

'*Calling Sahasra* is a pure experiment-based

**FILM FOR ME'**

P11

Kissinger's power grew during the turmoil of Watergate, when the politically attuned diplomat assumed a role akin to co-president to the weakened Nixon.





## People determined to defeat KCR: Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Thanking everyone who voted during the elections, Telangana BJP Election Management Committee Chairman Eatala Rajender said that the people are determined to defeat KCR.

He said that people voted thinking that Huzurabad could not be imagined without Eatala Rajender. "Huzurabad will give me a huge majority and I will fulfil people's responsibility. There is a quiet revolution in Gajwel. Survey results are inconsistent," he said.

Speaking to the media after polling, Eatala said, "The people voted indicating that they have found a leader who will not surrender to KCR's tyranny. Thanks to all BJP workers



who fought like tiger cubs for 40 days. KCR fielded a psychosadist in Huzurabad. The real reason for this is KCR. KCR said that the BRS candidate in Huzurabad is like a son to him and an activist. KCR should make his position clear after the election verdict.

## 'KCR changes seat when he smells defeat'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reacting to exit poll results TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that KCR would change constituencies whenever he is on the verge of defeat and declared that KCR is going to be defeated in Kamareddy.

"The Congress saved democracy. Thank you for defeating KCR in Kamareddy. KCR changes constituency whenever he smells defeat. It is commendable that our people laid a trap for him and defeated him here. The voters of Kamareddy are dynamic. People defeated KCR without falling for the many temptations offered. A heartfelt tribute to the soul of Srikantha



Chary. Srikantha Chary died on December 3 and election results are coming out on that day. A Congress government is going to take charge on December 9. We have faith in the people. Let's fight whoever

is elected. The KCR media did not come forward as the results are not in their favour," he said. "A challenge to KTR. Have you missed the exit polls? If they are true, will you apologise to the people? The opposition and the ruling party should act responsibly. If KCR wins he acts like a king and if he loses he is a slave. The Congress has restored democracy. It gives confidence to all sections of society. Media will also get freedom from today. We are not rulers, but servants. The four crore people of TS have allowed us to serve them. Our first and last enemies are the four members of KCR's family. The BRS will not cross 25 seats," Revanth said.

## Will retain power in Chhattisgarh: Deo

Says high command to decide

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh deputy Chief Minister T S Singh Deo on Thursday said he takes exit polls results with a pinch of salt and the Congress will retain power in the state.

The party high command's choice for the chief minister's post would be acceptable to all, he told PTI in Delhi.

A few exit polls on Thursday predicted a close race between the ruling Congress and opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in Chhattisgarh.

"As far as projections are concerned, I always take them with a pinch of salt. They are attempts by various news

channels and agencies to guess what may have happened in elections. We should wait for the 3rd (of December)," Singh Deo told PTI.

"In Madhya Pradesh, a Congress government should be coming (to power). In Rajasthan, we are very much there. Because it has been a traditional in-and-out format (in Rajasthan), five years one party, next five years another party, so that is the only hesitation (while predicting the party's victory)," he said. The Congress was very likely to form government in Telangana, he said, adding, "In Chhattisgarh, we are forming the government."

DISTRICT	PERCENTAGE
Yadadri Bhongiri	90.03%
Medak	86.69%
Janagaon	85.74%
Nalgonda	85.49%
Suryapet	84.83%
Mahabubabad	83.70%
Khammam	83.28%
Mulugu	82.09%
Jayashankar Bhupalpal	81.20%
Jogulamba Gadwal	81.16%
Kumaram Bhim Asifabad	80.82%
Adilabad	79.86%
Siddipet	79.84%
Kamareddy	79.59%
Nagarkurnool	79.46%
Bhadradi	78.65%
Nirmal	78.24%
Warangal	78.06%
Mahabubnagar	77.72%
Wanaparthy	77.54%
Narayanpet	76.74%
Peddapalli	76.57%
Vikarabad	76.47%
Sangareddy	76.35%
Rajanna Sircilla	76.12%
Jagtial	76.10%
Mancherla	75.59%
Karimnagar	74.61%
Nizamabad	73.72%
Hanumakonda	66.38%
Rangareddy	59.94%
Medchal Malkajigiri	56.00%
Hyderabad	46.56%

## 'Welfare schemes have enriched lives of people'

PNS ■ NALBARI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday called the various welfare schemes initiated under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi have enriched the quality of people's lives in the country.

Sonowal joined the prime minister during his virtual interaction with beneficiaries of various government schemes under the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' at Dakshin Pakua GP Office Ground in Dev Block in Nalbari.

"Under the dynamic leadership of the prime minister, this 'sankalp yatra' is an earnest

attempt to make the people of our country realise the various welfare schemes aimed at enriching the quality of lives and at the same time enabling social apparatus towards realising his vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat by 2047," Sonowal said.

The government aims to serve the poor, honour the marginalised and ensure the welfare of farmers with the help of various welfare schemes like 'PM Kisan', 'PM Awas Yojana', 'PM SVANidhi', 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana', 'Jan Dhan Yojana' and so many other initiatives, he said.

'The PM has given a clarion call that the 'atmanirbharta'

(self-reliance) of India can only be achieved by empowering women. For this, the government initiated various schemes like 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam', 'Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana' (PMMVY) and many others as well as correcting social evils like triple talaq to empower women towards the cause of nation-building," he said.

The youth of the country remains the cornerstone towards realising the vision of PM's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and implementation of the National Education Policy, Skill India initiative and other important schemes, Sonowal, the shipping minister, said.

'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' is being undertaken across the country to attain saturation of flagship schemes of the government by ensuring that benefits reach all targeted people in a time-bound manner.

The prime minister also launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kisan Drone Kendra', which will provide drones to women self-help groups (SHGs) so that they can use the technology for livelihood assistance. He also dedicated the landmark 10,000th Jan Aushadhi Kendra at AIIMS, Deoghar in Jharkhand and launched a programme to increase the number of such facilities in the country from 10,000 to 25,000.

## Congress will win Rajasthan polls

BJP to lose in all 5 states: Gehlot

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday said he was confident of a Congress win in Rajasthan assembly polls, and added that the BJP would not form the government in any of the five states where elections are being held.

Five state went to polls in November. While polling in Telangana will end Thursday evening, it was held earlier in the month in Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Results of the elections will be declared on December 3.



"Congress government will be formed (in Rajasthan). In all five states, I feel that BJP is not going to form the government. Exit polls may say something, surveys might suggest something, but based on the feedback of people in the cities

and villages, I feel that our government should come," Gehlot told reporters in New Delhi.

He said the Congress government in Rajasthan is the only government in the country, which has no anti-incumbency factor against it. "People are saying that the chief minister has not left any stone unturned in doing development works."

Gehlot slammed the "frightening language" used by BJP leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during the election campaign.

## India walks the talk when it comes to climate action: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for supporting developing countries with adequate climate financing and technology transfer to enable them to deal with climate change.

As he heads to Dubai to attend the World Climate Action Summit, Modi said India has walked the talk when it comes to climate action while highlighting the importance India attached to the issue during its G20 presidency.

"During our G20 presidency, climate was high on our priority. The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration includes numer-

ous concrete steps on climate action and sustainable development. I look forward to the COP28 taking forward the consensus on these issues," Modi said in his departure statement.

Modi will attend the World Climate Action Summit on Friday during the United Nations' Conference of the Parties' on climate, known as COP28.

Several world leaders are set to attend the climate action summit to discuss ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and effectively combat climate change.

The World Climate Action Summit is the high-level segment of the COP28.

The prime minister is scheduled to participate in three other high-level side events as well. The COP28 is taking place from November 30 to December 12 under the presidency of the UAE.

In his statement, the prime minister said the COP28 will provide an opportunity to review progress made under the Paris Agreement, and chart a path for future course on climate action.

"At the Voice of Global South Summit convened by India, the Global South spoke for the need for climate action based on the principles of equity, climate justice, and common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as a

## BJP ahead in MP, Rajasthan...

Continued from page 1

In Madhya Pradesh, while Dainik Bhaskar predicted 95-115 seats for the BJP and 105-120 for the Congress, India Today-Axis My India forecasted that the BJP will get 140 to 162 seats and the Congress 68-90. India TV CNX also gave a landslide to the BJP, pegging its seats at 140 to 159 and 70-89 seats to the Congress. Today's Chanakya forecasted that the BJP would get 151 (plus minus 12 seats) and the Congress 74 (plus minus 12 seats).

While Jan Ki Baat exit poll predicted that the BJP would get 100-123 seats and the Congress 102-125, Republic TV-Matrise forecast 118-130 seats for the BJP and 97-107 for the Congress.

TV9 Bharatvarsh Polstrat said the BJP would get 106-116 and the Congress would get 111-121. Times Now-ETG gave 105-117 seats to the BJP and 109-125 to the Congress.

Jist-TIF-NAI said the Congress was enjoying 2018-like edge in Madhya Pradesh, predicting 107-124 seats for the party as against the BJP's 102-119.

In Rajasthan, India Today-Axis My India forecast a tight race, predicting 86-106 seats for the Congress, 80-100 seats for the BJP and others 9-18. While Dainik Bhaskar gave 98-105 seats to the BJP and 85-95 to the Congress, Jan Ki Baat pollsters forecast that the BJP would get 100-122 and 62-85 for the Congress.

TV9 Bharatvarsh-Polstrat predicted 100-110 for the BJP and 90-100 for the Congress. Times Now ETG poll predicted 108-128 seats for the BJP and 56-72 for the Congress in Rajasthan. Today's Chankaya

gave a simple majority to the Congress, projecting that it would get 101 seat as against the BJP's 89.

While India TV-CNX put the Congress' tally at 94 to 104 in the 200-member House and the BJP's at 80-90, Republic TV-Matrise gave 115-130 seats to the BJP and 65-75 to the Congress. P-MARQ pollsters gave 105-125 seats to the BJP and 69-91 to the Congress.

Jist-TIF-NAI predicted that in Rajasthan there would be continuation of the state's revolving door tradition, forecasting 110 seats for the BJP and the Congress 70.

For Chhattisgarh, while ABP News-C Voter predicted 41-53 for the Congress and 36-48 seats for the BJP in the 90-member House, India Today-Axis My India forecast 40-50 seats for the Congress and 36-46 seats for the BJP.

## Hyd drags TS...

Continued from page 1

Among districts, the polling percentage in Hyderabad district till 5 pm is 40.23 per cent followed by Medchal Malkajigiri with 49.25 per cent and Ranga Reddy district with 53 per cent. These areas brought down the overall polling percentage as all other districts reported voting percentages above 60 per cent. The BRS is trying to retain power while the Congress has been fighting tooth and nail to wrest power from it. The BJP also has left no stone unturned to win power.

The BRS fielded candidates in all the 119 seats. As per the seat-sharing agreement, the BJP and the Jana Sena are contesting in 111 and eight seats respectively while the Congress gave one seat to its ally the CPI.

## KCR, wife vote in Chintamadaka...

Continued from page 1

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao, Congress leader Revanth Reddy, and Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy also voted. Celebrities like Allu Arjun, Chiranjeevi and Jr. NTR also exercised their franchise.

Expressing hope that the BRS would form a government for the third time in the state, KTR tweeted, "Getting reports from all over the state. CAR in Top Gear. Jai Telangana."

Political leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urged the public to exercise their franchise.

"I call upon my brothers

and sisters in Telangana to vote in record numbers and strengthen our democracy. I urge youth, especially first-time voters, to exercise their right to vote," tweeted Modi.

Union Minister Amit Shah tweeted, "Only a corruption-free and pro-poor government can work selflessly for Telangana. I appeal to the people of Telangana to come out in large numbers and elect a government whose priority is empowerment and not appeasement."

"No force on earth can stop an idea whose time has come," tweeted Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urging the people of Telangana, especially first-time voters, to exercise their franchise.

## Tension at Nagarjuna Sagar...

Continued from page 1

"When Telangana Police personnel were busy with election duty they (AP police) resorted to this act. It is pre-planned they came to draw water without asking the 'Telangana Irrigation department,'" Telangana officials said.

Additional police personnel from Telangana were deployed following the incident, a senior police official said. Officials further said Nagarjuna Sagar dam, built over river Krishna, is under the control of Telangana government while the control of Srisaillam project is under Andhra Pradesh government.







# Both BRS & Cong confident of victory

## It was BRS, Cong all the way in Assembly polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Voting in the Telangana Assembly elections ended on Thursday after a high-voltage campaign by the top leaders of all major political parties. Now the candidates of the three major parties have to wait for the next 48 hours to know their fate.

Thanks to the Election Commission for reducing the tension of candidates by 24 hours. In the 2018 Telangana Assembly elections, candidates had to wait for four days to know their fate.

In 2018, the elections were held on December 7 and the results were announced on December 11. This time elections were held on November 30 and the results will be announced on December 3.

Meanwhile, candidates, particularly those belonging to the BRS and the Congress, are busy collecting information about voting trends after the end of polling. Based on polling trends the candidates are assessing the likely outcome in their constituencies.

In the 2018 Assembly elections, the turnout was 73.74%



and in the 2014 Telangana Assembly elections the turnout was only 69%. There are expectations this time that the turnout may cross 75%. Compared to urban areas in rural areas the polling percentage was high.

As per general opinion, if the voting percentage is low it is advantage ruling party, and if the voting percentage is high it is advantage opposition. But this theory may not be correct always. Political mathematics is

**As per general opinion, if the voting percentage is low it is advantage ruling party, and if the voting percentage is high it is advantage opposition. But this theory may not be correct always.**

different from ordinary mathematics. In politics, one plus one may become three.

After the completion of polling, the ruling BRS is confident about its hat-trick victo-

ry and the Congress also is confident of coming to power for the first time in Telangana. The BJP is hopeful of winning a respectable number of seats.

The 2023 TS Assembly election results would certainly impact the coming LS general elections. The winning party in the Assembly elections may have an advantage in the LS general elections which is scheduled in the next four months.

For the BJP the LS general elections are more important than Assembly elections. But for the BRS and the Congress both Assembly and general elections are important. Once the Assembly elections are over political parties will concentrate on the coming LS general elections.

If the BRS retains power a new government will be formed without delay. But if the Congress wins the formation of a new government may take some time.

The main issue in the Congress is selecting the Chief Minister and Ministers. The Congress high command will take some time to finalise the Chief Minister and Cabinet Ministers.

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

The atmosphere at various polling booths indicates that the fight was between the BRS and the Congress only in the Telangana Assembly elections. Clashes took place near several polling booths during the polling. The scenario at polling booths indicates the position of the BJP in Telangana.

At several places, the ruling BRS and the main opposition Congress workers clashed and the BJP was nowhere in the picture. It shows that the ballot fight was between the BRS and the Congress directly and it was not a triangular contest. Due to various reasons, the BRS and the Congress workers clashed.

The Congress and the BRS activists mainly clashed over the distribution of money near polling booths and ruling party leaders coming to polling booths indicating their party colour. Only at a few



places, the BJP workers also clashed with the BRS and Congress workers. The BRS and Congress have taken the Assembly elections as a prestigious issue and this was spread to ground level workers too.

Party candidates' victory depends on active participation of their respective party workers. The BRS and Congress workers competed with each other in bringing the voters to the polling booths. In this context, in several places the BRS and the Congress workers clashed. Though ini-

tially, everyone thought that there will be triangular between the BRS, Congress and the BJP, finally it turned out to be a direct fight between the BRS and the Congress, except in some places where the BJP was in a strong position.

While the BRS and the Congress are expecting to come to power the BJP hopes there will be a hung Assembly. But there seems to be no chance for a hung Assembly. Whether it be the BRS or the Congress which wins, it will get complete majority.

## Centre launches PM Mahila Kisan Drone Kendras

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central government launched the Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kisan Drone Kendras for empowerment of rural women. As part of the initiative, Rs 1,261 crore is to provide drones to 15,000 women Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Expressing his views on the scheme, Marut Drone CEO, Prem Kumar Vislawath said, "Women's empowerment, especially in rural area, is part of value system of Marut Drones, we have been actively engaged in delivering drone training not only to provide certificates but to ensure that employability and financial liberty is achieved for Indian rural women. In recent



days, Marut Drones has already empowered more than 100 women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) across various states, making the entire experience user-friendly for women in diverse linguistic communities, including Telugu, Kannada, and Tamil."

Vislawath further said, "It has been the constant endeavor of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure women led development. In yet another step in this

direction, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched Pradhan Mantri Mahila Kisan Drone Kendras for Women SHGs. Aligned with PM's vision to make agriculture profitable for Indian farmers, our mission is to empower women farmers, encouraging them to embrace drone technology as a means to enhance their livelihood. Recognising the potential challenges in drone procurement, repair, and maintenance for SHGs, Marut Drones has already simplified the process. We are aligned to the cause, programme announced by the Prime Minister and committed to make our contributions for making 15,000 SHGs empowered."

## AP Police action on N'Sagar is not proper: Kishan Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy said that he will write a letter to the Central government to intervene in the matter in regard to Andhra Pradesh police action on Nagarjuna Sagar on Thursday wee hours.

While speaking to the media on Thursday, Union Minister Kishan Reddy has objected to the way the AP government has acted in the Nagarjuna Sagar case, saying it is not proper. The Union Minister said that he has no objection to providing drinking water to AP. He asked both the states to resolve the issues through discussions.



He alleged that the BRS and the YSRCP are creating tension together to get benefit. BRS and Congress parties have been accused of distributing large amounts of money to lure vot-

ers during elections. He said that the elections went smoothly across the State. Voters participated in the polling on a large scale and congratulated them for making it successful.



## KCR will create history: Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha said that the victory of BRS in the Assembly elections held in the State is certain and KCR will create history as a hat-trick Chief Minister. She spoke to the media after visiting Peddamma temple in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. She said that a pink wave has been seen in Telangana in the elections.

She offered prayers in temple for well being of people. She said that the presence of active and dynamic people in Telangana movements means that people have decided to have representatives who will benefit the people. According to the information we are getting from the field level, BRS party is known to be positive, she said. Kavitha said that people

**She spoke to the media after visiting Peddamma temple in Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad. She said that a pink wave has been seen in Telangana in the elections.**

are going to create history by blessing the BRS party and CM KCR if they see the pink wave coming across the state. She said that despite the polling percentage, BRS's victory is inevitable. She said that celebrations are already being held in every constituency and the MLAs are confident of victory. She said that many fake surveys are coming to mislead the people and this happened in the last elections as well.

## AIMIM Nampally candidate Majid detained in Ahmed Nagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The West Zone Task Force on Thursday detained All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen's (AIMIM) Nampally candidate Majid Hussain leading to tension in the area.

The Congress and AIMIM have entered a close contest in the constituency, leading to tensions between the cadre of

both the parties. Hussain was detained from Ahmed Nagar; after Congress candidate Feroz Khan filed a complaint alleging that AIMIM workers were indulging in bogus voting.

GHMC deployed drones to monitor the polling situation in the constituency to ensure the smooth conduct of polls.

Similarly, Majlis Bachao Tehreek Spokesperson and



Yakutpura candidate Amjed Ullah Khan was briefly detained by the south zone

police. Khan was booked under several Sections of the Indian Penal Code and Section 41 (A) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The MBT Spokesperson objected to voter slips being allegedly printed by the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) workers at the Aftreen Palace Function Hall in Dabeerpura.

## Hope TS continues on path of peace, says Asaduddin Owaisi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As the Telangana Assembly elections concluded on Thursday, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) President and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi hoped that the State will continue to be on the path of peace and progress.

Owaisi took to Twitter and thanked the people of Telangana for casting their votes and was confident of

winning the nine seats contested by the AIMIM.

"My sincere thanks to everyone who took out time to vote for us. Grateful to all AIMIM workers and supporters for their hard work & commitment throughout a gruelling campaign. Inshallah, we will win our 7 seats and also win Rajendranagar and Jubilee Hills. I hope Telangana and Hyderabad continue on the path of peace and progress."

## Revanth alerts Cong candidates

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President Revanth Reddy appealed to Congress candidates and agents to be alert till counting is over.

On Thursday night, Revanth Reddy said on Twitter, "I appeal to Congress candidates, election

agents and workers. Be alert till polling is over, the EVMS are sealed and they reach strong rooms. The Election Commission should disclose the percentage of polling on Thursday night. The ECI should take care not to repeat mistakes of the past."



## BRS minister, MLA cast votes in party scarves

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two candidates of ruling Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), including a minister, violated model code of conduct by wearing the party scarves while casting their votes in the Assembly elections on Thursday.

Minister for Law, Forests and Endowments Indrakaran Reddy was wearing a party scarf while exercising his franchise at Yellapelli village in Nirmal constituency, from where he is seeking re-election. The pink

scarf he was wearing carried the party's name and an image of party president and Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao.

Another BRS MLA Durgam Chinniah also wore the party scarf while casting his vote at a polling booth in Bellampalli constituency in Mancherial district. Chinniah was seen wearing the scarf inside the polling booth in Venkatapur village.

The Congress party has lodged a complaint with the election authorities against both the minister and the MLA.

## Amjedullah Khan alleges bogus voting in Yakutpura

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) Spokesperson Amjed Ullah Khan on Thursday alleged bogus voting in Yakutpura constituency during Telangana elections.

Khan took to Twitter and alleged that All India Majlis-e- Muslimeen cadre forcibly removed ink from the fingers of a few voters. "Miscreants are removing ink from voters' fingers at the nearby Azam Pan Shop, and bogus voting is proceeding at Rasheedia Function Hall near Yakutpura Railway Station, polling Station No: 164"

Meanwhile, an independent candidate Mohammed Abdul Aziz Khan levelled allegations against AIMIM of creating bogus voter ID cards.

It is to be noted that the MBT spokesperson raised quite a few concerns regarding irregular distribution of voter slips in Yakutpura alleging that most of them were provided to AIMIM workers. He also alleged that the AIMIM pinned its pamphlets to voter slips.



## NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

## CM Jagan opens Tunnel 2 of Owk

**Releases 20,000 cusecs of water from Gorakallu to Owk reservoir**

PNS ■ METTUPALLI

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy dedicated Tunnel 2 of the Owk project to the people by unveiling its pylon and releasing 20,000 cusecs of water from Gorakallu reservoir to Owk reservoir amid recital of hymns by Vedic pundits here on Thursday.

The government has so far spent Rs 1,501.94 crore on Owk tunnel with Rs 567.94 crore being incurred on Tunnels 1 and 2.

Out of the 5.801 km length of Tunnel 3, an extent of 4.526 km was completed with Rs 934 crore, and the works relating to the rest of 1. 275 km are in full swing. The total cost of the third tunnel is estimated to be Rs 1297.78 crore.

Last year, the Chief Minister dedicated to the people Nellore and Sangam barrages which are the lifelines of the Penna delta, and the Handri-Niva Lift Irrigation project that would fetch



water to 77 lakes to meet the drinking and irrigation needs of the western parts of Nandyal and Kurnool districts.

Due to the sustained efforts of the Chief Minister, the government paid a compensation of Rs 1000 crore to the displaced persons of Gandikota reservoir in which 26. 85 TMC of water could be stored in successive years from 2019.

The displaced persons of the Chitravati reservoir were paid compensation of Rs 250 crore after which officials succeeded in storing water to its capacity level against the storage of 4 TMC of water during the TDP rule.

The Irrigation Department could also maintain capacity water levels in the Velugodu reservoir from 2019 after the Government spent Rs 500 crore and completed the lining works of the link canal and Telugu Ganga canal.

The Owk project witnessed hectic activity when Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy was the Chief Minister as the then Government spent Rs 340.53 crore completing the major portion.

The project was neglected between 2014 and 2019 as the TDP Government abandoned the fault zone spending a meagre Rs 81.55 crore following which

the present government sanctioned necessary funds and completed the Tunnel 2 with Rs.145.86 crore.

With the release of water to Owk reservoir, an integral part of the Galeru-Nagari Sujala Sravanthi (GNSS) project, the Government has fulfilled the long-cherished aspirations of the Rayalaseema people.

While Tunnels 1 & 2 facilitate the daily release of 20,000 cusecs of water into the Owk reservoir during flood season, the completion of Tunnel 3 will facilitate the release of another 10,000 cusecs daily.

With the completion of the tunnels, Gandikota, Vamikonda, Sarvaraya Sagar, Mylavaram and Paidipalem reservoirs will receive an additional 1TMC of water daily for irrigating 2.60 lakh acres in the undivided Kadapa, Chittoor, and Nellore districts besides stabilising 1.31 lakh acres of ayacut and providing drinking water to 20 lakh people in 640 villages.

While it will help fill the Gandikota reservoir in 15 days through the Galeru-Nagari flood canal, Rayalaseema will receive 2 TMC of water daily in the flood season.

## APJAC - Amaravati seeks swift resolution of staff issues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee - Amaravati (APJAC - Amaravati), Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, called for the immediate settlement of outstanding dues during a State secretariat meeting at Revenue Bhavan in Vijayawada on Thursday.

Venkateswarlu, leading the proceedings, addressed concerns regarding pending payments, including Dearness Allowance (DA), Surrender Leaves, General Provident Fund (GPF), Andhra Pradesh Government Life Insurance (APGLI), and retirement benefits owed to government employees, police personnel, and pensioners. Members of the committee

collectively stressed the importance of swiftly addressing these financial matters, essential for meeting the future needs of employees and pensioners, such as educational expenses, marriages, and other familial requirements.

The Chairman highlighted the substantial financial obligation owed by the State government, expressing disappoint-

ment at the perceived lack of government interest in resolving these financial concerns. He specifically noted the absence of compensatory appointments for Zilla Parishad Teachers who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Venkateswarlu also lamented Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's failure to disburse dues scheduled for payment by April 2022.



INDIA CORNER

## All rescued workers normal, can go home: AIIMS-Rishikesh

The AIIMS-Rishikesh on Thursday declared all 41 workers who were evacuated from Silkyara tunnel fit to return home. Briefing the media here on their health condition, Dr Ravikant said the workers were thoroughly examined and their blood test, X-ray, and ECG reports were normal. "They are physically normal and clinically stable. We have given them clearance to return home," he said. The workers were rescued from the tunnel Tuesday night after a long-drawn operation. The doctor said as they have come out of a tunnel after 17 days, the workers might need acclimatisation. They have been advised to go to the nearest hospital after two weeks for a check-up. "On the basis of their major organ screening, we can say they are fit to travel. As they were taken good care of during their confinement in the tunnel with regular feeding, there was no case of starvation. They are mostly quite young or of middle age. That also helped them stay fit," Ravikant said. Doctors from AIIMS-Rishikesh will stay connected with the workers through tele-medicine to monitor their mental health for the next few weeks, he said in reply to a question.



## BJP demands suspension of jailed WB Minister

JP lawmakers staged a walkout from West Bengal Assembly on Thursday demanding a discussion on the suspension of the jailed West Bengal Minister and TMC MLA Jyotipriyo Mallick. All the about 30 MLAs of the saffron party present walked out of the Assembly hall after Speaker Birman Bandyopadhyay disallowed a motion by them demanding that they be allowed to raise the issue of Mallick's suspension from the House in view of his arrest in a money laundering case linked to the ration distribution scam. The motion was brought by BJP MLAs Shankar Ghosh and Agnimitra Paul among others two days after senior party leader Suwendu Adhikari was suspended for the entire winter session of the House after allegations that he made objectionable remarks against the speaker and created ruckus in the House. In response to BJP leaders demands Bandyopadhyay said the issue cannot be discussed in the House.



## French defence major Thales opens new office in Bengaluru

French aerospace major Thales has set up a new office in Bengaluru in sync with its focus on expanding its footprint in India. In 2019, Thales set up its Engineering Competence Centre (ECC) in Bengaluru in support of the group's ramp-up plans in India and the region. This ECC is a first-of-its-kind centre in India focusing on software and hardware capabilities in civil and defence businesses serving Thales's global needs. "Thales invests close to 4 billion Euro globally in R&D every year. This ECC, along with an additional center based in Noida, form one of the group's three major engineering competency center hubs," the company said in a statement. The new office in Bengaluru was inaugurated on Wednesday. "We are proud to mark yet another expansion of our footprint in India with this new facility in Bengaluru," said Ashish Saraf, Vice President and Country Director for Thales in India.



# Govt policies, decisions have taken economy to new height

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said his government's policies and decisions have taken the economy to a new height, creating immense possibility for employment and self-employment generations. Speaking to newly inducted employees in different government departments at the Centre and in some states after distributing nearly 51,000 appointment letters as part of 'Rozgar Mela', he asked them to ensure that welfare initiatives reach the most deprived people wherever they are and said this will lead to the realisation of goal of making India a developed country by 2047. Modi said that their biggest priority should be people's ease of living, and took a swipe at past governments saying they ignored the equality envisaged by B R Ambedkar, the key figure behind the Constitution, among all citizens. A big section of society was



**Modi said that their biggest priority should be people's ease of living, and took a swipe at past governments saying they ignored the equality envisaged by B R Ambedkar, the key figure behind the Constitution, among all citizens.**

denied even basic facilities till 2014 when his government came to power, he said. The prime minister said his government prioritised the marginalised and adopted their development as a mantra, asserting that it reached out to those who for decades had not got any facility from any government. "We have been trying to change their lives," he said. The same bureaucracy and system are in place but the

mindset and work culture has changed, changing the lives of people, he said. Citing a report, Modi said over 13 crore people moved out of poverty in the last five years. Many global agencies have come out of positive reports about the Indian economy, he said, adding that this also is an evidence of the immense possibility for employment and self-employment in the coming years. The prime minister told the new employees through

video conferencing that they should make a note of any hardship they might have faced due to some government employees and ensure that they never treat anyone in the same manner. His government, he said, has been spending lakhs of crores of rupees in building modern infrastructure, including expressways, airports and in rail sector, which have obviously created a lot of employment. India is witnessing an "infrastructure revolution", he said. Development projects hanging fire for years and decades were accomplished by his government, he said, citing the construction of an airport in Sikkim and Paradip refinery. Real estate sector was headed to sure shot destruction when his government came to power but it ushered in reforms through the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act to restore its good health. The sector creates a lot of employment, he noted.

## Angry guests pour boiling oil on cook

PNS ■ BADAUN (UP)

Miffed at not getting "hot roti" at a wedding here, some guests allegedly poured boiling oil on the cook, who was rushed to a hospital with serious burn injuries, police said on Thursday. The incident happened when Indrapal Pali, the groom's uncle, and a few others sat down to have dinner at the wedding of Pannalal's daughter in Moosajhag Police Station area here late Wednesday night and asked for "hot roti." They were told that it was not possible since it was very late in the night and the tandoor had been extinguished, police said quoting the witnesses. Angry over the refusal, Indrapal and his three friends went to the spot where the cook was busy making preparations for the next feast and poured hot oil on him and fled. The cook named Rajesh was admitted to a private hospital where his condition is said to be critical.

## India approves defence acquisition projects worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday accorded an initial approval to defence acquisition projects worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore that included procurement of 97 Tejas light combat aircraft and 156 Prachand combat helicopters, in a major move to significantly enhance the combat capabilities of the armed forces. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, cleared the projects, at a time India is locked in a bitter military standoff with China at a number of friction points in eastern Ladakh for over three years. The defence ministry said 98 per cent of the total procurement worth Rs 2.23 lakh crore will be sourced from the domestic industries and that the move will give a substantial boost to the Indian defence industry in achieving the goal of 'Aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in defence industry. The DAC also approved a proposal of the Indian Air



Force to upgrade its Su-30 fighter fleet by state-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL). The DAC further accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) or initial approval for procurement of two types of anti-tank munitions namely area denial munition (ADM) type-2 and type-3. The top body on procurement of military hardware also cleared acquisition and integration of automatic target tracker (ATT) and digital basaltic computer (DBC) for T-90 tanks besides approving another proposal to buy medi-

um range anti-ship missiles (MRAShM) for the Indian Navy. The MRAShM is a lightweight surface-to-surface missile which will be a primary offensive weapon onboard various Indian naval ships. "The DAC accorded AoNs for procurement of Light Combat Helicopter for Indian Air Force and Indian Army and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk-1A for IAF from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) under Buy (Indian-IDDM) category," the ministry said. Though it did not mention the specific numbers, official sources said 97 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (Mark 1A) are being procured for the IAF and 156 Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) are being procured for the Army and the Air Force. In February 2021, the defence ministry sealed a Rs 48,000 crore deal with the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd for procurement of 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the IAF.

## Ecosystem that encouraged corruption has ended: V-P Dhankhar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday said India stands at the "front leagues of nations" in the domains of land, sea, air and space at a time the country has an ecosystem that encourages a level playing field for all. He also said that while disruptive technologies have made inroads, this is the first time India is among the leading countries that is focusing on it. Addressing participants of a course on public administration, he said India's achievements in indigenous technology was demonstrated by the launch of aircraft carrier INS Vikrant last year and the development of several indigenous defence equipment. He also referred to the recent flight Prime Minister Narendra Modi undertook on a Tejas light combat aircraft. "When you started your career, we had in the country

an ecosystem which unfortunately had embedded in it an element of patronage, an element of corruption. People thought they were above the law," he said. Now, an ecosystem exists that provides a level playing field, Dhankhar said. In the past, Dhankhar said, the country used to wait for other nations to help in technological advancement. "Now we are in research, quantum computing, we are in the front-line our country is one of the very few countries in single digits that are focusing on 6G. Commercialisation of 6G will take place from 2025 to 2030," he said. Dhankhar also expressed concern over recent incidents of stone-pelting on Vande Bharat trains and pushed for "exemplary consequences" for the culprits. There has been at least seven such incidents in the recent past.



## 'I am not a rubber stamp or yes man'

■ Kerala Governor on holding back certain bills

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Thursday said he was not a "rubber stamp" or a "yes man" who would give his assent to bills passed by the state Assembly without applying his mind. Khan said when any ordinance or Bill comes before him, he applies his mind to ascertain whether it is constitutionally and legally sound. He said that a bill or an ordinance meant for the welfare of the people of Kerala will not stay on his desk for even an hour. "I will dispose of it immediately. But where they (government) use the power of law to destroy the institutions, universities and their autonomy and also go against the letter and spirit of the Constitution, they cannot expect me to be their yes man. "I am not a rubber stamp. I am not," he told reporters here. Regarding the seven bills he reserved for presidential assent, Khan said he had waited for nearly two years for the ministers to come and explain the contents of those legislations. "The ministers came but could not explain," he said. Khan further said that since the government decided to go to the Supreme Court, instead of giving the explanations sought by him, he referred the seven bills to the President. He further justified his



action by claiming that of the seven bills, four were in the nature of Money Bills as they entailed expenditure and therefore, prior permission of the Governor was required for tabling them in the state Assembly. Regarding the remaining three, Khan said that those bills were contrary to the UGC norms. His decision was criticised by Leader of Opposition in the Assembly V D Satheesan, who said that the Governor cannot unnecessarily hold back bills passed by the Assembly.

## LS SECRETARY GENERAL GETS ONE YEAR EXTENSION

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Secretary General Utpal Kumar Singh was on Thursday granted a further extension in tenure for one year, an official order said. Singh, a 1986-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Uttarakhand cadre, took over as the Lok Sabha Secretary General on December 1, 2020. He was granted a two-year extension on November 30, 2021. "The Speaker is pleased to extend the tenure of Shri Utpal Kumar Singh, IAS (retd), as

Secretary General, Lok Sabha and Lok Sabha Secretariat...in the rank and status of Cabinet Secretary on the existing terms and conditions for a period of one year with effect from December 1, 2023 to November 30, 2024," the order said. Singh retired as chief secretary of Uttarakhand on July 31, 2020 and took over as Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat on September 1, 2020. He assumed the post of Lok Sabha Secretary General on December 1, 2020 after the superannuation of the then incumbent Snehlata Shrivastav.

## 'BJP resorting to provocative, divisive issues to garner support for 2024 polls'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

BSP chief Mayawati on Thursday predicted multi-cornered contests in next year's Lok Sabha polls and claimed that the BJP resorts to "narrow, provocative and divisive issues" as it cannot get votes on the basis of its work. At a meeting here of its Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand units, she repeated the party's stand to fight the Lok Sabha elections on its own strength. "Yearning for some 'achhe deen' (good days), the 25 crore citizens of UP continue to suffer the pangs of poverty, unemployment, backwardness and migration during the BJP rule," she was quoted as saying in a statement. The former UP chief minister called upon the party workers to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha election with all their might, and said it is going to be a "multi-cornered struggle" and her party will play an important role in it. "All the party workers should fulfil their responsibilities with full force and honesty to secure better results in the next general elections," the BSP supremo said. On the political situation in

the country, Mayawati said, "The political situation is changing rapidly due to the narrow, casteist and anti-people policies and functioning of the country and various state governments, including Uttar Pradesh." "In such a situation, people seem eager to choose the path of multi-cornered struggle rather than the dominance of any one party. It is very likely that the next Lok Sabha polls will be interesting. The BSP will also play an important role in this. "Good results can definitely be achieved by working honestly and sincerely on the important guidelines given to the party from time to time," she said. She claimed that the BJP, like the Samajwadi Party and Congress, is not in a position to seek votes on the strength of its work and hence "it again needs to resort to narrow, inflammatory and divisive issues" for the electoral gain. The BSP contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in UP in alliance with the Samajwadi Party and won 10 seats. However, in the 2022 assembly elections, the party managed to secure a victory on only one seat in the state.



## Indira Gandhi, P N Haksar proved more than a match for Nixon-Kissinger in 1971: Ramesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger passed away, senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Thursday recalled that in 1971 then US President Richard Nixon and Kissinger created huge headaches for India but then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her close aide P N Haksar proved "more than a match for them". Kissinger, who dominated foreign policy as the United States extricated itself from Vietnam, died Wednesday. He was 100. In a post on X, Ramesh said, "Henry Kissinger has passed



away. He was as immensely consequential as he was hugely controversial. In his long and eventful life he has been both celebrated and condemned, Ramesh noted. "But there can be no doubt about his sheer intellectual brilliance and awesome charisma," he said. For the last three decades, he

positioned himself as a great friend and supporter of India and indeed he was, Ramesh said. "But this was not always so and in 1971 especially, President Nixon and he created huge headaches for India and thought they had us cornered. However, Indira Gandhi and P N Haksar proved more than a match for them," the former Union minister said. "I have described the Kissinger-Haksar and Nixon-Indira Gandhi encounters with archival detail in my book 'Intertwined Lives: PN Haksar & Indira Gandhi'," Ramesh said.

## Varanasi court gives 10 more days to ASI

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Varanasi district court on Thursday gave 10 more days to the Archaeological Survey of India to complete and submit a scientific survey report of the Gyanvapi mosque complex here. Taking up the plea of the ASI seeking three additional weeks to submit the report, District Judge A K Vishvesh said he hoped that the ASI would not ask for more time, according to counsel for the Hindu side Madan Mohan Yadav. The court fixed December 11 as the next date of hearing in the matter, Yadav said. The court was hearing the ASI plea moved on Tuesday

seeking three more weeks for submitting the report, saying it needed more time for the assimilation of information generated by different experts. The ASI started the survey in the barricaded area of the Gyanvapi premises, excluding its sealed section, on August 4, following court orders to determine whether the 17th-century mosque was constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple. The Muslim side represented by lawyer Mohammad Ikhlaiq strongly objected to the request for more time and argued that the ASI is seeking time to file the report again and again without any proper reason. He also argued that there



should be some end to this process of taking time again and again to file the report. The ASI be directed to file the report positively within the time granted by the court, Ikhlaiq said. In its order, the court said it expects that within the provided time, the ASI shall positively file the report and will not

seek further time. On Wednesday, taking up the plea of the ASI, District Judge Vishvesh asked a senior ASI official from Delhi to explain the need for more time, to which the ASI counsel said that officials in Varanasi had been handling the task and would apprise the court about it. Earlier, the district court had asked the ASI to submit the survey report of the Gyanvapi complex by November 28. In its application, the ASI had stated that its experts are working on various types of data collected by archaeologists, surveyors and other experts, etc., and assimilation

of information generated by different experts and different tools is a difficult and slow process and it will take some more time to complete the report for final submission. On November 2, the ASI told the court it had "completed" the survey but may take some more time to compile the report, along with the details of the equipment used in the survey work. The court then granted additional time till November 17 for submitting the document. But its counsel again sought 15 more days due to the non-availability of the technical report and the district judge then asked it to submit its report by November 28.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## The CAA scare

Amit Shah rakes up citizenship Act amid State elections, much to the consternation of minorities

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent statement regarding the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has reignited a vigorous debate and speculation. The CAA, a bone of contention since being introduced in December 2019, aims to provide citizenship to persecuted minorities from neighbouring Muslim-majority countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. At the time, it faced widespread protests and criticism over its potential impact on India's secular principles and the rights of religious minorities. This time again, Shah's reiteration about the CAA's implementation has triggered doubts and discussions. Due to its association with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the fear of potential discrimination and exclusion – especially against the Muslim community – fueled protests across the nation. The Government's response to these protests involved reassurances that the CAA was not meant to harm any particular community and that it aimed to provide a haven for persecuted minorities from the neighbouring countries. However, the controversy surrounding the Act persisted, leading to an unspecified delay in its implementation. But due to nation-wide protests Government chose to put it on the backburner. Meanwhile other issues took over and CAA was almost forgotten. But with Amit Shah's statement it is back on the centre stage. Proponents argue that the CAA is a humanitarian gesture, offering refuge to neighbours facing religious persecution. They contend that it aligns with India's tradition of sheltering persecuted communities and upholds the principle of religious freedom. On the



other hand, critics express concerns about the Act's potential impact on India's secular fabric. They argue that by selectively providing citizenship based on religion, the CAA undermines the principle of equal treatment for all regardless of religious affiliation. Critics fear it may set a precedent that challenges the secular foundation of the Constitution. Furthermore, the CAA has been closely associated with the NRC, a process aimed at identifying and expelling undocumented immigrants. The combination of CAA and NRC has raised apprehensions about possible discrimination and exclusion, particularly affecting vulnerable communities who may struggle to produce the necessary documentation. Shah's statement on the CAA's implementation, especially during Assembly polls, raises questions about the timing and political motivations. Elections often bring specific policy issues to the fore as leaders seek to rally support. The CAA, with its polarising nature, can be strategically used to appeal to certain voter bases. The nation does need a comprehensive refugee policy but that must not be discriminatory, to say the least. Besides, dislocating people living in India for generations would be inhumane as it violates India's commitment to uphold human rights.



School students form 'red ribbon', Universal symbol of awareness about HIV, in Moradabad

# India rising but China still ahead

India is becoming proactive in international arena and getting good response but the China's dominance in the Global South remains undisputed



SANTHOSH MATHEW

In the ever-shifting landscape of global power dynamics, India finds itself at the forefront of a compelling narrative—the quest to be the “voice” of the Global South. As it assumes the G-20 Presidency, India's ambitions to represent the diverse nations of Africa, Latin America, and Asia echo loudly, challenging its formidable neighbour, China, in a musical chairs game of influence. The ongoing great power struggle between these two nations raises crucial questions about the future trajectory of the Global South and who will emerge as its torchbearer.

In this intricate dance of geopolitics, the article ultimately raises the question of what it truly means to be the “voice” of the Global South. As the world watches the interplay between the Dragon and the Elephant, whether India's soft power and ideals of brotherhood can attract nations, contrasting with China's more robust physical and economic might. In the late 1980s, Deng Xiaoping prophetically declared the advent of the “Asian Century” during a meeting with India's then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. This prediction has materialized, but the pivotal question remains: which nation will lead this Asian century? Statistical data, unequivocally, places China ahead of India in military prowess, economic size, and technological advancements. Yet, this article explores the unique strengths and potential contributions India can offer as it endeavours to become the “voice” of the Global South. Coined in 1952 during the Cold War, the term “Third World” has evolved into the more neutral “Global South.” This term transcends through the diverse group of nations from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, evolving into a symbol of shared historical experiences of colonization, economic challenges, and a collective desire for a more equitable global order. India, currently hosting the G-20 Presidency, has taken proactive steps, hosting a virtual “Voice of the Global South” summit and championing the issues of developing nations. As India positions itself as a



leader, it offers distinct advantages over China. India's vibrant democracy, commitment to pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law resonate with nations worldwide. With a young and tech-savvy population, India's scientific community has already made significant global contributions. India's diplomatic finesse comes to the forefront as it navigates challenges posed by China's economic investments in neighbouring regions. Unlike China's perceived debt-trap diplomacy, India's trade relations and diplomatic acumen position it as a bridge between the Global North and South. The question lies in whether India's commitment to collaboration and building trust can outshine China's more assertive tactics. A recent report published by Pew Research Surveys has unveiled a noteworthy trend: India has greater favourability than China in the developed world. However, when it comes to developing countries (the Global South), China has an edge over India as the more favourably favoured nation. This trend can be seen because, within the Global South, many countries grapple with shared historical experiences, socio-economic challenges, and aspirations for equitable global representation. China's ascendancy as the preferred nation is predictable

INDIA'S ADVANTAGES LIE IN NOT BEING PERCEIVED AS AN AGGRESSOR OR ENCROACHER, IN CONTRAST TO CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE VIEWED AS A POTENTIAL DEBT TRAP

due to its economic prowess and infrastructure investments, which will help developing countries achieve their developmental goals. Amidst a backdrop of geopolitical shifts and economic realignments, India's democratic values, commitment to human rights, and rule of law sets it apart. Its young, tech-savvy population and thriving scientific community position it as a catalyst for innovation. India, with its evolving intellectual property regime, excels in process technology and manufacturing. US-based multinationals heavily invest in both China and India. The allure of less expensive skilled labour, market access, collaboration opportunities, and government incentives draws these corporations to India. In sectors such as information technology, telecommunications, transport equipment, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and energy, India faces both opportunities and challenges. The lack of a sophisticated customer base hampers significant innovation in IT, but this gap may close in the coming decades. The growing sophistication of engineering and design services in aircraft and automotive industries positions India as a significant player in global markets. India is moving beyond replicating designs to contributing to cutting-edge innovation.

India's ascent in the Global South leadership struggle against China is not only influenced by geopolitical dynamics but also by its innovation landscape. Chinese and Indian firms are increasingly involved in early-stage research and clinical trials, showcasing a shift towards innovative product development. India's advantages lie in not being perceived as an aggressor or encroacher, in contrast to China's Belt and Road Initiative viewed as a potential debt trap. India's trade significance and good relations globally position it as a bridge between the Global North and South. While China may have firepower, India's diplomatic prowess and cordial relations give it a better ability to lead the world. India's journey from shadows to spotlight in the global innovation arena is nothing short of a triumph. As the dragon of China breathes its economic fire, the elephant of India is trumpeting its unique strengths on the global stage. So, as the dragon and elephant dance in this innovation duet, India's ascent is not just a rise; it's a melody, echoing across the realms of progress. (The writer is Associate Professor, centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies & Social Sciences Pondicherry Central University, views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ALLOW DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Sir — Very often, this age-old issue about dual citizenship despite various utterances by different politicians over the years comes to the fore. It is an issue that has been of concern to many people. It would be in everyone's best interests to resolve this issue once and for all. The government and the courts need to find a solution that may resolve the issue faced by many who have obtained Portuguese and other nationalities find themselves in, many through birth and for historical reasons. It would be prudent for the central government to allow people dual nationality or citizenship as they can have a foreign nationality and still maintain close links with the motherland. According to the World Population Review, 49% of all countries worldwide allow dual citizenship which means that a person can be a citizen of more than one country. We are living in an age where the world is a global village just like no man is an island.

Ramanath Krishan | Kozhikode

### TELANGANA ELECTIONS

Sir — Telangana sees a triangular contest between the BJP, Congress, and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). BRS has fielded candidates in all 119 seats. As per the seat-sharing agreement, the BJP and actor Pawan Kalyan-headed Jana Sena are contesting in 111 and 8 seats, respectively, while Congress has given one seat to its ally CPI and is fighting from 118 others. Meanwhile, Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM has put up candidates in nine segments in the city. The key candidates include Chief Minister KCR, his minister-son K T Rama Rao, state Congress president A Revanth Reddy, and BJP Lok Sabha members Bandi Sanjay Kumar and D Arvind. Ahead of the polls, the state saw top national leaders, including PM Modi, Rahul Gandhi, and ruling BRS supreme K Chandrasekar Rao, wooing voters.

### Silkayara rescue operation



Prayers from the entire nation towards rescuing the 41 workers trapped inside the Silkayara tunnel in Uttarakashi bore fruit after a 17-day ordeal. The mission that has been accomplished is a triumph of human labour over

machinery, as the rat-hole mining experts managed to manually break through the final 12 metres of rubble using only hand drills and pulleys. This extensive and challenging rescue work, spanning over 400 hours, showcases the resoluteness and determination of the rescuers and the indomitable spirit of the trapped workers. It also highlights the might of our nation and the combined spirit of its people to stand united in the face of any adversity, and we can go to great lengths when it comes to the well-being of our people. But as we watched on television the hardship and struggle over the operations, questions emerged as to whether the mountainous area in Uttarakhand can withstand the level of this kind of heavy tunnelling work.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

The saffron party's campaign stressed the necessity of electing a “double engine government” and pointed to the “family rule” of KCR and alleged corruption. The BRS's campaign centred around the previous Congress regime's failures and ongoing welfare measures for farmers, women, and other sections of society, as well as his struggle to achieve Telangana statehood. Congress's campaign focused mainly on the alleged corruption of the BRS government while highlighting its six poll guarantees. The results of Telangana will be out on December 3 along with the other four states that went to polls. It would be interesting to see which way the wind is blowing. The general elections are not very far and these results would definitely give an indication of public mood.

Ashraf Hussain | Howrah

### ALL INDIA JUDICIAL SERVICE

Sir — Since lower courts are the lifelines of the common man, picking their presiding officers with care and caution cannot be overemphasised. At present, the jurisdictional high courts or state

governments are vested with the power to select subordinate court judges either through examination, interview, or both. At the same time, however, the process of selecting lower court judges has not consistently met the nod of approval from the know-how. The need to have a uniform mechanism for picking judges at the entry level on an all-India basis is widely felt. President Drupadi Murmu recently pitched for an All India Judicial Service, and there are a plethora of legal experts who believe the time is ripe for such a system on the lines of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The generally tough IAS exams attract the best talents in India. In the same vein, an All India Judicial Service could captivate meritorious young minds that are at present not keen on the judiciary as a career. The Centre does not seem averse to the idea, but it may not easily pass muster with the judiciary because the latter's authority stands threatened.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

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## Are foreign universities best bet for better education?

Foreign university campuses in India may be good for many reasons but improvement of higher education is not one of them

With the latest UGC notification regarding the regulations for foreign universities to be set up in India, getting a degree from a reputed foreign university may not be difficult for the privileged class. In recent times, there has been an exodus of Indian students to foreign countries for higher studies and jobs. In states like Kerala and Punjab, this trend is increasing daily. The trend is so alarming that even after schooling, students leave the mother country, and many foresee a generation of old-age couples living in posh houses. Why are people moving to alien countries? Is it due to the lack of quality education in our country? Is it a lack of poor infrastructure in our educational institutions? Or is it the colonial mindset that made us look at foreign countries as better than our homeland? If we analyze the issues behind this exodus, we find that there are multiple issues, and it is challenging to pinpoint one problem. One main issue in our higher education is the unnecessary administrative procedures followed in our public



sector universities and colleges. It's more challenging to tackle the administrative people of these institutions than to learn complicated subjects. Half of the productive time of students doing doctoral degrees in these institutions is wasted on tackling the people in the administration. Students must get no-objection certificates from different sections, even sections unrelated to their course. Even after awarding the PhD degree, if the student wants a NET exemption certificate, they have to repeat the complete cycle of paperwork. What is the need for these complicated administrative procedures? Is it to protect the job of jobless staff members? Few new-generation public sector universities like the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) have streamlined these com-

plicated procedures, reducing the paperwork and completing the work within the stipulated timeline on their website. However, the majority still follow the old culture. Many students move to foreign countries to complete their degree within the specified time without hassles. The second reason for the mass exodus is their lucrative salary in foreign countries. Gone are the days when students worked jobs as service. Nowadays, for even minor assistance, a student expects remuneration. When we were students, we used to help our teachers to maintain departmental libraries and gardens. Only people from the affluent class could get admission to these universities because of the higher tuition fees. More than that, even if a student receives a degree from a foreign university having a campus in India, it won't have the same weightage as studying in their main campus in the respective countries. The culture of a university is directly related to the culture followed in society. So, even if a foreign university tries to follow an alien culture, the native societal culture is

bound to reflect on their campuses. Even though starting foreign university campuses is a welcome step, it won't bring long-term benefits. Instead, we must improve the quality of education and research in our public sector universities and attract international students to India. The presence of international students on our campuses will enhance our academic quality and bring money to the public exchequer. Since the Indus Valley civilization, education and learning have been deeply ingrained in the Indian subcontinent. Our ancient universities, like Takshashila and Nalanda, have attracted students from around the globe. We have to envision the day when students from foreign countries visit our public sector universities, and we start our university campuses in other countries. As a driving force, this will also help propagate Indian values and philosophy across the globe. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN







MONEY MATTERS

## Karnataka Govt unveils 35 innovative products

The Karnataka government on Thursday unveiled 35 "ground-breaking" products and solutions developed by startups at the 26th edition of the ongoing Bengaluru Tech Summit 2023 here. Out of the 35 startups, nine are women-led, underlining the inclusive and diverse nature of Karnataka's startup ecosystem, a press release from the state government's Department of Electronics, Information technology, Biotechnology and Science and Technology said. Several of the startups received financial support through the state's seed funding programme, which indicates the government's commitment to nurturing entrepreneurial talent and fostering a culture of innovation, it added. A majority of the startups have flourished within Government of Karnataka-supported incubators, such as K-tech Innovation Hubs, Centres of Excellence (CoEs), and Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) and anchored by institutions like C-CAMP, NASSCOM, Jain Incubation Centre.



## PVR Inox to open 150 screens next fiscal

The country's largest multiplex operator PVR Inox will open 150 screens in the next fiscal with an investment of about Rs 500 crore, a top company official has said. The company, which opened a six-screen luxury cinema at Maison Inox here on Thursday, already runs 118 screens across 23 properties in the megapolis. Overall, including its property in Colombo, it operates 1,711 screens at 359 properties across 114 cities. We are planning to add 150 more screens at an investment of around Rs 500 crore next fiscal. Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, an Executive Director at PVR Inox, told PTI here. On the Maison Inox, he said normally a screen required an investment of Rs 5 crore but given that it's a luxury collection and comes with the first attached bar (Gastby Bar), the per screen cost is about Rs 7 crore. On the company's overseas expansion plans, he said they will have more screens in Sri Lanka only and not anywhere else.



## Tanishq opens two stores in Texas, expands global biz

Tanishq, an Indian jewellery brand, has opened its store here and in Frisco as part of its global business expansion strategy and to cater to the growing needs of the Indian diaspora in the US. The US state of Texas, with the second largest Indian Diaspora, is now home to two of Tanishq's stores, one in Houston and the other in Frisco, near Dallas. At the inaugural event, the Consul General of India in Houston, DC Manjunath was the Chief Guest. He was joined by CK Venkataraman, Managing Director, Titan Company Limited, Kuruvilla Markose, CEO of Titan International business and Michael McCabe, Resident Director, North America, Tata Sons. The brand is owned by The Tata Group, a Mumbai-based multinational conglomerate. "Delighted to see that Tanishq, Tata company's jewellery arm opened its 2 new stores in Texas; Houston & Frisco, thus enhancing India-US connection", Consul General Manjunath said.



# India, Africa key players in peak global crude oil demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The global demand for crude oil is expected to see its peak in 2030 at 112 million barrels a day mark with India and Africa to be major contributors, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

The current global demand of crude oil is at 103 million barrels per day, Pulkit Agarwal, head of India Content at S&P Global Commodity Insights, said on Thursday.

The global demand for crude oil will peak to stay in the range of 112 million barrels a day in 2030 from the present level of 103 million barrels a day, he told PTI at S&P Global Commodity Insights: Media Roundtable Outlook 2024.

India and Africa will be the major contributors to the 8.73 per cent increase in demand by 2030 as industrial activities will pick up in the region, Agarwal said.

There will be increased use of clean cooking, automobiles and setting up of refineries by various economies, he said.



However, the demand for crude oil in India will see its peak in 2040 to reach 7.2 million barrels a day from 5.2 million barrels a day at present, he said. On the price outlook he said, "In our base case, oil prices will likely hover above USD 80/barrel and can inch closer to USD 90/barrel by Q3 2024."

Gauri Jauhar, Executive Director, Energy Transitions & CleanTech Consulting, S&P Global Commodity Insights, said as India grows, it will also transition at a sustainable pace based on an underlying economic transition of mobility, urbanization and a desire for reliability. An energy transition will inevitably be a technology transition to reduce emissions, and the cleaner technology spectrum offers a range of near-term, medium-term and long-term solutions. These cleaner technologies will need financing and policy support, globally and in India, to reach giga scale, she said.

Stuti Chawla, Associate Director, India/Middle East Chemicals Pricing, S&P Global Commodity Insights, said

India is expected to remain a bright spot in Asia for petrochemical demand in 2024, given its strong economic growth and resilient industrial production. Greater demand, however, is unlikely to bring much relief to domestic producers struggling with pressure on margins, as prices of key bulk chemicals are expected to remain suppressed due to ample supplies and new capacities coming on stream.

The market for chemical commodity products in India is expected to grow at around 7 per cent in 2023 and 8 per cent in 2024. The robust demand growth is being driven by a sharp pickup in India's economic activity after it emerged from COVID-19 lockdowns.

Elvis John of S&P Global Commodity Insights said India imposed a slew of restrictions on grains trade in 2023 amid rising domestic prices, fear of El Nino affecting crop production, and ahead of state elections and general elections in 2024.

## Two-wheeler volumes expected to grow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two-wheeler retail sales are expected to increase by just 4-7 per cent in volume terms in the domestic market this fiscal year despite logging strong growth in the festive period, according to a report.

The festive season this year saw robust growth in two-wheeler retails aided by the upcoming wedding season and some recovery in rural demand, which supported sales growth in the entry-level (110 cc) segment, the report by rating firm Icrs stated.

The dealer inventory remained at near normal levels, with the OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) wary of a build-up in inventory at the dealerships, it added. "The industry is expected to record a moderate growth in volumes in FY 2024 (4-7 per cent) even as export volumes remain impacted by weak demand," Icrs said. Elaborating on the passenger vehicles, Icrs stated that the segment is expected to record a moderate growth in volumes in FY2024 (6-9 per cent) and reach an all-time high during the period.

## India should not take new commitments at COP28 climate talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India should not take new commitments at the ongoing United Nations COP28 climate talks in Dubai and continue its green transition without additional assurances, think tank GTRI suggested on Thursday.

The climate conference is being held at the Dubai Expo City from November 30 to December 12.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that India has already made significant commitments at COP27 (Conference of Parties) and the Paris Agreement, aligning with its Long-term Low Emissions and Development Strategy. India's commitment to generating half of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 is noteworthy.

"At COP28 India need not take new commitments at COP28. Instead, it may continue its green transition without additional commitments," GTRI Co-Founder Ajay Srivastava said. However, he added that the country's high methane emissions, especially from the agriculture sector, pose a challenge.



"Any improvement will require changing crop pattern which may take decades of efforts. Balancing emission reduction with the livelihood impact on the agriculture sector is crucial," Srivastava said.

The think-tank also suggested that as 70 per cent of electricity is generated from coal power here and many large industries rely on captive and not grid power.

## Stock markets eke out gains in highly volatile trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty settled with marginal gains on Thursday in a highly volatile trade amid the scheduled monthly derivatives expiry and muted trend in the US markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex closed 86.53 points or 0.13 per cent higher at 66,988.44, registering its third day of gains. During the day, it hit a high of 67,069.89 and a low of 66,610.35.

Despite heavy volatility in equities during the day, the combined market valuation of all listed companies on the leading stock exchange BSE continued to remain above the USD 4-trillion mark for the second day in a row. The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE reached the USD 4-trillion milestone for the first time ever on Wednesday. The broader Nifty50 of the National Stock Exchange edged up 36.55 points or 0.18 per cent to close at 20,133.15.

## Indian economy grew 7.6% in Sep quarter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy grew 7.6 per cent in the September quarter as against 6.2 per cent in the year-ago period, according to official data released on Thursday.

India remains the fastest-growing major economy, as China's GDP growth in the July-September quarter this year was 4.9 per cent.

As per the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the GVA (Gross Value Added) of the agriculture sector recorded a 1.2 per cent growth, down from 2.5 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022-23.

The GVA growth of the manufacturing sector accelerated to 13.9 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal against a decline of 3.8 per cent a year ago.

The growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the April-September period in 2023-24 stood at 7.7 per cent compared to 9.5 per cent in the first half of the last financial year.

The GDP growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal remained unchanged at 7.8 per cent.

## DUBAI INTERNATIONAL FOOTWEAR AND LEATHER EXHIBITION

# More than 60 Indian firms to showcase leather products

PNS ■ DUBAI

More than 60 top Indian footwear and leather goods manufacturers will participate in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's largest exhibition of such products here from December 11-13.

Dubai International Footwear and Leather Exhibition (DIFLEX 2023) is being held in the backdrop of the demand upswing for footwear and leather goods in the Middle East and N Africa (MENA) estimated to be growing at a compound



annual growth rate of over 7 per cent and poised to touch upwards of US\$ 20 billion by next year.

The Indian pavilion participation is under the auspices of the Council for Leather Exports (CLE), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of

India, and is aimed at boosting exports which stood at US\$ 5.26 billion in 2022-23, as per CLE data.

Footwear exports, both leather and non-leather exports account for over 50 per cent of the trade.

India is the second-largest exporter of leather garments, third-largest exporter of saddlery and harnesses and 4th largest exporter of leather goods in the world. Verifair, organisers of DIFLEX 2023 which will be hosted at Dubai Festival Arena, Dubai Festival.

## Infosys inks pact with Shell for sustainable data centres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT major Infosys on Thursday said it has partnered with energy company Shell to accelerate the adoption of immersion cooling services for data centres.

Infosys and Shell will bring together their capabilities in digital and energy, respectively, along with an ecosystem of partners to create an integrated offering for green data centres, the IT firm said in a statement.

"In our joint efforts with Shell, we aim to create a more sustainable future. This collaboration will leverage AI-based digital solutions that will create environmentally responsible data centres that can manage high computing loads with optimised hardware.

## Tata Tech makes bumper stock market debut

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Tata Technologies, an arm of Tata Motors, made a dream stock market debut on Thursday and ended with a huge premium of nearly 163 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 500.

The stock of the company, which provides engineering and product development digital services, was listed at Rs 1,199.95, registering a sharp jump of 139.99 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 180 per cent to Rs 1,400. Shares of the company ended at Rs 1,314.25 apiece, rallying 162.85 per cent.

On the NSE, it began the trade at Rs 1,200, climbing 140



per cent. The stock jumped to Rs 1,400 during the day. Shares of the firm ended at Rs 1,313 per piece, a jump of 162.6 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 53,314.99 crore. The Rs 3,042.5 crore initial public offer of Tata Technologies was subscribed 69.43 times on the final day of subscription on Friday, driven by remarkable participation from institu-

tional buyers.

This was the first company from the Tata Group to float an Initial Public Offer (IPO) in nearly two decades. Tata Consultancy Services was the last IPO from the group in 2004. The IPO of Tata Technologies was fully subscribed within minutes of opening for bidding on Wednesday last week.

"As expected, a bumper listing above our expectation respecting the legacy of the Tata brand. After witnessing a remarkable subscription demand Tata Technologies garnered significant attention in the stock market," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

## India's GDP grows 7.6%; fastest-growing economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy grew 7.6 per cent in the September quarter of this fiscal and remained the fastest-growing large economy, mainly due to better performance by manufacturing, mining and services sectors, the government data showed on Thursday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 6.2 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022-23. India remained the fastest-growing

major economy, as China posted a 4.9 per cent growth in July-September 2023. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the agriculture sector GVA (Gross Value Added) growth decelerated to 1.2 per cent in the September 2023 quarter from 2.5 per cent a year ago.

The expansion in financial, real estate and professional services' GVA was 6 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

The GVA in the manufac-

turing sector showed a growth of 13.9 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal compared to a contraction of 3.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

As per the data, the output (GVA) in the 'mining and quarrying' accelerated to 10 per cent in the second quarter against a contraction of 0.1 per cent a year ago.

Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services' grew by 10.1 per cent from 6.1 per cent.

## Mkt valuation of BSE-listed firms over \$4 trn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the leading stock exchange BSE remained above the US\$ 4 trillion-mark for the second straight day on Thursday amid an overall optimistic trend in equities.

Rallying for the third consecutive day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 86.53 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 66,988.44 points despite volatile trends during the day.



In intra-day, it touched a high of 67,069.89 points and a low of 66,610.35 points.

The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE reached the US\$ 4 tril-

lion-milestone for the first time ever on Wednesday.

At the end of trade on Thursday, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies hit an all-time peak of Rs 3,35,60,155.58 crore, translating into US\$ 4 trillion, at the exchange rate of 83.30.

In three days of the market rally, investors' wealth have jumped by Rs 6.88 lakh crore.

It took just two-and-a-half years for the exchange to hit the US\$ 4 trillion landmark after the market capitalisation

(m-cap) of all listed companies on the BSE touched the US\$ 3 trillion-mark on May 24, 2021. The total valuation of the exchange-listed companies went past the USD 1 trillion level on May 28, 2007.

The journey from US\$ 1 trillion to US\$ 1.5 trillion was covered in 2,566 days or just over seven years on June 6, 2014. The m-cap of listed companies on the BSE reached US\$ 2 trillion on July 10, 2017 -- taking 1,130 days from the US\$ 1.5 trillion level.

# Petrol, diesel price revision after oil price stabilises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned fuel marketing companies are likely to revert to daily revision in prices of petrol and diesel only when international oil prices stabilise below USD 80 per barrel on a sustained basis, industry officials said.

Three state-owned fuel retailers -- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) -- which control roughly 90 per cent of the market, have kept petrol and diesel prices on freeze for a record 20th month in a row.

This is despite the raw material (crude oil) cost surging last

year, leading to heavy losses in the first half of 2022-23 fiscal year before easing rates propelled them to profitability.

"There is considerable volatility in the international oil market and prices fluctuate wildly," an official said. "Oil companies can cut prices by Re 1 per litre and everyone will applaud. But when international oil prices go up, will they be allowed to raise rates remains in doubt."

India is the world's third largest oil consuming and importing nation. It imports more than 85 per cent of its oil needs and hence domestic pricing is linked to international rates.

The basket of crude oil that India buys has averaged USD



83.42 per barrel in November, down from USD 90.08 of October and USD 93.54 of September.

While at current prices, oil companies are making some money on petrol, diesel -- the

most consumed fuel accounting for almost 40 per cent of all petroleum products consumed in the country -- but it has been in a "touch-and-go" scenario in recent weeks, another official said. "On some days there is

profit on diesel but on other days there is loss. There is no consistent trend."

Three retailers had been recouping losses they incurred for holding rates when crude oil prices shot through the roof last year. In May, international oil prices and retail pump rates had come at par, but the subsequent surge widened the gulf between cost and price realised.

"For oil companies to revert to daily market based price revision, oil prices will have to come below USD 80 on a sustained basis," an official said.

Petrol and diesel prices have been on a freeze since April 6 last year. Petrol costs Rs 96.72 a litre in the national capital and diesel comes for Rs 89.62

per litre.

The three firms made bumper profits in April-September -- first half of the current fiscal -- but considering the low earnings of last year, they are yet to recoup all losses, officials said.

Consider this, IOCL posted a net profit of Rs 26,717.76 crore this year as compared with a full year profit of Rs 8,241.82 crore in 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023).

In 2021-22 (considered a normal year), the company had posted a profit of Rs 21,762 crore for the full year.

Considering that to be a normalised earnings, for two years (2022-23 and 2023-24), it should make about Rs 42,000 crore.

## Key infra industries' growth up at 12.1% ; 5 sectors expand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The output of eight key infrastructure sectors jumped by 12.1 per cent in October 2023 against 0.7 per cent expansion in the year-ago period on account of a sharp uptick in production of coal, steel, cement and electricity, according to the official data released on Thursday.

These numbers assume significance as the eight core sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

Growth was primarily driven by a low base effect and double-digit growth in five

sectors -- coal, steel, cement and electricity.

Infrastructure sectors grew by 9.2 per cent in September. The output growth of eight sectors was at 8.6 per cent in April-October 2023-24 against 8.4 per cent in the year-ago period.

Coal output rose by 18.4 per cent while steel production jumped 11 per cent during the month under review as against 3.8 per cent and 5.8 per cent in October 2022 respectively.

Cement production grew by 17.1 per cent against a 4.2 per cent contraction in the year-ago period. Electricity generation rose by 20.3 per cent in October 2023 against 1.2 per cent in the same month last year.









Praneetha



Lalitha



Sneha Chowdry



Swathi S





Rekha



Kavitha



Karuna

Socialities from the Queens Lounge Ladies Club, graced the Colours theme party, organised by Creative Global Women by SVR Groups, at Golf Club in Hyderabad.

Photos by - SV Chary

LISTINGS

Abbott's campaign on blood donation

Abbott has extended its worldwide donor recruitment campaign, 'BETHE1,' and launched the first-ever donor campaign song, *Give Blood. Get Good Vibes*. This song aims to inspire Indian youth to donate blood, making blood donation a contemporary, compelling approach to build a healthier India. The vocals are by Tamojit Chatterjee, aka MC Headshot, an Indian hip-hop artist, rapper, lyricist, and stage performer. The company had launched the campaign in major cities across India, including Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Kochi, Nagpur, Vizag, Guwahati, Nagpur, and Nashik, with digital and physical assets, mobile donation vans, and more. These sites record approximately 300,000 annual donations, with an encouraging rise in donations by over 20% this year.

Godrej Capital Nirmaan enhances its offering

Godrej Capital is betting bigger on its Nirmaan platform by significantly expanding its collaborative network. Partnerships with industry stalwarts such as DBS Bank India, Visa, Amazon, and others underscore Godrej Capital's commitment to providing growth opportunities for MSME owners. These collaborations are designed to empower MSMEs, offering a diverse array of value-added services and comprehensive support throughout their business journey. The platform aims to foster growth revolving around three critical areas for MSMEs: Expansion of customer base, Streamlining of operations, and Enhancement of employee productivity.

Bhargav stands out as a versatile artist

Bhargav H C, a rising star in the Indian music scene, stands out not only as a talented vocalist but also as a versatile artist—making his mark as a music composer, director, and actor. Paving his way from humble beginnings, Bhargav achieved a remarkable feat by winning Gold at the National Republic Day Camp 2020 for both composing and singing. Recognized as a Cultural Ambassador for Karnataka and Goa Directorate, he contributed to the state's gold-winning entry in the 'best song' category with his composition *Nav Bharath*, aptly termed 'mothi' or pearl by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. With a track record of winning gold in over 100 singing contests across the country, Bhargav is a familiar name at college fests. His recent triumph as the Title Winner of Radio City Super Singer Season 15 opened doors to his first playback opportunity in the movie *Matnee*, presented to him on the finals stage by Sandalwood's acclaimed Music Director, Poona Chandira Tejaswi. Bhargav continues to refine his skills, captivating audiences through his music, theatrical performances, and concerts.

Universal Sampo fosters financially secure future


The Government of India's initiative, PMSBY, launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on May 9, 2015, has proven to be a beacon of financial security for underprivileged families across the nation. Universal Sampo General Insurance Company has insured 8 lakh people in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, in the first half of the current financial year with a growth of 17% over previous year. The company has disbursed over Rs 4.5 Crores of claims in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana since inception of the scheme to the families of the insured in the entire state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Kartik Aaryan becomes the face for House of McDowell's Glassware

Friendships have a way of blossoming unexpectedly, whether it's reconnecting with an old friend, bonding with a neighbor over random hobbies, or forming a connection with a stranger in a new city. It is what House of McDowell's Glassware calls - *#YaaronWahiBaat*. *Yaaron Wahi Baat* is an expression of the heartwarming connection that goes above and beyond to constantly embrace the limitless possibilities of not just existing friendships but also those encountered on the go. Bringing alive this very emotion, is the ultimate Yarn of our generation- Kartik Aaryan. The actor embodies the very spirit of today's generational dynamics, and his presence not only enhances the appeal of the brand but allows us to forge authentic and meaningful connections with the audience. The actor, known for getting into the skin of the character, went to the lengths to learn the ISL and perfect it for the TVC.


Instashield showcases innovative MedtechWellness solutions at WCDM

Hyderabad based Instashield, a medtech wellness company, participated in The 6th World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDM) being held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The event is expected to bring forth numerous valuable insights into disaster management for various dignitaries and experts in the space, which further can be translated into practical actions to save the State from natural disasters. World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDM) brought together experts, policymakers, and industry leaders to discuss and explore cutting-edge strategies for disaster management and work towards the response. At the WCDM, Instashield's booth at the WCDM served as a hub of activity, attracting attention with its state-of-the-art solutions aimed at addressing various aspects of wellness. Attendees had the opportunity to engage with Instashield's team of experts, who provided insightful demonstrations and discussions on the company's groundbreaking products.



The youth wing of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Young Indians (YI), unveiled the theme of its much-anticipated 20th National Summit, "Take Pride 2023," scheduled for December 21-22, 2023. The two-day conference will be hosted at ITC Grand Chola in Chennai.

ARCHIE

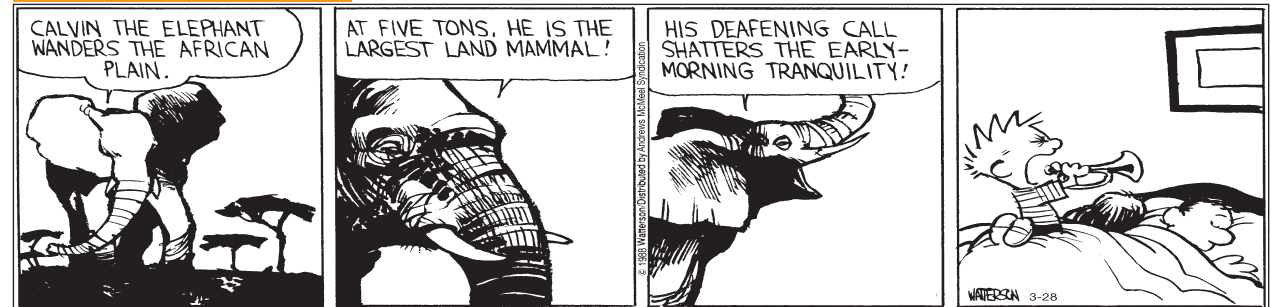


THINGS SHOULD BE A LITTLE MORE ORDERLY NOW THAT I'VE BANNED THE USE OF CELLPHONES DURING SCHOOL HOURS!

WHAT THE ?!!

COULD YOU REPEAT THAT, VERONICA? YOU'RE BREAKING UP!

CALVIN AND HOBBS




CALVIN THE ELEPHANT WANDERS THE AFRICAN PLAIN.

AT FIVE TONS, HE IS THE LARGEST LAND MAMMAL!

HIS DEAFENING CALL SHATTERS THE EARLY-MORNING TRANQUILITY!

GARFIELD




"DEAR ASK A DOG, WHAT'S WITH YOU DOGS ROOTING THROUGH THE GARBAGE ALL THE TIME?"

BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK! BARK!

YOUR DENIAL WOULD BE MORE BELIEVABLE IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A BANANA PEEL ON YOUR HEAD

NANCY

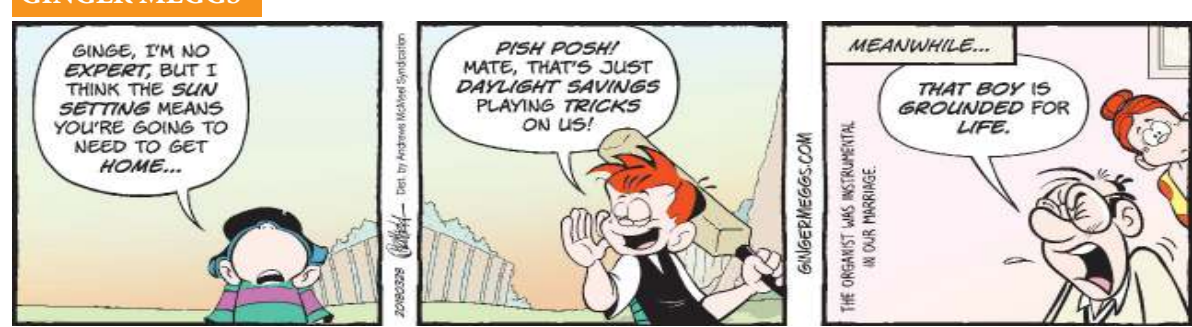


OH BOY PARTY ST

NOW I SEE WHY THEY'RE ON SALE

ONLY SCARY ONES LEFT!

GINGER MEGGS




GINGE, I'M NO EXPERT, BUT I THINK THE SUN SETTING MEANS YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO GET HOME...

PISH POSH! MATE, THAT'S JUST DAYLIGHT SAVINGS PLAYING TRICKS ON US!

MEANWHILE... THAT BOY IS GROUNDED FOR LIFE.

REALITY CHECK




SHIFT CHANGE!

ROUGH DAY--

GO HOME, SAL-- I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE

SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

	1	2	3	4	5
6					
7					
8		9		10	11
			12		
13					
14	15	16	17	18	
19					

ACROSS

8 Good-looking  
10 Feeling cheerful  
11 One third of twenty-four  
13 This many-legged creature is the young form of a butterfly  
14 Queues  
17 An animal to ride  
19 People on journeys

DOWN

1 Come to a halt  
2 Mix black and white to make this  
3 A throbbing pain  
4 Make music with the voice  
5 Periods of a hundred years

SOLUTION

M	I	D	A	Y	F	R	E
A	I	N	G	U	A	I	N
S	N	E	S	N	H		
S	H	E	I	F	U	L	V
A	P	A	I	N	E	D	
U	N	G	G	O	S		
C	A	N	C	H	E	R	
R	U	B	I	C	H	O	S

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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





## Prithviraj Sukumaran starrer *The Goat Life* in worldwide theatres on April 10, 2024

Directed by National Award Winner Blessy, *The Goat Life* features Superstar Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead role and is based on the novel *Goat Days* by Benyamin.

The greatest ever desert film Indian cinema has seen will be releasing in theatres near you on 10th April 2024, in five languages: Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada.

The wait is finally over! After a decade-long endeavour, the greatest survival adventure, based on a true story, *The Goat Life*, starring Malayalam superstar Prithviraj Sukumaran is all set to release in theatres worldwide on 10th April, 2024. Produced by Visual Romance, directed by National Award Winner Blessy, the film also features Hollywood actor Jimmy Jean-Louis, Amala Paul, Indian actor K.R.Gokul, and renowned Arab actors Talib al Balushi and RikAby in pivotal roles. *The Goat Life* boasts of music direction and sound design by Academy Award winners A.R. Rahman and Resul Pookkuttu respectively. The stunning visuals of the film have been shot by Sunil KS and the film has been edited by Sreekar Prasad. Being shot in multiple countries around the world, the film is the biggest ever venture in the Malayalam film industry, showcasing remarkable production standards,

aesthetic elements, storytelling, aspirations, and acting prowess. With its ace acting and soul-stirring background score, the film is a larger than life theatrical experience.

The movie is based on the novel 'Aadujeevitham', one of the most popular best sellers ever from the Malayalam literary world, which has been translated into 12 different languages, including those that are foreign. Penned by noted writer Benyamin, it follows the true story of the life of a young man Najeeb, who, in the early 1990s, migrates from the lush green shores of Kerala in search of fortune in a land abroad.

Speaking about this Indian film, which is made for a global audience, director, Blessy said, "The greatest challenge in front of me was that *The Goat Life* is a subject with universal appeal and I would have to stay true to its narrative style. The novel is based on some real incidents and I want to captivate the viewers with each moment that something unbelievable happens to someone. The truth has never been stranger than fiction. The scale of the movie demands to be felt within the confines of a theatre and we are excited to bring this magnum opus to audiences around the world."

*The Goat Life* is all set to release in theatres near you on 10th April 2024, in Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada.



## 'Calling Sahasra is a pure experiment-based film for me'

Actor Sudigali Sudheer interacts with *The Pioneer*, sharing some interesting tidbits about his film *Calling Sahasra* released today, breaking stereotypes and more.

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor-host-comedian Sudigali Sudheer's *Calling Sahasra* was released in theatres today (December 1), and one must admit that the actor has taken a huge risk with this project. In fact, Sudheer himself confessed to us that this movie is purely experimental for him.

The film, starring Dollysha, is directed by Arun Vikkiral. Sudheer's previous film *Gaalodu* was a good hit, and he shared that he has been extremely cautious about his films, so much so that he revealed having heard close to 138 scripts before signing for *Calling Sahasra*. "I want to come to the audience with good content. People expect something hilarious from me, but as an actor, I need to explore other genres too, and *Calling Sahasra* is one such experiment I did. With the release of this, I will know what the audience is 'actually' expecting from me. If the movie works out well, I will get clarity that the audience is ready to watch me do different genres, so I can choose my scripts wisely later."

To put it in simple words, Sudheer shared that he signed *Calling Sahasra* just to break the stereotype about him just

being able to do comedy and make the audience aware of what they can also see him do.

*Calling Sahasra* is a suspense thriller that has many layers to it, including love, the dark web, and others. "I am still confused if I performed well or not in calling Sahasra as I attempted something new for the first time. The movie's key point is something new to me, and I felt like giving it an attempt. I felt to myself like I was watching some new person on screen," he shared about his performance in the movie.

Shifting his career to films on the small screen, Sudheer felt the heat so much that he even consulted a doctor for extreme stress. "I feel the burden to entertain the audience," he shared.

Sudheer is popularly known for his comedy; hence, he doesn't want to sideline comedy in his films while also experimenting with other genres. He shared that his next movie, *Goat*, is complete out-and-out commercial entertainment. However, he also confessed to us: "Apart from comedy, I like the movies that Adivi Sesh Garu does, which are into crime suspense, mystery, and thrillers. I want to try those genres," added the *Three Monkeys* star.

Speaking of his camaraderie with his co-star Dollysha, he mentioned, "She is a very

good actress, and she grasps things very quickly. In fact, I took some time to get into the skin of my character, Ajay Srivatsav, in the movie. She is a very competitive actress. There is a fight sequence in the end, and one will know her hard work after watching that sequence."

Lastly, asked about what the audience can expect from the movie, and he shared, "I want the audience to go to theaters without expecting anything from Sudheer. They will see Sudheer in a new way, unlike in regular comedy or dance. This is a different and new thriller film."



## Adhik Ravichandran still on board for *AK63*

Popular production house of Tollywood Mythri Movie Makers, is trying to spread its wings to Kollywood. As a part of expansion, they have confirmed Ajith Kumar's film in Adhik Ravichandran's direction. But, all of a sudden Gopichand Malineni came into the picture and since the last two days reports are rife that Adhik has been replaced by Gopichand Malineni to direct *AK63*. Ajith Kumar is currently busy with Vidaa Muiyarchi,



directed by Magizh Thirumeni, which is expected to be released soon. Adhik, who made his

debut with the adult comedy *Trisha Illana Nayanthara*, is an ardent admirer of Ajith and has

expressed his desire to work with him several times. Now, after years of waiting, Adhik has finally got the opportunity to direct his idol in *AK 63*, which is said to be a mass entertainer with a lot of surprises. The film is being produced by the popular Tollywood production house, Mythri Movie Makers, who have delivered several remarkable hits. The film is expected to go on floors after Ajith completes his current project, *Vidaamuyarchi*, which is

being directed by Magizh Thirumeni. But, as it turns out, the rumours were false and Adhik is still the director of *AK 63*. According to sources, Ajith Kumar's PRO Suresh Chandra denied the rumours and confirmed that Adhik isn't being replaced. Adhik Ravichandran is known for his bold and unconventional films, and known for his quirky themes. It will be interesting to see what kind of film he will make with Ajith Kumar.

## Lokesh Kanagaraj's produced *Fight Club* stars Vijayakumar in lead

Happening director Lokesh Kanagaraj, who has recently delivered blockbuster *Leo*, has launched his own production house, 'G Squad'. He announced that he will be making films with his close accomplices and friends initially, and then he will be producing movies that showcase the vision with new talent. He has already announced his first project under his banner.

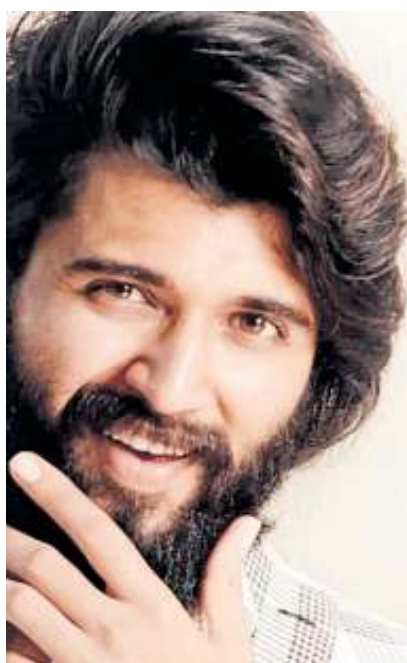
The film is titled *Fight Club* and it is directed by Uriyadi films fame Vijayakumar, who also plays the lead role. The film is said to be an action thriller with a social message. "The first look poster of the film was released by Lokesh Kanagaraj on X, simply wrote, "#FightClub - The

bravest gang will meet you all soon!" The poster shows Vijayakumar in a fierce pose with a gang that has goal with vengeance. The film is written and directed by Abbas A Rahmat, who is also an assistant to Lokesh Kanagaraj. The music is composed by Govind Vasantha, who is known for his soulful melodies in films like *96* and *Jaanu*. The film is to hit the screens by December 2023.

Lokesh Kanagaraj, is currently working on his next directorial venture *Thalaivar 171*. He is currently scripting for *Thalaivar 171*, which is a standalone film without being a part of his LCU. He vouched to showcase Superstar Rajinikanth like never before.



## VD-Rashmika's pic at *Hi Nanna's* event upsets fans



that it was an attempt to needlessly publicize a private moment. Many fans of the *Arjun Reddy* actor have gotten riled up. They took out their anger on the organizers of the event, the *Dasara* actor as well as host Suma Kanakala.

As per the vocal fans of Vijay, Nani and Co. should have avoided displaying the pic when the VD-Rashmika duo has not come out in the open with their alleged relationship. Others feel that such things are par for the course in the celebrity culture. "The image has been in the public domain. What is wrong with displaying it at a public event? There is nothing cheap or crass about it," a Netizen shared.



At the pre-release event of *Hi Nanna*, a picture featuring Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna was displayed on the big screen. The image was allegedly clicked on a Maldives vacation by the duo more than a year ago. It is known that the *Geetha Govindam* pair are rumoured dating partners.

The image was shown in a lighter vein at the *Hi Nanna* event. However, the same hasn't gone down well with the fans of the *Kushi* actor, who feel

PRABHAS-PRASHANTH'S STILL FROM

## *Salaar* intrigues fans, trailer out today

*Salaar : Part 1 - Ceasefire* is set to captivate movie lovers globally, starting December 22, 2023. Directed by Prashanth Neel and starring Prabhas in the lead role, expectations for the movie are incredibly high.

In anticipation of the theatrical debut, the makers plan to release the movie's trailer tomorrow at 07:19 PM. To keep fans engaged, they dropped an on-set still featuring the pillars of *Salaar* - Prabhas and Prashanth Neel - deeply engrossed in smartphone, discussing something related to the film. The still has received an immense response from fandom.

Sruthi Haasan is the female lead in this highly-anticipated pan-Indian film, with Prithviraj Sukumaran, Easwari Rao, Jagapathi Babu, Tinnu Anand, and Sriya Reddy in prominent roles. Hombale Films funded this action-packed venture, with music composed by Ravi Basurur.





# INDIA NEED YOUNG BOWLERS TO DELIVER

PTI ■ RAIPUR

India's young bowling unit, which has been under the pump, will look to better its death overs performance while utilising Glenn Maxwell's absence to its advantage in the fourth T20 International against Australia here on Friday.

India's second-string attack did not paint a good picture of itself by not defending 40-plus runs in the final two overs in the third match which the Australians won while chasing a daunting 223-run target.

"There is a possibility of a minor tweak in the Indian line-up after Prasadh Krishna gave away 68 runs in four overs, including 21 in the final over.

"Deepak Chahar is back in the T20 mix and his ability to move the new ball should be considered for his inclusion in the playing XI along with death overs specialist Mukesh Kumar, who is back after one-match break.

"Both Prasadh and Avesh Khan lack variety and innovation as they keep pitching the ball at the same length. Both bowl in late 130s or early 140s but consistently pitch it back of the length and the nature of Indian tracks make it a cannon fodder for batters. 'Also not being able to use variations like conventional or wide yorkers has been the undoing of these bowlers who also didn't execute slower deliveries properly.



"In the batting line up, Shreyas Iyer's comeback means only Tilak Varma looks a candidate who could be benched as five others -- Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan, skipper Suryakumar Yadav and finisher Rinku Singh select

themselves.

"India will also look to exploit the absence of a marauding Maxwell who pulled off a heist of sorts to singlehandedly bring Australia back into the five-match series with a win in a last-ball finish in Guwahati.

"But the hosts will fancy their chances with Maxwell, and other influential players such as Steve Smith and Adam Zampa not figuring in the playing XI here, having left for home after a long stay in the country where they won their sixth

World Cup title recently.

"Cricket Australia (CA) released many of its top players including Maxwell midway into the series keeping in mind their workload and fitness ahead of the T20 World Cup.

"The Suryakumar Yadav-led second-string India are smarting from a classic Maxwell innings, and the home team bowlers will be relieved that he will not walk out to bat at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium.

"Instead, they will probably be bowling to players such as Tim David, Josh Philippe and big-hitter Ben McDermott, a far better proposition at the moment than challenging Maxwell, who has enhanced his reputation as one of Australia's greatest white-ball batters in the past five-weeks.

"The runs, and the manner and situation in which he has accumulated them, has catapulted Maxwell into a level not meant for others.

"India's bowlers, though, will still have to contend with Travis Head, on a high after his scintillating match-winning hundred in the World Cup final against India, and the seasoned Matthew Wade, who is leading the side in the ongoing series.

"Like in Guwahati, dew could again have a say on a December evening in this part of the world, and the captain winning the toss would opt to bat second without an iota of doubt, leaving the team batting first to deal with the wet ball in the second innings.

"The reinforcements have already joined the Australian squad and are available for the penultimate match of the series that started barely three days after their triumphant World

Cup campaign, the tight scheduling leaving many former players surprised.

"India's batting has been served well by the likes of young Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ishan Kishan, Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma and the skipper himself when required.

"These players are expected to fire again but one man whose confidence will be sky high is Ruturaj Gaikwad, who is coming off a blazing 123 off 57 balls.

"The likes of Jason Behrendorff, Kane Richardson and Tanveer Sangha could find the going tough one more time.

"So far, the unfriendly conditions meant the series has been a nightmare for the bowlers with five 200-plus totals in six innings, and the trend is expected to continue in the remainder of the rubber.

"Teams (from):

"India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Shivam Dubey, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Prasadh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar.

"Australia: Matthew Wade (capt), Jason Behrendorff, Tim David, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Chris Green, Aaron Hardie, Travis Head, Ben McDermott, Josh Philippe, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Kane Richardson.



## Rohit will handle it with grace: Ashwin 'If Mumbai Indians make Hardik captain'

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Spin stalwart Ravichandran Ashwin feels that if all-rounder Hardik Pandya is made the Mumbai Indians skipper, Rohit Sharma will "handle it with grace" as the Team India captain "does not have much ego".

"Pandya returned to Mumbai Indians recently after an all-cash deal trade-off with Gujarat Titans, the IPL side he led for two years.

"Pandya, who had started his IPL journey with Mumbai Indians in 2015 and won four titles, moved to Gujarat Titans in 2022 and led the side to title triumph the same season, besides helping it finish runners-up in IPL 2023.

"The trade-off to bring Pandya back to the MI fold raised several eyebrows, especially in terms of the franchise's captaincy, which is currently with Rohit.

"Rohit Sharma does not have much ego. He is a great human being and a sound leader. He will handle it with grace (if Pandya is made MI leader)," Ashwin said during his YouTube interaction with former cricketer S. Badrinath.

"In the history of IPL, apart from the top four to five teams, all have released players. Mumbai and CSK have never done it. I know Hardik to an

extent. I see this move as a milestone achievement," he added.

"The day I lose this motivation, I know it's over"

"Asked about his retirement plan, Ashwin, 37, said the day he loses motivation, he would call it quits.

"I am not being diplomatic, but for four to five years (since 2019), I found myself in a very dark space in life, and took help for mental health as well. In the dark space, I realised I have to be ready for any eventuality," he said.

"I have been preparing for life after cricket for five years. But I continue to work hard on my cricket; to contribute with the bat, I went to the USA and practised baseball.

"The day I lose this motivation, I feel irritated about waking up in the morning to bowl or bat, I know it is over. I will then quit immediately, say thanks to all and go on to the next chapter in life."

"Ashwin, however, clarified that he has not yet decided on his post-retirement career.

"I am searching for something to do beyond cricket. I am interested in marketing and a lot of other things. But even if nothing else, I can't stop watching cricket. I am a cricket-tragic. I will do something in cricket and something other than that," he concluded.

## Shanto's century helps Bangladesh

AP ■ SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

Najmul Hossain Shanto became the first Bangladeshi cricket to hit a century on his debut as captain as the hosts tightened its grip on the first Test against New Zealand here on Thursday.

"Shanto's 104 helped Bangladesh extend its lead to 205 runs by reaching 212-3 at stumps on Day 3. Mushfiqur Rahim was batting on 43, after adding 96 runs with Shanto for the fourth wicket.

"The captain helped his team regain the upper hand on a spin-friendly track after Bangladesh lost two openers in quick succession to leave them on 26-2.

"Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel got the better of Zakir Hasan (17) for the second time in the match, with a delivery that spun sharply to rap him in front of leg-stump.

"Mahmudul Hasan, who top-scored for Bangladesh with 86 in the first innings, was run out in unluckiest manner as a drive from Shanto touched bowler Tim Southee's palm on the followthrough to hit his stump.



"The two wickets in two overs brought the Black Caps back into the game but Shanto and Mominul Haque added 90 runs for the third wicket to give Bangladesh the edge.

"Mominul survived a leg-

before shout as New Zealand reviewed in vain but appeared to be confident against his favorite opponent, against which he has averaged a whopping 55.61. He was run out on 40 after hitting four

boundaries from 68 balls.

"Unlike his aggressive first-innings 37, Shanto stayed clam throughout the day to frustrate the New Zealand bowlers. He raised his fifth test hundred off 192 balls and his third in the

last four innings, pushing a fuller delivery of Patel past extra cover from a single.

"He then hit a boundary in the last ball of that over, his 10th in 193 balls as bad light forced stumps for the third consecutive day.

"New Zealand had resumed the day on 268-8 and was bowled out for 317, in reply Bangladesh's 310 in the first innings.

"Captain Tim Southee Southee played the key role, scoring 35 off 62 with three fours while Kyle Jamieson added 23 off 70.

"With the main bowlers failing to make any breakthrough, Shanto introduced occasional bowler Mominul who wrapped up New Zealand's innings, dealing a double blow.

"He trapped Jamieson leg-before to end a 52-run ninth-wicket partnership and, four balls later, also got the better of Southee to finish on his career-best 3-4.

"Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam took four wickets on Wednesday, including top scorer Kane Williamson for 104, but didn't add to his haul on Day 3 and returned figures of 4-109 from 39 overs.



## Uganda qualify for T20 World Cup, join Namibia

PTI ■ WINDHOEK (NAMIBIA)

Uganda qualified for next year's T20 World Cup, set to be held in the West Indies and the USA, with a nine-wicket win over Rwanda here on Thursday.

"It will be joining Namibia as the second side to enter the main tournament from the ongoing Africa Qualifier.

"In the regional final of the Africa Qualifier, Uganda ensured a top-two finish with the victory over Rwanda, their fifth in six matches.

"Batting first, Rwanda were all out for 65 in 18.5 overs. In reply, Uganda completed the formality in 8.1 overs while losing just one wicket.

"Uganda will become the fifth African nation to play in the T20 World Cup.

"On the other hand, Africa Qualifier favourite Zimbabwe failed to secure a berth. Zimbabwe are currently placed third in the regional final with six points, having won three of their five games.

"After the results of the Africa Qualifier, the slots for the 20 participating teams have been filled.

"The main tournament is set to take place between June 4-30 next year.

"The top two sides from each group make it to the Super 8 stage, followed by the semi-finals and the final.

"The qualified teams for the 2024 T20 World Cup: 'USA, West Indies, Australia, England, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ireland, Scotland, Papua New Guinea, Canada, Nepal, Oman, Namibia and Uganda.

## Delhi didn't keep promise to retain me: ABD recalls 2010 snub

PTI ■ DURBAN

One of the greatest batters of modern era, AB de Villiers has revealed that he was snubbed by erstwhile Delhi Daredevils after spending three seasons at the IPL franchise.

"Before making it big at the Royal Challengers Bangalore, the South African batting legend had three lukewarm season with the Delhi franchise, now known as Delhi Capitals.

"But in a team meeting, also attended by explosive Australian opener David Warner, de Villiers was told that he was going to be "retained" but it happened otherwise as the franchise released him before the 2011 auction.

"Recalling the incident in his YouTube channel, 'AB de Villiers 360', the former South African skipper said: "When I played in the 2010 season, I got called into the office and was told 'you are going to get retained, young AB de Villiers'."

"I sat alongside David Warner in that meeting. It came as a huge surprise to me a week or two later when I realised I had been released.

"So the communication wasn't great back in the day, that must be different these days but it's not a nice feeling," De Villiers added.

"The 39-year-old said it was a huge blow and he was very nervous before the auction.

"You're unsure of your career,



at that time in 2010 I think I only played five games in that IPL season so a lot of doubts crept up in my mind.

"But I did have a very good international season. I kept

playing good cricket and luckily for me the auction happened and I got picked up by RCB, and it changed my life forever, so great memories with regards to that.

"I was so nervous. Then I got the news from Twitter that I was picked by RCB and the next moment Virat (Kohli) called."

"De Villiers went on to mesmerise the Indian fans with his stroke-making and formed a dream combination with star batter Kohli at the top of the order for 11 seasons.

"De Villiers said the released players should not feel disappointed as it's not the "end of the road."

"For all the released players, it's not the end of the road, keep a close eye on the auction. But if you're not picked up, it gives an opportunity to go back to the drawing board and work even harder," he added.

## 'Rohit, Virat were crying in dressing room after heartbreaking loss'

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Skipper Rohit Sharma and Star batter Virat Kohli were in tears in the dressing room following India's heartbreaking loss to Australia in the recent ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad, veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin said.

"Australia beat India by six wickets on November 19 in the final to win a record sixth ODI World Cup title.

"After the loss, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Indian dressing room and tried to cheer up Rohit and Kohli.

"But Ashwin said the dressing room witnessed some heart-breaking scenes.

"Yes, we were feeling the pain. Rohit and Virat were in tears, (and) seeing it felt bad. Anyway, (it was) not meant to be. This team was an experienced side, (and) everyone knew what to do," he told former cricketer Subramaniam Badrinath on his YouTube channel.

"Although India failed to emerge successful in the World Cup, Kohli and Rohit lit up the event up with their explosive batting. Ashwin heaped praise on Rohit, both as a batter and leader.



"If you take a look at Indian cricket, everybody will be telling you that MS Dhoni is the best captain. (But), Rohit Sharma is an outstanding person, (and) he understands every single player in the team," he said.

"He knows the likes and dislikes of each of us and has a great understanding. He puts in the effort to know each player personally," he reckoned.

"Ashwin played just a game in the entire World Cup, India's opener against Australia in Chennai, finishing with figures of one for 34.

"Asked why Rohit didn't

include him in the playing XI for the final, he backed the skipper saying it's not easy to change the winning combination.

"As far as I playing the final is concerned, the team combination and all is secondary. Firstly, it's about empathy, (and) I keep stressing it a lot.

"It's like standing in someone else's shoes and looking at things from his/her perspective. Had I been in Rohit's shoes, I would have thought 100 times about altering the (winning) combination," he said.

"It was going alright for the team, so why rest a fast

bowler for three spinners?" he wondered.

"Ashwin said he was prepared for the grand finale, but was not certain about his place in the playing XI.

"Honestly, I understood Rohit Sharma's thought process. Playing the final is big, (and) I was preparing for three days in the lead-up," Ashwin said.

"At the same time, I was also prepared to cheer for the side and run in with energy drinks if I was not given the opportunity.

I was mentally prepared for that as well," the spinner concluded.