and shall be considered to have withdrawn from the relevant Competition. The relevant Participating Team/Participating Club and its affiliated Member Association shall be subject to the provisions of the relevant Competition regulations regarding the consequences of withdrawal, as applicable."

## Sania Mirza-Rajeev Ram advance to mixed doubles quarters

SIANS ■ MELBOURNE

India's Sania Mirza and her American partner Rajeev Ram advanced to the quarter-finals of the 2022 Australian Open mixed doubles event after beating Australia's Ellen Perez and Matwe Middelkoop of the Netherlands, here on Sunday.

Mirza-Ram won their second-round match 7(8)-6(6), 6-4 in one hour and 27 minutes.

The Indo-American pair got off to a bad start and trailed



2-0 in the opening stages of the first set. However, they struck back to level up the score at 6-6 and stretched the set into a tiebreaker.

Sania and Ram had a better start in the second set, racing to a 2-0 lead. The experienced duo, with no unforced errors, then won the set comfortably.

In the quarters, Sania Mirza and Rajeev Ram will now face the winner of the match between Australian wild card pairs Samantha Stosur-Matthew

Ebden and Jaimee Fourlis-Jason Kubler. Notably, both Mirza and Ram have won the Australian Open mixed doubles title before with different partners. While Sania Mirza won the Grand Slam in 2009 with Mahesh Bhupathi, Ram won the 2019 and 2021 mixed doubles events with Barbora Krejickova.

The 35-year-old Sania is the only Indian left in the competition after Rohan Bopanna made a first-round exit in mixed doubles event on Saturday.

## Ash Barty beats Anisimova, to face Pegula in quarters

SIANS ■ MELBOURNE

Top-ranked Ashleigh Barty booked her place in the 2022 Australian Open quarter-finals with a win over Amanda Anisimova, here on Sunday.

Top seed Barty beat 20-year-old Anisimova 6-4, 6-3 in a 74-minute clash. She will meet No 21 seed Jessica Pegula, who reached the last eight in Melbourne for the second straight season after defeating No 5 seed Maria Sakkari of Greece 7-6(0), 6-3. With this win, Barty's quest to become the first home women's champion at the Australian Open since Chris O'Neil in 1978 remains alive. In her previous second-week showings, she lost in the 2019 quarter-finals to Petra Kvitova, the 2020 semifinals to Sofia Kenin and the 2021 quarter-finals to Karolina Muchova.



During Sunday's outing, Barty's progress was not all smooth sailing. At times, she was outthit by bold drive volleys and down-the-line winners from Anisimova. She gave her younger opponent openings with a smattering of dou-

ble faults (three, two of which came consecutively) and unforced errors (17, outweighed by 23 winners).

However, the World No 1 found solid one-two punches to wriggle out of her tightest service games in the first set, and a couple of moments of magic with delightfully angled backhand slice winners to break Anisimova for the first time. Her crafty variation on the slice paid dividends throughout, repeatedly tangling Anisimova up tactically and technically.

The 25-year-old Barty also raised her level to accelerate toward the finishing line of both sets. The first three of her seven total aces came in her final two service games of the first. And in the second, Anisimova held two game points to hold for a 4-3 lead, only for Barty to reel off 12 of the next 14 points to take the win.

## 'Players heartbroken over withdrawal from Women's Asian Cup'



SIANS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Praful Patel described India's inability to put up the minimum required players for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Group A match against Chinese Taipei in Navi Mumbai due to Covid-19 cases and injuries as the unfortunate situation and sought support for the players.

"We are as disappointed as probably the entire nation would be right now with this unwarranted situation. However, the players' health and well-being are of paramount importance to us, and it cannot be compromised under any circumstances. I wish all the

infected players and team officials a swift and full recovery. They will be well supported by the AIFF and AFC," he said in a statement on Sunday.

Patel said the team is heartbroken and said that despite taking all precautions, so many players and support staff were stricken by Covid-19.

"The team is heartbroken, and I request all to respect their feelings and sentiments," he said.

"I am proud of the great promise the team showed in their first match, and am confident that they will prove their mettle in the near future," Patel, also a FIFA council member, stated.

"This is not the end of the world. The promise on display in the first match against IR Iran was there for all to see and I am confident they will bounce back from this temporary setback," he added.

"Unfortunately, this happened to us despite the best measures put in place, and it is sheer bad luck that it happened to us. Let there be no fingers pointed at any. We need to understand this is a pandemic situation, and no bubble is foolproof around the world," the AIFF chief said.

Patel said the AIFF will continue to support the Blue Tigresses and was sure that the players will come back stronger.

"Our support for the Blue Tigresses will continue, and we will work to ensure that our players come back stronger. The AIFF also thanks the fans and is grateful for their continuous support in the joint endeavour to take Indian Football Forward Together," the AIFF President averred.

The AFC said as of now the tournament will go ahead as per schedule with the final scheduled on February 6.

# China thrash Iran 7-0 for another stylish win

SIANS ■ MUMBAI

Eight-time champions China virtually sealed a place in the quarter-finals and underlined their AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 title credentials by cruising to a 7-0 win over Iran at Mumbai Football Arena here on Sunday. Wang Shuang scored a birthday brace, Wang Shanshan too scored a double, Xiao Yuyi and Tang Jiali contributed a goal each while Iran's Fatemeh Adeli scored an own goal as Shui Qingxia's side continued their blistering start to the tournament and set their sights towards the latter stages of the competition. The result leaves Iran's quarter-final ambitions hanging on Wednesday's clash against Chinese Taipei, which



is likely to be pivotal to both sides' knockout stage hopes.

As expected, China dominated the match, enjoying 80.4 percent possession, and attempted 23 shots and 12 of them on target, resulting in six goals. Iran could get only one shot on target. The Steel Roses returned to the scene of Thursday's 4-0 win over Chinese Taipei eager to build on their fast start, and they quickly assumed control against a deep-lying Iranian defence.

Wang Shanshan forced a strong save from Zohreh Koudaei in the 10th minute, and the star goalkeeper got down low to deny the Chinese captain once again five minutes later, continuing the form which saw her voted Player of the Match in Thursday's 0-0 draw

against India. It seemed that it would take something special to beat Iran's number one, and that's exactly what Wang Shuang provided in the 28th minute, picking out the bottom corner with a perfectly directed left-footed effort from the edge of the box to celebrate her 27th birthday in style. Coach Maryam Irandoust's Iran side was never easily broken down, but China produced a move that would have picked apart the very best defences just before halftime, with Zhang Xin's slide-rule pass setting up Xiao Yuyi, who duly caressed the ball into the net to make it 2-0 two minutes before half-time. Iran's dynamic teenage striker Negin Zandi was introduced at half-time as they looked for a way

back into the match, but their cause suffered a significant blow when Melika Motevalli clumsily fouled Chinese substitute Li Mengwen, with Wang Shuang easily beating Koudaei from the penalty spot to make the points all but safe in the 49th minute. The earlier intensity of the game now noticeably absent, Wang Shanshan extended the lead when she poked home Xiao Yuyi's cross in the 55th minute, and the same duo teamed up four minutes later to increase the tally to 5-0.

China's superior fitness and technique was evident throughout the second half, and they duly added a sixth through Tang Jiali 77th minute, with the Tottenham forward finding the net with the swerving effort 15 minutes.

## Ngannou regains heavyweight crown over Gane



SIANS ■ ANAHEIM (USA)

Francis Ngannou's win in UFC 270 over interim champ Ciryl Gane has put the organisers in a spot.

The heavyweight champion, who took on Gane in a five-round clash at the Honda Centre in Anaheim, California, has made it clear that he will not fight again unless he is given a considerable fee hike.

So far, UFC President Dana White has been reluctant to consider it. The fight was a literal

and figurative clash of titans with both men standing at 6 feet 4 inches and weighing in well over 230 pounds.

Both fighters also share a considerable history having been long-time sparring partners and this was evident throughout the fight with Gane winning the first two rounds on the feet, nullifying the Cameroonian's scary knockout power, no doubt due to being used to it in the sparring sessions they have together. But Ngannou showed that he too had learnt lessons from those sessions as he proceeded to turn around the fight in the next three rounds by repeatedly taking down the French kickboxer, leaving him helpless as he couldn't wrestle away from the Champion's considerable frame.

The fight between the former training partners wasn't the only title clash on the card, however, with the co-main event being contested for the flyweight championship between incumbent champ Brandon Moreno and Deiveson Figueiredo.

This was the third battle for the title between the pair with the first two matches ending in a draw and a win for Moreno which saw him snatch away Figueiredo's crown.

## Shapovalov gets past No. 3 Zverev

SIANS ■ MELBOURNE

Canadian star Denis Shapovalov remained calm and composed as he booked his Australian Open quarterfinal berth with a 6-3, 7-6(5), 6-3 victory over world No. 3 and Tokyo Olympic Games gold medallist Alexander Zverev of Germany at the Melbourne Park on Sunday.

Shapovalov has now set up a quarterfinal showdown with Spanish stalwart Rafael Nadal, who is aiming for his second Australian Open crown after the title triumph in 2009.

The searing Melbourne heat could not stop Shapovalov from extinguishing the hopes Zverev in the duo's first meeting at a major.

The 14th-seeded Canadian had to take an ice bath after his gruelling five-setter against world No. 54 Soonwoo Kwon of South Korea in the second round, but he kept a cool head

throughout the tough encounter to brush past an inconsistent Zverev in the fourth round. "It's probably the one I least expected to finish in three (sets)," Shapovalov was quoted as saying by atptour.com on Sunday. "I'm very happy with my performance, definitely happy with where my game is at."

With his returns sharp as ever, Shapovalov broke Zverev early for a 3-1 lead, the German dropping just his third service game of the tournament on the way to also losing his first set in Melbourne this year.

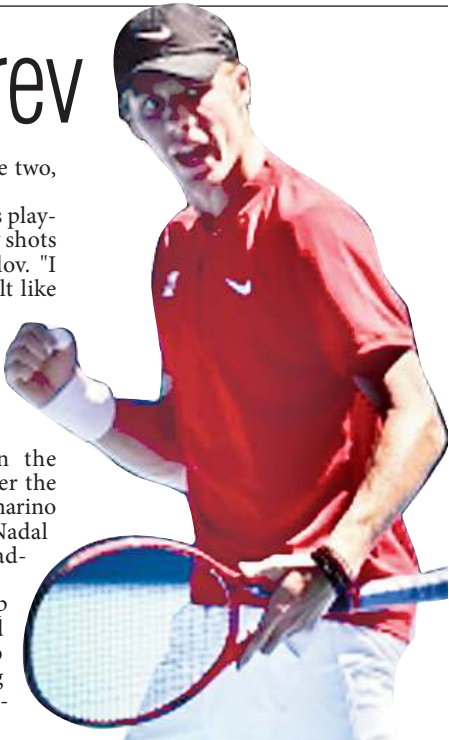
Zverev looked frustrated as Shapovalov broke the German again immediately in the second. But seven double faults in the set from the Canadian helped Zverev claw back. Serving for the set at 5-3, Zverev's inconsistency again came to the fore at crucial moments and Shapovalov forced a tie-break. The Canadian

looked more comfortable of the two, winning 7/5.

"I think off the ground I was playing really well, really feeling my shots off both wings," said Shapovalov. "I played pretty smart today, it felt like things were going my way early on. I lost a little bit of momentum mid-way in the second set but fought well to come back and just kind of rolled with it after."

Shapovalov's opponent in the quarterfinals will be Nadal, after the sixth-seed defeated Adrian Mannarino of France 7-6(14), 6-2, 6-2. Nadal holds a 3-1 lead in the ATP head-to-head against Shapovalov.

always an honour to go up against a guy like Rafa," said Shapovalov. "It's always going to be a battle against him. It's going to be a tough one and I'm definitely going to enjoy it."





## 'The way Raj & DK treat female characters is amazing'

**R**aashi Khanna has established herself as one of the most in-demand actors in the South Indian cinema industry. Despite beginning her career in cinema with the Bollywood film *Madras Cafe*, she has since moved her concentration to South cinema and has become a household figure. The actress has made news for her roles in Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam films, and she is now back in the Hindi entertainment industry, working on her upcoming web series, in which she will play alongside Ajay Devgn in one series and Shahid Kapoor and Vijay Sethupathi in the other. Speaking exclusively with *The*

*Pioneer* about her upcoming web-series with Raj and DK, the actress tells us, "Being a part of filmmaker duo Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's web series is a blessing, they are one of the smartest director duos in the industry with a gender sensitive gaze. Raj and DK are the creators of *The Family Man*, which has changed the way we see OTT shows. The way they treat their female characters is amazing! That's what I have understood working with them. They are extremely sensitive to issues and have no gender bias. They are into breaking those stereotypes, which is why they are these wonderful filmmakers."

She further adds, "The kind of storytelling they have, it is not easy to blend in so many characters in a story like this and give each of them the importance they deserve. But they have managed to do it. Every character is so important in their series that it really isn't just a one-person thing."

## MM Keeravani to score music for *Gentleman 2*

**S**outh India's well-known producer KT Kunjumon who once made high budget movies like *Gentleman*, *Premikudu* and *Prema Desam*, which were massive blockbusters both in Tamil and Telugu is making a comeback to film production.

The veteran producer who is known for his unique and aggressive promotional strategies had

announced to make sequel for his superhit *Gentleman* under the distinguished production banner Gentleman Film International.

Kunjumon had also announced a contest on Twitter. He had asked movie buffs to guess the legendary musician who would be scoring music for his film titled *Gentleman 2* with the hashtag #G2MusicDirector and said that three lucky winners would be rewarded with a gold coin each.

On Sunday, Kunjumon announced that MM Keeravani will be the music director of *Gentleman 2*. He tweeted: "I proudly announce that the iconic legend of Indian cinema, MM Keeravani *garu*, will be the music director of my Gentleman Film International's *Gentleman 2*. Gold coin winners will be announced."

Kunjumon who introduced S Shankar as director with *Gentleman* was renowned for suggesting the director to rewrite the climax of the movie based on the assassination of former Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. The film *Gentleman*, which starred Arjun Sarja and Madhoo in the lead roles, threw light on corrupt politicians and the education system in India. After 27 years, the producer will be making the sequel, but with a different team. As of now, only MM Keeranai is confirmed for the project. Other cast and crew will be announced later.



## Akhanda gets highest viewership

**S**etting a new record on Disney+ Hotstar, *Akhanda* received

the highest viewership and watchtime on the streaming platform for a Telugu movie ever. Viewers of Disney+ Hotstar have showered their love towards *Akhanda* essayed by Nandamuri Balakrishna for his new look and strong character whilst applauding the top-notch production quality of the movie and the ensemble cast. *Akhanda* with its proven record in the Box office witnessed Nandamuri Balakrishna in a unique character of aghora who has blessings of Lord Shiva and becomes the saviour of the village trapped under the mining goons. The film also

features Jagapathi Babu, Srikanth, Pragya Jaiswal, Shamna Kasim, Viji Chandrasekha and Subbaraju in lead roles. The music provided by SS Thaman for this film received accolades for the background score and the songs. Actor Nandamuri Balakrishna said, "I am thankful to my audience who always stood by me, each time I have tried something new. I have the blessings of Lord Shiva and after such an overwhelming response in the Box office celebrating 50days, we also did a record-breaking opening on Disney+Hotstar. I am enjoying this period and happy that many more movie lovers got to watch the movie from anywhere through this."

## Sumanth's *Malli Modalaindi* releasing on Zee5



**A**ctor Sumanth is gearing up to dazzle movie lovers with his next film *Malli Modalaindi*. The film is expected to be released exclusively on OTT. The filmmakers chose to forego a theatrical release in favour of an OTT arrangement with Zee5. The

film's OTT streaming date has been set, according to the newest information. From February 11, *Malli Modalaindi* will be available on ZEE 5. "*#MalliModalaindi*, a whimsical tale of life after divorce, launches this Feb 11 on #ZEE5. Sumanth wrote on Twitter. *Malli Modalaindi* tells the story of what happens when a divorce applicant falls in love with his lawyer.

In the film, Sumanth is romancing Varshini Soundarajan and Naina Ganguly, which is directed by TG.Keerthi Kumar. Varshini Soundarajan plays Sumanth's wife, and Naina Ganguly plays his lawyer in the film. Posani Krishna Murali plays the part of divorce lawyer Kutumba Rao, while Vennela Kishore plays the role of Kishore, a motivational speaker. Anup Rubens composed the film's music. The film is being produced by K.Rajasekhar Reddy under the Red Cinemas banner.

# Boom time for dubbed films

**I**t looks like the preferences of movie watchers have changed during the lockdown. The idea of going to a cinema has always been to enjoy an entertaining fare. You would have observed that the films that do not entertain or identify with the taste of the audience are rejected.

The whole parallel cinema, backed by Film Finance Corporation (FFC), later renamed National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), amounted to nothing eventually. NFDC was government-backed and the only recognition these NFDC films got was from the government itself; they kept winning National Awards.

That was funny because it amounted to government largesse going from one pocket to another. In the process, the National Awards never got due recognition from the real film industry, the filmmakers who mattered.

So, the film buffs stuck to regular commercial stuff. At least, it did not induce boredom like art and parallel cinema. The audience had no option but to consume the 'opium of the masses' as commercial Indian films have been labelled over the decades.

Looks like the addition to this opium was the only thing available to people. There was no alternative entertainment available. There was no exposure to any other form.

Suddenly, during the periodic lockdowns over the last two years, people's preferences are seen to have changed. They are rejecting what is peddled as commercial entertainers.

Whether they come in cinemas, or through OTT streaming platforms, the audiences are not willing to be taken for granted any longer! Be it Salman Khan, Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, Ranveer Singh, they came up with new

films which did not really find takers.

While the admission rates remain high, the stars keep peddling the same stuff, film after film. Salman Khan has delivered a line-up of flops over the last few Eid festivals, his favourite release date; Akshay Kumar has delivered one dud, Bell Bottom, and one average film, Sooryavanshi, which even his co-stars Ajay Devgn and Ranveer Singh could not salvage. The films of all these stars are failing to make an impact on OTT platforms as well. Surprisingly, though, the films, serials and other content of either lesser known or past-their-prime actors are working on all platforms. By non-star actors, or actors past their prime, one means actors such as Saif Ali Khan, Kay Kay Menon, Manoj Bajpai, Abhishek Bachchan, Susmita Sen, and many such whose appearance in feature films was getting scarce. The careers of these actors have been revived on OTT.

What is also obvious is that while Hindi stars are being rejected, dubbed films from the South are being lapped up.

One of the reasons why some of the dubbed South Indian films are readily accepted is because they don't lack in any way when compared to Hindi films. In fact, they come up with different subjects and are spectacular, providing a visual treat.

These films are made with mammoth budgets, which they justify. The acceptance of these dubbed South Indian films seems to have happened gradually through television channels. In the absence of new Hindi films, most of the filmy television channels are telecasting the dubbed versions of the South Indian films day in and day out.

Watching films on television was fine, but what worked finally was the release of

'Baahubali'. The film took the Hindi box office by storm. Nothing like this had been seen coming from the Hindi film industry. Hindi filmmakers claimed crores being spent on their films, which never showed in their films!

*Baahubali: The Beginning*, especially, was an out-of-the-world experience. *Baahubali 2: The Conclusion* came across as half-baked but it still enjoyed the equity of its predecessor.

*Baahubali* has successfully neutralised the aversion of Hindi film audiences to Tamil and Telugu films.

Look at the recent release, *Pushpa: The Rise*. The makers dared to release the film in direct opposition to 83. The story of the 1983 Cricket World Cup-winning team under the leadership of Kapil Dev, a legend in his own time, 83 came a cropper while 'Pushpa' turned out to be a hit.

Imagine, a dubbed South Indian film getting the better of the most promoted Hindi film with a top star!



The saga of dubbed films is long. Dubbed films from the South were never bought by distributors expecting to earn money. They were bought mainly as gap fillers or for adjustment. Earlier, cinemas were controlled by exhibitors.

For instance, in the Bombay Circuit, cinema owners from far-off places in Gujarat, Kutch or Maharashtra could not manage the bookings of films week after week from where they are. They delegated this task to an individual or a group of people in Mumbai whose responsibility it was to make sure the cinemas got a film every week. Some of these exhibitors controlled multiple cinemas.

There were some phases in a year that were considered non-productive for the film business. There were no new films that were released during these periods. March to April (due to exams) and then from September to Diwali were dull for business. The Ganesh Chaturthi, Shraddha and Navratri days and the pre-Diwali fortnight were disastrous for business. But the cinema exhibition business could not be shut down. It had to have a film every Friday. That is when these dubbed films helped fill the gaps. So as not to incur losses on the deal, some interpolations took place. Many times, porn clips were inserted into these films and they managed to draw a certain type of audience.

The other reason why a distributor needed to buy a dubbed film from the South was if he had had a good year with distributing his other, mainstream films. The income tax slabs were very high and some way had to be found to keep the profits earned. After all, how many petty expense vouchers could an accountant make?

The idea was to buy the rights to a dubbed film at a comfortably inflated price and get most of the amount back in cash.

Now, dubbed films are a big business. Especially thanks to Hindi movie television channels. Initially, even these channels used dubbed movies as fillers for late night or all-night slots. There were no viewers, so it did not matter.

— IANS