

Jagan, Babu hopeful of brotherly cooperation

Congratulate TS new CM

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and other leaders congratulated A Revanth Reddy on taking over as the new Chief Minister of Telangana state on Thursday.

Jagan Mohan Reddy also congratulated B Vikramarka, who took oath as the Deputy Chief Minister.

"My congratulations to the newly sworn-in government of Telangana. I congratulate Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Vikramarka and the Ministers who took oath," said Jagan Mohan Reddy in a post on X.

Without invoking the name of the political party, Congress, which swept the 2023 Telangana Assembly elections, Jagan Mohan Reddy wholeheartedly wished for brotherly love and cooperation between the two Telugu states.

Chandrababu Naidu applauded Revanth Reddy on assuming the Chief Minister's post in the neighbouring state.

"Congratulations to Anumula Revanth Reddy on



being sworn in as the Chief Minister of Telangana. I wish him a successful tenure in service to the people," said Naidu in a post on X about the new CM, who spent several years as a TDP leader.

Modi, Sanjay congratulate Revanth, promise support

Congratulating Revanth Reddy on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Telangana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured all possible support for the progress of the state and its people. Tweeting regarding this, the Prime Minister said, "Congratulations to Revanth Reddy Garu on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Telangana. I assure all possible support for the progress of the state and the welfare of its people."

Seniors get prominence in Revanth Cabinet

9 Ministers were YSR's close associates

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government came into being on Thursday with 12 Ministers including Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The party gave importance to senior leaders in the Cabinet. Except Revanth Reddy, Ponnamp Prabhakar and Danasiri Anasuya all other Ministers are seniors and are also former Ministers.

Leaders like Thummala Nageshwara Rao, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Damodara Rajanarsimha and Jupally Krishna Rao have the experience of working with three Chief Ministers. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has worked with two CMs.

Thummala Nageshwara Rao has worked in the ministries of NTR, N. Chandrababu Naidu and K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Damodara Rajanarsimha and Jupally Krishna Rao have



worked with Chief Ministers YSR, K. Rosaiah and N. Kiran Kumar Reddy. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has the experience of working with Chief Ministers YSR and K. Rosaiah. Konda Surekha has the experience of working in the YSR Ministry. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy was a member of the N. Kiran Kumar Reddy Ministry.

The new Speaker, Gaddam Prasad Kumar, was a Minister in N. Kiran Kumar Reddy's Ministry and was also a close associate of the late YSR.

However, Revanth Reddy, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ponnamp Prabhakar, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Danasiri Anasuya are first-time Ministers.

Interestingly, Ministers Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Damodara Rajanarsimha, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Jupally Krishna Rao, Konda Surekha, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnamp Prabhakar were close associates of former Chief Minister, the late YS

Rajasekhara Reddy. All these Ministers were active Telangana leaders during the time of YSR.

Another interesting thing is that Revanth Reddy, Thummala Nageshwara Rao and Danasiri Anasuya were in the TDP.

The Congress inducted all senior leaders as Ministers although the party appointed the comparatively young leader Revanth Reddy (54) as the Chief Minister. Danasiri Anasuya (52) is the only Minister younger than Revanth Reddy and D. Sridhar Babu (54) is the same age as CM Revanth Reddy.

Thummala Nageshwara Rao (70) is the senior leader in Revanth Reddy's cabinet. Damodara Raja Narasimha (63), Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka (62), N. Uttam Kumar Reddy (61), and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy (60) have crossed the age 60 mark.



No decision yet on CM candidates

BJP likely to name observers today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP is likely to name central observers for electing the leaders of its legislature parties in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan on Friday amid indications that new chief ministers may be named over the weekend.

A senior party leader said the observers for all the three states are expected to be named on Friday.

They will then travel to the respective states to oversee the meetings of newly elected MLAs where the future chief ministers will be named.

He said no decision has been taken yet on the choices of the chief minister and the party will

keep in mind social, regional, governance and organisational interests in picking the three CMs.

Leaders from three states have been meeting the top party brass, including Home Minister Amit Shah and party president J P Nadda, but sources played down their significance, saying such meetings are routine. "So many state leaders have been meeting our national leadership. There can be only three chief ministers. One should not be reading too much into it," a source said, noting that many of the probabilities include MPs who have resigned from Parliament and are meeting national leaders as courtesy.

Modi biggest OBC face in country: Min

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the biggest face of the Other Backward Class (OBC) and Extremely Backward Class (EBC) categories in the country, Union minister Nityanand Rai said on Thursday, adding the Bharatiya Janata Party will win all 40 seats in Bihar in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"The JD-U is finished in Bihar. The RJD has become very weak. Bihar wants to move ahead by becoming free from caste restrictions. Therefore, we will win 40 out of 40 seats in Bihar," he said. He said the JD(U)-RJD

combine is not a challenge for the BJP in Bihar and the whole country, including the state, has benefited from the developmental programmes under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"There is no bigger face of the OBC community in the country than Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There is no bigger face than him (Modi) even in the EBC community," he told PTI-Video in an interview. He was asked about the comments of Janata Dal (United) leaders that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was the most trusted OBC leader in the country.

APPSC issues notification for 897 Group-2 posts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission on Thursday issued notification for filling of 897 executive and non-executive posts under APPSC Group-2 Services for which preliminary exam will be held on 25 February 2024. The applications are invited online through the Commission's website (<http://www.psc.ap.gov.in>) from eligible candidates for the posts falling under Group-II Services from 21/12/2023 to 10/01/2024 by 11:59 midnight. Any application sent through any mode other than the prescribed Online mode will not be entertained under any circumstances.

CREDIT-LINKED SHORT-TERM SKILL COURSES

UGC approves guidelines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved guidelines for introducing short-term industry-relevant certificate courses with up to 30 credits in the higher educational institutes to bridge the skill gap and boost productivity of students at the workplace, officials said on Thursday.

The "guidelines for the introduction of short-term skill development courses in higher educational institutes (HEIs)" were approved during a meeting held by the UGC on Thursday. The duration of the courses will be between three to six months with a major focus on practical learning. The draft of the guidelines



will soon be released in the public domain seeking feedback from stakeholders, the officials said.

According to the draft guidelines, the courses can be taken by students pursuing degrees or diplomas at the HEIs or anyone who has cleared class 12 or its equivalent.

"This initiative is coherent with the objective of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that encourages switching from the traditional rote, content-heavy learning method to holistic learning."

Empty chairs greet Pawan at Vizag meet

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As if rubbing salt into the wounds of Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief K Pawan Kalyan, who put up a poor show in the just-concluded Telangana Assembly elections, his meeting at AS Raja Grounds in the city on Thursday witnessed an equally poor turnout.

Addressing the m, "I have endured many failures in my life. I will adhere to my ideology and shall not merge Jana Sena with any political party," he announced.

Referring to the privatisation of Visaka Steel Plant (VSP), he said that the issue is linked to the emotions of the people and the privatisation



would enhance emotions among people and he had apprised the same to the Centre. "If the JSP had one MP, we would have brought captive mines to VSP," he claimed. Shifting the focus to the neighbouring Telangana, Pawan Kalyan complimented Revanth Reddy following his appointment as the TS Chief Minister.

'Agniveers will ensure youthful profile of forces, says Army Chief

PNS ■ PUNE

Indian Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Thursday called the Agniveer scheme a "path-breaking" manpower intake methodology and asserted that it will ensure the youthful profile of the armed forces.

Under the Agniveer scheme, which was introduced in 2022, soldiers are enrolled as Agniveers by the armed forces for four years. They can then go back to society and take up jobs in other sectors to pursue a career of their choice.

"In the human resource management domain, the introduction of the Agniveer (Agniveer) scheme has been a path-breaking manpower intake and management methodology. This will ensure the youthful profile and bring more technologically adapted and oriented soldiers into ranks and file," said the Army chief.

Gen Pande was speaking at



the convocation and scroll presentation ceremony at the College of Military Engineering in Pune.

He said the scheme also ensures that the "best of the best" are retained as core manpower of the armed forces. Gen Pande said the integration of Agniveers into the units and subunits is the key as their assessment and retention in service is based entirely on merit.

"You all are going to be important stakeholders at the grassroots in your units. I

want you to provide professional leadership and mentorship both as expected from a good sub-unit commander," he said while addressing the graduate officers.

He said the Indian Army has embarked upon the path of transformation since last one year.

The need for the transformation has accrued four key drivers such as unprecedented trends in the geo-strategic landscape, the limitless potential of destructive technology, the changing character of war and profound changes in the socio-economic situation, he said.

"In order to address these imperatives to affect the changing design, we implemented a transformation road map a year ago. We have made good progress and good beginnings to ensure continued focus and impetus across all wide pillars of the transformation road map," he said.

Cabinet expansion only after...

Continued from page 1

Till then, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will look after portfolios other than those handed over to the 11 Ministers. The new Ministers have not been allotted portfolios.

Speaking to the media after the first Cabinet meeting Minister D. Sridhar Babu made it clear that information about portfolios which has gone viral on social media is false.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Ekadashi: Dec 08 05:06 AM to Dec 09 06:31 AM

Dwadashi: Dec 09 06:31 AM to Dec 10 07:13 AM

Nakshatram: Hasta: Dec 07 06:28 AM to Dec 08 08:54 AM

Chitra: Dec 08 08:54 AM to Dec 09 10:43 AM

Rahukalam: 10:45 AM to 12:07 PM

Yamagandam: 2:52 PM to 4:15 PM

Varjyam: 05:30 PM to 07:13 PM

Gulika: 8:00 AM to 9:22 AM

Amritakalam: 03:50 AM to 05:33 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:45 AM to 12:29 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 29°C

Humidity: 67%

Sunrise: 6:34 AM

Sunset: 5:42 PM

Updated: December 7, 2023 5:00 PM

ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370 SC verdict soon on pleas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce its verdict on December 11 on a batch of petitions challenging the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution which bestowed special status on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the cause list of December 11, Monday, uploaded on the apex court website, a five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud would deliver the verdict.

The other members of the bench are Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjay Khanna, B R Gavai and Surya Kant. The apex court had on



September 5 reserved its verdict in the matter after a marathon 16-day hearing. During the course of the hearing, the top court had heard Attorney General R Venkataratnam, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, senior advocates Harish Salve, Rakesh Dwivedi, V Giri and others on behalf of the Centre and the intervenors defending the abrogation of Article 370.

Govt to Parl: No decision to shut down NM to expand Central Vista

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

No decision has so far been taken to shut down the National Museum to expand the Central Vista, the Centre informed Parliament on Thursday.

Union Minister for Culture G Kishan Reddy shared this information in a written response to a query by TMC's Jawhar Sircar in Rajya Sabha.

National Museum, located along Delhi's Janpath, is home to a collection of ancient artefacts and one of the most iconic modern landmarks of the capital city.

Sircar, in his written query, also asked if the government has decided a place to shift the priceless artefacts of the museum for interim storage,

and if the government has studied any shifting of such a scale anywhere in the world.

Sircar asked whether the government has consulted the best international and national experts on museums and antiquities; and whether, during such storage, the government will ensure appropriate requirements of light, heat, ventilation, humidity, etc. for all objects that require them.

In his response, Reddy said, "No such decision has so far been taken by the government."

The 35,000-square metre museum presently holds approximately 2,00,000 objects, both Indian and foreign, covering over more than five thousand years of Indian cul-

tural heritage.

The foundation of the present building was laid by the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on May 12, 1955.

The first phase of the National Museum building was formally inaugurated by the then Vice President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on December 18, 1960. The second phase was completed in 1989.

The redevelopment of the Central Vista the nation's power corridor in Delhi envisaged a triangular Parliament building next to the existing one, a common Central Secretariat for ministries and the revamping of the 3-km-long Rajpath from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate.

We are servants...

Continued from page 1

Revanth said the government would try to ensure both welfare and development.

Soon after taking oath as Chief Minister, Revanth Reddy signed two files, the first file regarding the implementation of the six guarantees given by the Congress to the people of Telangana. The second file he signed was intended to fulfil a promise he had made during the election campaign to a woman named Rajini who suffers from dwarfism. The promise was to give Rajini her first job, if the Congress came to power. Rajini was specially invited on Thursday. The Chief Minister signed orders giving her a government job and handed it over to her.

At the Secretariat accompa-

nied by his wife, Revanth Reddy conducted puja amid the chanting of Vedic hymns by a group of priests. When he occupied the CM's chair, the priests blessed him. Later, he signed files brought in by Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari and other top officials. Earlier, Secretariat employees accorded a warm welcome to Revanth Reddy. After the Congress stormed to power, Revanth announced that the doors of the Secretariat would be open to everyone. The new Secretariat complex, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities was inaugurated on April 30. Former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao inaugurated the complex by occupying a chair in his chambers on the sixth floor and signing some files.

Hyderabad tops in child pornography cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The city is in the top place in the use of children for pornography and storing child pornography material cases with 21 out of 52 victims in other 18 major cities in the country.

According to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB)-2022 Hyderabad has witnessed 21 victims, followed by Jaipur with 10 and Chennai with six victims in use of a child for pornography and storing child pornography material (Section 14 and 15 of POCSO Act). As per the State-wise list is concerned most of the victims are from Bihar with 202, followed by Rajasthan with 170 and Jharkhand with 46 victims. Telangana is in the eighth place with 2,730 victims in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). Uttar Pradesh has the

Most of cheating cases booked in city

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad has booked the most number of cheating (Section 420 IPC) cases with 3,414 out of 24,606 incidents across major cities of the country. According to the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB)-2022, Hyderabad is in first place in incidents and second highest in victims. Delhi has witnessed the most victims with 4,118 followed by Hyderabad with 3,434 victims out of 26,224. Hyderabad is in the top in fraud (Sec 420 and Section 465, 468 to 471 IPC/IT Act) incidents in the year of 2022

with 2,365 and victims are 2,366, followed by Jaipur and Delhi. In the year of 2021, incidents are 2,771 and victims are 2,809. The State also tops in fraud victims and cheating victims in the year of 2022 with 4,697 and 4,715 respectively. Most of the offences relating to documents and property marks were filed in Hyderabad in the year 2022 with 5,789 incidents, and 5,819 victims. In the year of 2021, New Delhi was in the first place with 4,679 incidents, followed by Hyderabad with 4,679 incidents and 4,737 victims.

most number of victims in the city with 7,970, followed by Maharashtra with 7,675 and Madhya Pradesh with 5,951 victims. Advocate Bojaraju Prashanth from Kalwakurthy said, "IPC 376 and POCSO has been filed on the accused of rape. If a girl is below 16 years old, a POCSO case would be filed against the accused. I am advising boys not to commit anything physically with a minor girl even though she accepts it. The POCSO Act would be filed on a person whether she agrees or not. If the accused is guilty he will get a lifetime imprisonment or death sentence."

The State is in the eighth place in Child Rape (Section 4 and 6 of POCSO Act and Sec 376 IPC) with 1,754 victims. Maharashtra is in top with 4,258, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 3,653 and Tamil Nadu with 3,621 victims.

Revanth gives contract job to Rajini

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Thumari Rajini was appointed as project manager on contract basis with a salary of Rs 50,000 per month in TS Seed and Organic Certification Agency. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy promised to give her job once voted to power during his election campaign. The second file he signed was to fulfil the promise he had made during the election campaign to Rajini who suffers from dwarfism. The promise was to give Rajini her first job, if the Congress party came to power.

On Thursday, she was specially invited and the Chief Minister signed the orders to give Rajini a government job and handed over the same to her. On October 17, Revanth Reddy had given a written assurance to Rajini that she would be the first person to get a government job and had also signed a Congress guarantee card and handed it to her.

Traffic snarls galore due to CM's swearing-in

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Most parts of Hyderabad experienced heavy traffic congestion on Thursday due to the swearing-in ceremony of Telangana Chief Minister at LB Stadium. A heavy flow of traffic was witnessed from Masab Tank, PTI building, Ayodhya Junction, Nirankari towards Shadan College.

Vehicular movement was affected at Mehdiapatnam, SD Eye Hospital, NMD, Masab Tank towards Road No.12. Similar traffic movement was witnessed from Secretariat, Lumbini Park, Ambedkar Statue towards Lepakshi Emporium. On another route from Battery Line, Bazaar Ghat, Ek Minar, Nampally X



roads towards Public Gardens, Gun Park and Assembly witnessed heavy traffic.

The heavy traffic led to a rush at most of the Metro stations as there was an influx of Congress cadre from various

districts and city-based commuters. Ajit, a regular Metro user said, "There is a sort of chaos here today. I had to walk from Koti to Lakdikapul since bus routes were diverted due to the ceremony."

Hyd witnesses second highest rise in office rental values

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad has witnessed the second highest rise in average monthly office rental values with eight per cent. It has risen from Rs 61 per sq. ft. in the first six months of 2023 to approx. Rs 66 per sq. ft. in the first six months of 2024. Chennai witnessed the highest 10 per cent yearly jump in average monthly office rental values.

Amid increased office space completions, vacancy levels across most top cities rose marginally except in NCR, MMR, and Kolkata. According to the ANAROCK

Research data, average vacancy rates of Hyderabad has increased from 15.90 per cent of 2023 first six months to 18.50 per cent of 2024 first six months. In Hyderabad, office space vacancy levels increased by 2.6 per cent over the course of the financial year. Hyderabad has surpassed Bengaluru with the highest influx of new office supply in the first six months of 2024.

Prashant Thakur, Regional Director ANAROCK Group, said, "Interestingly, average rental values across the top 7 cities witnessed a 7% growth in H1 FY24 when compared to the same period in FY23,



essentially due to increased construction and input costs. ANAROCK Research data indicates that Grade A office

rental values averaged at Rs 83 per sq. ft. per month across the top 7 cities in H1 FY2024, while in the corresponding

period in FY23, it was approx. Rs 77.5 per sq. ft."

"It was widely anticipated that commercial office space demand in India will see a downturn amid layoffs by several large corporates worldwide, and shrinking business volumes," says Thakur. "However, despite all headwinds, office activity remained largely unchanged in the first half of FY 2024 as compared to the corresponding period in FY 2023. New completions saw a meagre 5% yearly jump in the period and net absorption dropped by just 1 per cent", Prashant said.

Eligible citizens can enrol in new voters' list before Jan 1

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All eligible citizens, who are attaining the age of 18 years on or before January 1, 2024, should apply for enrolment, objections and corrections.

On Thursday Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vikas Raj released a press note saying that those who missed to enrol themselves on earlier occasions can file their applications. House-to-house visits will be done by the BLOs with a pre-filled BLO register containing the details of existing electors in their respective party and to get the details verified from the head of the family.

Publication of the integrated draft electoral roll will be released on January 6. Period for filing claims and objections is between January 6 and 22, 2024. Disposal of claims and objections will be released on February 2. Final publication of the electoral roll will be released on February 8.

Removal of discrepancies in Electoral Roll, EPICs, improvement of image quality ensuring good quality photographs will be done from December 20 to January 5, 2024.

While filling their applications, all the citizens or electors shall provide the information accurately in all the columns of the relevant Form-6, Form-7 & Form-8 as the case may be. 6. All such applications can also be filed online in the website <https://voters.eci.gov.in>



Satyam Shivam Sundaram Gau Nivas to hold 23rd anniversary

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Satyam Shivam Sundaram Gau Nivas, South India's biggest goushala (cow shelter) located on eight acres of land and home to about 6,000 cows rescued from slaughter houses is organising Annakut celebration at its premises at Peddamma Gadda, Gaganpahad in Hyderabad on the eve of its 23rd anniversary on Sunday.

The Gau Nivas gives a new meaning to the concept of cow protection. Cows which just escaped from the jaws of their death, get a decent life and royal treatment. It was established by Dharam Raj Ranka, an 83-year-old man, with a mission to protect India's most revered animal cow. He has fully dedicated his life to the cause of cow protection. He is the pioneer of the Gou Shala concept in twin cities and has been instrumental

in setting up several goushalas.

Dharam Raj Ranka said that the Annakut festival is celebrated at the beginning of each new year. Lots of variety of food items prepared with love and devotion are offered to God. Thousands of devotees are expected to participate in the celebrations.

He added that although the literal meaning of 'Annakut' is "mountain of food", it symbolises an offering of food to God and the love and devotion that has gone into preparing it. As part of the Diwali celebrations, Hindus around the world cook a variety of different vegetarian items of food, snacks, sweets, pickles and delicacies as offerings to God. Traditionally, Annakut symbolises devotion through offering the first harvest and distributing it to all.

SCR to partially cancel/divert trains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of cyclone 'Michaung', South Central Railway has temporarily diverted or partially cancelled a few train services between various destinations on Thursday. Train No 07695 (Secunderabad - Ramanthapuram) was temporarily diverted to Renigunta - Tiruttani - Melpakkam Cabin - Tirumalpur - Chengalpattu - Mundiampakkam - Villupuram on December 6.

Train No 47177 (Lingampalli -Falaknuma) to be partially cancelled at Kacheguda -

Falaknuma, Train No 47156 (Falaknuma -Secunderabad) to be partially cancelled at Falaknuma -Kacheguda, Train No 47212 (Lingampalli - Umdanagar) to be partially cancelled at Kacheguda - Umdanagar, Train No 47246 (Umdanagar - Secunderabad) to be partially cancelled at Umdanagar - Kacheguda, Train No 47185 (Secunderabad - Falaknuma) to be partially cancelled Kacheguda - Falaknuma, Train No 47252 (Falaknuma - Secunderabad) to be partially cancelled at Falaknuma - Kacheguda.



RPF diversifies operations in protecting railway property

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is entrusted with the responsibility of security of railway property, passenger areas and passengers. The force has been working round-the-clock for providing safe, secure and comfortable travel experience to the rail users. RPF is always in the forefront, at times even risking their own lives, to safeguard the railway property and also the lives of passengers.

In order to give focused attention to the safety of railway property, passenger security and providing assistance to passengers while taking coordinated action with government police and other law enforcement agencies, RPF has launched several operations and recorded noteworthy performance.

A brief of the achievements of RPF/ South Central Railway (SCR) during the month of November 2023 are under "Operation Yatri Suraksha", RPF/SCR has arrested 44 offenders and recovered stolen property worth Rs 25.92 lakh with registration of 52 cases against them. Under "Operation Amanat", RPF personnel provided help in securing passenger belongings and



handed over them to rightful owners. They retrieved more than 184 belongings of passengers valued at more than Rs 53 lakh in the month of November-2023.

Also, the RPF has launched "Operation Narcos" to curb narcotic smuggling through railways. Under this operation, the officials confiscated ganja valued more than Rs 1.79 crore with the arrest of 30 persons during the month of November-2023 whereas under "Operation Nanhe Fariste", they undertook the noble cause of identifying and rescuing children in

need of care and protection who are lost/separated from their family due to various reasons. About 107 children (93 Boys + 14 girls) have been provided safety by RPF/SCR in November.

Under "Operation Aaht", they have rescued 46 boys from the clutches of eight traffickers, under "Operation Satark", liquor worth Rs 4,56,037 being transported illegally through trains was seized with the arrest of 13 persons and subsequently handed over to Excise Department, who registered 35 cases against the offenders.

TS stands third in suicides related to family issues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana falls third due to suicides related to family problems by recording a total of 5,390 cases in 2022 as per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report on accidents and suicides in India. Though there is a slight increase in the overall cases as compared to the cases recorded in 2021 with 4,464 cases, the State maintains its position.

In Hyderabad, the number of suicide cases registered due to family problems is 140 in 2021 while in 2022 there is a slight decrease in the number of cases with 120 cases. In India, the total number of cases recorded in suicides due to family problems in 2022 is 52,924 whereas in 2021 the number of cases is 53,286 showcasing slight decrease in the number of cases.

According to Dr Vinod Kumar, a Clinical Psychologist, "Suicides occur not only due to family problems but also occur among farmers, unemployed people and self-employed. Generally, men commit more suicides than their counterparts. The main reason behind why people commit suicides is depression. People who spend most of their time alone and do not go outside often become victims to depression which leads to committing suicides.

"In the case of those committing suicides due to family problems, they tend to feel that they have no solution to the specific issue or to that particular tough situation, especially in case of financial and relationship problems. They tend to showcase negative behavior such as emotional instability, aggressive behavior etc, as they cannot cope up with the situation or pressure in the family. In such conditions, the family members need to take him or her to a psychologist or psychiatrist for counselling. With the aid of psychologist or psychiatrist advice, one can prevent people from committing suicide."

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT FORM-VI PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION (See sub-rule(1) of rule -19 and Section - 11(1) of the Act 20(2013)) G15989/2023 Date: 15-10-2023 No.D1642/2023, Dated: -09-2023						
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / District Collector, Nalgonda that a total of Ac.1.36 Gts land is required in the Kadaparthi Village Nakrekal Mandal of Nalgonda District for public purpose, namely Pressure Main in the village of Kadaparthi.						
The Government of Telangana has issued G.O.Ms.No. 518/CAD Department dt:07.02.2023 exempting the Provisions of Chapter-1&11 under Sec-10A of Telangana Amendment Act 2016 (Act No.21/2017) under RPFCLARR-Act-2013 to this Project.						
Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the Kadaparthi Village of Nakrekal Mandal and Nalgonda District land measuring, more or less Ac.1.36 Gts of standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition.						
SCHEDULE						
Village: Kadaparthi; Mandal: Nakrekal; District: Nalgonda						
Sl. No	Sy. No	Type of Title	Type of Land	Area Acquisition (Ac.Gts)	Name & address of the person interested	Details of trees/ Structures/ Bore wells/ Pipelines
1	435	Patna	Dry	0.04	Goria Venkanna S/o Malliah	--
2	437	Patna	Dry	0.30	Goria Nagamma W/o Yadaiah	55 Laxmi Trees & 2 bore wells
3	438	Patna	Dry	0.04	Goria Sorniah S/o Malliah	--
4	438	Patna	Dry	0.03	Goria Yadaiah S/o Malliah	--
Sub-Total				0.07		
5	439	Patna	Dry	0.03	Sunkaraboina Chittamma W/o Venkanna	--
6	454	Patna	Dry	0.12	Macha Sathiah S/o Ramulu	--
7	447	Patna	Dry	0.02	Goria Saidiah S/o Ramulu	--
8	447	Patna	Dry	0.15	Goria Yadaiah S/o Malliah	--
9	447	Patna	Dry	0.03	Macha Sathiah S/o Ramulu	--
Sub-Total:				0.30		
TOTAL EXTENT:				1.36		
This notification is made under the provisions of Section-11(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 30/2013), as amended by the Right to Compensation and Transparency in Land acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.						
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Revenue Divisional Officer, Nalgonda and Tahsilat, Nakrekal on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana/Collector-cum Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Officer Revenue Divisional Officer, Nalgonda and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section-12 of the said Act.						
Under section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.						
Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested/affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section 15 of the Act before District Collector, Nalgonda/ Revenue Divisional Officer, Nalgonda.						
Sd/- Land Acquisition Officer, Nalgonda.			Sd/- Additional Collector (Revenue), Nalgonda.		Sd/- District Collector, Nalgonda.	
DPR No.745/LA/PP-Pub/2023-24						

Cong gives equal importance to TPCC president, CLP leader

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The Congress high command is continuing its old policy regarding the TPCC president and the CLP Leader.

When the Congress came to power in 2004 in the United Andhra Pradesh after 10 years, the high command gave equal importance to the then TPCC President D Srinivas and CLP Leader YS Rajasekhara Reddy.

Now also the same policy is being continued by the high command by giving equal importance to TPCC President Revanth Reddy and the CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka.

Interestingly, now also the Congress came to power after 10 years in Telangana State. The only difference was that in 2004 CLP leader YS Rajasekhara Reddy was made



the Chief Minister and now TPCC President Revanth Reddy has been made the CM.

When YSR was made the Chief Minister, the high command told him that TPCC President D Srinivas should be given equal importance in the government.

Now also the same thing has been told by the high command to Revanth, that is, CLP leader Vikramarka should be given equal importance in the government.

The high command told Revanth that in their opinion both the TPCC President and the CLP Leader are equals. The same thing was told to YSR when he was made the Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, Revanth wanted to make Dadari Anasuya alias Seethakka the Deputy Chief Minister. But the high

command thought that if a person other than Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is made the Deputy Chief Minister that will reduce his importance.

The high command wanted to give equal importance to Revanth and Vikramarka. It thought that if Vikramarka is made the Deputy Chief Minister then it will give the impression that Revanth and Vikramarka have been given equal importance.

Keeping this in view the high command decided to have only one Deputy Chief Minister in Revanth's Cabinet.

In 2004, when D Srinivas was refused the Chief Minister post, the high command considered it as injustice. In fact, this was told to the then Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy by the high command. YSR's close associates told this to the media privately.



Pragati Bhavan: Iron gates go to build bridges with people

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM
■ HYDERABAD

The huge iron grills in front of the Pragati Bhavan, which not only caused traffic jam on the busy road in front of the official residence of former CM KCR but acted as a barrier between the rulers and the ruled for over a decade, have been demolished in Begumpet to pave the way for the rulers to meet the ruled.

Without any invitation from inside the Pragati Bhavan, entering the portals of it is impossible not only for the people but also for the highly influential ministers, who on a number of occasions waited outside the Pragati Bhavan for the mercy of KCR to flow on them.

There was an instance of renowned baldeer late Gaddar waited for four hours outside the Pragati Bhavan to meet

KCR. In another instance, JC Diwakar Reddy was chased away denying appointment to meet KCR. All these instances were still green in the memory of the people.

Besides, the innumerable suicide attempts made in front of the Pragati Bhavan by protesters in support of their demands was unheard of. These instances used to take place till a few hours ago beginning a decade ago.

However, the scene has totally changed. There was no trace of tall iron grills and gates, there were no traffic jams on the Begumpet road and there were no restrictions imposed by the police on the movement of people or vehicles on the road.

The iron gates were demolished extending an invitation to the people to enter the portals of once restricted Pragati Bhavan. Hereafter, it would be called Praja Bhavan. The cur-

rent scenario at Pragati Bhavan resembles that of the scenes that had prevailed when YS Rajasekhara Reddy was the CM of united AP.

As the TPCC president A Revanth Reddy declared that the forts of the Doras would be demolished to pave the way for the people to enter the portals of Pragati Bhavan, within a few hours after he became the CM, he was bold enough to implement the promise. Revanth Reddy sent the message across Telangana that Pragati Bhavan belongs to them and there were no hurdles between the government and the people.

Revanth Reddy succeeded in bridging the distance between the government and the people and took the Praja Bhavan closer to the people. Demolition of the iron gates has more than one positive connotations.

POWER SUPPLY TO EX-MLA'S MALL STOPPED RTC serves notice to Jeevan Reddy to clear pending bills

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) officials have served notices to former BRS MLA from Armoor Assembly constituency A Jeevan Reddy. The RTC officials have announced in the mike before the mall that belongs to Jeevan Reddy for not paying Rs 8 crore pending bills to the department. The officials warned Jeevan Reddy that they will seize the mall at



any time in case he fails to pay the pending bills.

The RTC officials also issued orders to the businessmen doing business in the

shopping complex to vacate it. With the RTC officials' orders, the businessmen are in confusion. On the other hand, the RTC officials are getting ready to seize the mall.

On the other hand, the Electricity Department officials stopped power supply to the mall belonging to Jeevan Reddy. The Electricity Department officials pasted the notices to the mall as Jeevan Reddy has to Rs 2 crore to the department.

Except D Raja, Derek O'Brien, none from INDIA bloc turn up for swearing-in

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress sent invitations to many INDIA alliance partners. However, only CPI national general secretary D Raja and TMC Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien attended the event.

Telangana Congress invited the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and former Chief Ministers — K Chandrasekhara Rao, N Chandrababu Naidu and others. But they did not

turn up. However, YS Jagan and Chandrababu Naidu congratulated the Telangana new CM A Revanth Reddy through Twitter.

Stalin tweeted saying, "During our phone conversation, I extended my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Thiru, @revanth_anumula (Revanth Reddy), as he prepares to be sworn in as the Chief Minister of Telangana." Stalin posted on X. Stalin, in his social media post, further wished Reddy a successful and impactful tenure."

'Dorala Palana' ends, Indiramma Rajyam begins: Bhatti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

"This day is an auspicious day for the people of Telangana as 'Dorala Palana' has ended paving the way for Indiramma Rajyam. We will work hard to develop the state," said Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka.

Talking to the media after the swearing-in ceremony on LB Stadium, here on Thursday, he said that people gave an amazing and historic verdict in favour of the Congress to unveil a people's government and democracy.

"We will be committed to fulfil all the dreams of the peo-

ple in Telangana given by Soniamma. The Congress party's six guarantees are the result of my long padayatra during which I had seen and heard the woes of the public," he added.

Bhatti said the six guarantees are meant to distribute wealth among the public. "We will fulfil the dreams of women and the unemployed and homeless families," he said.

The Congress government would begin its journey keeping in mind the fact that rulers and bureaucrats are public servants, he said.

Woman's body found near Duppalapalli

PNS ■ NALGONDA

An unidentified married woman was done to death by some assailants by smashing her head with boulders and lethal weapons in the wee hours of Thursday on the outskirts of Duppalapalli village in Tipparti police station limits of the district. Her body was found lying on the side of the road leading to Basireddypalli village. The victim was appar-

ently in the age of 30-35 years. She was identified as a Hindu woman. She was wearing a yellow Punjabi top, black panties and a black chunni. Silver anklets and toe rings were found on the person of the woman.

Anyone has information leading to revealing the identity of the woman should contact the Tipparti SI on 8712670181 and Saligaaram CI on 8712670146.

KALESHWARAM GRAFT Lawyer Bhaskar files complaint with ACB



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

High Court lawyer Rapolu Bhaskar filed a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) against the corruption that took place in the Kaleshwaram project. In his complaint, Bhaskar appealed to the ACB to file cases against former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao, former Minister T Harish Rao, BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha, contractor Megha Krishna Reddy and Engineer-in-Chief

Venkateswarlu.

Bhaskar alleged in his complaint that thousands of crores of money was looted in the corruption that took place in the Kaleshwaram project with fake estimates. He alleged that KCR, Harish Rao, Kavitha, Megha Krishna Reddy and Venkateswarlu indulged in economic irregularities in the name of drinking and irrigation projects. He appealed to the ACB officials to file a case and take up an inquiry into it.

Woman arrested for cheating jewellers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Osmania University Police on December 6 arrested a woman for cheating jewellers in Habsiguda.

The accused identified as Vemuri Bhargavi Reddy (26), a resident of Bhavaninagar, Tirupati Urban, Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, went to the store wearing a duplicate gold chain and on the pretext of buying a new gold chain allegedly stole it and escaped. "Bhargavi, on the pretext of checking the gold chain, replaced the original with duplicate piece and left the shop. She later sold the stolen chain at a store in Ameerpet and transferred the money to a friend," said Osmania University Inspector P Anjaneyulu. Based on a complaint, the police registered a case and traced the accused in Tirupati. She was arrested and remanded.

Rumana Sinha Sehgal bags Karmaveer Chakra gold medal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rumana Sinha Sehgal, an entrepreneur and mentor at T-Hub, has been awarded the prestigious Karmaveer Chakra gold medal instituted by the United Nations and Indian Confederation of NGOs (UN & iCongo) at the Rex Conclave 2023-24 on November 26 in Faridabad. She is the first woman entrepreneur from the State to be honoured with the gold medal this year.

Her commitment to fostering innovation, relentless contribution and service to humanity were key factors in securing this accolade. Earlier in 2019, she was conferred with the Karmaveer Chakra silver medal.

She has been a guiding force at T-Hub, contributing significantly to the growth and success of startups in the region. As a mentor, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape of the State, inspiring and guiding the next generation of innovators. Beyond the accolades, Rumana also



stands as a beacon of social entrepreneurship, championing advocacies on gender equality, healthcare encompassing cancer awareness and menstrual hygiene, and the imperative to halt violence against women and children.

Rumana Sinha Sehgal, Founder, Serendipity and Mentor, T-Hub, said, "I am grateful for the honour of receiving the Karmaveer Chakra gold medal and Rex Karmaveer Global Fellowship 2023-24 from the United Nations & iCongo. This recognition is a shared victory,

made possible by the support of an incredible community. I am thankful for the opportunity to contribute to positive change and look forward to continuing this impactful journey together" Mahankali Srinivas Rao, CEO, T-Hub, said, "We are immensely proud of Rumana Sinha Sehgal's accomplishments. As a T-Hub Mentor, her dedication to fostering innovation and creating a positive impact has not only transformed the lives of countless entrepreneurs but has also brought global recognition to Telangana."

Kavitha sure of TBGKS getting elected as SCCL recognised trade union

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Boggu Gani Karmika Sangham (TBGKS) and MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has underlined the need for TBGKS getting elected as recognized trade union of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) and exuded confidence that it is certain that the pink flag is set to fly atop SCCL.

She said that the TBGKS would not let the SCCL management to rest in peace till the rights of the work force are protected and their interests are fulfilled. She said Singareni was synonymous with SimhaGarjana (roar of the lion) and called for working with the same spirit to save the SCCL.

In view of the elections to elect the recognized trade union, TBGKS leaders and important workers called



on MLC Kavitha on Thursday here.

Addressing them, she praised the coal miners for playing main role in achieving statehood to Telangana. The national trade unions did not have the fighting spirit that the SCCL workers has had. The sweat that the coalminers shed working hard in collieries is bringing sheen to Telangana. Therefore, she asked

them to fight boldly.

Irrespective of the BRS in power or not, it fought for statehood to Telangana, she said expressing no qualms over TBGKS winning the SCCL trade union elections. She appealed to each of the trade union leaders to work like KCR. The manifesto committee would be constituted soon and maintained that the TBGKS would release its manifesto soon.

Trade unions like INTUC and AITUC did not safeguard rights of the SCCL and would not be able to do anything for the development of the SCCL, she felt.

The TBGKS fulfilled the demands of the Singareni workers without having to strike work, she pointed out. The priorities of the Congress are not the SCCL and its workers, she alleged.



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT

FORM-C

NOTIFICATION

(Under Section 11 of the Act where 10A Exemption is given) (See rule 6/12)

G13/11/2023

Lr.No.D/90/2023,

Date: 27-10-2023

Dated: 30-09-2023

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/ Collector that a total of Ac.3.24 gts Patta land and Government land is required in the Gottimukkala Village of Devarakonda Mandal, Nalgonda District formation of Embankment of Main Canal of DLIS from Km 30.000 to Km 45.000 including CM & CD works, and formation of Earth Dam of Chintapally Reservoir and Gottimukkala Reservoir including construction of Spillway and Head sluices under Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme in Nalgonda (Dist) for formation of Gottimukkala Reservoir. Hence, below mentioned lands are notified under Section 11 (1) of the Act 30/2013 RFCT LARR Act, 2013.

The Government of Telangana has issued G.O.Ms.No.39 Irrigation & CAD (L.A.R. & R.A.2) Department dated: 30.08.2017 exempting the Provisions of Chapter-II & III under Sec-10 A Act No. 21/2017 under RFCT LARR Act-2013 to this project.

Therefore, it is notified that for the above said project in Gottimukkala Village of Devarakonda Mandal, Nalgonda District a piece of land measuring more or less Ac.3.24 gts of standard measurement, whose detailed description is as mentioned below, is under acquisition.

SCHEDULE

Village: Gottimukkala; Mandal: Devarakonda; District: Nalgonda

Sl. No.	Sy. No., Classification, Description of land i.e. patta/ Inam/ Govt.	Area under Acquisition. (in acres)	Name of the Patta/holder/ Employer	Other Particulars such as structures wells etc.,
1	13 Dry/ Patta Ac. 0.05 gts	0.05	Konduri Madhavi W/o Ramu	-
2	14 Dry/ Patta Ac. 1.24 gts	1.24	Konduri Madhavi W/o Ramu	-
3	15 Dry/ Patta Ac. 0.02 gts	0.02	Konduri Madhavi W/o Ramu	-
4	Vaagu Ac. 1.33 gts	1.33	Vaagu	-
Total		3.24 gts		

This notification is made under the provisions of Section-11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Act No. 30/2013), as amended by the Right to Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No. 21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Deputy Collector, R&RLA, Unit-II, Nalgonda and Executive Engineer (R&CAD Dept), Irrigation Division No.9, Chintapally on any working day during the working hours. The District Collector, Nalgonda is pleased to authorize the Special Deputy Collector and Acquisition Department and Revenue Department and their staff to enter upon and survey the land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section-12 of the said Act.

Under section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objections to the acquisition, if any, may be filed by the person interested within (60) sixty days from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section (15) of the Act before the District Collector, Nalgonda and the Special Deputy Collector, R&RLA, Unit-II, Nalgonda.

Sd/- Special Deputy Collector, R&RLA & LA, Unit-II, Nalgonda.

Sd/- Additional Collector, Nalgonda


Sd/- District Collector, Nalgonda

DIPR No.747/LA/PP-Pub/2023-24

INDIA CORNER


Indian ambassador met ex Navy men on death row in Qatar

The Indian ambassador to Qatar met on December 3 eight former Indian Navy personnel who were handed death sentence by a Qatari court in October, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said two hearings on the appeal against the death sentence have already taken place. "We are closely following the matter and extending all legal and consular assistance...Our ambassador got consular access to meet all eight of them in prison on December 3," Bagchi said at a media briefing. The Indian nationals were given consular access earlier as well. The Navy veterans were on October 26 given death sentence by Qatar's Court of First Instance. India described the ruling as "deeply" shocking and vowed to explore all legal options in the case. The Indian nationals, who worked with private company Al Dahra, were arrested in August last year reportedly in an alleged case of espionage.



324 posts of HC judges vacant: Govt

There are more than 320 vacancies in various high courts where 790 judges are working as against the sanctioned strength of 1,114, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. In a written reply to a question, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal also said that according to the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP), the transfer of chief justices and judges of the high courts are to be made in public interest -- for promoting better administration of justice throughout the country. "No timeline has been prescribed in the MoP for transfer of judges from one high court to another," he said. Prepared in 1998, the MoP is a set of documents which guide the appointment, elevation and transfer of high court judges. Since Supreme Court judges cannot be transferred, it guides their appointment and elevation. As on December 4, the top court is functioning with its sanctioned strength of 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India. As regards the high courts, against the sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges, 790 judges are working and 324 posts are vacant, he said. Meghwal said as on January of this year, 171 proposals received from High Court Collegiums were at different stages of processing.



Seat sharing to be top agenda in upcoming INDIA bloc meet

Working on seat sharing agreements will be on the top of the agenda at the upcoming meeting of the INDIA bloc, likely to be held between December 17 and 20, sources have said. According to sources, while a date for the meeting has not been finalised yet, the meeting will be held in the third week of December. Several constituents of the INDIA bloc have been increasingly pressing for a fast decision on seat sharing in different states so that candidates have sufficient time for campaigning and gauge the situation on ground. A meeting of the floor leaders of INDIA parties was held on Wednesday at Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's residence with a focus on discussing the parliamentary strategy for both Houses. The seat sharing matter was also raised by leaders of the Trinamool Congress during a meeting of opposition leaders held on Monday morning to decide the strategy for the Winter Session of Parliament.



'BJP people's most preferred party'

PM Modi cites poll win data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday cited poll data for assembly elections over the decades to assert that the BJP has become people's most preferred choice for governance as its record of retaining power is better than the Congress and other parties. Speaking at the BJP Parliamentary Party meeting, he said not any leader but "team spirit" should be credited for the party's big win in the recent assembly polls, noting that besides winning in three states, the party's strength has also grown in Telangana and Mizoram, sources said. The prime minister also asked party leaders to use the language preferred by the masses in their interaction with them. While giving an example, he said they should use "Modi ki guarantee" instead of "Modi ji ki guarantee". Quoting Modi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister



Pralhad Joshi told reporters that the Congress faced assembly polls 40 times while in power in those states and could win only seven of them, having a dismal success rate of 18 per cent. The corresponding figures for the BJP are 22 out of 39 times, a success rate of 56 per cent, Modi noted. Regional parties have fared better than the Congress but not the BJP as they won 18 of 36 times when in power, notching up a success rate of 50 per cent. It shows that the BJP is the

most preferred party for running the government, he said. In the case of a party in power in a state for two terms facing assembly elections, the Congress' success rate is only 14 per cent compared to the BJP's 59 per cent, he added. The prime minister reiterated that the four biggest "castes" for him are the poor, youth, women and farmers, and party leaders should work for their development. He asked MPs to participate in "Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra", a government exercise aimed at saturation coverage of various welfare schemes.

Modi's 'arithmetic of success' shattered 'mathematics of oppn'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a swipe at the INDIA bloc, senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Thursday claimed there was an ongoing tussle among the alliance partners and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "arithmetic of success" has shattered the "mathematics of the opposition". Addressing people during the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in Rampur's Koyla village, Naqvi said the opposition should realise that a "swarm of stopgap" will not be able to conquer the "mountain of mass mandate". There is an "ongoing tussle" among the partners of the Indian National Inclusive

Developmental Alliance (INDIA) bloc and Prime Minister Modi's "arithmetic of success" has shattered the "mathematics of the opposition". A non-Congress central government is successfully completing two consecutive terms ensuring good governance and inclusive empowerment and is moving towards the third term under the "dynamic and decisive" leadership of Prime Minister Modi, Naqvi was quoted as saying by a statement from his office. Taking a swipe at the Congress, he said the success of the Modi government has sent the "democratically defeated dynasty" into depression.



Grant of citizenship: SC questions singling out Assam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre why did it single out Assam and exclude West Bengal from grant of citizenship under section 6A of the Citizenship Act when the latter shares a much larger border with Bangladesh. Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relates to illegal immigrants in Assam. Observing that illegal immigration is a serious problem, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, what is the Union government doing to safeguard the border. "Why did you single out Assam when West Bengal shares a much larger border with Bangladesh? We want to know why was West Bengal excluded from the grant of citizenship...the argument cannot be that there was agitation in Assam...why was West Bengal left alone...what is the position in West Bengal now? the bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant, M M Sundresh, J B

"Why did you single out Assam when West Bengal shares a much larger border with Bangladesh? We want to know why was West Bengal excluded from the grant of citizenship...the argument cannot be that there was agitation in Assam... why was West Bengal left alone...what is the position in West Bengal now? the bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant, M M Sundresh, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said."

Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said. As the hearing commenced the Centre clarified that examination of the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, has nothing to do with any other amendments in the Citizenship Act. Mehta told the five-judge constitution bench that the application of section 6A is limited to only a specific period of time. "I would like to begin with some factual clarifications. Your lordships are examining a limited question of constitutional validity of Section 6A. This is confined to a very few individuals during a particular period of time. This examination has nothing to do with any other

amendment to Citizenship Act," he told the bench. Mehta told the top court that so far as the contentions as pointed out by the petitioners are concerned like influx of immigrants from foreign countries, paucity of resources that were otherwise available to them, etc, all their concerns are true. "Person is deemed citizen if his parents or any grandparents were born in undivided india. The category is very limited- it applies in Assam, a limited geographical area. The category from which persons are permitted is only Bangladesh, a very limited area," Mehta said.

President highlights need to bring some changes in education

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said there is a need to make some changes to the education system in management institutions for inclusive development of the country. The President, who presented the Lakshmi Pat Singhania-IIM Lucknow National Leadership Awards here, also called for linking artificial intelligence (AI) to management education and said one who knows and uses it properly should not have any fear of losing his or her job. "We have to bring some changes in the education system of our management institutions for more effective and inclusive development of the country," Murmu said. She urged managers, educationists and organisational heads to connect Indian management studies with Indian companies, consumers and society. Instead of case studies and articles about businesses based abroad, the President said,



case studies about Indian and multinational companies based in the country should be written and taught. "Our management institutes should also focus their research on research journals based in India. Special attention should be paid to those Indian journals that are in the open access domain and are accessible to students and researchers of every category," she said. Referring to the recent rescue of 41 workers from the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand, Murmu said the rescue operation is not only being appreciated but there is also talk of conducting leadership studies on it. "This is a very good and lively topic, especially for leadership and teamwork in a crisis," she said. Speaking about AI, Murmu said many people are worried about job loss due to this technological innovation. "One who knows AI and uses it properly should not have any fear of losing his job due to AI," she said.

PM has directed release of Rs 450 cr second instalment to TN, Rajnath Singh

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed the Union Home Ministry to release Rs 450 crore, the second instalment to Tamil Nadu for cyclone relief, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Thursday. Following an aerial survey and a hi-level meeting with Chief Minister M K Stalin at the Secretariat, Singh said the first instalment of Rs 450 crore had been released earlier to the state. The release of two instal-



ments to Tamil Nadu is the Centre's share in the State Disaster Response Fund. "PM Modi is distressed by the loss of lives in TN due to rains, flood," he said. After the meeting with Singh, Stalin said a team from

the Centre would soon visit the state to assess damage due to the cyclone. He termed as 'unseen before,' the rains here and nearby areas and outlined the state's relief initiatives on war-footing. In view of the government's preventive measures, loss of lives and damage has been avoided to a large extent. The CM said relief work would continue to go on in full swing to bring normalcy in all the affected areas. Chennai city has started returning to normalcy.

Ethics panel report on Moitra likely to be tabled in LS on today: Sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The report of the Ethics Committee which recommended the expulsion of TMC MP Mahua Moitra in a "cash-for-query" case is likely to be tabled in Lok Sabha on Friday, parliamentary sources said. The report was earlier listed in the agenda of the lower house for December 4 but was not tabled. Various opposition members have insisted that there should be a discussion on the



recommendations before a decision is taken on Moitra. "If the report is tabled, we would insist on a full-fledged discussion as the draft was adopted in two-and-a-half minutes," BSP MP Danish Ali

told reporters on Thursday. The committee headed by Vinod Kumar Sonkar, at a meeting on November 9, adopted its report recommending Moitra's expulsion from Lok Sabha over the "cash-for-query" allegation. Six members of the panel, including Congress MP Preeti Kaur who had earlier been suspended from the party, voted in favour of the report. Four members of the panel belonging to opposition parties submitted dissent notes.

Mamata plucks tea leaves in north Bengal; shakes a leg

PNS ■ KURSEONG (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday visited a tea estate in Darjeeling district, plucked leaves along with workers besides talking to them. Wearing the tea pluckers' apron, Banerjee also sang a few lines with the workers and shook a leg with them. The chief minister is on a six-day visit to the northern districts of the state. "Today, after wearing their clothes, I plucked tea leaves. I learned tea plucking from them. Now, I can go to any tea garden and pick tea leaves. This is my biggest lesson today. I remember I wrote a poem about them (tea leaves pluckers) long ago," she later

said. The Trinamool Congress supremo has over 100 books to her credit and several of them are of poems. "We have blood relations with the people of the Hills. The Hills became my own home," she added. Banerjee also spoke to the tea garden workers and distributed winter garments to them. During a trip to Darjeeling last year, Banerjee took to making momos at a roadside shop in Darjeeling besides serving pani puris to the people of the Hills. Later, Banerjee went to a community hall here to bless her nephew Abesh Banerjee who tied the knot with his longtime girlfriend at a ceremony here.



More women coming out to report crimes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Commission for Women Chief Rekha Sharma on Thursday said that the increase in number of FIRs in crime against women, as revealed by NCRB, indicates that more women are coming forward and reporting such cases, which is a positive development. Speaking on the survey recently released by the National Crime Records Bureau, Sharma said, "NCRB data is showing that more women are coming forward and reporting crimes against them. NCRB data is saying that more FIRs are being registered, in Delhi, UP..." "Data doesn't show crime is rising. This data means women are coming forward and complaining. It does not say how many FIRs have been registered, and how many charge sheets have been filed. It is only on the basis of FIRs. We always tell the Police, always register the FIR when a woman complains," she said.

Arthritis drug may suppress progression of type 1 diabetes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A commonly prescribed rheumatoid arthritis drug may suppress the progression of type 1 diabetes, according to a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The researchers at St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research (SVI) in Melbourne found that the drug called baricitinib can safely and effectively preserve the body's own insulin production and suppress the progression of type 1 diabetes in people who initiated treatment within 100 days of diagnosis. Type 1 diabetes is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin. It typically appears in adolescence.

The disease can also occur in children and adolescents depending on how many B-cells of the pancreas are non-functioning. "When type 1 diabetes is first diagnosed there is a substantial number of insulin-producing cells still present. We wanted to see whether we could protect further destruction of these cells by the immune system," said SVI's Professor Thomas Kay. "We showed that baricitinib is safe and effective at slowing the progression of type 1 diabetes in people who have been recently diagnosed," Kay said. The findings show promise as the first disease-modifying treatment of its kind for type 1 diabetes that can be delivered as a



tablet, the researchers said. "It is tremendously exciting for us to be the first group anywhere in the world to test the efficacy of baricitinib as a potential type 1 diabetes treatment," said Kay. "Up until now, people with type 1 diabetes have been reliant on insulin delivered via injection or infusion pump. Our trial

"We showed that baricitinib is safe and effective at slowing the progression of type 1 diabetes in people who have been recently diagnosed," Kay said."

showed that, if started early enough after diagnosis, and while the participants remained on the medication, their production of insulin was maintained," the researcher said. The randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled human trial of the drug baricitinib monitored the blood glucose and insulin production of

91 participants over the course of one year. Of these, 60 were given baricitinib and 31 were given a placebo. All trial participants were aged between 10 years and 30 years and started on the trial within 100 days of having been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. The study shows that people with type 1 diabetes in the trial

who were given the drug required significantly less insulin for treatment. Management of the lifelong autoimmune disease is incredibly burdensome on those diagnosed and their families, requiring meticulous glucose monitoring and insulin administration day and night to stay alive, the researchers said. "We are very optimistic that this treatment will become clinically available. This would be a huge step-change in how type 1 diabetes is managed and we believe it shows promise as a fundamental improvement in the ability to control type 1 diabetes," said Professor Helen Thomas, preclinical lead on the trial.

Separate poverty assessment for minorities not done: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday informed the Lok Sabha that a separate poverty assessment for minorities has not been done and it implements various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every section of society, including minorities. Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani said this in a written reply to a question by BSP MP Danish Ali on whether the government proposes to carry out any survey for identifying the minorities, including Muslims, living below the poverty line in each state.

The ministry has adopted a multi-pronged strategy by way of implementation of various schemes aimed at educational empowerment, employment-oriented skill development and infrastructure support, etc. for the upliftment of the living standards of economically weaker and underprivileged sections of all minorities, Irani said. "A separate poverty assessment for minorities has not been done by the government. The government implements various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every section of the society including minorities," she said.

Shooting from the hip

Yet another unsavoury remark from the DMK irks sensible Indians and sits in favour of BJP

The DMK, the ruling party in Tamil Nadu, recently touched a raw nerve with its MP DNV Senthilkumar referring to the Hindi heartland as "Gaumutra States", though better sense soon prevailed and he apologised for the remark. However, the damage has been done and it would take some time for the DMK's partners to douse the fire. Anyway, it is not the first time the party has indulged in such capers. The latest remark which carries a derogatory connotation, seen in conjunction with Chief Minister MK Stalin son Udhayanidhi's criticism earlier of Sanatan Dharma, raises questions about the DMK's stance on cultural and religious diversity in India. While the context in which the term was used is crucial, people have interpreted it as an attempt to belittle the cultural and linguistic diversity of the northern States. Earlier, Udhayanidhi's unflattering utterances had drawn criticism from various quarters, with accusations of religious insensitivity and intolerance flying thick and fast. The DMK, historically



known for its opposition to the perceived imposition of Hindi and Brahminical practices, has seemingly extended its critique to cultural and religious aspects as well. The party has a long history of championing Dravidian identity and opposing what it sees as the cultural hegemony of north India. The DMK was founded on the principles of social justice, self-respect and anti-Brahminism. Its roots lie in opposing the 'imposition' of Hindi as the sole official language, leading to the ill-famed anti-Hindi agitation in Tamil Nadu in the 1960s.

The recent remarks, however, seem to have moved beyond the linguistic and cultural debate and entered the realm of religious sensitivity, or the lack thereof. The DMK, by identifying the Hindi heartland as "Gaumutra States" and expressing criticism of Sanatan Dharma, risks alienating a significant chunk of Indian population that identifies with these cultural and religious aspects. The DMK's comments have naturally elicited strong reactions from political opponents, cultural groups and religious leaders across the country. Critics argue that such statements contribute to the polarisation of the diverse Indian society and undermine the principles of unity in diversity. The political fallout of these remarks could affect the DMK's alliances and relationships with parties outside Tamil Nadu. Its recent jibes against the Hindi heartland and its criticism of Sanatan Dharma have ignited a contentious debate on its stance on cultural and religious diversity. The DMK leaders must understand that such utterances do nobody any good, politically or otherwise. These would be construed as an attack on Hinduism and would then be difficult for the INDIA bloc to defend, of which the DMK is a part. The latest comments have gone beyond the traditional boundaries of political discourse. As parties play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, it is essential for their leaders to speak carefully, fostering unity and understanding rather than deepening the divides.

PICTALK



Aspirants participate enthusiastically in a state level bullock cart race in Tumkur district

Why is Europe turning rightward

The European nations are abandoning liberalism and using nationalism to prevent immigration from Asia and Africa

There is no doubt that Europe is leaning Right. National elections held in the Continent are bringing forth governments one by one, which can be called right-wing, but not fascist. The Netherlands has all but elected Geert Wilders, an unapologetic opponent of Islam. Giorgia Meloni, Italy's rightwing and nationalist Prime Minister, is going strong; She has thrown out China's BRI project and refuses to toe the European Union's line on immigration. Emmanuel Macron of France, who began as a centrist is turning right, much to the consternation of that country's socialists and leftists, while indications are that the far-right, anti-immigrant and anti-Islam Marine Le Pen might win France's next elections. President Emmanuel Macron has often spoken of the need to build a "Europe that protects".

In a landmark 2017 Sorbonne speech, he had also called for "a sovereign, united and democratic Europe". Finland has a strong right-wing prime minister, Petteri Orpo, who is no friend of unrestricted immigration. Hungary under Viktor Orban has already called the European Union a dysfunctional arrangement and no longer obeys its diktats. Now Greece is throwing up rightwing politicians, who have opened their doors to Indian investments, but more importantly, Greece has stated that it will never be friends with India's enemies. Much to everyone's horror, the Alternative Fur Deutschland (AFD), a nationalist and right-wing German party is gaining ground in that country and might soon rule Deutschland. The AFD is reportedly a hard-right party opposed to the liberal and green environmentalist agendas of Germany's conventional political parties, and also their liberal stance on immigrants coming into Germany. The days of former German Chancellor Angela Merkel's 'welcoming' policies towards Turkish and Middle Eastern migrants are now more or less over. Whether the new rulers admit and say it or not, they have been elected in response to a dread of Islam. The fascists had captured



power between the two World Wars, which itself had been a fearful response to the threat of communism.

In the context of World War II, Fascism/Nazism or class collaboration were conceptually appropriate to the growth of ideologies that propagated and promoted class conflict. Logically, the antidote to the fear of Islam should have been more and more influence of Christianity. Unfortunately, however, the grip of Christianity over the minds and hearts of Europeans, with the march of modernity and the progress of advanced learning and education, has dissipated. Education encourages thinking, and a thinking individual does not accept any assertion without research or survey, preferably of an empirical nature.

Over and above this difficulty, three religions have competed with the same claim. To start with, Judaism, then Christianity and thereafter Islam have the same contention and beliefs. To worship without being allowed to pursue spirituality or seeking an opportunity to see or feel the divine is a very limiting and constraining experience. This can seem harsh to the thinking person. Experts in Europe say that currently, only about 25 per cent of people in West Europe declare themselves as



THE EUROPEAN FAR RIGHT HAS BEEN OFTEN ACCUSED BY ITS LEFTIST AND LIBERAL CRITICS OF REPRESENTING THE WORST THINGS IN EUROPEAN IDEOLOGICAL TRADITIONS

Christians, and only a small minority of even these people are church-goers. In other words, Christianity is in no position to help to keep Muslims out of the Continent. Between the two world wars, waging class conflict was seen as something normal until it was countered with class collaboration. In its heyday, Christianity could have helped combat Islam. Today, the Europeans are abandoning their liberation and using nationalism to prevent further immigration from Asia and Africa. In a way, this is an about-turn, because, after WWII, nationalism had become unwelcome. Books were written to show that fascism was nothing but an intensification of nationalism and therefore, was unwelcome any longer. The coming together of Europe under the banner of the European Union (EU) was a demonstration of the post-WWII European opposition to nationalism.

The European far Right has been often accused by its Leftist and liberal critics of representing the worst things in European ideological traditions. These are; namely, exclusive "nationalist essentialism", dogmatism that runs counter to the values that were bequeathed by the Enlightenment and political authoritarianism, which the Right is accused of re-energizing.



PRAFULL GORADIA

ing. But the European Right today conveys a simple but powerful message today, based on three core ideas: rediscovery of the nation and national identities; warning of the dangers of unrestrained immigration, particularly from Islamic countries, which is derided as xenophobia; and anti-political, anti-establishment populism. In this regard, the far Right offers its followers an exclusive identity. The European Right has identified conventional politicians, i.e., the establishment as the culprits and advocates simple and now increasingly unavoidable solutions like throwing out unwanted foreigners and overthrowing the traditional political class. Right or wrong, good or bad, this seems to be catching on in today's Europe. The Soviet Union was a superpower inhabiting a part of Europe's geography, to which also the European Union was an answer. An ideologically non-descript Russia, with its fifteen republics having seceded is no longer seen as an almighty threat. As a result, quite a few European experts may begin to consult crystal gazers to check up on the future of the European Union.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BJP WINS SEMI FINALS

Sir — With superior organisational skills, better resources at hand, and fail-proof strategies, the BJP won the key assembly elections that were dubbed semi-finals. Had the Congress party shown some accommodative mindset towards its friends in the INDIA group, it could have gotten better results in the lost three states. Though it might not have helped Congress win the elections, it would have left it with formidable friends to go with the final war. The fragile bonding among the opposition camp is quite evident if the number of absentees for group meetings is any indication.

In Telangana, the Congress party could win the elections, as it sorted out intra-party hiccups in time and showed a united voice. In the coming general elections, it should first win the trust of alliance parties with mutual respect before challenging its formidable rival. For that, a lot of groundwork in drawing rooms is needed.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

GUARANTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Sir — Congress would do well to introspect rather than find fault with the system or blame the BJP for the results. Prime Minister Modi's guarantee-warranty has emerged strongly and effectively in the recent assembly elections of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh. Well-planned imposition of internal discipline at the district and tehsil level, practical and trustworthy selection of candidates, poll promises made in the manifesto, etc. have left a lasting effect on the populace. The national issues dominated the local issues. The failure of the opposition parties mainly happened due to corruption, nepotism, and malfunctioning in government offices. India Block failed to gauge the pulse of the public. The BJP's "double engine" government in many states and at the Centre succeeded in implementing public welfare schemes under a time-bound plan. This massive victory has shattered the overconfidence of the Indian Bloc and especially shaken



RAJDEEP PATHAK

India has made

The 'National Remote Sensing Centre' (NRSC) utilizes satellite imagery to monitor river basins and assess flood risks. This enables authorities to implement preventive measures and coordinate timely responses, as demonstrated during the 2013 Uttarakhand floods. As per reports, the utilization of 'geospatial technology' facilitated accurate mapping of affected areas, aiding in rescue and relief operations. The "INDRISHTI" application, developed by the 'National Disaster Response Force' (NDRF), allowed for real-time information sharing among different agencies, ensuring a synchronised response. Despite these strides, it is essential to acknowledge the persistent vulnerabilities and the need for ongoing efforts. The Himalayan region, for instance, remains susceptible to earthquakes, and the potential consequences demand continued research and preparedness.

(The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views are personal)

Natural calamities: India's preparedness is exemplary

From Tsunami of 2004 to the recent Cyclone Biparjoy, remarkable progress in dealing with natural calamities

Cyclone Michaung made landfall in Andhra Pradesh, Southern India, near Bapatla on December 4, 2023, with winds reaching 100 kmph. Preceding landfall, heavy rains caused destructive flooding in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, claiming at least nine lives. The Indian Meteorological Department issued 'severe cyclonic storm' warnings, leading to the suspension of various activities such as industrial operations, transport services, businesses, and schools. Chennai airport was also temporarily closed due to the floods. Rescue operations, involving the deployment of 29 additional NDRF teams along the Andhra coast, are underway. The response to 'Cyclone Yaas' in Odisha exemplifies this - reducing casualties from 10,000 in 1999 to 10 in May 2021. Odisha's approach involved technological integration and strategic planning. The state established the first 'Odisha State Disaster Management Authority', local planning committees; an 'Early Warning Dissemination System' and also built resilient housing.



Moreover, Odisha formed over 20 units of the 'Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force' (ODRAF) with specialized personnel for multi-disaster response. In the wake of the 2004 Tsunami, India recognized the need for a comprehensive disaster management framework. The 'Disaster Management Act of 2005' was a significant legislative step that established the 'National Disaster Management Authority' (NDMA). One of the key aspects of India's disaster management strategy has been the emphasis on early warning systems. The 'Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre' (ITEWC) was established in 2007, equipped with state-of-the-art technology to monitor seismic activity and issue timely alerts. This was a crucial development, considering India's vulnerability to earthquakes and tsunamis

due to its location on the seismically active Ring of Fire. Additionally, the community-based response and national solidarity following major disasters set India apart, showcasing an effective approach to tackling natural disasters and minimizing damage. The involvement of local communities in planning and response mechanisms has proven effective. This was visible in the case of the 2018 Kerala floods. Also, embracing community-centric approaches and integrating traditional knowledge and wisdom with modern technology has further aided in reducing mortality rates. The successful deployment of 'Early Warning Systems' was evident during the 2019 earthquake in the Andaman Islands. The ITEWC promptly detected the seismic activity, allowing authorities to initiate evacuation measures swiftly. This not only minimized casualties but also showcased the efficacy of technology in enhancing preparedness. Floods, another recurring natural calamity in India, have witnessed innovative technological interventions.

Cyclone Michaung plays havoc



Natural disasters are seen as acts of nature. However, what Chennai has witnessed in the aftermath of Cyclone Michaung is a lack of human action, as the city's residents yet again bore the brunt of nature's fury. For many in Chennai, it is a repeat experience of the 2015 floods caused

by Cyclone Vardah. Come November-December every year, citizens of Chennai are getting more scared as even moderate rains wreak havoc on the city and affect their normal lives considerably. Over the years, unfortunately, the governments of the two Dravidian majors have failed in their preparedness and response mechanisms to confront the relentless force of nature. And it is the fate of Chennai that it should brace itself to be hit by cyclones every year in the future. What's the government's plan to keep us safe from these natural calamities? There is always a new type of calamity that affects Chennai drastically. Everyone asks one question: When will the government take such measures to tackle these natural calamities?

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Congress.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

HISTORIC DAY FOR THE NAVY

Sir — On the golden occasion of Navy Day 2023 (4 December), a 43-foot-tall statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (at Rajkot fort in Malvan, Sindhudurg district, Maharashtra) and the royal seal (known as Raj Mudra) on the Navy flag were unveiled by the Prime Minister. This is the first time a Navy Day event has been held at a remote location from a major Naval base. Of course, all this is pleasant, but what is going on in our neighbourhood? It is imperative to pay equal attention. It was Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who laid the foundation of the Navy. The naming of Indian Navy posts by Indian culture is certainly commendable. What does it mean to throw aside the yoke of slavery and live with a stiff neck, creating your independent existence? Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj has given an ideal example of this. Maharaj is known in different parts of the world. But to spread his fame more, and who exactly was he? Indianisation of posts is important to create this curiosity in the minds of the

world. Due to this, disputes at the international level, bitterness in relations, etc. are trivial issues. There is no point in stressing about it. India is an independent country. There is nothing wrong with the decision to Indianise posts as per Indian culture. The biography of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is being taught in universities in England and America. Also, students are doing this study with interest. India wants to walk with the work of his venerable role model.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj built Forts Jaldurg (Forts in the Sea) when no technology was available in his time. He not only laid the foundation of the Navy but also established a strong dominance over the sea. Now, technology has advanced a lot. So it will be interesting to see how India utilises Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj knowledge and today's advanced technology for establishing dominance over the ocean. The world should see his talent in the next few years through the work of the Indian Navy.


Er Jayesh Rane | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

SHAPING UP INDIA'S 'TECHADE'

Technology is at the heart of future geo-political arrangements



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Much of the discourse in Delhi this week was focused on the use of technology and its impact on society. This happened at a time when most of India was discussing the impact of the crucial state election results on the upcoming national elections next year. The conspiracy narrative that finally emerged after the last votes had been counted was that somehow, the winning team managed to technologically hack the electronic voting machines, at a mass level, which resulted in an outcome that wasn't expected! The techno-political challenges apart, there were many parallel conversations that pointed to the centrality of technology in modern geopolitical equations.

External affairs minister was addressing a global technology summit that discussed in detail the role technology, is likely to play in the wake of expected higher decibels on the political front (with the two largest democracies India and the US getting in the election mode next year and the overall impact on future of the planet. External affairs minister S Jaishankar said "We all intuitively know that the march of technology is really the history of human progress and actually pretty much every era has its particular sets of technological advancements which have defined it. We also know that the history of the world, the balances of power, the making and unmaking of nations, of civilizations are all in one way or another a reflection of how technology has grown. Now, in terms of the policy challenges that it presents, one of course is the need to regulate technology because many technologies also come with downsides and we have seen that expressed in world affairs through regimes and treaties and rules."



In one of the most candid admissions, the minister highlighted the pitfalls of India following an ideological (to be read as non-aligned) blinder-induced foreign policy approach for nearly three decades. The obvious reference was to the opt-out from the US block on nuclear technology cooperation back in the 1960s when the then US president had offered India to build a nuclear weapon of its own. India had refused on ideological high grounds and the prevailing foreign policy mindset. Some of these drained onto the national psyche, where India beyond a point, was content with importing most finished goods while sticking to being a monsoon-dependent agrarian economy. Keeping to the context Mr Jaishankar said "Where India is concerned, I think today we are, in many areas, very clearly playing catch-up. We're playing catch-up because while our era of reform started three decades ago, the era of reform was not necessarily the era of technology, and we conceptualised reform in much narrower terms. if I were today to sum up the last decade because I think we are now very clearly at the tail end of what is the second term of the Modi government, perhaps one major difference has been the centrality of technology in approaching public policy and to approach governance and towards national security. So, if one looks today at the domestic direction, the push on manufacturing, and this itself is a debate in this country, there are people who believe that it is not our competence, I would say even our karma, to do manufacturing, and that we would be wasting our time, energy and resources embarking on that path. But here's a common-sense proposition. You're not going to be able to do R&D if you don't have competitive manufacturing. You can't encourage people to be at the cutting edge if you are not at the middle level of the same business." This focus on technology at the heart of future geo-political arrangements is one dominant theme getting into 2024.

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

Has SAARC lived up to its expectation?



SANTOSH MATHEWS

SAARC Charter Day is observed on December 8 by eight member countries. It is time to analyse its journey; what has been achieved and where it is headed



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WE MUST NOT LOSE HOPE AS THE REVITALISATION OF SAARC IS IN OUR BEST INTEREST AND COULD CHANGE THE WAY WE ARE PERCEIVED ON INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS

The South Asian Regional Cooperation also known as SAARC, is a regional cooperation comprising eight countries i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. When SAARC was initially constituted in 1985, there were only seven member states however in 2007, Afghanistan was added to this regional grouping.

The SAARC was set up in order to ensure that economic, social and cultural development occurred in the region. However, over the last few years, we have seen a decline in any kind of engagement on these fronts. Further the major objective of ensuring that the living standards of the people has gone downhill and there have been blatant human rights violations in the region which has caused individuals to lose their dignity in a myriad of ways. Regional integrity which was the founding idea behind SAARC has faced a serious blow with the skirmishes and standoff between India and Pakistan. These conflicts have spilled over into other avenues as well, which has effectively brought the SAARC functionalities to a grinding halt. Thus, also putting the peace and harmony of the region in jeopardy. The conflicts have prevented states from being able to build sustainable cooperation to promote economic, social or cultural development as a regional block. However, one must note that despite the fact that the regional block is not functioning as it was envisioned, states continue to have individual interactions with each other on various fronts of cooperation. The major driving factor behind the creation of SAARC was the acceleration of the process of economic growth. Further in order to realize this the SAARC states created an institutionalised regional economic cooperation through the Committee on Economic Cooperation.

The agenda for this committee was to promote various methods and ways through which economic and trade relations could be intensified. The biggest step undertaken by the committee towards helping realize this goal was the creation of the SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) in 1993. The SAPTA came into force in 1995 with the sole goal of promoting free trade among the member states in the region. To a large extent, this Agreement can be credited for reducing the trade barriers in the region to a large extent and for kindling the fire of free trade in the region. The SAPTA was replaced by the South Asian Free Trade Area at the twelfth SAARC meeting which was held in Islamabad. The South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) though signed in 2004 was operationalized in 2006 and for a while, it was able to promote trade in the region but has fallen flat at the present due to political conflicts that exist between the two nuclear power states of the South Asian region. Over the years both the SAPTA and the SAFTA have failed to achieve their goals of accelerated economic growth in the region. Further, the incapacitation of Afghanistan to act as a state the Taliban has ruined the economy of the state. However, there is a need to strengthen the SAFTA and create a more durable structure like that of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Drawing a parallel with recreating the same possibilities through SAFTA that the AfCFTA is set to bring to the region. According to a recent World Bank report the AfCFTA is set to boost the regional income by 7% which when converted to dollars amounts to \$450bn. Thus, impacting the quality of life of women, daily wage labourers and unskilled. This in turn enables the region to lift around 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035. The AfCFTA will be able to achieve this goal by diversifying exports, accelerating growth, competitively integrating into the global economy and increasing foreign direct investment. If the SAARC could implement the SAFTA in a much more aggressive manner it would aid in the upliftment of around 736 million people living in extreme poverty in the South Asian Region.

Terrorism is not something that is new to the region and is however something that is overlooked to a large extent. States in the region tend to engage and counter-terrorism as individual actors rather than work together collectively as a block to prevent this from escalating in the region. Terrorism and politically instigated violence is not something that is new to the region and has persisted from before the inception of the SAARC. There is a need for SAARC to contribute to the strengthening of practical and implementable counter-terrorism cooperation. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and it aims at the promotion of cooperation between member states against three identified tents of counter-terrorism i.e. terrorism, separatism and extremism. If the SAARC could create something similar to the RATS it would greatly benefit their current individualistic fight against terrorism. From the perspective of India, why does SAARC play an important role in the foreign policy of India? If the SAFTA is properly operationalized it would be able to achieve its goal which is to reduce the customs duties to zero in the region. Thus, enabling India to boost its economic growth not just in the region but internationally as well. Further, the framework agreement on energy cooperation in the South Asian Region would enable India to mitigate the shortage faced in electricity production. Further, it would allow all member states to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Accord as the electricity created under this Agreement leans towards green energy sourced from renewable sources. SAARC as an organisation had come up with a Visa exemption scheme wherein certain categories of dignitaries were exempted from Visas. If this idea is to see fruition there is a need for states to set aside their differences and work together. India has always been the forerunner of Space development initiatives and it would be an added feather to the cap of India if we could launch the SAARC regional satellite. It would also help boost the amity between the respective member states. Further, the revitalization of SAARC would play an important role in enabling India to curb the rampant spread of Chinese influence in the region. With the Chinese influence becoming stronger in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal, it is imperative for India to show these states that India can do for them what China offers as with the political tilt of various governments of the member states of SAARC the influence of China waxes and wanes. India needs to capitalise on this before it is too late and the damage is done. SAARC as a regional grouping is still of incredible importance. It is true that SAARC as a regional grouping is dormant now. However, we must not lose hope as the revitalisation of SAARC is in our best interest and could change the way we are perceived on international platforms.

(The writer is a professor at Puducherry University, views are personal)

Road safety: Rising accidents is a cause of concern

In the last few years, the nation has witnessed an alarming surge in road mishaps, surpassing even China in harrowing game of road safety roulette



SIDDHARTH MISHRA



SIMRAN DAS

According to the annual report on road accidents in India, 2022 released by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the grim reality reveals a huge toll on lives and resources. A staggering 461,312 incidents were reported in 2022 alone, resulting in a catastrophic loss of 168,491 lives and causing injuries to 443,312 individuals. Shockingly, these figures depict an alarming escalation of 11.9% in accidents, 9.4% in fatalities, and 15.3% in injuries compared to the previous year, underscoring the gravity of the situation. These figures carry far more significance than just numbers; they stand for broken lives, devastated families, and a massive socio-economic burden on society. Every victim of road accidents serves as a stark reminder of how vital it is to deal with this growing emergency. The question now becomes apparent: Why is our nation, known for its inventiveness and resourcefulness, unable to address this issue and provide an appropriate and effective solution to the growing menace of road accidents? This situation seems to be the result of several circumstances, including a mix of careless driving, speeding, intoxication, and a disregard for following traffic regulations. This, together with insufficient enforcement of traffic laws and lack of awareness among people, keeps the situation dangerous on India's highways.



It is obvious that for ensuring road safety, improving the condition of the road networks is crucial. Dangers for commuters are further compounded by poorly maintained roads, inadequate signage, insufficient illumination, and a dearth of separate pedestrian sidewalks and cyclist pathways. Furthermore, a plausible factor contributing to this menace is the ease of getting a license by people as well as the faulty administrative procedure for issuing driving licenses in India. There are apparent loopholes and variations in the driving examinations for issuing licenses in different Indian states. The procedure for obtaining driver's licenses may further vary from district to district. In certain places, it is fairly flexible, while in others, it is quite rigid. Here, the role of corruption, assumingly prevalent in local offices, cannot be denied which, probably, becomes a cause of issuing licenses to undeserving persons, who, through their negligent driving, put the lives of others in danger. This is not a secret that driving licenses can be obtained relatively easily in our country. On the contrary, getting a driver's license in countries such as Germany is almost akin to a quest for a holy grail. In Germany, getting a driver's license is considered one of the toughest jobs as it requires passing highly difficult tests and procedures. Moreover, a corruption-free system makes sure that people with full driving competence, capacity and skill as well as an understanding of road conditions only get a driver's license. Moreover, in Germany, detailed road safety regulations are in place which require the parties involved in an accident as well as those witnessing an accident on the road mandatorily to stop, notify the police, assist the victims and ensure that help arrives. Any contravention of such rules makes the violator liable for heavy penalties and punishments. Moreover, Indian laws for ensuring road safety need reforms, especially Indian penal laws. The lax colonial age law in this respect is usually misused and also lacks in creating an effective deterrence. For example, Section 304 A of the IPC allows for a maximum sentence of two years for causing death by negligence—a very short sentence, when compared to the current needs. The Motor Vehicle Act of 1988 also requires significant reforms. While the Act was amended and Section 134A was added to protect people who save the lives of others from criminal or civil liability as a result of the Save Life Foundation's PIL, no significant changes have been observed till now. Road safety must become a top priority as India moves forward on its path to development and global leadership. To ensure safer roads for all, it is essential to adopt a culture of responsible driving, support infrastructural improvements, push for strict policy reforms and enforce laws strictly.

(Siddharth Mishra is an Assistant Professor Faculty of Law University of Delhi, and Simran Das is a Student Faculty of Law; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Tata Motors partners with HDFC Bank for vehicle financing

Tata Motors on Thursday said it has partnered with HDFC Bank to provide digital financing solutions for its commercial vehicle customers. The two companies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect, Tata Motors said in a statement. Under this partnership, Tata Motors customers can now seamlessly access HDFC Bank's vehicle financing solutions through Tata Motors' online sales platform and the Tata e-Guru mobile application, it added. "The integration of financial services into the digital ecosystem will ensure a streamlined process, allowing customers to select their preferred financier that suits the requirements," the company said. Tata Motors Vice President & Business Head Trucks, Rajesh Kaul said, "This partnership aligns with our commitment to enhancing customer experience through innovative digital solutions. By integrating HDFC Bank's expertise and reach, we aim to empower our customers with a range of financial choices that suit their unique needs."



Giordano aims to double revenues from India

Retailer Giordano is targeting to double its revenues from the apparel business in India in 2024, top officials said on Thursday. The Hong Kong-headquartered company, which re-entered the Indian market almost after a decade, is set to close 2023 with a revenue of Rs 20 crore from the apparel business. Ujjval Saraf, the director of Brandzstorm India Marketing, the company's partner in India, said in 2024, the revenue from Giordano's apparel sales are to go up to Rs 40 crore and the points of sale to double to 100. Giordano International's member of management committee, Ishwar Chugani, said the company has 108 points of sale in Myanmar and it sees India as a promising market. Saraf said the target is to book a revenue of Rs 100 crore from apparel sales in 2026 with a corresponding increase in distribution which includes exclusive stores, shop-in-shop and selling at online marketplaces.



Hyundai to increase vehicle prices from January 1

Automaker Hyundai Motor India Ltd on Thursday said it will hike the prices of its vehicles from next month citing rising input cost, adverse exchange rate and increase in commodity prices. The company, which sells a range of vehicles starting from Grand i10 Nios to electric SUV IONIQ5, priced between Rs 5.84 lakh to Rs 45.95 lakh, however, did not specify the quantum of the proposed price increase to be effective from January 1, 2024. The price increase is owing to rising input cost, adverse exchange rate and increase in commodity prices, amongst other reasons, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), said in a statement. HMIL COO Tarun Garg, COO said the company always tries to absorb the cost escalations to the extent possible and ensure customers are not burdened. "However, it has now become imperative to pass on some portion of the rising input cost to the market through a minor price increase," he added.



No 'spectacular announcement' in February budget, says FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday ruled out any "spectacular announcement" for her sixth budget on February 1 next year, saying it would just be a vote on account before the general elections.

A full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal would be presented in July next year by the new government elected after the April-May general elections, she said at the CII Global Economic Policy Forum.

"I am not going to play a spoilsport, but it is a matter of truth that the February 1, 2024, budget that will be announced will just be a vote on account because we will be in an election mode. So the budget that the government presents will just be to meet the expenditure of the government till a new government comes to play," she said.

"No spectacular announcements come in that time (in a vote on account). So you will have to wait till after the new government comes in and presents the next full Budget in July 2024," Sitharaman said in reply to a question on whether she would announce a "super-



charged budget" in February.

Piyush Goyal, who was holding additional charge of the Ministry of Finance after Arun Jaitley fell ill, had presented the last interim budget in 2019. After the Narendra Modi-led government swept to power for the second straight time, Sitharaman was appointed as the finance minister and she presented the full budget on July 5, 2019.

Traditionally, a vote on account is an authorisation for incurring certain expenditures required till a new government takes office.

Governments in the past have refrained from making any major policy announce-

ment during the vote on account, but there is no constitutional bar from making big announcements. Goyal had announced a Rs 6,000 per year cash dole to 12 crore farmers in the interim Budget 2019.

Goyal had also announced tax sops for the middle class, including hiking the standard deduction available to the salaried class to Rs 50,000, from Rs 40,000.

Also, a full tax rebate was announced for individual taxpayers having taxable annual income of up to Rs 5 lakh. The 2019 interim budget had proposed that such taxpayers would not be required to pay any income tax.

'All sectors contribute significantly to high GDP growth'

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said India continues to maintain the momentum of the fastest-growing major economy, with all sectors contributing significantly in economic activities. Replying to a short-duration discussion on the state of the economy in the Rajya Sabha, the minister also highlighted the various achievements of the Modi government since May 2014. "The second quarter growth was very high, it is the highest in the world. We continuously maintain that momentum of being the fastest-growing economy," Sitharaman said. She further said that in just the last eight years, India has become the fifth largest economy from the 10th in 2014. "The activities are all across the economy. It's not as if one sector is doing well...All sectors are growing and growing significantly for us to notice it," she said.

National highways totalling 43,856 km under construction stage: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National highway projects totalling 43,856 kilometres are under construction stage in the country, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

These national highways are being constructed at a cost of over Rs 9,60,103 crore, Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said in the Lok Sabha.

According to the data shared by the minister, as of October 31, the total length of national highways in the country is about 1,46,145 km against 91,287 km as of March 31, 2014.

The total number of under-construction national highway projects is 1,609. These projects are coming up across various states and UTs, Gadkari said.

The government has taken a number of steps to ensure the timely completion of projects like awarding projects after adequate preparation in terms of land acquisition and pre-construction activities, streamlining the land acquisition notification process, simplifying the procedure for approval of GAD (General Arrangement Drawing) by Railways, among others.

MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

ED files first chargesheet against Chinese smartphone maker Vivo

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has filed its first charge sheet in connection with its money laundering probe against Chinese smartphone maker vivo-India and some others, official sources said on Thursday.

The prosecution complaint was filed before a special court here on Wednesday under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and vivo-India has been named an accused apart from those arrested in this case, the sources told PTI.

The federal probe agency arrested four people, including mobile company Lava International's MD Hari Om Rai, in October as part of this investigation. The others who were taken into custody were Chinese national Guangwen alias Andrew Kuang and chartered accountants Nitin Garg and Rajan Malik.

The ED had claimed in its remand papers before a local court here that the alleged activities of the four arrested accused enabled vivo-India to make wrongful gains that were detrimental to the eco-



nomic sovereignty of India.

It had raided vivo-India and its linked persons in July last year, claiming to have busted a major money laundering racket involving Chinese nationals and multiple Indian companies.

The ED had then alleged that a whopping Rs 62,476 crore was "illegally" transferred by vivo-India to China to avoid payment of taxes in India. The company had said that it "firmly adheres to its ethical principles and remains dedicated to legal compliance".

Rai had recently told a court here that though his company and vivo-India were in talks to launch a joint venture in India a decade ago, he had nothing

to do with the Chinese firm or its representatives since 2014.

"He has not derived any monetary benefit, nor has he engaged in any transaction with vivo-India or any entity allegedly related to vivo, let alone having been associated with any alleged 'proceeds of crime'," Rai's lawyer had told the court.

The agency filed an enforcement case information report (ECIR), the ED's equivalent of a police FIR, on February 3 after studying a December 2022 Delhi Police FIR against an associated company of vivo-India, Grand Prospect International Communication Pvt. Ltd. (GPICPL), its directors, shareholders and some other professionals.



Govt bans use of sugarcane juice/sugar syrup for ethanol making

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday banned the use of 'sugarcane juice and sugar syrup' for ethanol production in the 2023-24 supply year that started this month, in order to maintain adequate sugar availability for domestic consumption and to keep prices under check.

However, the government has allowed use of 'B-molasses' for ethanol production in 2023-24, a move which sugar industry bodies welcomed.

In a letter issued to all sugar mills and distillers, the Food Ministry directed them "not to use sugarcane juice /sugar syrup" for ethanol production during the 2023-24 ethanol supply year (December-November).

The directive was issued as per clause 4 and 5 of the Sugar (Control) Order 1966.

"Supply of ethanol from existing offers received by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) from B-Heavy molasses will continue," Food ministry said in the letter.

The decision by the ministry comes in the backdrop of estimated fall in sugar production in 2023-24 marketing year (October-September).

Welcoming the move, the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF) Managing Director Pakash P Naiknaware said, "There is huge stock of ethanol made from B-molasses lying in the country apart from contracted quantities. The letter resolves the industry's concern."

However, there are some ambiguity in the letter that states supply of ethanol from "existing offers" received by OMCs from B-Heavy molasses will continue.

EV retail sales grow 25.5% to 1,52,606 units

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Electric vehicle total retail sales, including passenger and commercial vehicles, grew 25.5 per cent to 1,52,606 units in November, according to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA) on Thursday.

The total EV retail sales in November 2022 were recorded at 1,21,596 units, according to FADA.

The e-two-wheeler sales were 18.82 per cent higher at 91,243 units during the previous month from 76,791 units in November 2022.

The e-three-wheeler volume rose 32.37 per cent to 53,766 vehicles in the reporting month as compared to 40,619 units retailed in the year-ago period, the data showed. Electric passenger vehicles retail sales in November this year stood at 7,064 units, a growth of 77.35 per cent over 3,983 units in the same month of last year.

The electric commercial vehicle (e-buses) retail sales were reported at 533 units in the previous month as against 203 units retailed in November 2022, registering a year-on-year growth of 162 per cent, it said.

Stock markets snap seven-day winning run; Sensex falls 132 points

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty snapped their seven-day winning streak on Thursday due to profit taking by investors after recent sharp gains triggered by negative cues from Asian markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 132.04 points, or 0.19 per cent, to close at 69,521.69. The gauge hit the lowest intra-day level of 69,320.53.

Broader index Nifty also declined 36.55 points, or 0.17 per cent, to settle at 20,901.15.



Analysts said crude oil prices in international markets failed to boost sentiment amid selling pressure from foreign institu-

tional investors even as traders stayed on the sidelines ahead of RBI's monetary policy decision. The Reserve Bank of India is

Odisha approves projects worth Rs 4,804 crore

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Thursday approved 19 industrial projects worth Rs 4,804 crore which are likely to generate 17,553 jobs, officials said.

The projects were approved at the State-Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) meeting chaired by chief secretary PK Jena here.

The approved projects are in apparel and textiles, steel downstream, paint (chemical), plastics, packaging/metal downstream, chemicals, food, beverage and allied sectors, steel (ferroalloys), IT infra-

structure, agro processing, renewable energy/circular economy and infrastructure.

These diverse investments not only enhance Odisha's manufacturing capabilities but also showcase the region's rich mineral resources, metallurgical expertise and commitment to technological advancements in the IT sector, Jena said, adding that the agro industry has seen notable advancements, tapping into the state's cultivation potential.

The new projects will come up in 10 districts, which will reflect a comprehensive and widespread industrial development strategy for the state.

'Make-in-India prog drives growth in manufacturing-based exports'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exports of manufacturing-based products have increased significantly due to the Make-in-India programme, leading to a huge growth in employment opportunities in the country, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday.

The Railways, Communications and Electronics & IT Minister told reporters here that earlier the services sector used to dominate the export figures, but pharmaceuticals, mobile phones and merchandise have replaced it



now. He attributed the increase in the export of manufactured goods to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make-In-India programme.

According to 2022-23 export data, of total exports of USD 762

billion, USD 453 billion came from manufactured goods and USD 309 billion from services, the minister said.

"This is a big turning point. It is a reflection of change in the country's economy. Manufacturing-based exports impact a common man's life. If we study the economy of countries like Japan and South Korea, we will see that they all, during their economic journey, focused on manufacturing while moving from low-income to middle-income and then high-income," Vaishnaw said.

CAN REGISTER 8% GROWTH: NITI VC

'India labour-rich with enough institutional maturity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has the potential to grow at 8 per cent as the country is labour-rich with enough institutional maturity of a functioning democracy, Niti Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery said on Thursday.

Bery also cautioned that North India has not been doing well traditionally compared to South India, and this can create tensions in a federal polity. "So, 8 per cent growth or something approximating that means continuous change that needs to be politically man-

aged," he said while addressing the Global Economic Policy Forum 2023, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the finance ministry. According to Bery, the modernisation journey of India is unusual and unique.

"And if I wanted to bet on India for the next 25 years, I would point to first, the fact that we are not labour constrained in a world which is increasingly labour constrained. But much more importantly...we have the institutional maturity of a functioning democracy with estab-



lished rules of the game for the transfer of power we have just seen magnificently in the state

elections," he added. Bery noted that economic growth in a country like India is a prereq-

uisite for equity.

"So, growth is not an end in itself, but it is a means to an end to raise living standards and secure India's strategic and institutional economy," he said. Bery pointed out that India is the fastest-growing major economy but still the lowest per capita income country in the G20. "Growth needs to be both inclusive as well as pro-people, and women-led growth will be critical for attaining positive outcomes.

"The challenge is to use the mature institutional democratic structure of India to

realise its potential in the Amrit Kaal," the Niti Aayog vice chairman said. He emphasised that growth must be prioritised to achieve domestic and international objectives of higher living standards and securing India's strategic and institutional economy.

Bery also said it is important to strike the right balance between facilitation and regulation at the Union and state levels to realise India's potential. "It is important to link both the personal as well as spatial dimensions of inequality," he said.

Pencil-maker Doms sets Rs 750-790 price band for Rs 1,200 crore IPO

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The second largest pencil-maker Doms Industries on Thursday set a Rs 750-790 price band for its Rs 1,200 crore initial share sale that's opening on December 13.

The Umbergaon, Valsad-based company said the issue comprises Rs 850 crore of offer for sale and Rs 350 crore of fresh issue, and will close on December 15. Its chief financial officer Rahul Shah told reporters here that the floor price is 75 times and the cap price is 79 times the face value of the equity shares.

The OFS will have its single largest shareholder Fila of Italy

selling shares worth Rs 800 crore from its 51 per cent holding and promoter families diluting shares worth Rs 50 crore Rs 25 crore each by Sanjay Mansukhlal Rajani who is a director of the company and Rs 25 crore by Ketan Mansukhlal Rajani who is whole-time director.

This offer also includes a reservation of shares aggregating up to Rs 5 crore for subscription by eligible employees which will be issued at a discount of Rs 75 per share.

The company will use proceeds to part finance the Rs 453.57 crore capex for setting up a new manufacturing facility to expand production

Early language skills enhance employability in India

(The author, Eshleen Jolly, is the founder, of Learning Lingos.)

WINTER & HEART: Season's impact on cardiovascular well-being

(The author, Dr. Anjan Siotia, is the Director of the Cardiology Department at BM Birla Heart Research Centre in Kolkata.)

B-town inspired hairstyles for you to ace this wedding season

● **ACHIEVE THIS LOOK:**

- Start by using a hair dryer and blow dry the hair until 80% dry. Once dried, section your hair into half, creating a center part.
- Starting with one half, create outward-facing curls by manually winding a small section of hair around a round brush, while using the dryer on a high heat and high air-flow setting.
- Heat each section of hair for 5 seconds (or until dry) and set the curl with by pinning up. Leave it till it dries and remove the pin. Repeat the process and complete the first half of the hair.
- Complete the second half of the hair by following steps 3 & 4.
- With an elastic band, tie the hair into a low-side ponytail.
- Split the ponytail in half, twist one half to the elastic band and secure it with pins.
- Repeat the same for the other half.
- For a more natural look, loosen strands of hair at the top part and release strands of fringe at the side.
- You may also add some flowers to go with your traditional attire.

A woman with long, wavy, light brown hair styled in a low-side ponytail with outward-facing curls, wearing a white lace-trimmed garment.



Umbala



Ramesh Kumar Reddy



Dhanalakshmi and Priya



Shalini



Chaitra sai and Likhitha



Rujula

Regency College of Culinary Arts and Hotel Management celebrated the Regency Christmas Gala at its campus in Hyderabad. For the event, the final year students came up with a unique '7 International Cuisine Display', each consisting of 150 authentic recipes were displayed in the set-ups.



Jyothi



Monika



Shashi Priya

Ferty9 medical doctor, Dr. C. Jyothi, along with her team, unveiled the logo of its upcoming baby meet program, which is going to be held tomorrow in Hyderabad. This event is going to provide a unique opportunity for parents and soon-to-be parents to come together and create a supportive network to share their experiences. The event is expected to be graced by actress Sneha.



M. Srinivasa Rao (MSR)-CEO of T-Hub, flagged off Petfolk's revolutionary pet grooming service on bikes from T-Hub in Hi-tech city. The service aims to provide a convenient and economic mode for pet owners to groom their pets.










Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has secured branding rights from L & T, Hyderabad, for Metro Stations at Peddamma Gudi and MGBS. During a function held at LIC Peddamma Gudi Metro Station, LK Shamsunder, Zonal Manager, inaugurated the branding activities.




HS Bhatia, managing director of Kelwon Electronics and Appliances, has been honoured with the distinguished 'Licensee of the Year' award in the Electronics category at the 2023 Labels Summit Awards.

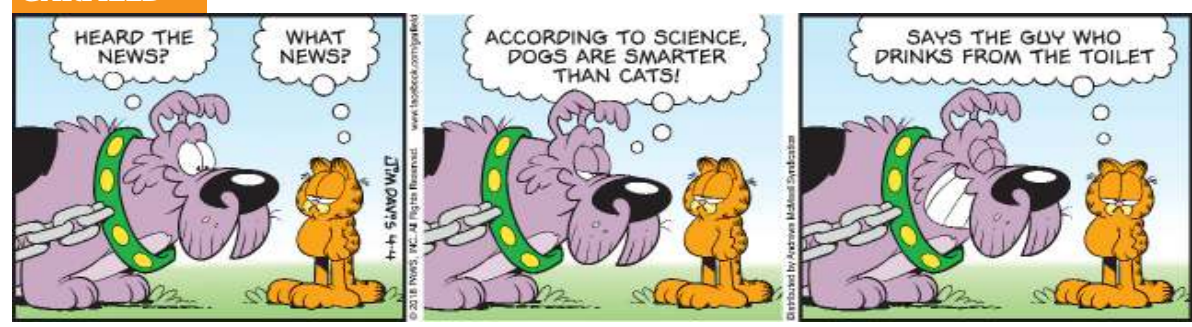
ARCHIE



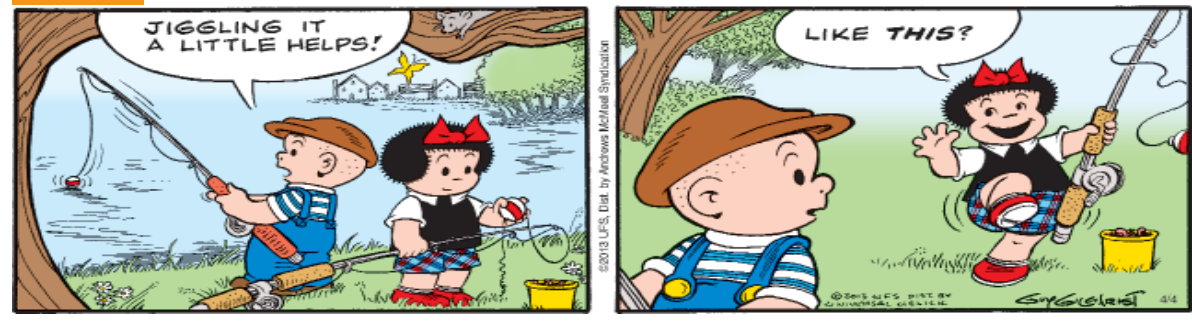
CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD



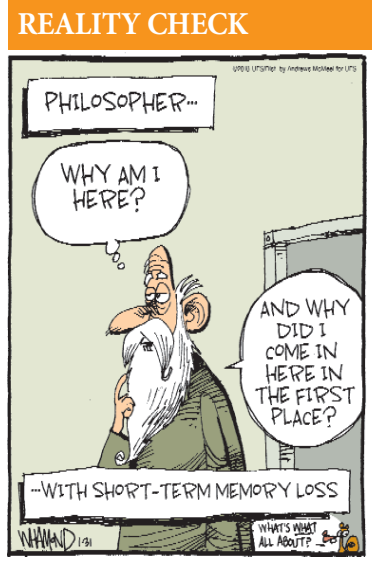
NANCY




GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

1

 A large extinct animal

6

 Do this in water

7

 Me

9

 A friendly word for a cat

11

 Feathered creatures

12

 The same in value

13

 This animal has no legs

16

 Turned over and over on the ground

18

 A group of players on one side in a game

19

 All the bones in your body

4

 A person from Moscow

5

 Unwell

8

 Someone who catches fish

10

 Houses for horses

14

 Wide awake and watchful

15

 Doing nothing, lazy

17

 A bird that hunts at night

DOWN

1

 Vanish

2

 Hit these in with a hammer

3

 A large number of soldiers

SOLUTION

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

NANDAMURI KALYANRAM'S **DEVIL** IN CINEMAS ON DEC 29

Nandamuri Kalyanram's next on-screen appearance will be in *Devil*. The PAN-Indian film features Samyukta Menon as the female lead. The movie was supposed to come out during the last week of November. The makers postponed the release due to the delay in post-production works.

Now, here is the latest update from the team. The movie will open in cinemas worldwide on 29th December. This is a bold move as *Devil* is coming to theatres a week after the big-ticket film *Salaar*. Till now a couple of songs have been unveiled.

Harshavardhan Rameshwar, who recently impressed with his background score in *Animal*, is the music director of *Devil*. Srikanth Vissa penned the story, screenplay, and dialogues.



Mrunal Thakur: I am a 'Telugu Ammayi' too; I am here to stay in Tollywood

Having another blockbuster hit in her kitty with *Hi Nanna*, Mrunal Thakur has proved that she's here to stay in the South, with enrapturing hearts. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, a super excited Mrunal gets candid about being in the most bewildering phase of her life, having a South career, and more.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Tollywood actress Mrunal Thakur is living like the rich and famous now, but most importantly, she's not letting that success get to her head. Straight from New York, with huge expectations, the leading lady speaks to us on the Zoom call and expresses the significant response she's anticipating and how excited she is to promote it in an international country. But before that, it was really important for us to get to know her headspace with all those well-liked compliments surrounding her in the South.

She communicated with a lot of feelings—feelings of joy—“I am in the most bewildering phase of my life. Every Telugu release is just making me feel stupefied about the reception. Earlier, I was going through a phase of FOMO, and I am satisfied now. There is a whole new world waiting for me now. This new phase is allowing me to put a smile on the faces of a whole new set of audiences, and that's so enriching to see. Filmmakers across every language are reaching out to me with their scripts.”

As she learns the Telugu ropes, she further continues, “Having a South career itself is

an enormous discovery of my life. I never thought I'd end up working in a language that I am uncomfortable speaking. Lately, one of my fans has stood up and said you remind me of Smita Patil. I was floored! I was about to break down emotionally. I adore this comparison. It was a pleasant coincidence, even though she was a Maharastrian, and my fans tell me now I am the one taking the Marathi community onto a global scale.”

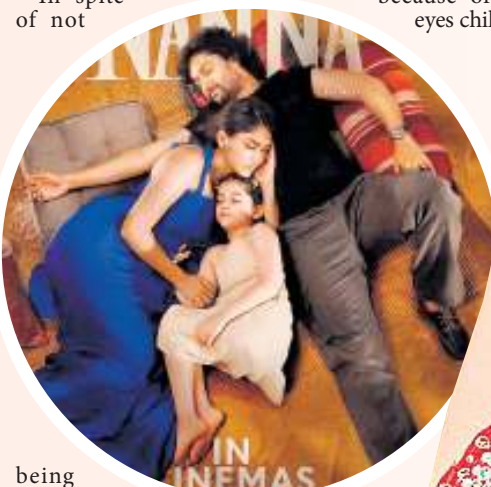
Of course, *Sita Ramam* was the game changer. A movie that didn't overlook any of her attributes and continued to only make her a memorable telugu actress down South. The *Jersey* fame conveyed, “I deserve a lot of love, which was lacking when *Sita Ramam* hadn't entered my life. I am a Telugu ammayi, so am I a Marathi mulgi now. I am here to stay in Tollywood! The treatment has changed so much: they are calling me by my character names and not Mrunal anymore.”

She even indicated a few lines in the context of Telugu production houses she's been working with continually, and we hear her saying, “Contracts are very important for an actress these days; how much is your producer allowing you to go for the promotions? My dates were occupied with the Family Star movie, but the production house managed it for me, so that, even I could attend the *Hi Nanna* promotions. There were days spent attending to my doctor, going for dental surgery, shooting for Family Star, and then doing my current release's promotions. I am doing this because these are my babies in the South Fraternity. I want all of them to be a success!”

As we spoke, she was in America, just had a phone call with Nani, and immediately revealed, “With a gigantic heart, he has asked me to helm the *Hi Nanna* promotions over-

Hyderabad for the local promotions. The last I had come for my movie screening was Love Soniya in Hindi. I am representing my own film in a country that is not my home ground.”

In spite of not



being a telugu-speaking girl, gradually she's picking up on the linguistic identity too, and on the same note, she clarified for the masses, “Speaking telugu is very difficult for me, although I have begun understanding it so well now. I can deliver my dialogue in Telugu even with all the difficulties around me. This was an accidental career I discovered in Tollywood, and this has become my multiverse now.”

When you see the promos, *Hi Nanna* is bound to take you on an emotional ride. Well, how did the actress play on her emotional strengths? Was our next question imposed on her? She replied with utmost honesty, “Sometimes we have to play certain relationships on-screen, for the audiences and fans of which the dynamics we have never experienced in our real lives. I was evoking all the emotions in the movie. And Kiara Khanna will always be my first child. Her mother knows it too; there

were days on the sets when Kiara used to unknowingly call me “mumma,” and I was never uncomfortable. She provoked and demanded those positive maternal instincts from me; I liked it. All the children in the movie *Fraternity* are well-behaved, but Kiara is different to me; she's extremely expressive. Many times she's made Nani garu and me go what! I had always sat down for her close-up shots because of the eyes chiko.”



Pindam promises a visual feast for horror enthusiasts

Roja Poolu, *Aadavari Matalaku Ardhalu Verule* fame Sriram, Kushee Ravi are teaming up for a horror drama *Pindam*, directed by a debutant Saikiran Daida. Yeshwanth Daggumati of Kalaahi Media is the producer. After encouraging responses to the first look, teaser and the song - *Jeeva Pindam* - the trailer of the film was launched today. The film is releasing in theatres on December 15.

The trailer commences with a discussion between Srinivas Avasara and Easwari Rao on spirits, if people after their death can harm others lives. The story shifts to a 90s backdrop when Anthony and his family move to a mysterious house. The house has a past they're unaware of and the family is soon affected by a series of eerie events. Two children hear strange conversations from one another.

The parents and the grandma are naturally worried and do their best to protect the children.

dren. After a spirit healer enters the house, she confirms that the house is affected by multiple spirits and asks the family to take care of the younger child. They need to protect their child before the 'mahalaya amavasya'. A dialogue suggests regardless of one's efforts to destroy something, they can't restrict its internal power.

Pindam lives up to the 'scariest film' ever caption with its engrossing trailer that pleases horror enthusiasts with intriguing drama, thrills and a chilling backstory. The aesthetics of the film are certain to be a major attraction, with the cinematography, unique lighting techniques, music and sound design contributing to its appeal. One also can't wait to watch the gripping premise, performances on the screen.

Pindam will unfold across three timelines - present-day scenario besides dating back to the 1930s and 1990s. Ravi Varma plays another crucial role. Saikiran Daida, Kavi Siddhartha have written the story while Satish Manoharan is the cinematographer. Krishna Saurabh Surampalli has composed the music and Shirish Prasad is the editor. Jashuva and Vishnu Nair are the stunt director and the art director respectively.



PINDAM

'Gitanjali is a character very dear to me as an actor,' says Rashmika Mandanna

Rashmika Mandanna, also known as the national crush, is one of the most well-known actresses of the film fraternity. Recently she was seen in the blockbuster Sandeep Reddy film, *Animal*, for which she has received immense love. The chemistry between Rashmika Mandanna and Ranbir Kapoor has been hailed by audiences with the newly famous hashtag - #RaRa! It is undoubtedly true that nobody would've been able to portray Gitanjali the way Rashmika did! On receiving so much love, Rashmika shares, “My loves!! The past couple days have been so overwhelming with the amount of love I have been receiving for *Animal*. It's inexplicable. Thankyou. Gitanjali is a character very dear to me as an actor. Her strength is her most admirable trait, and I just loved every bit of playing her character. I'm going to forever cherish the moments spent on the sets with the whole team of *Animal*.” Even amidst the success of her recent film, she's shuttling between locations for her upcoming thriller project, *The Girlfriend* which just goes on to prove her dedication to deliver stellar performances! On the work front, Rashmika has an exciting line up of projects that prove will surely be a treat to her fans, right from *The Girlfriend*, *D-51* and highly anticipated, *Pushpa 2- The Rule*.

Urvashi Rautela roped in for NBK109

Urvashi Rautela, who is Bollywood's youngest superstar, has achieved global recognition through her perseverance and hard work. She currently has over 70 million followers on

Instagram. In addition, Urvashi is the youngest Indian to be listed in the Forbes Top 10. And now, in the ever-evolving landscape of the Indian film industry, Urvashi consistently shines bright. Urvashi has once again left fans in awe by signing yet another massive pan-Indian project. The actress is all set to grace the silver screen as the leading lady in the much-anticipated film titled *Nbk109*.

Currently, the movie is shooting in the picturesque locales of Ooty, *Nbk109* is helmed by the accomplished director K. S. Ravindra Bobby. Produced by Sithara Entertainment

Director KS Bobby was amazed at Urvashi's performance in Inspector Avinash which had an acclaimed 8.5 rating on IMDB and also her acting performances alongside Megastar Chiranjeevi, Pawan

Kalyan had amazed him and roped the actress for this massive project.

The anticipation surrounding *Nbk109* is palpable, Urvashi has consistently wowed audiences with her versatility, and her inclusion in this star-studded project only amplifies the excitement. And now the actress is on a signing spree as she has almost done 5 massive Pan Indian projects in a Year and has always amazed the audience

with her performance. And now including Bobby Deol, Dulquer Salmaan, and Nandamuri Balakrishna adds an extra layer of excitement, promising a cinematic feast that transcends linguistic boundaries.

As the film is currently under the shooting process this massive news has caused fans to eagerly anticipate the moment when Urvashi Rautela, alongside Bobby Deol, Dulquer Salmaan, and Nandamuri Balakrishna, graces the screen in this visual extravaganza.



'Every episode of Vadhuvu will impress the audience'



Disney plus Hotstar is back with another interesting web series titled *Vadhuvu*, which is currently streaming on the platform. The series has Avika Gor, Nandu, and Ali Reza playing key roles. Produced by Srikanth Mohta and Mahendra Soni under the SVF banner, *Vadhuvu* is directed by Poluru Krishna.

Ahead of the release of the series on the platform, the team organised a special event, during which actor Ali Reza said, “One day I got a call for the series *Vadhuvu*. They asked for a 30 days call sheets. However, I was shooting for Varun Tej's *Operation Valentine*, where I am playing the character of an Air Force pilot in it. I told the same thing to the HotStar team. They said they will think. However, with the *Operation Valentine* shoot being postponed for another two months, I told the team that I was ready to work in the project. The mood of the scene was already created

when we went into the set. The atmosphere on the set was kept like that. *Vadhuvu* will be a sure hit.” The series is a remake version of a Bengali web series *Indu*.

Director Poluru Krishna said, “When I watched the original web series, I really liked the soul of the story. But we have designed the characters to suit our nativity. Our series is very different from the original. The name itself is a Bengali remake. In the first episode, Avika gets married and comes to her in-laws. The real story starts from the second episode. We will also take the audience to Avika's in-laws. The series is so gripping. From the second episode to the 7th episode, the story is just as curious. Episode 7 is going to kick ass.”

'Not a great film, but I have made Thikamakata a good film to watch,' says director Venkat

Thikamakata is gearing up for release on December 15 with a new concept. Twins Hari Krishna and Ramakrishna as heroes, Annie and Rekha Nirosha as heroines is the movie *Thikamakata* directed by Venkat. The pre-release event of this movie was held in the city. Producers C. Kalyan, Damodar Prasad and Prasanna Kumar were the chief guests for this pre-release event and congratulated the



movie team.

Producer C. Kalyan, who graced the event, was elated with Venkat introducing himself as a director and sharing that the entire team has done a great job. “I wish with all my heart that the film will be a success. He said that if a small film is good, the industry will be good, so he wants a small film to be accepted as a good film and succeed instead of being a big film.”

Meanwhile, director Venkat shared that when he first told this story to producer Tirupati Srinivasa Rao, he said, ‘I am getting ready to make this film for my sons.’ “This movie started when the hero Hari Krishna Rama Krishna liked the story. Hari Krishna, Ramakrishna, Annie, and Rekha

all supported each other well. Sivannarayana Garu, Rocket Raghava, Yadama Raju, and Bhaskar are also very highlighted, and each one supports me. I can't say that I have made a great film, but I can definitely say that I have made a good film. He said that he wants this movie to be a success. Also, special thanks were given to the producers, C. Kalyan, Damodar Prasad, and Prasanna Kumar, who came to support this movie.”



GAMBHIR CALLED ME FIXER: SREESANTH

PTI ■ SURAT

Former pacer S Sreesanth on Thursday alleged that ex-India teammate Gautam Gambhir called him a "fixer" during a Legends League Cricket match here.

The two World Cup-winning players were involved in a heated exchange during an Eliminator match between Indian Capitals and Gujarat Giants here on Wednesday. The umpires had to intervene and separate the two players.

"He kept on calling me 'fixer fixer, you are a fixer, **** off you fixer on live television on centre wicket,'" Sreesanth said while going live from his Instagram handle.

"I just said 'what are you saying', I kept laughing in a sarcastic way. He spoke to the umpires in the same language when they tried to control him," he added.

Sreesanth was handed a life ban by the BCCI's disciplinary committee due to his alleged involvement in the IPL 2013 spot fixing scandal.

However, the ban was reduced to seven years in 2019 by the Supreme court of India.

"From my side, I didn't use any bad word. Please guys support the real truth. He has been doing it with a lot of people. I



have no idea why he started it, it was the end of the over. "Now his people are saying sixer sixer bola hai but unhone bola you fixer, tu fixer hai (his people are claiming he said sixer sixer but he said you are

a fixer). This is not the way to talk. I'm thinking of leaving it (the incident) here but his people are trying to save him. I request you all to not fall for extra paid PR work," Sreesanth added.

An hour after Sreesanth went live. Gambhir, who is a BJP MP from East Delhi, posted on X a picture of himself in the Indian jersey smiling, captioning it "Smile when the world is all about attention!"

On Wednesday, in another Instagram live video after the game Sreesanth had called Gambhir “Mr fighter”, adding that he did not even respect senior players. “Just wanted to clear the air

with what happened with Mr fighter. One who always fights with all his colleagues. For no reason whatsoever. He does not even respect his own senior players, including Viru Bahi (Virender Schwag) “That’s exactly what happened today. Without any provocation, he just kept on calling me something which was very rude which shouldn’t have been said,” by Mr Gautam Gambhir,” Sreesanth had said. “I am not at all at fault here. I just wanted to clear the air straight away. What Mr Gauti has done, sooner or later all of you will get to know. The words that he used and the things he said on a cricket field, live, is not acceptable. “My family, my state, everybody has gone through so much. I fought that battle with all your support. Now people want to down me for no reason. He said things he shouldn’t have said. I will surely let you know what he said,” he reiterated.

This is not the first time Gambhir has been involved in an on field altercation. He has had fiery exchanges with Virat Kohli a couple of times during the IPL, including earlier this year when Royal Challengers Bangalore took on Lucknow Super Giants.

Smith's manager debunks former Australian captain's retirement talks

PTI ■ SYDNEY



Steve Smith will not follow his teammate David Warner into Test retirement as the former Australian captain thinks he can still achieve a lot more, clarified Warren Craig, his long-time manager. Warner had expressed his desire for a Sydney farewell after the third and final Test against Pakistan starting from January 3, 2024.

There have been talks about Smith following the suit after a below par season this year against India and England. While the New South Welshman's overall average remains the best among contemporary batsmen -- 9320 runs from 102 Tests at an average of 58.61 with 32 hundreds -- he has struggled for big runs this season. However, Craig did not buy into the floating rumours. "I can debunk that (retirement) at this point in time. He's still talking about things he wants to achieve," Craig was quoted as saying by Sydney Morning Herald. The 34-year-old top-order batter has achieved every trophy during his illustrious career, including the Ashes (2015), ODI World Cup (thrice and 2023), T20 World Cup (2021) and the World Test Championship (2023). But this year, he has man-

aged only 518 runs across 17 innings at an average of 34.53. But standing very close to becoming the fourth Australian batter to score 10000 Test runs, Smith might not want to miss that chance.

Allan Border, Ricky Ponting and Steve Waugh are the Aussie players to have crossed that landmark.

Smith was also in decent form during the recently concluded ODI World Cup in India, scoring 302 runs from 10 innings at an average of 33.55 with two fifties.

However, former Australian captain Mark Taylor offered a word of caution to Smith. "It doesn't mean they're done (in mid 30s), but normally you've seen their best by then. The early-30s would be the purple patch for most players," he told SMH.



Buttler delighted to regain form

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND
(ANTIGUA)

England skipper Jos Buttler said he was "fed up" with his woeful run of form and that it was time to get back to being "the player that I know I am" by putting up a solid performance with the bat.

The wicketkeeper batter, who struggled with the bat all throughout the ODI World Cup, scored his first half century since September -- an unbeaten 58 off 45 balls to guide England to a series-levelled six-wicket victory over hosts West Indies in the second ODI here on Wednesday.

"I've been searching for form. I have had moments where it has been frustrating," Buttler was quoted as saying by the "BBC".

"I was getting fed up with it so it was time to put in a performance and get back to the play-

er that I know I am," he added. Ahead of the second ODI Buttler had been dismissed for five single digit scores in eight outings. But the match-winning knock on Wednesday made him the fifth England batter to cross the 5,000-run mark in ODIs.

"Really pleasing. I've been playing for a while now so it's great when you get to those milestones after playing for a long period of time. It's been a frustrating time recently."

Buttler had taken over the reins as white-ball skipper from World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan last year. Under his leadership, England won the T20 World Cup last year. However, defending champions England made an embarrassing early exit from the ODI World Cup last month, finishing seventh to just qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy.

Bangladesh and New Zealand

Day 2 washed out in the 2nd cricket Test

AP ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

A day after 15 wickets tumbled, there wasn't a ball bowled on Thursday because of rain on Day 2 of the second cricket test between Bangladesh and New Zealand.

There was no sign of the rain stopping so match officials called stumps early and ruled that play would start earlier than scheduled on Friday.

Bangladesh has a 117-run lead and control of the match as it bids for a first ever Test cricket series win over New Zealand.

After skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto won the toss and opted to bat, Bangladesh was bowled out for 172 runs with Mushfiqur Rahim top-scoring on 35.

That dismissal made Mushfiqur the first Bangladeshi batter to be given out for handling the ball and obstructing the field.

Bangladesh's spinners then helped the home team hit back strongly, reducing New Zealand to 55-5. Offspinner Mehidy Hasan led the attack with 3-17 and left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, fresh from his 10-184 in the first test, took 2-29.

Bangladesh leads the two-match series after a 150-run victory in the first Test.

Bangladesh and New Zealand

Day 2 washed out in the 2nd cricket Test

We should have varied pace more, fielded better: Patil

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Y
Shreyanka Patil feels India should have varied the pace more while bowling and also fielded better in their 38-run defeat against England in the opening Women's T20I here. Renuka Singh Thakur (3/26) got two wickets in the first over, but India squandered the advantage to help England post a massive 197 for 6 on Wednesday. The home team batters then cut a sorry figure on a placid wicket to be restricted to 159 for 6 in the opening T20I of the three-match series.

"We could have varied the pace little more, the wicket was not that great for bowlers, it was completely in favour of the batters. I could bowled better but bowling in the death overs is not at all easy," Patil (2/44) told reporters at the Wankhede Stadium.

Patil, who made her T20 debut on Wednesday, admitted that fielding was one area in which the Indian team needs immediate attention as it looks to bounce back in the second match to be played at the same venue on Saturday.

"The wicket was amazing to bat on, it was not easy (to bowl), but I think we did a pretty decent job. We will have a discussion as to what can be improved. Fielding could have been better, but we



will bounce back stronger," she said.

The 21-year-old said it was difficult for her to get sleep after knowing that she would make her debut against England.

"I was very happy that I got the cap. I was a bit excited as well as nervous, I did not get any sleep (the previous night) but after one or two balls I was fine. (It felt like) I belong here," she said.

Patil said the inaugural Women's Premier League has

helped her learn the tricks of playing under lights with the white ball.

"It (WPL) did help me personally playing against Harry di (Harmanpreet Kaur), Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah (Rodrigues)," she said.

"I think that was the start for me and to carry the momentum here was a good achievement. It did help me to adjust under lights, bowling under pressure... Now I feel like this is where I belong and I am enjoying it."

Patil said she did scenario-based practice before the series in Bangaluru which proved beneficial for her. “Yes, I did a lot of scenario-based practice in Bangaluru with my coach (Arjun Dev) because once you start playing high-level cricket you need to be more accurate as to what should be doing so that performance comes out well. “The execution part is still in the learning phase, but I would say planning is very important and execution will

happen with experience," she said.

England batter Danni Wyatt scored a fluent 47-ball 75 with eight fours and two sixes to help the tourists post the total.

Her 138-run third wicket stand with Nat Sciver-Brunt (77) is now England's highest partnership against India in T20Is.

"Nat is just so calm, we don't really talk much out there. We have played with each other a lot. I have batted a lot with Nat. She is a quality player, she scores runs for fun, especially out here in Mumbai and (is) familiar with the conditions," Wyatt said.

Not been selected in the WPL last year was disappointing for the right-handed batter but Wyatt said she would be looking forward to being a part of the upcoming edition of the league, the auction for which will be held on December 9.

"Not while I was batting, not when I was walking out to bat but it crossed my mind a few times, people spoke about it," Wyatt replied when asked if WPL auction was on her mind while batting.

"I was pretty disappointed last year but I have completely changed my mindset now. I've done hard work and I kind of had a good summer. I would love to be a part of the next WPL," she said.

England beats West Indies by 6 wickets to level series

AP **NORTH SOUND**
(ANTIGUA)

Will Jacks scored 73 and Sam Curran took 3-33 as England found form to beat the West Indies by six wickets in the second one-day cricket international, leveling the three-match series at 1-1. Jacks' second ODI half century helped England to a winning total of 206-4 in the 33rd over in a match which was low-scoring compared with the series-opener in which 651 runs were scored. England sent the West Indies in at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium and bowled out the home team for 202 in 40 overs. Shai Hope top-scored with 68 after his match-winning 109 not out in the first match which the West Indies won by four wickets. The West Indies slumped to 23-4 after seven overs before Hope restored the innings in a 129-run partnership with

Sherrane Rutherford, who scored 63.

Hope reached his 25th ODI half century from 44 balls and scored his 68 runs at a run a ball, trying to give impetus to an innings which flagged a little in the middle stages.

Rutherford's maiden half century came from 71 balls.

Jacks gave the England innings a solid foundation. He shared a 50-run partnership with Phil Salt (21) for the fourth wicket and reached his half century from 43 balls.

His was the fourth England wicket to fall with the total 116 in the 20th over.

While Zac Crawley and Ben Duckett both were out for 3, Henry Brook and Jos Buttler took charge and carried England to victory with 17.1 overs to spare.

Buttler finished 58 not out, Brook 43 not out and the unbroken partnership was worth 90.

At 36, Buttler reached 5,000



career runs in one-day internationals, following West Indies captain Shai Hope who reached the 5,000 run milestone in the first ODI. Hope reached 5,000 runs in 17 innings, Buttler in 153. Buttler registered his 26th ODI half century from 43 balls just before the end, reaching the mark with a six off the bowling of Oshane Thomas.

"It was a must-win game today and we put in a brilliant performance," Buttler said. "I've been searching for some form and it was great to spend some time in the middle. There's no substitute for that. "Being not out at the end to get your side over the line is a great feeling."

The West Indies began poorly when Alick Athanaze was out in the fourth over, caught by Buttler off a sharp delivery from Gus Livestone. Curran then made a timely return to form by dismissing Keary Carty (0) and Brandon King

(17) to leave the West Indies innings teetering at 23-4. It was Curran's first haul of three wickets or more in nine ODI's since March. His 0-98 in the first match was the most expensive ODI spell ever by an England fast bowler.

"It was a tough day the other day but you've got to keep trying to move forward and bounce back," Curran said.

"We lost that game the other day but bounced back and we're really pleased."

Hope and Rutherford stayed together until the 30th over when Rutherford was caught by Salt from Livingstone's bowling. Hope fell four overs later, bowled by Livingstone and the rest of the West Indies order offered little resistance.

"We put pressure on ourselves by the way we batted," Hope said. "We didn't play situations smart enough and that's what caused the downfall in the batting."

