

ANALYSIS 7
THE WORLD MUST UNITE
FOR FIGHTING INFLATION**MONEY 8**
MOODY'S SLASHES INDIA'S ECONOMIC
GROWTH FORECAST TO 8.8 PC FOR 2022**SPORTS 12**
ROYAL BATTLE

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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'I ONLY KEEP ONE
FILM IN BANK'

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**DELHI WOMAN PLOTS HER OWN
KIDNAPPING TO EXTORT MONEY**

A 38-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly plotting her own kidnapping to extort money from her brother, police said on Thursday. The police said the woman was going through a financial crisis and was in need of money following which she converted her voice to sound like a man with the help of an app and sent it to her brother for ransom. According to the police, a complainant was received at the Mehrauli police station on Wednesday in which the man said his sister had been kidnapped and he was receiving extortion calls and messages from her phone number.

**INFOSYS CEO SALIL PAREKH GETS 88
PC JUMP IN SALARY TO RS 79.75 CR**

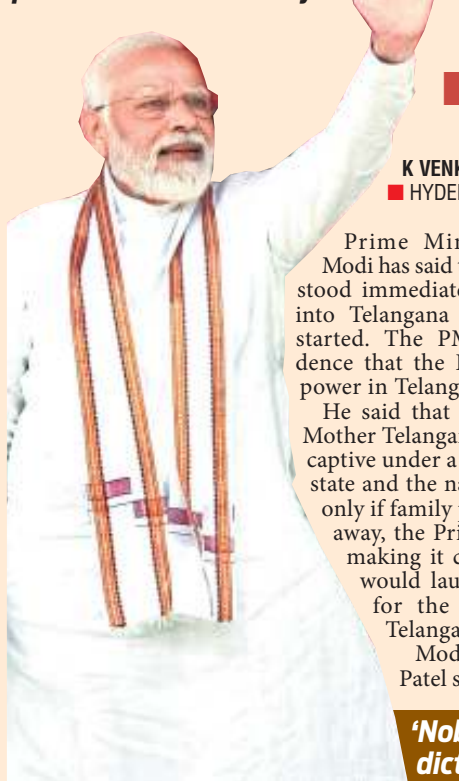
Infosys CEO Salil Parekh has got a massive 88 per cent jump in annual remuneration to Rs 79.75 crore, making him one of the highest-paid executives in the country. The software services firm has sought shareholders' approval for the reappointment of Parekh as chief executive officer and managing director for a second five-year term beginning July 1. According to the company's annual report released on Thursday, Parekh, 58, took home a salary of Rs 71.02 crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2022. This included Rs 52.33 crore from exercising RSUs (Restricted Stock Units) granted to him earlier.

**CENTRE TRANSFERS IAS OFFICER
OVER ALLEGED MISUSE OF STADIUM**

In a swift action, the Centre Thursday shunted IAS couple Sanjeev Khirwar and Anu Dugga to Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh respectively following media reports suggesting misuse of official position by them, officials said here. In an order, the Home Ministry said Khirwar, a 1994-batch IAS officer from AGMUT cadre, is shifted to Ladakh and his wife to Arunachal Pradesh with immediate effect. According to official sources, the home ministry had sought a report from the Delhi Chief Secretary on the news report regarding the misuse of facilities at Thyagraj Stadium by Khirwar and his wife.

**RUSSIA SLAMS SANCTIONS, SEEKS
TO SHIFT BLAME FOR FOOD CRISIS**

Moscow pressed the West on Thursday to lift sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine, seeking to shift the blame for a growing food crisis worsened by Kyiv's inability to ship millions of tons of grain and other agricultural products because of the conflict. Britain immediately accused Moscow of trying to hold the world to ransom and insisted there would be no sanctions relief. Ukraine is one of the world's largest exporters of wheat, corn and sunflower oil, but the war, including a Russian blockade of its ports, has prevented much of that production from leaving the country, endangering the world food supply. Many of those ports are also now heavily mined.

**'The state and the nation
can develop only if family
parties are chased away'****K VENKATESHWARLU**
■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that he had understood immediately after stepping into Telangana that change has started. The PM exuded confidence that the BJP will come to power in Telangana soon.

He said that the BJP will free Mother Telangana which is now a captive under a family's rule. The state and the nation can develop only if family parties are chased away, the Prime Minister said making it clear that the BJP would launch a movement for the development of Telangana.

Modi said that Sardar Patel strived to preserve

Change has started in TS

■ BJP will come to power ■ Telangana reeling under a family rule: PM

the integrity of the nation. Telangana has been developing as an IT hub. Thousands of youth sacrificed their lives during the Telangana movement. But the dreams of the martyrs are not getting fulfilled in Telangana as it is under a family's rule. Nobody's hopes are getting fulfilled in dictatorial Telangana, the PM said.

The BJP's aim is to take Telangana to the top. The Prime Minister declared that he had realised immediately after stepping on Telangana soil that the saffron wind has started blowing in the state. The change has started in the minds of the people of Telangana. He said that he is getting a feeling that the flag of the BJP will fly high in Telangana.

The Prime Minister satirised Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar



Rao without mentioning KCR's name. The PM ridiculed KCR saying that superstitions have increased among Telangana's rulers.

The Prime Minister criticised the tendency to think that it is unlucky to go to certain places. The PM was indirectly saying that KCR was afraid to go to some places and

the Secretariat due to superstitions.

Modi recalled that even when he was the CM of Gujarat, some people said not to go somewhere, but he said he went everywhere believing in science.

2



Telangana CM KCR in a meeting with former Prime Minister Devegowda in Bengaluru on Thursday

Sensational change at the national level in 3 months

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has declared that in the next two to three months there will be a sensation in the country.

KCR met former Prime Minister HD Devegowda and former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy in Bengaluru on Thursday and returned to Hyderabad by evening.

KCR said, "This time I assure you

there is going to be a change at the national level and none can stop it. There will be a lot of talks but India will change, India has to change. India has to rise by setting aside politics, politicians and isms and change the country. In two to three months you will get sensational news."

"During Amrit Mahotsav celebrating 75 years of Independence we suffer shortages of power, drinking and irrigation water. What the hell it is.

2

You are the future of India

■ Nation seeing political will, reforms being implemented since 2014
■ Prime Minister Modi addresses ISB graduates in Hyderabad**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Owing to continuous political instability during the last three decades, the country suffered from lack of political willpower and stayed away from implementing reforms and important decisions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday. However, the nation is now seeing political determination and reforms also being implemented continuously since 2014, he said.

Modi, addressing the graduating students of Indian School of Business (ISB) here, said India is the fastest growing economy among the G-20 nations besides boasting of several other achievements, including in the start-up environment and attracting the highest-ever FDI.

Due to the continuous political instability in the last three decades, the country has seen a lack of political willpower for a long time. Because of this the country stayed away from reforms and from taking big decisions.

Since 2014, our country is seeing political will and also, reforms



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeting ISB students in Hyderabad on Thursday.

**Mentioning that Indian
solutions are being
implemented globally,
Modi called upon the
graduating students of
ISB to link their
personal goals with
those of the country.**

are being implemented continuously, Modi said.

Public and popular support is assured when reforms are undertaken with determination and

political will, he said.

Listing the achievements, the Prime Minister said in the case of Smartphone Data Consumer, India is at number-one position and also it has occupied second slot when it comes to internet-users. "India is in the second position in global retail index. India has the third largest start-up eco system in the world," he said.

India is emerging as a major centre of growth today and the world is realising that India means business, Modi said.

2

PM Modi cowered in fear of KCR: TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not name Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, the TRS or the TS government at the Begumpet Airport, TRS leaders reacted strongly to the PM's criticism.

R&B Minister Vemula Prashant Reddy said that the post of Prime Minister is an honourable one, but Modi forgot that and spoke as if he was the BJP state President.

"People from all states across the country desperately want their states to develop like Telangana. Modi is unable to digest this. He started fearing KCR. Forget coming to power in Telangana, take care of your post in New Delhi," he said.

On superstition, Vemula said KCR believes in both science and God and cited the example of the Kaleshwaram Project for science and Yadadri Temple for God. "We don't use God to seek votes like the BJP," he said.

Health Minister Harish Rao reminded that the BJP is also a party run by families.

2

Hyundai to invest Rs1,400 crore

○ A big boost to investments in Telangana mobility sector
○ Minister KTR meets company CEO Young Cho Chi at Davos**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

In a big boost to Telangana's automobile industry, Hyundai has decided to invest Rs 1,400 crore to set up their Proving Grounds and has agreed to be a stakeholder and a consortium partner in the first of its kind New Mobility Valley created by the Telangana government.

The announcement was made after Industries Minister KT Rama Rao met Hyundai's President & CIO, Young Cho Chi, at Davos.

Earlier in the day, GMM Pfaudler announced the expansion of its facility in Hyderabad, which manufactures glass-lined reactors, tanks and columns for pharmaceutical and chemical companies.

The company plans to expand its operations and provide manu-



Minister KTR with Hyundai's President & CEO Young Cho Chi, Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan & Chief Relations Officer Amar Atmakuri in Davos

facturing support to the group's global operations and is investing an additional USD 3.7 MN to increase capacity.

GMM Pfaudler had invested USD 6.3 MN to acquire the glass lining equipment manufacturing

2

TRS Rajya Sabha nominee has assets worth 3,909 crore but no vehicle

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRS Rajya Sabha nominee Bandi Parthasaradhi Reddy has declared assets worth Rs 3,909 crore making him the richest nominee from the state.

Telangana Publications Group Chairman and Managing Director Damodar Rao Divikonda's declared assets are worth Rs 121 crore. Recently, elected TRS Rajya Sabha MP Vaddiraju Ravi Chandra

declared assets worth Rs 46 crore.

Partha Sarathi revenue is Rs 135 crore and a majority of assets are in the form of shares of Hetero Labs, Honour Labs, Hetero Drugs, Hindys Labs, and Hazelo Labs.

Hetero chairman declared that his wife Bandi Kalavathi's assets are worth Rs 1,276 crore. Incidentally, neither of them have a vehicle in their names.

2

No fish prasadam for asthma patients

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bathini Harinath Goud and his family said that the annual distribution of fish prasadam for asthma treatment has been cancelled this year.

This is the third consecutive year that the Goud family has cancelled the distribution of fish prasadam due to the corona pandemic.

2

BJP, TRS are hand in glove, alleges Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President Revanth Reddy sent a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday on the occasion of the PM's visit to Hyderabad. In his letter, Revanth said that both the BJP and the TRS had failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people. Both the BJP and the TRS have been enacting dramas but the people know about their secret pact, he said.

Revanth shot nine questions at Prime Minister Narendra Modi

and asked him to answer them in Hyderabad.

After the PM's visit to Hyderabad, Revanth Tweeted saying, "Begumpet Modi's speech has no interest in Telangana except a thirst for power. It is ridiculous that Modi, who cancelled the ITIR project sanctioned by Congress, has promised to turn Hyderabad into a technology hub. Youth chanting is deceptive."

Meanwhile, Revanth went to the US on Thursday morning along with his family for a summer vacation.

2

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

Tithi: Chaturthi: May 18 11:37 PM
to May 19 08:24 PM
Panchami: May 19 08:24 PM
to May 20 05:29 PM

Nakshatram:

Purva Ashadha: May 19 05:37 AM
to May 20 03:17 AM
Uttara Ashadha: May 20 03:17 AM
to May 21 01:18 AM

Rahukalam: 1:49 PM to 3:25 PM

Yamagandam: 5:46 AM to 7:23 AM

Varjyam: 10:37 AM to 12:05 PM

Gulika: 8:59 AM to 10:36 AM

Amritakalam: 10:57 PM to 12:24 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:46 AM
to 12:38 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 29%
Sunrise: 5:47 AM
Sunset: 6:37 PM

Updated: MAY 18, 2022 5:00 PM

Cong to file plaint against Bandi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Accusing Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay of making a "highly objectionable and provocative" speech against Muslims, the Congress on Thursday demanded stern action against him.

"Sanjay delivered a hate speech in Karimnagar with the sole intention to provoke the minority community and spread communal hatred. Although people like Sanjay, who have zero IQ and no knowledge of history and geography should be ignored, his remarks cannot be taken

lightly as he is desperately trying to incite communal violence," Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Minorities Department Chairman Shaik Abdullah Sohail said in a statement on Thursday.

2

Hyderabad logs five mega land transactions

■ Hetero group purchases 600 acres of land in India's biggest deal in 2022 so far

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hetero group has purchased around 600 acres for Rs 350 crore. This is the biggest land deal that has occurred in the country in 2022 so far.

Anarock Research reveals that from January 2022 till date, various entities have sealed around 28 land deals accounting for over 1,237 acres across the country. Of the total transacted land, at least 18 deals accounting for 351 acres are earmarked for residential projects



in various cities.

Details regarding the seller in the

BJP, TRS Govts neglecting MGNREGS workers in TS: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nalgonda MP Captain N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has accused the BJP government at the Centre and the TRS government in Telangana of neglecting the 55 lakh workers registered with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the state.

He said by reducing man-days from 16 crores last year to 10 crores in the current fiscal, the Centre was denying an honourable livelihood to lakhs of rural poor.

On the other hand, the TRS government has made no efforts to link NREGS with agriculture which could have improved the lives of MGNRES workers, he added.

He said that the Warangal Declaration, unveiled by



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on May 6, promises to link NREGS with agriculture besides extending a financial assistance of Rs 12,000 to the landless poor registered with the MGNREGS.

Uttam Kumar Reddy was addressing meetings in

Lakaram, Srinivasapuram, Amaravaram, Anjali Puram, Lingagiri, Sarvaram and Seetharampuram Gram Panchayats in the Suryapet district as part of the Rachabanda/Rythu Bharosa Yatra in Suryapet district on Thursday.

He pointed out that the Centre has reduced budgetary allocation for MGNREGS by 25.2 per cent. As against the Rs 98,000 crore sanctioned under the revised budget for 2021-22, this year the allocation has been reduced to Rs 73,000 crore. He said this reduction harmed the rural poor, especially in Telangana. The number of man-days has been reduced from 16 crores to 10 crores impacting the livelihood of Telangana labourers.

He said the Centre has also stopped funding for works like school compound walls, plan-

tations, digging trenches for water, etc. As a result, about 55.52 lakh job cardholders in Telangana were not finding work.

Uttam said that there was a steep fall in MGNREGS works in the last three years. Compared to 2020-21, NREGS works declined by nearly 7.6 per cent in 2021-22, he added.

As per a report released by LibTech India, an organisation that works on improving transparency in rural public services, the decline in NREGS works was registered in 23 out of 32 districts. With the Centre reducing man-days from 16 crores to 10 crores and funds by over 25 per cent, the MGNREGS workers of Telangana are bound to face financial problems, he said.

The Congress MP said that the Congress-led UPA government introduced MGNREGS

to guarantee the 'right to work' to the impoverished in rural areas.

"Both the BJP and TRS governments have killed the spirit of MGNREGS by not implementing it properly. While the TRS government is trying to wash its hands off by blaming the Centre for reducing man-days and funding, the Centre is not implementing the scheme from a human perspective. As a result, the poor are losing their livelihood," he said.

Uttam demanded that the TS Government should take an all-party delegation to New Delhi to make a representation to the Centre to restore MGNREGS man-days to 16 crores and also increase funding.

He said that the TS government should extend financial assistance to all landless workers registered with MGNREGS.

Bill to make CM Chancellor of state-run varsities in place of Guv

West Bengal cabinet approves the proposal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The West Bengal cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal to make the chief minister the chancellor of state-run universities, in an apparent bid to clip the wings of the governor on the matter.

Education Minister Bratya Basu, while briefing journalists after the cabinet meeting held at state secretariat, said the proposal would soon be introduced in the state assembly in the form of a bill.

"Today, the state cabinet gave its consent to the proposal to make the chief minister the chancellor of all state-run universities in place of the governor.

This proposal will soon be introduced as a bill in the assembly," Basu said.

The governor is at present the ex-officio chancellor of 17 state-run universities in the state.

The Raj Bhavan remained silent on the state government's decision and calls to



Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar went unanswered.

Dhankhar has been at loggerheads with the Mamata Banerjee government in the state on several issues since assuming charge as the governor in July 2019.

In December last year, the governor had expressed anguish over chancellors and vice-chancellors of private universities not attending a meeting called by him at his official residence. They had expressed inability to attend the meeting citing the COVID-19 situation.

Dhankhar had faced a similar situation in January 2020

when vice-chancellors of state-run universities were invited for a meeting.

He had alleged that the state government was making appointments to the vice-chancellor post in various universities without consulting the chancellor, and he is being forced to take strong view of such developments.

Dhankhar had then said that there was a need to revisit all the appointments and called for focus on improving the educational environment in the state.

The West Bengal cabinet's decision was based on a recommendation made by the Punchhi Commission in 2010 that the convention of appointing governors as chancellors of universities be stopped.

The Tamil Nadu and Kerala governments have already adopted the recommendation made by the committee on Centre-state relations headed by Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi, former chief justice of India.

‘Stronger regulations for tech inevitable’

PNS ■ DAVOS

Given the pervasiveness of digital technology in our lives, it is inevitable to have stronger regulatory regimes around all facets of technology, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has said.

"I think the responsibility of stakeholders like ourselves or businesses like us is to both anticipate and adapt to regulation versus ignore it or expect not to have regulation," he said here at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting.

"I think even with internet safety and moderation, I think there's a lot of regulation coming out of the European Union which I think are going to set standards," he added.

Nadella said another thing

about regulation is that you have to ensure that you have the design process.

It's not about just how do you meet the regulatory standard.

It is also about how do you ensure that the entire organisation's process of building technology ensures the regulatory framework around privacy, ethics and internet safety. These are all things that you take into account starting at the design side, he said.

As in technology, many times it is very hard to fix things at scale, so one needs to start by really thinking about regulation at unit of scale of one versus 7 billion people, the Microsoft chief said.



Change has started in TS

Continued from page 1

Modi said amidst jubilation that Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, who is dressed in saffron, went to Noida to check superstitions and Yogi came back as Chief Minister.

The Prime Minister said that the people of Telangana will suffer as its rulers believe in superstitions even in the 21st century.

The Prime Minister described the family rulers of Telangana as traitors. Telangana was not created for family rule. He said that youth were not entering politics due to dynastic politics. Modi made it clear that his aim is to free TS from family rule. He said that development was stalled in states ruled by families.

He said that the people of Telangana have decided to bring about change in the state and to vote the BJP to power. The BJP would certainly come to power in Telangana. He said

that the BJP has been thinking of making Telangana an IT hub.

The PM called upon BJP activists to take the dreams of Sardar Patel forward. He declared that the BJP will take the state to the top by joining hands with the youth.

He said that attacks on BJP activists have come to his notice.

Modi said that he had not forgotten the year 2013. That year history was written in Hyderabad. He said that people came in large numbers and state BJP leaders had sold tickets for his speech. He said the Telangana people's affection that day had become a turning point in his life and that he got an opportunity to serve the nation.

The same Hyderabad, the same Telangana people's enthusiasm would bring about change in future, he said.

"You will not go back and we will certainly fly the victory flag," the PM declared.

The Prime Minister addressed BJP activists and leaders at the Begumpet Airport on Thursday where BJP activists had arranged a welcome meeting.

The Prime Minister started his speech in Telugu by saying, "Greetings to the people of Telangana who are synonymous with perseverance and manhood."

He said that the Telangana people had extended him an extraordinary welcome whenever he visited Telangana. The PM thanked the people of Telangana and BJP cadres for extending a warm welcome to him braving the hot summer.

The Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, Union Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy, Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar, BJP MLAs, MPs, the Telangana Animal Husbandry Minister, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, and officials welcomed the Prime Minister at the Begumpet .

Sensational...

Continued from page 1

It is not whether a government will be formed with the Congress, without the Congress or the BJP. An attempt is being made to make a shining India. Leave aside sensations and sensational news, the country should go in a positive and concrete direction. The countries which got independence along with us have gone forward, but we are stuck. Nobody is happy in this country. Farmers, Dalits and tribals are unhappy. The situation is deplorable. There will be a lot of talk and promises. But the reality is that industries are closing, GDP is low, Rupee has fallen like never before, and inflation is high. Intellectuals must think about a change in India," KCR added.

KCR said that the meeting discussed everything, including national and Karnataka politics. He said that many prime ministers and governments have already ruled the country and added that China, which had a lower GDP than India, is now dominating the world economically.

He said that the Modi government was aiming for a USD 5 trillion economy which is an insult to this country. If you really use our brains, India will be the first, and will be better off than the US, KCR added.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹308
Without Skin	₹328
Broiler at Farm	₹162

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	385
VIJAYAWADA	385
VISAKHAPATNAM	410
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹3.85

You are the future of India

Continued from page 1

Pointing out that often Indian solutions are being implemented globally, he called upon the graduating students of ISB to link their personal goals with that of the country.

He said resilience and strength of the health sector was proved during the COVID-19 pandemic and India developed its own vaccines.

More than 190 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered across the nation and India has also sent vaccines to more than 100 other countries, he said.

The Prime Minister also noted that bureaucracy has also made firm contributions in the reform process. He credited the people's participation in successful implementation of government's schemes. He said that when people cooperate, quick and better results are

assured.

In the system now, government reforms, bureaucracy performs and people's participation lead to transformation, he said and asked the ISB students to study this mechanism of reform, perform and transform.

The Prime Minister further cited the biggest reason that after 2014 the country is witnessing phenomenal performance in every sport due to the confidence of the country's athletes.

Confidence comes when the right talent is discovered, when there is handholding of talent, when there is a transparent selection and a better infrastructure is available for training, competition. We can see transformation in sports due to reforms like Khelo India' and the TOPS scheme right in front of our eyes, he said.

Similarly, he cited the

Aspirational District Programme as a great example of performance, value addition, productivity and motivation in the public policy sphere.

Modi further stressed the need to give more opportunities to grow small businesses and help them in connecting with the new local and global markets.

Underlining their immense potential, the Prime Minister said to make India future-ready, we have to ensure that India becomes self-reliant.

All you business professionals have a big role in this. And this will be a great example of service to the country for you, he added.

Modi also recalled that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee dedicated this (ISB) institution to the country in 2001. Since then, more than 50,000 executives have passed out from ISB. Today, ISB is

among the top business schools of Asia. Professionals passed out from ISB are helping top companies and giving momentum to the county's business, he said.

Students from here have created hundreds of startups and played a role in creating unicorns, Modi said adding This is an achievement of ISB and a cause of pride for the entire country .

Modi, who participated in the celebration of the completion of 20 years of ISB-Hyderabad and addressed the graduation ceremony of the PGP Class of 2022, also gave away medals to some of the meritorious graduates.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region G Kishan Reddy, were among other dignitaries present.

Cong to file complaint against...

Continued from page 1

He also announced that the Chairmen of the Congress Minority Departments in all the 33 districts of Telangana have been asked to file formal complaints against Sanjay in their districts.

Sohail said that the Telangana BJP chief knows nothing about Islam or Muslims in Telangana. Initially, he targeted four per cent Muslim reservations and then the Urdu language. Now he is targeting mosques by demanding the digging up of all masjids, Sohail added.

"His hatred for Muslims has reached a different level although it is aimed at political gains. He is making desperate attempts to grab public attention by making provocative comments," he said.

The Congress leader said

that the Telangana police should've registered a case 'suo motto' against Sanjay for his hate speech. However, as the TRS is a secret ally of the BJP, the police are taking no action.

He said the Congress would never allow the plan of the BJP and the TRS to disturb communal harmony.

"We will launch a formal complaint against Sanjay. If the police refuse to register a case we will approach the court seeking action," he said.

Sohail also ridiculed Sanjay's allegations that mosques were built on 'shivams'. He said no mosque could be built on temple land or even grabbed land. Therefore, Sanjay's allegations were nothing but a figment of his weird imagination.

"By repeatedly taking the name of AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi in his speeches, Sanjay is trying to

endorse Owaisi as the sole Muslim leader. MIM is a non-entity outside the Old City of Hyderabad. Further, there is not a single seat in Hyderabad where the MIM and the BJP are direct competitors. The BJP leader is using MIM's name only to create a false impression that Owaisi is his main rival. This is a game plan hatched by the TRS-BJP-MIM trio to divert public attention from problems like unemployment and rising inflation," he said.

The Congress leader advised people belonging to all communities not to get provoked by the misleading statements of Sanjay or Asaduddin Owaisi.

He said that both the leaders, as per the directions of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, were trying to incite communal hatred by indulging in a fake war of words.



No fish prasadam...

Continued from page 1

The distribution was cancelled in the year 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The fish prasadam used to be given annually at the Nampally Exhibition Ground on the day of Mrigasira Karti entry.

Nampally Exhibition Society Secretary Aditya

Margam said the Bathini family had not contacted them this year.

Bathini Goud later clarified that they had decided not to distribute the fish prasadam this year too.

Every year on the day of Mrigasira Karthi, the Bathini brothers used to distribute fish prasadam to asthma patients in Hyderabad.

IN BRIEF



Metro train movement disrupted at Nampally

Running of the one of the metro trains was disrupted at Nampally on Thursday. The train came to a halt on the track at Nampally metro station. It stopped on track for technical reasons. The train stoppage at Nampally station on the Miyapur-LB Nagar corridor has affected other services. It has created more congestion in the evening at the station. The reasons for the train's stoppage were not given, L&T officials said repairs would be made immediately. Passengers were getting in trouble as trains were running late. Meanwhile, on the 24th of this month, Metro services were disrupted on the Red Line route. It is learnt that the train stopped at Moosarambagh station due to a technical fault. As a result, traffic between LB Nagar and Miyapur was paralyzed for some time.

IPE to conduct Startup Boot Camp today, tomorrow

The Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE) has launched its Entrepreneurship Cell, with the tag-line Connect Collaborate Create. The E-Cell at IPE will be organising its first ever Startup Boot Camp in association with The Entrepreneurship Zone, for the students of IPE on the 27th and 28th of May 2022 at the IPE Shamirpet Campus. The Boot Camp aims to enable the students to ideate and recognise opportunity, identify product-market gap, validate ideas, discover customers and create value proposition, identify and understand sources of funding and fund raising process.

Free mobile app for competitive exams

Vaardhi Society has come up with Vaardhi mobile app which provides free material for competitive exams. The app can be downloaded anywhere by the individuals in Telangana who are preparing for competitive exams and get registered to use the facilities. In order to bridge the gap between jobseekers and employers, with the participation of several hundreds of unemployed youth from various parts of the State, the software team based from Karimnagar IT hub has created this application. The application helps in writing mock tests, find employment and get preparation material. Users can get exam and job notifications related updates, can get materials for various exam syllabuses and they can find nearby free coaching centers.

HMWSSB extends 'Safety week at work site' to June 5

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) MD Danakishore on Thursday said that the 'Safety awareness week at work site' being organised by the HMWSSB will be extended to June 5. Dana Kishore said a special program called Monsoon Safety Walk was launched to create awareness and take strong measures for the safety of the people as part of the Security Week celebrations in the wake of the onset of monsoon. In this regard, he held a teleconference with the Water Board ED, Directors, CGMs and GMs on Thursday.

Addressing on the occasion, he said, "We have directed the authorities to initiate a safety audit as per the instructions of the government to prevent any untoward incidents in the wake of the monsoon. Manhole covers have to be placed wherever there is no manhole cover. It is suggested

the Water Board officials were ordered to complete and report on a comprehensive safety audit in all sections by June 4.



to identify the damaged manholes and replace them immediately. If there is no safety grill for a deep manhole, it should be installed immediately. Be sure to set up barricades and warning boards while the work is in progress," said Dana Kishore.

The Water Board MD further said that HMWSSB officials are instructed that the waste material at the manholes should be removed immediately. Safety kits have to be made available at the section

offices on a regular basis. Meanwhile, the Water Board officials were ordered to complete and report on a comprehensive safety audit in all sections by June 4.

DGMs and GMs are directed to constantly monitor the safety audit conducted within the sections. He also said that awareness should be provided on the precautions to be taken by the people during monsoons. It was ordered that a safety audit be initiated immediately in all sections.

Office boy held for clicking pictures of woman in wash room

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An office boy of a boutique in the city was arrested for secretly clicking photographs of a woman while she was using the washroom. The accused has sent the pictures to the woman. He was arrested by the Banjara Hills police on Thursday.

The woman who previously worked at a boutique located at Road No 92 Banjara Hills received a message on her mobile phone three days ago and on clicking the link noticed her obscene photographs."She later came to know that the office boy Mithun Das, a native of West Bengal, who works in the office clicked the photographs without her knowledge and sent it to her mobile phone to harass and blackmail her," said Banjara Hills sub inspector, T Srikanth Goud.

The police booked a case and took Das into custody. The police found similar pictures of a few other women in the phone of the accused.



'I Love Secunderabad' selfie-point installed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of the station beautification and to improve the ambience of the circulating area, a selfie point depicting 'I love Secunderabad' has been installed by South Central Railway at the concourse area of platform no 10 in Secunderabad Railway Station to provide a richer and enhanced experience to passengers. Secunderabad Railway station is one the largest and busiest Railway stations on Indian Railways, currently handling average

daily passenger footfall of nearly 1.5 lakh. Being a prominent station in the twin cities, it is also a popular tourist attraction, captivating the attention of travelers from across the country. The innovative selfie point will serve as recreational activity for selfie enthusiasts, tourists, bloggers and travelling passengers. Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager (In-charge), SCR appreciated the team of Secunderabad Division officials for undertaking this creative initiative.

Three convicted and jailed in eve-teasing cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three persons were convicted and jailed for committing eve-teasing, creating nuisance in drunken condition in the limits of Gandhi Nagar Police station, on Thursday.

Police said that the accused D Manikanta (19), and A Bhuvaneshwar (19) residents of Bholakpur were convicted for 37 days and 19 days respectively of jail in a petty case for teasing ladies. Police also registered petty case against K. Bharath (29), resident of CC Nagar who was convicted for 112 days jail by XIII special MM magistrate, Secunderbad for creating nuisance in drunken condition and misbehaving with ladies in CC Nagar double bed room houses.

Fraudsters demand money in the guise of IAS officers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Fraudsters are targeting IAS officers in Telangana. The fraudsters are demanding money from subordinates and others by using the names and photos of the IAS officers in the city. They have so far targeted six IAS officers, including Arvind Kumar, a top IAS officer of Telangana. IAS officers have become victims of a fraudulent scam. The fraudsters are using the photos of IAS officers and demanding money. On Thursday, a top IAS officer in the state, Arvind Kumar, the Special Chief Secretary for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, was once again became the victim of a fraudulent scam in the same month of May. Arvind Kumar

lodged a complaint with the police. He said that some fraudsters were posting photos of him and sending messages and extorting money. "Some fraudster is seeking money by putting my picture and sending messages from this number. I have again filed a complaint with the police. This is the second time it's happening within a month.

Please ignore if you've got any such request," said Arvind Kumar on Twitter.

Earlier, on May 3, 2022, Arvind Kumar was initially the victim of an impersonation scam involving fraudsters using his photos and demanding money.

Apart from that, Mahabubnagar Collector S Venkat Rao, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri Collector Pamela

Six IAS officers, including Arvind Kumar, Special Chief Secretary for Municipal Administration and Urban Development have become victims of impersonation scam by fraudsters

Satpathy, Jayashenkar Bhupalpalay District Collector, Bhavesh Mishra and Warangal Collector have faced similar problem from fraudsters in the past.

Oakridge Bachupally hosts camp night as part of Summer Learning Programme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Oakridge International School, Bachupally, supported by Society for Space Education Research and Development (SSERD), has organised a camp night as part of Summer Learning Programme. Children in the age group 3-13 years got an opportunity to dazzle under the stars with their dear ones and friends at this night camp. It was all about discovering, learning, and enjoying the star-studded skies.

Around 50 families took part in this tour held at Oakridge Bachupally. Kids learned teamwork, how to build the tents, and enjoyed an overall camping experience. The children and their parents took the opportunity to



explore and know the Night Sky and observed some of the deep sky objects like planets and the moon with the help of hi-end telescopes.

"Summer Learning Program 2022 was like never before, the stargazing activity was the showstopper, and setting up

TSRTC to launch Intelligent Ticket Issuing Machine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To provide better services to the passengers, Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) will soon be launching Intelligent Ticket Issue Machine based on android ticketing on long distance buses. This approach is being made available to make it more convenient for passengers during transit.

The officials explained that with this approach, passengers will be able to book tickets 15 minutes before the departure time of the bus from each bus station. However, online bookings and reservations on long distance services are currently being stopped an hour earlier.

This approach not only saves passenger time but also helps in knowing in advance



how many seats are vacant on the bus and how long it will take for the bus to arrive. At present passengers have to pay cash in buses to get tickets, but passengers can make UPI or credit or debit card payments in the bus with this usage. TSRTC is planning to introduce smart cards soon after the introduction of the policy in a bid to provide better facilities to travelers.

Sluggish progress brings numerous hardships to commuters, bizmen

SAITEJA BURRA
■ HYDERABAD

Uppal residents have been facing problems with severe traffic congestion and heavy dust for the past five years due to delay in the works of Uppal elevated corridor, the largest flyover in Telangana. Residents say most of their businesses have been damaged due to the ongoing flyover works.

In 2018, the Roads and Building development department started the construction of Telangana's largest flyover, Uppal Elevated Corridor at a cost of Rs 675 crore, aimed to reduce traffic congestion on the Warangal highway. The project was expected to be completed in two years, but it was delayed due to land acquisition and technical issues. Due to delays in work, people and commuters traveling from Uppal Junction to Medipally have been facing severe problems due to constant traffic congestion and heavy dust.



Residents express concern by saying that traveling on these roads has become a headache as the construction of the flyover is still not completed even after five years. On the other hand, residents who relied on businesses that had been running for years on the Hyderabad to Warangal Highway are now suffering severely due to pending of flyover works.

Rajini, who runs a flower shop, said their business has become like a lamp in the air. "Five years have passed and a lot of work is still pending.

Many times the authorities visit the place and instruct us to shift from the place. With this, how do we run our shop and our families?" Said Rajani. She further said further said nearly 30 families were struggling to run flower shops in the wake of flyover works on Uppal Road. Apart from that, commuters and local residents express concern that they have been facing severe problems with traffic congestion in the past four years. "With only 50 per cent of the work completed, we have to wait another two years for the flyover.

Apart from that, commuters and local residents express concern that they have been facing severe problems with traffic congestion in the past four years.

Until then we have to deal with these issues on daily basis. We urge the authorities to at least make arrangements to prevent water logging here during the monsoon season," said Sandeep Kumar, one of the commuters living in Uppal. Devaraj, one of the flyover construction foreman, said the Uppal Elevated Corridor flyovers would take two years to complete as they were plagued with technical problems.

TELANGANA GOVERNMENT PROVIDES A RARE OPPORTUNITY

TO OWN ENCUMBRANCE-FREE OPEN PLOTS

LOCATION DETAILS					
Sr. No.	Name of the Village, Mandal & District	No. of Plots	Extent in Sq. Yds.	Extent in Acs. Gs.	Uppel/Reserve Price per Sq. yd.
1.	Aarambh Township at Chandanagar, Serilingampally (T) & Ranga Reddy District	8	12,628.86	2.68	40,000/-
2.	Kawadipally (Rg.) Adilapurmet (R) Ranga Reddy District	117	26,188.00	6.03	10,000/-
Total		125	41,826.86	8.71	

HIGHLIGHTS	
1	100 % Encumbrance-free land with clear title issued by Government
2	Residential Plots ready for immediate construction. No need for any change of land use
3	Layouts are in prime locations
4	Planned, Government Layout with open space for Parks & other amenities

e-AUCTION SCHEDULE for AARAMBH TOWNSHIP, KAWADIPALLY

1.	Date of Notification	13-05-2022
2.	Last date for registration	13-06-2022
3.	Last date for submission of EMD	14-06-2022
4.	Date of Pre-Bid Meeting	27-05-2022
5.	Site visits from 14-06-2022 to 14-06-2022	10 AM to 5 PM on all days
Date of e-Auction		
Aarambh Township Chandanagar		15-06-2022 Plot No 1 to 3 - 9 AM to 12 Noon
Kawadipally		15-06-2022 Plot No 1 to 40 - 2 PM to 5 PM 16-06-2022 Plot No 41 to 80 - 9 AM to 12 Noon Plot No 81 to 117 - 2 PM to 5 PM
7.	Minimum bid increment	Rs. 100 per Sq. yd or multiples thereof

Contact Numbers for Site Visit:
Aarambh Township: 7993455802, 9502690038
Kawadipally: 9701452763, 9951933005

For further details, log on to: tslic.telangana.gov.in | www.mstcecommerce.com, www.mstcindia.co.in

Issued By: Commissioner, I & PR Department, Government of Telangana

TRS, BJP devising strategies to gain the upper hand

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The TRS and the BJP are trying to take advantage of the fight between the Centre and the State.

Both the BJP-led Central government and the TRS government are targeting each other to gain political ground in the next Assembly elections. Both parties strongly believe that the people of Telangana will support only them.

Ahead of the Assembly elections, the Centre clamped financial restrictions on the TRS government headed by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. The BJP thinks that if the TRS government is financially choked it will derail its welfare schemes.

If the TRS government is not able to fund its welfare schemes the people can turn against Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's government and it can damage the prospects of the TRS in the



Both the BJP-led Central government and the TRS government are targeting each other to gain political ground in the next Assembly elections. Both parties strongly believe that the people of Telangana will support only them.

coming Assembly elections.

The BJP's plan is to damage the TRS image by weakening the finances of the TRS government. If the TRS weakens,

that will benefit the BJP in the Assembly elections.

While the Centre is citing official reasons to weaken the TRS government, the TRS is

pointing to political equations to criticise the Centre.

The TRS says that the Centre has targeted all non-BJP ruling States and is troubling them for political reasons.

The TRS allegation is that the Centre is using the Governors of non-BJP States to create problems. It cites West Bengal, Kerala, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu as examples of this.

The Centre is also using the administration to weaken non-BJP ruled states financially.

The TRS strongly believes that the people of Telangana have more faith in it than in the BJP. The TRS thinks that the more the harassment by the Centre the more it will benefit them.

The next Assembly elections are crucial for both the TRS and the BJP. Both the TRS and the BJP are devising strategies to gain the upper hand as Assembly elections are approaching.

Officials asked to send procured paddy to rice mills

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Additional Collector (Revenue) S Motilal on Thursday paid a surprise visit to the paddy procurement centre at Palem under Bijinapalli mandal and asked the authorities there to speed up procurement of the paddy. He inspected the progress in procurement. He asked the officials to record the moisture percentage of the paddy without fail. He asked them to increase the number of hamalis and send the procured paddy to rice mills.

He asked the Agriculture Extension Officials to record the moisture content and put their signature authenticating the percentage of moisture in paddy. He asked the procurement centre in-charges to collect the photocopies of the Aadhaar card, bank passbook and pattadar passbook from the farmers. Otherwise, it would pose problems in entering the details in tabs and making payments, delaying the disbursement of money in lieu of the paddy procured.

REDDY-VELAMA IMBROGLIO

Madhu Yashki takes Revanth to task for 'casteist remarks'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Political storm continues to rage over Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president A Revanth Reddy's remarks on 'Reddy-Velama' castes. TPCC Campaign Committee chairman Madhu Yashiki Gound, in a sharp reaction to the 'caste remarks' by Revanth Reddy, addressed an open letter to the latter. The remarks, Madhu Yashiki pointed out, were against the Congress ideology.

Madhu Yashki said, in his four-page letter, that it was not proper on the part of Revanth Reddy to make such caste remarks. He felt that the remarks would damage the Congress party and harm the reputation of Revanth Reddy personally. He alleged that remarks were in a nature of 'insulting Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.'

It is not proper on the part of Revanth Reddy to speak in a manner that would hurt the sentiments of the weaker sec-



tions. He asked TPCC to explain his remarks immediately to clear the confusion prevailing among the party leaders belonging to Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Minorities. At last, Revanth Reddy responded to the criticism on his caste remarks through twitter. He said "Congress fights every day to protect the social fabric of this society & has always stood for the welfare of BCs, SCs & STs. Being the president of TPCC, I believe in this philosophy of inclusion Ppl twisting my statements should focus on the issues in TS #INCforAll #BharatJodo".

Earlier in the day, Telangana Congress Affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore tweeted saying that 'Dear @INCtelangana colleagues don't forget the words of our leader Rahul Gandhiji on May 7, 2022 at Gandhi Bhavan.' When The Pioneer contacted Madhu Yashki on party leaders' tweets, Madhu Yashki said that the tweets are not aimed at him and hence he will not respond to it. Madhu Yashki, in his letter, mentioned that the BC, SC, ST and Minorities were united with the inspiration provided by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Sarvai Pappanna, Chakali Iamma Doddi Komuraiah.

Yashki reminded Revanth Reddy of the fact that the Congress party came to power in 2004-2009 because of AICC president Sonia Gandhi and Reddy-BC unity. While understanding this fact, the Congress party high command has been moving forward to unite all castes and sections aiming to gain power in 2023, Madhu Yashki said.

TRS activists to take message of welfare schemes to people

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjana Reddy has said that the schemes being implemented by the Telangana government should reach one and all.

He was addressing a political class for the TRS activists here on Thursday.

The TRS government has been forging ahead by implementing unprecedented welfare schemes for the people spending huge amounts of money. He said that the pensions were being paid in either BJP or Congress-ruled states are very meagre when compared with that of the pension being paid to beneficiaries in Telangana State.

The States of Assam, Bihar, Manipur, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, MP, Rajasthan and UP pay pension which is less than Rs 300, he said and



Minister for Agriculture S Niranjana Reddy with TRS leaders and activists in Wanaparthi on Thursday

added that the government of Telangana earned praise from the critics also by implementing Rytu Bandhu and Rytu Beema schemes, which are unprecedented. The State government extended support to many in the form of Kalyana Lakshmi/Shadi Mubarak and KCR kits. The Mission Bhagiradha, Mission Kakatiya, Palle and Pattana

Pragati programmes have changed contours of the villages, he said. Therefore, the TRS activists should mingle with the people explaining the significance of the welfare schemes, he said. The political classes will be conducted in Wanaparthi continuously, he said adding a new committee has been constituted to monitor the political classes.

Four died as lorry collides head-on with auto

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Four persons died and two others suffered injuries in a ghastly road accident in the district on Thursday.

The accident happened when a speeding lorry collided head-on with an auto-rickshaw. The death was instant for two persons. Two others succumbed to injuries while being transported to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad.

The accident happened on the outskirts of Alirajpet village. A family hired an auto-rickshaw to go to Tupran in Medak district. When the auto-rickshaw reached Alirajpet outskirts, it was hit by a speeding lorry.

While Kanakaiah and Kavitha died on the spot, two more succumbed to injuries when they were being taken to hospital.

Warangal police bust interstate cybercriminal gang

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Warangal police busted a three-member interstate cybercrime gang and seized from them Rs 10.07 lakh cash, according to Warangal Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi here on Thursday.

The suspects were identified as Manoj Jaiswal and Gnanendra Yadav of Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh and Raj Kumar of Warisaliganj in Bihar.

The gang had cheated Botha Ravinder, who hailed from Inavolu mandal, of Rs 1.36 lakh by luring him by promising to secure home loan for him. The suspects had committed the crime online.

Based on the complaint lodged by Ravinder, the police started investigating the case. A special police team was



Police presenting alleged cybercriminals in masks at a media conference in Warangal on Thursday

sent to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The police team arrested the suspects and brought them to Warangal. They were produced before the local court and remanded in judi-

cial custody. While East Zone DCP Venkata Lakshmi and Mamunur ACP Nareesh Kumar monitored the case, IT core Inspector Naresh Kumar and Inovolu Sub-Inspector Bharat nabbed the gang.

Man jailed for 5 days for harassing woman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A local court here on Thursday, sentenced a man to five days imprisonment for stalking and harassing a woman. The accused J Nagesh (36) is a private employee from Banjara Hills. The victim is an employee at a private hospital.

With an intention of getting close to the victim, the accused allegedly started harassing her in the guise of introducing her to weight loss reduction techniques. He stalked her and passed lewd comments against her twice in the last fortnight. Following her complaint, the She Team, with the help of local police identified Nagesh by using his bike registration number provided by the victim.

Mana Ooru-Mana Badi : MLA thanks govt for release of Rs 9.81 crore

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Cong MLA from Manthani D Sridhar Babu has appreciated the Mana Ooru-Mana Badi programme aimed at developing infrastructure in government schools.

The MLA made the remarks in response to government releasing Rs 9,81,55,000 for implementing the scheme in five remote mandals of Mahadevpur, Mahamuttaram, Malhar Rao, Palimela, Kataram mandals of Bhupalapalli district in Manthani constituency.

The MLA sent proposals to the government for construction of toilets, compound wall, kitchen sheds to schools under the NREGS.

Talking to The Pioneer, the MLA said that the public opinion about education in government schools was not good as the students were lagging behind because of lack of amenities. The government allotting huge amount

of funds under Mana Ooru-Mana Badi programme is a welcome development, he said.

Giving the break-up of the release of funds, the MLA said that the government released Rs 5.40 crore for the purpose of building toilets in 46 schools, Rs 1.08 crore for building kitchen sheds in 31 schools, Rs 3.53 lakh for construction of compound walls to 42 schools in the five mandals. Since the region is very remote area, he tried to bring funds in undivided AP for development of the region in spite of shortage of funds. But the needs of the people are growing, he added.

He said that efforts are under way to take this constituency ahead of all other constituencies making allocations in tune with the population growth. He thanked the State government, District Collector for release of funds for the development of schools development.



Harish Rao inspects bus station modernisation works

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Minister for Finance and Health T Harish Rao on Thursday inspected the old bus stand in the city. With the initiative of Harish Rao, the old bus station is being modernised to handle passengers up to 24,000. When the Minister J Chokka Rao laid the foundation stone for the bus stand, its capacity was to handle only 2,000 passengers.

The modernisation of the old bus station is nearing completion.

The Minister said that the modernisation works of the bus station are being carried out in accordance with his plan. The bus station works have reached the last phase of the construction. He ordered the RTC officials to take steps to complete the balance of



Minister for Finance T Harish Rao inspecting the modernisation works in TSRTC bus station in Siddipet on Thursday

works as early as possible.

The RTC officials told the Minister that the bus stand has modern toilets, canteen, shopping complex, 20 platforms, he said. Former

Municipal Chairman Rajanarsu, Siddipet Urban Development Chairman Ravinder Reddy and other elected people's representatives took part in the event.

Officials told to put paddy procurement on fast track

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Additional Collector (Revenue) Srinivas Reddy on Thursday directed the officials to ensure that paddy procurement at Indira Kranti Pathakam (IKP) centres are speeded up.

Srinivas Reddy was holding a review meeting at the District Collectorate with the officials of the Civil Supplies and Tahsildars. Paddy procurement at Akkannapet and Husnabad would be completed in 10 to 15 days, the officials told the Additional Collector.

Srinivas Reddy told the Tahsildar to ensure that sufficient number of tarpaulins is made available at procurement centre.

The responsibility to ensure that the paddy brought the procurement centres is not drenched in unseasonal rains rested on Tahsildars. He warned the officials against



Siddipet Additional Collector Srinivas Reddy holding a review meeting in Siddipet on Thursday

laxity. He asked the officials to ensure justice to farmers. He directed the Tahsildar to visit each and every procurement in their respective jurisdictions and see that the paddy procurements are carried out without any hitch. The Tahsildars should take measures for the protection of the farmers' interests. He asked the Revenue Divisional Officers to check the stocks at

rice mills. He instructed the Tahsildar to review the functioning of Dharani portal and the pending cases in courts. He asked the officials to launch crackdown on those indulging in illegal excavation of soil. Revenue Divisional Officer Chennaiah, Gajwel Revenue Divisional Officer Vijendra Reddy, District Civil Supplies officials and Tahsildars were present.

The responsibility to ensure that the paddy brought the procurement centres is not drenched in unseasonal rains rested on Tahsildars.

K VENKATESWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

During former AICC chief Rahul Gandhi's visit, anonymous flexes had appeared in Hyderabad throwing a 'White Challenge' to Rahul.

In the same manner, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hyderabad visit, 17 unclaimed flexes appeared at 17 places in Hyderabad. The 17 flexes posed 17 different questions to Modi.

They were, "Modi Ji Where is Kazipet Rail Coach Factory?," "Modi Ji any financial support for Pharma City in Telangana?," "Modi Ji Why Turmeric Board not sanctioned for Nizamabad?," "Modi Ji NITI Aayog recommended funds for Mission Bhagiratha, where are they?," "Modi Ji Where is the National Institute

of Design for Telangana?," "Modi Ji where is the IIM of Telangana?," "Modi Ji why Defence Corridor was not sanctioned for Telangana?," "Modi Ji Why not even a single mega powerloom textile cluster was allotted to Telangana?," "Modi Ji, where is Bayyaram Steel Factory?," "Modi Ji, Why Medical College not sanctioned by Centre?," "Modi Ji Why new Navodaya Vidyalaya not sanctioned for Telangana?," "Modi Ji where is ITIR of Telangana?," "Modi Ji why global centre for traditional medicine moved from Hyderabad to Gujarat?," "Modi Ji where is the national tag for Kaleshwaram Project?," "Modi Ji where is national status for the Palamuru-Rangareddy Project?," "Modi Ji where is the Indian Institute of Science Education

Modi Ji where is ITIR of Telangana?," "Modi Ji why global centre for traditional medicine moved from Hyderabad to Gujarat?

and Research for Telangana?," "Modi Ji, why relief funds for Hyderabad floods not given?"

The BJP leaders suspect that the flexes which attracted people in a big way were the handiwork of the TRS. The flexes cloths were coloured white and the letters written on them were in red and black colours.

RAINS LASH CITY; 2 INJURED AND 3 CARS DAMAGED

MET predicts more rains for next two days in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Heavy rains along with gusty winds lashed several parts of Hyderabad on Thursday. Commuters and people were severely affected by the sudden gusts of wind and rain. Due to the strong winds, iron sheets flew from a building under construction near the RDO office in Nampally and fell on the oncoming vehicles.

As a result, three cars were damaged at the Nampally main road junction and two were slightly injured.

Meanwhile, Shaikpet received 12.8 mm of rainfall on Thursday while Golconda, Serilingampally and Kapra received 10 to 11 mm of rainfall.

In this context, the city received showers at Jeedimetla, Shapur Nagar, Suraram, Quthbullapur, Suchitra, Kompally, Gachibowli, Champapet, Karmanghat, Saroor Nagar, Saidabad and Amberpet and other parts.

The Hyderabad Meteorological Department has forecast light to moderate rains with thundershowers in the state for the next two days.

According to meteorological reports, the southwest monsoon extends further into parts of the southwestern Arabian Sea, the southeastern Arabian Sea, the Maldives, the Comorin region and other parts of the southern Bay of Bengal.

INDIA CORNER

Gyanvapi case: District court to continue hearing on maintainability on May 30

A district court, which on Thursday heard arguments of Muslim side on the maintainability of the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex case, fixed May 30 as the next date of hearing in the case. The Muslim side's arguments on the maintainability of the case remained incomplete today, which they will continue on May 30 -- the date fixed by the court for the next hearing," said District Government Counsel Rana Sanjeev Singh. The court had on May 24 fixed May 26 for hearing on the maintainability of the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex case. Singh on Tuesday had said the court also gave a week's time to both Hindu and Muslim sides to file objections to the report of a court-mandated videography survey of the Gyanvapi mosque premises. On May 20, the Supreme Court had transferred the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex case from a civil judge (senior division) to a district judge, saying looking at the "complexities" and "sensitivity" of the issue, it is better if a senior judicial officer having an experience of over 25-30 years handles this case.



UP budget 2022-23 meets aspirations of people: Adityanath

The Uttar Pradesh budget for 2022-23 meets the aspirations of the people of the state and is the government's vision for the next five years, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday. The budget has taken care of the BJP's Lok Sankalp Patra (election Manifesto) released during the assembly polls, and out of 130 resolutions, 97 have been addressed, he said. Along with all-inclusive development of the state, the budget will also prepare the roadmap for a bright future, Adityanath added. State Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna on Thursday tabled Yogi Adityanath's second term government's maiden budget of over Rs 6.15 lakh crore in the state assembly. This is the biggest budget of the state till date. Describing the budget as one in accordance with the aspirations of 25 crore people of the state, Adityanath said it was prepared keeping in mind the overall development of the state.



UP: Account with Rs 1.28 crore of jailed MLA Vijay Mishra attached

The district administration on Thursday attached a bank account with Rs 1.28 crore in it allegedly transferred by former MLA and gang leader Vijay Mishra. Superintendent of Police (SP), Bhadohi, Anil Kumar on Thursday said, "Vijay Mishra who is currently lodged in Agra Jail deposited Rs 1.28 cr in a bank account in Bhadohi owned by his close aides and son Vishnu Mishra." "The said money has been gathered with the help of illegal activities. The money was attached on the direction of the senior administrative officials under provisions of the gangster act." Associated with the Samajwadi Party for a long time, Mishra was elected MLA thrice under its banner - 2002, 2007, and 2012. He contested from Gyanpur assembly seat of Bhadohi from jail in the latest Uttar Pradesh election, but lost.



India will ramp up foodgrain production, help nations

PNS ■ DAVOS

As the world faces a severe food crisis due to the war in Ukraine, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday said India is a responsible country that is committed to all possible help to the rest of the globe.

"However, with such a big population, our own need for foodgrains is much higher. However, we will ramp up our production and it is my humble request that all other countries should also do the same and all responsible countries should come together to tackle the food crisis," the minister said at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting here.

"India is a responsible country and is committed to provide all help that may be required. The Indian philosophy of the whole world being one family saw India helping the rest of the world with medicines and vaccines even during the lockdowns," he said in reply to a question on fears



He elaborated on the role of technology and innovations in building resilience in global food systems and also highlighted various efforts of the PM Modi-led government in modernising the agriculture sector.

of famine, especially in Africa.

Mandaviya, also the union minister of chemicals and fertilisers, was speaking at a session on 'Redefining Food Systems with Emerging Technologies'.

He elaborated on the role of technology and innovations in building resilience in global food systems and also high-

lighted various efforts of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government in modernising the agriculture sector.

"India is a big country with huge diversity and almost half the population depends on farming. We are taking a number of initiatives so that farmers get fertilisers at cheaper rates and also they get the

information digitally on soil health etc.

"We are trying to ensure that the costs remain low for farmers and their productivity improves. We are providing all kinds of financial and technical support to farmers. Despite the size of farms going down, the production is going up in India," he noted.

Maoists storm construction site in Odisha, torch vehicles

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

Maoists have set ablaze at least four vehicles after storming the makeshift camp of a contractor engaged in road construction in Odisha's Kalahandi district, police said on Thursday.

The Naxals left handwritten banners and posters, alleging that one of their cadres, who was reported to have surrendered earlier this month, was actually arrested with the assistance of the contractor.

At least 20 armed ultras reached the spot near Tala Pipili village in Bhawanipatna block late on Wednesday and torched an excavator, a truck and two tractor trolleys, a police officer said.

Superintendent of Police Abilash G said a combing operation was carried out and a bomb detection squad deployed at the spot.

The officer added that security would be provided to the contractor, who claimed to have been receiving threat calls.

NEW EDUCATION POLICY

Only 58% school teachers took part in discussions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At least 44 percent school teachers in India do not have adequate work space while 65 percent of them are overloaded with work, according to the National Achievement Survey (NAS)-2021 conducted by Union Education Ministry.

The survey also found that just 58 percent teachers participated in discussions around the new National Education Policy (NEP).

Over 5 lakh teachers of 1.18 lakh schools in 720 districts from both rural and urban areas participated in the survey which was conducted throughout the country on November 12 last year. The last NAS was held in 2017.

According to the report, 44 percent teachers do not have adequate work space and 65 percent of them are overloaded with work.

Only 42 percent teachers participated in individual or collaborative research while just 58 percent teachers partic-



ipated in discussions around new NEP, it said.

While 97 percent teachers claimed to have job satisfaction, at least 92 percent of them believed that there is scope for professional development.

"Sixty-five percent teachers engaged in formal dialogue with colleagues on how to improve teaching in collaboration with Block Resource Centres (BRC) and Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) while 42 percent teachers participated in mentoring or peer observation and coaching as part of BRCs and CRCs," the report said.

The survey pointed out that at least 52 percent teachers participated in professional development programmes conducted by DIETs, CBSE and NCERT.

The NAS covered government, government-aided and private schools. The achievement tests along with the questionnaires -- pupil questionnaire, teacher questionnaire and school questionnaire -- were developed and translated in 22 different languages by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Civilian killings belie claims of normalcy in J-K: Mehbooba

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday questioned the Centre's Jammu and Kashmir policy saying the civilian killings in Kashmir did not support Government of India's claims of normalcy in the union territory.

In Kashmir, mournings have sadly become the norm & a daily ritual. Countless innocent civilians are killed in one way or the other & devastated families are left behind to pick up the pieces. What will it take for GOI to recalibrate their J&K policy to end this bloodshed? Mehbooba tweeted.

Commenting on the killing of a female TV artist by three Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists in Budgam district's Chadoora area on Wednesday, the former chief minister said while the government was making claims about normalcy, the gruesome killings suggest otherwise.

GOI keeps blowing its trumpet of normalcy in J&K even when such gruesome incidents suggest otherwise. My heart goes out to Ambreen Bhat's family & pray her nephew recovers swiftly, Mehbooba said.

5 teachers, among 7 detained for question paper leak in Karnataka

PNS ■ BENGALURU

As many as seven people, including the principal of a school, a journalist, and four teachers in Magadi Taluk of Ramanagara district of Karnataka, have been detained on the charge of leaking question papers of the recently concluded 10th standard examination, police sources said. They were picked up from different schools, the sources said.

The exams were conducted in March and April and the results announced recently. However, it

turned out recently that the question papers were leaked in many places.

The police grilled the principal, who spilled the beans. Based on his statement, police detained the six others, police said, adding that some of them may be arrested soon.

It is learnt that the teachers would get the question papers at least 15 minutes in advance and then share them in their network through whatsapp.

Quickly, the answers were prepared, and the students informed the answers before

hand. The objective was to ensure that no student fails in the exam, said the detained people to the police.

Majority of students scored distinction while the others got first division marks. A few other schools, which too have got similar results, are under watch.

The matter would not have come to light had the principal of the school shared a question paper on a whatsapp group of teachers. By the time he realised the mistake, some of them had downloaded it, and allegedly blackmailed the principal.

HATE SPEECH CASE

Kerala court remands P C George; HC asks state why keep him in custody

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Hours after senior politician P C George, arrested by the police following cancellation of his bail in connection with a hate speech case, was sent to judicial remand by a magistrate court here on Thursday, the Kerala High Court asked the state what was the purpose of keeping him in custody if police had recordings of the speeches made by him.

The query by the High

Court was posed to the state government during hearing of George's two pleas -- one seeking anticipatory bail in a hate speech case registered at Palarivattom police station and the other appealing against the cancellation of his bail in another hate speech case lodged against him in Thiruvananthapuram.

The high court asked the

state what was the purpose of taking George into custody when the investigating agency already had video recordings of the speeches made by him.

It asked the Director General of Prosecution to answer the queries, posed by it, on the next date of hearing -- Friday.

The court also said that

Bengal Speaker flays Guv for sitting over bill

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee Thursday slammed Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar for not giving assent to the bifurcation of the Howrah Municipal Corporation bill, accusing the Raj Bhavan occupant of sitting over it. The Howrah Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which proposes to separate Bally Municipality from the jurisdiction of the HMC, was passed by the state assembly last year.

ED chargesheet a political weapon against me, says Shivakumar

PNS ■ BENGALURU

With Enforcement Directorate (ED) filing a chargesheet under the anti-money laundering law against him and others, Karnataka Congress President D K Shivakumar on Thursday alleged that all "political weapons" are being used against him, ahead of 2023 assembly polls in the state.

He claimed that the chargesheet is "part of a plan to eliminate people, whom the ruling dispensation fear may create trouble for them politically or don't surrender to them", adding that he is ready to "face everything".

"I have got to know that some national channels are reporting that they (ED) have filed a chargesheet. They have submitted it to the court, we have not been given a copy yet. The court will give us the copy. Usually it has to be filed within 60 days from the day I was jailed, but they have filed it after 3-3.5 years after large scale investigation," Shivakumar said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said he has belief in the law of the land and will abide by

it. "Let the chargesheet come, they can't create any new things. However, the Income Tax department had created new things (against me earlier), going against the law and Supreme Court judgements," he added.

The federal probe agency in September 2018 registered a money laundering case against Shivakumar, A Haumanthaiah, an employee at the Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi, and other people.

The case was based on an Income Tax Department chargesheet filed against Shivakumar and others before a court in Bengaluru for alleged tax evasion and hawala dealings.

Further claiming that the "people of the country know that he has not done anything wrong" and that he had earlier stated that there were political motives behind the case, the KPCC chief recalled that during late Congress leader Ahmed Patel's election to Rajya Sabha his house was raided and money belonging to his friends were reported as his.



Indian NGO bags UN award for disaster risk reduction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Sustainable Ecological and Environmental Development (SEEDS), an NGO working in the field of disaster risk reduction and climate change has bagged the United Nations Sasakawa Award 2022 for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The global awards established in 1986 by the founding Chairman of the Nippon Foundation, Mr Ryoichi Sasakawa for recognising excellence in reducing disaster risk, was announced at the ongoing 7th Session of Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2022 in Bali, Indonesia.

SEEDS has been working with the communities across South Asia over for the last 28 years to build resilience by combining local wisdom with modern science and technology and multi hazard approach. SEEDS focus on vulnerable communities, amplifying their voices to policy makers, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) said in a statement.

Manu Gupta, co-founder, SEEDS, said, "We are delighted and humbled by this award. It has been 28 years since we took up the mission to help build resilience among vulnerable communities.

42% of deaths in 2020 due to heart problems, pneumonia & asthma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Heart diseases, pneumonia, and asthma together claimed highest number of lives -- over 42 per cent -- of the total 81.15 lakh medically certified deaths registered in the country in 2020.

According to the Report on Medical Certification of Cause of Death 2020, prepared by India's Registrar General and Census Commissioner, COVID-19, which hit the country in that year, claimed nearly nine per cent of the lives -- 1,60,618 people.

While diseases of circulatory system claimed 32.1 per cent lives, respiratory system related diseases took 10 per cent.

Those who died due to diseases of pulmonary circulation and other forms of heart diseases and ischemic

heart diseases were categorised as deaths due to 'diseases of circulatory system'.

Deaths from pneumonia, asthma, and related diseases were termed as deaths due to the 'diseases of respiratory system'.

The third leading group, constituting 8.9 per cent of the total medically certified deaths, was classified under the 'Codes for special purposes: COVID-19'.

Certain infectious and parasitic diseases, which were the fourth leading cause of death, were mainly constituted by septicemia and tuberculosis. They claimed 7.1 per cent lives in 2020 in India.

The fifth leading cause, endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases were responsible for 5.8 per cent of the

Covid-19 claimed nearly nine percent of lives



total medically certified deaths. Diabetes and mellitus were the major

causes under this category.

The sixth leading reason of coun-

try's deaths was injury, poisoning, and certain other consequences of external causes (fractures, poisoning by drugs and biological substances) and it constituted 5.6 per cent of the total deaths.

Neoplasm (cancer) was the seventh leading cause, accounting for 4.7 per cent of the total medically certified deaths.

Male and female constituted 64 per cent and 36 per cent respectively of the total medically certified death.

The highest number of deaths (5,17,678 or 28.6 per cent of total medically certified deaths) were reported for the age-group 70 years and above.

For the age-groups of 45 years and above, diseases of circulatory system (heart diseases) were the first leading cause of death.



Rule of the gun

The Robb Elementary School carnage again raises the issue of gunman fetish among America’s youth

The American myth is turning on itself. Pet phrases, like the “world’s policeman” or the post-9/11 “world’s soldier”, are boomeranging. A larger-than-life portrayal of the American Marine in Hollywood and addictive video games has acquired bloody connotations. The American “Special Operator”, who is the quintessential symbol of the “American way of life”, is the latest Frankenstein. And, it is now happening in Texas, the land of the self-claimed frontiersmen, those buccaneers who still wear cowboy hats and boots and ride horses, the guns and rifles and repeaters completing their macho image. The latest incident of mass killings in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday gives Americans a long-overdue wake-up call: The previous mass killers were labelled as Islamist jihadists, white supremacists or right-wing local terrorists. Today’s American



killer is nothing of that sort. Mostly male, he is an ordinary citizen with a neighbourly attitude that hides the ghosts of penury or social ostracism, a generally wasted life or a pitifully impaired mental status. The killer, ashamed of his situation, decides to get justice the only way he knows: By the gun. But first, the would-be killer has to get into the role. He chooses the image that hits him from every TV screen, chewing gum wrapper, muscle-building whey tin, and film, in fact from every advertisement in the US: the macho, gun-toting American vigilante. So, he acquires the tactical battle uniform including the hat, vest, gloves and cargo trousers, the toughest ‘costume’ Americans like him swear by.

The “Special Operator” must have thought a lot about the weapon. He chose the DDM4 Rifle, the civilian version of the military’s M4 Carbine. Luckily, the civilian version does not switch to fully automatic; otherwise, more would have died. The AR-15 rifle and 375 bullets must have cost him between \$400 and \$2000, the holographic sight an additional \$700. The killer symbolises the current American fetish for the olive-green-clad American military superman. The world got a hint of such looming disasters quite early in the Donald Trump era as these gun-toting mutants of the Special Ops Forces (SOFs) roamed the country in their pick-ups without purpose other than to advertise their trigger-happy right-wing attitudes. The world remembers the rioters who stormed the US Capitol this January on Trump’s calling, wearing Kevlar and metal helmets and fancy weapons. Such “activists” fired bullets in the air to protest COVID mask mandates. They want to shoot guns and say they love America. The gunman fetish has come out of Waco; it is now mainstream. The armed pretenders are the foot soldiers of right-wing ‘heroism’, settling debts with bullets. The Republicans glorify gun culture; the Democrats make half-hearted attempts to ban it. It is the indifference that is costing that country today. The American mindset needs urgent formatting. It is not just about limitations on guns, but erasing the puffed-up machismo image that makes disturbed people take to guns. It is insulting democratic common sense to insist that owning guns is being liberal.

PICTALK



An aerial view of the flood-affected areas after heavy rainfall, in Assam

PTI

Slipping into abyss

Kerala is experiencing one blow after another in the LDF Government’s second term in office

Swami Vivekananda, during his tour to Kerala in 1892, had described the province as a “lunatic asylum” as he was shocked by the vacuous communalism. The Kerala of 2022 needs an epithet stronger than what the renowned monk had used. Despite democratically electing India’s first Communist Government and being a social, economic and educational model for the country, the State often spawns communal battle cries, threats and one-upmanship among religious leaders and organisations which even the Kerala High Court has described as “terrorist outfits”. The threats and challenges touched a new high as a 10-year-old boy was used by the activists of Popular Front of India, an Islamic outfit, to raise slogans against Hindus and Christians. Though the slogans raised during a Republic Rally at Alappuzha last Saturday are not fit to print, it can be said that these were a blot on Kerala’s psyche. Political murders, dowry deaths, student violence and drug trafficking have become regular features in the State’s daily life. The CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front Government under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, which retained power in the 2021 election, is clueless or suffering from selective amnesia since it assumed office last May.



This is the first time in four decades that a Government succeeded in retaining power for the second term in Kerala. Despite making a lot of sound and fury, Vijayan’s second innings stands out because of its indifference to burning issues. Another news that shook Kerala’s conscience pertains to a rape survivor who approached the Kerala High Court with the charge that the trial court has a hidden agenda to derail her case. The victim, herself a popular actress, had named Malayalam cinema’s top actor Dileep as the prime accused in the 2017 case in which the latter hired a petty thief to rape the woman. A series of dowry deaths reported from various parts of the State has caused anguish in the mind of Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who staged a day’s fast as a mark of solidarity with the victims. Nothing is going right to date in the second tenure of the LDF Government. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister and his party colleagues accusing the rape survivor of playing politics has further shocked women in the State. Kerala deserves a much better deal than this sexist approach.

Upshot, prospects of Biden’s Asia policy

There are several reasons why the Biden Administration’s efforts to infuse a new movement in the ties with Asean assume huge significance



SUMIT KUMAR

Amid a gloomy picture of the world order due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, President Joe Biden has redirected his attention to deepening and consolidating America’s ties with its allies and partners in Asia. In this context, the US hosted Asean leaders for a special summit on May 12-13 to take stock of its relationships. Biden paid a five-day visit to South Korea and Japan during May 20-24, launching a mega-regional economic plan for the Indo-Pacific.

While commemorating the 45 years of US-Asean relations, Biden declared the beginning of a new era in their relations. He argued that “a great deal of history of our world in the next 50 years is going to be written and the Asean countries and our relationship with you is the future in the coming years and decades”. Undoubtedly, there are several reasons why the Biden Administration’s political and others efforts to infuse a new movement in the ties with Asean assume huge significance. Of course, one factor that has dominated the US pivot to Southeast Asia is China’s increasing footprints in the region through the Belt & Road Initiative, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Therefore, to contain China’s influence and maintain its permanence in the region, it is imperative for the US to accelerate the level of cooperation with Asean. On the other hand, Asean countries have become alarmed at China’s assertive posturing in the South China Sea. Consequently, they not only want strong American military presence in the region, but are also trying to increase trade and commerce with the US to reduce their economic dependability on China.

Sadly, President Donald Trump’s unpredictable behaviour, the absence of Asean centrality in the Indo-Pacific strategy, the US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement created huge distrust among



Asean countries about the US’ desire to invest in the relationship. The Biden Administration’s decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, the initial ambiguity in its approach towards Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and other issues only compounded Asean’s apprehensions about the future direction of the relationship.

Expectedly, the special summit addressed certain critical issues of Southeast Asian countries. One, the US reiterated that its Indo-Pacific strategy will be Asean-centric. This acknowledgment was important because Asean has generated the concern that the US Indo-Pacific strategy will dilute its position in US policy towards Asia. Two, Biden also announced to invest \$150 million in new projects to bolster Southeast Asia’s climate, maritime and public health infrastructure. Three, Asean countries, except Singapore, have adopted the policy of neutrality on Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. This in turn signalled the decline of US influence in the region. Thus, before starting his Asia tour, Biden wanted to

“BEFORE STARTING HIS ASIA TOUR, BIDEN WANTED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO RUSSIA AND CHINA THROUGH THE SPECIAL SUMMIT THAT THE US CONTINUES TO ENJOY CLOSE TIES WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

send a message to Russia and China through the Special Summit that the US continues to enjoy close ties with Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, though the joint statement issued after the Summit did not mention the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Biden must have reportedly asked Asean members to take a tough stand on the Russia-Ukraine war.

On the other hand, during his Asia visit, the launch of Indo-Pacific Economic Framework during the second in-person QUAD Summit emerged as a major development. Ever since the reemergence of QUAD in 2017, formally known as Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, it has made huge progress. This can be gauged from the fact that the QUAD meeting was initially held at the junior bureaucratic level. Now, it is organised at different levels, including the heads of State. While QUAD has played a pivotal role in dealing with the COVID virus, the group has become the anchor of promoting a free, open, prosperous and secure

Indo-Pacific. Addressing an overdue lacuna in the Indo-Pacific strategy, QUAD has launched Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. In turn, it will play a crucial role in limiting China’s economic clout in the region.

Earlier, QUAD had shown hesitation in adding security issues to its priority. However, the launch of an Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) has indicated the willingness of the QUAD countries to foster security cooperation. The IPMDA will offer a near-real-time, integrated and cost-effective maritime domain awareness picture and help Quad members’ allies as well to fully monitor their shores.

Of course, Taiwan appeared as a major issue on the priority list of Biden’s visit to Asia. In fact, he said in no uncertain terms that the US would intervene militarily if Taiwan came under Chinese attack. This strong presidential statement, with the presence of the major Asian powers in Tokyo, certainly assumes huge importance, indicating the possible shift in the US’ approach towards ‘One China’ policy. Thus, while the visit has crystallised the Biden Administration’s readiness to lead the regional and global efforts to contain autocratic tendencies in Asia and beyond, it needs to be realised that the success of the Indo-Pacific strategy and QUAD singularly dependents on whether the US and other powers can protect Taiwan’s independence or not.

Thus, while the US has indicated to end the policy of ambiguity on Taiwan, global and regional efforts must be channelised to make Taiwan an integral element of the Indo-Pacific Strategy and QUAD.

(The author is a former Ministry of Foreign Affairs Visiting Fellow, NCCU, Taipei. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AAP’S EXEMPLARY ACT IN PUNJAB

Sir — The news of a Minister of the AAP Government of Punjab indulging in corruption is in the headlines as well as the speedy action taken by the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on this corrupt Minister. Mann without delay dismissed the Minister from the Cabinet. In a way, such Ministers also have to be praised that as soon as their name cropped up in the bribery case, they accepted their mistake. But one thing is incomprehensible that how many days it has been since the formation of the AAP Government and it is very unfortunate to have such allegations against a Minister of a reputed department in as many days.

But the good thing is that the Minister did not take any recourse to power to save himself, as usually happens. Or say that the Government did not delay in paying compensation for the Assembly elections of Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat. The Punjab Government and AAP have proved by the immediate dismissal that the mobile number given to prevent corruption is working fine. It is a request to the Almighty that this number keeps working fine. Other State Governments should also provide similar numbers to the common man.

Rajender Kumar Sharma | Rewari

NEED TO BE REASONABLE

Sir — These days we find many discussions going on, some in favour and some against, about the release of Perarivalan, one of the accused in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. Some have even gone overboard to say that the Supreme Court has committed a grave mistake in releasing Perarivalan, thereby proving to be more Catholic than the Pope! It should not be forgotten that one of the senior inquiry officers has regretted that he had recorded Perarivalan’s statement wrongly, thereby implicating him in the heinous crime.

Reputed legal luminaries, including Justice Krishna Iyer, have raised their

Cong must wake up to reality



Developments in the Congress, including prominent leaders like Kapil Sibal quitting it, have exacerbated the crisis it faces. Sibal announced that he had resigned from the Congress as he filed Rajya Sabha nomination papers with the Samajwadi Party’s backing. Sibal’s resignation has come as a big blow to the Congress, which is struggling to pick up the pieces after its lacklustre performance in the recent elections. Sibal is the fifth prominent leader to leave the party after Sunil Jakhar,

Hardik Patel, Ashwani Kumar and RPN Singh. The leadership is at a loss for how to tackle the exodus the party faces. In fact, Sibal had resigned from the party a day after the much-talked about conclave held in Udaipur, aka Chintan Shivir.

By his action, he has dropped a hint that he was dissatisfied with the brainstorming session in Udaipur. It may be recollected that Sibal was part of G-23, a group of dissenting Congress leaders who have been demanding radical changes in the party. Sibal’s quitting the Congress is a wake-up call for the party. Its leadership must not take such desertions lightly. The party leadership needs to wake up to reality. A weak Congress party cannot counter the BJP even in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The party leadership needs to come out of the cocoon it is settled in and take immediate steps to rejuvenate it.

Venu GS | Kollam

voice in favour of release of Perarivalan confirming that he had only been arrested and kept in jail for three decades only out of suspicion. Can anyone of those who are opposing the release of Perarivalan categorically state that he was involved in Rajiv’s assassination with unambiguous and authentic evidence? Let us give the benefit of the doubt to Perarivalan at least now after he has been made to waste his entire youth in custody and allow him to spend the rest of his life peacefully with his mother.

Tharcus S Fernando | Chennai

THE GOOD MORNING HABIT

Sir — Reading newspapers early in the morning along with a cup of tea is still a morning trend in India. Although in many families, newspapers have been replaced by mobile phones, there are many who recognise newspapers as a more reliable source of information. People believe that anything available on the internet may be untrue and to cross-check people prefer

newspapers or any other printed source (magazines, letter, etc.). A newspaper has more advantages than disadvantages while it is the other way round in the case of smart phones. Newspapers increase reading skills, vocabulary, general knowledge and don’t affect one’s eyesight.

We can get newspapers to update ourselves on various current issues and news from across the world. These are handy items, made of papers and, therefore, eco-friendly and easy to recycle. Most importantly, it is the easiest and cheapest source of information. Entertaining things like puzzles, stories and crosswords are also available in a newspaper. The Indian Readership Survey (IRS) reveals that newspaper readership at the end of Q1 of 2019 has grown to 425 million. The trust which the people have for print media can never be replaced by any other source.

Ishita Patidar | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

We only know how to run the Government. We don’t do vote bank politics.



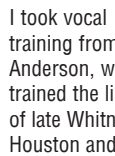
Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal

This is a stupid war which your (Vladimir) Putin started. This war was built on lies.



Kremlin critic — Alexei Navalny

I took vocal training from Ron Anderson, who has trained the likes of late Whitney Houston and Ariana Grande.



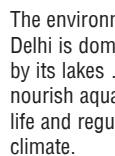
Actor — Madhuri Dixit-Nene

The last game we played, we felt almost like we played our best game of this campaign so far.



RCB captain — Faf du Plessis

The environment of Delhi is dominated by its lakes ... they nourish aquatic life and regulate climate.



Delhi Environment Minister — Gopal Rai

FIRST COLUMN

QUAD LEADERS' SUMMIT OUTCOMES FOR FUTURE

Maritime data sharing provides weather and waterway watch



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Tokyo for the second in-person QUAD leaders' summit. He had bilateral discussions with Prime ministers of Japan and Australia and US President Joe Biden. It underscores the importance of the Indo-Pacific as the external strategy of the QUAD members. The apprehensions regarding the US losing focus on this crucial region due to Ukraine stand resolved. This group of 4 nations, though not a military alliance, shares common threat perceptions from China. Australia had pulled out from the group in 2007 as it was then in a tight embrace with China. However, an aggressive China in Australia's backyard, used military power to expand its territorial controls, forcing the Australians to get back into QUAD. The Tokyo summit saw a mint-fresh Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese attending the meeting in person along with his foreign minister. The QUAD political leaders expanded on their targets they had set out in their meetings since March 2021. One important outcome was announcement of Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA). In a statement, the White House elaborated that IPMDA would provide for "faster, wider, and more accurate maritime picture of near-real-time activities in partners' waters. This common operating picture will integrate three critical regions-the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean region-in the Indo-Pacific." Earlier a senior US administration official



had highlighted that maritime arrangement will allow countries "The ability to know what is happening in countries' territorial waters and in their exclusive economic zones." This cooperation could be one of the most significant outcomes from QUAD so far as it brings together all the QUAD partner countries together to share the data they collect individually about their maritime resources and far away islands and get a big picture. This data sharing could lead to early warnings for disasters, climate change incidents and most important be the eyes at the largest waterway in the world. It will keep an eye on illegal military interventions, illegal fishing activities and potentially criminal activities using the sea route. The QUAD leaders were categorical in stating the purpose as nonmilitary but at a level of sharing surveillance data amongst the coast guards. Any analyst would be able to pinpoint the actual reason behind this initiative is to contain China's aggressive illegal occupations and economic activities in many of the islands in the Indo Pacific region.

It is a shared concern for India, Australia and Japan. However, increasingly it has been a major issue of conflict for several countries in South and Southeast Asia which have felt bullied by China. The QUAD decision to make the shared data "unclassified" and therefore open for any country in the region, makes IPMDA an inclusive framework. The focus is on identification and working on cutting edge future technologies to collect the data and make it most meaningful for users. This could make QUAD a unique partner for many countries in the region, as they could fall back on QUAD data and intelligence for securing their maritime economic interests and prevent criminal activities in their backyard. Another key aspect of the recently concluded QUAD summit was the focus on cyber security vulnerabilities faced by each nation and sharing of information between the Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT). It was also stated that "the Quad will improve software and Managed Service Provider (MSP) security by coordinating cyber security standards for Quad Governments' procurement of software." This should create a common framework for governments in each of the 4 nations to be effective in case of cyber-attacks on their critical infrastructure.


(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Arson exposes violent social underbelly of Konaseema

The violence was the result of longstanding community rivalries and discontent with the Govt rather than antagonism towards Ambedkar

What happened in Konaseema district in Andhra Pradesh on May 24 was unprecedented and totally unforeseen. Houses of a Minister for Transport, Pinipe Viswaroop, a Dalit, and M.L.A. P. Satish, a fisherman, were set on fire by a mob which also indulged in arson and vandalism in Amalapuram town. Violence broke out when the police attempted to prevent a procession taken out by Joint Action Committee (JAC) as part of 'Chalo Amalapuram' from meeting the district collector. Had the police allowed the protestors to submit their memorandum to the collector, things might have been different.

The JAC was formed to oppose the change of the district's name from Konaseema to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema



RAMACHANDRA MURTHY KONDUBHATLA

(The writer is a senior journalist and Editor, primepost, a news website based out of Hyderabad. The views expressed are personal.)

District. People of Konaseema are sentimental about the name of their district. The movement for a separate district of Konaseema was on for many years. It acquired momentum with the State Government's decision to create Konaseema district and to add Ambedkar's name to it. Top leaders of major parties supported the proposal though many others, transcending party differences, privately opposed the change. Nara Chandrababu Naidu of the TDP and Pawan Kalyan of the Jana Sena Party gave their consent when YSRCP government sought their approval. Konaseema district has a peculiar demographic picture. Kapus, Settibalij as and Dalits are the three dominant communities which are equally large, vocal and militant. There



Settibalij as who are part of the BCs. Konaseema district has one Lok Sabha seat (Amalapuram) and three (out of a total of seven) assembly seats reserved for SCs. Anuradha, an SC, is representing Amalapuram constituency in Lok Sabha. The Minister from the district Viswaroop is considered very close to YSR's family. Dalits are in command in the district and this is detested by Kapus and Balijas. When AP Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy visited Marumalla village near Amalapuram last week, Viswaroop had taken a delegation of Dalits to him. They submitted a memorandum requesting the Chief Minister to name Konaseema district after Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Jagan Mohan Reddy accepted

the request but wanted the opposition parties to approve the proposal. TDP and JSP leaders had welcomed the idea. A gazette notification was issued last week renaming the district as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema District and it asked the people to let the government know within one month if anybody has any objection. The GO was not openly opposed by any noted political leader. But WhatsApp messages were sent in their thousands by the general public, supporting or opposing the move. The Dalit protagonists were as aggressive as Kapus and Balijas. Viswaroop reportedly told the police to use force in dealing with the situation. The police had clamped Section 144 and Section 30 by way of preventive measures. But the force which the protestors unleashed in a matter of hours was not foreseen by the police who were unprepared. They used lathis and fired in the air for five times to control the mob. Till 8 pm the street battles between the police and the protestors were going on. The police could bring the situation under control by late in the night. DIG Palraju (Eluru range) and four SPs have been camping at Amalapuram which remained peaceful on Wednesday. Extra forces have been rushed to the town. Forty-six persons have been taken into custody till Wednesday afternoon, according to DIG Palraju. He had spoken to community leaders. He appealed to the people to maintain peace and harmony. Konaseema which is known for its greenery, coconut trees and high yielding crops, has all of a sudden exploded in the face of the police officials. Nothing of this sort had happened in the last four decades. Even at the time of Vangaveeti Mohan Ranga's murder in Vijayawada in 1989, the riots were all over coastal Andhra and only Kapus in Konaseema were involved in sporadic violence. This time it was SCs versus all others. It was mostly the result of long-standing community rivalries and discontent with the present Government rather than antagonism towards Ambedkar. The dominant profile of Dalit leaders also added fuel to the fire. Former Speaker of Lok Sabha, GMC Balayogi, hailed from the same place.

The world must unite for fighting inflation

To control inflation, decisions of all Central banks need some kind of real-time coordination, a mechanism for which needs to be worked out and activated



It seems that for the entire world, high inflation is going to be the new normal, at least for the foreseeable future. In April 2022, the IMF's World Economic Outlook predicted that during 2022, inflation will be at 5.7 percent in advanced economies and 8.7 percent in emerging markets and developing economies-1.8 and 2.8 percent higher, respectively, than its earlier projections in January. The unprecedented supply disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine War, now about to enter its fourth month, have been driving commodity prices for quite some time, and conditions are expected to deteriorate progressively.

Worsening supply-demand imbalances and further increases in commodity prices could lead to persistently high inflation at least in the medium term, which in turn would lead to a spiral of rising interest rates, higher wage demands and consequent fall in the profitability of companies forcing them to curtail production, leading in turn to still higher inflation and more losses in real wages. Post-pandemic, the world is already struggling for economic recovery while trying to manage much higher debt levels than before due to the expansionary fiscal policies triggered by the pandemic. Now the higher inflation would expose countries, especially the emerging markets and developing economies, to serious debt vulnerabilities, let alone building fiscal buffers.

The drivers of this rising inflation - the war, sanctions, lockdown in China due to a resurgence of Covid, and the massive supply-chain disruptions as a result of all these - are beyond the control of central banks. Hence monetary policies alone may not suffice to tame the menace of inflation, though the responses of different countries to such policies would vary depending on their conditions and the strength of their fundamentals. Governments would also be weary of reversing their expansionary fiscal policies which would translate into economic hardships for their people trying hard to recover from the losses suffered during the pandemic years. In the unfolding scenario, growth will likely take a back seat for the entire world for the time being.

In India, the retail inflation measured by the CPI had shot up to 7.8 percent in April 2022 from 7 percent in March, the highest in the last 8 years. While the urban inflation was 7.1 percent, the rural inflation soared to 8.4 percent. In the CPI basket, food and beverages carry a weightage of 45.9 percent and fuel another 6.8 percent; even if we take these out, the core inflation still remained at 6.5 percent, way above the RBI's inflation target of 6 percent at the upper band. Factory output also remained sluggish, with the index of industrial production (IIP) rising only by 1.9 percent in March 2022, down from the peak of 134.4 percent recorded in April 2021, mainly due to the low performance



IT IS STRANGE WHY THE RBI TOOK SO LONG TO ACT AND WHEN IT FINALLY DID, WHY IT HAD TO ACT IN SUCH AN ABRUPT MANNER THAT WAS SURE TO JOLT THE MARKET, LEADING TO PANIC SELLING BY FOREIGN INVESTORS LEADING TO SUSTAINED MAYHEM IN THE STOCK MARKET AND SEVERE EROSION IN THE VALUE OF THE RUPEE

(The author is a former Director General at the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and an academic. The views expressed are personal.)



of the manufacturing sector which has been hit hard by rising input prices and supply disruptions.

A part of the inflation is also imported, since more than 80 percent of our fuel and 60 percent of edible oil are imported from countries which are also facing severe inflation, and the inflated import bill is reducing our foreign exchange reserves which have come down to US\$ 598 billion providing an import cover of about 11 months in April 2022, from US\$ 635 billion in January 2022. The inflation figures are already exceeding 9 percent in certain states like West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Telangana. The optimism of the Union Finance Ministry that the gradual recovery of aggregate demand was reducing the risk of sustained high inflation may be rather misplaced. Even the higher collection of GST as seen in the recent months may also be partly fuelled by the rise in prices of commodities rather than due to the expansion of economic activities.

Following the US Fed's 0.5 percent hike in inflation, the RBI has increased the repo rate as well as the CRR by 0.4 percent on 4th May. It is widely expected that there would be another steep hike in both the interest rate as well as the CRR in June. CRISIL Ratings has projected inflation to be around 6.3 percent for the current fiscal; it also expects the RBI to raise repo rates by another 0.75 percent to one percent during FY-2023. Economists and corpo-

rate leaders expect the interest rate to finally settle down around 5.5 percent by the mid FY-2023.

Indeed, given the huge difference between the repo rate of 4.4 percent and the yield of 10-year G-Sec at above 7 percent which is a benchmark for interest rate in the economy, there is scope for still higher increases. But every increase in interest rate contracts the space for fiscal manoeuvrability of the government and growth becomes the ultimate casualty. Already the growth forecasts for India have been sliced by all agencies - RBI has itself lowered its growth protection to 7.2 percent in 2022-23, down from 7.8 percent it had earlier estimated.

The wholesale inflation measured by the WPI has been much higher than the CPI inflation throughout - it rose to a four-month high of 14.55 percent in March 2022 from 13.11 percent in February. Prices accelerated across all segments - 10.71 percent for manufactured products, 25.97 percent for basic metals, 34.52 percent for fuel and power, and 15.54 percent for primary articles, despite a marginal slowdown in the cost of food articles. On a monthly basis, wholesale prices increased by 2.69 percent in March, the most since the series began in 2004. The reason for such divergence between the WPI and CPI is partly due to the different weightages in their respective baskets - in the WPI basket, manufactured articles get 64.2 percent weightage which is much higher than in the CPI,

whereas primary articles get 22.6 percentage weightage, followed by 13.2 percent for fuel and power.

While the RBI considers retail inflation for its policy decisions, the wholesale price rises ultimately get reflected on the retail prices after a lag of a few quarters as companies tend pass on the burden to consumers. Thus, the high WPI inflation in March for primary articles is likely to get translated into still higher food prices which will affect the poor more than the rich, again belying the Finance Ministry's assumption that at the lower end of the economic strata, the impact of inflation is not as deep as at the upper end.

It is really strange why the RBI took so long to act and when it finally did so, why it had to act in such an abrupt manner that was sure to jolt the market severely, leading to panic selling by foreign investors leading to sustained mayhem in the stock market and severe erosion in the value of the rupee. The increase in interest rates could have been affected in a little more predictable manner, using the mechanism of regular MPC meetings. If inflation is to be controlled, decisions by all central banks need some kind of a real-time coordination, a mechanism for which needs to be worked out and activated without delay. The WTO, must also be involved simultaneously in the battle against inflation. Inflation is as bad as Covid if not worse, and only by coming together, the world can fight it effectively.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

AGAIN, RAHUL GANDHI MEETS UK MP JEREMY CORBYN WHO IS KNOWN FOR HIS HATRED AND DISLIKE FOR INDIA... ADVOCATES KASHMIR'S SECESSION.
— UNION LAW MINISTER KIREN RIJUJU



AM AMAZED AS TO HOW DEAREST FRIENDS IN TV MEDIA HAVE TO BEND OVER BACKWARDS TO SERVE THE GOVERNMENT'S IDIOTIC AGENDA.
— CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Moody's slashes India's economic growth forecast to 8.8 pc for 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Thursday slashed India's economic growth projection to 8.8 per cent for 2022 from 9.1 per cent earlier, citing high inflation.

In its update to Global Macro Outlook 2022-23, Moody's said high-frequency data suggests that the growth momentum from December quarter 2021 carried through into the first four months this year.

However, the rise in crude oil, food and fertilizer prices will weigh on household finances and spending in the months ahead. Rate hike to prevent energy and food inflation from becoming more generalized will slow the demand recovery's momentum, it said.

"We have lowered our calendar-year 2022 growth forecast for India to 8.8 per cent from our March forecast of 9.1 per cent, while maintaining our 2023 growth forecasts at 5.4 per cent, Moody's said.

Strong credit growth, a large increase in investment intentions announced by the corporate sector, and a high budget allocation to capital spending by the government indicate



that the investment cycle is strengthening.

But unless global crude oil and food prices rise further, the economy seems strong enough to maintain solid growth momentum, Moody's added. For 2022 and 2023, it projected inflation to be around 6.8 per cent and 5.2 per cent, respectively.

A rise in prices across all items from fuel to vegetables and cooking oil pushed WPI or wholesale price-based inflation to a record high of 15.08 per cent in April and retail inflation to a near eight-year high of 7.79 per cent.

High inflation prompted the Reserve Bank to hold an unscheduled meeting to raise the benchmark interest rate by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent earlier this month.

In November last year, Moody's had projected a 9.3 per cent economic growth for India in the ongoing fiscal year (April-March).

Earlier this month, S&P Global Ratings had cut India's growth projection for 2022-23 to 7.3 per cent, from 7.8 per cent earlier, on rising inflation and longer-than-expected Russia-Ukraine conflict.

In March, Fitch had cut India growth forecast to 8.5 per cent, from 10.3 per cent, citing sharply high energy prices on account of Russia-Ukraine war.

The World Bank in April slashed India's GDP forecast for 2022-23 to 8 per cent from 8.7 per cent predicted earlier, while IMF has cut the projection to 8.2 per cent from 9 per cent.

SBI economists peg Q4 GDP growth at 2.7 pc, FY22 expansion at 8.5 pc

Upcoming release of official data for economic performance is likely to register a 2.7 per cent growth for the January-March period, and the FY22 growth is expected to be 8.5 per cent, economists at SBI said on Thursday. They were, however, quick to add that it is difficult to comprehend the numbers due to the spate of revisions that we have seen till now and termed this situation as a forecaster's nightmare. We ...believe the GDP projection for Q4 FY22 is clouded by significant uncertainties. For example, even a one per cent downward revision in Q1 GDP estimates of FY22 from 20.3 per cent, all other things remaining unchanged, could push Q4 GDP growth to 3.8 per cent, they noted. Official data on the economy is expected to be released on May 31.

L&T Technology Services opens R&D centre in Poland, to hire 300 engineers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering services company L&T Technology Services Limited (LTTs) on Thursday inaugurated its engineering, research and development centre in Krakow, Poland, that will cater to global customers and leverage technologies in the automotive, mobility and hi-tech domains.

LTTs is a subsidiary firm of conglomerate Larsen & Toubro Limited.

The centre will mark its expansion into eastern Europe, a company statement said, adding that it will cater to several major customers in Europe and North America, including a US-based automotive Tier-1 company.

In the new ER&D centre, LTTs will work on both software and hardware development of product lines. "This centre is part of LTTs' global delivery model and is a logical extension of LTTs' Munich, Gothenburg and Jerusalem engineering centres, allowing the new centre to bring in specialised competencies along with local talent," the statement said.

Fake reviews on e-commerce sites under lens; meet with stakeholders today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The consumer affairs ministry along with Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) will hold a virtual meeting on Friday with stakeholders including e-commerce entities to discuss the magnitude of fake reviews on their platforms, which mislead consumers into buying online products and services.

The purpose of the meeting is to prepare a road map ahead. The discussions will be broadly based on the impact of fake and misleading reviews on consumers and possible measures to prevent such anomaly, the ministry said in a statement.

Consumer affairs secretary Rohit Kumar Singh has written to all stakeholders: E-commerce entities like Flipkart, Amazon, Tata Sons, Reliance Retail and others, besides consumer forums, law universities, lawyers, FICCI, CII, consumer rights activists, etc. to participate in the meeting.

The secretary has flagged with stakeholders results of a EU-wide screening on online consumer reviews across 223 major websites.

The screening results underlines that at least 55 per cent of the websites violate



the unfair commercial practices directive of the EU, which requires truthful information to be presented to consumers to make an informed choice.

Further, in 144 out of the 223 websites checked, the authorities could not confirm that traders were doing enough to ensure that reviews were authentic, i.e., if they were posted by consumers who had actually used the product or service that was reviewed, the statement said.

The secretary said in the letter that consumers are increasingly shopping online for purchase of goods and services with growing internet and smartphone use.

"Given that e-commerce involves a virtual shopping

experience without any opportunity to physically view or examine the product, consumers heavily rely on reviews posted on e-commerce platforms to see the opinion and experience of users who have already purchased the goods or service," he said.

As a result, due to fake and misleading reviews, the right to be informed, which is a consumer right under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, is violated, he added.

"Since the issue impacts people shopping online on a daily basis and has a significant impact on their rights as a consumer, it is important that it is examined with greater scrutiny and detail," the secretary added.

MONEY MATTERS

Sensex halts 3-day decline, rebounds over 500 pts amid F&O expiry



Equity benchmarks mustered gains for the first time this week on Thursday as investors piled into the recently-battered metal, bank and IT stocks amid expiry of monthly derivative contracts. Snapping its three-session losing streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 503.27 points or 0.94 per cent to settle at 54,252.53. On

similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty gained 144.35 points or 0.90 per cent to end at 16,170.15.

Tata Steel topped the Sensex gainers' chart, rallying 5.27 per cent after its recent rout, followed by SBI, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Nestle India, HDFC, ICICI Bank, TCS and Wipro. In value terms, HDFC twins and ICICI Bank accounted for over half of the benchmark's gains. In contrast, Sun Pharma, eilance Industries, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro, Dr Reddy's and Bajaj Finance were the laggards, losing up to 1.16 per cent. The market breadth was in favour of the bulls, with 24 of the 30 Sensex stocks closing in the green. Markets witnessed healthy short covering towards the closing hours that helped key indices to reverse the 3-day losing streak. With the US FOMC minutes out of the way now, market is more or less getting prepared for the likely rate hikes, and hence we saw strong buying on the futures and options (F&O) expiry day.

CIL to divest 25 pc stake in BCCL; plans subsequent listing

State-owned CIL on Thursday said it is planning to divest 25 per cent stake in its unlisted arm Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL) and will go for the subsequent listing of the subsidiary on stock exchanges after obtaining further clearances. A meeting of the board of directors to this effect was held on March 10, 2022. Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a regulatory filing. "As advised by MoC (Ministry of Coal), CIL Board in its 438th meeting held on March 10, 2022 had accorded its 'in-principle' approval to divest 25 per cent of paid-up share capital of BCCL held by CIL and its subsequent listing on stock exchanges and advised to forward the proposal to Ministry of Coal for obtaining further clearances," the filing said. Stating that the company's board had given only "in principle" approval to the proposal, CIL said that only after getting further clearance from the government, subsequent action would be initiated. "On receipt of further clearance from MoC (Ministry of Coal) the same would be placed to CIL board and the decision of CIL board would be promptly disseminated to stock exchanges," the filing said. In FY'21, BCCL achieved a production of 24.66 million tonnes (MT), against the target of 37.13 MT and off-take of 23.13 MT against the target of 37.13 MT.

Govt drops offer to sell 53 pc stake in BPCL as bidders express inability to attend

The government on Thursday withdrew its offer to sell its entire 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL, saying that majority of bidders have expressed their inability to participate in the current privatisation process due to prevailing conditions in the global energy market. The government had planned to sell its entire 52.98 per cent stake in Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and invited Expressions of Interest (EoIs) from bidders in March 2020. At least three bids came in by November 2020. However, the privatisation was stalled after two bidders walked out over issues such as lack of clarity in fuel pricing, with just one bidder left in the fray. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said the multiple COVID-19 waves and geopolitical conditions affected industries globally, particularly the oil and gas industry.

Third-party motor insurance premium to go up from June 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has increased the third-party motor insurance premium for various categories of vehicles with effect from June 1, a decision which is likely to jack up the insurance cost of cars and two-wheelers.

According to the revised rates notified by the MoRTH on Wednesday, private cars with an engine capacity of 1,000 cc will attract rates of Rs 2,094 compared to Rs 2,072 in 2019-20.

Similarly, private cars with an engine capacity between 1,000 cc and 1,500 cc will attract rates of Rs 3,416 compared to Rs 3,221, while owners of cars above 1,500 cc will see a drop in premium from Rs 7,897 to Rs 7,890.

Two-wheelers over 150 cc but not exceeding 350 cc will attract a premium of Rs 1,366, and for over 350 cc, the revised premium will be Rs 2,804.

After a two-year moratorium due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the revised Third-



Party (TP) insurance premium will come into effect from June 1.

Earlier, TP rates were notified by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). This is the first time that the MoRTH has notified the TP rates in consultation with the insurance regulator.

According to the ministry's notification, a discount of 7.5 per cent on the premium shall be allowed for hybrid electric vehicles.

While electric private cars not exceeding 30KW will attract a premium of Rs 1,780,

those exceeding 30 KW but not 65 KW will attract a premium of Rs 2,904.

The premium for goods carrying commercial vehicles exceeding 12,000 kg but not 20,000 kg will increase to Rs 35,313 from Rs 33,414 in 2019-20. In the case of goods carrying commercial vehicles exceeding 40,000 kg, the premium will increase to Rs 44,242 against Rs 41,561 in 2019-20. The third-party insurance cover is for other than own damage and is mandatory along with the own damage cover that a vehicle owner has to purchase.

Flexi-cap funds see Rs 35,877 cr inflow in FY22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The newly-created flexi-cap category -- which requires mutual funds to invest at least 65 per cent of the corpus in equity without any restrictions on investing in large, mid or small-cap stock -- registered a net inflow of Rs 35,877 crore in 2021-22.

This was the highest net inflow among the equity categories, data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

Since the creation of the flexi-cap category by capital markets regulator Sebi in November 2020, many asset management companies (AMCs) that had realigned their existing funds into the flexi-cap category have

launched multi-cap funds, while those AMCs that had retained their funds in the multi-cap category have started flexi-cap funds, according to Morningstar India.

Of the Rs 35,877 crore, flexi-cap funds saw a net inflow of Rs 2,478 crore in the three months ended June 2021, Rs 18,258 crore for the quarter ended September 2021, Rs 6,191 crore for the quarter ended December 2021 and Rs 8,950 crore for three months ended March 2022. While large-cap funds experienced a net inflow of Rs 13,569 crore for the entire 2021-22, inflow for mid-cap funds stood at Rs 16,308 crore and the same for small-cap funds was at Rs 10,145 crore.

ONGC offers stake in KG block to foreign firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is offering a stake to foreign companies in its ultra deepsea gas discovery

ery and a high-pressure, high-temperature block in the KG basin as it looks for financial and technological help to bring the challenging fields to production.

ONGC has floated an initial tender seeking interest of global majors with "requisite technical expertise and financial strength" to join as partners in development of the Deen Dayal West (DDW) block as well as ultra-deep discoveries in Cluster-III of its KG-D5 area.

Expressions of Interest (EoIs) have been invited by June 16, according to the ten-



der floated by the company.

While ONGC had made a gas discovery UD-1 in the KG-D5 block in water depth of 2,850 metres (almost 3 kilometres), the firm had in August 2017 paid Rs 7,738 crore for buying 80 per cent stake in the DDW block from Gujarat government firm GSPC.

On the one hand, ONGC

does not have the requisite technology and expertise to develop the UD discovery, which lies about 150-km from the coast, while on the other hand it hasn't had much success in DDW block which holds reserves at high pressure and high temperature (HPHT).

ONGC is seeking technolo-

gy partners and service providers for the development of the two and is willing to offer an equity stake to firms interested, the tender document said.

It however did not say how much equity stake the company will offer.

At the time of the acquisition of stake from GSPC in 2017, ONGC had stated that the acquisition fits well with its strategy to enhance natural gas production from domestic fields at a faster pace.

It had plans to use GSPC field facilities to bring to production the discoveries in its neighbouring KG-DWN-98/2 (KG-D5) block.

But the seven wells drilled to date did not yield much success. The plan to use DDW facilities too hasn't materialised.

PNS ■ DAVOS

Making a strong pitch for investing in social jobs, the World Economic Forum on Thursday said every dollar of investment in such jobs can generate a multiplier effect of 2.3 times the initial capital.

Investing in education, health and care jobs can yield a triple dividend -- boosting economic activity, expanding employment opportunities and generating social mobility, according to a new report published by the WEF on the last day of its Annual Meeting 2022.

New modelling of the United States economy suggests that

investing one dollar in social jobs would yield a USD 2.3 return.

The model estimates that USD 1.3 trillion in the social jobs of tomorrow could unlock USD 3.1 trillion in GDP returns and create 11 million jobs by 2030.

These jobs include 4.2 million teaching jobs, 1.8 million jobs for personal care and service workers, and 900,000 jobs in healthcare.

The report said that the associated increases in productivity, increased GDP and tighter labour markets will lead to a parallel increase in real wages.

Aided by technology and



better skills, the jobs of tomorrow have the potential to lift living standards globally, the WEF said.

After more than two years of turmoil in the global economy

sible and benefit companies, workers and economies alike.

The Good Work Framework, another report released at the Annual Meeting, proposed enhancing job quality through five objectives and associated goals: promote fair pay and social justice; provide flexibility and protection; deliver on health and well-being; drive diversity, equity and inclusion; and foster employability and learning culture.

This report draws from the views of employers, unions and experts and was developed in collaboration with Mercer.

To support this broad agenda and to mobilise the required investments globally, the first

meeting of the Jobs Consortium was also held at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos. The initiative comprises CEOs and ministers championing productive employment, growth in the jobs of tomorrow, new standards in the workplace and better wages for all.

The WEF also said that refugees are a particularly vulnerable group, often excluded from the labour markets of host economies. Over 6 million refugees are estimated to have left Ukraine since February 2022, adding to the estimated 31 million people worldwide, who have been forcibly displaced across borders.

‘Mann Bharrya is a song that can never die’

TEJAL SINHA

Pratik Bachan, aka B Praak, has always managed to woo everyone's heart with his melancholic music. Be it in music direction or his career in singing, he has never failed to win hearts.

Recognised as one of India's royal artists, *His Highness* has churned out mega hits like *Do you know*, *Horn Blow*, *Backbone*, *Baarish Ki Jaaye*, *Teri Mitti*, and *Filhall* (amongst many other hit songs) that have uplifted the Punjabi and Hindi music industry. A heartthrob and an award-winning singer, the famed artist derives inspiration from AR Rahman and Jazzy B.

It's always the best time when Zee Live's Supermoon is back in town. Since its inception in 2019, Supermoon has collaborated with leading artists such as AP Dhillon, Prateek Kuhad, Divine, and Yohani, to name a few. This year, we finally get to see Supermoon in association with the King of Hearts, bringing to us his first-ever 10-city India tour. Be it falling in or falling out of love, the spirit of the tour is mainly romance, heartbreak, and medleys in a set format.

The tour will kickstart in Mumbai on May 28 and will end with a bang with his fans left spellbound in July. With the tickets for the event being sold like hotcakes, fans from various cities get to experience the much-awaited tour. The tour that sees entertainment being served on a scale never witnessed before will adhere to the highest standards of safety and hygiene.

We could not wait longer and got in touch with Paaji, for whom this was a much-awaited

dream finally coming true. While connecting to us about the tour, he shares, "This was a dream for almost 10 years. And now, after 10 years, we have done this. By God's grace, we are doing it in association with Zee. I am very excited about this because this is the first time ever I will be performing with a symphony band. This has never been done by any Punjabi singer. People have been waiting for this. They sent me the screenshots of the tickets that they had booked and showed their excitement. I have put a lot of effort into this. My team, my musicians, Zee, Supermoon, everyone has put in a lot of effort. I just can't wait for the tour to start and want the show to be a hit. Knowing that your music is appreciated across all corners of the country is everything that I could have ever asked for. My fans have made me the star that I am today, and it's now time for me to give them an unforgettable symphony concert that they'll cherish. I can't wait to get started and give them the experience to remember for a long time."

His fans are all set to witness the popular Punjabi singer ignite a symphony in their hearts with his popular tracks of romance and heartbreak. It'll be a night filled with pure magic as the famed artist churns out popular chartbusters such as *Mann Bharrya*, *Ranjha*, *Teri Mitti*, *Dholna*, *Kaun Hoye Ga*, *Filhall*, and many others.

Fans of the singing sensation will witness him belt out his popular melodies in the cities of Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Delhi, and Bengaluru. He exclusively shared with us three more cities that will be part of the tour; Hyderabad, Indore, and Chandigarh. However, the dates of these cities will be announced soon.

Love for Hyderabad

This will not be the first time that the singer will be in Hyderabad for an event. It looks like it has always been an amazing experience for him whenever he is in the city. We ask him more about his experience in the city of pearls, and whether the city is going to be a part of the tour? To which he says, "Yes, Hyderabad is also going to be a part of the 10-city tour. The dates will be announced soon. It has always been an amazing experience in Hyderabad. It has always been so much fun to perform in the city. People are so sweet and give so much love every time I am here. They are very humble, and it's always fun being here. I love the food. It is just amazing. I love the vibe. It's just so good. It feels amazing to perform here every time."

A musical journey

To the ones who do not know, the *Filhall* singer made his debut in the music industry as a director and later made his debut in singing the soulful song *Mann Bharrya*. The song starred actor, singer, and Bigg Boss 13 alum Himanshi Khurana.

He shares, "The inspiration to get into music has been my family itself. From the start, I was sure that I wanted to get into singing. I started playing music and then I started singing. I've always wanted to do shows, and now it's finally happening. I feel really blessed."

Mann Bharrya, a song that will never die

B Praak made his debut with *Mann Bharrya* and, for him, this song will never die.

He shares, "I still get the love for *Mann Bharrya* and that song can never die. The song was

once again lived by being a track in *Shershaah*. People praised and loved the song a lot. Yeh ek baari phirse zinda hogaya. It felt really amazing when everyone connected to this song in *Mann Bharrya 2.0*. While making it for the second time and even *Ranjha*, I tried to put in all the feelings that we thought while making these songs. It did come out very well, and people loved these songs. People know me as a singer who sings these heartbreak songs, and I love it. I know people can really connect to these songs, and it feels like we are there for them."

The King of Hearts has also collaborated with the talented music composer and singer, Jasleen Royal, for another superhit track from *Shershaah*, *Ranjha*. Sharing his experience of the collaboration, he adds, "It was amazing working with Jasleen. She is a very good composer and a brilliant music director. This was the first time that we had collaborated, and the song turned out to be the best song of 2021."

Apart from the tour, the *Teri Mitti* singer has got a lot of new projects coming up by next month but signs off saying that his main focus is going to be this tour.

B Praak, in association with Zee Live's IP Supermoon, will be embarking on a 10 city India tour, the 'Supermoon ft. B-Praak King of Heart Tour'. *The Pioneer* gets in touch with him, who shares some exclusive details about the tour, his love for Hyderabad, and his debut song, *Mann Bharrya*.



Moving houses with pets

Moving with pets is a different set of challenge, and can be a stressful experience for your pet, whether it's moving across the street or moving overseas. Animals are known to be very sensitive to change. So, when we have to move for any reason like a job change or partner opportunities, will you leave your loved one or your best buddy with others?

So, while moving we need to keep a few things under check for our buddy's smooth travel.

Nitin O Mahipal, Managing Director, Mega Pack and Carry shares, "Traveling for long hours may not be comfortable for your pet as they will be having the habit of travelling. Make sure

that your pet knows your vehicle well or the box if not lure them with treats this will help them to stay there for the time and after that praise them for being a good pet. Doing this often will help you for travelling the long journey too. It is ideal to employ professional packers and movers company for the finest pet relocation experience."

Be connected with your veterinarian

When you are moving please be in contact with your pet. Depending on the mode of travelling certain documents will be needed related to your pet's health. Before moving do a health check-up of your pet signed by your vet. Carry medicine with you in the case of an emergency. After moving the first thing

to do is to find another vet near your new place. You may need to see the vet with your pet after travelling.

Travelling overseas

While travelling overseas with your pet you need to keep all required documents ready before boarding the flight. Make sure that your pet's identification tags are up to date including your contact details and your pet's microchip to assist them in getting your pet to you.

Things to pack before moving

- Pee Pads (just in case!)
- Extra Towels
- Baby Wipes
- Treats & Chews
- Collapsible Water Bowl
- Ample Food
- Pet's health reports

PNS |
HYDERABAD

Contraceptive pills, commonly known as birth control pills, are a form of hormonal contraception. In India, over 139 million women resort to modern contraception methods to prevent pregnancy. Oral contraceptive pills are a highly effective birth control method when taken in the prescribed manner, with only 0.1% of women experiencing an unintended pregnancy.

The pills contain a synthetic form of the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, which are naturally

produced in the ovaries.

Dr. Shilpi Sachdev, obstetrics and gynecology expert at Apollo Cradle & Children's Hospital shares, "Contraceptive pills prevent pregnancy by preventing the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (ovulation), thickening the mucus to prevent the sperm from penetrating or thinning the uterine wall to keep the egg from implanting in the womb. Like all medicines, contraceptive pills can have adverse effects on one's health that women should be aware of. Usually, the side effects are minor and disappear gradually. However, in some rare cases, the pills can cause serious repercussions."

Here are some of the side effects of using contraceptive pills as listed by the doctor:

Headaches and nausea

One of the most common side effects reported by women taking contraceptive pills is headaches and nausea. This usually happens because of the oestrogen and progesterone

in these pills that can trigger headaches or migraines. When first starting on birth control pills, some women may also experience mild nausea because of the hormonal changes in the body, which may cause nausea in some women. Taking the pill with food or before bedtime can reduce the likelihood of nausea. Both headaches and nausea tend to subside with time.

Breakthrough bleeding

During the first three months of taking the pills, around 50% of women experience breakthrough bleeding or spotting. This is vaginal bleeding and occurs due to the thinning of the uterine wall and because of the changes in hormonal levels. Spotting may occur with some menstrual cramps. However, by the third month, the spotting tends to subside. Women who experience light bleeding for more than five days or heavy bleeding for over three days should seek medical assistance.

Cardiovascular concerns

For some women, oral contraceptive pills can increase their blood pressure. The presence of extra oestrogen and progesterone in the body can also increase the risk of blood clots. However, these effects are rare, but when they do present themselves, they can raise serious health concerns. Additionally, women who smoke have a higher chance of developing cardiovascular concerns. Women should seek immediate medical assistance if they experience trouble breathing or pain in the chest.

Liver-related complications

Contraceptive pills can have

a direct impact on a woman's liver as the pills pass through the liver for metabolism. Oral contraceptives have been known to be associated with certain liver ailments such as sinusoidal dilation, peliosis hepatitis, hepatic adenomas, hepatocellular carcinomas, and hepatic vein thrombosis. Additionally, long-term usage of birth control pills may increase the risk of forming gallbladder stones and benign liver tumours. Women prone to liver ailments should be wary of oral contraception as it may aggravate their existing issues.

Mood swings

Some women may experience irritability, mood swings, or even depression while on the pill. Ideally, all the hormones in the body should be perfectly balanced, but the introduction of artificial hormones, such as oestrogen and progesterone, can cause hormonal imbalances in the body, leading to moodiness. Women who have previously dealt with depression may find themselves at a higher risk of experiencing mood-related side effects when taking oral contraceptive pills. It is advisable to discuss the emotional changes or alternatives to the pills with a medical professional in such cases.

Final Thoughts

Although a highly effective and convenient method to prevent unwanted pregnancy, contraceptive pills do come with certain side effects and health ailments. Long-term usage can raise other serious health concerns such as hypertension, blood clots, liver-related complications and depression, among others. It is always recommended to visit a hospital or speak to an expert to find out which birth control method may suit your health the best.



what's brewing?



Lahari Shari



Sahasra

JEWEL SHOW

Actresses Lahari Shari, Saanve Meghana and others were present at the curtain raiser of the 40th edition of the 'Asia Jewel Show', being hosted from June 3 to 5 at the Radisson Blu Plaza hotel in Banjara Hills.



Supraja



Divya



Saanve Meghana



Srilekha

PARTY



DivyaReddy



Nishant, Dheerajkumar, Bharathkumar and Seshagiriraju

CLASSROOM

Aakash+BYJU's launched its seventh classroom centre at Kondapur on Thursday. The new classroom centre will provide classes for students preparing for medical and engineering entrance examinations, along with foundation-level courses. The centre has 11 classrooms that can accommodate up to 1,000 students.



Lipsa

Photos by SV Chary



Nandini



Ajanthalakshmi

LISTINGS

Volkswagen India showcases all-new Virtus

Enabling customers to experience the all-new Virtus, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India organised the exclusive preview of its striking, exhilarating, German-engineered, new global sedan across its 18 showrooms in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The Virtus is the second product from the brand, under the India 2.0 project, which will be launched in the Indian market on June 9.



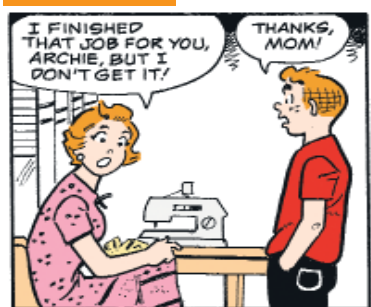
Kia India opens bookings for the EV6

Kia India announced the commencement of bookings for its globally acclaimed, upcoming premium offering – the Kia EV6. Built on Kia's dedicated EV platform, the EV6 marks the beginning of Kia's EV journey in the country. The vehicle can be booked with a token amount of Rs 3 lakh exclusively through 15 select dealerships across 12 cities in India. Meanwhile, the EV6 was unveiled at CAR Kia Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad by. K.S. Sreenivasa Raju, IAS, Secretary to Govt Department of Transport, Roads and Buildings Telangana, along with C. Ramesh, Joint Transport Commissioner, J. Pandurang Naik, Joint Transport Commissioner and Dr. K. Papa Rao, Deputy Transport Commissioner Telangana.

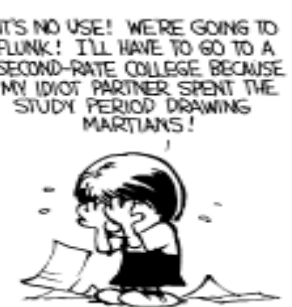


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



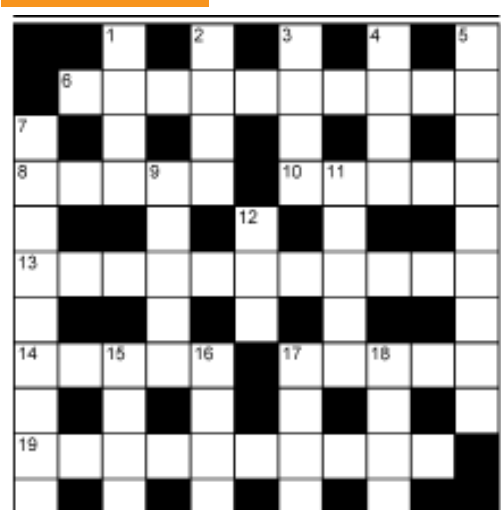
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SPEED BUMP



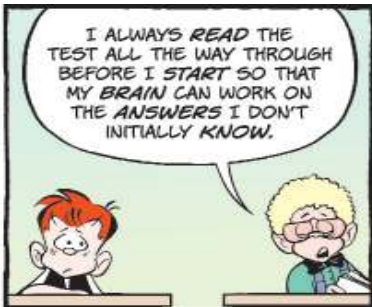
CROSSWORD



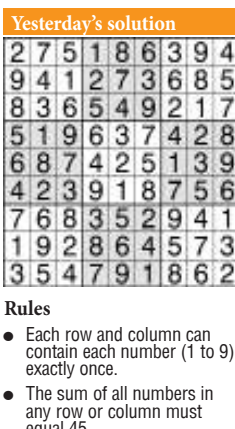
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU



ACROSS

- 6 Speed up
- 8 Elephant tusk material
- 10 Leather belt
- 13 Performer
- 14 Keep your money in this
- 17 Large group of singers
- 19 Avalanches
- 11 The upper part of your leg
- 12 Pig pen
- 15 Ladder step
- 16 Compass direction
- 17 Small bed for a baby
- 18 Finished

DOWN

- 1 Sound bouncing back
- 2 Extremely
- 3 Fewer
- 4 Head covering
- 5 Not permanent
- 7 A tropical fruit
- 9 These tall grass-like plants grow in or near water

SOLUTION





Simha Koduri's title *Ustaad* launched

MM Keeravani's son Sri Simha Koduri makes his debut with Mathuvadalara and Tellavarite Guruvaram. Simha Koduri is now going to choose a different genre of entertainers. The makers on Thursday had announced a powerful title named *Ustaad* for this film. MM Keeravani gave the first clap for the film. Sharing the details, the makers posted, "Here's unveiling the title *Ustaad* with immense pride and promise to tug your heart..It is going to be beyond what you expect..*USTAAD*ing ur timelines now."



Kamal Haasan starrer *Vikram* gets U/A certificate

Superstar Kamal Haasan's latest movie *Vikram* directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj has got a U/A certificate from the Censor Board. The film, which is one of the most anticipated movies of 2022 has Vijay Sethupathi and Fahad Fazil playing major roles along with Kamal Haasan. Tamil actor Suriya is playing a cameo role. The movie kickstarted its promotion by releasing the trailer on May 19. Lokesh Kanagaraj who has directed the movie is a popular Tamil director with movies like *Kaithi*, and *Master* starring Karthik and Vijay were super duper hits. The director has tweeted that *Vikram* got the U/A certificate from the Censor Board. Kamal Haasan had announced at the Cannes Film Festival 2022 that the movie will be in Non-Fungible Token (NFT) and is on the Metaverse platform. *Vikram* is an action thriller and is expected to hit the screens on June 3.

'I only keep one film in bank'

Varun Tej, known for super hits like *Loafer*, *Tholi Prema*, is gearing up for the release of *F3* and his excitement over the film's output has no limits. *The Pioneer* gets in touch with the actor in context of his next release *F3*, who speaks with us about his film and more.

K. RAMYA SREE

The makers and the actors of *F3* have been in full pace when it comes to promotion of the film. Fans have been waiting for the movie to release and finally the day comes. While we had recently connected with Daggubati Venkatesh, how can we forget Varun Tej who plays a major role in the film. The *Fidaa* actor shares, "We decided to do *F3* while shooting for *F2* itself but we were not really sure. After seeing the success of *F2*, we decided to jump into this project, but the responsibility was huge for this film given the success of *F2*. We put an entire on Anil Ravipudi. I have a stammering problem and Venkatesh garu has night blindness. So imagine this combination in any of the night scenes. The comedy idea started that way. Anil performs and shows us. That makes our work easier working with him. I haven't done comedy before, but because of Anil, the shooting was done at ease." While the audience have been assuming that *F3* is going to be a sequel of the storyline of *F2*, Varun clarifies about the same saying, "I like the character that I am playing in the film. *F2* is a sequel to the characters, not the story." He believes that since there is availability of different content with the advent of OTT, the public has a lot of exposure to different content. "I first showed it to my cousins. They were shocked to see me perform like that since I am a very reserved person in life even if I am around my family. I want to work in all genres in the future. I choose my next film based on my previous film's performance at box office and response from the public. I only keep one film in the bank and go with the flow." Sharing about working with Sunil, he shares that Sunil was his favorite comedian during his college days. "When I was in college, Sunil was my favorite comedian. After he became a hero and later did comedy, I couldn't see the old Sunil, but in this film, Anil wanted to bring the old Sunil out and mine and Sunil's combination will be really nice to look at," he shares adding that the team also wanted kids to have a beautiful experience and so the film has a track that shows this generation children's problems. *Kanche* and *Gaddalakonda Ganesh* characters are Varun's favorites, as he shares that he had enjoyed a little more while shooting for it. "Next month, my film with Praveen Sattaru will take off. It is an action film. The whole film will be shot in London. We fixed a 60 to 70 day schedule in London. Personally, I even experienced frustration with lack of money. When I was in college, my dad never gave me money. Thankfully, I have good friends with whom we would share money with each other, (he laughs). I was given many get ups in this film from police, to a rich man, to a penniless man, I did many get ups in this film, which was fun," signs off the actor.



Naresh Agasthya's new film launched

Naresh Agasthya made his presence in the industry with his performance in Senapathi. He is currently busy working on films like Panchathanthram, Happy Birthday, Mayalo, and Asuragana Rudra. According to the latest reports, he has added another crazy entertainer. The project is being directed by Veerabhadram Chowdhary. The project referred to as *Production No 1* was launched on Thursday with a traditional pooja ceremony. The project is expected to be a crime comedy thriller and the regular shoot will commence in July 2022. The film is produced by Nabishaik and Thumu Narsimha Patel under Jaya Durga Devi Multimedia and Deccan Dream Works banners. The music for the film is scored by Anup Rubens.



Teaser of *Thankyou* out now

The teaser of Naga Chaitanya starrer *Thankyou* was released on Thursday. The film is said to be a romantic comedy. Apart from Chaitanya, Raashi Khanna, Malavika Nair, Avika Gor, and Sai Sushanth Reddy will be seen in the film. Chay was shown in different makeovers and age groups with a different heroine at each phase of his life. The film teaser looks rich and classy after a couple of middle-class love stories from Naga Chaitanya. Naga Chaitanya will also be seen in Aamir Khan starrer *Laal Singh Chaddha* to hit the theaters this year and is currently busy shooting for yet to be titled Venkat Prabhu's Bilingual film. Naga Chaitanya is rumored to be working with *Sarkaru Vari Pata* director Parasuram Petla's film and the details will be announced shortly.



Debutant director Sarath Mandava's *Rama Rao On Duty* which is based on true events, Divyansha Kaushik and Rajisha Vijayan play the female lead roles. In his comeback, actor Venu Thottampudi will play a pivotal role in the film. The soundtrack for the film is composed by Sam CS, while Sathyan Sooryan ISC is the cinematographer, and Praveen KL is the editor. Billed to be a film which is based on true events, Divyansha Kaushik and Rajisha Vijayan play the female lead roles. In his comeback, actor Venu Thottampudi will play a pivotal role in the film. The soundtrack for the film is composed by Sam CS, while Sathyan Sooryan ISC is the cinematographer, and Praveen KL is the editor. The producers will soon announce a new release date. Billed to be a film which is based on true events, Divyansha Kaushik and Rajisha Vijayan play the female lead roles. In his comeback, actor Venu Thottampudi will play a pivotal role in the film. The soundtrack for the film is composed by Sam CS, while Sathyan Sooryan ISC is the cinematographer, and Praveen KL is the editor. The producers



Rama Rao On Duty postponed



ROYAL BATTLE

On a roll, RCB fancy their chances against Rajasthan in Qualifier 2

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Rajasthan Royals will need to shake off an ordinary bowling performance in their last outing when they clash with Royal Challengers Bangalore, a team which seems to be peaking at the right time, in the high-stakes IPL Qualifier-2 here on Friday.

Having sneaked into the play-offs, RCB are on a roll and a tight win over Lucknow in the Eliminator has fuelled expectations for a long-awaited trophy.

They take on Rajasthan, a team which has all bases covered but still came up short against Gujarat in Qualifier 1.

The IPL caravan moves to Ahmedabad after a couple of high-scoring games in Kolkata.

It has been a quick turnaround for RCB but they won't mind that as they look to ride the momentum.

"The best thing is that we have one day and we play again. Cannot wait to be in Ahmedabad and take the field again. We are so excited and happy with how things have gone. Hopefully, two more games and we all can celebrate," star RCB batter Virat Kohli told the IPL website after the win over LSG.

Rajasthan vs Bangalore
Live from 7:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

Rajat Patidar, who played the innings of his life on Wednesday, will be a man with supreme confidence in another high-pressure knockout fixture.

For someone who went unsold in the IPL auction and came into the RCB squad as a replacement player, it has been a career-changing season for him.

Both the high-profile openers, Kohli and Faf du Plessis, are big match players and will be itching to make an impact after low returns in the previous game.

Dinesh Karthik has managed to maintain consistency in a tough role and the team management would be also hoping for more runs in the back end of the innings from Glenn Maxwell.

The team is likely to stick to the winning combination. While Wanindu Hasaranga has shown the courage even when he has been taken to the cleaners, Harshal Patel has been the go-to pacer in slog overs.

Mohammad Siraj returned

for the LSG game and bowled well with the new ball. Josh Hazlewood enhanced his reputation as a death bowler with a match-deciding penultimate over and with the addition of a yorker in his armoury, has only become tougher to score of.

RCB bowlers will have to be on the top of their game against a formidable Rajasthan batting line up which rely heavily on Jos Buttler and skipper Sanju Samson. Both scored against Gujarat but it did not prove to be enough.

Samson will be eager to convert his 30s and 40s into a substantial knock and lead from the front.

It remains to be seen how the bowlers come back after a forgettable outing.

R Ashwin had a rare off day against Gujarat while Prasidh Krishna paid the price for bowling length balls to David Miller in the final over.

I don't shy away from bowling in slog overs: Harshal

PTI ■ KOLKATA

RCB seamer Harshal Patel does feel the nerves while bowling in the death overs but says he wants to be in those extreme pressure situations game after game.

The 31-year-old, who represents Haryana at the domestic circuit, has been the most improved bowler in the recent past and has cleverly used his variations to get the better of batters in the death overs.

Harshal also enhanced his reputation as a 'death overs specialist' in the IPL Eliminator against LSG.

"Whether I would be able to deliver or not, I don't really know, I can't say. But I want to be in those situations, there is no doubt about that," Harshal said after inspiring the team to a 14-run win over LSG on Wednesday.

"I have been wanting to do that for the past two-three years, I have been doing that for Haryana, and I wanted to do it at

the bigger stage and I will continue to put myself in those situations, sometimes it is going to come off, sometimes it is not going to come off.

"There will be games where I will end up losing for the team and I am okay with that as long as I don't shy away from challenges," said Harshal.

On Wednesday, while defending 208 against Lucknow Super Giants, Harshal bowled a tidy spell of 2-0-8-0 in the middle overs.

But with KL Rahul and hard-hitting Marcus Stoinis looking to break free at the death, the seamer was summoned to bowl the 18th over with 41 runs to defend.

"First of all, yes, I was nervous, there is no doubt about that. If you are defending 35 off 18 balls, then you're going to be nervous around it.

"I knew when I gave away six runs without bowling a ball — gave away those wickets, I knew that the wide yorker won't work.

"So I thought what worked for me in the first two overs, I want to go back to that and give myself the best opportunity to get KL (Rahul) and Stoinis out. Fortunately, I got Stoinis out at the boundary," he said.

Harshal, who had bagged 32 wickets for RCB last season, once again has been their bowling backbone and has 19 wickets from 15 matches in this IPL.



Meghana, Rodrigues propel Trailblazers to 190/5



PTI ■ PUNE

Batting duo of Sabbhineni Meghana and Jemimah Rodrigues slammed scintillating fifties to propel Trailblazers to 190 for five against Velocity in a must-win Women's T20 Challenge match here on Thursday.

Meghana, who was left out of their opening game, smashed a strokeful 73 off 47 balls en route to a 113-run partnership off 73 balls with Jemimah Rodrigues (66 off 44 balls) to set the foundation.

Hayley Matthews (27 off 15) and Sophia

Dunkley (19 off 8) provided the late charge as the defending champions scored the highest total in the history of the tournament.

The only team to open their account yet, Trailblazers came into the match need a huge win to qualify for the finals. They will have to restrict Velocity within 158 to make the summit clash.

Sent into bat, Meghana took the responsibility to steer the team after Trailblazers lost skipper Smriti Mandhana (1) early.

The 25-year-old from Andhra Pradesh, who was dropped at 16 and 63, displayed her big-hitting skills, clobbering seven fours and four maximums.

Rodrigues too had seven hits to the fence and one six in her 44-ball innings.

Velocity was extremely sloppy on the field as their butterfingers fielders dropped as many as four catches -- two in Simran Bahadur's over.

Meghana produced two good hits down the ground off Kate Cross but the bowler returned to dismiss Mandhana with Simran taking an easy catch.

Cross could have added Meghana's wicket to her list but Sneha Rana dropped her at the point.

Rodrigues then slammed two fours off Deepti Sharma as Trailblazers scored 47 for 1 in the powerplay.

Meghana took apart the attack, dispatching Radha Yadav for two sixes -- one an inside out shot over covers and the second one over the bowler's head — en route to her fifty in the 10th over.

Rodrigues too played some exquisite shots and reached her fifty in the 14th over off 30 balls.

We were trying to hit boundaries but RCB bowled well: Rahul



PTI ■ KOLKATA

When Mark Zuckerberg famously said: "The biggest risk is not taking any risk", KL Rahul ought to have paid attention.

The India player is too good a batter to not take on the bowlers at any stage of a game, but his conservative middle-

overs approach did not help Lucknow Super Giants cause in the eliminator against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

At the end of the game, the LSG skipper acknowledged that "two big hits" would have probably done the job for his team in a chase of 208.

"Yes, I think now, looking back, yes, it was just about two

big hits in the middle overs and that could have gotten us over the line," Rahul said in the post-match press conference here.

There was a seven-over period after the powerplay during which Rahul managed to hit just one boundary.

Rahul was in red-hot form this season with two centuries and four fifties, but his approach

One of best innings I've ever seen under pressure: Kohli on Patidar

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Batting stalwart Virat Kohli says Rajat Patidar's match-winning century in the IPL Eliminator was one of the best innings produced under pressure.

Little-known Patidar from Indore slammed a 54-ball 112 not out to single-handedly win the IPL Eliminator for Royal

Challengers Bangalore on Wednesday night here.

"That was one of the best innings I've ever seen under pressure by Rajat Patidar, and I've seen many," Kohli, who had added 66 with Patidar, said on RCB's Game Day segment.

"That level of striking in this game is some level of batting. Watch out for him!," he said.

while chasing is something he needed to work on. The IPL debutants lost five of their seven matches while chasing.

"We won a few games but generally overall we did not do well chasing. It's something that we need to learn," Rahul said.

"For me, I think this season has been like every other season, has been a good learning experience. "We, as a team as well, it's been a very challenging season. We've learned a lot."

Rahul, who is only the second batter this IPL to go past 600 runs, scored 79 off 58 balls on Wednesday, which was not enough in their stiff chase.

"I've really done well in other seasons, and I enjoy chasing.

ing. Yeah, you become successful and at times you fail," Rahul said after the 14-run loss.

"But it's a team game and the team has really stepped up even when we're chasing," he added.

Rahul, who will lead India in the upcoming five-match T20I series against South Africa next month in the absence of Rohit Sharma, has been in imperious form this season, with 616 runs from 15 matches at an average of 51.33.

But his stats while chasing give an altogether different picture.

He has scored just 191 runs from seven innings while batting second, with an average of 27.28 at a strike-rate of 113.01.



Mathews, Chandimal, bowlers get SL closer to series win

AP ■ DHAKA

Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal hit centuries as Sri Lanka raised hope of winning the second Test after reducing Bangladesh to 34 for 4 on day four on Thursday.

The host still needs 107 runs with six wickets remaining on the last day to force Sri Lanka to bat a second time. Bangladesh was in survival mode after its hope of a first home series win over Sri Lanka was shattered. Mushfiqur Rahim and Liton Das, who helped Bangladesh

recover from 24 for 5 to post 365 on Tuesday with a record 272-run partnership, were in the middle at stumps after another top-order rout. Mushfiqur was 14 not out and Liton on 1.

Mathews followed his 199 in the first innings with an unbeaten 145, and Chandimal scored 124 to give Sri Lanka a 141-run lead. Sri Lanka was all out after tea for 506 in the first innings.

Mathews and Chandimal combined for 199 runs for the sixth wicket to take the game away from Bangladesh, despite Shakib Al Hasan's 5 for 96.

Langer hits out at politics in CA

PTI ■ PERTH

Former Australia coach Justin Langer has slammed the politics in the national cricket board as he opened up on his messy departure from the top job, specifically hitting out at interim chairman Richard Freudenstein.

In February, the 51-year-old stepped down as the senior men's team coach after rejecting a six-month contract extension, having hoped for a multi-year deal after overseeing a successful T20 World Cup campaign and an Ashes triumph.

The day after quitting his job, Langer had a heated conversation with Freudenstein.

Several Australian legends, including Mark Waugh, Adam Gilchrist, Ricky Ponting, Steve Waugh, Matthew Hayden and the late Shane Warne, came to their former teammate's defence and questioned Cricket Australia (CA) for the treatment meted out to Langer.

"The first thing he (Freudenstein) said to me was, 'It must make you feel so good that all your mates are support-



ing you in the media,'" Langer told a Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA event in Perth.

"I said, 'Yeah it is, acting chairman, but with all due respect, those mates are also the all-time greats of Australian cricket. They are the fabric of Australian cricket. They are Australian cricket. They also work all around the world in cricket.

"So yeah, I'm glad my mates are looking after me. Imagine if you had have."

"Ironically, the last six months of my coaching career

were the most enjoyable period of 12 years of coaching. Not only did we win everything, but I had energy, and I had focus, and I was happy - besides the bull**** politics."

The former Australia opener also clarified he had never spoken to anyone about taking the England coaching job after the sacking of Chris Silverwood.

Langer's departure coincided with the sacking of Silverwood, and the Australian's name was immediately linked to the England coaching position.

The former Australia opener also said he had never spoken to anyone about taking the England coaching job after the sacking of Chris Silverwood.

"I've never spoken to English cricket," Langer said.

"Former England captain) Andrew Strauss rang me the day after I resigned... But I have known Andrew Strauss for a long time and that was 14 weeks ago.

"(Apart from that) I've never spoken to English cricket."

"The thought of coaching England ... mate (shakes his head)."

KL becomes 1st batter to score 600+ runs in four IPL seasons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Even though his dream of winning the Indian Premier League (IPL) title ended once again with a heartbreaking 14-run defeat against Royal Challengers Bangalore on Wednesday (May 25), Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) skipper KL Rahul reached a unique batting milestone during his 58-ball 79-run innings against the Faf du Plessis-led side at Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

The 30-year-old became the first cricketer in the cash-rich league's history to score 600 plus runs in four different seasons. In the 15 matches of this year's edition of the IPL, the right-handed opening batter has scored 616 runs at an average of 51.33 and a strike rate of 135.38. He scored back-to-back hundreds against five-time winners Mumbai Indians and crossed the fifty-run mark on four occasions.

Before this year's edition, the top-order batter from Bengaluru had scored 626 runs in 13 matches of the 2021 edition, 670 runs in 14 matches of the 2020 season and 659 runs in the 2018



edition of the world's richest franchise cricket league.

KL, who is the second-highest run-getter in this season of the league up till now, finished as the third-highest run scorer in the 2018 and 2021 seasons, the second highest in 2019 and won the Orange Cap in the 2020 season, when the tournament was played in the United Arab Emirates.

Besides four 600+ seasons, KL scored 593 runs in the 2019 edition. West Indies T20 batting legend Chris Gayle and star Australian opening batter David Warner have scored more than 600 runs in the IPL on three different occasions and are now second on the list.

Both these left-handed batters have won the Orange Cap on two different occasions and are among the top 10 run-getters in the history of the league.

The 42-year-old Gayle crossed the 600 run mark in three consecutive years (2011-2013) while he was part of the Royal Challengers Bangalore side.

On the other hand, David Warner also achieved the feat in three consecutive seasons from 2016 to 2019 as the Sunrisers Hyderabad captain.