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I believe none of my roles have changed me as an actor



'I AM AN OPPORTUNIST, ALWAYS LOOKING FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE

BASED ROLES'



-K. T. Rama Rao, Municipal & IT Minister of TS

QUOTE OF THE DAY

the pioneer

DON'T MISS...

Jail 30 yrs after student's death

Over three decades after the death of a 21-year-old man in a fake encounter here, a local court on Friday sentenced a retired sub inspector to life imprisonment. Additional Sessions Judge Pashupatinath Mishra on Wednesday held Yudhisther Singh, the then sub inspector, guilty of killing Mukesh Johri alias Lali, on July 23, 1992 in Bada Bazar area of the city. The court awarded life imprisonment to Singh on Friday and also imposed a fine of Rs 30,000 on him, government counsel Ashutosh Dubey said.

Ex-bureaucrat expresses...

E A S Sarma, former Secretary to Government of India, has written to the Union Secretary of Environment and Forests, Leena Nandan, regarding the extensive Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) violations committed by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) along the beach in the name of 'beautification' works for the ongoing G-20 meetings.In his letter, Sarma enclosed a...



Suspense in YSRCP as Seediri gets...

Minister for Animal Husbandry Dr Seediri Appala Raju rushed to CMO after getting a call from the chief minister's office on Friday. The call to minister raised many eyebrows among the YSRCP leaders and political circles. Sources say that the ministe informed by the CMO to come to Tadepalli to meet Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday evening. The minister cancelled all his programmes in Vizianagaram district and rushed to Tadepalli...

India have firepower in pace department...

Former New Zealand skipper Ross Taylor has backed the Indian pace unit to cause trouble for Australian batters in the World Test Championship final scheduled at the Oval in London from June 7-11. Taylor feels Indian fast bowlers have the wherewithal to create problems for Australia even though Jasprit Bumrah will be sidelined. "Any time you play in England, conditions and the weather play a big part," Taylor was told ICC website. "Any time you think of Australia and India, and also you're...

US Senate confirms Indian-American Richard Verma for top State role

PNS WASHINGTON

The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American lawyer, diplomat and executive Richard Verma as the Deputy Secretary of State, Management and Resources, a position which is normally seen as the CEO of the powerful State Department in the US government. Verma, 54, was confirmed by a vote of 67-26 on Thursday. He served as the US ambassador to India from January 16, 2015, to January 20, 2017, and is currently the chief legal officer and the head of global public policy at

Mastercard. During the previous Obama administration, Verma served as the Assistant Earlier in his career, he was National Security Advisor to United States Senator Harry Reid and was Democratic Whip, Minority Leader and then Majority Leader of the United States Senate. Verma has served as Vice Chairman

of The Asia Group, Partner and

Senior Counsellor at Steptoe

Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs.

and Johnson LLP, and Senior Counsellor at the Albright Stonebridge Group.

He is a veteran of the United States Air Force, where he served as a Judge Advocate. Verma, who was born in 1968 to an Indian immigrant, grew up in Pennsylvania. He attended a private

> Verma, who was born in 1968 to an Indian immigrant, grew up in Pennsylvania. He served as the US ambassador to India from January 16, 2015, to January 20, 2017, and is currently the chief legal officer and the head of global public policy at Mastercard.

Service Medal from the Department of State, the International Affairs Fellowship from the Council on Foreign Relations and the Meritorious Service Medal from the United States Air Force.

P2

Verma was appointed to the President's Intelligence Advisory Board and is a former member of the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism Commission

He serves as a trustee of The Ford Foundation and is on numerous other boards, including that of the National Endowment for Democracy and Lehigh University.

'JAGANANNA SASWATHA BHU HAKKU-BHU RAKSHA'

'End survey by May 20'

CM claims no other State in the country has taken up such a resurvey

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Stressing the importance of the 'Jagananna Saswatha Bhu Hakku Bhu Raksha' scheme, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to complete the survey of lands within the stipulated time across the State.

At a review meeting on the survey of lands held at the Camp Office here on Friday, the Chief Minister asked them to acquire the necessary survey paraphernalia at the earliest to avoid delay.

When he enquired about the progress of survey taken up in 2,000 villages in the first phase by the Revenue department, officials told him that the distribution of the documents is in full swing. The survey work should be completed by May 20 in all respects including the laying of survey stones, he instructed them, suggesting that rovers be used wherever necessary to complete the work on time.

Survey equipment like the rovers should be arranged in all village

secretariats to ensure that the completing it using modern tech-

work of surveyors would be smooth, he said, adding that officials must procure all available technical equipment at the earliest.

The Chief Minister said that the State has taken up the resurvey of lands on a large scale after hundred years in an unprecedented manner. No other state has taken up such a survey in the country so far, he said, adding that the survev programme is important not only to the people of the present generation but also to future generations.

The government is aiming at

nology and hand over the documents to the land owners in such a way that no one can tamper with them, he said.

The officials informed him that 31 lakh survey stones are ready to be fixed once the survey is completed and arrangements are in place to supply 50,000 stones a day. The Chief Minister told them to make preparations in advance to procure the required quantity of stones needed for the next phase of the survey.



Trump indicted by NY grand jury over hush money payments

PNS NEW YORK

Donald Trump has been indicted by a Manhattan grand jury on charges related to paying off a porn star during his 2016 presidential campaign, making him the first former US president to face a criminal charge and upending his bid to retake the White House in 2024. The grand jury on Thursday

voted to indict 76-year-old Trump, a Republican, for his role in paying money to porn star Stormy Daniels in an attempt to buy her silence over an alleged affair.



BJP natl secy Satya Kumar's car attacked by YSRCP activists

Satya Kumar says MP Nandigam Suresh behind incident, urges DGP to take action



PNS VIJAYAWADA

college on a US Air Force scholarship. He earned a B.S at Lehigh University, a J.D. $\operatorname{\mathsf{cum}}$

laude at American University, an LLM with

Center, and a PhD at Georgetown University

He is the recipient of numerous awards and

distinction at Georgetown University Law

decorations, including the Distinguished

Stones were hurled at the car of BJP national general secretary Y Satya Kumar at Uddandarayunipalem village near here when he was going back after attending the Amaravati region farmers' meeting on Friday.

The agitation of Amaravati farmers, who have given their lands for the construction of the capital city, entered 1200 th day today. The farmers have been agitating for the last four years in protest against the government's move of shifting the Executive capi-

tal from Amaravati to Visakhapatnam. The Amaravati region farmers, to mark the 1200th day of their agitation, organised a meeting. When BJP national general secretary Satya

NADDA SERIOUS

VIJAYAWADA: BJP national president JP Nadda is learnt to have taken the attackon national secretary of the party Y Satya Kumar seriously. According to sources, after listening to the version of Satya Kumar, Nadda had instructed the party cadre to take the movement forward without any hesitation.

Kumar was going back after addressing the farmers' meeting, a group of people, said to be the activists of ruling YSRCP, pelted stones when Satya Kumar's car was passing through the seed acceded road.



12% rise in prices of 384 medicines likely

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Prices of essential medicines are expected to rise by about 12 per cent in what would be the highest-ever annual price hike. The prices of more than 1,000 formulations of essential medicines and 384 drugs are expected to be raised by the government from April 1 which means consumers have to

pay more for routine and essential drugs, including painkillers, anti-infection drugs, cardiac drugs, and antibiotics. Earlier the National

Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) said the annual change in Wholesale Price Index (WPI) was 12.12 per cent for the calendar year 2022. Last year, the NPPA announced a 10.7 per cent change in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI). Every vear, the NPPA announces a change in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in accordance with the Drugs (Price Control) Order, 2013, or DPČO, 2013. Annual hikes in the prices of

drugs listed in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) are based on the WPI. Also called essential drugs, these medicines are used in various government health programmes, apart from being sold directly to retail consumers. Speaking to The Pioneer, Dr

Srinivasa Raju, IMA state president said that post-Covid raw material used in medicines has increased abnormally on the other hand GST is being imposed starting from 5 % to 18 % on health care by the central government. The cost of

imported raw materials and

intermediaries has also increased. He said that the government should not think of health care in a commercial angle as corporate, instead, the government should play a pivotal role to provide better health care to the people. He said that if the central government wishes, it can roll back the 12 % hike on medicines and reduce the burden on the common people and comorbidities patients.

Kotamreddy joins Amaravati farmers' protest

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Suspended YSRCP MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy has



extended his support to the Amaravati farmers' agitation. He took part in a special programme organised by the capital farmers

mark their 1,200 days of protest at Mandadam on Friday. Leaders of the opposition TDP, Jana Sena, BJP and Left participated took part in the programme in support of Amaravati farmers.

TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu congratulated the farmers for their continuous struggle. He expressed the opinion that in the end, it is Amaravati that will be victorious. Rajadhani Rythu JAC organised the programme.

Amaravati stir fake: Sajjala

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The protest in the name of Amaravati is not a real agitation, it is only a protest by Chandrababu Naidu's benamis and real estate businessmen, said State Government Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy. He said that there are no farmers in the agitation as all the farmers have sold their land or plots have been allocated to them. Speaking to the media persons on Friday, he said that decentralisation is the order of the day globally. The opposition parties are conspiring against decentral-

Sajjala recalled that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had stated that the State can register progress only through the overall development of all regions. Now Naidu should tell why he is against decentralisation. The Left party leaders should tell why they are supporting the capitalists, he added.

Sajjala alleged that a land scam of thousands of crores of rupees had taken place in Amaravati and said that the protest in the name of Amaravati is not an agitation at all. allegations of attacks and said that against Margadarsi.



The State government had assured that Amaravati will be developed and there shall be no second thoughts about it. He recalled that BJP sought the Judicial capital in Kurnool and now changed its stand. The saffron party is now of the view that everything should be based in Amaravati.

farmers was fake and artificial and it was proved beyond doubt. The Government Advisor said

that the State government had he alleged. assured that Amaravati will be developed and there shall be no second thoughts about it. He recalled that BJP sought the Judicial capital in Kurnool and now changed its stand.

view that everything should be based in Amaravati.

He said that the protest of Amaravati in a democracy there can be criticism but not the use of filthy language. Naidu and his party men are using unparliamentary language,

Eenadu group chairman Ramoji Rao's frauds are coming out one by one, Sajjala said and alleged that the former had used Margadarsi for his selfish gains. He alleged that Ramoji was doing fraud and covering his The saffron party is now of the wrongdoings through Eenadu newspaper, alleged Sajjala, and said that CID had unearthed the hidden Asking the people, not to fall into facts of Margadarsi irregularities. He the trap of Naidu, he condemned the said that stern action will be taken

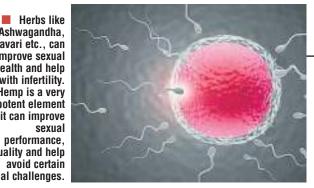
UNSPOKEN PAIN

Infertility's impact on mental health in Indian couples ogists, gynaecologists, infertility specialists, mental health experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Infertility is an uncomfortable and stigmatised topic in India. This does not steal away from its alarming rise. "Nearly one in six married couples are believed to be impacted by infertility in India, sadly less than 1% seek medical assistance. This is due to lack of awareness, and difficulties in access/ affordability of treatment", Aatish Rathi, Birla Fertility. Diagnosis and treatment of infertility can cause extreme psychological stress among the couple spanning confusion, frustration, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and guilt. Women bear the brunt of infertility distress because of the cultural conditioning that a woman is primarily responsible for bearing the child.

Ashwagandha, Shatavari etc., can improve sexual health and help with infertility. Hemp is a very potent element too, it can improve sexual performance, quality and help avoid certain sexual challenges.



Prior to the summit, GetInt imacy surveyed over 100 infertile couples and discovered alarming insights.

and difficulties in access/ affordability of treatment", Aatish Rathi, Birla Fertility. Diagnosis and treatment of infertility can cause extreme psychological stress among the couple spanning confusion, frustration, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and guilt.

This is due to lack of awareness,

and sexual wellness brands - Birla Fertility, Ananta Hempcare, IMBesharam, Haplocare, Gravid, Apex Healthcare, to name a few. The Summit was dedicated to sensitising healthcare experts on mental health challenges couples (especially women) face while undergoing infertility treatment. Prior to the summit,

GetIntimacy surveyed over 100 infertile couples and discovered alarming insights. "It's high time we normalise discussions around infertility and its impact on a couple's psycho-social life", said Pallavi Barnwal, founder of GetIntimacy. The survey showed how a couple who is diagnosed as infertile' enters a vicious cycle.



SSC exams from April 3

O 3,349 exam centres set up across AP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In all, 6,64,152 candidates will appear for the Class 10 examination across the State that will commence from April 3 to 18. As many as 3,11,329 boys, 2,97,741 girls, 1,525 OSSC regular candidates, 53,410 supplementary candidates, and 147 OSSC supplementary candidates will take the exam, said D Devananda Reddy, Director of Exams.

The exams will be conducted from 9.30 am to 12.45 pm every day and the candidates should enter the exam centre premises by

A total of 3,349 exam centres have been arranged to conduct the SSC examination across 26 districts in the State.

The hall tickets were uploaded Reddy.

the official website www.bse.ap.gov.in.

To organise the exams peacefully, the board has deputed 156 flying squads and 682 sitting squats across all the exam centres, and CCTV cameras were arranged in 104 problematic exam centres. Stern action will be taken against the candidates found to be resorting to malpractice. The spot valuation will com-

mence from April 19 to 26. A control room was set up in Vijayawada by the SSC Board with a toll-free number 0866-2974540 from March 18 to April 18 which will work 24/7. The students are advised not

to carry any electronic gadgets or books into the examination hall, according to Devananda

challenges especially with the sensitivity it demands. One of the male clients struggling with low sexual desire stated that the andrologist India's leading platform for intima-Still, a large number of medical insensitively remarked why are cy education, with support from

experts are ill equipped to address

infertility related mental health

you making a big fuss about desire, you are a man. To highlight the mental health wellness gap in infertility diagno-

sis and treatment, GetIntimacy,

concluded the much-anticipated Infertility and Mental Health Summit on 22nd January 2023, in Gurgaon, India. The Summit saw participation from over 100+ healthcare professionals - androl-

IMBesharam and other sponsors,

Clouds of alliance over disqualification dust!

judgement convicting Rahul Gandhi of criminal defamation charges couldn't have come at a more opportune time for the Congress and the so-called 'Non-Congress, non-BJP' front of regional parties. The judgement imposed a two-year jail term as punish-ment, thus immediately disqualifying Rahul Gandhi as a Member of Parliament, in line with the 2013 Supreme Court judgement in the Lily Thomas

case.

The judgement came just around when Rahul Gandhi concluded that the Congress, fighting only with its UPA alliance partners, would face the same outcome in 2024 as it had in the last two elections. The Congress couldn't win enough seats to qualify for the Leader of the Opposition position both times. With this

completed a trip to London, where he tried to enlist support from foreign powers to drive a narrative that democracy was in danger in India under Prime Minister Narendra

At the same time, various

anti-BJP regional parties,

which had grown in their states at the cost of Congress, had tried to project a 'Non-Congress, non-BJP' grouping and failed to get any traction.
Major parties in this grouping
were Trinamool Congress
(TMC), led by Mamata Banerjee; Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by Arvind Kejriwal; Janata Dal-United (JDU), led by Nitish Kumar and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), led by TS Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR). In addition, these parties have recently taken severe blows to

Yet, leaders of these political parties were quick to portray the disqualification of Rahul as Modi's handiwork and BJP's attack on democracy. **Mamata Banerjee of TMC called Rahul's** disqualification a "new low for democracy in PM Modi's New India". AAP's Arvind Kejriwal called it a "dictatorial move" and requested everyone to "come together and save our democracy".

their image due to allegations of large-scale corruption. Given the zero-tolerance stand taken by PM Modi on corruption, they had concluded that their only option was to paint the investigations as political targeting and vendetta by the

It was clear from the beginning that the BJP had no role in Rahul's disqualification. The specific law was on the statute for a long time; the earlier SC judgement in the Lily Thomas case and the current trial court judgement were delivered by

the independent judiciary; it was Rahul himself who had torn and trashed an ordinance that Manmohan wanted to bring to stay the disqualifica-tion in such cases. Legal lumi-naries, including Kapil Sibal, a confidant of Rahul Gandhi and Minister of Law and Justice in the Manmohan Singh Cabinet, were quick to point out that the disqualification of Rahul Gandhi was automatic upon the judgement.

Yet, leaders of these political parties were quick to portray the disqualification of



KISHORE POREDDY

Rahul as Modi's handiwork and BJP's attack on democracy. Mamata Banerjee of TMC called Rahul's disqualification a "new low for democracy in PM Modi's New India". AÁP's Arvind Kejriwal called it a "dictatorial move" and requested everyone to "come together and save our democracy". BRS supremo and Telangana Chief Minister, KCR, who earlier called Rahul Gandhi the biggest buffoon" in the country, accused Modi of being a dictator and called it a "black day in the history of Indian democracy".

It is easily discernible that these parties had already concluded that their very survival depended on them uniting. These parties were waiting for an excuse they could use for joining forces with Congress, a party they had claimed to be fighting until then.

On the other hand, even Rahul was aware of the consequences and did not want to clarify and apologise for his offensive remarks. Congress, filled with legal luminaries like no other party, did not try to secure an immediate stay on the conviction from a higher court. Both facts lead to the

saw it as an opportunity to unite all anti-BJP parties who were until then reluctant to accept Rahul's primacy under the leadership of the same Rahul Gandhi.

Coming to Telangana, after failing to get traction on his non-Congress, non-BJP initiative and renaming TRS to BRS and relaunching it as a national party, options for KCR and BRS had narrowed down. With BJP becoming a potent alternative and growing even more robust by the day in the state, KCR had concluded that alliances are the only option for survival. The alliance with Communist parties in the Munugode by-election, and the narrow victory margin of the BRS candidate in it, had validated the necessity of alliances. His son Rama Rao's presence with Rahul

nomination, his defence of Nehru's and Manmohan's performance as Prime Ministers in the Assembly, his daughter Kavitha's invite to Congress president Mallikharjun Kharge and party supremo Sonia Gandhi to join her Jantar Mantar dharna were all apparent overtures to the Congress for an alliance. Rahul's disqual-

for an alliance. Rahul's disqualification was the opportunity KCR was waiting for, and he quickly pounced on it.

It's time for senior Congress leaders in the state, who claim to sincerely fight against KCR's misrule, to decide where they stand. The only force that will stand. The only force that will be fighting the Bharat Rashtra Samithi in the Assembly elections this year-end will be the Bharatiya Janata Party.

> (The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

MLA Vikram Reddy slams TDP for false campaign

PNS VIJAYAWADA

MLAfrom Atmakuru Mekapati Vikram Atmakuru Mekapati Vikram Reddy reacted strongly to the false propaganda by the opposition TDP campaign that he was going to quit the ruling YSRCP. In a scathing remark, Vikram Reddy said that instead of 'shouting like stray dogs they should post correct news and inforpost correct news and information. He said that for any decision I call Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and take his support. He also expressed confidence that the YSRCP will win all the seats in the district in the coming elections.

Vikram Reddy dismissed such rumours and stated that if his uncle M Chandrasekhar Reddy left the YSRCP party, he would eventually know what his power is and that the action would be initiated against anyone if they cross the party

The YSRCP MLA made it clear that Mekapati's family

will always be with CM YS Jagan and follow him. Unable to face him directly, the TDP was campaigning against him using his allied media. Vikram Reddy said that CM Jagan's position in the hearts of the people could not be wrested no matter who tries to, whether it's the TDP or

the yellow media, he stated Mekapati Vikram Reddy, in response to the developments in the district, exuded confidence that the YSRCP will win ten out of ten seats in the Nellore district in the 2024 elections and give it as a gift to CM YS Jagan.

HUGE DEMAND FOR SC GURUKULS

Proposals sent to govt for additional seats: Minister

Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarjuna has said that there is a huge demand for seats in SC Gurukul as students are achieving excellent results at all levels. Keeping this demand of students in mind, it has been revealed that proposals have been sent to the government for granting additional seats.

On Friday, the minister visited Dr. BR Ambedkar's social welfare gurukul schools in the Kokkirapalli and Nakkapalli villages of the Anakapalli district. Various departments including the computer lab, kitchen, and classrooms were closely inspected. He talked to the students and teachers and inquired about the problems in the Gurukuls.

Minister Nagarjuna stated



that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is keen on the welfare of children more than their own parents and is taking all steps to pave the way for them to have a good future. He said with the steps taken by CM Jagan, there was a huge competition for the seats in SC Gurukuls last year.

He recalled that in the past,

seats in SC Gurukuls were left unfilled. As the demand has increased proposals were sent for the sanction of additional

He said that special measures have been taken to achieve 100% results in Class 10 and Intermediate examinations. He said that it is the responsibility of the teachers of ensure that all the students in the gurukuls pass in all the sub-

He further said that for those who do not pass, the teachers of the respective subjects should provide tuition to the students and ensure that

He said that teachers will also be given special training as part of achieving 100 percent

Minister appreciated Kakarapalli school Principal RV Krishnatara for keeping the school premises clean, and later he distributed the hall tickets to the class 10 students of the Gurukul.

DCO Rupavathi, along with local public representatives, and officials of social welfare and revenue departments also

KTR's dig at Modi; ready to display his certificates

PNS HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao took a dig at Modi and said that he is ready to display his academic certificates pub-

Ín a Tweet, he said, "I have a Masters in Biotechnology from Pune University. I also have a Masters in Business Administration from the City University of New York. I am ready to display both certificates publicly. Just saying."

The BJP attacked Delhi

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday and accused him of "peddling lies" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the Gujarat HC set aside the CIC order asking the Gujarat University to provide information on Modi's academic degree to him.

The Gujarat High Court on Friday set aside the sevenyear-old order of the Central Information Commission (CIC) asking the Gujarat University to provide information on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's degree to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Allowing the Gujarat University's appeal against the CIC order, Justice Biren Vaishnav also imposed a cost of Rs 25,000 on Kejriwal and asked him to deposit the amount within four weeks to the Gujarat State Legal Services Authority (GSLSA).

Justice Vaishnav also refused a request by Kejriwal's lawyer Percy Kavina to stay the order. In April 2016, the then CIC, M. Sridhar Acharyulu, directed the Delhi University and the Gujarat University to provide information to Kejriwal on the academic degrees Modi had received.

Three months later, the Gujarat High Court stayed the CIC order after the varsity approached it against that order. The CIC order came a day after Kejriwal wrote to Acharyulu, saying he has no objection to government records about him being made public and wondered why the commission wanted to "hide" information on Modi's educational qualifications.

'End survey by May 20'

Continued from Page 1

Officials of the Municipal Department said that they are making preparations to take up the survey in urban areas and data analysis is going on presently. Panchayat Raj Department officials told the Chief Minister they would complete the survey in 300 villages by the end of the third week of April and in all villages by the end of December.

Mines and Geology Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Principal Advisor to the Chief Minister Ajay Kallam, Special Chief Secretaries G Sai Prasad, Y Sri Lakshmi, Dr Rajat Bhargava, B Rajasekhar, Principal Secretary (Panchayat Raj and Rural Development) Gopalakrishna Dwivedi, senior ÍAS officers Siddharth Jain, A Md. Imtiaz, Praveen Kumar, and Shan Mohan were among those present.

Kotamreddy joins...

Continued from Page 1

Senior Telugu Desam leader Kanna Lakshminarayana APCC president Gidugu Rudraraju, MLC Panchumarthi Anuradha, former minister Adinarayana Reddy, and other leaders demanded the government to roll back the three capitals' decision and continue Amaravati as the only capital of AP. Kanna Lakshminarayana stated that the future of the State is dependent on Amaravati and with the consensus of all political parties including the YSRCP. Amaravati has been named the capital. He further claimed that many stakeholders have come to Amaravati and the people of this State, together with the people of Amaravati, have given the power to CM Jagan Mohan Reddy to honour the sentiments of the people.

Suspended YSRCP MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy said Amaravati belongs to the Telugu people across the world and not just the 29 villages of AP. He asked CM Jagan Mohan Reddy why he supported Amaravati while as Leader of the Opposition and took a U-turn after coming to power. He said that the YSRCP government had not moved even a single brick to construct Amaravati in the past four years and predicted that the anti-Amaravati forces will be defeated in the next election.

MLC P Anuradha criticised the government's response even though the farmers of Amaravati have been fighting for 1200 days. CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna, P Balakotayya, president of Amaravati Bahujan JAC, Jada Shravan Kumar, founder of Jai Bheem Bharat Party, BIP leader Y Sathya Kumar and others demanded that the government continue Amaravati as sole capital of AP.

Trump indicted by NY grand jury...

Continued from Page 1

The indictment remains under seal and it is not clear what crimes and how many criminal counts Trump has been charged with. CNN reported that the former president has been charged with more than 30 counts.

The office of Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, who has been pursuing the investigation for years, confirmed that it had contacted Trump's lawyers on Thursday evening to "coordinate his surrender" on unspecified charges.

This evening we contacted Mr. Trump's attorney to coordinate his surrender to the Manhattan D. A.'s office for arraignment on a Supreme Court indictment, which remains under seal. Guidance will be provided when the arraignment date is selected," a spokesperson for District

Attorney Bragg said.

"a historic development that will shake up the 2024 presidential race and forever mark him as the nation's first former president to face criminal charges." Trump, the 45th US President from 2017 to 2021, is expected to fly from his home in Florida to New York on Monday and be arraigned

in court on Tuesday. The proceeding is expected to be brief. The charges in the indictment will be read to him at the hearing, which is set to last about 10-15 minutes.

Trump has denied all wrongdoing in connection with the payments made ahead of the election. In a statement responding to news of his indictment, the former president called it "Political persecution and election interference at the highest level in history," and

accused Democrats of The New York Times "weaponising our justice system who just so happens to be a

President of the United States. "The Democrats have lied, cheated and stolen in their obsession with trying to 'Get Trump,' but now they've done the unthinkable - indicting a completely innocent person in an act of blatant Election Interference," Trump said.

He lashed out at Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, calling the prosecutor a "disgrace", and accused him of doing Joe Biden's dirty work".

"This is third-world prosecutorial misconduct. It is the opportunistic targeting of a political opponent in a campaign year," Trump's son Eric tweeted. President Biden, a Democrat, repeatedly declined to comment on the indictment of former President Donald Trump as he departed.

Metro Rail extends 'off peak hours' offer from today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD appreciated by Hyderabad

L&T Metro Rail announced 'off peak hours' offer on contactless smart cards (CSC) and will continue the supersaver offer from April 1.

A 10 per cent discount will be available on notified fare on CSC only, from 6 am to 8 am and 8 pm to 12 pm. The super-saver offer

(SSO-99) which was widely

Metro Rail passengers, and which saw more than 1.3 million rides, ends on March 31. L&TMRHL will continue it starting from April 1 to March 31, 2024. Passengers can travel unlimited on 100 notified holidays at Rs 99

Pre-existing SSO-59 smart cards can be used for SSO-99

BJP natl secy Satya...

Continued from Page 1

The YSRCP and BJP activists clashed on the road for some time after the attack but the police dispersed them.

BJP leader P Suresh told the media that the YSRCP activists enquired about the former minister and BJP leader C Adinarayana Reddy who was not in the car.

Later talking to the media, Satya Kumar alleged that the ruling YSRCP activists attacked his car with stones. He would not be scared of such attacks.

The BJP activists could counter the attacks but did not since the BJP wants to protect the democratic system. When thousands of farmers were organising a dharna, very few police were

deployed there, he flayed. Satya Kumar alleged that the attack on his car took place as per the directions of MP Nandigam Suresh. He said that he would take

the incident to the notice of BJP central leaders.

He appealed to the State DGP to take stringent action against those who attacked

TODAY **ALMANAC** Sukla Paksha Month & Paksham: Tithi:Ekadashi: Dwadashi: Magha: Rahukalam 1:51 PM to 3:23 PM Yamaqandam: 06:06 PM to 07:52 PM Varjyam: 6:14 AM to 7:46 AM Gulika: 03:01 AM to 04:48 AM Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:55 AM to 12:44 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms **Temp:** 36[∞] Humidity: 63%

Updated: MARCH 31, 2023 5:00 PM

Sunrise: 6:03 AM

Sunset: 6:20 PM

Infertility's impact on mental health...

Continued from Page 1

A large number of couples reach the brink of divorce. In one instance, the husband's family threatened the wife to give a child or face separation over her inability to conceive'.

Then, most infertile women compare themselves to their friends/ relatives with kids and feel isolated and

parents/ in-laws drastically affects career aspirations. the couple's mental health. In one instance, a mother-in-law kept a check on her daughter-in-law's timing of sex, and even dared to ask her did you have sex previous night'. This created acute mental stress because of a grave violation of privacy.

Sadly, such cases are just the tip of the iceberg, with countless others under the carpet.

Meenakshi

tunate that women associate selfworth with being a mom which equates infertility to being not good enough'. Also many times, mothers /in-laws too, tend to make the woman feel incomplete' by constant bickering.

Also, working women who choose to have children later in life, are put under additional pressure that this is Finally, excessive interference of the price being paid for prioritising

> admit that they can have sexual problems because it hits their notorious male ego'. Dr. Surbhi Singh, Gynaecologist, highlighted that when female patients come for treatment, they're accompanied by their mother/ in-law. The husband's tests are delayed or never happen.

Many Indian men are unwilling to

This is due to the social condition-Ahuja, ing that manhood equals his sexual

quite common. And many men remain unaware of the treatment options available, the most powerful of them being Ayurveda. "Herbs like Ashwagandha, Shatavari

etc., can improve sexual health and help with infertility. Hemp is a very potent element too, it can improve sexual performance, quality and help avoid certain sexual challenges", said Mansi Sood, Ananta Hempcare.

Subject matter experts lamented about the lack of sexual education. The men are unaware of their desires, lack personal hygiene and miss out on the basics of pleasure for a woman. They project unrealistic expectations from porn which further distances their wives. Women, who have had a sheltered upbringing, accept this as something wrong with themselves.

Thus many marriages remain sex-

Gynaecologist and Senior Director at Fortis La Femme said that it is unfor- anxiety and erectile dysfunction are less even though couples are perfect- ly healthy and IVF is opted because they start seeing sex as a chore.

> doctors, social media influencers and sexual wellness brands like IMbesharam have been trying to destigmatize pleasure and other taboos. At IMbesharam we have been working tirelessly for a decade to open

"Of late, sexual health educators &

conversations between experts and seeking, husband and wife, parents and children. We showcase sex toys as a means of healthy adult pleasure. Basically, they are just pieces of rubber and silicone, it's our mind that makes it what we imagine it to be.

We are also trying to make access to sex toys easier because pleasure focus can greatly alleviate the mental health burden usually associated with sex and infertility."

Raj Armani, Founder IMBesharam, India's leading adult store.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

g- PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE CTN No. 30/EE/NH8CRF//DEE2/AEE2/2022-23 Online tenders are invited through e-procurement paltform for 1 work under Central Road Infrastructure Fund Scheme in Kakinada District. Value of work Rs.10.00 Crores. Last date of receipt of tenders 21.04.2023 @ 3.30 PM. Furthe details can be seen at e-market place @ tender.apeprocurement.gov.in Sdi- Chief Engineer (R&B)

R.O.No: 8238/CL/ADVT/11/12021-22, Dt. 31.03.2823

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPT. e- PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE From No. 145 to 161/2022-23 Dat

Online tenders are being invited to execute 17 works under JJM grant of Rs. 1021.03 Lakhs in undivided Prakasam district. Tender documents can be downloaded from 01-04-2023. For details, contact www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in. Ph: 08592-233275. Sd'- Superintending Enginee

R.O.No: 8255/CL/ADVT/11/12021-22, Dt. 31.03.2023 RWS&S Division, Ongole

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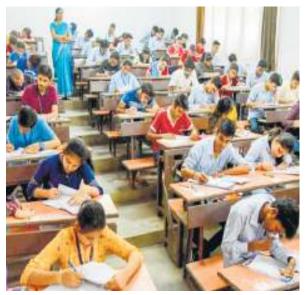
Over 52,000 students to appear for Class 10 exams in NTR, Krishna districts

Over 52,000 Class 10 students are set to take the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Public Examinations in NTR and Krishna districts from April 3 to 18. NTR district will host over 30,000 students and Krishna district around 22,000 students.

The district Education department officials in both districts have made all necessary arrangements for a smooth examination process. The District Collectors and DEOs have held review meetings and provided suggestions for the successful conduct of the exams.

To ensure the safety and comfort of the students, free bus travel and first-aid kits will be provided at the exam centres. The District Collectors have also issued orders to impose Section 144 at all examination centres.

In the NTR district, over 27,000 regular students and 2,800 private students will take the exams. To maintain order and prevent cheating, question papers will be stored in 35 police stations and five flying squads will be arranged. In Krishna district, over 19,900 regular students and 2,500 private students will take the exams. The district officials



have identified four high-risk examination centers, which will be monitored by CCTV

After the exams, spot valuation will take place from April 19 to 26 at the Bishop Azaraiah Girls' High School in Vijayawada. Section 144 will be in effect during examination hours and no Xerox centers will be allowed within 100 meters of the centers. Officials have reminded all concerned not to bring mobile phones to the examination centers and to

wear ID cards during the examinations.

Overall, the authorities have put in place strict measures to ensure a fair and peaceful

examination process. Krishna District Officials Confirm All Arrangements Made for SSC Exams

Krishna district collector P Ranjith Basha and DEO Tahera Sultana have announced that all necessary arrangements have been made to conduct the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Public Examinations

be monitored by CCTV camsuccessfully. Approximately 22,436 students, including eras. In addition, 20 route offi-12,048 boys and 10,388 girls, cers have been appointed, and will be appearing for the class 10 routes have been arranged for the transportation of exam 10 final examinations across 143 examination centres in materials.

The exams will be conducted from

comfort of the students, free bus

provided at the exam centres. The

District Collectors have also issued

orders to impose Section 144 at all

travel and first-aid kits will be

examination centres.

the district.

April 3 to 18. To ensure the safety and

Moreover, control rooms Out of the total number of have been set up with phone students, around 19,935 are numbers 9848530928, 9848232601, and 9966753718 regular candidates and the remaining 2,501 are private candidates. The exams will for addressing any concerns or issues related to the exams. take place from April 3 to 18, Officials have also directed with timings from 9.30 am to 12.45 pm. The officials have everyone concerned not to take mobile phones into the appointed 143 chief superinexamination centres and to tendents and departmental wear ID cards during the officers, along with 5 flying examinations.

The district education department officials have made To prevent malpractices and all necessary arrangements to mass copying, the authorities have made strong security arrangements and identified conduct the SSC exams peacefully, and the Krishna district administration is well-prepared to ensure a successful outcentres in the district that will

SURPRISE V&E INSPECTIONS

Many irregularities observed at NGO homes, centres

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vigilance Enforcement department officials on Friday conducted surprise inspections across the state on Orphanages and Homes

women/children/trafficked persons/specially-abled persons/ senior citizens & centers for drug addicts/beggars / destitute. During the inspection, 62 Homes in 26 districts across Andhra Pradesh were inspected, and observed irregularities in various homes and centres.

The V&E officials found that Doctors are not available to attend to the inmates. Firefighting equipment was not available. A sufficient number of Toilets was not maintained for the present strength and no proper drainage system is maintained.

Compound wall/perimeter fencing is not available and many of the homes do not have separate rooms for kitchen and dining.

They also found that admis-

sion registers, Discharge registers, Donation registers, asset registers, cash registers, and stock registers are not maintained properly. Security personnel or guards are not provided. Proper beds and blankets are not provided to the inmates. CCTV cameras are not in working condition. A few buildings require repairs and found roof leakages.

In a few homes and centres the officials found that accommodation was insufficient as per the number of inmates. Social workers/clinical psychologists are absent. Although registration has expired, the same was not renewed. Regular audits of accounts are not conducted for many years. Supervisory officers of concerned departments are not visiting the Homes on a regular basis, observed the V&E officials during their surprise inspection.



PD Act will be invoked against ganja peddlers: CP

NTR Vijayawada Police Commissioner Kanti Rana Tata has said that the police will invoke the Preventive Detention (PD) Act to be invoked against ganja sellers who committed offences by importing and selling repeatedly. He made it clear the peddlers will face expulsion, if necessary, on the lines of rowdy sheeters being expelled from

NTR district-level Narcotic Coordination (NCORD) meeting was held at the Collector's camp office in Vijayawada on Friday.

District Collector Dr. S Dilli Rao, Police Commissioner Kanti Rana Tata, Sub Collector Aditi Singh, and DCP Vishal Gunni attended.

Later, CP Kanti Rana addressed the media persons and said that the police would put a special vigil on the transportation of drugs and register cases against drug peddlers in the district. The Police department has focused on selling and consuming ganja for the past three months, he said.

The police identified several hotspots at hristrurajapuram, Gangireddula Dibba, KL Rao Nagar, Railway Yard, Vambay Colony, Bhavanipuram, Ibrahimpatnam, Singhnagar, Kotturu Tadepalli and other places, he added. He said 159 persons were arrested in 69 cases.

he said. Of them, 8 persons were suppliers. Rana said that ganja sellers import the weed from Chintapalli, Alluri Sitarama Raju district, and other Agency areas. After receiving the contraband, they sell it in 50 grams and 100 grams



NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao and Commissioner of Police Kanti Rana Tata are addressing a press conference about Narcotics control in Vijayawada on Friday.

Photo by Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

packets, he said. "We identified 20 persons who are habitually smuggling ganja. They are receiving up to 20 kg and later selling 1 kg packets to peddlers," he said.

At this stage, to prevent ganja transportation and sales, the police are conducting awareness programmes at all schools, and colleges, he said. now, 150 awareness programm ducted, he said. With this, consumption of ganja came down by 30% to 40%, he said.

He said the Vijayawada police are talking with Visakhapatnam Range DIG and Alluri Sitarama Raju district SP to control ganja smuggling from the agency.
NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao said that

illegal transporters are adopting new ways to bring ganja to Vijayawada.

Steps taken to prevent stray dogs menace: Mayor

PNS ■ GUNTUR

squads, to ensure the smooth

four high-risk examination

conduct of the exams.

City Mayor Kavati Manohar Naidu and Municipal Commissioner Keerthi Chekuri said that effective steps were taken to check the stray dog menace in the city. The mayor and the Civic

Chief inaugurated the Animal Birth Central (ABC) located at Etukuru road here on Friday. They inspected the operation theatre and postsurgery hall in the centre. They also saw the veterinary medical equipment. Later talking to the media on the occasion, the civic chief said that the rabbi's vaccine is being administered to the stray dogs in the ward secretariat wise.

people in the city are facing problems due to stray dogs. Keeping this in mind, the city administration has asked ABC to control the stray dogs and give them an anti-rabies vaccine. He said that the ABC has been modernized and the public health authorities



special measures to take special care of dogs undergoing surgery at the centre until they recover.

Ćommissioner Keerthi ernized ABC could perform around 50 surgeries every day to stray dogs to regulate their population.

"The ABC has advanced facilities to deal with the stray dog menace. Stray dogs should be identified in every secretariat in the city and they

have been directed to take must be given ABC and antirabies vaccine and sanitary inspectors have been ordered to pay special attention," she directed the officials.

Keerthi Chekuri instructed staff to perform surgeries on the stray dogs to regulate their population. CMOH Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi, MHO Dr. Bhanu Prakash, DEE Hanif, and AE Durga Prasad were among those who accompanied the Mayor and Civic

Left parties plan campaign against 'anti-people' Union govt

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Left parties will conduct a campaign to create awareness among people across the State against the 'anti-people' rule of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy from April 14 to

CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna and CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao addressed the media persons at the Balotsav Bhavan in Vijayawada on Friday.

CPI State secretary Ramakrishna said that there seems to be a dangerous situation in national politics and he alleged that Prime Minister Modi has no respect for Parliament. The entire world is discussing Adani's financial irregularities, but the Modi did not announce the Joint iment Committee to pr

He further said that during his Chief Minister's tenure, Modi had used Adani and reached the Prime Minister post. Corporate people's assets increased drastically during the nine years of Modi's regime, he felt. Anyone questioning the government is being harassed with raids by central agencies like Enforcement Directorate

in this regard, he commented.

alleged. CPM state secretary Srinivasa Rao said that the BJP-led central government accepted the capital Amaravati and announced the Polavaram project as a national project, but funds have not been released so

(ED), CID, and others, he

Further, he said if the TDP. YSRCP, and Jana Sena Party have any sympathy for the people, they should come forward to fight against RIP



Focus on increasing milk collection: Collector

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has directed the officials concerned to lay special focus on increasing milk collection under the 'Jagananna Pala Velluva' scheme in the district. To provide affordable prices and financial inclusion to the women dairy farmers, he said.

The District Collector conducted a video conference with concerned officers on the 'Jagananna Pala Velluva' from the camp office in Vijayawada on Friday

He said that the officials concerned should implement the 'Pala Velluva' scheme. The scheme is being implemented in G Konduru, Mylavaram, Gampalagudem, Tiruvuru, Vissannapet, Reddigudem and A Konduru mandals, he said. As many as 15,334 women dairy farmers were registered and of them, 4,673 are supplying milk, he said.

Every centre should collect 100 litres of milk every day and for that officials should conduct meetings with women farmers, he suggested and said the government is paying Rs 85.80 per litre and officials could create awareness among farmers to increase milk collection, he added.

Ex-bureaucrat expresses concern over GVMC's CRZ violations

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

E A S Sarma, former Secretary to Government of India, has written to the Union Secretary of Environment and Forests, Leena Nandan, regarding the extensive Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) violations committed by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) along the beach in the name of 'beautification' works for the ongoing G-20 meetings.

In his letter, Sarma enclosed a copy of his earlier letter dated 27-2-2023, highlighting the CRZ violations committed by the GVMC.

He also stated that the Ministry had asked the Andhra Pradesh Coastal Zone Management Authority (APCZMA) to inspect the area and submit a report, but they have not responded to his letter.

Sarma expressed concern over the inaction of the local authorities in enforcing the CRZ norms and the delay of the APCZMA in taking action. He further called for the "polluter pays" principle to be enforced, with the costs and penalties recovered from the officers concerned.

The former Secretary stated that the illegal structures in Visakhapatnam, including multistoreyed buildings constructed within the CRZ area, deserve demolition as per the landmark directions issued by the Supreme Court in the case of Maradu apartments in Kerala in 2019. He accused the APCZMA of becoming a willing abettor of the offence by remaining inactive in such

Sarma demanded that the Ministry take immediate action and become alert to the CRZ violations that have taken place withthe CRZ-II area in Visakhapatnam, including the recent beach levelling works and illegal buildings constructed.

Amaravati will remain people's capital: Lokesh

TDP general secretary, Nara Lokesh, expressed confidence that Amaravati will remain the people's capital. As the agitation of the farmers who donated their lands for Amaravati reached 1200 days, Lokesh, during his pada yatra, thanked them for their relentless battle and said that the ultimate result will be in their favour. On the 56th day of the

'padayatra' on Friday, Lokesh was given a rousing welcome

at the Raptadu Assembly segment. The pensioners complained to Lokesh that their pension has been withdrawn as their monthly power bills are more than the limit set by the Government. Lokesh promised the petty traders and local women that their problems will be resolved after TDP is back in power.

The representatives of Valmikis and Boyas met Lokesh with an appeal to include them in the BC list. The Kurubas also complained that the Rs 2 lakh loan facility for them has been withdrawn by the government. He said BCs are being harassed by foisting even petty cases against them and those cases will be lifted by the TDP as soon as the party forms the government.

Lokesh said unable to bear the torture by the local MLA, the Jockey company left Andhra Pradesh leaving 6,000 jobless. Those who have given their land for the Jockey company met Lokesh and wanted him to bring the company back to Rapthadu.

and said that prize money of Rs 2 lakh will be given away to the

top three winners in the three

fee of Rs 300, Rs 400 and Rs 500

will be collected for the three

Further, he said a registration

Eda Sulochana elected TFI Jt secy

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Throwball Association general secretary Eda Sulochana has been elected unanimously as joint secretary for the Throwball Federation of India (TFI). The TFI general body meeting was held in the Bihar state recent-

In the general body meeting, the new body was elected unanimously. Interestingly, Eda Sulochana of Andhra Pradesh is the only woman who was unanimously elected as joint secretary for the new executive body. Also, she is the only woman in the entire TFI

Throwball Federation of



India (TFI) Secretary General Naresh Mann specially felicitated Sulochana for her rendering services for the game development in Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer', Sulochana said that the TFI joint secretary post would put an additional responsibility on her. The new post made her proud of her, she said.

"I will work harder to produce more Throwball players in Andhra Pradesh. After the state bifurcation, AP state conducted Senior Nationals successfully in Vijayawada," she

Jersey out for 'Ahimsa Run' in city tomorrow Jain International Trade

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Organisation (JITO) is going to organise an 'Ahimsa' run with the technical support of the Andhra Pradesh Athletic Association (APAA) in Vijayawada on April 2 (Sunday) at 5.30. Olympian and Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president PT Usha, who is also a Rajya Sabha member, will be inaugurating the run for Peace and Non-Violence at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation

(IGMC) Stadium. The run, organised across 65 different cities in 22 countries, aims at promoting nonviolence, peace and brotherhood among people. "The run



Members of the Jain International Trade Organisation (JITO) released a poster and jersey on 'Ahimsa Run' to be held on April 2, at a press conference in Vijayawada on Friday. Pic by Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

will be held in three categories - 3km, 5km and 10km. The run will be flagged off by Olympian and President of Indian Olympic Association (IOA) P Usha, who is also a Rajya Sabha member, along with

ministers and district admin-

istrators," said JITO Vijayawada Chapter chairman Ashok

Golecha. In view of the JITO Ahimsa Run, JITO Vijayawada Chapter Chairman Ashok Golecha, chief secretary Manish Doshi, Ladies Wing chairperson Trapti

Jain, chief secretary Sangeeta Nenawat and Andhra Pradesh Athletic Association general secretary Akula Hyma unveiled jersey and posters at a hotel in ijayawada on Friday.

Later, JITO chairman Ashok Golecha addressed the press categories in which men, women and children (above 12 years) will be taking part. The JITO 10km run will start

categories.

at the IGMC stadium and pass on MG Road, Benz Circle and take a u-turn at Trendset Mall. MG Road, Police Control Room, Flyover, Vinayaka Temple and return to the stadium. APAA secretary Hyma said that the association was offering technical support for the smooth conduct of the

Senior journalist Payam

passed away

while under-

the pioneer



Aqua farmers demand subsidised power tariff

Prakasam District Shrimp Farmers' Association convenor Gopinath has appealed to the government to provide a subsidy on power tariff to the aqua

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, he demanded that the Central government implement the CIA Act to hatcheries in the aqua sector as per the CRZ guidelines.

Gopinath said that aquaculture was cultivated in the Prakasam district on about 30,000 acres of land. But the aquaculture cultivation has been reduced to 6,000 acres now since the aqua farmers are unable to bear the high power

The exorbitant hike in power tariff forced the aqua farmers to pull themselves out of shrimp cultivation.

Gopinath said that they had invested huge money in the cultivation of shrimps and incurred losses. He said that



due to this, the production of prawns has decreased. He recalled that last year, India had stood at the top in the world in exporting shrimp, but due to reduced production, it fell to the second position

"If the situation continues like this, India will fall to the fourth position. Besides, last year there AP achieved a turnover of Rs 50,000 crore in the export of shrimp. Due to the decrease of shrimp exports, the aqua sector in AP achieved only Rs 30,000 crore worth of exports this year," he stated.

He urged the state government to provide electricity subsidies to small farmers. S Anjibabu, President of Prakasam Prakasam Prakasam District President of Prawn Farmers Association, General Secretary Subba Rao, Joint Secretary Chaudhary, Former Presidents Mohan Kumar, and Thota Venkat were among those who were present.

Suspense in YSRCP as Min Seediri gets a call from CMO

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Animal Husbandry Dr Seediri Appala Raju rushed to CMO after getting a call from the chief minister's office on Friday. The call to minister raised many eyebrows among the YSRCP leaders and political circles. Sources say that the minister was informed by the minister was informed by the CMO to come to Tadepalli to meet Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy on Friday evening. The minister cancelled all his programmes in Vizianagaram district and rushed to Tadepalli.

The suspense still is in the air as the exact reason for Jagan's

as the exact reason for Jagan's call to Appala Raju is not known. It led to speculations that Jagan is contemplating reshuffling his cabinet by dropping some ministers and inducting a few others. However, Appala Raju might be one of the ministers who are likely to be dropped from the ministry. Before doing that, Jagan wants to talk to him personally and explain to him why he has been compelled to take the



The suspense still is in the air as the exact reason for Jagan's call to Appala Raju is not known. It led to speculations that Jagan is contemplating reshuffling his cabinet by dropping some ministers and inducting a few others.

Minister Appalaraju said that he has no information about removal from the minister post. He affirmed that he will not be bothered whether he has a ministerial post or not. He made it clear that public service is more important to him than

minister posts. He stated that he belongs to the BC community and CM Jagan has given him the post of minister. He added that he will obey the orders of the CM and there is no information that he will be removed from the minister post.

Senior journalist Payam no more

PNS HYDERABAD



Born on April 28, 1970 in Kerala, Payam Sudhakaran had worked in a string of leading English newspapers and magazines including the Times of India and Deccan Chronicle etc. He carved a niche for himself in the field of journalism with his scholarly writings and impeccable language teaching skills.

Suave and amiable, Payam Sudhakaran endeared himself to the people's cause and was always at the forefront to groom novices in the journalism field into perfect

His funeral held at Bansilalpet cremation grounds on Friday evening was attended by a large number of journalists and people from different walks of life.



YSRCP leader dares Mekapati for debate

Tension prevailed in Udayagiri town on Friday as YSRCP leader Vijay Kumar Reddy squatted on the road near the bus stand challenging the rebel YSRCP MLA Mekapati Chandrasekhar Reddy for an open debate.

It may be mentioned here that on Thursday, the rebel YSRCP MLA Mekapati Chandrasekhar Reddy squated on the road station, challenging the YSRCP leaders to counter him

Accepting the rebel MLA's challenge, YSRCP leader Vijay Kumar Reddy, along with his large number of followers Friday squatted on the road. The activists started raising slogans leading to a tense sit-

The police made elaborate security to regulate the crowds. If rebel MLA Mekapati attended to him.

Chandrasekhar Reddy had come to the place, a big clash would have taken place between the two groups, a YSRCP leader said.

Three of the YSRCP leaders who were suspended from the party for voting against the party whip in the graduate quota MLC elections are in Nellore district and they are Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, and Mekapati Chandrasekhar Reddy. The challenges and counter challenges by the rebel MLAs are causing law and order problems, a police offi-

Interestingly, the police detained Mekapati Chandrasekhar Reddy in his house when he was preparing to go to the bus station to face Vinay Kumar Reddy. Mekapati family members later said that the MLA fell ill and doctors

Take steps for paddy procurement'

Eluru District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has directed the officials concerned to make all required arrangements to purchase paddy produce from the farmers during the Rabi season.

The Collector held a district Agriculture Advisory Board meeting which was presided over by Agriculture advisory board chairman Vejju Venkateswara Rao and MLAs Puppala Vasu Babu, Dulam Nageswara Rao, and Kotari Abbayya Chowdary attended the meeting. Speaking on the occasion,

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that keeping in mind the experience of purchasing paddy during the last Kharif season, the officials should take effective measures to procure paddy during the ensuing rabi season.

"About 60 lakh gunny bags should be kept ready for paddy



produce procurement in the district. The problems in purchasing paddy produce from the farmers should be monitored every day and steps should be taken to resolve problems. The equipment to measure the moisture content should be kept ready," the Collector told the officials.

The Collector also asked the officials to allocate 25 acres of land for the establishment of an oil palm factory at Ramasingavaram village and another 25 acres to set up an oil palm nursery.

The Kisan drones should be grounded through Rythu Bharosa Kendras. At the Rythu Bharosa Kendra level, if the youth who have got diplomas are identified locally to manage drone services, the eligible candidates should be selected and sent for drone pilot training, he said.

The authorities concerned should determine how many drones are needed within the

respective RBKs. The requirement of 'pachi rotta' fertilizer should be collected from all the mandals of the district and proposals should be submitted to AP Seeds, the Collector said, adding that the distribution would start as soon as the prices of 'pachi rotta' fertilizer are finalized in the district.

Denduluru MLA Kotharu Abbayya Choudhary said that necessary measures should be taken for irrigation in the Denduluru constituency, adding that 800 cusecs of water will be released from Krishna from Saturday to irrigate the canal suburbs. MLAs Dulam Nageswara Rao and Puppala Vasu Babu asked the Collector to take effective steps to produce paddy procurement during the ensuing rabi season. District agriculture office Y Rama Krishna, Micro irrigation PD Ravi Kumar, LDM Venkateswara Rao, and fisheries and MarkFed officials

Pawan condemns attack on Satya Kumar's car

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party chief K Pawan Kalyan has condemned the attack on BJP national secretary Satya Kumar's car by the YSRCP activists.

In a statement here on Friday, he said that the YSRCP attacked Satya Kumar on the reason that he extended support to the agitating Amaravati farmers. The attacks of YSRCP activists reached a peak and all democrats should condemn such violent acts, he said.

The attack on Satya Kumar exposed once again the YSRCP's anarchy has reached its peak, he said and asked whether the ruling YSRCP is giving a message that if political parties extend support to the Amaravati farmers, they will be attacked. The JSP would

respond to such acts in a democratic way, he made it clear.

Pawan Kalvan demanded that the police should arrest those who were involved in the attack. "The BJP central leadership should take the attack

seriously. The Centre should order for a comprehensive inquiry on the incident," Pawan Kalyna said. Pawan Kalyan pointed out that YSRCP MP told

openly that C Adinarayana Reddy escaped today and demanded an inquiry on the same.

The people rejected the YSRCP three capital concepts in the three graduate elections. The Chief Minister and YSRCP leaders are treating the opposition party leaders, who are extending support to the agitating farmer, as enemies." Pawan

Officials directed to issue notices to land grabbers

PNS BAPATLA

District Collector Vijaya Krishnan has directed the officials concerned to issue notices to those who encroached on the assigned lands.

She held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the government lands, land resurvey works, and graveyard lands. Speaking on the occasion, the

district Collector said that she wants to ensure that the government lands in the district are not alienated.

The lands in the hands of encroachers should be taken and given to the deserving poor. The government lands required for graveyards in the district should be acquired, the Collector told the officials. The revenue officials, who

are supposed to protect the government lands, are looking at the court. The Collector warned the Tehsildars that such a thing would not be tolerated. At the time of allocation of government lands for mining, the NOC should be issued after taking the opinion of surrounding farmers, Collector Vijaya Krishnan instructed the officials. The Collector expressed

anger that while sending land transfer proposals, the proposals prepared by lower-level staff, are being sent without at least looking at the files. Joint Collector K. Srinivasulu, District Revenue Officer Lakshmi Siva Jyoti, Revenue Divisional Officers Ravindra, Sarojini, Parthasarathy, Tahsildars, and others participated in this programme.



900 grams ganja seized, one held

The police seized 900 grams of ganja and arrested one person at MR Appa Rao colony in Nuzvid mandal. Special Enforcement

Directorate CI Gopala Krishna told the media on Friday that on a tip-off, the police team conducted a raid and arrested Matangi Sanjay who was selling

The police seized 900 grams of ganja from him. The arrested bootlegger was being produced before the court, the CI said.



Simpliforge, IIT Hyd develop a prototype 3D printed bridge

PNS HYDERABAD

A prototype 3D printed bridge has been developed and printed in collaboration between IIT Hyderabad and Simpliforge Creations.

The concept and design were developed and evaluated by Prof KVL Subramaniam and his research group, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT, Hyderabad. The bridge was printed by Simpliforge, a startup company specialising in providing 3D concrete printing solutions. Designed as a pedestrian bridge, the prototype bridge is undergoing load testing and evaluation for func-

The bridge has been designed at IIT Hyderabad broadly following form optimisation to minimise the use of concrete and reinforcement. The concept of the bridge was developed following the con-



cept of 'Material follows Force'. Simpliforge Creations developed an extrusion and software system specifically for the project to fully exhibit the merits of their 3D printing system. Using the Industrial robotic arm 3-D printer, the bridge was printed off-site in little under 2 hours at Simpliforge Printing facility and assembled on site at Charvitha Meadows, Siddipet.

Enlisting the uniqueness of the 3D printing technology, Prof KVL

Subramaniam, IITH, said, "3D concrete printing is an emerging technology that has the potential for transforming the construction industry with the promise of rapid, efficient, and free-form construction. Technology application in this space requires advancements in design methodologies, material pro-

cessing, and delivery systems." "We are proud to have been a part of this ground-breaking project" said Hari Krishna Jeedipalli, Managing Director, Simpliforge Creations. "This bridge is a testament to the capabilities of 3D construction printing technology and its potential applications in infrastructural requirements, defense, and disaster scenarios owing to its speed and ease. We hope that this project will inspire others to explore the possibilities of 3D concrete printing in infrastructure and other

Medico commits suicide

PNS NIZAMABABD



In a tragic incident, an MBBS student committed suicide by hanging in the hostel room here on Friday. The Medical College

authorities and the police have been puzzled over the incident because the thirdyear medical student, identified as Sanath, did not leave any suicide note. He reportedly spent with his friends till the early hours of Friday and he was found hanging from the ceiling fan in his hostel

Officials directed to make foolproof arrangements for SSC exams in WG

PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector P Prashanthi has directed the officials concerned to make foolproof arrangements to conduct SSC exami-

nations which begin on April 3. The Collector held a meeting with the officials here on arrangements being made to conduct the SSC examination.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that 24,586 students would appear for the SSC public examinations in the

WG district. Out of these, 12,929 boys and 11,657 girls, 20,619 regular and 3,967 are private candidates.

As many as 121 examination centres were allocated for the student to write the examinations. The Collector said that question papers would be preserved in 22 police stations. 121 Friday and reviewed the chief superintendents, departmental officers, 12 additional departmental officers, 44 custodians, 6 flying squads, 50 sitting squads, 44 route officers and 1,190 invigilators have been appointed to monitor the

conducting of examinations, she stated.

"Besides disciplinary action, strict criminal action will be taken against the malpractices in conducting the examinations. All the officials and staff should work hard to conduct the SSC examinations without any flaws in the district", she told the officials.

"Tahsildars should monitor the implementation of Section 144 in designated places. Actions should be taken to ensure that xerox and internet centres within 100 meters of



the examination centres are closed compulsorily. Cell the examination centre and phone," Collector Prashanthi phones and other electronic only the Chief Superintendent said.

devices are not allowed inside

is allowed to have a cell

Apart from setting up medical camps and keeping staff and ORS packets ready, medicines prescribed by DMHO should also be made available at the examination centres as part of precautions, she told the officials. Collector Prashanthi directed the Tahsildars, MPDOs and Municipal Commissioners to inspect the 50 'C' class examination centres which were identified in the district on a daily basis.

She said that 14 examination centres have been set up to conduct the SSC and Intermediate

public examinations under the 'Open School Society'. Out of them, 5 have been allocated for SSC exams and 9 for conducting intermediate exams, she said, adding that a free bus facility has been arranged for the students who appeared for the exams. The student can travel on the bus by showing a hall ticket. DRO K Krishnaveni, DEO R Venkata Ramana, GSWS office KCH Appa Rao and DMHO D Maheshwara Rao were among those who were

1 crore mobile numbers linked with Aadhaar in February

residents in the month of February, an official statement said on Friday. The linking of mobile numbers with Aadhaar jumped 93 per cent in February from 56.7 lakh registration in January, according to the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). "Over 10.97 million mobile numbers were seeded in Aadhaar following requests from residents in the month of February 2023, a jump of more than 93 per cent over the previous month," the statement said. Linking of Pan number with Aadhaar is considered to

be one of the key factors that pushed the growth of seeding mobile numbers with Aadhaar. Till date 90 crore Aadhaar holders are estimated to have linked their mobile numbers with their unique ID. "The UIDAI has been encouraging residents to link their Aadhaar with mobile number for better and effective communication while availing welfare services and accessing multitude of voluntary services," the statement said



Indore temple tragedy: 8 families rise above grief, donate body parts of deceased kin

he families of eight of the 36 persons killed in the Indore temple stepwell roof collapse overcame deep sorrow to donate vital body parts of their deceased kin. The largehearted families agreed to donate the skin and eyes of their loved ones whom they lost after the roof of the stepwell collapsed during a havan' held on the occasion of Ram Navami at the Beleshwar Mahadev Jhulelal temple, said voluntary organisation Muskan Group. "After persuading the kin, we coordinated with doctors and bureaucrats. With a heavy heart, the families under grief gave their nod for organ donation to see their deceased kin in

others," said Sandipan Arya of the organisation. "So far, family members of Indra Kumar, Bhumika Khanchandani, Jayanti Bai, Daksh Patel, Laxmi Patel, Bharati Kukreja, Indar Chandki and Kanak Patel have given their written consent for eye and skin donation," he said. Their eves have been donated to an organisation working in this field, MY hospital and Sankara Eye Bank. Choithram Hospital authorities have received the skin donated by the kin of the deceased, Arya said



Mumbai: 21 held, 300 booked for clash during Ram Navami procession

Police have registered a first information report (FIR) against nearly 300 persons and arrested 21 so far in connection with a clash between two groups during a Ram Navami procession in Mumbai's Malvani area, as afficially in the connection of th Navami procession in Mumbai's Malvani area, an official said on Friday. The incident occurred on Thursday night at Malvani in suburban Malad (West) when the procession was going on and some people objected to high volume DJ and loud music accompanying it. Those involved in the clash are being identified with the help of drone and CCTV footage of the area at the time and action is

being being according to their role, he said. While nearly 300 persons have been booked, police have arrested 21 persons so far and more arrests are likely, the official said, adding that the probe in the case underway. In the FIR, police have pressed charges under Indian Penal Code sections 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter a public servant from discharge of his duty), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means).



Russia to enhance strategic partnership with India

PNS MOSCOW

Russia will focus on strengthening its strategic partnership and trade ties with India in Eurasia and ensure their resistance to "destructive actions" of unfriendly states and their alliances, according to an updated foreign policy doctrine approved by President Vladimir Putin on Friday.

The ties between India and

Russia remained strong notwithstanding Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. India's import of Russian crude oil has gone up significantly in the last few months despite increasing disquiet over it in many Western countries.



According to the updated Concept of Foreign Policy, one of Russia's focus areas in Eurasia is strengthening strategic partnership and developing trade and other ties with India. "Russia will continue to build up a particularly privileged strategic partnership with the Republic of India with a view to enhance and expand cooperation in all areas on a mutually beneficial basis and place special emphasis on eral trade, strengthening investment and technological ties, and ensuring their resistance to destructive actions of unfriendly states and their alliances," according to a paragraph on Eurasia.

The concept was approved amid tension between Russia and the US over the war, with the US slapping thousands of sanctions on Russia, while militarily, economically and diplomatically supporting Ukraine.

India has not yet condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and it has been maintaining that the crisis must be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue.

2014 DEFAMATION SUIT

Since Rahul is not MP any

Guj: Eight AAP workers held for putting up anti-Modi posters

PNS AHMEDABAD

Eight workers of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have been arrested for allegedly putting up posters saying "Modi Hatao Desh Bachao" in different parts of Ahmedabad city in Gujarat, police said on Friday.

The Gujarat unit of AAP condemned the arrests saying the action has proved their point that "democracy is in danger".

In a release, the city crime branch said eight persons have been arrested on the charge of damaging public property by putting up posters with the text "Modi Hatao Desh Bachao" in areas like Isanpur, Maninagar, Vatva, Narol and Vadaj.

before the court in June 2018

application seeking perma-nent exemption from appear-

ing in the court on the ground

that he was a member of

Parliament who had to visit

his constituency, attend the party work and travel a lot.

Two days back, Kunte, while opposing Gandhi's

application, submitted a pur-

Last year, he had filed an

and pleaded not guilty.

Steps by Beijing along India-China border 'provocative' The think tank -- Centre for

PNS WASHINGTON

Some of the steps being taken by Beijing along the India-China border has been "provocative", a top White House official has said while reaffirming that the United States is "destined" to work more closely with India.

Kurt Campbell, the Deputy Assistant to the US President and Coordinator for the Indo-Pacific, told a Washingtonbased think-tank on Thursday that India is not an ally of the United States and will never be

"But it does not mean that we will not be close partners and share many things. That's how we need to understand the role that India will play as a great nation on the global stage. "We want to encourage that

a New American Security (CNAS) -- in a report said that the India-China border intrusions and clashes have become more frequent and threaten to lead to all-out conflict. and support that and deepen this relationship, which is

The increased prospect of India-China border hostility already very strong, probably the strongest people-to-people relahas implications for the United States and its Indo-Pacific strattionship of any country that the egy between the two Asian giants, it said. India's engage-United States has on the global stage," he said. Campbell said ment with China is "complex" that the India-US relationship "is and Chinese attempts to unilatthe most important bilateral relationship for the United States erally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh starting from April-May 2020 seriously disturbed the peace and tranquility in border areas and impacted overall ties, the

in the 21st century". "I believe we are destined to work more closely together. I believe that our people-to-people ties are strong, animate in a relationship that is becoming Ministry of External Affairs deeper, richer and more strate-(MEA) said in a report this gically important," he said.

Police search for Amritpal Singh expanded to deras in Hoshiarpur

PNS HOSHIARPUR

Punjab Police expanded their search for Amritpal Singh on Friday to 'deras' and other possible hideouts of the fugitive preacher in Hoshiarpur district, where some suspects had abandoned their car following a chase three days ago.

Police sources said barri-cades have been placed at key choke points and a thorough search of all vehicles in Marnaian and nearby villages was underway police officials were also searching deras, residential places, small rooms set up near tubewells and even shel-



purported videos and an audio clip released on social media in the past three days.

In the latest video, the Khalistan sympathiser asserted he was not a fugitive and would soon appear before the world. In the audio clip, he debunked speculation he was negotiating his surrender and nudged the Akal Takht for the second time to summon a 'sarbat khalsa" congregation to discuss issues related to the Sikh community.

Singh was launched in Hoshiarpur district Tuesday night following inputs the radical preacher and his aides could be there.

Calling 'sarbat khalsa' is Akal Takht's prerogative

PNS ■ AMRITSAR (PUNJAB)

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) said on Friday that the convening of a "sarbat khalsa" congregation is the sole prerogative of the Akal Takht chief, after fugitive radical preacher Amritpal Singh sought such a meet to discuss issues concerning the Sikh community.

In his two video messages that surfaced on social media on Wednesday and Thursday, Amritpal Singh has asked the jathedar (chief) of the Akal Takht, the supreme temporal body of Sikhs, to call "sarbat khalsa" -- a congregation of the faithful.

He also appealed to the jathedar to take out a "khalsa vaheer" (religious procession) from the Akal Takht in Amritsar to the Damdama

Sahib in Bathinda and hold the congregation there on Baisakhi

Responding to the demands, SGPC general secretary Gurcharan Singh Grewal told PTI, "It is personal wish of Amritpal Singh.... To call or not to call 'sarbat khalsa' is the sole prerogative of Akal Takht jathedar and no one else." Since the jathedar is leading

the Sikh community, he takes each decision with deep thought followed by the opinions of Sikh scholars and intellectuals, Grewal said.

The jathedar would see what needs to be done in the light of prevailing circumstances.... There is no doubt that many Sikhs who are close to Amritpal Singh were arrested under the National Security Act which is also a matter of grave concern,"

more he can appear in person An RSS activist, who had initiated criminal proceed-

ings for defamation against Rahul Gandhi, has informed a court here about the Congress leader's disqualification after his conviction in a similar case in Gujarat, and opposed his application seeking permanent exemption from appearance.

Kunte, had in 2014 filed a private complaint before the Bhiwandi magistrate's court after watching Gandhi's speech where he allegedly



accused the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)

Kunte claimed this statement slandered the reputation of the RSS.

Gandhi had appeared disqualified.

tion) to the court saying after Gandhi's conviction by a Surat court in a defamation

case, the Congress leader was

Birla calls for deepening India-Israel ties to combat terrorism

PNS NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday called for deeper cooperation between India and Israel to combat terrorism, saying a common strategy will give a new direction to the world in the fight against the

scourge.

Birla also said that in the changing global dynamics, the relations between India and Israel have become more important.

He made these remarks

while welcoming an Israeli parliamentary delegation to

The delegation, led by Amir Ohana, Speaker of the Knesset (Parliament) of Israel, is in India at the joint invitation of Vice President and Rajya Sabha Ĵagdeep Chairperson

Dhankhar and Speaker Birla.
The delegation is visiting
India between March 31 and April 4. This is the first visit of Ohana to any country after assuming office of the Speaker, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said

Birla said that Israel and India have traditionally enjoyed close and friendly relations and underscored that the two countries share a robust democratic heritage and as fellow democracies both have many similarities, including respecting diverse cultures and following democratic values.

He observed that in the

changing global dynamics, the relations between India and Israel have become more important.

BSF seizes narcotics in Puniab's Amritsar. Tarn Taran districts

PNS ■ AMRITSAR (PUNJAB)

The Border Security Force on Friday seized huge quantities of contraband from two Punjab districts, officials here said. Troops deployed at the India-Pakistan border recovered two stuffed black socks in fields close to the border fencing near Daoke village around 6.30 am, a BSF official said in a statement issued here. Inspections revealed that the socks contained three packets of heroin weighing about 1.7 kilograms and a Pakistani currency note, he said.

order to Gujarat govt on Modi's degree

PNS AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat High Court on Friday set aside the sevenyear-old order of the Central Information Commission (CIC), asking the Gujarat University to provide infor-mation on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's degree to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

HC quashes CIC

Kejriwal. Allowing the Gujarat University's appeal against the CIC order, Justice Biren Vaishnav also imposed a cost of Rs 25,000 on Kejriwal and asked him to deposit the amount within four weeks to the Gujarat State Legal

Services Authority (GSLSA). Justice Vaishnav also refused to stay his order as requested by Kejriwal's lawyer Percy Kavina.

In April 2016, the then CIC M Sridhar Acharyulu had directed the Delhi University and the Gujarat

degrees that Modi received. Three months later, the Gujarat High Court stayed the CIC order after the varsity approached it against that order. The CIC order came a

mation to Keiriwal on the

day after Kejriwal wrote to Acharyulu, saying he has no objection to government records about him being made public and wondered why the commission wanted to "hide" information on Modi's educational qualifications. Based on the letter, Acharyulu directed the Gujarat University to give records of Modi's educational qualifications to Kejriwal.

During the past hearings, the Gujarat University vehemently objected to the CIC's order saying "irresponsible childish curiosity" of someone cannot become public interest under the Right to



2 hybrid militants arrested in Shopian

PNS SRINAGAR

Two hybrid militants of The Resistance Front (TRF) were arrested in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir for their alleged involvement in an attack on a social media journalist last year, police said on

Friday. During the course of investigation of the case, a special investigation team (SIT) was constituted, which, on the basis of oral, circumstantial and technical evidences, rounded up a number of suspects, a police spokesman

During questioning, two suspects identified as Suhaib Reyaz and Anayat Ullah Iqbal, both residents of Saidapora Payeen village of Shopian, admitted their involvement in the terror attack, the spokesman said.

He said it also came to fore that the duo was working as hybrid terrorists of proscribed terror group TRF - an off-shoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba On their disclosure, the weapon of offence - a pistol

along with its magazine and

five pistol rounds besides, an

IED were recovered by the

security forces in the orchards of Saidapora Payeen, the spokesman said. Waseem Ahmad Wani (27), a resident of Heerpora area of Shopian, who ran a YouTube news channel, escaped unhurt after two motorcycle-borne militants shot at him on

December 25 last year.

Akhara panel calls for bandh **PNS** JAMSHEDPUR

Security was tightened in the steel city on Friday ahead of Ramanavami processions being taken out in the evening while an Akhara Committee has called for a Jamshedpur 'bandh' (shutdown) on April 1 over seizure of a truck with a music system and trailer. The district administration however said it has no information about the bandh called so far.

"We have called a dawn to dusk bandh in Jamshedpur on April 1 in protest against seizure of DJ (truck with music system) and trailerMany akharas will not take out processions this evening," Central Ramnavmi Akhara Čommittee



RAMANAVAMI PROCESSIONS

Security tightened in Jamshedpur;

and senior BJP leader Abhay

Singh told PTI. However, many akharas were seen taking out colourful processions headed for the river front.

"A Nagaland registered trailwith national permit and DJ has been siezed as it cannot be used for procession in narrow lanes. We had already prohibited use of DI... The entire city cannot be taken to ranson for some people's interest. No person has come forward so far to deputy commissioner Vijaya Jadhav told PTI. Asked about bandh call, Jadhav said the administration

has no information on this so far and that the situation in the

industrial city is normal. Dhalbhum sub-divisional officer Piyush Sinha said around 200 licensed akhara committees will take out Ramanavami immersion processions in the city on

The official said the deputy commissioner Jadhav and senior superintendent of police Prabhat Kumar inspected all routes of the processions, including sensitive and super sensitive areas and issued direcclaim the trailer," Jamshedpur

tions to senior officials

The radical preacher has been on the run since a police crackdown on his outfit Waris Punjab De on March 18. He ter for animals in several vilhas, however, appeared in two

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-PAPER WITH PASSION—

Proof of the pudding...

Foreign Trade Policy 2023 has good intentions but these need to translate into action for \$2-trillion exports

he new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) is in sync with the basic thrust of the economic policy regime: doing away with incentives and moving towards a system in which is friendlier to exporters in terms of costs and procedural rigours. The key approach to the policy, according to the Government, is based on four pillars: incentive to remission; export promotion through collaboration involving exporters, states, districts and Indian missions; ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives; and emerging areas ase-commerce developing districts as export hubs and streamlining SCOMET policy. SCOMET is the acronym of special chemicals, organisms, mate-



rials, equipment and technologies. Announcing the policy, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said, "We will achieve \$2 trillion in exports by 2030, but it shouldn't be that merchandise exports are outperformed by services exports." The Government's focus is correct, for merchandise exports are laggards. In the first 11 months of 2022-23, they stood at \$405.94 billion, which was 7.55 per cent more than \$377.43 billion in the corresponding period 2021-22. In contrast, services exports went up from \$227.58 billion in April 2021-February 2022 to \$296.94 billion in April 2022-February 2023, which was a rise of 24.56 per cent. This is not surprising because India's weakness in manufacturing is no secret; economic reforms began

more than three decades ago, but they still have to percolate to the lowest levels. This explains the greater focus on states, districts, ease of doing business, reduction in transaction cost and e-initiatives in FTP.

FTP 2023 is based on continuity of time-tested schemes facilitating exports, an official press release said, adding that it is a document which is nimble and responsive to the requirements of trade. The release highlights the nimbleness and responsiveness by pointing out that changes were done subsequent to the initial release of FTP 2015-20. That may be true, but the point is that this did not help merchandise exports much, as the latest figures suggest. Services exports have been doing well, but that is primarily because the businesspersons in this sector don't have to interact much with the government officials. For instance, an IT firm is not bothered by the boiler inspector. An important feature of FTP 2023 is that it is open-ended. As Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi told the media, it will be updated "as and when required." Another feature is a one-time amnesty scheme for exporters to close the old pending authorisations and start afresh. He also said, "The approach of the new policy is to move from an incentive-based regime to a remission of taxes regime." Just as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the efficacy of a policy is in its implementation. The target of exports worth \$2 trillion can be achieved if the good intentions of FTP 2023 get translated into action.



A tiger cools itself in a pond on a hot day, at Maharajbagh Zoo in Nagpur

Congress' OBC paranoia is age-old



Party leader Rahul Gandhi's stand against the other backward classes will cost the Congress dear, just as it had during Rajiv Gandhi's time

ate Rajiv Gandhi was the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha in 1990 when the then Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh took the historic decision to implement the Mandal Commission Report to give effect to reservation to other backward classes (OBCs) to the xtent of 27 per cent. Six years before Rajiv Gandhi had led Congress to win 404 seats with over 49 per cent vote share.

The Mandal Commission Report was a turnaround for Indian politics, as Rajiv Gandhi stood in the Lok Sabha to oppose its implementation. The Bharatiya Janata Party leaders Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani welcomed the decision of the VP Singh government, stating that the time had come to recognise the legitimate demands of the OBCs in the

The stand of Rajiv Gandhi was almost unilateral as records of those times show that the OBC leaders within the Congress were appalled at the decision of their leaders. The Congress leaders were shocked that Rajiv Gandhi was disconnected from the masses. He was not ready for the march of social justice.

Within a few years, Congress was reduced to a party with the best tally of about 200 Lok Sabha seats even when the party came to power in alliance with other political parties. From the strength of 404 Lok Sabha seats, Congress' fortuned was cut by half in the Lok Sabha, solely for its anti-OBC mindset. The space vacated by Congress was occupied by the regional parties. They mushroomed all across the country. The political parties espousing the cause of the OBCs came up in Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere. They ate into the vote base of Congress. Even after three decades, Congress has mostly lost its vote base in states where the OBC identity-based regional parties cropped up.

The BJP was clear from its beginning that the OBC deserved social justice and the party's leadership was steadfast in their support. The BJP's sup-

port for the OBC was also manifested in a strong leadership of the party from the backward castes. They were at the forefront of the party workers in several states. They also took the leadership of the party and even became chief ministers.

The journey of Congress and the BJP is in sharp contrast. Congress went into a steep political fall since the 1990s. The BJP rapidly rose in its political stock since the 1990s. The Congress base shrank. The BJP vote base expanded. Congress kept hitting lower and lower in its Lok Sabha tally. The BJP tally in the Lok Sabha kept rising.

In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, Congress won 197 seats. The BIP had won 85 Lok Sabha seats in the same election. Three decades later, the BJP won 303 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Congress for the second time in a row could not win enough seats to gain the status of the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. The people of the country punished Congress for its anti-OBC bias in the last three decades.

AMERICA'S BACKING FOR RAHUL

Sir — All is not well for the Indian government as the United States of America and Germany are backing and support-

ing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and

noting his disqualification of member-

ship from the parliament and receiving

congratulations from all the opposition

parties and its leaders and Congress sup-

Since it is a great embarrassment for

the Indian government to intervene in

foreign countries in the internal matter

of India which has been rejected but the

growing support or backing of foreign

countries to Rahul Gandhi is a cause for

concern which may spoil the friendship

porters across the country.



THE BJP WAS

CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THE OBCs DESERVED SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP WAS STEADFAST IN ITS SUPPORT TO THEM

Rahul Gandhi repeated the same mistake that his father had committed in the Lok Sabha in 1990. There is not a single independent voice in the country that didn't admonish him for his 2019 election speech in Kolar, Karnataka in which he asked "why all thieves have Modi surname". This was an outrageous statement by a person who was president of Congress. He had been a member of the Lok Sabha multiple times. He is also 52 years old. He couldn't have made the scandalous and outrageous statement to question the integrity of the OBC

community. Worse is the fact that there is no remorse on the part of Rahul Gandhi. He has occasions to express remorse and apologise in the Surat Court. But he chose not to apologise. It's beyond under- wrath, and the Opposition standing that a number of party given its current who hold senior positions in Congress would not have gauged the consequences of Rahul Gandhi not apologising for his defam- the 2024 general elections. atory statement.

Also, there had been a number of precedents in

EDITO

which senior political leaders escaped judicial fury by apologizing in the court. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also levelled baseless allegations to defame the late Arun Jaitley and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. Both forgave him after he apologised for his mistakes. But here Rahul Gandhi doesn't want to own up to his mistake. In place, he has chosen to enact political stunts in the name of his conviction by the court in a criminal defamation case and the subsequent automatic disqualification from membership of the Lok Sabha, which was in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling of 2013. Rajiv Gandhi's anti-OBC stand had cut Congress' strength by half. Rahul Gandhi's stand against the OBC will also bring similar may find among the regional parties sitting in one corner of the Lok Sabha with a handful of members after (Author is the national gen-

eral secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party)

Words matter, better choose them carefully-



It is imperative to choose words with empathy. They should build bridges, not create barriers

Children or learners can be

instilled with confidence by

the words, tone, or even the

tone of encouragement they

receive from their parents,

teachers, or coaches. This

even helps promote cognitive

development. Also, giving a

impacts their emotional state

resulting in creating a ripple

effect of positivity. When people use powerful words

and phrases such as "please

and thank you"; "how may I

and appreciating work, they

inspire the individual, thus

making their work environ-

ment more enjoyable. Such

words even help in motivat-

ing, encouraging and build-

ing mutually respectful rela-

tionships with team mem-

bers, clients and customers.

On the other hand, negative

words along with sarcasm at

times, can tear down, intim-

idate and discourage an indi-

vidual especially young

learners resulting in the

release of dozens of stress-

producing hormones which

ultimately interrupt brain

ords are a mysterious manoeuvre of communication in an individual's life. They are the most powerful drug used by humans so if they can inspire and connect at the same time they can divide, demoralise and incite hate.

Words are invasive and their impact on different people varies because it depends on their understanding and conception. As they are used in every aspect of life, their power is immense and powerful as a result. A single phrase, an uplifting word or even a single act of kindness can change an individual's life forever towards the betterment.

Words are what an individual uses to express themselves, thoughts and feelings. One must never underestimate words' power. A person's choice of language can affect not only how another person feels but also how they perceive events around them. Childhood bullying, verbal abuse in domestic relationships, and even word choice by medical



professionals can lead to emotional challenges. Several researchers have found that the choice of words can cause specific areas of the brain to activate and affect a person's subjective experience of pain. Pain-related words create stronger responses in many areas of the brain, including the anterior cingulate cortex and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex. Words when used as bullets, with a feeling of superiority and condemnation will never restore a relationship to love. As seeds of support and sincerity, they can rebuild a relationship in a positive and life-affirming way. Words impact different people differently because it depends on their understanding and conception of them. They are functioning. For adults, it

by far the most powerful may lead to stress, anxiety force available to humanity. and anger followed by a dis-

connect in the relationship. A word is not just a combination of letters or sounds but a functional unit that helps thoughts take shape. It's the words that have the power and power to help, heal, hurt, harm or compliment to a co-worker humiliate anyone. Since it is or a colleague positively not in anyone's control what others say or do to a loved one, learning how to respond in loving ways can always prove fruitful.

Remember, no one can create a better reality while help you?"; acknowledging complaining or crying over current problems. It is imperative to choose words carefully with empathy and intention. Words should build bridges, and opportunities and not barriers, spread love and affection and not hate and war. Always be mindful of the conversation going on in your mind, for it can destroy or uplift you. It is imperative to become aware of words because words and feelings, when directed outwardly, can rebound and cause havoc in one's own life.

(The author is an *educator*) and relationship with US and Germany and many other countries in future. It is high time the tense situation in the country must be defused at the earliest to avoid many more foreign countries interfering in the internal matter of India to make it an international issue.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

COMMUNAL TENSION ON RAM NAVAMI Sir — At a time when the world is admiring us watching different festivals being celebrated all over the country democratically, Ram Navami brought us shame and communal violence in the name of festivity. Ram Navami was celebrated across the country with grand processions and special pujas, but the festivities were marred in Madhya Pradesh

where 14 devotees died after falling into

a well at a temple, and in Maharashtra

where a clash left 12 injured. In the nation's Capital, Delhi, a large number of people defied a police order and took out a procession in Jahangirpuri, which witnessed riots last year during the Hanuman Jayanti celebrations. Meanwhile, stones were pelted at a march in Gujarat's Vadodara too. The celebrations remained largely incident-free in the rest of the country with people coming out on the streets with

Cause of great concern



s cases of the Covid-19 virus are rising again, it is yet another reminder that the world must not lose its guard against the pandemic, India logged 3,016 new Covid cases in the last 24 hours, over 40% rise in daily tally, A concern over a fresh spike in infections in the country, Though Number speaks: No cause for alarm on Corona outbreak as of now as nationwide we have administered around 220.65 crore doses of Covid vaccine

Though we have fully upgraded our health care system, with adequate ICU facility and Oxygen supply to meet any eventuality, India must take concrete steps for its prevention as in the view of the ground realities reflecting poverty, social backwardness, Lockdowns are not the answer as it affects more poor people with the closure of business establishments and the sufferers are especially daily-wage earners, and cannot be treated as the only solution. We have seen the plight of people during the Corona-19 second wave which will prove a counter-pro-

ductive and will further wreck the economy. Patients with slight symptoms of shortness of breath, and lowering of Oxygen should immediately report to their family doctor. Other notable steps are, fully adhering to Corona-19 protocols, like wearing masks in crowded places. keeping a safe distance, and if cases increase we can go for pre-screening with testing increase testing and citizens to adhere to strictly to the covid --19 protocols, Also virus knows no geographical boundaries, hence we must keep with on international traveller coming from those countries with cases of Corona-19

Ramesh G Jethwani I Bengaluru

Lord Ram will be an inspiration for from the states on the action taken humanity in every era. Maryada Purushottam' Lord Ram's birth anniversary brought a feud and fight in the streets and made a mockery of the celebrations. Thus, far we did make an impact as a country of different castes, creed and religions brought out the fighting past and a bleak future during the festivities of this nature. Again, as the festivals collide in this country, so do people go haywire and collide in disruptive ways.

CK Subramanium | Mumbai

HATE SPEECH — A VICIOUS CIRCLE

Sir — Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Supreme Court that hate speeches were being made by several people against the members of the Hindu comreligious fervour and enthusiasm and munity and the court could not be seleclaw-enforcement agencies on the watch. tive in its approach in seeking a response

against such statements. He asked the court why it had not taken Suo motu cognizance of such cases and held state governments to account even when those speeches were in the public domain.

The hate speeches were a vicious circle and said they are being made by fringe elements. Every action has an equal reaction. We are following the constitution and orders in every case are bricks in the structure of rule of law. We are hearing the contempt petition because states are not taking action in time. This is because the state has become impotent, and powerless, and does not act in time.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Coimbatore

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FIRST COLUMN THE HYBRID **WORKPLACE PUZZLE**

Post pandemic, 'hybrid' will define the employer-employee relationship



ARNAB GHOSH

ost-pandemic commercial real estate professionals are grappling with the word "hybrid." The agile workspace is dead. A hybrid workplace is the new holy grail of office design. How we interpret this new word will define the employer and employee relationship now. The perfect solution will take some time to arrive. Meanwhile, we can only attempt to solve this hybrid jigsaw with our eyes and ears open wide.

Designing a hybrid workplace involves creating a flexible work environment that allows employees to work remotely and on-site. As a design brief, it is a challenge and thus needs a structured approach.

The first step is to assess the needs of your workforce, including their work styles, preferences, and job requirements. One-to-one interviews with senior leaders, online surveys, and real-time occupancy data from existing workplaces will help establish the base-



The second step is to evaluate your technology infrastructure. A hybrid workplace relies heavily on technology, including communication tools, collaboration software, and video conferencing systems. After evaluation, we need to do a gap analysis and ensure the proposed new technology infrastructure is robust enough to support remote and on-site work.

Once the above is done, the designer is ready to start with his design thinking process. A few approaches which might work for the designer while designing a hybrid office space are as follows:

1. Redesign your physical office space to create a more flexible work environment that supports remote and on-site work. This may include the conscious selection of flexible work furniture, which can be rearranged for different work environments, dismountable partition systems, formal and informal meeting spaces, and quiet spaces.

2. Today, it is essential to understand that the purpose of the office has changed dramatically—accordingly, the spaces it used to contain need also to evolve. The ambience of an office today is designed to provide a positive and inclusive environment for all employees. The use of wallpapers, curated artwork, designer work furniture, and decorative light fixtures today help designers to achieve that desired reality. The new trend of serviced offices is forcing the new office design to be strongly influenced by hospitality design principles.

3. While we do all the above, let us remember the imminent climate change disruption expected soon. Energy efficiency and wellness thus need to be default goalposts for designers today—no compromise on those aspects.

4. Finally, please continuously evaluate your hybrid workspace's effectiveness and adjust as needed. Gather feedback from employ-

ees and make changes based on their input. By following the above steps, you can physically create a hybrid workplace that is flexible, productive, and supportive of your employees' needs. However, in addition to the physical execution, certain

managerial aspects need to be part of this change management. A key aspect of a hybrid workplace is to not have dedicated workstations for employees. This can be a major change to adjust employees. Please establish clear policies around remote work, including work hours, communication, and productivity expectations. Organizations must be cognizant of today's new reality and establish their design briefs accordingly. Design and project profession-

als should look at the workspace through all lenses before recommending solutions to their clients. (The writer is Managing Director, Corporate Fitouts, Colliers India)

Reforming the capital gains tax a smart move



It is perfectly justified if the rich class is made to pay more which, in turn, helps the Government provide services to the poor



n the Finance Bill, 2023 passed by the Lok Sabha on March 24, 2023, an amendment relates to a change in the tax treatment of capital gains from non-equity or debt mutual funds (DMF). This has led to consternation in the investor fraternity including high net-worth individuals (HNIs), corporate, and so on who argue this will undermine efforts to deepen the bond market which is crucial for financing the long-term development needs of the

They also say such a change should have been introduced in the Union Budget. This would allow for thorough discussion in Parliament, instead of an official amendment. Now that it is part of the Finance Act, any discussion on the procedure adopted is merely academic. Before discussing the amendment that will take effect from April 1, 2023, let us look at the existing position. DMF is a scheme that invests in fixed income instruments, such as corporate and government bonds, corporate debt securities, and money market instruments etc. that offer capital appreciation. Debt funds are also called income or bond funds.

Currently, any capital gain on redemption of units in a debt fund held for three vears or longer is treated as long-term capital gain (LTCG) and is taxed at a flat 20 percent with the benefit of indexation (it adjusts the cost of a person's investment to account for inflation, effectively reducing her capital gains and in turn, her tax liability). Any capital gain on redemption of units held by investors before three years is treated as short-term capital gain (STCG) and is taxed at an individual's income tax (albeit personal) slab rate.

The amendment does away with this distinction in the case of 'Specified mutual funds' (SMFs) which essentially refer to mutual funds where not more than 35 percent of their total proceeds are invested in equity shares of domestic companies. As a result, gains arising from SMFs irrespective of the period for which the units



LOOK AT THINGS FROM **PERSPECTIVE** OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH IS **EXPECTED TO** MAKE LAWS WITH THE **OBJECTIVE OF** INCLUSIVE **GROWTH THAT** ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF ALL SECTIONS OF SOCIETY

(The writer is a policy

are held by investors are deemed STCGs and hence, liable to tax at the rate applicable to the slab in which their total income falls.

Given the way SMFs are defined, the new tax treatment will also apply to exchange-traded funds (ETFs), international funds, gold/silver funds, outbound mutual funds and even equity funds etc. wherein the gains will be taxed at the personal income tax (PIT) slab rate. The amendment will be rately depended and the personal taxes are the personal taxes and taxes are taxed to the personal taxed applied prospectively from April 1, 2023. This implies that all MF units already in possession of the investors as well as those acquired before this date will continue to be covered by the old dispensation.

IMPACT ON INVESTORS

Consider a high-income earn er earning Rs 2 crore per annum. The applicable effective tax rate in her case is 39 per cent. Assume she has invested Rs 100 in DMF units which yield a return of 10 percent per annum. Further, assume that nflation is 5 percent. With these basics, under the old regime i.e., 20 per cent LTCG tax with indexation benefit, her gain at the end of three years would be Rs 17.4 (value of investment Rs 133.1 minus inflation adjusted cost Rs 115.7). Tax @20 per cent on Rs 17.4 comes to Rs 3.5. Under the new regime i.e., tax rate in the relevant slab (39 per cent in this example) and no benefit of indexation, capital gain at the end of three years will be Rs 33.1 (value of investment Rs 133.1 minus cost Rs 100). Tax @39 per cent on Rs 33.1 will be Rs 12.9 which is almost 4 times the tax under the previous regime. It is this steep increase in the tax burden that is hurting the high-income

We need to look at things from

the perspective of the govern-ment which is expected to make laws with the objective of inclusive growth that address the concerns of all sections of society and not just pander to the interests of a particular class. If the rich class is made to pay more resulting in more revenue for the government. This in turn, helps it cater to the majority of the poor, this is perfectly justified.

Even so, the existing taxation regime was arbitrary, inequitable and customized to grant undue benefit to HNIs/corporate etc. Income earned by a person has no colour. Irrespective of the source from where earnings are made be it salary, profit from business, investment in shares, bonds or mutual funds and so on, these add to her income. Therefore, the tax treatment must be uniform. It can't vary depending on the source.

Yet, the regime gave preferential treatment to income generated from DMF investment by taxing capital gains from these at 20 percent against the applicable slab rate of 39 percent. It was discriminatory even compared to investment in other avenues. For instance, interest income from investment in fixed deposits (FDs) in banks or bonds issued by governments or companies is taxed at an individual's income tax slab rate. These earnings don't also benefit from indexation.

While HNIs should have no grudges about paying more tax, those earning less, especially the middle class, will not stand to lose in the new dispensation. Under the proposed PIT regime as per the 2023-24 Budget, a person with annual income up to Rs 700,000 pays 'nil' tax. For those earning Rs 700,001-Rs 900,000, the tax rate is without any basis.

10 percent and for those earning Rs 900,001-Rs 1,200,000, it is 15 per cent. For all investing in DMFs, the switch to taxing capital gains at the applicable slab rate will be beneficial. Under the earlier regime, these were taxed at a higher rate of 20 percent.

The Finance Bill, 2023 also addressed another anomaly. This one relates to a fancy instrument called market-linked debentures (MLDs). Unlike a normal debenture on which a fixed return is paid, MLD holders get a return linked to stock price movement, say the Nifty 50 Index. Earlier capital gains from listed MLDs were taxable at 10 per cent if held for more than a year. They were also taxable at a slab rate if held for up to I year Now these will be taxe at the slab rate even when owned for more than one year.

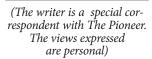
To conclude, the 2023-24 budget has ended DMF preferential treatment by taxing all capital gains — irrespective of the holding period — at the slab rate and withdrawing the indexation benefit. It has created a level playing field by aligning their tax treatment with other avenues such as FDs and bonds etc. It would be naïve to believe that this would lower the shine of such instruments (read: debt MFs) as investment in these units is liquid; it can be withdrawn at any time unlike FDs where premature withdrawal attracts a penal interest rate. Besides, the former offer investors the possibility of setting off capital gains in some units by shortterm capital losses in others thereby reducing tax liability. Any fear that the amendment would impact funding the long-term development needs of the economy is

Fill top vacancies at 3 important institutions for PwDs

The Government must ensure that three institutions funded by it for the welfare of the disabled population function properly and deliver in right earnest

n a welcome move which though, comes much after dilly dallying for years, the Government has now promised to fill by April-end the top-level vacancies at the three statutory institutions - Chief Commissioner of Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), National Trust (NT) and Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) — of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and

Empowerment. The Secretary of the Persons with Disability Department, Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in a recent submission before a Parliamentary Panel said that the process is on to fill the posts. He submitted that the candidates were being shortlisted and interviews will be held in the first week of the



ARCHANA JYOTI

next month i.e., April.

He also expressed confidence that by the end of April month they will send three proposals to the DoPT. After that the final accreditation will come from the ACC (Appointment Committee of the Cabinet), the Secretary submitted before the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment when asked about the vacancy position in the offices of the three statutory bodies. Headed by Lok Sabha MP Rama Devi, the panel submitted its report last week in Parliament.

However, disability rights activists are not impressed. In fact, they have dismissed these promises as just lip service. They argue that advertisements for appointments have

time over the past years, but additional secretary in the actually taking steps to the posts were never filled up. To corroborate their

points, in this regard, they have drawn attention to a reply to a query in Parliament in 2021 when Union Social Welfare and Empowerment Minister of State, Pratima Bhoumik, while admitting that the post of Chairperson, RCI, has been lying vacant since September 15, 2015, the steps were being taken to fill the post.

However, it is needless to say that this has not happened till date. Presently, Secretary Rajesh Aggarwal is the officiating head of the RCI and NT. This speaks volumes of how serious the Government is for the welfare of the sector. The CCPD is headed by bureaubeen published from time to crat Upma Srivastava, an lip service but not keen in Act.

Ministry.

In the absence of appointments of a candidate through a transparent process, new policies, existing programmes and funds remain half-heartedly implemented. Focus of the NT, RCI and CCPD has lost in between, leaving the sector to fend on its own, laments activist Alok Bhuwan from Manovikas Charitable Society.

This apathy also leads one to doubt government's intention if it is really keen for transparent appointments for the sensitive posts or wants to put its cronies who toe the government's line. The delay in appointment is also strengthening the doubts that the government is just doing

empower, handhold the sector which has big potential if given the chance. As per the latest report, India has 3 crore people with a wide range of disabilities.

The Council formed under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 is mandated to regulate and monitor the training of rehabilitation professionals while the activities of the National Trust include training, awareness and capacity building programmes and shelter, caregiving and empowerment to the people with intellectual disability. Similarly, CCPD has been conceived with an aim to ensure legal rights of the sector enshrined in the Persons with Disability Rights

it's high time that the government adopts a right-based approach instead of the Charity Model. Charity model of disability views the person with disabilities as the problem and dependent on the sympathy of others to provide assistance in a charity or welfare. This model treats the disabled as dependent upon society. Thus, leaving them hapless and helpless, dependent on the benevolence and charity of the so-called 'abled' in the society.

In contrast, the Rightsbased model of disability regards disability as a normal aspect and that the disabled are equally entitled to rights as others, ensuring that criteria for support programmes are prioritized by people dignity'.

Bhuvan maintains that themselves respecting their autonomy and freedom of choice. The disability rights model focuses on equality and non -discrimination, reasonable accommodation, accessibility, breaking down barriers, equal participation and inclusion and private and public freedom, says Dr Dilip Kumar Upadhyay, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Madhav University, Rajas-

By ensuring that the three important institutions seriously deliver what they are meant to, the Government will be implementing what has been enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. That is 'all human beings are born free and equal in rights and



Rupee rises by 17 paise to 82.17 against US\$ on forex inflows

capital inflows and a rally in domestic stocks bolstered investor sentiment. esides, easing global crude oil prices and rising appetite for riskier assets also supported the domestic unit, forex traders said. However, a strong dollar against major rivals overseas ahead of US inflation data capped the rupee's gain, they added. At the

interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic unit opened strong at 82.12 and touched an intra-day high of 82.09 and a low of 82.26 against the greenback. The local unit quoted at 82.17 at 1530 hrs, registering a gain of 17 paise over its previous close of 82.34. The forex market was closed on Thursday for Ram Navami. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, gained 0.25 per cent to 102.08 ahead of the release of the US inflation data later in the day.



IFFCO-Tokio crosses Rs 10,000 cr gross written premium in FY23

Rs 10,000 crore of gross written premium for the current fiscal. IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance Company Limited is a 51:49 joint venture between Indian Farmers Fertilizer Co-operative (IFFCO) -- one of the world's biggest cooperative societies -- and Tokio Marine Group, the largest listed insurance group in Japan. HO Suri, Managing Director and CEO of IFFCO Tokio, said there are many

seaments of the business, which represents growth. However, Health Insurance and Crop Insurance verticals are the top most segments, witnessing a growth of 28 per cent and 47 per cent. respectively, he said. In terms of geographical growth, Suri said Assam Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and West Bengal have shown remarkable growth. "Besides, our active policyholders figure has also been improved significantly



Sebi extends compliance period for 3 yrs for large corporates

apital markets regulator Sebi on Friday extended the compliance requirement to three years for 'large corporates' to raise at least 25 per cent of their incremental borrowings through debt securities to a contiguous block from two years at present. This comes after the board of Sebi approved a proposal in this regard on Wednesday. Currently, the rules mandate large corporates to mobilise a minimum of 25 per cent of

their incremental borrowings in a financial year through the issuance of debt securities which has to be met over a contiguous block of two years. In a circular, Sebi "decided that the contiguous block of two years over which large corporates need to meet the mandatory requirement of raising minimum 25 per cent of their incremental borrowings in a financial year through issuance of debt securities will be extended to a contiguous block of three years (from the present requirement of two years) reckoned from FY 2021-22 onwards.



India unveils 'dynamic' foreign trade policy

Eyes US\$ 2 trillion exports by 2030

PNS NEW DELHI

India on Friday came out with a 'dynamic and responsive' foreign trade policy with the objective of raising the country's outward shipments to USD 2 trillion by 2030, making Indian Rupee a global currency and incentivising e-commerce exports.

The approach of Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2023 is to move from 'incentive to remission' based regime; encourage collaboration between exporters, states, districts and Indian Missions; reduce transaction cost; and develop more export hubs. India is likely to cross USD 765 billion merchandise and services exports in financial year 2022-23 which ends on Friday. The total exports were USD 676 billion in previous fiscal year.

Unlike the practice of 5-year FTPs, this time the government

and responsive trade policy without any end date, and will be updated as per the emerging global scenario.

We have ensured there is no end date to this policy, it will be updated from time to time," said Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Sarangi while briefing media

on the salient features of FTP 2023 unveiled by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. Goyal said Department of Commerce will be making a massive focused outreach to the world, either sectorally or country-wise, over the next 4-

5 months. Ministry of External

"Foreign Trade Policy 2023"

abroad will work with the

department.
"We have to meet our exports targets going forward. We will achieve USD 2 trillion in exports by 2030, but it should not be that merchandise exports are outperformed by services exports," the minister

PNS NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra

(BoM) on Friday said it has opened



Gold climbs Rs 380: silver declines Rs 280

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices climbed Rs 380 to Rs 59,680 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday amid a jump in prices of the precious metal in global mar-kets, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the vellow metal had ended at Rs 59,300 per 10 grams.

Silver, however, declined by Rs 280 to Rs 71,300 per kg.
"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at Rs 59,680 per 10 grams, up Rs 380 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst -

Commodities at HDFC

Securities, said.

BoM opens branch for startups

in the overseas market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,975 per ounce while silver was down at USD 23.75 per ounce. Gold prices turned bullish after weaker US GDP data for the fourth quarter of 2022, Gandhi said.

added. Speaking at the occasion,



Global headwinds to deeply

director Anuj Sethi said. The BFSI segment, which has seen quite a few instances of stress after the Silicon Valley Bank collapse, will see revenue growth getting halved to mid-single digit, the agency said, adding that this impact would be marginally offset by 12-14 per cent growth in the manufacturing segment and 9-11 per cent growth in other

growth estimated in FY23, Crisil

Ratings said. "Headwinds in key markets, especially the BFSI (banking, financial services and

insurance) segment in the US

and Europe, will affect the rev-

enue growth of domestic IT ser-

vices companies," it's senior

IT Industry lobby grouping Nasscom has ceased its practice

mate for the next fiscal. The sector, which supports over 50 lakh people directly, has witnessed a slew of changes lately including some top companies reporting a decline in head count.

The rating agency, which analysed data from 17 companies which account for 71 per cent of the Rs 10.2 lakh crore Indian IT sector revenue, said the last two fiscals have been one of the best for the industry as it had put out a 19 per cent growth in FY22. Going ahead, healthy growth in cost-optimisation deals, along with strong digital solutions, cloud, and automation capabili-

will support the demand scenario, it said. IT spends by clients are witnessing a shift towards cost optimisation and vendor consolidation away from discretionary spends by most end-user indus tries, the agency said.

The banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) segment accounts for 30 per cent of the sector's revenues, followed by retail and consumer packaged goods with 15 per cent with the balance almost equally contributed by life sciences and healthcare, manufacturing, technology and services, communication and media, and others, it

Markets end last trading day of FY23 in style; Sensex Nifty rally 2%

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended the last day of 2022-23 fiscal with nearly 2 per cent jump on Friday global markets and heavy buying in index major Reliance Industries.

Fresh foreign fund inflows also added to the positive momentum in the equity

The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 1,031.43 points or 1.78 per cent to finish at 58,991.52. During the day, it jumped 1,108.38 points or 1.91 per cent to 59,068.47.

The broader NSE Nifty climbed 279.05 points or 1.63 per cent to end at 17,359.75.



Among the Sensex firms, Reliance Industries emerged as the biggest gainer as it Nestle, Infosys, ICICI Bank, Motors, Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies,

Japan, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the green.

Mahindra and Axis Bank were the other major winners. Sun Pharma, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finance and Titan were the laggards. In Asian markets, Seoul,

its first dedicated branch for startups in Pune. The dedicated branch will provide all kinds of support to a startup during its growth journey, BoM said in a statement. During the in and CEO AS Rajeev said, "India is one of the growing hubs for startups and unicorns in the world. It is imperative for us to start our own dedicated branch for startups, where we shall cater to all their needs -- right from the inception to the issuance of IPO/FPO". Pune is strategically important for us to venture into, considering the technological and industrial advancement of the city and the expertise the bank has, the This will begin a new vista for the bank and also for startups in Pune

BoM ED Asheesh Pandey said startups are entrepreneurial ventures in an early stage of business operation, which if properly nurtured, becomes an integral pillar of economic growth and employment generation while satisfying evolving needs of its clients with innovation There are so many start country, which have become global names and added glory to the nation's progress, the lender said. India is the largest talent pool in the world, and youth energy is the driving force of the nation, it added. "As the Amrit Kaal is upon us driven with Atmanirbharta, startups and youth energy are the best bet where we can invest. A vibrant startup ecosystem is a roadmap to achieve Atmanirbhar Bharat in totality," Pandey said. During the event, BoM signed a pact with SIDBI venture capital for proactive financing of startups.

Registration of properties in Mumbai city set to fall 26%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Property registration in Mumbai municipal area is set to fall by at least 26 per cent 12,421 units on higher base and rise in mortgage rates, according to Knight Frank India. The registration data is up to 10.30 am on Friday and the numbers would increase by end of the day.

Real estate consultant Knight Frank India said the property registration in March 2023 was highest during this fiscal year.

"Mumbai city (area under BMC jurisdiction) saw property sales registration of 12,421 units in March 2023, contributing over Rs 1,143 crore to



the state revenues," real estate consultant Knight Frank India said in a statement.

Of the total properties registered, 84 per cent were residential while 16 per cent were non-residential properties.

In March last year, as many as 16,726 properties were reg-

State-owned India Post

Payments Bank has partnered with Bharti Airtel to launch

banking services through

WhatsApp for its customers

here, a joint statement said on

Friday. The newly launched

IPPB WhatsApp Banking channel will enable IPPB cus-

tomers to connect with the

bank on WhatsApp and effort-

lessly avail a host of banking

services, including doorstep

service requests and locating

PNS NEW DELHI

India Post Payments Bank partners Airtel

to launch banking services on WhatsApp

However, registration of properties rose 28 per cent from 9,684 units in February this year. Knight Frank India

Director Shishir Baijal said: 'Notwithstanding recent interest rate increases, the strength of Mumbai property market was on display in March. The market saw an increase in property registrations as it recorded its highest registrations for fiscal year 2023 in March 2023, driven by the resolute homebuyer desire for ownership.'

This reflects the buoyancy of the Mumbai property market, which remains strong in the face of headwinds, he

Revamped Ioan guarantee scheme for micro, small enterprises from April 1

PNS NEW DELHI

A revamped credit guarantee scheme for India's micro and small enterprises will come into effect from Saturday, with the annual guarantee fee for loans up to Rs 1 crore getting reduced from the peak 2 per cent to 0.37 per cent, reducing the overall cost of credit for small businesses.

The limit on ceiling for guarantees has also enhanced from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro & Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) has issued guidelines in this regard. "The limit on ceiling for guarantees has been enhanced from Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore. For settlement of claims in respect of guarantees for loan outstanding up to Rs 10 lakh, initiation of legal proceedings will no longer be required," the MSME ministry said.

In Budget 2023-24, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the revamping of credit guarantee scheme for micro and small enterprises with effect from April 1, 2023.

Citigroup CEO explores Global Capability Centres landscape

Citigroup CEO Jane Fraser along with top management officials visited the company's Citi Solutions Centre here and held discussions about the landscape of Global Capability Centres (GCC) in the country, the company said on Friday.

On her maiden visit to Chennai and to any Citi Solutions Centre in the country, Fraser during her brief across operations and tech-

nology on their projects and capabilities managed out of the Citi Solutions Centre.

city and Maharashtra state, he

'Jane's visit to the Citi Solutions Centre in Chennai was her first to any CSC in India. For more than a decade, our CSCs have extended stellar support to Citi businesses in more than 80 countries (of Citi's total footprint in 95 countries," Citi India CEO Ashu Khullar

said in a company statement. "This visit was a reaffirmavisit was engaged with teams tion of Citi's focus on capturing the India opportunity by



growing its institutional clients businesses and building scale and expertise with the exceptional talent that we have across Citi in India," Khullar said.

The Citi Solutions Centre in India houses teams across global consumer banking, markets and securities, risk

management among others.
"We had productive discussions on the growing landscape of the Citi Solution Centres in India and the value they create for Citi globally. We will continue to invest in high-quality and diverse talent, upskilling and state-of-the-art infrastructure to further boost our capabilities...," Citi Solutions Centres head of South Asia Operations and Technology, Balaji Nuthalapadi said in

and capital management, cash

the nearest Post Office. "We are delighted to work with Bharti Airtel as our partner in driving digital and financial inclusion in India. We believe that financial services driven by technology have great potential and can go a long way in ensuring that the best financial products reach the farthest corners of the country," IPPB CGM and CSMO Gursharan Rai Bansal

> accounts in Delhi. Airtel-IPPB WhatsApp Banking solution is also working on building multi-language support, enabling added convenience to customers, especially to those in the rural parts of the country to access banking services in their preferred language

said. IPPB has over 4.51 lakh

With the addition of WhatsApp messaging to the existing SMS and voice communication that we offer to India Post Payments Bank customers, we will further enable two-way communication between the bank and its customers

IPPB and Airtel IQ are working towards further integrating a live interactive customer support agent in WhatsApp, which will enable customers to access roundthe-clock support and get quick resolutions for their queries, the statement said. With the addition of

WhatsApp messaging to the existing SMS and voice communication that we offer to India Post Payments Bank customers, we will further enable two-way communication between the bank and its customers

"We are delighted to continue our association with IPPB to contribute significantly in making banking services more accessible to tier-2, 3 cities in the country," Airtel IQ, Business Head, Abhishek Biswal said.

Untimely rains, hails damage about 20% of mango crop years. From March 20, unsea-

PNS NEW DELHI

The mango crop in the country has been damaged up to 20 per cent because of untimely rains, hailstorm and strong wind, according to senior ICAR officials.

Many mango growers said the damage has been huge in North India due to hailstorm and thunderstorm.

Mango is an important fruit crop in India and popularly called the 'King of Fruits'. India is a major mango growing country, contributing nearly 42 per cent of the world's pro-

Since last few days, unseasonal rains, hailstorm and gusty wind due to the western disturbance have impacted both foodgrain and horticultural crops in some parts of the country.

"First untimely rains did not cause damage, but later rains and hailstorm have badly impacted the mango crop. We anticipate the total damage to be about 20 per cent as of now," Indian Council of Agricultural Research(ICAR) Deputy General Director (Horticulture) A K Singh told

The frequency of the mango



crop loss has been more in North India, especially Uttar Pradesh which is a leading

mango producing state in the country. The anticipated mango crop loss in North

India alone is about 30 per cent, while in South India the damage is less than 8 per cent, he

However, the fresh data is awaited from states, he added. Lucknow-based mango grower Upendra Singh, who owns a 5-hectare mango orchard, said, "There has been up to 75 per cent damage due to hailstorm in Maal-Malihabad mango hub area. In places where there was only untimely rains and no hailstorm, the damage has been

The mango crop condition till March 19 was best in last 30

sonal rains and hail have brought huge damage," he said and added that high moisture during flowering stage has led to black fungus. Tafari Farmer Producer

Company Director Atul Kumar Awasthi said, "Fruits had set in but strong thunderstorm and strong wind led to fruit drops and the crop damage is estimated to be about 25 per cent."

The high moisture has caused pest infestation in mango trees in some parts. This will affect availability of quality mangoes for export purpose, he said.

what's brewing?

New Citadel trailer zooms into memory loss of Madden, Priyanka's characters

new trailer of the upcoming streaming series Citadel further

new trailer of the played by Richard Madden and Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

Their memories get wiped out deep dives into the show's nar- after one of their colleagues

rative of two former agents double-crosses them, leading to

Their memories get wiped out

the titular spy agency's fall.

As per the show's narrative, the titular independent global spy agency was destroyed by operatives of Manticore, a powerful syndicate manipulating the world from the shadows. THE USSO BROTH

Priyanka and Richard's character remain hidden under cover unaware of their part until one

night,

Richard's

down by his former Citadel colleague, Bernard Orlick (Stanley Tucci), who desperately needs his help to prevent Manticore from establishing a new world order.

Mason (Richard) seeks out his former partner, Nadia (Priyanka), and the

two spies embark on a mission that takes them around the world in an effort to stop Manticore.

Citadel is being pro-

duced by Amazon Studios and the Russo Brothers' AGBO. It premieres on April 28 on w h e n Prime Video with new episodes released weekly every Friday all character is tracked through to May 26.

Vikrant Massey as Kapil in Gaslight wins praises from all across!



Ti k r a n t Sara Ali Khan and Chitrangada Massey star-rer mystery marked his presence on the Singh, Vikrant very brilliantly marked his presence on the screen and has left the audience impressed who just could not stop flooding the internet with their praising comments for the actor.

As Kapil, the estate manager in Gaslight, Vikrant Massey has yet again given a worthwhile justification to his character with his acting prowess and indeed proved himself one of the most talented actors of his era. The actor has successfully kept the audience hooked to their seats till the end while his portrayal of the bad guy in the climax is loved immensely by the audience and critics. This has certainly made the netizens drop their praising comments for the actor on Instagram. While some praised saying, "Your hardwork defin-tily pays off" many poured in their blessings, and said that they are sure the film is going to be a superhit.

As Vikrant is currently ruling the hearts of the audience with his brilliant performance in Gaslight, he has an extremely exciting lineup up ahead with projects like Maddock's-Sector 36, Vidhu Vinod Chopra's- 12th Fail, Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba and more.

ubbed as one of veteran actor Satish Kaushik's last films, Mirg has completed post-production and gearing up for release. The film stars Raj Babbar, Anup Soni and Shwetaabh Singh along with Satish Kaushik in pivotal roles.

Mirg is a mountain leopard found in the lower regions of Himachal Pradesh. There are numerous myths surrounding this rarely-seen creature. Myths and stories are what separate Mirg from a normal leopard. Stories that are larger than life yet strangely believable. A genre bender, MIRG

explores the journey of one man, Anil, a smart, yet caged, order following boy. Set in the jungles of Himachal, *Mirg* is a heistgone-wrong revenge drama, a journey of realization that in the jungle the difference between the hunter and the hunted is just

Director, Tarun Sharma said, "My main aim while approaching Mirg was to give the audience an engaging film. Every aspect of filmmaking should come together to create something engaging, transporting people into an alternate reality. That for me is the magic of cinema. I was blessed with a wonderful and involved crew. Having stalwarts like Raj Babbar, Satish Kaushik and Anup Soni in my debut film was a blessing. Satish Kaushik was the first actor on board and to my surprise he agreed to do the film within 2 hours of me sending the script. To this day I can't believe that he is no more. His childlike passion for cinema is something I shall never forget. I really wanted him to see the final product but that is one feeling that shall remain regretfully unfulfilled. I must also add, Shwetaabh gave a breakthrough performance standing up to such

Karm Ya Kaand: Sonu Sood returns with new season of MTV Roadies

Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood, who has worked across multiple film industries in India, is returnfilm industries in India, is returning to the youth adventure television show MTV Roadies season 19. The makers of the show dropped the show promo on Friday.

Sonu was recently seen in Amritsar gearing up for the next season of the show.

Kickstarting the season's audition announcement, the video shows him prepring with some sugarcane

him prepping with some sugarcane juice for a journey that promises to be replete with 'Kaand', referring to the teaser launch, and logo reveal of the show's latest season - 'Karm ya Kaand'.

ya Kaand.'
Excited about the upcoming season, Sonu said, "MTV Roadies has consistently redefined the meaning of adventure for viewers across the country. I'm thrilled to be back with a new season of MTV Roadies. It's going to be a thrilling and twisted ride of entertainment, courage, and adventure - I can





Speaking about Mirg, actor Raj Babbar said, "I thoroughly enjoyed shooting for this film. We had a blast. Tarun is a brilliant director; he really gives his actors a free hand to grasp the characters their own way. This technique gets you much more attached to the character and you grow a sense of responsibility to really do justice to it. Every actor in this film has delivered nuanced performances".

Actor Anup Soni added, "Mirg is many films within a film. The story line is unpredictable and the treatment is very fresh. It was a dream

come true for me to be in a film with such brilliant actors like Satish Kaushik Sir and Raj Babbar ji. Tarun is a visionary; I blindly followed his lead and I'm glad I did. Now I can't wait for it to hit the screens."

Mirg is majority financed by UK based Studio RA and Produced by Rishi Anand, NaMa productions (Shwetaabh Singh) & OneShot Films (Tarun Sharma), Mirg is shot in Districts of Himachal like Una, Hamirpur, Govind Sagar Lake and jungles

ARCHIE

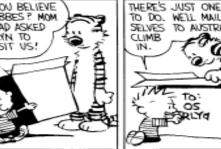


















GARFIELD









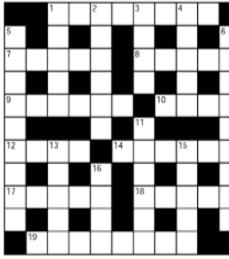
REALITY CHECK

CLUB WOULD LOOK LIKE: THING YOU GUYS GOT ANY

ESTERDAY'S COMIC ABOUT A CONSPIRAC' CLUR FOR DOGS WAS A FAKE! HERE IS



CROSSWORD











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 Indicate direction with your finger Moscow is in this country

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19 So smooth it is difficult to get hold of DOWN

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18 Defrosts

3 Shift 4 A type of dance club Large stone buildings built

5 Wrong in ancient Egypt as tombs 6 Most powerful 7 Steel pins knocked into wood 11 A sculpted figure 8 Call in on

13 Ruin 15 Rome is the capital 10 A song sung by one person city of this country 12 Have a lie down 16 Large boat



GINGER MEGGS







the pioneer 1]ayawada

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> Saturday April 1, 2023

Serving l'il hearts with care

This week for our weekly edition of the Hyderabond, *The* Pioneer connects with Dr. Kanchan S Channawar, a consultant pediatrician at Kamineni Hospital, who shares with us her association with the city.



TEJAL SINHA

Paediatrics is one of the most exciting professions in the field of a medical professional. Many people opt for a family doctor who sees people of all ages, while others exclusively prefer their little one to a paediatrician

This week for our weekly edition of the Hyderabond, we interacted with Dr. Kanchan S Channawar, one of the most established consultant pediatricians in the region. After com-pleting her MBBS studies, Dr. Kanchan came here to Hyderabad to complete her post-graduation, and that was when began her journey excelling in this profession. "I was working in Yashoda as a DMO (Duty Medical Officer) and later joined KIMS

Secunderabad DNB

Pediatric. After 3 years, I continued working in KIMS, as well as in Lotus. At Lotus, I was there as a consultant and was also taking care of paediatric cardiac. After working till 2016 at Lotus, I joined Kamineni hospitals as a consultant, and

its been three years now that I completed my super specialisation in paediatric critical care scholarship," shared the doc about her prolonged alliance with the city of pearls adding, "I have had a lots of options and opportunities also.

I'm very satisfied with the work I'm doing or the places that I worked I really had a good satisfaction." From hav-

ing lived in

Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur to growing in her profession Hyderabad, feels, "Compared to the other cities I feel Hyderabad is quite calm. It has a space and you can balance your work and life efficiently like

example

Mumbai it's like you have to be on your toes, here you can relax take your own time and work, you can have some time for yourself also. People here I feel are better pro-

fessionally also." Childhood tuberculosis or paediatric tubercu-

losis (TB) represents an important burden of disease worldwide. It is estimated that 210.000 children die each year from TB. Today, the main strategy for preventing TB among children is to perform household contact investigation complemented by the challenging diagnosis and treatment of latent TB. Highlighling more on the same, Dr. Kanchan shared, "Previously few decades back when they used to call TB, it was a social taboo like it is a bad disease and not curable but now TB is just like any other diseases only thing is you have to take treatment for a longer time and you have to take treatment for a longer time and you have to adhere to the treatment and take care of yourself in terms of nutrition basically. Generally TB we see in rural population mostly since they have more overcrowding and since they interact more. And it's airborne.'

So whats with paediatric tuberculosis? Parents,!

Here's what you need to pay attention to. Let's hear what the medico has to tell, "I would like to tell what the medico has to tell, "I would like to tell parents that whenever they feel their kids are having chronic cough and generally they say there should be a weight loss, but with the kids they are not gaining weight, we see either they don't gain weight, don't gain height and appetite will go down. That is when you'll have to think if it's a chronic thing if it's more than one and a help a chronic thing if it's more than one-and-a-half months. The first thing that should come in your mind should be TB. Symptoms for this includes: cough, mild fever coming and going not eating properly or if there's some history of other family members suffering from TB or having chronic cough then we have to suspect TB and we have to get the basic tests done so we can rule out."

No surprise that Hyderabad has turned out to be the country's healthcare hospital.

means to him

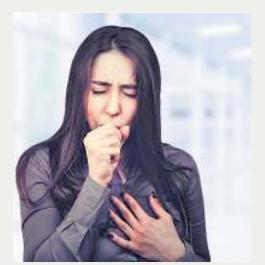
Within a few years of the state's formation, hyderabad quickly emerged as the country's healthcare capital and has provided an alternative choice for medical tourism, which usually is a yardstick to measure the quality of healthcare services, when com-

quality of healthcare services, when compared to other metro cities.

The doc agrees too, as she said, "Hyderabad is very good for medical, any medical super specialty or a specialty here you have multiple hospitals, you have single standalone paediatric hospitals where you'll get higher end treatment basically. In Hyderabad, you have a government paediatric In Hyderabad, you have a government paediatric hospitals for those who cannot afford and have financial issues atleast they can go there. Then you have Rainbow, KIMS cuddles, and Lotus they are

the standalone facilities for the kids."

"I like the weather it's not very hot or very cold. Here the traffic is bad but since I travel from the outskirts but initially when I used to travel from the city traffic was very bad. Here people don't have a traffic sense and then there's traffic jams because of it so it's very difficult to reach on time. Even if you follow the traffic rules you don't know when and how someone can come from the opposite side in a very fast speed so you have to be careful on the roads," signed off the professional stating that Hyderabad is her heart because, "Hyderabad means a lot to me actually I have nurtured here been in a good profession achieved my



Tech evolution to detect TB drug resistance

PNS| HYDERABAD

Tuberculosis has become another pandemic that's affecting city dwellers, as per our research. It is an infectious disease that is fatal. Many years ago, medical knowledge has made available the way to prevent this epidemic.

If you take the medication for the recommended amount of time and follow the doctor's instructions, you can achieve total health. But still many people do not know about this disease and every year 20 lakh people across the country and about one crore people around the world are affected by this disease. This is the epidemic that is killing the most people in the country! in the country!

This is the epidemic that is killing the most people in the country!

"We are analyzing the increasing pollution, smoking as well as not detecting disease at the right time, and not using proper medicines are the main reasons for not being able to overcome this problem. Contrary to popular belief, tuberculosis can affect any part of the body, not just the lungs. This illness can also damage the intestinal system, meninges, lymph nodes, bones, and kidneys. But the disease mostly targets the lungs. Symptoms include prolonged cough for more than four weeks, strong cough with expectoration, fever in the evening and at night, abrupt loss of weight, and full lack of appetite. I advise using some standardized tests to diagnose the illness. Sputum smear, chest X-ray, and sputum culture tests can be used to diagnose this condition. However, the recently developed nuclear acid amplification test can now quickly and accurately diagnose this illness in just a hundred minutes. called NAAT, this test is based on DNA. Provides three times better results in detecting caries, said Dr. Sr. D.S. Sowjanya, a pulmonologist at Kamineni Hospitals, Hyderabad.

Youngsters with poor immune systems, elderly persons, people infected with HIV, and malnourished adults are in danger of developing tuberculosis easily. It is easy to avoid infection and fatalities with a

adults are in danger of developing tuberculosis easily. It is easy to avoid infection and fatalities with a few precautions. Up to 40,000 pathogens are present before he coughs or sneezes.

She continued, "They enter, mix with the environment, and spread to other people. They thrive when the immune system is compromised, and appears. For this reason, medical professionals advise keeping the patient segregated and under close observation until the illness is treated. It is vital to ensure that the tuberculosis patient is taking the medication appropriately and to supply them with sustenance to cope with the minimal side effects of the drug as part of this treatment. The TB germs may become more resistant to the antibiotic if the treatment is stopped before it has totally cleared the problem. As a result, the patient's illness becomes more the immune system is compromised, and appears lem. As a result, the patient's illness becomes more resistant to treatment."
As technology advanced in healthcare, the devel-

As technology advanced in healthcare, the development of drugs treating tuberculosis came rapidly. The genesis of TB vaccines and drugs brought along a beacon of hope that tuberculosis will end soon! However, the chances of ending it became slimmer and slimmer as more patients started becoming resistant to the drugs earlier responsible for treating them. And this led to a rise of greater concern as the aim to confine the disease remained underserved. It immediately sparked discussions on are we equipped to tackle TB drug resistance.

The question remained for many years till the diagnostic industry witnessed a technological revolution with advanced technology such as genotyp-ing and molecular diagnostic facilities that started providing key results in tackling TB drug resistance!

"Several cutting-edge technologies are currently utilised for the identification of drugresistant tuberculosis. While the traditional methods for identifying TB resistance involve testing samples using culture-based techniques, which can take several weeks to yield results, the evolution of rapid diagnostic tools, such as mfloDxTM MDR-TB enabled the detection of drug-resistant TB within hours. These advanced techniques rely on molecular-based methods that techniques rely on molecular-based methods that target specific genes associated with drug resistance, thereby providing accurate and reliable results in a short period. Moreover, the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms has further improved the accuracy of TB drug resistance identification. These techniques enable the analysis of large data sets and the identification of patterns that would be difficult for humans to detect. Additionally, AI-based algorithms can predict potential drug-resistant TB strains by analyzing genetic sequences and predicting mutations that may lead to resistance. Therefore, the use of technological advancements in the diagnosis of drug-resistant TB has greatly enhanced the speed, accuracy, and effectiveness of TB management and control, leading to better health outcomes for patients. With an aim to end TB from the root level, the government of India is consistently working on National TB Elimination Program along with other initiatives. The emergence of TB drug resistance is a multifaceted issue which requires a comprehensive approach to accomplish the desired goals. Besides improvement in healthcare systems and infrastructure, the mission to eliminate it requires increased investment in research and development," says Dr. Pavan Asalapuram, co-founder of Empe Diagnostics!

Gashmeer Mahajani: I believe none of my roles have changed me as an actor

AMARTYA SMARAN

Tearly five months ago, *Tu Zakhm Hai* season 1 was released on MX Player. The long form TV serial has done really well and the makers are back with season 2. The new season dropped on the streaming platform on March 23. Dashing actor Gashmeer Mahajani gained a massive following for his portrayal of Viraj Trehan on

The actor quite certainly did not expect the kind of response the show has been getting. In conversation with *The Pioneer*, Gashmeer Mahajani schmoozed about *Tu Zakhm Hai*, how the show is different from other forms of content and what the craft of acting means to him.

There are certain roles that come searching for actors because it's just meant to happen. Can you imagine *Baahubali* without Prabhas? No way! The same goes with *Tu Zakhm Hai*. We asked the Sarsenapati Hambirrao actor as to what was the best compliment that he received for playing Viraj Trehan. He said, "When people say if you want to continue doing this show, Viraj Trehan can only be Gashmeer Mahajani. If he's not there, you don't do Viraj Trehan(haha); then you change the character or bring another character but nobody else can play Viraj Trehan. I think that's a huge thing and the biggest compliment that an actor can receive. I feel very flattered by such compliments."

He also informed us that many of them are watching season 2 first and then tuning into season 1

because they're intrigued by the show.
"I was quite surprised and overwhelmed at one point because after the first season, we came up with the second season after five months," began the actor. "I thought the audience was going to lose faith. There's so much content on the web now that people tend to deviate. Surprisingly that didn't happen. Right now wherever I see on social media, I'm getting feedback from the neutral audience; I've seen them tweeting and that feels nice. It's organically reaching people and they're feeling like talking about the show and the performances. They are not followers or crazy fans as such. They are just neutral audiences who checked out a show on MX Player and now they are writing threads about it on Twitter."

and now they are writing threads about it on Twitter. Playing such intense characters is bound to have an impact on the actors who give everything to play these parts. It could sometimes bring a huge change in the way they perform as well. However, Gashmeer says it didn't change him as an actor. "I believe none of my roles have changed me as an actor," explained Gashmeer. "I think I found a different side of mine while performing. I always get

more attracted to characters which have damaged parts, which have some kind of trauma that they can associate with; which in turn decides or defines the way they behave in their current scenario. It becomes extremely deep and interesting. During that journey, I started finding things from my past. I start finding certain sides and dimensions of my own self as a human being. I feel every character only brings out a different side of you. It

only makes you grow as a whole-some human being." People are consuming content in different ways. The format keeps changing and actors must adapt themselves at any cost. Tu Żakhm Hai is a long format serial for the web, according to the actor. He says it's not a mini series of 8 episodes or 10 episodes.

Having done a lot of web shows, he puts *Tu Zakhm Hai* in the TV serial category. "This is an MX TV serial, but having said that it is not like working on the Indian daily soaps or anything because here we knew the show was going and where it's going in the end."

Underscoring glaring differences between regular soap operas and MX

Player's TV serial format, he concluded: "In television things go nowhere after an episode.



GAIKWAD TAKES CSK TO 178/7

Ruturaj scores 92 runs from 50 balls to help Chennai post a fighting total against GT



pener Ruturaj Gaikwad was all class in his 92 off 50 balls as Chennai Super Kings posted a challenging 178 for seven against defending champions Gujarat Titans in the IPL opener here on Friday.

Gaikwad regaled the near capacity crowd here with with his sublime strokeplay. It was a display of effortless hitting from Gaikwad, who relied on his lofted drives over extra cover and

relied on his lofted drives over extra cover and

crisp pull shots to collect as many as eight sixes.

Apart from Gaikwad, the only other batter who put the Titans under pressure was Moeen Ali who came up with a 17-ball 23. Ali's flat six off Mohammad Shami on a free-hit ball was the

highlight of his cameo. Gaikwad pulled IPL debutant Joshua Little on his very first ball to set the tone of his innings. That over went for 15 runs and with Shami conceding 17 runs in the following over, CSK got the momentum they were looking for.

Titans' trump card Rashid Khan was introduced in the powerplay and as he often does, he got the wicket that his team was looking for

Mumbai Indians on Friday replaced injured pacer Jasprit Bumrah with Sandeep

Warrier for the 2023 Indian

the entire tournament due to

arm fast bowler, will join the

Mumbai Indians squad as a

replacement player for Jasprit

Bumrah. Sandeep, who debuted for India in 2021, is an

Bumrah was ruled out of

Sandeep Warrier, right-

experienced player in the Friday afternoon.

Premier League.

a back injury

by getting the dangerous looking Ali caught behind.

Rashid's second over saw him getting rid of England Test captain Ben Stokes, who too was caught by wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha, leaving CSK at 70 for three.

However, the fall of wickets did not make Gaikwad change his game as he kept getting the boundaries. He welcomed Alzarri Joseph into the attack by smashing him for three sixes in the eighth over.

Titans did well to stem the flow of runs in the middle overs and got the wicket of Ambati

Shivam Dube struggled to find the big hits and that put pressure on Gaikwad who was caught in the deep in the 17th over and missed out on a deserving hundred.

Skipper M S Dhoni came out to bat at number eight but still managed to make an impact as he pulled Little for a six before flicking him for a four in the final over, sending the crowd into a frenzy.

Kane Williamson injured his knee while fielding at the boundary and limped off the field.

Bangalore."

The release added,

"Sandeep will join the Mumbai Indians squad ahead of the team's first game of IPL 2023 against Royal Challengers

Warrier, who has played 66
First-Class, 69 List A and 68
T20 matches in the domestic

circuit taking 217, 83 and 62

wickets respectively, made his

debut for India in the shortest

format at Colombo in July 2021

against Sri Lanka. He repre-

sented Kerala in domestic

cricket before moving to Tamil

Warrier joins MI as Bumrah's replacement

domestic circuit having played

over 200 games with 69 of

them in T20 format, taking 362

wickets in his career so far

across formats," Mumbai

Indians said in a statement on

muthool

Hazlewood likely to miss first 7 games of RCB

PTI MELBOURNE

Set to miss at least first leg of the IPL due to an Achilles (heel) problem, Royal Challengers Bangalore's Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood would reach India by April 14 but would take another week to be match-fit.

While Hazlewood will miss at least seven IPL games, his Australian teammate Glenn Maxwell is doubtful for RCB's opening match against Mumbai Indians on April 2 in Bengaluru as he is yet to fully regain strength post leg frac-

ture.

"Everything is ticking along according to plan, so I'll be heading over on the 14th (of April) depending on how the next two weeks go," Hazlewood was quoted as

saying by The Age.
"I probably won't be quite ready to go right then, but (after) another week in India to touch things up skills wise I should be ready to go hope-

Hazlewood, who had to opt out of Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India, is hoping to get ready for the Ashes via the IPL. "You don't need a lot of workload for T20. It's more just ticking off those boxes of getting up to speed and pushing back in the run-up. I'm probably only going to need to do one or two sessions at full pace and then I'm prob-

ably good to play.
"T20 is a lot different to Test and even one-day cricket. You only need 20 balls at et. You only need 20 balls at full pace and that's pretty close to a game, which is a good thing," he said.

The 32-year-old pacer, however, is still awaiting a medical clearance from Cricket Australia before

Cricket Australia before

departing for India.
"It's a niggly one, the Achilles tendon. It's a slow process but it thrives on a bit of work, and I'd have to be bowling to prepare for the Ashes, so it may as well be in a game of cricket," Hazlewood

India have firepower in pace department to trouble Oz in the WTC Final: Taylor

PTI DUBAI

 ${\mathbb F}_{ ext{Ross Taylor}}$ has backed the Indian pace unit to cause trouble for Australian batters in the World Test Championship final scheduled at the Oval in London from June 7-11.

Taylor feels Indian fast bowlers have the wherewithal to create problems for Australia even though Jasprit Bumrah will be sidelined.

"Any time you play in England, conditions and the weather play a big part," Taylor was told ICC website.

"Any time you think of Australia and India, and also you're playing in a neutral ground, the seamers play a big part. The Australian seamers are renowned for bowling with the Dukes ball and have a lot of experience.

But taylor didn't rule out India's chances. "I wouldn't rule out this Indian side. They have had a lot of success over there in the years gone past, they have a few of these seamers," he added. While spin played a key role in the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India, Taylor expects pacers of both the teams to rule the roost in the WTC Final at The Oval.

Taylor is confident that even without Bumrah, India have enough options in the pace department to make an impact in English conditions.

Very tough to replace someone like Bumrah. He has been fantastic in all three formats and is the leader of their bowling attack," he said.

"But I think there's still enough depth in this Indian line-up to trouble the Australian side. (Mohammed) Shami and co are fantastic in these condi-

"When you consider the India attack, (Mohammed) Siraj and Co. Are also very good with the Dukes ball.

"I think there are still a lot of (India) seamers that are fantastic and enjoy bowling with the Dukes ball. Umesh Yadav also bowls 140-plus. They will relish the opportunity to bowl with the Dukes ball and in English conditions," Taylor added.



These are the two franchises, which over the years have flattered to deceive.

Inconsistency in team selections seemed to have also affected the them badly

on national duty.

PBKS squad is stacked with all-rounders, the most lethal among them being \$2 million plus buy Sam Curran, who is more than handy with the bat and is a very fine death bowler.

Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza is another utility all-rounder

Dhawan and Short to provide consistency at the top.

PBKS could bank upon. But they would depend on

On the bowling front, PBKS would miss Rabada on Saturday and in his absence the onus would be on Arshdeep Singh, old guard Rishi Dhawan, Curran and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar to do the job.

For two-time champions KKR, new coach Chandrakant Pandit will be the key man as take all decisions from the dug-out and Rana's only job would be to implement them.

KKR too have been hurt by injuries with regular skipper and batting mainstay Shreyas being almost ruled out of the tournament with a back probThe two Bangladeshis Shakib Al Hasan and Litton Das are also going to miss the opening game due to national commitments.

KKR's strength too lies in the team's all-rounders with the likes of Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, David Weise, Vernkatesh Iyer and Shakib Al Hasan in their rank.

Even though both Tim Southee and Lockie Fergusson have joined the KKR squad, the it is now an open secret that he latter is a doubtful starter on along with Mumbai stalwart Saturday having injured his

KKR's weakness lies in an unsettled top-order and it remains to be seen who will anchor the innings. In Wiese, Rinku Singh and

Afghan Rahmanullah Gurbaz, KKR have some terrific hardhitters who can pull off a win on their given day.

DC look to corner under-pressure Rahul's LSG

Mitchell Marsh's brute power with the willow will be Delhi Capitals' lethal weapon as they brace up for life without Rishabh Pant while starting their Indian Premier League campaign against Lucknow Super Giants, here on

LSG, who will be playing at home for the first time, is an equally beleaguered outfit if not more, with skipper KL Rahul going through the toughest phase of his career and has been on a downward spiral for quite

By the look of it, neither DC nor LSG look like outfits that give you the



vibe of a champion side like Chennai Super Kings, Mumbai Indians or for that matter Gujarat Titans.

However in the shortest format, equations could change at the drop of hat as the margin that separates a mas-ter-stroke from a harakiri is as thin as

So when DC begin its journey on Saturday evening at the Ekana Stadium, it will be an Australian, who will hold the key to the kind of start that the franchise expects.

And that Australian isn't stocky New South Wales man David Warner, who is leading the side but the giant from Western Australia, who has provided some sort of a trailer during the

ODI series against India with 12 sixes in three games -- 11 of which came in the first two encounters.

It seems that Marsh has got a hang of Indian tracks and that can only augur well for DC.

Marsh, who hasn't bowled his medium pacers for some time, will be a vital cog in Powerplay overs if Warner and his flamboyant opening partner Prithvi Shaw, fail to get going.

DC head coach Ricky Ponting expects a lot from Shaw and on his day, he can butcher any attack. Shaw also likes to work with pace of deliveries and Mark Wood in the opposition ranks, with a speed in excess of 150 clicks, gives him that opportunity.

Stirling leads Ireland to maiden Bangladesh win

AP CHITTAGONG

Paul Stirling hit an aggressive 77 off 41 balls to lift Ireland to their first win against Bangladesh on Bangladesh soil in Friday's third and final T20

The visitors lost the opening two matches but raced to overs after bowling out their

hosts for 124 in Chittagong. Shamim Hossain struck his maiden 50 to lift Bangladesh from a precarious 41-5 but it was not enough to deny Ireland their first win of the tour.

Stirling hit 10 fours and four sixes, including a six and three fours off

consecutive deliveries, to hasten his team's victory.
Taskin Ahmed bowled

ended a rung below in the sev-

enth spot in the 10-team com-

new skippers this season. While

veteran Shikhar Dhawan will

be at the helm of Punjab,

domestic star Nitish Rana has

replaced injured Shreyas Iyer as

looks a tad more stronger than

KKR. But Englishman Jonny

Bairstow's absence will cer-

tainly leave a big void in

Bairstow has been ruled out of the entire IPL as he con-

tinues to recover from a leg iniury he had sustained while

playing golf last September.

In Bairstow's place, PBKS has roped in BBL's player-of-the-tournament this season,

Matthew Short who is expect-

ed to open the batting along

who will miss Saturday's game

are hard-hitting all-rounder

Liam Livingstone, who is yet to

get clearance from the ECB, fol-

lowing a knee injury, and South

Other key PBKS players,

side Dhawan.

Punjab's team composition.

On paper, though, PBKS

Both teams will be led by

petition last year.

KKR captain.

Ross Adair for seven before Shoriful Islam dismissed Lorcan Tucker for four, but Stirling shared a 68-run partnership with Harry Tector for the third wicket to keep Ireland on



NZ beat SL by 6 wickets,

New Zealand capitalized on another failure by Sri Lanka's batters and avoided one of its own to win the third ODI by six wickets in Hamilton on Friday and to take the three-

match series 2-0.

After being bowled out for only 76 in the first match — which New Zealand won by 198 runs — Sri Lanka was dismissed for 157 in 41 2 years as missed for 157 in 41.3 overs as it batted first after winning the toss in Game 3.

New Zealand also was in trouble early when it lost two wickets in the second over of its innings and was 6-2, then 21-3. But Will Young, who had been out of form with only 30 runs from his last four ODI innings, ground his way back to



which guided New Zealand to victory with 17.1 overs remain-

Young and Henry Nicholls (44) shared an unbroken partnership of exactly 100 runs for the fifth wicket.



on 'balance of probabilities' Rafiq, who told lawmakers in November 2021 that English cricket was "institutionally

Vaughan cleared of racism

AP LONDON

Former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan was on Friday cleared "on the balance of probabilities" of using racist language before a match for county club Yorkshire in 2009.

He was alleged to have used the term "you lot" when referring to a group of four players of South Asian ethnicity, including Pakistan-born Azeem Rafiq.

A Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) report said it was "not satisfied on the balance of probabilities" that Vaughan spoke the words he was alleged to have used.

But it added that its findings "do not in any way undermine the wider assertions" made by

racist".

In its concluding remarks the CDC report said: "This is not a case which necessitated a conclusion from the panel that anyone has lied or acted out of mal-

"Far from it, the panel had to consider whether the case as presented to it by the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board), in light of all the evidence, was sufficiently accurate and reliable, on the balance of probabilities, to rule out mistake. was not."

Vaughan, who appeared in person at a CDC hearing earlier this month to answer the his time at the club.

charges brought by the ECB, thanked the panel for "their careful attention in very difficult circumstances".

"It has been both difficult

and upsetting to hear about the painful experiences which Azeem has described over the past three years," the 48-year-old said in a statement on social media. "The outcome of these CDC

proceedings must not be allowed to detract from the core message that there can be no place for racism in the game of cricket, or in society generally."

Yorkshire accepted in September 2021 that Rafiq, now 32, had been the victim of racial harassment and bullying during

tollywood

'I am an opportunist, always looking for good performance based roles'

TEJAL SINHA

reteran film director Relangi Narasimha Rao, who's best known for making rib tickling comedies such as Dabbevariki C h e d u (1987), D a g u d u m u t h a l a Dampathyam(1990), Iddaru Pellala Muddula Police(1991), and Edurinti Mogudu Pakkinti Pellam(1991), has a knack for getting the best performances from new comers. And he did rit again with up-and-coming actress Hindola Chakravorty. She starred opposite Yash Kondapaneni in Relangi Narasimha Rao's 75th film titled, Oo Antava Mava Oo Oo Antava

"It was quite a journey," said Hindola, who has been a part of several creative fields including theaters, modeling, ads, comedy, webseries, and now movies. "Absolutely proud to be a part of the Telugu film fraternity. Can't thank enough to Chadalavada Srinivasa Rao sir for introducing me to the Telugu film industry, he is the producer of my first Telugu film (which is yet to be released), and *Oo Antava Mava Oo Oo Antava Mava* is my second film technically. I'm happy to have shared a screen space with such a respected cast. Learned so much from each and everyone of them."

It's important for actors to play characters that they relate to on a deep level because it

makes it easier for the audience to connect with it as well. And so, when we asked the actress about how relatable she felt her character was to her, she humourously replied, "I loved my character in the film. Soundarya is a very challenging, performance based character. This movie is not a very regular go-to horror movie, it's a completely different concept horror and comedy. I got to play many roles for one character. As far as how the character is relatable in real life, I have a devil mind deep inside me which I explored through this role (she laughs), otherwise I don't want to encounter ghosts."

Samantha's sizzling performance in Oo Antava Mawa from *Pushpa: The Rise* has still been loved by the audience. In fact, people even call her the *Oo antava* girl. Not just this, actor Ranveer Singh had also said at Koffee with Karan that Samantha in Oo Antava is hotter than Katrina in *Tip Tip*. So on working on a film with a title of such a blockbuster hit, she said, "I was super excited when I heard the title of the movie from my producer Prasanna Kumar Tummala sir, already this title has become a word of mouth, and it brought some brownie points for the movie."

Being a Kolkata-native girl, how did she land up in Tollywood? Hindola gleefully shared, "I am an opportunist! I always look for shared, "I am an opportunist! I always look for good performance based roles. I like to something. Stay intact with me!"

explore. I'm a multi-lingual actor. Honestly, Acting has no language. What connects an actor to the audience is the acting, not the lan-

Coming to an industry with no godfather is definitely not an easy quest. And this was the same for the budding actress too. However, being smart to understand things well, Hindola handled all of it with ace. But she did recall, "I have come across many casting groups and casting directors who wanted money in order to get me a character in a movie or series."

The artiste is not here to settle for less, and confine herself to just one genre, or just one particular industry. She's here to explore all, right from more of Tollywood to even Bollywood. "I would love to go for challenging roles. Would love to play a cop, or a very rustic character, even a love story," said the wondrous artist, who was overwhelmed with the response that the southern audience had treated her, as she said, "Audience in the south are very warm and very loving. I feel loaded with love now!

Going ahead, Hindola has a Telugu movie and a Bollywood single in the pipeline. However, without revealing much of the details she said, "I love to give and get surpris-

Actress Hindola Chakravorty, who recently made her debut on screen with Relangi Narasimha Rao's Oo Antava Mava Oo Oo Antava Mava, spoke about her Tollywood stint, type of roles she desires to play, and more in this exclusive chat

The Pioneer.



Neelima Guna: Mallika Mallika is very popular among youth

with the massive success of Yashoda(2022), superstar Samantha made it clear that she's here to stay in Tollywood. Now she's back again to prove her mettle as a star and actor with Gunasekhar's Shaakuntalam. The trailer of the film has been receiving rave reviews for its visual effects, set pieces and the plot line. Mani Sharma is the music

director and he enjoys a great reputation.
The makers released the *Mallika Mallika* video song from the much anticipated period drama on YouTube on March 31.

"I watched the movie and it felt great. Since the moment I watched the film, I've been eager to release the song. I even conveyed the same to Gunasekhar Garu. Mallika Mallika is my favourite song from the film. It feels great to watch the video song and I'm happy to present it to the audience," said the Yashoda actress.

Speaking of the film, the creator of Shaakuntalam, Gunasekhar said, "Mallika Mallika is special to some of the unit members. As much as we enjoyed recording the song, it felt equally good watching it on the screen. I believe this song is going to impress everyone when they watch it on the screen because it is visually appealing. Everyone who saw it said it was amazing and felt happy. On the 14th of this month, we will bring the movie *Shaakunthalam* to the pan-India audience."

pan-india audience.

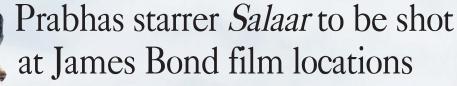
"Mallika Mallika is a song that is very popular among youth," said Neelima Guna sharing how pleased she is with the song. "Ramya Behara sang wonderfully. Everyone who heard said it was good. Now the

video song is get-

good response. This song will be even better in the movie. Samantha's facial expressions coupled with other visual elements in the song will impress everyone.

Written and directed by Gunasekhar, Shaakuntalam is presented by Dil Raju under Sri Venkateswara Creations Banner. The film is being produced by Neelima Guna under Guna





location Matera, Italy where the action prologue for the James Bond film No Time to Die was

The Indian tional titles. action movie Salaar starring Prabhas is currently ongoing in Italy. Pan-India

Prabhas seen playing a dual role in the film according to sources. The highly anticipated movie, written and directed by Prashanth Neel and produced shot at the s international by Vijay Kiragandur's Hombale Films company, has been filming mid march in Matera, the old southern Italian town famous for its prehistoric whitewashed caves. Matera was the setting for the prologue action sequence for the James Bond film No Time to Die, among other interna-

Salaar production has now moved to Naples, where preparations for filming in the southern port city's central Piazza del Plebiscito plaza are underway. The dia star local police are assisting with the set Prabhas preparations, which include the will be use of drones and lighting for night shooting. Aside from Matera and Naples, other Salaar locales include Rome and

despite the distance and cultural differences, and overcome numerous challenges. The first installment of the thriller with a love undercurrent is set to be released internationally on September 23 in Telugu and dubbed in Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, and English.

Meanwhile, it is being learnt that Hombale Films' Salaar has been mounted on a very huge scale and has been budgeted at a whopping 400+ crores. While the dynamic team and technicians of KGF are also a part of Salaar, we can certainly now say that the era of Salaar has begun! Releasing on September 2023.

Did Varun Tej reveals his look from his Bollywood debut?

Actor Varun Tej's pictures from his recent Mumbai visit has been making the headlines and kept us wondering about his purpose of visit to Mumbai. The VT 13 actor is all set to surprise audiences with back to back action packed projects that are currently untitled. VT 13 also marks Varun's Bollywood debut. He has been extensively shooting for his films across the globe and the country and recently was spotted in



Mumbai which made us wonder if he is signing another bol-

lywood film. The actor was seen in a new look that further piqued our interest if any Bollywood pro-

ject is on cards for him after VT13, and we can't wait to hear it from the actor himself.

Opening about his new look by ace celebrity stylist Aalim Hakim and visit Varun shares, "It was a wonderful experience to be in Mumbai and meet some of my fans.I am overwhelmed with all the love that I have been receiving and can't wait to take my audiences by surprise very soon."

Varun Tej has much awaited projects titled VT 12 and VT 13 (working titles) in 2023. Well, only time will tell what this new look is all about!

Genelia Deshmukh grabs best popular actress Award at the Zee Chitra Gaurav awards



amous for her beautiful portrayal of movie characters to her buzzing social media, Genelia is a total collection of all things wonderful. She recently made

us prouder and proved that she is totally a people's favorite when she won the Best Popular Actress Award at the Zee Chitra Gaurav Awards 2023.

The 'Zee Chitra Gauray', is considered to be the most respected one in the Marathi entertainment world.

Actress Genelia Deshmukh enjoys a huge audience base with millions of fans. She takes pride in her work and has given us multiple films as well as ads with her best performances. She's an impactful personality that really brings courage to aspiring women in terms of fitness to motherhood to setting a perfect

work life balance. The actress is popular for her work in multiple lan-

'I'm not a film star,' said Sai Pallavi on coming to terms with the title!

he talented Sai Pallavi has undoubtedly left an impact on the audiences with her impeccable script choice and powerful performances on screen. The actor was recently in town and spoke exclusively with Ánupama Chopra on Film Companion about film-making being a spritual process, the success of her first film Premam, her biggest fear and many more

Sai Pallavi opened up on not having a manager and entourage she said to Film Companion "Ilike to speak to the director or producer myself to know what the film is for what it is. We're all going to work on the film together, so I don't need a middle person." She adds, "You can call me directly and we can talk and see how it goes. But also, I like doing things my way." and like to take care of her-

Sai Pallavi's unique dancing style is quite famous amongst the youth. When asked about the roots of her dancing prowess, she said, "I've never learnt to dance, I grew up watching Madhuri Dixit ma'am, Aishwarva Rai ma'am and Saroi Khan ma'am's dances. I think, for 3 years,



I just danced to one song and that is *Dola* Re Dola. It was my go-to dance, I liked it so much. Even when you wake me up in my sleep, I'll be doing that step." She adds, "I didn't realise, growing up, that dance will play a major role in disciplining me or bringing some sort of rhythm

fine."

in my body. So, I owe it all to dancing, and Mum letting me do what I loved, even as a child.'

When discussing her routine as a 'film star' who doesn't believe in the late-night lifestyle, Sai Pallavi finds it difficult to be called that term. "I'm not a film star, I'm just someone who's lucky enough to do what she loves and is getting so much love from the people around. I consider myself to be extremely blessed. But ves, I have made a few changes to be sane to stay up late at night." She recalls being a sleepy child on the sets of Premam. "For the last scene of the film, Alphonse (director) would say, "Pallavi, the shot is ready" and I would just wake up, do the shot & come back to nap. I was a child! Now, I think I've grown up to be a more friendly person."

When asked about the demand for female actors to wear makeup and look glamorous, she said "I think, it's maybe the person that I am...I don't know the other side...of how it might feel. Maybe there's a lot of pressure to look like your perfect version, and I'm not saying that makeup doesn't help. If it makes you feel confident, you should do it. I feel confident this way, and I think I'm doing.

Bathukamma song an ode to Telangana's flower fest

The song Bathukamma from the upcoming Salman Khan-starrer Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan was released on Friday.

The track, which features Salman in traditional Telugu attire, celebrates the annual flower festival. Bathukamma, celebrated by women in Telangana for nine days. It was shot during the Bathukamma festival, making it an authentic representation of the event and

a tribute to Telugu culture. The song is an epitome of cultural richness and features a mix of traditional and modern music, with Pooja Hegde executing the dance in a graceful manner.

A source revealed that Telugu star Venkatesh Daggubati was the one who had suggested the festival and Salman loved the idea



on how the festival doesn't have a song dedicated to it and told the music director to come up with a song for the same.

The song has been composed by Ravi Basrur while the lyrics have been penned by Shabbir Ahmed, Ravi Basrur, Kinnal Raj and