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**BARRIERS BY TRANSFORMING GENDER DYNAMICS** 

Rashmika Mandanna-starrer The Girlfriend kickstarts ITS SHOOT



QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer The Congress government will fall within one year in the process of clearing debts done by the previous BRS government. Previous government put the state in a position where it cannot pay the interest on the loans. How will the coming government bring the money for schemes it announced? It is possible for BJP only to run Telangana. BJP will come to power in Telangana

- Raja Singh, BJP MLA elect

### 'Soaked sprouted paddy should...

Telugu Desam party senior leader and former minister Nakka Ananda Babu demanded the government to purchase the soaked and sprouted paddy from the farmers in the cyclone affected area and deplored that the farmers bore the brunt of the Michaung cyclone. Nakka Ananda Babu along with other leaders visited some of the affected fields at Kolluru mandal in Vemuru constituency and saw the damaged paddy crop. He entered the knee deep water at the field, saw the soaking crop and interacted with the farmers and listened to their...

### Some crops tolerate ozone...

Certain crop plants are less prone to harm caused by ground-level ozone pollution, according to a study that opens the door to better models for predicting crop responses to the effects of climate change. The findings, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, also pave the way for developing more resilient varieties that can sustain humanity's increasing demand for food, feed, fibre and fuel. A team of scientists at Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and University...



### ONGC to cut gas flaring, use green...

State-controlled Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) plans to wheel green electricity to its installations in the Arabian Sea to replace natural gas it uses in operation of oil wells as part of its programme, its Chairman Arun Kumar Singh said. India's top oil and gas producer has substantially cut gas flaring -- burning of methane gas is produced when oil is extracted from below surface -and would look to bring it down to nil as part of its environmental commitments, he said..

### India opens campaign against...

India will face Afghanistan in the opening match of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup cricket tournament here on Friday. Pakistan will play Nepal in the other match of the opening day. Arch-rivals India and Pakistan will face each other on Sunday. Eight teams will compete for the top prize in the 50-over event which is being hosted by the Emirates Cricket Board. The teams have been divided into two groups of four each, India, Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan are placed in Group A. Bangladesh, Japan, Sri Lanka and hosts..

# Michaung affects four lakh people

# Paddy crop in thousands of hectares damaged

Cyclone Michaung has devastated life in eight districts across the coastal area in Andhra Pradesh. The cyclone impact has shattered the lives of 3,97,376 people in 308 villages in the coastal districts, according to the reports of the State government on Wednesday.

Among the people affected by the cyclone storm, 3,69,663 people were from Konaseema district while 11,926 in Krishna district, 6,077 in Nellore district, 5,113 in West Godavari district, 3,386 in Tirupati, 872 in Kakinada and 339 in Bapatla district.

As it is the time for harvesting paddy, the crop has been damaged in thousands of hectares in the West Godavari, Konaseema, Kakinada, Krishna, Bapatla, Prakasam, Nellore and Tirupati districts and the government is gearing to start enumeration process to assess the crop losses once

the water recedes.
A total of 131 huts were damaged in which 78 were in Tirupati and 48 in Konaseema and 62 houses were partially damaged in Konaseema. As many as 232 houses were marooned in Tirupati district and there were no instances of the same in the rest of the districts. As many as 25 villages were inundated of which 21 were in Bapatla district and the rest four in Tirupati district and no incident of village inundation was reported in



the rest of the districts. A total of 308 villages affected due to Cyclone Michaung in which highest number of 114 villages were in the Nellore district, followed by Tirupati with 54 villages, Krishna 52

villages, 41 in Konaseema, 21 in Bapatla, 18 in Prakasam, five in West Godavari and three in Kakinada district. A total of 77 Mandals in AP were affected including 25 in Tirupati, 19 in Nellore, nine in

Konaseema, seven each in Krishna and Bapatla, five in Prakasam, three in West Godavari and two in Kakinada district.



# 18,500 cusecs of water discharged from Prakasam barrage

VIJAYAWADA: Due to the impact of Cyclone Michaung, NTR district has received heavy rain causing a significant amount of water to accumulate at the Prakasam Barrage. To prevent any damage, the Water Resources Department opened 25 gates, each one foot in height, and discharged 18,500 cusecs of water downstream on Wednesday. The district has recorded about 21.90 cm of rainfall for the past two days. According to Water



upstream of the Prakasam Barrage experienced continuous rainfall for two days. This resulted in a large volume of water

many other streams in the district. As a result, the downstream canals and streams were filled with rainwater prompting the Irrigation authorities to stop the release of water to the canals. To manage the situation, the Irrigation Department lifted 25 gates, each one foot in height, and released the surplus water at a rate of around 18,500 cusecs into the sea. Additionally, the department maintained the barrage crust level at 12 feet

# Focus on restoring normalcy: CM

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed the Collectors, SPs and other senior officials of the cycloneaffected districts to focus on restoring normalcy.

During a review meeting on the damage caused by Cyclone Michaung held at the Camp Office here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister virtually asked them to extend support to the affected families with humanity and compassion.

Lauding the district collectors and special officers for their good work in taking timely precautionary measures and helping the victims in affected areas, he asked them to be liberal in extending financial help to the victim families, not minding the finances involved. The extent of financial support should be the same as we expect as victims, he suggested, adding that

have come to their rescue in difficult times. 'People whose houses were dam-

aged should be paid Rs.10,000 each while the people being sheltered in relief camps should be treated well and given the compensation and ration without fail when they leave for home," he said, adding there should be

no lacunae on this part. The Chief Minister asked the officials to give priority to clear the water from inundated agricultural fields with all available human resources and protect the crops as per the SOPs issued by the RBKs.

Asserting that the Government would stand by the loss-suffering farmers at every step from protecting the crops to purchasing the wet paddy to paying compensation, he asked them to convey this message to the farming community clearly.



# Rs 100-cr plan to transform SDTIs

Project will witness signing of MoUs with major industries

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSS-DC) has introduced a significant plan worth Rs 100 crore to improve skill development and training institutions. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will officially launch this initiative in Visakhapatnam, aiming to make a big difference in developing skills throughout the

As part of the ceremony, individuals who have undergone training in various fields will receive employment offer letters, showcasing the tangible outcomes of the skill development program.

The project will also witness the signing of memorandums of understanding with major industries, including KIA Motors, L&T, JSW, Samsung, UltraTech, Schneider Electric, Hyundai Steel, and Johnson Lifts and Escalators. These collaborations are poised to play pivotal roles in advancing skill development

The APSSDC, as a cornerstone of the State's comprehensive plan, holds a critical role in generating a high-quality skilled workforce. Skill Development and Training Minister Trainers (TOT).



Buganna Rajendranath Reddy underscored the significance of skill development, stating, "Skill development is the cornerstone for unlocking the inherent potential of our youth. The AP skill development event demonstrates our constant commitment to providing high-quality training programs that empower individuals and catalyze economic growth in our state."

The State government is actively modernizing its institutions to align with the latest technological advancements.

This collaborative effort with renowned industries aims to enhance the in-house infrastructure and human resources of ITIs, polytechnic colleges, skill colleges, and NAC Centres. The key objectives include modernizing 227 government institutions, aligning course content with industry standards, creating in-demand courses, and fostering increased partnerships with industries for Training of

# Jagan following path laid by Ambedkar

The ruling YSRCP leaders paid floral tributes to the portrait of Dr BR Ambedkar on the occasion of his death anniversary at the YSRCP party office at Tadepalli on Wednesday. Minister Meruga Nagarjuna, MPs Nandigam Suresh, Gurumurthy, SC Cell State president Jupudi Prabhakara Rao and others paid tributes.

Meruga Nagarjuna said that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was following the path laid by Ambedkar in all aspects related to administration. "On the occasions of Ambedkar's death anniversary and birth anniversary, political party leaders garland his portraits and

LS takes up Bill to establish Tribal

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday

took up a bill for the establishment

of the Sammakka Sarakka Central

Tribal University in Telangana in

pursuance of the Andhra Pradesh

Piloting the Central Universities

(Amendment) Bill, 2023 in the

lower house, Minister of State for

Education Subhas Sarkar said the

tribal university in Telangana is

being established in pursuance of

the commitments made in the

Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation

**University in TS** 

PNS NEW DELHI

Reorganisation Act.

Act, 2014.

statues. However, they show negligence in following the ways suggested by him to eradicate poverty and achieve equality. YS Jagan is the person who is implementing them to achieve equality, not in the cabinet, not in other posts, but in the schemes being implemented," he said.

MP Nandigam Suresh said that with he vision and ideas of Ambedkar, India was able to achieve a good place among world countries. He said that through Nadu-Nedu, government schools were being developed and the children from economically backward families were receiving good education so that they could compete globally.



# homage to Dr Ambedkar



Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy paid homage to Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar on the occasion of his death anniversary, here on Wednesday. The Chief Minister paid floral tributes to the portrait of Ambedkar and offered obeisance. Home Minister T Vanita, Social Welfare Minister M Nagarjuna, MP N Suresh, Government Advisor (Social justice) J Prabhakar Rao and several party leaders also participated in the programme.

# PK, Naidu discuss political developments

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Days after the Telangana election results were declared, Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan met TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu at the latter's residence in Hyderabad on Wednesday. It is reported that there was a discussion between the two on the latest political developments.

The primary focus of their discussion is the forthcoming Andhra Pradesh elections and a retrospective analysis of the political landscape in Telangana. Pawan Kalyan, accompanied by Nadendla Manohar, arrived at Babu's house not long ago, and the meeting is currently in progress.



Lokesh, a key figure in Chandrababu's camp, is also present at the meeting. The agenda likely includes a detailed examination of the voting trends observed in Telangana. Pawan Kalyan's firsthand experience leading the Jana Sena Party in Telangana provides valuable insights for the discussions with Chandrababu.

The recent success of the Congress in Telangana, capitalizing on public dissatisfaction and unseating KCR, serves as a notable case study. Chandrababu and Pawan may be contemplating the application of similar strategies in Andhra Pradesh. The urgency of their meeting, occurring iust three days after the Telangana polls, suggests a concerted effort to leverage anti-incumbency sentiments to their advantage in Andhra Pradesh. The meeting holds significance not only in terms of strategic planning but also as a platform for collaboration between Pawan Kalyan and Chandrababu Naidu.



### FOR WELL-PERFORMING ENGINEERING COLLEGES

# AICTE removes cap on increasing intake

The cap on increasing intake of students has been removed for "wellperforming" engineering institutions from 2024, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) chairman TG Sitharam announced on Wednesday.

While launching the Approval Process Handbook (APH) for 2024-27, Sitharam also said that well-performing technical institutions will now be able to get approval from AICTE for three years at once and undergraduate management and computer application courses will now be brought under its ambit.

Presently, every technical education institute has to reapply for

approval every year. Before the grant of approval for





Before the grant of approval for the increase in intake sought by any institution, the Council shall ascertain the infrastructure and faculty availability there, according to the technical education regulator.

the increase in intake sought by any institution, the Council shall ascertain the infrastructure and faculty availability there, according to the

technical education regulator.

Policy (NEP) 2020 and the nation's proactive initiatives towards enhancement of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), the Council decided to

laid down in National Education allowed earlier for the courses, programs offered by existing institu-

"This is subject to the fulfilment of infrastructure availability, its "As envisaged in the provisions remove the upper limit on intake readiness and filled faculty position. cal and management education."

increase in intake sought by the institution, the council shall ascertain the infrastructure and faculty availability throughan EVC (expert visiting committee)," the AICTE chairman

At present, colleges are allowed to have a maximum of 240 seats in one branch. The upper limit was introduced following a mismatch between demand and supply. The council has, for the first time, released a threeyear handbook that will remain valid from 2024-25 to 2026-27.

The Council has also decided to bring undergraduate (UG) courses in Computer Applications (BCA) and Management (BBA/BMS) under the umbrella of AICTE to "ensure coordinated development in techni-

## All set for Revanth to take over

5 other Congress legislators to take oath as Ministers

K VENKATESHWARLU HYDERABAD

The stage is set for the swearing in of the new Chief Minister of Telangana State and his Council of Ministers at a grand ceremony in the LB Stadium on Thursday.

Congress' Chief Minister-designate A Revanth Reddy is going to take oath as the Chief Minister of Telangana, after K Chandrasekhar Rao, who ruled the state for two terms.Elaborate arrangements are being made for the swearing-in ceremony to be held at 1.04 PM at LB Stadium. Congress' top leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and AICC president Mallikarjuna Kharge, are

attending the ceremony.

Covernor Tamilisai Soundararajan will administer the



his team. Besides Revanth, 6 Ministers will take oath on the occa-

The probables include Bhatti Vikramarka, Seethakka, Sridhar Babu, Uttam Kumar, Ponnam Prabhakar. The Protocol Department and the General Administration Department have made all arrangements.



# Total unity is the only survival mantra for the Cong in TS!

Assembly, the Congress government being led by Revanth Reddy may be in for many challenges, politically and financially. In a sense, it will be a tightrope walk for him as he will have to strategically balance internal and external challenges.

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi, as a strong opposition party, will utilise every opportunity to corner the government on many issues, particularly the much-publicises, particularly the much-publicises six guarantees. As the Congress leadership itself had underlined the interest of the public that the public during the election campaign, the state of Telangana is debt-ridden. In this precarious financial situation, from where the Congress government will bring the funds

required to translate the six guarantees into reality is a question that has no immediate answer.

Revanth Reddy is the first

Chief Minister from the Congress party without any administrative and ministerial experience. This may come in handy for the opposition BRS to taunt the new government unless the Congress leadership acts in unison by jettisoning internal bitterness among those who had missed the chief minister's post. It is a fact that the Congress could come to power due to the unflinching and dedicated efforts of Revanth Reddy and the party's high command acted sensibly by crowning Revanth Reddy. The Congress party's state leaders must keep in mind the facts and the compulsions involved and solidly stand by the new Chief

For the Congress, it is a much-deserved chance to govern the state as, after all, it was the party that had granted Telangana in the first place. The golden opportunity that the people of the state have given it should not be squandered due to internal squabbles. Other parties in the state are ready to embarrass the government by taking advantage of its slender margin.

Minister, come what may. The situation would have been different had the Congress won more than eighty seats, allowing it to enjoy unquestionable majority. But, with a margin of just six seats, keeping the majority intact is essential for the survival of the new government. For this to happen, the new Chief Minister must consult even the disgruntled leaders who had

aspired for the chief minister post in vain, not only to strengthen the party but also to not give any scope for the opposition BRS to fish in troubled waters.

For the Congress, it is a muchdeserved chance to govern the state as, after all, it was the party that had granted Telangana in the first place. The golden opportunity that the people of the state have



RAJESWARA PRASAD

given it should not be squandered due to internal squabbles. Other parties in the state are ready to embarrass the government by taking advantage of its slender

margin. There will always be scope for it, given the political maneuvering ability of BRS supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao. He may be silent for now, but if the opportunity comes, he will never hesitate to make use of it. Over two terms, the KCR govt enjoyed a rock-solid majority and even now its number in the opposition is not such a weak one: including BJP's eight members and MIM's seven members, the total opposition strength is around 54. The difference between the ruling and opposition is only 10 members. Given the razor-thin majority, there will be a ruthless onslaught on the government by the combined opposition. In this kind of precarious situation, the Congress govt has to take each step carefulso that no room is left for the

opposition's combined attack. Apart from maintaining internal unity, the new Chief Minister has to be more careful about implementing the given promises, which involve hundreds of crores of rupees. With the debt burden looming large, it will be a herculean task for the Chief Minister to be able to fulfil them so as not to give any scope for criticism.

Total unity is the only mantra for the Congress government to sustain itself. It is incumbent upon the Congress leaders to shed any kind of dissatisfaction and work unitedly for the success of the government just as they had worked during the campaign to bring the party to power. Everyone has to stand by the new Chief Minister in fulfilling the agenda of the government and

take it to the doorstep of the people. Aspirations for posts and positions can wait. The first and foremost responsibility of the leaders is to keep the government on a strong pedestal by standing behind it and lending a strong helping hand to the new leader. It is a long-awaited dream coming true for the Congress, which the grand old party should not lose at any cost.

Lastly, experience can be gained with time if the leader is ambitious and a visionary like Rajiv Gandhi who had no political and administrative experience before taking over the reins of prime ministership after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Later, he proved his potential and gave India a vision for development and showed the path for progress.

# **Complaint seeks removal of** duplicate entries for votes

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The YSRCP ministers and leaders lodged a complaint with the State Chief Electoral Officer urging that those who have registered as voters in Telangana shall not register as voters in Andhra Pradesh.

Ministers Ch Venugopala Krishna and Jogi Ramesh, along with MP M Gurumurthy and MLC Lella Appi Reddy, complained about the enrolment of Telangana voters in Andhra Pradesh, violating Section 17 of the Representation of People Act, 1950. It says that no person shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for more than one constituency.

The YSRC team lodged a complaint with AP Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

Chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu is going to New Delhi on December 7 to complain against the YSRCP on entry of bogus votes.

Minister Venugopala Krishna said that it was the biggest violation of elec-toral practices that had been taken up by the Telugu Desam in Hyderabad as the voters who had already voted in Telangana recently were being illegally lured to get their names enrolled as new voters in Andhra Pradesh by TD

He alleged that Naidu was telling lies regarding bogus votes and going to spread the fake news in the national media in New Delhi and sought the Election Commission to remove the double and

evidence and proof. Telugu triple entry voters and give voting rights to genuine

> Minister Jogi Ramesh said they had come to notice that there were 4,30,264 duplicate votes in both Hyderabad and AP and asked CEO MK Meena to remove double entries.

The policy of YSRC is that every eligible person should have a vote in one place in the country and they have already informed the Election Commission about this issue many times. He said that after examining the evidence provided by them, an investigation should be conducted and such votes deleted. Minister alleged Chandrababu was trying to back to the Central Election Commission for committing illegalities and complain about it.

### **CM** attends wedding of **MLC's daughter**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, along with his wife YS Bharathi Reddy, attended the wedding of YSRCP MLC Talasila Raghu Ram's daughter at A Convention Centre here on Wednesday. The Chief Minister and his wife blessed the couple, Pranava and Vishnu.

# No merit in petitions against GO: AG

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court, on Wednesday, heard a batch of petitions challenging the State government's decision on shifting camp offices to Visakhapatnam. Recently, the State government issued G.O. 2283 for providing office space for senior functionaries including ministers at the Millenium Towers A&B at Rushikonda in Visakhapatnam. Following the recommendations of the Commerce of Officers, the State government issued the

However, the order was challenged by Gadde Tirupathi Rao, managing trustee of the Amaravati Conservation Society, Mandala Srinivasa Rao, Valaparla Manoharam and farmers of Amaravati region. The petitioners approached the High Court seeking an interim order of stay on the government order.

Advocate General Subrahmanyam Sriram, representing the Andhra Pradesh government, told the court that there was no merit in the petition and argued that the issue which was supposed to be

filed as a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) had been filed as a writ petition.

He further said the matters related to Amaravati capital region can only be heard by the Chief Justice of India or the full bench.

He also said the petitioners deliberately filed the case as a writ petition and this was considered as forum shopping (the practice of deliberately choosing a specific court for a legal case in the hope of getting a favorable outcome).

The court posted the matter for next hearing on Friday.

## Final results of SI recruitment released after HC nod

PNS VIJAYAWADA

State Level Police Recruitment Board-Andhra Pradesh Chairman Atul Singh, here on Wednesday, released the inspector recruitment after getting clearance from the AP High Court. A few aspirants had filed petitions in the High Court alleging faulty measurement of height hence the APHC conducted a measuring process on the court premises and found no fault in the process. The AP HC permitted the release of the test results, putting aside the earlier stay order, hence the APSLPRC released the results on Wednesday.

Atul Singh, in the order, stated that 1,73,047 candidates had submitted online application forms for the post of SCT SI (Civil, Men & Women) and RSI (APSP, Men) after notification issuance. Preliminary written test was held on February 19, which www.slprb.ap.gov.in

Krishna Paksha

Dec 07 03:04 AM

Dec 08 05:06 AM

Dec 07 06:28 AM

to Dec 08 08:54 AM

1:29 PM to 2:52 PM

6:37 AM to 7:59 AM

03:43 PM to 05:29 PM

9:22 AM to 10:44 AM

02:17 AM to 04:03 AM

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

Updated: December 6, 2023 5:00 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

to Dec 08 05:06 AM

to Dec 09 06:31 AM

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Dashami:

Ekadashi

Hasta:

Nakshatram:

Rahukalam:

Varjyam:

Amritakalam:

Temp: 30<sup>∞</sup> Humidity: 81%

Sunset: 5:34 PM

was attended by 1,51,288 candidates and the results were declared on February 28. As many as 57,923 candidates passed the written test and hall tickets were issued to them for He explained that 31,193 candidates qualified for PMT/PET and hall tickets were issued to them for the final written test which was held on October 14

Atul Singh stated that the final test was held for four papers. The preliminary key for the Papers III and IV was given on October 15. Papers III and IV will be evaluated for only those candidates who pass Papers I and II. Atul Singh said that 25,839 candidates qualified in Papers I and II, out of which 18,637 candidates qualified Papers III and IV.

He added that the candidates may download their result sheets from the AP website,

Continued from Page 1

among those present.

Focus on restoring...

The Agricultural Department should be ready to supply

seeds on 80 per cent subsidy, he said. Official machinery

should also focus on restoring power supply and roads in

affected areas while paying attention to sanitation to pre-

vent spread of diseases, he said, adding that the government

would also stand by the staff involved in relief and rescue

for the family of the constable who died in line of duty

during the cyclone and said it would support all

employees from volunteers to village secretariat staff to

DGP KV Rajendranath Reddy, Special Chief Secretaries

G Sai Prasad (Revenue and disaster management), Y Sri

Lakshmi, (MA&UD), K Vijayanand (Energy), MT

Krishna Babu (Medical & Health), Home Principal

Secretary Harrish Kumar Gupta, Civil Supplies

Commissioner H Arunkumar, Panchayat Raj

Commissioner A Suryakumari, Civil Supplies

Corporation MD G Veera Pandyan, Housing Special

Secretary Mohammad Deewan, Disaster Management

Director Dr BR Ambedkar and other senior officials were

Home Minister T Vanita, CS Dr KS Jawahar Reddy,

higher level employees in difficult times.

The Chief Minister announced Rs. 30 lakh ex-gratia

### Michaung...

Continued from Page 1

Regarding cyclone relief camps, a total of 236 relief camps were opened of which 124 were in Nellore, 37 in Konaseema, 36 in Tirupati, 27 in Bapatla and 12 were opened in West Godavari district. The officials evacupeople and shift. ed them to relief camps of which 6077 were shifted to cyclone relief camps in Nellore district, 5113 in West Godavari, 3386 in Tirupati, 1308 in Bapatla and 910 in Konaseema district.

The cyclone damaged 1266.9 km length of surface roads, of which 495 km of roads are in the Nellore district followed by 311 km in Prakasam, 285 km in Bapatla, 95.4 km in Tirupati and 80.5 km in Konaseema district. As many as 14 sources of minor irrigation were damaged in Tirupati district, 3162 villages remained in darkness in which power was restored in 2,338 villages and works were under progress to provide power to the rest of the 824

### Aarogyasri scheme strengthened including 3,257 procedures PNS VIJAYAWADA Medical and Health Minister Viddala Rajini has said that the government is taking innovative steps regarding the Aarogyasri scheme. During a review meeting with the Medical and Health

New Aarogyasri health cards soon: Min

cards.

Health Department officials on Wednesday, minister Rajini said that the government, under the leadership of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, had strengthened the Aarogyasri scheme by including 3,257 less than Rs 5 lakh. She explained that even treatments

Aarogyasri. The minister stated that the Aarogyasri card has also been fully modernized and the new cards will be given to every family very soon. The process of making the cards has already

worth Rs 25 lakh can be pro-

vided free of cost under

started and Chief Minister YS newly designed Aarogyasri Jagan Mohan Reddy has issued instructions to start distribution of new Aarogyasri cards

She said that steps had been taken to distribute Aarogyasri cards to 1.43 crore families across the State through their secretariats. The officials were directed to take proper measures to avoid any problems in the issuance of cards. As per the instructions of the Chief Minister, steps are being taken to include ID numbers in the

Minister Vidadala Rajini

said that Jagan had set a goal one in our State should be stored safely. To that extent, the government has already undertaken many reforms. The details of all those receiving medical treatment in our State are being fully digitized through Jagananna Arogya Suraksha, Family Doctor, and Aarogyasri. Steps were ordered to ensure that the details of all

the patients are available at one place regardless of the way they are receiving treatment.

Rajini stated that the Chief Minister had already issued orders to take steps to implement the second phase of Jagananna Arogya Suraksha programme. Steps should also be taken to provide more specialty services in the second phase Jagananna Arogya Suraksha camps. She said that new medical tests should also be included and necessary procedures should be formulated

Special Chief Secretary of Medical Health Department MT Krishna Babu, Secretary of Medical Health Department, Dr Manjula, Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare Department J Niwas, Director of Secondary Health and CEO of Arogya Dr Venkateshwar, DME Dr Narsimham and oth-

## All set for Revanth to take over...

Continued from Page 1

After taking oath, Revanth Reddy will go to the Secretariat at 3:00 PM.

The Telangana Congress has erected three daises for the swearing-in ceremony. Revanth will take oath as CM on the main

A special stage has been set up for the 63 MLAs elect on the left of the side, another stage has been arranged for 150 VVIPs.

The TPCC has arranged

cultural programmes outside the LB Stadium for the benefit of people attending the swearing-in ceremony. About 500 artistes, including those representing Gondu, Dappu, Oggu, Bonalu and Sheri Band, will welcome Revanth Reddy, his cabinet colleagues, VVIPs, and other guests attending the ceremony as per Telangana traditions and customs. Revanth Reddy will come to the venue from his residence head-

ing a huge rally, it is learnt. The organisers have set up a special gallery for martyrs' families with 300 seats.

Another gallery has been set up for intellectuals and Telangana protagonists with 250 seats. The seats have been so arranged that more than 30,000 people can simultaneously watch the programme from vantage

Besides, there is a chance for another 30,000 people to watch the proceedings from the galleries. The TPCC has arranged

huge LED screens for people outside the stadium to watch the proceedings.

# Jagan following path...

Continued from Page 1

"The Opposition leader proposed to install Dr Ambedkar's statue in a corner of Amaravati while CM Jagan installed the statue in the heart of Vijayawada city, which will be a tourist attraction in the days to come," he added.

MP Gurumurthy also said that Jagan was the only CM who was implementing Ambedkar's ideologies in India.

Jagan has designed the education system to provide education to all children without any discrimination. Ambedkar framed the Constitution of India keeping in mind equality, he explained.

Lella Appireddy said that in India, where there were different religions and castes, everyone was able to live peacefully because of the Constitution written by Dr BR Ambedkar.

He said that it was equal to a holy book for India In Andhra Pradesh, CM Jagan has been following the path shown by Ambedkar to eliminate poverty among SC, ST, BC and minority communi-

# PK, Naidu discuss...

Continued from Page 1

As they navigate the complex political landscape, the duo aims to forge a united front, capitalizing on lessons learned from Telangana and formulating a roadmap for success in Andhra Pradesh.

With Lokesh by Chandrababu's side and Pawan's unique insights, this meeting signals a proactive approach to political dynamics, setting the stage for a potentially impactful collaboration in the upcoming elec-

# **CM Jagan to lay stone for developmental works**

Temple being developed with a comprehensive plan at an estimated cost of Rs 225 cr

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Vijayawada on Thursday. The CM will participate in the inauguration of various development works and the ground-breaking ceremony at Kanaka Durga temple. Later, he will have darshan of goddess Kanaka Durga. Minister for Endowments Kottu Satyanarayana, Temple EO and the Commissioner of Police reviewed the arrangements for CM's visit.

On the occasion, the min-

ister said that the Durga temple was being developed with a comprehensive plan at an estimated cost of Rs 225 crore. "The repair works of the temple will be carried out without causing any inconvenience to the devotees. CM Jagan will lay the foundation stone for development programmes on Thursday morning. A four-storey automatic car park is being prepared for a permanent solution to traffic

woes. We are taking precautions to avoid landslides and a ramp will be built for the unused queues and put into use," said the minister. The minister said that the State government has given

funds of Rs 70 crore to transform it into a modern Indrakeeladri with the State government funds as well as devasthanam "Development works will be done on par with Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam without any inconvenience to the devotees. The works are going on as per the master plan. After the development works, we will take a decision on the Ghat Road depending on the situation. After laying the foundation stone, the works will be completed within 18 months even during the elections," Kottu Satyanarayana said.

### GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE

Online tenders are invited for 53 works with an estimated cost of Rs. 1005.02 Lakhs for Providing drinking water works to various habitations in Prakasam District. Tenders schedule will be available in e-market from 08.12.2023 to 11.12.2023, 4.30 PM. Details visit: place i.e. www.tender. apeprocurement.gov.in. Ph: 9100121610. R.O.No: 11929/CLIADVT11112921-22, Dt. 06.12.2023

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# Rain soaks paddy yield, farmers worried

### Express concern that they may lose MSP for paddy grains

PNS VIJAYAWADA

they get wet.

Paddy was

Farmers in Krishna and NTR districts are facing concerns as their paddy fields, which were in the harvesting stage, have been submerged due to the rain caused by Cyclone Michaung. In many other areas, the paddy yield was kept in heaps and piles soaked in water. Additionally, farmers are worried over the paddy as the grains dried on the roads would sprout when

cultivated in 2.50 lakh hectares in the comb i n e d Krishna district (which includes both Krishna and NTR districts). Unfortunately, the cyclone caused significant damage to the crops, affecting 67,300 hectares in the Krishna district and 5,500 hectares in the NTR district. This has

harvesting their crops.

Before the arrival of the cyclone, farmers started paddy harvesting and they are drying their grains on the roads to reduce the moisture. At this stage, the Michaung cyclone has shown its effect on the

resulted in huge losses for the farmers, who had just started

Corporation

procured the paddy when it had 17 per cent moisture, however, the MSP will be slashed on the proportionate of the content of moisture.

Paddy grains have sprouted in Nunna, located in the Vijayawada Rural Mandal of the NTR district, and in Ramachandrapuram and Surampalli, located in the Gannavaram Mandal of the Krishna district. Due to heavy rainfall, the piles of paddy submerged in water have started sprouting. Farmers are now drying their paddy grains on the roads. The state government has instructed officials to procure the paddy without any restrictions regarding moisture. However, as of now, paddy grain procurement has not started.

Farmers Bommareddy Reddy, Subba Bhimavarapu Ajay Kumar Reddy have said that their paddy grains have sprouted due to the wet. One day before the cyclone, they harvested the paddy crop and dried up the grains on the bypass road, they said. Delay in the procurement, they lost the MSP, they felt. They urged the Civil Supplies Department authorities to procure the paddy grains

immediately.
Krishna District Agriculture Officer (DAO) Padmavathi and her team inspected the paddy crops in Surampalli on Wednesday. The crops were

## Bogus votes: Complaint filed against TDP leader

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Councillor Bhumi Reddy Vamsi has lodged a complaint against TDP in charge of Proddatur, Praveen Kumar Reddy, for maintaining bogus votes. Expressing concern over duplicate votes, the YSRCP leader filed a complaint with the Tahsildar against Praveen and his family for hav-

ing votes in two places.

Vamsi provided Form-7
along with his complaint to the
Tahsildar seeking deletion of
bogus votes of the TDP leader
in Proddatur and Kogatam village. He requested the Tahsildar Office to remove the stated bogus vote from the electoral list. The YSRCP leader criticised the Opposition leader and his family for including bogus votes in the electoral roll. He questioned the alleged ignorance of Praveen whose party is accusing the ruling party that it is indulging in including the duplicate to the voters' list.

# Will procure every paddy grain, Collector assures farmers

Steps ordered to drain out rainwater from fields

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has assured the farmers that the State government will support the farmers who lost their crops due to Cyclone Michaung. Farmers need not worry about their wet grains as they would get the Minimum Support Price, he said, adding that they would procure every paddy grain from the farmers. Collector Dilli Rao, District

Agriculture Officer (DAO) S Naga Manemma and their team visited the paddy fields Rayanapadu Pydurapadu villages near Vijayawada on Wednesday. Farmers showed their crops submerged in the rainwater to the Collector.

After talking to the farmers, the Collector directed the officials to take the necessary steps to drain out the rainwater from the fields. The State government will provide support for every farmer in the

district. As much as 41,163 hectares of paddy was cultivated in the district and harvesting was completed in 10,000 hectares, he said.

Further, he stated that as per the preliminary report, 11,859 hectares of paddy crop were affected by the cyclone. Other crops on around 600 hectares were also affected. Also, he instructed the officials to arrange JCBs to drain out the

rainwater from the fields. Meanwhile, he said that based on the e-crop booking

data, crop damage assessment would be started soon after receiving guidelines from the government. Based on survey numbers, crop damage details would be collected. The Agriculture and Revenue departments should submit the detailed report as early as

possible, he explained. Agriculture Department Assistant Director B Venkateswara Rao, Vijayawada Rural AO B Ranganath Babu, Tahsildar K Lakshmi, and oth-

ers accompanied the Collector.

## **Graduation ceremony held at Government Dental College**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The graduation ceremony for the 2018 batch of Vijayawada Government Dental College took place with grandeur on the college premises on Tuesday. Dr Indla Ramasubba Reddy, Chairman of Indlas Hospitals and an Eminent Psychiatrist, who is also an Executive Member of the

Dr YSR University of Health the college principal, holders shared their experi-Sciences graced the occasion expressed his gratitude to Dr ences with the college and its Sciences graced the occasion as the chief guest.

During his keynote address, he emphasized the urgent need for dentists in society and advised the graduating students to uphold social values and ethics in their professional lives. On the occasion, he

launched the college website. Dr Kolasani Srinivasa Rao,

Indla Ramasubba Reddy. The principal encouraged the graduating dentists to aspire to achieve greater

heights in their careers. The ceremony included the felicitation of students with the highest marks and those who received research funding from prestigious institutes like ICMR. Degree

ences with the college and its contributions.

Cultural programmes organized by the students added entertainment to the event, and notable attendees included Dr Mahbub Sheikh, a Member of the Dental Council of India, Heads of the department staff, and students were pre-

# Govt shifts CM's base to VIMS for accelerated Uttarandhra development

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In an important move to speed up the development of North Andhra and make sure the decentralization works well, the government has said that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will stay in Visakhapatnam for a longer time. During this stay, the CM will have detailed discussions with State-level officials to check how things are going

To accommodate the CM and the accompanying officials, the government has designated up to 20 separate rooms at Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS). A team of officials has already inspected VIMS to ensure the feasibility of utilizing these

rooms for both office spaces and lodging purposes.

Discussions have taken place between officials and the VIMS administration regarding the allocation of rooms for office spaces. Once the rooms are allocated, the necessary infrastructure will be provided to meet the requirements of the visiting state-level officials. Concerned officials are expected to return to VIMS shortly to finalize the accomeach department.

VIMS currently comprises three blocks, with one housing the Outpatient (OP) and Inpatient (IP) departments, another dedicated to administrative functions, and a third block hosting laboratories and operation theaters for specific medical tests. However, these facilities are currently limited to the ground floor, first, and second floors. Plans are underway to maximize the utilization of the remaining floors for the upcoming state-level reviews and administrative activities.

The allocation of VIMS for the CM's review meetings underscores the government's commitment to streamlining administrative processes and tion between state officials. The developments at VIMS are expected to facilitate a conducive environment for discussions and strategic planning focused on the progress of Uttarandhra and the successful implementation of the

## Power restoration complete in most cyclone-hit areas

PNS VIJAYAWADA

submerged and to prevent sprouting, DAO Padmavathi

suggested that farmers spray

salt on the water. She person-

ally supervised the spraying of salt on the paddy fields. She

assured the farmers that they

would procure the paddy as early as possible and would pay

MSP. Also, farmers need not

worry about their paddy

sprouts and those grains would

be also procured as per the

Andhra Pradesh Power Utilities successfully restored power supply to normalcy in most of the cyclone-affected areas in the districts of Nellore, Guntur, Prakasam, Krishna, Chittoor, Kurnool, West and East Godavari, Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram and other parts of the State on Wednesday.

Energy Special Chief Secretary K Vijayanand monitored the power restoration instructed the officers to complete the works in a timebound manner and get the power supply to normalcy as early as possible to avoid any inconvenience to the people living in the cyclone-affected

Explaining the damage, CMD APSPDCL K Santosha Rao said that in the Circles of Nellore, Tirupati and Kadapa, three EHT Substations, 269 33/11 KV Substations, 145 33-KV feeders, 770 33-KV poles, 2,341 11-KV poles, and 247 DTRs were restored to normalcy. As many as 1,132 villages, 46 mandals and seven

many as 231 special teams were arranged and the losses were assessed to be Rs 1,235.45 lakh. Thirty-six 33/11kv substations were completely dead in Nellore Circle due to the cyclone, CMD APSPDCL said.

CMD APEPDCL I Prudhvi Tej said that in the Circles of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, and Eluru, 150 33KV Substations, 134 33 KV feeders, 16 33KV poles, 514 11 KV poles, and 173 DTRs were restored to normalcy. Around were also restored. As many as 395 special teams were arranged and the cost of damages was assessed to be Rs. 545.98 lakh.

APCPDCL CMD J Padma Janardhana Reddy said that in the Circles of Vijayawada, Guntur, CRDA, Ongole, 204 33/11-KV Substations, 147 33 -KV feeders,115 33KV poles, 1,247 11 KV poles, and 504 DTRs were restored to normalcy. As many as 1,707 villages, 109 mandals and 11 towns were also restored. Eighty-one special teams were arranged and the losses were estimated at

# Illegal excavation scandal rocks Anantagiri Panchayat

### Local leaders accused of pillaging hills for personal gain

PNS SRIKAKULAM

The hills of Ananthagiri Panchayat in Vajrapukotturu Mandal have turned into the epicenter of an illicit excavation racket involving local political leaders. Reports unveil that six leaders from different political parties are allegedly the hills, extracting stones, gravel, and soil, and selling them for personal profit. These resources are purportedly finding their way into the hands of individuals involved in real estate ventures.

Locals, deeply concerned about the environmental impact, have disclosed that excavators and tractors operate covertly under the cover of darkness, extracting materials from the hills. Each tractor load is reportedly sold for an exorbitant Rs 500, contributing to an estimated total of a staggering Rs 30 lakhs in illegal earnings. Adding to the grav-

laswamy, Tehsilda acknowledged that on government land is a

ity of the situation, one of the accused leaders is said to have purchased land near the hills and transported 500 loads of gravel without making any payments to the government. The perceived inaction of

the authorities has ignited resentment among the locals. Marada Dhuryodhana Reddy, Telugu Youth Mandal President in Vajrapukotturu, expressed deep dissatisfaction, threatening to file complaints with higher authorities and pursue legal action if necessary.

Neelapu Venkata Reddy, Anantagiri Panchayat TDP Vice President, has echoed

concerns over the authorities' silence and demanded immediate action against the alleged perpetrators. Responding to the allega-

tions, B Appalaswamy, Tehsildar of Vajrapukotturu, acknowledged that unauthorized excavation on government land is a crime. He of obtaining permission and paying the prescribed fee to the government before engaging in any excavation activities. However, he denied any knowledge of house plot allocations, clarifying that such matters are not subject to manual discretion.

The rampant excavation has raised serious concerns about environmental degradation and potential damage to the fragile ecosystem of the hills. Urgent and decisive action by the authorities is imperative to curb this illegal operation and safeguard the natural resources of the region.

# Services restored in KK line after boulder falls on track



PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Cyclone Michaung led to a boulder fall in the Tyada-Sivalingapuram section of the Kottavalasa-Kirandul line on Tuesday, disrupting train services. The alert loco pilot of a goods train demonstrated quick thinking by halting the train to avert potential mishaps from falling boulders.

Divisional Railway Manager Saurabh Prasad, accompanied by ADRM (Infra) and senior officials, rushed to the site in the night itself to oversee the situation. Reflecting on the urgency, Prasad stated, "Our



immediate focus was on ensuring the safety of passengers and restoring train services as quickly as possible.

Despite challenging weather conditions, the rescue team efficiently cleared the boulders to restore train services. Prasad acknowledged the collective efforts, saying, "It was a challenging task, but the dedication of our teams from various departments ensured the timely restoration of goods train services by 9.30 am."

The passenger special train o. 08552 Kirandul-Visakhapatnam, present at Araku during the boulder fall, was short-terminated. Waltair Division promptly organized three buses from Araku Station to transport the 199 passengers to Visakhapatnam due to the Sivalingapuram. In response to cancellations from Araku, refund arrangements were made for affected passengers. The Commercial department of Waltair Division stepped up, providing essential supplies such as water, tea, biscuits, etc., to passengers being transported in buses from Araku Station to Visakhapatnam.

Expressing gratitude, Saurabh Prasad stated, "I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the department officials whose dedication and prompt action led to the swift restoration of train services. The commitment of our team remains unwavering, prioritizing passenger safety and ensuring service continuity even in challenging weather conditions."

### Rs.1,995.57 lakh. towns were also restored. As

# Will submit report on crop damage in 48 hours

**OFFICIALS TO SPECIAL OFFICER** 

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Dr G Lakshmisha, the Special Officer for Krishna district and Director of Gram/Ward Sachivalayam, and Collector P Raja Babu have instructed the officials concerned to hand over the details of losses incurred due to Cyclone Michaung. The report should include losses related to paddy roads, drinking water, animal husbandry, fisheries, and other assets, they said.

Special Officer Lakshmisha and Collector Raja Babu inspected the paddy fields which were submerged in rainwater, in many villages of Guduru Mandal in the district on Wednesday. Later, they conducted a video conference with officials concerned regarding the crop loss assess-

badly affected by the cyclone

and many paddy fields are sub-

merged in rainwater. In this

Speaking on the occasion, they said that around 61,000 hectares of paddy crop was



context, officials concerned should take necessary steps to pour out the rainwater from the fields. Further, they stated that the district administration is trying to submit the detailed crop loss report to the government within 48 hours. As of now, 30 per cent of paddy harvesting was completed and the remaining crops were in the rainwater, they said. Also, they said that the government would purchase the paddy

Later, they explained the

measures which were taken to restore the electricity supply and road services in the district. As many as 52 mobile teams worked during the cyclone time and restored the power supply in 68 villages which were affected by the cyclone, they added.

Krishna District Agriculture Advisory Board Chairman J Raghava Rao, DWAMA PD GV Suryanarayana, agriculture scientists Dr Girija Rani, AD Manidhar, Water Resources even if it may get a colour Department DE Kiran and others were present.

### Cong govt will fall within one year in the process of clearing debts: Raja Singh

PNS HYDERABAD

MLA-elect from Goshamahal constituency T Raja Singh alleged that the Congress government will fall within one year in the process of clearing debts done by the previous BRS government. Raja Singh commented that it is possible for the BJP only to run Telangana and make it clear that BJP will come to power in Telangana.

Speaking to the media on Wednesday after paying tributes to Dr BR Ambedkar's portrait on the occasion of death anniversary on Wednesday at the party office, Raja Singh said that it is not possible for the Congress to implement the six guarantees. The previous government made the State so as it is not in a position to pay the interest to the loans it took. How will the coming government bring the money for its announced schemes? he asked.

Raja Singh stated that the people changed KCR, who stated that he will change the Constitution. He said that



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the person who spread the greatness of Ambedkar to

the world. Raja Singh said that all sections of the people remember Ambedkar. The Ravan Raj ended in the State. KCR had deceived Dalits and erected Ambedkar's statue with the pressure from BJP, he said.

Recalling that CM-desig nate Revanth Reddy stated that he will implement all the schemes implemented by KCR, Raja Singh said that the BJP activists will not leave Revanth Reddy if he deceives Dalits. He alleged that the Congress party never honoured Ambedkar and slammed the Congress that it gave deceiving assurances in the name of six guarantees.



# Michaung cyclone batters 6 districts, damages crops



The Michaung has battered six districts and caused heavy

damages to crops. Heavy rain lashed Tirupati, combined Kadapa, Nellore, Prakasam, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam

Vizianagaram districts. Leaders of Rythu unions said that 70% of paddy crop is yet to be harvested and almost

all the crop damaged in the cyclone. Most of the farmers were planning to take up harvesting in the middle of December but their crop has been soaking in the water now, they lamented.

Moreover, the paddy farmers have left the heaps of harvested paddy at the field itself and all the produce is soaking in the rain water. According to sources, paddy cultivation was taken up in about 4.50 lakh

district and the officials expected over 10.50 lakh metric tonnes of paddy yield...

Sources said that in Guntur district paddy was cultivated in 1.05 lakh acres, 1.95 lakh acres in Bapatla district. The entire paddy crop in the two districts were marooned in the rain water and the farmers may not get their investment.

The farmer expected 35 bags of paddy in an acre and each 76

bag is purchased at Rs 1650. The paddy farmers incurred Rs 57,750 loss per acre due to cyclone," Srinivas, general secretary of AP Rythu Sangam said.

According to sources, In Guntur district blackgram crop was damaged in 3000 acres, groundnut crop in 10,000

was damaged in 5000 acres, red gram crop was damaged in 8800 acres and plantain crop in 1400 acres. Åt Palakollu, over 200

coconut trees uprooted and caved in due to heavy gales. In Palnadu district, maize crop and red gram crop were damaged in hundreds of acres. The AP Rythu Sangam leader demanded the government to purchase dis-coloured and sprouted paddy from the farmers.



## Sweeping success of Govt. College at Academic Fest 2022-23

PNS RAJAMAHEN-

The Government Autono mous College in Raja mahendravaram during the academic year 2022-23 has grabbed Commissioners Degree Government Colleges across the State.

It highlights the various awards received in different categories at an academic fest 2022-23 conducted by the Commissionerate of Collegiate Education (CCE). Dr. Ramachandra R K, the principal, mentions that a total of 19 awards were won across three categories, student, faculty, and college.

Among these, notable awards were earned in fields like Community Service Project, Start-Úp Ideas, Physical Sciences. Chemistry, YouTube Channel Management, Best Library and more. The awards ceremony is set to take place on December 16th at the Government Autonomous Degree College in Anantapur. The note further details

individual achievements across departments in the in categories like NIRF, NAAC CGPA, research papers, internships, and outstanding library facilities. It also mentions the Principal, Dr. Ramachandra R K, and the Internship Mentor, Mr. Ramu, extending awards to students and faculty for their excellence.

The event witnessed the presence of various dignitaries, including Mr. Sreesaila Shastry (Vice Principal of the College), Mr. Sanjeev Kumar (Coordinator of NRC,East Godavari District), and Dr. Sanjeev Kumar (Coordinator of the College Academic Cell), alongside other faculty members.

# Crop loss is enormous; govt should help farmers; Manohar

**PNS** ■ GUNTURU

Jana Sena Political Affairs Committee chairman Nadendla Manohar said that the crop loss due to the Michaung cyclone is enormous and the government should help the farmers. Nadendla Manohar along

with the TDP leader Alapati Rajendra Prasad visited some of the rain affected fields at Kollipara, Aithanagaram, Chakrayapalem, Burripalem, Chadalavada Chemudupadu villages in Tenali rural mandal on Wednesday.

They saw the damaged crops and spoke to the farmproblems of the farmers. They expressed anguish after seeing the waterlogged paddy crop. They saw the farmers draining out the water stagnaged at the fields by using

The JSP and TDP leaders demanded the government to disburse Rs 20,000 compen-



sation per acre to every affected farmer.

Nadendla Manohar said: 'The farmers are in trouble. The Chief should save them by pushing buttons. Instead of pushing the hollow button, is better for the Chief Minister to push the real button to save the farmers."

He criticized the Chief Minister for releasing a meger Rs 2 crore to each district to meet the expenses of cyclone damage and relief

"Crops worth Rs 1800 crore damaged in Bapatla and Guntur districts as per the preliminary estimation. If the irrigation canals had been modernized the situation would not have arisen," Manohar opined.

Alapati Rajendra Prasad the state suffered heavy blow as their crops submerged in the rain water. The cyclone battered the farming community in the state, he lamented. He demanded the government to provide seeds on 100% subsidy to all affected

### Home guards play vital role in serving society: SP

PNS KAKINADA

Superintendent of Police S Sathish Kumar said that Home Guards play a vital role in extending all kinds of supportive services to the society as an affiliate of the police department. Addressing the Home Guards as the chief guest at the Home Guards orga-

nization 61st foundation day celebrations at the Bhanugudi police convention hall here, Kumar said that the Home Guards organization was started as an voluntary service organization on December 6, 1963 and later became an affiliate of the police department with the Home guards getting honorarium for their services.

## 'No loss of life in Bapatla district as precautions were taken'

PNS BAPATLA

Minister for Social Welfare Meruga Nagarjun said that loss of life was avoided in Bapatla district during the Michaung cyclone as all precautions were

The Minister, along with Collector P Ranjit Basha, visited some of the cyclone affected fields at Ilavaram village in Bhattiprolu mandal. The Minister and the Collector visited a relief camp set up at Ailavaram village in Bhattiprolu mandal.

The Minister spoke to the affected people. He also inquired about the facilities being provided to them. The Minister along with the district Collector gave away the compensation money and essential commodities announced by the government to the 26 families who were taking shelter at the village secretariat in that area. Later, they inspected the submerged paddy crop at the

Talking to the media, the



minister said that the state government was alerted when the announcement came from the Meteorological Department that there would be a big storm near Bapatla. He said that since the Chief Minister of the State had given instructions to the District Collector for four days, the administration had taken strong measures that are why there was no loss of life in the district, he claimed.

The Minister said that the farmers had incurred huge losses due to the cyclone and it was the responsibility of the government to protect the farmers, the minister said. The government is ready to purchase the paddy produce from the farmers. Collector Ranjit Basha reiterated all steps taken to protect the interests of the farmers. He made it clear that a survey had already begun to assess the loss of crops.

# Krithika Shukla assures all help to farmers

PNS KAKINADA

District Collector Krithika Shukla assured of extending all needed help to the Michaung cyclone affected farmers and asked them not to worry.

The Collector held a video conference with the officials and reviewed the cyclone situation. Speaking on the occasion, she said that there is no need for the farmers to worry as required help would be extended to them.

"The government will purchase the paddy produce from the farmers irrespective of the condition of paddy through RBKs. The farmers should not sell their paddy less than the MSP through the mediators. The water stagnated at the agri-culture fields will be drained out using the workers of MGNREGS," the Collector said, and asked the agriculture, irrigation



and DWAM officials and staff to work in coordination to help the farmers.

Collector Krithika Shukla made it clear that the government is ready to provide seeds for horticulture crops on 80% subsidy to the farmers. The agriculture department officials should visit the fields and give advice to the farmers to save their waterlogged crops, she told the officials.



Telugu Desam party senior leader and former minister Nakka Ananda Babu demanded the government to purchase the soaked and sprouted paddy from the farmers in the cyclone affected area and deplored that the farmers bore the brunt of the Michaung cyclone.

Nakka Ananda Babu along

with other leaders visited some of the affected fields at Kolluru mandal in Vemuru constituency and saw the damaged paddy crop. He entered the knee deep water at the field, saw the soaking crop and interacted with the farmers and listened to their difficulties. Speaking on the occasion,

Nakka Ananda Babu said that the Michaung cyclone battered the farmers in the state extensively. The worst affected were the paddy farmers, he said. The sufferings of tenant farmers were untold, he lamented. "The government miserably

failed in mitigating the cyclone affected and loss. Since the government did not provide water from the Pattiseema by intime, delay took place in completing sowing operation in the kharif season which caused the farmers incur huge loss," the exminister flayed.

If the water from the Pattiseema had been released 10 days earlier, most of the



farmers could have saved their crop, Nakka Anandababu

hoped. He said that paddy cultivation was taken up in 96,000 acres in Vemuru constituency of which only 10% of crop had been harvested so far and the rest was damaged due to

The paddy crop in about 86,000 acres is yet to be harvested when the farmers were preparing for the same, at the same time, the cyclone created devastation, he lamented. He said that there are six drains in Kolluru and Repally division and the creepers in the drains should be removed before the farming activities begin. But the YSRCP leaders did not do so and claimed the bills, he alleted. Since the drainage system is in a bad position the rain water inundated the crops, he

criticized. "When the TDP was in power, Rs 20,000 compensation was paid per hectare. The present government should extend Rs 30,000 compensation per hectare to tenant farmers.

The government should take steps to purchase dis-colored and shriveled paddy produce from the farmers," Nakka Ananda Babu demanded. TDP State secretary executive Kanapari Srinivsa Rao and Jana Ŝena coordinator Oosa Rajesh and other leaders were present.

## WG district incurs Rs 188 cr. loss due to cyclone: Collector

PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector P Prashanthi has said that the district has incurred a loss of Rs 188 crore and crops damaged in 23,661 hectares due to the Michaung

In a statement here on Wednesday, the Collector said that the district had incurred a loss of Rs 188 crore including damages to the crops in 23,661 hectares, roads and other infrastructure.

"As many as 113 villages in 19 mandals were affected by the cyclone. Water gushed into 19 villages and four municipal towns which affected 4,090 people. As many as 26 houses including three pucca houses and 11 huts were badly damaged while 79 houses were slightly damaged," she informed, adding that 32 cat-

the cyclone. Collector Prashanthi said that 10 people were injured in the cyclone. She said that 6,354 food packets and 15,336 water packets were supplied to the cyclone victims and 31 medical camps were set up for

She informed that 423.53 KMs of R&B roads were damaged while 20 trees were



uprooted in the district during tĥe cyclone storm. She said that Rs 11 crore required to carry out temporary repairs to the roads and Rs 165 crore required to reconstruct the damaged roads. The Collector said that six

roads of panchayat raj with a length of 9.7 KMs were also damaged and Rs 42 lakh required to carry out temporary repairs Rs 130 lakh required to reconstruct then The Collector said that 17.7 KMs roads in urban areas were damaged while 5.4 KM open drains and underground drains were also damaged.

She said that three 33KV feeder lines, fifteen 11 KV feeder lines, two 33/11 KV sub stations were damaged while two 11 KV electrical poles uprooted the loss was estimated at Rs 13 lakh.

### Crops in 24,575 acres inundated

PNS ■ ELERU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh said that crops in 24,575 acres were marooned in the Michaung cyclone and all steps taken to drain out the rainwater from the agriculture fields.

The Collector held a teleconference with the officials here on Wednesday and reviewed the cyclone situation. Speaking on the occasion, he said that crops in 33,724 acres tilted under the influence of rain and gales and crops in 24,575 acres were marooned in the rain water of which paddy crop is in 7,458 acres.

The Collector said that 1,05,948 metric tonnes of paddy produce has been purchased from the farmers so far in the district and 28,324 metric tonnes of paddy was also procured offline.



## Youth killed as bike plunges into drain

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A youth was killed and two others were injured when the bike which he was riding plunged into a drain at Mission school road in Narasapuram on Wednesday.

Police said that the deceased Pala Hemanth (20) along with two other youths were riding



a bike. He lost control of the

bike resulting in it plunged into a drain killing Hemanth instantaneously.

Two pillion riders were injured in the accident and they were shifted to the GGH where their condition was said to be serious. The police registered a case and shifted the body of Hemanth to the GGH for postmortem.

# JC launches collection of funds for servicemen

**PNS** ■ PARVATHIPURAM

Joint Collector R Govinda Rao here on Wednesday launched the collection of funds for the welfare of servicemen on the occasion of the Armed Forces Flag Day.

Every year, Armed Forces Flag Day is celebrated on December 7 to collect funds for the betterment of the forces and pay respects to the ones who laid their lives while protecting the country.

Speaking on the occasion, the Joint Collector conveyed his wishes to the army personnel, ex-servicemen and their families.

He said that the whole them a lot. nation is proud of the patriotism, bravery and sacrifices shown by the Indian Army forces, during the Pakistan-China war, the Kargil conflict,



and the Bombay Taj Hotel invasion and during natural disasters

The Joint Collector said that many army brothers laid down their lives for the defense of the country and all Indians owe

December 7 th is observed as the Armed Forces Flag Day throughout the country to honour the martyrs and the men in uniform who valiant-

ly fought & continue to fight on the borders to safeguard the country'. District ex-servicemen welfare

officer Majji Krishna Rao appealed to people to send their donations to the account number 52065221666, IFSC Code: SBIN0020931, MICR No.535002017 and send the cheques in the name of 'Director, Synic welfare, Vijayawada to Sainik welfare office, Vizianagaram.

## Japan is in favour of strengthening ties with Nagaland

apanese Ambassador to India, Hiroshi Suzuki, on Wednesday said his country is in favour of strengthening and expanding ties with Nagaland. Japan and Nagaland have Jiavour of strengthering and experience and the was speaking as the chief guest of the sixth day of Cultural Connect', a cultural extravaganza of speaking as the chief guest of the sixth day of Cultural Connect', a cultural extravaganza of the sixth day of Cultural Connect', a cultural extravaganza of the sixth day of Cultural Connect', a cultural extravaganza of the sixth day of Cultural Connect', a cultural extravaganza of the sixth day of Cultural Connect', a cultural extravaganza of the connect of the sixth day of Cultural Connect of the sixth day of Cultu the tribes of Nagaland at the Hornbill Festival in Naga Heritage village Kisama here. Suzuki

expressed gratitude for the generosity the Nagas extended to the Japanese people who came here to collect the remains of their families after the war. "We are grateful for the warmest support to the Japanese by the Naga people," he said. Suzuki said, "We want to strengthen and expand our cooperation and the friendship that we enjoy between Nagaland and Japan." Impressed by the beautiful dances and songs of the people of Nagaland, he said this is a testament of how to preserve one's tradition and culture that were



# **Law Minister accuses INDIA bloc** of trying to divide country aw Minister and BJP leader Arjun Ram Meghwal on Wednesday accused INDIA

parties of trying to divide the country on north-south lines, and asserted that the opposition will fail in its attempts. Meghwal said DMK MP D N V Senthil Kumar on Tuesday "described the states BJP won as 'gau mutra' (cow urine) staes." The BJP has won assembly polls in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, while Congress got

Telangana. The minister said when an apology was sought from DMK floor leader T R Baalu in the Lok Sabha, he refused. He claimed leaders from the Congress NCP and other INDIA parties stood up in his support in the House "We want to ask whether they want to divide India. A senior Congress leader says he likes South India. Is it because you lost Amethi that you do not like North India," Meghwal said while addressing a press conference inside Parliament



## **Doctor kills wife, 2 kids before** committing suicide

doctor posted at a Railway hospital here allegedly killed his wife and two children before committing suicide, police said on Wednesday. Arun Kumar Singh (45), Abailing from Mirzapur, was an eye specialist at the Modern Rail Coach Factory Hospital since 2017. He lived with his wife Archana (40), son Aarav (4), and daughter Ariba (12) in a house located inside the hospital complex. The incident came to light on

Tuesday night when the doctor's colleagues informed police after no one from the family answered phone calls. The police personnel broke open the door and found the bodies. Police recovered syringes from near the bodies which were allegedly used by the doctor to administer some drugs to his wife and children to make them unconscious before killing them, Superintendent of Police Alok Priyadarshi said The minors died of head injuries while Singh was found



# Over 100 websites blocked for facilitating illegal investments

The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday said that more than 100 websites that were being operated from overseas and involved in organised illegal investments and part-time job frauds have been blocked.

These websites were identified and recommended for blocking by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), an initiative of the Home Ministry aimed at addressing cybercrimes in a coordinated and comprehensive manner through its National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (NCTAU), an official spokesperson said.

Building a "Cyber Safe India" is the topmost priority under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the spokesperson said.

These frauds typically involve targeted digital advertisements using keywords like "ghar baithe job" (Do jobs sitting at home) and "ghar baithe kamai kaise karen" (how to earn while sitting at home) in multiple languages.



The targets are often retired employees, women and unemployed youth seeking part-time jobs with whom the fraudsters engage through WhatsApp or Telegram, convincing them to perform tasks such as liking and subscribing to videos or rating maps.

Victims are initially given a commission and then persuaded to invest more for higher returns. Once the victims deposit larger sums of money, their deposits are frozen, resulting in them being deceived, the spokesperson

To combat cybercrime and protect citizens from threat actors, the Home Ministry urges people to promptly report phone numbers and social media handles used by fraudsters to the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal

Several complaints have already been received through the helpline and NCRP as these offences pose a significant threat to citizens and raise data security concerns.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) invoked its power

Technology Act, 2000 to block these websites, who facilitated organised illegal investments and part-time job frauds, and they were found to be using digital advertisements, chat messengers, and rented accounts.

The proceeds from these economic frauds were being laundered out of India through methods such as card networks, crypto currency, over-seas ATM withdrawals, and international Fintech compa-

The authorities advised people to exercise caution and due diligence before investing in online schemes that promise very high commissions.

"If an unknown person contacts you via WhatsApp or Telegram, refrain from engaging in financial transactions without verification.

Verify the name of the receiver mentioned in the UPI App, as random recipients may indicate a fraudulent scheme involving a mule account. Also, check the source of the initial commission received," the spokesper-

### HP govt to back Rajiv Self-Employment Startup Scheme

PNS SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Wednesday urged banks to provide loans at concessional interest rates to the beneficiaries of the govern-ment's Rajiv Gandhi Self-Employment Startup Scheme.

The chief minister assured the banks that the government will give guarantee on the loan for purchase of e-taxis under the first phase of the scheme, a statement issued here said.

Presiding over a meeting with representatives from public sector, co-operative and private banks here, he said the state government has initiated the first phase of the Rs 680-crore Rajiv Gandhi Self-Employment Startup Scheme and asked the banks to provide loans to the youth at concessional rates.

Under the first phase, 50 per cent subsidy is being provided on the purchase of e-taxi with an aim to get these vehicles attached with government offices to provide self-employment to people.

The chief minister also asked all the banks to send the interest rates to the state government within stipulat-

## Kashmir suffered for years due to Nehru's blunders: Shah

Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday blamed India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's "two major blunders" -- declaring a ceasefire without winning the entire Kashmir and taking the issue to the United Nations -- for the sufferings of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Replying to a debate in the Lok Sabha on the Jammu and Reservation Kashmir (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, Shah said if Nehru had taken the right steps, a large chunk of territory would not have been ceded and Pakistanoccupied Kashmir would have been part of India.

"I support the word that was used here -- Nehruvian blunder. Because of the blunder that was committed during the time of Nehru, Kashmir had to suffer. With responsibility, I want to say that the two big blunders that happened during the tenure of Jawaharlal Nehru, happened due to his decisions, because of which Kashmir had to suffer for years," Shah said.

"Kashmir had to suffer due to Nehruvian blunders. One

was that when our Army was winning and as soon as Punjab area was reached, ceasefire was declared and Pakistanoccupied Kashmir was born. If the ceasefire would have been (declared) three days later, PoK would have been part of

India," the home minister said. The ceasefire made without winning the entire Kashmir was one "blunder" and the other was taking the issue to

There was an uproar by the opposition benches over the remarks on Nehru and they staged a walkout but returned

After their walkout, BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab said the home minister should also talk about the "Himalayan blunder", a reference to Nehru's actions leading up to

the war with China in 1962. Shah quipped that his talking about two blunders had upset the opposition benches and if he had used the phrase "Himalayan blunder", they would have resigned. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla

said the remarks made were not an insult to anyone and were only made to put things in context. In his remarks, Shah also

alleged that the Kashmir matter was taken to the UN in a

"If at all it had to be taken to the UN, it should have been sent under Article 51 rather than Article 35 of the UN Charter," he said, asserting that he of course believes that the issue should not have been taken to the UN in the first

# NCERT treats 'India' on par with 'Bharat': MoS

PNS NEW DELHI

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) does not differentiate between India and Bharat, and duly acknowledges the spirit as enshrined in the Constitution that recognises both, according to the Union Education Ministry.

This information was shared by Union Minister of for Education Annapurna Devi in a written reply to a question asked by CPI(M) member Elamaram Kareem in the Rajya Sabha regarding an NCERT panel's recommendation to replace the country's name "India" with "Bharat" in school textbooks.

"Article Constitution of India states that 'India', that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States'. India's Constitution recognises both 'India' and 'Bharat' as the official names of the country which can be used interchangeably. NCERT duly acknowledges this spirit as enshrined in our Constitution and does not differentiate between the two," she said. The minister further said



The minister further

said the country is collectively moving away from the colonial mindset and encourages the usage of the words in 'Bharatiya Bhasha' (Indian languages).

the country is collectively moving away from the colo-nial mindset and encourages the usage of the words in 'Bharatiya Bhasha' (Indian lan-

guages).
"NCERT, an autonomous body under the aegis of the Ministry of Education involved in preparation of school curriculum and textbooks, will also do its best in furthering the same," the minister said.

## Lalduhoma to be sworn in as new Mizoram CM tomorrow

ZPM leader legislature party sworn in as the new chief minister of Mizoram on Friday, a Rai Bhavan official said.

Besides Lalduhoma other members of his council of ministers will also be sworn in on Friday at 11 am in a function at the Raj Bhavan, the official said on Wednesday. Earlier in the day Lalduhoma met Governor Hari Babu Khambampati at the Raj Bhavan and staked claim to form the government. The governor invited him to form the government.ZPM won 27 of the 40 seats of the Mizoram



Assembly, election to which was held on November 7. The party emerged victorious on Monday trouncing Mizo National Front (MNF) headed Zoramthanga

The ZPM advisory body will meet Lalduhoma on Thursday to discuss the structure of the new government, the general secretary of the ZPM media cell, Eddy Zosangliana Colney

# Garba dance in UNESCO's cultural heritage list now

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

UNESCO has approved the inclusion of Gujarat's traditional Garba dance in its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity', Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel announced here on Wednesday.

India had nominated Garba, performed across Gujarat and in many other parts of the country during the Navratri festival, for inclu-

sion in the list. The age-old tradition of devotion to Goddess Mother in the form of Garba is alive and growing. Garba which has become the identity of Gujarat has been approved by



UNESCO under its intangible cultural heritage list," Patel said in a post on X.

"This is a moment of pride for Gujaratis spread all over the world. This is a result of importance being given to the heritage of the country under prime minister Narendra

Modi's leadership and such heritage being taken to the world. Congratulations to the people of Gujarat," Patel fur-

ther said. The inclusion was made under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

during the 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which began in Kasane, Botswana. on Tuesday.

"Garba of Gujarat is the 15th ICH element from India to join this list. This inscription underscores Garba's pivotal role as a unifying force that fosters social and gender inclusivity. Garba as a dance form is entrenched deeply in ritualistic and devotional roots, involving people from all walks of life and it continues to thrive as a vibrant living tradition bringing communities together," an official

# Govt cut off from harsh realities

### Oppn on concerns over growing unemployment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday accused the government of being cut off from the ground reality of the economic situation but treasury benchers hit back, asking them not to rely on selective facts and planted

During the discussion on the economic situation in the



country after MoS Finance Pankaj Chaudhary laid on the table a statement on the Yadav (SP) alleged the ruling

Supplementary Demands for Grants 2023-24, Ram Gopal

members were only indulging in propaganda and publicity.
"When the ruling party members were speaking yesterday it appeared as if they were from another planet. They don't know what is happening on this side," he said in the afternoon session, alleging they were indulging only in propaganda and publicity using Prime Minister Narendra

### Stepping up heat on the opposition over the north-south divide remarks, Union Minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday accused the Congress of hatching a con-

'Congress hatching

Addressing a press conference here, he also questioned the silence of senior Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on the issue and wondered whether the remarks on the north-south divide, reference to north India as "gaumutra states" and criticism of Sanatan Dharma

leader said. "The Congress doesn't



# Some crops tolerate ozone pollution better than others

PNS NEW DELHI

Certain crop plants are less prone to harm caused by ground-level ozone pollution, according to a study that opens the door to better models for predicting crop responses to

the effects of climate change. The findings, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, also pave the way for developing more resilient varieties that can sustain humanity's increasing demand for food, feed, fibre and fuel.

A team of scientists at Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and University of Illinois

Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), US found that the so-called "C4" crops like corn and sorghum tolerate increased ozone levels better than "C3" crops, like rice or snap beans.

A crop is designated as C3 or C4 depending on whether the CO2 it captures from the air is initially converted into a 3-carbon or 4-carbon compound, they said.

The general ability of C4 crops to tolerate increases in ground-level (or "tropospherc") ozone better than C3 crops has long been suspected but not widely tested under actual field conditions, said Lisa Ainsworth, a research molec-



ular biologist at ARS.

Together with ARS research plant physiologist Christopher Montes and a UIUC team led by Shuai Li Ainsworth conducted an extensive analysis of both published and unpublished data.

They culled the first dataset from 46 journal papers and the second set from 20 years' worth of open-air experiments conducted in the US, India and

Their analysis focused on the responses of five C3 crops (chickpea, rice, snap bean, soybean and wheat) and four C4 crops (sorghum, corn, giant miscanthus and switchgrass) to both ambient levels of ozone and increased concentrations of the gas, ranging from 40 to 100 parts per billion.

Of particular interest were changes in the crops' photosynthetic capacity, chlorophyll content and fluorescence (a form of measurement for the pigment), antioxidant leaf activity, biomass material and

seed yield. C3 and C4 crops differ in how their leaves capture carbon dioxide from the air as a key component of photosynthesis. It is the process by which plants use sunlight to convert carbon dioxide into glucose, a sugar that helps power their growth, repair and development and, in turn, sustain other forms of life on the plan-

et, including humankind. While both C3 and C4 crops use the enzyme called rubisco to convert carbon dioxide into sugars, C4 crops isolate rubisco in specialised cells where the concentration of carbon dioxide is very high.

This enables higher rates of photosynthesis and greater efficiency of water use.

# conspiracy to insult Indian culture, identity'

PNS NEW DELHI

spiracy to insult Indian culture and identity, instead of analysing the reasons for its defeat in the elections.

had their sanction. 'Prime Minister Narendra Modi is spreading the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' but the opposition has started using foul language and blaming the EVMs and regionalism for their loss in the assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh," the senior BJP

believe in constitutional institutions. After facing defeat, they never analyse the reason for the defeat. They keep blaming EVMs and insult Sanatan Dharma, Hindus and Hindu culture," said Thakur, the Union Information and Broadcasting Minister.

election campaign, Congress raised the issues of casteism and religion, and when it did not work the opposition party was now resorting to a northsouth divide. "Congress-led 'ghamandia'

He said that during the

(arrogant) alliance is leaving no stone unturned to insult Hindu, Hindi and Sanatan Dharma," Thakur alleged.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# **INDIA** hits roadblock

With certain satraps demanding their pound of flesh, Congress forced to be on the defensive

he Congress seems to be spiralling down the goodwill and credibility meter. After the drubbing it received in three recent Assembly elections, its partners in the INDIA bloc are also not extending it the courtesy it has grown accustomed to. After burning most bridges with its co-parties on account of its preoccupation with the State elections, where it miserably failed to score a point, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had convened a meeting of the INDIA bloc on December 6, but key alliance partners cocked a snook at the abrupt invite and expressed unavailability to attend, forcing Congress to reschedule the gathering. The absence of prominent figures, including TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar, SP's Akhilesh Yadav and DMK's MK Stalin underlined the growing discontent within the alliance. Mamata cited commitments, Nitish is reportedly down with viral fever, and Stalin is engaged in relief efforts after cyclone Michaung. The unexpected nature of these



absences left the Congress in an awkward position. The lack of communication and coordination reflected poorly on the Congress's ability to manage the alliance. To address the discontent, the Congress scaled down the meeting to include only floor leaders, rescheduling the heads of parties' meeting to the third week of December. This move aims to accommodate the busy schedules of alliance leaders and foster better participation, which should have been the priority right from the start. However, the rescheduling indicates the need for Congress to reassess its approach to alliance management and communication.

These are difficult times for the Congress. The decimation of the party must have had a demoralising effect on the INDIA alliance as well, which was keenly watching the elections and hoping for a turnaround in the northern region. The development also indicates that though Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra created good impact, it failed to translate into votes. The fissures in the alliance were actually visible even before the elections. Several bloc parties, including the TMC, AAP, SP and JD(U), expressed frustration with the Congress for stalling alliance activities, such as seatsharing talks, citing Assembly polls. The delay raises concerns about the cohesion and effectiveness of the alliance, with some members believing that the political momentum gained after previous meetings has been lost. The Congress must address the issues of perceived dissension, EVM tampering controversy in Assembly elections and work towards restoring the alliance's stability, effectiveness and cohesion for the political battle ahead. The rescheduled meeting presents an opportunity for the Congress to regroup, re-establish communication with alliance partners and chart a course that strengthens the unity and purpose of the coalition. It will also be the litmus test of the INDIA bloc's ability to survive together.



Eminent dancer Dona Ganguly's troupe performs on 29th Kolkata International Film Festival. in Kolkata

Insurtech is the next

# The significance of Sam Bahadur



The biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw depicts him as a fearless man of honour and integrity but skips the scruffy treatment he got in his twilight years

ndoubtedly, many parents will be writing about Sam Bahadur, the biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. It not only shines a light on the life and times of a genuine military hero but also on what it means to be an officer and a gentleman. Whatever one's views about the movie or its shortcomings, of which there are a few, it is undeniable that the director, Meghna Gulzar, has brilliantly caught the very essence of the Field Marshal, both as a human being and a military leader nonpareil. For that, she and the cast certainly deserve ample praise and accolades.

For unknown reasons, the biopic has skirted the issue of the horrendous treatment meted out to the Field Marshal in his twilight years by our political establishment and the bureaucracy. That is rather unfortunate. For instance, though appointed Field Marshal in January 1973, he only received the arrears of his pay and allowances in 2007, a full thirtyfour years later, and that too because of the personal intervention of President Abdul Kalam. Interestingly, in 1972, when Mrs Gandhi first proposed to promote him to the rank of Field Marshal, she also wanted him appointed Chief of Defence Staff. A proposal vigorously opposed by bureaucrats not unexpectedly, but also by the other two Services as well. Unfortunately, we are still paying a very high price for the shortsightedness of our military hierarchy to this day. On his demise in June 2008, while

the Government did honour him with a State Funeral, neither the President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Pratibha Patil, nor Prime Minister Manmohan Singh nor his defence minister AK Antony, could spare time to attend. Instead, the Government was represented at the funeral of India's greatest military icon since Independence, by the Minister of State for Defence, Mr. Pallam Raju. What it says about our politicians needs no elaboration! Indeed, one would not be surprised if the unflattering depiction of politicians and bureaucrats in the movie was deliberate and not



miscasting as many suggest. The unkindest cut of all though, was the absence from the funeral of the Naval and Air Force Chiefs, Admiral Suresh Mehta and Air Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major. As per newspaper reports, this was supposedly because of the short notice and their inability to organise appropriate transportation. In fairness to them, they were represented, but if the reasons for their absence were true, it was certainly a grievous error of judgement on their part and reflected very poorly on them. Coincidentally, the Army Chief, General Deepak Kapoor, was also absent, but on an official visit to Russia, and was represented as per protocol, by the Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Naidu.

The significance of their absence was not lost on the serving and veteran community, as it clearly reflected the direction the military was heading, where displaying fealty to political masters overrode necessity to live up to the traditions and ethos of the military. A trend, that has only taken deeper roots over time, as increasing politicisation within the military has started taking its toll. Today, interference in purely military mat-



MANY AMONGST OUR TOP MILITARY HIERARCHY ARE COMPROMISED AS THEY OWE THEIR PRESENT **POSITIONS** MORE TO POLITICAL MUNIFICENCE, THAN THEIR OWN **PROFESSIONAL** 

ters by politicians and bureaucrats, who have neither military experience nor domain knowledge, and will never be held accountable is clearly visible. The unviable Agnipath Scheme that is causing grave damage to our military ethos and capability is just one exam-

That there has been no opposition from within the military to all of this can be attributed to the sad fact that many amongst our top military hierarchy are compromised as they owe their present posi-tions more to the political munificence, than their own professional abilities. Moreover, reputations, standng and self-respect were greatly damaged by the unwillingness of the Service Chiefs to speak up when military veterans and families were illegally and mercilessly beaten up by the Delhi Police as they sat in peaceful protest at the Jantar Mantar against Government's failure to grant OROP, a promise that incidentally it has yet to honour in full Indeed, those unwilling to defend their own will never garner any respect.

Ironically, the situation our military is in presently has created a fundamental problem for the political leadership,

though it appears they may have failed to comprehend this as yet. One aspect that stands out in the movie is the fact that the Field Marshal endeared himself to Mrs Gandhi not by submitting to her every whim or a flagrant display of personal loyalty, but by giving her straightforward professional advice, regardless of consequences. Thus, despite all her inherent fears regarding the Field Marshal's likely motives or ambitions, she came to place implicit trust in his professional judgement and abilities. The results were there for all to see. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Modi does not have that luxury, which probably explains our weak-kneed response to Chinese provocations. As Napoleon so aptly put it, "If you build an army of 100 lions and their leader is a dog, in any fight, the lions will die like a dog. But if you build an army of 100 dogs and their leader is a lion, all dogs will fight as a lion".

eran and a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with the Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. *Views are personal)* 

# big thing after FinTech

By merging insurance with technology, this burgeoning sector promises to revitalise the traditional insurance sector

n the past decade, FinTech's revolutionary impact has been marked by the integration of cuttingedge technologies across various sectors. Thriving on innovation, these FinTech companies have disrupted traditional processes, raising billions in the process. Even with a funding slowdown, the sector managed to secure \$1.3 billion in H1 2023.

Building on this momentum, Insurtech emerges as India's new digital frontier. Merging insurance with technology, this burgeoning sector promises to revitalise the traditional insurance. Its innovative solutions aim to enhance customer experiences, streamline operations, and increase insurance accessibility. Currently valued at US\$ 20,667.5 million, Insurtech is projected to surge to an estimated 210,664.3 million by 2033, growing at a CAGR of over 26%. This remarkable growth trajectory positions Insurtech not just as a trend, but as a transformative force in India's digital economy.

Insurtech and its scope Insurtech (made of two words: Insurance and around 40 crore individuals 25%. Here are some of the



Technology) refers to the use of technological innovations designed to squeeze out savings and efficiency from the current insurance industry model. It is not just limited to digitising the existing insurance framework; rather, it's a reimagining of insurance operations using cutting-edge technologies like AI, blockchain, and IoT to create more personalised, automated, and customer-centric ser-

Insurtech in India represents a transformative force within the traditionally manual and paperwork-heavy insurance sector. Leveraging technological innovations, Indian Insurtech start-ups are streamlining policy management, claims processing, and risk assessment. This simplification makes insurance more accessible and userfriendly. There is still a large proportion of the population uninsured, for instance

do not have access to any most critical reasons, besides health insurance. This significant presence of an uninsured population, coupled with growing digital adoption, positions Insurtech for substantial growth .

Success of the Fintech The success of fintech companies and the rapid adoption of the services offered by these enterprises have laid the groundwork for the emergence and growth of Insurtech. The current trajectory of Insurtech which promises high growth rates and is also characterised by disruptive innovation and

swift market penetration, is

quite similar to how the

Fintech sector has evolved in

the past decade. **Investors are for Insurtech** Even though the comparison of numbers with the fintech sector would not be fair, it is critical to mention that Insurtech enterprises have raised more than \$2.6 billion in the past five years. With exciting forecasts, it is rather a surety that VCs and investors would be more than happy to pour more money into a sector that has a forecasted CAGR of more than

the growth trends, that have enhanced investors' interest in Filling gaps in insurance

Traditional insurance models are often hindered by inefficiencies like lengthy claim processes and limited customer interaction. Insurtech addresses these gaps through technological solutions that streamline operations and enhance customer engagement. This ability to solve longstanding problems in insurance makes Insurtech a particularly attractive investment for those looking to fund ventures that combine

innovation with practical, market-driven solutions. **Data-Driven Insights** The fundamental appeal of

the sector is based on data analytics and AI. These technologies enable more accurate risk assessment, personalised policy offerings, and predictive analytics to anticipate future trends and customer needs. For VCs and investors, the efficiency and customercentric nature of these datadriven solutions presents a compelling investment case. (The writer is the founder, of Alwrite; views are personal)

### **IMRAN KHAN CRIES OVER HIS DOINGS**

Sir — On the face of it, predicaments for cricketer-turned-politician and former Pak Prime Minister Imran Khan are turning from bad to worse with each day passing and seeming far from over given that Mr Khan has been on the tenterhooks since he put in his papers as Prime Minister following a no-confidence motion passed against him in the National Assembly with 174 votes on April 10 in 2022. Mr Khan and his close aide and exforeign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi are already behind bars in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, a special court judge on Monday ruled that Mr Khan and Mr Qureshi would be again indicted in the cypher case on December 12 for allegedly leaking state secrets in violation of the country's laws. Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqernain heard the case in the Rawalpindi prison where the duo is incarcerated.

To remind you, the Federal Investigation Agency(FIA) filed the chargesheet against the PTI leaders duo on September 30 under sections 5 and 9 of the Official Secrets Acts which entails a death sentence or up to 14 years in jail in case of conviction. Given that the Army in Pakistan has largely been in the driver's seat since the creation of the country in 1948, Pakistanis have taken the army rule in their country in their stride.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

**COP28 CONTINUES TILL NEXT WEEK** Sir — The COP28 global climate conference will continue for another week. That means its formal completion will be announced on the 12th of December. But this meeting held in Dubai, in many cases, seems to be entangled in a web of controversies even before it has started. First, there was controversy over the name of its chairman, Sultan al-Jaber, who is himself the head of an oil company. Secondly, that document became public, which also includes the draft which states that the **COUGH SYRUP IS SWEET POISON** increase the sales of its oil. Second, con-

### **Opposition parties must introspect**

E EDITO



t is indeed a pity that opposition parties are still not sensitised on the need to exhibit unity among themselves to bring about the much-

sensus was not seen on an agreement that pledged to triple installed renewable energy capacity by 2030. Only 118 out of 200 countries signed it. China, the world's second-largest country in terms of emissions, and India, the third-largest, did not sign. This historic decision was discussed at that time only. India, as G20 chairmanship, had also given its consent to this drafting. No one can understand India's sudden rejection of it.

Anyway, all the COP series meetings are also held, and so far, we have seen only a boom in tourism. No concrete achievement from this is visible in any part of the earth. The temperature is increasing exponentially. Forests are being reduced to ashes by wildfires. With the expansion of the sea coast, cities and towns are coming under submergence. The world is becoming plagued by floods, storms and extreme heat. The countries of the world are still looking at every agreement from the perspective of their profit and loss. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

UAE is going to use this platform to Sir —As per a report more than 40 companies manufacturing cough syrups in the

needed change in the political course of the country. People seem to have acted in desperation and kept the non-BJP parties at a distance. Telangana stands apart as the leader of the Congress party in the state and could successfully take all the factions with him. In Rajasthan, at least, Congres has only two

major factions whereas in Telangana the party has too many leaders and each leader leads a faction. But they all acted under a single command in exposing the misrule of BRS and emerged successful. But, at least, now the party should act with more sense of responsibility and spirit of nationalism as advised by the Prime Minister, though his utterance was more sarcastic. A bigger task is before them and let us hope better counsel will prevail in their mind. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

country have failed quality tests, a Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) report said, citing lab tests conducted in different states in the aftermath of reports potentially linking India-made cough syrups to 141 child fatalities globally. As per the CDSCO report, of the 1,105 samples tested, 59 were declared "not of standard quality". The report was released by CDSCO in November under a list of drugs, medical devices and cosmetics declared as "not of standard quality", "spurious", "adulterated", or "misbranded". The move came after several deaths were

reported among children globally after consuming India-made cough syrups. Concerns surrounding these cough syrups were raised after the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that about 70 children in Gambia had died from acute kidney injury potentially linked to cough and cold syrups produced by Indian manufacturer Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd. With this, the image and credibility of India have fallen in the world.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

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## **FIRST COLUMN DISCIPLINE YOUR SENSES**

Our senses would always seek their objects but we must keep them on a leash



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

e have six senses, which are actively looking for gratification by contact with their objects. For example, our tongues look for tasty foods except when we are full. There is nothing wrong with it if these pleasures are within 'dharma'/ 'maryada' (within allowable limits). God has allowed it, as stated by Lord Krishna in verse # 7.11 of the Bhagavad-Geeta, in which He stated, "I am passion in beings, according to religious principles." He emphasised this point further in verse # 6.17, when He counselled, "One whose eating and recreation are appropriate; of one who strives appropriately in activities; of one who sleeps and stays awake, as required; his sufferings are less. Because sufferings there will be in this material world, described by the Lord as a place of miseries." (8.15) But despite such warnings, we are forever ready to transgress allowable limits hoping to escape punishment.

What happens will be clear as we go through the activities of these six active senses. Beginning with our tongue, all of us are guilty of indiscretions sometimes or other. Picture yourself invited to a very rich buffet dinner. You survey what is on offer, which will be a lot unless you are on a restricted diet. What should I eat? People load their plates as if they are starving. This explains our control over our senses. Shouldn't we consider what is best for us to eat? Is it on offer? Then, why think so much? Just eat enough because more food will be available in a few hours for breakfast.



Let us go to our eyes next. It used to be okay till multiple channels came and now smartphones. There is so much to see, especially now one can watch with no one watching. Unfortunately, we are being watched all the time because 'karmaphalas' are being made by our acts. Wise people restrict themselves to what is useful and at worst, what is harmless like a sports programme.

The pleasure of speaking occupies a very high place in modern man's desires. Everyone is an expert on everything with Google playing its role. Doctors get frustrated when patients begin telling them what they should know. One doesn't want to consider that if one was so wise why should he or she be in so much trouble?

The fourth sense, which is also very active is our ears. What do we want to hear most? Our appreciation, which is how good we are compared to everyone around us. Again, like question begs an answer: why aren't we satisfied with our lives then?

Our skin occupies an important position in how we think. We place comfort in all considerations. Air conditioners, heaters, etc are all fine, but how about a little sweating it out with walks, yoga exercises, etc? What does a modern person value the most? Muscles of course to show off. People spend hours in gyms to build what is not needed which gives them trouble as they age.

I have saved the next sense for the last, which gives us the maximum trouble. Yes, you have guessed it right. The sex pleasure is considered the topmost pleasure of all by almost everyone. Our thinking is normally defined by it. Lord Krishna has warned us about it in verse # 18.39, when He cautioned about 'pramad'.

The conclusion is obvious. We have senses and they would always seek contact with their objects. This is normal, but what is not normal is not restricting oneself to what is allowable. God would not have made such a system if it was not workable. It is very much so; only we have to be highly disciplined in thinking and acting, and we can live a satisfactory life.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views are personal)

# Is India losing sheen for investors?

The slowdown in foreign direct investment in India is a cause for concern, as multinational corporations are finding other competitors more attractive

ndia's GDP grew by 7.6% in the second quarter (July-September) of the year, a positive sign of economic growth. However, the steepest declines in foreign direct investment (FDI) are a matter of concern, especially considering India's recent emergence as a promising investment destination and a viable alternative to China This decline a viable alternative to China. This decline is particularly worrying as it is happening despite positive projections of India's growth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank.

According to the latest report by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), FDI inflows have slowed down drastically. The decline in FDI inflows have been attentioned the sit in FDI inflows has been steep, and the situation has only worsened, with a further decline of -24% in April-September 2023. The current FDI inflows stand at \$20.48 billion, down from \$26.91 billion over the same period last year. Even the overall FDI inflows in 2022-23 witnessed a 16% decline, standing at \$71.3 billion from \$84.8 billion in 2021-22.

The steepest declines in FDI have been in crucial sectors such as computer software and hardware, automobile, infrastructure construction activities, and metallurgical industries. For instance, inflows in computer software and hardware fell from \$14.4 billion in 2021-22 to \$9.3 billion in 2022-23, in the automobile industry from \$6.9 billion to \$1.9 billion, in infrastructure construction activities from \$3.2 billion to \$1.7 billion, and in metallurgical industries from \$2.2 billion to \$219 mil-

The slowdown in foreign direct investment (FDI) in India is a cause for concern, as multinational corporations (MNCs) are finding Vietnam, Indonesia, and other competitors more attractive. This is a clear indication that the "China plus one" strategy of MNCs is not working for India. During January-September of this year, FDI in Vietnam increased by approximately 8% compared to the same period last year, reaching about \$18 billion. In the case of Indonesia, FDI flows stood at around \$10 billion during January-September of this year, similar to the lev-

The factors that influence capital flows into countries include the global and domestic macroeconomic environment, the domestic policy and regulatory environment, and political stability. Since India is expected to benefit greatly from the "China plus one" strategy, policymakers must pay closer attention to these FDI

It is well known that FDI flows are more likely to gravitate towards countries with broader and deeper trade agreements. Lower tariffs and other benefits negotiated through free trade agreements (FTAs) incentivise foreign investment. Therefore, the decline in FDI flows to India may reflect this. A deeper assessment of the country's prospects is needed to address

India is genuinely the alternative to China for companies looking to diversify if it is the "one" in China plus one strategy if the Government's PLI scheme is a powerful enough incentive to draw in investments, and if the solid foundations of India's growth forecasts are taken into account, then MNC investor should be long on India. Any concerns regarding an uncertain business environment, an uneven playing field, or the fear of arbi-



THE FACTORS CAPITAL FLOWS INTO COUNTRIES INCLUDE THE GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC MACROECONOMIC

ENVIRONMENT, THE DOMESTIC POLICY AND POLITICAL STABILITY

trary changes to the rules of the game must not deter investors from investing in India.

More states should be in the ambit of FDI: The scope of FDI must be expanded to more Indian states. FDI has been concentrated in only a few states due to their location and favourable business environment. Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat have together attracted a staggering 69% of the FDI THAT INFLUENCE inflows into the country, with Maharashtra being the top recipient. However, it is disappointing to note that Punjab ranks a lowly 12th in attracting FDI, with a cumulative investment of a meagre Rs. 7693 crore in the past four years, which is a paltry 0.49% of the total inflows of Rs. 15.08 lakh crore from October 2019 to September 2023.

In contrast, the neighbouring state of Harvana has been more successful, ranking sixth with FDI equity inflows of Rs. 67,502 crore, accounting for a substantial 4.17% of the total inflows during the same period. Punjab's successive governments have been striving to attract investments, particularly from foreign investors, but they have been facing major hurdles such as location disadvantage, poor connectivity, and frequent

The existing industry in Punjab has also been complaining about disruptions in their operations and movements due to the aforementioned issues. Haryana is way ahead in this regard with a significant advantage due to its proximity to Delhi NCR and superior

It is high time that Punjab takes firm steps to improve its position in attracting FDI, as its highest ranking was only ninth in 2020-21, when it attracted FDI equity investment of Rs. 4,719.45 crore, primarily in food processing, auto components, engineering goods, and textiles. The declining trend in the state must create a more conducive environment for businesses and investors, and promote its attract more FDI and boost its economy.

Disadvantage: Despite signing and negotiating bilateral free trade agreements, India has failed to secure a trade agreement with the European Union or become part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) countries including China, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea for free trade agreements. The trade agreement between the 10 member states of ASEAN and their free trade agreement partners -Australia, Čhina, Japan, New Zealand, and Korea - has deepened economic integration between these countries, which are at the heart of manufacturing supply chains.

As a result, India's exclusion from such agreements and the supply chains that run through these regions puts it at a significant dis-

advantage in this manufacturing ecosystem. The Way Forward: Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) have a far greater potential to facilitate the growth of the Indian economy than Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI). However, India needs to take swift and assertive action to speed up structural reforms, root out corruption, and reduce red tape in bureaucracy to strengthen its position as the most FDI inflows to Punjab since then attractive investment destination is a cause for concern. Therefore, for FDI. India has adopted a negative list approach in its FDI po icy, which outlines only those sectors and activities where foreign potential in various sectors, to investment is regulated. Sectors not mentioned in the document are open to obtaining 100% FDI under the automatic method.

The liberal and attractive policy regime for investors, combined with a favourable business climate and reduced regulatory framework, have resulted in higher FDI inflows. But this alone is not enough. India needs to complement this with a sound trade policy that boosts exports, encourages inclusive development, and incentivises R&D to make our manufacturing ecosystem globally competitive, thereby fetching FDI at a large scale.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are strictly personal)

# Artificial Intelligence is transforming the steel industry

A step-by-step approach is the best to implement artificial intelligence. Scores of AI models are available for use in the steel units which can be tried without much hassle

Technology is ever-evolving. While it becomes difficult to keep pace with rapid technological advancements in all expanses of life, it is equally difficult to discount them because these are highly value-accretive. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one such technology. The manufacturing sector, in general, and the steel sector, in particular, are integrating AI into their daily operations to improve productivity, health and safety, reduce operational costs and reap countless other operational and functional benefits. Survival will be at stake for those who will not. In a developing nation or the Global South, cheaper availability of steel is a prequel to ensure sustainable development. Since raw materials for



ALOK SAHAY

making steel are unlikely to be economical in the foreseeable future, adaptation of modern disruptive technologies and processes is the only way out. Estimates suggest that the proper adaptation of AI in the entire value chain of steelmaking can save between \$60 and \$100 per tonne. Apart from this, a key takeaway from the recently concluded ISA Steel InfraBuild Summit in Lucknow was that the use of AI in architecture will enable engineers and architects to design, plan, and build steel structures more efficiently, resulting in proper economics and savings in infrastructure and real estate.

In the steel sector, AI can be adopted from R&D and innovation to procurement, man-

process digitalisation to supply-chain inventory, marketing, and whatnot. All these can lead to a 60% growth in EBDI-TA in three years. Greenhouse gas emissions can also be reduced by 5-10%.

Maintenance is, as always, a difficult task. Each manufacturing unit has its maintenance plan tailored to its particularities. Proper implementation and use of AI can help predict the exact timing of maintenance, thereby reducing shutdown time, cutting maintenance costs, and enhancing the lifespan of the machinery. The Indian steel industry has been the early adopter of AI.

Adaptation of AI has the highest impact on steel manufacturing in the entire value chain. In the coke oven plant, ufacturing and back-office sinter plant, blast furnaces,

continuous caster and rolling, among others, the implementation of AI has multiple benefits ranging from 1-2% yield improvement to a 50-80% reduction in quality losses. Energy consumption also improved by roughly 10%. Autonomous or semiautonomous data or content examination also makes predictions and recommendations easier. Integration of sales and production data improves revenue management and customer satisfac-

With precise data, AI's ability to predict market data and price fluctuations helps manufacturers adjust production, manage inventories, and respond swiftly to changing market conditions. Enhancing safety is also another essential

aspect. No wonder steel manufacturers worldwide are embracing AI to ensure faster delivery of business requirements. This is the age of intelligent manufacturing. Far from having a steel-producing smart factory, intelligent manufacturing encompasses all of it sourcing raw materials to production to marketing products through an integrated intelligent supply chain.

Steel consumption mirrors the health of an economy. Aspiring to be in the league of a developed nation, India has miles to go to catch up with the global steel consumption average. The building, construction and infrastructure sector consumes nearly 70% of all steel in India. The growth of the steel sector will largely depend on the demand emanating

from the infrastructure sector. While AI adaptation will benefit the steel sector, implementing AI in the infrastructure sector will help assess the sector's specific needs - such as identifying cost-effective highstrength steel structure-based designs and offering tailormade products.

Adaptation, both in the steel and the infrastructure sector, is a challenging task. A mind-set of experimentation and a determination to bring about positive changes are required. With AI, the ultimate goal is to implement an automated and unsupervised process linked with software and processes to improve performance over time. However, there is no substitute for human capital, and once integrated with AI, it will do wonders if used for the benefit of mankind and planet Earth. The apprehension that AI will displace jobs is unfounded. However, the dynamics of the job will change, requiring manpower with digital skills. It also warrants upskilling existing employees. A step-by-step approach is the best to imple ment AI. Building on the following line from the learnings of the first will yield the best results. Scores of AI models are in use in different steel manufacturing units in the country. The use of transformative technology will only go up in the days ahead. We need to be ready to adapt to the changes and implement it.

(The writer is the Secretary General of, the Indian Steel Association (ISA), views are personal)

### VIJAYAWADA | THURSDAY | DECEMBER 7, 2023

## As many as 65 illegal telecom setups unearthed

s many as 65 illegal telecom setups, that allowed international calls with spoofed Indian numbers, were busted during FY2023-24, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has directed the International Long Distance Operators (ILDOs) to drop incoming calls with no Calling Line Identification (CLI), or improper CLI or having certain prefixes. Moreover, DoT is blocking the apps allowing the origination of spoofed calls.

Such apps are also blocked at Google Play Store and iOS App Store, Minister of State for Communications, Devusinh Chauhan said in a written reply in Lok Sabha. DoT in coordination with Law Enforcement Agencies and Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) is unearthing illegal telecom setups that allow international calls with spoofed Indian numbers. Such illegal setups are used to bypass the ILDOs for antinational activities, cyber-crimes and financial frauds, Chauhan said. "So far, 65 such illegal setups during FY 2023-24, 62 in FY 2022-23 and 35 in FY 2021-2022 have been unearthed.



## **ABFRL forms JV with shoe** designer Christian Louboutin

investment in an equal joint venture with French luxury shoe designer Christian ALouboutin. Both the partners plan to invest a total of Rs 10 crore into the JV, which will be a subsidiary of ABFRL, according to a spokesperson. The 1991-founded Christian Louboutin has a presence in 30 countries, and has a portfolio consisting of men's footwear,

leather accessories, beauty and kids, and is known for its red sole shoes. This joint venture envisages the transfer of the current Indian business into a newly incorporated subsidiary of ABFRL where the partners will hold an equal stake, the statement said. "We are excited to partner with ABFRL's team and look forward to working with them to manage and develop the business in India which is an extremely important market for us," Alexis Mourot, group chief executive officer of Christian Louboutin, said.



## **Airlines to retain US\$ 5.45 on** average for every passenger

amount is just enough to buy a basic grand latte at a London Starbucks, IATA chief Willie Walsh said on Wadnesday as he emphasized that the profit of sidings should Willie Walsh said on Wednesday as he emphasised that the profit of airlines should be put in proper perspective. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has projected the airline industry to rake in profits of USD 25.7 billion in 2024 and USD 23.3 billion this

year. Walsh, the Director General of IATA said that considering the major losses of recent years, the USD 25.7 billion net profit expected in 2024 is a tribute to aviation's resilience and that the speed of the recovery has been extraordinary, but it also appears that the pandemic has cost aviation about four years of growth. "Industry profits must be put into proper perspective. While the recovery is impressive, a net profit margin of 2.7 per cent is far below what investors in almost any other industry would accept



# India's economy to grow at 6.8% in current fiscal: CII

PNS NEW DELHI

Industry chamber CII expects the country's economy to grow at 6.8 per cent in the current fiscal and accelerate to 7 per cent in 2024-25, driven by the government's continued focus on infrastructure development and promotion of ease of doing business.

In an interview with PTI, CII President R Dinesh, who is also the Executive Vice Chairman of TVS Supply Chain Solutions, said even on a conservative basis, the expected gross domestic prod-uct (GDP) growth of 6.8 per cent will be more than the 6.5-6.7 per cent estimated earlier by the industry body.

Sharing growth projections, the CII President said: "In the beginning, we had said 6.5-6.7 per cent. Now, actually, we are saying it is going to be 6.8 per cent for this year, and we are looking at 7 per cent for next year. Obviously, the first half has given the comfort for 6.8 per cent. In fact, I would say it



is a conservative number because if you look at what has happened in the first half, we are being conservative here".

On the recent state elections, he said the stock market and the industry favour continuity

During the recently held state elections, the BJP won in three major states -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, while the Congress won in Telangana.

"We welcome continuity in policy and making sure that the consensus is for the growth of the country.... for us, continuity in policy is very important and that's something that whichever party be in power, we make sure that we communicate that... The stock market is cheering the fact that there

According to him, India is in a "sweet spot", owing to various reasons, including the government's focus on infrastructure and the push for ease of

is continuity from an

approach"

growth of 7.7 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal

ended in September. When asked about the possibility of an interest rate cut by the RBI in its upcoming bimonthly monetary policy review, he said: "We are not asking for that (interest rate cut) at all because we don't believe that it's the right time to ask because inflation is above the benchmark (4 per cent), which they (RBI) have set for themselves".

"Today, we have 75 per cent to 95 per cent capacity utilisation cutting across many sectors, that has been there for the last 3 quarters. So, more or less, we can expect that very soon, we will have that percentage crossing, where people will continue to make capex investments. We did our membership survey and found that a majority of our members were actually looking at higher private sector investments taking place in H2 as compared with H1," Dinesh said.

## Domestic electronics manufacturing up 4-fold to Rs 8.22L cr

PNS NEW DELHI

'Domestic electronics manufacturing increased over 4-fold to Rs 8.22 lakh crore in the last 10 years, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar informed the Lok Sabha that India has now reached a stage where 99.2 per cent of mobile handsets being used in the country are manufactured domestically, and from being an importer in the segment, the country has now become an exporter.

"In FY 2013-14 the electronics manufacturing was Rs 1,80,454 crore (US\$ 29.8 billion) and has grown significantly to Rs 8,22,350 cr (US\$ 102 billion)in FY 2022-23, which is further expected to grow up to Rs 23,95,195 cr (USD 300 billion) by 2026," the minister said. He said the country exported mobile phones worth US\$ 11.1 billion in financial year 2022-23. "We have become a mobile exporting country with US\$ 11.1 billion exports in FY 2022-23 as compared to a mobile importing country in 2014-15 when almost 74 per cent of all mobile phones sold in India were imported,"

# Markets scale fresh lifetime highs; Nifty nears 21k-level

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty rallied for the seventh straight session to hit fresh lifetime highs on Wednesday, driven by gains in index majors Reliance Industries, ITC and L&T amid persistent foreign fund inflows. Besides, receding crude oil

prices in international markets also boosted sentiment, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex surged 357.59 points, or 0.52

per cent, to settle at a new record of 69,653.73. The barometer rose to 69,744.62 during intra-day. The broader index Niftv

also climbed 82.60 points, or 0.40 per cent, to hit its fresh peak of 20,937.70.

"Post-state elections, market optimism thrives, confirming policy continuity and meeting investor expectations. A robust FII reversal is fuelled by receding inflation and dropping yields in US and Indian markets. The allure of Indian market gains post-China credit rating downgrade and decline in oil prices was followed by ease and ICICI Bank ended the ses-

in geopolitical tensions," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

As many as 20 shares of the 30-share index closed the session with gains, while 30 stocks of the Nifty's 50 firms ended in positive territory.

Among major Sensex movers, Wipro closed with the maximum gain of 3.85 per cent, followed by ITC -- 2.51 per cent higher. L&T and TCS gained 2.31 per cent and 2.13 per cent, respectively. Tata Motors, Nestle India, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were other

On the other hand, NTPC, Axis Bank, UltraTech Cement sion with a loss of up to 1.58 per cent.

Analysts said the sustained equity buying by foreign institutional investors was attributed to declining US bond yields, while the domestic players were betting big on favourable macroeconomic data and expectations of longer political stability in the coun-

Besides, investors are also expecting the Reserve Bank to maintain the status quo on the interest rate in its bi-monthly monetary policy decision to be announced on Friday, they

### **Adani group** stocks end up to 20% higher

### 3 firms hit 52-week high

PNS NEW DELHI

Adani Group shares extend ed their gains and ended up to 20 per cent higher on Wednesday after billionaire Gautam Adani-led conglomerate said it has plans to invest USD 75 billion on energy transition initiatives by 2030. Eight of the group firms ended in the green territory, and three in the red.

During the day, some of the group firms also hit their 52-week highs and locked in upper-circuit levels, with the total valuation of group companies reaching near the Rs 15 lakh crore-mark at close.

On the BSE, Adani Total Gas zoomed 19.98 per cent to close at Rs 1,053.65 apiece, Adani Green Energy rallied 16.11 per cent at Rs 1,565.10, Adani Energy Solutions bounced 7.36 per cent to Rs 1,162.30, and NDTV advanced 7.07 per cent to settle at Rs 285.40.

Sanghi Industries shares jumped 4.97 per cent to end at Rs 136.35, Adani Wilmar climbed 4.11 per cent to Rs 396.35, Adani Power gained 4.09 per cent to Rs 560.55, and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEŽ) rose 0.67 per cent to Rs 1,018.65

### RBI unlikely to cut rates before June: Deutsche Bank

PNS MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank-led Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is unlikely to tweak repo rates till June next year, according to a foreign brokerage report. The bi-Wednesday and the decision on rates will be announced on Friday.

According to the report by Deutsche Bank, the interest rate cycle appears to have peaked and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is unlikely to go for further hikes, unless absolutely necessary. The rate is likely to be cut in June, it said. The RBI hiked the repo rate last on February 23, when it was raised to 6.5 per cent. With the RBI continuing to

maintain tight liquidity, shortterm rates are hovering around 6.85-6.9 per cent, which is 35-40 bps higher than the repo rate. "We see the central bank cutting the policy repo rate by 75 bps in 2024 and another 25 bps in early 2025. Earlier, we were expecting a 100 bps of repo rate cut in 2024 itself, starting from April 2024, but given that the Fed is likely to start cutting rates from June 2024, we have pushed back the start of the rate cut cycle to June 2024," the analysts

"We now expect 25 bps rate cuts in each of the quarters beginning from Q2 of 2024 totalling 100bps of easing in FY25, which will likely bring down the repo rate to 5.50 per



'We now expect 25 bps rate cuts in each of the quarters beginning from Q2 of 2024 totalling 100bps of easing in FY25, which will likely bring down the reporate to 5.50 per cent by early 2025.

cent by early 2025," they said. However, the analysts said the RBI's final decision will depend on the Fed's move on rates. If Fed goes for a rate hike in early 2024, or does not go for a rate cut in the whole of next year, it could delay the RBI's rate cut cycle. The report said India's economy will double in size to US\$ 7 trillion by the end of the decade with per capita income also nearly doubling to US\$ 4,500 by 2030.

And even before the end of this decade, India is likely to become the third largest economy after the US and China, overtaking Japan and Germany,

### Ashv Finance gets US\$ 10 mn investment from Encourage Capital

PNS MUMBAI

Small businesses-focused lender Ashy Finance on Wednesday announced that Encourage Capital has invested US\$ 10 million (about Rs 83.33 cr) into the company.

has over Rs 1,000 crore of assets under management at present, is planning to launch a rooftop solar finance facility for small and medium businesses with the capital, according to a statement. The quantum of the acquired

stake in the small businessesfocused lender was not revealed.

At present, it operates at 180 locations across 15 states and the funding will also be deployed for expanding its reach, the state-

# opened around transfer dates under CBI scanner PNS NEW DELHI

The CBI investigation into surprise credits totalling Rs 820 crore in the accounts of UCO Bank customers has brought thousands of recipient accounts which were opened around the dates the transfers took place, officials said Wednesday.

The CBI is probing a case where over 41,000 UCO Bank customers received surprise credits of varied amounts in their accounts during November 10-13 without any corresponding debits in the originating accounts, they said. Among various leads, the agency's needle of suspicion



Surprise credits in thousands of UCO Bank accounts

has also gone on "thousands of

using 5G services," he informed.

accounts" which were opened around the time the transactions started and received the transfers, the officials said.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had earlier said in a statement that several account holders allegedly exploited this situation, illicitly withdrawing funds from UCO Bank through various banking channels, thereby benefiting wrongfully from the transaction.

"No one who received the funds without criminal intent needs to worry about our investigation. We focus only on those

who conspired and orchestrated the massive scheme. It is an early stage of investigation, and all angles are being looked into," an official said. He added that people must beware of fraudno may want to exp the situation by posing as investigators. The CBI does not make phone calls to get details in the case, hence, he said in cases of such calls, people may approach the agency directly.

The agency has noted that Rajasthan was the most affected state in the money transfer case, recording 7.50 lakh transactions in three days spread across 230 branches and 28,000 accounts in which Rs 760 crore

# 'Nearly 100 million subscribers using 5G services'

The 5G networks have rolled out in 738 districts across the country, and around 100 million subscribers are using these services, marking one of the fastest fifthgeneration rollouts in the world, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

Telecom service providers have also committed a total investment of Rs 2 lakh crore, including a commitment of Rs 1.5 lakh crore for spectrum acquired through auction in July-August 2022, Minister of



State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan said in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

"As on November 24, 2023, 5G networks have been rolled out in 738 districts across the country and a total of 3,94,298 base stations have been installed with around 100 million subscribers

India, he said, has seen one of the fastest 5G rollouts, globally. "Further Gross Revenue of Telecom service providers has crossed Rs 3 lakh crore for first time in FY 2022-23, Chauhan said. The telecom sector growth has been aided by various structural and procedural reforms implemented by the government over the last few years to promote healthy competition, infuse liquidity, encourage investment, and reduce the regulatory burden on operators while protecting the interests of



## Maruti Suzuki's electric SUV to be manufactured in Gujarat

**PNS** ■ AHMEDABAD

Leading car manufacturer Maruti Suzuki on Wednesday announced that its upcoming electric SUV will be manufactured in Gujarat, and a new plant will be added to the company's existing manufacturing facility in Hansalpur, nearly 90

km from here. Suzuki Motor Gujarat Private Ltd (SMG), which runs the car manufacturing plant at Hansalpur, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Maruti Suzuki and commenced oper-

ation in February 2017. "Our first EV, an SUV, will be launched in the next financial year of 2024-25. It will come out from SMG's Gujarat plant. At present, the entire SMG facility at Hansalpur has three plants - plant A, B and C. Now, to manufacture the EV, a new plant, also called a production line, will be added there," Maruti Suzuki Executive Director (Corporate Affairs) Rahul Bharti told

reporters.
The upcoming EV SUV, to

"Our first EV, an SUV, will be launched in the next financial year of 2024-25. It will come out from SMG's Gujarat plant. At present, the entire SMG facility at Hansalpur has three plants - plant A, B and C. Now, to manufacture the EV, a new plant, also called a production line, will be added there."

be produced here at the SMG plant, will be exported too, he

In March 2022, SMG's parent firm Suzuki Motor Corporation signed an MoU with the Gujarat government to invest Rs 3,100 crore in the Hansalpur plant for EV man-

ufacturing, Bharti said.
"Our EV concept car has already been unveiled. It will be a high-specification SUV having 550 km range (on a single charge) and a 60-kilowatthour battery," he said.

# ONGC to cut gas flaring, use green power at oil wells

PNS NEW DELHI

Kumar Singh said.

State-controlled Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) plans to wheel green electricity to its installations in the Arabian Sea to replace natural gas it uses in operation of oil wells as part of its ambitious decarbonisation programme, its Chairman Ârun

India's top oil and gas producer has substantially cut gas flaring -- burning of methane gas is produced when oil is extracted from below surface -- and would look to bring it down to nil as part of its environmental commitments, he said while speaking at the 28th UN Climate

Change Conference in Dubai,

called COP28. Singh said ONGC uses a lot of gas to generate electricity as well as meet compression and other process needs of an oil and gas field. By 2028, this gas is intended to be replaced with green power wheeled to installations as far as 160 km from the west coast. The gas thus freed will be sold to industries like fertiliser and power plants.

Companies around the globe have pledged to slash down methane emissions by 30 per cent from 2020 levels by 2030. Methane, which is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, tends to leak into the atmosphere.



This is sometimes deliberate when companies flare the gas that comes alongside crude oil, due to lack of consumption markets. It also can leak unde-

tected from drill sites, gas

pipelines and other oil and gas equipment.

Controlling methane, which has been rising in atmospheric concentration for decades, is seen as one of the easiest and

immediate impact on global greenhouse gas emissions. 'We have been working very

cheapest ways to make an

consistently on reducing methane emissions," Singh said at the session on 'Accelerating the Elimination of Methane and Emissions Decarbonisation of Oil & Gas'.

"Because of the (Indian) geography and population, we hardly have any scope to flare," he said. However, a "very small" amount leaked unintentionally because of the "prohibitive" cost of capturing it, he said, adding that ONGC was working with technology providers to check that.

'We want to help the planet by making zero methane from

"Earlier, we used to flare 14-15 million standard cubic meters per day, but now we are hardly flaring... now it is around 2 per cent," he said. "Still 2 per cent needs to go

becomes uneconomical.

our operations," he said.

Flaring, which used to be

done in the past because of lack

of customers for gas, has been

reduced by almost 80 per cent,

he said. Crude oil pumped out

of ground can easily be trans-

ported in trucks but to take gas

from remote well locations to

industries requires pipelines.

gas coming out with oil is so low that laying a pipeline

Sometimes, the amount of

Kriti Sanon wraps a schedule for her production *Do Patti* in Manali

Sanon is currently in Manali as she wraps a schedule for, Do Patti, produced by her production house Blue Butterfly Films. Earlier this year, Kriti made headlines by venturing into film production with the launch of her production house. The talented actress is now set to bring fresh narratives to audiences with her debut production, showcasing her versatility both in front of and behind the camera.

Taking to social media, she shares "Manali.. You are beautiful! @ Its a Schedule wrap for #DoPatti!!Cold weather, Warm hearts! #Passionate souls trying to create some magic while making memories! Such a fulfilling schedule, all thanks to a great team!@beatnikbob5 @martratassepp you guys killed

it! #DoPatti @bluebutterfly-

The year 2023 has proven

filmsofficial

Sanon, as she not only delves into film production but also expands her entrepreneurial endeavors. Besides making waves in the film industry, Kriti has

recently ventured into the world of beauty by unveiling her own skincare brand. Her foray into multiple domains underscores her dynamic and multifaceted

approach to her career. As the actress continues to make waves in the industry, her achievements reach new heights with a notable accolade - a national award and a Filmfare Best Actress award. Kriti Sanon's unstoppable journey paints a picture of a determined artist and entrepreneur, leaving fans and the industry eager to witness her upcoming film, *Do Patti*, where she takes on the dual roles of producer and leading

prowess on and off the

'Our films need to make





scar winner Angelina Jolie says she probably wouldn't pursue acting as a career if she was just starting in the industry today.

Born to actor parents Jon Voight and Marcheline Bertrand, the 48-year-old said she "really has a social life" living in Los Angeles since every time she leaves her house, she is subjected to unwanted attention by the paparazzi, which is also one of the reasons why she eventually wants to move from Hollywood.

"I' wouldn't be an actress today. When I was starting out, it wasn't as much of an expectation to be as public, to share so much," Jolie told the Wall Street Journal Magazine.

"It's part of what happened after my divorce. I lost the ability to live and travel as

high-profile and bitter separation from her Mr & Mrs Smith co-star and former husband Brad Pitt. In the interview, Jolie also noted that she hopes to spend more time at her home in Cambodia, from where her adoptive son Maddox (22) hails from.

"I will move when I can," she added. Jolie made her screen debut as a child alongside Voight in 1982's |Lookin' to Get Out" and went on to carve her niche as a leading actor with films such as her Oscar-winning turn in Girl, Interrupted, Lara Croft: Tomb Raider, Salt, A Mighty Heart and Maleficent.

The actor, also known for her humanitarian efforts, admitted that she "was never very impressed" with Hollywood.

"I never bought into it as sig-

freely," she said referring to the nificant or important. I grew up in quite a shallow place. Of all the places in the world, Hollywood is not a healthy place. So you seek authenticity," she said, adding fame after her Oscar win led to depression and at times, suicidal thoughts.

Being in the public eye for almost all her life, Jolie said the stress post her separation from Pitt in 2016 got so bad that during shooting of the Disney sequel Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, her voice had changed registers from when she first played the titular fairy tale vil-

"My body reacts very strongly to stress. My blood sugar goes up and down. I suddenly had Bell's palsy six months before my divorce," she added.

Her last screen appearance was 2021's Eternals.



### 'Will always champion an **Indian designer** on international platforms'

Actress and style icon Sonam Kapoor revealed her reason to go local at international events which has led to India having major fashion moments globally She said: "For me, I remember it was my first Cannes appearance. I was working with an international brand and they were taking me to Cannes. I know Masaba since we were kids, we were in kathak class together. But my sister Rhea and I discussed and we were like 'we should wear an Indian designer on a global platform' and we wanted to wear a designer who was young and someone who represented the modern and young India."

Recalling the time she wore a saree, Sonam added: "I remember, I wore her (Masaba) saree and at that time, I draped the saree myself. We had one make-up artist that was being shared by all young girls representing the global brand

that I was endorsing." "I remember going there and suddenly there was this one photographer who comes and takes a picture of me and the next thing I know is that I am on the cover of a leading fashion magazine in America!" The actress said: "I cannot tell you how excited Masaba was! But what was very exciting for

me was the fact that I was 23 years old, that an Indian designer featured on a global magazine, and I felt very proud of it as an Indian! On the work front, Sonam will be seen in Battle for Bittora

## engaging stories for children from Indian cinema' ctor Gulshan Devaiah is thrilled to embrace a childrenfriendly narrative with Little Thomas and said that

there is a need to make more engaging stories for kids from Indian cinema. "My earlier films have been catering to a more mature audience. Little Thomas is a wonderful shift for me, and I'm genuinely excited about making a film that children and their families can enjoy together," Gulshan said. The actor added: "The English speaking world makes a lot of films for children but in Indian we don't cater much to our children. Our films need to make diverse and engaging stories for children from Indian cinema."

The actor emphasises the importance of exploring varied genres for younger audiences and encourages fellow filmmakers to step up and experiment with storytelling that resonates with children. The film tells a heartwarming story centered around a Goan family. Directed by the National Award-winning filmmaker Kaushal Oza, Little Thomas also stars Rasika. The film marks a reunion for Rasika and Kaushal, who had previously collaborated on the short film The Miniaturist of Junagadh.

# **SUSAN SARANDON FIRED**

ctress Susan Sarandon has thriller film Slipping Away amid her anti-Semitism contro-

Slipping Away is about a schizophrenic man who "struggles with his own psychosis and his wife's extramarital affair."

In the wake of the October 7 massacre by Hamas, Sarandon has been under fire for her latest outburst for saying Jews are "getting a taste of how it feels to be Muslim in America."

David Barroso, co-founder of the indie movie production company PTO Films, told Page Six: "As a company, PTO Films would like to make it clear that Susan Sarandon's views do not reflect the opinions of our organisation. We were considering her for a short film, but due to her recent statements, we have decided to pursue other options."

The actress had been set to play been asked to leave the Dr Sylvia Mansfield in Slipping Away, with the film appearing in her "upcoming" projects list on IMDB under the "pre-production" list, reports aceshowbiz.com.

She has also been dropped from her talent UTA agency as "several staffers" are said to have been "extremely hurt" by her comments on the Israel-Hamas Sarandon made her contro-

"getting a taste of how it feels to be Muslim in America" after she attended a string of rallies in New York tackling the Israel-Hamas conflict - during which she also joined in the chant "From the river to the sea.



### **ARCHIE**









### CALVIN AND HOBBES









### GARFIELD







### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP





ACROSS

stick

14 Small cities

people

DOWN

6 A railway engine

13 Glass buildings for

growing plants

17 Nairobi is the capital of

19 In the middle of lots of

this country in Africa

8 Wear these on fingers

10 An orchestra conductor's





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- The middle of the day
  - 2 Things to play with 3 A wartime explosive 4 Birthday present

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11 Make smile or laugh

- 16 Cold winter flakes 17 He wears a crown 18 Require



### **GINGER MEGGS**







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Thursday December 7, 2023



# BREAKING BARRIERS BY

# TRANSFORMING GENDER DYNAMICS

TEJAL SINHA

ender equality is the most coveted state of affairs that our country has long craved. Gender equality is now a social and economic challenge as well as a moral obligation. Despite its many accomplishments, India is still underappreciated when it comes to gender equality. And then there is Seema Bhaskaran, the Lead for Gender at Transform Rural India, whose expertise in gender issues and community development makes her an invaluable resource.

makes her an invaluable resource.

Basically, her initial work with the Centre for Social Studies, where she documented the work of organisations working with women, helped her understand the importance of a multidimensional approach where the perspectives of many stakeholders can converge seamlessly. The lead begins, "My interactions with activists and academicians from the women's

activists and academicians from the women's movement further sharpened my analytical and nuanced understanding of gender equality. Later, I worked on gender and decentralisation with Sakhi and KILA (the Kerala Institute of Local Administration). I developed modules and manuals and also trained elected representatives and Panchayat officials in areas like status studies of women, gender planning, budgeting, and auditing."

ear representatives and Panchayat officials in areas like status studies of women, gender planning, budgeting, and auditing."

As the state project director of the Mahila Samakhya programme under the erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), her work focused on developing federations of women working towards gender equality and gender education of teachers. The work also entailed starting help desks in all schools in Kerala and working on the educational retention of children in difficult circumstances as well as the survivors of child sexual abuse.

"In MHRD, I worked on the implementation of the Right to Education by strengthening educational systems to retain children from marginalised communities in the education stream. As a technical expert on gender and social inclusion in the National Rural Livelihoods Mission, I worked on developing curriculum, modules, manuals, protocols, and advisories for gender and social inclusion and supported all states of India in developing gender operational strategies and implementation," shares Seema, adding that the focus was on the capacity building of staff, cadres, institutional mechanisms, and strengthening institutional mechanisms for action. "Interventions on gender equality and inter-





facing with the public system were also part of the process. This journey across the country has been instrumental in shaping my insights on gender equality. Through Transform Rural India (TRI), the endeavour has been to work through a gender transformative lens and a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral approach towards quality-of-life enhancement.

The initial eye-opener for her was when she was looking at the lives of women from Safai Sathi communities and fisherfolk communities who faced extreme forms of deprivation. This helped her understand the concept of intersectionality very early in her childhood. And so, "I witnessed inequities and discrimination experienced by women from matrilineal communities and the domestic violence they were subjected to despite having land ownership, and this led me to question, introspect, and analyse the reasons behind these paradoxical situations. Instances of child sexual abuse in matrilineal homes also led to questions regarding the safety and security within a home and the institution of the family. My early association with the women's movement and participation led to a sharper and more nuanced understanding of gender rights. My education at TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) promoted an even deeper academic understanding of gender issues."

Just like many, she too wishes there were a silver bullet to fix gender inequality, but sadly, there is not. That is why the only real solution she feels is a multidimensional approach—a multiplicity of strategies. It is also important to bring equal opportunities to rural India.

In rural India, the topic of domestic violence is much easier to talk about than that of sexual health. Public spaces for women to discuss gender issues are extremely limited. Gender issues ranging from menstruation, reproductive health, control over body and fertility, spacing pregnancies, use of contraception, abortions, domestic violence, and marital rape are taboo subjects. However, she shares, "Due to the growth of SHG-federations, women now have a platform to discuss aspects of financial inclusion. With attempts to integrate gender within the SHG network and develop institutional mechanisms, space has been developed for voicing issues of domestic violence too. Discussion on the Domestic Violence Act has been undertaken through campaigns by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, and women in rural areas have been informed about the One-Stop Centre where they can seek rehabilitative services. Discussions around the body and sexuality are still, however, curtailed by taboos. Efforts to introduce them into the school curriculum have failed. Patriarchy continues to decide on the age of marriage, number, and preferred gender of the child while family planning and spacing are done via the instrumentation of women's bodies."

Irrespective of Janani Janma Suraksha's aim to enhance reproductive health services, women's decision-making power regarding their bodies and fertility remained constrained within the patriarchal family structure. In such cases, "SHG networks and ASHA services have been instrumental in accessing entitlements under the National Food Security Act, the National Social Assistance

Programme, etc. ASHA's work has been critical in enabling access to reproductive health services, especially institutional delivery. Despite awareness, the fear of institutional delivery is high due to the lack of facilities in the labour room and a gender-insensitive environment. The behaviour of care providers also restricts women from accessing primary health centres in underserved areas. Social norms stemming from patriarchy have been difficult to change, and decision-making over fertility can be improved only through women's knowledge enhancement on reproductive health and sexuality. Adolescent education on sexual and reproductive health can be imparted through Anganwadis."

Children, adolescents, and youth are bombarded with distorted information, often leading to perverse notions and a debilitating escalation in sexual violence and rape. Women and children face the brunt of this and are scarred for life. And so, in such cases, "sex education would, on the other hand, provide adolescents and youth with scientific information. This would lead to enhanced control over the body and fertility and informed choices regarding marriage and contraception. It will also improve health-seeking behaviour and dispel false notions and misconceptions about masculinity and femininity. It will also enhance bodily agency and the understanding of reproductive rights. Very early on in my career, I realised that regressive ideas about women and their bodies are not just rooted in personal prejudices but stem from institutional beliefs that need to be addressed—the system needs changing if there is to be change at a macro scale. Young girls can be educated through the school curriculum. Adolescent clubs and the health and nutrition programmes in Anganwadis in rural areas can also be leveraged for sex education. The theme can also be introduced through a life-skill educational module.'

### CASE STUD

The Mahila Samakhya programme under the Ministry of Human Resources Development, which focused on the educational empowerment of women, was a good example of providing sex education. Sex education was provided through Mahila Shikshan Kendras and Kasturba Gandhi Ballika Vidyalayas managed by Mahila Samakhya. Sex education was undertaken in schools among girl children in rural areas as well. It was packaged as part of life skills education and led to enhanced confidence among girls. Educational mobility was enhanced. As was the awareness among women to educate children and report violations of rights.

# CHAMAK: Lurking beneath the Punjabi music industry's politics

TANISHA SAXENA

hamak is an intriguing musical thriller that explores the dark underbelly of the music industry in Punjab. Although slow-paced, the screenplay keeps us interested throughout the series, shedding light on various aspects of Punjab's society, such as racism, politics, business feuds, LGBTQ issues, and possible honour killings.

The story opens with a mesmerising drone shot, offering a stunning view of Punjab's land-scape in 1999, draped in the enchanting cloak of winter fog. The crowded ground, embellished with a meticulously arranged stage, eagerly anticipates the appearance of the legendary singer, Taara Singh. Yet, the narrative

singer, Taara Singh. Yet, the narrative takes an unexpected turn when a gunshot pierces the air, abruptly concluding his performance. And the next moment, we are in Vancouver, Canada, in 2023. Kaala, a young chap who is accused of burglary, possession of illegal firearms, and other petty crimes, is presented to the officers for parole at the central prison. He says, "It is not what I did! It is the way I look. The colour my god painted clay with. I am not a criminal; I am an artist." He hints at the racism and bullying that he has been

subjected to in the country. He is a rapper at heart who comes back to Punjab from Canada and unravels the death of Tara Singh.

This six-part series stands out for its genuine approach and layered storytelling. Aside from the inquiry, the series provides a glimpse into the lives of different members of society, exploring the struggles of people who want to make out in the music industry in Punjab. *Chamak* serves as a musical thriller that invites contemplation. While superficially depicting the quest of a young rapper investigating the demise of a renowned singer, the narrative unfolds layers, offering a nuanced and thought-provoking experience.

Chamak, as opposed to its literal meaning, transcends glamour; it delves into the shadows concealed behind the radiant glow of stage lights. It almost unfolds as a spiritual and cathartic journey, particularly for those intricately linked to the tapestry of the Punjab music industry. The drill to get the first break, nepotism, family dynamics, politics, and more. Each of these elements is wonderfully woven into the narrative, and



nothing feels out of place.

Tara Singh and his wife, Navpreet, met a tragic end under the hail of AK47 gunfire. Curiously, despite both being victims, the case is singularly designated as the 'Tara Singh murder case.' A journalist, meticulously delving into the intricacies of the crime and subsequently aiding Kaala, raises a poignant inquiry. He astutely questions the conspicuous absence of the woman's name in the case, revealing a stark lack of reverence for women that persists even in the aftermath of death. The journalist poignantly observes the irony that, even in the solemnity of death, women seemingly contend for recognition, underscoring a disconcerting societal paradox. He questions, Even in death, women have no existence. Isn't it funny?

The cast delivers commendable performances; particularly noteworthy is Paramvir Singh Cheema's portrayal of Kaala, executed with remarkable authenticity. Kaala's character, navigating through both personal tribulations and professional struggles, emanates vulnerability juxtaposed with inherent strength. The on-screen dynamic between Cheema and Isha Talwar, essaying the role of Jasmine (Jazz), an aspiring musician, is a captivating narrative to witness. Jazz, despite defying the conventional Punjabi girl archetype, infuses each frame with her dis-

tinctive charisma. Their on-screen chemistry illuminates the nuances of the contemporary dating landscape, exploring insecurities and, most significantly, delving into the complex facets of commitment and loyalty within a relationship.

relationship.

Manoj Pahwa and Mohit Malik, portraying the roles of Pratap Deol, owner of a music company, and Guru Deol, his son, form a captivating duo in the series. Their intricate father-son relationship unfolds gradually, with Guru navigating through a poignant chapter in his life. This dynamic adds a refreshing layer to the storyline, providing viewers with a compelling narrative to contemplate.

As the series progresses, the audience is treated to a wealth of relatable nuances. The musical thriller aspect shines with a stellar soundtrack featuring prominent names from the Punjabi music industry. Icons like Gippy Grewal, Mika Singh, Malkit Singh, MC Square, Afsana Khan, Asees Kaur, Sunidhi Chauhan, Kanwar Grewal, Shashwat Singh, and Harjot Kaur contribute to one of the standout albums of the year.

Melodies such as *Kangi Wava* and Sunn *Zindagi Ka Sangeet* exude a profound warmth that resonates deeply with the listener, offering a soul-stirring experience.

**RATING:** 3/5

# A look at the changing phase of paediatric diabetes

The past generation has witnessed a surge in the number of children with diabetes. It is important to know two types of diabetes that are more common in children: type 1 diabetes (T1DM) and type 2 diabetes (T2DM). Although there are other variants, they are less common.

In T1DM, the complete deficiency of insulin is more common at an early age and carries a high genetic cause, whereas in T2DM, there is a relative insulin deficiency encountered in a child's later years due to a combination of genetic causes and obesity encountered due to poor lifestyle practices. In most cases, T2DM illness begins with excess weight gain, which can pose challenges to insulin and cholesterol metabolism. One can vary from having mild glucose elevations to severe glucose values, which are defined as impaired glucose tolerance, to true diabetes, where there are elevated levels of fasting or postmeal glucose elevations.

In T1DM, the illness is picked up very early since it is more symptomatic, like poor growth, significant weight loss, increased thirst, and passing urine more frequently since it is an autoimmune reaction where the body attacks its own cells. Concerns are with T2DM, especially in children, where alarming symptoms are not seen initially until the condition progresses to a more serious situation. Many times, it is picked up when a child presents to a doctor with some other problem and blood or urine tests show elevated glucose levels. So, it is very necessary to screen high-risk children early in life. In either case, young people who develop diabetes have a higher risk of health challenges throughout their lives.

If we focus on T2DM here, since it is a condition where reversible causes can be worked with, recent studies delineate risk factors for the development of T2DM in children and young adults. Incidence rates of T2DM increase with age, as puberty is associated with a challenge in insulin production. Emerging evidence suggests that lifestyle intervention and ideal medical intervention may reduce the rates of development of type 2 diabetes in subjects at the

highest risk, which mainly include obesity, a strong diabetes history in the family, diabetes affecting the mother during pregnancy, ethnicity, like we as Asians have increased risk, low birth weight, and most importantly, dietary factors like excess caloric intake, a low-fibre diet, high trans-fatty acids, and saturated fat, which increase risk, and reduced intake of fibre, polyunsaturated fat, and long-chain n-3 fatty acids, which

may have a protective role.

The American Diabetes
Association recommends risk-based
screening for type 2 diabetes after the
onset of puberty or age 10 years in
children who are overweight or obese
and have one or more additional risk
factors as mentioned earlier. In high
school, screening is recommended
every 3 years, and if tests are normal,

moting self-management skills and establishing individualised plans for self-monitoring of glucose. Lifestyle interventions aimed at achieving desired weight loss, which include improving diet standards with special importance given to nutrition and increasing physical activity, are often recommended. The role of medications in children with T2DM options is limited, which includes oral antidiabetic medication and insulin. Other injectable options aimed at weight and glucose control are being tried.

In T1DM, the answer is only insulin, since the body cannot produce it. Management is straightforward when administering insulin. Here, two types of insulin are commonly used by doctors: one type of insulin for meals, which is short-acting only for meals, and another type



recheck more frequently if BMI increases. The definitions of diabetes in children and adolescents are the same as in adults.

Screening for children with risk factors and who do not have symptoms of diabetes requires a single fasting blood test, which tests glucose levels (FBG) and average glucose over 3 months (what we call HbA1c), and if abnormal levels are found, doctors do a 2-hour glucose challenge test to confirm diabetes.

Management of diabetes varies between T1DM and T2DM. For T2DM prevention and treatment of diabetes, a structured management plan is recommended with the provision of extensive education on proof insulin as a background cover, which should last round the clock, meaning a long-acting insulin. Room for oral medications usually doesn't exist unless the child is obese, which is less common with T1DM.

T2DM management can be challenging as there are limited oral medications used in children. If that fails, the only option remaining is to administer insulin. More importance is being placed on lifestyle measures like encouraging physical activity and having a well-balanced diet.

(The author, Dr. Srinath Aswathiah, is a senior consultant in diabetes and endocrinology at Gleneagles Hospital, Kengeri.)

### **ICC RANKINGS**

# Ravi becomes world number 1 T201 bowler



roung Indian leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi on Wednesday rose to the top player of the series-winning

Mushfigur becomes first

Bangladesh batter to be

out for obstructing field

Former captain Mushfiqur the ball with a hand not holding Rahim on Wednesday the bat. This will apply whether

became the first Bangladesh it is the first strike or a second

2001.

172 inside 67 overs.

Sylhet by 150 runs.

**PTI** ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

patter to be given out for

'obstructing the field' in a bizarre dismissal on the opening day of the second Test against New

The 36-year-old Rahim defend-

ed a rising delivery from New

Zealand quick Kyle Jamieson in

the fourth ball of the 41st over

and then extended his right

hand to apparently keep the ball

away after it bounced up wide

outside off stump.

The Black Caps were quick to appeal and the on-field umpires

referred the matter to the TV

umpire Ahsan Raza who gave

According to Law 37.1.2, "The

striker is out obstructing the

field if, except in the circum-

stances of 37.2, in the act of

Zealand here.

Rashid Khan (692) from the top

Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga and England's Adil Rashid, who both have 679 points, are in joint third. Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana (677) completes the top

five. Bishnoi is the only Indian bowler in the top 10 in the shortest format even as Axar Patel climbed nine spots to be 18th. Meanwhile, the swashbuckling Suryakumar Yadav, who captained India during their 4-1 T20I series win against Australia,

held on to the top spot among batters, while opener Ruturaj Gaikwad dropped a place to be seventh.

Hardik Pandya retained the

third spot in the all-rounders' list, despite missing the series against Australia due to injury.

> Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner (3-31) and offspinner Glenn Phillips (3-65) shared six wickets to wreak havoc on the Bangladesh batting lineup. Ajaz Patel, another left-arm spinner, claimed 2-54 while skipper Tim Souther took one skipper Tim Southee took one wicket without conceding a sin-

AP MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

 $B_{\text{the final test against New} } \\ Zealand after 15 wickets fell on$ 

an eventful day one Wednesday

as the hosts pursue a first ever

test series win against the Kiwis.
The home side was all out for 172 but hit back strongly to

reduce New Zealand to 55-5 in

12.4 overs before bad light

forced stumps. Both teams' batters struggled on a wicket where most of the balls

kept low and the bounce was

uneven. The New Zealand bowling attack maintained a tight line

and length to create pressure by conceding just eight runs in the

gle run in 5.2 overs. Mushfiqur Rahim made a teamhigh 35 before becoming the first Bangladeshi batter to be dismissed for handling the ball. While defending a delivery from fast bowler Kyle Jamieson, the

West Indies, where it is a little bit drier, it will spin." Maxwell will

return to action as captain of

Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash

League opener against Brisbane Heat in the opener at the Gabba

team's most experienced batter used his right hand to push the ball away even though it wasn't close to the off-stump.

After New Zealand reduced to 55-5

Bangladesh takes control of 2nd test

After New Zealand appealed for the out, the third umpire checked and then gave him out for obstructing the field. Bangladesh's first boundary came in the eighth over when

Zakir Hasan drove Patel through cover for four. The pressure eventually got the better of Zakir (8) when he played a rash shot against Santner and chipped it straight to mid-on. In the next over, Patel dismissed Mahmudul Hasan (14) after he was beaten by the drift to give a catch at short-leg.

first seven overs after Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto opted to bat Mominul Haque (5) was the next to go when he was caught behind off Patel's bowling.
But the biggest blow for Bangladesh followed in the next over

when captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (9), who hit a century in the previous test, attempted a reverse sweep against Santner. The on-field Umpires turned down the appeal but New Zealand reviewed it successfully to leave Bangladesh 47-4. Mushfiqur and Shahadat

Hossain, playing his only second test, shared a 57-run partnership which eventually kept Bangladesh ahead on a tricky

The dismissal of Mushfiqur

triggered another collapse, which began with Shahadat (31) being caught down the leg-side off the bowling of Phillips.

on eventful 1st day

The onus was on Mehidy Hasan to lead a fightback with the lower order but Santer came back to dismiss him as New Zealand bowled Bangladesh out shortly

after tea. However, Mehidy led Bangladesh's bowling attack with 3-17 and left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who took 10 wickets in

the first test, took 2-29. Tom Latham and Devon Conway started cautiously but Mehidy broke through with a delivery that Conway thought would turn. Instead it went straight to crash the stump as Conway was out for 11.

Taijul then dealt a double blow by dismissing Latham and Henry Nicholls.

New Zealand fell into deep trouble when Kane Williamson, the centurion of the previous test, ended up getting an inside edge towards short while defending a quicker delivery of Mehidy.

Just a ball later, Mehidy fired another quicker one that kept extremely low to trap Tom Blundell leg-before for a duck. Daryl Mitchell (12) and Glenn Phillips (5) were batting when play came to an end because of bad light.

spot in the ICC T20I bowling chart on the back of his recent

performance against Australia. The 23-year-old was India's go-to bowler in the just-concluded series against Australia, taking nine wickets from five games. Bishnoi, who is on 699 rating points, has jumped five places to displace Áfghanistan spinner

receiving a ball delivered by the bowler, he/she wilfully strikes

the ball with a hand not holding

or subsequent strike. The act of

Earlier such dismissals were

classified as "handled the ball"

but a change in the laws in 2017

brought them under "obstruct-

# India opens campaign against Afghanistan

Faces Pakistan on Sunday The teams have been divided into two groups of four each. India, Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan

India will face Afghanistan in the opening match of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup cricket tour-

nament here on Friday.
Pakistan will play Nepal in the other match of the opening day. Arch-rivals India and Pakistan will

face each other on Sunday.

Eight teams will compete for the top prize in the 50-over event which is being hosted by the Emirates Cricket Board.

four each. India, Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan are placed in Group A.

Bangladesh, Japan, Sri Lanka and hosts UAE feature in Pool B. The top two teams from each of the two groups will progress to the semi-finals which will be played on December 15.

The tournament final will be played at the Dubai International Stadium on December 17. All

group matches and semi-finals will be played at the ICC Academy Ovals 1 and 2. All tournament matches will begin at 9:30 am local

# Will play IPL until I cannot walk anymore: Maxwell

**PTI** ■ MELBOURNE

Star Australia all-rounder Henn Maxwell has vowed to play in the world's biggest cricket league, the IPL "until he can't walk anymore".

receiving the ball shall extend both to playing at the ball and to striking the ball more than once in defence of his/her wick-The 35-year-old, who played a massive role in Australia's ODI World Cup-winning campaign in India recently, will once again don the colours of Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL

ing the field" category.

Former England captain

Michael Vaughan was the next year. "The IPL will probably be the last tournament I ever play, as I last batter to be given out 'han-dling the ball' against India in will play the IPL until I can't walk anymore," Maxwell was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press (AAP) at the Rahim was Bangladesh's topscorer with his 35 off 83 balls as Melbourne Airport on Wednesday. the hosts were bundled out for

"I was talking about how good the IPL has been to me through-Bangladesh won the first Test in out my career, the people I've



met, the coaches I have played under, the international players that you get to rub shoulders with, how beneficial to my whole career that tournament has been.

"You're rubbing shoulders with AB (de Villiers) and Virat (Kohli) for two months, talking to them while watching other games. It's just the greatest learning experience that any player could ask for," he said. Maxwell feels Australian cricketers should play in the IPL for experience ahead of the T20 World Cup in the United States and the West Indies in June. "Hopefully, a lot of our

Australian players can get over

to the IPL and get to work in

slightly similar conditions to the

After winning the ODI World Cup by beating favourites India at home, Australia are now looking to reclaim the T20 world title which they won in 2021.

on Thursday.

"As soon as we won this World Cup, we all talked about the refocus towards the next one," Maxwell said. "I'm hoping it's going be a really exciting summer for the BBL, with what is just around the corner.

'Hopefully a little bit more importance on putting your name up in the headlines for the right reasons and trying to push for those spots," he added.

Du Plessis hints at return to international cricket

### PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Raĥim out.

Jacques Kallis, one of the last multi-skilled legends, says quality all-rounders have become a scarcity in modernday cricket, especially in Test cricket, because of "too much cricket across formats".

While Sir Garfield Sobers (8032 runs and 235 wickets) is considered 'greatest of 'em all' across generations, Kallis (25,000-plus runs and nearly 600 wickets in three formats) is inarguably one of the legendary allrounders the modern era has

In the 1980s, there were four great all-rounders in Imran Khan, Richard Hadlee, Ian Botham and Kapil Dev while the new millennium saw emergence of Kallis and Andrew Flintoff.

But with advent of T20 cricket and mushrooming leagues across the globe with new rules have actually discouraged development of multi-skilled crick-

"It is a tough question to answer, all-rounders don't come around every day. There aren't many throughout the history. Lot of things, amount of cricket that is played certainly plays a role," Kallis told PTI during an exclu-

The former Proteas captain is in India to play the Legends League

sive interview.

# Too much cricket is affecting development of all-rounders: Kallis



Premier League but the former KKR coach isn't a great fan of 'Impact Player' rule where a team can change one player during its batting or bowling innings as per need.

"A few T20 competitions have substitutes (IPL) and I am not a big fan of that as it takes away the all-rounder out of your team. The teams that do not have good all-rounders are now playing with 12 men. I am not a huge fan of that.

There are lot of little things that add up on to why there aren't too many all-rounders at the Cricket. moment, as it is surprising as they add so much value to the

game. But it's a whole lot of little things coming together," Kallis said.

CENTURION WILL BE TOUGH FOR INDIA: The Indian team would be embarking on a tough away tour of South Africa, the only major Test playing nation where it hasn't won a single Test series in 31

The focus will be on the two Test matches, which is a part of World Test Championship (WTC) cycle even as ODIs and T20s are part of the full tour. The stars from both sides (Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Kagiso Rabada) will

only be playing the traditional format during the series.
"This is a good Indian team but

South Africa is tough to beat in South Africa. Centurion will probably suit South Africa and Newlands will probably suit India. It will be a good series and it will come down to one or two sessions that one team might play better than the other. It would be a closely-fought contest," said Kallis.

**TRANSITIONS** TOUGH, GET YOUNGSTERS **READY:** The Indian team's average age is in mid-30s. Skipper Rohit is 36 and main batter Virat Kohli is 35.

Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja are 37 and 35 respectively while Mohammed Shami 33.

There would be a transition sooner or later in another couple of years and Kallis feels that if talented youngsters are groomed by keeping them with senior team, the handing of baton becomes easier.

"Older players obviously have got the knowledge and you would combine that with younger players. That's the job of coaches and selectors to make sure so that even if younger players might not be playing, they are in that environment where they can learn from the older players," said Kallis, who scored 45 Test hundreds in his illustrious 18-year career in which he played 166 Tests.

It is imperative that youngsters are travelling to unfamiliar territories and soaking in all knowledge available watching those who have been there and done that.

"(They should) travel to these parts of the world that they are probably not used to and learn from sitting on the side, try to pick up as much knowledge as

possible and play those warmup games where big players are resting for. Picking up knowledge helps a lot and transition when a few players are retiring, it becomes little bit easier," he elaborated.

Having started his career in mid-90s just when players like Kepler Wessels, Peter Kirsten, Andrew Hudson had all retired or were on verge of retirement, Kallis felt that back in the day, Proteas had a good system of changeover in place.

"Certainly, when I started, South Africa were very good at transitioning younger players into good international players and that obviously needs to be done when senior players retire." A BIT OF LUCK ON BIG

**DAYS:** A part of the South African side that had to bear the label of "chokers" for not winning big-ticket events, Kallis understands the pain of the current Indian team that has now lost nine semi-finals or finals at marquee ICC competitions. 'You need a little bit of luck in

these tournaments to go your way. You could end up being at the wrong end of the toss or bad end of the conditions, you need little bit of luck as players certainly don't go out there to lose. "From that point of view, you can get beaten by a better team on the day and you have got to

put your hand up and accept it.

Try to learn from those things,"

was a Test against Pakistan in February 2021. "I believe that I can return to international cricket," du Plessis told the broadcaster of Abu Dhabi T10 league. "We have been speaking about this for the last couple of years. It's just figuring out the balance of the T20 World Cup next year. It's certainly something we have spoken about with the new coach," he added.

Du Plessis last featured in a T20I

three years ago in 2020. While his last match for South Africa

Despite not featuring for South Africa, du Plessis has been doing well in the domestic circuit as well as in T20 leagues across the world.

With 730 runs from 14 games for the Royal Challengers Bangalore, du Plessis was the second highest run getter in the IPL earlier this year.

Former South Africa skipper Faf du Plessis has hinted at a The 39-year-old led South Africa comeback to international crickin the 2014 and 2016 T20 World et ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup, saying that he has Cups but wasn't considered for the last two editions of the been is discussion with the tournament, despite never offi-Porteas' white-ball coach Rob cially retiring from white-ball Walter for the past couple of cricket.

On Monday, South Africa whiteball coach Walter had said the likes of du Plessis, Quinton de Kock and Rilee Rossouw will be considered for the T20 World Cup, scheduled to be played in June next year in the West Indies and the USA. "Given that some of our front-

line bowlers are missing out and there are guys - let me throw it out there just to create some media hype - like Faf (du Plessis) and Rilee (Rossouw) as well as Quinny (De Kock) that could well be considered for a T20 World Cup and then also the SA20 that happens next year -80% of the side picks itself but there is definitely a space for other guys to get themselves into the conversation," Walter had Vijayawada | Thursday December 7, 2023

# Hi Nanna has helped me push my musical boundaries

PNS HYDERABAD

Hesham Abdul Wahab, a composer from the Malayalam film industry, debuted in Tollywood with *Kushi. Hi Nanna* by Nani is his next album to be released. In this interview, he discusses how he approached the sentimental, gentle movie with Nani and Mrunal Thakur in the key roles. On December 7, the movie, which also stars Baby Kiara, will be released in theatres.

Hesham made his debut with the Malayalam film Salt Mango Tree in 2015. And since then, there has been no looking back. For him, "Every single film is a test for me. It is too early for me to feel I have achieved a lot. There is so much to learn, explore and discover."

Well, it is through his upcoming film, Hi Nanna that he feels has helped him push his musical boundaries."Hi Nanna differs from other films belonging to the genre in the way the story is narrated. All love songs induce the same sort of emo-tions and romantic feelings. The difference has to be brought out through the choice of singers, for example. That's one of the ways in which you do it. The song Ammaadi in Hi Nanna is a case in point. Samayama in Hi Nanna is not the same as Darshana in Kushi. Director

Shouryauv has made this film as a soft romance, which is why the songs are not loud. I used the instruments accordingly. The songs in Hi Nanna have a calming influence. The hangover of working on Hi Nanna is yet to be finished for me. I worked on the movie till last week. The director has made use of my songs in surprising ways, especially in his non-linear approach to 'charanam' and 'pallavi'. The song 'Samayama' has a peculiar

For one of the songs, he has used Nadaswaram because it is associated with the Indian style of wedding. The use of the instrument underlines the marital association between the lead

"Odiyamma took a lot of rumination involving me and the director. The song comes at a crucial point. We took some time to understand the underlying energy. Hi Nanna is the first Indian film to make use of Artificial Intelligence for scoring. What AI does is it makes 'sampling' easy. It presents mind-blowing possibilities. AI lets the composer do layered work. Changing the instruments also comes easy with AI. The film is way more than its music. It is going to be seen as an absolutely special film. Nani has expanded his boundaries as an actor. He deserves to be called the Natural Star."

On the other hand, he also has

Rashmika Mandanna's The Girlfriend, which went on the floors on Wednesday, which he feels is a new sort of genre for him. "The music I have done for Kushi and Hi Nanna is healing in nature. I don't get emotionally attached to my tunes. Once it is out there, I leave it for the listeners how they want to embrace it. I move on to the next project. I am currently doing a film starring Sharwanand in the lead (produced by People Media Factory and directed by Sriram Adittya). The musical soundscape will keep changing with time. Nothing is static. We have to keep on evolving. I myself have changed my style from Hridayam to Kushi and now Hi Nanna'.

Recently, he has also worked with actor-producer Vikranth Reddy for Spark. "Although the film didn't work at the box office, it helped me assemble my music team, which helped me for *Hi Nanna*. Some films

are like practicing in the nets."

Ending the chat on a brighter note, he signs off saying, "The music scene is growing in Hyderabad. The musicians here are so professional Their knowledge is immense. Most of the composers are settled in Chennai and other cities. Hyderabad has had only a few musicians. As far as I am concerned, Hyderabad is my second home. If not in Kochi, I want to work



tollywood

# Jorugaa Husharugaa trailer out now, in theatres on Dec 15

ove, family, and career. That's what *Jorugaa* Husharugaa, starring Viraj Ashwin of Baby fame in the lead, is about. Starring Pujita Ponnada as the heroine, the youthful family entertainer is directed by Anu Prasad. Producer Nireesh Thiruveedula of Shikhara & Akshara Arts LLP. Film to grace theatres worldwide on December 15. today got the film's trailer unveiled at the hands of Uppena sensation Buchi Babu Sana.

Releasing the trailer, Buchi Babu Sana appreciated its content. He also wished Viraj all the best. "Thanks to Baby, Viraj now enjoys a good image. I hope Jorugaa Husharugaa becomes a notable theatrical hit. I wish direc-

tor Anu Prasad and producer Nireesh all the best. This film looks promising," Sana said.

The trailer shows Sai Kumar as the male lead's economically challenged and idealistic father. A weaver, he values relationships more than any-thing. In the city, Viraj's character falls in love with a beautiful colleague (Pujita). The rom-com scenes also



involve Madhunandan. Siri Hanumantu plays another urban girl who gets to play an important part. Brahmaji as a Church Father, Chammak Chandra and others have hilarious roles. The film, as the title suggests, is filled with fun. At the same time, expect some dramatic moments as well. The film is going to grace the theatres worldwide on



Rashmika Mandannastarrer *The Girlfriend* kickstarts its shoot

ince its inception, Geetha Arts has been a production company, known for its distinctive storylines and quality production values. The production company owned by ace producer Allu Aravind has been making exceptional hits time and again. Now, recently the production announced a project in collaboration with the blockbuster production house of SKN's Mass Movie Makers in association with Dheeraj Mogilineni Entertainment banner.

Entertainment banner.

With National crush and phenomenal performer Rashmika Mandanna in the lead role, talented filmmaker Rahul Ravindran helming the project. The title of the film is *The Girlfriend*. The film launched recently with a grand pooja ceremony. Now the film's regular shoot begins today. Rashmika got a grand welcome to the sets from director Rahul Ravindran, producers SKN, Dheeraj Mogilineni and Vidya Koppineedi.

Ace producer Allu Aravind garu gave his blessings to Rashmika and the whole team. The first schedule will last 20 days and will

The first schedule will last 20 days and will have key actors in addition to Rashmika. Already released sneak peek, promises to be a one-of-a-

kind cinematic experience for

audiences of all ago Krishnan Vasant weilds the camera while musical sensation Hesham Abdul Wahab will score the music, both of which will surely be among the movie's highlights. Ace producer Allu Aravind presenting the film while Vidya Koppineedi, SKN and
Dheeraj Mogilineni bankrolling the film. "Prema Katha is different from Star hero Vijay Deverakonda released the trailer for the *Prema* Katha movie on Tuesday evening. In the press meet organized on this occasion, cinematographer Vasu Pendem thanking the producers and director said, "Our trailer is out now, and you will definitely like it. You have to decide the fate of any movie. This is a different love story. Prema Katha will entertain you for sure." Debutante Diya Sithepalli, who is making her debut with the film, gleefully says, "I'm glad to get the opportu-

the regular love movies' ¬he upcoming film Prema Katha, starring Kishore KSD and Diya Sithepalli, is jointly produced hard for this film. This is my debut movie and I've learned a lot on the sets. Our movie is different from regular love by Tonga Productions LLP and Cine Valley Movies. The film is bankrolled movies. We are expecting your support."
In the film, actor Vinay Mahadev, who by Vijay Mattapalli, Sushil Vajpilly, and Shinganamala Kalyan. Upender plays the character of a guy named Yadav reveals that all the action sequences in Goud Erra is acting as co-producer. The film is directed by Shivashakti the film were done by the actors themselves. And in fact, this fight is going to Reddy. The film *Prema Katha* is going release in theatres very soon. be the highlight of the film. The film also stars actor Vikram, who plays a character named Srinivas.

Prema Katha movie was made with almost all newcomers," shares producer Vijay Matta, adding, "LotLots of talented actors from theater played good roles in our film. Varthan Devarakonda, Mathura Sridhar Reddy and Singanamala Kalyan supported us well. Thank you to the hero

Vijay Devarakonda who released the trailer We are thankful to hero Anand Devarakonda, directors Harish Shankar, Hanu Raghavapudi and Maruthi for supporting our movie and releasing the first look and songs. We made our Prem Katha movie with a genuine love story."

'TRIPTI DIMRI IS A PART OF RAVITEJA

ver since the film *Animal* has hit cinemas, the one big thing that is being talked about is none other than the girl who has played the role Zoya. In almost all the public talk videos from Bollywood and Tollywood, people could be seen mentioning this beautiful lady, who is none other than

Though the actress has showcased her potential in projects like *Qala* (Netflix), she actually got a huge name for a role that is neither author-backed nor has a good arc in Animal. Her beautiful looks, teasing glamour and innocent expressions have really impressed the audience big time and that made her banner many rumours right now in Tollywood. Some gossip popped out that she's part of Raviteja and Anil Ravipudi's movie, and other projects as well. How much of them are actually true? Reports are coming from close sources that there is no truth in these rumours and they are just a figment of imagination. Currently, Tripti Dimri is

busy with her Bollywood assignments and she's not ready to take up any special roles or songs in Tollywood, but looking forward to doing as a leading lady only in big movies which would give her a huge break as it happened in the case of Mrunal Thakur. On the other hand, Anil

ing Nagarjuna Akkineni is busy wrapping up his ongo-ing film Naa Saami Ranga which marks the directorial debut of popular choreographer Vijay Binni. Ashika Ranganath is playing the lead-

ing lady in the movie and her character was intro-duced as Varalakshmi. The glimpse that was released along with the first look poster presented the adorable chemistry of the lead pair. The film's first single Yettukelli Povalanipisthunde will be unveiled soon. The makers announced to release of a promo of the song before launching the lyrical video. Nagarjuna looks elegant in the farmer get-up. Clad in Lungi, Nagarjuna is seen with a tractor on an agricultural

Ravipudi hasn't even wrapped the script, forget

about casting. One cannot ignore the buzz and the sensation the flick *Animal* has created. This is further seen in the film's box office collections as the Saturday numbers were higher than Friday numbers.

Fans have loved the chemistry of Ranbir Kapoor and Tripti Dimri in this movie. They felt that Tripti has captured the spotlight. Tripti has delivered a note worthy performance. Alia Bhatt has in particular penned a lengthy note appreciating Tripti Dimri.

Tripti made her debut in the year 2017, with the comedy film Poster Boys and gained recognition for her performances in Anvita Dutt's supernatural drama flick 'Bulbbul' and period film *Qala*.

Dimri will soon be seeing sharing the screen with Rajkummar Rao in Raaj Shaandilyaa's next venture Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video. This movie will take us back to the Mystical Age of 90's. It is an illustration of a retro recall and does promise to be an out and out family entertainer The title Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video

makes us ponder that what the video will be all about. Let's wait and watch to discover what will the video be all about once the movie goes on the

MM Keeravani who enchanted us with the BGM for the glimpse scored wonderful soundtracks. Chandra Bose penned the lyrics for all the songs in the album. Billed to be a mass action entertainer, passionate producer Srinivasa Chitturi of Tollywood's leading production house Srinivasaa Silver Screen is making the movie on a grand scale with a massive budget. Pavan Kumar presents the movie. The shoot of the movie is presently taking place in Hyderabad. The production works neared the final stages. The blockbuster writer Prasanna Kumar

Nagarjuna-MM Keeravani combo is back with another chartbuster, Yettukelli Povalanipisthunde land and he smokes a beedi. Bezawada provided the story and dialogues for the film. Naa Saami Ranga will have its theatrical release for Sankranti, in 2024.

