



'One flag, one PM, one Constitution' not a slogan:
Amit Shah

'21,791
FAKE GST REGISTRATIONS; SEE SUSPECTED TAX EVASION OF RS 24,000 CR'

I am focusing completely on the mainstream cinema, not inclined TO DO OTT

QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

"The party high command selected dynamic leader Revanth Reddy as CLP leader after considering the consequences in Telangana and the opinions of the MLAs elected in the CLP meeting. Revanth Reddy will take oath as CM on December 7. Justice is being done to the senior leaders. There would not be one-man show at any cost in Telangana. The decisions will be taken collectively after discussing in the party"

- KC Venugopal,
AICC Organising General Secretary



DON'T MISS...

AIC, T-Hub launches startup..

The Atal innovation Centre, in collaboration with T-Hub, on Tuesday launched incubation programme focusing on India's space technology system. The initiative aims to empower 10 SpaceTech startups across India, leveraging criteria such as founder experience, product innovation and a robust business model. Participants will have access to a spectrum of resources, including grants, venture capitalists, cutting-edge engineering laboratories, global mentors, industry ...

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Sonia won't make me PM: Pranab...

"No, she will not make me the PM," was Pranab Mukherjee's cryptic response in a reference to Sonia Gandhi when he was asked by his daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee about his chances of becoming the prime minister in 2004. Sharmistha recalls her father's reply after Sonia Gandhi's decision to withdraw from the prime ministerial race in her upcoming book "In Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers". In the book, the former Congress spokesperson who quit politics in 2021 provides a...

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'75,000 GW solar power potential ...

Solar power generation capacity can go up to 75,000 gigawatts by 2050 globally with long-duration storage capacity, a report by the International Solar Association (ISA) and LDES Council, said. The report released on Tuesday by ISA and the Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) Council unveils a bold vision for the future of renewable energy, showcasing the pivotal role of Long Duration Energy Storage in realizing ambitious solar targets...

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India to play fearless cricket...

India women team's new head coach Anil Muzumdar wants his players to play 'fearless cricket' while also making it clear that there would be no compromise on fitness and fielding, ahead of the three-match T20I series against England beginning here on Wednesday. "We need to play a certain brand of cricket, which we have been known for so far. Fearless cricket is something which I have always advocated. We would be playing that brand of cricket," Muzumdar told ...

-SPORTS

Congress crowns Revanth



- The TPCC chief will take oath on December 7 at 10.28 AM
- Swearing-in ceremony will be held at LB Stadium
- Justice is being done to seniors

'No one-man show in TS, decisions will be taken collectively'

K VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

As widely expected, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president A Revanth Reddy is going to be the Chief Minister of Telangana State, following the Congress' victory in the just-concluded Assembly elections.

The Congress party's high command announced Revanth Reddy's name on Tuesday evening. It took two days for the party to address certain senior leaders' reservations about Revanth Reddy's candidature for the CM position. AICC organising general secretary KC Venugopal made the announcement about CM in Delhi in

the presence of Telangana Elections Chief observer-Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shiva Kumar, Telangana Congress Affairs in-charge Manikrao Thakre as well as CM position aspirants N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka.

Venugopal announced Revanth Reddy's name as CLP leader after a meeting with N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, both of whom had left no stone turned to get the CM position till the last minute.

Venugopal said: "The party high command selected dynamic leader Revanth Reddy as CLP leader after considering the consequences in Telangana and the opinions of the MLAs elected in the CLP meeting. Revanth Reddy will take oath as CM on December 7. Justice is being done to the senior leaders. There would not be one-man show at any cost in Telangana. The decisions will be taken collectively after discussing in the party".

Earlier, the party high command finalised Revanth Reddy's name at a meeting held at the AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge's residence, where Kharge earlier had a word with Rahul Gandhi.

2



Revanth to discuss cabinet with high command

Sonia, Rahul, Priyanka and Kharge to attend swearing-in ceremony

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Congress Committee leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, Mallikarjuna Kharge, and KC Venugopal, among others, will attend the ceremony organized for the swearing in of A Revanth Reddy as Telangana Chief Minister at LB Stadium on December 7.

Revanth Reddy went to Delhi by special flight on Tuesday to personally invite the AICC leaders.

Revanth Reddy would have a meeting with Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, Mallikarjuna Kharge and others on Wednesday to decide on the composition of the Cabinet, considering factors like representation of districts and social equations, among others.

Revanth Reddy would also discuss certain governance issues, besides the politically significant question of first sign on which file etc.

BRS may lose heavily in Lok Sabha elections



NAVEENA GHANATE
HYDERABAD

With the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) winning only 39 seats in the Assembly elections, there is a view in informed quarters that BRS could lose most of the seats in the upcoming LS election.

Telangana has a total of 17 Lok Sabha seats, with the Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat being mostly held by the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (MIM). That is, only sixteen seats are contested by major parties. BRS currently has nine members in the Lok Sabha. In the just-concluded Telangana Assembly elections, BRS won most of the seats in GHMC. In terms of erstwhile districts, it got five Assembly seats out of 13 in Karimnagar district and seven Assembly seats out of 10 in Medak.

The leaders of the party agree that, in the upcoming General Election, it is not possible for BRS to win Lok Sabha seats like in the past. Besides, during the Assembly election campaign, KCR's refrain was that the coming government at the Centre would be a government of regional parties. But now BRS has lost power in Telangana. So, there are many leaders in the party who doubt the possibility of BRS focusing on elections in other states. In fact, BRS leaders see the possibility of KCR changing the composition of candidates contesting in the Lok Sabha polls. New entrants have already expressed their desire to contest.

Sources in the party said that should KCR give ticket to those who had lost in the Assembly elections; it would deal a death blow to BRS. Sources said the former CM himself may contest in the Lok Sabha for two reasons: one, he is interested in national politics; two, it will help him drive the message that the party is still going to make its voice heard and that Kamareddy was a small setback.

various rain-related incidents in and around Chennai even as personnel on fishing boats and farm tractors were engaged in rescuing stranded people in the city on Tuesday. The city and adjoining districts faced relentless rains on Monday as Michaung loomed over the north coastal areas of Tamil Nadu.

Odisha's southern districts too received rains on Tuesday in the wake of severe cyclone Michaung. Authorities have deployed five teams

Beware of divisive agenda: PM Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday took a swipe at critics, saying they may remain happy with their arrogance, lies, pessimism and ignorance but people should be aware of their divisive agenda as an old habit of 70 years cannot go away so easily.

He was reacting to an X post captioned "Meltdown-e-Azam" (great meltdown) of a news clip that cited "excuses" and alleged attempts by an "ecosystem" to stoke regional divide and insult voters in Hindi speaking states after the BJP swept to power in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, brushing aside the challenge from the Congress.

2

Senior leaders' efforts go in vain

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Once again, senior Congress leaders' all-out efforts to grab the Chief Minister position went in vain with all their credentials.

Congress leaders Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, N Uttam Kumar Reddy, D Sridhar Babu, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Damodara Raja Narasimha and certain others made efforts to project themselves as the ideal CM pick. But their efforts went in vain with the party high command zeroing in on TPCC president A Revanth Reddy for the top post.

Uttam Kumar Reddy in particular put in tremendous efforts until the last minute. He pointed out that, as a senior Congress leader he had all the qualifications to become the

GADDI GALATA



CM. Uttam conceded that it was not wrong for the high command to pick the CM candidate from among four or five contenders in the race.

However, Uttam said that he would abide by the decision of the high command and would not

divulge internal matters of the party. In wry humour, senior leader D Sridhar Babu stated that all 64 Congress MLAs were contenders for the CM post and he was just one of them.

2

CS reviews steps for swearing-in ceremony

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari has instructed officials to make elaborate arrangements in a grand and befitting manner for the swearing in of Chief Minister-designate A Revanth Reddy and his council of ministers at a ceremony in the L.B.Stadium on Thursday. The CS held a meeting with the officials in this connection.

The Chief Secretary asked the officials to work in close coordination and make the event a grand suc-



cess. The Police Department has been directed to make adequate bandobust, traffic, parking and security arrangements.

Fire tenders will be positioned around the venue. Officials of

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department have been asked to ensure cleaning, watering and fogging of the venue.

2

Uncertainty over Group II exam

Aspirants want exams only after revamp of TSPSC

REVANTH CHITHALURI
HYDERABAD

Many of those aspiring to take the disgraced Telangana State Public Service Commission's Group II examination, scheduled for January 6 and 7, are in a quandary, with a section of the applicants hoping that the examination would be postponed and conducted only after a revamp of the TSPSC and that too in line with the job calendar promised by the Congress in its manifesto. Most of these aspirants are saying that since they had been campaigning for the Congress party during the elections, they could not concentrate on studies.

Banoth Rajender, an aspirant from Mahabubabad, said: "Many of the TSPSC aspirants were in the political campaigning for more than one month in support of the Congress. We were created as groups for campaigning at that time; so, we could not concentrate on studies. The exam should be postponed for at least two months. As the previous notifications attracted court cases and other issues, the upcoming exams should be without any issues."

2



PNS ■ CHENNAI/ AMARAVATI/ BHUBANESWAR/ HYDERABAD

Severe cyclonic storm Michaung made landfall crossing south Andhra Pradesh coast between 12.30 pm and 2.30 pm on Tuesday leaving its maximum fury to be felt on Monday in Chennai and adjoining areas in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. Southern districts of Odisha and eastern Telangana continue to be on alert. At least 12 people lost their lives in

Michaung makes landfall, claims 12 lives

Leaves trail of deluge and destruction

of ODRAF (Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force) and eight teams from the fire service department for rescue operations in the five southern districts - Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati and Ganjam - the state's Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu said.

Michaung crossed near coastal south Andhra Pradesh's Bapatla district with maximum gales of up to 90 to 100 km per hour, an Amaravati Meteorological Centre official said, adding that the weather system was to move northwards and weaken into a cyclonic storm in the two hours after landfall.

The landfall phenomenon lasted around three hours. After being pounded by rains the

whole of Monday, Chennai witnessed some respite on Tuesday even as the city struggled to cope with large scale water logging, power cuts and disruption in mobile services.

Apart from the 12 persons who had lost their lives, eleven others, who sustained injuries in rain-related incidents, were receiving treatment in various hospitals, officials said. Several District Disaster Response Teams (DDRT) were formed to carry out relief work in all rain-affected areas across Chennai. The Air Force Station, Tambaram and the Navy joined the rescue and rehabilitation works.

Two helicopters were pressed in for service in rain affected areas while Navy's divers, swimmers and inflat-

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2



New Cabinet to be formed tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress high command is planning to form the total Cabinet at a time. According to Congress sources, the swearing-in ceremony of the new Cabinet will be held on December 7. In the new Cabinet there will be two or three new faces and remaining all former ministers. In the new Cabinet there will be no representation to Hyderabad district as no Congress candidate won from Hyderabad district. In the remaining erstwhile nine districts from Nizamabad, Medak and Ranga Reddy will have ministers one each. Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal districts will have two ministers each



In the new Cabinet there will be no representation to Hyderabad district as no Congress candidate won from Hyderabad district. In the remaining erstwhile nine districts from Nizamabad, Medak and Ranga Reddy will have ministers one each. Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal districts will have two ministers each as per sources.

as per sources. From Nizamabad former minister P Sudarshan Reddy will have a Cabinet berth. Sources said that the Congress high command is very clear about the chief ministerial candidate. TPCC President A Revanth Reddy will be the Chief Minister and Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka will be the Deputy Chief Minister. From Mahabubnagar, along with Revanth Reddy, former Minister Jupally Krishna Rao will be in the Cabinet. From Nalgonda, former minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and N Padmavathi, the wife of former TPCC president and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy. Uttam Kumar Reddy was also elected as MLA from Huzurnagar.

From Warangal district, former minister Konda Surekha and Dadari Anasuya alias Seethakka will be in the Cabinet. From Khammam district, along with Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, former minister Tummala Nageswar Rao will be taken into the Cabinet. From Adilabad district G Vivek and K Prem Sagar Rao will be in the Cabinet. From Karimnagar former minister D Sridhar Babu and Ponnamp Prabhakar will have chance in the Cabinet. From Ranga Reddy district, former minister G Prasad Kumar and from Medak district former deputy chief minister Damodar Raja Narasimha will be taken into the Cabinet. The high command has to finalise two more ministers.

An indomitable fighter who took on the mighty BRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It will be a classic case of a grassroots politician rising from the ranks and fighting to the finish line when Anumula Revanth Reddy, the determined Telangana PCC president, takes over as the new chief minister of the state.

Reddy is credited with steering the Congress to power in Telangana by challenging both the mighty BRS, which had a stranglehold on Telangana politics, and the ambitious BJP, which was striving hard to emerge as the alternative.

Reddy's career in public life is intriguing as it began with student activism in the right-wing ABVP and later included a brief period of incarceration amid bribery allegations. He played a spirited role as PCC president in the battle against the BRS, led by former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who enjoys a larger-than-life image.

The 56-year-old Congress leader, Reddy, is known among fellow politicians, party members, and the public for his never-say-die attitude.

A fierce critic of Chandrasekhar Rao, Reddy has often been the target of vehement political attacks by the BRS and the AIMIM.

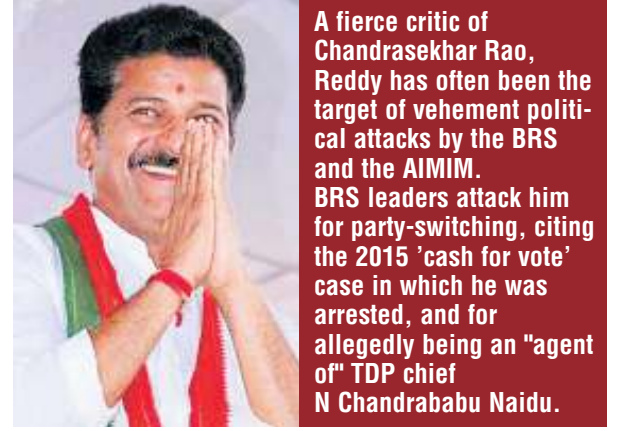
BRS leaders attack him for party-switching, citing the 2015 cash for vote case in which he was arrested, and for allegedly being an "agent of" TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu.

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi targets him over his ABVP background.

Reddy, briefly associated with BRS (then TRS), was first elected to a political office in 2006 when he succeeded in a Zilla Parishad election. He was elected as a Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency (ZPTC) member, then as an independent.

Born on November 8, 1969, in Kondareddy village in Nagarkurnool district, Reddy was elected to the legislative council from the local bodies constituency in undivided Andhra Pradesh in 2007 as an independent. It was Revanth's brother's wish to see that I become MLA or leader and that our family should have such representative in politics.

He joined the TDP and became a confidante of party chief and former Chief



A fierce critic of Chandrasekhar Rao, Reddy has often been the target of vehement political attacks by the BRS and the AIMIM. BRS leaders attack him for party-switching, citing the 2015 'cash for vote' case in which he was arrested, and for allegedly being an "agent of" TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu.

Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Reddy, a graduate in arts, was elected to the Legislative Assembly on a TDP ticket in 2009 and later in 2014 when Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh.

He faced the biggest challenge of his political life in 2015 when he was allegedly caught on camera trying to bribe a nominated MLA to vote in favor of the TDP in a legislative council election.

He was sent to jail in Hyderabad but was released on bail. He quit the TDP in October 2017 and joined the Congress the same year.

Revanth Reddy lost the 2018 Assembly poll to the BRS candidate and remained in political wilderness for a while.

Reddy was elected to the Lok Sabha in the 2019 elections from Malkajgiri here, described as a 'mini-India' due to the presence of people from all over the country in the constituency.

He was appointed the PCC president in 2021 despite being junior in the Congress, leading to discontent among many seniors in the state Congress unit.

He had the challenging task of reviving the fortunes of the Congress amid difficult circumstances and succeeded in uniting the party leaders.

The ruling BRS was at the peak of its power and glory after a resounding victory in the 2018 Assembly polls and 12 Congress MLAs joining the ruling party in 2019.

The Congress continued to face setbacks as the BJP achieved significant wins in the bypolls for two Assembly constituencies and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal

Corporation (GHMC) election during 2020 and 2021 after Bandi Sanjay Kumar assumed leadership of the BJP in Telangana.

Unfazed, Reddy continued to lead the party in the face of formidable challenges, and the Congress in Telangana witnessed a change in its fortunes after the Karnataka elections in May this year.

Besides AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, he was the only state Congress leader who extensively campaigned during the recent assembly polls.

Reddy, a football enthusiast considered to be close to Rahul Gandhi and Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, is now poised to become the second chief minister of Telangana on December 7 following the Congress's victory in the recent Assembly polls.

Reddy is the second chief minister of Telangana after KCR, who held the office from June 2, 2014, to December 3, 2023.

However, Revanth Reddy's tenure could be challenging as he has to implement the six poll guarantees made by the Congress, face a robust opposition led by the astute KCR, and manage his own party leaders seeking recognition while the party is in power.

Before Revanth Reddy's appointment as the new CLP leader announced by AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal in Delhi on December 5, former PCC president and MLA-elect N Uttam Kumar Reddy indicated in the national capital that he aspired and deserved to occupy the post of chief minister.

Revanth tells officials to be alert amid warnings of Cyclone impact

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress' Telangana unit chief A Revanth Reddy, who is set to take over as chief minister on December 7, said on Tuesday that officials should be alert in view of the IMD's warnings on the impact of Cyclone Michaung on various districts of the state.

In a post on X, Reddy said officials should take measures to see that paddy crop is not damaged and people living in low-lying areas do not face trouble.

"Officials should be alert in view of the IMD's warnings on the impact of the cyclone on various districts in

Telangana. Precautions should be taken to see that paddy is not damaged," he said in the post.

"(The officials) should see that daily life is not troubled in agency and low-lying areas. (They should) be ready to take up the necessary relief measures," he added.

The severe cyclonic storm Michaung made its landfall, crossing the south Andhra Pradesh coast between 12.30 pm and 2.30 pm.

Chennai and adjoining districts in neighbouring Tamil Nadu bore the brunt of the cyclone's fury. The southern districts of Odisha and eastern Telangana continue to be on alert.

Uncertainty over ...

P. Ravinder from Siddipet said: "The government should conduct any exam only after revamp of the TSPSC as they (Congress leaders) have promised in their political meetings. Also, the exams should be conducted after adding jobs."

Aspirants are hopeful that

the exams would be conducted as per the job calendar promised in the Congress manifesto. They say they stand to lose should the government conduct exams on schedule.

Y. Raju from Nagarkurnool said: "Since we have seen the Congress manifesto, we are hoping that the exams would be conducted according to their job calendar".

Beware of divisive agenda: ..

Continued from page 1

The Congress drew some consolation by winning the assembly poll in Telangana. Modi posted, "May they be happy with their arrogance, lies, pessimism and ignorance. But... Beware of their divisive agenda. An old habit of 70 years can't go away so easily. Also, such is the wisdom of the people that they have to be prepared for many more meltdowns ahead."

His reply and the expression of unusual social media aggression in reaction to a post was also punctuated by several emojis, also not very common with his remarks on X.

BJP leaders said the prime minister's post reflects the party turning up the heat in its social media outreach in the recent months. "This post of the prime minister is not out of character. It is aggressive and taking the opposition ecosystem head on," a leader said.

Sampath Reddy worked with KCR like a soldier

BRS cadre told to observe condolence meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS party working president KT Rama Rao has called that all district ZP chairmen and district presidents across the State should pay tributes to late Janagama ZP Chairman Pagala Sampath Reddy in the party offices on Wednesday. KTR paid tributes to Sampath Reddy.

KTR called on the family members of Sampath Reddy and prayed for his soul to rest in peace. Sampath Reddy, one of the founder members of BRS worked with KCR like a soldier for 14 years and the death of Sampath Reddy has shocked every BRS worker, KTR said.

He said that Sampath Reddy worked actively as the president



of the district party and whatever programme the party gave, he worked with commitment and made it successful. On behalf of KCR and party lines, he expressed deep condolences to Sampath Reddy's family. Sampath Reddy's death is

extremely sad. Party will support their family in all ways. KTR has appealed to the party ranks that the ZP chairmen and district presidents of all the districts across the State should pay their respects at the party offices on Wednesday.

BJP leaders mock opposition for blaming EVMs for defeat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As some opposition leaders have raised questions on EVMs after Assembly poll results were announced in five states, BJP leaders mocked them on Tuesday, saying they are looking for excuses to hide their own shortcomings. As the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged victorious in three Hindi heartland states -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh -- in the recent round of Assembly polls, several opposition leaders raised questions over electronic voting machines, even as

some said they had faith in the EVMs. Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh slammed the opposition and said they blame EVMs whenever they fail to win elections. "There is nothing new. The opposition, whoever it may be, when they win, they are fine with the EVMs, but when they lose, they blame it on the EVMs," he said.

Another BJP leader, S P Singh Baghel, said, "With these EVMs, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won elections in Delhi thrice and in Punjab once, the Samajwadi Party (SP) got an

absolute majority (in Uttar Pradesh) in 2012, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) got an absolute majority (in Uttar Pradesh) in 2007 and the Congress won Telangana."

He used an idiom -- "Naachna jane anjan tedha (a bad workman blames his tools)" -- to explain the situation.

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) MP Chirag Paswan said the opposition is being repetitive. "There is nothing new, but if you are raising questions in three states, also question the Telangana victory. This is a done-to-death formula.

Congress crowns Revanth

Continued from page 1

Rashtra Samithi president K Chandrasekhar Rao, who ruled the state for two terms from 2014. Revanth Reddy is the second leader to become CM after KCR. It is learnt that DK Shiva Kumar cited his own case while convincing senior leaders Uttam Kumar Reddy and Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, who had argued that Revanth Reddy joined the party a few years ago and hence it was not proper to neglect 'original and senior leaders'. Shiva Kumar said he had settled for the Deputy Chief Minister position, while accepting the candidature of Siddaramaiah for the CM position only for the sake of the party, though he too was 'original Congress leader' and had been in the party from the beginning of his political career.

Revanth Reddy is creating history by becoming Congress' first Chief Minister of Telangana State, taking over from Bharat

Rahul Gandhi suggested Revanth Reddy's name and left. Priyanka Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi also preferred the name of Revanth Reddy for the CM position, he was told. Finally, KC Venugopal, DK Shiva Kumar, Manikrao Thakre convinced the CM position aspirants-Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, N Uttam Kumar Reddy and others.

Revanth Reddy is creating history by becoming Congress' first Chief Minister of Telangana State, taking over from Bharat

Senior leaders' efforts go in..

Continued from page 1

Two other senior leaders, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Damodara Rajanarsimha, also put in their efforts to get the CM position but did not speak openly on the CM post issue when matters came to a head. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, having burnt his fingers in trying to get TPCC chief position, tried somewhat softly for the CM post without much hopes.

Uttam and Bhatti, who went to Delhi on Tuesday morning, had meetings with top Congress leaders like AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shiva Kumar and Telangana Congress in-charge Manik Rao Thakre.

CS reviews steps for ...

Continued from page 1

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation officials were told to take up repairs of roads leading to the venue. The Health Department has been directed to arrange fully-equipped ambulance. Energy department officials were told to ensure uninterrupted power supply. DGP Ravi Gupta, CP Hyderabad Sandeep Shandliya, Special Chief Secretary Sunil Sharma, Principal Secretaries S.A.M Rizvi, Shailaja Ramayyar, Secretary to Governor Surendra Mohan, GAD Secretary Sheshadri, Secretary R&B Srinivas Raju, Commissioner I&PR Ashok Reddy, Hyderabad Collector Anudeep and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Michaung makes landfall, claims 12 lives

Continued from page 1

Das told reporters that there were 42,747 cell phone towers in Chennai of which 70 per cent were currently operational. The rest of the 30 per cent was not operational due to lack of power, he said.

Schools and colleges will remain closed in and around Chennai on Wednesday, he added.

Air services that were suspended to and from Chennai airport on Monday, partially resumed on Tuesday with domestic and international flights landing and taking off albeit with delays reported on some sectors.

A Southern Railway press release stated that they were trying to resume all train services to and from Chennai by Wednesday. The services from and to Chennai were completely shut down on Monday.

Before its landfall, at many places in the coastal districts of southern Andhra Pradesh, Michaung left a trail of inundation, eroded roads, overflowing canals, swollen streams and ponds, including submerging thousands of acres of fields of crops in the agrarian state.

Andhra Pradesh Chief

Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy held a review meeting to take stock of the severe cyclonic storm on Tuesday and assessed its impact and relief measures. The CM instructed officials to efficiently distribute food rations deploying the ward and village volunteer system. He sanctioned Rs 22 crore for immediate relief efforts.

The state government set up helplines in the affected districts: Bapatla (871265881), Guntur (0863 2234014), Krishna (08672 25272), NTR (0866 2575833), Chittoor (9491077356), Kadapa (08672 23272), Visakhapatnam (0891 2590100) and Tirupati (0877 2236007), among others.

Departmental helplines include Police (100, 112) and Fisheries (9390125477). In Anakapalli district, 52 rehabilitation centres have been set up and arrangements made to accommodate more than 60,000 people.

A holiday has been declared for schools in Eluru district.

In the wake of the severe cyclonic storm, several paddy fields were inundated at Sarvepalli in Nellore district. Special officer Hari Kiran went to observe Sarvepalli Reservoir. He also surveyed some affect-

ed places in Nellore town.

Meanwhile, Telangana government directed the Collectors of districts where heavy rain is forecast due to Michaung to be on alert and said NDRF teams were being sent to two districts. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held a tele-conference with the Collectors of Bhadrachal-Kothagudem, Khammam, Mulugu, Hanmakonda, Warangal, Jangaon, Mahabubabad and Suryapet districts in the wake of the Meteorological Department's warning that there is a possibility of moderate to heavy rains in North and South Telangana districts due to the impact of the severe cyclonic storm Michaung. The Chief Secretary instructed them to be on alert as there is a possibility of heavy rains in various parts of the state on December 5 and 6, an official release said.

Appropriate measures should be taken in accordance with the protocols to be followed in case of heavy rains and floods, she said, adding that National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams are being sent to Bhadrachal-Kothagudem and Mulugu districts.

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FOCUS ON INDIA'S SPACE TECH ECOSYSTEM

AIC, T-Hub launches startup incubation programme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Atal innovation Centre, in collaboration with T-Hub, on Tuesday launched incubation programme focusing on India's space technology system.

The initiative aims to empower 10 SpaceTech startups across India, leveraging criteria such as founder experience, product innovation and a robust business model. Participants will have access to a spectrum of resources, including grants, venture capitalists, cutting-edge engineering laboratories, global mentors, industry experts, service providers and the invaluable insights of veteran SpaceTech entrepreneurs. Amongst the selected startups are Onnes, Nveas Labs, Spantrik, STEM & Space, TaraMandal, Hindustan Magnesium Products Private Limited.

The selected startups will undergo a dynamic curriculum of intensive mentorship, product-market-fit, corporate connects, investor access and go-to-market activities meticulous-



The initiative aims to empower 10 SpaceTech startups across India, leveraging criteria such as founder experience, product innovation and a robust business model

ly designed to accelerate their growth trajectory. The programme will feature the active involvement of top founders from leading space companies such as Skyroot and Dhruva Space. Their invaluable time and expertise will be dedicated to nurturing and mentoring the participating startups, enhancing the overall impact of the programme.

Mahankali Srinivas Rao, CEO, T-Hub, said, "The launch

of our Space Tech Programme marks a significant step towards building a thriving and collaborative environment for startups in this transformative industry. Our programme is designed to empower SpaceTech startups by providing a robust ecosystem with unparalleled access to essential resources."

Rajesh Adla, CEO of AIC T-Hub Foundation, said, "We are excited to introduce the Space

Tech Incubation Programme under the AIC T-Hub Foundation. This initiative underscores our commitment to providing a nurturing ecosystem where startups can thrive, fostering a new wave of advancements in space technology. We are excited about the possibilities this collaboration holds and the transformative impact it can have on shaping the future of the space industry in India."

Heavy rainfall leads to traffic snarls in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Owing to rainfall caused by cyclone Michaung a few areas in Hyderabad on Tuesday experienced traffic congestion.

The Hyderabad traffic police took to Twitter and reported slow vehicle movement from Mehdiapatnam, Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital, National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), Masab Tank, Mahaveer Hospital, PTI, Ayodhya junction, Shadan College towards Khairatabad X roads.

The city received moderate rain on Tuesday morning causing traffic congestion on the roads connecting Gachibowli and the financial district due to cyclone Michaung, which has disrupted normal life in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. As more rainfall is expected in the city, traffic movement may continue to be slow in Hyderabad.

TSRTC implements Enterprise Resource Planning project

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) launched an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project on Tuesday. TSRTC is the first corporation in India which implemented ERP project.

TSRTC Vice-Chairman and Managing Director VC Sajjanar, along with CEO of Nalsoft Private Limited Nalluri Venkat, launched the CIS project at the Bus Bhavan. RTC utilises the latest Oracle ERP application, integrating modules like Finance, Human Resource Management System (HRMS), Supply Chain Management (SCM), Enterprise Asset Management (EAM), PayRoll and Depot Operations.

At the launch ceremony, Sajjanar said that the corporation has implemented the ERP project in a record time of 10 months. The CIS project enables effective management of revenues and timely actions for cost control. It provides Data Integrity, Centralised Data Availability, Data Security, Optimum Manpower Utilisation and enables faster and intelligent decision-making.



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An MoU was signed with Nalsoft Private Limited on January 30, 2023, for the CIS project in TSRTC. The TSRTC daily operates 35 lakh kilometers, serving approximately 45 lakh passengers and connecting about 10,000 towns and villages.

The key features of CIS project are Streamlining of all HR functions from recruitment to retirement, centralisation of payroll management, digitalisation of core finance functions, including accounts receivables, account payables, general ledger, fixed assets, GST integration of these modules with other modules and systems for faster and accurate information flow and decision-making.

KCR offers to vacate his Delhi quarter soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Chief Minister K Chandrasekharao's association with his official quarters allotted to him in Delhi is coming to an end soon. KCR was understood to have asked the Central government officials to give him two or three days to vacate the official residence allotted to him when he was the CM on 23, Tughlak Road in Delhi.

Since the change of guards is on the cards in Telangana, the Congress is going to form government in a day or two. KCR and other ministers are required to vacate their official quarters here. Several ministers and unsuccessfully contested MLAs have been vacating their official quarters and shifting their equipment in camp offices.

KCR, who left the Pragati

Bhavan for his farm house in Yerravelli, is also required to vacate the Pragati Bhavan. KCR is monitoring the party activities from his farm house.

With KCR's electoral defeat, his more than 20-year association with the official quarter on 23, Tughlak Road in Delhi has been severed. KCR has been making arrangements for vacating the quarter.

The Centre allocated Type-8 quarter to KCR, who served as Labour Minister in Manmohan Singh government, upon his election as Lok Sabha member from Karimnagar on the TRS ticket in 2004.

Later in 2006, he resigned from his MP seat and successfully contested the Karimnagar by-election and continued in the same quarter. In 2009, he was elected

MP from Mahabubnagar seat and stayed in the same quarter in Delhi.

In 2014, KCR became the CM of Telangana. The Centre allots official quarters for CMs in Delhi. As part of the exercise, the Centre allotted the same quarter to KCR. Around the same time, Kavita was elected MP from Nizamabad and stayed in the same quarter, which became the official residence of KCR and Kavita too. KCR upon becoming the CM for the second time continued in the same quarter.

Following the poor show of the BRS in the recently-concluded Telangana Assembly elections, KCR submitted his resignation to Governor. Moreover, nowadays Kavita is not an MP. Therefore, KCR prepared to vacate his quarter in Delhi.

AIMIM MLA Jaffar booked for violating curfew orders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MLA Jaffar Hussain Meraj was on Tuesday booked for violating prohibitory orders, following his victory in the Yakutpura Assembly constituency on December 3.

The police patrolling party observed a gathering near Samad Hotel in Salam Chowk on Sunday, which was allegedly organised by Hussain, Yaser Arafat and other AIMIM members. The crowd took out a rally, bursting crackers without permission and caused a disturbance, as reported by Bhavani Nagar constable A Sudhakar. Jaffar Hussain Meraj and others have been charged under Sections 188, 341, 290 of IPC & the City Police Act.

Srinivas of Sloka Advertising re-elected as director of AAAI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

K Srinivas, Managing Director and CEO of Sloka Advertising Pvt Ltd is the first person from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana who has been elected to the Board of Directors of Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) consecutively for the second time.

Srinivas is a familiar and a well-known figure in the advertising fraternity with more than 30 years of experience in the fields of advertising and marketing. He has been instrumental and highly successful in planning, implementing and setting future strategy resulting in the phenomenal growth of Sloka Advertising Pvt Ltd, which is considered to be one of the best and sought-after agencies.

On this occasion, Srinivas



Srinivas is a familiar and a well-known figure in the advertising fraternity with more than 30 years of experience in the fields of advertising

said, "I'm extremely honoured to be elected to the board of this prestigious association which is a great opportunity and responsibility and I would strive to work in tandem with other board members to uphold sound business practices."

Prashant Kumar, CEO, South Asia of Group M Media was re-elected as the President of the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI). Rana Barua of Havas media was

unanimously elected Vice-President of the association. The other members of the board are well known and who is who of the advertising industry.

AAAI, which was founded in 1945, today is true representative with a very large number of highly reputed agencies as its members, who together account for almost 80% of the advertising business placed in the country.

Man tries to set fire to AIMIM office

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chandrayangutta police booked an unidentified person for attempting to set fire to the AIMIM office in the early hours of Tuesday.

The CCTV footage showed a man walking towards the office and sprinkling petrol on the door before throwing a lit match stick causing the fire. A part of the door was damaged in the incident; as some neighbours noticed the flames and immediately doused the fire.

The police arrived at the spot later in the morning and after examination collected the CCTV footage. The case was registered following the complaint of the local AIMIM leader Syed Shareef. The police formed a special team to investigate the case and arrest the person.

TOMCOM launches recruitment of nursing staff for Japan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Overseas Manpower Company Limited (TOMCOM) will be organising a special programme to train and recruit qualified nursing staff for working in Japan under specified skilled workers (SSW) scheme of the Government of Japan. TOMCOM is going to conduct screening tests for the selection of candidates for the batches on December 7 at the National Institute of Skill Training (NSTI), Vidyanaagar.

TOMCOM released a press release on Tuesday. It has successfully recruited 32 nurses in various hospitals in Japan. According to the press release,

fresh BSc Nursing graduates/GNM diploma holders from registered colleges in the age group of 22 to 30 years can apply for this programme. No prior work experience is required.

Residential training in Japanese language and additional professional skills required to work in Japan will be provided to the selected candidates in the city.

The candidates can earn up to Rs 1.50 lakh to Rs 1.80 lakh if they are successfully placed.

For more details, aspirants can visit www.tomcom.telangana.gov.in or contact 8919047600, 6302292450 and 9573945684.

Microsoft provides ease of access for information on govt websites

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Microsoft's India Development Centre (IDC) in Hyderabad is emphasising on Artificial Intelligence as the way forward. The IDC has developed the Jugalbandi AI chat bot enabling access to information on government services to people in Indian languages.

The Microsoft translator currently supports 20 languages which promotes linguistic diversity and breaking language barriers. The chat bot is one of the products developed by the IDC in the last 25 years. Microsoft 365 (office) is also an app comprising various productivity apps on the android and IOS powered devices.

It encompasses online ser-



Microsoft IDC staff at Silver Jubilee celebrations

vices such as Outlook.com, OneDrive, Microsoft Teams, programs formerly marketed under the name Microsoft Office (including applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook on Microsoft Windows, macOS,

mobile devices and on the web), enterprise products and services associated with these products such as Exchange Server, SharePoint and Yammer. It also covers subscription plans encompassing these products, including those

that include subscription-based licenses to desktop and mobile software and hosted email and intranet services.

It is to be noted that the IDC in Hyderabad observed 25 years of its establishment. Addressing the media on this occasion, Microsoft IDC Managing Director Rajiv Kumar said, "In the last 25 years, the India Development Centre has made remarkable strides, from learning to build products remotely to deeply contributing across all of Microsoft's products and services."

Today, we are celebrating our achievements and the exceptional workplace culture, where the best minds come to work, innovate, and create global impact."

NTPC distributes high-pressure toilet washers to govt schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To promote sanitation among students, the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) southern region headquarters, Secunderabad,

on Tuesday distributed high-pressure toilet washers to 80 government schools in Hyderabad at their office premises located in Kavagudiga.

Debashish Chattopadhyay, RED(South) was the chief guest. In his address, he stated that apart from being a responsible corporation, NTPC also undertakes various initiatives for community development, especially in the fields of education, health and sanitation. A total of 80

schools were distributed with toilet washers in the first phase. These high-pressure toilet washers will help in maintaining cleanliness and proper sanitation in the schools.

SN Panigrahi, GM (HR), highlighted the corporation's role in nation-building and stressed the need for proper sanitation and hygiene among the school children to enable them to have better healthcare and learning environment.

The school management and authorities appreciated NTPC's efforts and support in the area of education. The meeting was attended by all senior fraternities of the corporation.

MBT to observe 'black day' today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Majlis Bachao Tareekh (MBT) announced that it would observe a 'Black Day' on December 6, the day marking the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

A few organisations in Hyderabad observe December 6 as a black day, marking the demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh in 1992. People in parts of Hyderabad, especially in the Old City observe the day.

31 years after its demolition, the Babri Masjid demolition and incidents that followed are mourned by many across the country.

SCR to run 32 additional Sabarimala special trains between various destinations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In order to clear extra rush of Sabarimala pilgrims, South Central Railways (SCR) will run 32 additional Sabarimala special trains between various destinations from December 12, 19 to January 24.

Train No. 07167 (Hyderabad - Kottayam) will depart from Hyderabad at 12:25 pm on Tuesdays and will arrive at Kottayam at 4:40 pm on Wednesdays on December 12, 19, and 26 and January 2, 9, 16 and 23 while Train No. 07168 (Kottayam -Hyderabad) will depart from Kottayam at 8:25 pm on Wednesdays and will arrive at Hyderabad at 11:45 pm on Thursdays on December 13, 20 and 27 and

January 3, 10, 17 and 24.

Train No. 07169 (Machilipatnam - Kottayam) will depart from Machilipatnam at 9:35 pm on Tuesdays and will arrive at Kottayam at 10:45 pm on Wednesdays on December 12, 19 and 26 and January 9 and 16 while Train No 07170 (Kottayam -Machilipatnam) will depart from Kottayam at 12:30 am on Wednesdays and will arrive at Machilipatnam at 3 am on Fridays on December 14, 21 and 28 and January 11 and 18.

Train No. 07157 (Secunderabad -Kottayam) will depart from Secunderabad at 4:50 pm on Mondays and will arrive at Kottayam at 10:05 pm on Tuesdays on December 11 and 18 while Train No 07158



(Kottayam -Secunderabad) will depart from Kottayam at 12:30 am on Wednesdays and will arrive at Secunderabad at 4:35 am on Thursdays on December 13 and 20.

These special trains consist of three-tier AC, sleeper class, and general second-class coaches.

Train No 07159 (Hyderabad

- Kottayam) will depart from Hyderabad at 3:50 pm on Thursdays and will arrive at Kottayam at 10 pm on Fridays on December 14 and 21 while Train No 07160 (Kottayam -Hyderabad) will depart from Kottayam at 12:30 pm on Saturdays and will arrive at Hyderabad at 5 pm on December 16 and 23.

These special trains will stop at Secunderabad, Cherlapalli, Bhongir, Jangoan, Kazipet, Warangal, Mahabubabad, Dornakal, Khammam, Madhira, Vijayawada, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole, Kavali, Nellore, Gudur, Renigunta, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thrisur, Alwaye and Ernakulam Town stations in both the directions.

Man arrested for manufacturing fake cancer medicine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Drug Control Administration on Tuesday arrested a man for manufacturing counterfeit cancer medicine and seized drugs worth Rs 4.35 crore.

The accused was identified as K Sateesh Reddy, Director, Astrica Healthcare. Based on a tip off by the Vigilance Cell of Drugs Control Administration, Telangana, regarding manufacturing of spurious drugs by the firm 'Astrica Healthcare', a special team of Drugs Control Administration led by P Ramu, Assistant Director and Drugs Inspectors G Srikanth, K Anvesh, M Chandrasekar, V Ajay and S Vinay Sushmi conducted raids at various locations in the city on December

2. DCA officials took assistance of the postal authorities at Alwal to trace the location mentioned on the invoices gathered by and upon enquiry, it has been found to be a fake address.

The special team then raided courier offices used by the firm 'Astrica Healthcare' for shipping their drug consignments. DCA constituted two teams to catch the culprit, one team raided the courier offices at IDA Cherlapalli, Nacharam and Medchal and the other team raided the premises of 'Astrica Healthcare' at Keesara. Officials identified the courier boy who is delivering the drug stock of Astrica Healthcare and traced the location of the counterfeit drugs

which were stocked in three shutters at Macha Bollaram which is an unlicensed premise and surveilled it since December 2.

On December 4, the DCA officials raided the unlicensed premises and seized 36 varieties of anti-cancer drugs. Certain seized drugs were found to be of spurious nature, as the labels bear details of a non-existent company 'Astra Generics Pvt. Ltd.' whose licences had already been cancelled in July 2021.

The seized drugs belong to the following companies, Astra Generics Pvt. Ltd., Telangana; Astrica Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., Telangana; Medion Biotech Pvt. Ltd., Himachal Pradesh; Alliance Biotech, Himachal Pradesh; etc.

Running government won't be a smooth affair for Cong in TS

PIN POINT

Of course, the Congress is enjoying blissful moments for coming to power in Telangana, India's newest state that was granted by the grand old party a decade ago despite stiff resistance shown by people in the residual Andhra Pradesh.

Whatever be the reason for granting statehood to Telangana, the party, wittingly or unwittingly, ruined its own interests in the process. Against odds, the Congress leadership stood by the people of Telangana. The Congress then merely had an assurance from the erstwhile Telangana Rastra Samithi (now Bharat Rashtra Samithi) to merge with the Congress out of gratitude for creating the separate state. The TRS went back on the assurance after the passage of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act - 2014 in Parliament. Subsequently, the two parties

contested separately on the plank of being 'achievers' of Telangana State. People reposed confidence in TRS and gave it the reins of power in the first ever elections of 2014 in TS. In subsequent elections too, TRS utilized Congress-TDP alliance as a weapon and whipped up Telangana sentiments, saying the tie-up would throw up rulers with Andhra roots whose actions would be detrimental to the interests of TS. So, people again believed TRS in the 2018 polls.

Over two terms, BRS had to face several challenges resulting in anti-incumbency factor, including tell-tale flaws in the Kaleswaram LIS, whose costs had escalated abnormally from Rs. 30,000 cr to Rs.1.00 lakh crore. The sinking of the pillars of the Medigadda barrage of KLIS confirmed people's worst fears.

The party was in such state that it could not confidently project its CM face. Nor did the Congress high command take a call on picking the chief minister immediately after receiving the one-liner resolution sent to it by the Congress Legislature Party, though TPCC president A Revanth Reddy had been regarded as the natural choice for the position.

The Congress is once again in the limelight, after languishing politically for a decade. The party was in such state that it could not confidently project its CM face. Nor did the Congress high command take a call on picking the chief minister immediately after receiving the one-liner resolution sent to it by the Congress Legislature Party, though TPCC president A Revanth Reddy had been regarded as the natural choice for the position. Talking of party tradition, Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy was selected as CLP leader when the Congress came to power in

2004 in the combined AP. He was Leader of the Opposition in the previous term and the party allowed him to continue in the same post. Normally, CLP leader will be the chief minister when the party is in power. The presence of Backward Class leader D. Sreenivas as PCC chief did not give scope for caste equations. Discounting talk that a BC leader may be given chance to take the reins of the state to address statehood demand for Telangana, YSR sought clarification from Congress supreme Sonia Gandhi, who then cleared all suspicions in his mind. In



Karnataka also, then PCC president SM Krishna was made CLP leader after the party's victory in the 1999 elections. Assembly elections were held in Andhra Pradesh along with the Lok Sabha polls. The Congress made it in Karnataka by securing 38% of the votes polled in the state; while in AP, the party could not come to power despite getting 43% of the votes, leav-

ing YSR and party cadre in deep distress. In Kerala, during the 2001 elections, then CLP leader A. K. Antony was allowed to continue in that post only to head the government there. In the recently concluded Karnataka Assembly polls, as PCC president D.K. Siva Kumar led the Congress party to an impressive victory. Contrary to expectations, due to the presence of former chief minister Siddharamaiah in the race, DK was convinced to wait for his turn in due course. DK settled for Deputy Chief Minister's post.

Telangana Rashtra Samithi also got a similar mandate in 2014, bagging just three seats more than the half way mark (60). To avoid instability, the TRS leadership subsequently attracted TDP and Congress legislators. So, the slender margin that the Congress now has (four seats more than the half way mark) may be quite inspiring for the

BRS, should it aim to destabilise the Congress government. The 'wait and watch' attitude of the newly elected BRS legislators suggests that they are not yet ready to be only the principal opposition in the TS Legislative Assembly. KCR may make his son and former IT Minister K Taraka Rama Rao or nephew and former Health Minister T. Harish Rao as Leader of Opposition in TSLA. BRS will thus become the biggest opposition party in TSLA with its strong contingent of 39 MLAs. In the combined Andhra Pradesh also both Dr.YS Rajasekhara Reddy (Congress) and N. Chandrababu Naidu (TDP) had played the role of LoP with 90+ seats each.

Now that the Congress has an opportunity to rule Telangana, it should create a conducive atmosphere to make people feel that Telangana is in the safe hands of a national party. KCR

would do well to remember the Karimnagar LS byelection in 2006. Exactly on 4th December, 2006, Karimnagar LS bypolls was held, making KCR subsequently a hero for T-movement. He won the election with a huge margin of 2 lakh votes. Fast forward to 2023, KCR had to lose power besides facing defeat at the hands of a new candidate from BJP in the Kamareddy Assembly seat. He managed to win in Gajwel, but tasted electoral defeat after 40 years. In a way, KCR's fate is similar to that of his political mentor NT Rama Rao, who lost power and his Kalwakurthy seat in the 1989 polls.

Despite odds, KCR will have a chance to play politics with the Congress government in TS. He might contest in the Lok Sabha polls in 2024 and prefer to be in national politics more prominently, even if the BRS notches up a single-digit tally then.

No takers for Speaker post in Cong

SNCN ACHARYULU
HYDERABAD

In the Congress party there are no takers for the Assembly Speaker's post. All the senior MLAs want Cabinet berths only. According to sources, Congress leadership has consulted former Deputy Chief Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha and former Minister D Sridhar Babu for Speaker's post. But both did not show interest and said that they want Cabinet berths. Former Minister G Vinod's name is under consideration for the Speaker's post. But Vinod's brother G Vivek will be taken into the Cabinet. Congress high command may not agree to give two important posts for one family.

Former TPCC president and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy



who won from Huzurnagar Assembly constituency is also one of the strong contenders for the Chief Minister's post. According to sources close to Uttam Kumar Reddy, if he will not get the Chief Minister's post, he wants to be an MP and his wife Padmavathi will be in

the Cabinet. Congress leadership is planning to give the Speaker's post to the weaker sections. Congress leadership is searching for BC or SC community leaders for the Speaker's post. Congress leadership is not ready to give two impor-

tant posts, the Chief Minister and the Assembly Speaker's posts to same caste. Usually senior MLAs want to become a minister only and not the Speaker.

Every time selecting the MLA for the Speaker's post becomes a problem to the Congress leadership. The MLAs who want to be in active in politics do not prefer the Speaker's post. Congress leadership thought to make former minister and MLC T Jeevan Reddy as Assembly Speaker. But Jeevan Reddy was defeated from Jagtial Assembly constituency.

Under the circumstances if no senior MLA comes forward to take the Speaker's post the Congress leadership may consider from the newly elected MLAs who have some legislative knowledge.

Cyclone in AP: Collector cautions people

PNS SURYAPETA

Collector S Venkat Rao has called upon the people of the district to remain on the alert as the Met office, in its bulletin, cautioned that there is every chance of the district experiencing heavy rains in the light of the cyclone lashing Andhra Pradesh.

In a statement here on Tuesday, he asked the people not to venture out unless it is absolutely necessary. He asked them to keep away from mud walls and electric poles as a precautionary measure.

He asked the farmers against working in their fields and taking shelter under the trees as thunder showers are lashing the district.

Reddys with 43 seats to dominate Telangana politics

MARUTHI SUBRHANYAM
HYDERABAD

A regime with a majority of Reddy MLAs is on the cards in Telangana after several decades.

In fact, during the Nizam regime, Reddy community wielded lot of clout, while Deshmukhs had ruled the villages. Now, the same Reddy community is going to rule Telangana.

In current Telangana Assembly, total Reddy MLAs from all parties is 43. In 31 seats, SC and ST MLAs were elected, while Muslims were elected from seven seats.

There was no single Muslim MLA from the Congress or the BRS.

The caste composition of the current House is as follows: BCs-19, Kammas -4, Velama -13, Brahmin-1 and Vyasa-1.

In fact, 62 MLAs hailing from upper castes were elected to the House.

The Reddy population in Telangana is 9%, while Kammas constitute 4%. The population of Velamas is less than 1%. The BCs followed by



JAYAVEER REDDY

Dalits constitute majority population in the State. However, only 13 Velama MLAs and 4 Kamma MLAs were elected to the House.

Even more surprising is that only 19 BC MLAs were elected to the Assembly. The BCs occupy lion's share of population in the State.

The Congress and BRS gave 42 and 41 tickets to Reddy community members. In all, 29 Reddy MLAs from Congress, 14 from BRS and 3 from BJP were elected to the House.

The current Assembly would have 43 Reddy MLAs as against 30 MLAs in the previ-

ous House. Of all the MLAs, those from the Reddy community constitute 36.13%.

During YSR regime, the Reddy community got priority in making appointments to constitutional bodies to nominated posts. The posts like CM, Speaker, DGP were held by the community members. TDLP deputy leader Devender Gould and Tammineni Sitaram who was then in the TDP criticised the government for filling all posts with Reddy community members. Releasing of a list of various posts occupied by the Reddy community created a sensation then.

A non-controversial leader Jana Reddy is not going to be a part of the House as he made the way for his son Jayaveer Reddy to enter the portals of the current Assembly. Veteran in Congress politics and political strategist Jana Reddy stayed away from electoral politics this time.

National OC Welfare Association president G Karunakar Reddy, while commenting on the poll results, remarked that the parties ignored social justice.

Kunamneni will take a call if Cong offers minister post

PNS HYDERABAD

CPI lone MLA elect from Kothagudem and CPI Telangana State secretary Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao stated that they will take a decision if Congress party offers minister's post, whether to accept it or not.

While speaking to the media on Tuesday after meeting the CM elect A Revanth Reddy at Ellaa hotel along with party leaders Dr K Narayana, Chada Venkat Reddy and others, Sambasiva Rao said that people of Telangana proved that they will not tolerate the detentions. He alleged that there were breathless detentions in KCR's 10 years rule. KCR, who assured that he will make Telangana golden, failed to implement a single assurance fully.

Cong will henceforth have say in GWMC

PNS RANGAMPET

The Congress party workers are in a jubilant mode as the Congress captured 10 Assembly segments in undivided Warangal district. Many feel that it would have severe impact on the local body elections, which are due next year.

During the past 10 years, the Congress was out of power in Telangana. The Congress activists were in despair as many constituencies have no Congress MLAs.

The Congress flag did not flutter over Narsampet, Palakurti, Vardhannapeta and Warangal West for periods ranging between 20-50 years. With the Congress capturing all 10 out of 12 Assembly seats of undivided Warangal district, the party workers are in celebration mode.

The Congress leaders are now preparing to contest the local body elections to be held next year as many constituencies are being represented by the Congress MLAs.

For the past 10 years, the BRS held the sway. With the change in the situation, minor leaders of the Congress have set their sights on winning the local body elections. Meanwhile, some elected representatives of local bodies are holding negotiations with the new MLAs to cross over to the Congress.

The latest election results, in which Congress emerged as a major beneficiary, prompted many a leaders to focus attention on the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC). Earlier, Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation was regarded as a strong fortress of the Congress.

In the new State of Telangana, the BRS captured many posts in GWMC in 2016 and 2021 elections. In the two elections, BRS candidates won 80 per cent of the seats. They also captured the mayor and deputy mayor posts. There was not a single Congress corporator in Warangal East constituency. BRS people's repre-



sentatives were the ex-officio members of the civic body.

Now, Nayini Rajender Reddy has been elected MLA from Warangal West and Konda Surekha from Warangal East, KR Nagaraju elected from Vardhannapeta seat, Revuri Prakash Reddy was elected from Parakala from the Congress party, while Kadiam Srihari was elected from Station Ghanpur. They will serve as new ex-officio members of the GWMC. The Congress strength in the civic body is going to increase. The Congress leaders say the BRS would have no impact in the civic body hereafter.

'People of Revanth Reddy's native village in jubilant mood

PNS NAGARKARNOOL

Fans of Revanth Reddy were in celebration mode as the Congress high command announced his name for the CM post. A lot of activity was seen near the residence of Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad.

Following the announcement, the police have beefed up security near Revanth Reddy's house. A festive atmosphere prevailed in Revanth Reddy's native village of

Kondareddypalli in undivided Mahabubnagar district.

The people of the village are celebrating their fellow villager becoming the CM.

Some of the villagers who fondly address Revanth Reddy as 'Pateela' shared their happiness with media.

They would say, "Our Revanth Patel has become CM. Whenever he visits the village, he addresses all with love and affection. He is a down-to-earth person in spite of hold-

ing top position. Hereafter the village will become popular as CM's village but not by its name Kondareddypalli.

The villagers were seen distributing sweets and sprinkling guala on each other to celebrate the occasion of the son of their son becoming the CM.

Earlier, Burgula Rama Krishna Rao who belonged to Kalwakurthy became the CM of Hyderabad State. After several decades.

BRS to go easy on Congress for six months



PNS HYDERABAD

that there was severe anti-incumbency in the party, that even the magnanimity of KCR couldn't help BRS win the elections.

Sources said that the immediate lessons will be first implemented in Lok Sabha elections. A BRS leader said that there is constant threat looming large that leaders might defect. A MLA-elect said, "Yes everybody is asking whether we will leave. I won't, but it is too early for anyone to decide. People who won know about the Congress and how the infighting happens. They should first settle down and then think of poaching any of us. Defections may happen but largely during or after Lok Sabha elections."



Ponnam says his name is in the minds of high command

PNS HYDERABAD

Congress MLA Ponnam Prabhakar said that for him, the post of minister will be decided by the leadership.

Speaking to the media at his office on Tuesday, he said, "The winning MLAs passed a unanimous resolution to elect Revanth Reddy as the CLP leader. After considering everything, the party high command announced Revanth Reddy as the CLP leader. I am very happy that Revanth Reddy has been elected as CLP leader."

"Revanth Reddy worked hard in this election and brought the party to power. The senior leaders in the party have the freedom to aspire to become the CM in the Congress. One has to follow the orders of the high command. BRS party will decide the 2P chairperson position in Hyderabad. Also our Congress is a national party so decisions are made in Delhi," he said.

Dead fish float on Durgam Cheruvu

PNS HYDERABAD

Durgam Cheruvu, also known as Secret lake, witnessed a grim visual on Tuesday as hundreds of dead fish were seen floating on the surface of water. This lake was previously considered to be among the cleanest lakes of Hyderabad.

Residents near the lake have noticed this and notified the officials through social media. Residents near the lake feel that the lake has been contaminated or sewage has been released in the lake.

Priyanka Narula, a resident near the lake, saw the dead fish on Tuesday around 8 am. She



said, "I don't know much about the technicalities. The reason could be the lack of oxygen in the lake, weather changing since the two days or sewage being released into the lake."

Komatireddy congratulates CM-elect Revanth

PNS HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader and Nalgonda MLA-elect Komatireddy Venkat Reddy extended congratulations to CM-designate A Revanth Reddy.

In a statement, Komatireddy said, "Best wishes to Anumula Revanth Reddy, who will take charge as the second Chief Minister of Telangana State. Without betraying the trust of the people of Telangana.

BJP slams comments of DMK MP Senthil

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana State unit of BJP Spokesperson NV Subhash has condemned the comments made by Parliament member of DMK DNV Senthil Kumar that they are most objectionable and unwarranted.

"Describing the states that voted for BJP in the recently concluded elections as 'Gaumutra' states is most objectionable and condemnable. This is the height of arrogance and insulting the people who voted in elections," said Subhash, spokesperson of BJP, in a release here on Tuesday.

Senthil Kumar, while speaking in Parliament on Monday, made these comments. For a long time the DMK has been spewing venom against Hindus and the BJP and making highly deplorable comments.

Instead of commenting on the BJP, Subhash said that the DMK MP should focus more on relief measures to be taken in Tamil Nadu where people



are suffering from heavy rains. Subhash also criticised the DMK MP as he is ignorant of the growth of the BJP in southern states since he was always blindfolded as far as the BJP is concerned.

It has become a habit for the DMK leaders to criticise Hindus as in the month of September Tamil Nadu Sports Minister Udayanidhi Stalin called for 'eradication of Sanatana Dharma.' "Just like dengue, mosquitoes, malaria or Corona virus, there is need to eradicate Sanathan Dharma," said Udayanidhi, attracting condemnation from various sections across the nation. Subhash demanded an unconditional apology from the DMK MP immediately.

Last minute decisions that saved BRS from ignominious defeat

PNS HYDERABAD

In the current elections, the BRS received a rude shock. Had the BRS supreme K Chandrasekhar Rao not initiated some last-minute changes to the list of the candidates, the BRS would have fared even more miserably.

In Alampur, the BRS changed the candidate gave

ticket to Vijayudu in place of Abraham enabling it to post victory.

Similarly, for Janagoan seat the BRS nominated Palla Rajeswar Reddy instead of Muttireddy Yadagiri Reddy leading to BRS romping home there.

In Station Ghatnpur seat, the BRS opted for Kadiam Srihari in stead of giving ticket to

Tatikonda Rajaiah, leading to BRS posting victory.

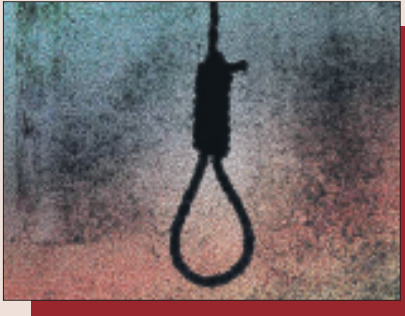
In Narsapur, the BRS gave ticket to Sunita Lakshma Reddy in place of Madan Reddy helping the party to win the seat.

In Korutla, the BRS fielded Dr Kalwakuntla Sanjay Rao in place of Kalwakuntla Vidyasagar Rao enabling the BRS to win the seat.

INDIA CORNER

Sikkim tops suicide rate chart in country with 43.1% rate

The picturesque Himalayan state of Sikkim has reported the highest suicide rate per one lakh population in the country, the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) stated. According to the report, Sikkim registered a 43.1 per cent suicide rate, followed by 42.8 per cent in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 29.7 per cent in Puducherry, 28.5 per cent in Kerala and 28.2 per cent in Chhattisgarh. The national average was 12.4 per cent, with a total of 1,70,924 suicides reported across the country in 2022. Sikkim reported 293 suicide cases in 2022, 27 more than 2021, an increase of 10.2 per cent in the suicide rate, according to the report. A total of 226 men and 67 women died by suicide in Sikkim, with unemployment (83 suicides) being the biggest reason for people taking the extreme step in the Himalayan state last year. Sikkim has a population of over 6.10 lakh, according to Census 2011.



Railway employees can now apply for leave through mobile app

The Railway Board has simplified the leave application process for its employees by making changes in the leave module of its mobile app, HRMS (Human Resources Management System). The leave module, which was launched on August 1, 2023, for digitising the process of leave, now offers a facility for employees to apply for leaves through this mobile application. "In order to further improve the user interface for employees, facility for applying for certain types of leaves have been provided in the Mobile App of HRMS with immediate effect," said a written communication from the Railway Board dated November 4, 2023 issued to all railway zones. It added, "It may be noted that as of now, the mobile app feature will only be available for applying the leave and process of sanction needs to be done either through the web portal 'HRMS' or through mobile browser."



Court grants bail to "honeytrapped" former IAF official

Delhi court has granted bail to a former Indian Air Force official who allegedly shared secret information with Pakistan's ISI-backed intelligence operatives after being "honeytrapped" in 2015. The judge noted that the accused has already spent more than half the maximum sentence prescribed for the alleged offence. Additional Sessions Judge Aparna Swami granted the relief to Ranjith K K, who was a Leading Aircraftman, a junior ranking official below a corporal, with the Indian Air Force (IAF) posted in Bhatinda. The judge noted the submissions made by advocates Akash Vajpai and Javed Ali, who while appearing for the accused said a close scrutiny of the case file reflected that no delay in trial can be attributed to the accused. "As per the record, all the material witnesses have been examined. At present, 12 witnesses are left to be examined."



TN seeks Rs 5,000 cr central aid as rains wreak havoc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The DMK on Tuesday demanded an immediate central assistance of Rs 5,000 crore to provide relief to the people and rebuild infrastructure in Chennai and nearby districts hit by incessant rains caused by cyclone Michaung. The demand was made by Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) MP and Parliamentary party leader T R Baalu in Lok Sabha and Tiruchi Siva in Rajya Sabha. Party MP Kanimozhi drew attention to the issue at a press conference in the national capital, saying the DMK-ruled state is facing an unprecedented situation. "In two days, we had 33 cm of rainfall. We faced such bad rains for the first time in the last 47 years. This was worse than the rains we faced in 2015," Kanimozhi told reporters. Chennai is facing the brunt with many areas submerged. The nearby districts are also impacted and the losses are



much more than Rs 4,500 crore, she said. "We have demanded a central assistance of Rs 5,000 crore immediately," she added. Kanimozhi said the state government has made all preparations to tackle the situation. Shelter homes and medical relief camps have been set up. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is also extending help. She said the water is being drained out using huge motor pumps.

aged due to the fury of nature and essential supplies have been hampered, he said. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and the entire Cabinet, municipal corporation officials, fire department, sanitation workers, doctors, rescue teams and electricity department have been working on a war footing to rescue people and provide relief material, he said. As a precautionary measure, electricity supply was suspended, Siva said. He said that while the state government is doing everything in its means, the damage to infrastructure is so huge that it cannot be repaired at the earliest. "The state government has requested an interim relief of Rs 5,000 crore." "I urge the Union government (that) considering the condition of Tamil Nadu and five districts, kindly release Rs 5,000 crore as initial interim relief which would help the State government in their efforts to safeguard the people of Tamil Nadu," he said.

ASKS KARNATAKA CM SIDDARAMAIAH

What's wrong in increasing budget for minorities

PNS ■ BELAGAVI (KARNATAKA)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday wondered what was wrong in increasing the state budget allocation for minorities. Speaking to reporters, the chief minister also clarified that in his speech during an event organised by a Muslim organisation he had said his government would protect all the communities in the state including Muslims. "What is wrong with that?" Siddaramaiah sought to know about a query on his statement to increase the annual budget for minorities from Rs 4,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore. He accused a section of the media of misquoting him as saying that his government will protect only Muslims.

56 Indian varsities feature in QS World University rankings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University tops the chart among 56 Indian universities that have made the cut in QS World University Sustainability rankings, officials announced on Tuesday. DU is followed by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay and Madras. Overall, the University of Toronto has ranked at the top, followed by the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) and The University of Manchester at the second and third spot. The QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2024 features 1,397 institutions across 95 countries and territories, more than double the number featured in last year's pilot edition. Evaluating universities based on social impact, environmental impact and governance, the rankings provide a unique and detailed framework to assess how universities are taking action to tackle the world's most pressing global challenges.



"India, as one of the world's largest emitters of carbon dioxide, faces a formidable challenge and shoulders immense responsibility for meeting its commitment to achieve net zero by 2070. In this context, the role of Indian universities is pivotal as they continue to expand in number and improve in quality," QS Senior Vice President Ben Sowter said. "While there are commendable achievements in certain areas of the ranking, there are also areas for improvement. The performance of institutions like VIT and the University of Delhi in

Environmental Education and Institutional Sustainability is noteworthy and these achievements are crucial for India's climate action plans. However, challenges related to Environmental Research and Equality remain. "To align with the nation's environmental commitments, universities need to amplify their research capabilities, foster diversity and inclusivity and invest in high-impact environmental research. Furthermore, as India seeks to enhance its inbound and outbound student mobility, carbon offsetting within the sector will become increasingly necessary," Sowter added.

'One flag, one PM, one Constitution' not a slogan: Amit Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday asserted that the concept of "one flag, one prime minister, one constitution" was not a political slogan and the BJP firmly believes in the principle and finally implemented it with regard to Jammu and Kashmir. Responding to a remark by TMC's Saugata Roy in the Lok Sabha that "ek nishan, ek pradhan, ek samvidhan (one flag, one head, one constitution)" was a "political slogan", Shah wondered as to how can a country have two prime ministers, two constitutions and two flags. He said Roy's remarks were "objectionable". While responding to a remark from the opposition benches, Shah said, "Whosoever did it was wrong. Narendra Modi has corrected it. Your approval or disagreement does not matter. The entire country wanted it." This

comment was made in an apparent reference to the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. He went on to state that "one symbol, one head, one constitution" was not an election slogan. "We had been saying since 1950 that a country should have one PM, one flag and one constitution and two will not do and we have done it." Soon after Roy ended his speech on the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said while the TMC leader mentioned Syama Prasad Mukherjee, he should have also recalled his sacrifice. Roy said he had taught in a college named after Mukherjee and "ek nishan, ek pradhan, ek samvidhan" was his slogan and it was a "political slogan". Shah then rose to hit back at the TMC member.

Just 11.75% women in police forces in country

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There are just 11.75 per cent women in the police forces in the country despite the central government's repeated efforts to enhance the strength of the women police to 33 per cent, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued advisories on May 21, 2014, May 12, 2015, June 21, 2019, June 22, 2021 and April 13, 2022 to all the state governments and Union Territory administrations to increase the representation of women police to 33 per cent of the total strength. He said all the state governments and Union Territory administrations have been requested to create additional posts of women constables and sub-inspectors by converting the vacant posts of constables and sub-inspectors. The aim is that each police station should have at least three women sub-inspectors and 10 women police constables, so that a women help desk is manned round the clock, he said in a written reply to a question.

Chidambaram accuses govt of steering jobless growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former finance minister P Chidambaram on Tuesday hit out at the government and accused it of steering a jobless growth, questioning its policies are in favour of the rich. Taking part in a short discussion on the economic situation in the country, the senior Congress leader said despite India becoming a large economy, growing at the fastest rate in the world with the largest FDI inflows, the growth is not seen on the ground. He said India's worker population rate -- the number of

workers to the total population -- is 46 per cent which is quite low but acceptable given the various circumstances in the country. "Of the worker population, that is 46 per cent of the total population, male workers are 69 per cent but female is only 22 per cent. Of the worker population, less than 50 per cent actually work," he said. Effectively, he said, "It means that only 23 per cent of the people work. This is more or less constant in the last nine and half years of the BJP government. Why, I ask, if we have such scintillating growth, why

is this number not improving?" Citing official periodic survey data, he said the unemployment rate in the age group 15-24 is 23.22 per cent; 42 per cent among graduates under the age of 25; 23 per cent among graduates between the age of 25-29 and nearly 10 per cent in graduates between the age of 30-34. Stating that one out of four graduates will be unemployed and even until the age of 35 one out of ten will be unemployed, Chidambaram asked, "Why is this spirited growth, scintillating growth not turning into jobs?"

Keeping in mind most employment in this country is self-employment 57 per cent, he said even regular-wage employees have declined from 24 per cent to 21 per cent. "Apart from the quantity, the quality of employment is also poor," he added. On price rise, he said even today the CPI inflation is above the tolerance limit of 4-6 per cent of the RBI and food inflation is 9.2 per cent. "What does the combination of high unemployment and high prices mean? It means that the impact will be felt in cut in domestic consumption,

cut in household consumption," Chidambaram asserted. Stating that the net financial assets of households have plummeted to the lowest level of 5.1 per cent, he said, "It means that people are consuming less, people are borrowing more, they are liquidating their household assets and savings and their net financial savings has come down to a historical low, 50-year low of 5.1 per cent. The consequences of such developments are felt in child malnutrition and their education and mental ability, he said.

82% rise in medical colleges since 2014, MBBS seats up by 112%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of medical colleges rose by 82 per cent in the country, and MBBS seats have increased by 112 per cent since 2014, the Rajya Sabha was told on Tuesday. In a written reply, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar said the number of postgraduate medical seats rose by 127 per cent in the same period. The number of medical colleges rose from 387 in 2014 to the current, the minister said. MBBS seats went up from 51,348 to 1,08,940 while PG



seats surged from 31,185 to 70,674, in the same period, she said. Additionally, the construction of 157 medical colleges have been approved, under a centrally sponsored scheme for the establishment of new medical colleges attached with existing district/referral hospitals' with preference towards underserved areas and aspirational districts where there is no existing government or private medical college, Pawar said. The construction of colleges have been approved in three phases and funding for it has been shared between the Centre and state governments 90:10 for northeastern states and special category states and 60:40 for the rest, she added.

Over 294 kidnapping cases daily in country in 2022; maximum in UP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 1 lakh kidnapping and abduction cases were registered across India in 2022, an average of over 294 daily or more than 12 every hour, with the maximum FIRs being lodged in Uttar, according to the NCRB. In 2022, the average rate of crime per lakh population for the country was 7.8, while charge sheeting in such offences stood at 36.4, according to the report. As many as 1,07,588 kidnapping and abduction cases were reported in the country in 2022 while the figure last year was 1,01,707 and 84,805 in 2020, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which functions under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, said in its annual crime report. A total of 1,10,140 people, including 21,278 males, 88,861 females and a transgender were reported kidnapped or abducted during 2022, out of which 76,069 -- 13,970 males and 62,099 females -- were children and 34,071 -- 7,308 male, 26,762 female and a transgender -- were adults, it stated.

During 2022, a total of 1,17,083 kidnapped or abducted people -- 21,199 male, 95,883 female and one transgender -- were rescued out of which 1,16,109 people were rescued alive and 974 were found dead, the NCRB said. Delhi registered 5,641 FIRs of kidnapping and abduction in 2022, 5,527 in 2021 and 4,062 in 2020, according to the report of the NCRB, which is tasked with the collection and analysis of crime data. However, the national capital recorded the highest rate of crime of 26.7 per lakh population and the worst charge sheeting rate of 7.8 among all states and Union Territories across the country, the NCRB data showed. Uttar Pradesh lodged a maximum of 16,262 cases in 2022, up from 14,554 in 2021 and 12,913 in 2020. However, the crime rate in the state stood at 6.9 and the charge sheeting rate was 43.7, both better than the national average, the NCRB data showed. Maharashtra logged 12,260 cases in 2022, up from 10,502 in 2021 and 8,103 in 2020. The crime rate stood at 9.8 and the charge sheeting at 20.9.



Sonia won't make me PM: Pranab told daughter in 2004

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

"No, she will not make me the PM," was Pranab Mukherjee's cryptic response in a reference to Sonia Gandhi when he was asked by his daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee about his chances of becoming the prime minister in 2004. Sharmistha recalls her father's reply after Sonia Gandhi's decision to withdraw from the prime ministerial race in her upcoming book 'In Pranab, My Father: A Daughter Remembers'. In the book, the former Congress spokesperson who quit politics in 2021 provides a glimpse into the illustrious life

of her father, where she also says that he did not have any rancour against Sonia Gandhi for not making him the prime minister, and definitely not against the man chosen - Manmohan Singh. Through her father's diary entries, personal stories narrated to her and her own research, Sharmistha uncovers new, hitherto unknown facets of his political life - his unfulfilled ambition of becoming India's prime minister arising out of his inability to emerge as the 'number one person' to earn Sonia Gandhi's trust, the personality cult around the Nehru-Gandhi family and Rahul Gandhi's lack of charisma and



political understanding among other things, according to the book's publishers Rupa Publications. Mukherjee served as India's finance minister and subsequently became minister for External Affairs, Defence, Finance and Commerce. He

was India's 13th president (2012 to 2017). He died on August 31, 2020 at the age of 84. As the president of the single largest party Congress to win the Lok Sabha elections in 2004, Sonia Gandhi was tipped to be the prime minister and had the full support of the coalition partners. But she renounced her claim to be the prime minister - a decision that took the nation, including her own party colleagues and coalition partners, by surprise. In the chapter titled "The PM India Never Had", Sharmistha also writes: "Following Sonia's decision to withdraw from the

prime ministerial race, there was intense speculation within the media and political spheres. "The names of Dr Manmohan Singh and Pranab were being discussed as the top contenders for the position. I did not have the chance to meet Baba for a couple of days as he was terribly busy, but I spoke to him over the phone. I asked him excitedly if he was going to become the PM. His response was blunt, 'No, she will not make me the PM. It'll be Manmohan Singh.' He added, 'But she should announce it fast. This uncertainty is not good for the country.'"

The author goes on to add that if her father harboured any disappointment about not being named the prime minister, it did not reflect in his diaries. He told a journalist that he did not have any expectation from Sonia Gandhi to make him the prime minister. "If there's no expectation, there's no disappointment as well," the book, which will be launched on Mukherjee's birth anniversary on December 11, says. "It is generally believed that Pranab had a chance to become the PM earlier in 1984 as well, after Indira Gandhi's assassination, and not just in 2004," it adds.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Sensible approach

Cong will do well not to dwell on the Assembly poll debacle and heed PM Modi's sound advice

The Assembly poll results in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have bruised the Opposition, particularly the Congress. The defeat in the Hindi heartland raises questions about its strategy, also triggering concerns about its impact on the winter session in its weakened avatar. The rout has prompted its leaders, workers and supporters alike questioning the efficacy of their campaign strategies and leadership choices. The winter session of Parliament comes immediately after the declaration of results, making it important for the Congress to register its presence on the political landscape. So it might resort to pandemonium, walkouts, sloganeering and entering the well to disrupt proceedings. The defeat may also affect the morale of Congress members, leading to potential rifts and groupism. Causing further embarrassment to the Congress, Trinamool's Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav — already unhappy with the party over its indifference in attending a seat-sharing meeting with the INDIA bloc members ever since the last round of State elections was announced as it reportedly wanted to focus on the polls — have declared that they have no plan to attend today's INDIA all-party meeting at Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's residence.



The Congress, as the principal Opposition party, is supposed to play a crucial role in shaping House discussions, debates, legislative agenda and steering the bloc. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a balanced approach in Parliament, despite the heated post-election atmosphere, underscores the need for constructive debate. The Congress would do well to introspect rather than finding fault with the system or blaming the BJP for the results.

Following the rather surprising verdict, Modi has urged the Opposition MPs not to vent their anger in Parliament. The call for restraint comes at a time when tensions are high, and there is a risk of disruption. The appeal for a dignified and constructive approach to parliamentary proceedings highlights the importance of maintaining decorum and focusing on the nation's priorities. Unfortunately, however, the PM's own party has other ideas. Amit Malviya, the BJP's IT cell head, mocked, "Where is Rahul Gandhi hiding?" Malviya, and for that matter the huge troll army at the BJP's disposal, would do well not to provoke the Congress as that will result only in more acrimony. It is crucial for all political parties, including the BJP and the Congress, to prioritise the nation over partisan interests. The Assembly election results should serve as a catalyst for introspection, reform and improvement rather than leading to a confrontational stance. The session presents the Congress with an opportunity to reevaluate its strategy and leadership and connect with the electorate. It can be a platform for the party to articulate a clear vision for the future, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity.

PICTALK



A farmer carries harvested rice as a herd of wild elephants gathers in a field in search of food, in Nagaon

Only right education can ensure world peace



JS RAJPUT

The quality of school education deserves maximum attention, particularly in terms of teacher education and recruitment, vocational skills and interest identification

The strife-torn world aspires to witness days of no wars, and no violence for future generations. One could safely state that even those who are busy fighting the Ukraine-Russia war, or Israel - Palestine war; or busy in violence in the name of fundamentalism and terrorism, must be somewhere inside willing to give a tension-violence-war free world to their future generations. Probably some select ones could still be under the illusion that their Truth is the only Truth, and all others who do not toe the line must be brought within the fold by even by violence would like their generations ahead to continue in the tradition of violence their Goal - certainly a utopia - stands achieved!

One needs a really tough-nut optimist to even imagine that wars and violence could vanish from the face of the earth in the near future. However, the faith in human ingenuity and trust in the powers of love to create an environment of hope and inspire people to work for global peace. The way out is only one; follow the path of knowledge, and be conversant in applying the skill of discrimination to separate right from wrong, light from darkness, real from false, and Truth from Untruth! This is not the oft-quoted cliché! It is the only alternative available to human beings for the very survival of the human race on the planet Earth, and the planet itself.

The mute question before India and Indians is: are we preparing ourselves to become the soldiers of peace and harmony within the boundaries of India, and then establish that the only way is the Indian way that respects diversity, universality of the human race, and responsibility of human beings to care for every human being, and most importantly, the nature that sustains humans so long it is treated in the appropriate manner! In the third decade of the third millennium, it is evident that as the world moves ahead in its dependence on knowledge, the emergence of an enlightened and cohesive people; and a strong, prosperous, enterprising, nation would prominently depend on good quality



education and dynamic skill acquisition which are the two of its most powerful pivots. India's achievements in education in the post-independence period are indeed praiseworthy. From a literacy rate of around 18%, in 1947 we are now touching 80%!

Initiatives taken at the policy level, support extended to the community and adequate comprehension of their key role by teachers, academics, scholars and people have contributed to reaching the present position. Credit must also go to three major policy formulations in education - 1968, 1986 and 1992 - that have taken a comprehensive view of the emerging needs of the nation, changing national and international scenarios and aspirations of the young of India.

Each one of these confronted the inherited legacy of a transplanted alien system of education and made an attempt to move away from it. It has not been an easy task. However, India is now well-equipped with the necessary experience and expertise and has successfully formulated a policy that is 'rooted to culture and committed to progress'. It envisages India's prominent role in global human endeavours to create new knowledge and explore every possibility of its use for the benefit of humanity.

The NEP-2020 is essentially an articulation of the fundamen-

tal role of education in 'achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development'. It responds with the confidence of an alert and active nation to achieve the SDG-4 that seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The challenge before the academia of the nation is how to ensure quality education on a universal scale, dynamic skill acquisition and effective personal development. This would require high levels of competence, commitment and performance from every teacher irrespective of his level or stage in the hierarchy.

The NEP-2020 offers basic support by permitting flexibility in the choice of subjects of study and encourages multidisciplinary. Every learner could pursue the subject areas of his interest, he could study music and mathematics, or chemistry and philosophy. Flexibility and learner's interest shall dominate the system. As the quality of school education paves the path for quality enhancement at higher levels, it deserves maximum attention, particularly in terms of teacher education and recruitment, vocational skills, individual attention and interest identification, and assessment procedures. It shall have to fully transform itself to ensure that ideas, imagination,

curiosity and creativity with which every child is blessed with is never impeded, but dexterously nourished.

Hopefully, education shall get all the resource support in future, and the dilution of quality in certain aspects of education shall be redressed early. Only then the Indian education attract global attention and appreciation and shall not be 'just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of Soul'. True Indian education imbued with the legacy of 'Worlds but one family' could pave the path for global brotherhood in the world of today that is suffering in innumerable ways. The first step in India could be the transformation of elementary schools!

Yes, if teachers are given the autonomy - and responsibility - to present a model of regularity, punctuality, discipline, honesty, integrity, empathy, broad vision, commitment to the profession, value-based conduct, and growing up in competence, the multiplier impact would be tremendous. That could transform work culture in every other sphere of life. For that, the nation must trust the teacher and look after him!

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious unity)



THE WAY OUT IS ONLY ONE; FOLLOW THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE AND BE CONVERSANT IN APPLYING THE SKILL OF DISCRIMINATION TO SEPARATE THE RIGHT FROM WRONG

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A MEMORABLE PERSONALITY

Sir — On December 5, 1950, Sri Aurobindo left his body in Pondicherry. His far-sighted views on many issues are still relevant and deserve our attention. He had the foresight about the necessity of a socialist revolution for evolutionary progress.

He wrote, "There is to be equality of opportunity for all, but also of status for all, for without the last the first cannot be secured; even if it were established, it could not endure (The Human Cycle: The Psychology of Social Development - page 201). On October Revolution he said to AB Purani that he was one of the influences that worked to make it a success (Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo - Page 474).

We cannot deny the contribution of the October Revolution towards human evolution. That brute capitalism made poor children die young after working as chimney sweepers, gives us enough reason to tip our hats to his foresight. Let us recall a line from William Blake's poem, "The Chimney Sweeper: When my mother died I was very young", "So your chimneys I sweep & in soot, I sleep." As a result of the October Revolution, many socialist states emerged to take care of the potentialities of every human being. Human evolution again discarded the dictatorship of the proletariat of socialism as it had earlier thrown out the laissez-faire liberty of market players. However, the contribution of socialism to human evolution can never be denied as modern welfare states have come to balance between the liberty of capitalism and the equality of socialism.

All modern welfare states including the United States of America have accepted the ideas of socialism in their policy of giving social security to the people like health care and handsome allowance for the unemployed. A true welfare state is more inclined to socialism than far-right capitalism.

Sujit De | Kolkata

BJP's spadework succeeds



Like every election season, this one too was filled with tall promises, speeches, and the blame games of netas. As in the past, it steered clear of all the noise and brought a fresh

lease of life bereft of the poll issues. As all attention now moves to the CM designates in states, we love to see the outcome across the five states. Unlike the 2023 World Cup cricket final (trigger warning: may revive trauma), where the match still had to be played to know the result, the result here is already decided.

A range of exit polls have given their verdict on what they see as likely to happen in the five Assembly elections. With the BJP emerging as an impossible opponent to dislodge, is Madhya Pradesh the new Gujarat? The BJP has always won a higher vote share than the Congress this millennium. The thumping victory in MP made its model most amicable for its governance. The exit polls have gone awry but exact poll results proved BJP's supremacy in state elections.

CK Subramaniam | Chennai

DRUG ADDICTION

Sir — Today the country's youth are falling into the swamp of drugs. One of the reasons for this is lack of stamina. Young people today lose their morale very quickly, which leads to depression and then falling into the trap of drug addiction. Parents should teach their children to fight situations and make them strong. The second big reason is that addiction has become popular nowadays. In many films, the actor is shown smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol, as a result of which young people are also inspired to become addicted to drugs. The biggest weakness of young people is accepting drugs as a fad by falling into bad company. Young people need to empower themselves and share any problems with their parents.

Ashraf Nawaz | Hyderabad

SOIL POLLUTION: A CAUSE OF CONCERN

Sir — Soil pollution has received a different level of attention than water and air pollution. The chemicals emerging from industrial and agricultural practices cause land degradation. Untreated waste and waste waters have also destroyed

thousands of species of fish, birds and plants. Though soil has the innate property to filter out contaminants, it can do so only to a limited extent, the rest trickle out into the atmosphere. Direct contact with contaminated soil is a plausible reality. More than ninety per cent of people's food is accrued through soil and, therefore, its conservation is crucial for the eco chain.

The crippling effects of soil pollution, including congenital health disorders, infective diseases and non-contagious diseases like cancer, have worried the health professionals. No doubt, environmental scientists have in their armoury various remedies to combat soil contamination like surface leaching, bioremediation, thermal remediation, mycoremediation and phytoremediation. Nonetheless, on December 5, World Soil Day, the responsibilities of an individual as an active contributor to the prevention and elimination of soil pollution cannot be overlooked.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Why did Gehlot lose despite his welfare schemes?



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

The BJP encashed the alleged massive corruption in the welfare schemes launched by Gehlot and people trusted Modi's guarantee

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is ready to return to power in Rajasthan and in the elections held on 199 seats, BJP has won 114 seats and Congress 70 seats. But this is evident from the fact that the difference between the two parties appears so big. This marks a continuation of a three-decade-old trend of voters in the desert state changing governments every five years. This marks a major turnaround in the fortunes of the party, which was divided into factions and was struggling to counter the welfare agenda of the Ashok Gehlot-led government. To win in Rajasthan, the BJP targeted the Gehlot welfare model and ensured victory by controlling the internal strife in the party. The only hindrance was the lack of unity in its organisation and the Rajasthan unit was mired in infighting. Rani Basundhara proceeded step by step to convince Rajee and bring unity to the party and addressed the leadership issue by fighting as a unit and without announcing any chief ministerial face. Modi's guarantee card Modi had previously mocked



the growing Revadi or 'freebie' culture in Indian politics, mocking the Congress' guarantee in Karnataka and even speaking on the issue in Parliament. However, several surveys conducted by the BJP found that people were voting based on day-to-day economic issues and that the Congress' promised welfare schemes in Himachal and Karnataka were key factors in its victory.

Thus, the BJP went to the polls armed with a number of welfare schemes, both existing schemes - such as Madhya Pradesh's Ladli Behna scheme, which was announced in March this year - and the annual financial assistance for women in Chhattisgarh in the manifesto. As promises were made. Also many concessions for youth and farmers. The Prime Minister also used his personal credibility by offering the 'Modi Guarantee' to differentiate BJP's welfare schemes

from those of Congress. There was the issue of recruitment exam paper leak, which was used by BJP leader and Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to target the youth constituency. Rajya Sabha MP Kirori Lal Meena and the state leadership held several protests on the issue. Earlier this year, when Meena was on hunger strike, Bashundhara Rajee had also given her support to him. The BJP brought together these issues, from paper leaks to crimes against women to unemployment, during a street protest in September - 'Nahi Sahega Rajasthan' - to craft a unified script and capitalise on the anti-incumbency wave. Can be picked up. Since Rajasthan has a mental tendency to elect a different government every five years, the BJP's only real fear was a welfare scheme-based loss by Gehlot at the last moment, but the CM lost that advantage too by retaining most of its sitting MLAs, which became a boon for the BJP. To turn the indecision of Gurjars in BJP's favour. In 2018, the Gujarat community was seen supporting the Congress and rallied with

the Meenas to make then-state chief Sachin Pilot the chief minister. Eight Gujjar candidates of the Congress won, giving the party a total of 25 seats in East Rajasthan. The BJP was reduced to three seats in the region, with the remaining seats going to independents and the BSP, which later supported the Congress. This time, the BJP had been working on a multi-pronged plan for some time to win back the Gujjar votes, as evidenced by Prime Minister Modi's attempt to capitalise on Congress's attempt to humiliate Rajesh and Sachin Pilot at rally after rally. This not only brought many Gujjar leaders into the organisation, but also kept the issue of Pilot's "insult" alive in the Gujjar belt to draw community voters away from the Congress. State BJP leaders acted at Modi's behest, for example, Sukhbir Singh Jaunapurिया, a two-time MP from Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, said Pilot had "no chance of becoming chief minister because Gehlot would never allow it". (Writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN GET ON THE HAPPINESS TRAIN!

Happy people see the humour and magic in each moment



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

As per 'World Happiness Report' (WHR) released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a global initiative of the United Nations, India stands at rank 126th in the global happiness ranking list with a Happiness score of 4.036, classifying it as one of the world's least joyful nations. Isn't it startling & unpleasant? There is no doubt in it that happiness is an aspiration of every human being, and it can also be a measure of social progress. It is the art of living, the very purpose of our existence & the true index of quality of life. Without happiness, life is dry and meaningless. With happiness, life immediately becomes fulfilling and wonderful. Being happy is not about how well you're doing in general, but rather if you're doing better than expected. For example, say you go to an ice cream parlour where the desert ice cream was the best you've ever had in your life. Now, according to the happiness equation, you would be happier if you had expected it to be just average, as opposed to assuming it would be as delicious as it was. However, it doesn't mean that having low expectations is the path to happiness. Happy people usually keep themselves happy because they know the little ways to appreciate themselves and to see the humour and magic in each moment.

Each one of us wishes to be happy all the time and we pursue this goal of ours in various ways, whether it be through leisure, careers, wealth, relationships or whatever the means, the tendency of the soul is towards being happy. However, in this quest to be happy, we end up making others unhappy and at times also make ourselves unhappy. In such a situation, we should ask ourselves, "Why do we lose



our happiness?" What makes us take the wrong path and lose our inner state of buoyancy? When we pursue limited, superficial or false goals, it is very easy to lose happiness, firstly, because we are not being true to the self, and secondly, because we may build up false expectations that are not met through our goals and activities. Remember! Happiness gained through relationships and possessions has seeds of sorrow because they are sown with expectations that stem from greed, selfishness, attachment or ego. Hence before getting yourself involved in anything, we need to ask ourselves, "Will this bring me happiness?" Very few people know about the fact that human beings in their most powerful stage have a good stock of happiness. It is only when we contravene the spiritual and natural laws, we lose happiness & start making others around us unhappy. The repercussions of anger, attachment, greed, ego and desire lead us to loss of peace and happiness. The more we are driven by these forces, the more we will spend the stock of our happiness. Hence awareness and application of spiritual truths is the only way out to sustain & increase our stock of happiness. We need to go within ourselves to tap the eternal source of happiness and for that firstly we need to be true to the self, know the self and be the self.

Once we have understood the happiness that comes from within and as a result of the manner in which we conduct our lives, and ourselves then it is possible to understand how to share that happiness with others. Increasing the happiness of others brings happiness to the self, but this cannot be an escape - that is, it is not a substitute for creating internal happiness. Benefiting the self on a spiritual level will definitely bring internal happiness & resolve past karma. So what are you waiting for? Let's get on the happiness train & reach our final destination of "Happy Nation".

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

Cut out red tapism in public sector share sale



UTTAM GUPTA

The lengthy and cumbersome process of approval and bureaucratic red tape undermines the chances of the Government selling CPSU shares to willing investors

In the Budget for 2023-24, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had set a target of Rs 51,000 crore for proceeds of the sale of Union government shareholding in central public sector undertakings (CPSUs). As per available indications, the government may fall short of this target by Rs 30,000 crore.

An overwhelming share of the shortfall is due to delays in the disinvestment plans of IDBI Bank (the government plans to sell 30.48 per cent of its stake as well as 30.24 per cent shareholding of LIC aggregating to a total stake sale of 60.72 per cent) and state-owned NMDC Steel. Whereas, in the case of IDBI Bank, this is due to delays in the vetting process for potential buyers by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the sale of NMDC Steel is hamstrung due to elections in Chhattisgarh where the company's main plant is located.

The shortfall in proceeds during the current fiscal year is in sync with the trend seen since 2015-16 when the Modi government started disinvestment with a particular focus on 'strategic' sale (a sophisticated nomenclature for a share sale that reduces its holding in the CPSU to below 50 per cent or privatization). Barring two years viz. 2017-18 and 2018-19 when the actual proceeds exceeded the target, in the remaining six years, the achievement was far short.

Even during 2017-18 and 2018-19, the government could achieve the target primarily because of the two big-ticket sales of its shares in one CPSU to another viz. (i) sale of its 51.11 per cent shareholding in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) during 2017-18 that yielded Rs 37,000 crore; (ii) sale of its 52.63 per cent stake in Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to the Power Finance Corporation (PFC) during 2018-19 yielding Rs 13,000 crore. These sales can't be termed as strategic as the purchaser being another CPSU namely ONGC/PFC, the Government continues to have effective ownership over the divested entity viz. HPCL/REC.

It makes no sense to fix a target for proceeds from share sales. This is because unlike tax revenue, which can be projected with a degree of certainty, the same cannot be said about proceeds from disinvestment. In this case, a lot depends on the market scenario and, in particular, the perception of investors about the company in which share sale is contemplated. In cases where the strategic sale is mooted, the Government faces a bigger challenge as apart from a favourable market, it needs bidders with deep pockets. The lengthy and cumbersome process of approval and bureaucratic red tape further undermines the chances of the Government kicking the ball rolling just around the time when the strategic investors are ready to put in their bets.

The Niti Aayog identifies companies for disinvestment which are then considered by the Core Group of Secretaries on Divestment (CGD), a long-drawn process by itself, which takes it to the Alternative Mechanism (AM) - a group of ministers, including finance, road transport & highways, administrative reforms, etc., - for approval. After AM's approval, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) moved a proposal for in-principal approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs



THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO REMAIN IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT EVEN AFTER STRATEGIC SALE. THIS IS AMPLY REFLECTED IN A STATEMENT IN SITHARAMAN'S BUDGET SPEECH FOR FY 2019-20

(CCEA). Taking all these approvals is a time-consuming process and by the time these are in place, the market scenario could become adverse. At a fundamental level, disinvestment of the government's shareholding in a PSU is tantamount to the sale of assets. Therefore, receipts arising therefrom can only be treated as 'capital receipts' (CRs). While preparing the budget, it won't be advisable to plan for receipts from this source in the same manner as it is done for revenue receipts (RRs) which are receipts generated from the day-to-day business activities e.g. dividends on shares held by the government.

The government should only provide for proceeds from share sales in CPSU on an 'actual' basis after it has happened instead of making provision at the time of presenting the budget. Having delinked from the budgetary process, it should take up disinvestment in CPSUs as an independent exercise guided by the broad principle of where it shouldn't be in.

In an approach outlined in the Budget for 2021-22, the government divided CPSUs into two broad categories i.e. strategic and non-strategic. The strategic group covers atomic energy, space and defense; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services. The non-strategic category includes all other sectors such as industrial and consumer goods, hotel and tourist services, trading, and marketing.

While, the government wants to

sell CPSUs in the strategic sector with the caveat that at least one (and a maximum of four) will be retained in the public sector, it will privatise 'all' undertakings in non-strategic sectors. All loss-making undertakings in the latter category will be closed. Based on this template, it is working on a detailed action plan which is fine. But the process is hamstrung because of a host of legacy issues.

For instance, despite the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) and Niti Aayog recommending the privatisation of all nine CPSUs in the fertiliser sector (it falls in the non-strategic category) coming under the administrative control of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, the latter has opposed it. The ministry feels that with control over fertilizer PSUs gone, the government won't be able to ensure adequate availability of this politically sensitive agri-input in every nook and corner of the country.

The strategic sale of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) hasn't happened nearly four years after it was initially mooted in 2019-20. A prime reason is the government's intent to regulate the prices of petrol and diesel (despite the price of these fuels having been deregulated way back in 2010/2014) which it can do by asking the three oil marketing CPSUs including BPCL to do its bidding. Its ability to influence prices will be hampered if BPCL is privatised.

The government wants to remain in the driver's seat even after strategic sales. This is amply reflected in

a statement in Sitharaman's budget speech for FY 2019-20. She had stated the intent was to change the existing policy from "directly" holding 51 per cent or above in a CPSU, to one whereby its total holding, "direct" plus "indirect", is maintained at 51 per cent.

In yet another glaring instance, even though an order of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) issued last year prohibits participation of CPSUs in the strategic sale of other PSUs, a caveat "...unless otherwise specifically approved by the Central Government in public interest" enables the powers that be to bypass this prohibition if they so wish.

Above all, the majority ownership and control by the Government for several decades has ingrained in the bureaucrat a feeling of exercising command (albeit remote) over the management of the PSU. The latter readily acquiescing has added to the sense of bureaucratic power. Although things have improved under the Modi - dispensation (courtesy of its focus on a 'policy-driven state', and increase in 'transparency'), the basic ingredients remain intact.

Modi needs to play some hardballs to kill the existing mindset of the bureaucracy. The process of share sale should be de-bureaucratised by setting up a holding company (HC) where all government shares in CPSUs are placed. To be manned by eminent professionals, the HC should be fully empowered to make all decisions.

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)

Revolutionising agriculture with the 'natural produce on wheels' project

The 'natural produce on wheels' project has been a resounding success in Himachal Pradesh, showcasing that natural farming can reshape agricultural practices in the region

A truck arrives at the Department of Agriculture of Himachal Pradesh in Baluganj, Shimla. Two women, Nirmala and Sumana Devi, members of Narishakti Mahila Krishi Samooch from Nerwa village, Tutu Block, Shimla, step out, bringing fresh seasonal vegetables. These vegetables, including tomatoes, radishes, French beans, and even fruits like guava and kiwi, have been collected on the same day from the doorsteps of local farmers, primarily by women. Representing their group, the two women, along with Lokesh Bhanot, Farmers Produce Officer (FPO) from the agriculture department, move to the vegetable market or 'subzi mandi'. Bhanot, who surveyed the market rates the



SARITA BRARA

previous evening, displays the rates on a blackboard, and customers make on-the-spot purchases. The vehicle then heads to another selling venue at the state Secretariat complex, carrying the produce along with a cashier.

Upon reaching the venue, vegetables and other products are unloaded and arranged. Several women, mostly regular customers, are already waiting to buy these fresh, chemical-free, and locally-grown products. "The vegetables are fresh, have a longer shelf life, taste better, and, importantly, they are chemical-free, not harmful to our health," says Sunita, a regular customer. Other customers echo similar sentiments, expressing a preference for naturally farmed, more nutritious produce.

Beyond fresh vegetables, products from forest areas, such as anna dana (dried pomegranate seeds), amla (Indian gooseberry), kachina, Bauhinia variegata, and wild honey, are also available. The villages, falling under forest areas, allow people to collect and sell forest produce.

The farmers are paid according to the rates fixed by the FPO. Another pickup van from Basantpur Block brings vegetables from villages in that area, forming a network of women farmers participating in the 'natural produce on wheels' project. Three blocks in Shimla district, Totu, Mashobra, and Basantpur, were selected for this initiative, involving 5,000 farmers, including 8% women, practising natural farming. They are

all small and marginal farmers. Four women Self-Help Groups with 20 members are involved in this pilot that aims to procure fresh produce directly from farmers' doorsteps and sell it at the HP Secretariat & Agriculture Directorate Boileuganj, Shimla. This alleviates the need for middlemen, ensuring farmers receive fair market prices.

The project operates twice a week, and its success may lead to increased frequency based on customer response. For farmers, it is a win-win situation; they receive market prices without intermediaries, transport costs are shared among them, and all produce is sold on the same day.

A survey conducted a year ago identified areas and farmers engaged in natural farming.

Farmers undergo a two-day training program, and their products are certified and graded by the agriculture department. Initiated earlier this year, the 'natural produce on wheels' project addresses the challenge of lower yields in natural farming. Farmers cultivate only a portion of their land using the kitchen garden model, maximising the output on smaller plots.

Natural farming, a chemical-free traditional method, relies on nature's laws, avoiding external inputs like chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The process minimises human intervention, making it distinct from organic farming. Pesticides used are prepared by farmers using cow dung, cow urine, garlic, red chilli, and buttermilk.

While organic vegetables are often costly, products from natural farming are more affordable for daily consumption. A survey indicates that natural farming reduces cultivation costs by 46% and increases profits by 22%. In comparison, organic farming relies on expensive inputs, contributing to higher market prices. The positive impact of natural farming extends to disease incidence. Scab and marssonina incidences in Natural Farming orchards are notably lower than in chemical farming, suggesting its potential to improve crop health. Most women involved in the project own small agricultural plots, not exceeding 6 to 7 bighas of land. Their husbands typically work in various professions, and two

women from each group manage the pickup of produce. "We spend half of our day in our agriculture fields or with livestock, managing sowing to harvesting on our own," shares one woman. The pickup service provided makes it feasible for them to sell their produce without the challenges of transportation. The 'natural produce on wheels' project has seen success, with products selling out quickly, and the demand continues to grow. It exemplifies a sustainable model, benefiting farmers, consumers, and the environment, showcasing the potential for natural farming to reshape agricultural practices in the region.

(The writer is an independent senior journalist, views are personal. Charkha Features)

MONEY MATTERS

Inox India, Stanley Lifestyles get Sebi's nod to float IPOs

Cryogenic tank maker Inox India and luxury furniture brand Stanley Lifestyles have received capital markets regulator Sebi's go ahead to raise funds through initial public offerings (IPOs).



US-based Panattoni to invest Rs 110 cr in India

US-based Panattoni, a global leader in industrial and logistics real estate development, will invest Rs 110 crore by March 2025 to develop a warehouse park in Delhi-NCR.



Gold nosedives Rs 1,050 to Rs 63,250 %10g

Gold nosedived Rs 1,050 to Rs 63,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, retreating from its all-time high due to weak trends in the global markets.



Banks write off Rs 10.57 lakh crore in 5 years

NPA recovery worth Rs 7.17 lakh cr: FinMin

Banks have written off Rs 10.57 lakh crore during the last five financial years, of which Rs 5.52 lakh crore was in respect of loans pertaining to large industries.



enabled by which, SCBs have made an aggregate recovery of Rs 7,15,507 crore (RBI provisional data for FY 2022-23) in NPA accounts.

tion, Karad said: "Scheduled commercial banks have written off an aggregate amount of Rs 5.52 lakh crore in respect of loans pertaining to large industries and services during the last five financial years (FYs), i.e. from FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-

23." He also said that this includes Rs 93,874 crore written off by all the banks on account of fraud during the five-year period.

Indian Chamber of Commerce unveils first overseas office

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Marking a milestone in its international expansion strategy, the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has inaugurated its first overseas office in Italy.

'21,791 fake GST registrations; see suspected tax evasion of Rs 24,000 cr'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said GST officers have detected 21,791 fake GST registrations and over Rs 24,000 crore of suspected tax evasion during a two-month-long special drive.



The minister was replying to a question on the number of entities identified as having fake registrations, and the total amount of evasion detected during the special drive against fake GST registrations conducted by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) from May 16 to July 15, 2023.

a simplified procedure for registration of e-commerce operators has already been notified. It provides that when an e-commerce operator applies for registration in a particular state or Union Territory where he/she does not have a physical presence, he/she can apply for registration by giving details of the principal place of business located in another state or Union Territory.

Number of MFI loans extended by lenders dips



PNS ■ MUMBAI

The number of microfinance loans extended by all lenders declined in the September quarter, but an increase in the average ticket sizes helped in the quantum of lending to grow, a report said on Tuesday.

Stock markets continue record run, Sensex scales 69K peak

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty soared to new lifetime highs on Tuesday, fueled by robust buying in power, banking and utility stocks, extending their rally for a sixth consecutive session.



favourable macroeconomic data in the previous week and the results of assembly polls of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh that raised expectations of longer political stability in the country.

per cent and ICICI Bank by 2.28 per cent. Other gainers included Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan and Maruti. On the other hand, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finance remained laggards with losses of up to 1.49 per cent.

of key US job data this week. The aura of the state election results and other positive factors like above-expected earnings and GDP growth data are supporting the return of FII flows to the Indian market.

Zevo launches refrigerated EV with Machphy Solutions



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Tech-enabled EV mobility platform ZEVO on Tuesday unveiled its refrigerated electric vehicle (REV), in collaboration with Machphy Solutions for the temperature-controlled last-mile delivery segment.

need for temperature-controlled logistics (TCL), the company said. "Our partnership with Machphy Solutions signifies a groundbreaking leap towards revolutionising the cold chain logistics landscape.

Microfinance loan portfolio stands at Rs 3.76 lakh cr

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Microfinance loan portfolio at the end of the second quarter of the current financial year stood at Rs 3.76 lakh crore, serving 7.1 crore borrowers, an industry body report said.

'Frameworks to cast safety, trust as obligation on SM platforms'

PNS ■ NEWDELHI

The government has been developing regulatory frameworks that cast safety and trust as obligation on digital platforms, Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Tuesday, adding that this approach will continue to be finetuned going forward.

and Electronics said at the India Internet Governance Forum -- IIGF'23. "So safety and trust as an obligation cast on platforms, is a framework that our government has been developing since 2021 and we will continue to fine-tune this... there is nothing that is going to be collegial, best-effort, self-regulatory framework that we have seen for so long."

Chandrasekhar also touched upon the issue of deepfakes. "As the PM recently pointed out and put the spotlight on an issue like deepfakes, which is misinformation powered by AI, these are all challenges we will have to immediately square up to, and not let it get so far ahead that the regulation is playing catch-up," he said.

'75,000 GW solar power potential by 2050 possible'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Solar power generation capacity can go up to 75,000 gigawatts by 2050 globally with long-duration storage capacity, a report by the International Solar Association (ISA) and LDES Council, said.



LDES to ensure continuous, reliable, and affordable renewable energy, a statement said.

bonization and achieving a solar capacity of 75,000 GW by 2050.

with limited interconnectivity and high local fuel costs. The combination of solar, wind, and LDES emerges as the most cost-effective solution for achieving 100 per cent renewable energy.

posed solutions to overcome these hurdles. "Solar, already the most economical source of new electricity globally, will further strengthen its competitive advantage. Combined with Long Duration Energy Storage, solar becomes a continuous, reliable 24/7 energy source," stated Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General ISA.

Govt reviews progress on curbing deepfakes

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Tuesday met social media platforms to review progress made by them in tackling misinformation and deepfakes, and asserted that advisories will be issued in the next two days to ensure 100 per cent compliance by platforms.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA TENDER NOTICE 12/2023-24

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.S. LTD. Tender Notice, 12/2023-24

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PUBLIC HEALTH AND MUNICIPAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA TELANGANA GOVT. TEXT BOOK PRESS

'My biggest flex is that I am a live performer; I enjoy the overall process of having to travel to the show'

TEJAL SINHA

Music is something that everybody can relate to in one way or another. Not only for the listeners but also the musicians. Well, so has it been for the adroit singer Madhur Sharma too. As much as he could recall, he has always been inclined towards music from a very young age. While nobody in his family pursued music professionally, his father was an avid music lover and amateur performer.

So in a way, "I owe it all to him. Watching him admire music made me fall in love with it as well. When I decided to take up music professionally, it almost felt like I was trying to fulfill my father's dream." Just as how his name 'Madhur' refers to melodious and/or sweet, so has his journey been—'Madhrastic'. "The more I think about my journey, the more overwhelmed I get. My journey so far has been nothing short of a miracle, if you ask me. The love I have received from my fans for all my work has been beyond anything I could have imagined. But the aim is to keep getting better and make sure that the journey ahead is better than what it has been so far." With over 1500+ performances across the country at various events and festivals, he's earned a reputation as one of India's most sought-after singers. And so, "I am a strong believer that you are nothing without the support of the people who appreciate your art. And in that aspect, I have been very lucky. My fans have showered all my songs with immense love, and I am also very grateful to everyone who takes the time from their busy schedule to watch me perform. I hope and pray that I continue to receive such love in the future as well."

Lately, the one-minute music format has been gaining immense traction. And in fact, a one-minute version of his now-full-version song, *Samandar Sharaab*, has gained over 30 million streams. Isn't that massive? An elated *Kali Kali Zulfon Ke* singer shares, "The numbers sure took us by surprise as well. One-minute versions of songs were a fairly new concept, and we simply decided to dabble in it as an experiment. However, we did not expect *Samandar Sharaab* to reach as many people as it did. I and my team are incredibly grateful. A fuller version of the song was recently released. I used to often think about romance and true love, and how everyone isn't as lucky when it comes to love. I was discussing this dilemma with a few friends one night. That's when I thought, Why not make a song about it? And that is how *Samandar Sharaab* happened."

Recently, he has also unveiled a new mesmerizing melody track, *Maahi*, which he says has been very close to his

heart. Firstly, because "it is the brainchild of a very dear friend. And it allowed us to work together again. And secondly, it was all the more special because it was backed by a big label like T-Series. I had a lot of fun working on this song, and I am happy that people have accepted it. I am looking forward to coming out with more songs like this one."

Millions of people prefer to work or try to fall asleep while watching these videos on YouTube, which include endless streams of relaxing hip-hop music matched to animated character graphics. By definition, lo-fi music is less polished and professionally produced than other types of music. This is not to say that the music is poor; rather, it employs less expensive equipment, faulty audio, and lower sound quality to create its unique style.

Talking about the same, the *Mere Baad Kisko Sataoge* (Lo-Fi) singer shares, "I personally like Lo-Fi music because I find it very soothing. The gentle beats and calming melodies allow you to enjoy a moment of respite while listening to the song. Its raw and unpolished nature resonates with listeners. And since I like Lo-Fi music, I thought my listeners would too. And that is how we decided to release Lo-Fi versions of my songs. I am glad people have loved them too."

Apart from this, another video, or probably video song of his, that had gone viral was that of *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai's* version. And he gleefully shares, "When we talk about music from the late 90s and early 2000s, we simply have to mention the soundtrack of *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai*. And just like a lot of other people, my favorite song of the entire soundtrack was the title track. I always wanted to perform this song. However, I thought of doing something different to the song in my style for a different listening experience. And since we have spoken about my love for Lo-Fi, I thought, why not release a Lo-Fi version of *Kaho Na Pyaar Hai*? And to my surprise, it was well received by the listeners."

Just as the emotional person that he is, so does that reflect heavily on his creative process. "I'd like to think that the experiences in my personal life have been a great source of inspiration to me. Also, I listen to a lot of different genres of music. And I am always open to feedback and constructive criticism of my work. All of these things help me become a better artist," shares the *Sanu Ek Pal* singer, who finds his biggest inspiration in Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Sahab and then, of course, enjoys listening to Atif Aslam, Arijit Singh, and Ed Sheeran.

While there has been a constant debate on the recreation of songs, Madhur, who has received immense love for his recreated versions, shares, "Some songs become such an important part of

our lives that the thought of someone meddling with the memory alone can feel intrusive. And that makes the process difficult. However, in my opinion, while remaking any song, you need to understand that the simplest rule is to keep it minimalistic and clean. Try to meet the expectations and bring the demands of the song on par with its original composition. Ultimately, I think creating original tracks and recreated tracks both take an equal amount of hard work and effort. All I know is that you have to have honesty and original ideas while working on any song."

Waiting for the right opportunity and ongoing talks in general, he signs off the chat on a brighter note, saying, "My biggest flex is that I am a live performer and I get to perform in front of so many people so frequently. I enjoy the overall process of having to travel to the show, the sound-check, the interaction with the fans, and the final performance. And if that weren't all, I love being surrounded by such talented musicians. My band is my family since we all spend so much time together while touring. They keep my spirits up and make sure the performances are worth remembering."

Singer Madhur Sharma, who has become a new traction of the social media era, gets candid with *The Pioneer* about his journey, his recent releases, recreation and Lo-Fi music, and more.



WEDDING DECOR TRENDS TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS 2024

The wedding industry is prepping for a revolutionary change in the way we celebrate weddings as we approach the new year. In 2024, an upsurge of innovation and personalization is expected to sweep over the wedding décor industry, encompassing everything from sustainable practices to the use of technology.

cuisine, and attire. They have developed into an all-encompassing experience that covers all facets of guest interaction. Every element, from the sophisticated dance floors and welcome foyer to the specially created lounges and dinner tables, is carefully chosen to create an experience that will never be forgotten by the guests.

SUSTAINABLE WEDDINGS

Amidst an increased awareness of environmental issues, the notion of sustainable weddings is gaining prominence. What was once limited to basic décor is now being used for large weddings, with eco-friendly materials and locally produced flowers taking prominence. Sustainable alternatives are replacing plastic and synthetic fibers, resulting in an elegant combination of style and environmental responsibility.

VENUE SPACE MANAGEMENT

The art of wedding décor has evolved beyond its traditional limitations and is now comparable to interior design. It includes the traditional Vidhi Mandap as well as the meticulous arrangement of food counters, lounging areas, and tablescapes. The entire space has been thoughtfully designed to exude luxury and sophistication in every corner of the venue.

BACKYARD OR FARMHOUSE WEDDINGS

Backyard or farmhouse weddings are expected to be another popular wedding décor theme in 2024. Nowadays, many choose to wed on family farms or in their own homes. As a result, they can provide a more intimate and personal wedding experience. Rustic and basic decorations are popular for backyard and farmhouse weddings. Consider mason jars, wildflowers, and string lights being beautifully added to the theme.

LEBANESE STYLE DECOR
 The extravagance and elegance of Lebanese aesthetics serve as inspiration for the 2024 wedding décor, which embraces rich materials, elaborate designs, and vivid color palettes to provide a sense of grandeur and drama to the celebration.

PERSONALIZATION

Gone are the days of bland décor. Nowadays, couples are incorporating every aspect of the wedding décor with their own personal stories. Every crevice and edge of the wedding location is decorated with quotes that capture their habits, love stories, and most treasured memories. This personal and sentimental atmosphere undoubtedly creates a heartfelt ambience overall.

INTEGRATION OF TECHNOLOGY

In keeping with the digital era, modern wedding décor incorporates cutting-edge technologies like facial mapping, kinetics, and AR/VR features to create a captivating visual experience that captivates visitors and gives the celebration a futuristic feel.

It's obvious that things are changing to meet the needs of a more aware, tech-savvy, and engaged audience as we set off on this journey of cutting-edge wedding décor trends in 2024. The wedding décor business is poised to revolutionize celebration art by putting individuality and sustainability at its center and providing lasting and unforgettable experiences for guests and couples alike.

THE COMPLETE EXPERIENCE

Nowadays, weddings involve more than just décor,

(The author, Sachin Mehendale, is the Head Designer of House of Vivaah.)



'I acknowledge that sometimes this industry is not a fair playing field for outsiders'

Debutante Alizeh Agnihotri, who recently made her way to the entertainment industry with the recently released *Farrey*, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, about being passionate about cinema, crediting her co-stars for the praise, and more.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Farrey starred Alizeh Agnihotri, the niece of Salman Khan and daughter of Atul Agnihotri, as a board-topping genius, who gets lured into a cheating racket at an elite private school. The stakes were high for her! She was representing the country's most privileged youth, but gratefully, she's not stuck in that circle because Alizeh, for the better, had the fundamental right to star in the film, and she succeeded. You know what, readers? Nepotism is tiring now; its discourse is rinse, and repeat!

In an exclusive conversation with the upcoming leading actress of our industry, the debutante says, "I am just as passionate about cinema as any enthusiast would be. My whole life revolved around films. I

admit it openly: I didn't have any obstacles coming my way, and there are more advantages to being an industry kid than disadvantages. In a business that already has so much to do with who you know and your networking, it makes a big difference in your career! Sometimes, industry is not a fair playing field for outsiders. But at the same time, I don't want to be inconsiderate of the pressures industry kids have. Yeah, in the grand scheme of things, the obstacles are very manageable."

Well done, Alizeh; she acknowledges that at the heart of our discomfort with nepotism is the unfairness of it all. After creating quite a buzz, we moved ahead with our conversation, and she said, "My co-stars are the reason why the film has received so much praise; I owe everything to them. I am not a competitive person at all!

As far as the title of my movie goes, I have never cheated in any of my examinations. Yes, I have asked for help during submissions to increase my grade." Interesting Alizeh!

Actually, once the stage was set, she came on her own without any help from her 'Mamu Jaan'. It's true! "The school and classroom portions were the most fun to shoot. We had a 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. schedule. We would wake up, get ready in our uniforms, and go to the classroom. We were shooting in an actual school; it all felt very real," added the actress, who instantly bagged the spotlight. She was very nervous about shooting *Bigg Boss* by the way, and her 'Mamu Jaan' Salman Khan, helped her through. She admitted that she was more nervous shooting for a reality television show than her own movie! She even thought his mom wouldn't come on *Farrey's* sets because everyone gets distracted when he's around and they don't focus on the task at hand. She clarified that it's not him who creates the confusion and chaos; it's the people who are around him, and he wanted the focus to always be on the actors and the film.





Premal Parekh, Chandubhai Patel, Chetan Boghani, and Minal Vakharia, graced the curtain raiser event of the biggest-of-its-kind event Gujarati Ekta Mahotsav-GEM-24 in Hyderabad. The 4-month-long event will feature sports, cricket, badminton, table tennis, Miss & Mrs. Telangana Gujarati, and more.

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary



Toshiba Transmission & Distribution (India) Private Limited (TTDI) has been honoured with the Star Performer Award by the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC India). TTDI, designs, develops, and manufactures T&D products supports the Make in India initiative of the government. TTDI has established its unit in Rudraram Village, Patancheru near Hyderabad.

LISTINGS

European fashion brands launched in Jubilee Hills

Leading European fashion brands JACK&JONES, VERO MODA, ONLY and SELECTED HOMME have newly revamped their flagship store in Hyderabad taking their retail presence in the country one notch higher. The store presents a diverse array of international fashion styles and popular high street trends, catering to the city's fashion-savvy shoppers. With a plethora of immersive in-store shopping experiences, the store is pegged as a one-stop-shop for a new generation of fashion-conscious consumers and style enthusiasts in the city. Spanning across 2 floors, the store occupies an area of 6500 sq feet and showcases a wide-ranging assortment of stylish apparel choices for modern men and women. The store has been designed using minimalist visual language juxtaposed with indoor foliage to bring out the unique persona of all the brands individually. Equipped with technology and services that elevate the in-store experience for today's on-the-go and tech savvy consumers.

Pharma Live Expo & Summit to open doors in Mumbai

Pharma Live Expo & Summit, the flagship event of the Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association is set to host more than 500 exhibitors and showcase above 20,000 products in front of the ever growing Indian Pharmaceutical industry. The show is scheduled to take place from January 17 till 19, at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, NESCO Mumbai. Organised under the aegis of Dept. of Pharmaceuticals, Govt of India the event is also supported by industry stakeholders like Pharmexcil, FOPE, FPME, BDMAI and others. The event will attract 20,000 pharma professionals across worldwide from profiles like Procurement, R & D, Plant Engineering & Maintenance, production, QA, QC, supply chain and many among others.

Air Asia adds over 1.5 million seats for flights between India and Malaysia in 2024

AirAsia announced a significant service increase between Malaysia and India, totalling an impressive 69 weekly flights starting in the first quarter of 2024, with up to 1.5 million seats per year. The significant increase in capacity comes in response to the anticipated surge in travel demand following the Malaysian government's announcement of a 30-day visa-free entry for travellers from India into Malaysia starting 1 December 2023. The announcement also coincides with the recent announcement by the governments of Thailand and Vietnam of a visa-free entry initiative for visitors from India to these countries. This enables Indian travellers to explore other Asean nations affordably via AirAsia's Fly-Thru service with a one-stop in Kuala Lumpur and connect to Bangkok, Phuket, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and more seamlessly.

Awe inspiring global community connecting DLC Hyd entrepreneurs globally

Serial entrepreneur and Community builder, Jimmy Mistry announced Della Leaders Club Hyderabad chapter Board under the Presidency of Mr Balaji Reddy, Executive director Vamsiram Builder & Developers Ltd. Della Leaders Club, a highly curated technology enabled global platform focuses on knowledge exchange, lifestyle guidance and social responsibility while building a support ecosystem for leaders globally. Being a first-generation entrepreneur, Jimmy strongly believes that modern leaders, especially in the post pandemic world, will benefit greatly from the knowledge and experiences from global leaders. His vision for DLC is to create an exclusive and secure global community of leaders that will help each other evolve from a "Life of success to a Life of significance."

iQOO introduces exclusive priority pass for iQOO 12

iQOO, the high-performance smartphone brand, is thrilled to announce for the first time ever, an exclusive priority pass for the iQOO fans. iQOO is exhilarated by the exceptional anticipation for the upcoming flagship smartphone - iQOO 12. Boasting numerous industry-first features, iQOO 12 is the ultimate flagship smartphone by the brand and for the same it has been receiving overwhelming response from more than a million iQOO fans. The limited time priority pass will offer an exclusive window for aficionados to grab a chance to pre-book super flagship iQOO 12 before the official launch from 5th - 7th December 2023 on Amazon.in and iQOO.com. Consumers can pre-book their device and avail the Priority Pass which further can be redeemed to buy iQOO 12, 24 Hours before the sale starts.

The Vault Exhibit at Kanakavalli Hyderabad

Kanakavalli Hyderabad is delighted to present the Vault exhibit of exquisitely embellished heirloom kanjivaram silk saris this season. These classic formal kanjivarams are exclusive to the brand, reviving ancient motifs, layouts and colour palettes within a contemporary setting, each featuring traditional weave techniques. This design-led initiative, authored by Kanakavalli, focuses on tradition, not just in pattern but also in weave technique. **Venue:** Plot No. 782, Road No. 44, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500 033 **Dates:** December 7th, 8th & 9th, 2023 **Time:** 10AM-8PM **Store Contact:** +91 73587 34555

Synchrony recognised as top employer

Synchrony has been recognised as an India Workplace Equality Index 2023 Top Employer in the 'Bronze' category. This honor acknowledges Synchrony's exceptional leadership in driving initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) 2023 is a definitive benchmarking tool for inclusive policies and practices for LGBT+ employees in India. Presented by Pride Circle in collaboration with the Keshav Suri Foundation, the IWEI spotlights organizations that stand out in inclusivity and diversity for their LGBT+ workforce.

MOAMC unveils new investment

Motilal Oswal Asset Management Company (MOAMC) announces the launch of its latest investment offering, the 'Motilal Oswal Small Cap Fund'. This open-ended equity scheme is strategically designed to provide investors with a unique opportunity to tap into the potential of small-cap segment. MOAMC is launching an active fund after a gap of 7 years. **Nature:** Open-ended equity scheme. **Investment Objective:** Capital appreciation through predominantly investing in small-cap stocks NFO Period: December 5, 2023 to December 19, 2023 **Portfolio Strategy:** The fund aims to maintain a well-balanced portfolio with a minimum 65% exposure to small-cap stocks, complemented by a thoughtful allocation to large-cap stocks for tactical and liquidity purposes.

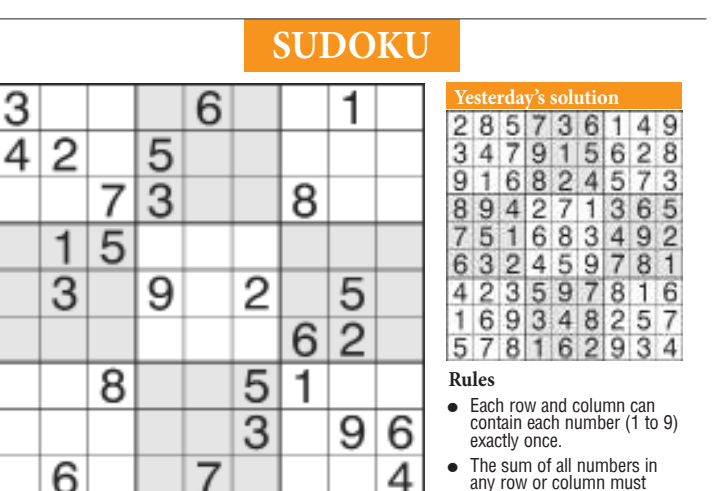
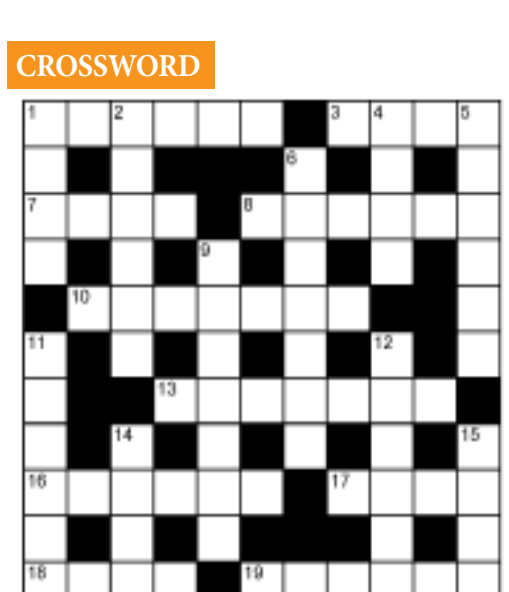
Amazon Pay launches sign language video KYC service

In an endeavor towards inclusivity, Amazon Pay recently launched a video sign language Know Your Customer (KYC) service for hearing and speech-impaired customers, which involves communication through sign languages, a pioneering initiative in the digital payments sector in India. The company has rolled out the initiative that enables two-way video communication in sign-language between Amazon Pay employees and customers. The goal is to make the KYC process effortless for those who rely on sign language and making digital payments more inclusive. The innovative initiative aligns with Amazon's commitment to Digital Bharat, ensuring that its services are inclusive and accessible to all, in line with the broader vision for a digitally empowered India.

Maharashtra Tourism's travel, trade roadshow excels in Hyd

With a motive to offer incredible opportunities, gather sentiments from prospective clients, and explore market potential by linking travel trade, Maharashtra Tourism has commenced an 8-city roadshow tour across the nation in addition to participating at various trade fairs in association with its stakeholders/partners. These Trade fairs are a one-stop shop for depicting the enormous travel and tourism landscape that Maharashtra as a state offers. Boasting its historical heritage, beaches, religious monuments, hill stations, wildlife, adventure sports, exotic cuisine, cultural festivals, transport connectivity, etc, Maharashtra is considered one of the most preferred tourist destinations. After receiving an astounding response last year, Maharashtra Tourism conducted its roadshow this year in the glorious city of Hyderabad. The event was organized on 4th December at Marriott and was attended by eminent personalities in the tour and travel fraternity of the city.

FUN



'I AM FOCUSING COMPLETELY ON THE MAINSTREAM CINEMA, NOT INCLINED TO DO OTT'



PNJS HYDERABAD

Nithiin awaits the release of *Extra-Ordinary Man* on December 8. Director Vakkatham Vamsi's entertainer, co-starring Sree Leela as the heroine, has Nithiin in a hilarious role. He says that, for the first time ever, he is not stressed out ahead of the release of a movie. Nithiin reveals that a song in the second half will surprise the audience. "The journey of this film began 2.5 years ago with Vamsi giving a narration. The shoot was begun in November 2022. As I am an extra on the sets of films in this movie, there are references to some movies and stars. Pawan Kalyan, my favourite actor, is one among them," shared the Telugu actor. The film doesn't delve into the struggles of junior artists. It is a fun-filled entertainer with an exciting screenplay. Vamsi is

known to write fresh protagonists, as evidenced by *Kick*, *Temper* and *Race Gurram*, among others. Goddess Maisamma drives the story in a certain direction, as the trailers suggested. By the time of the interval, you can expect a surprise element that might be called a twist. Amid violent films in recent times, he is confident that 'Extra' is mostly about being an out-and-out entertainer. "The father-son scenes will surely bring the roof down. My scenes with Rao Ramesh are hilarious. I play a fear-stricken son who is scared of his controlling dad. Our characters are thoroughly entertaining! You will also fall in love with Sampath Raj's character. When the content is strong, every artist will get into the right zone. Every scene that the artists were part of became close to their hearts. That's why we all could give our best," added Jayam. Usually, films set in the backdrop of the film industry turn serious. 'Extra' maintains its hilarity factor throughout. It is jovial from start to end. The 'josh' factor will surely keep the audience engaged consistently, claims Nithiin.

He continued, "My primary focus is and will be Telugu cinema. Anything else that comes my way will be a bonus. I am not fancying my chances to do non-Telugu movies at this point in time. I have done non-entertainers like *Check* and *Maestro* in recent times after dabbling in safe genres like *Bheeshma*. *Maestro* would have become a box-office hit had it been released in theatres. Since it was an OTT release, I am unable to gauge if I should try out something of that sort again. I am focusing completely on the mainstream cinema and theatrical market. I am not inclined to do OTT. I am up for a grey character." Rashmika Mandanna had been replaced by Sree Leela for his film with director Venky Kudumula of *Bheeshma* fame. Love, comedy and action are all his favourite ingredients. That's why he like films like *Bheeshma* a lot. He has never viewed himself as a Telangana hero consciously in the last 20 years of being in the industry. Unless someone tells him he is a "Telangana hero", that thought doesn't even cross his mind.

Superstar siblings Suriya and Karthi to donate ₹10 lakhs for relief efforts of Chennai floods



Superstars and siblings Suriya and Karthi have come up as the first from the business to contribute to relief efforts amid the destruction wrought by heavy floods in Chennai. Through their fan clubs, they have contributed a total of Rs 10 lakhs, which will be used to assist with any necessary relief efforts. "Actors #Suriya and #Karthi have announced an initial sum of Rs 10 lacs to carry out relief work in the flood affected districts of Chennai, Kancheepuram, Chengalpattu, and Tiruvallur. ||#ChennaiRains2023||#ChennaiFloods||#Cy cloneMichaung|| The actors are offering assistance to those affected through their fan clubs," a trade expert tweeted in reference to this news on X.

what the state has received in 2015. The Chief Minister also called on organisations involved in Relief Work to join hands with the government to alleviate the suffering of fellow human beings. "Relief assistance of Rs 5,000 crore will be requested from the central government for storm and rain damage. Relief assistance will also be provided to the people who have suffered," CM MK Stalin said. Eight people have lost their lives while multiple roads and subways are closed due to waterlogging in the wake of the Severe Cyclonic Storm 'Michaung', which is expected to make landfall on the southern coast of Andhra Pradesh between Nellore and Machilipatnam.

The state government advised people to take precautionary measures as the IMD issued a red alert for the state, predicting heavy to very heavy rainfall in Chennai and neighbouring areas.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin on Tuesday said that the rains received during Cyclone period have exceeded



'No paid premiers for Hi Nanna,' says Nani

Hi Nanna is the latest film directed by the young filmmaker Shouryuv, featuring Natural Star Nani as the protagonist and Mrunal Thakur as the heroine.

In a recent Twitter chat session, "Ask Nani," the actor addressed questions from his fans, providing clarity on the paid premieres of the movie.

In response to a fan inquiring about paid premieres in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Nani mentioned that there would be no paid premieres for the film. He also shared that AMB Cinemas will host several shows on the evening of December 6th, including special screenings for the media and selected audiences.

Expressing confidence in the movie's impact, Nani stated that he believes *Hi Nanna* will leave a lasting impression on the audience and fans.

This family-centric action emotional entertainer has generated high expectations among Nani's fans and the general audience. The film's music, composed by Hesham Abdul Wahab, has already gained popularity. We have to see if the film becomes a hit.

The film is scheduled for release on December 8th.



Tripti Dimri vs. Rashmika Mandanna: Are Rashmika fans upset over Tripti's dominance?

There has been an online war between the supporters of Tripti Dimri and the fans of Rashmika Mandanna ever since the release of *Animal*. Tripti, for those who haven't watched the movie, plays a character named Zoya Riaz. It is she who is seen in the viral bedroom photo doing the rounds on the Internet.

As per many male audiences, Tripti is far better than the *Geetha Govindam* actress in the film. "Tripti Dimri ate Rashmika alive despite limited screen time. Her chemistry with Ranbir is something nobody expected; they were so good," a netizen wrote.

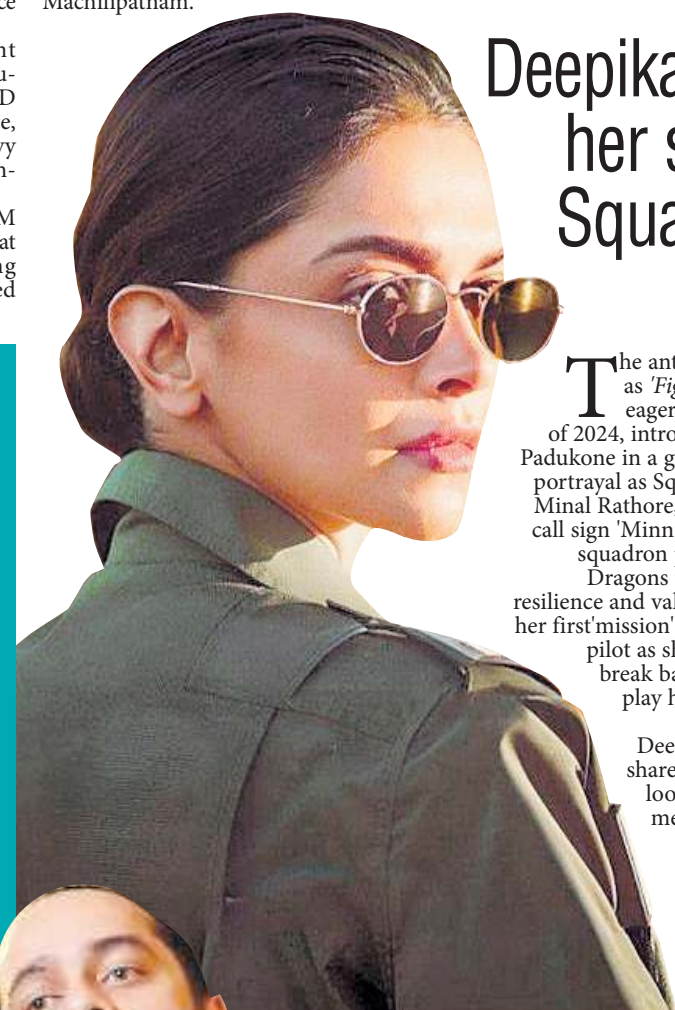
"Get Tripti Dimri more films; she deserves it so much. She is made for bigger roles, as she had such a small part in *Animal* but the way she shined was just wow! Also, her chemistry with Ranbir was better than the chemistry he had with Rashmika," wrote another movie buff.

Rashmika's fans, however, are trolling Tripti's supporters by arguing that looks are not the only aspect of a performance.



Vishal Chandrasekhar to lend music for the Prabhas-Raghavapudi film

Fans of Prabhas are gearing up to watch their star hero in action as *Salaar* will be released on a massive scale on the 22nd of this month. Prashanth Neel has directed this film, and Shruthi Haasan is the heroine. Apart from *Salaar*, Prabhas is also doing a film with Maruthi and has started shooting for it. We had already reported that Prabhas will be doing a film with *Sita Ramam* fame Hanu Raghavapudi soon. Mythri Movie Makers will be producing this film, and we have now come to know that Vishal Chandrasekhar, the man who composed hit music for *Sita Ramam*, has been roped in to compose music for the Prabhas starrer as well. Hanu has worked with Vishal earlier, so he has roped him again. Prabhas will be seen in a romantic role in this film, as per the news.



Deepika Padukone unveils her spectacular look as Squadron Leader Minal Rathore in *Fighter*

The anticipation soars as *Fighter*, the most eagerly awaited film of 2024, introduces Deepika Padukone in a groundbreaking portrayal as Squadron Leader Minal Rathore, known by her call sign 'Minni'. Her role as a squadron pilot in the Air Dragons unit showcases resilience and valor. This marks her first mission as a helicopter pilot as she continues to break barriers and display her acting mastery.

Deepika Padukone shared the exclusive look on her social media and wrote, "Squadron Leader Minal Rathore, Call Sign: Minni, Designation: Squadron

Pilot, Unit: Air Dragons." Squadron Leader Minal Rathore's character embodies fortitude, determination, and the unwavering spirit of a fighter. Her journey within the film encapsulates the essence of a pioneering woman navigating new horizons, poised to redefine norms and inspire generations.

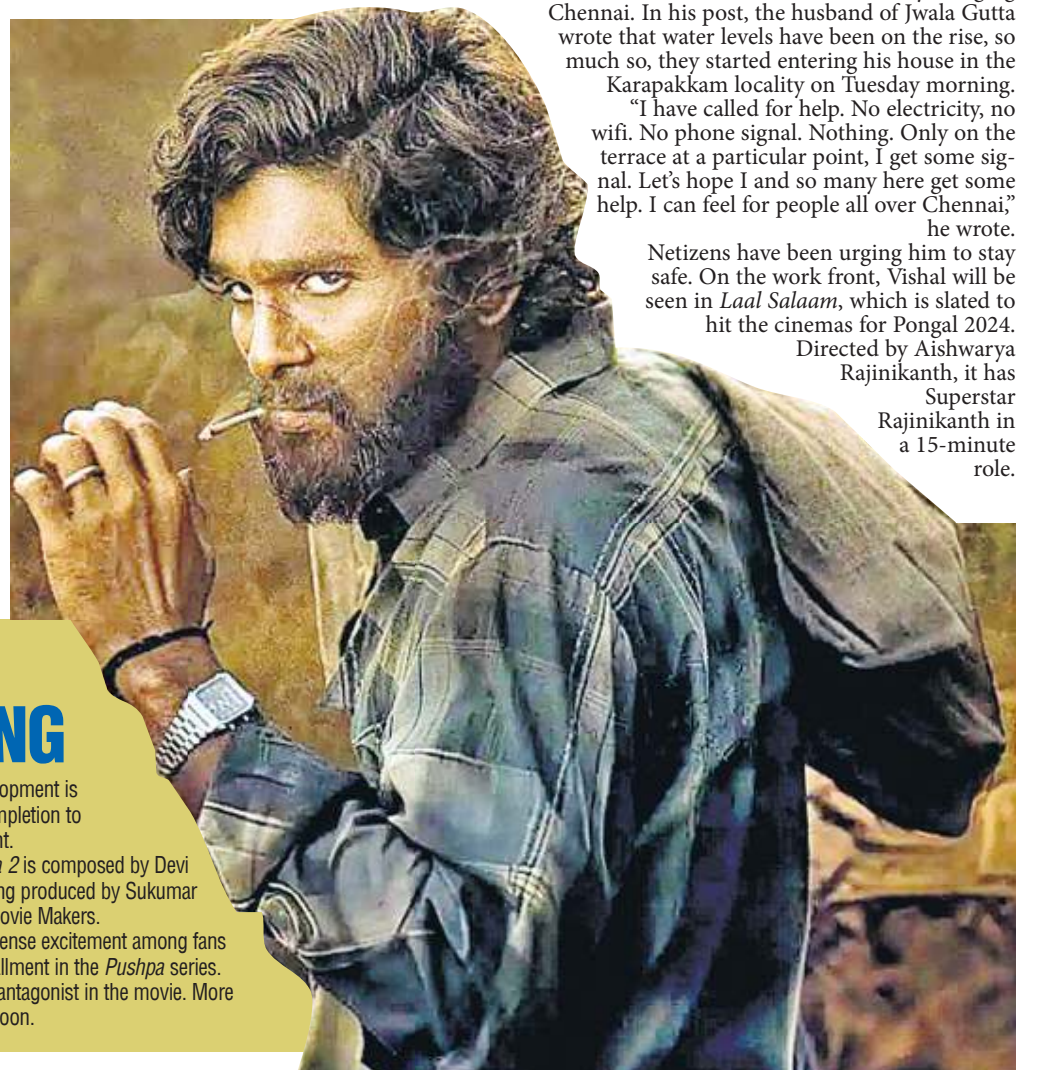
Fighter emerges as more than just a film; it is a movie transcending conventional storytelling. Helmed by Siddharth Anand and presented by Viacom18 Studios in collaboration with Marflix Pictures, it brings together thrilling action and a strong patriotic fervor. Mark your calendars for January 25th, 2024, India's 75th Republic Day, as *Fighter* takes flight and witnesses the spectacle of cinematic brilliance.



Vishnu Vishal 'calls for help', gets to the terrace

Vishnu Vishal, who is known for Tamil films like *FIR* and *Gatta Kushti*, on Tuesday took to his social media at a time when floods are furiously ravaging Chennai. In his post, the husband of Jwala Gutta wrote that water levels have been on the rise, so much so, they started entering his house in the Karapakkam locality on Tuesday morning. "I have called for help. No electricity, no wifi. No phone signal. Nothing. Only on the terrace at a particular point, I get some signal. Let's hope I and so many here get some help. I can feel for people all over Chennai," he wrote.

Netizens have been urging him to stay safe. On the work front, Vishal will be seen in *Laal Salaam*, which is slated to hit the cinemas for Pongal 2024. Directed by Aishwarya Rajinikanth, it has Superstar Rajinikanth in a 15-minute role.



PUSHPA 2 MAKERS TO SOON KICKSTART SHOOTING ITS SONG

The much-anticipated sequel film *Pushpa 2*, directed by Sukumar, features Icon star Allu Arjun as the hero and Rashmika Mandanna as the heroine. Despite high expectations, the director and the production team are progressing rapidly with the shooting of the film, having recently embarked on a significant schedule. In the upcoming week, the makers plan to kickstart the shooting of a song for *Pushpa 2*. There are speculations that the song shoot will commence after completing a portion of the

dialogue sequence. This development is expected to take the film's completion to approximately 65 to 70 percent. Notably, the music for *Pushpa 2* is composed by Devi Sri Prasad, and the film is being produced by Sukumar in collaboration with Mythri Movie Makers. The project is generating immense excitement among fans eagerly awaiting the next installment in the *Pushpa* series. Fahadh Faasil plays the film's antagonist in the movie. More details of the film will be out soon.

INDIA TO PLAY FEARLESS CRICKET

PTI ■ MUMBAI

NO COMPROMISE ON FITNESS AND FIELDING: WOMEN'S TEAM COACH MUZUMDAR



India women team's new head coach Amol Muzumdar wants his players to play 'fearless cricket' while also making it clear that there would be no compromise on fitness and fielding, ahead of the three-match T20I series against England beginning here on Wednesday.

"We need to play a certain brand of cricket, which we have been known for so far. Fearless cricket is something which I have always advocated. We would be playing that brand of cricket," Muzumdar told reporters on Tuesday ahead of the team's training session at the Wankhede Stadium.

"Shafali (Verma) and Jemimah (Rodrigues) are both very important cog in the wheel. I would like them to continue what they have been doing."

Muzumdar said that every step taken from here-on will be important as the team has embarked on its preparations for next year's T20 World Cup (September-October 2024 in Bangladesh).

"We are moving towards the World Cup. Every series and match will have its own importance. The series against England and Australia will count a lot," said Muzumdar who is starting his coaching stint with the women's national team during the three-match T20I series against England.

"We had a chat about it with the team and they (players) are all raring to go. Every step that we take (hereon) is (about) moving towards the World Cup."

"England and Australia will be a superb series to start the preparations (for the World Cup). (Both) will be tough series (and) will give us an indication of where we are. Going forward, the tougher the opposition, the better it is," he said.

After the contest against England, India face

Australia in another home series.

Muzumdar said there will not be any compromise on fielding and fitness standards, as parameters have been set and are being followed already.

"Fielding and fitness are of highest priority. There is no compromise on fielding or fitness. There will be a lot of camps post this series - a lot of cricket will be played - at NCA or some other place," he said.

"That means more exposure. All the fringe and new players will also get an opportunity."

India's record of only seven wins in 27 matches against England in T20Is (home and away) does not bother the new coach who has urged his team to leave the past behind.

"As a team, we have decided to leave the statistics and whatever has happened behind us. We are looking forward to a fresh start," said the domestic batting stalwart.

"The numbers are there to be seen, but these girls and the team are looking forward to the season ahead. We are not going to go back in history — of course it is important — but at the same time, it is also important to look forward to the season ahead. They are all raring to go."

Muzumdar informed that Troy Cooley has been named the bowling coach for the series against England (three T20Is, one Test) and Australia (one Test, three T20Is and three ODIs).

He said women's cricket in India is on 'cusp of something big' with the inaugural Women's Premier League garnering a lot of response from the fans.

"It was a fantastic advertisement for women's cricket last year. We all saw how many people turned up for the game. We all are on the cusp of getting it big in women's cricket. The crowd turning up for the game is absolutely a boost for everyone," he said.



This tour is going to be valuable: Heather

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The T20 series in India gain significance as it will show how the young visiting players excel in conditions which will be similar to what the team will experience in Bangladesh during next year's T20 World Cup, said England women's skipper Heather Knight.

India and England are set to face off in a three-match T20 series, starting here on Wednesday.

"I learned a lot about my game playing in Indian conditions, it really tests you as a cricketer, your skill level and how you do with the noise and the heat," Knight told reporters ahead of England's training session here on Tuesday.

"It is a really good place to accelerate development, to see how our young players cope with it. We have got a T20 World Cup in Bangladesh later on in the year (2024) so this tour is going to be valuable in terms of having similar conditions."

The T20 World Cup is scheduled to be hosted by Bangladesh between September and October in 2024.

A lot of members of the England's T20I squad arrived in

India two days before the start of the series which will be played at the Wankhede Stadium on Dec 6, 9 and 10.

Knight said it will be challenging for her team to silence the Indian crowd as despite their dominant record against the hosts, presence of "world-class" players make India a "brilliant" team.

"We have had some really good T20 games against them. They have got some world-class players in and in home conditions they are going to be tough (to face)," Knight said.

After winning the ODI World Cup beating India in the final, Australia captain Pat Cummins had said that he took delight in silencing the Indian fans.

Knight said passionate crowds in India can be imposing on the visiting sides and her team will look to keep its focus amid all the noise.

"Sometimes you can feel like things are accelerating; rushed actually, when there is crowd and the game is happening quite quickly. We have talked a lot about trying to get our own pace, maintain our concentration in the moment," the England captain said.



"Trying to silence the crowd will be tougher - watching the men's World Cup it is all you see and the support and the passion that Indian fans have and having experienced that, it is a hard thing to do to silence the crowd and even if there is not many of them they are usually very loud."

"We have to have quick turnaround, adapting to conditions has to be accelerated a bit. How we do that, how we communicate, how we are going to take 10 wickets, how we are going to score runs?" Knight said the past experience

of playing in India, including the Women's Premier League (WPL) earlier this year should hold her side in good stead.

"We have got some good experience of players playing in India as well which will be valuable. It will be a brilliant series between two best teams," she

said.

Having played in the WPL for Royal Challengers Bangalore wherein Knight shared the dressing room with some Indian players like Smriti Mandhana, Shreyanka Patil and Kanika Ahuja, the England captain said knowledge-sharing works two-ways.

"It is brilliant that some of the RCB girls have got the chance to play for India on the back of what they did in the WPL. It works both ways, obviously I know those players better and they also know my game better," Knight said.

England have seven wins in nine T20Is against India in their backyard and overall 20 wins from 27 matches, but Knight said it does not feel like they have a comforting factor as far as knowledge of conditions is concerned.

"It feels like a long time actually since we have been to India, before that 2019 series we had a lot of tours here," she said.

"It is how the Future Tours Programme pans out, and obviously, playing another WPL here in the calendar, there is going to be a lot of cricket here which is brilliant."

Bangladesh looking to secure first test series win over NZ

AP ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha wants his players to guard against complacency as it tries to secure a first series win against New Zealand in the second and final test.

Bangladesh won the first test in Sylhet by 150 runs to close in on a landmark series victory. The only top-level teams that Bangladesh has ever beaten in a two-match test series are Zimbabwe and West Indies.

"I can't see complacency in the team. If I see any action of complacency, I will have one to one chat," Hathurusingha said ahead of Wednesday's opening day.

"We had a good chat inside the dressing room yesterday. Strong and experienced leaders like Mushy (Mushfiqur Rahim) and Mominul (Haque) spoke very emotionally. They spoke in Bengali. I can see there's no tall poppies in the dressing room."

The Sylhet test victory was only Bangladesh's second against New Zealand in 18 meetings, and it came courtesy of captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's second-innings century. In doing so, Shanto became the first Bangladeshi cricketer to hit a century on his debut as captain.

"Captaincy and leadership are two things," Hathurusingha said. "Shanto's captaincy was excellent. He was tactically on the mark. He was step ahead of the game most of the time. Very impressive field placings as well. Sometimes unorthodox, but very effective."

"His leadership was excellent. He led from the front with his performance. He was commanding respect, and demanding the standard. I think he has

a long future ahead."

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who took 10-184 in the first test, will be a Bangladesh's most crucial weapon in Mirpur, which traditionally has a slow wicket with uneven bounce.

"He goes under the radar because he plays second fiddle to Shakib (Al Hasan) in most of the games," Hathurusingha said of Islam. "His record is phenomenal. He has nearly 200 wickets. He is very consistent."

New Zealand skipper Tim Southee said the team's spinners need to show more consistency if they are to avoid a first series defeat against Bangladesh.

"We're expecting obviously spin-friendly conditions, but we spoke about it after the last game about being more consistent for longer as a bowling group," Southee said. "And then, obviously, partnerships as a batting unit. We've had a great couple of days of training. So, we're looking forward to getting into another test match."

While Bangladesh's spinners claimed 18 wickets at an economic rate of 2.48, New Zealand's spinners took 14 wickets at a rate of 3.73 runs.

New Zealand's frontline spinners Ajaz Patel and Ish Sodhi also had a limited impact in the match, and the team could include Rachin Ravindra and Mitchell Santner in the squad for the second test.

"They're (Ravindra and Santner) obviously capable spinners. But we went with what we thought was the best side to win that first test match," Southee said. "It's just a tough one to try and get your 15 great players to fit into an 11. So, it's about picking a side that you think is going to do the job for the five days ahead of you."

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Gandas, Chouhan headline SSP Chawrasia Invitational Golf

Defending champion Manu Gandas, PGTI Ranking leader Om Prakash Chouhan and Rashid Khan will be seen in action in the second edition of the SSP Chawrasia Invitational Golf tournament beginning here on Thursday.

The 124-member field of the Rs 1-crore prize purse event will also see tournament host and local favourite SSP Chawrasia, along with the likes of Rahil Gangjee, Khalin Joshi, Chikkarangappa, Veer Ahlawat, Karan Pratap Singh, Udayan Mane and Aman Raj.

The leading names from abroad include Sri Lankans N Thangaraja, Anura Rohana and K Prabakaran, Bangladesh's Badal Hossain, Md Akbar

Hossain and Md Dulal Hossain, American Varun Chopra, Nepal's Sukra Bahadur Rai, Canada's Sukhraj Singh Gill and Andorra's Kevin Esteve Rigall.

The other prominent local players are Shankar Das, Divyanshu Bajaj, Mohammad Sanju, Arjun Puri and Raju Ali Mollah.

Two-time Indian Open champion Chawrasia is the second Indian professional golfer after Jeev Milkha Singh to have a PGTI event named in his honour.

A six-time winner on the Asian



Tour, Chawrasia also has represented India at the Rio Olympics and the World Cup of Golf in 2016.

He also represented Team Asia at the EurAsia Cup in 2016 and 2018. SSP, a winner of 17 professional titles, was honoured with the Arjuna Award in 2017.

"With a strong field, we can expect a week of exciting golf. I'm also very motivated to performing well at my home course. I wish the players all the best," tournament host Chawrasia said.



Rajeshwari, Vivaan win season's first trap shooting national trials

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Paris Olympics quota winner Rajeshwari Kumari on Tuesday won the national selection trial 1 in women's trap, while Vivaan Kapoor triumphed in the men's category on a day when both the finals went into shoot-offs.

India's No. 1 woman trap shooter Rajeshwari had topped the qualification round held at the Karni Singh ranges over three days, with a score of 118. Teenager Bhavya Tripathi of Delhi, who won silver, shot 114 to grab one of the six qualifying spots, but improved upon her fifth position to end tied at 43 hits with Rajeshwari in the final.

Bhavya then missed the first shoot-off shot as Rajeshwari made no mistake to win the



match. Shreyasi Singh was third.

Vivaan's path to winning the trial was a bit different as he shot 121 in qualification to finish second to Shardul Vihaan, who shot a table-topping 122. The Rajasthan trap shooter then hit 44 targets in the final and found himself tied with Zoravar Singh Sandhu after the regulation 50 targets.

It was the second time Vivaan faced Zoravar in a shoot-off on the day.

At the end of the qualification, Vivaan had pipped Zoravar 1-0 to take the higher bib number going into the final.

In the final, Zoravar put up a better fight, but missed his third shoot-off target as Vivaan blasted all three. Former world champion Manavjit Sandhu came third.

Ebenyo, Yehualaw star attraction in Kolkata 25K run on Dec 17

PTI ■ KOLKATA

World championships 10,000m silver medallist Daniel Simiyu Ebenyo of Kenya and Ethiopian 10K world record holder Yalemzerf Yehualaw will be the star attractions in the men's and women's sections respectively in the Tata Steel Kolkata 25K run on December 17.

Ebenyo won a silver medal in 10,000m in Budapest world championships in August and then finished second in half marathon in Riga at the inaugural World Road Running Championships, before easily winning the Delhi Half Marathon in October.

Two other Kenyans, Roncer Kipkorir Konga and Bernard Biwott, Victor Kipruto Togom, Jackson Kipleting (all from Kenya); Hiskel Tewelde, Afewerki Berhane (both from Eritrea), Abe Gashahun, Mulgeta Debasu (both from Ethiopia).

Women: Yalemzerf Yehualaw, Anchinalu Dessie, Sutmee Asefa Kebede (Ethiopia); Betty Chepkemoi Kibet, Nelly Jeptoo (both from Kenya); Mercyline Chelangat (Uganda).

podium position.

Yehualaw, who set the 10k world record of 29:14 in 2022, will participate in the event for the first time. She also sits second on the world all-time list in half marathon with a time of 1:03:51 (clocked in 2021).

Another Ethiopian, Anchinalu Dessie and Kenya's Betty Chepkemoi Kibet will be the main challengers for Yehualaw.