

ANALYSIS 7
CAN MODI-CAPT DUO HELP
BJP IN PUNJAB?**MONEY 8**
GRANULES INDIA GETS USFDA NOD FOR
GENERIC PRODUCT**SPORTS 11**
RANJI TROPHY TO BE HELD
IN TWO PHASES: BCCI

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

NAGA CHAITANYA
IN TALKS TO MAKE
OTT DEBUT

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**DELHI LIFTS WEEKEND CURFEW,
REOPENS RESTAURANTS**

New Delhi lifted a weekend curfew and allowed restaurants and marketplaces to reopen on Friday, following a sharp drop in new infections of Covid. Under new orders, however, the city will remain under night time curfew, and schools will be closed, Delhi's lieutenant governor said. Restaurants, bars and cinemas will be allowed to operate with up to 50% capacity and the number of people at weddings will be restricted to 200. The number of new cases in Delhi fell to 4,291 on Jan. 27 from a peak of 28,867 on Jan. 13. More than 85% of Covid beds across the city's hospitals were unoccupied, government data showed.

**BJP FACES REBELLION IN 4 GOA SEATS,
INCLUDING PANAJI, AHEAD OF POLLS**

The ruling BJP has managed to contain dissent in most areas in the run up to the Goa Assembly polls scheduled for February 14, but four seats, including the prestigious Panaji constituency, continue to be a cause for worry. In Panaji, Utpal Parrikar, the son of former chief minister and BJP's tallest leader from Goa so far late Manohar Parrikar, is up as an independent against the ruling party's Atanasio Monserratte, who had quit the Congress in 2019. Utpal Parrikar has claimed his heart continues to be with the BJP but he was contesting to ensure a 'wrong person', possibly a reference to the serious cases registered against Monserratte in the past, does not get elected from a seat his father represented for several terms.

**WINE IS NOT LIQUOR, SALE WILL DOUBLE
FARMERS' INCOME: SANJAY RAUT**

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Friday stated that the Maharashtra government's decision to allow the sale of wine in supermarkets and walk-in stores would boost farmers' income. "Wine is not liquor. If wine sale increases, farmers will benefit from it. We've done this to double farmers' income," said Raut. Hitting out at the BJP for criticizing the state government's decision, Raut said, "BJP only opposes but does nothing for farmers. Mallikarjun Kharge has said it right. BJP has sold the public sector."

**AKHILESH YADAV SAYS CHOPPER DELAY
FROM DELHI TO UP WAS 'CONSPIRACY'**

Akhilesh Yadav, who has emerged as a key challenger in Uttar Pradesh, this afternoon alleged that his helicopter was briefly stopped from flying from Delhi to UP's Muzaffarnagar - he called it 'losing BJP's conspiracy'. Nearly half an hour after accusing the ruling party of halting his chopper, he posted a cheeky tweet - "We are ready to take the flight to victory". "My helicopter has been halted in Delhi without any reason. It is not being allowed to fly to Muzaffarnagar (in UP). But a BJP leader was just allowed to fly from here. This is losing BJP's conspiracy - a proof of their frustration," the former UP Chief Minister tweeted in Hindi at around 2:30 pm.

CENTRAL DEPUTATION

Jagan hails Centre's move to amend IAS Cadre Rules

Urges PM to retain the existing process of requiring State govts to issue NOCs

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

While his counterpart in the neighbouring Telangana, K Chandrasekhar Rao has squarely opposed the Centre's proposal to amend IAS cadre rules on Central deputation, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has taken a cautious approach.

Jagan on Friday wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a balanced and measured response to the Government of India's proposal to amend IAS cadre rules.

In his letter, Jagan, while welcoming the concept of officers going on Central deputation, urged Modi to reconsider the proposal



and retain the existing process of requiring state governments to issue NOCs to officers going on deputation to Central government. He mentioned that the officers

who should be sent to Central deputation, should be decided by the State government.

Jagan said the State government is in a better position to assess who

all can be spared for the Government of India deputation, keeping their professional as well as personal requirements in mind.

"I wholeheartedly welcome such an initiative taken by the Government of India under your leadership to ensure that the departments and offices at the central government are manned by able officers from the Indian Administrative Service. Such a strong and sufficiently manned team at the helm of affairs in the central government would be essential to ensure the smooth and seamless functioning of the government."

2

AP records 12,561 fresh Covid cases, twelve deaths

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh reported 12,561 fresh cases of COVID-19 and 12 more deaths on Friday.

The latest health bulletin said 8,742 infected people also got cured in the state in the last 24 hours ending at 9 am on Friday. The active case count now stands at 1,13,300, the bulletin said.

The gross COVID-19 positive cases in the state touched 22,48,608 while the number of recoveries reached 21,20,717. The death toll now stands at 14,591.

Kurnool district registered 1,710, Guntur 1,625, Kadapa 1,215, Visakhapatnam 1,211, East Godavari 1,067, Krishna 1,056 and SPS Nellore 1,009 fresh cases.

2

Stalemate over govt-staff talks on

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The stalemate over the talks between the employees and the government-appointed committee continued on Friday too. The members of the PRC struggle committee, the umbrella organisation of the employees' unions, had failed to turn up on Friday too to hold talks with the government-appointed committee. The committee member Botsa Satyanarayana said hereafter they will not wait anymore for the unions at the secretariat. The committee members, ministers Perni Nani, Botsa Satyanarayana, and government advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy have waited daily in the morning at the secretariat for the PRC struggle committee members to meet them.

Three days ago, struggle committee members had submitted a memorandum to the government committee on their demands that



File photo

includes payment of salaries based on old scales. Botsa Satyanarayana on Friday reiterated that the talks are the only solution for the employees to resolve the impasse.

He also said that if they failed to come forward and talk to the government will go ahead with its plan. He said the government was not looking for hostile environ-

ment and accused the unions of bringing in new culture.

Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy made it clear that the January month salaries will be paid as per the new PRC. He also said that the three demands put forth by the unions have nothing to do with the talks.

2

'AP ties up with intl agencies over marketing'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Industries Secretary Karikal Valaven said Andhra Pradesh, being a new state, is collaborating with international agencies, in the field of technology, skills with market linkages, to help strengthen market mechanisms in identified sectors.

He spoke at a Policy Dialogue



organised by International Labour Organisation (ILO) on 'Building a market-responsive, resilient, and

inclusive MSME ecosystem for job-rich and sustainable growth' on Friday in virtual mode.

ILO organised the Policy Dialogue in collaboration with the state governments of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

2

Crash in Amaravati real estate led to Karvy collapse

2



and economic efficiency of the sector, and promote a sustained increase in paid electricity consumption.

In order to avail additional borrowing space linked to power sector reforms, the state government has to undertake a set of mandatory reforms and also meet stipulated performance benchmarks. The reforms to be carried out by the states include the progressive assumption of responsibility for losses of public sector distribution companies (DISCOMs) by the state government, transparency in the reporting of financial affairs of the power sector including payment of subsidies and recording of liabilities of Governments to DISCOMs and of DISCOMs to others, etc.

2

Power sector staff submit strike notice to AP govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Power Employees Joint Action Committee (APSPEJAC), on Friday, submitted their agitation programme to the State Energy Secretary, demanding implementation of new service regulations in APCPDCL.

The APSPEJAC leaders submitted their agitation programme seeking immediate intervention pertaining to critical issues prevailing in AP power sector. The agitation programme will be conducted at all the Generating Stations, Division Offices, Circle Offices, Zonal Offices, Corporate Offices or APTRANSCO, APGENCO and APDISCOMs.

The employees would protest by wearing black badges from January 29 to February 5 and mass represen-

tations to the CM through social media/postcards. They would submit representations to the statues of freedom fighters from February 3 to 5. Lunch hour demonstrations will be held from February 7 to 16 and relay hunger strike, from February 17 to 28. Work to rule along with relay hunger strike will be held from February 21 to 28. The future course of action will be intimated in due course.

The APSPEJAC has requested the State government to withdraw the Cabinet decision on handing over of O&M of SDSTPS to private players for 25 years and also requested the management to withdraw the implementation of new service regulations in APCPDCL.

2



APSRTC staff to take part in strike

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The leaders of the Andhra Pradesh Public Transport Department employees on Friday decided to take part in the strike by the PRC Struggle Committee, an umbrella organisation of four employees' associations and JACs, against the cancellation of GOs issued by the State government on 11th PRC and raising other demands. The State RTC employee leaders said that they extended complete support to the PRC Struggle Committee.

The RTC leaders told media persons on Friday that they would play a key role in the proposed strike and support all forms of the protest. They said they thought that merging APSRTC with the State government would benefit the employees.

"However, now the employees feel that we shouldn't have accepted that proposal as they are losing all their benefits," he said.

2

TODAY**ALMANAC****Month & Paksham:**

Pausa, Krishna Paksha

Tithi : Dwadashi - Jan 28 11:36 PM to Jan 29 08:37 PM

Trayodashi - Jan 29 08:37 PM to Jan 30 05:29 PM

Nakshatram : Moola - Jan 29 05:07 AM to Jan 30 02:49 AM

Purnima - Andhra, Jan 30 02:49 AM to Jan 31 12:22 AM

Rahukalam : 9:40 AM to 11:05 AM**Yamagandam** : 1:53 PM to 3:17 PM**Varjyam** : 11:26 AM to 12:53 PM**Gulika** : 6:52 AM to 8:16 AM**Amritakalam** : 09:06 PM to 10:33 PM**Abhijit Muhurtham** : 12:06 PM to 12:51 PM**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

Forecast: SUNNY

Temp: 31°

Humidity: 65%

Sunrise: 6:41 AM

Sunset: 6:06 PM

Updated JANUARY 28, 2021 5:00 PM

Centre permits AP to borrow Rs 2,123 cr

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Union Ministry of Finance's Department of Expenditure has granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 2,123 crore for undertaking the stipulated reforms in the power sector. The Department of Expenditure has allowed additional borrowing of Rs 7,309 crore to two states.

Rajasthan has been allowed to borrow additional Rs 5,186 crore, Andhra Pradesh Rs 2,123 crore as incentive to embark on the reform process.

Ministry of Finance, based on the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission, has decided to grant additional borrowing space of up to 0.5 percent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to the states every year for



a four year period from 2021-22 to 2024-25 based on reform undertaken by the states in the power sector.

This was announced by the Finance Minister in the budget

speech of 2021-22. This will make available additional resources of more than Rs 1 lakh crore every year to the states. The objectives of the additional borrowing permissions are to improve the operational

Crash in Amaravati real estate reason behind Karvy collapse

■ SEBI order in 2019 said KSBL diverted funds to its real estate subsidiary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Parallels are being drawn between the collapse of once celebrated Hyderabad-based stockbroking firm Karvy Group and that of another Hyderabad-based beleaguered IT company Satyam Computers in 2009.

In both cases both the companies had resorted to diversion of funds to invest heavily in real estate. While the collapse of the Hyderabad real estate market around the 2008 global economic meltdown had eventually led to the fall of Byrraju Ramalinga Raju led Satyam Computers, in the case of Karvy Stock Broking Ltd (KSBL) it was the crash of real estate in Andhra Pradesh's capital Amaravati.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday said that it has arrested KSBL chairman and MD C Parthasarathy, and CFO G



Hari Krishna, in the Rs 2000 Crore security scam.

Informed sources in the industry circles said that KSBL's subsidiary, Karvy Realty Private Limited (KRPL) bought huge tracts of land in Amaravati, the new capital of Andhra Pradesh, in anticipation that the then chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu would return to power and they could make a killing.

However, the regime change

in Andhra Pradesh and the subsequent change in the priorities of the new government in Andhra Pradesh had totally upset KSBL's plan as the real estate value in Amaravati had totally fallen flat.

A SEBI order on November 22, 2019, had clearly stated "Prima facie a net amount of Rs. 1,096 crore has been transferred by KSBL to its group company i.e. Karvy Realty Private Limited between from

01-April 2016 to 19-October-2019". All the amount KRBL routed to its real estate subsidiary has been invested in Amaravati real estate.

ED's investigation into the fund trail also confirmed the diversion of funds from KSBL to its real estate arm.

Parthasarathy, Krishna Hari were arrested under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in a money laundering case connected with the fraud committed through the illegal diversion of clients' securities by KSBL worth Rs 2873.82 crore and pledging of these securities with banks/NBFCs for seeking loans and subsequent loan default.

ED in a statement said money-laundering investigation based on the FIR filed by HDFC Bank with CCS Hyderabad Police under various sections of IPC for defrauding HDFC Bank.

"Fund trail investigation has shown that the borrowed funds were transferred to other group companies, particularly to one WoS of KSBL i.e. Karvy Realty (India) Limited (KRIL) and then to 14 shell companies floated by Karvy Group," said ED.

ED had recorded the statement of various employees of the Karvy Group, and conducted searches at 9 locations last year in September. The central agency during its investigation had found the complex web of transactions designed by the senior management of the Karvy Group to misuse the securities of their clients and to raise loans fraudulently which were then rotated via multiple related companies and diverted away from the stated purpose.

It is learnt that Karvy Group had promised investors returns of 18-20pc and collected large sums of money.

'Be innovative in installing firefighting equipment'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Disaster Response and Fire Services Director General Pratap Madireddy, said that the government is keen to work with industries and technical institutes to have cost-effective fire fighting equipment to install in their factories.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organized a session on Fire Safety with a focus on Fire Prevention, Hazards and Risk associated through virtual mode on Friday.

Addressing the session through virtual mode Pratap Madireddy, suggested having common fire fighting equipment at the industrial park level to avoid unnecessary capital expenditure for small-scale units. He also mentioned that Department of Disaster Response and Fire Service is taking several innovative steps to control fire accidents at cold storages in the state.

He also felt that there is a need to encourage innovation in adopting new fire



fighting equipment to reduce costs for the industry.

CII Visakhapatnam Zone chairman and RINL Director D K Mohanty in his welcome address pointed out that fire safety is of paramount importance for the industry. He also mentioned that industry is taking required precautions to avoid fire accidents at the factories.

CII Andhra Pradesh Public Policy Taskforce Co-Chairman and Ramky Pharma City India Ltd CEO, Dr P P Lal Krishna, in his concluding remarks said that Industrial Park level safety would be beneficial to all stakeholders. The industry is keen to work with the Department of Fire for having required fire safety measures at Park level, he mentioned in his address.

95.27 % of total assets held by only 10 regional parties

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As per ADR's analysis among the 44 regional political parties, the assets of the top 10 parties are worth Rs 2,028.715 crore or 95.27 pc of the total assets declared by all the regional parties for the FY 2019-20.

The highest assets were declared by Uttar Pradesh's Samajwadi Party (SP) worth Rs 563.47 crores (26.46 pc), followed by TRS worth Rs 301.47 crore and AIADMK worth Rs 267.61 crore.

Fixed Deposits/FDR consti-

tuted the largest share of Rs 1,639.51 crore (76.99 pc) of the total assets declared by regional parties in FY 2019-20.

Regional parties declared maximum assets under FDR/Fixed Deposits which amounted to Rs 5970.59 crore (65.48 pc of total assets) followed by Rs 1363.87 crore (14.96 pc) under fixed assets and Rs 946.57 crore (10.38 pc) under other assets.

Among regional parties, political parties such as SP (Rs 434.219 crore), TRS (Rs 256.01 crore), AIADMK (Rs 246.90

crore), DMK (Rs 162.425 crore), Shiv Sena (Rs 148.46 crore), BJD (Rs 118.425 crore) among others declared highest assets under FDR/Fixed Deposits.

The top 10 regional parties declared the total Capital/Reserve Fund of Rs 1,984.28 crore while the remaining 34 parties declared Rs 84.44 crore.

SP declared the highest capital of Rs 563.099 crore followed by Rs 297.06 crore of TRS and Rs 267.48 crore of AIADMK.

TRS, TDP, YSRC among top 10 regional parties...

Continued from Page 1

Of the total declared assets of Rs 188.19 crore of TDP, Rs 86.97 crores is in the form of FDs, Rs 79.74 crore as fixed assets, Rs 8.17 crore are other assets, Rs 13.31 crore of loans and advances.

Of the total YSRC's assets, Fixed Deposits/FDR constituted the largest share of Rs 135 crore followed by other assets worth Rs 7.562 crore.

Interestingly in the FY 2019-20, among the total 44 regional parties, TDP declared the highest total liabilities of Rs

30.342 crore followed by DMK which declared Rs 8.05 crore. TRS has only Rs 4.41 crore and YSRC just Rs 0.29 crore of liabilities.

There are a set of accounting standards for commercial, industrial and business enterprises and they are issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). Political parties fall under the non-commercial, non-industrial or non-business entity. Thus, the standard accounting formats of the other entities are not applicable to political parties.

Centre permits AP to borrow...

Continued from Page 1

Once, the aforesaid reforms have been undertaken by the state, the performance of the state is evaluated on the basis of set criteria to determine the eligibility for additional borrowing in 2021-22.

In addition, states are also eligible for bonus marks for privatisation of the power distribution companies.

The Ministry of Power is the nodal ministry for assessment of the performance of states and determining their eligibility for granting additional borrowing permission. Apart from Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, nine other states, Assam, Goa, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh have also submitted their proposals to the Ministry of Power, which are under examination. Additional borrowing permission will be issued to eligible states on receipt of a recommendation from the Ministry of Power.

Jagan hails Centre's move...

Continued from Page 1

I strongly believe that states would benefit immensely from such well-functioning departments in the Government of India. Further, more IAS officers from the state cadre in different levels at the Central government will help the state in pursuing the issues pertaining to the state with the Government of India," said Jagan in the letter.

He further said that he fully appreciates the need for such a move and extended his complete support to the proposal. However, he said a few issues might arise during operationalisation of the proposed amendments.

He explained that IAS officers form the most important part of the State government who provide leadership to the departments and various projects handled by the State government. Officers are given responsibilities in the State considering their skill set and experience required to handle the most critical projects in the

The Election Commission of India (ECI) requested the ICAI for recommendations to bring uniformity in the accounting and auditing practices of political parties. Thus, the "Guidance note on Accounting & Auditing of political parties" or the "Accounting guidelines" were formulated in February 2012 by the ICAI on the request of the ECI, in order to improve accounting and auditing standards of political parties and improve transparency in their finances.

These guidelines lay down principles of recognition, mea-

surement and disclosure of items of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities in the financial statements of political parties.

"Details of fixed assets received as a donation by the parties should be declared such as original cost of the asset, any additions or deductions, depreciation is written off, cost of construction, etc. The same should also be declared of fixed assets purchased by the political parties but not all political parties declared this information," observed the ADR team.

AP records 12,561 fresh...

Continued from Page 1

Of the remaining six districts, three of them added less than 900 each and three more logged below 500 each.

Visakhapatnam reported three fresh fatalities while Kurnool and SPS Nellore recorded two deaths each in a day. Anantapuramu, Chittoor, Guntur, Vizianagaram and West Godavari added one more COVID-19 death each to their tally.

APSRTC staff to take part in strike...

Continued from Page 1

AP NGO Amaravati chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarulu said that 10 various RTC employees unions had extended their support to the PRC Struggle Committee and all the unions had unanimously given their consent to participate in the strike. Bopparaju said that even after the merger, their issues remained unresolved. "Arrears of the RTC employees have been pending since 2017. The government wants to generate good revenue even though it hasn't solved the employees' long pending issues," he pointed out. He further demanded that the government should act on promotions as per the employees' needs.

Other PRC Struggle Committee leaders were also present on the occasion.

Stalemate over govt-staff talks...

Continued from Page 1

Ramakrishna Reddy observed that the unions never raised the issue regarding the HRA slabs and that the government could have considered paying salaries on old slabs if the unions had discussed that with the committee members.

He had also said that they were ready to hold talks if the unions felt employees will be lost with the changes in HRA slabs. Reddy added that during the discussions about the PRC unions were only talking about fitment.

Meanwhile, the state treasury employees were not ready to submit the salary bills and process the salaries of the employees.

They said its too short a time to process the salaries without the Bills from the departments.

The employees union leader, Bopparaju Venkateswar Rao said that the government was trying to shift the blame on them for not participating in the proposed talks even as their salaries have been slashed.

He added that it's only as a last resort without any assurance from the government that they had decided to go for an indefinite work strike.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹215
Without Skin	₹235
Broiler at Farm	₹117

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	430
VISAKHAPATNAM	425
HYDERABAD	405
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.30
IN VIJAYAWADA	

Chinese scientists warn of new Coronavirus

PNS ■ BEIJING

A type of coronavirus, NeoCov, that spreads among bats in South Africa may pose a threat to humans in future if it mutates further, according to a study by Chinese researchers.

The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study recently posted on the preprint repository BioRxiv, shows that NeoCov is closely related to the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), a viral disease first identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Researchers from Chinese Academy of Sciences and Wuhan University noted that NeoCov is found in a population of bats in South Africa and to date spreads exclusively among these animals.

In its current form, NeoCov does not infect humans but further mutations may make it potentially harmful, the researchers noted.

"In this study, we unexpectedly found that NeoCov and its close relative, PDF-2180-CoV, can efficiently use some types of bat Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) and, less favourably, human ACE2 for entry," the authors of the study noted.

'AP ties up with intl agencies...

Continued from Page 1

The event facilitated knowledge-sharing as it delved upon the strategies adopted for enabling the promotion of sustainable enterprises, developing the missing segments in the value chain, promotion of MSME clusters based on regional comparative advantage and for economies of scale in other developing countries in the region.

Speaking at the session, Ministry of Micro Small Medium Enterprises, Government of India, Secretary, BB Swain, said,

"The MSME sector is important for India's GDP. MSMEs have been impacted by preventive measures taken against COVID-19. To boost the ecosystem, India is trying to formalize the sector not to lose any benefits going to MSMEs. The resilience of MSMEs and market responsiveness will need technology to respond to the demands. This dialogue will support the

knowledge building in the two states and support them to develop the evidence-based policymaking."

"Andhra Pradesh, being a new state, is collaborating with international agencies, in the field of technology, skills along with market linkages, to help strengthen market mechanism in identified sectors. Learnings from Vietnam, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, as well as knowledge sharing from Korea, will provide insights on the global best practices at this high-level, multi-stakeholder policy dialogue," said Karikall Valaven.

The discussion focused on four countries, namely South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Bangladesh to facilitate knowledge building for India, particularly for Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, to adopt similar economic development models. The countries elaborated upon the efforts made by them in transforming to market-based economies by transitioning from a low-value

agrarian to high-valued manufacturing products and emerging as sectoral leads or sourcing hubs. The dialogue discussed how economies seized the opportunity provided by the COVID-19 wake-up call to accelerate building resilience and help formal and sustainable MSMEs sustain global against the competitiveness of sectors.

"Under the initiative, ILO aims to equip young women and men with entrepreneurial skills to help scale-up up new business development in the value chain of food processing, garments and textiles sectors in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha to generate more and better-quality jobs and help in the formalization of work," said ILO Country Office India director Dagmar Walter. It's important to support the integration of the two states into the global supply chain, to help establish them as responsible and reliable sourcing states at a global level, Ms Walter added.



Power sector staff submit strike notice to AP govt...

Continued from Page 1

The APSPEJAC further said that if the management took any adverse steps during the agitation programme, the APSPEJAC would proceed on a lightning strike from that moment without any further notice.

APSPEJAC chairman P Chandrasekhar, general secretary P Prathapa Reddy and convener B Sai Krishna submitted the programme.

CM launches ‘Jagananna Palavelluva’ in Anantapur

■ Says vested interests destroyed cooperative dairies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched the Jagananna Palavelluva - AP Amul Project in Anantapur district virtually from his camp office here on Wednesday.

The State government has signed two MoUs with Amul for the purchase of Milk for Balamrutham and Anganwadi kids, in the presence of the Chief Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said Amul is the largest dairy cooperative society and it has enormous experience in milk processing and added that Amul has been buying milk paying more money than private dairies.

He said dairy farmers are the stakeholders in this society and added that they are manufacturing chocolates from milk and competing with world-class companies.

The Chief Minister said Amul has been paying a decent price to dairy farmers with no scope for cheating, adulteration and middlemen and added that they have been giving profits as bonus for every six months. He said some vested interests have destroyed coop-



erative dairies and many have turned into private firms and added that Amul has already started procuring milk in six districts - Prakasam, Chittoor, Kadapa, Guntur, West Godavari and Krishna benefiting dairy farmers.

He said he had witnessed the problems of dairy farmers during padayatra where they compared their milk rates to that of mineral water, saying while the price of one-litre mineral water was Rs 23, they don't even get that for a litre of milk and added that the State government has been taking measures to overcome such a scenario.

The Chief Minister said the other dairies have been paying Rs 5 to Rs 20 per litre more than the existing price as Amul has been paying the remunerative price in the market. He said the state government has been setting up BMCs and AMCs at locations where milk is being procured and added that they will be set up in every village with the expansion of the Amul project. He said receipt will be given to the dairy farmers with details of price and quantity immediately after milk is purchased and added that quality can be tested directly.

The Chief Minister said the state government has laid special focus to prevent fraud in milk procurement and increased inspection drives and added that 20 cases were registered at various locations. He said the people who were booked are paying Rs 0.45 to Rs 10 less than the prescribed price.

The Chief Minister has thanked Amul MD RS Sodhi, Kaira Milk Union MD Amit Vyas, Banaskantha Milk Union MD Sangram Chaudhary, Sabarkantha Milk Union MD Anil Bayati for participating in the event.

BJP State chief slammed for comment on Kadapa people

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The controversial comments made by BJP AP State president Somu Veerraju have come under strong criticism from political circles. CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna condemned the comments made by Somu Veerraju portraying the people of Kadapa as known to kill.

Rama Krishna, on Friday, said that the BJP president had lost his mental balance as he asked why the people of Kadapa, who were killers, needed an airport. He criticised Veerraju for lack of knowledge that Kadapa had an airport six to seven decades earlier.

Ramakrishna slammed the BJP State leaders for passing



inappropriate comments to create communal unrest for their political mileage. "At least now, Veerraju should put an end to such comments," advised Ramakrishna.

Earlier in the day, Veerraju made the controversial comment that the people of Kadapa were killers. The BJP State president further said that those people only knew how to kill people, but did not

know how to develop their area. For such people, the BJP government got an airport, he said.

The BJP leader was reacting to a recent statement of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy that his government wanted to set up an airport in every district. He asked when the CM didn't have money to repair the damaged roads, how he could build airports in all districts.

He reminded that it was the BJP government that had developed Vijayawada, Tirupati and Rajahmundry airports and got the new airport sanctioned for Kurnool. Even for Kadapa, known for its killings, the BJP government brought an airport, he said, landing criticism.

My comments on politics distorted: Veerraju

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP State president Somu Veerraju has said that his comments on murderous politics have been distorted.

"My comments on murderous politics were distorted to create a controversy. The people of Kadapa have nothing to do with the murderous politics. I have made the comments keeping in view the murder of YS Vivekananda Reddy. Reports said that some political leaders had links with the Viveka's murder case and keeping that in view I have made the comments," Somu Veerraju clarified.



Girl drowned in water sump

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A seven-year-old girl drowned in a water sump while playing near her house at Laxmi Nagar Colony in Saidabad here on Friday.

The girl identified as Shivani, was playing alone when she is suspected to have slipped and fell into the water filled sump in front of her house around 5 pm. According to K. Subbarami Reddy, Inspector (Rajendranagar), the family members, who realised that Shivai was missing for a long time, began searching in the surroundings and found her body in the water pit. They rushed her to a nearby hospital where doctors declared her dead.

Following a complaint from Shivani's father, the Saidabad police have booked a case and are investigating.

Jagan running a ‘puppet Cabinet’: Yanamala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP senior leader Yanamala Ramakrishnudu on Friday accused Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy of running a 'puppet Cabinet' by turning all the Deputy CMs and Ministers into his hand puppets without giving any powers to them.

Ramakrishnudu said a group of Jagan Reddy's trusted advisors was making all the policies and decisions while even the senior Ministers were not able to open their mouths. The YCP rule was so undemocratic, unconstitutional and choking that nobody was given a chance to speak out against any injustice. For everything, advisors were making needless comments all the time.

Ramakrishnudu asked how advisors could speak on issues relating to the Government



departments and employees. The Ministers have muzzled apparently.

Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy was wielding power in the State and Vijay Sai Reddy outside the State. Ministers were just standing there like silent spectators.

Ramakrishnudu said the whole administration in the State has collapsed already and it came to a standstill following the agitation of the employees. During the recent visit of a 20-member official team to Delhi,

Vijaya Sai Reddy called all the shots. Vijaya Sai did all the political and official management in the national capital. The TDP leader deplored that the constitutionally formed Cabinet was almost shelved and a kitchen cabinet was brought in its place. All power was vested in the hands of 5 Reddys, were Vijay Sai Reddy, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, SV Subba Reddy, Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy and Paddirreddy Ramachandra Reddy.

Ramakrishnudu slammed Jagan Reddy for holding democracy hostage by turning Ministers into rubber stamps. The State was divided into 26 districts but none of it was named after Dr. BR Ambedkar or any BC leader like Gouthu Latchanna. It only exposed the anti-BC and anti-weaker section stance of the CM.

Steel Plant workers stage dharna

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Demanding immediate steps for the wage revision and as part of the general strike on January 31, thousands of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant workers staged a dharna in front of the Executive Director (works) of RINL on Friday. Leaders from all the trade unions of the plant led the protest. The leaders strongly objected to the delay in implementing the wage revision.

The CMD of RINL has already announced that Rs.790 crore was earned in the past quarter and the management had to bear only Rs.15 crore for the wage revision. The management is trying to create confusion and damage the financial benefits of the steel plant workers, the leaders alleged.

Leading trade union leaders including J. Ayodhyaram, Y.T. Das, G. Venkata Rao, Subbaiah, Masen Rao, Ganapathi Reddy and Ch. Sanyasi Rao addressed the workers.

Vamshi thanks CM Jagan for carving out NTR district

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



MLA Vallabhaneni Vamshi has expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for taking the initiative to announce one district per parliamentary constituency as part of the election promises. He thanked the Chief Minister for naming the new district after founder of the Telugu Desam Party and former CM of undivided Andhra Pradesh N T Rama Rao.

Speaking to media persons on Friday, Vamshi pointed out that TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, while in power, could not do what Jagan Mohan Reddy has done to N T Rama Rao. The TDP chief could not even thank CM Jagan for naming the district after NTR.

Vamshi said, "It was only with the generous nature of the great leader NTR that many leaders including Chandrababu Naidu and I got political recognition. During Jagan Mohan

Reddy's Padayatra, I told Chandrababu Naidu about his proposal to name a district after NTR, however Chandrababu criticized it. People might say I reveal this now because of political reasons, but it is a fact."

Since Nimmakuru is the hometown of NTR and the village is close to Machilipatnam, some people approached him to name Machilipatnam after

NTR and a few others wanted to name Vijayawada district as Vangaveeti Mohana Ranga district.

He said that the State government and the CM had taken the decision in a proper manner that was acceptable to all.

Vamshi said that NTR and YSR had different political approaches, but were good friends and both had strived to develop Krishna district.

YSRCP workers attacking employees: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh on Friday held YSRCP MP Vijayasai Reddy responsible for the unchecked land grabs and gang violence in Visakhapatnam and other parts of North Andhra. Lokesh said the Jaganmohan Reddy gangs were wreaking havoc all through otherwise peaceful North Andhra districts. The latest in a series of incidents was the local YSRCP leaders' attack on the revenue employ-

ees of Sattivanipalem village in Pendurthi mandal of Vizag district.

In a statement here, Lokesh said that YSRCP local leader Doddi Kiran encroached on some land in the village and attacked the revenue staff when they came to remove the encroachment. The beating up of revenue staff at Sattivanipalem was highly condemnable. The authorities should take action against the guilty.

Nara Lokesh deplored that

the YSRCP goons were behaving as if they had got a patent right on encroachments under their leader Jaganmohan Reddy's rule. Even the village-level leaders were resorting to land grabs and assaults on the government employees. Their wrongdoings were crossing all limits as some of them were even making physical attacks on the employees.

Lokesh demanded that YSRCP leader Doddi Kiran and his followers should be arrested immediately for their

physical attacks on the employees. The Government should provide necessary protection to the on-duty employees.

The TDP MLC paid rich tributes to noted Dalit writer Yendluri Sudhakar whose death would remain a huge loss for the Telugu language and literature. Prof. Sudhakar created the much-needed awareness among the weaker sections with his thought-provoking writings. Lokesh conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

Dists reorganisation will lead to all-round development: Avanti

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Reorganisation of the districts in the State, making the total number from 13 to 26, was a historic decision and it would result in the all-round development of all the areas, claimed Minister for Tourism Development M. Srinivasa Rao. "The decision to divide Visakhapatnam into three districts has received overwhelming response from all sections of people --intellectuals, educationists and elected representatives," the minister said.

"With the formation of the new districts, power and development would be decentralised and the funds would reach all the areas, leading to all-round development," the minister



added. As a result of the Covid pandemic and several other issues, the State has been suffering for the past two years. However, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has fulfilled his pre-election assurances, which shows his commitment towards the people's issues, he said.

As many as 30 welfare

schemes have been implemented and almost 90 per cent of the election promises fulfilled during the past two-and-a-half years. Priority is given to development of the Agency area and ensuring better living conditions for the tribals. Two Manyam districts were established, the minister said. "Normally, there would be some suggestions and objections regarding reorganisation of the current setup.

The government has given one month to register the voices of the people and would surely consider them," he added. Mayor H.Hari Venkata Kumari, Zilla Parishad Chairperson J. Subhadra and VMRDA Chairperson A.Vijaya Nirmala were also present.

JSP appoints presidents to 4 corporations

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Jana Sena Party (JSP) has appointed presidents to four municipal corporations.

Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan has approved the appointment of Chegondi Suryaprakash as president of the Political Affairs Committee.

He also appointed Sangishetty Ashok as president to Kakinada, Yarnagula Srinivasa Rao to Rajahmundry, Malaga Ramesh to Ongole and Jagadish Raja Reddy to Tirupati.

AP govt's policies anarchic: Naidu to Centre

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Telugu Desam Parliamentary Party (TDPP), at a meeting, presided over by party National President and former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday appealed to the Centre to turn its focus on the AP Government's anarchic policies and constitutional transgressions.

The TDPP met here ahead of the Parliament budget session to begin on Monday and discussed the AP issues to be raised in both the Houses there. It sought the Centre's attention to the YSRCP Government's financial excesses and anti-people policies that have plunged the State into a deep crisis in all sectors.

The TDPP leaders said the

The TDPP resolved to raise the issue of increased FRBM limit in the Parliament as this kind of facility was not sought or utilised by any other State Government in the country till now. Never before the FRBM rules were changed for enabling a State to procure hugely excessive loans.

future of Andhra Pradesh was pushed into grave danger because of the Jagan regime's excessive loans and the ruling YSRCP leaders' limitless looting. In just 32 months of its rule, the YCP regime created such a debt burden that was more than all loans made by the previous Governments since independence.

MPs Galla Jayadev, Rammohan Naidu, Kesineni Srinivas (Nani), Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar, TDP state president K. Atchannaidu and National General Secretary Nara Lokesh were present at the TDPP meet.

The TDP MPs pointed out that by the time CM Jagan came to power in 2019, AP

had an outstanding debt of just Rs. 3.14 Lakh Cr. Within a short period of time, the YSRCP regime created an additional debt of Rs. 3.64 Lakh Cr. Alarminglly, these massive loans were made in violation of the financial guidelines and not used for taking up development projects.

Expressing serious concern, the TDPP said the YCP rule's unaccounted loans were causing severe harm to the AP economy as a whole. On the other hand, the ruling party's looting in sand, liquor and mining was hampering the State's development completely. Unless the Centre would check the downside in AP, the State would witness total collapse in the near future.

Police arrest mobile phone snatching gang in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Banjara Hills police arrested a four-member mobile phone snatching gang involved in six cases here on Friday. Police recovered eight mobile phones from them.

The arrested persons are Mohd.Khaja Pasha alias Khaja (19), a painter, Mohd.Sabeel (19), a degree student, Shaik Sohail (19), a painter and M.Pavan Kumar (20), all residents of Singadikunta in Banjara Hills. They are involved in cases in Golconda, Jubilee Hills and Banjara Hills.

The four suspects are close friends and belong to the

same neighbourhood.

As they do not have a proper source of income, they decided to earn easy money by committing mobile phone snatchings from pedestrians walking alone on secluded roads during the night. According to the police, recently Pasha bought a bike and they started committing mobile phone snatchings in Raidurgam.

On January 24 night, they met at Singadi Kunta auto stand and after consuming liquor, they went to Tolichowki in Golconda and snatched the mobile phone of a pedestrian.

Top priority for setting up medical infrastructure: APMSIC MD

■ Construction and development of 165 Area Hospitals and CHCs taken up at a cost of Rs 1,223 crore

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh government is giving top priority to setting up medical infrastructure covering all the areas of the 13 districts, said Muralidhar Reddy, Managing Director, Andhra Pradesh Medical Services Infrastructure Corporation (APMSIC). Talking about the corporation's activities, the MD said that under the comprehensive programme of Nadu-Nedu, which has been envisaged for revitalisation of the hospital and healthcare services, the government is spending huge

funds to ensure quality medical aid to all the common people.

Addressing a media conference here on Friday, Muralidhar Reddy said that the corporation was entrusted with the development of primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare infrastructure across the State. As part of upgradation of secondary healthcare infrastructure, construction and development of 165 Area Hospitals and Community Health Centres have been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,223 crore, and all the works are progressing at a swift pace, he added.



"Agreements have been signed and works are progressing for four new govern-

"Agreements have been signed and works are progressing for four new government medical colleges at Paderu, Machilipatnam, Piduguralla and Pulivendula, to be constructed at a cost of Rs.250 crore"

ment medical colleges at Paderu, Machilipatnam, Piduguralla and Pulivendula, to be constructed at a cost of Rs.250 crore. Tenders were finalised for establishing 12 more government medical colleges at a cost of Rs. 5,830 crore," the MD explained. Tenders have also been finalised and work orders issued for developing 11 existing medical colleges and two attached institutions at a cost of Rs.3,820 crore. The entire project cost of the medical colleges is Rs. 11,700, he added.

"Based on what we learned from the times of the Covid pandemic, the government has laid 6,151 oxygen pipelines and allied works at a cost of

Rs.50 crore have been done. Besides, 39 hospitals are being provided with LMO tanks with a total capacity of 390 KL. Out of 98 PSA plants, 92 plants have already been commissioned," Reddy said.

The corporation is also establishing 20-bed pediatric care units with oxygen support at 182 Community Health Centres, spending Rs. 65 crore.

Reddy also conducted a review meeting of five districts -- Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari -- on the works and status of the tenders.



Guntur ZP approves budget for 2022-23

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Zilla Praja Parishad general body meeting approved Rs 957,60,74,000 estimated budget for the year 2022-23.

The meeting which was held here on Friday in the ZP conference hall approved the estimated budget for the year 2022-23 Rs 957,60,74,000, the surplus budget of Rs 1,78,96,000. The budget proposals were introduced in the meeting for approval.

Z P Chairperson Henry Christina Suresh said that the revised budget of the Zilla Praja Parishad for the year 2021-2022 and the estimated budget for the year 2022-23 were approved at the meeting. She said the agenda items discussed at the meeting of the standing committees were approved in the House. Zilla Praja Parishad receives revenue



from surcharge stamp duty, mineral, sand synergy, shopping complex leases, dock auctions and also the 15th Finance Commission Grant and the Prime Minister's Housing Scheme Grant. Based on the funds received from the above sources, the same would be released to the village panchayats and mandals, she informed.

Zilla Praja Parishad Chairperson Henry Christina presided over the ZP meeting on Friday in the ZP meeting hall. MP Ayodhya Ramireddy, MLAs P Ramakrishna Reddy, Ambati Rambabu, Bolla Brahma Naidu. Dr.Gopi Reddy Srinivasa Reddy, Kilari Venkata Rosaiah and Meruga Nagarjuna, Joint Collector, B

Rajakumari, K.S. Sridhar Reddy, and Anupama Anjali, MLCS L Appi Reddy and Janga Krishna Murthy were among those who were present.

During the meeting, MLAs ZPTCs and MPTCs demanded that steps be taken to ensure the proper functioning of the RO plants in the schools developed by the scheme in rural

areas, recruitment of watchmen for schools and fill up the vacant teaching and non-teaching posts. Legislator Bolla Brahmanayudu said that the Eepoor village MPP Office was in bad condition and demanded that the office be shifted to a temporary building and a new building be constructed immediately. Penna - Godavari connection

They demanded disbursement compensation to the farmers whose lands were acquired for the interlinking project of the Penna-Godavari rivers. They demanded the development of link roads between villages and agriculture fields in Chunduru and Tenali mandals. The MLAs said that medical services at various primary health centers were not being provided to the people properly and steps should be taken to improve medical services.



Collector directs officials to implement welfare schemes

PNS ■ ELURU

West Godavari District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has directed the officials to work efficiently to implement the welfare schemes, resolve problems of people and carry out development programmes.

The Collector here on Friday held a meeting with the officials. Speaking on the occasion, he said that he would not compromise in completing the assignments given to the officials and asked them to bring them to his notice if they had any problems.

The Collector reviewed the implementation of welfare schemes and the carrying out of development works in the district. He said that he would review their performance every week and directed them

to complete the task given to them with diligence in stipulated time.

"All the grievances which are received in the Spandana programme should be resolved in the prescribed time. The construction works of houses for the poor should be expedited. Steps should be taken to ensure that the Navaratnalu welfare schemes are reached to all eligible households", the Collector told them. A call centre would be set to know whether the Spandana grievances are resolved or not, he said. Steps were taken to strengthen the ward and village secretariats which are playing a key role in implementing welfare schemes, he said.

Prasanna Venkatesh instructed the officials to take steps to ensure that there would be no Covid deaths in

the district. He asked the officials to set up mask enforcement teams to ensure that all wear masks.

The Collector told them that the works being carried out under Nadu-Nedu should be completed at the earliest. All officers should make field level visits twice in a week to know the situation, he said, adding that e-office should be maintained and files should be cleared earliest. He said that convergence meetings would be held to remove the communication gaps between government departments. He asked the officials to organise a job mela for unemployed youths and set up coaching centres for them.

Joint Collectors Dr.B R Ambedkar, DRO V David Raju, RDOs and other officials were present.

Collector Pravin directs officials to upload data of OTS beneficiaries

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar has directed the officials to upload the data of One Time Settlement (OTS) beneficiaries.

The Collector held a video conference with the mandal level officers virtually on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector directed them that to ensure that work at the data entry, VRO / Panchayat Secretaries level should not be pending.

The Collector directed all the officers to work in coordination and advised them to be vigilant in case of objectionable house sites during the registration process. Pravin Kumar warned that strict action would be taken if there is indifference in discharging



duties. The beneficiaries who want to build houses in Jagananna colonies, if they are also members of self-help groups, would be created aware of getting an additional loan of Rs 35,000.

The Collector said that the banks should be constantly

monitored to ensure that loans are extended expeditiously to such beneficiaries.

Joint Collectors J Venkata Murali, T.S. Chetan, KS Viswanathan, DRDA PD Babu Rao, MEPMA P D Ravi Kumar, other mandal officials were present.

OU extends date for PhD thesis submission

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Responding to requests from research scholars and in consultations with the Deans of the Faculties of Osmania University, the university administration has on Friday released the official circular in connection with the last date of submission of PhD thesis by scholars availing one time chance from 31 January 2022 to 31 March 2022.

This provision is extend-

ed only to such scholars who have made the research progress seminar and pre-submission seminar presentation in front of the respective Departmental Research Committees by 28 February 2022, and 15 March 2022 respectively.

Scholars are expected to submit the final PhD thesis by 31 March 2022, after which no further extension will be entertained by the University, and the admission will stand cancelled.



Creation of districts a farce: Ananda Babu

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and former minister Nakka Ananda Babu has alleged that the creation of new districts has become a farce and sincerity did not appear in the government on the formation of new districts.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, the TDP leader flayed that in order to divert the attention of people from controversial issues like Casino and PRC, the government had hurriedly announced the formation of new districts. Finding fault with the government for issuing a GO overnight to create new districts, the former minister said the TDP was opposing the manner in which districts were created in an irrational manner.

"There is a need to bifurcate the districts. The government

should have formed committees to elicit public opinion on the creation of new districts. The government should take the people of all regions into consideration to form new districts to avoid people's resentment", he said, adding that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that the creation of new districts should be accepted by all.

Nakka Ananda Babu vehemently objected to merging Vemuru into the Bapatla district. He said that many people go to Tenali for various works. Without taking the opinion of people of Vemuru, located near Tenali town, it was merged into Bapatla district, he lamented. The merger of Vemuru in Bapatla district would badly affect the people of Vemuru, he lamented. "We demand that the government create Tenali district and merge Vemuru in Tenali district," he said.



SSC examination fee last date Feb14

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Directorate of Government examination (DGE) on Friday revised the due dates for remittance of examination fee for the SSC/OSSC/Vocational Public Examinations scheduled to be held in April /May -2022. The last date to pay the examination fee by the students to the headmaster concerned is February 14. With a late fee of Rs.50 and Rs.200, students can pay the exam fee till February 24 and March 4 respectively.

The exam fee will also be accepted with a late fee of Rs. 500 up to March 14th. These dates are applicable to regular and private candidates, once failed candidates wishing to appear for the SSC/OSSC/Vocational Public examinations April/May 2022. The due date of remittance of the exam fee would not be extended further under any circumstances, the DGE said. For more details candidates can approach the headmaster concern or visit the website [http:// www.bse.telangana.gov.in/](http://www.bse.telangana.gov.in/).

MP Maloth got CM's blessings

PNS ■ MAHABUBABAD

Mahabubabad MP Maloth Kavitha got blessings of CM KCR at Pragati Bhavan on Friday. She met CM KCR to get blessings on the occasion of she appointed as TRS Party Chief for Mahabubabad. In this occasion MP Kavitha's father and Dornakal MLA DS Redya Naik, Mahabubabad District TRS leader KSN Reddy, ZP Co-option Member Mahabub Pasha, Ayub, etc attended.



NGOs, teachers continue indefinite fast on 2nd day

PNS ■ ELURU

The government employees including teachers observed an indefinite fast on the second Friday demanding the government to revoke the GO issue to implement the PRC.

On the second day, the agitating teachers, government employees and pensioners under the aegis of 'PRC Sadhana Samithi' observed a relay hunger strike at the Collectorate as part of the agitation. Hundreds of employees, teachers and pensioners attended the programme. PRC Sadhana Samithi leaders RS Harnath, Chodagiri Srinivas, Kancharlapally Ramesh Kumar, L Vidya Sagar, Dasari Krishnan Raju, treasury union leaders U.Pandu Ranga Rao, K.



Satyannarayana, UTF leaders Poliseti Narasimha Rao and PRTU leaders Puvula Anjaneyas, D.P.R.T. leaders P Venkateswara Rao were among those who were present. Addressing the gathering the agitating leaders demanded

that the government concede their legitimate demand in respect of implementing the PRC.

They said there was no point in backtracking on the movement until the government accepted their demands. The

government is yet to call the state leaders of the PRC Sadhana Samithi for talks and resolve the issues. As part of the campaign, the relay hunger strike will continue till the 30th of this month, they informed.

Rlys constitute panel to look into grievances of candidates

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Attention of the Railways has been drawn to the concerns raised by some candidates over the process of shortlisting of candidates for the second stage of the ongoing recruitment examination under RRBs Centralised Employment Notice (CEN) No. 01/2019 (for Non-Technical Popular Categories - Graduate and Under-graduate) - results of which were announced on 14.01.2022. RRBs have postponed the 2nd Stage CBT (computer based test) of NTPC and 1st stage CBT of Level one. A high-power committee

comprising of senior officials has already been formed to look into the concerns raised by candidates in regard to the results of 1st Stage Computer Based Test (CBT) of NTPC exam without affecting existing shortlisted candidates and Introduction of 2nd Stage CBT in CEN RRC 01/2019. The candidates can lodge their concerns and suggestions to the committee till 16.02.2022 at following email id: rrbcommittee@railnet.gov.in. The committee after examining these concerns will submit their recommendations by 04th March, 2022.

Cash, ornaments stolen from farmer's house

PNS ■ NIRMAL

In an incident of burglary on Friday at Kandi village, the miscreants decamped with over Rs 2 lakh in cash and gold ornaments. The incident took place in the house of a farmer, B Dandari Mallesh. The miscreants, according to police, broken open the main door and gained entry into the house. They also broke open the almirah in which the money and gold ornaments were locked up. Police are investigating.

Four farmworkers die in truck-tipper collision

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

Four women were killed and several others were injured in a collision between mini truck and coal-laden tipper on Friday at Tippapanally village under Chandrugonda mandal. The accident took place when the women farmworkers were on their way in a mini truck to Yerragunta village. The ill-fated truck was completely mangled. The tipper truck

was said to have been transporting coal from Sattupalli to Kothagudem. It collided with the mini truck as the driver of the tipper had lost of control of the vehicle, it is said. The truck reportedly flipped over. The deceased were identified. Local people staged a protest in support of their demand for stern action against the tipper driver. They also demanded adequate compensation to the families of the dead.

PNS ■ KADAPA

Kadapa District Collector V Vijaya Rama Raju has sought suggestions and objections from the people on the formation of the new Annamayya district.

The Collector in a statement here on Friday asked people to send their suggestions and objections on the formation of the new Annamayya district. He asked the people to send their opinion in written statements either in English or in Telugu.

He said that the government had initiated the formation of a new district in order to improve the administration process and develop the region swiftly and gazette notification in this regard was



already issued.

The Collector said that the YSR district would consist of Kadapa, Jammalamadugu,

Badvel revenue divisions while the newly created Annamayya district consists of Rayachoti, Rajampet and Madanapalle revenue divisions with Rayachoti its headquarters.

"We ask people of the divisions to submit their suggestions or objections to use so that they will be examined and doubts will be allayed. The suggestion and objections should be presented either in Telugu or in English," he said.

The Collector asked people to send the suggestion addressing the 'District Collector, New Collectorate, Kadapa'. The people should send their suggestions to their respective Collector Offices, he informed. Suggestions and objections could be sent within 30 days from January 26.

LS Speaker Om Birla calls Arvind, asks him to come to New Delhi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Prakash Birla called Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind on Friday. Om Birla enquired about how the attack on Arvind by TRS activists took place and how the police behaved. Arvind told Om Birla that the TRS government had tried to murder him with the help of the police.

Reacting to the incident, Om Birla asked Arvind to come to New Delhi immediately. Arvind said that he will go to New Delhi within two



days and file a complaint with the Speaker on the issue. The Governor made a telephone call to Arvind on Thursday and enquired about the incident. The MP reportedly told the Governor that he was attacked by knife-wielding goons attacked him at

Om Birla enquired about how the attack on Arvind by TRS activists took place and how the police behaved. Arvind told Om Birla that the TRS government had tried to murder him with the help of the police.

Issapally village. He accused the police of orchestrating the attack. He also blamed the Police Commissioner for turning a blind to the incident.

Police directed to check ganja smuggling

PNS ■ ELURU

Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma directed the police officials to take stringent steps to prevent the smuggling of ganja, illicit liquor and banned tobacco products in West Godavari district.

The SP held monthly crime review meetings with all DSPs, CIs, and SIs in the district on here Friday virtually.

The SP reviewed the circle-wise pendency of grave, non-grave, and property crimes. The SP instructed the police officers to put a special emphasis on detecting property crimes and completing the investigation in stipulated time



in crime against women, and a crime against the SCs and STs.

The SP reviewed the registering cases, arresting accused, investigating cases, and filing

charges and the officers were briefed on crime detection and prevention.

The police officers were also instructed to prevent the

smuggling of 'cannabis' and 'illicit liquor' and the banned tobacco products like 'gutka and khaini'. They were also instructed to monitor interstate check posts closely to prevent other forms of smuggling.

The officers were directed to give counselling to bad characters and troublemakers within their police station and to respond quickly to petitioners.

The officers were also instructed to execute the pending NBWs at their respective police stations and produce the warranties in court. In all trial cases, witnesses should be brought to the courts on time, and steps

should be taken to ensure justice.

The SP directed the officers to coordinate with the other departments so that road safety could be maintained and road accidents could be prevented. The police staff should take precautions to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in the district, the SP told them.

District Additional SP, Admin A V Subbaraju, Special Enforcement Bureau Additional SP C Jaya Ramaraju, all Sub-Division DSPs, CIs and SIs in the district, DCRB SI Nagaraju, and IT Core In-Charge Narendra Kumar attended the meeting held virtually.

INDIA CORNER

MVA govt committed to development of powerloom sector: Maha minister

Maharashtra Minister Aslam Sheikh said the Maha Vikas Aghadi government was committed to the development of the powerloom sector in the state. Sheikh was addressing representatives of the textile and powerloom association at Bhiwandi in Thane district on Thursday. The state textile minister said he wanted to understand the issues faced by weavers in the state and address them in the new textile policy to be framed by the government in the next one year. The MVA government has been given an opportunity to serve citizens and industries and not to crush and beat them, he said. "Our view in the entire process is that the government benefits and the weavers also benefit from it. With the help of a new textile policy, we will bring about a revolution in the sector," Sheikh said. The minister said he was touring powerlooms in Bhiwandi, Malegaon, Solapur and Ichalkaranji to discuss the issues faced by weavers and address the same in the next policy.



TN police warns of action against those disturbing religious harmony

Tough action would be taken against those spreading canards in social media to create religious hatred or disturb public tranquility, Chennai police Commissioner Shankar Jiwai warned on Friday. Following a complaint against a BJP functionary which alleged that he posted tweets that created among people hatred and enmity based on religion, an FIR was filed by cyber crime wing and investigation has been taken up, police said. The complaint was against Bhartiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), Tamil Nadu president, Vinoo P Selvam and it was filed by a resident of Kilpauk here, Elangovan. Against this background, Jiwai warned of tough action against those spreading falsehood or distorting true news in social media to stoke communal passions or disturb public peace, a city police release said. Selvam had posted some tweets related to an allegation that a school in Thanjavur district had coerced a 17-year old girl student, a hostel inmate to convert to Christianity.



Odisha: People from outside Puri allowed to cremate bodies at Swargadwar crematorium

The Puri administration has lifted a restriction on the cremation of bodies from outside the coastal district of Odisha at Swargadwar crematorium in the wake of an improvement in the COVID-19 situation here, an official said on Friday. The authorities had imposed the curb on cremation of bodies from other districts and outside Odisha from January 10, as Puri town witnessed a surge in coronavirus infections. The restriction imposed on the funeral services of deceased belonging to other parts of Odisha and neighbouring states at Swargadwar and also on immersion of ashes at 'Mahodadhi' (sea) to contain the spread of COVID-19, was withdrawn with the decreasing trend of coronavirus-positive cases in the Puri district, the official said, citing a notification issued by the local administration on Thursday.



Naqvi takes swipe at Ansari for remarks on 'cultural nationalism'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an apparent swipe at former vice president Hamid Ansari, senior BJP leader and Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Friday that the "Bharat bashing brigade" is engaged in a competition of "lynching" of the country's culture, commitment and Constitution". At a virtual panel discussion organised by the Indian American Muslim Council on Wednesday, Ansari had said there has been emergence of trends and practices that dispute the well-established principle of civic nationalism and interpose a new and imaginary practice of cultural nationalism. And it wants to distinguish citizens on the basis of their faith, give



ment to intolerance, he had said, drawing sharp comments from BJP leaders. Speaking to reporters, Naqvi said, "Some people are becoming a part of anti-India conspiracy of Pakistan sponsored organisations. These organisations are conspiring to create confusion over India's culture and inclusivity". These people are becoming a "partner in Pakistan's propaganda" to defame India, he said.

Naqvi said that the country feels that some people and organisations have taken "supari" (contract) to tarnish

India's culture, nationalism and its ethos of unity in diversity. "The mindset of Modi-bashing is now changed to Bharat-bashing", he alleged. Unable to digest positive atmosphere and constructive mood of the country, some people are spreading falsehood about minorities before the world, he added. Naqvi said the BJP government works on the plank of development with dignity which has ensured that every section of the society has become an equal partner in inclusive empowerment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday lauded the strength of India's young population in fields ranging from start-ups to sports, and said no one can stop a nation whose youth works with the spirit of "nation first". Speaking at the National Cadet Corps PM Rally at Cariappa ground here, Modi said efforts are being made to strengthen the organisation with a high level review committee formed in this regard. Over one lakh new NCC cadets have been added in border areas in the last two years, he said while pitching for induction of more girls in the organisation. He noted that women are getting more and

No one can stop nation whose youth works with spirit of nation first: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

more responsibilities in the armed forces. The prime minister also highlighted the menace of drug abuse and asked NCC members to work to keep themselves and their campuses free from this and also help those who are not in the NCC in getting rid of this. Noting that in an era of possibilities relating to digital technology and information sector there are also dangers of misinformation, he said NCC members can run awareness campaign for this.



Maha govt, FDA crack down on oil adulteration



PNS ■ THANE

The Maharashtra food, civil supplies and consumer protection department and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducted a series of raids at edible oil manufacturing units in the Mumbai metropolitan area, an official said on Friday. The raids were conducted over the last few weeks to check the quality and hygiene standards being followed by the oil manufacturers in the region, he said. The state department

had raided a factory in Vashi area of Navi Mumbai on Tuesday, while the FDA conducted operations at units in Bhiwandi and Mira Road, the official said. The raids were conducted based on information about adulteration of sunflower oil, which was allegedly being mixed with palm oil and sold in Mumbai and parts of Maharashtra such as Panvel, Alibaug, Raigad, among others, said Kamlesh D Kedare of the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department.

Calls received on Covid helpline dropped in Jan 12-25 period: Delhi govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The total number of calls received on the Covid helpline, enquiring about availability of beds, vaccination programme, e-passes and other details, fell from 2,041 on January 12 to 983 on January 25, according to official data. These figures were shared during the meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on containment of COVID-19, held on Thursday. According to data about the '1031' Covid helpline run by the Delhi government, 180 channels are active which is sufficient to handle 8,000 to 10,000 calls a day. In case of an increase in call volume, the call centre can enhance the number of lines within two days time, officials said. On January 12, the helpline had received 2,041 calls, including 515 related to tele-



consultations with empanelled doctors and 450 on e-passes for movement during curfew hours, the data stated. The total number of calls then gradually fell to 1,981 on January 13; 1,784 on January 14 and eventually to 983 on January 25. The total number of calls on January 23 and January 24 had

stood at 875 and 1,060 respectively. The pattern of calls for doctor's tele-consultations also showed a similar trend in this two-week period, with 515 calls on January 12; 506 on January 14 and 187 on January 25, according to the data. The number of daily cases in Delhi has been on the decline after touching a record high of

28,867 on January 13. The city had recorded a positivity rate of 30.6 per cent on January 14, the highest during the ongoing wave of the pandemic. It took just 10 days for daily cases to drop below the 10,000-mark. Delhi had on Sunday reported 9,197 Covid cases with a positivity rate of 13.32 per cent and 34 deaths.

Yediyurappa's granddaughter Dr Soundarya dies by suicide

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's granddaughter Dr Soundarya V Y allegedly ended her life by hanging herself from the ceiling fan at her Vasant Nagar flat on Friday morning, police said. According to police, the reason behind the extreme step taken by the 30-year old doctor working in a private hospital was not known immediately. Soundarya, daughter of the BJP leader's second daughter Padmavathi, was married to Dr Neeraj S, who works in the same hospital, in 2018, police said. On Friday morning, Neeraj left for the duty at around 8 AM and

it is suspected that she ended her life two hours later. The matter came to light when the maid came to the house and knocked on the door repeatedly but in vain. She informed Dr Neeraj, who too called her on phone but there was no response, the police said, adding, the door was then opened by force. The body was later shifted to the Bowring Hospital where the post-mortem was performed. Learning about the incident, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, some ministers and senior BJP functionaries rushed to Yediyurappa's house to console the bereaved family members, BJP sources said.



BJP, SP giving casteist colour to Assembly polls: Mayawati

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BSP president Mayawati on Friday accused the BJP and Samajwadi Party of colluding to give a communal and casteist colour to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. In a tweet, the BSP supremo also cautioned the people against their designs. "The way religion and caste politics dominate in the UP assembly elections and the media is also full of such news, it seem that all this is happening as SP and BJP are colluding to give the elections colour of hatred on Hindu-Muslim and casteist lines.

UP polls: BJP declares 91 candidates, 13 ministers find place in list

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The BJP on Friday released a list of 91 candidates for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, giving tickets to 13 ministers and repeating its sitting MLA in Ayodhya. The party dropped Co-Operative Affairs Minister Mukut Bihari Verma, whose son Gaurav will be contesting from his Kaiserganj seat in Bahraich. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's media adviser Shalabh Mani Tripathi has been fielded from Deoria. The BJP repeated its sitting MLA from Ayodhya, Ved Prakash Gupta. The ministers who have been fielded



include Siddharth Nath Singh, who will contest from Allahabad West, and Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi', who will be in the fray from Allahabad South. Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Shahi has also found a place in the list.

UP polls: SP workers' resolve to don red caps godsend for poll merchandise sellers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "red cap is red alert" jibe, Samajwadi Party workers are buying the cap in hordes in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh to drive home their point that the headgear is a symbol of "change and revolution". And the SP's resolve to prove a point has come as blessing for those selling election paraphernalia as they are witnessing a huge jump in the sales of red caps, a compensation of sorts for the losses they



have suffered due to the ban on election rallies due to Covid. Led by party chief Akhilesh

Yadav, SP leaders and workers are registering a silent protest against the prime minister's

statement by flaunting their red caps, according to senior leaders. "Today, every leader and worker of SP is campaigning in villages and streets of the state while wearing a red cap," SP national spokesperson and MLC Sunil Singh Sajjan told PTI. "After PM Modi and CM Adityanath's statement that red, the colour of socialism, is a 'red alert for UP' and 'goons with red caps', party leaders and workers are putting on red caps to bring back socialism in the state and change the current government," he added.

Nadda hails SC order on MLAs' suspension

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda on Friday welcomed the Supreme Court order that held the Maharashtra assembly decision to suspend 12 BJP MLAs from the House for one year as "unconstitutional" and "irrational". The court's verdict to reject this decision, which was in violation of democracy and the constitution, is a victory of truth, Nadda said, adding that the BJP will continue to raise its voice against Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

BJP declared assets worth Rs 4,847 cr in 2019-20

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP declared assets worth Rs 4,847.78 crore in financial year 2019-20, the highest among all political parties, followed by the BSP at Rs 698.33 crore and the Congress at Rs 588.16 crore, according to poll reforms advocacy group ADR. The Association for Democratic Reforms prepared its report based on its analysis of assets and liabilities of national and regional parties in 2019-20. According to the analysis, the total assets declared by the seven national and 44 region-



al parties during the financial year amounted to Rs 6,988.57 crore and Rs 2,129.38 crore, respectively. Among the seven national

parties, the highest assets were declared by the BJP (Rs 4,847.78 crore or 69.37 per cent), followed by the BSP (Rs 698.33 crore or 9.99 per cent) and the

Congress (588.16 crore or 8.42 per cent), the ADR report said. Among the 44 regional parties, the assets of the top 10 parties were worth Rs 2028.715 crore or 95.27 per cent of the total declared by them all combined. In the FY 2019-20, among the regional parties, the highest assets were declared by the Samajwadi Party at Rs 563.47 crore (26.46 per cent), followed by the TRS at Rs 301.47 crore and the AIADMK at Rs 267.61 crore. Fixed Deposits/FDR constituted the largest share of Rs 1,639.51 crore (76.99 per cent) of the total assets declared by

regional parties in the FY 2019-20. Under the FDR/Fixed Deposits category for the financial year, the BJP and the BSP declared Rs 3,253.00 crore and Rs 618.86 crore, the top two among all national parties, while the Congress declared Rs 240.90 crore. Among regional parties, political parties such as the SP (Rs 434.219 crore), TRS (Rs 256.01 crore), AIADMK (Rs 246.90 crore), DMK (Rs 162.425 crore), Shiv Sena (Rs 148.46 crore), BJD (Rs 118.425 crore) among others declared highest assets under FDR/Fixed Deposits.

Budget session: Cong to work with like-minded parties; raise farmers issue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Top Congress leaders on Friday decided to work closely with like-minded parties during the upcoming budget session of parliament and jointly raise matters of public importance, including farmers' issues and border dispute with China. This was decided at a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Strategy group chaired by party chief Sonia Gandhi. The meeting was held virtually and it was decided to raise the issues of farmers' dis-



stress, border dispute with China and relief package for Covid victims. The party has

been demanding a compensation package for the families of Covid victims.

Missing classes

There is still no clarity from any quarter on whether it's okay to reopen schools

One would have expected the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (Insacog) or the National COVID Task Force or the entire body of epidemiologists and virologists to at least now come up with a view on the reopening of schools. Unfortunately, their view eludes us. Schools remained closed for all of 2020 and most of 2021. They began to reopen in several States at the end of the second wave but closed down again when Omicron surfaced. Scientists predict that the current wave is subsiding fast, but they do not want to tell us if it is okay for children to return to school. Restrictions are being lifted but no State Government is willing to bell the 'school reopening' cat. Is there something we do not know but ought to know? Or is it that nobody wants to take the risk because nobody can say with confidence that the reopening will increase, or not increase, the risk of infection? The children and their parents are owed an explanation. For over 600 days, students have missed school, been kept away from classroom studies and subjected to forced home isolation and, for no fault of theirs, they are becoming victims of mental distress. We hear the usual from the scientists that children have a strong immune system that prevents them from catching infection easily. On the contrary, months of sitting isolated at home without exercise or physical activity may have dented their immunity.



There is no data on how children faced infection and no surveys on whether strict precautions in schools can ward off infection till they are vaccinated. To a large extent, the hesitation of the Government in reopening schools is justified because children are the only segment of the population without a vaccine. Those over 15 are getting their first dose now. Vaccines for children above two years of age will have to wait for a while longer, probably till early summer when five vaccines will be available to them — Cadila Healthcare's ZyCoV-D, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, the Serum Institute's Covovax, Biological E's RBD and Johnson & Johnson's 26COV.2S vaccine. In the meanwhile, there should have been a national assessment of the fall in education reception, or knowledge absorption and in the standards among children, if any. The shortcomings of the online method of teaching are already in the public sphere. Students from poor families are suffering from not being able to afford digital devices or lacking electricity to run them. Parents are beginning to ask why education is not an "essential" service like economic activity is. They find it surprising that bars are the first to reopen, but not schools. They say it is naïve to suppose children are not exposed to the virus when adults in the family go out regularly for work. It is time for rationality, not emotions, to decide on the reopening of schools. There is no scientific reason to keep them closed, anyway.



Tourists paraglide as weather clears after snowfall in the Solangnala plains of Manali

Hindus as punching bags for centuries?

There are several mentions in historical recordings and scholarly papers to show that pre-Islamic religious edifices were razed to build mosques

There is no doubt that Hindus have had the image of being soft and, therefore, a useful punching bag. It was overdue for a firm stand to be taken as was rightly done by TS Tirumurti, the Indian permanent representative to the United Nations, very recently. Swami Vivekananda was palpably aware of the Hindu image having been tarnished and there being a Hindu phobia. Accorded a tumultuous welcome upon his return after making a great name for himself and his faith overseas, Swamiji gave a frank explanation for why there was Hindu phobia.

Sir Sankaran Nair, a member of the Viceroy's Council, in his book called *Gandhi and Anarchy* (published by Tagore & Company; Madras, 1922), wrote: "For sheer brutality on women, I do not remember anything in history to match the Malabar rebellion. It broke out about the 20th of August (1921). Even by the 6th of September, the results were dreadful." Gandhiji's comment which he wrote in *Young India* of September 29, 1921: "We have forgotten the divine out of dying for our faiths without retaliation..." The Hindus must have the courage and the faith to feel that they can protect their religion in spite of such fanatical eruptions." He warned the Government against excessive repression of the Moplahs. The ending of the revolt was a matter not only of urgency, but of simple humanity: "Be the Moplahs ever so bad, they deserve to be treated as human beings."

Amongst Swami Dayanand's successors, Swami Shradhdhananda was the most successful in implementing *shuddhi*. He was murdered in his sick bed. Gandhi's comment was: "I have called Abdul Rashid a brother and I repeat it. I do not even regard him as guilty of Swami's murder. Guilty indeed are those who excited feelings of hatred against one another."

The message of Vivekananda was clear that many problems have their roots in us. There is no power in the universe to injure us unless we first injure



ourselves. One-fifth of the population in India has become Mohammedan. Whose fault is it? One of our historians says in ever-memorable language: "Why should these poor wretches starve and die of thirst when the perennial fountain of life is flowing by? The question is: What did we do for these people who forsook their own religion? Why should they have become Mohammedan?"

To go back to Aurangzeb, over two centuries after the desecration, F Growse, the magistrate of the district in the 1870s, felt that of all the sacred places in India, none enjoys greater popularity than the capital of Braj, the holy city of Mathura. For nine months in the year, festival follows upon festival in rapid succession and the ghats and temples are daily thronged by new troops of way-worn pilgrims. So great is the sanctity of the spot that its panegyrists do not hesitate to declare that a single day spent in Mathura is more meritorious than a lifetime passed in Benares. All this celebrity is due to the fact of it being the birthplace of lord Krishna.

In his *Mathura: A District Memoir*, Growse has recorded his exhaustive survey of



THE MESSAGE OF VIVEKANANDA WAS THAT MANY PROBLEMS HAVE THEIR ROOTS IN US. THERE IS NO POWER TO INJURE US UNLESS WE FIRST INJURE OURSELVES. ONE-FIFTH OF THE POPULATION IN INDIA HAS BECOME MOHAMMEDAN. WHOSE FAULT IS IT?

Brajbhoomi. He was so overwhelmed by the vandalism that visited the area repeatedly that he wrote feelingly, although his home was in far-away England. To quote: "Thanks to Muhammadan intolerance, there is not a single building of any antiquity either in the city itself or its environs. Its most famous temple, which was dedicated to Kesava Deva (Krishna), was destroyed in 1669, the 11th year of the reign of the iconoclast Aurangzeb. The mosque (*idgah*) erected on its ruins is a building of little architectural value."

Today, Balkrishna is worshipped in a little room which appears like a servant quarter adjoining the back of the *idgah*. Pathos can be experienced by any visitor, whether a devotee or otherwise. The mischief with *masjids* extends from Somnath in the west to Adina mosque on the Bangladesh border in the east. The Adina mosque is situated on National Highway No.34 near Gaur. On the wall outside, distinct remnants of Hindu deities are visible. One stone slab displays Ganesha by the side of his consort. Inside the mosque, the stone work is equally convincing that the original building was a temple. There



PRAFULL GORADIA

has obviously been done a fair amount of work on this place of worship. Memoirs of Gaur and Pandua by M Abid Ali Khan, subsequently revised by HP Stapleton, prove this.

A more recent work of scholarship is entitled *Mosque Architecture of Pre-Mughal Bengal* by Dr Syed Mahmudul Hasan. Evidently, local legend as to who built the Adina mosque and why, appears to be incorrect. According to scholars, it was established by Sultan Sikandar Shah between 1366 and 1374 AD. There is a difference of opinion, especially between JH Ravenshaw and other scholars as to whether Gaur, the famous capital of medieval Bengal, was older or whether Hazrat Pandua, where Adina is located, flourished earlier. The significance of the controversy is about how much rubble from pre-Islamic edifices could have been used. Dr Hasan is impartial enough to quote various scholars at length, although he betrays some unhappiness at the allegation about the use of Hindu materials.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the *Rajya Sabha*. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE MAHARAJA'S HOMECOMING

Sir — For the Tatas, the original owners of Air India, nothing can be greater delight than the homecoming of the debt-laden, yet the nation's prestigious, air carrier after nearly seven decades. Air India, which gave wings to the nation, was much more than a business venture to the country's biggest conglomerate. (*Air India lands up in Tatas' hands*, January 28). From the first operation from Karachi to Bombay in October 1932, with JRD Tata steering a Puss Moth aircraft, to seizing control of Air India 89 years later, the Tata Group has had a rollercoaster ride in Indian civil aviation history.

While normally aircraft head back to their original destinations after flying, perhaps for the first time in aviation history has an airline company itself headed back to its original roots. The skies of independent India had long witnessed the dominance of the country's flagship airliner, and perhaps they are eagerly waiting to welcome the beginning of a new era in India's aviation ecosystem. And the Maharaja, whose famous moustache was designed by Bobby Kooka, a close associate and friend of JRD Tata, is truly back with a bang.

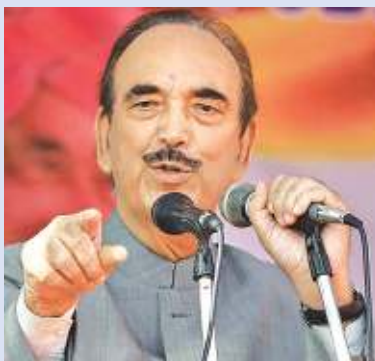
Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

INT'L HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Sir — We observe the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27 every year to mark the liberation of Nazi Germany concentration camp, Auschwitz Birkenau, from the historical atrocities committed on Jews. This day reminds us of the crimes committed by Nazi Germany in concentration camps, leading to about 1.1 million deaths between 1940 and 1945. On this day, the qualities of tolerance, equality, free speech and human rights need to be inculcated in this world beset by a number of challenges and inequalities. As the holocaust memories fade in the mist of time, anti-Semitic, religious and racial intolerance are taking the centre stage.

Since the number of Holocaust survivors is showing a downward trend, the younger generation must be made aware

Reason for Cong's discomfiture



This refers to the editorial, 'Missing focus' (January 28). The Government awarding the Padma Bhushan to Congress veteran Ghulam Nabi Azad in recognition of his services to public affairs has brought the fault lines in the party to the fore. Innuendoes and indignities against him are flying around. Praising the one from West Bengal as "Azad" for rejecting the national honour and mocking the other as

"Ghulam" for accepting it signifies the grand old party's deep decline. Azad's public affairs credentials are impeccable. He was the J&K CM in 2005, after Congress' CM Syed Mir Qasim in 1975. Also, he was Cabinet colleague to the party's who's-who of Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh.

This Government has in the past honoured Congress stalwarts like Pranab Mukherjee and Tarun Gogoi, too. Terming the present conferment 'political' is not true. Even the Government's harshest critics, the Shiv Sena and TMC, endorse the honour to Azad. After being sidelined by his party since he is a G23 member, Azad is doing well by pulling crowds in his home State. He may be eying a new political innings in J&K. That he may align with the BJP is probably worrying the Congress. Sad that while senior party members are polarised on the issue, the party's top leadership is in such disarray that it cannot even focus on the upcoming State elections.

SK Prabhakar | Gurugram

of it so as to be able to separate facts from falsehoods and hatred. Enlightening the youth about the agony of Holocaust is a tool that can spring them into action against the scourge of hatred. When Holocaust survivors' memories become ours, the future generations will avoid the mistakes of their ancestors. Collective memory has the propensity not just to serve as a blueprint for the future but also to rekindle the past memories and avoid repeating mistakes.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

WHAT'S WRONG WITH INDIAN CRICKET?

Sir — Cricket is like a game of chess and so every move counts in its shortest form. Having lost the Test series in a one-day fashion, we could have chalked out a strategy to avoid the mistakes committed in the longest form of the game. The blame game has started. It started from the Kohli era but we blame Rahul for the

downfall. The ex-captain is enjoying his cricket just like it is an outing in the park. As the captain, he was sending flying kisses to the pavilion and now, as a player, he is doing a cradle celebration.

The batting standards have gone down considerably, which forced such a situation that the bowlers were put to test. In the event of a small total to defend, most of the time on the tour our strategy should be to dismiss the opposition early. We lost to South Africa 1-2 in Test matches and 0-3 in One-Day matches. As a result, we sacked certain star bowlers as scapegoats. How long can we bank on our home wins? What is wrong with Indian cricket? Thus India's T-20 ranking is by far the best, compared to Test (3rd) and ODI (4th) after the debacle in South Africa.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

In the 75th year of Independence, we must resolve to ensure 75% turnout in every election.

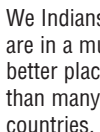


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



No deal with prosecutors (in graft trial). I will continue to lead Likud (Party).

Israeli ex-PM — Benjamin Netanyahu



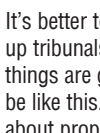
We Indians are in a much better place than many other countries.

Singer — Daler Mehndi



I asked myself 'What'd Novak do?' And I thought, OK, fight to the last point.

Russian tennis player — Daniil Medvedev



It's better to wind up tribunals if things are going to be like this. What about propriety?

Chief Justice of India — NV Ramana

Opportunists

Political leaders of myriad hues have turned elections into a joke in their lust for power

Till the 1980s, June and July used to be months of activity in Kolkata's football *maidans* despite the monsoon. That was the period of inter-club player transfers as a prelude to the Calcutta League. Though neither Bengal nor India were anywhere near the top 10 teams in Asia, the transfers took place with decency and dignity. The Indian Soccer League has since robbed the Calcutta League and the player transfers of their importance. The elections to five State Assemblies, to be held in February 2022, bring to mind more or less a similar scenario. Ministers, Assembly's sitting members and the out-of-favour leaders have suddenly sprung to life and are animatedly defecting from their old party to new outfits for the lure of tickets and other benefits. In Uttar Pradesh, many Ministers and their hangers-on have jumped fences and crossed over to parties which offered to fulfil their demands. A leader in the BJP's UP Government suddenly got enlightened that his community, Dalits and Muslims were being ignored by the Government in power since 2017 and so he walked off to the rival camp.



On why he kept quiet for five long years before crossing over to another party, his explanation was that people had given him the mandate for five years and that period was over once the election was declared! While this Minister defected to the Samajwadi Party, a leader from the house of the SP bosses jumped ship and joined the Hindutva bandwagon, portraying it as 'secular and humane'. The Uttarakhand PCC president joined the BJP because he would not have made it to the list of party candidates in the GOP. These are not stray incidents but routine shows that play out before every election. The Aaya Rams and Gaya Rams are still around... in modern avatars. Though Rajiv Gandhi after becoming Prime Minister amended the Constitution in 1985 with a view to checking defections, our ingenious political leaders have designed new strategies to circumvent the anti-defection laws. Politics is degenerating into 'politricks' and has truly become the 'Great Indian Political Circus'. If the common man opts for "one nation, one election" as proposed by the Prime Minister, it is only to get rid of this political gymnastics. A senior and respected MP was heard saying the other day she was willing to step aside provided her son was accommodated in her place. Cry, my beloved country!!

FIRST COLUMN

SOVEREIGN BOND MOVE IS A WELCOME IDEA

Foreign capital inflow will ease down the bond yield to some extent



SHSHANK SAURAV

Union budget 2022 is few days away and there are speculations around inclusion of India's sovereign bond in the global bond index. Sometime back RBI governor said that the process is on and it should happen in few months. Historically, India has remained averse to the foreign ownership in the country's debt. This policy choice was largely driven by our experience related to balance of payment situation in 1990s. Government opened up the corporate sector for foreign capital (via FDI/Filroute) and even FPI limit in corporate bond was kept high but RBI continued to keep a conservative stand on sovereign bonds. Things have changed now and our foreign exchange reserve is enough to withstand the short-term volatility caused by sudden capital outflow. The Covid pandemic has curtailed revenue generation on one hand while public spending has increased on the other. The Government has resorted to borrowing as other non-tax receipts (like disinvestment proceeds or asset monetisation schemes) are lagging behind the target. The GOI 10-year bond yield has touched two years high of 6.54 percent in January 2022. Economic growth is still under the shadows of pandemic and therefore government borrowing is unlikely to come down drastically. When economy revives and credit demand picks up, banks would not be showing the same appetite for the Government papers and it appears that yields are not going to ease in near term. A higher yield means more outflow on account of interest payment and thereby leaving less amount with government for infrastructure and asset creation.

Foreign capital inflow will ease down the bond yield to some extent. However, this inflow will cause appreciation of INR and it will be detrimental to the exporters. This exchange rate movement can be managed by the RBI with its market intervention policies. Despite of various concessions and incentives given by government, private investment is not picking up and government has to come forward for almost all major infrastructure projects. Domestic borrowing directly impacts the liquidity which has direct impact on demand/consumption and inflation. In our case, external borrowing should be used for growth purpose only and foreign capital should not be tapped just to finance the fiscal deficit. Country's risk perception determines the demand of the government papers by the buyers. Credit Default Swap spread is generally used to gauge the risk perception on the securities issued by the borrower. India's five-year sovereign CDS spread has consistently fallen (after reaching its peak in March '20 due to Covid-related uncertainty) which means that credit perception has improved. India's sovereign credit rating has remained stable and downgrading by Moody's in June 2020 from Baa2 to Baa3 had invited severe criticism. Attractive yields on Indian bonds are remunerative to the foreign investors even if exchange rate risk is factored in and therefore demand of these securities is not a question which policy makers should worry about. There are certain areas which need to be clarified by the RBI and finance ministry before this policy shift sees the light of the day. Though there is an overall ceiling of six percent and two percent of outstanding loans for central Government and state development loans respectively, operational process should be smooth. Taxation aspect (both interest receipt at periodic interval and capital gain) is important as any relaxation to the foreign investors would be detrimental to the domestic investors. A concession to the foreign investors while taxing the transaction in the hands of domestic investors would go against the principles of equity. This structural shift shows change of mindset and it is a welcome step but will need to be monitored cautiously post implementation.

(The writer is a Chartered Accountant, author and public policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)



Can Modi-Capt duo help BJP in Punjab?



AMITABH SHUKLA

Several Assembly polls have shown that Modi alone cannot be the face of BJP; it needs that extra zing, that extra person or an issue, to ride home

The Enforcement Directorate's raids on the house and business premises of the relatives of Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi follows a set pattern being followed by the central agencies for a while now in poll-bound states.

"This will generate a lot of smoke, this smoke will remain visible for a while but it will have little or no adverse political consequences for those who have been targeted," a leader in Punjab quipped on the timing of the raids when elections have been announced and the electoral process has begun.

Those who are knee-deep into politics say that the ED or Income Tax raids or any raid by a central agency hardly benefits the BJP in the elections as the fire is extinguished by those affected by the raid the very next day by playing the victim card to the hilt. The smoke too clears in the next 3-4 days after the agencies give an account of the recoveries and the dust it generates settles down in a week.

So, BJP in Punjab will have to rely solely on the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the political guile of two-time chief minister Amarinder Singh, having a combined tenure of nine and a half years in the top job of the state.

As we all know by now, Modi has a great influence when it comes to something like presidential type elections where he hardly has any political rivals and easily towers over others. It happened in 2014 and 2019 where the election was clearly Modi versus the rest. Obviously the combined "rest" was no match to Modi and the results hardly had any element of surprise. Not much has changed even in 2022 on this front.

However, at the same time, the Assembly elections in several states clearly showed that Modi alone cannot be the face of BJP and it has to get that extra zing, that extra person or an issue to ride home. Even in the home state of the Prime Minister, Gujarat, Congress did reasonably well despite the fact that Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah hailed from the same state. There were a string of losses in states all over the country, suggesting that local and regional leaders held on their own in their home turfs.

In Chandigarh Municipal Corporation elections, Modi was the only face of the BJP in the polls and the party could not win a majority despite ruling the civic body for five years. It's a different matter that through political machinations, it managed to get its "minority" Mayor elected, though the Aam Aadmi Party had two seats more than the BJP in the House.

So in Punjab, it is unlikely that Modi will have a big influence in the voting process and outcome, whatever his supporters say. The only rally he was supposed to address before the polls were announced, in Ferozepur, had to be canceled after the much-publicized security



WITHOUT GETTING INTO IFS AND BUTS OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AFTER THE POLLING, IT IS CLEAR THAT BJP WANTS TO HAVE A ROADMAP OF ITS OWN IN THE SIKH MAJORITY STATE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IT WAS IN ALLIANCE WITH THE SHIROMANI AKALI DAL FOR OVER TWO DECADES IN THE BORDER STATE AND USED TO CONTEST 20 SEATS IN THE URBAN AREAS AS A JUNIOR PARTNER

(The writer is Senior Resident Editor, The Pioneer, Chandigarh. The views expressed are personal.)



breach. Though the weather was bad on that day and prevented people from getting out, the low presence at the rally ground suggested that despite the repeal of the three farm laws, BJP has still to cross several more bridges to gain the trust of the Punjabis. To bridge that gap, one election is too short a time. It will take a while and sustained political efforts before BJP comes with the right formulae and local social engineering to get going in Punjab.

As far as Amarinder Singh is concerned, many in the state, some even his supporters, now believe that for him, forming Punjab Lok Congress and aligning with BJP is not a serious shot at power but only an attempt to ensure that Congress which he feels humiliated him, is defeated. Also, many in his old party believe that Amarinder could well be looking at fishing in troubled waters with half a dozen MLAs in a possible hung Assembly.

Without getting into ifs and buts of what would happen after the polling, it is clear that BJP wants to have a roadmap of its own in the Sikh majority state in the near future. It was in alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal for over two decades in the border state and used to contest 20 seats in the urban areas as a junior partner. The two parties complemented each other well-SAD, claiming to put across Sikh point of view while BJP the Hindu point of view in a state which was badly affected by militancy in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The now repealed three agricultural laws changed the political dynamics of the state and no one either from the BJP or the SAD could envisage the consequences it would have on state politics before the bills were conceptualized and eventually passed. As Sikh farmers from the state gathered at Delhi borders in one of the most visible non-violent protests in decades, opposition to the farm laws became a sort of mass movement in Punjab which a party could neglect only at its peril. SAD took the initiative and parted ways with its partner BJP and withdrew its minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal from the Modi Cabinet.


Even when BJP was in alliance with SAD, particularly, during the ten years of its rule (2007 to 2017), there were demands within BJP to test electoral waters independently. This chorus grew louder since 2014 when Modi emerged as a towering leader and BJP won several state elections and changed the political dynamics of the country. So, in 2022 it will be the first time in decades that BJP would be the big brother in the alliance with Congress turncoat and PLC chief

Amarinder Singh and would contest 65 odd seats. If BJP manages a decent show and the definition of a decent outing would vary from one leader to the other, a new alignment could emerge in Punjab. But given the fact that BJP has been unable to grow in rural Punjab due to multiple factors, it looks like a long haul for the safe party at present.

Many in the SAD believe that Amarinder Singh's PLC is only a one election wonder and they have little or no differences with BJP, more so when the reason for their differences-Farm Acts-no longer exists. So there would hardly be much surprise if the SAD is back in alliance with the BJP for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and a soft understanding soon after the 2022 Assembly polls. In fact, none of the two parties-SAD and BJP-are making noises against each other in the campaign, making it clear that there is hardly any difference of opinion amongst them. If BJP does reasonably well in assembly polls, it will then bargain for more seats in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls from SAD. That seems to be the refrain of some BJP leaders as well as an aging Captain Amarinder is no guarantee for their future political plans in the state and SAD completes the Hindu-Sikh political stereotype which helps BJP in rest of the country as well.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WARM CONGRATULATIONS TO @GHULAMNAZAD ON HIS PADMA BHUSHAN. IT'S GOOD TO BE RECOGNISED EVEN BY A GOVT OF THE OTHER SIDE. — CONGRESS LEADER SHASHI THAROOR



RIGHT THING TO DO (REFUSING THE AWARD). HE (BUDDHADEB BHATTACHARJEE) WANTS TO BE AZAD (FREE), NOT GHULAM (A SLAVE). —CONGRESS RAJYA SABHA WHIP JAIRAM RAMESH

Solid waste management policy still suffers from niggles

Primary segregation is key to effective solid waste management, specifically recycling and composting

Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 brought in by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) are having limited success. Authorities right from the Ministry of Urban Development, CPCB, State pollution Control Boards, Municipalities, and Gram Panchayats have been made accountable. Implementation is mainly by municipal authorities and gram panchayats as per rules. Segregation at source is the mainstay of the Rules as has been amply demonstrated by municipalities like Indore, making citizens and institutions responsible for primary segregation.

The ministries of Urban Development and Rural



RAJESH KUMAR

(The writer is Special Correspondent, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

Development are the main monitoring agencies at the national level.

Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, according to clause 7, has to ensure market development assistance and promotion of city compost with chemical fertilizers in the ratio of 3:4, but the ministry has done nothing to assist the municipalities and gram panchayats, where compost is being produced.

Similarly, the Ministry of Agriculture, as per clause 8, had to set up labs for checking the quality and propagation of compost on farmland, but it has done little. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) hardly monitors State Pollution Control Boards for implementation. Even Delhi is not segregating waste as per rules right under the nose of CPCB. According to SWM Rules



2016, Clause 15 makes local authorities responsible for solid waste management. Except for municipalities like Indore, Ambikapur and a few others, no municipality is following the rules. Cities like Noida are finally working on different types of waste and segregation at doorsteps but implementation is insufficient even though City managers like Salil Yadav worked hard to implement and succeeded partially. He has been transferred to Greater Noida

Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) to implement in the planned township of Greater Noida.

GNIDA was fined Rs 2 crore by National Green Tribunal in 2019 for not properly implementing SWM 2016 rules. Since then, it has taken action for empanelment of private agencies for bulk waste generators (apartments) and has empaneled more than 17 agencies in category 2 of its notification.

Sources said three attempts were made by GNIDA to empanel vendors for colonies but due to unfavourable conditions such as unwillingness to pay or pay very little, harassment of sanitary workers and collectors, the attitude of residents, foiled the initiative.

A look at the implementation of apartments and colonies

like Jalvayu Vihar, AWHO, Gurjinder Vihar, Jaypee Greens, La Residencia, NHPC Employee colony, Greenwood Society, Ansal Golf Links, Gaur City 1 & 2 throws up interesting facts.

Jaypee installed a composter machine in July 2021, in accordance with the SWM rules of GNIDA and Central Government, but the machine had not worked properly due to its vendor's inadequacies. Segregation at the residential level was patchy at best. A person from the machine maker explained that it is a proper aerobic composter and not a burning machine as used in many societies. Sources from GNIDA informed that Jaypee had been fined heavily on quite a few occasions as waste was not being processed and was picked by a company, K waste, which disposed of all wastes in landfills. Penalty amount could not be verified. La Residencia was earlier a joint venture with Amrapali. After being fined by GNIDA they have bought the machine and are finalizing the vendor. In the case of Gaur City, a huge residential complex, segregation, and processing were not visible.

AWHO, similar to Jaypee Greens, has a very big aerobic composter and a proper structure allotted and one of the first to implement in 2019. It was inaugurated by Deputy CEO of GNIDA, but the machine is not working since September 2021. A source in the RWA office informed that a company was doing the composting till August 2021 but the RWA Housekeeping committee and the company had their differ-

ences and so, the company was asked to wait till they try a new vendor from September 2021. But it has been months and neither the current vendor K Waste nor the current RWA committee has taken action to rectify the machine. The plant did not have any workers and no evidence of any waste management work was seen. GNIDA has not taken action against AWHO as per rules. The earlier company was not available for comments.

In the case of AWHO, one RWA committee was the initiator and the committee which came later played the spoilsport and violator. GNIDA sources informed they have blacklisted certain vendors like SVM, who were throwing waste in landfills in Greater Noida or even transported it to Ghaziabad.

Granules India gets USFDA nod for generic product

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Granules India on Friday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market Potassium Chloride, which is used to treat low blood levels.

The US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA) has approved the abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) for Potassium Chloride for Oral Solution filed by Granules Pharmaceuticals Inc (GPI), a wholly-owned foreign subsidiary of the company.

Potassium Chloride is used to prevent or to treat low blood potassium levels (hypokalemia).

The product would be available for the US market



shortly, Granules India said in a statement. "We are pleased to receive the approval of the product and will surely be a valuable addition to our growing product

portfolio in the US market," GPI Executive Director Priyanka Chigurupati noted. Granules stated that it now has a total of 49 ANDA approvals from the USFDA.

According to MAT Nov 2021, IQVIA/IMS Health data, the current annual US market for Potassium Chloride for Oral Solution is around USD 44 million.

Atul Q3 net profit falls Rs 17.6 pc to Rs 156.91 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gujarat-based chemicals manufacturer Atul on Friday reported a decline of 17.56 per cent in its consolidated net profit to Rs 156.91 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 190.35 crore during the October-December quarter of the previous fiscal, Atul said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations jumped 44.85 per cent to Rs 1,380.31 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 952.89 crore a year ago. Atul's total expenses were at Rs 1,176.15 crore, up 57.77 per cent in Q3/FY 2021-22, as against Rs 745.48 crore. Its Q3/FY22 revenue from the 'life sciences chemicals' segment was at Rs 397.61 crore and Rs 1,026.38 crore from 'performance and other chemicals'.

Sebi to auction Ramel Industries properties on Feb 24

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi will auction properties of Ramel Industries for a total reserve price of Rs 19 crore on February 24 in order to recover money raised by the company from public through illicit schemes.

The properties to go under the hammer include land parcels, agricultural land, office premises and flat and godown across West Bengal, Sebi said in a public notice on Friday.

Inviting bids for sale of properties in the recovery proceedings against Ramel Industries and its promoters or directors, Sebi said the e-auction will take place on February 24, 2022 between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm.

Total reserve price of these properties is pegged at Rs 19 crore and the regulator has engaged Quirk Realty to assist it for sale of the properties.



The market watchdog said the bidders should make their own independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, litigation, attachments, acquisition and liabilities of the property put on auction prior to submitting their bids.

"The properties are being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to Sebi. Sebi shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues, etc," as per the notice.

Embassy REIT Q3 net operating income up 30 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Embassy Office Parks REIT on Friday reported 30 per cent increase in net operating income to Rs 621.3 crore for the quar-

ter ended December 2021 and announced distribution of Rs 493 crore to unitholders. Michael Holland, Chief Executive Officer of Embassy REIT, said, the company's per-

formance was good despite COVID disruptions. This underscores the resilience and growth potential of Embassy REIT, he added.

"We continue to see multiple

positive indicators for our business - the uptick in new leasing, our delivery of the 1.1 million square feet (MSF) JP Morgan campus, our 4.6 MSF of development pipeline, and a 5 MSF

potential acquisition opportunity in Chennai," Holland said. Embassy REIT leased 4,28,000 square feet across 15 deals, and achieved 14 per cent rent increases on 1.8 MSF.

MONEY MATTERS

Rupee rises 5 paise to close at 75.04 against US dollar



The rupee snapped its three-day losing streak to close 5 paise higher at 75.04 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday amid expectation of better dollar inflows from upcoming IPOs.

However, the rebound in the rupee was restricted amid weakness in domestic equities, analysts said. Forex traders said geopolitical tensions, elevated crude oil prices and hawkish US Fed stance also weighed on the local unit. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 75.12 a dollar and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.88 and a low of 75.13. The domestic unit finally settled at 75.04 (provisional) against the American currency, up 5 paise over its last close of 75.09. Meanwhile, the US dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against the basket of six currencies, rose 0.11 per cent to 97.35. "The Indian rupee managed to stabilise after sharp sell-off in the last three days and retraced from one-month low on expectation of better dollar inflows from upcoming IPOs and position downsizing ahead of the Union Budget," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. However, stronger dollar index, elevated energy price and higher bond yields could push local currency lower in the coming days, Parmar added. During this week, the local currency has depreciated 61 paise against the US dollar. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.49 per cent to USD 89.78 per barrel.

German economy shrank 0.7% in 4th quarter as COVID resurged



The German economy shrank by 0.7% in last year's fourth quarter amid a resurgence in coronavirus infections and new restrictions, official figures showed Friday. The quarter-on-quarter decline reported by the Federal Statistical Office

followed two quarters of solid gains that came despite persistent supply bottlenecks. Gross domestic product grew 2.8% over the whole of last year, the office said, rebounding from a plunge of 4.6% in 2020 when pandemic lockdowns were at their most severe. That figure was revised up slightly from the preliminary figure of 2.7% the office reported earlier this month. The government this week cut its growth forecast for this year to 3.6%, down from the 4.1% Germany's previous government forecast in late October. Economy Minister Robert Habeck told parliament on Friday that it expects 2.3% growth in 2023. The first-quarter performance will be "inhibited, above all because of the corona pandemic and the restrictive measures but of course also because of the foreign policy situation - times of crisis are often times in which the investment climate suffers," Habeck said, alluding to tensions with Russia over Ukraine. "We expect that the pre-crisis level will be reached in this year's second quarter." Germany is currently seeing another spike in COVID-19 infections fuelled by the highly contagious omicron variant. However, on Tuesday, a closely watched survey showed business confidence unexpectedly picking up in January after a six-month slide.

Gold declines Rs 423; silver tanks Rs 1,105



Gold price in the national capital declined by Rs 423 to Rs 47,777 per 10 grams on Friday amid weak international precious metal prices and rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal settled at Rs 48,200 per 10 grams. Silver also dipped by Rs 1,105 to Rs 61,652 per kg from Rs 62,757 per kg in the previous trade. Spot gold prices for 24 carat at Delhi extended decline by Rs 423 reflecting overnight selling in COMEX gold prices along with rupee appreciation," Tapan Patel, Senior Analyst (Commodities), HDFC Securities, said. The Indian rupee eked out a marginal 4 paise gain at 75.05 against the US dollar in the morning trade on Friday. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,794 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 22.63 per ounce. Gold prices traded down with spot gold prices at COMEX trading 0.15 per cent lower at USD 1,794 per ounce on Friday," he added.

AEPC set to double India's share in Colombia's total apparel imports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) on Friday said that domestic exporters should aim to increase India's share in Colombia's total apparel imports by focusing on high value added products.

Speaking at an online event on 'India-Colombia Synergies in Apparel and Textiles', AEPC Chairman Narendra Goenka said that India's share is only 3.2 per cent in Colombia's global apparel imports.

"We are looking at escalating this to some respectable figure in double digits. We are focusing on higher value and specialised products like man-made fibre (MMF) apparels, medical and technical textiles," he said. According to the council, though there has been a fall in imports of ready-made garments (RMG) in Colombia, Indian RMG exports have been able to maintain its share in the Colombian market.

While Colombia's RMG import from the world fell from USD 652 million in 2019 to USD 408 million in 2020, India's share in Colombia's



total apparel imports remained the same at 3.2 per cent with USD 21 million in 2019 and USD 13 million in 2020, it said.

Goenka said that the Indian apparel sector offers a large opportunity for investment.

"Colombian investors can also set up manufacturing facilities in India directly or through joint ventures, and partner with us in building R&D, innovation and incubation centres in India," he said. The textiles sector has attracted FDI worth USD 3.75 billion from April 2000 to March 2021.

Speaking at the event, Indian Ambassador to Colombia Sanjiv Ranjan said over a period of time, the popularity of Indian garments and textiles in Colombia has been increasing especially among women and this is an added advantage. "Concerted efforts would be required to reach the pre-pandemic level of exports of about USD 22 million," he said. Crishtian Salamanca, Executive Director, Colombia-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that Indian companies are reliable partners with the Colombian firms.



Century Plyboards India's net profit jumps

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Century Plyboards (India) Ltd on Friday reported a 42.7 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 93.89 crore for the third quarter ended December 2021.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 65.79 crore in the corresponding quarter of last year, Century Plyboards said in a BSE filing.

Its revenue from operations

during October-December 2021 jumped 29.5 per cent to Rs 854.79 crore. It was Rs 660.09 crore in the year-ago period. Century Plyboards' total expenses stood at Rs 725.98 crore during the December 2021 quarter, a jump of 30.67 per cent as compared with Rs 555.60 crore.

Shares of Century Plyboards (India) Ltd on Friday declined 2.16 per cent to close at Rs 593.35 apiece on the BSE.

PNB looking to further monetise its stake

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Friday said it is looking to further monetise its stake in UTI Mutual Fund as part of its non-core asset sale plan to shore up its capital base.

The bank has categorised non-core assets into two heads -- real estate and investment assets. "We have sold 3 per cent stake in UTI AMC, where we have earned an amount of about Rs 180 crore in October 2020...we had investment of 18 per cent in UTI AMC which we have brought down to 15 per cent. There is still scope to monetise that," S S Mallikarjuna Rao said at a virtual media briefing.

PNB is one of the sponsors of the country's oldest mutual fund company. Besides PNB, State Bank of India, Life Insurance Corporation of



India, Bank of Baroda and US-based T Rowe Price are other sponsors.

The bank also intends to divest its stake in Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance Co Ltd, an associate of the bank, within the regulatory guidelines to monetise it, he said. The city-headquartered bank had acquired a stake in the life insurer post amalgamation of the erstwhile Oriental

Bank of Commerce (OBC) into itself last fiscal year. The erstwhile OBC held 23 per cent stake in the life insurer, which by virtue of amalgamation has come to PNB.

Besides, he said, the bank is also looking to divest stake in asset reconstruction companies during 2022-23.

With regard to real estate assets, Rao said, the bank has one of the floors in Bhikaji

Cama place at Delhi and other floors are in line.

Asked about the outlook for the current quarter, he said, the bank expects recovery of about Rs 5,000 crore from both NCLT and non-NCLT cases in the January-March period.

"At a conservative level we are confident of getting gross non-performing assets (NPAs) below 12 per cent by March 2022. We shall definitely get net NPAs below 4.5 per cent by March 2022 because we are expecting recovery to the extent of Rs 5,000 crore during the quarter," he said. On the bottomline, he said, the current financial year would close with net profit of over Rs 4,000 crore. For the 9 months, the profit is about Rs 3,250 crore, he said, "so we are properly in line with the guidance given that the profit at the end of March 2022 would be more than Rs 4,000 crore."

Power Mech Projects seps jump in profit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power Mech Projects posted a multifold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 32.75 crore in the December 2021 quarter, on the back of higher revenues. The company had reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 3.15 crore in the corresponding quarter last year, according to a BSE filing.

It has been a blast working with Sidharth: Fatima Sana Shaikh

Fatima Sana Shaikh and Sidharth Malhotra shared great chemistry in their recent television commercial actress Fatima Sana Shaikh was recently seen in a TVC with the handsome hunk Sidharth Malhotra, and their chemistry was to watch out for. The audience also liked their camaraderie on screen and have been wanting to see them again on screen soon. Fatima also enjoyed the company of Sidharth and considers him a great co-start to work with. On her experience working with Sidharth, she shares, "It has been a blast working with Sidharth for the ad. We gelled so well on the sets, it didn't feel like it is the first time we are working together. I believe, acting is a lot of reacting. It's always good to have good performers opposite you so that you can feed off their energies." Seems like the duo had a blast while shooting and it would be really a great surprise for the audience to see their boiling chemistry on screen.

The duo have shared a great playful moment in the ad on screen. The audience has been waiting with a bated breath for a new shining pair on screen.

Speaking about their upcoming projects, Fatima Sana Shaikh will be next seen in Sam Bahadur while Sidharth Malhotra will be next seen in *Mission Majnu*.

Shilpa excited about uncovering hidden talent across India

Actress Shilpa Shetty, who is currently seen judging *India's Got Talent*, is happy about uncovering hidden talent across the country with the help of the reality show. Speaking about the premiere weekend, Shilpa said, "I am excited about uncovering the plethora of hidden talent that India's nooks and crannies have in store for us."

She added, "It's heartening to also see that the audience is enjoying this season of *India's Got Talent*. Kirronji, Badshah, Manoj and I are having a great time shooting for the show."

This is the fourth time that Shilpa is seen judging a reality show. Previously, she has judged shows like *Zara Nachke Dikha*, *Nach Baliye* and *Super Dancer*. *India's Got Talent* Season 9 airs on Sony TV.

On the film front, Shilpa, who is currently seen as a judge on *India's Got Talent*, will be seen in the film *Nikamma*. Directed by Sabbir Khan, the film also stars Abhimanyu Dassani and Shirley Setia.

Shruti Haasan, Mithun Chakraborty to star in psychological thriller *Bestseller*

Actors Mithun Chakraborty, Shruti Haasan, Arjan Bajwa, Gauahar Khan, Satyajit Dubey, and Sonalee Kulkarni will be starring in an eight-episode psychological thriller *Bestseller*.

This will stream from February 18 on Prime Video as an Amazon Original series.

It is produced by Siddharth Malhotra's Alchemy Production LLP and directed by Mukul Abhyankar.

"At Prime Video, our endeavour has been to provide a platform to diverse cinematic voices and bring compelling, engaging and differentiated content to our customers," said Aparna Purohit, Head of India Originals at Amazon Prime Video.

"Our latest Amazon Original Series, *Bestseller*, is a fast-paced, gritty psychological thriller that will pull viewers deep into a vortex of flawed human nature and leave them hooked. It's a complex world where nothing is quite as it seems, and the story gets darker."

Siddharth Malhotra, Founder & CEO of Alchemy Production LLP added, "For me, *Bestseller* has not been a project but a dream that I have envisaged for over the last several years. I have had endless brainstorming sessions with my team nurturing, shaping and transforming this riveting story into a series that I believe will redefine 'psychological thriller' as a genre. Mukul Abhyankar, the director, has tied the story together in an incredible way and the highly talented and versatile cast have breathed life into the script."



Kevin Macdonald to direct *The Iceman* starring Joseph Fiennes

BAFTA and Oscar winner Kevin Macdonald will helm *The Iceman*, which will star Joseph Fiennes as the larger-than-life extreme athlete Wim Hof.

The pic reunites producer Debbie Gray, who is producing alongside Fiennes, with sales agent Cornerstone Films following their recent collaboration *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande*, reports *deadline.com*.

The two companies are also partners in The Reset Collective, the Australian production and distribution company that launched 2020.

Kevin Macdonald said, "Wim is someone who has suffered a terrible trauma — the loss of his wife — and finds an entirely new way to deal with the depression that comes with that experience."

"Jeff Pope has written a brilliant script — full of humour and humanity and emotions. In it, we are introduced to the Dutch suburbs — a world of crazy stunts, a broken family, a love affair and an epiphany. This is a film about resilience, second chances and the amazing ability of the human body and mind to heal."

The Iceman will start shooting in November 2022. Hof, a widower working as a postman and struggling to support his four children, turned to the cold to find peace and strength. Soon, his radical techniques drew worldwide attention.

Kanye West announces *Donda 2*, album to release in Feb 2022

Rapper Kanye West has announced a follow-up to his 2021 album *Donda*.

In a post on Instagram, West, who now goes by the name Ye, announced that the *Donda 2*, which will be his 11th album, will release on February 22, 2022.

"*Donda 2*. Coming 2 22 22. Executive Produced by Future," the 44-year-old rapper wrote alongside the album's cover art.

Donda, which West released in August 2021, was named after his mother, Donda West, who died at the age of 58 following plastic surgery complications in 2007.

Donda 2 would mark the first time West has made a sequel to one of his albums, and its release falls on the same day he plans to launch his clothing collaboration with Skid Row Fashion Week, according to *Entertainment Weekly*.

The record would also arrive less than a week after Netflix drops part one of *Jeen-Yuhs*, the three-week documentary event chronicling more than 20 years of the musician's career.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



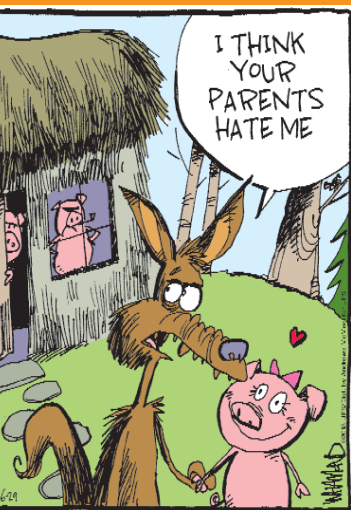
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GINGER MEGGS



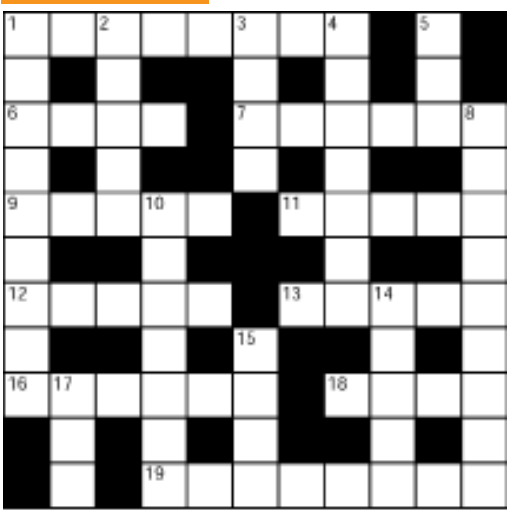
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

1	2	7	9	8	5	4	3	6
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Rules

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

ACROSS

- Train stops
- Tell a fib
- Young cows
- A tall type of building
- A feeling of rage
- Bees make this
- One third of twenty-one
- Instructions for cake making
- The part along the side or end of something
- Always ready to give away or share what you have
- Complete quiet
- Tell a fib
- People unknown to you
- The late part of the day
- A machine that can record television programmes
- A type of blood vessel
- Pixie

DOWN

- A thing with handles for carrying an injured person
- Let
- Say this when you get hurt





A Telugu treasure: Sowcar Janaki's mark on the industry

Her 400th film was released in 2020 — *Biskoth* starred Santhanam and Tara Alisha.

Many of her films were immediately well-received, but some became classics. In the Telugu film industry, *Charanadasa* was a box office success, quickly followed in 1956 by *Edi Nijam*, which was another hit, and it received a National award for best Telugu feature film. The very

Here are some must-watch movies of Sowcar Janaki:

Shavukaru: It is a 1950 drama film, produced by Nagireddy & Chakrapani under the Vijaya Productions banner and directed by L. V. Prasad. Starring NTR, this film brought so much fame to Veteran South Indian actress Janaki that people began calling her as Sowcar Janaki after this film's release.

Rajulu Marayi: This story is set in a native village environment and portrays the changing times. The film is the debut of Waheeda Rehman in the film industry. *Rajulu Marayi* was released on 14 April 1955. The film ran for over 25 weeks in theatres, thereby becoming a Silver Jubilee film, and was remade in Tamil.

Doctor Chakravarthy: The film starring Akkineni Nageswara Rao is based on Koduri Kousalya Devi's novel Chakrabhramanam. The film was recorded as an industry hit at the box office. It is the first film to win the Nandi Award, instituted by the then Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1964. It inspired many people in India to become doctors.

Samsaram Oka Chadarangam: The film directed by S P Muthuraman, the film won three Nandi Awards. Her character as Chittamma won many applause then.



Veteran actress Sowcar Janaki was one of the few people from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to be awarded the coveted Padma Shri. She has appeared in 400 films and 3,000 live stage performances and is one of the most influential, iconic actresses to grace the southern screens of her day. She's shared the limelight with almost all the stars of southern cinema — ANR, NTR, Janaki, Savitri, SVR, Gemini Ganesan, Kamal Hassan, and many more. Her career has spanned over 7 decades, making her one of the very few Indian actors, who have enjoyed an extremely long career.

Born in Rajahmundry in 1931, Janaki was a strong-willed spirit from her early years. Her father's stern eye made her read the newspapers regularly, from where she picked up her impeccable English. She went on to become a radio jockey, a job she

enjoyed at the age of 15. Her debut on the silver screens was in the L.V. Prasad-helmed movie *Shavukaru* with NTR. The movie received great reviews and was the beginning of what was to be a long and exciting career for a versatile, expressive actress. It was the very movie that made Sankaramanchi Janaki become Sowcar Janaki! It was indeed in dire circumstances that she had to take up acting, with a baby and a family in need of money, but there was no looking back after tasting resounding success. She essayed a wide variety of roles throughout her 71 years career. The only other actors to have had such long careers in the field of acting in India were Dev Anand, Pran, Ashok Kumar, Akkineni Nageswara Rao, and Kamini Kaushal. However, by 2016, her career span has overtaken most other actors. The tireless diva has a movie in the works even today!

next year, her *Bhagya Rekha* would win the same award. In 1964, the next big Telugu hit of her filmography would be *Dr. Chakravarthy*, which was based on Koduri Kousalya Devi's book, *Chakrabhramanam*. It made history by becoming the first film to win a Nandi award.

Manchi Kutumbam in 1968 was also a critical success and was followed by *Dharma Dhaata*, which is a drama about money and love.

Other movies that are not to be missed are the wildly popular *Dasavataram*, *Samsaram oka chadarangam*, for which she received a Nandi award, *Geethanjali*, *Yevade Subramanyam*, and the 2015 hit *Kanche*.



Shakun Batra tears up thanking Boman Irani of his love



Waiting the streaming of *Gehraiyaan*, filmmaker Shakun Batra joined the virtual celebrations of the third anniversary of Boman Irani's production house, Irani Movietone. Many luminaries of Bollywood graced the celebration of the incredible milestone and witnessed an emotional Batra talking about his love and admiration for Boman. The filmmaker teared up as he expressed his gratitude to the actor-producer for being there for him as he concluded his heartfelt address. Shakun shares with us, "He (Boman) has seen me

as an assistant trying to figure his own life out. He has seen me nervous, anxious and has been there for me. I can never forget him coming up to me when I was being nervous to say you will be fine and it's rare that you meet people like him and then he became an important part of life."

Overwhelmed by emotions, he adds, "Bomsie I am so proud and happy. I genuinely wish that I could learn more from you and I was hoping to be as giving as you and there are not many like you so thanks for being you. Thanks for being amazing and I am very thankful to have people like you in my life."

'Delta or Omicron, vaccination is the only available solution'

To enhance awareness about the latest developments around Covid-19 virus, and how people can stay safe in these testing times, Business Network International (BNI) Hyderabad organised a webinar session for business owners on Friday. The session was attended by 250 participants from various businesses. The webinar was conducted by Dr Rohith Reddy, consultant pulmonologist at Century Hospital and many entrepreneurs and business owners, representing a few thousand of their staff and employees attended the webinar. In these fast-changing times, participants had many doubts about the threats and about the means to tackle the crisis, and every doubt was addressed by the doctor during the discussion.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rohith Reddy said, "Covid-19 virus is constantly metamorphosing and emerging as a new variant or a new mutation, which is causing a great deal of concern among the population worldwide! Though none is sure about how long the novel coronavirus will stay amidst us, vaccination is the best available solution to tackle the

problem." "Foods that have anti-inflammatory, antibacterial/viral/fungal and immunity boosting properties must be consumed. Regular exercise with a healthy diet will minimize the need for medications, supplements, and hospitalization. Intestines are one of the largest organs in the body which host microbes for digestion and immunity, maintaining the gut flora with probiotics is equally important to tackle this problem," added Dr. Rohith

Reddy. With the virus spreading fast and deep into the community, it is difficult to contain its proliferation. The government and healthcare machinery focus is also on containing morbidity and mor-



Kids today have countless options to choose from the ocean of cartoon shows that have come up in the recent years! While parents' have control over what their children watch, they can't wade through this ocean and choose what works best for their kids. To make this task easier, we have picked up top five animated shows loved by kids and listed them below. These shows take them into a world full of magic, comedy, adventure, and a lot more!

● Motu Patlu

From their uncanny ability to attract trouble which only lands them in hilarious situations to teaching us friendship by always having each other's back, this



jodi takes you on a laughter riot every time you see them on screen. Watch the adventures of Furfuriya Nagar with Motu Patlu on Nick every day at 8.30 am.

● Shiva

The story of Shiva is about holding the right morals and fighting the villains! A not so smart policeman, a classical singer who can bring a tornado with his

singing, reliable and outspoken friends, kids have fallen for this show since its beginning. Join this 9-year-old cyclist save his city from evil on Nick, Monday to Friday at 5.30 pm.

● Rudra

Kids love magic but they love the magician more! A 9-year-old magician, an evil ruler of Kaal city, loyal friends, failed



5 animated shows kids love watching these days



magic tricks, an adventure to become the successor, this show is filled with laughter, drama, adventure, magic, basically, everything! Watch the show on Nick, Monday to Friday at 10.30 am.

● Golmaal Jr.

The spin-off of the popular movie franchise Golmaal, this show takes you in a comical ride filled with light hearted rivalry and innocence. From the geekiness of Laxman to the cunningness of Pappi, Madhav's never ending desire to win over Gopal and more! Watch this havoc filled adventures of the Golmaal prank gang only on Nick. Watch Golmaal Jr at 12.30 pm on Nickelodeon!

● Chikoo and Bunt

This show depicts sibling rivalry at its best! Since it went on-air, the show has gained immense popularity due to its relatability! From a father who is usually disinterested in the homely banter and a mother who takes charge of everything, to kids who have the BroVsBro vibe going on, the show is a mirror of every Indian household! Check out Chikoo Aur Bunt on Nick, Monday to Friday at 10.30 am.

From moral filled characters to overpowering villains (oh! They don't win) and a ride into different imaginary worlds, the shows have it all! Although we get that the list is never ending do drop in your comments to us if we missed out on your kid's favourite.

Ranji Trophy to be held in two phases: BCCI

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah on Friday said that the postponed Ranji Trophy will be held in two phases starting next month, clearing the decks for India's premier domestic competition to resume after being cancelled last season.

It is expected that the 38-team tournament will begin in the second week of February and the first phase will continue for about a month.

The tournament, which was not held last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was scheduled to begin on January 13 but was postponed owing to a third wave of infections across the country.

"The Board has decided to conduct the Ranji Trophy this season in two phases. In the first phase, we plan to complete all matches of the league stage while the knockouts will be held in June," Shah said in a statement.

"My team is working closely to mitigate any kind of health risk caused by the pandemic, while at the same time ensuring a highly competitive red-ball cricket contest."

Shah said that the BCCI understands the significance of Ranji Trophy.

"Ranji Trophy is our most prestigious domestic competition, which has been providing Indian Cricket



with an enviable talent pool every year. It is absolutely important that we take all necessary steps to safeguard the interest of this premier event," he said.

The BCCI announcement has come a day after its treasurer Arun Dhumal had said that the Board intends to host the event.

The two phases are required

since the BCCI also plans to host the IPL from March 27 and hosting two big tournaments would not be possible practically as the players' availability would also be an issue.

Indian cricket will be spineless if Ranji trophy is ignored: Ravi Shastri

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former head coach Ravi Shastri on Friday said that Indian cricket would become "spineless" if the Ranji Trophy is ignored, his comment coming just before the BCCI announced that the marquee domestic event will be held in two phases starting next month.

The Ranji Trophy was scheduled to start on January 13 this year but was postponed indefinitely by the BCCI due to the third wave of the pandemic.

"The Ranji Trophy is the backbone of Indian cricket. The moment you start ignoring it our cricket will be SPINELESS!" Shastri tweeted.

Just about an hour after Shastri's comment, BCCI secretary Jay Shah issued a statement, confirming the phased resumption of the tournament.

"The Board has decided to conduct the Ranji Trophy this season in two phases. In the first

phase, we plan to complete all matches of the league stage while the knockouts will be held in June," Shah said in a statement.

It is expected that the 38-team tournament will begin in the second week of February and the first phase will continue for about a month.

BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal, after a meeting of the Board on Thursday, had said that the body intends to hold the tournament in "two phases".

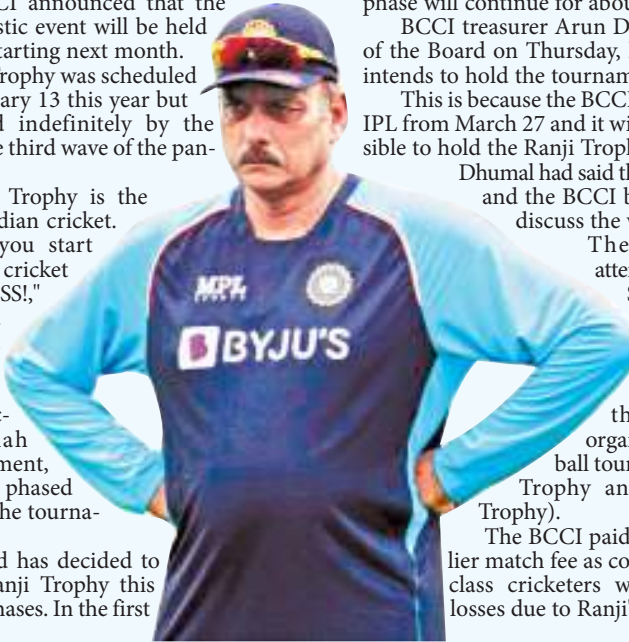
This is because the BCCI is planning to start the IPL from March 27 and it will be practically impossible to hold the Ranji Trophy at a stretch.

Dhumal had said this after many state units and the BCCI brass held a meeting to discuss the way forward.

The meeting was also attended by BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and Shah.

The pandemic had played spoilsport last season as well when the BCCI could only organise two men's white-ball tournaments (Vijay Hazare Trophy and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy).

The BCCI paid 50 per cent of the earlier match fee as compensation to all first-class cricketers who endured financial losses due to Ranji's cancellation last year.



No change in ICC women's World Cup schedule

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC women's ODI World Cup CEO Andrea Nelson on Friday asserted that there will be no change in the number of venues or scheduling of the event despite the recent spread of the COVID-19's Omicron variant in host country New Zealand.

The World Cup is scheduled to be held in New Zealand from March 4, with the hosts taking on West Indies in the tournament opener.

However, New Zealand has seen a surge in COVID-19 cases recently leading to several restrictions.

"We have been in preparation to host the World Cup here in 2022 for quite a some time, originally it was scheduled for 2021. We are well on track and 35 days away from the opening match in Tauranga and 66 days away from the final at the Hagley Oval in Christchurch.

"The first thing to say is that the tournament schedule is remaining as it is, and that involves moving around New Zealand," Nelson told a select group of reporters on a con-call on Friday morning.

"We are working with the ICC at a managed environment. But broadly speaking, the tournament will proceed

nationwide as planned," she added.

On Thursday, New Zealand Cricket announced the event as per the schedule that the teams will not have to travel a lot for matches in both men's and women's events.

"The big change in the last week or so has come about though is New Zealand has the Omicron variant. But what hasn't changed is our full commitment to staging an incredible event for the athletes," stated Nelson.

The World Cup is slated to be played at six venues - Tauranga, Dunedin, Hamilton, Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch and Nelson maintained that as of now there was no change in location. "The plan is to retain the schedule as it is with the six venues. The contingency measures were put in place related to protecting the travel between those venues as much as possible.

"We are currently staging the event as per the schedule that has been previously published with no changes of location."

"So, there are no significant changes to the way the event will be delivered for the players. Predominantly the changes are related to spectators inside the stadium."

Brendan Taylor banned by ICC for 3 and half years

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor was on Friday banned for three and a half years by the ICC for failing to report a 2019 spot-fixing approach by an Indian businessman on time and was also handed a one month suspension for failing a dope test which was linked to his intake of cocaine during the episode.

In a statement, the ICC said Taylor admitted to being in breach of the provisions of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code.

"Former Zimbabwe captain Brendan Taylor has been banned from all cricket for three and a half years after he accepted breaching four charges of the ICC Anti-Corruption

Code and, separately, one charge of the ICC Anti-Doping Code," the ICC said.

On January 24, Taylor made a stunning disclosure that he was blackmailed after "foolishly" taking cocaine during his meeting with an Indian businessman.

Taylor said he is facing a multi-year ban from the ICC for delay in reporting a corrupt approach by an Indian businessman in 2019.

Taylor had claimed that he was invited by the businessman to India to discuss "sponsorships" and potential launch of a T20 event in Zimbabwe besides an offer of USD 15,000 in October 2019. He did not name the businessman in question.

Afghanistan defeat Sri Lanka, set up semifinal clash

PTI ■ COOLIDGE (ANTIGUA)

Afghanistan sneaked into the Under-19 World Cup semi-finals after edging out Sri Lanka by four runs, courtesy a sensational fightback, here.

The odds were heavily stacked against them when they posted just 134 on the board after Sri Lanka asked them to take first strike but Afghanistan produced a superb performance with the ball to bowl the island nation out for 130 in 46 overs.

A composed stay at the crease from Sri Lanka skipper Dunith Wellalage (34 off 61) looked like would pull his team over the line, but it was not meant to be.

Afghanistan will now face England in the first Super League semifinal on February 1.

Put to bat, Afghanistan openers Nangeyala Kharote and Bilal Sayedi looked solid for the opening 10 overs before Traveen Mathew struck with a wicked delivery that removed Sayedi.

Kharote departed in the very next over and when skipper Suliman Safi was trapped LBW



after making just one, Afghanistan were reeling.

Ijaz Ahmadzai lost his wicket without troubling the scoreboard, but fellow middle-order batter Abdul Hadi was able to steady the ship with a crucial 37-run knock.

Vinjua Ranpul then helped clear-out the tail for Sri Lanka, ending with a five-wicket haul at the expense of just ten runs.

The Sri Lankan reply was

A composed stay at the crease from Sri Lanka skipper Dunith Wellalage (34 off 61) looked like would pull his team over the line, but it was not meant to be.

shaky from the start. Opener Sadisha Rajapaksa went for a duck in the opening over, and his replacement Shevon Daniel went for just 2 after he was clean bowled by Bilal Sami.

After 13 overs, they were in a worse position than Afghanistan were during their innings. Noor Ahmed then produced a cracking delivery to remove Ranuda Somaratne and put Sri Lanka in real trouble.

Their dreams of lifting a first U-19 World Cup trophy were fading fast. However, the eighth wicket partnership between captain Wellalage and Raveen de Silva looked like it might save the day, taking Sri Lanka from 43 runs for seven to 112.

Kharote took the crucial wicket of the skipper, who played cheaply, before Naveed claimed the wicket of de Silva to set-up a nerve jangling finish.

Sri Lanka got to within five runs of victory, but their fourth run-out of the innings cost Mathew the final wicket and gave Afghanistan a dramatic victory.

Indian cricket in good hands under Rohit Sharma's captaincy: Sammy

PTI ■ MUSCAT

Former West Indies captain Darren Sammy feels Indian cricket is in "good hands" under Rohit Sharma's leadership as he bracketed the senior India batter alongside the legendary MS Dhoni in their ability to get the best out of their teammates.

A five-time IPL winning captain, a fit-again Rohit will take charge as full time India white ball captain in the upcoming three ODI and three T20Is series against the West Indies beginning in Ahmedabad on February 6.

Rohit was made the captain after the BCCI removed Virat Kohli as the ODI skipper following his war of words with the Board.

"Kohli has been exceptional with his performances on the field.

I don't think it will affect the team," Sammy told PTI on the sidelines of Legends League Cricket here.

"Rohit has been an excellent captain (with Mumbai Indians), a good motivational leader. I've watched him captaining Mumbai in the IPL.

He's among the captains who have won like MS Dhoni, (Gautam Gambhir..."



"All these guys can manage to get performances from their teammates.

These captains normally get results and win trophies. I'm not worried about Indian cricket. It's in good hand," the 38-year-old added.

Sammy recollected how Dhoni finished the game for Chennai Super Kings with a six-ball 18 not out, smashing three boundaries in the last over against Delhi Capitals in the semifinal last season.

CSK won their fourth IPL title in 2021 beating Kolkata Knight Riders in the final.

"You see guys like MS... He didn't do much the entire season but when the team needed him to fire in the playoffs,

he was out there in full flow," Sammy said.

Sammy said it will not be a cakewalk for India in the upcoming white-ball series and the Kieron Pollard-led side should "fancy their chances".

West Indies had bounced back from a shock 1-2 ODI series defeat against Ireland to lead the ongoing five-match T20I home series against England 2-1.

"I believe Pollard will definitely fancy his chances (against India).

He has been playing in India for so long, he knows the conditions well.

"At the (ongoing) England series, we have unearthed some new talents.

I think West Indies could go out there (India) and do well."

India struggled in their last ODI series in South Africa as the KL Rahul-led side were routed 0-3 by the Proteas. They had lost the preceding Test series 1-2.

Asked whether it would be an advantage for the West Indies considering

India's struggle in their last series, Sammy said: "India have always been strong at home, they are a force to reckon with because of some really good one-day players."

Multan starts PSL with big win over Karachi



AP ■ KARACHI

Defending champion Multan Sultans thumped Karachi Kings by seven wickets as Pakistan's premier domestic Twenty20 league opened with several players and support staff members already in isolation after testing positive for COVID-19.

Led by Mohammad Rizwan's unbeaten 52 off 47 balls, Multan cruised to 126-3 with 10 balls to spare after South Africa leg-spinner Imran Tahir took 3-16 and had restricted Karachi to 124-5.

The spread of coronavirus has already seen several players like Wahab Riaz and Kamran Akmal of Peshawar Zalmi and Imad Wasim

of Karachi going into isolation. Star allrounder Shahid Afridi was the latest to test positive on Thursday and was ruled out of his team Quetta Gladiators' first four games.

Afridi, who was due to miss at least two games due to back pain, will remain in isolation for at least one week before he will be reintegrated with his team in a bio-secure bubble after getting a negative COVID-19 test.

"I have unfortunately tested positive but have no symptoms at all," Afridi tweeted.

Karachi missed allrounder Wasim, who helped the team win the tournament in 2020 but now is being replaced by Babar Azam as skipper. To make things worse for Karachi, its premier fast bowler Mohammad Amir had to sit out the first game due to a side strain.

Babar, leading Karachi for the first time, and Sharjeel Khan struggled to set the tempo against some tidy bowling by fast bowlers David Willey and Shah Nawaz Dahani up front after Rizwan won the toss and elected to field.

Asian rivals India and Bangladesh face off in all important quarterfinal

PTI ■ OSBOURN (ANTIGUA)

COVID-hit India will be bolstered by the return of key players, including skipper Yash Dhull, when the record four-time champions meet holders Bangladesh in the third quarterfinal of the U-19 Cricket World Cup here on Saturday.

Most of the half a dozen India players, who were affected by the dreaded virus, have recovered and are set to feature in the crucial clash. However, Nishant Sindhu, who was stand-in captain of the team, has tested positive and will miss the match. He will be replaced by

Aneeshwar Gautam in the squad. Six players -- Dhull, his deputy Shaik Rasheed, Sidharth Yadav, Aaradhya Yadav and Manav Parakh -- had returned positive RTPCR tests before the Ireland game. All of them are available for Saturday's game.

Dhull and other infected players reached Antigua on Friday morning after undergoing seven days of isolation in Trinidad.

"They have been medically deemed fit to play. They have a day or so to train and be game ready," an ICC source told PTI.

They had gone into isolation ahead of India's second league fix-



ture against Ireland, dealing a big blow to the record four time champions. Five of them tested positive

in the RTPCR tests and also ended up missing the last league game against Uganda.

**India vs Bangladesh
Live from 6:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK**

However, the depth in the squad ensured India won both those games comfortably and qualified for the quarterfinals as group toppers.

Sindhu led the side in Dhull's absence as India struggled to field 11 fit players on the park in the game against Ireland.

"Most of the players have recovered and should be fit enough to play tomorrow," a BCCI official told PTI. Both Dhull and Rasheed are important batters for the team and

had looked in good touch against South Africa in their tournament opener.

Opener Angkrish Raghuvanshi and all-rounder Raj Bawa's confidence must be sky high after they scored match winning tons against Uganda. Left-arm spinner Vicky Ostwal has been India's stand out bowler in the tournament with seven wickets.

Another left-arm spinner Sindhu has been tidy with the ball, taking four wickets at an economy rate of 2.76 runs per over.

The Bangladesh batters will also not have an easy time negotiating the extra pace of

Rajvardhan Hangargekar.

The game will be a rematch of the previous edition's final in 2020 when Bangladesh had stunned the favourites to win their maiden title. Current Bangladesh skipper Rakibul Hasan was part of that memorable final.

In the recently held Asia Cup semifinal in the UAE, India had outplayed Bangladesh and gone on to win the title.

Bangladesh's entry into the knockouts here wasn't as smooth as India's. England outplayed them in the first game before they qualified with wins over Canada and UAE.

‘It still feels so dark when I recall assault on my husband’



Konda Murali, a former Congress MLC from Warangal, Telangana, spoke about the assassination attempt on his life 30 years ago and how he survived despite being shot 47 times. He was speaking at the launch of Ram Gopal Varma's *Konda*, a biopic

Konda Murali's wife, four-term former MLA Konda Surekha, was a member of the Congress before joining the YSR Congress and later switching to the TRS. Surekha lost the 2018 Telangana Assembly election while running on a TRS ticket, and has since returned to the Congress. The biopic's main characters are Konda Murali and Surekha, for whom RGV spent 75 days in Warangal. Recalling the assassination attempt on him 30 years ago on January 26, Murali said, "Despite 47 bullets being pumped into my body, I survived the attempt, not for my family but for my people."

The trailer for Ram Gopal Varma's latest directorial — *Konda* was unveiled at an event held on Wednesday. Billed to be the biopic of Konda Murali and Konda Surekha, the duo recalls the terrific attacks they had faced in their lives.

Murali lauded Ram Gopal Varma

for his dedication, as he was in Warangal for more than 75 days just to shoot the movie *Konda*.

"I narrated a few things in my life. Ram Gopal Varma researched and went on, to speak with several native folks to know more about my past and how I survived the most brutal attack," Murali said.

Surekha said, "The trailer has reminded me of the dark days when we faced the toughest challenges in life." "The day on which my husband was subjected to an assault, there was blood everywhere. As I recall the incident, it still feels so dark. I was shell-shocked as I saw my husband in a blood pool," Surekha said.

Konda stars Irra Mor, who has played Surekha, while actors Prudhvijay, Parvathi Arun, Prashanth, LB Sriram, Tulasi, Jabardasth Ram Prasad, Abhilash Chowdhary, and others appear in important roles.



Naga Chaitanya in talks to make OTT debut

Akineni Naga Chaitanya, who is high on success after *Love Story* and *Bangarraju*, is likely to begin shooting for a web series, produced by Amazon Prime Video. Touted to be a thriller, the web series will have 24 fame Vikram Kumar as the director. It is being reported that Naga Chaitanya is prepping to play a never-before-role,

on his physical appearance for the much-hyped web series.

Inside talks suggest that Chaitanya will be seen in a role with multi-layered idiosyncrasy, while he plays a journalist. Now, in the talks is Chaitanya's makeover, which he has been preparing to bring in, for the role in the web series.

Chaitanya will be seen romancing Priya Bhavani Shankar, while the web series will have three sea-

sons. Other sources also report that the story of this much-hyped series revolves around time travel and each season will have around 8-10 episodes.

While the team is yet to make an official announcement, there is so much anticipation around this venture. Chaitanya and Vikram Kumar, who are currently busy shooting for their upcoming movie *Thank You*, will soon start working on the other pre-production works so as to kick-start the series.

A yoga retreat was the best gift I could give to myself: Vijay Varma



Post a year of hectic schedules, Vijay Varma on his trip to Rishikesh, "I feel it was much needed. A yoga retreat was the best gift I could give to myself post all the covid distress," says Vijay Varma.

All set to steal the show with an interesting lineup of projects, Vijay Varma has been busy with hectic shoot schedules all of last year and has now taken a short break to rejuvenate at a yoga retreat in Rishikesh post his recovery from Covid.

Talking about his health

holiday, Vijay says, "After a very busy year of shoots, I took this trip to Rishikesh which I feel was much needed. I am mesmerised by the peace and calm here. A yoga retreat was the best gift I could give to myself post all the covid distress. After almost 2 years I had a chance to just be spontaneous, and I am really enjoying using this break to recharge and restore my body and to just spend time with myself before getting back into the hectic schedules and life."

We have been seeing fun pictures of the actor across social media from

Rishikesh where he was seen attending the evening *Aarti* and enjoying the winters of Rishikesh.

After a year packed with back to back shoot schedules in Benaras, Mumbai and Rajasthan, the actor is finally taking this much deserved break.

On the work front, the actor has an interesting lineup of projects including, *Darlings* with Alia Bhatt, *Fallen* with Sonakshi Sinha, *Hurdang* with Nushratt Bharuccha and Sunny Kaushal as well as Viacom's untitled project by Sumit Saxena.



Radhe Shyam releasing in March?

The makers of the Prabhas and Pooja Hegde starrer *Radhe Shyam* seem to have finalised a new release date for the film and are expected to announce it shortly. The creators are considering holding a special promotional event once again in order to rekindle interest in this romance drama *Radhe Shyam* and rekindle the enthusiasm, which has certainly

piqued the interest of the viewers. According to sources, the film *Radhe Shyam* will be released in the first part of March.

We hear that the news of the release date for *Radhe Shyam* will be a Valentine's Day gift for Prabhas' fans. If everything goes as planned, Prabhas and Pooja Hegde's *Radhe Shyam*'s new release date announcement poster would be presented on February 14, Valentine's Day.

Shruti Haasan as Aadya

On the occasion of Shruti Haasan's birthday on Friday, the makers of her upcoming film *Salaar* released a special birthday poster, revealing that she will play Aadya in this Prabhas' film. On Shruti Haasan's birthday, the makers released a

special poster introducing her character from the upcoming pan-India film *Salaar*, which is moving at a rapid speed under the direction of Prashanth Neel of *KGF* fame. In the picture, she is seen wearing a modest kurta and looking stunning.

Salaar is an action drama that will be shot in Telugu and Kannada simultaneously and dubbed into Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam. Vijay Kiragandur's Hombale Films is producing the Prabhas and Shruti starring, while Ravi Basur is composing the music.



Sree Vishnu mesmerises with his looks in Bhala Thandanana

Actor Nani took to his social media handles to release the teaser of Sree Vishnu's upcoming political thriller titled *Bhala Thandanana*.

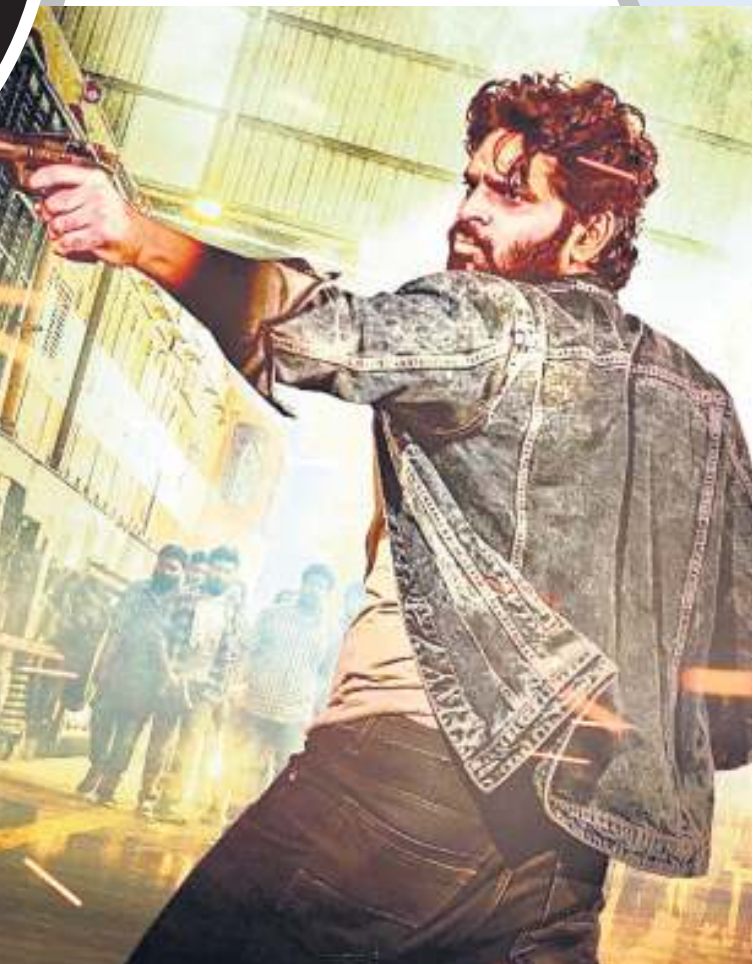
"Happy to launch the teaser of #BhalaThandanana A very talented team :) Wish you guys a huge success," the *Shyam Singha Roy* actor wrote, as he shared the *Bhala Thandanana* teaser.

The *Bhala Thandanana* teaser features Sree Vishnu in a boy-next-door *avatar*, while he showcases his other side of a revolutionary young man who goes against a corrupt political leader.

Directed by Chaitanya Dantuluri, the

hawala scams, it is expected to be a good thriller. The BGM by Maestro Manisharma is so much in sync with the teaser's narrative, while Sree Vishnu's role as a crime reporter creates much anticipation.

Actress Catherine Tressa is also seen as a reporter, as she is introduced in the teaser of 'Bhala Thandanana'. While 'KGF' fame Ramachandra Raju has played the villain in this movie, actors Srinivas



Aadavaallu Meeku Johaarlu to release on Feb 25



Young and happening hero Sharwanand is presently starring in a wholesome family entertainer *Aadavaallu Meeku Johaarlu* being directed by Tirumala Kishore under Sudhakar Cherukuri's Sri Lakshmi Venkateswara Cinemas banner with the most sought-after actress Rashmika Mandanna playing the female lead.

The film's entire shooting has been wrapped

Johaarlu marks Sharwanand's first collaboration with Rashmika Mandanna and Tirumala Kishore. Sharwanand plays a guy next door kind of role, while Rashmika Mandanna will be seen in a meaty role.

The title itself suggests the importance of female characters in the movie. Khushbu, Radhika Sarathkumar and Urvashi are playing important roles in the film that also features some stellar cast. Sudhakar Cherukuri is pro-