

ANALYSIS 7
BJP AIMS RECORD HAUL
IN A THREE-WAY POLL**MONEY 8**
INDIA TO GROW AT 'MODERATELY BRISK
RATE', INFLATION TO EASE: FINMIN**SPORTS 12**
SOUTH KOREA HOLDS
URUGUAY TO 0-0 DRAW

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

IS SAMANTHA
HOSPITALISED? TEAM
DISMISSES THE
RUMOURS

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**UAE BARS ENTRY OF PEOPLE WITH
SINGLE NAME IN PASSPORTS**

Individuals having only single name as surname or given name in their passports will not be allowed to enter the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with new guidelines coming into force. "Any passport holder with a single name (word) either in surname or given name will not be accepted by UAE immigration and the passenger will be considered as INAD," according to a circular issued by Air India and Air India Express, mentioning about the latest UAE guidelines. INAD refers to Inadmissible Deportee. According to the circular, dated November 21, such passengers will not be issued a visa and in case, the visa was issued previously, then he or she will be considered as INAD by the immigration authorities.

**'JHUND' ACTOR PRIYANSHU KSHATRIYA
ARRESTED FOR THEFT**

Priyanshu Kshatriya (18), who played a prominent role in Amitabh Bachchan-starrer 'Jhund', has been arrested for an alleged theft. Nagpur city police said on Thursday. Pradeep Mondave (64), a resident of Mankapur area, had filed a complaint about a theft of jewellery and cash worth Rs 5 lakh from his house, said a police official. The police apprehended a minor suspect who disclosed Kshatriya's alleged involvement in the crime and the latter was arrested on Tuesday, the official said. He was produced before a court which remanded him in police custody till November 25. The stolen items were recovered from a pigeon box in Gaddigodam area, the official said.

**INDIANS OVERTAKE CHINESE AS
LARGEST GROUP OF STUDENTS IN UK**

Indian students have for the first time overtaken Chinese as the largest group of foreign students studying in the UK with a massive 273 per cent hike in visas granted over the past few years, according to the country's official immigration statistics released on Thursday. The UK Home Office data collated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveals that Indians also continue to be the top nationality granted visas in the skilled worker category, with 56,042 granted work visas in the past year. Indian nationals also represented the highest number of visas at 36 per cent of the total under the tailored Skilled Worker Health and Care visa targeted at medical professionals, reinforcing Indian contribution to the state-funded NHS.

**SC COLLEGIUM RECOMMENDS
TRANSFER OF 7 HC JUDGES**

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Thursday recommended transfer of seven high court judges to different high courts in the country. The list of high court judges, who have been recommended for transfer, does not include Justice Nikhil S Kariel of the Gujarat High Court. Media reports on Justice Kariel's proposed transfer to Patna High Court had triggered protests by lawyers in the Gujarat High Court and later a delegation of bar leaders had met the CJI who was claimed to have assured them that the matter will be looked into. The resolutions of the Collegium, which also comprises Justices S K Kaul and S A Nazeer, were uploaded on the apex court website.

KCR for Assembly session in December**TRS to blast Centre's bias against TS**NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has decided to hold a session of the State Legislative Assembly for a week in December to apprise people about the discriminatory financial policies of the Centre against Telangana.

KCR directed Finance Minister Harish Rao and Legislative Affairs Minister Prashant Reddy to take steps regarding this.

"The unjustifiable sanctions imposed by the Centre on Telangana has resulted in the income of the state declining by around Rs 40,000 crore in fiscal 2022-2023. The Centre is preventing Telangana from moving forward in the path of development. The Centre's ludicrous economic policies have become a stumbling block in the growth of all states," the CMO statement said.

As the Monsoon session was not prorogued the Governor's address is not required in this session.

All States prepare budgets by taking into consideration budget figures released by the Centre before every financial year. As a regular practice, the Centre announces the FRBM limit for each state. The Centre announced the FRBM limit for Telangana as Rs 54,000 crore at the beginning of fiscal 2022-23.



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Following this, Telangana prepared its budget outlay. But the Centre suddenly reduced Telangana's FRBM limit to Rs 39,000 crore. The CMO said that due to this Telangana lost Rs 15,000 crore.

Apart from this, financially strong states are entitled to avail of 0.5 per

cent additional fund mobilization from the FRBM limit. Telangana, which is registering robust growth, was denied the 0.5 per cent additional loan facility as it refused to enforce electricity reforms which were against the interests of farmers. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar

Rao has already made it clear to the Centre that Telangana is ready to bear any hardships but will not accept the Centre's power sector reforms as that will harm Telangana's farmers as well as its agriculture sector.

As a result, the state lost about Rs 6,000 crore. This means that Telangana lost around Rs 21,000 crore (Rs 15,000 crore through the reduction in the FRBM limit and Rs 6,000 crore through additional mobilization).

The Centre also blocked the release of Rs 20,000 crore in non-budgetary funds to TS. The Telangana government is of the opinion that the state did not get nearly Rs 40,000 crore due to the Centre's policies.

"What is even worse is that the state government was mobilizing funds for the development of Telangana as per agreements signed with financial institutions earlier. The Centre blocked these funds by imposing impractical conditions," the CMO said.

The CM said that at every step the Centre is blocking Telangana's development by imposing restrictions.

"It is clear that the Centre is conspiring to dilute Telangana's development effort as the state has set an example for the country with its outstanding progress," the CMO said.

**'Biased and
inaccurate'****India slams USCIRF's
observations**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday termed as "biased and inaccurate" the US Commission for International Religious Freedom's latest observations claiming that religious freedom and related human rights are under threat in the country, and said the body continues to be guided by its prejudices and pursues a motivated agenda.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is a Congressional-appointed body. Its recommendations are, however, not mandatory to be implemented by the US State Department. Religious freedom and related human rights in India are under ongoing threat,

2

**Cases against Malla
Reddy and IT official**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cases were registered on Thursday by the police here against the Telangana Minister of Labour and Employment, Ch. Malla Reddy, for allegedly hindering the duties of Income Tax officials during their searches and against an IT department official following a complaint by the Minister's son, police said.

Based on the complaints, a 'Zero FIR' was registered (pertaining to

both cases) at the Bowenpally police station. The FIR will be transferred to Dundigal police station for investigations, they said.

The IT official in his complaint said that Malla Reddy and his family had interfered with his duties and that he was detained and his belongings were taken away by them. Accordingly, a case was registered against the Minister, police said.

Similarly, the Minister's younger son, filed a complaint with the police alleging that his elder brother was forced to sign some documents by the IT official, a senior police official said.

Following the complaint and counter-complaint cases were registered as a 'Zero FIR', the official said.

On Wednesday, Malla Reddy had accused CRPF personnel, who had accompanied Income Tax department officials during the searches carried out at his residence and educational institutions of 'beating up' his son.

2

**Verify Aadhaar
before accepting****UIDAI asks state
governments, entities**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Unique Identification Authority of India has asked state governments and entities to verify Aadhaar before accepting it either in the physical or electronic form to check its misuse, an official statement said on Thursday.

Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) said it maintains that verification of the Aadhaar number following the consent of the Aadhaar holder is the right step to establish the genuineness of any form of Aadhaar -- Aadhaar letter, e-Aadhaar, Aadhaar PVC card, and m-Aadhaar, presented by an individual.

UIDAI has also issued circulars to emphasise the necessity of verification and specify the protocol to be followed.

TRS MLAS POACHING CASE**SIT files cases against
Santhosh, Jaggu and Thushar****HC directs SIT not to arrest Prathap Goud till further orders**K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Special Investigation Team (SIT) officials included BJP General Secretary BL Santhosh, Jaggu Swamy and BJS President Thushar Vellappally in the accused list as they were facing allegations regarding the case on the attempt to poach TRS MLAs at the Moinabad farmhouse.

The SIT included BL Santhosh as A-4, Thushar Vellappally as A-5, Jaggu Swamy as A-6 and lawyer B. Srinivas as A-7 while filing cases against them at the Moinabad police station on Thursday. Ramchandra Bharati is A-1, Simhayaji is A-1 and Nanda Kumar is A-3 in the case.

The SIT also got a report regarding the voice patterns of the three accused from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL).

HC directs SIT not to arrest Prathap Goud

Meanwhile, Chitralekha and Pratha Goud filed a petition in the High Court challenging the notices issued by SIT. However, the Court directed the SIT not to arrest them till further orders. The High Court also directed Chitralekha and

Prathap to appear before the SIT on November 25.

Another twist took place in the attempt to poach TRS MLAs' case on Thursday.

The Telangana Special Investigation Team (SIT) issued notices to YSRCP MP Kanumuru Raghu Rama Krishna Raju. The SIT had issued the notices under CrP Section 41(A) asking Raghu Rama Krishna Raju to appear before the SIT on November 29 at the SIT office in the Police Command Control Centre.

2

**Is BJP eyeing
votes of AP BCs
settled in Hyd?**

2

'BJP giving tips about TRS leaders to ED, IT officials'SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana unit of the BJP is behind the Enforcement Department (ED) and Income-Tax Department (IT) raids on prominent TRS leaders and Ministers.

Sources said the state BJP unit is providing inputs to the Centre about TRS leaders and as per the direction of the Central Government headed by Prime

Minister Modi the ED and I-T officials are going into action.

A BJP leader said that the ED raided Minister Gangula Kamalakar's residence based on his complaint. This strengthens the impression that the state BJP is providing info to the Centre.

The BJP leadership wants to cut the funding sources of the TRS to weaken it financially by the time of the next Assembly elections. During the Munugode Assembly

by-election, both the BJP and the TRS competed with each other in spending money. In this, the TRS secured the upper hand by spending more money than the BJP and got the result accordingly.

The BJP leadership thinks that if the same thing repeats during Assembly elections the TRs may win. Keeping this in mind the BJP leadership has decided to cut the funding sources of the TRS. In this the BJP leadership is getting inputs

from the state BJP and they are directing ED and IT officials to conduct raids.

During the Munugode Assembly election, IT officials raided the residence of Power Minister G. Jagadish Reddy's PA. After the Munugode election, ED officials raided TRS minister Gangula Kamakar and companies owned by TRS MP Voddiraju Ravichandra.

2

Did not have one person who could complete term**■ SC comments on panel recommendations for Election Commissioner post**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The list of bureaucrats the Union law ministry recommended to the prime minister for picking an election commissioner did not have the name of even one person who could complete the stipulated six-year tenure at the poll panel, the Supreme Court said on Thursday.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice KM Joseph wondered was the government not closing the doors on meritorious younger candidates by appointing retired bureaucrats.

"There is a law. We expect you that you would act in such a way that you would comply with the statutory requirements. Why is that you will have a pool of retired bureaucrats, why

not others? Why only four names, why not have a larger pool of candidates?"

"Are you not shutting out the meritorious younger candidates? You seems to be hell bent that no chief election commissioner or for that matter EC gets a complete six

years tenure and it is against the statute," Justice Joseph said. Under the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991 an EC can have a tenure of six years or up to the age of 65, whichever is earlier.

Justice Joseph said the point is that from the pool of a large number of officers the government has selected

only those people who are never going to complete the six-year tenure.

"Why were the names sent to prime minister and not the council of ministers?" Justice Joseph asked. Attorney General R Venkataramani responded, "Batch is one criteria, date of birth is other, seniority from the batch is other. Similarly, there are several other aspects which are being considered. Several discussions are done. Everything is not in black and white. There are several ways of appointment. Some files go to the Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) through cabinet secretariat and some go directly to the prime minister".

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2

**Unemployment rate
dips to 7.2%: Survey**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas declined to 7.2 per cent during July-September 2022 from 9.8 per cent a year ago, the National Statistical Office (NSO) said on Thursday.

Joblessness or unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons among the labour force. Joblessness was high in July-September 2021 mainly due to the staggering impact of Covid-related restrictions in the country.

The latest data based on a periodic labour force survey, underlining a decline in the unemployment rate amid an improved labour force



participation ratio, point towards a sustained economic recovery from the shadow of the pandemic.

The unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above in April-June 2022 was 7.6 per cent in urban areas, the 16th Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) showed.

2

TODAY**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Dwitya: Nov 25 01:37 AM
to Nov 25 10:35 PM
Tritya: Nov 25 10:35 PM
to Nov 26 07:28 PM

Nakshatram:
Jyeshtha: Nov 24 07:37 PM
to Nov 25 05:21 PM
Moola: Nov 25 05:21 PM
to Nov 26 02:58 PM

Rahukalam: 10:39 AM to 12:03 PM
Yamagandam: 2:49 PM to 4:12 PM
Variyam: 01:32 PM to 02:58 PM
Gulika: 7:53 AM to 9:16 AM
Amritakalam: 09:23 AM to 10:50 AM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 27°C
Humidity: 64%
Sunrise: 6:26 AM
Sunset: 5:39 PM

Updated: NOVEMBER 24, 2022 5:00 PM



Is BJP eyeing votes of AP BCs settled in Hyderabad?

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM
■ VIJAYAWADA

Is the BJP trying to step into the shoes of the TDP? Did it eye on the votes of Andhra settlers in Hyderabad? Is it devising a strategy to corner the BC voters from AP in Hyderabad?

It may be recalled that the KCR government, soon after taking reins of state administration, cancelled quota for 26 BC communities in Telangana. After eight years, the BJP opposed the withdrawal of quota only to eye on the BC voters of AP. What is the motive behind the BJP submitting memoranda to Governor Tamilisai at Raj Bhavan?

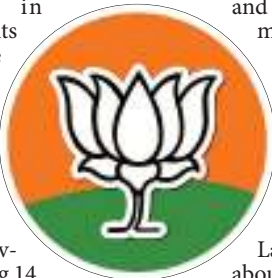
Within three months of TRS coming to power annulled quota for 26 AP BC communities in Telangana attracting criticism from AP BC communities then. But, Telangana BC communities did not react on the issue. It took place eight years ago. No political outfit raised its voice on the issue then. To the surprise of one and all, the BJP took up the issue

stirring a lot of political interest. Let us analyse the reasons for the BJP's latest political move.

The BJP is exploring all possible ways to gain good grip over Telangana. In a latest move, the settlers issue became handy for the BJP. The BJP which is spreading its tentacles in Telangana wants to include the 26 BC communities, who settled in Hyderabad long back, quota issue in its armoury.

The TRS government on Aug 14, 2014 issued a GO cancelling quota for the 26 BC communities of AP. These communities enjoyed the fruits of quota in undivided AP.

At a recent BJP training camp, the BJP MP CVL Narasimha Rao, who addressed on media relations, also touched the issue of withdrawal of quota for 26 AP BC



groups. He asked the party rank and file to take up the issue to the affected BC communities to render them social justice. Consequently, the BJP OBC Morcha entered the fray. OBC National Morcha president Dr K Lakshman led a OBC delegation to Governor Tamilisai Sounder Rajan and submitted her a memorandum reviving of 26 BC communities and include them under the BC Welfare Department. In fact, BJP MPs GVL and Dr Lakshman discussed about it 10 days ago to woo the AP settlers in Hyderabad towards the BJP fold.

But, the Andhra settlers in Hyderabad since long have become the traditional support base of the TDP. In the wake of Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy becoming the CM, the Rayalaseema settlers shifted their loyalty to the Congress.

Thus the Andhra settlers in Hyderabad divided their loyalties between TDP and Congress, but did not support any other party.

After the bifurcation of AP, Chandrababu Naidu proceeded to AP. Leading to dwindling of TDP operations in Hyderabad. Even after the bifurcation, the TDP got 15 seats and BJP with the support of TDP got 5 seats in constituencies in and around Hyderabad. After the vote for note controversy, the TDP leadership quit Telangana. In this backdrop, the settlers inclined towards the TRS as it was inevitable for them. The TRS leadership gave them MLA and municipal corporator seats in proportion to their population and won their hearts. In the last GHMC elections, the TRS candidates won from all divisors that have sizeable population from AP. The people who belonged Telangana districts but settled in Hyderabad lent their support to the BJP.

‘Biased and...

Continued from page 1

the USCIRF alleged on Tuesday in an unusual year-end update of the status of its assessment of religious freedom in the country.

Asked about the report at a media briefing here, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "We consider these biased and inaccurate observations about India by USCIRF. They (USCIRF) have a tendency to consistently misrepresent facts and this shows their lack of understanding of India, our constitutional framework, plurality and our robust democratic system."

"Given its past record, we are not surprised to see that USCIRF continues to be guided by its prejudices and pursues a motivated agenda that calls into question its own credibility," Bagchi said.

In its 2022 Annual Report earlier this year, the USCIRF had recommended that the US Department of State designate India as a "country of particular concern" for engaging in or tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as set forth by the International Religious Freedom Act.

Government to speed up construction of 2BHK houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Housing Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy and Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar held a video conference with Collectors, Additional Collectors and housing department officials on Thursday and asked them to prepare an action plan to speed up the construction of houses.

He said that basic infrastructure and the selection of beneficiaries should also be completed at the earliest so that the houses can be handed over to beneficiaries.

The Chief Secretary said the 2BHK housing programme is one of the flagship programmes of the government which was formulated by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao.

The Collectors were told to prioritize work on critical infrastructure and complete the remaining work in consultation with local MLAs and the

Minister.

The Minister said that Rs 18,000 crore has been sanctioned for the construction of 2.91 lakh houses. He said that the construction of 1.29 lakh houses has already started in towns and villages and is now in various stages of completion.

He said that 62,000 houses have been completed in the state and that Collectors are responsible for providing basic facilities like road, electricity, fresh water and drainage facilities and completing the selection process of beneficiaries.

By January 15, 2023, if there are any minor works left they should be completed, and basic facilities must be provided on a war footing to select and hand over houses to beneficiaries.

He said that the process of selecting beneficiaries should be transparent and those who are below the poverty line and have white ration cards and are living in rented buildings are

eligible.

First, gram sabhas and ward sabha meetings should be held and applications should be taken. The applications should be sent to Tahsildars, and must be examined at the field level and the list of those eligible should be sent to Collectors.

After that, if the list is sent to the government through collectors it will be thoroughly examined and the final list will be sent. If there are more eligible beneficiaries than the houses available, the beneficiaries should be selected through a lucky dip and the remaining applicants must be put on the waiting list.

Later, the Chief Secretary held a video conference with Collectors, Additional Collectors and other officials and reviewed the progress achieved in Podu, Bruhat Palle Prakruthi Vanam, Telangana Kreedha Pranganam and other revenue-related issues from the BRKR Bhavan on Thursday.

How can IT raids be wrong, Sanjay asks TRS leaders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is not an administration that will silently allow someone to earn money illegally by looting the poor, Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar said here on Thursday.

Sanjay said the way Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao has been responding to the raids is not right.

He said the BJP will fight legally the notices issued to BJP General Secretary BL Santhosh by the SIT and made it clear that the BJP has full confidence in the judiciary.

Criticising the allegations of TRS leaders that the BJP making the IT department raid TRS leaders as an act of political revenge, Sanjay said that officials would respond against persons who had



earned money illegally by looting the public and that they have the responsibility to conduct raids when they receive complaints.

Asking leaders criticising the raids to make it clear whether conducting raids against those who have amassed wealth illegally is wrong he said that it is not correct to link the raids to political parties.

He said the officials are not connected to any political party and that those who criticise are speaking without realising this.

Sanjay said that no one need be afraid of raids if they have not committed any wrongs. They can prove their sincerity by cooperating with the agencies, he said.

He said the Chief Minister has to take full responsibility for the murder of forest official Chalamala Srinivasa Rao. He asked the TRS government to ensure see that such incidents are not repeated.

He said that a discussion is going on across the nation on the KCR family's role in the Delhi liquor scam. He said the KCR family must extend full cooperation to the inquiry if they have not committed any offense.

BJP giving tips about...

Continued from page 1

Now IT officials are conducting raids on institutions and companies belonging to TRS Minister Ch. Mallareddy. In the casino case, the ED officials have questioned TRS Minister Talasani Srinivasa Yadav's brothers.

Sources said the BJP leadership has prepared a list of TRS leaders who are strong financially. In this list, there are some more ministers and public representatives who are close to Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao. After the attempted poaching of TRS MLAs, the Centre is concentrating on Telangana, particularly TRS leaders.

After the ED and IT raids TRS leaders are now frightened that the ED or IT department will raid their residences. Sources said that in coming days ED and IT officials are likely to raid some prominent TRS leaders including Ministers.

TRS leaders who are engaged in business are taking precautions to escape ED and IT raids. In fact, the raids have not surprised TRS leaders as KCR had warned them at a recent party meeting that Central agencies might raid them.

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records of Malla Reddy and the educational institutions belonging to him and his family members, sources privy to the development said.

Cases against Malla Reddy...

Continued from page 1

The IT sleuths, who carried out the searches on Tuesday and Wednesday checked the tax

TRS to blast Centre's bias against TS

Continued from page 1

"Every year, states prepare development plans (pragati paddu) as per their expectations. Due to the Centre's inappropriate decisions and the delay in releasing funds, the development of states has been blocked. The Centre's wrong policies will be detrimental to the country's development," the CMO said.

The CMO statement said the irrational decisions of the Centre are not only blocking the progress of Telangana but also that of the country. The Centre is undermining federalism by throttling states with its vindictive degenerate policies.

The Telangana Government wants to bring to the attention of the state's people and the country the Centre's irrelevant decisions. So it decided to hold an Assembly session in December to enlighten people through the Assembly.

SIT files cases against...

Continued from page 1

It is learnt that the SIT collected important information about Raghu Rama Krishna Raju as part of its investigation into the Moinabad farmhouse TRS MLAs' poaching case and served notices. Already, the accused Ramachandra Bharati, Simhayaji and Nanda Kumar are in judicial custody.

The SIT also issued notices to BJP General Secretary BL Santhosh, BDJS president Thushar Vellappally, Dr Jaggu Swamy and lawyer B. Srinivas. Only Srinivas appeared before the SIT during its two-day sitting.

The SIT issued notices on Wednesday to Nanda Kumar's wife Chitralekha, and another lawyer Prathap Goud from Amberpet. On Thursday, the SIT issued notices to Raghu Rama Krishna Raju.

The ACB Special Court dismissed the petition seeking the custody of the three

accused, Ramachandra Bharati, Simhayaji and Nanda Kumar by the SIT on Thursday.

The ACB Court made it clear that it had already allowed two days of custody of the accused and that it is not possible to allow their custody again.

The SIT officials questioned the three accused on November 10 and 11 after taking them into custody on various issues. The SIT collected some more information from the three.

But the information they got from the three was not enough and the SIT needed their custody to collect more information as they came to know some more facts during investigation.

The SIT requested five days of custody to collect information from the accused. But the ACB court dismissed the SIT plea.

The SIT has already collected information from where they got the money to

purchase MLAs. The SIT also seized the cell phones, laptop and other gadgets and secured information from them.

The SIT brought to the notice of the ACB court that they want to question the accused regarding some information they retrieved from cell phones, laptops and other gadgets.

However, the lawyers of the accused argued that the SIT has already questioned them for two days. They also said that the sections filed against the accused were wrong and that the SIT had filed cases against the accused due to political reasons.

They also said that the SIT had kept the accused in Chanchalguda jail for the last 25 days as remand prisoners. The lawyers of the accused urged the court not to allow custody once again. Agreeing with their arguments, the ACP special court refused to give the CBI five days of custody.

Did not have one person who...

Continued from page 1

The bench, also comprising Justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and C T Ravikumar, clarified there should not be any misunderstanding that the court is against the government and it is only debating and discussing the issue.

The AG replied, "Yes, My Lord. It is a debate and I am bound to answer the court's questions. If we start doubting every appointment, look at the implications for institution's reputation".

Justice Joseph said, "So, ultimately your point is that only those people need to be appointed who are on the verge of retirement, so that they don't get a full six year period. Is that the law? You are violating the law and we are saying that clearly".

The bench said it is not questioning or scrutinising the names but the process, and from the database the government has given, it appears there are several other officers who are younger.

Venkataramani said the existing system has been working for quite a long time and this is the

convention which is being followed.

"We cannot conclude that there is quid pro quo because something has happened in a certain way," he said.

Justice Roy said the court is struggling to find the reasons and logic as how these four names were selected by the law minister.

"You may be right in saying age category. We are testing the process. Now if age category is important, then there are 40 more names. How 36 names were left (out)?" Justice Roy said,

adding the court wants to lighten the mood by saying the Attorney General's note forgot to mention that Goel is gold medalist in mathematics and that election is all about numbers.

Venkataramani said he had left the point as he did not want to step into the shoes of decision makers.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner Anoop Baranwal said, as a matter of fact, there are 160 officers from the same batch and many are younger than those who were considered.

Unemployment rate dips...

Continued from page 1

It also showed that the unemployment rate among females (aged 15 years and above) in urban areas declined to 9.4 per cent in July-September, 2022 from 11.6 per cent a year ago. It was 9.5 per cent

in April-June, 2022.

Among males, the unemployment rate in urban areas dipped to 6.6 per cent in July-September 2022 compared to 9.3 per cent a year ago. It was 7.1 per cent in April-June 2022.

Labour force participation rate in

CWS (Current Weekly Status) in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above increased to 47.9 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022, from 46.9 per cent in the same period a year ago. It was 47.5 per cent in April-June 2022.

Labour force refers to the part of the population which supplies or offers to supply labour for pursuing economic activities for the production of goods and services and, therefore, includes both employed and unemployed persons.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹225
Without Skin	₹235
Broiler at Farm	₹200

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	477
HYDERABAD	484
VISAKHAPATNAM	477
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.84
(IN VIGYAWADA)	

5 knives seized from Poonawala's Chhatarpur flat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has seized five knives from the Chhatarpur flat of Aaftab Khan Poonawala who is accused of killing his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar and sawing her body into 35 pieces, sources said on Thursday.

However, police said, the saw used to cut her body is yet to be recovered.

The knives have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for examination to ascertain if these were used in

commission of the crime, the sources in the police department said.

"If these knives were used during commission of the crime, will be ascertained only after forensic examination which takes time," said a source.

Poonawala allegedly strangled Walkar and sawed her body into 35 pieces which he kept in a 300-litre fridge for almost three weeks at his residence in South Delhi's Mehrauli before dumping them across the city over several days.

MEHRAULI KILLING

Will ensure 'strict punishment' to accused: Amit Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that Delhi Police and prosecution will ensure "strict punishment" to the accused in minimal possible time in the Shraddha Walkar murder case. "I have my eyes on the entire case. I just want to tell the people of the country that whosoever has done this, through law and through courts, Delhi Police and prosecution will ensure strict punishment in the minimum time," he said at the Times Now Summit here. Shah said there is no lack of coordination between Delhi and Mumbai police. But the letter that has come to fore, Delhi Police has no role in it. In a police station in Maharashtra, Shraddha had given a letter that her body will be cut into pieces and about receiving death threats... No action was taken on it there... There will be probe on it there. At that time we did not have our government... Whosoever is responsible, strict action will be taken," the home minister said.

Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar had on Wednesday questioned the alleged failure of Maharashtra Police in taking strong action on a complaint filed by slain call centre employee Walkar in November 2020 in which she stated her live-in partner Aaftab Poonawala had tried to kill her. Poonawala allegedly strangled his live-in partner Shraddha Walkar (27) and saved her body into 35 pieces, which he kept in a 300-litre fridge for almost three weeks at his residence in south Delhi's Mehrauli before dumping those across the city over several days past midnight.

TRS cracked BJP playbook?

Continued from page 1

In fact, Industries Minister KT Rama Rao spoke about the BJP playbook during a media interaction and said that they can counter it.

"They will try to dent our vote bank, create communal tensions, religious polarization and make non-issues take centre stage. This is their playbook, they did it in West Bengal," KTR said. He said that the BJP's playbook

worked in WB as they got 20 seats.

"The BJP knows that they cannot come to power immediately in Telangana. Their game plan is to come second. They will fire these arrows and try out Hindutva tactics. They will use the RSS, the VHP, and the Bajrang Dal. Fortunately, we have Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao as our leader. He is a much better strategist than them," KTR said.

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LABOUR COST UP BY 8-10% YEAR-ON-YEAR IN Q3 2022; STABLE OUTLOOK FOR ECONOMY EXPECTED

Greenfield construction cost rises by 5% to 7% in view of the pandemic

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The year 2022 recorded an escalation in material costs due to curtailed production in view of the pandemic and increased global shipping costs led by supply chain bottlenecks. The overall greenfield construction cost increased by 5-7% in Q3 2022 Y-o-Y.

CBRE South Asia Pvt. Ltd., India's leading real estate consulting firm, today announced the findings of its report, 'Project Management 2.0 - Driving Value in the 'New Normal' Era'. The report examines the current market landscape and deliberates on factors influencing cost

trends across key asset classes.

Labour cost increased by 8-10% and reinforcement steel prices by about 20% Y-o-Y during Q3 2022 (reinforcement steel prices dip by 14% Q-o-Q in Q3 2022). Resolution of certain supply chain disruptions and reduction in price pressures in Q3 2022 brought about a directional swing and reduction in the index across most cities. This trend is expected to continue till the end of 2022.

Looking ahead, inflationary pressures are widely expected to abate in 2023. This, alongside the resolution of supply chain disruptions and more active policy intervention from the government, might limit hikes

in material prices. The report also highlights that cost pressures are likely to persist in the short term, even as overall cost increase is expected to recede in the coming quarters. Amidst ongoing geopolitical complexities, it is anticipated that material prices may moderate in 2023, with an expectation of longer-than-usual lead times for material delivery and short-term labour scarcity.

The outlook for construction costs remains stable but cautious, as market volatility is likely to persist in 2023 along with monetary tightening, continued high inflation, a possibility of a recession in developed economies and geopolitical tur-



moil-related challenges going forward. Therefore, CBRE forecasts a marginal rise in the over-

all construction costs during 2023 across cities, with Mumbai likely to witness a sharper rise.

However, strong demand for construction is likely to continue to push up employment in

the construction sector. Currently, the availability of skilled construction workers remains a challenge despite increased wages, benefits, and incentives being offered by employers.

Fuel price volatility may also impact the overall input costs in 2023. The report also suggests that the overall impact of costs related to health initiatives such as sanitization, periodic check-ups, labour maintenance, and additional insurance requirements will subside in 2023.

CBRE anticipates that for 2022-2023, the impact of health and wellness initiatives on the overall cost will further reduce

by around 1.5-2%.

Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO - India, South-East Asia, Middle East & Africa, CBRE, said, "Despite supply constraints, the demand side of the equation is bolstered this year by rental increases and market demand. Construction demand is likely to remain strong in the near term."

We expect a comparatively stable outlook for the Indian economy with the possibility of potential economic slowdown; however, considerable pent-up demand for new construction including government infrastructure projects should largely sustain construction activity in India."

PHARMA INDUSTRIES IN CITY FLOUT PCB GUIDELINES

Effluents find their way into Musi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Extensive damage is being caused to environment as several bulk drug and pharmaceutical industries, instead of treating the industrial effluents, are storing them in huge pits dug on the premises of the industry, violating the rules.

The irregularities related to disposal of the industrial effluents came to light when raids were carried out by the TS Pollution Control Board (PCB).

The PCB has directed six chemical companies to close their units since they went on stream without security necessary licence from it.

Instead of sending the efflu-

ents to the treatment plant, the companies are storing the waste on premises of the units in pits. The factory managements are discharging the effluents along with the rain water, causing pollution of lakes and tanks.

Some others have been shifting the effluents in private tankers to discharge them in the River Musi.

There are over 3,000 units in 10 industrial estates located in and around the city. These units are manufacture bulk drugs, chemicals, engineering goods and other products. Nobody knows what are the goods being produced by majority units in industrial estates located at Pasamylaram,



Jeedimetla, Charlapalli, Katedan, Jinnaram and Bollaram industrial estates.

Many unscrupulous elements manufacture banned products at some of the industrial estates. Majority of the

industries do not have a board indicating the nature of the industry. There will be high security near the gates.

No new person is allowed to enter the unit. Precautions are taken so that even the locals

would not know the activity going on behind the gates.

Industries categorised as Red and Orange should obtain permission from the PCB as these have a tendency to cause air and water pollution. At least 5,000 units secured PCB approval in the state.

Every unit that has the PCB approval is required to install a six-feet-long and four-feet-wide board indicating the name of the industry.

On the black board, the company should write in white colour the name of the company and name of the product and the area of transportation of the product. But the rule is hardly being implemented in industrial estates.

RS 18,000 CRORE SANCTIONED FOR 2.91 LAKH HOUSES

2-BHK housing works to be prioritised in state

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Housing Vemula Prashanth Reddy, along with Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, held a video conference with District Collectors, Additional Collectors and housing officials and directed them to prepare an action plan to expedite the construction of houses.

He said that basic infrastructure works and selection of beneficiaries should also be completed at the earliest so that the houses can be handed over to the beneficiaries. The Chief Secretary noted that the 2-BHK housing programme is one of the flagship programmes of the government which has been formulated as per the vision of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

The Collectors were told to prioritise the critical infrastructure works and complete the remaining works through convergence in consul-



tation with the local MLAs and the Minister.

The Minister said that Rs18,000 crore has been sanctioned for the construction of 2.91 lakh houses in the state. He said that the construction of 1.29 lakh houses has already started in municipalities and villages and they are in various stages. He said that 62,000 houses have been completed in the state and the district collectors are responsible for completing the basic facilities like road, electricity, fresh water and drainage and completing the selection process of the beneficiaries.

OU renews MoU with W Sydney varsity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of strengthening bilateral relations, Osmania University has renewed the MoU with Western Sydney University, Australia. Representatives from Western Sydney University Professor Barney Glover AO, Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Deborah Sweeney, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (REI), Professor Linda Taylor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) had an MoU signing meeting at Osmania University with the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. D. Ravinder.

Areas for collaboration discussed were cyber security, psychology (positive psychology, psycho-linguistics), Health Science - cancer research, genetics, entrepreneurship, business analytics, Indo-Pacific Studies with potential activities to be considered like Lecture/webinar series, faculty and student exchange, joint research and online courses.

Prof. Ravinder assured to initiate and facilitate the academic collaborations with the respective departments from OU to be successfully carried out in the period of engagement with Western Sydney University, Australia. He invit-

ed all the deans, principals and respective heads of the concerned faculties to present current research activities, and areas of mutual collaborations.

Prof. Glover recalled his memories of meeting Union Minister of Education, Dharmendra Pradhan and reiterated the engagement through the international partnerships in terms of mutual recognition of qualifications, tapping out potential through NEP, alleviate the challenges of skill gap in India through mutual collaborations. He highlighted areas like ocean governance, geopolitics, rare diseases through genetic screening, micro-credentials and applications of block chain technology and all other potential areas for collaborations. Prof. Glover assured to connect Osmania with academic unit of western Sydney to design courses with blended learning with Centre for Distance Education. Prof. Deborah echoed with Prof. Glover and expressed her keenness in the area of additive manufacturing.

Prof. P. Laxminarayana, Registrar, Osmania University, signed the MoU documents in the presence of Prof. G.B. Reddy, Chairperson, MOU Committee.



Representatives from Western Sydney University exchange an MoU at Osmania University with the Vice-Chancellor Prof. D. Ravinder

A PEARL IN CITY'S NECKLACE



KTR to open Shilpa Layout flyover today

Minister KT Rama Rao will be opening yet another Infrastructure project improving connectivity to ORR and decongesting Gachibowli Junction on Friday. This project is part of the Strategic Road Development Programme (SRDP) by the GHMC in the last six years. It is the 33rd SRDP project completed and the 17th flyover. So far, 17 flyovers have been completed, one cable bridge and 15 RUB, ROB and underpasses. Another 14 works under SRDP are in progress, said the Minister.

Talasani Yadav lays stone for community hall, urban clinic

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Animal husbandry T Srinivasa Yadav has said that the state government works for the welfare and development of the poor.

He laid the foundation stone on Thursday for a Rs 2-crore multipurpose community hall and an urban clinic to be built in Sriramnagar of Banjara Hills area of Khairatabad constituency along with MLA Danam Nagender and city mayor Vijayalakshmi.

Addressing the gathering, the minister asked officials to ensure that an anganwadi centre is located in the area along



with community hall and the urban clinic.

He asked the officials to take steps to develop the playground here. He expressed concern over successive governments that ruled the AP neglecting development of Sriramnagar colony of the city.

He said that the development works were sanctioned because of the efforts made by Danam Nagender and Mayor Vijayalakshmi.

The TRS government has

been striving hard to provide all amenities in slums. On account of the special attention paid by municipal administration minister development of flyovers and under passes are being built in the city.

The minister announced that grounding of works soon to construct a 2 BHK colony and multipurpose community halls in slums like BS Makta, Deendayal Nagar, Gowri Shankar Nagar in Khairatabad constituency.

Zonal Commissioner Ravi Kiran, deputy commissioner Rajanikant Reddy and executive engineer Vijay Kumar and others were present.

Trial diversions along Jubilee Hills check-post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of heavy flow of vehicles on Road No. 45 Junction and surrounding roads of Jubilee Hills, which is resulting in traffic congestion and to ease the movement of traffic, diversions are being made from November 25 onwards for a week on trial basis.

Traffic coming from Jubilee Hills check post and intending to go to Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge should go straight along Road No. 36 and take any of the following routes:-

Take a left turn at Metro Pillar No. 1650 (after Creamstone) Road No. 54, Jubilee Hills - Road No. 45 (under cable bridge flyover)

after Heart Cup and take right turn towards Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge. At Crona, take a left turn to Road No. 39, Jubilee Hills, left turn at Magnolia Bakery, Road No. 45, take a U turn at Zozoz Pizzeria Restaurant and Durgam Cheruvu cable bridge. Traffic coming from Jubilee Hills check post and intending to go to Durgam Cheruvu Cable Bridge will not be allowed to take a right turn at road No. 45 Junction or at Journalist Colony Junction.

Traffic Coming from under the Cable Bridge i.e., from Inorbit Mall side and intending to go to Jubilee Hills check post will not be allowed till Road No. 45 Junction and should take a left turn at Road

Maharashtra to exports goods through sea route. The state government has been trying to establish a dry port following a request from industrialists in the state.

In 2017, the government proposed to establish dry port in public-private partnership. Several organisations have come forward to be part of the exercise, but the state government backed out as the organisations did not meet requisite quality standards.

In July 2021, the Centre sanctioned 16 logistics parks to states, including Telangana. The Centre directed the state to acquire 2,000 acres for the purpose and asked the state to provide necessary infrastructure.

Guv calls for a concrete health plan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Thursday called for a concrete health plan to reduce the deaths related to many preventable diseases.

She said that it was important to have a time-bound action plan to realise the goal of TB-Mukth Telangana State by the year 2024.

The Governor was interacting with eminent medical professionals on health issues and initiatives at Raj Bhavan, here.

Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan exhorted the NGOs, activists, families, friends and all other members of the society to take part in the TB-Mukth Telangana campaign and support the patients in their fight against the disease.

Highlighting the importance of sustained initiatives to prevent



Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan interacting with eminent medical professionals on health issues and initiatives at Raj Bhavan on Thursday

the anaemia among the vulnerable people, including women and tribals, she stated that the consumption of local-made Mahualaddu, which is full of nutritional values, is one of the effective solutions to prevent malnutrition.

Referring to the increasing

number of breast cancer cases, she said that early detection and massive promotion of diagnostic tests would help identify the cases and offer effective treatment, thus avoiding the high incidence of mortality.

Promoting awareness, carrying out preventive tests, and

maintaining cancer registries are vital to manage the explosion of cases.

The Governor also suggested the preventive and regular health check-ups from the school level to the university level were vital in identifying the complications like poor eyesight, cardio-vascular diseases, and renal failures and offering them early and effective treatment.

Eminent breast cancer specialist Dr Raghu Ram, Devnar School for the visually-challenged founder Dr Sai Baba Goud, TB specialist Dr Sudheer Prasad, and Ravi Helios founder Dr Vijay Bhaskar Goud were among those who interacted with the Governor on health initiatives. Dr Raghu Ram submitted a detailed roadmap to the Governor highlighting the prevention and fight against breast cancer in the State.

SAILING SMOOTH



Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar said the Waterschool at Durgam Cheruvu initiated by the HMDA and managed by Yacht Club of Hyderabad is shaping up nicely after initial hiccups. School kids, school management, women and kids desirous to learn sailing should contact <https://yachtfoundation.com>

ISB hosts meets for forest economy model

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Indian School of Business (ISB) hosted a series of round-table discussions to establish the forest economy model, which is being built on partnerships amongst the industry, forest-dependent communities and the government.

The Initiative on the Forest Economy (IoFE) is a landscape-scale initiative at ISB-BIPP aimed towards building a robust forest economy to transform the livelihoods of over 200 million forest-dependent people and to enable sustainable management of forest landscapes across the country.

TS Swacch ranking improves from 11 to 4



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana won 23 awards in the Swachh Survekshan-2022 (SS). Of this, 16 awards were handed over during the Azadi@75 Swachh Survekshan-22 event held in New Delhi on October 1.

The MoHUA announced Rank No: 2 and No: 3 in the 'fast mover city' category on November 21 in which Telangana bagged seven more awards.

The overall ranking of Telangana has improved from number 11 in SS-21 to number 4 in SS-22. In the South Zone category, out of the 30 awards, Telangana bagged 21 awards.

Warangal was adjudged the third fastest-moving city in the

national category. Telangana with 21 out of 30 awards came first among the five states in the south zone.

The MoHUA has requested states to felicitate award-winning cities. Three ULBs won awards under the National Level League, that is, the Indian Swachhatha League, which was conducted for the first time.

Under the Prerak Dauur Sammam category the number of awards was increased from three in 2020-21 to seven in 2021-22. Telangana came second in the country in the number of awards won.ODF++ towns have increased from eight in 2020-21 to 45 in 2021-22 due to efforts made under the state-level flagship Pattana Pragathi Programme.

List of ULBs which won awards under SS-2022

1. Bhoopur Municipality in the Self-Sustainable City category under <15K population section
2. Chandur Municipality as the first Fast-Moving City in the <15K population category
3. Wardhannapet Municipality as the second Fast-Moving City in the <15K population category
4. Kothapally Municipality as the cleanest city in the <15K population category
5. Neredchherla Municipality in the Citizen Feedback category in the <15K population group
6. Chitral Municipality for 'Innovative & Best Practices' in the <15K population category
7. Adibatla Municipality in the Self-Sustainable City category in the 15K-25K population category
8. Kompally Municipality as the first Fast Moving City in the 15K-25K population category
9. Gundlupochampally Municipality as the second Fast Moving City in the 15K-25K population category
10. Kothakota Municipality as the third Fast Moving City in the 15K-25K population category
11. Ghatkesar Municipality as the cleanest city in the 15K-25K population category
12. Husnabad Municipality in the Citizen Feedback category in the 15K-25K population category
13. Gajwel Municipality as the Cleanest City in the 25K-50K population category
14. Turkyamjal Municipality as the first Fast Moving City in the under 25K-50K population category
15. Amangal Municipality as the second Fast Moving City in the 25K-50K population category
16. Vemulawada Municipality as the first Citizen Feedback City in the under 25K-50K population category
17. Badangpet Municipal Corporation as the Cleanest City in the under 50K-1 Lakh population category
18. Korutla Municipality as the first Fast Moving City in the under 50K-1 Lakh population category
19. Kagaznagar Municipality as the second Fast Moving City in the 50K-1 Lakh population category
20. Jangaon Municipality as the third Fast Moving City in the 50K-1 Lakh population category
21. Siricilla Municipality as the first Self-Sustainable City in the 50K-1 Lakh population category
22. GWMC as the third Fast Moving City in the 3-10 Lakh population category
23. eCunderabad Cantonment Board for 'Citizen Feedback' in the Cantonment Board Category
24. Alampur Municipality in the category of <15K population
25. Peerzadiguda Municipal Corporation in the category of 25K to 50K population
26. Korutla Municipality in the Special Mention category.

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Thursday bluntly told Sangareddy MLA T Jagga Reddy to pick an MLA of his choice as CLP leader in case the latter was not happy with his leadership.

Bhatti Vikramarka, however, said he would respect the opinion of Jagga Reddy.

Jagga Reddy, who is also vice-president of Telangana Pradesh Congress committee, held TPCC chief A Revanth Reddy and Bhatti Vikramarka responsible for Marri Shashidhar Reddy to quit the party. An experienced leader had quit the party. Jagga Reddy alleged on November 19 that Reventh Reddy and Bhatti Vikramarka were 'playing their own game.'

Speaking to the media on Thursday at Assembly media point, Bhatti Vikramarka said that Marri Shashidhar Reddy should not have left the party. However, it was not proper for Shashidhar Reddy to criticise the party. He said that Shashidhar Reddy's father,



Jagga Reddy alleged on November 19 that Reventh Reddy and Bhatti Vikramarka were 'playing their own game.'

Marri Chenna Reddy, was not secular.

"I am condemning Marri Shashidhar Reddy's comments. BJP and TRS have been trying to see that there is not Congress party in Telangana", he said. Bhatti Vikramarka found fault with Health Director G Srinivasa Rao touching the feet of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. Srinivas Rao said he would do so for 100 more times, Bhatti

Vikramarka said, and added it was 'objectionable.'

Responding to IT and ED raids in the State, Bhatti Vikramarka said that the TRS and BJP were politicising the raids being conducted by the Income Tax and Enforcement Directorate agencies.

It was usual for the agencies to conduct raids. He said that the notices were served by the ED to Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi. They were an act of political vendetta.

Bhutanese Buddhist monks impressed with features of Bhuddhavanam

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A high-level Bhutanese Buddhist delegation led by Tenzin Nyamgya, representing the International Buddhist Confederation, visited Bhudhavanam, a Buddhist Heritage Park in Nagarjunasagar on Thursday.

The visit was organised under the instructions of Minister for Tourism V Srinivasa Goud. The Buddhist monks were facilitated by Special Officer Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Bhuddhavanam project and TSTD Managing Director B Manohar Rao.

It was a guided tour. Buddhist Expert and Consultant E Sivanagi Reddy briefed the monks on the Buddhist heritage of Telangana, Buddhism at Nagarjunakonda, the contribution of Acharya Nagarjuna



Bhutanese Buddhist monks visiting Bhuddhavanam in Nagarjunasagar on Thursday

and important Buddhist sites in Telangana.

The high-level Buddhist delegation was received by Bhuddhavan officials K Sudhanreddy and K Krantibabu. Dr Sivanagi Reddy explained salient features of the Bhuddhavanam.

They expressed their thanks to Telangana Tourism Minister V Srinivasa Goud and Mallepalli Laxmaiah for their support.

The Bhutanese Buddhist monk delegation was impressed with the features at Bhuddhavanam and announced their intention to set up a Monastery. The monks were apprised of the concept and segments of Bhuddhavanam.

The Heritage Theme Park spread across 274 acres is divided into eight segments. Each segment gave an insight into the major events of the life of Siddhartha Gautama.

Officials told to promote creativity among students

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Medak MLA Padma Devender Reddy inaugurated the 2022- district-level science exhibition would help promote creativity among students.

Padma Devender Reddy inaugurated the 2022- district-level science exhibition organised under the auspices of the Education Department at the local Wesley High School. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA stressed the need to conduct science exhibitions to encourage creativity among the youth. She advised the students to strive to become good scientists. She exhorted the students to serve the people by becoming scientists. She expressed happiness over the organisers arranging 438 science exhibits and 36 inspire exhibits received from the public and private schools



TRS MLA Padma Devender Reddy inaugurating a science exhibition at Wesley High School in Sangareddy on Thursday

in the district.

District Education Officer Ramesh, Municipal Chairman Chandrapal, Vice-Chairman Mallikarjun Goud, District Science Officer Rajireddy, Medak DSP Saidulu, Medak MEO Nilakantham, teachers and students participated in this programme.

Ex-MLA Anil issues notice to Shashidhar for 'defaming' Tagore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former MLA Eravarthi Anil has issued a notice to Marri Shashidhar Reddy accusing him of making defamatory statements against Telangana Congress affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore.

In his notice, Eravarthi Anil Kumar said that he is issuing the notice to Marri Shashidhar Reddy as he was offended by the defamatory, derogatory and baseless statements made against Congress leader Manickam Tagore, an MP, and in-charge of TPCC without any evidence.

Anil said that it was brought to his notice through newspapers that Shashidhar had made a statement that Manickam Tagore had taken Rs 25 crore as a bribe and had helped Revanth Reddy, MP, to get appointed as

the TPCC President.

Shashidhar had said that the bribe was taken by Tagore as he was the in-charge of Congress affairs in Telangana.

Anil said that Shashidhar's statement was baseless without any evidence and is an attempt to tarnish Tagore's image and thereby weaken the Congress. Tagore was selected for the party post as he is an MP and has been in politics for many years and is regarded with high esteem. Anil said that Shashidhar made the statement more than a year after Revanth's appointment as TPCC President and after quitting the party.

This shows Shashidhar's intention to defame not only Tagore but also the party which had given Shashidhar many opportunities in his political career.

Shashidhar had said that the bribe was taken by Tagore as he was the in-charge of Congress affairs in Telangana.

Anil said that Tagore was elected as an MP by the people and the attempt made by Shashidhar is not only defamatory but also indicates the malicious intention to spoil his image. Anil said that Shashidhar should withdraw the statement made against Manickam Tagore in public and apologise to him and if he fails to do it legal action would be taken against him.

NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

Homes for all, vows CM

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The main objective of the government is to provide shelter for all people who do not own houses, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy has said and directed the Housing department officials to provide basic infrastructure of electricity, drinking water and drainage system in all colonies by the time the construction of the houses is completed. During a review meeting on the Housing department held here on Thursday, the Chief Minister directed the officials to constantly monitor the construction of the houses for which the government had already spent Rs 5,655 crore in the present fiscal. Underlining the need for constant supervision of the construction of houses, he said it would help the official machinery take follow-up action periodically to achieve targets in the housing sector. When the officials informed him that every Saturday is being observed as Housing Day and inspection teams are visiting the layouts without fail on that particular day to supervise the progress of construction of the houses, the Chief Minister asked them

to upload the details of the visits on related websites.

While instructing the officials to complete the construction of the houses well before the scheduled deadlines, he asked them to concentrate on the construction of the houses for the people who have chosen Option 3.

He directed them to identify the priority works in all layouts without compromising on the quality of construction by strict adherence to the SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) which would be made available to construction teams.

Quality control measures should be applied and quality evaluation tests conducted at every stage of the construction to ensure the good quality of the houses.

When informed by the officials that the DPRs relating to the provision of basic infrastructure are ready, he suggested that by the time the construction of the houses is completed, they must be provided with all three basic facilities of drinking water, drainage, and electricity while the works on other infrastructure can go on simultaneously.

Only one family thrives in TS: TDP leader

PNS ■ MEDAK

Narsapur Assembly constituency TDP in-charge Ramana Rao has alleged that only one family thrived in all aspects in new state of Telangana.

One way, statehood to Telangana has been granted only to benefit that family.

In an indirect reference to Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's family at a programme held at a private function hall here on Thursday, he said that Kasani Gyaneshwar Mudiraj has been appointed new in-charge of Narsapur Assembly constituency of the TDP. He alleged that the state government is not in a position to pay wages to employees every month and charged the Chief Minister with completely failing to fulfill the promises he made to the people. Therefore, he demanded former chief minister of undivided AP N Chandrababu Naidu to play an important role in development of Telangana. He vowed to strive hard tirelessly for development of TDP in Narsapur constituency. He hinted at launching the TDP membership drive in villages to take the party into the masses.

Officials told to speed up podu land claim process

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

District Collector P Uday Kumar has directed RDOs to direct the District Regularisation committee to examine the qualified claims for pattas to the Podu lands.

He said that a total of 17,282 claims had been received from 138 gram panchayats in the district for regularisation of the Podu lands. He asked the Revenue Divisional Officers to go through the claims sent to



Nagarkurnool Collector P Udaya Kumar hold a review meeting with Revenue Divisional Officers in Nagarkurnool on Thursday

them along with documentary evidence and re-route the eligible claims to the district

committee.

He reviewed the progress of regularisation of the Podu

lands in a meeting with the RDOs held at collectorate here on Thursday. He asked

them to get comprehensive information from mandal development officer and gram panchayat secretaries and forward the claims to the district committee.

He asked the RDOs to do injustice to the eligible tribal people in a transparent manner. Additional Collectors Manu Choudhary and Motilal, District Tribal Welfare Officer Anil Prakash, DPO Krishna, RDOs Nagalakshmi, Rajesh Kumar and Pandu Naik were present.

Laxman demands inclusion of 26 communities in BC list

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Rajya Sabha member K Laxman addressed a letter to Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan to include 26 communities in the Backward Classes (BC) list of Telangana state. These communities were included in the BC list during the period of United Andhra Pradesh. But, they were removed from the BC list by the Telangana government in 2014, he explained. He further said that the communities included sev-

eral categories. He warned that there would be agitation if the government failed to include these com-

munities in the BC list. These communities were removed from the BC list without conducting a survey, he said.

He warned that if the decision to remove 26 castes of AP from Telangana's BC list were not reversed, there would be another movement against the

KCR government. He demanded that 26 castes belonging to Uttarandhra be reinstated in the BC list.

After talking to the media, Laxman said that the Governor responded positively to his appeal. He criticised Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for removing the communities from the BC list.

Laxman accused KCR government of unilaterally removing 26 castes from the BC list. He regretted that due to KCR's action, the BC students were not getting scholarship.



INCREASE IN STORAGE CAPACITY

Marketing Department achieves milestone in building

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Department of Agriculture Marketing under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao is taking measures to strengthen the Marketing wing in the State. The measures being taken are aimed at extending better services to farmers, according to officials.

There were 750 warehouses with a storage capacity of 7.50 lakh tonnes by the time the new State of Telangana came into being. The State government embarked on construction of warehouses on a

massive scale after realising that the storage capacity was not at all sufficient to serve the interests of the farmers.

The State government, in cooperation with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), started the construction of 457 warehouses at a cost of Rs 10.24 crore with a storage capacity of 17.35 lakh tonnes. As many as 347 warehouses have been constructed and the storage capacity went up from 7.38 lakh tonnes to 24.65 lakh tonnes. These warehouses have been put to use for storing rice



meant for Public Distribution System (PDS), fertiliser and MSP operations.

The total storage capacity of warehouses belonging to State Warehousing Corporation, Civil Supplies, Markfed, Central Warehousing

Corporation, Food Corporation of India, Investor Godwons, Private Entrepreneur Guarantee, Agriculture Marketing Department and Private godowns was 39.01 lakh tonnes during 2014-2015. The storage

capacity has gone up to 73.80 lakh tonnes by 2021-22, the officials said. A total of 58 Agricultural Markets were integrated with e-NAM. Nizamabad Agriculture Market Committee secured PM Excellence award in 2017.

The Agriculture Market Committee at Kesamudram got first prize for successfully integrating with e-NAM. A total of 50.18 lakh tonnes of agricultural products worth Rs 16,977 crore were sold through e-NAM. Apart from it, a vegetable market on Karimnagar highway and

farmers's markets at Pragnapur and Allampur were constructed.

Integrated markets were constructed at a cost Rs 20 crore at Siddipet, Rs 22.85 at Gajwel and at a cost of Rs 19.85 lakh at Suryapet.

There were a mere 30 Rythu Bazaar in the past. Now, the number of Rythu Bazaars has been went up to 47 and 13 more are under construction. A model Rythu Bazaar, was set up at Kukatapally. A bio-gas plant with a capacity to use 10 tonnes of waste for generating electricity was set up.

INDIA CORNER

Situation in Jammu and Kashmir has improved: Muzaffar Baig

Former Jammu and Kashmir deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Baig on Thursday said the situation in the union territory has improved in the past two to three years and good work has been done on the development front as well. Baig, who quit the Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP in 2020 after nearly 20 years, also said peace in the region was in the interest of both Pakistan and India. "I don't think there is as much instability in Jammu and Kashmir as is being projected. In the past two to three years, stability has improved significantly... The situation has been such that there has been a reduction in bloodshed," Baig told reporters here. On assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, he claimed that towns and cities are neglected because elections have taken place only at the village level where 70 per cent of the population lives. Good work has been done at the village level, but in cities and towns, development works have not taken place, Baig said, adding that this can happen when assembly elections are held and an elected government is in place and prepares a budget.



Art exhibition explores elements of spirituality, a journey within

Inspired by her visits to religious places across India, an artist here has created a series of artworks with elements of spirituality, evoking thoughts about "the creator", the mysteries of the universe and the inner space. The art exhibition, "Antarman: A journey within", by Shruti Goenka at India Habitat Centre showcases artworks based on her visit to monasteries in Ladakh, Ganga ghats in Varanasi, Kedarnath temple, historical Buddhist site Kanheri caves in Mumbai, and temples of south India. The show is curated by Sangeeta K Murthy. "The meaning of spirituality can be different to every human being. For some it can be an experience that creates a system of personal beliefs in a religion or god, for some it can be just connecting with something bigger than yourself, for others it can be in the form of service to humanity or connecting with nature, art, yoga, meditation etc", Goenka said. Goenka's subjects are depicted in her signature style wherein she has used various hand mudras.



3003 couples tie knot at mass marriage event in Ghaziabad

More than 3,000 pairs from Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist communities tied the knots as per their religious rites at a community marriage ceremony in Kamla Nehru Nagar ground here on Thursday, a senior government official said. Couples were from Ghaziabad, Hapur and Bulandshahr districts, Ghaziabad District Magistrate RK Singh told PTI. The financial help was also provided to the children of daily wagers registered with the district labour department which organised the mass marriage event, he said. Rs 10,000 were paid in advance to each pair to purchase the wedding dress while Rs 65,000 would be transferred to the bank account of the bride's father by the labour department, the DM said. In total Rs 22.50 crores have been spent by the labour department on the event, the senior officer said. Local parliamentarian VK Singh and Anil Rajbhar, Minister of labour and employment in the UP government, who were present in the ceremony, blessed the newly wed couples, the officer added.



Concentrated global push of millets key for food security: Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday said a concentrated global push for millets is needed as the three Cs of climate change, Covid-19 and conflict are impacting food security in some way or the other.

Millets are grown in 130 countries, including India, and a concentrated push by these countries for millets would enhance food security, increase self-reliance and global availability, the minister said.

Speaking at a pre-launch celebration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets, the minister shared how each of the 3Cs has impacted food security putting the global economy at risk due to the concentration of production centres and trade disruption.

He said de-risking the global economy requires more decentralised production and more self-reliance as well as "willingness" on part of the country not only to grow for themselves but to help each other. Against this backdrop, the minister asked High Commissioners and Ambassadors to India to give much greater attention to food security and think of millets from the point of view of international relations apart from its nutritional, production and climate benefits.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of State for Agriculture Shobha Karandlaje, Minister of State for External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi and Agriculture Secretary Manoj Ahuja were present at the event.



"Look at the state today of the world. I would like you to reflect on the relevance of millets to that. If there are three big challenges which we have experienced and continue to experience. They are to my mind are 3Cs: Covid, Conflict, and Climate. Each one of them some way has impacted food security," Jaishankar said.

He suggested that in international relations, every country

should be giving "much greater attention to food security" and looking for more resources, diversity, production, reliable and resilient supply chain.

"If there is today a concentrated global push of millets grown in 130 countries, what you will see (is) these 130 countries will surely enhance their own self-reliance and food security," he said.

In the process, they will

actually contribute to a larger amount of foodgrains which will be available for global consumption, he added.

He said millets-growing nations should not only think purely as nutritional or agricultural exercise or something which will improve farmers' income, which is extremely important but do also think of larger implication, greater protection of more diversity of food which has other virtues."

Sharing the impact of 3Cs on food security, Jaishankar said concentrated production centres and trade disruptions affect the global economy. The Covid-19 period reminded what the pandemic would do to food security. "I think this was not the first pandemic and I am sure this will not be the last one. ...I think there will be a future pandemic.

BJP committed to bring Uniform Civil Code: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the BJP is committed to bring Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the country but only after following all democratic processes and discussions on it.

Addressing an event here, he also exuded confidence in BJP's victory in the Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat assembly elections as also in the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) polls.

The home minister credited Prime Minister Naredra Modi for making the country's politics free from the "naasur" (canker) of casteism, dynasty and appeasement.

"Modi ji has made country's politics free from casteism, dynasty and appeasement and started politics of performance.



Whosoever perform, will govern the country. Whosoever puts in effort, will govern the country. Those who are pro-country will govern (it).

"Nobody would rule on the basis of place of one's birth or to the caste he or she belongs or how much appeasement somebody does," he said, adding that the country's people have accepted this policy of the Modi government.

Talking about the UCC, Shah said it has been a promise of BJP since its days of Bhartiya Jan Sangh.

"Not only BJP, the Constituent Assembly had also advised the Parliament and states that UCC should come in the country at an opportune time," he said at the Times Now Summit on 'India: A vibrant democracy, global bright spot'. Shah said for any secular country, laws should not be on the basis of religion.

"If a nation and states are secular, how can laws be based on religion? For every believer, there should be one law passed by the Parliament or the state assemblies," he said.

He, however, said that the commitment of the Constituent Assembly was forgotten over a period of time.

"Except the BJP, no other party is in favour of the Uniform Civil Code. They don't even speak on it. If they don't have courage, they won't oppose it.

Labourer in actor's farm house gets 43 yrs jail term in POCSO case

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A special POCSO court in Mysuru has sentenced a labourer from Bihar to 43 years in prison for sexually assaulting a nine-year-old girl.

Judge Shayma Khamroz found Najeeb (33) guilty and sentenced him on charges under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. A fine for Rs 50,000 was imposed on him.

Najeeb was employed in Vinish Darshan Katewari Stud Farm owned by Kannada actor Darshan. He used to look after the horses at the farm house located on T Narasipura Road.

According to prosecution, the 33-year-old man repeatedly sexually assaulted the minor in 2021.

Tripura man sentenced to death for murdering five in killing spree

PNS ■ AGARTALA

A court in Tripura's Khowai district sentenced a 40-year-old man to death for murdering five people, including his two daughters, elder brother, a police inspector and a passer-by, in a killing spree last year.

The court of District and Sessions Judge Sankari Das, after hearing the arguments, awarded capital punishment on Wednesday.

"Initially, it appeared that Pradip Debroy was mentally ill but later doctors certified that he was mentally fit. The court passed the verdict in less than a year," government advocate Bikash Deb said.

Debroy, a resident of Uttar Ramchandraghat area in the district and a daily-wager by profession, had suddenly turned violent on the midnight



of November 26 last year, killing his two daughters Aditi and Mandira with an iron rod.

When his elder brother, identified as Amalesh Debroy, came to the scene, he was also killed by the convict on the spot, Assistant Inspector General Jyotishman Das Chowdhury said.

After murdering the three family members, the convict came out on the road and started randomly attacking passersby, resulting in severe

injuries to two people going on a rickshaw, of whom one person, Krishna Das, succumbed to his injuries at Khowai hospital.

As Debroy created havoc on the road, Khowai Police Station officer-in-charge Satyajit Mallik along with a large police contingent reached the spot and tried to take him into custody.

But in the melee, Debroy attacked Mallik and he later died at a state-run hospital in Agartala. Eventually, police took him into custody.

After conducting a speedy investigation into the gruesome murders, police submitted the chargesheet with the court.

However, why Debroy had suddenly turned violent on the night of the incident was not immediately known.

Pilot traitor, can't be made Rajasthan CM: Gehlot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot called Sachin Pilot a "gaddar" (traitor) on Thursday and said he cannot replace him as he had revolted against the Congress in 2020 and tried to topple his own government.

The remarks have further widened the fissures in the Congress party in Rajasthan, where Assembly polls are slated next year. The Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, is also set to enter the desert state.

Pilot, who walked alongside Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday, did not react to Gehlot's remarks.

Gehlot also alleged that Union Home Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Amit Shah was



involved in Pilot's rebellion, when some Congress MLAs loyal to him were holed up in a Gurugram resort for more than a month and Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited them often, claiming that he has proof that an amount of Rs 10 crore was paid to each of those legislators, including Pilot.

The veteran leader also said the Congress can replace him with any of its 102 MLAs

in Rajasthan except Pilot if the top leadership feels that the prospects of the party would improve in next year's Assembly polls.

"The MLAs will never accept someone who has revolted and has been dubbed as a gaddar. How can he become the chief minister? How can the MLAs accept such a person as the chief minister? I have proof that Rs 10 crore each were distributed to the MLAs holed up in a

Gurugram resort for toppling the Congress government in Rajasthan," Gehlot told NDTV.

He said one will never find an example where a party president "tries to topple his own government".

Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Punia has, however, denied the charge that the saffron party was involved in paying money to Congress legislators in 2020 to defect.

Gehlot said if Pilot had apologised to the MLAs and won them over, things would have been different.

"Till now, he has not apologised. If he had apologised, I would not have had to apologise," the chief minister said, referring to his apology to former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi after more than 90 MLAs close to him did not allow a Congress Legislature Party meeting to take place.

Nirav Modi seeks permission to appeal extradition to India

PNS ■ LONDON

Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi has filed an application in the High Court here, seeking permission to appeal against its decision to extradite him to India in the UK Supreme Court.

The 51-year-old businessman lost an appeal on mental health grounds earlier this month, when a two-judge High Court bench ruled that his risk of suicide was not such that it would be either unjust or oppressive to extradite him to India to face charges of fraud and money laundering in



the estimated USD 2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) loan scam case.

Nirav, who remains behind bars at Wandsworth Prison in London, had two weeks to file an application seeking an appeal on

the grounds of a point of law of general public importance, which according to experts is a high threshold that is not met very often. It is unknown if and when extradition may take place as Nirav Modi still has legal challenges open to him, UK Home Office sources said.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), acting on behalf of the Indian authorities, is now expected to respond to the latest application, following which a High Court judge is to give a ruling on paper without a full hearing.

Court orders registration of case against K'taka Minister

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A Special Court here has ordered for the registration of a criminal case against the Karnataka Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on finding prima facie evidence that he had defamed an activist.

"This court is of the considered opinion that the complainant has made out sufficient grounds for proceeding against the accused for offences under Section 499 of IPC which is punishable under Section 500 of IPC and the offence under Section 501, R/w section 34 of IPC," the

XLII Additional Magistrate Court which is a Special Court of trial of cases against sitting and former legislators said in its order on November 15.

The private complaint was filed by R Anjaneya Reddy from Chikkaballapura taluk. It came up before Judge Preeth J. The complainant Reddy claimed to be a social worker who had fought for irrigation schemes. When Sudhakar was appointed as the chairperson of the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board on June 20, 2019, Reddy had challenged this in the High Court of Karnataka.

Political heat over Karnataka-Maharashtra boundary dispute intensifies

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The political heat over the inter-state border row has escalated with Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai hitting back at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis terming his statement on the issue "provocative".

"No village in Maharashtra will go to Karnataka! The state government will fight strongly in the Supreme Court to get Marathi speaking villages in Karnataka including Belgaum-Karwar-Nipani!," said

Fadnavis.

In a retort, Bommai, terming it a provocative statement, said: "His (Fadnavis') dream will never come true. Our government is committed to protecting our state's land, water and borders."

He further said that there was no question of giving up any space in the border districts of Karnataka. In fact, he said: "Our demand is that the Kannada speaking areas of Maharashtra like Solapur and Akkalkot should join Karnataka." The dispute over Belagavi dates back to the

1960s after the reorganisation of States on linguistic lines.

Earlier this week, the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra appointed two ministers to coordinate with the legal team regarding the court case on the dispute set to come up in the Supreme Court. Bommai said soon after that the State has deployed a battery of top lawyers, including Mukul Rohatgi and Shyam Diwan, to fight its case.

Bommai said since 2004, the Maharashtra government has filed a case in the Apex court over the border issue.

FIRST PHASE OF GUJARAT POLLS

21% candidates facing criminal cases; AAP tops list

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

A total of 167 candidates, out of the 788 contesting the 89 seats in the first phase of Gujarat Assembly election, have criminal cases against them, with 100 of them facing serious charges like murder and rape, a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said on Thursday.

With this, 21 per cent of the candidates in fray have criminal cases against them, while 13 per cent are facing serious charges.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is contesting 88

seats out of the total 89, tops this list among major political parties in the fray with 36 per cent of its candidates having criminal cases. Thirty per cent of its candidates are facing serious cases such as murder, rape, assault, kidnapping, among others, the ADR said in its report. The number of candidates having criminal cases fielded by the AAP is 32.

The Arvind Kejriwal-led party is followed by the Congress, which has fielded 35 per cent of its candidates with criminal cases. Twenty per cent of such candidates are facing



serious cases. The grand old party is contesting all 89 seats in the first phase and the number of candidates with criminal cases fielded by it is 31, the

report said. The ruling BJP, which is also contesting all seats in the first phase of the election, has fielded 14 candidates with criminal records.

Percentage-wise, such candidates account for 16 per cent of its total number and 12 per cent are facing serious charges, the ADR said in its report.

The Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP), which is contesting 14 seats in the first phase, has four candidates (29 per cent) with declared criminal cases.

A total seven per cent of its candidates have serious criminal cases this time. In the 2017 Assembly elections, 15 per cent of candidates contesting in the first phase had criminal cases against them, the report said, adding that eight per cent of the

candidates then had serious criminal cases.

Some candidates with serious criminal cases are Janak Talaviya (BJP) and Vasant Patel (Congress), the report said.

Of the 167 candidates from the first phase, 100 have declared serious cases against them in their affidavit submitted to the Election Commission. These include nine cases of crime against women, three cases of murder and 12 cases of attempt to murder. In 2017, there were 78 such candidates in the fray in the first phase, it added.

Situation tense but peaceful along violence-hit Assam-Meghalaya border

PNS ■ HAMREN (ASSAM)/SHILLONG

The situation along the Assam-Meghalaya border, where six people were killed in a village following violent clashes, remained tense but peaceful and a large number of security personnel have been deployed in the area, a senior official said on Thursday.

Restrictions under Section 144 of the CrPc have also been imposed in the clash site and surrounding areas, she said. "The situation is peaceful and a strong presence of security personnel have been ensured till the atmosphere normalises completely. Our

magistrates are visiting the place daily," the official said.

Meanwhile, the Meghalaya government extended suspension of mobile internet services in at least seven Khasi-Jaintia Hills districts in the eastern part of the state till Saturday, officials said.

"To prevent misuse of social media to disturb peace and tranquillity, and to maintain law and order, mobile internet and data services stand withdrawn for a period of 48 hours," Home Department Secretary CVD Diengdoh said. Mobile internet services were suspended in the seven districts on Tuesday, hours after the violence erupted.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Undead

The National Anti-profiteering Authority will live on as a part of Competition Commission of India

The Government has given the Competition Commission of India (CCI) the mandate that the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) enjoys. The reason is that the NAA will cease to exist by the end of this month. The NAA has a mandate to ensure that reductions in goods and services tax (GST) are passed on to consumers. It was meant to check any profiteering by businesses; hence the name. The decision is reportedly in accordance with a recommendation by the GST Council, which has representation from the Centre as well as state governments. So now, even as the NAA will cease to exist, its work will be carried out by the CCI mandarins. Right from the beginning—that is, 2017 when the NAA came into being—it was an affront to the business class. In fact, the very word ‘profiteering’ has a ring of dirigisme around it; this is the reason that Leftists use it quite often. It presupposes that all businesspersons are unconscionable, blood-sucking villains who exploit their employees and fleece their customers. Added to the malice is the erroneous notion that government can control or check prices by coercive means. Right from the brutal regime of Alauddin Khilji to the pre-1991 days of Nehruvian socialism, such controls were put in place; they never brought any relief to the man on the street; invariably they led to shortages, black-marketing, and corruption. One of the most anti-business decisions in the last few years has been the setting up of the NAA.



It was supposed to complete its work of monitoring GST rollout in two years, so it was given a two-year term. But that was not to be. As the famous economist Milton Friedman said, nothing is so permanent as a temporary government programme. The NAA kept getting extensions; what was supposed to die in 2019 is still alive—and will remain so. It needs to be mentioned here that it is not just the Narendra Modi Government that is responsible for the perpetuation of a price control mechanism; the entire political class is involved in it, for the GST Council includes various states. The NAA perpetuation highlights a disturbing fact: our political masters have little faith in economic reforms. What liberalisation they have carried out in our country, they have done under compulsion, not by choice. This is not surprising, for liberalisation is essentially the process of the retreat of the State from the processes of economy; it involves less regulation, less intervention in the market. While all this is good for the economy and the people at large, it is not so good for politicians and a section of intellectuals who are ideologically wedded to the theories which are predicated upon the big State. Besides, there are a lot of people—bureaucrats, economists, technocrats, et al—who grew up reading and internalising Leftwing books. This is the reason that Leviathan marches on and abominations like NAA never die.

PICTALK



People light earthen lamps on 400th birth anniversary of Ahom Commander Lachit Borphukan in Nagaon

demonetization woes

The People have the right to know if demonetisation was a masterstroke or a blunder.

As the hearing on the demonetization gets underway in the the Supreme Court, new facts and new arguments might tumble out after six years when the Prime Minister Modi had announced demonetization on November 8, 2016; banning high-denomination currency notes of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 and replacing them with the new currency notes of Rs. 500 and Rs. 2000 denomination. The standard argument at that time was that it would be a big blow to the black money and the economy would be purged in one stroke. The government sticks to its argument in the affidavit submitted to the apex court saying that it was a ‘well-considered decision’ taken after duly consulting the Reserve Bank of India. The Union government filed the affidavit in response to a batch of 58 petitions that had challenged demonetisation. A five-judge constitution bench comprising Justices S.A. Nazeer, B.R. Gavai, A.S. Bopanna, V. Ramasubramanian, and B.V. Nagarathna is now hearing the matter again.



The new facts that have come to light through an RTI give a very different picture than what the govt would have us believe. The RBI was not in favour of demonetization as it maintained that black money in the country was not in the form of currency notes but its opinion was brushed aside. The govt submitted that demonetisation was executed on the specific recommendation of the RBI's Central Board. However, according to RTI activist Venkatesh Nayak, who accessed the minutes of the 561st Meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the RBI through a RTI application, Para 4.4 of the minutes seems to indicate that the Board was simply not aware of this planning before the tabling of the Deputy Governor's memorandum on the subject at its meeting less than six hours before the Prime Minister announced the decision to the country. The minutes provide that the Board was only “assured” that the matter had been under discussion between the Central government and the RBI. Nayak noted that the RBI's directors had – contrary to the government's stand – opined that most of the black money is not held as cash but in the form of real estate, jewelry etc. The matter is subjudice and it is for the court to decide upon the validity of the claims made by both sides but one thing is clear; there is more to demonetization than meets the eye. Apart from bringing hardships to people, it did not succeed in either curbing the black money or ending terrorist funding. Will people ever know the truth?

Climate finance is the pivot of COP27

The fight against climate change is not developing nations vs. developed ones. It's against the fatal fallout of climate change vs the existence of humanity.

The global mean temperature of the planet is 1.15 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial average and we have been having the conference of parties (COP) every year since 1995, wherein world leaders come together to think of solutions to fight the looming dangers of climate change. This year the summit at Sharm El-Sheikh was attended by world leaders arriving in their respective private jets, close to 400 of them, contributing significantly to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. One would think what a great way to kickstart the discourse around climate change.

Over the last decade or so, green washing has become a norm and we all have assumed that someone else would take care of the problem of climate change. The corporations have used the issue of climate change to fill in their coffers and the global leaders have done little to help either. Lip service has been the norm as far as climate change is concerned. Every year, these conferences signal hope. Eminent leaders from different parts of the world make pledges, talk of achieving net zero emissions by so and so year, promise aid to emerging economies and so on. But when it comes to progress on ground, the results are invariably dismal. They paint a sorry picture of our fight towards climate change. It is demoralizing and one can't help but give in to the gnawing cynicism around these summits.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres said, “A third of Pakistan got flooded. We have seen Europe's hottest summer in 500 years. The Philippines got hammered. The whole of Cuba was in blackout. And ... in the United States, Hurricane Ian has delivered a brutal reminder that no country and no economy is immune from the climate crisis.” All these events serve as a brutal reminder for entire humanity to get its act together.

The COP27 summit did set its agenda right with focus on mainly four focus aspects of mitigation, adaptation, finance and collaboration. What needs to be seen is how many countries significantly contribute to the said areas in all earnestness. One of the major themes of COP27 has been loss and damage. It is only this year that the developed nations agreed to put the subject into the formal agenda. An important issue for the group of developing nations, called G77, their leaders underscored how they needed aid from the wealthy nations to mitigate the causes of climate change and prepare against the fallouts of it in future. A positive headway has been made at the summit in this direction with respect to the creation of a ‘loss and damage’ fund. The fund may help the emerging economies to address the harmful effects of natural disasters like droughts, floods and cyclones etc. However, the details of how it will be used to stop climate change and who the list of donors would be is still unclear.

Back in 2009, the developed nations had made a pledge to supply \$100 billion every year by 2020 to less wealthy nations to help bring down further rises in temperature. But what happened to that? Wealthy nations have



clearly not delivered on the promise to date. The \$100 billion won't even make the cut, as developing nations have clearly outlined that they would need \$6 trillion to \$11 trillion to meet climate targets. It is crucial for aid to come through to developing nations, without which they won't be able to make much progress on reducing greenhouse emissions. Speaking at a press conference at COP27, John Kerry, the U.S. presidential envoy on climate, asserted that the negotiations won't end with rich countries signing up for open-ended liabilities. The emerging nations rallied against making a ‘loss and damage fund’, but the wealthy nations shrugged off the idea by saying they favoured existing financial channels. This year's COP was called the COP for implementation, because pledges alone don't make the cut. One needs a detailed road map and more transparency with respect to climate finance.



THIS YEAR'S COP WAS CALLED THE COP FOR IMPLEMENTATION BECAUSE PLEDGES ALONE DON'T MAKE THE CUT. ONE NEEDS A DETAILED ROAD MAP AND MORE TRANSPARENCY WITH RESPECT TO CLIMATE FINANCE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Sir — The climate emergency is a direct consequence of heavy land use and agriculture, transport, buildings, industrial processes and use of polluting energy sources. Without profound changes to these sectors and a drastic cut to carbon footprints, there is little hope of protecting the planet from the worst effects of a warmer world.

The UN environment programme (UNEP) stands at the core of the action in the fight against climate change. We call for greater responsibility from countries and recognition of the benefits of integrating natural systems into concrete climate action. A global fund for ‘loss and damage’, providing financial assistance to poor nations stricken by climate disaster is a solution. The deal was far from perfect, with several key elements flawed or lacking. Some countries on limiting temperatures to 1.5C represented progress on the Cop26 conference in Glasgow last year, but efforts for phasing out fossil fuels was weak. Countries have now agreed to finalise the details of the fund by 2024. Let's hope for the best.

Mithlesh Panwar | Ujjain

MANAGING LIFESTYLE DISEASES

Sir — Despite the best advances in technology and drug research, the modern medicine is yet to find successful curative management of not only disorders like diabetes, hypertension, chronic gastrointestinal disorders etc but almost all neurological diseases and the psychiatric illnesses also, what to talk of the recent covid19 pandemic across the world. Even the best invention and abuse of antibiotics or hormonal interception and other drugs for neurological or psychiatric drugs have caused havoc of dangerous side effects rather than providing sustained relief to the patients. On the other hand Ayurveda along with Yoga offers drugs along with procedures such as Panchkarma and Yoga provides hope towards a healthy and happy life.

The need of the hour is to acknowledge the handicaps of modern medicine

Traffic congestion in Bengaluru



In light of exponential expansion of Bengaluru horizontally and the setting up of a large number of Information Technology parks(IT), increasing the number of vehicles and more so after Corona-19 people have started going to offices Physically.I would like to give some suggestions to ease out the traffic congestion in Bangalore,which can be examined. Though in these trying circumstances, Bengaluru traffic is doing good work.

In areas which experience heavy traffic in morning and evening, the government should suggest Information Technology (IT) companies/ large PSU's to divide their starting and closing working office hours in morning and evening. Say they can change office hours with 15-20 minutes gap. Also these IT companies could also be advised to employ some people on Saturday/Sunday so that the traffic load may further get divided on roads. There are a large number of IT parks, in Whitefield, Electronic city, Sarjapur road and near Manyata Technology park side. Another suggestion is start point-to-point Bus service from a particular place in Bengaluru direct to IT parks. Traffic police department, Principal secretary Information Technology(IT) department can call a meeting of IT companies and make a framework to implement this suggestion. If these plans are successful, there will be some relief for commuters and traffic congestion may reduce in short to medium term till Metro connectivity improves and reaches all parts of Bengaluru.

Ramesh G Jethwani | Bengaluru

in the management of certain diseases and syndromes to join hands with the scholars of Ayurveda to overcome the most disgusting conclusions in the management of such disorders where Ayurveda presents the hope towards a better life. Not only India but the entire world population also can be benefitted by the encouraging results that the integrated research may conclusively offer curative management of certain diseases such as Parkinsonism et. al. The super specialist medical institutions shall have to initiate with or without government's support to reach the wisdom of Ayurveda to begin integrated research for certain diseases where Allopathy has limited approach with hazardous side effects.

Dr Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

ELECTIONS PROVIDING JOBS

Sir — After struggling for two years with no work due to the COVID-19 pandem-

ic, the Assembly elections in Gujarat have become money-spinner for a large number of powerloom workers in Surat. Over a lakh workers are engaged in weaving, dyeing and stitching the election material and tricolour for the last month to meet the high demand from the political parties.

Workers are busy round the clock for stitching saffron colour caps for the BJP at a factory in Surat, Gujarat ahead of Gujarat Assembly Election and it is a make or break situation at present. Again, for 32 years BJP has had a stronghold as Modi and Amit Shah both hail from the same state and work in tandem to achieve a dream of winning again. The BJP IT section is also busy making the dream come true. The elections are indeed a boon to workers.

CK Dorai Ramani Suresh | Ghaziabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



SHREYA GARG

he and other world leaders hardly explained why the promises made earlier were not met to date. Biden rightly said that the world faced a ‘pivotal moment’ in the fight against the climate crisis. But failed to lay out the steps that humanity should take.

With the COP27 having come to an end, some inspiration has been rekindled. What global leaders do in the coming years will be watched carefully, but at the same time, the citizenry all across the world must also do what they can at individual level. We need more people actively raising clamour around this subject. Young climate warriors need to come about and for that, introducing climate change as a subject in school curriculum will prove to be a step in the right direction.

Hope is clearly not a good strategy to adopt in view of climate change. Therefore, one must strive to surpass all hurdles, shun inhibition, deliberate and make a sincere endeavour to avert the global catastrophe awaiting us. We owe this to our collective future generations.

(The author writes on news pertaining to women rights, and social and environmental issues. Views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

The current challenge is to save the law and the democracy and we will do anything to save it.



Bihar Deputy CM — Tejshwi Yadav

What happened was everybody – Germans, French, Italians, everybody, (US President) Joe Biden – saw that there was simply no option.

Because you couldn't negotiate with this guy (Putin). That's the key point.

Former UK Prime Minister —Boris Johnson

I have had people wanting to jeopardise my career, take away from my work, make sure I wasn't cast just because I was doing well in what I was doing. In India, very few of us are happy for somebody else's success.



Actor — Priyanka Chopra

One-day cricket was probably my best format in international cricket, so it's nice to be playing some white ball and Ford Trophy. I'm really looking forward to it.

New Zealand cricketer — Ross Taylor

I am sure India took it up and will take it up. But the point is he is a Malaysian national and if he is invited somewhere... whether they knew, I have no knowledge of that.



Union Minister — Hardeep Puri

FIRST COLUMN

INDIA-UAE TRADE PACT:
PATH TO PROSPERITY

India is close to starting free trade negotiations with GCC



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Qatar was in news, not just for dazzling the world with billions of dollars of investments for showcasing and hosting one of the largest sports events of all time, the FIFA world cup, but also for pulling off one of its kind supply deals with China. Qatar signed a 27-year natural gas supply deal with China, which is being touted as one of the longest in the history of hydrocarbons.

The agreement according to Chinese government officials would also provide access to the strategic North Field South Project in (NFS) in Qatar. The NFS expansion project is a mega LNG transport train which promises to make Qatar one of the largest natural gas traders in the world in a decade. The expansion project allows international enterprises participation and so far all western big names from Total, Shell, Exxon Mobil, etc., are partners for helping Qatar reach its stated target. In comes China, with a long agreement with Qatar and it also wants to have full access and share in the hydrocarbon-led geopolitical rubric playing out. This agreement with China comes at a time when the European Union is scrambling for securing natural gas supplies from sources other than Russia.

The traditional European inertia to get into long term binding contracts is one of the other reasons such agreements between the West and Qatar are not maturing. In the middle of all this, India is close to starting Free Trade Negotiations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) of which Qatar is an important member. The GCC is an intergovernmental,



political, economic union consisting of six Arab nations. India has had a framework agreement with the GCC since 2004. The framework, according to the commerce ministry, provides for exploring ways and means for extending and liberalizing trade relations and initiating dialogue towards a free trade agreement.

However, despite two formal dialogues in 2006 and 2008 the GCC, according to the Government of India, could not persuade its member countries to move further to a Free Trade Agreement level negotiation. Regional economic issues among the Arab states, their bilateral relations with India played a significant role in the delay.

The recent pandemic has made Gulf countries willing to expand their economic clout beyond hydrocarbons; this has led to a change in the mindset. India signed a CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement) with one of the most influential GCC countries, the UAE, earlier this year. This CEPA allows India's goods to have preferential access for 97 per cent tariff lines, which accounts for 99 per cent of India's exports to the UAE. India primarily exports gems and jewellery, textiles, leather footwear, sports goods, plastics, furniture, wood products, engineering products, pharma and medical devices to the UAE.

India's major import from UAE is primarily energy. The CEPA, one of the first off the block, agreed by India after it has been dragging its feet on getting into binding trade agreements for more than a decade aims to achieve \$115 billion bilateral trade of goods and services in just five years. India had earlier walked out of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, one of the largest economic partnerships, citing a China dictated framework.

India now realises the importance of trade as a significant contributor to the national GDP. India realises that trade in goods and services will be a key contributor towards the economy reaching \$40 trillion in the next two decades. India signed a Free Trade Agreement with Australia earlier. Similarly, a free trade agreement negotiation with the UK has been progressing for more than six months now. FTA negotiations with GCC, if concluded successfully, could be another milestone in India's multi trillion-dollar economic path.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

RBI must opt for alternatives to digital currency

Many transactions can be made compulsory through digital mode and there can be limits on cash payments

The Reserve Bank of India on October 7 released a concept note on Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC). The purpose behind the issue, as claimed by the RBI, is to create awareness about CBDCs in general and the planned features of the Digital Rupee (e?), in particular. It explains the objectives, choices, benefits, and risks of issuing a CBDC in India. The Note also seeks to explain Reserve Bank's approach towards introduction of the CBDC, which has been launched on a pilot basis now.

As explained by the RBI the e? will provide an additional option to the currently available forms of money. It is substantially not different from banknotes, but

KALYAN SUNDARAM

(The author is a retired banker)

being digital it is likely to be easier, faster and cheaper. It also has all the transactional benefits of other forms of digital money.

The RBI claims that its approach is governed by two basic considerations – to create a digital Rupee that is as close as possible to a paper currency and to manage the process of introducing digital Rupee in a seamless manner.

The concept paper lists out the following as features of CBDC:

- CBDC is sovereign currency issued by Central Banks in alignment with their monetary policy
- It appears as a liability on the central bank's balance sheet
- Must be accepted as a medium of payment, legal tender, and a safe store of value by all citizens, enterprises, and government agencies.
- Freely convertible against commercial bank money and cash
- Fungible legal tender for which holders need not have a bank account
- Expected to lower the cost of issuance of money and transactions.

There can be two types of currencies which are used for settlement of transactions. One is physical currencies and another digital form of currency. As we have now all the bank deposits which can be transacted through digital platforms are part of digital currencies only. So whose custody is not important. How digitally it can be trans-

acted only matters.

Hence the question arises why there should be a digital currency from the RBI now? If the aim is to completely wipe out the physical currency, it is a different matter. Not only is our country, no other country in the world is aiming for any such proposition.

Our bank accounts provide seamless digital transactions by means of debit cards, credit cards, NEFT, RTGS, IMPS, UPI etc. Now in this concept paper RBI broadly defines CBDC as the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is akin to sovereign paper currency but takes a different form, exchangeable at par with the existing currency and shall be accepted as a

medium of payment, legal tender and a safe store of value. Hence, it is almost identical to the digital transactions provided by banks except the sovereignty.

The RBI says that the key motivations for exploring the issuance of CBDC in India among others include reduction in operational costs involved in physical cash management, fostering financial inclusion, bringing resilience, efficiency, and innovation in payments system, adding efficiency to the settlement system, boosting innovation in cross-border payments space and providing public with uses that any private virtual currencies can provide, without the associated risks. Again, these are already available for digital transactions through bank accounts.

The RBI claims that CBDCs have some clear advantages over other digital payments systems, as it being a sovereign currency, ensures settlement finality and thus reduces settlement risk in the financial system. This may be theoretically and conceptually true. But then this undermines the banking system we have under the same RBI regulation. If any bank fails in any settlement system, then it will speak about RBI's supervision.

As per the scheme, the CBDC issued will be the liability of the RBI and whoever wants to have this will have to pay to RBI to acquire this CBDC. Hence it is similar to deposits obtained by commercial banks. But the RBI has decided not to pay any interest on this. As it is primarily introduced as a method of payments like cash, it would not bear interest.

Instead of going in for CBDC, the RBI can further improve penetration of digital transactions by making many transactions compulsory through digital mode. There can be limits on cash payments. There can even be restricted use of cheques. This will reduce cost for the economy as well as arrest illegal and unaccounted transactions.

Irrespective of the form of money, in any economy, money performs three primary functions—medium of exchange, a unit of account and a store of value.

BJP aims record haul in a three-way poll



DEEPAK K UPRETI

The BJP is set on its target again, lest an undercurrent shakes it off or throws a fractured delivery

After 27 years in the saddle in Gujarat, the Bharatiya Janata Party wants to do it again. And when one says it is 'the BJP contesting the poll' in Gujarat, it actually translates into Prime Minister Narendra Modi who may have vacated Gandhinagar in 2014 but it is he who is seeking mandate for the seventh time in the western Indian state in 2022 and in turn in his decisive run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Another win for the saffron party tiding over almost three-decade anti-incumbency would possibly press a 'delete' button on the Congress and allow the 'third-factor' Aam Admi party (AAP) to rise in the western shores.

Ironical as it may sound for the BJP backers, the Congress despite the BJP's 'double-engine' domination over the power, in last 2017 state elections not only increased its Assembly seats tally but also improved upon its vote share. In contrast, there has been a steady decline in the number of seats collected by the BJP since 2002.

The BJP's seats at 99 went downwards in 2017 from 116 of 2012 Assembly results, but its vote share at 49.1 increased by 1.25 per cent. The Congress, which had won 60 seats in 2012 Gujarat assembly elections, had gained significantly in 2017 by winning 77 seats. The main opposition party had thus not only improved its position by 17 seats but also collected 41.5 per cent vote share, a jump of 2.57 per cent from 2012 Gujarat Assembly polls.

The Congress could not gather enough steam in 2017 to beat the BJP, which had the formidable advantage of its well-oiled organizational machinery and Modi's 'realpolitik' checks and balances to keep the voters interest in the party vis-a-vis a faceless Gujarat Congress and its unimaginative central leadership.

As the stage is set for 2022 December one and five poll for the 15th Gujarat assembly polls, the dynamics of Gujarat elections can be read as "waveless" which could be won by technical management which is: 'right selection' of candidates coupled with 'right booth handling' that is ensuring good turnout of the support base.

Palpably anxious of declining number of seats in successive assembly polls, the BJP has denied tickets to 40 of its sitting MLAs and given place to the fresh and young, not loaded with the burden of anti-incumbency. With winnability being the prime factor for all political parties vis-a-vis the 'ideology', the BJP too has, so far, blessed 10 out of 19 Congress MLAs who resigned and joined the BJP after the 2017 elections with its tickets.

In contrast, Congress has, 'understandably', retained most of its sitting MLAs as party candidates. It is indeed a game of reshuffling of the available players on the ground for both the parties and creating a 'new rainbow' before the voters.

To defend its Gujarat fort and make



PALPABLY ANXIOUS OF DECLINING NUMBER OF SEATS IN SUCCESSIVE ASSEMBLY POLLS, THE BJP HAS DENIED TICKETS TO 40 OF ITS SITTING MLAS AND GIVEN PLACE TO THE FRESH AND YOUNG, NOT LOADED WITH THE BURDEN OF ANTI-INCUMBENCY



it 'unbreachable', the BJP has selected the Congress turncoat Patidar Hardik Patel, 29, who crossed-over to the saffron party in July from 'Viramgram', his home town, which had been twice won by the Congress. The roping in of the leader of 2015 OBC reservation stir would further consolidate the BJP's hold over the influential Patel community.

Among other young and new faces also include Cricketer Ravindra Jadeja's wife Rivaba, 28, who is the BJP candidate from Jamnagar North seat. Before joining the BJP, she served as the leader of the Rajput Community's throwback organisation 'karni Sena'.

The choice of Kantilal Amrutiya, 60, for the Morbi assembly seat, which witnessed a bridge collapse disaster, killing over 135 people, is another reflection of the BJP's 'careful micro-management' of seat distribution. Following the tragedy, the saffron party denied ticket to the sitting MLA of Morbi and selected Atrutiya after videos showed him jumping into the river to save lives. A former MLA, Amrutiya had lost in 2017 assembly polls.

Apart from the main rivals of the past – Congress and the BJP -- the entry of AAP has introduced an X factor in the Gujarat polls, leaving political players wondering which way it would impact the elections and to whose advantage. The freebie announcements by AAP's mercurial leader Arvind Kejriwal has prompted many to anticipate that it may nibble into the urban votes of the BJP and may do less

harm to Congress which is rather strong in rural pockets of Gujarat.

The BJP's state president CR Patil thinks otherwise, saying the AAP would cut into Congress votes and thus help BJP's prospects. The AAP has banked heavily on the Patidar community and fielded its Gujarat president Gopal Italia from Katargam in Surat as well as former Patidar agitation leader Alpesh Kathiriyra from Varachha in Surat city.

Currently, campaigning most aggressively, the AAP is now banking on its success in Gujarat in 2021 civic polls when it ousted congress from the Surat municipal corporation, winning over Patidar votes. The AAP also won one seat in Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation.

In the 2022 Gujarat poll, the AAP is not without some resonance and digging deep to create its place as against the well-entrenched BJP and Congress. The AAP's approach to Patidars and fielding of backward community member Isudan Gadhvi as the chief Ministerial candidate indicates its calculated long-term planning after scoring victory in Punjab.

The 'Hindustava' card of Kejriwal, however, may not pay its dividend against the BJP which has its master key with itself.

The main challenger to the ruling BJP, the Congress is currently on to its 'door-to-door' silent campaigning, bridging the connection it left uncovered in 2017.

As for the BJP, its 'guarav yatra' apart, the Prime Minister has laid out a slew of mega projects in

Gujarat, two of which shifted from Maharashtra to convince voters that continuity in its governance would ensure uninterrupted 'development' in the state with the guarantee of funds from the central government. The hair-splitting analysis of television anchors notwithstanding, the election match in Gujarat, in a way, seem to be dominated by 'turncoats', including the likes of Hardik Patel and Alpesh Thakor.

Italia, one-time Patidar agitation spearhead and close associate of Hardik, who is famous for hurling a shoe at a BJP minister Pradipsinh Jadeja outside the legislative assembly 2017, is now an AAP nominee. The BJP is set on its target again, lest an undercurrent shakes it off or throws a fractured delivery.

The facts 'laid-out can, however, be deceptive at times. In 1985 Congress in Gujarat returned to power with 149 seats and 55 per cent votes and in the 2002 assembly poll BJP won 127 seats and gained 49.8 per cent of the votes and cycles are slowly reversing again.

If journalism is said to be 'history written in a hurry', it would not be irrelevant to quote historian EH Carr from his noted book 'What is History?' to put elections in a perspective.

"It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context... a fact is like a sack—it won't stand up till you have put something in it..." Please, take your pick from Gujarat!

POINT COUNTERPOINT

VOTES FROM SOME MACHINES SHOULD BE "INVALIDATED."
— OUTGOING BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT JAIR BOLSONARO



NO MORE PROCRASTINATION, IRRESPONSIBILITY, INSULTS TO INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRACY .THE ELECTION WAS DECIDED IN THE VOTE AND BRAZIL NEEDS PEACE TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE.
— THE PRESIDENT OF LULA'S WORKERS PARTY GLEISI HOFFMANN

India to grow at ‘moderately brisk rate’, inflation to ease: FinMin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is well placed to grow at a "moderately brisk rate" in the coming years on the back of macroeconomic stability, despite global monetary tightening, a finance ministry report said on Thursday.

It further said inflationary pressures will ease in the coming months with the arrival of kharif crops and at the same time job opportunities will increase with improvement in business prospects.

The 'Monthly Economic Review for October 2022' also cautioned that the US monetary tightening is a "future risk" which could lead to dip in stock prices, weaker currencies and higher bond yields, resulting in higher borrowing costs for many governments around the world. It said a rapid deterioration in global growth prospects, high inflation, and worsening financial conditions have increased fears of an impending global recession.



The spillovers of the global slowdown may dampen India's exports businesses outlook. However, resilient domestic demand, a re-invigorated investment cycle along with strengthened financial system and structural reforms will provide impetus to economic growth going forward.

"In a world where monetary tightening has weakened growth prospects, India appears well placed to grow at a moderately brisk rate in the

coming years on account of the priority it accorded (to) macroeconomic stability," the report said. The ministry said, so far in current year, India's food security concerns have been addressed and will continue to receive the utmost priority from the government.

"Easing international commodity prices and new kharif arrival are also set to dampen inflationary pressures in the coming months," it said. India's wholesale and retail

price inflation fell in October after remaining high for most part of the year mainly due to supply chain disruptions following outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in February.

Retail or CPI inflation fell to 3-month low of 6.7 per cent, while wholesale or WPI inflation was at 19-month low of 8.39 per cent. Russia and Ukraine are among the most important producers of essential agricultural commodities, including wheat, maize, sunflower seeds and inputs like fertilisers. Together with other countries bordering the Black Sea, they constitute the world's breadbasket. Along with an uncertain macroeconomic outlook, the year 2022 also brought to the fore the vulnerability and interconnectedness of the global food system to shocks, the ministry said. India's grain availability was impacted by the untimely heatwaves and deficiency of the southwest monsoon in the current year.

‘Circular economy must deal with climate change issues’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is a need to promote a circular economy to deal with the issues related to climate change, India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Thursday said.

Addressing an event virtually, Kant noted different ministries and states are taking initiatives to promote a circular economy.

He said in COP 27, India underlined its long-term low carbon emission strategy.

India's Presidency for the G20 from December 1 provides an opportunity to the country for an accelerated transition towards the circular economy, he added.

Noting that there is a need to create a business environment for the circular economy, he said, "We need to ensure that regulations do not become burdensome".

The G20 comprises 19 countries -- Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South

India's Presidency for the G20 from December 1 provides an opportunity to the country for an accelerated transition towards the circular economy, he added.



Africa, Turkey, the UK, the USA and the European Union (EU).

Together, they account for over 80 per cent of the global GDP, 75 per cent of international trade and two-thirds of the world population.

‘Lagged data, reviews make monetary policy’s task challenging’

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael Patra on Thursday said formulating monetary policy is a challenging task in a volatile environment like the current one, given lagged data inputs, which are also frequently reviewed. Patra said that next week, the deliberations will be starting for the next policy review to be announced in the first week of December and will have to depend on inflation data for October and growth data for July-September coming out on November 30.

"Monetary policy has to be forward-looking, and that is because when the policy rate is changed, it takes quite a while before it reaches lending rates and aggregate demand in the economy. Hence, we can only target future inflation, not yesterday's," Patra said in a speech at the annual SBI conclave. "On the basis of one month ago and three month ago data, I will have to assess

what is inflation and growth going to be one year down the line," he added. Patra, who oversees the important monetary policy function at the central bank, said there are shocks like the war in Ukraine, and the jump in oil and food prices, which the monetary policy has to contend with after the release of the dated official data. Additionally, there is the risk of frequent reviews as well, he rued, pointing out that in India, we have preliminary, partial, revised and final styles of account presentations. "Another complexity to this whole tightrope walking is that the whole data on this data from NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) from 3 months ago are subject to revision. And sometimes the change is drastic," he noted.

He pointed to a quote from former Fed chairman Ben Bernanke pointing to the limited options that exist before the central bank in the case of such an outcome and stressed that the situation applies to India as well.

Rooftop solar capacity installations fall 29% to 320 MW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rooftop solar capacity installations in India fell 29 per cent to 320 megawatt (MW) in July-September 2022, according to Mercom Research India.

The country added 448 MW rooftop solar capacity in the same quarter a year ago, the research firm said in a report on Thursday.

During January-September, the installations at 1,165 MW were also down 11 per cent compared to 1,310 MW in the corresponding nine-month period of the last year, the report titled 'Mercom India Rooftop Solar Market Report Q3 2022' said.

In the third quarter of 2022, 46 per cent of rooftop solar capacity was installed in the industrial sector, followed by 32 per cent in residential, commercial 21 per cent and the remaining in the government sector. According to the report, at the end of Q3 2022,



cumulative rooftop solar installations reached 8.3 GW.

"We are seeing rooftop solar installations trending down as costs have risen. The market is struggling with supply issues because of the Approved List of Module and Manufacturers (ALMM), and installers are finding it a tough environment to operate in overall," said Raj Prabhu, CEO of Mercom Capital Group.

The tendering process increased 46 per cent year-on-year to around 311 MW of rooftop solar projects in July-

Rupee gains 30 paise to close at 81.63 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 30 paise to close at 81.63 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as a weak greenback in the overseas market and a rally in domestic equities boosted investor sentiments.

Forex traders said the dollar fell in international trade post the weak US data and dovish Fed minutes.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 81.72 and touched an intra-day high of 81.60 and a low of 81.77 against the greenback.

The local unit finally settled at 81.63, registering a rise of 30 paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee depreciated 26 paise to close at 81.93 against the US currency. "Rupee continued to trade in a narrow range and volatility remained low in the past few sessions.

Coal stock at thermal power plants may reach 45 MT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday said it is planning to augment coal stock at thermal power plants to 45 million tonnes by March-end. The coal ministry said that it further plans to increase the stock of fossil fuel at the pithead.

"The Ministry of Coal is planning to build stock at domestic coal-based plants to the tune of 30 million tonnes by the end of November, 2022," the coal ministry said in a statement.

It has plans to keep building the stock so that by the end of March 31, 2023, coal stocks at Thermal Power Plants (TPP) go up to 45 million tonnes.

The total coal output in the country stands at 448 million tonnes (MT) as of October, 18 per cent higher than the production of the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

"The growth of coal production from Coal India Ltd (CIL) is also more than 17 per cent," the ministry said.

The average coal rakes per day availability registered a growth of nine per cent in the April-October period of the current fiscal, thereby helping transportation of higher quan-



"The Ministry of Coal is planning to build stock at domestic coal-based plants to the tune of 30 million tonnes by the end of November, 2022," the coal ministry said in a statement.

tity of dry-fuel and building up stocks at power plants. The power ministry is also augmenting transportation of coal through rail-cum-road mode.

"CIL has communicated a quota for RCR mode of lifting to all the power generating companies for next eight months. This will help power generating companies to plan transportation logistics in advance," it added.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Ministry of Power, Railways and Coal are working hand in hand in a bid to encourage

transportation of dry-fuel via sea route.

So far, transportation of coal from CIL arm Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) to Paradip by rail and thereafter to power plants on Eastern Coast is being made through rail-sea-rail (RSR) route.

The government is encouraging transportation of dry-fuel from coal mines in eastern parts of the country to power plants located on the western coast or northern part. Accordingly, the capacity of coal transportation to Paradip is being increased. It

is planned to start movement of coal for western coast plants through RSR by early next year. The government is mulling to give a fillip to transportation of coal through all three possible modes. The Centre is monitoring issues related to production, transportation and quality of domestic coal closely.

Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

Several states in the country faced power outages in the summers due to shortage of coal.

Sensex hits record high, Nifty jumps 216 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex closed at an all-time high of 62,272.68 on Thursday, tracking a firm trend in global markets after the US Fed minutes indicated a slower pace of rate increase that bolstered investors' sentiment. Extending its rally to the third straight day, the 30-share BSE benchmark rallied 762.10 points or 1.24 per cent to settle at 62,272.68, its record closing peak. During the day, it jumped 901.75 points or 1.46 per cent to its lifetime high of 62,412.33.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 216.85 points or 1.19 per cent to end at 18,484.10. During the day, it hit its 52-week high of 18,529.70, higher by 262.45 points or 1.43 per cent. "Two triggers assisted the Sensex rally to record highs.

One, in the mother market US, the market construct turned favourable with rising equities, declining bond yields and falling dollar. Two, macro developments in India show steady rise in credit growth and capex indicating strong economic recovery." Along

with this, sharp correction in crude is a big positive. This has facilitated this Sensex rally led by large-caps, mainly the HDFC twins, Infosys, TCS and RIL," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. From the Sensex pack, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Wipro, Power Grid, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC, HDFC Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the major winners. Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the laggards. Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended in the green, while Shanghai settled lower. Equity exchanges in Europe were trading in the green in the afternoon trade. Wall Street had ended higher on Wednesday. "Led by broad-based buying, domestic indices witnessed solid gains as investors digested the latest Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes, which hinted that the rate hike cycle may be slowing down.

MONEY MATTERS

IOC launches ‘TB-mukt IndianOil Parivar’ programme



State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has launched the 'TB Mukt IndianOil Parivar' programme to eradicate the menace of Tuberculosis from the IOC family by 2025. The firm aims to reach out to almost 7 lakh stakeholders to

eradicate Tuberculosis by 2025, the company said in a statement. The 'TB Mukt IndianOil Parivar' pledge is in line with the government's call to end TB in India by 2025, five years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of 2030. "The program will reach out to almost 7 lakh IOC stakeholders and family members. The stakeholders include employees, contractual workers, fuel station customer attendants, LPG delivery personnel and tank truck crew," it said. IOC will implement a tuberculosis elimination workplace policy at its locations across the country, by screening the entire workforce for TB, creating awareness and capacity-building in-house medical doctors and paramedical staff. This is aimed at accelerating the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program," the statement said. Speaking on the occasion, S M Vaidya, Chairman, IOC, said, "Tuberculosis remains a public health crisis and a health security threat, and its rising footprint in India is a matter of grave concern."

About Rs 400 cr tax deposited by filing updated ITRs so far



The recently introduced provision of allowing taxpayers to update their tax returns has seen as many as 5 lakh re-filings with about Rs 400 crore additional tax coming in, a senior government official said on Thursday. The Finance Act, of 2022 introduced

a new concept of updated returns, which permitted taxpayers to update their ITRs within two years of filing, subject to payment of taxes. New form ITR-U was made available in May this year for taxpayers to update their income tax return (ITRs) with any income or earnings that may have been skipped in the original filings for fiscal years starting 2019-20 (the assessment year 2020-21). "So far about 5 lakh updated ITRs have been filed and about Rs 400 crore taxes have been paid," he said. The official said compliance has improved substantially and even corporates are filing updated income tax returns. "Data showed that one company has filed an updated return and the amount of tax paid is Rs 1 crore.

Andaman gears up for G20 Presidency meeting



Arrangements are in place for one of the much-awaited meetings of the G20 Presidency, which will be held in the picturesque Andaman and Nicobar Islands on November 26, official sources said. It will be held at Swaraj Dweep' (popularly known as Havelock Island), which is a

nearly two-and-half-hour sea journey from Port Blair in government ferries and private cruises. The delegates will reach Port Blair in a chartered flight on November 25 and the meeting will take place the following day, the sources said. They will likely depart from the archipelago on November 27. Considering its popularity and mesmerising natural beauty, the G20 secretariat in New Delhi decided to hold one of its meetings at Swaraj Dweep', the sources said. A series of cultural events, consisting of traditional dance and music, have been lined up for the guests, who will also be served delectable local recipes, they said. The delegates will also undertake a tour of the Cellular Jail during their stay at Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the sources added. Security has been beefed up across the Union Territory ahead of the high-profile event. "The people of Andaman are very excited for the event, and are gearing up to accord the delegates a warm welcome. Not only will this bring our beautiful islands on the global map as far tourism is concerned, it will also lead to a lot of developmental projects," MP Kuldeep Raj Sharma told PTI. "I had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, requesting him to hold one of the meetings in Andaman, and I am happy that it is happening now," he said. Earlier this month, Indonesia handed over the G20 presidency to India for the coming year at the Bali summit. The G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies.

Maha: Steel manufacturers seek restoration of electricity subsidy
PNS ■ JALNA

The Steel Manufacturers Association of Maharashtra (SMAM) on Thursday sought restoration of power subsidies first given by the Devendra Fadnavis government in 2019 to boost the ailing sector in some parts of the state.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA FOREST DEPARTMENT
e-PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE
RC.No. 444/2021/SPS, Date: 23.11.2022
E-tenders for [8] works during 2022-23:
Extraction and Transportation of Long Bamboo in Bamboo Coups of Aswarapeta and Dammapeta Ranges of Paloncha Division with total estimated cost of Rs.111.76 Lakhs. Bids starting on 25.11.2022 at 1.00 PM. Bids closing on 02.12.2022 at 3.00 PM and Bids will be opened on 02.12.2022 at 3.10 PM. For further details visit: www.eprocurement.gov.in, Phone No. 9440810095.
Sd/- Forest Divisional Officer, Paloncha. R.O.No: 983-PR/CILADVT/12822-23, Dt. 24.11.2022

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
No.45/EE/DIV.13 (Old-7B)/GHMC/2022-23 Date: 23-11-2022
Name of the work: Maintenance Works - 1 Nos., Estimate Amount: Rs. 156.90 Lakhs. Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 24.11.2022 from 12.30 PM / 01.12.2022 upto 12.30 PM. Name & Address of the Officer: Sri. D. Koleswara Rao, Executive Engineer, Division No.13 (Old-7B) (KZ), GHMC, Khairatabad, Hyderabad. 9989930378. For further details can be seen at www.tender.eprocurement.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer R.O.No: 6386-PR/CILADVT/12822-23, Dt. 24.11.2022 Division No.13 (Old-7B), GHMC

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
SHORT TENDER NOTICE
MIT No.23/EEC-4/LBNR/GHMC/2022-23 Date: 24-11-2022
Name of the work: Maintenance Works - 1 Nos., Estimate Amount: Rs. 8.65 Lakhs. Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 24.11.2022 @ 2:00 PM / 25.11.2022 upto 12.30 PM. Name & Address of the Officer: Sri. D. Koleswara Rao, Executive Engineer, L.B.Nagar Circle-4, GHMC, (M): 9989904468. For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ https://tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer R.O.No: 6386-PR/CILADVT/12822-23, Dt. 24.11.2022 L.B.Nagar Circle-4, GHMC

Exporters demand fiscal incentives, credit at affordable rates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exporters on Thursday demanded fiscal incentives, tweaking in customs duties on certain products and credit at affordable rates in the forthcoming Budget to boost exports and create jobs.

In a pre-budget virtual meeting with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said the depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar is affecting exports' competitiveness and the sector requires more support. "Creation of employment is

the biggest challenge faced by the country...We would urge the government to provide fiscal support to units which provide additional employment in the export sector," the exporter's body said.

It said that incentives may be provided based on twin criteria of growth in exports and the creation of additional jobs.

The body stated that at a time when global demand for goods is declining, it has become fundamental to go for "aggressive" marketing.

It argued that the Rs 200 crore support given under Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme for



promoting exports to USD 460-470 billion is just a "drop in the ocean".

"Therefore, for aggressive marketing, there is a need for the creation of an Export

Development Fund with a corpus of minimum 0.5 per cent of preceding year's exports," it suggested adding a special scheme for goods exported by MSME can be introduced in

the Budget.

On the direct tax front, it has demanded an increase in the deduction for investment. On R&D, and procedural simplification by the abolition of TCS (Tax Collected at Source) has been sought.

It also asked for a 200 per cent tax deduction on the expenditure made by exporters for overseas marketing; and extension of tax incentives for the private sector to set up a global Indian shipping line to tap the market.

On loans to MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises), FIEO said the credit rate is currently between 11-13 per

cent and it may increase further in the next few months.

"Therefore, there is an urgent need to restore the interest equalization (subsidy) benefit of 5 per cent to manufacturer MSMEs and 3 per cent to all 410 tariff lines (broad sectors) as existed prior to October 2021, as cost of credit has crossed the pre-COVID level and is adversely impacting exporters," it added.

On Goods and Services Tax (GST), the body asked for a tax refund to foreign tourists at the airport as it would give a fillip to tourism and exports of handicrafts, carpets, khadi, and leather goods.



Uorfi, the viral sensation, is not only ruling the internet but also the Splitsvilla kingdom in its ongoing season. Bringing to you the travel tales of Uorfi, *The Pioneer* connects with the internet sensation, sharing with us her travel diaries.

THERAPEUTIC SEA SOUNDS MAKE UORFI TRAVEL BACK TO GOA

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The mix of Indian and Portuguese cultures at once makes the viral internet sensation, Uorfi Javed visit Goa most of the time. The dotted beach huts, reddish sand, and lagoons are the most favourite parts of this trending island.

Moving away from the overly crowded areas, she's rather interested in the hidden spots. "I even love doing water sports there; that place calms me down. Yes, it's touristy, but the few secret lakes do the trick for me," she shares.

There's always something new to explore in Goa because, as small as it appears on the map, it's rather massive in its interior. Uorfi, who is currently seen ruling the Splitsvilla kingdom, continues, "My preferred place to stay in Goa is always a villa because that's what I miss back in Bombay. We need some space to breathe! I always stay in the same villa in Goa; nothing changes there. The sound of the sea can be very therapeutic. If you're looking for peace and quiet, a stay at one of the villas on the beach might be the best option. There's nothing like waking up to the sound of the gentle waves!"

Goa was once a Portuguese colony, and the influences can be found in their food too. With a mix of tamarind, coconut, curry leaves, mustard, and

magic, Goans definitely know how to rock their curries too. "You can not only find plenty of fresh seafood but also real beef steaks, which are rare in India. Moreover, Goa has some amazing places for European food too. Most of the beaches are dotted with sea-facing shacks that are typically run by local Goan families. It's easy for me to spend almost an entire day sitting on the beach beds of these shacks and gazing at the sea. I love it! Almost all of these shacks have a beach bar too, where I order from a range of local brews."

And what about the old-school psychedelic trance gatherings? So for Uorfi, travelling is more of a learning experience.

She says, "You learn languages. You learn about their culture. You learn history. You get to know their political situation too; it intrigues me. You explore the exotica, and the list continues."

She's planning a trip to the Maldives soon, hoping to see the famous white sandy beaches and turquoise ocean, as well as live in a stilted waterside villa.

"The dining experience is something else that attracts me — the underwater restaurant. It's like dining among the wild fish! The seafood also offers you a Thai mix, as I have heard from my friends, so why not give it a try, although my true attachment lies in Goa only," she concludes.

TANISHA SAXENA

The USP of the TVF series is their everyday archetypal characters. And the *Girls Hostel* is no different.

It is about the mundane, complicated, yet amusing things that take place inside a girl's hostel. While the first and second seasons of the show showed hostel life and college politics, the third season attempts to deal with sensitive subjects. But the narrative is by and large carried forward from the previous seasons.

Set at SVM Dental College, the story revolves around the girl gang (Jo, Zahira, Mili, Richa and Ramya) as they navigate hostel life. In the first season, we met the girls as they adjusted to a hostel's unforgiving yet all-embracing nature. In the second season, we saw how the college election process treats these girls. The third season begins on a familiar note, but things have progressed. This time, these girls are facing another set of problems, ranging from a power cut to executing a talent show. There are a lot of expectations from the president

internship in the realm of politics over a dental degree. Zahira is a courageous president who is struggling in her academic space but wishes to do wonders for the girls as always. However, this time it is extremely difficult for her to manage both. Richa (played by Ahsaas Channa) takes up bigger responsibilities in this season. She takes major decisions and in tackling all the issues her character speaks volumes about the idea that an individual can't keep everyone happy and that leadership comes with a cost. Well, Tanvi Lehr Sonigra as Vipassana does a fabulous job in delivering a powerful performance. It is not easy to initiate a dialogue around gender identity so simply and while this is not sufficient it is at least honest. When Vipassana explained that 'It is not necessary to understand everything

TEJAL SINHA

Disability is just a matter of perception. It was the English theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, who once said, "Concentrate on things our disability doesn't prevent you from doing well, and don't regret the things it interferes with."

Today, we have with us Hasitha Illa, who proves the saying very well.

Hasitha had no idea how quickly her life would change when she was a cute, bubbly kid in her childhood. And definitely not an easy one. One day, she abruptly started limping, which left her parents worried too.

major issue throughout the show remains the execution of the talent show and everything else just revolves around

Wheels over heels

couldn't. People around me were also not very friendly. I was bullied for being different."

During this tough phase of her life, she says her family has been her biggest support and strength. Not only this, but her mom had also encouraged her to participate in the Miss Wheelchair India Pageant held in Mumbai. "My mom wanted me to participate in this; I didn't want to participate, but my mom enrolled me in it. Because of this, even my stage fright had disappeared. Even though I didn't win, I learned a lot."

While she began accepting herself as she was, she began gaining interest in writing and started expressing herself through her YouTube channel and Instagram (@lifewithhasi).

You might wonder if this was her turning point in life, but it was "when I gave my first motivational speech with singer and composer Shankar Mahadevan. It was then that I realised I could inspire others like me, as well as others in general."

She believes that awareness about anything begins from childhood. And, thus, she recently released her own book 'Wheeling Away'. The book, written by the debut author and motivational speaker, talks about being an ally to people with special needs. To make Wheeling Away

happen, Hasitha, joined hands with parenting coach Saakshi Singla, and for sure, anyone who reads the book, will surely learn more about inclusivity and acceptance.

Morgan Freeman once said, "Attacking people with disabilities is the lowest display of power I can think of." There are many people out there who are fighting against the odds, making their own mark. However, the discrimination and ill-treatment of people with disabilities never goes off.

"Awareness begins in childhood itself. When they are kids, one can point them in the right direction. However, when they grow older, they have their own perceptions. People with disabilities face a great deal of discrimination in all aspects of life. Treating people with disabilities as if they were any other human being is the way to go! People always ask me how I approach a person with a disability. Do it the same way you would approach anyone else. Also, I like it when people take the time to get to know me instead of just my medical history. The list goes on and on, and I talk more about it via my Instagram handle, @lifewithhasi," she signed off.

HASITHA ILLA DEFIES ALL ODDS BY TRANSFORMING HER DISABILITIES INTO HER STRENGTHS. THE PIONEER BRINGS TO YOU HER JOURNEY FROM DEMOTIVATION TO BECOMING A MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER.



Girls Hostel 3.0: Progressive, inclusive, & above all, Relatable

of the student's council, Zahira Ali (played by Parul Gulati).

Directed by Harish D. Kalia, this five-part series touches upon the courageous topics including LGBT rights. Written by Anuya Jakatdar, Alka Shukla, and Shreyasi Sharma, *Girls Hostel 3.0* rises above the ordinary, not in the sense of the characters but the subjects they choose to weave the story around. The college dean Dr. Sarla Desai (Jayati Bhatia), is a corrupt woman who also hates her daughter who wanted to go to a hostel. The reason as stated is how girls dress, behave, and above all practice the concept of 'women empowerment' in hostel premises. It's not shocking to hear from such remarks from Desai but it surely does reflect the stereotyping of hostellers in society. Desai, one of the many women of our society who appreciates patriarchy in one way or the other. Jo (Srishti Srivastava) decided to hear her inner voice and take a tough step by choosing to go for her dream

about the LGBT community what's important is to respect the identities each of us possesses, the statement is loud and too nuanced to understand but it is apaisable, to begin with. Ramya Mantri (played by Shreya Mehta) is still arrogant but towards the end of the series we see a spark in her and it is positive. She doesn't join hands with her opponents but stands for what is right. Mili (Played by Simran Natekar) is a naive character in the show. Her sense of humour might not be as praiseworthy as her quirky response to the situations in the hostel, be it the arrangement of an inverter or taking up the onus of the things that could have turned disastrous in turn—her character is engaging. The girl gang indeed delivered an honest and compelling performance to make their characters relatable. The dialogues are another superpower in the show. Meticulously pointed out at the right moment, the dialogues rule the show by purgation of emotions. The

doing the same, yet making it all worthwhile. There's not one but several messages that the series promises to give.

The five episodes of *Girls hostel 3.0* are engaging and assure you of being glued to your screens.

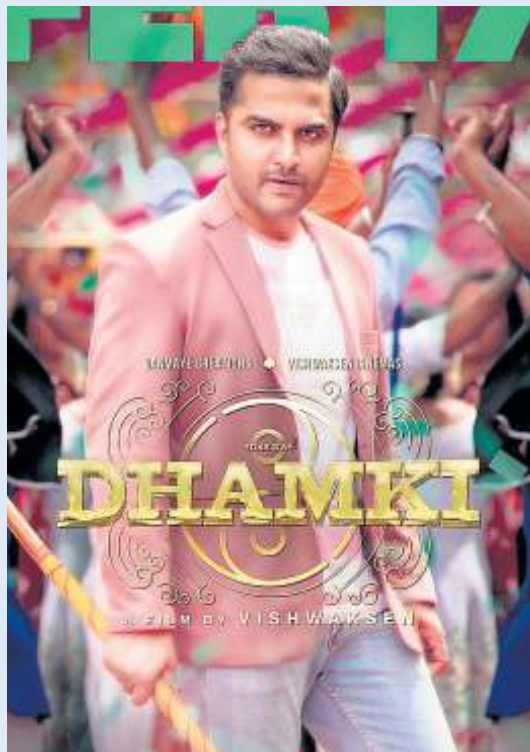
Rating: 3.5/5

She couldn't even hold plates properly due to her imbalance. At one point, while we enjoyed playing games and going to parks, she had to go for hospital visits and, in fact, discontinue her playtime because of her physical transformation. She was diagnosed with Friedrich's Ataxia, a progressive disease, at the age of 10. While she had previously used her wheelchair on and off, it wasn't until about five years ago that she began using it on a regular basis. Hailing from Pune, Hasitha is currently based in the US and working as an HR professional.

Beginning with her struggles, Hasitha said, "Self-acceptance was my biggest struggle. It was tough for me to accept this and be someone different from the rest of the people. There was not much representation of people with disabilities back then, so I didn't know much about people living in wheelchairs. I had no idea what to do as a child at the time. It felt as if I was the only one in the wheelchair, which made it more difficult for me. While kids enjoyed their childhood days, I

Review:





Vishwak Sen starrer *Dhamki* to hit theaters on Feb 17, 2023?

Vishwak Sen, who recently entertained in class avatar in *Ashoka Vanamlo Arjuna Kalyanam* and *Ori Devuda*, is set to shed it and done his tailor made mass avatar in his upcoming film *Dhamki*. Vishwak Sen's first look and the film's teaser released by Natasimha Balakrishna got a huge response from the masses.

According to sources, Vishwak Sen has now finalised the *Dhamki* date. The film will be releasing on February 17, 2023. The film's new release

poster showing Vishwak Sen in a serious look carrying a stick attracted the attention of all.

The film is directed by Vishwak Sen himself and features Nivetha Pethuraj as the female lead. The film stars Hyper Aadi, Rangasthalam Mahesh, Rohini and Rao Ramesh in important roles while Dinesh K Babu is the cinematographer and Leone James scored the music. The film is bankrolled on Vannaye Creations and Vishwak Sen Cinemas banners and is releasing in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam languages.

Meet Cute : A genuine attempt with a beautiful idea

Director: Deepthi Ganta
Produced by: Nani
Cast: Rohini Molleti, Adah Sharma, Varsha Bollamma, Akanksha Singh, Ruhani Sharma, Sunaina, Sanchita Poonacha, Ashwin Kumar, Shiva Kandukuri, Deekshit Shetty, Govind Padmasooraya, and Raja Chembolu.
Music Director: Vijai Bulgaganin
Editor: Garry BH
DOP: A Vasanth
Production House: Wall Poster Cinema

AMARTYA SMARAN

Sony LIV's *Meet Cute* is a 5-part anthology that follows a set of accidental meetings between strangers. The anxiety that kicks in when you have to meet someone for the first time is suffocating. How about that crippling anxiety gradually withering away as time passes on the first meeting? Not just that, but also the conversations you have that lead to life changing experiences. To be succinct, this is what *Meet Cute* thrives on.

If there is something that the series excels at, it is to put the idea right across the viewer's face. Ever thought of how a rigid first meeting could go well or how meeting an old man at a consulate when you're pissed off with your husband can change your perspective about love. What about faking your name in order to know who your son is dating? Or how about giving a superstar a ride because her car breaks down?

The series has some really good lines that make you think. Like "What doesn't break you makes you stronger" and "Where there is no love, there is no relationship". The aim of the series is to perhaps put forward some of our deepest fears and make us feel like it's okay to

feel nervous about the uncertainties in life. Director Deepthi Ghanta tries her best to put the idea across, but shines only in parts. The production values, camera work, set design and the music add up quite well, but the writing seems half cooked in a few portions.

Episode one is a big let down. *Meet the boy*: It is about Swati Ganta, an Imptech manager, who is reminded by her mother to meet Abhi, a consultant at Demoite. I know, the fake names of these famous companies are funny? The matrimonial set up is what frustrates a lot of would be married guys and girls. That same frustration can be seen in the face of Swati. While Swati waits in the parking lot, we see "Dude No 11" pop-up on her phone screen. This just shows how disinterested she is in meeting Abhi. Anyway, let's cut to the chase.

What starts off as a forced meeting turns rosy when Abhi tells Swati that it is not the first time he's seeing her. "Meet the boy" just doesn't land right. Although the idea is in the right place, the execution could have been better. When Abhi describes the nature of his job to Swati, she seems disturbed. She asks him, "So! All that you did was just a marketing trick, huh? Just like your job!". Abhi comes off as a yes man as he keeps concurring with Swati's idea of love.

Some of the most brilliant moments from the series come from episodes two and three. For instance, the super irritated Saroja recognises this old journalist at the consulate struggling with his papers and helps him out. Through the conversation, Saroja begins to understand that love is all about the small things. The Urban Herald journalist asks pertinent questions like Are you sentimental or expressive? The director does a good job in episode three where the idea of companionship is promulgated. The most cherished thought of



Romanticism seems childish after watching the episode ends. You begin to wonder, "Right! Companionship is the truest form of love isn't it?". As we go ahead with the series, episodes four and five don't really offer much except for some good lines here and there. The narrative slows down and turns too filmy at times and makes it harder to believe some of the situations that the characters have been put in. A random stranger meeting another is fine, but giving a ride to a superstar? Umm... okay! Fine, but taking her home? Quite not believable even if you consider the

theme of the series. Scenes like this make the series look unreasonable at times.

Despite having a great idea, *Meet cute* doesn't quite hit the target with most of its writing and narrative. Technically, the series is great and it's visually pleasing to the eye. From the standpoint of narration, it takes a backseat. *Meet Cute* is a genuine attempt at presenting a beautiful idea but it is caught up in a storm where the captain tries too hard to sail the ship in the right direction.

Rating: 2.5/5

Animal Welfare Board of India issued notice *Varisu*

Thalapathy Vijay is on a mission to make inroads into the Tollywood market with his upcoming film *Varisu*. The film will be releasing in Telugu as *Varasudu* and it will lock horns with Mega Star Chiranjeevi's *Waltair Veerayya* and Natasimha Balakrishna's *Veera Simha Reddy*. The film is directed by award-winning director Vamsi

Paidipally. When everything is going right for the film, the makers landed in serious trouble as people complained against them for torturing and tormenting animals. They alleged that the *Varisu* team during the shooting tortured five elephants. Following this, the Animal Welfare Board of India issued notices to *Varisu* makers for torturing the elephants and casting them in the film without obtaining prior permission. It has to be seen how the *Varisu* makers react to this controversy. The film stars Rashmika Mandanna as the female lead with Thaman being the music director. Prabhu, Sarath Kumar, Prakash Raj, Jayasudha, Srikanth, Shaam, Yogi Babu, Sangeetha, and Samyuktha are starring in the film.



Makers of *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* confident about the film being a milestone

T Pawan Kalyan is speeding up his upcoming period entertainer *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*. He is keen to complete the project as quickly as possible so that he can concentrate on politics and take his party, Jana Sena, to power in the upcoming elections in 2024.

The shooting of the film had already begun in the last week of October at the Ramoji Film City in Hyderabad.

Now, sharing some more updates on the shooting of the film, the makers had said that the shoot of the film is progressing at a brisk pace. Mega Surya Productions on Thursday said, "Any work of quality cinema with historic significance that stands the test of time, demands meticulous detailing, research and immense effort of hundreds of cast and crew. The shoot of *#HariHaraVeeraMallu* is progressing at a brisk pace in an enormous set erected at Ramoji Film city as per



schedule since October last week with sri @PawanKalyan garu along with a nine hundred cast and crew participating with all their might. We are extremely confident that *#HHVM* will be a milestone movie and sure will be celebrated by one

and all around the globe. We require all your love and constant support going forward."



Is Samantha hospitalised? Team dismisses the rumours

Ever since Samantha Ruth had announced being diagnosed with Myositis, her near and dear ones, along with her fans have been wishing for her speedy recovery. Despite her health condition, the actress did her part promoting and giving as many interviews as possible for her latest release, *Yashoda*. Not only this, but the actress made sure to connect with her fans as much as possible, and thanked them for all the love. Now, there have been rumours doing rounds on social media which claim that the *Majili* actress has again been hospitalised. However, according to the

reports by India Today and Pinkvilla, Samantha's team had refuted these rumours and said that the actress is not hospitalised. The actress is currently at her home and is in shock at how a piece of wrong news is being spread on the Internet. Samantha has not gone to any hospital for even a routine checkup in the last 2-3 weeks.

With unconventional roles in films like *Oh Baby*, *Super Deluxe* and the web show *The Family Man 2*, Samantha Ruth Prabhu has proved she is a powerhouse of talent. Even on a personal level, Sam has proved to be fiercely independent, confident and courageous. Ahead of her film *Yashoda*'s release, she opened up about her health condition in a courageous note.

Nagarjuna's next, a masala comedy?

Nagarjuna is known for doing different genres. However, of late he is seen in action entertainers like *Officer*, *The Ghost*, and *The Wild Dog*. Both the films bombed at the box office and in between even the romantic track *Manmadhudu 2*, the sequel to his classic *Manmadhudu* turned out to be a disaster. Apart from the results of these films, Nagarjuna has been trolled for quite some time now on social media even by his fans for the selection of the scripts. Under these circumstances, reports are coming that Nagarjuna is planning to try a comedy track and totally undergo a changeover from serious to hilarious. Earlier rumors spread that Nagarjuna would be teaming with *Thani Oruvan* fame Mohan Raja but seeing the *Godfather* result, he decided against it. He is planning a masala comedy entertainer

and discussed the same with Prasanna Kumar Bezawada after knowing that, he wrote a mass masala comedy for Raviteja's upcoming film *Dhamaka*.

But Prasanna Kumar Bezawada is dreaming of turning director and Nagarjuna is not keen to take charges with debutantes. Nagarjuna put conditions that he needs a top director and Prasanna Kumar is in a dilemma. In the meantime, reports are also coming that Nagarjuna is planning to remake a Malayalam film *Porinju Mariam Jose* which was released in 2019. The film is an emotional action thriller between three friends.

Sources say Nagarjuna is keen to rope in Allari Naresh for one role and planning to rope in another young star. It has to be seen how Nagarjuna takes off his career from here.



