

**ANALYSIS 7**  
MANUFACTURED SOCIAL  
NETWORKING'S FRENZY

**MONEY 8**  
GST COLLECTION UP 18% AT OVER  
RS 1.33 LAKH CR IN FEB

**SPORTS 11**  
MITHALI RAJ LOOKING TO FIN-  
ISH JOURNEY WITH WC TROPHY

VIJAYAWADA, WEDNSDAY, MARCH 2, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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RASHMIKA MANDANNA:  
I DON'T WANT TO BE  
CATEGORISED AS  
AN ACTOR

Page 12

## OIL PRICES SURGE ABOVE \$100 A BARREL AS WAR ON UKRAINE RAGES

Oil prices soared and investors shifted more money into ultra-safe US government bonds as Russia stepped up its war on Ukraine. The price of oil surged back above 100 a barrel after Russia, a major energy producer, faced further isolation and economic damage because of its invasion of Ukraine. The rush into bonds pushed the yield on the 10-year Treasury back down to 1.77%, where it was in early February. Stock prices were mixed in the early going on Wall Street. The S&P 500 was bobbing between small gains and losses in the first few minutes of trading. European markets were lower.

## NEW AIR INDIA CEO DECLINES JOB 2 WEEKS AFTER APPOINTMENT

Turkey's Ilker Ayci said on Tuesday he will not take on the role of chief executive of Tata Group's Air India, days after the announcement of his appointment led to opposition in India over his previous political links. Tata last month (on February 14) announced Ayci's appointment as CEO of previously state-run Air India after taking over the debt-laden airline in January in a \$2.4 billion equity and debt deal. Last week, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the called on the government to block Ayci's appointment citing his previous political links in Turkey, which has strained relations with New Delhi.

## THREE MURDERS IN ONE NIGHT AT GURGAON FUEL PUMP, CCTVs WERE OFF

Three people were stabbed to death at a CNG pump on the Delhi-Gurgaon expressway early yesterday morning. With this incident, five people have been murdered in Gurgaon over the past three days. Police have said CCTV cameras at the Sector 31 CNG pump were deactivated shortly before the crime and no cash has gone missing, indicating that the attackers knew the area well and that the crime could be a fallout of an old enmity. Around 3 am yesterday, a man bleeding from knife injuries stumbled to the petrol pump next to the CNG pump and collapsed there, police said.

## INDIA ASKS CITIZENS TO "LEAVE KYIV URGENTLY TODAY" IN LATEST ADVISORY

As Russian forces continued their advance in Ukraine, shelling cities, India urged all its citizens to leave Ukraine capital Kyiv urgently today, by trains or any other means available. "All Indian nationals including students are advised to leave Kyiv urgently today. Preferably by available trains or through any other means available," the Indian Embassy in Ukraine tweeted. The advisory was posted hours after satellite images emerged showing a long convoy of Russian military vehicles on roadways northwest of Kyiv. Hundreds of tanks, towed artillery, armored and logistical vehicles can be seen in the images released by a US-based space technology company.

# Indian student killed in Russain shelling

First Indian casualty in Kharkiv city □ External Affairs Ministry confirms death of student from K'taka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In first Indian casualty in the war in Ukraine, a student from Karnataka was killed in shelling in Kharkiv city on Tuesday morning.

External Affairs Ministry confirmed the death of the Indian in a tweet.

"With profound sorrow we confirm that an Indian student lost his life in shelling in Kharkiv this morning," it said. The ministry said it is in touch with the family of the student.

"We convey our deepest condolences to the family," it said.

The student was a native of Karnataka's Haveri district, a state government official said.

"A student Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar, a native of Chalageri in Haveri district, died in the shelling," Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority Commissioner Manoj Rajan told PTI. The MEA said Foreign Secretary is calling in ambassadors of Russia and Ukraine to reiterate its demand for "urgent safe passage" to Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and in other cities conflict zones. "Similar action is also being undertaken by our ambassadors in Russia and Ukraine," the MEA said.

The Kharkiv city is witnessing increasing fighting between the Ukrainian troops and Russian forces.



Naveen Shekarappa



Indian students hiding in bunkers expecting indian government to come to their rescue

### "Place Indian flag if you have": Father's last advice to son

The Indian student who died in Russian shelling in Ukraine today was advised by his family to "place an Indian flag" outside the building he was in. A video of his last conversation with his family indicated that the idea was also suggested by Union minister Piyush Goyal, who apparently told them that both Russia and Ukraine had assured the safety of Indian students.



### Indians are starving, leftovers being provided

Telling sordid tales of intolerable living conditions, stranded Indians in Ukraine said they are facing hardships in availing meals and medicines as priority is being given to locals. Trapped inside a bunker in Kharkiv city of Ukraine, Assoum Hussain (25), who hails from Kerala, told PTI over phone on Monday that he only had a loaf of bread in the last 48 hours. He said the bunkers are freezing 24X7 and are overcrowded, adding that they also lack basic amenities like water or bathrooms with doors. "We bought four to five bedsheets and arranged them together for makeshift beds."

### 70 Ukrainian soldiers killed as Russian troops near Kyiv

Ukraine said that more than 70 Ukrainian soldiers were killed in a Russian rocket attack today, as a huge Russian military convoy approached the capital Kyiv. More than 70 Ukrainian servicemen were killed by a Russian rocket attack and dozens of civilians have died in "barbaric" shelling. Russian artillery attacked several residential areas in Ukraine's second largest city Kharkiv.



## PM Modi briefs President on the crisis



PM Modi met President Kovind on Monday to explain govts efforts on Ukranian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday and briefed him on various issues, including the Ukraine crisis, official sources said. The government has launched "Operation Ganga" to evacuate Indian citizens, mostly students, from Ukraine, which has been attacked by Russia. Sources said Modi briefed Kovind on the crisis and his government's efforts to bring back the Indian citizens stranded in the country. The government had on Monday decided to send four ministers to several neighbouring countries of Ukraine to coordinate the evacuation exercise.



## 301 AP students to be airlifted from Slovakia

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Efforts are on by the Andhra Pradesh government to bring the Telugu students from the war-torn Ukraine directly to Vijayawada instead of New Delhi and Mumbai in India. Principal Resident Commissioner of AP Bhawan in Delhi Praveen Prakash wrote to the Ministry of External affairs (MEA) in this regard.

At least 301 students belonging to Andhra Pradesh scheduled to reach Uzgorod in Western Ukraine in two trains on Tuesday and they will be transferred to Slovakian border from where students will be airlifted to either New Delhi or Mumbai.

"As per communication received by us, these students will be transferred to Slovakian border. This information has also been shared with the MEA's 'Situation Room'. While onward flights for

returnees are currently operating for New Delhi and Mumbai, since Vijayawada has a fully functional international airport and all 301 of these students hail from Andhra Pradesh, we request your support to arrange for these returnees to fly back directly to Vijayawada so that they can be reunited with their families at the earliest. The list of students is also enclosed as an annexure to this letter," said Praveen Prakash in the letter to MEA.

AP government had already constituted a task to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in evacuating the students belonging to Andhra Pradesh. MEA had deployed four teams on the land borders of Ukraine at Poland, Hungary, Slovik Republic and Hungary. Efforts are on to bring students to these four border areas by road and from there they will be airlifted.

## V-P deplors efforts to divide society on lines of caste, religion

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has deplored that efforts are being made to divide society on the lines of caste and religion and appealed to people to encourage leaders who have patriotism and discipline.

Addressing the diamond jubilee function of Patibandla Sitaramaiah High School here on Tuesday, the Vice-President regretted that values and standards are declining in the society and efforts are being made to divide society in the name of 'caste, language, and region' to gain temporary political mileage.

"If leaders are climbing benches, hurling chairs, breaking mikes and using foul language in the Assembly and Parliament; if the



leaders are stuck in 'corruption', who will guide the young generation," he lamented and appealed to people to encourage those who work with discipline and patriotism.

Venkaiah Naidu said that leaders must have four 'Cs' 'Character,

Calibre, Capacity and Conduct. Unfortunately, four new 'Cs' were brought and they are 'Caste, Community, Criminality and Cash'. He called upon people not to encourage such people in politics.

## AP Cabinet meeting deferred to March 7

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The next Cabinet meeting, scheduled to be held on March 3, has been postponed to March 7, the first day of the Budget session of the State Legislature.

Thursday's Cabinet meeting has been postponed on account of the death ceremony of IT and Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy on Thursday.

The Cabinet meeting will now be held on March 7, the first day of the Budget session after the Governor's address to the joint session. The Cabinet is likely to discuss the Budget that will be presented in both the houses on March 11 and also other key and important Bills that will be presented during the upcoming session.

## Viveka's daughter turned into a pawn in TDP's hands: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has lambasted Opposition TDP leaders for making baseless allegations against Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's family over the Vivekananda Reddy's murder incident and stated that the latter's daughter Dr Sunita had become a pawn in the hands of TDP Chief Chandrababu Naidu.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Sajjala said that Chandrababu Naidu was conspir-

ing in the CBI investigation of Vivekananda Reddy case for the last three years and using Sunita to divert the entire probe by offering an MLA ticket from TDP in the coming elections. He also said that Sunita was making allegations without any proper evidence to defame Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Sajjala opined that this was an internal matter of the family, but vested interests are trying to derive political mileage by dragging the Chief Minister into it with false allegations. He wondered why the TDP had failed to act when it was in power during Viveka's

murder and added that the call records between TDP and others should be examined.

He further said that Naidu is unable to tackle YS Jagan Mohan Reddy politically, so he is resorting to character assassination with false allegations, he added.

Speaking of the CBI investigation, Sajjala demanded a fair and impartial probe instead of diverting the case for political gains. He stated that CBI is trying to establish Avinash as the accused without looking into the prime suspects or conducting a proper investigation. He appealed to the people not to believe these kinds of politically motivated allegations.

## Fighting all odds to save her kid from progressive illness

SNV SUDHIR ■ VIJAYAWADA

A single mother from Vizag is fighting all odds yet looks determined to save her 11-year-old daughter who suffers from a rare ailment Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type 2. While Keya, the youngest daughter of Monisha Hatkar, was detected with SMA at a very early age of 11 months and has been under sensitive conditions ever since, the Covid pandemic has deteriorated her condition.

Keya has been holed up at home without proper medical attention for the last two years. Her muscular weakness has grown and her spine has developed Kyphoscoliosis which requires an immediate surgical correction and rigorous physical rehab to help her sit so she can continue schooling and painting which she loves.

Keya's mother is currently raising funds to a tune of Rs 7 crore on the crowdfunding platforms ImpactGuru.com and others for a drug named RISDIPLAM, launched by Roche Pharma, which can give her a new lease of life.

"I have been managing as a single parent since 2014. It's been anything but easy. Keya has grown up well in spite of her SMA, which has only managed to deform her physically. Today she aces her academics, sings, dances, loves to paint and is an amateur You-Tuber. Keya, despite her challenges, is a rock star. With her shivering hands, immense pain in her body and endless courage, she holds us all together in our weakest moments, inspiring us to keep moving ahead and leading by example." Says Keya's mother Monisha Hatkar.

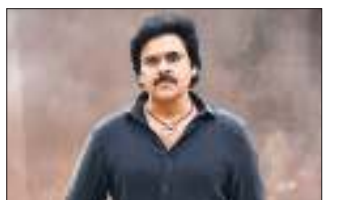
Monisha adds that Keya's

Keya has been holed up at home without proper medical attention for the last two years. Her muscular weakness has grown and her spine has developed Kyphoscoliosis which requires an immediate surgical correction and rigorous physical rehab to help her sit so she can continue schooling and painting which she loves.

health was always a concern from her birth for the family as she was born under a complicated pregnancy. With very little weight gain and delayed motor skills Keya was always the main concern for the entire family. Their world was shattered when the family found that their little angel was suffering from SMA in February 2012. Having experienced so much at such a young age, right from complicated birth to being detected with SMA

was a lot to take for the child as well as the mother.

Keya could not walk from birth, but managed to sit with her prosthetic braces. So against all odds, Monisha decided to school her with the help of a shadow maid. She did superbly well, as she was always bright from the start and was also a quick learner. "We believe our Keya will be able to defeat this dreadful progressive illness. Today Keya is bent but not broken," adds Monisha Hatkar.



## Complaint lodged against Bheemla Nayak in Guntur

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A complaint was lodged against the makers of Bheemla Nayak with the Guntur Urban SP on Tuesday, alleging that there were objectionable scenes hurting the sentiments of a particular community.

Andhra Pradesh Shalivahana, Kummari Corporation chairman Purshotam lodged the complaint at the Guntur Urban Police Station which said that there were a few objectionable scenes in the movie that hurt the sentiments of the members of the community.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

**Month & Paksham:**  
Tithi: Amavasya : Mar 02 01:00 AM to Mar 02 11:04 PM  
Sukla Paksha Pratipada: Mar 02 11:04 PM to Mar 03 09:36 PM  
**Nakshatram:**  
Shatabhisha: Mar 02 03:48 AM to Mar 03 02:37 AM  
Purva Bhadrapada: Mar 03 02:37 AM to Mar 04 01:56 AM  
**Rahukalam:** 12:28 PM to 1:56 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 8:05 AM to 9:33 AM  
**Varjyam:** 08:50 AM to 10:23 AM  
**Gulika:** 11:00 AM to 12:28 PM  
**Amritakalam:** 07:46 PM to 09:18 PM  
**bhijit Muhurtham:** Nil

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

**Forecast:** Mostly sunny  
**Temp:** 37°C  
**Humidity:** 42%  
**Sunrise:** 6:28 AM  
**Sunset:** 6:18 PM  
**Updated:** March 1, 2022 5:00 PM



# Jagan's 'focus' on Pawan may boost self confidence in the latter!

What does the focus over a film star turned politician who was proved nothing in the last electoral battle by a well-matured political figure who emerged as a ruler with 86% seats in the assembly mean? Reason may be that he is still enjoying popularity by virtue of prominent figure in the tinsel world and having capability of influencing general public over the key issues besides garnering support from every possible quarter of the society against the government.



been fine and dignified manner if the issue could find a conclusion by simply issuing concerned G.O without any 'follow up' things. The entire staff of government from related departments swung into action by camping at numerous cinema theatres where Pawan Kalyan's latest movie Bhimla Naik is screened. Big cinemas of top ranking stars getting released with specific assurance of increase in ticket prices hitherto probably with the acceptance of successive governments. There is a specific situation prevailed that hero's remuneration naturally comes from the collections of first day itself. Because of this reason only makers of big films simply rely on this issue of increasing ticket prices in theatres. Jagan government in Andhra Pradesh 'paid' needful attention on this issue and decided to stop giving permissions for screening of benefit shows and providing facility to increase ticket prices for few days from the

**Telugu film fraternity has been divided into two groups for and against the state's government. Influence of caste factor on film field is simply not ruled out with every insider of the Telugu film industry. During initial years of Telugu film industry, there was a lot of influence of caste over cine industry.**

date of release of films. Telugu film fraternity has been divided into two groups for and against the state's government. Influence of caste factor on film field is simply not ruled out with every insider of the Telugu film industry. During initial years of Telugu film industry, there was a lot of influence of caste over cine industry. After shining like a leading light of film industry for more than 30 years, NTR entered into politics only to rule another world i. e politics. He launched his own political unit in 1982 with an aim of putting down the curtains for Congress' era and becoming chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh. Within

9 months of launching political party Telugu Desam, he created history by stunning victory over Congress with 200 plus seats in 294 member house in AP assembly. Since then politics and film industry got entangled with each other and successive chief ministers had shown their influence over film industry by controlling things by appointing their trusted men in the post of Film Development Corporation (FDC). It has almost become ritual for film industry to be in good books of chief minister by felicitating him on grand scale. Needs of film industry such as the issues needs to be addressed by the government for proper redres-



M D RATNA KUMAR Senior Journalist

sal, were to be brought to the notice of chief minister collectively and those are duly solved by the head of the government. Participation of popular stars NTR&ANR was quiet natural on every occasion. The Telugu film industry had an elaborate meeting with the then chief minister Kasu Brahmananda Reddy at a star hotel in Madras (now Chennai) during his visit to this South Indian film capital in those days. There was no existence of another group in

film industry probably for criticising ruling parties.

Coming back to the present scenario of tinsel world, Reddy community has been trying to get hold on the film industry affairs through the cooperation extended by the government headed by Jagannathan Reddy. With the emergence of Chiranjeevi, his younger brother Pawan also enjoying the star status. Kapu community that he belongs to you. Another star Allu Arjun came from in-laws family of Chiranjeevi. With this development, Kapu community is also having say on the affairs of film industry. But no prominent Reddy face can be seen here.

Pawan is being cornered by several ministers in Jagan government on the occasion of releasing the latter's new film Bhimla Nayak. G.O no. 35 is appears to be become a hurdle for the makers of big movies that ensures flow of funds in the name of their picture. Pawan draws comparison this issue with the increase of wealth that could reach max-

imum people. Pawan's every moment gets significance with regard to taking on the government and its policy. Referring to the 'cautious attitude' shown by government staff at cinema theatres for ensuring strict implementation of G.O no. 35. Why shouldn't the same staff keep a strict vigil at every sand reach in the state where crores of rupees which are meant to go to government are being siphoned allegedly by the cadres of ruling YSR Congress party.

There is support from general public when anybody cutting across the party lines questioned the government's unapardonable silence over possible slashing of prices of cement, iron etc. Pawan's party Jana Sena (JSP) has been focussing on these issues and seeking public opinion.

Actually, dealing with Pawan factor is non issue for the leadership of YSR Congress. But the popularity and base by virtue of prominent film actor will be forever. Because of this reason only he could with stand his

position of being torch bearer atleast for some sections of society. Garnering support from various sections may be continuous act on part of Pawan in view of popularity of government is at stake with every passing day. That's why government is compelled to be attentive towards Pawan who is capable of uniting Kapu community against Jagan. The person who lost his two seats he contested in last elections, now being given 'rousing reception' at every place. In this way Jagan seems to be focussing his attention on a person who got 18 assembly seats in 2009. This development indicates that Pawan is getting self confidence of becoming more stronger in days to come with the attention being paid by the chief minister Jagan. While boasting its 151 seats winning, ruling party is concentrating on the person who lost his two seats he contested from bhimavaram & gajuvaka. Ruling party appears to have recognised Pawan as a formidable force in future!

## Affordable fees attract aspiring doctors from Andhra to Ukraine

C PRADEEP KUMAR VIJAYAWADA

Many factors attract aspiring doctors to Ukrainian universities, such as lower fees, no donation, English medium, WHO and MCI/NMC recognition, affordable cost of living and easy connectivity. A student can complete the medical course by spending just Rs 20 lakh in Ukraine while in India, one has to spend anywhere between Rs 0.50 to Rs 1 crore to study the course in a private medical university.

As stated by private educational consulting agencies, there are about 16 popular medical universities in

Ukraine that Indian students prefer and every university has got decades of history. The colleges in Ukraine and Russia are run by the government, while a few seats are allocated for foreign students and the medical education is far cheaper compared to private colleges in India.

The top destinations for medical students are Russia, China, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Kyrgyzstan, UK and Singapore. However, Ukraine happens to be the first choice due to lower fees compared to other countries.

The migration of students to Ukraine to pursue medical

courses began a decade ago, but it became a popular destination for aspiring doctors about five years ago as there is no donation or entrance examination. Admissions are on the basis of eligibility of 50 per cent marks and NEET qualification and the medium is English. A class has not more than 15 students for better understanding and learning. There are separate hostels for Indian students with round-the-clock security, besides all basic amenities which are offered free of cost for all foreign students. The accommodation facility has options with two/three/four seating rooms. Adequate clin-

ical exposure and learning, and more importantly, very low fees of Rs 20- 25 lakh for the whole course including accommodation are seen as the main advantages by the students of India.

G Subba Reddy, a parent, said that he wished to admit his son to a private medical university to pursue MBBS in AP, but the fees were very high -- Rs 50 lakh to Rs 1 crore. He added that a similar situation prevailed in medical universities in the adjacent Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana States. He said that on knowing about the medical universities in Ukraine offering good education for affordable and

very less fees compared to our private universities, he preferred Ukraine.

An overseas education consultant, Chaitanya, said that most of the parents preferred their children to join Ukrainian medical universities as the fees were much lower compared to other foreign universities. He said that the students who passed out from medical colleges in foreign universities needed to clear Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE) to get a licence to practise in India by the Medical Council of India, which is a good facility for students studying in Ukrainian universities.

## Sea phase of Milan begins

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As many as 26 ships, 21 aircraft and one submarine will participate in the sea phase of the ongoing multilateral naval exercise MILAN 22 commencing in the Bay of Bengal on Tuesday.

The sea phase scheduled till March 4 includes advanced and complex exercises in all three dimensions of maritime operations. Earlier, a pre-sail combined briefing for the sea phase was presided by the Rear Adm Sanjay Bhalla, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet which was attended by Senior Officers, Commanding Officers and planning teams of all participating units from friendly foreign countries. The sea phase of MILAN aims to enhance interoperability and maritime cooper-



ation, and share best practices amongst the participating

navies. The schedule includes weapon firings, seamanship evolutions, advanced anti-submarine warfare exercises, cross deck helicopter landings, simulation of complex operational scenarios and tactical manoeuvres.

### Complaint...

Continued from Page 1

Purshotam, in his complaint, mentioned that the pot-making wheel (Saare) was considered as god by them. However, the sacred Saare was kicked in a few scenes in the movie. He demanded that those scenes be removed immediately from the movie unconditionally, failing which legal action would be initiated.

The much-awaited Bheemla Nayak starring JSP chief Pawan Kalyan and Rana Daggubati was released on February 25. The movie, remake of a Malayalam film, is directed by Sagar K Chandra and scripted by Trivikram Srinivas.

### AP Cabinet meeting deferred to March 7

Continued from Page 1

Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma's office had already forwarded a note to all Special Chief Secretaries/Principal Secretaries/Secretaries to send their proposals by March 2 for inclusion of the same in the Cabinet meeting agenda.

### CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹200
Without Skin	₹273
Broiler at Farm	₹130

### EGG RATES ₹/100

VIJAYAWADA	365
HYDERABAD	340
VISAKHAPATNAM	375
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.65

## V-P deplures...

Continued from Page 1

The Vice-President said that he wishes India would be made a powerful nation. Powerful nation does mean what Russia is down now and what America and China want to do in future.

"We want a powerful India which is huger-free nation, education to all, no discrimination against women, everybody is treated equally, no social discrimination", he said. The Vice-president said "I want to see India a strong, happy and prosperous nation. I will be doing whatever is possible from my side till my last breath", he made it clear.

Venkaiah Naidu said that some of his admirers wish that he would reach a higher position. "If I go to a higher position, I can not mingle with people freely due to protocol and I want to move freely with people as I enjoy it," he said. Lauding the efforts of



Patibandla Sitaramaiah high school for generating disciplined and brilliant students, he said that National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was formulated with an objective of providing education with high standards. Former MP Yelamanchili Shivaji, NABARD chairman Chintala Govinda Rajulu, Patibandla Sitaramaiah high school president Ganta Subba Rao and secretary Patibandla Vishnuvardhan were among those who were present.

## Indian student killed in Russain shelling

Continued from Page 1

Official sources said the deteriorating situation in Kharkiv is a matter of grave concern and that the safety and security of Indian nationals in that city is of utmost priority for the government.

They said India has already taken up with the Russian and Ukrainian embassies the "pressing" requirement of safe passage to Indian nationals, including students, from Kharkiv and other cities in conflict zones.

"This demand has been repeatedly made of Russia and

Ukraine since the beginning of this conflict on February 24. It has been conveyed to both their ambassadors in New Delhi as well as taken up in their capitals," said a source.

The sources said the preparations for evacuation of Indians from the Indian government side have been in place for sometime now.

"An Indian team has been positioned in the Russian city of Belgorod, close to the Ukrainian border. However, the conflict situation in and around Kharkiv and nearby cities has been an obstacle," the source said.

### 70 Ukrainian soldiers killed as Russian troops...

Continued from Page 1

Kyiv says 352 civilians have been killed, including 14 children, since the invasion began last Thursday. Russia has acknowledged for the first time that it has suffered losses. New Air India CEO Declines Job 2 Weeks After Appointment By Tata Sons New Delhi/Istanbul: Turkey's Ilker Ayçi said on Tuesday he will not take on the role of

chief executive of Tata Group's Air India, days after the announcement of his appointment led to opposition in India over his previous political links. Tata last month (on February 14) announced Ayçi's appointment as CEO of previously state-run Air India after taking over the debt-laden airline in January in a \$2.4 billion equity and debt deal.

### Indians are ...

Continued from Page 1

We are sleeping near railway tracks and on platforms. Our jackets are worn out because it is very cold here. The conditions are quite bad here," Hussain said. Indian students trapped in Ukraine have also alleged racial discrimination against them by the locals. Recently, videos showing Indians being attacked did the rounds of social media. In one of the videos shot during night time, a student wheeling his suitcase behind him is kicked by a guard in uniform. In another video, students claimed that they were being thrown off the train parked at a railway station in Kyiv and beaten with sticks.

## "Place Indian flag if you have": father's last...

Continued from Page 1

Naveen Shekharappa, a 21-year-old from Karnataka, died in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, which has been facing intense Russian shelling since

yesterday. His friend said he had gone out to get food from a nearby grocery store. In the phone conversation, Naveen's father is heard recounting their conversation with Piyush Goyal, who

handles the commerce and industry portfolio in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. "We have talked to minister Piyush Goyal. He said that there is a little problem. If we try to move from there, then rescue is

possible. He has said that our government has talked to both the countries, both the countries has assured them that nothing will happen to the Indians there," his grandfather is heard saying.

## Hyderabad second in ultra-rich individuals

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With 467 ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs), Hyderabad is second after Mumbai in UHNWI numbers.

Knight Frank's 'The Wealth Report 2022,' says that Hyderabad is home to 467 UHNWIs with a net worth of USD 30 mn and above in 2021, the second-highest in India after Mumbai which has 1,596 UHNWIs.

The ultra-wealthy population in the city is expected to increase by 56 per cent to 728 by 2026. In the last five years, Hyderabad's ultra-rich population grew by 48.7 per cent from 314 in 2016 to 467 in 2021.

In India, the number of ultra-high net worth individ-

uals grew by 11 per cent in 2021, the highest growth in APAC.

India also ranked sixth in percentage-wise growth of ultra-high net worth individual population that is self-made and under the age of 40. Globally, the number of the ultra-wealthy population saw an annual increase of 9.3 per cent to 610,569 in 2021.

Shishir Bajjal, the Chairman & Managing Director of Knight Frank India said, "Equity markets and digital adoption have been key factors driving the growth of UHNWIs in India. The growth in younger, self-made UHNWIs has been incredible in India and we foresee them driving new investment and innovation. With a healthy growth in the UHNWI and



billionaire population, India is expected to be one of the

fastest-growing countries, strengthening itself econom-

ically and emerging as a super-power in various sectors."

According to the Attitude Survey of the Report, 29 per cent of the overall wealth of Indian UHNWIs is allocated to the purchase of principal and second homes followed by 22 per cent in commercial property (including rental property, offices etc).

The survey said that eight per cent of their investable wealth was allocated to indirect properties (includes REITs, funds, etc.) in 2021. Nearly 60 per cent of the overall wealth of UHNWIs in India was allocated to real estate in 2021.

Eleven per cent of the investable wealth of Indian ultra-high net worth individuals (UHNWIs whose net worth is USD 30 mn or more) is allocated for passion-led investments against

the global average of 16 per cent.

About 29 per cent of Indian UHNWIs spent more on passion investments during 2021. The joy of ownership scored above investment returns and marked as the driving factor to collect investments of passion by the Indian ultra-rich. Art is the most preferred investment by Indian UHNWIs, followed by jewellery and classic cars. Luxury handbags and wines, slipped from their earlier first positions to fifth and seventh respectively in 2021.

According to Knight Frank's luxury investment index (global), art provided a return of 13 per cent in a year and 75 per cent in 10 years.

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# Naidu urges MEA to expedite evacuation of Telugus from Ukraine

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

TDP national president and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday urged External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for taking steps for speedy evacuation of the stranded Telugu people in war-torn Ukraine.

In a letter sent to the Union Minister here, Naidu stressed the need for an increase in the number of flights to bring back the stranded people.

Lauding the efforts made so far, Naidu said: "It is heartwarming to note the stupendous efforts put forth by you, your team, and colleagues to bring back the stranded Indians in Ukraine. The Government of India has till now brought our people back home only through Bucharest and Budapest airports i.e., Romania and Hungary respectively. There are several people that crossed Ukraine border and waiting to fly back home."

Chandrababu Naidu told Jaishankar that in the light of the increased number of Telugu people along with other fellow Indians at various border points, the following requests may be considered. Increase

the number of flights evacuating Indians. These flights may be operated from other border countries of Ukraine like Slovakia, Moldova and Poland so that the Government of India-run flights can cater to more people.

The TDP chief said currently, all flights carrying Indians are terminating at Mumbai or Delhi. Considering the huge number of Telugu people, it is requested to operate flights to Hyderabad, Tirupati, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam.

Naidu further said that simultaneously, we have collected possible information of around 1,500 stranded Telugu people and their fellow Indians in various places. At present they are all traveling towards Uzhhorod and will reach there around 12 noon (IST) on 29th February 2022.

The TDP chief said that Uzhhorod is close to the Slovakia border and it is urged to arrange flights from Bratislava airport for these people. We take this opportunity to thank the Ministry and staff for their efforts to bring Telugu people back home at the earliest.

## 1,500 Telugus still stuck in Ukraine: Chandrababu

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu, on Tuesday, urged External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar for taking steps for the speedy evacuation of the stranded Telugu people in the war-torn Ukraine and along its border countries.

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The TDP chief said that Uzhhorod was close to the Slovakia border and it was urged to arrange flights from Bratislava airport for these people. "We take this opportunity to thank the ministry and staff for their efforts to bring Telugu people back home at the earliest," he added.

# Devotional fervour marks Maha Sivaratri festivities

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Devotees, in large numbers, thronged Siva temples across the State right from the early morning of Tuesday on the occasion of Maha Sivaratri celebrations. The Siva temples across the State echoed the chants of 'Om Namah Shivaya' by the devotees. The authorities have made elaborate arrangements at the famous Siva temples across the state for the devotees' darshan.

Rudrabhishekams and other special pujas were performed on the occasion of Sivaratri.

In Vijayawada, thousands of devotees thronged the Malleswara Swamy temple located on Indrakeeladri and Old Sivalayam in Samarangam Chowk in one town and performed special Puja on Tuesday to mark the Maha Sivaratri. The devotees took the holy bath in Krishna river and visited the two temples. Irrigation, police, VMC and endowments and fire services departments have made elaborate arrangements for the bathing and to prevent mishaps at the Durga ghat and other places as a large number of devotees visited the ghats.

Water sprinklers were arranged for the bathing and changing rooms were arranged



for the devotees near the ghat. The rush of devotees started early in the morning and continued till night. Similarly, the devotees took bath at Punnami ghat and Ferri in Ibrahimpatnam. The Siva temples are reverberated with 'Om Namah Shivaya' since the morning as devotees visited the temple.

Tight bandobast has been made in and around the temple, Durga ghat, Punnami ghat and other places along the Krishna river. Similarly, Siva temples located at Muktyala, Mopidevi, Musunuru and other parts of the district witnessed heavy rush since early

morning. A large number of devotees attended the Sivarama Kshetram and Siva temple located in Satyanarayanapuram. The priests performed special pujas to mark the Maha Sivaratri. Police have regulated the traffic for the convenience of the devotees.

Elaborate arrangements were made for the celestial wedding of Lord Siva and Parvati late on Tuesday night. Temples were illuminated to mark the Sivaratri festival. Many devotees observe fasting on the occasion of auspicious night.

# Lokesh decries 'attack' on Chittoor Dalit

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Tuesday expressed concern that there seemed to be no end to the atrocities being committed by CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, his party and his social group's leaders on the weaker sections in the State.

Lokesh condemned the latest 'physical torture' of a Dalit man named Chandran by the ruling YSRCP goons at Peddantipalli hamlet in Nandanuru panchayat limits in Gangadhara Nellore assembly segment in Chittoor district.

In a statement here, Lokesh said that Deputy CM Narayana Swamy's right hand Eswar Reddy and his henchmen tied

legs and hands of Chandran and gave him a thrashing. The Dalit victim was taken to the mango garden and meted out torture just for repayment of a Rs. 10,000 loan.

Nara Lokesh described as a 'sadistic act' the manner in which the YCP miscreants kidnapped, tied up and then beat up the weaker section's person. Once again, it was amply proved that there was no safety to the lives of Dalits under the ruthless and oppressive regime of Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The TDP MLC demanded the police to explain why no FIR was registered till now despite a complaint filed by the aggrieved SC family and relatives. The law and order in



Andhra Pradesh was apparently in the hands of the YCP leaders but not the police. Instead of preventing injustice to his Dalit community, Deputy CM Narayana Swamy was acting beneath his post and merely passing time by playing second fiddle to CM Jagan Reddy.

Lokesh asked what moral

right Narayana Swamy had to comment on Bheema Nayak when he was afraid of talking about atrocities being perpetrated on Dalits in his assembly constituency. The SC, ST atrocities cases were filed on the Dalit farmers itself when they were peacefully protesting in Amaravati Capital City area against the atrocious 3 Capitals plan.

Lokesh recalled how the High Court passed strictures against the police for filing atrocities cases against SCs. The Jagan Reddy regime should change its attitude at least now. It should prove its commitment to the Dalit cause by making immediate arrest of Eeswar Reddy for attacking Dalit person Chandran.

# 'Educate students to wipe out plastic use'

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Visakhapatnam Mayor Golagani Hari Venkata Kumari has said that awareness should be created among students to wipe out plastic use. On Tuesday, she, along with GVMC Commissioner Dr G Laxmisha, took part in a shooting programme on the use of cloth bags hosted by the BBC channel at KDMP School.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said in the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme that the Commissioners are promoting cloth bags instead of plastic in Visakhapatnam and making special efforts to eradicate plastic use.

As part of it, the BBC chan-



nel filmed the use of cloth bags made by students at the KDMP School.

In this context, the Mayor and the Commissioner said

that the Central and State governments were making special efforts as part of the Swachh Survekshan. They said that awareness should be created

from the student stage on achieving first rank in Swachh Survekshan-2022. Children should be made aware of the plastic ban and thereby educate their parents to totally ban plastic. They said that every household wet waste can be converted into organic manure and used for gardens at homes. Later, they inspected the dust bins in front of the shops in the area.

Ward Corporator N Lakshmi, Chief Medical Officer Dr KSLG Shastri, Zonal Commissioner Shiv Prasad, DEO Srinivasa Rao, AMOH DR Lakshmi Tulsi, Sanitary Supervisor Janardhan, School Principal, Teachers, Sanitary Inspector, students and others were present.

# Lokesh flays CM's comments on Viveka case

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Tuesday asserted that the murder of former MP YS Vivekananda Reddy was no longer a mystery following the latest statements being recorded by the CBI.

Lokesh said that the whole drama played by the ruling YSRCP leaders got badly exposed now in front of the people of the State.

In a statement here, Lokesh asked why CM Jagan Mohan Reddy had referred to the Viveka murder case as the 12th case for him to handle if it was handed over to the CBI. These comments would only affirm that the CM had drawn the main sketch for the murder of his uncle Viveka.

Nara Lokesh recalled how Jagan Mohan Reddy said on several occasions that Avinash Reddy and Siva Shankar Reddy were like two eyes for him. Both these persons were involved in the brutal murder of Viveka. The CBI probe so far had come out with clinching evidence to this effect.

The TDP MLC asserted that the time has come for the CBI officials to examine the role of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy in the brutal killing of his paternal uncle YS Vivekananda Reddy in Pulivendula in Kadapa district.

The TDP MLC demanded the police to identify the threatening miscreants and immediately arrest them.

Lokesh recalled how Jagan Mohan Reddy said on several occasions that Avinash Reddy and Siva Shankar Reddy were like 2 eyes for him. Both these persons were involved in the brutal murder of Viveka.

# PIL filed in HC against non-Sunnis, non-Shias in Waqf Board panel

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

A petition was filed in the Andhra Pradesh High Court against the appointment of non-Sunni and non-Shia communities to the nominated posts of the AP State Waqf Board, including chairman. The case was filed by Muslim minority leaders including Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (Sunni) State co-convenor and Sufi mentor Altaf Ali Raza.

Altaf Ali Raza said that Islamic scholars, minority leaders and religious chiefs had many times urged the government to restrain appointment of non-Sunni/Shia people to the Waqf Board as it belonged to Sunnis and Shias. He said that the government continued to appoint non-Sunni/Shia people, hence they filed a PIL in the High Court seeking justice.

Altaf Ali Raza claimed that according to the government gazette of the Waqf Board in 1962, the majority of the assets of the Waqf Board belonged to Sunni Muslims and some belonged to Shia Muslims as well. He mentioned that Sunni and Shia Kings donated thou-



sands of acres of lands in the name of Allah for Dargahs, Peer Panjas, Deevidis and other worship places. But some people belonging to other faiths of non-Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat and non-Shia were appointed to the Waqf Board and were involved in illegal activities including sale of Waqf lands.

Altaf Ali Raza added that non-Sunni/Shia people did not have faith in Dargahs, Peer Panjas and others and they did not follow the traditions, so they would not work for their protection. He stated that several Peer Panjas and Deevidis were

converted into other institutions by those non-Sunni/Shia people damaging and hurting their religious faiths.

Altaf Ali Raza said that the non-Sunnis worked against the YSRCP and Jagan Mohan Reddy in the elections and now they were trying to destroy the purpose of Waqf by illegally selling Waqf lands.

He said that they filed a petition in the High Court objecting to the appointment of non-Sunni / Shia people in the AP Waqf Board, for the protection of Waqf assets from encroachments. The hearing is scheduled for March 7.

# Hearing assessment camp tomorrow

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

On the occasion of the World Hearing Day, on March 3, a free hearing assessment health camp for children and adults will be organised at Manipal Hospital, Vijayawada. The camp is intended to improve the quality of life of those with hearing impairment. The free hearing camp, to be led by Dr Venkata Krishna Sandeep and Dr Jaya Krishna Anne, will be held from 10 am to 2 pm.

Speaking about the health camp, Dr Venkata Krishna Sandeep, Consultant, ENT and Head and Neck surgery, said: "I am so glad to be a part of a free hearing assessment health camp for children and adults with hearing loss across the State. Cochlear implantation is done for children and adults suffering from nerve-related hearing loss. So far, we have operated on eight children under the age of five years and one adult of 57 years. The goal is to offer children a better life because impairments should not stand in the way of them continuing to give their best in the future."

# 'Grama Mahila' police serving at grass-root level: SP

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Krishna District Superintendent of Police Siddharth Kaushal got the opportunity to explain the services being rendered by Grama Mahila Police at the grassroots-level to 84 IPS officers across the country. SP Kaushal was participating in a webinar organised by the National Police Academy on Tuesday, attended by senior IPS officers with eight to 10 years of experience, in which he talked about the services rendered at the grassroots-level to the women.

Police offering their services through a video conferencing system at the village/ward secretariat level has been named as 'Pratyaksha Spandana'. Problems related to women can be intimated to the SP, DSP, Inspectors and the Sub-Inspectors through video-conferencing.

Addressing the IPS officers on the occasion, SP Kaushal said the women living in the

interior areas could visit the village/ward secretariats and contact the police officers. The State government has constituted village/ward secretariats across the State to take the administration to the grass-roots-level. The villagers, particularly elderly women, sick women and others can visit the village secretariats and take the help of Mahila Police appointed by the government there.

SP Kaushal said women can't visit the offices of the SP, DSP and police stations due to various reasons, but they can visit the nearest ward/village secretariats and bring their problems to the notice of senior police officers. The SP can direct the subordinates to sort out the problems of the women on the spot. The SP said Pratyaksha Spandana promoted friendly policing and was very useful to the people and the police staff as transparency was maintained.

The IPS officials, who participated in the national webinar, hailed the project.



# Arrangements for V-P's visit reviewed

**PNS ■ ELURU**

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) K V Mohan Rao and Superintendent of police Rahul Dev Sharma reviewed the security arrangements, which have been made for the Vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu's visit and held a briefing programme here on Tuesday.

Eluru Range DIG and SP with the officers said that in the wake of the visit of the Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu, a total of 491 police personnel from East Godavari District, Rajahmundry Urban, Krishna Districts and West Godavari District had been deployed on security duty.

The DIG briefed the police personnel on the 'do's and don'ts' during the Vice president's programme. He instructed them not to use cell-phones during the event.

The total police personnel being deployed to the Vice President's programme are one Additional SP, DSP 05, CIs 11, SIs 23, A.S. 1 / HC 94, Police Constables 195, Women Police 53, Home Guards 109 AR Platoon 1, Special Party Police personnel provided security.

Special Enforcement Bureau Additional SP C Jaya Ramaraju, Additional SP Eluru in-charge DSP Dr Dilip Kiran, DSPs Narasapuram DSP Veeranjaneya Reddy, Kovvur DSP B Srinath Garu, Paideshwara Rao, Shubbakara Rao, AR DSP Krishnaraja, DSP CICH Kondala Rao, Eluru 1st Town Inspector B. Adi Prasad, 2nd Town Inspector DV Ramana, 3rd Town Inspector Prasad and Bhimadolu CI Subba Rao.

# Enkindling scientific spirit in young minds

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

On the occasion of the National Science Day, SRM University organised an event in collaboration with the South Asian Meteorological Association (SAMA) under the 2022 theme 'Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future'.

Prof V S Rao, Vice-Chancellor, SRM University, appreciated the students for their enormous participation in various activities and for rightly articulating the significance of the focal theme through their representations. "There cannot be a better

example than the pandemic which demonstrated the integration of science and technology," Prof Rao said. He also recollected the invaluable contributions of Indian scholars like Dr Jagadish Chandra Bose, Srinivasa Ramanujan, Homi J Bhabha and Vikram Sarabhai, who transformed the scientific outlook of India.

Prof B V Babu, dean of the School of Engineering and Sciences, addressed the gathering and briefed about the importance of taking science and technology together towards a sustainable future. He emphasised the relevance of non-conventional sources of

energy in the times ahead and the social benefits associated with them. He further elaborated on the concept of Digital Lean Solutions and their impact on our lives.

Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, presided over the programme and expressed concern over the inescapable repercussions of climate change and the ruthless exploitation of nature. He also recognised the pivotal role SRM University-AP continues to play in creating talents and masterminds through intensive research practices and exposure to global technological facilities.

Further, there were talks on the works of Nobel Laureates of 2021. Prof. T. Yasunari, Advisor, RIHN KCCAC, Japan, explicated the major works of the Nobel Laureate Prof. Syukuro Manabe and reiterated Manabe's philosophy of 'Simplicity and Balance' in Climate Modelling.

Prof. Krishna Achuta Rao, head, CAS, IIT-Delhi, threw light on the stochastic climate model, the innovation of another Nobel winner, Klaus Hasselmann. A question-answer session was also organised with both the speakers for students to gain insight into global scientific developments.





Eight buses gutted

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Eight buses of private travels caught fire and destroyed at the outskirts here on Tuesday.



Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Goa and Shiridi. Due to Covid-19, the buses were not being operated for the last one year.

Volvo scania buses, one high tech bus and two Ashok Leyland buses were destroyed in the fire.



Chased by dogs, deer falls into water sump

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

A deer, in a bid to escape from a pack of stray dogs, fell into a water sump and the forest officials rescued it at Ganganapalli village.

A fully grown deer entered the village. A pack of dogs saw the deer and tried to attack it. The deer in a bid to escape fell into a water sump.

A large number of villagers rushed there to see the deer. However, the forest officials who got information about the deer went there and rescued the deer.

3 youths drown in Gundlakamma stream

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Three youths were drowned in the Gundlakamma stream at Inavolu village in Vinukonda division. The deceased youths Sheik Ayesh Siddhiqi (19) belonged to Narasaraopet, Mohammad Faisal Khan (19) and Sheik Heena (22) belonged to Vinukonda.



The bodies were fished out and shifted to the Vinukonda government general hospital for postmortem. Narasaraopet TDP Parliamentary constituency president and former MLA G V Anjaneyulu consoled the bereaved family members.

Talking to the media, he alleged that the sand mafia had dug up in the river bed to plunder the sand in which the three deceased slipped and drowned.

5 lakh was paid under Chandranna Bhima insurance to those above 18-years if they died in accidents. The scheme was shrunk by the YSRCP regime; he flayed, and demanded the government to extend financial assistance to the bereaved families.

Minister presents silk clothes at Kotappakonda temple

PNS ■ GUNTUR / ELURU / ONGOLE

Over two lakh of devotees thronged the famous hill shrine Sri Trikoteswara Swamy temple, located atop the Kotappakonda hill in Guntur district on Tuesday on account of Mahashivaratri.

Kotappakonda temple today to have darshan of god.

MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayalu, Chief Whip Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy, MLA Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy couple, MLA Bolla Bramhanaidu visited the temple and offered pooja at the temple.

The devotees formed long queues in the early morning itself in front of the temple to have darshan of god. Minister for Endowment Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao presented silk clothes to Sri Koteswara Swamy and performed a special pooja.

Keshatram and worshiped lord Shiva. She also visited Shiva Temple at Brahamanagudem and later she participated at the distribution of milk organised by the Avanti Feeds chairman Alluri Indrakumar.

In Ongole, MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy participated in the Maharudra homam performed on the occasion of Mahashivaratri at Sri Kashivisweswara Swamy temple located at Keshava Swamytemple here.



Endowments Minister Velampalli Srinivas presenting silk clothes to Lord Siva at Sri Trikoteswara Swamy temple at Kotappakonda in Guntur district on Tuesday.

Union Minister to visit Polavaram project on March 4

PNS ■ ELURU

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat will visit the Polavaram project on March 4.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and state ministers will accompany the Union minister and explain to him the progress of the project.

Following the visit of Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy and Union Minister for Agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on March 4, district Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh visited the Polavaram project area on Tuesday.

Rs 9.61 crore released for housing scheme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector J Nivas on Tuesday said that the State government had released Rs 9.61 crore to 2,601 beneficiaries of the free house scheme for construction activities.

from time to time for the completion of the houses that are in the basement stage. For the ongoing house construction, funds will be released to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries without any delay.

He said that the government had sanctioned Rs 1.80 lakh for the construction of houses. Steel, cement and sand required for the construction were being made available.

Telangana model of progress gives tough time to TRS allies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

While the TRS Government says that it is leading by example, the development schemes implemented in Telangana seem to be making life difficult for the friends of the TRS in other states.



Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme. At a public meeting KCR said that during his visit to Mumbai, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray enquired about the Rythu Bandhu scheme saying that they are facing huge pressure from farmers, particularly in areas bordering Telangana, for similar support.

First, Maharashtra Udhav Thackeray asked about the Rythu Bandhu scheme due to demand from their areas bordering TS. Now, Tamil Nadu farmers want to ask their Chief Minister for a project like the

there. The TRS has a tough task to balance between gathering anti-BJP forces and boasting about their development schemes. It may be mentioned here that KCR has asked what's wrong in going to the people with the 'Telangana Model of Governance' like the 'Gujarat Model of Governance'?

Reacting to a question on going to the people with the Telangana Model of Governance KCR said, 'Why not? People in Maharashtra are demanding merger with Telangana. The BJP MLA of Raichur demanded merger with Telangana in front of their minister.'



2 realtors shot dead

Unidentified men open fire near Ibrahimpatnam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two realtors were killed when unidentified men opened fire near Ibrahimpatnam on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Tuesday.



Dead body of one of the two realtors killed

The incident took place at around 6 am in the Karanaguda village of Ranga Reddy district under the Rachakonda police commissionerate.

The victims were identified as Srinivas Reddy from Almasguda and Raghavender Reddy from Amberpet.

This incident came to light when some locals saw a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) with bleeding men by the side of the road in Karanaguda village. Those who saw the unconscious man in the driver's seat immediately informed the police. Police suspect that a dispute over 20 acres of land purchased by the two realtors led to the murder.

In 1996, Indrareddy, Narsinghreddy, Devi and Purushottamreddy sold lands to some Nellore residents. The land was leased to the Nellore residents by the Lake Villa plot owners. In the Dharani portal, the land is registered in the names of Indrareddy and Narsinghreddy. Srinivas Reddy and Raghavender Reddy signed an agreement with Indrareddy showing non-agricultural land as agricultural land.

Rachakonda police said that they had received several complaints in the past against realtors Srinivas Reddy and Raghavender Reddy.

Members of the Lake Villa Plot Owners Association had complained to the Rachakonda police that their land was being grabbed. The complaints were ignored by the police.

Just a week ago, Srinivas Reddy had threatened the flat owners and the owners of Lake Villa were preparing to

Four people abducted from Jithender Reddy's Delhi residence

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Unidentified persons have abducted senior BJP leader AP Jithender Reddy's four staffers from his official residence in New Delhi two days ago. Jithender Reddy's personal staff filed a complaint with the police in New Delhi.



Interestingly, Minister Srinivas Goud went to New Delhi along with Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao on Monday.

Jithender Reddy's driver Thapa, Mahabubnagar resident Munnuru Ravi and two others were kidnapped by unidentified persons from Jithender's residence.

It may be recalled that the persons who were kidnapped had filed petitions in the High Court alleging that the election of TRS Minister Srinivas Goud was not valid.

Cops seize 400 kg ganja, arrest 8

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police Special Operations Team personnel (Shamshabad) nabbed 8 persons and seized 400 kgs of ganja from them. Acting on a tip off, the team arrested P Ananda Prarakale (57), Umesh Gyakwad (38), Pradeep Kalangi (23), Dattasakat (53), Satish Vijay Shinde (36), Vishal Pupat (21), Ashok Patpute (50) and Ankush Pandule (50) natives of Maharashtra. Two others, Subhan and Basha of Khammam are absconding.

DCP (Shamshabad) R Jagadeswar Reddy said, Basha and Subhan were supplying ganja to Ankush and Ananda. On February 22, Ananda sent a truck to Khammam from Maharashtra to send a load of ganja to Pimpri Chinchwad near Pune.

Around 6.3% of Indian population suffers from hearing loss: Experts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated 3rd March as World Hearing Day. Experts say that around 6.3% of the Indian population suffers from hearing loss.

Hearing loss is the most common sensory deficit in humans. According to the National Sample Survey Organisation, currently there are 291 persons per 1 lakh suffering from severe to profound hearing loss. A large percentage of these are children between the ages 0-14. In India, an alarming 27,000 children are born deaf every year. WHO highlighted noise control as one of the seven key interventions and stressed the importance of mitigating exposure to loud sounds. WHO has called upon governments, industry partners and civil society to raise awareness for this and implement evidence based standards that promote safe listening.

Doctors say one of the measures to decrease the burden of hearing loss is screening of newborns and infants. Newborn screening programme should be made mandatory by all pediatric hospitals whether government or private. Hearing test is just as important as a regular health check-up as hearing loss is a gradual process, one may not realise it until it becomes a cause of worry.

The theme for this year's World Hearing Day will be 'To hear for life, Listen with Care'. The thrust is on the importance of hearing loss prevention through safe listening.

MS Dhoni teams up with GSK for 6-in-1 vaccination

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) teamed up with Former Indian Skipper, MS Dhoni to raise awareness for the 6-in-1 vaccination campaign.

MS Dhoni said, 'As parents, my wife and I look for ways to give our daughter a good foundation for life, I was eager to join GSK to raise awareness for the 6 in 1 vaccine. Combination vaccination means that infants get the same kind of protection but with fewer injections.'

Without the combination shot, children will have to take more injections which increase the likelihood of pain, not only for the child but also to the parent. The vaccine for infants provides them protection against six diseases.

Booster dose numbers dipping in TS as per Cowin data

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Though doctors are proposing a booster dose every year, the number of takers has significantly dropped. Just a few hundreds are getting inoculated in the last couple of days, which is the lowest ever since the precautionary dose programme had begun. On 28th February, 1,247 booster doses were taken, on 27th February

it was the lowest with only 312 doses being administered. The highest was 15,214 doses which was taken on 7th February. People are still hesitant to take booster dose and the programme is yet to open for all other age groups. Telangana is at the 13th place in the country with only 4.7 lakh precautionary doses being taken so far.

The booster dose started in the country with a bang on 10th January. According to Cowin data, more than 37 lakh people have taken the booster dose in the country till now.

Then slowly the numbers started to fall every week. During the current week, only 2 lakh people have taken the precautionary dose across the country. During the last days of February within the coun-

try it was at an all time low with only 18,426 people getting vaccinated.

According to the dashboard on the Cowin website, a total of 1.89 crore precautionary doses have been administered so far. Two states have crossed the 20 lakh mark. Uttar Pradesh tops the list with more than 22 lakh doses and Gujarat comes next with more than 20 lakh doses.





INDIA CORNER

### Raj govt gives three Congress leaders cabinet minister status

The Rajasthan government has given the status of cabinet ministers to three Congress leaders, including the Vice-Chairman of the Twenty Point Program Implementation and Coordination Committee, Chandrabhan, an official statement said. The other two are Rameshwar Dudi who has been appointed as the chairman of Rajasthan State Agro Industries Development Board and former minister Brijkishore Sharma who has been made the chairman of Rajasthan Khadi and Village Industries Board. The government has released the first list under political appointments on February 9, in which 58 leaders, including 11 MLAs, were appointed as presidents / vice-chairmen in 44 state-level commissions / boards / corporations. The second list was released on Monday in which 74 people were made chairman, vice-chairman and members of various commissions / boards and corporations of the state.



### Couple held for duping people on pretext of getting them govt contracts

A man and his wife were arrested from Jaipur for allegedly duping several people of crores of rupees by promising railway and government contracts, police said on Tuesday. The accused, Abhishek Aggarwal (38) and his wife Meenakshi (34), natives of Supaul district in Bihar, were wanted in at least four criminal cases and have been absconding for the last three years. In the last five years, the duo cheated big businessmen and property dealers of approximately Rs 20 crore, police said. The victims were swayed by their lavish lifestyle and paid advances to the duo with the hope of getting government contracts, they said. After getting advances, the couple fled and switched off their mobile phones. Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Vikram Singh said police teams analysed several mobile numbers used by the couple.



### Admin of 'Mangalore Muslims' booked for derogatory remark against HC judge

A case has been registered against the administrator of a Facebook page 'Mangalore Muslims' and another person who had posted against one of the three judges of the Karnataka High Court hearing the hijab case. The cyber crime division of the Bengaluru South division registered a case on its own against Ateeq Shariff from Bengaluru and the administrator of 'Mangalore Muslims' on February 23, which came to light only recently. The complaint says that Ateeq Shariff posted derogatory content on February 12 against one of the judges questioning his credentials and integrity. Those who had liked the post against the judge may also incur the penal action, a police officer said. This incident comes close on the heels of derogatory remarks against the same judge by Kannada actor Chetan Kumar Ahimsa who was arrested and remanded to judicial custody.



## 'No party has formed govt in UP for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive time'

PNS ■ BALLIA

No party has been able to form government in Uttar Pradesh for two consecutive terms in decades, but the BJP is set to break this trend, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday. Addressing an election meeting in Rasra, he also urged voters not to fall prey to any temptations or get misled, and said that while voting, it should be kept in mind that the country is above all.



"The trend from the first phase to the fifth phase has made it clear that the voters of Uttar Pradesh are going to write a new history. In the past 30 to 40 years, no one was able to form government in the state for the second consecutive time. For the first time, the BJP is going to form its government for the second consecutive time," Singh said. Taking a jibe at the

Congress, he said corruption cannot be removed by delivering speeches. "Corruption can be stopped by making changes in the system," the senior BJP leader said ahead of the sixth of the seven phase Uttar Pradesh assembly polls. Former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had with 'laacharee'

(helplessness) had said that of the 100 paise which is sent from Delhi, hardly 15 paise reaches the beneficiary, Singh said. However, in the BJP government, the benefits of schemes are reaching beneficiaries without any corruption, he said. Praising the foreign policy of

the Narendra Modi government, Singh said that the Centre has kept the head of the country high in the world. "Earlier, the world did not seriously listen to India, but now the world is listening to what India is saying. We will not allow India's head to bow down," he said. He also showered praises on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the work done by the state government. "Uttar Pradesh was earlier known as a 'BIMARU' state, but in the five years of Yogi Adityanath's government, it has jumped to the second spot in terms of economy," Singh said. "Goddess Lakshmi does not come to any house riding a cycle (the poll symbol of the Samajwadi Party), elephant (the poll symbol of the Bahujan Samaj Party), nor does she come waving her hand (the poll symbol of the Congress).

### BJP govt washing hands off job crisis: CPI(M)

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Tuesday attacked the BJP government at the Centre, saying it is "washing its hands off" the job crisis in the country. His remarks came in the backdrop of Home Minister Amit Shah's comments in an interview in which he said that the communists consider only government jobs as employment. "So Amit Shah says demanding jobs is a 'communist' idea. BJP washing hands off jobs completely. Promise of two crore new jobs every year - jumla. Fill up huge number of vacancies. Privatisation destroys job reservations. Pushing India back by centuries - economically and socially," Yechury said in a tweet. The CPI(M) leader also attached a clipping of the newspaper interview. In the interview, Shah said that there is a difference between jobs and employment, and said that the country has new startups and the government has improved e-marketing opportunities.

## Deaths linked to PM2.5 pollution in India increased by 2.5 times

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Deaths attributable to PM2.5 pollution in India have increased by 2.5 times over the last two decades, according to a new report by the Centre for Science and Environment. The report released by Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Patel on Tuesday said India accounted for one out of every four deaths due to air pollution in 2019. Data collated by green think-tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), and represented in its "State of India's Environment Report", showed that 6.67 million people died due to air pollution in the world. Of these, 1.67 million deaths occurred in India. China saw 1.85 million deaths due to air pollution. The report said 4,76,000 infants died globally in their first month of life from health effects associated with air pollution exposure in 2019. Of these, 1,16,000 deaths occurred



in India. Poor air quality was the fourth leading risk factor for early death worldwide in 2019, surpassed only by high blood pressure, tobacco use and poor diet. "Over the last two decades, deaths attributable to ambient PM2.5 in India has increased by 2.5 times -- from 2,79,500 in 1990 to 9,79,900 in 2019," the report read. PM2.5 refers to fine particles which penetrate deep into the body and fuel inflammation in the lungs and respiratory tract, leading to the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory problems, including a weak immune system. Deaths attributable to ozone in India has increased by 2.9 times -- from 43,200 in 1990 to 1,68,000 in 2019, it said.

## Govt of India needs strategic plan for evacuation: Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday condoled the death of an Indian student in shelling in Ukraine's Kharkiv and called upon the Union government to draw up a strategy for the safe evacuation of all stranded Indians. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed the

death in a tweet on Tuesday and said it was in touch with the family of the student. The student, Naveen Shekarappa Gyanagoudar, was a native of Chalageri in Karnataka's Haveri district. "Received the tragic news of Indian student Naveen losing his life in Ukraine. My heartfelt condolences to his family and friends.



"I reiterate, GOI (Government of India) needs a strategic plan for safe evacuation. Every minute is precious," Rahul Gandhi wrote on Twitter. The Congress party expressed condolences to Gyanagoudar's family and friends. It also urged the government to expedite the evacuation of Indians stranded in war-torn Ukraine.

"We are deeply saddened by the tragic news of the demise of an Indian student in Ukraine. Our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends. We once again urge GoI (Government of India) to ensure the speedy and safe evacuation of our people," it stated in a tweet. The MEA said the foreign sec-

retary is calling in ambassadors of Russia and Ukraine to reiterate its demand for "urgent safe passage" to Indian nationals who are still in Kharkiv and in other cities which have become conflict zones. "Similar action is also being undertaken by our ambassadors in Russia and Ukraine," the MEA said.

## With just hope and prayers, student reaches home

PNS ■ KOTTAYAM

Uncertainty looming large over their return, it was only hope and prayers for Greeshma Rachel Thomas and others who made the arduous journey from the war-torn Ukraine to home state Kerala recently. For the Kerala girl, the four years of her life as a medical student in Chernivtsi had been a pleasant experience till last week before Russia's military offensive on Ukraine, that has prompted the Centre to launch a major evacuation drive to bring back stranded Indians, most of them students, back to the country. But, the generally calm but lively city in western part of Ukraine suddenly seemed to be gripped with anxiety and fear after the news of Russia's military onslaught in the European nation broke out last week. Detailing the hazardous journey from the Ukraine university back to the southern state, Thomas said none of them were sure at the time whether they could reach home or meet their family.

"We only had some hope and prayers in mind," she told PTI. Soon after the Russian attack, long queues started forming in front of ATMs and grocery shops and anxious locals went on a frenzied shopping spree to stock themselves up with whatever they could, aware of the fact that they will be confined indoors till hostilities cease, she said. A fourth-year student of the Bukovinian State Medical University in Chernivtsi, Thomas said the city was not at all the same when she and her friends went out on the morning of February 25, a day after the Russian offensive began, to buy some essential articles. "There were long queues everywhere from right in front of ATMs to grocery shops. We did not get money from the first ATM counter as it ran out of cash and we had to rush to the next one anxiously to find money for our travel," she said. Hailing from Puthuppally in Kerala's Kottayam district, Thomas was one among the 250 Indian students who managed to reach the country the other day.



### 'Massive mandate in rural polls reaffirms BJD's commitment'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

With BJD winning a landslide victory in the just concluded three-tier panchayat election in the state, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday said the massive mandate for the party has increased its commitment for "seva" (service) to the people. BJD has won in 766 of the 851 zilla parishad zones where the election was held and the regional party is all set to form the zilla parishad in all the 30 districts. Patnaik tweeted, "I thank the people from the core of my heart for their liking for BJD and support to the BJD candidates. This massive mandate has reinforced our commitment towards service of the people. The dedicated service by the winning candidates

and our party workers has made the BJD a movement." While Patnaik's popularity is considered a major factor for the party's landslide victory, opposition parties have, however, alleged misuse of government machinery for the regional party's growth. The BJD has reversed its losses in 2017 and wrested all the 10 districts held by the opposition BJP and Congress. The party has this time established its hold over Balangir, Bargarh, Deogarh, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Rayagada and Jharsuguda. In 2017 the BJP had won 476 seats and could form zilla parishads in 20 districts, while BJP formed had done so in eight districts and the Congress in two.



### Centre relaxes guidelines for grants to scientists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has relaxed compliance guidelines for scientists, making it easier for them to access grants and rope in associates for research and development projects. The new guidelines for 'Ease of Doing Science: Towards less government, more governance' are aimed at reducing the compliance burden and switching from research administration to research facilitation. These were released recently by Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh on the foundation day of the Department of Biotechnology. The reforms also include single step approval for administrative issues such as budget re-appropriation within the recurring head and change of principal investigator.

## HC to hear Nawab Malik's plea against arrest in money laundering today

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court will hear on Wednesday the petition filed by Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik, who was arrested last week, seeking quashing of the case registered against him by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which is probing money laundering linked to fugitive underworld don Dawood Ibrahim. Malik, who is currently in the ED's custody till March 3, had on Monday filed a petition in the HC, claiming his arrest was "illegal", and sought immediate release. On Tuesday, his advocate Taraq Sayed mentioned the plea before a division bench of Justices S S Shinde and N R Borkar seeking urgent hearing. The court was informed that the regular bench of Justices P B Varale and S P Tawde, designated to hear criminal petitions, would not



be available this week. Justice Shinde then said his bench would also not be available on Wednesday. The matter shall be listed for hearing before a bench of Justices S B Shukre and G A Sanap on Wednesday, he said. NCP leader Malik on Monday filed a petition in the high court, seeking to quash the case and also the order passed by a special court remanding him in the ED's custody. He alleged that his arrest was "illegal" and that he was targeted for being a "vocal critic of the misuse of central

## 'Below normal' max temperatures from March to May: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maximum temperatures are predicted to remain "below normal" in the northern plains, including Punjab, parts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, during the May to March period, the India Meteorological Department said on Tuesday. "Above normal maximum temperatures are most likely over many areas in western and adjoining central India, northwest India and northernmost parts of northeast India," it said. However, below normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of



Peninsular India, east and northeast India as well as the northern plains, the IMD said. The number of heat waves in the Indo-Gangetic plains is likely to be lower than normal during the period, it said. "The maximum temperatures are likely to remain above normal in Jammu and

Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, major parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and adjoining areas of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said. "During the upcoming hot weather season (March to May), normal to above normal minimum temperatures are most likely over many parts of northwest India, most parts of northeast India, some parts of central India, east coastal region and some areas along the foothills of the Himalayas," the IMD said in a statement. During March, normal to below normal maximum temperatures are likely over most

parts of Peninsular India and east and northeast India, whereas above normal maximum temperatures are forecast over many parts of western and central India. Minimum temperature expected to be above normal in most parts of northwest and west India. No heat wave is predicted in March in the northern plains. For the plains, a "heat wave" is declared when the maximum temperature is more than 40 degrees Celsius, and at least 4.5 notches above normal. A "severe" heat wave is declared if departure from normal temperature is more than 6.5 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

## SpiceJet sends plane to Slovakia to evacuate students

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

SpiceJet on Tuesday afternoon sent a plane to Kosice in Slovakia to evacuate Indians stranded in Ukraine due to the Russian military offensive. Slovakia shares land border with Ukraine on the western side. Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju is travelling on SpiceJet's special flight to Slovakia as a Special Envoy of the Indian Government to oversee the evacuation, SpiceJet said in a statement. "The aircraft will fly to Kosice in Slovakia from Delhi and the return flight will operate via Kutaisi, Georgia," it said. The Kosice flight depart from Delhi at 4 pm on Tuesday, the airline said.

### Hardeep Puri heads for Budapest

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri left for Budapest on Tuesday to oversee evacuation of Indians from Ukraine through its border crossing with Hungary. "All set to bring back our young students back home safely. Enroute to #Budapest with a refuelling stop in Istanbul with the ever efficient 6E boys & girls," Puri tweeted and posted a picture with the Indigo crew. The Russian attack on Ukraine began five days ago. India started issuing advisories in mid-February, asking Indians to consider leaving Ukraine after tensions increased between Moscow and Kyiv. The government has decided to send four Union ministers as the prime minister's envoys to Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova to oversee the evacuation of Indians from Ukraine through its border crossings with these countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had chaired a meeting on Sunday evening as well and had asserted that the safety and evacuation of Indians from Ukraine, attacked by Russia, is a top priority for his government. Scindia will take care of evacuation efforts from Romania and Moldova while Rijiju will go to Slovakia. Singh will be in Poland to manage the evacuation of Indians who have come from Ukraine through land borders.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A thin line

### India is indulging both Russia and Ukraine but spelling out a clear policy will be good

Is there an invisible undercurrent that runs through India's policy — or strategy — on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or are we getting the messaging wrong? The world sees India abstaining from a UN Security Council vote not once but twice. First, it was the American-sponsored resolution condemning Russia; then, the procedural vote for an emergency session of the UN General Assembly. Be clarified that a Security Council vote is binding, the General Assembly's is not. India has a historical and deep relationship with Russia, which is its largest arms supplier. A host of defence agreements and projects are in various stages of consideration and progress right now. By abstaining from the Security Council vote, India may have achieved a double: It sits in with its stated policy that dialogue is the only way to resolve differences. It can be interpreted as reflecting the partnership with Russia. In any case, India's abstention was never going to affect the vote. To that extent, the foreign office mandarins can be content thinking that they have come up tops both ways. But that is not foreign policy; it is at best a strategy to keep both sides happy without committing yourself. After the vote, however, New Delhi has thrown enough hints to show that while abstaining, it is also wholeheartedly with the rest of the world in actively sympathising with the cause of Ukraine. The Americans are doing it by imposing sanctions. Some European countries are doing it by arming Ukraine.



India is sending critical aid, especially medical, to Ukraine. It is also more forthright on the matter of invasion, post-vote. It is on record stating that the situation in Ukraine "has worsened", describing it as a "humanitarian crisis". India stresses the "importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations". This is the closest New Delhi

has come to question Russia's actions in Ukraine. India also regrets that the "path of diplomacy was given up". That is as much an observation about Russia as it is about other countries which were in touch with President Vladimir Putin to make him give up plans to invade Ukraine. These gradual escalations in pronouncements are followed by action in terms of the supply of critical aid to Ukraine. On the domestic front, New Delhi's strategy is playing out in the form of an all-out effort to evacuate the 20,000-odd Indians, mostly students, stuck in Ukraine. The task gets difficult for a few thousand Indian students in eastern Ukraine, in cities like Kharkiv, Kyiv and Sumy, which are close to Russian air bases and witnessing intense fighting. An Indian student has already wondered aloud why, if Russia is India's friend, can New Delhi not ask Moscow to help evacuate the students instead of making them travel over 1,000 km to safe border points in western Ukraine. The naive thought notwithstanding, it surely calls for a policy from India, not just a strategy.

### PICTALK



Devotees at Baba Baijnath temple on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, in Kangra district

# America: Its base idea of alliances



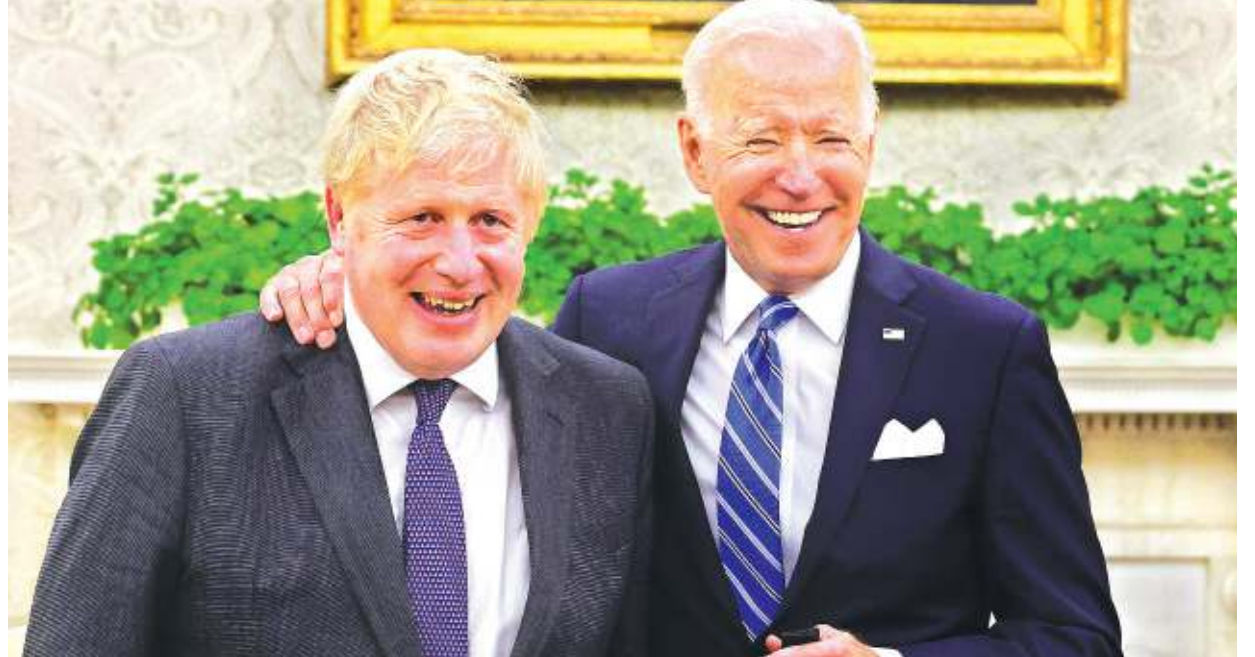
PRAFULL GORADIA

### The modern history is replete with instances where the US chose to look the other way when one of its allies asked for a helping hand

Speaking on CNN last week, well known American columnist and TV personality Fareed Zakaria was pessimistic about the prospects of Ukraine in its current clash against Russia. Zakaria felt that for the next several decades, India would have to face China's hostility. New Delhi should, therefore, align itself solidly with the US. In any case, the Ministry of External Affairs should forget its old habit of dancing with neutralism. Coming from a former Indian, Zakaria's advice must be taken as earnest.

However, it would be advisable to look at America's record as an ally; written, spoken or implicit. Towards the end of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson promoted the establishment of the League of Nations, headquartered at Geneva. Its function was to be similar to that of its successor, the United Nations Organisation. The League functioned to the extent of conducting an exchange of population between Bulgaria and Turkey, as well as Greece and Turkey. Unfortunately, the American Senate based at the Capitol in Washington DC refused to endorse the unnecessary involvement of the US in Europe's affairs. That, effectively, was the end of the League of Nations, an idea that had been conceived and actively promoted by an American President.

World War II broke out on September 1, 1939, when Germany's Wehrmacht invaded Poland, which had a written treaty of alliance with Britain and France, according to which if any of the three countries were to be attacked, all three would fight together to defend one another. Yet, in September 1939, Britain and France did nothing other than expressing sympathy for Poland, which was overrun in its west by Adolf Hitler and the east by Josef Stalin. Never before had history witnessed horses being butchered by battle tanks, a fate that befell the cavalry units of the Polish Army when German Panzer tanks were unleashed on them. So much for the value of an alliance!



The US is racially an Anglo-Saxon nation. The cultural bonds between the US and Britain are fraternal and close. Prime Minister Winston Churchill's mother Lady Randolph Churchill was an American. After the Battle of Britain, the crucial clash between the Air Forces of Britain and Germany in the summer of 1940, Churchill realised that there was no way for his country on its own to overcome Nazi Germany. He flew to Washington DC to appeal to President Franklin Roosevelt as well as the US Congress to come to the aid of their British brethren. Else, the fear was that western civilisation would go under the Nazi jackboot. Churchill returned empty-handed, save for an American promise to supply arms on a rental basis, called the Lend Lease. This was despite Churchill's stirring appeal to Washington: "Had my father been an American and not my mother, would you not have helped me?" Such was the 'fraternity' between the two Anglo-Saxon partners.

Washington didn't anticipate that Japan would soon sail across half the Pacific undetected and destroy Pearl

Harbor, America's vital naval base, on December 7, 1941. The US then declared war on Japan, which retaliated with a similar declaration. The Axis alliance of Germany, Italy and Japan required that if any of these countries were at war, the other two would join in immediately. Consequently, Germany and Italy declared war on the US. It was thus only in December 1941 that this European conflict, which had begun more than two years ago, truly became a world war, leaving no option for the US but to join it. In other words, the US entered the fray only when it was attacked; it did not fight when its brother was desperately in need.

Taiwan, another country that is an American ally and faces an expansionist China, to a considerable extent, is ethnically Chinese but its leader Chiang Kai Shek was allied to the US until his defeat at the hands of Mao Zedong in China's civil war that ensued from 1945 to 1949. It was Chiang who led many of his followers to the island that is today Taiwan. The country's political system is democratic, while its economic ideology is free and liberal. Taiwan was

not only admitted to the UN promptly, but also continued as a member of the Security Council. When the threat of war from mainland China grew graver, a security agreement to protect Taiwan was signed with the US. That agreement, the Taiwan Relations Act, is still in force although in 1972, quite casually, Taiwan was removed from the Security Council and its seat was given to communist China, which is now considered an adversarial nation.

This American habit of engaging in a tango for change is a source of apprehension to potential allies. Fareed Zakaria is oblivious of such changes, he cannot be in any position to be advising India's foreign policy moves. In any case, for a large country, it is desirable to be self-reliant and flexible towards the changing tunes of international affairs. The economic benefits that could accrue from a wealthy ally would be too small for a large country, while the US willingness to come to the aid of allies is doubtful.

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



THE US ENTERED WORLD WAR II ONLY WHEN IT WAS ATTACKED, WHEN IT HAD NO OPTION; IT DID NOT FIGHT WHEN ITS BROTHER BRITAIN WAS DESPERATELY IN NEED OF HELP

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAKE

Sir — Is the world heading towards annihilation? Are the COVID pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war just the tip of an iceberg? In an era when science and technological inventions are supposed to make lives easier for humankind, machines and other such scientific creations have upended human beings. The race for supremacy has nations competing with one another, producing weapons of mass destruction. The vagaries of nature and climatic upheavals continue to unleash untold miseries on mankind. Unseasonal rains/floods in certain areas and droughts in other regions; hurricanes, tsunami and other catastrophes; all these climatic trends could wreak havoc.

As much as natural calamities have been the cause of large-scale destruction across the world, the spate of 'virus invasions' has further hit the human race. The 'discovery' of a virus each day has been the bane of the world. The inability of virologists to check these rampaging viruses has complicated matters. At a time when calamitous situations threaten to wipe out the human race, we have global 'super powers' trying to impose their will on less powerful nations. We are rushing into an awful situation which may be averted if we were only a bit more circumspect about hasty decisions.

Pachu Menon | Margao

### PUNISH THE PNB SCAM ACCUSED

Sir — It is shocking to learn that the CBI is begging to be allowed to prosecute former CEO Usha Ananthasubramanian and two ex-Executive Directors Brahmaji Rao and Sanjeev Sharan of the Punjab National Bank even though the case was registered more than four years ago in connection with ₹13,578 crore Choksi fraud. It is not hard to discern the reason behind the prolonged delay in bringing to book the top bank officials involved in jaw-dropping scam amounts. If it is not the Government's unwillingness to risk getting its own complicity exposed, what else can it be?

During the last two decades, a number of frauds have taken place in Indian

## Oppn leaders must stay united



ill the other day, 'Opposition unity' sounded like a cliché. All discussions about a united Opposition centred around a few ambitious leaders. Not an easy task, considering the man these leaders desire to see the back of is one-of-a-kind, Narendra Modi. That said, some non-BJP Chief Ministers are flexing muscles to keep the hope alive among the Opposition ranks. Though West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee started off well, buoyed by a massive win in the West Bengal Assembly election, that critical push to the singular cause was actually

ing. Perhaps the Congress' aversion to Mamata has stopped her from going the whole hog.

Since there is no dearth of friends for the 'grand old party', no 'united front' or 'third front' can afford to take off without the Congress. If the party does well in the just-concluded Assembly polls, then the necessity to carry it along will become all the more imperative. Therefore, when Telangana CM KCR met his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray to discuss Opposition unity, they were cautious with their words. It is important for the Opposition leaders to focus on agendas. The BJP-led Government's flops have to be dissected threadbare. They need to draw more leaders into their fold; leaders with a good pan-India image, and these politicians should speak in tandem. Any infighting before the final push may sound the death knell for Opposition 'unity'.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

banks. No official found guilty of connivance with the fraudsters was subjected to prosecution, trial and punishment (except ex-Indian Bank chairman Gopalakrishnan). If a bank clerk/cashier is caught stealing even a rupee, he gets dismissed within a quarter of a year. But top bank officials who cause the loss of thousands of crores of rupees are allowed to go scot-free? The argument that these 'poor' officials were acting under political pressure does not hold water; they do not bend for nothing.

MR Anand | Vrindavan

### LENT: A PERIOD OF PRAYER, FASTING

Sir — Lent, the 40-day period of prayer and fasting for Christians all over the world in preparation for Easter, begins this year on March 2 with Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday, officially known as the Day of Ashes, is a day of repentance when Christians confess to their sins and profess their devotion to God. Here's something interesting: There are actually 46

days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday. How? The answer takes us back to the earliest days of the Church. Jesus' original disciples, Jews, believed the Sabbath was Saturday. Jesus rose from the dead, however, on a Sunday.

So the early Christians starting with the apostles transferred the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Since all Sundays, not simply Easter Sunday, were days to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, Christians were forbidden to fast/do penance on those days. Therefore, when the Church expanded fasting/prayer period in preparation for Easter to 40 days, Sundays could not be included in the count. Thus, for Lent to include 40 days of fasting, it had to have six full weeks (with 6 days of fasting each week), plus four extra days that follow it. And that's how we arrive at the 40-day figure for Lent.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Party's over!

### Barely had Delhi's booze party reached a high when the Govt poured cold water over it

With crucial elections to the three municipal corporations due next month, the Delhi Government has shown some responsibility by ordering that all discounts, concessions, rebates or offers being doled out at retail liquor shops should be discontinued. The decision was ostensibly taken to address the issue of overcrowding in and around these shops, which caused 'law and order' problems and inconvenience to the neighbourhood residents. The order correctly noted that the risk of COVID-19, Omicron and other variants of the virus was still not over and the chock-a-block shop premises could turn into 'super-spreaders'. The BJP and Congress are already at the throat of the ruling AAP, claiming that the Arvind Kejriwal-led party has turned the Capital into a huge liquor store of sorts as part of its populist measures to win over the electorate ahead of the polls. The BJP has taken the battle to the AAP's door by deciding to hold a referendum on March 4 seeking the opinion of 10 lakh Delhiites on the pitfalls of the new excise policy, including the reduction in the number of dry days and opening of vends even in the vicinity of schools and temples.



The excise commissioner's order clarifies that the decision was necessitated also because of the licensees indulging in "unhealthy market practices" but it wasn't elaborated upon. Apparently it hinted at the practice being followed by certain outlets which, in their bid to attract more buyers, had placed banners and hoardings to 'advertise' their lucrative schemes. The last fortnight experienced high spirits and serpentine queues outside most liquor vends, which have been handed over to private players after the Government exited this business. The more prudent owners who held licences to two or more such liquor outlets, chose to do business as usual at select vends while offering 'buy-one-get-one-free' or 'buy-two-get-one-free' schemes in the not-so-affluent neighbourhoods. The exercise was mainly aimed at exhausting the existing stocks before the issuance of fresh L7Z licences. The recent order, however, marks a marked departure from an essential facet of the State Government's new excise policy which had allowed liquor retailers to sell their wares at discounted rates or club these together as a package deal. Of course, the exercise did help buyers in pecuniary terms and protected them against 'brand pushing', but it did take a toll on the city's health.

## SOUND BITE

We want to build our health infra...beyond the big cities.

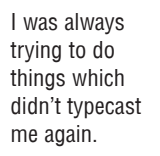


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



I am here. We'll not lay down weapons...they are our truth.

Ukraine President — Volodymyr Zelenskyy



I was always trying to do things which didn't typecast me again.

Actor — Jimmy Sheirgill



Being constantly judged on social media can get to you.

Indian women's team bowler — Jhulan Goswami



The BJP has harmed Gujarat's people more than it harmed the Congress here.

Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi





## FIRST COLUMN FROM THE HIJAB TO THE KITAAB: A PERSPECTIVE

Education must rise above social-religious beliefs and gender stereotypes



MADHURI SUKHUJA

Does civic nationalism still hold good in India today? The distinctiveness of Indian democracy lies in its diversity and not in the divisiveness between the majority and the minority which sometimes becomes a cause for concern. The controversy surrounding the hijab in some Karnataka educational institutions has not only stirred many a conscious mind but has also been a matter of deep discord. The hijab has a wider connotation and is not merely a covering. It is also a reflection of certain values and represents identity. Ironically, it has become entangled with different perspectives and ways of thinking. How much of it is to do with uniforms in educational institutions? Dress codes are reflective of discipline in education at the school level but at a higher or college level, one needs to ask: Do dress codes enrich the education system? States have their own takes on it. However, for many, it



is more a matter of a minority within a minority trying to be at par with the rest, especially in the field of education and exercising their choice too. This matter has not been easy to resolve and did take a turn for the worse leading to closure of schools for few days in Karnataka.

India has many cross-cutting cleavages, be it caste, class, religion and the like and these can certainly be utilised to strengthen the democratic ethos and prevent pervasive populism from holding sway. It is certainly not as if the young Muslim girl students invoked religion or culture that disturbed the harmony of educational institutions. The Indian Constitution allows the right to practise, profess and propagate religion of one's choice, but certainly with reasonable restrictions. Whether the wearing of the hijab in educational institutions constitutes an essential religious practice of Islam needs further probe in the light of constitutional guarantees coupled with several decisions taken by the Supreme Court and High Courts when dealing with litigating parties. Of late, the Karnataka government's decision to leave it to the courts to decide appears to be the right course of action. The Karnataka High Court on its part has reserved the judgement on pleas against hijab curbs in colleges and will deliberate on the matter before coming to a conclusion. Resolving this issue on the basis of law and the Constitution is a better option. In 2017, 'instant triple talaq' was declared unconstitutional, and this was an exemplary judgement. Constitutionalism has been the very essence of Indian democracy and has helped to sustain it. A two-year tryst with the pandemic and ensuing lockdowns has done enough damage and education should not stand to suffer in any way. After all, it is our ray of hope and the most potent instrument by far by which we can change the world for the better. A question that naturally comes to our minds is that if turbans and the crucifix can find their way into educational institutions, should the hijab be left behind. The keenness expressed by our young students to pursue education despite their hardships is encouraging in itself. 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' has been an excellent national initiative of the current Government and substantial work has been done to improve the lot of the girl students. We need to carry that spirit forward. Education must rise above social-religious beliefs and gender stereotypes, thereby creating safe spaces and prompting us to think, do we really need to choose between the 'hijab' and the 'kitab'. Whether hijab empowers women or motivates and inspires them is a matter of opinion, but should it be a pre-condition to accessing education needs serious thinking.

(The writer is a Professor at Delhi University. The views expressed are personal.)

# Manufactured social networking's frenzy

Next time you want to react or feel deeply about a post, please be conscious of the faceless phoney peer accounts playing their game



SHILPA ARORA SHARMA

The news delivered through social media is more tenable these days. The viral posts, online bashing, online-visibility and trending hashtags have more sensory acceptance than what they show on the TV channels. It is obvious that our virtual world ailments are embodied from our real-world behaviours. If strangers can gather to witness a road-side quarrel to engage in some sadist entertainment, the same gets manifested in the digital world. However, there's a twist: the online onlookers are fed with the action 'intentionally' and they end up absorbing the propagated perceptions as the truth.

This era of exciting trending hashtags, viral videos, influencers, unlimited availability of information and individual empowerment vibrates our lives with its stupendous momentum every day. Do we even care to notice the ingredients used in the recipe of this sensory indulgence?

As the upbeat societies had always been thriving on the game of shallow pleasures of showing off their jewellery, handbags, branded wear and foreign trips, the ego stroking has gone another level by the new-fangled riches with the display of their online presence.

Apart from the affluent looking for online validation, we have a booming industry of influencers who are self-proclaimed symbolization of the society fashion, life-style and norms.

This influencing is a power since the dawn of civilization that allowed anyone to climb to the political top. Do not underestimate it as a mere validation by their millions of followers, but they have serious finances rolling around their brand value. A micro influencer of 10000 followers may easily get 10-20 thousand rupees for a post and mega influencers may get lakhs.

Smart Retail Corporations now have marketing strategy to pay influencers mushrooming in every nip and corner of the society who could advertise their products in their own style to their followers. Paying influencers is more effective than throwing a commercial for prime TV or giving an advertisement in the Newspaper. Just to highlight, as per financial express, the influencer marketing industry in India was estimated to be of ₹900 crore by the end of 2021.

Whenever there is a financial turnover, it comes with its sister industries and strategies. For influencers it's their digital public relation agencies. So, if influencers gain money and power in society, they must pay back-end teams constantly to maintain and uproot their social media handles.

It is evident that the influencers' brand value is identified by their number of followers and their post engagements. Most successful influencers hire digital PR agencies to ensure staying upbeat in their game. If you want to invest in your online brand, get an agency, most of them offer packages to get yourself followers, high



IF WE IMAGINE TWITTER WITHOUT FAKE PROFILES, IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DULL WITH HARDLY ANY TRENDING HASHTAGS OF ISSUES, EXCEPT ON SOME RARE OCCASIONS. FAKE ACCOUNTS NOT JUST SPICE UP ANY PLATFORM BUT ALSO ROTATE MONEY, HENCE APPEAR TO BE A NECESSARY FRILL

(The writer is a cyber security expert. The views expressed are personal.)



post engagements and sometimes, packages to make your posts viral. Any idea, how much is the digital PR industry worth? As per Statista website, the digital marketing industry in India is ₹292,000 crore.

Here comes the manufacturing part, many popular websites such as Forbes and PRWEEK carry research articles that almost all influencers may have fake followers causing the inflation fraud. Instagram is one such platform where single user may create multiple accounts and even if the fake or alternative accounts get reported multiple times, the platform takes forever to remove the accounts. Just simply google to purchase Instagram followers and the unlimited Digital PR agencies would be available. Looking at what exists, it's not a far-fetched thought, that these digital PRs and social media platforms could be hand and glove running the Digital Influencing Show.

These fake accounts operated by humans or bots also boost the valuation of Social Media platforms. Here, the 'doctrine of Network Effect' is the key. The value of the services of utilities given by any platform increases when the number of people using the platform increases. Hence, it's not surprising that if Twitter Audithead states that Twitter is a place which is largely haunted by fake profiles which could be a huge number such as 40-50 per cent at a given time and that explains why twitter is such a happening place. Not just Twitter and Instagram, the reports on internet are alarming for each giant social media platform.

For the sake of sanctity and legal integrity, these fake accounts

have a smaller life cycle as below:

Fake Account Creation by Human or Bot -> Increase Following of the client -> Increase the Likes/retweet/Views of the client -> Post stories as per the narrative of the client -> Get caught by the Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence Engine of a Platform or Get Reported by Many Accounts -> Get Deleted -> Repeat.

As we can see the above steps, the fake profile deletion is performed by almost every platform and they also report it. Facebook reported to have deleted 1.3 billion fake accounts between October-December 2020.

Let us look at the possible overhead of allowing fake accounts in any platform.

The database storage costs and operational costs of the additional fake accounts that could have been prevented by not allowing them.

Expensive Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence Deployment to check fake accounts.

Human Resource Costs to provide oversight to the automated process of fake account deletion.

Human Resource Costs to implement the manually reported fake account deletion.

Advertisement costs wasted on the fake accounts.

The above costs are humongous and could have been simply avoided by a verification or a KYC kind of module at the time of account creation. But then, why would the super intelligent management of Social Media giants not decide to do this, just for the sake of cutting these overhead costs, if ethical grounds are of meagre consideration?

Could it be because the Digital PR agencies and social media platforms are in one team to increase the monetary turnover of the industry? Could it be because the social media giants want to inflate the earnings through online advertising, which gets inflated due to fake accounts? Could it be because, the social media platforms want to boost up their 'Network Effect' by allowing inflation fraud to their user base, in turn amplifying the exchanges of online interactions which if were to be done by real people would have been way too lesser, unabausive, unignited, untar-getted and restricted to individual's minuscule level of communication. If we imagine Twitter without fake profiles, it would be extremely dull with hardly any trending hashtags of issues except on some rare occasions.

Fake accounts not just spice up any platform but also rotate money, hence appear a necessary frill. In today's world, if you must voice up in social media, the digital narrative is a package available with a price tag.

If this awareness deepens, it may strike your ethical fabric, but come as it may, neither we can withdraw from it nor we can live in a denial of what kind of system we digitally breathe-in.

Next time you want to react or feel deeply about a post, please be conscious of the faceless phoney peer accounts playing their game. They are just work, so you should not take anything personal. Always remember, the posts of praising or demeaning someone may be all the outcome of PR industry's tedious labour, waiting to grab your senses and get you entangled.

Be careful, it may be fake, only you make it real by engaging with it.

## POINT COUNTER POINT

WE HAD URGED INDIA TO GIVE US POLITICAL SUPPORT IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. STOP THE AGGRESSOR TOGETHER!  
— UKRAINE PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKIY



INDIA'S POWER IS MEANT FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD AND NOT TO SCARE ANYONE... THIS IS OUR CHARACTER.  
— DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH

# Is the Dravidian Model an alternative to Gujarat Model?

DMK supremo Stalin consolidates self and State in a short time, adapting himself and his party to the changing times

Tamil Nadu chief minister M. K. Stalin has proved worthy of his late father and five times chief minister, the late M. Karunanidhi. Within nine months of his party coming to power, Stalin has consolidated his position in the state, establishing his authority with a massive win in the urban body civic polls last week.



KALYANI SHANKAR

Stalin asserted the sweeping victory was a 'crowning moment' for the 'Dravidian model of governance'. Stalin has pitched the Dravidian model as an alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Gujarat model'.

The low-profile politician has reasons to be proud of his achievements, as the civic poll results showed DMK's seat share in corporations stood at

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

69.29 percent; it was 61.41 percent in municipalities. The DMK alliance has also bagged over 80 percent of the posts in municipal councils, and town panchayats, including in the Western belt considered an AIADMK stronghold.

He has gained new ground and expanded his party's base further in these polls. DMK's allies, including Congress, Left parties, Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi, Tamizhaga Vazhvirimai Katchi, and Indhiya Jananayaga Katchi, also helped in taking the DMK front's tally beyond the two-thirds mark. DMK had lost all 10 mayoral posts in the 2011 local body elections.

Rival AIADMK lost mainly because of the power tussle between its co-convenors E. Palaniswamy and O. Panner Selvam, both former



AIADMK chief ministers. The cadres were confused because of this rivalry.

The Sasikala factor was also a reason. She has been plugging for a single leader to head the party (meaning herself) since she came out of jail last February after completing her four-year sentence in a disproportionate assets case. She kept away from In the 2021 Assembly polls, but has been touring the state since then. EPS and OPS have rejected her claims on the party.

AIADMK also lost its alliance parties, DMDK, Puthiya Tamilagam, Mukkulathor Pulipadai, Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi, New Justice Party, and All India Samathuva Makkal Katchi. Even BJP dumped the AIADMK. In contrast, Stalin humored the allies and kept them intact, even praising them after the urban poll results.

Karunanidhi picked Stalin, his younger son, as his political heir overlooking the claims of the elder Alagiri and daughter Kanimozhi. Named after Josef Stalin of former USSR, Stalin was grounded in party affairs and became a valuable backroom boy. He was known as 'Thalapathi' (general) to his supporters.

Stalin held important posts such as General Secretary,

Youth wing chief, minister, and later Deputy chief minister in Karunanidhi's cabinet. He was also the mayor of Chennai Corporation.

Apart from politics, Stalin also had a film career. He acted in the 1987 Tamil film 'Ore Raththam', (same blood) written by his father, M Karunanidhi.

Stalin emerged out of his famous father's shadows after Karunanidhi's death in 2017, leading the party to victory in 2021. Though he was not a great orator like his father, he compensated with his hard work and changed the DMK to suit modern times.

Stalin, who is not a mass leader, the professional event managers helped change his image. In 2021, he appointed poll strategist Prashant Kishore

to advise him. He had ditched his dhoti for jeans, a T-shirt, and sneakers to vibe well with the 80 lakh first-time voters. Stalin loves sports, arts, and cultural activities and plays cricket, badminton, and chess. He tries to identify himself with the common man (Ungalil Oruvan-one amongst you). He cycles, ride a motorbike, and even travels in autorickshaws to strike a chord with voters.

After winning the state last year, Stalin has become ambitious and is trying to find a role in national politics. He combined with his West Bengal, Telangana, and Maharashtra counterparts to form a federal front to make himself relevant for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. In the changing national politics where the opposition lacks a credible leader, Stalin has

emerged as an established leader of Tamil Nadu and in the south.

However, Stalin is facing criticism for grooming his son Udayanidhi as his political heir. Stalin has made all the right moves-getting capable bureaucrats and choosing right people as his ministers. He managed the Covid challenge well as his first challenge. Tamil Nadu has been a good performer in health, education, and gender equality and talks of social justice.

Stalin has the edge over his rivals as there is no charismatic leader in the other parties. Like his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik, Stalin has come to stay in state and national politics, but he should be careful not to commit any glaring mistakes.



INDIA CORNER

RBI imposes penalty on 3 co-op banks

The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty on three cooperative banks, including Nagrik Sahakari Bank Maryadit, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, for deficiencies in regulatory compliances. A fine of Rs 4.50 lakh has been imposed on Nagrik Sahakari Bank Maryadit for contravention of the directions issued by the RBI to urban cooperative banks on exposure norms and statutory/other restrictions-UCBs and Know Your Customer (KYC), the central bank said. The Reserve Bank has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 lakh on Jila Sahakari Kendriya Bank Maryadit, Panna for contravention of certain provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme, 2014 and KYC. Also, a penalty of Rs 25,000 was imposed on Jila Sahakari Kendriya Bank Maryadit, Satna for non-compliance with the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund Scheme, 2014. The RBI, however, added the penalties are based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their respective customers.



Mahindra total sales up 89 pc in Feb

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) on Tuesday said its total sales increased by 89 per cent to 54,455 units in February. The company's total sales stood at 28,777 units in February 2021. The Mumbai-based auto major's passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market rose by 80 per cent to 27,663 units last month as against 15,391 units in February last year, the auto major said in a statement. Commercial vehicle sales increased to 23,978 units last month as compared with 11,559 units in February 2021. The company said its exports last month stood at 2,814 units as against 1,827 units in the same month last year. All segments showed robust growth including SUVs at 79 per cent, which registered the highest ever monthly volume. We expect demand to continue to remain strong as the Covid situation eases further. "We continue to closely monitor the semiconductor-related parts supply and take corrective action as appropriate," M&M Automotive Division CEO Veejay Nakra noted.



Fintech startup Snapmint raises US\$ 9 mn from angel investors

Snapmint, a buy-now-pay-later platform, has raised USD 9 million in its series-A funding from a clutch of investors and industry leaders led by Prashasta Seth of Prudent Investment Managers. The round also saw participation of 9 Unicorns, Anicut Capital, Negen Capital, Livspace founder Ramakant Sharma, Usama Fayyad of Open Insights among other angels, the city-based startup said in a note on Tuesday. The fintech platform has over 4 million consumers on its platform, many of them from smaller towns, and serves over 27,000 pin-codes. With the investment, Snapmint plans to expand its network of merchants, launch a suite of innovative products and add more customers, it said. Snapmint was founded in 2017 by four IIT Bombay batchmates Malin Agrawal, Anil Gelra, Abhineet Sawa and Rahul Agarwal. The USD 810-billion domestic retail market is the fourth largest in the world, and affordable credit options will continue to boost growth of this market.



OMICRON IMPACT

GST collection up 18% at over Rs 1.33 lakh cr in Feb

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GST collections in February grew 18 per cent to over Rs 1.33 lakh crore in February even as the Omicron wave dented the month-on-month collection momentum. This is for the fifth time in the current fiscal that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection has crossed Rs 1.30 lakh crore mark. Also, this is the first time, cess collection has crossed the Rs 10,000 crore mark, signifying recovery in certain key sectors, especially automobile sales, the Finance Ministry said on Tuesday. The GST revenues had hit a record high of Rs 1,40,986 crore in January. "The gross GST revenue collected in February 2022 is Rs 1,33,026 crore of which Central GST is Rs 24,435 crore, State GST is Rs 30,779 crore, Integrated GST is Rs 67,471 crore (including Rs 33,837 crore collected on import of



goods) and cess is Rs 10,340 crore (including Rs 638 crore collected on import of goods)," the ministry said in a statement. The revenues for February 2022 are 18 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year and 26 per cent higher than in February 2020. During the month, revenues from import of goods were 38 per cent higher, and that from

around January 20, it added. During the current fiscal, the gross mop-up in April was over Rs 1.39 lakh crore, in May (Rs 97,821 crore), June (Rs 92,800 crore), July (over Rs 1.16 lakh crore), August (over Rs 1.12 lakh crore), September (over Rs 1.17 lakh crore), October (over Rs 1.30 lakh crore), November (Rs 1.31 lakh crore) and December (over Rs 1.29 lakh crore). Deloitte India Partner MS Mani said that GST collections exceeding Rs 1.33 lakh crore despite the challenging pandemic situation on January 22 indicate that the collections are now on a stable trajectory and the FY22 targets would be exceeded. "While on an overall basis, the collections are 18 per cent higher than the same period last year, there is significant divergence amongst states with increases in the range of 2 per cent to 23 per cent amongst the large states," Mani added.

Honda Cars wholesales dip 23 pc in Feb

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Cars India on Tuesday reported a 23 per cent decline in domestic sales to 7,187 units for February. The company had dispatched 9,324 units to dealers in the domestic market during February 2021. Exports stood at 2,337 units last month as compared with 987 units in February 2021. "We are witnessing improvement in consumer sentiment as COVID-situation seems to be tapering off and markets are opening-up. This is positive for the industry." On the supply side, chip shortage continued to impact our production and despatches in Feb'22.



Global shares mixed as Russia, Ukraine plan further talks

PNS ■ TOKYO

World shares were mixed Tuesday after talks between Russia and Ukraine aimed at ending the war just yielded an agreement to meet again. European markets opened mostly lower while Asian shares and US futures were mostly higher. Oil prices rose. A 40-mile convoy of Russian tanks was threatening Ukraine's capital Kyiv in the sixth day of the war as the Kremlin grew increasingly isolated. A first, five-hour session of talks ended with an agreement to another meeting in coming days, though embattled Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he believed stepped-up shelling by Russian troops was designed to force him into concessions. Russia is a major energy producer and surging oil prices and increasing financial pressure from the US and allies on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine were adding to uncertainty about the global economic outlook.



France's CAC 40 lost 0.6% to 6,622.35. Germany's DAX shed 0.7% to 14,357.77, while Britain's FTSE 100 edged 0.1% higher, to 7,467.27. On Wall Street, the futures for both the S&P 500 and the Dow industrials were 0.2% higher. "While the ceasefire talks at the Belarus-Ukraine border ended, the military fires certainly have not ended by any means alongside sanctions being raised further," Tan Boon Heng at Mizuho Bank in Singapore said in a commentary. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 1.2% to finish at 26,844.72. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 surged 0.7% to 7,096.50. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.2% to 22,761.71, while the Shanghai Composite rose nearly 0.8% to 3,488.83. Markets were closed in South Korea for a holiday. "The market's focus will continue to be on geopolitical tensions, at least in the short term," Anderson Alves of ActivTrades said in a report. The value of the Russian rouble plunged to a record low after Western countries moved to block some Russian banks from a key global payments system. On Monday, the U.S. Treasury Department announced more sanctions against Russia's central bank.

Coal India output rises 4% to 64 MT in February

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned CIL produced 64.3 million tonnes of coal in February, registering a growth of nearly 4 per cent compared to the year-ago period. Coal India Ltd (CIL) had produced 61.9 MT of coal in the corresponding month of previous fiscal. In a statement on Tuesday, the company said that stepping up its output tempo, it produced 64.3 MT of coal in February. On a month-on-month basis, CIL's average production increased to 2.3 MT per day in February. So, despite being three days lesser than January, the sequential production in February was at par with the previous month. CIL's all out efforts are focused on ending FY'22 in the realm of 630 MT,



according to the statement. CIL's production at 542.4 MT during April-February period of FY'22 was a historic high for this period. Coal output surged ahead 27.3 MT in absolute terms on a year-on-year comparison. "The company expects to post the highest ever production by the closure of FY'22, going past the previous high of 607 MT recorded in FY'19," the company said. CIL's off-take in February has scored a strong 12 per cent double-digit growth at 57.4 MT against same month last year. The gain in absolute terms was 6.2 MT.

Berger monitors cost, demand closely before going for price hike

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Berger Paints India Ltd on Tuesday said it was monitoring the cost pressure in the wake of crude price hardening but will take a call after tracking the demand scenario. With crude oil trading above USD 100 per barrel owing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, cost pressure will mount if the geopolitical uncertainties continue for a few months. "We are monitoring the situation closely but not raising the price in a haste. We will take a call after monitoring the demand scenario also. Price rise impacts volume demand," Berger Paints MD & CEO, Abhijit Roy, told PTI. Berger had hiked prices in the last one year to offset

input cost inflation, the company said. Roy explained that out of the four major ingredients of making paints, one is linked to crude. It is the solvent binder, which is a derivative of crude. However, its price is more affected by demand-supply issues than the price of crude itself, he said. Overall, solvent binder forms about one-third of Berger's raw material basket. "The demand for paints remains normal but may not exhibit a high growth if compared with the figure of last year which saw disruptions," Roy said. In the nine months till December 2021, Berger earned a revenue of Rs 6600 crore.



CDSL's tally of active demat accounts reaches 6 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Central Depository Services (India) Ltd or CDSL on Tuesday said the number of active demat accounts opened with it has reached the 6-crore mark. The leading depository began operations in 1999. It facilitates holding and transacting in securities in the electronic form and settlement of trades on stock exchanges, according to a statement. On this occasion, Sebi Whole Time Member Ananta Barua focused on the importance of investor awareness amid the growth of the Indian securities markets. "I congratulate the CDSL team for their achievement of registering 6 crore demat accounts. Dematerialisation was a product of the difficulties caused on account of physical shares. The access to Indian securities market have become safe, convenient and easy and the new milestone is a representation of the same," he said. According to him, enormous efforts have been taken by all the market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) to maintain the seamless operations of the financial ecosystem during the last two years.



PNB cheques of Rs 10 lakh & above need customer clearance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-run Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Tuesday said high-value cheques of Rs 10 lakh and above will be cleared after reconfirmation with the issuer under the Positive Pay System (PPS) from April 4. PNB said to protect the bank customers against large-value cheque frauds, it will make the Positive Pay System (PPS) mandatory from April 4, 2022. The Delhi-headquartered lender introduced PPS for cheques of Rs 50,000 and above presented in CTS clearing from January 1, 2021, in accordance with the RBI guidelines. The banking regulator had said that while availing of the facility is at the account holder's discretion, and banks may consider making it mandatory for the cheque value of Rs 5 lakh and above. PNB in a release said that the PPS will now become mandatory from the next month for the cheques of Rs 10 lakh and above. As per the Positive Pay System (PPS) developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), a customer issuing the high-value cheque has to reconfirm some essential details. The details are then cross-checked while presenting the cheque in clearing before payment. The lender said its customers will have to share details like account number, cheque number, cheque alpha code, issue date, amount, beneficiary name for clearing the high value cheques under PPS. "These details are to be shared with the bank at least 24 working hours before the cheque is presented for clearing. Customers can share the details through its internet banking, mobile banking, SMS banking or in their home branch in the prescribed format." The cheques that are registered in the PPS will only be accepted under the dispute resolution mechanism, it said.

Indian NGOs to get over Rs 500 cr grant from Tarsadia Foundation in 10 years

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The US-based Tarsadia Foundation has tied up with Dasra to launch a 'resilience fund' to help communities impacted by the pandemic by supporting non-profits with a financial aid of over Rs 500 crore over 10 years. Maya Patel, executive chair of the foundation, said with the third wave of the pandemic waning, it is important to support the communities build resilience for which they decided to launch the fund and tied up with Dasra as the implementing partner which will help it find the right non-government organisations to support. Selected NGOs will be given a grant of at least Rs 10 lakh per annum for a period of five years, and each year over 100 new NGOs will be added to the list of receivers, to make it into an effort where 1,000 NGOs will be supported with grant of over Rs 500 crore in the 10-year period, Deval Sanghavi, the co-founder and partner at Dasra, said. Sanghavi said 20 per cent of the resources which will be



funnelled will be raised domestically and made it clear that all the NGOs which will get foreign funding will have the necessary licenses to get the grants from abroad. Dasra will also be helping the selected NGOs make a plan for themselves, assessing impact, corporate communication strategies etc, he said, adding that the annual disbursements will not be linked to any milestones. Dasra will not be charging any fees and the entire money raised will be utilised for the impacted communities, and added that it has also got specialist agencies on board which are working pro-bono to help on areas like communication, accounting etc.

Infibeam acquires UvikTech for Rs 75 cr

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Infibeam Avenues, a listed fintech company, has acquired the payments-focused Uvik Technologies for Rs 75 crore in a cash and stock deal. Venture capital fund Season Two Ventures will get an exit through the deal, as per a statement. Uvik is in the contactless payments space and has developed a technology that converts any smartphone into a payment device. Bengaluru-based Uvik's co-founder and chief executive Rahul Hirve termed the deal as a strategic step for the company which will drive growth to the next level. "The focus of offline payments in the next few years is going to be via contactless infrastructure. To achieve this objective, we, at Uvik, have been constantly working towards making payments easy-to-use for merchants with focus on security," Hirve said.

The number of ultra-high-net worth individuals, having net assets of USD 30 million (about Rs 226 crore) or more, in India increased 11 per cent last year on the back of buoyant equity markets and digital revolution, according to Knight Frank. India also ranked third in billionaire population globally in 2021. US is number one with 748 billionaires, followed by Chinese mainland at 554 billionaires and India with 145 billionaires. In its latest edition of The Wealth Report 2022, property consultant Knight Frank said the number of ultra-high-net worth individuals (UHNWIs) globally increased by 9.3 per cent in 2021 to 6,10,569, from 5,58,828 in the previous year. "In India, the number of UHNWIs (net assets with USD 30 million or more) has grown by 11 per cent YoY (year-on-year) in 2021, the highest percentage growth in APAC," Knight Frank said in a statement. The number of UHNWIs in India grew to 13,637 in 2021 from 12,287 in the previous year. Amongst key Indian cities, Bengaluru witnessed the highest growth in the number of UHNWIs at 17.1 per cent to 352, followed by Delhi (12.4 per cent, 210) and Mumbai (9 per cent, 1,596). The consultant has pegged the number of UHNWIs growing



ing 39 per cent by 2026 to 19,006 from 13,637 in 2021. In 2016, the number of UHNWIs stood at 7,401. Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Bajjal said: "Equity markets and digital adoption have been the key factors driving the growth of UHNWIs in India. The growth in younger, self-made UHNWIs has been incredible in India and we foresee them to drive new investment themes and innovation." With a healthy growth in the UHNWI and billionaire popu-

lation, he said India is expected to be one of the fastest growing countries amongst its global peers, further strengthening itself economically and emerging as a superpower in different sectors. As per the report, around 69 per cent of the super wealthy individuals in India are expected to witness an increase of over 10 per cent in their net worth in 2022. "Asia continues to be the forerunner in the billionaires' club contributing to 36 per cent of the total billionaires in the world in 2021. India has ranked 3rd in terms of billionaires' population in 2021 following US and China," the statement said. For the first time, Knight Frank has examined the size of the 'next generation' of the world's UHNWI population and assesses what that could mean for the property markets. "Globally, it is estimated that 135,192 UHNWIs are self-made and under the age of 40, accounting for around a fifth of the total UHNWI population. India has ranked 6th in percentage growth of the UHNWI population that is self-made and under the age of 40 years," it said. Over the next five years, Knight Frank forecasts that the global UHNWIs population will grow by a further 28 per cent, with Asia and Australasia at 33 per cent each seeing the largest growth, followed by North America (28 per cent) and Latin America (26 per cent).



# Raktanchal producer Chitra Vakil Sharma launches online venture



**P**roducer Chitra Vakil Sharma, who is known for her projects 'Tandoor' and 'Raktanchal', has launched her YouTube channel called Jupiter Hub on Mahashivratri.

As part of the first project on the channel, Chitra launched the mantra chanting 'Om Namay Shivay' by Eklavya Sakpal.

"I am starting the channel with the launch of 'Om Namay Shivay' which is in collaboration with Eklavya Sakpal. We both are Shiv Bhakts and before starting anything it's a good idea to take God's name. Then, I will launch another

song 'Shiv Ki Dhun', sung and composed by Eklavya as well. It's an anthem for every soul who believes in Lord Shiva."

"Om Namay Shivaya' is the primordial sound of the universe and sound is one form of energy that has its own vibrations. When it is chanted in a proper way or listened at a particular frequency then strong vibes are generated within you which make you more inclined in the process of understanding life and the purpose of its existence," Eklavya explains.

Chitra adds: "More than this, it also heals your body, mind, and soul. Unfortunately, with time, our world has

lost the proper balance of sound with this divine mantra and how it is supposed to be chanted or listened to. Therefore, Eklavya researched and finally recorded 'Om Namay Shivay' with references of Swar Dhvani Shastra from the roots of ancient Vedic science which is all about healing your mind, body, and soul."

Talking about Eklavya, Chitra says that there can be no one better suited for this. "Eklavya is a filmmaker by profession and a mythologist by passion. He is a writer and a director. Besides this, Eklavya is also a musician who can play various classical music instruments like veena, flute, and ravanahatha. He is also an illustrator, an artist, a sculptor, a psychic, and a scholar in ancient Vedic science."

"He started his career in the field of music as an assistant to well-known music directors and then switched casting and creative direction in the Indian television industry at a very young age. The unusual blend of pragmatism and profundity is what sets him apart," she says. "I always wanted to do this song with someone who holds the same spiritual mentality as me. Nothing was planned as such, everything happened naturally and we collaborated for this divine project. She, being my producer, understood my emotions very well with this song and gave me my creative freedom to create this song the way I wanted to," Eklavya says.

# Anushka Sharma's brother to launch female-focused streaming platform

**E**ntertainment entrepreneur Karnesh Ssharma has announced the launch of Clean OTT, a female-oriented original content streaming platform scheduled for the first quarter of 2023.

Clean OTT content will comprise international and regional projects across films, web series, and docu-series. They will include originally curated and produced works by Clean and pre-selected projects that meet the Clean OTT messaging framework by other producers from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.

The library will showcase the credentials of an experienced team of directors, scriptwriters, actors, and producers associated with Clean Slate Filmz, as well as giving rise to emerging talent.

Speaking about the launch, Ssharma, Founder of Clean OTT, said: "I have always believed in the power of storytelling to move hearts and minds and I am conscious of the responsibility that entertainment platforms have in producing and promoting stories that do not endorse



bias. For centuries patriarchy has governed storytelling, and as a man, I have always felt men play an equal part in shifting the narrative, conversation, and power shifts.

Ssharma, who recently announced a \$54mn content deal with Amazon Prime and Netflix for his production

company Clean Slate Filmz, will provide a roster of cut-through content placing female actors, directors, and producers at its heart and giving India, the world's largest film export, a central role to play in challenging global gender stereotypes.

He added: "When the voice

of women are heard, it teaches us new perspectives which, as an audience and filmmaker, are just as compelling and interesting. It's stereotypical when I hear people say women's stories are just about oppression or fall into the romantic comedy genre. Female first content is in fact extremely exciting and eclectic."

Speaking about the importance of market segmentation for its content strategy, Sharma shared: "We believe there is a unique opportunity to expand content. For example, women make up 50 per cent of viewership in India yet most of the content is male-focused or represents women in a secondary fashion. "We are confident the Clean OTT narratives will appeal to everyone as we provide a platform free of prejudice. This will give women a voice that can be enjoyed by any demographic around the world and for those who are part of our productions, a path for career progression."

Clean OTT will be available across web platforms, mobile apps, subscription platforms, and other content aggregators around the world.

# Benedict Cumberbatch receives a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

**B**enedict Cumberbatch was honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on Monday and the "Power of the Dog" star paid homage to his sister Tracy Peacock, who died of cancer last year.

One of the most prominent actors today, Cumberbatch also voiced support for the people of the war-struck Ukraine on the occasion.

His credits range from TV series 'Sherlock', 'Patrick Melrose' and feature films like 'The Imitation Game', '12 Years a Slave', and '1917'. He also stars as the superhero sorcerer Doctor Strange in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

In his address, the 45-year-old actor said his sister would have



loved to be a part of this ceremony.

"I want to mention my sister who we lost last year. She would have loved this. She was unbelievably loyal, supportive, and she would have loved the glitz and the oddness and the glamour. She would have just been

laughing nonstop all the way through, and probably crying," Cumberbatch said, as reported by Variety.

"I hope somewhere up there, where the real stars shine, you're looking down on this moment now. I'm sure you are. We miss you so much. You remain such a good and wonderful person to have had in our lives," he added.

The actor, who is nominated for a best actor Academy Award and BAFTA for Jane Campion's Western drama 'The Power of the Dog', also used the stage to raise awareness about Ukraine.

"I can't speak today at this amazing moment in my life, on this extraordinary platform, without acknowledging the obvious of what's happening in Ukraine and to show my support for the people of Ukraine, my

support for the people of Russia who are opposing the Kleptocracy and the idiocy of their rulers to try and halt the progression of this atrocity.

"But it's more now for all of us to do than just have thoughts and prayers. We need to act, we need to go on to embassy websites, we need to see what we can do as citizens of the world, citizens of Europe, and people who want a better place and a better outcome for this horrendous moment for these people with children, with families who are struggling to survive as rockets rain down on their cities," he added.

Last Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in eastern Ukraine, claiming it is intended to protect civilians.

# Tamil actress Akila Narayanan joins US Army as lawyer

**I**ndian-origin Tamil film actress Akila Narayanan has made history by enrolling herself as a lawyer with the United States armed forces.

Akila Narayanan, who made her debut with director Arul's horror thriller 'Kadampari' last year, has now enrolled herself with the US Army.

Sources say that Akila had to undergo the US Army Combat Training to enter the armed forces that ran into several months. After having successfully completed the training, the actress has now joined the US Army as a lawyer.

The actress of Indian origin who resides in the US made her debut in acting last year with 'Kadampari', which had music by



Prithvi and cinematography by V.T.K. Uthayan. Interestingly, Akila had also

been running an online school of music called the Nightingale School of Music.

## FUN

### ARCHIE

WHAT MOOSE LACKS IN BRAINS, HE MAKES UP FOR IN MUSCLE!

AND THAT'S A LOT TO MAKE UP FOR!

REGGIE BET HIM HE COULDN'T DO PUSHUPS WITH ONE HAND BEHIND HIS BACK!

LOOKS LIKE MOOSE MISUNDERSTOOD!

STILL PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, THOUGH.

### CALVIN AND HOBBS

HEY, LOOK! I HIT SOMETHING!

DON'T BREAK IT! DIG CAREFULLY!

GOSH, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE IT IS?

DUST IT OFF SO WE CAN SEE.

IT'S SOME BIZARRE SKULL!

LOOK AT ITS MOUTH. MAYBE IT'S A PREHISTORIC ANTEATER.

### GARFIELD

I HAVEN'T SEEN A MOUSE ALL WEEK. GOOD JOB, GARFIELD!

HOW WAS THE VACATION?

GREAT!

BUT IT'S ALWAYS GOOD TO GET BACK HOME

### REALITY CHECK

ALL THIS WALKING IN SLOW MOTION MAKES ME WANT TO TAKE A NAP.

HERE I AM, STUCK IN THE MIDDLE AGAIN!

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE MIRRORING? IS IT BECAUSE I'M ORANGE? IS THAT WHY?

### SPEED BUMP

SONGBIRD? NO, I NEVER SAID I WAS A SONGBIRD.

### CROSSWORD

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

### NANCY

SPRING IS SO BEAUTIFUL.

FOR THE TEN SECONDS I CAN SEE IT BEFORE MY EYES START TEARING UP FROM ALLERGIES.

WE HAD A GOOD RUN THIS YEAR.

### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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.

### GINGER MEGGS

HEY, FITZZY, WHAT DOES YOUR HEAD LOOK LIKE WITHOUT THAT BIG, BOOBY AFRO?

I DON'T KNOW, YOU'D HAVE TO SHAVE MY HEAD TO FIND OUT!

DID YOU REALISE WHO YOU WERE TALKING TO?

### ACROSS

- Not remembered
- A brass musical instrument blown in the army
- Time of darkness
- Very small
- This is made from cream
- A symbol on playing cards
- Wear this on a foot
- Lit up
- A word of greeting
- Allowed

### DOWN

- A keyboard instrument
- Leaves
- Poke this out at someone you don't like
- Two times six minus four
- Seller of meat
- A kind of long bomb fired under the sea to sink ships
- A small river
- Similar
- Cut exactly into two pieces
- Injured by a gun

SOLUTION

M	T	R	O	A	S
A	N	G	E	L	E
R	I	G	O	L	L
G	A	R	D	E	N
A	C	E	N	P	C
R	A	G	E	D	A
I	A	S	S	I	I
N	O	R	T	H	S
C	O	M	P	O	S
E	R	C	O	M	P



# Meet the bachelor dad!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

**T**usshar Kapoor grew up around cinema. He may have seen the beautiful parent-child relationship in the movies too, but ever since he became a father, he has got to experience this feeling first-hand. He welcomed his son Lakshya via surrogacy. While one might think that his decision to become a single parent could be self-centered in many ways, he has nothing to complain about at all. After all, surrogacy is a choice!

At the moment, you'll see him present at India's one-of-a-kind cultural mélange called Arth. Actor-producer Tusshar also announced his book *Bachelor Dad* last year, which revolved around his unconventional journey of fatherhood as a single parent. In an exclusive conversation with us, he shared, "There wasn't a trigger that made me write this book. I believe it was a process wherein I started to get interested in the idea of parenthood. And then finally, I made up my mind because friends would encourage me. There was one particular friend who kept telling me that it should be in a book because it's a different life and it will add another feather in your cap because you will share your experiences in a more honest and very different avatar with people in general who don't know much about your life, especially as a single father."

A culture fest, in its fourth season, is celebrating 75 years of Indian independence. And, Tusshar Kapoor is here to celebrate India's rich culture and heritage as an acclaimed celebrity. But, what was his child's reaction to seeing himself on the cover? Did he share bits and pieces of the book with his dad? "I haven't really spoken to my son about the book, but of course he knows it's called *Bachelor Dad*, and he knows he's on the cover, though I haven't really explained to him what the book is about. And I think he's too young to process that right now. But he knows it's part of my work, and as part of that work, I had to do that photoshoot with him. And while he knows that he's on the cover, he hasn't taken that part of it very seriously, and he hasn't asked me too many questions either, which is good. He's busy with his own life. When I took this life-changing step, I had to be sure of myself. So, I think that in itself sorted out the excessive baggage of who thinks what and what will be the repercussions regarding societal expectations."

As the proud father, he has never experienced such pure, innocent love like this in his life. He continued, "I just made a choice, and I decided to figure it out for myself. Once I was clear, I didn't really worry about even blocking things out. I think my mind was just clear that I wanted to do it. And of course, there's pressure — a pressure that builds up when your mind starts anticipating what is going to happen and what the reactions are going to be. But of course, it's much less and you know and you are clear about what you want to do with your life."

In line with the theme, the fourth season of Arth-A Cultural Fest will bring intriguing discussions on Indian art, culture, cinema, sports, politics, and faith to viewers, and that's why Tusshar also decided to be a part of it. He uttered, "I didn't choose Arth, Arth chose me. They wanted to have me on this platform for a session on *Meet India's Bachelor Dad* with my sister Ekta, and I was more than happy because it's very youth-centric. It's not typically centred around the kind of work that I do, so it caters to a different audience that probably will be more interested in the book and be my target audience with whom I want to share my experiences, who can get inspired by my journey and who can understand me as a person other than just the actor that they see on screen."

Fatherhood changed him in many ways. For one, "I have compartmentalised my day with Lakshya. When I am home and not on a shoot, I start my day with my morning workout, and then he goes to the beach, and then the latter half of the morning I spend with him. After that, I go to work till the evening, when I am with my son again. And then we go to the park or to any other outdoor activity, following which I bring him back home. He has his dinner and then I try to read a book to him if he's in the mood before going to sleep, and that's the end of my day with him. Then I have the night to myself. So I watched something on TV. I will have my dinner and recap the news. So my favourite everyday ritual is going to the park with Lakshya in the evening! I think it's so de-stressing and rejuvenating to see him play in the park or on the beach." He has got to learn a lot

from his child. He gets to experience unfiltered love from a piece of his heart! Meanwhile, he proudly mentioned, "I'll be flabbergasted if someone comes up to me and claims I'm a selfish father and tells me to go ahead with being a single parent. It just doesn't make sense! The fact that someone once told me that it's a big step wherein you have now decided to give an entire life of yours to the love of another person, to care for and uplift another person, is going to be a life-changing moment. It's almost as if my life has now become my son. So how can it be selfish? And I wonder what that person would think about families that have separated, families that live in different countries, or families where somebody has lost a spouse. It's quite a wild imagination to think that just because I have had a child as a single man, I have been selfish. But they can read the book to see my point of view on this!"

Were there any daunting moments? Yes, there were. The night his son was born and the morning he came into Tusshar's arms, it was daunting because I had never seen my baby before and it was an unconventional process. "I was very excited to see him, but I was also a bit nervous about how it would be, how I was going to change my life with this new role. I guess that was just the calm before the storm of happiness, joy, and fulfilment and everything positive that comes with starting a new family and

playing a new role, one that you wished for and one that you waited for a long time."

The writing part was all fun for him, by the way, and he concluded, "It's a beautiful amalgamation of fun, strenuous and consuming — but it's so rewarding. The process, however, you know, of releasing a book, from the time of its inception, to the writing, to the editing and promotion, to clicking the cover picture, is like making a movie. I don't know what the future holds, but as of now I am too busy promoting this book, and it's exhausting but exhilarating, also because I am doing this for the first time. I am really loving it, but yes, I have a long way to go before I can think about another one."

Needless to say, Tusshar Kapoor can't get enough of his munchkin, and so can we.

*There wasn't a trigger that made me write this book. I believe it was a process wherein I started to get interested in the idea of parenthood. Finally, I made up my mind because friends would encourage me. There was one particular friend who kept telling me that it should be in a book because it's a different life and it will add another feather in your cap because you will share your experiences in a more honest and very different avatar with people in general who don't know much about your life, especially as a single father.*



## How to fight cellulite on thighs

**C**ellulite doesn't discriminate based on weight, fitness, or healthy lifestyle choices. Most of the women have fat that bulges out of the skin in the buttocks, stomach, legs, or thighs. While cellulite cannot be gotten rid of completely, there are some proven ways of significantly reducing its appearance on the body. Rashi Chahal, the nutritionist at Rosewalk Healthcare, shared four home remedies that can help to get rid of the cellulite on the thighs.

- **Coffee scrub**  
Coffee contains caffeine, and therefore it helps to dilate blood vessels, improving blood circulation. Along with it, coffee contains a great amount of antioxidants which help to remove the dead cells present on the skin. This has a skin tightening effect also.
- **Green tea**  
One of the great benefits of green tea for cellulite is it helps to remove toxins and improve metabolism. Plus, it's a great home remedy for cellulite because it helps to increase the blood flow and helps create healthier skin, a more uniform texture. Have 2-3 cups of green tea each day. Green tea is an energy booster so it will also promote weight loss.

- **Exercise**  
Cellulite is a result of excess fat in the body so it is important you do regular exercise to get rid of it because exercise helps to reduce body fat and increase metabolism. You can perform squats, side lunges, deadlift, glute bridge, running, or cycling. These exercises will also help you strengthen your thighs by improving balance and stability.

- **Dry brushing**  
Foam rolling or dry brushing is the best home remedy you can try for some positive results to reduce cellulite. It is a traditional method that people try to lose cellulite. Dry massaging with a brush helps stimulate blood and lymph flow, which improves the skin appearance removing the cellulite. But keep in mind dry brushing should be avoided if you have dry or inflamed skin.

## Will real estate continue to offer a profitable return on investment in 2022-23?

**F**or a long time, almost a decade, real estate was a dud investment for many investors. However, the property market is back on the radar as the homebuyers are flocking for the shopping spree thanks to limited supply, ample liquidity, and rock bottom interest rates.

In a paradoxical fate of events, everyone was skeptical about investing in real estate due to the looming threat arising from the arrival of the lethal Covid-19 pandemic, the industry bounced back with great momentum and sales jumped to new highs.

Like a lot of other sectors, the real estate industry too was unprepared for the wrath of the pandemic but following the second wave, it showed remarkable resilience. The new launches came to halt but the demand was higher. However, 2021 was a game-changer for the sectors. As the world's largest vaccination drive gained momentum, the confidence for the realty as a sector rose and financial year 2022-23 is now seen as the turnaround year for the sector which will lead to a robust boom for the industry.



There is no doubt about it if one analyzes the initial trends. Simply because the largest cities of the country have scarce areas which can be developed and sold out. The pandemic has been a blessing in disguise for the industry as the low cost of lending has boosted the morale of developers to finish the pending projects, whereas the buyers have been able to hunch upon the low EMIs to buy new houses.

Top cities in India including Gurugram, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune are poised for favourable housing sales, sowing the

seed for the revival of commercial real estate as well.

The changing dynamics in favour of the real estate, even amidst the unstable economy, could be attributed to the changing consumer sentiments that underwent modification due to the uncertainties of rental accommodation. Even the millennials are adding to the demand. The new age generation, which relocated from Tier II and Tier III cities to Tier I and metros, is now in the favour of having their own house, instead of renting one. This is also now adding to more demand for the sector. The new investors or the homebuyers demand spacious houses, with luxury and a large number of amenities, to showcase their lifestyle. Housing is now a style statement and the notorious pandemic instigated parties and gatherings at home only. Another reason for the demand for the housing sector is the work from home option or the remote work culture, where people will visit their offices, but only occasionally. Installing workstations at home, with more than one working partner, is adding more demand to carry out the activities smoothly.

When remote working culture got adopted unanimously, people were on the lookout for homes with extra room or space, which could either serve as an office or study. As mobility got restricted, people started searching for homes that accommodated entertainment, exercise, and recreational areas, which added more demand. Another reason for the real estate boom is the lackluster return of other safer asset classes.

Barring the volatile equity markets or the unregulated cryptocurrencies, safer bets like bonds, FDs, and gold have failed to offer better returns to investors.

With the rise of geopolitical concerns globally and the strong outflow of foreign investors, one can assume that the golden days of equity markets are left behind and real estate is poised to emerge as a lucrative option for both risk bearer and risk hesitant investors.

Real Estate is an asset class with long-lasting value, evergreen utility, and security for the future even in uncertain times. This, coupled with easy financing, has made it a reliable investment for all, offering steady and solid returns.

Perceiving the revival potential of real estate, the government also came up with progressive policies to give a boost to the industry. The government is focused on the revival of demand in the economy and real estate is a key theme of its infra push. The center aims to provide a conducive environment to encourage home buyers.

Experts estimate that the low-interest rate is there to stay for a couple of years. Thus the home buyers can apply for higher amount loans which broaden their choices to buy bigger homes complemented by enhanced amenities and a better lifestyle. Considering the panoramic view of the industry, the future of the sector seems rather promising. Taking a positive turn, the sales in real estate are expected to reach their peak in a couple of years.

(The writer, Shubham Arora, director, SheerBulls India Pvt Ltd)



# Mithali Raj looking to finish journey with WC trophy

PTI ■ RANGIORA

Captaining the Indian women's team in the upcoming World Cup after first featuring in the showpiece 22 years ago, Mithali Raj feels her career has come a full circle with only the dream of holding the "elusive" trophy remaining unfulfilled.

Raj was a part of the Indian team that played in the 2000 World Cup in New Zealand and more than two decades later, she is returning to the same country, this time as the captain.

In between, she had also faced the heartbreak of losing in the summit clash to England in the 2017 edition, besides being a member of the team that ended second in 2005.

"I have come a long way from the 2000 World Cup, that also in New Zealand. I missed (matches of) that World Cup because of typhoid and here I am. It has come a full circle and I am looking forward to finishing the

**"I HAVE COME A LONG WAY FROM THE 2000 WORLD CUP, THAT ALSO IN NEW ZEALAND. I MISSED (MATCHES OF) THAT WORLD CUP BECAUSE OF TYPHOID AND HERE I AM. IT HAS COME A FULL CIRCLE AND I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO FINISHING THE JOURNEY"**

journey," Raj said in a video posted by the ICC.

"I would look forward to all my players doing well in the World Cup and that will give the Indian team the opportunity to get a hand on that elusive cup."

India had lost the recent ODI series against New Zealand 1-4 but the team was able to post 250-plus scores consistently. Raj said the side was looking to do better during the March 4 to April 3 World Cup.

"What we are looking at improving as a team for the World Cup is something we worked in the last series and before that.

"Yes, there was a bit of concern during South Africa and England tour. By the Australia and New Zealand series, the team has come around well to score above 250 consistently. We look forward to doing the same during the World Cup, probably much better than that."

The 39-year-old veteran batter said having a few left-handers

among the top and middle-order is an advantage for the team.

"It is good to have left handers in the playing XI, the advantage of having a left-right combination in the middle creates difficulties to the (opposition) captain, bowlers and the fielders."

Raj has been in good nick in the lead-up to the showpiece with nine fifties since the resumption of cricket last year.

"I always prefer sticking to the basics of the game because when you play a big game and high pressure situation, it is difficult to maintain composure. It is important to focus on the basic things you have worked on over the years and that comes to your help."

She said a strong performance in the World Cup would help in improving the fan base of the Indian women's cricket team.

"I hope each and every player becomes a household name. Also, there are a lot many young girls who looked up to the players. I am sure they will idolise many more women cricketers."

"Not just girls, but also young boys should look up to the young girls because these girls have worked so hard, sacrificed so much to be at the spot where they are now."



## India Women's beat WI by 81 runs in WC warm-up match

PTI ■ RANGIORA



India will enter the ICC Women's World Cup with their tails up after opener Smriti Mandhana's 67-ball 66 and the bowlers' disciplined show powered them to an 81-run win over West Indies in their final warm-up game here on Tuesday.

Kept under observation after taking a blow to her head during the team's first practice match against South Africa on Sunday, the elegant Mandhana was in her element within two days from the injury, laying the foundation for India's challenging total of 258 all out in the allotted 50 overs.

In reply, West Indies were stopped at 177 for nine at Rangiora Oval.

India, who will face arch-rivals Pakistan in their cam-

**INDIA, WHO WILL FACE ARCH-RIVALS PAKISTAN IN THEIR CAMPAIGN OPENER ON SUNDAY, BEAT SOUTH AFRICA BY TWO RUNS IN THEIR FIRST WARM-UP GAME**

panion opener on Sunday, beat South Africa by two runs in their first warm-up game.

**BRIEF SCORES**

**India Women:** 258 in 50 overs (Smriti Mandhana 66, Deepti Sharma 51)

**West Indies Women:** 177/9 in 50 overs (Shemaine Campbelle 63, Hayley Matthews 44; Pooja Vastrakar 3/21).

## 100th Test another feather in Kohli's cap: Bumrah

PTI ■ MOHALI

He made his Test debut under Virat Kohli and as the superstar-batter gears up for his 100th outing in the format, Indian pace spearhead and current vice-captain Jasprit Bumrah said the landmark game is a reflection of his former skipper's dedication towards the game.

Kohli's 100th Test would be against Sri Lanka beginning here on March 4. Bumrah made his Test debut under Kohli's leadership in 2018.

"It is always a special achievement for a player. You know it is a testimony to his hard-work, dedication," Bumrah said in an online press conference here.

"...(playing) 100 Test matches for your country is a great occasion and he has contributed a lot to the success of the Indian team and will contribute a lot more in the future as well," he added.

"It is another feather in his (Kohli's) cap. I just wish him the best and congratulate him for the



achievement."

Asked if he would like to gift Kohli something on the special occasion, Bumrah said, "If the Indian team wins, then there is no best (better) present than that. But

he (Kohli) as a cricketer would like to give his best."

"Whichever match we play, whether it is his 100th Test, yes obviously, (it is) a big achievement and it is a testimony to his hard work, but

India's main focus is on the series.

The Mohali test will be played behind closed doors and asked whether it was a bit of a downer, Bumrah said, "See, right now we are in the frame of mind, where we are focussing on what we can control."

"(If) the crowds come, it is good for the energy, but that is something that we cannot control, we don't have any power regarding that, we don't decide the rules," he made it clear.

"So, for us what we can control is our energy, so we are trying to focus on that, and that is the basic thing in everybody's mind right now, that how do we prepare.

"We are in the best frame of mind, even if crowds are not there, so how do we keep that energy up. And with that, obviously, as I said, it is a big, big day, a big match for Virat Kohli," added Bumrah.

So far, Kohli has scored 7962 runs from 99 Test matches after making his debut against the West Indies at Kingston in 2011.

## Jason Roy pulls out of IPL citing bubble fatigue



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

England's flamboyant batter Jason Roy on Tuesday pulled out of the upcoming IPL citing extended stay in the tournament bubble, dealing a blow to his new franchise Gujarat Titans weeks before the event gets going.

The 31-year-old South African-

born English cricketer was signed by Gujarat Titans for his base price of Rs 2 crore at the mega auction.

"It's with a heavy heart I have decided to pull out of this year's tournament. I want to thank the management and the captain Hardik for putting your faith in me and picking me in the auction," Roy wrote on his Twitter handle on Tuesday.

"However, with everything going on in the world over the last 3 years it's added up and taken its toll on me. I feel it's only right I spend some quality time with my family.

"As well as spending time working on myself and my game over the next couple of months leading into a very busy year. I will be following each game of the Titans and backing them to lift the trophy in their first year of the tournament."

The development is a big blow to the Gujarat franchise as Roy was the only specialist opener picked by them apart from young Shubman Gill.

This is the second time the English player is pulling out of the IPL. He had earlier withdrawn from the 2020 edition due to personal reasons after being picked up by the Delhi Capitals for ₹1.5 crore.



## SA beat Kiwis by 198 runs in 2nd Test

AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH

South Africa outwitted and outplayed New Zealand in a crushing 198-run second Test victory in Christchurch on Tuesday to draw the two-match series 1-1.

New Zealand, set a record 426 target to win, were all out in their second innings for 227 eight balls after tea on the final day. It completed a remarkable turnaround for South Africa who read the conditions far better

than New Zealand after being thrashed by an innings and 276 runs in the first Test on the same ground.

Captain Dean Elgar demanded his side "front up" after that humiliation and they obliged.

A century by Sarel Erwele laid the base for a first innings 364, Kagiso Rabada took five for 60 as New Zealand folded 71 in arrears and an unbeaten 136 from Kyle Verreynne in the second innings tightened the clamp on New Zealand. New Zealand started

the final day at 94 for four and while Devon Conway and Tom Blundell were at the crease they held hope they could salvage a draw.

But it was a forlorn hope and their 85-run partnership ended shortly before lunch when Conway went leg before wicket for 92.

New Zealand hopes of salvaging a draw rose again at 227 for nine when rain forced the players from the field, but it was a brief respite.

## Saurabh Chaudhary wins Gold in ISSF World Cup in Cairo

PTI ■ CAIRO

Indian shooting ace Saurabh Chaudhary won the Gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event, opening the country's account in the year's first ISSF World Cup here on Tuesday.

The Asian Games Gold medalist shot 16 in the Gold medal contest to finish ahead of Germany's

Michael Schwald (6).

The Bronze in the event was bagged by Tokyo Olympics Silver medalist Artem Chernousov of Russia, whose country's flag was removed owing to its involvement in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine.

The 19-year Chaudhary, an Olympian who also has a Youth Olympic Gold medal to his name, was third in the men's 10m air pistol qualification stage with a total of 584 points, making it through to the elimination as one of the top eight shooters.

This was Chaudhary's third individual ISSF World Cup Gold and first in the new format, dominating Germany's Schwald in the final.

Chernousov topped the 92-strong qualification field with 591 points.



## India to play England in Women's hockey World Cup on July 3

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

India will open its campaign in this year's FIH Women's Hockey World Cup against England on July 3, two days after the marquee tournament opens in Spain and the Netherlands.

The schedule was announced by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Tuesday.

Placed in Pool B, India will next face China on July 5 and New Zealand on July 7.

India will play all their pool matches at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen, Netherlands in the event to be held from July 1 to 17.

Soon after the schedule was made public, India women's team halfback



Sushila Chanu said the team won't be intimidated by any opposition.

"It does not matter against which opponents we start our campaign. We are not afraid as our mentality and our mindset is to take each game as it comes and try and win every match," Chanu said in a virtual press conference.

"We have faced China recently in Muscat, Oman, in the Women's Hockey Asia Cup 2022, and in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22. And so it will be an advantage for us," she asserted.

"We will be playing the FIH Hockey Pro League 2021/22 matches against England next month. We had last played New Zealand in 2020. So we know these teams quite well and we know how we have to prepare for the upcoming challenges."

## Dipa Karmakar identified as 'suspended' by FIG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian gymnast Dipa Karmakar is currently identified as "suspended" in the International Gymnastics Federation's website, a development that has left the national body flummoxed which says there has been no official communication from the world body.

Among the various Indian gymnasts listed in the FIG website, the 28-year-old Karmakar is marked as "suspended" while the others are shown as "active" against their respective names.

The 'biography' section of the athletes in the FIG website also shows Karmakar as "suspended" gymnast. There was no immediate



clarity on what the "suspended" status meant for Karmakar, who rose into limelight after her stupendous fourth-place finish in the vault event in the 2016 Rio Olympics. She has not been competing since 2019.

The Gymnastics Federation of India is clueless about the development.

"We have not received any communication from the FIG regarding Dipa's suspension. I don't know what is the reason or whether it is true. There has been no communication so let's wait," GFI president Sudhir Mittal told PTI.

"Unless there is any communication from the FIG I won't be able to comment anything."



## Rashmika Mandanna: I don't want to be categorised as an actor

Actress Rashmika Mandanna, who will next appear in the movie *Aadavallu Meeku Johaarlu*, stated that she doesn't want to get categorised as a North or South actress, but only wants to do content-rich movies.

The *Sarileru Neekevvaru* actress, who spoke to the media said, "I don't want to be categorised in any industry like North or the South. I want to be an actor with a pan-India appeal."

The actress who has two big-ticket Hindi flicks, *Mission Majnu* and *Good Bye*, starring Amitabh Bachchan, said that she is

open to acting in any good movies, without considering the language barriers.

Rashmika, though, subscribes to the fact that her appearance in South Indian movies like *Pushpa* and *Geetha Govindam* has given her great visibility in Hindi.

"People call me Srivalli (from *Pushpa*) or Geetha (from *Geetha Govindam*), etc. So the audiences remember my characters, which means they are watching all our content," she said.

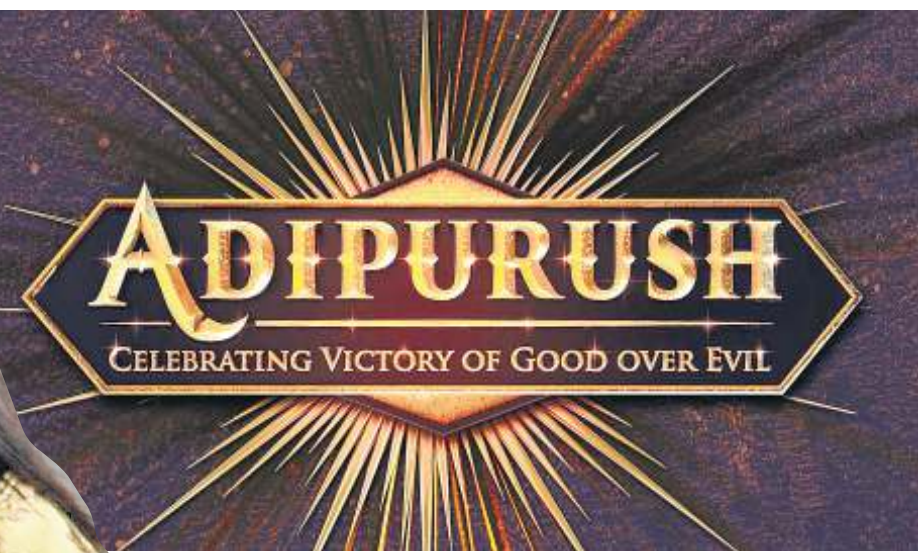
As Rashmika gears up for her next release titled *Aadavallu Meeku Johaarlu*, she said she learned to con-

duct herself by seeing senior actresses working on the sets of the Sharwanand-starrer.

"To see women like Radikaa, Khushbu, and Urvashi on the sets, knowing that they are such great actors, taught me how to conduct myself on the sets and how to treat others on the team," Rashmika said.

Rashmika Mandanna and Sharwanand will be seen together in Kishore Tirumala's upcoming family entertainer.

*Aadavallu Meeku Johaarlu* will hit the screens on March 4.



## Adipurush to globally release in Jan 2023

Filmmaker Om Raut's magnum opus *Adipurush* will arrive in theatres in 3D on January 12, 2023, the makers announced Tuesday.

The multilingual period saga, which is being touted as a film celebrating the victory of good over evil, is an on-screen adaptation of the

Hindu epic *Ramayana*. It features Prabhas as Lord Ram and Saif Ali Khan as Lankesh.

The film was previously scheduled to be released on August 11, 2022.

On the occasion of Maha Shivratri, the team announced the new release date of *Adipurush* via social media.

#Adipurush Worldwide Theatrical

Release in 3D on 12th Jan 2023, Prabhas wrote on Instagram. Also starring Kriti Sanon and Sunny Singh, *Adipurush* is Raut's follow-up project to his 2020 blockbuster movie *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior*. *Adipurush* is produced by Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar of T-series, Raut, Prasad Sutar, and Rajesh Nair of Retrophiles.

## Aadhi Pinisetty looks fierce in The Warriorr first look

The first look of Aadhi Pinisetty from *The Warriorr*, ace director N Lingusamy's upcoming Telugu-Tamil bilingual starring Ustaad Ram Pothineni as protagon-

ist, was released today along with the name of his character.

Aadhi Pinisetty, who is popular in both Kollywood and Tollywood, plays the antagonist and his character in *The Warriorr* will be talked

about. Interestingly, the name of Aadhi Pinisetty in the movie is Guru. In his first look poster, he is seen in a menacing look indicating Guru is the epitome of evil.

Indicating that he is playing the role of a merciless man, he is seen in a tough posture in the poster, which has been released as *Maha Shivarathri* special. The release of Aadhi's striking first look has come at a time when the first look posters of Ram and Kriti Shetty from *The Warriorr* were received well and added fuel to the anticipations of the movie.

Earlier known as *RAP019*, the title of the film was revealed in style recently. Along with a poster that featured Ram Pothineni as a police officer wielding a gun with a tough look and with cops surrounding him, the title of the movie was unveiled as *The Warriorr*.

And, to

mark Valentine's Day, the first look poster of the film's heroine Kriti Shetty was released on February 14. It featured her as Whistle Mahalakshmi in a trendy look.

According to the movie's team, the film will surpass the anticipations and will be one of the memorable police stories of south Indian cinema. *The Warriorr* comes after the success of *iSmart Shankar* of Ram Pothineni. Akshara Gowda will be seen in an important role in this flick.

Produced by Srinivasaa Chitturi under Srinivasaa Silver Screen banner, *The Warriorr* is expected to be a feather in the production house's hat after the success of its recent sports drama *Seetimaar*, which had Gopichand and Tamannah Bhatia in lead roles.

The action drama will be presented by Pavan Kumar and it is a Devi Sri Prasad musical. Cinematography is by Sujith Vaasudev. Major portions of *The Warriorr* have been shot and the film's release date will be announced soon.



## Bheemla Nayak Hindi release date locked

Pawan Kalyan and Rana Daggubati's action drama *Bheemla Nayak* is gearing up for its Hindi release soon. Reports say the dubbed Hindi version of *Bheemla Nayak* will be released on March 4. Despite there being no official update from the team, it is reported that the producers are trying their best to accommodate the Hindi release of the movie.

Helmed by Saagar K Chandra, *Bheemla Nayak* was released on February 25 and has

apparently crossed Rs 100 crore at the worldwide box-office.

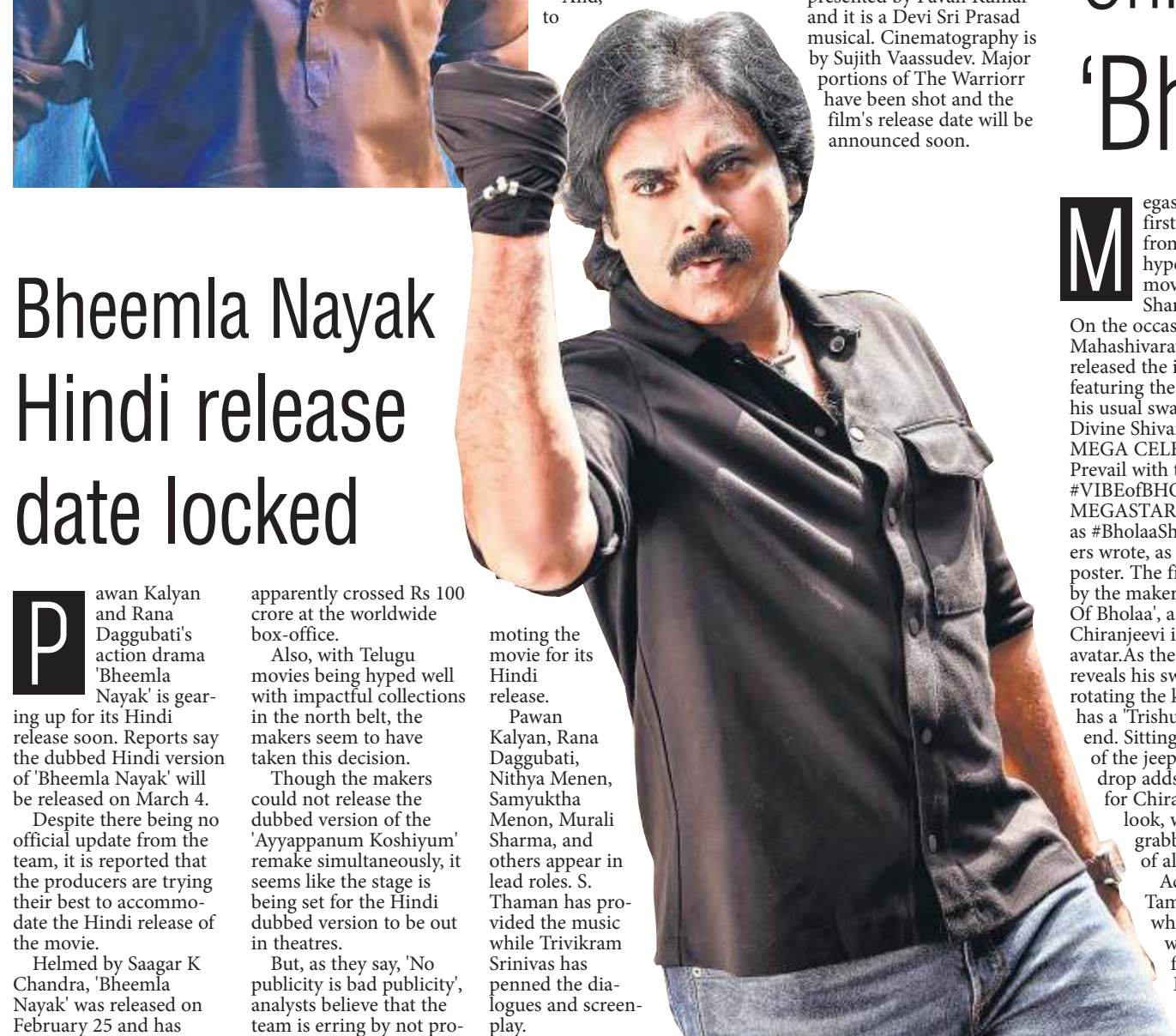
Also, with Telugu movies being hyped well with impactful collections in the north belt, the makers seem to have taken this decision.

Though the makers could not release the dubbed version of the 'Ayyappanum Koshiyum' remake simultaneously, it seems like the stage is being set for the Hindi dubbed version to be out in theatres.

But, as they say, 'No publicity is bad publicity', analysts believe that the team is erring by not pro-

moting the movie for its Hindi release.

Pawan Kalyan, Rana Daggubati, Nithya Menon, Samyuktha Menon, Murali Sharma, and others appear in lead roles. S. Thaman has provided the music while Trivikram Srinivas has penned the dialogues and screenplay.



## Music man Yuvan Shankar Raja to turn director soon

years in the film industry, Yuvan, while replying to a question from media persons during an interaction, said, "The script for my film is ready. I will be directing it either this year or next year." When asked to name a hero who he thought would be ideal to play the protagonist in his film, the reticent music director said, "Actually, my film will be a female-oriented film."

The music director, who enjoys a huge fan following all across south India, also announced that he would soon be entering the world of Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs) as well. "I have some unused BGMs. I have plans to put out NFTs for this unused BGMs," the music director disclosed.



## Chiranjeevi's uber-cool first look of 'Bhola Shankar' is out now

Megastar Chiranjeevi's first look poster from his much-hyped upcoming movie *Bhola Shankar* is out now.

On the occasion of Mahashivaratri, the makers released the intriguing poster, featuring the 'Indra' actor in his usual swag. "On this Divine Shivaratri Day, Let the MEGA CELEBRATION Prevail with the #VIBEofBHOLAA. Here's MEGASTAR @KChiruTweets as #BholaaShankar," the makers wrote, as they unveiled the poster. The first look released by the makers is titled 'Vibe Of Bhola', as it presents Chiranjeevi in a stylish avatar. As the motion poster reveals his swag, he is seen rotating the keychain, which has a 'Trishul' (trident) at its end. Sitting on the bumper of the jeep, a colorful backdrop adds to the festivity for Chiranjeevi's first look, which has now grabbed the attention of all.

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who was paired up with Chiranjeevi for the movie 'Sye Raa', will be seen as the leading

lady in this commercial entertainer as well. On the other hand, 'Mahanati' actress Keerthy Suresh will be seen as Chiranjeevi's sister in this movie. Helmed by Meher Ramesh, 'Bhola Shankar' is mounted on a grand scale by

Ramabrahmam Sunkara. Anil Sunkara's AK Entertainments is producing the film, in association with Creative Commercials. Dudley cranks the camera, while the dialogues are penned by ThirupathiMamidala. Martha

nd K Venkatesh takes care of editing and A. S. Prakash is the production designer. Kishore Garikipati is the executive producer. *Bhola Shankar* is currently in making and will be released later this year.

