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WISE ALLOCATIONS WILL
BOOST THE ECONOMY

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INFLATION TO BE TAMED: FM

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MEN IN BLUE'S TOP ORDER IN FOCUS
IN SERIES DECIDER

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



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*LATE CITY VOL. 5 ISSUE 112
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KAVYA THAPAR:
I MISS HAVING THE
GLOBAL EXPOSURE
WHEN I ENTERED
TOLLYWOOD

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UDAN IS GIVING BIRTH TO REGIONAL AIRLINES: SCINDIA

The government's regional air connectivity scheme, which has created a landmark, is giving birth to regional carriers in a country that in the last 20 years has seen closing down of airlines. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Tuesday. After virtually flagging off regional airline IndiaOne Air's flight from Jamshedpur to Kolkata, Scindia said it will also be the first scheduled commercial air service from Jamshedpur, which earlier was limited to non-scheduled operations. The UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme is 'giving birth to new airlines in a country that over the last 20 years has only seen closing of airlines.'

EARTH LIKELY TO CROSS 1.5 DEGREE WARMING IN NEXT DECADE: AI STUDY

The world will cross the global warming threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius within 10 to 15 years, even if emissions decline, according to a study that employed artificial intelligence (AI) to predict the results. If emissions remain high over the next few decades, the study predicts a one-in-two chance that Earth will become 2 degrees Celsius hotter on average compared to pre-industrial times by the middle of this century, and a more than four-in-five chance of reaching that threshold by 2060. The research, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, employed AI to predict climate change using recent temperature observations from around the world.

ARMED FORCES CAN TAKE ACTION AGAINST THEIR OFFICERS FOR ADULTEROUS ACTS: SC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that armed forces can take action against their officers for adulterous acts, as it clarified the landmark 2018 judgement that decriminalised adultery. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph said its 2018 judgement was not concerned with the provisions of the armed forces acts. The top court, on a plea filed by NRI Joseph Shine, in 2018 had struck down Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code dealing with the offence of adultery, holding it unconstitutional. The Tuesday order by the bench came after Additional Solicitor General Madhavi Divan, submitted a plea seeking clarification of the 2018 judgement.

FESTIVAL TO PROMOTE INDIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE ACROSS ART FORMS

The upcoming Mahindra Roots Festival will aim to explore unique and lost forms of Indian cultural heritage through theatre performances, folk, classical, Sufi and contemporary music recitals. The three-day festival will be organised at Bandra Fort Amphitheatre, Rang Mandir and Anti Social club from February 24. Organised by Mahindra Group, the multi-discipline cultural festival will see sessions of immersive storytelling, classical music and poetry in multiple Indian languages, Marathi devotional poetry form of 'abhangas' and Bengal's Baul music tradition, among other performances.

ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION

Guv issues notification, advises govt

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Another notification has been issued for the commencement of the budget session for the year 2023-24. However, the latest notification has been issued as decided in the earlier notification, which was issued on January 22 by the Assembly Secretary that the budget session will commence on February 3. However, as per the latest notification issued by Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan both the Legislative Assembly as well as the Legislative Council session will start on February 3. The budget ses-

sion will start at 12.10 pm on February 3 as a joint session which the Governor will address. The new notification has been issued as per "Article 176(1) of the Constitution at the commencement of the first session after each general election to the Assembly and at the commencement of the first session of each year the Governor shall address both the Houses of the Legislature and inform the reason for their summits."

The new notification says, "In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 174 of the Constitution of India,

It is learnt that Governor has asked the government to prepare the Governor's speech on the basis of facts.



All eyes on Guv's address

What line will Tamilisai adopt generating interest

After the deadlock over the budget between the BRS government and the Governor all eyes are on the Governor's address to the joint session of the Legislative Assembly and the Council. The public wants to see whether the Governor's address will be the "government's" address or the "Governor's" address. All these days the BRS government was criticising the Central Government led by the BJP for its alleged bias against Telangana on all fronts. The Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, was also openly criticising the BRS government headed by Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu. Moreover, the Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, never delivers any speech without praising Prime Minister Modi and the Centre's schemes. If the state and the Centre have good relations there will be no problems between the state government and the Governor.



BRS boycotts Prez speech, calls for 'Adani Act'

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

BRS MP K. Keshav Rao (KK) expressed his deep dissatisfaction regarding the performance of the BJP-led NDA Government. He spoke to the media on Parliament house premises after the President's speech on the first day of the budget session on Tuesday. He said they heard the President's speech and that it did not mention the main problems of the country like inflation and unemployment. KK said that crony capitalism is running in the country and that the government is gifting public funds to big businessmen. He said that the government should pass the Adani Act in the name of businessman

Gautam Adani as he was admired by the government. KK told President Draupadi Murmu that it would be better to ask the Prime Minister to introduce Adani Act in the country. KK said that the BRS is not against President Murmu and that they had to boycott the President's speech to highlight the failures of the Modi government.

Will show strength in MH&K'taka

There is only name change of TRS not its DNA: KTR



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS will show its strength in Maharashtra and Karnataka, Industries Minister KT Rama Rao said. Addressing a public meeting held in Jammikunta, KTR criticised the behaviour of the BJP and its leaders. "Even in the BJP, there is no Telangana including the words Vistarak and Palak. Our party has just changed the name to Bharat Rashtra Samithi so that we can go to Maharashtra and Karnataka and hoist the pink flag and show our strength. The name has changed but

the DNA or the leader or symbol or flag or agenda have changed. We will fight even with God for Telangana is our agenda," he said.

KTR said that the government at the Centre is a government that exploits the poor. "Modi has collected Rs 30,000 billion through petrol and diesel. Where have they gone? BJP leaders here don't say that KCR has made the state bankrupt. Eatara Rajender says that I worked as finance minister till now. "If Rajender has guts ask Modi about his debt.

IT raids on real estate and pharma firms

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Income Tax officials are conducting searches at Rajpushpa, Vertex and Muppa real estate companies, officials conducting raids at more than 50 places in Hyderabad and other places. Officials are also conducting searches at BRS MLC Venkat Ram Reddy's residence. IT searches were also conducted in the offices of the Vasudha Group of Companies located in Hyderabad. Inspections are also going on at the houses of Vasudha Group CEO, Directors and Managing Directors and in many areas along with the head office in SR Nagar. More than 40 teams were divided into the company's offices at Madhapur, SR Nagar and Gidimetla in Hyderabad

and participated in IT searches. Two teams are conducting searches in Vengal Rao Nagar and four teams in another corporate office in Madapur. Vasudha Pharma Chairman Venkataramaraj along with director were also searched. There are allegations that he is doing real estate business in the name of Vasudha Pharma. It seems that around 15 companies are doing real estate business. It has been found that profits from the pharma company have been invested in the real estate sector. During the previous raids on many real estate offices, evidence related to many investments were found and now IT officials are conducting searches based on them.

IT searches were also conducted in the offices of the Vasudha Group of Companies located in Hyderabad.

TSe-PASS Scholarships date extended to Mar 31st

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The date for registration of colleges and students on the TSe-pass website for sanctioning fresh, renewed scholarships for the 2022-23 year, has been extended to March 31. The Government of Telangana offers scholarships under Post-Matric Scholarships (PMS) Scheme benefiting Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Backward Class (BC), Economically Backward Class (EBC), minorities and Physically Challenged students in the State.

Vizag will be AP capital soon, says CM Jagan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday said the state capital will be shifted to Visakhapatnam. Speaking at the preparatory meeting for the Global Investors Summit to be held in Visakhapatnam in March, he said he was shifting his office to the port city in the months to come.



"Here I am to invite you to Visakhapatnam which is going to be our capital in the days to come. I myself would also be shifting over to Visakhapatnam in the months to come as well," he told the investors at the meeting. The N Chandrababu Naidu-led

government in 2015 acquired over 33,000 acres of land from farmers to develop Amaravati as the capital of the state. After Jagan Mohan Reddy took over in 2019, the state government wanted to have three capitals-Visakhapatnam-Executive Capital, Amaravati-Legislative capital and Kurnool-Judicial capital and passed an appropriate legislation.

Massive security for Secretariat

300 CCTV cameras & 60 Sentry posts
Traffic to be stopped on Telugu Thalli flyover for Formula E

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari discussed security arrangements at the Dr BR Ambedkar Secretariat Complex which is being inaugurated on February 17 and the arrangements for the Formula E racing being held on February 11 at a high level meeting held at the BRKR Bhavan on Tuesday. The meeting decided that traffic will not be allowed on the Telugu Thalli Flyover to Khairatabad Flyover road and from Mint Compound to I-Max from February 5 in view of the Formula E race being held on February 11. The meeting decided that the



public should be informed about alternative routes and they should be made ready to avoid delaying Secretariat works due to the Formula E race. The meeting also decided to provide high level security to the New Secretariat building being inaugurated on February 17.

Govt transfers 15 IAS officers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has reshuffled 15 IAS officers. The reshuffled officers are mostly Collectors. Bharati Hollikeri, (IAS 2010), has been posted as Spl. Secretary & Commissioner, Women & Child Welfare & Senior Citizen Department. Nizamabad, Medchal Malkajgiri, Hanamkonda, Adilabad, Vikarabad, Asifabad, Mahbubnagar, Suryapet, Rangareddy, Mancherial, Medak, Wanaparthy, Nirmal, Jagtial and Hyderabad will be new Collectors.

Indian economy to grow 6-6.8% next fiscal year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy is projected to slow to 6-6.8 per cent in the fiscal year starting April - still remaining the fastest growing major economy in the world - as extraordinary challenges facing the globe will likely hurt exports, the Economic Survey said on Tuesday.

The projection of India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is higher than the 6.1 per cent estimate of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and compares with the survey's estimated 7 per cent expansion in the current fiscal year (April 2022 to March 2023) and 8.7 per cent in the previous year.

The survey that details the state of the economy was tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman a day before



she presents Union Budget 2023-24. "At least three shocks have hit the global economy since 2020," the report, prepared by Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran, said. Starting with the pandemic-induced contraction of the global output, the Russian-Ukraine conflict last year led to a worldwide surge in inflation.

SC panel detects huge membership fraud in HCA

Supreme Court-appointed Supervisory Committee reveals startling facts

DEEPIKA PASHAM
■ HYDERABAD

The Supervisory Committee appointed by the Supreme Court has unearthed a deep rooted membership fraud in the Hyderabad Cricket Association. The report revealed startling facts like that there is no record of memberships, no documentary evidence on how the electoral roll of HCA was drawn up in 2019 by the election officer. The third point mentioned in the report said that some members own 7-8 clubs and are subverting democratic norms by using their votes to manipulate the Apex Council and to

blackmail all institutionalised processes provided by the Justice Lodha Committee's reforms incorporated in the by-laws to manipulate selections to state teams, the buying and selling of teams, leasing of cricket teams under their control to brokers who pose as cricket lovers in Hyderabad for lakhs of rupees. These brokers, in turn, fleece cricket players' parents and make them pay thousands of rupees every year to buy an opportunity for their child to play in the league matches hosted by the HCA.

The committee also noted that there is an imbalanced democracy in HCA, which is recognised by the BCCI as the sole representative of the cricket game in Telangana. This is because mostly clubs from Hyderabad City form the electoral college of the HCA while the remaining districts of Telangana do not have an equal say in the electoral college. The committee is working on a suitable model of memberships that is equitable. The report also mentions that

memberships are fraudulent with the names of member clubs changing from time to time, raising a strong suspicion of clubs being sold for crores of rupees which is against the fundamental ethics of societies memberships, which are non-transferable. The report also reflects complaints filed by the State Government alleging large scale frauds in HCA memberships, lack of intent to provide equal membership rights to districts and has also highlighted disappearance of the clubs allotted to the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad and institutions over the years.

TODAY ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Ekadashi: Jan 31 11:54 AM to Feb 01 02:02 PM
Dwadashi: Feb 01 02:02 PM to Feb 02 04:26 PM

Nakshatram: Feb 01 12:39 AM to Feb 02 03:23 AM
Mrigashirsha: Feb 02 03:23 AM to Feb 03 06:18 AM
Ardra: Feb 03 06:18 AM to Feb 04 09:13 AM

Rahukalam: 12:29 PM to 1:54 PM
Yamagandam: 8:16 AM to 9:40 AM
Varjyam: 12:48 PM to 02:36 PM
Gulika: 11:05 AM to 12:29 PM
Amritakalam: 05:35 PM to 07:22 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 50%
Sunrise: 6:52 AM
Sunset: 6:07 PM
Updated: JANUARY 31, 2023 5:00 PM

Administering overdose of welfare at the cost of development!

Everybody would welcome a welfare state. But none would countenance what is happening in Andhra Pradesh in the name of matchless welfare measures. In view of the umpteen welfare schemes launched by the YSR Congress Party government headed by YS Jaganmohan Reddy, lakhs of poor people and those from disadvantaged sections do feel much relieved, even if they are not content. They no longer have to worry about getting two square meals a day. Community pensions have changed the attitude of most people; many think it is no longer necessary to toil for meeting their daily needs. The availability of food grains and money for meeting various

needs at regular intervals, regardless of one's labour, has made many people complacent. The AP government has placed on record that funds to the tune of Rs.1,92,938 crore have been distributed among lakhs of beneficiaries across the state by crediting their bank accounts. This has made poor people happy. But what is happening to the state's fiscal position? The present debt burden in itself cannot be tackled in an easy manner for several years to come. The AP government appears to be in an extremely precarious state. It has to make requests to the Union government to relax the restrictions and limitations

The AP government has placed on record that funds to the tune of Rs.1,92,938 crore have been distributed among lakhs of beneficiaries across the state by crediting their bank accounts. This has made poor people happy. But what is happening to the state's fiscal position? The present debt burden in itself cannot be tackled in an easy manner for several years to come.

placed on borrowing of loans by States; for, AP's borrowings have reached an alarming stage, as stated by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament recently. In this backdrop, further borrowings might deepen the financial crisis, though the Jagan government wants to retain power in the 2024 elections 'at any cost'. The development of the state has been relegated. The promised Special Category Status could have helped, had it been incorporated in the AP Reorganisation Act 2014. Political blame game for not securing SCS for AP apart, even major projects, including the multi-purpose Polavaram, are not getting their due. The Polavaram project is designed to meet both agricultural and drinking water needs of the



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

entire state Andhra Pradesh. Apart from inter-state issues, fund crunch has stalled the project, which is considered the lifeline of AP. The state government has failed to keep its promises on

to infrastructure. Thrust on infrastructure can take the state to new heights. The common man may soon come to the conclusion that the state government has spent on welfare programmes Rs.1.92 lakh crore, which could have otherwise funded the Polavaram project. The maxim 'A politician would think about the next election, while a statesman would think about the next generation' is particularly relevant in Andhra Pradesh. The government seems to have no enthusiasm to complete the project before the completion of its tenure. Such lack of zeal and commitment will not serve the purpose of the state. Despite mounting political accusations day after day, the crucial subject of thrust to

infrastructure seems to have no place in the agenda of the present rulers. People really want statesmen, not mere politicians. Soon this could be the strong message from the electorate to the warring factions on the political landscape in the state. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, by portraying himself as a lion and describing his political opponents as wolves, has escalated political heat besides inviting criticism from the general public. Terming opposition leaders as wolves is nothing but degrading the stature of fellow politicians; it is wholly unwarranted. Voters, given their wise thinking, are capable of turning the tables on both lions and wolves tomorrow.

Sandoz to set up Global Capability Centre in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Sandoz, a global leader in generics and biosimilars, has announced the setting up of their Global Capability Centre in Hyderabad. The centre will support their worldwide knowledge services. The development is expected to strengthen Hyderabad's leadership in the Pharma and Global Capability (GCC) space. The centre will initially have a workforce of 800 employees. There are plans to increase it to approximately 1,800 people in the near future. The announcement was

made after a Sandoz team, headed by CEO-designate Richard Saynor, met Telangana Industry and Commerce Minister KT Rama Rao on Tuesday. "Delighted to announce that Sandoz Global, a global leader in generics and biosimilars, has chosen Hyderabad to locate their Global Capability Centre which will employ around 1,800 people in the next 15 months," KTR said in a tweet. "Met CEO of Sandoz, Saynor Richard, and had an exciting talk on how Hyderabad could play a larger role in their global opera-

tions. Looking forward to replicating Novartis achievements with Sandoz in Hyderabad," he added. Sandoz has a development centre in Genome Valley with cutting edge R&D facilities. The team also informed the minister that they are adding a state-of-the-art laboratory focused on automation at the GV facility. KTR also presented the Hyderabad Pharma City project and highlighted the value proposition for companies like Sandoz. He invited Sandoz to consider setting up a large manufacturing centre in

Hyderabad. The Sandoz team included Chief Scientific Officer Claire D'Abreu-Hayling, Sandoz Development Centre India head D. Vandana Singh, and Novartis Corporate Centre head Naveen Gullapalli. KTR noted that Hyderabad boasts a top-notch business environment backed by the state, with a strong emphasis on the life sciences industry. "Hyderabad is already home to Novartis and has grown into the second largest location for the company. We are looking forward to a similar association with Sandoz," he said.

Work hard to bring Cong to power

Kharge urges TS leaders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
AICC President Mallikarjuna Kharge has asked Congress in Telangana to work jointly to bring the Congress to power. Kharge made it clear to Congress leaders that they should join hands and work hard to improve the party's image instead of their personal brand equities. Telangana Congress leaders Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, CLP leader

Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, AICC Secretaries D. Sridhar Babu, SA Sampath Kumar, Mahbubnagar Congress leader Anidrudh Reddy and others had a two-hour meeting with Mallikarjuna Kharge along with Telangana Congress affairs in-charge Manikrao Thakre at the Srinagar Airport. Telangana Congress leaders TPCC President Revanth Reddy, CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, and MPs

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, and MLAs Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Seethakka, PCC Vice-President Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy and others went to Srinagar to participate in Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra's concluding meeting held at the Srinagar Lal Chowk on Monday. They got stuck in Srinagar due to the heavy snowfall and the cancellation of flights from Srinagar to New Delhi.

Will show...

Continued from page 1

Fourteen Prime Ministers contracted a total debt of Rs 56,000 billion. In Modi's eight years the debt has hit Rs 1,00,000 billion?" he said. Dismissing claims of the Centre constructing National Highways, KTR said, "Isn't toll collected for using NHs? The State is giving land. It is built with public funds and tax is collected." He asked if Sanjay brought anything for Karimnagar except calling Modi God. "The weavers of Jammikunta and Kamalapur should think.

Vizag will be AP capital...

Continued from page 1
The Jagan Mohan Reddy government passed a Bill in the Assembly in November last year, repealing the controversial AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020, which was intended to establish three capitals for the state. Without putting any time-frame, Jagan, speaking on the floor of the Assembly said the government would come out with a "comprehensive, complete and better" Bill after plugging loopholes in the previous version. In March last year, the Andhra Pradesh High Court ruled against the three capitals and directed the government to develop Amaravati as the state capital as envisaged. The Court also in its verdict on March 3, 2022 said the state Legislature lacked competence to make any legislation for shifting, bifurcating or trifurcating the capital.

Massive security for Secretariat

Continued from page 1
The Police, R&B, GAD, the Telangana Special Police and IT departments should work in close coordination. Three companies of the Telangana Special Police and 300 city police personnel will take care of security at the Secretariat building, the meeting decided. The Traffic Police have allotted 22 personnel for the purpose. Security gadgets like baggage scanners, vehicle scanners, body scanners etc will be kept ready, the meeting decided.

The Secretariat complex which is spread over 28 acres has parking facilities for 560 cars and around 900 two-wheelers. Six sentry posts have been set up around the Secretariat and 300 CCTV cameras have been installed to ensure security. A special command control room has been set up to oversee security arrangements. Monitoring of visitors will be done through special identity cards. Two fire engines with 34 staffers have been deployed on the Secretariat premises. Special arrangements have been made for physically

challenged people. Visitors will be allowed on all floors except the sixth floor. The HMWSSB has already arranged water supply and sewerage works are in progress. DGP Anjani Kumar, Special CS MAUD Arvind Kumar, IT Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, R&B Secretary Srinivas Raju, CP CV Anand, SPF DG Umesh Sharaf, Additional DG Sanjay Kumar Jain, DG Fire Services Nagi Reddy, Addl. DG Intelligence Anil Kumar, R&B E-in-C Ganapathi Reddy and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Modi govt fearless and decisive: Murmu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said the country has a government that is "stable, fearless, decisive", giving thrust to 'virsat' (heritage) as well as 'vikas' (development) and working for all classes without any discrimination. In her first address to the joint sitting of Parliament on the first day of the Budget session, Murmu spoke of the government's relentless fight against corruption, the "biggest enemy of democracy and social justice". India by 2047, she asserted, has to be a country that is self-reliant and fulfils its humanitarian obligations. The India of 2047, she said, should have no poverty with the middle class also being prosperous.

BRS boycotts Prez...

Continued from page 1
The Aam Aadmi Party led by Arvind Kejriwal also boycotted the President's speech along with the BRS. At a meeting called by Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Parthad Joshi on Monday, BRS floor leaders KK and Nama Nageswara Rao (Lok Sabha) said the governments of Telangana, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala and some others were facing problems with the Governor system and there was a need for discussion on the federal structure of the country. They also said that they would question the Centre about the problems and concerns of the public and demanded a discussion about the manner in which Governors conduct their business.

The Narendra Modi-led government has always kept national interest supreme, India's first tribal president said in her over-hour-long speech. "My decisive government has always kept the country's

interest paramount and shown the willpower to completely transform the policies and strategies when required. "From surgical strike to a firm crackdown on terrorism, from a befitting response to

every misadventure from LoC to LAC, from abrogation of Article 370 to triple talaq, my government has been recognised as a decisive government," she said. The president's address reflects the views of the government of the day. "Today India has a government which is stable, fearless, decisive and working with lofty ambitions. Today India has a government which respects the honest. Today India has a government working for permanent solution of the problems of the poor and their lasting empowerment," she said. The long felt urge to get rid of the scourge of mega scams and corruption in government schemes is now being realised, the president said.

Guv issues notification, advises govt

Continued from page 1
I, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana, hereby summon the Second Telangana Legislative Assembly and Council to meet for its Fourth Meeting of the Eighth Session at 12.10 pm on Friday, the 3rd of February, 2023, in the Assembly Hall, Public

Gardens, Hyderabad. However, experts said that the authorities are misinterpreting Constitution provisions regarding the Governor's address although the Constitution clearly mentioned everything. With this misinterpretation, there was no Governor's address last year (2022-23) in the name of pro-

All eyes on Guv's address

Continued from page 1
But relations between the state government and the Centre have turned bitter. The Governor's address is prepared by the state government and it will be sent to the Governor for her approval. If the Governor suggests changes the government will change it accordingly. This is the normal practice and there will be no problems if the state government and the Governor are on good terms. Now, in Telangana, the equation between Pragati Bhavan and Raj Bhavan is known to everyone. This is an election year for the BRS government and generally, the state government will try to criticise the Centre to get political mileage. If the state government prepares the speech strongly criticising the Centre and Prime Minister Modi will the Governor, Dr Tamilisai, accept that speech or not is the interesting point. Another one is that generally in the Governor's address the state government will try to explain to the public how it developed the state. When the Governor is openly criticising the BRS government regarding the state's development policies will she praise the BRS government. Two days ago the Governor criticised the BRS government saying that 'farmhouse' and 'buildings' do not constitute development. The Governor made these comments keeping in mind KCR's farmhouse and the new secretariat. The Governor's address is a problem for both the State government and the Governor. If the state government does not criticise the Centre in the Governor's address the BRS will have to face criticism.

Raj Bhavan scores victory: Governor

PNS ■ PUDUCHERRY
Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Tuesday said the Raj Bhavan scored victory in its legal battle against the state government after being invited to address the Assembly on February 3 following the High Court verdict. Referring to the Telangana High court's intervention helping end the budget logjam on Monday paving the way for the Governor to present her customary address to the Telangana Assembly on February 3, Soundararajan said the state government had approached the High court over her not giving consent to the upcoming budget. The court, however, ended the matter by asking the counsels of both parties to find an amicable solution as the judiciary could not intervene in the constitutional procedures.

Indian economy to...

Continued from page 1
And then, central banks across economies led by the US Federal Reserve responded with synchronised policy rate hikes to curb inflation. The rate hike by the US Fed drove capital into the US markets causing the US dollar to appreciate against most currencies. This led to the widening of the Current Account Deficits (CAD) and increased inflationary pressures in net import economies like India. "The Indian economy, however, appears to have moved on after its encounter with the pandemic, staging a full recovery in FY22 (April 2021 to March 2022) ahead of many nations and positioning itself to ascend to the pre-pandemic growth path in FY23. "Yet in the current year, India has also faced the challenge of reining in inflation that the European strife accentuated," the survey said.

However, the challenge of the depreciating rupee, although better performing than most other currencies, persists with the likelihood of further increases in policy rates by the US Fed. The widening of the CAD may also continue as global commodity prices remain elevated and the growth momentum of the Indian economy remains strong, it said. The survey stated that the inflation projection by RBI at 6.8 per cent for current fiscal (FY23) is above the central bank's tolerance limit but the pace of price increase is not high enough to deter private consumption or low enough to weaken investment. According to the survey, the pressure on the Indian rupee could continue due to the tightening of monetary policy. CAD may also remain elevated as imports could remain high due to a strong local economy while exports ease due to weakness in the global economy.

Scholarships date extended...

Continued from page 1
The system needs the registration of colleges and students to enable the processing of data for sanctioning scholarships. The registration of colleges and students for the year 2022-23 in the TS e-pass website for the process and sanction of scholarship applications commenced on October 16 and is going to cease on January 31.

The admissions for various Professional courses, ie, UG Ayush, UG Dental, PG Medical, PG Dental and DIET CETs are not completed so far. Eligible students have to register their applications after completion of the admission process for their respective courses. The Conveners of certain Common Entrance Tests of Professional courses have also not yet finalized the counselling data which

is required for fresh registration of students. Hence, the government has hereby extended the date for registrations for renewal and fresh scholarship applications and as well as college registrations in TS e-pass for the Academic Year 2022-23 from 1st February to March 31, so as to enable the students to register their applications for sanction of Post Matric Scholarships.

SC panel detects huge...

Continued from page 1
The committee report highlights the disappearance of hundreds of clubs that existed 35 years ago and there is no record of how these clubs disappeared and who fraudulently took them over. Finally, it is also seen that the chairman of the committee was appointed as the Ombudsman in 2021 by a rival group opposed to Md. Azharuddin, the President of HCA. This was done in utter disregard of the TS High Court

orders which upheld the appointment of Justice Deepak Verma as the Ombudsman of HCA. The Chairman of the committee has not signed the Committee's report. Usually, frauds in membership have to be looked into by the Ombudsman and under the by-laws there is no time limit prescribed for the Ombudsman to complete his enquiry. HCA sources said that membership frauds have existed in HCA since 1990 and have increased over time.

GOVT TRANSFERS 15 IAS OFFICERS

Continued from page 1
RV Karnan, (IAS 2012), Collector & District Magistrate, Karimnagar has been placed in FAC of the post of Collector and District Magistrate, Jagtial. Rajeev Gandhi Hanumanthu, (IAS 2012) has been posted as collector of Nizamabad district. D. Amoy Kumar (IAS 2013) has been posted as Collector of Medchal Malkajgiri. MoS is also given full additional charge of Hyderabad Collector.

Sikta Patnaik, (IAS 2014), has been posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Hanamkonda. Rahul Raj PS, (IAS 2015), has been posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Adilabad. Narayana Reddy, (IAS 2015), has been posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Vikarabad in place of Ms. K. Nikhila, (IAS 2015), who has been transferred. Shaik Yasmeeen Basha, (IAS 2015) has been posted as

Collector and District Magistrate of Kumar Bheem - Asifabad district. G. Ravi, (IAS 2015), has been transferred and posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Mahbubnagar. S. Venkata Rao, (IAS 2015), has been posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Suryapet. S. Harish, (IAS 2015), has been transferred and posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Rangareddy district.

Badhavath Santhosh, (IAS 2016), has been transferred and posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Mancherial district. Rajarshi Shah, (IAS 2017), has been posted as District Magistrate of Medak. Tejas Nandlal Pawar, (IAS 2018), has been posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Wanaparthy. Karnati Varun Reddy, (IAS 2019), has been posted as Collector and District Magistrate of Nirmal district.

Navin Mittal transferred to Land Revenue dept
HYDERABAD: In a separate circular Telangana Government has said that Navin Mittal, IAS(1996), Commissioner, Collegiate Education and Technical Education and Commissioner, Intermediate Education, and Secretary, Intermediate Board (FAC) is transferred and posted as Principal Secretary to Government, Land Revenue and Registration in the existing vacancy.

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MISSED FLIGHTS, BLOCKED FLYOVER AND AGONISING WAIT

Politicos' travel compounds commuters' travails in city

DEEPIKA PASHAM
HYDERABAD

The regular traffic grievances when politicians travel in the city have been increasing by the day. In a recent incident this issue has come to limelight when one of the popular singers shared the news on the social media.

Tollywood singer Sreerama Chandra tweeted, "15 members, including me missed our flight to Goa at 12.45pm today from Hyderabad. Reason: The PV Narasimha Rao Airport flyover was manually closed for general public as there was a politician travelling to the airport."

Later, explaining the concern, Chandra said, "Hello all, I am in the Hyderabad airport. I missed my Goa flight just now because the whole PV Narasimha Rao Airport fly-



over was blocked because some respected politician Sir was leaving to the airport and due to which they diverted us. It was terrible traffic and it took us 30 minutes only because the flyover was shut." The singer further showing

two others who also missed the flight said, "This is a humble request to our Chief Minister KCR, Minister KTR and Cyberabad Police to not cause this inconvenience to us. I have a show at 5pm and I am going to miss it because all

three of us are trying to book different individual flights. This is only as we were diverted from the flyover and took care of this issue as Indigo people were not considerate enough. Let others not suffer due to these traffic diversions."

Later, one of the travellers said, "Even I missed my Delhi flight due to the same reason. It costs Rs18,000 for two people.

At least they have to post the traffic instructions on twitter if there are any traffic blocks happening in the city."

The other route commuters have said that the experience is similar in the routes of Begumpet and they wait for more than 15 minutes at times. They also requested for proper alarms while ministers travelled so that they turn to diversions.

BNI conclave to be held in city on Feb 8

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Business Network International (BNI), the World's largest referral marketing organisation, is hosting India's biggest business networking meet, BNI Networking Conclave.

The conference will be held on February 8 at Om Convention, Narsingi, Hyderabad, which will provide a platform for entrepreneurs to explore business and collaboration with each other. The organisation has over 2.9 lakh members in 76 countries.

Over 3,000 entrepreneurs engage in various businesses, who are looking to expand their reach and network and explore business opportunities, will be part in the conclave.

The participants will be a mix of BNI members and non-BNI entrepreneurs. The programme could maximise the number of entrepreneurs each participant can meet.

Competitive exam aspirants applaud Kanti Velugu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The second phase of Kanti Velugu camps became a refuge to hundreds of students and unemployed youth, preparing for upcoming competitive exams and recruitment drives. Several institutions reported that students are thronging libraries and coaching centres in Telangana to prepare for Groups exams, and the long hours of studying is affecting their eyesight.

Students said that the free eye check up camps organised by the government are helping them resolve their eye issues, at the right time. A visit to the City Central Library at Ashok Nagar has brought to the fore the difficulties faced by the students due to poor vision.

V Venkatesh Naik from a tribal community of Mahabubnagar, said, "I had the problem of tears rolling from my eyes whenever I was studying. Hailing from a poor agricultural family, I



Minister for launching the Kanti Velugu which has not only provided eyesight to him but also made him aim for a better life.

The government has been treating 50,000 people daily on an average ever since the campaign was kick-started.

The government in its report dated January 31 has stated that Kanti Velugu camps were completed in 507 gram panchayats so far while it is in progress in 979 gram panchayats. Likewise, the camp has been successfully completed in 205 wards while it is in progress in 525 wards across the state. So far, 17,02,723 people have been screened of which 7,89,095 were male, 9,05,956 were female while 700 belong to transgender community. In all, 3,80,871 have been handed over reading glasses. Prescription spectacles will be provided to 2,62,928 persons and 10,58,745 people do not have any eye-related issues.

could not afford to visit a private doctor for the problem of short sight. I was also reluctant to visit a government hospital. My parents told me that the Kanti Velugu camp was being organised in our village. So, I went to the camp where the doctors tested me and gave me reading glasses free of cost. The problem of tears rolling from eyes subsided and I am now in a position to concentrate on studies." He thanked the Chief

New York City Mayor all praise for Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

New York City Mayor Eric Adams from the USA, met Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi to build goodwill between the two cities on Tuesday. Both the Mayors paid tributes to Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 75th birth anniversary on January 30 at New York City Hall.

Eric Adams said, "The city of Hyderabad has become famous since ancient times. It is transforming into a global city day-by-day and is becoming famous at the international level."

GHMC Mayor Vijayalakshmi said, "Hyderabad city is working to increase opportunities in business and mutual cooperation with physically developed cities through sister city relationships. Earlier, California City has signed a sister city relationship MoU with the city of Hyderabad and they are taking help in terms of cul-



New York Mayor Eric Adams with GHMC Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi

ture, academy and mutual opportunities related to both the cities." Mayor Vijayalakshmi requested Eric Adams to visit Hyderabad city before April 30 to view the developed areas here, technology and other mutual exchange agreements as per the MoU made as part of sister city relationship.

TS invites startups for innovation in E-Mobility sector

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government on Tuesday invited startups from across India in a bid to encourage innovation in the electric-Mobility (E-Mobility).

These startups will showcase their business under the "Connected" cars, "Autonomous / Automated" driving, "Shared" and "Electric" (CASE) Mobility Grand startup challenge. The winner of the challenge will be awarded Rs 10 lakh and will be enrolled in T-HUB's start-up incubation programmes.

The runners-up will receive Rs 5 lakh.

The programme will be conducted as part of the E-Mobility Week which will take place from February 5 to 11. Seven startups will submit their idea to resolve the challenges to the Indian E-Mobility sector. The grand finale of the competition will be held on February 7.

Speaking of the competition, Principal Secretary for IT Telangana, Jayesh Ranjan, said, "Innovations in CASE mobility will shape the next revolution in the auto-mobile

IPE to host Startupedia 2023

The Institute Public Enterprise (IPE) in collaboration with T-HUB will conduct Startupedia'23, the national-level startup event in Hyderabad. The two-day event will be held on February 16 and 17. IPE aims to promote entrepreneurship among youth.

industry. The competition provides a platform for startups to interact with technology experts and their feedback on the innovations." All startups are invited to Hyderabad

It will also provide acceleration, incubation and mentoring to the entrepreneurs. Other organising partners include The Entrepreneur Zone, The Hindu, Hyderabad Angels, Learning While Travelling, and Chaturideas.

to showcase their innovations and feasible projects for the E-Mobility Sector," he added. Over 100 startups have shown interest to participate in the competition.

Sangram Singh takes charge as RTC Vigilance SP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sangram Singh Patil assumed charge as Superintendent of Police of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC). After assuming office, he interacted with Managing Director VC Sajjanar.

Sajjanar thanked the State Government for appointing a good IPS officer to TSRTC for the development of the organisation. Sajjanar said that the services of Sangram Singh, who is a doctor himself, will be used to further

improve the facilities and welfare of the staff at Tarnaka Hospital. He reminded that like policing, RTC is also a public service. MD appreciated Sangram Singh Ji Patil's medical services to the tribals when he was the SP of Mulugu, Bhupalapalli.

Sangram Singh is a 2015 batch IPS officer from Pandharpur, Maharashtra. An officer belonging to Telangana cadre, he first worked as Bhadrachalam ASP. He has been working as Mulugu SP for the last four years.

HC invites applications for civil judges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday invited online applications for the post of civil judge in the Telangana State Judicial Service.

Eight of the vacancies will be filled through direct recruitment while the other two will be filled through transfers. The application forms will be available in the High Court's website. It is to be noted that the applications will be open from February 1 to March 1. The screening test will be conducted on April 23 and the candidates will take up a computer-based test. The hall tickets can be downloaded from April 1 and the exam timing will be mentioned on the hall tickets. It is to be noted that hand written, photocopy or hard copies of the application form will be rejected.

OU VC clears air on PhD exams process

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As protests erupted on the campus raising doubts on the PhD exams conducted by Osmani University, Vice-Chancellor Prof D Ravinder, has clarified that the eligibility tests for admission to Phd courses have been conducted as per the rules and UG guidelines. He said that a few people who have not passed the qualifying exams are creating unnecessary ruckus.

Those who have passed the tests should apply for the interview and admissions details are mentioned in the website www.ouadmissions.com and the last date for applying is February 10.

It is clear that a few people who have not passed the qualifying exams are creating unnecessary ruckus. Officials

revealed that they have adhered to the rules of University Grants Commission (UGC). It has been clarified that admissions cannot be granted to students who do not qualify against the rules. If that is done the value of Phd degrees of the ones who have already completed will be diminished.

The Vice-Chancellor reiterated that as per UGC rules and guidelines, admissions process was conducted and increasing the seats at this stage is not possible. He said that according to the rules, the reservations are being followed according to the eligibility criteria mentioned in the gazette provided by the government. There is no truth in the campaign made by a few people that there will be loss in the reservations for some Phd

aspirants. Admissions are being given to those who have UGC NET or JRF in Category-1. He said that the eligibility test was conducted as per the rules under Category - 2. He explained that according to the UGC rules, only those who have secured 50 per cent marks in the qualifying examination have been declared passed the Phd entrance and it cannot be reduced further.

SC, ST, OBC and EWS categories are given an exemption 5 per cent in the qualifying marks. Osmania University, has NAAC A++ status, the next cycle of NAAC accreditation, is to begin shortly. The students who are not qualified at present are advised to prepare for the entrance exam which will be released in the next academic year, explained the VC.

Water supply disruption on Feb 5, 6 in some areas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) issued a notice that water supply will cut off to areas under Krishna Drinking Water Supply Project Phase-II Ring main-II, due the construction of SRDP multi-level flyover at Bairamalguda Junction, from 6 am on February 4 to 12pm on February 5.

HMWSSB authorities said that there will be no water supply for the reservoir commanding areas under KWSP Phase-II in view of the A 1600 mm dia MS main being constructed at Bairamalguda Junction.

The water supply will be cut off to areas O&M (Operation and management) under Division I. Balapur, Maisaram and Barkas under Division II. Mekala Mandi and Bholakpur under Division V.

US-bound students defer plans due to lack of F1 visa slots

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Many students planning to move to the USA to pursue higher education began to defer their plans to next terms due to inadequate number of F1 non-immigrant student visa slots released by the US consulates.

Amidst the relocation works of US Consulate in Hyderabad to the financial district, consultants stated that only half of the applicants received a visa slot and joined the universities on time, while the rest are on hunt for slots, possibly for the next six months.

First-time visa applicants who received their admission into

American universities for fall 2023 had to defer to spring 2023, upon failing to get a slot for a visa interview.

Christy Meeniga, a student planning to move to pursue Masters, said, "I got accepted into George Washington University, Washington DC for spring cohort 2023. I have been trying to book a visa slot since the second week of November, 2022. It's been over three months and I still couldn't book a visa slot due to high demand and low availability. I had to defer my admission to the fall semester. Many of my friends who had the same plans had to either defer their admissions or cancel their

plans on studying in the USA."

Subhakar Alapati, Founder Director, Global Tree Overseas Careers, said, "This is primarily happening because post-covid, many embassy officers had to relocate and the consulates have been understaffed ever since. There is higher demand from students in 2022, a wave of students who could not move during the two years of covid are beginning to apply. There is an unprecedented growth in the number of students applying, so the number of slots seems lower." Sanjay Gupta, from Vyasya Consultants, said, "The embassy is prioritising first-time applicants.

Volcanic ash discovered in Hastalpur village

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ash heaps of volcanic lava were discovered by Kotha Telangana Charitra Brundam's researcher BV Bhadra Girish in Hastalpur village in Narsapur mandal of Medak district. He inspected the ash mounds recently, when he went to see the prehistoric rock art paintings on Pandavula Gutta in Hastalpur village after being told by the villagers that there are ash pits locally called suddaguttas on the outskirts of the village.

At a distance of one kilometer to the south-east of Narasimha Swamy Gutta on the outskirts of the village, an ash bed was found spread over a radius of about half a kilo-

meter, two feet deep. It is said that the locals used this ash as chalk. However, the presence of prehistoric rock paintings on the mound of the Pandavas at Hastalpur village, the presence of microlithic stone tools in the vicinity and the presence of iron-smelting ingots have previously suggested that the ash came from iron-smelting furnaces.

But the researcher of Kotha Telangana Charitra Brundam who re-examined the ash heaps, collected the ash samples and tested them in the laboratory, found that there was almost no carbon in it and only sulphur content of about 5 mg per kg. Examining the particles in the ash under a microscope revealed that the



particles had sharp edges as found in volcanic lava ash.

Kotha Telangana Charitra Brundam Expert and Advisor, Chakilam Venugopala Rao, Deputy Director General (Retd), Geological Survey of India (GSI) has examined these details and said that this ash can be confirmed to be that of Toba, a volcano that



erupted in Indonesia 75,000 years ago. About 75,000 years ago, Toba, a volcano in the Sumatra Islands of Indonesia, erupted and the ash spread over thousands of kilometers. The ash that fell was washed away by water currents and piled up in some places.

At Murreru near

Kothagudem, geologists have already identified such ash piles and also in some parts of Manjira valley. It is said that the piles of ashes called Merugu Sudda in Jwalapuram village near Banaganapalli in AP are also a part of these. He also opined that the ash mounds in other parts of Telangana may not be ash mounds formed by burning cattle dung in the prehistoric era as previously thought, and they should be re-examined.

He said that about 80,000 years ago, the Toba volcano in Indonesia erupted violently and lava ash was found in the Bay of Bengal and other river valleys of the Deccan Plateau in India.

KTR exhorts students to become entrepreneurs

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Minister for Municipal Administration and Information Technology K T Rama Rao interacted with students of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Backward Classes Residential School at Kamalapur after inaugurating it on Tuesday.

While having lunch with the students, the Minister made the students feel calm and relaxed. He asked them whether they were satisfied with the facilities provided in the school. He advised the students to work hard and strive to become entrepreneurs. They can provide employment to the unemployed by becoming entrepreneurs, he told the students. Their aim must be to become entrepreneurs instead of seeking a job.



Minister for Information Technology K T Rama Rao with students of the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Backward Classes Residential School in Kamalapur on Tuesday

He told the students that he would ask the Collector to take the Class 10 and 11 students to T-Hub and TASK centres in Warangal and Hyderabad.

The Minister praised Class

6 students T Vamshika and S Harini for their brilliance.

KTR inaugurated MJP Boys School, MJP Girls School and Junior College constructed at a cost of Rs 43.5 crore at Kamalapur.

National Dalit Bandhu Meeting on August 16

On two years of the completion of the Dalit Bandhu Scheme, the BRS government is planning to organise a national-level meet. Minister for IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao suggested to district collector RV Karnan that National Dalit Bandhu Sammelan be organised in Karimnagar district on August 16. Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu has introduced the Dalit Bandhu Scheme to promote the economic development of Dalits. But by next August 16, two years will be completed after the implementation of this scheme. KTR gave important instructions to the Collector on this occasion.

Police issue notice to Raja Singh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Mangalhat Police issued a notice to Goshamahala MLA T. Raja Singh for making a 'hate' speech at a recent rally in Mumbai.

Raja Singh, who has received police notices many times for making controversial comments, has been issued a notice once again by the police.

Recently, a huge rally was held in Mumbai demanding that Central and State Governments should enact laws against love jihad. Raja Singh was the chief guest at the inaugural meeting organised by Hindu organisations. Raja Singh received huge support from the people of Maharashtra during the meeting held in the Shivaji Park area of Mumbai which was thronged by Hindus. Earlier, Raja Singh was hailed at a rally held in Pune.

But Raja Singh's comments on religion at the Maharashtra meeting became a topic of discussion and the Mangalhat Police issued a notice to Raja Singh regarding that.

Sanjay lashes out at BRS for boycotting Prez speech

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that it was shameful on the part of BRS MPs to boycott President Droupadi Murmu's address to the Parliament on Tuesday, Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar lashed out at BRS MPs for boycotting the President's address to the joint session of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on the first day of the Parliament's budget session.

Sanjay also demanded their unconditional apology for insulting an Adivasi woman.

Speaking to the media along with other MPs from the state at the Vijay Chowk in New Delhi, Sanjay said it was shameful on the part of the BRS to boycott the first speech of an Adivasi lady President in Parliament.

Stating that no sane MP would think of boycotting the President's speech, Sanjay said the speech indicated the nation's direction. It explained



how the nation had made rapid strides in every field in the last nine years and how it was going to emerge as a superpower in the next 25 years.

"If BRS MPs had any objections to any of the observations of the President, they could have pointed them out during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks," he said.

Sanjay said that in the past, the BJP had made persons belonging to minority groups and Scheduled Castes as the President and this time, it had made an Adivasi woman the President. "But the BRS made every attempt to defeat Droupadi Murmu in the Presidential elections as it had

no regard for her. For that matter, it has utter contempt for women belonging to Dalit, girijan groups and weaker sections. It is evident from the way the KCR government has been ill-treating a lady Governor who hails from the weaker sections," he said. Sanjay said those who had been giving advice to the BRS would ruin the party. "KCR doesn't give any opportunity to discuss public issues in the TS Assembly. If anybody tries to raise his or her voice they would be suspended. BRS MPs will not take part in discussions in Parliament because they are afraid that their own government in Telangana would get exposed for not implementing Central welfare schemes," he said.

Sanjay also found fault with the Karimnagar district police for assaulting and arresting ABVP activists during the visit of the Chief Minister's son, KT Rama Rao.

New, reorganised police stations in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad to witness new and reorganised law and order police stations under a few divisions. In Madhapur zone under Madhapur circle the police stations are Madhapur, Raidurgam, Gachbowli, WPPS IT Corridor, Chandanagar, Miyapur and RC Puram.

The police stations under Balanagar Zone with limits of Kukatpally division are at Kukatpally, KPHB, Bachupally, Allapur (New), Balanagar, Jagathirigutta, Sanathnagar and Jeedimthla.

Under Medchal Zone, Pet Basheerabad division, there are at Pet Basheerabad, Shamirpet, Alwal, Genome Valley (New), Suraram (New), Medchal and Dundigal.

KTR inaugurates circuit guest house, MLA quarters

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao on Tuesday inaugurated Karimnagar circuit guest house and MLA quarters here.

While the circuit guest house was constructed at a cost of Rs 12.99 crore, the MLA camp office-cum-quarters at a cost of Rs 4 crore.

Minister for Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakar, Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao and State Planning Board Vice-Chairman B Vinod Kumar participated in the programme. Later, KTR held a meeting with the District Collector R V Karnan and reviewed the ongoing developmental activities.

Zilla Parishad Chairperson Kanumall

Vijay, Manakondur, Peddapalli, Jagtial and Ramagundam MLAs Sunke Ravisankar, Rasamayi Balakrishna, Dasari Manohar Reddy, A Sanjay and Korukanti Chandar were present. District Collector R V Karnan, Additional Collector Garima Agrawal, city Mayor Y Sunil Rao, SUDA chairman G V Ramakrishna Rao, former MLC Naradasu Lakshmana Rao and others were present.

KTR gave important instructions to the Collector. The Minister enquired about the implementation of welfare schemes. The Karimnagar Municipal Corporation council completed three years. Gangula Kamalakar said that the Karimnagar city was developed with the funds released by the State government.

'BRS violated Parliament tradition'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Rajya Sabha Member Dr K. Laxman said that BRS President Chief Minister K. Chandrababoo Naidu and his party leaders have a habit of insulting women.

Dr Laxman said that in democratic India, a tribal woman became the President for the first time. But BRS MPs boycotted her first address in Parliament. It is nothing but insulting an Adivasi woman.

Dr Laxman said that there is a tradition in the history of the Indian Parliament that everyone attends the first address of a new President to the Parliament. But the BRS broke the tradition by not attending the first address of Droupadi Murmu.

BRS has been conspiring as it could not digest the fact that a tribal woman sat in the nation's highest office, Dr Laxman said.

Speaking to the media after



the President's address to the Parliament's joint session on Tuesday, Dr Laxman said that the BRS government had invited the Governor to address the Assembly's joint session only after the High Court's order.

The BRS tried to blame the Governor saying that the Governor did not approve the budget. However, the BRS case

crashed in court and KCR agreed to allow the Governor to address the Assembly on February 3.

The HC also pulled up the KCR government for limiting Republic Day celebrations to the Raj Bhavan, he said and added that KCR did not attend the unfurling of the national flag by the Governor on R-Day.

'People laughing at BRS'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Tourism Minister Kishan Reddy said that BRS President Chief Minister K. Chandrababoo Naidu's call to BRS MPs to boycott the President's budget speech in Parliament is proof of the KCR government's regard for the Constitution, constitutional institutions and constitutional posts.

Kishan said that KCR, who is not known for respecting the Constitution, has been insulting the Constitution on democratic platforms. KCR doesn't know that he has to respect not only the MLAs and MPs but also the Governors, the Prime Minister and the President.

Kishan lashed out at KCR saying, "You (KCR) prevented BJP MLA Eatala Rajender from speaking in the Assembly by suspending him and you are teaching ethics to us," he



said. Addressing the media in New Delhi after President Droupadi Murmu addressed the Parliament's joint session on Tuesday, Kishan said that the people of Telangana are laughing at BRS leaders who say they are ready to resign always. "The people will send you back to your homes in the next elections and there is no need to resign now," he said.



Police rounding up students who blocked the convoy of Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao in Karimnagar on Tuesday

Students take police by surprise, block KTR's convoy

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Students affiliated to the National Student Union (NSU) and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) took the police by surprise when they suddenly turned up and blocked Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao's convoy on Tuesday.

The police chalked out a plan to ensure that there was no protest during KTR's visit to Karimnagar on Tuesday. Despite criticism and concerns raised by civil rights activists, the police went ahead with the arrest of several persons. The police tightened security to ensure that there was no trouble during the visit by the Minister.

The students, however, outwitted the police and broke through the barricades and halted the Minister's convoy. The students raised slogans like "we want justice." It led to the building up of tension. The students staged a protest wearing black shirts. The students affiliated to the ABVP tried to block the convoys. A heated argument ensued between the students and the police. Earlier, BJP MLA Eatala Rajender deplored the police action in arresting student leaders ahead of KTR's visit to the city.

Handloom workers, too, staged a protest at Community Complex dur-

ing the Minister's visit. The workers questioned him to explain what the government did for their betterment.

In response to the protest by the handloom workers, KTR said that the Telangana government has taken several measures for the welfare of the handloom workers. The government had extended financial help to handloom workers, he said. A new scheme would be launched soon for the welfare of handloom workers, he added.

The Minister arrived at Kamalapur by helicopter. He was accorded a grand welcome by the BRS leaders and activists. He laid the foundation stone for works to be taken up at a cost of Rs 49 crore.

He also inaugurated a Gurukula School. He shared a meal with the students. Gouda and Mahila Sanghams welcome the Minister.

A group of NSUI activists tried to obstruct KTR's convoy at Kamalapur village during his visit to the Huzurabad Assembly Constituency.

The NSUI students raised slogans the MJP boys and girls schools and a junior college after landing in a special chopper. The NSU students mingled with the people and suddenly raised slogans. The police and the BRS used force against the students raising slogans.

MLA promises potable water to residential colonies

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy has maintained that four major reservoirs are being built to provide drinking water to all new residential colonies under Ameenpur municipality.

He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for the 10-lakh litre reservoir near Sri Krishna Brundavan Colony in the municipality on Tuesday along with local municipal chairman Tummala Panduranga Reddy



Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy laying foundation stone for a reservoir in Patancheru on Tuesday

and Vice-Chairman Nandaram Narasimha Goud. In the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, daily drinking water was supplied to the colonies through tankers. The people faced hardships due to drinking water scarcity. However, in the new state of Telangana drinking water is being provided daily under the Mission Bhagiradha scheme, he said. He appealed to the people to see the difference between then and now.

In Ameenpur Municipal limits, the construction of reservoirs in PJR colony, Lala

Bavi colony, Beeramguda colony and on top of the hill where Siva temple is located is progressing at a brisk pace. He said that drinking water would be provided to 90 per cent of the homes by summer. Once the construction of the reservoirs is completed, daily 1.25 lakh crore litres of drinking water would be supplied to homes, he said. Municipal Commissioner Sujata, ward councillors, co-option members, BRS party senior leaders, party activists, colony residents and others were present.



15 children injured as RTC bus hits school bus

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRCILLA

At least 15 students were injured when a speeding TSRTC bus hit their school bus from behind at Yellareddy town in the district on Tuesday morning.

A Palle Velugu bus hit the school bus carrying 20 students from behind. The schoolchildren screamed for help. The students had a miraculous escape. The children sitting on the last row of the bus suffered bruises. Two passengers, too, were injured. The local resident ferried the injured to nearby hospitals.

The accident caused panic among parents. The parents and the relatives of the students rushed to the scene of the accident.

Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao, who represents the Sircilla constituency, called the District Collector to find out the details of the accidents. He directed the Collector to ensure the best possible medical treatment for the injured students.



Sanareddy Collector A Sharat at a review meeting in Sangareddy on Tuesday

Officials told to make arrangements for Podu lands distribution

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

District Collector A Sharat has directed the Revenue officials to complete all formalities relating to the distribution of the Podu lands to beneficiaries by February 4.

Addressing the officials of departments concerned at the Collectorate here on Tuesday, he reviewed the preparedness of officials for the distribution of Podu lands pattas to beneficiaries.

He told the officials to ensure justice for eligible beneficiaries. The officials were asked to follow the guidelines provided by the government.

He asked the sub-divisional committee to study grama sabha resolutions once again without any variation. He said that the SDLC district committee would be held. The applications approved at the district level should be uploaded to the websites concerned.

Additional Collectors Rajarshi Sha and Veera Reddy, District Tribal Welfare Officer Firangi, District Forest Officer Sridhar Rao, DPO Suresh, Mohan, ZPCEO Yellaiah, DRDO Srinivasa Rao, RDOs, divisional panchayat officers, MPDOs, forest range officials took part in the meeting.

MANA OORU MANA BADI

Renovated govt schools to be opened from today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government's flagship programme Mana Ooru - Mana Badi scheme which has completed one year has facilitated 12 types of basic facilities in the government schools. This scheme has been allocated Rs 7,289 crore. In that direction, the state education department has taken extensive measures to complete the work.

The government is making arrangements on a war-footing to repair the buildings, paint them, construct compound walls, furnish furniture for students and teachers, digital classrooms, provide solar panels and advanced facilities in the schools.

The education department has taken steps to build golden paths for the future of schoolchildren.

As part of this, Minister K

T Rama Rao said, "Education is getting much needed attention in Telangana. Delighted that Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy and myself will be launching the pioneering KG to PG campus developed under the Mana Ooru - Mana Badi at Gambhiraopet on Wednesday.

Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu has directed the higher officials of the Education Department to provide quality education in government schools.

Under the Mana Ooru - Mana Badi scheme, the government has issued orders to complete the necessary arrangements for clean drinking water, construction of toilets, additional classrooms, good lighting facility, food and accommodation arrangements, green boards and digital classes in the schools.

INDIA CORNER

Home guard arrested for extorting money from woman in Bengaluru

A home guard attached to the Bengaluru civic agency has been arrested for extorting money from a Delhi-based woman who had come to meet her friend in the city here, police said on Tuesday. Police said Manjunath Reddy V (47), a home guard, has been arrested on a complaint by Arsha Latif. Latif had taken to Twitter on Monday to explain the traumatic experience she had undergone. According to her, she was sitting with her friend at Kundanahalli lake when Reddy came there and threatened to register a case against them for sitting there without permission. He then demanded Rs 1,000 to let them go. After Latif's friend Lakshay Hooda transferred the money into his account through online payment, the home guard left the place. "I have received an update that the identified person Manjunath Reddy V has been arrested. He works for BBMP - Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike - and was impersonating the police to extort money. Thank you @BIRCityPolice for escalating the matter and taking swift action," Latif tweeted on Tuesday.



Ex PM Manmohan Singh conferred Lifetime Achievement Honour in UK

Former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh was recently conferred a Lifetime Achievement Honour by the India-UK Achievers Honours in London for his contribution to economic and political life. The Honour, announced at an awards ceremony last week, will be handed over to Dr Singh in New Delhi by the National Indian Students and Alumni Union (NISAU) UK at a later date. The India-UK Achievers Honours by NISAU UK, in partnership with the British Council in India and the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT), celebrate the achievements of Indian students who studied at British universities and the Lifetime Achievement Honour is a nod to Dr Singh's academic achievements at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. "I am very touched by this gesture, which is especially meaningful coming from young people who are the future of our country and of the ties between our two countries," Dr Singh said in a written message. "The India-UK relationship is indeed especially defined by our educational partnership. The founding fathers of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel and many others studied in the UK and went on to become great leaders, leaving a legacy which continues to inspire India and the world."



Adoor resigns as chairperson of Kerala's film institute

Renowned filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan on Tuesday announced his resignation as chairman of the K R Narayanan National Institute of Visual Science and Arts, days after its director - Shankar Mohan - quit following complaints of caste discrimination against him by a section of students and staff. Gopalakrishnan - a Dadasaheb Phalke Award winner - while announcing his resignation, at a press conference here - from the institute, also threw his weight behind Mohan by saying the latter was a well respected and distinguished professional who has been at the helm of various government-run film institutions in the last four decades. The filmmaker further said Mohan had diligently worked with him during the last three years to bring the institution back from the edge of ruin and turn it into one of the best film institutes in the country. "It is such a professional whom we invited here and then forced him to leave by levelling baseless, false and derogatory allegations against him and insulting him," Gopalakrishnan said while speaking to the media here.



World acknowledging India's tough stand on terror: Murmu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has emerged as a country that is "connecting" today's "divided world" in some form or the other amid several global challenges and questions over relevance and efficacy of decades-old international institutions, President Droupadi Murmu said on Tuesday. In her address to a joint sitting of Parliament on the first day of the Budget Session, she said the world is acknowledging New Delhi's "tough stand" on terrorism, and described the current phase of India's global relations as the "best" one. Murmu said the government "firmly" believed that lasting peace is possible only when the country is strong politically and strategically, and that it is the reason why constant emphasis is being put on the modernisation of the country's military strength. In the around hour-long speech, Murmu touched upon India's ongoing presidency of the G20, chairship of the



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) as well as its role in the Quad with a focus on working for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. However, there was no reference to India's frosty ties with Pakistan and China, though she mentioned the challenge of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. "The world is looking towards India with 'high hopes' and it is among those countries that are reinforcing the trust in the global supply

Murmu said asserting that the country's identity as a nation was immortal in the past, and will remain so in the future as well. "The president said the goodwill that India has generated benefitted it during the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine, especially in evacuation of Indian citizens from these countries. "Today, the world is also acknowledging India's tough stand on terrorism. Due to this, India's voice against terrorism is being heard seriously on

every global platform," she said. "In October last year, a special meeting of the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee was organised for the first time in India. In this too, India made its position clear against terrorism," Murmu added. She said the government is also "sincerely presenting" its concerns relating to cyber security before the whole world. The president also highlighted several challenges facing the world and how New Delhi is playing an important role in connecting a "divided world." "Today's world is witnessing many challenges. The relevance and efficacy of international institutions created decades ago is also being questioned," she said. "Under these circumstances, India has emerged as a country that is connecting today's divided world in some form or the other.

Two killed as bus falls into roadside ditch

PNS ■ MALDA (WB)

At least two women were killed and 34 others were injured after a bus with over 40 passengers on board fell into a roadside ditch in West Bengal's Malda district, police said on Tuesday. The accident occurred on Monday night when the speeding bus hit a goods carrier on National Highway 34 before falling into the roadside ditch, a senior officer said. "Two women passengers have died in the accident and around 34 others have been injured. The injured people are undergoing treatment at the Malda Medical College and Hospital. The condition of a couple of them is critical," he said. Most of the passengers of the North Bengal State Transport Corporation bus were believed to be Trinamool Congress supporters and were travelling to participate in party supremo Mamata Banerjee's scheduled meeting on Tuesday in Malda, the officer said.

Prez speech: Oppn says key issues remain unaddressed

○ Call it BJP manifesto for 2024 General Election

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Tuesday criticised the President's address alleging that the speech was like the "first chapter" of the ruling BJP's manifesto for 2024 and key issues related to price control, communal harmony and women were "missing". In her maiden address to the joint sitting of Parliament on the first day of the Budget session, President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said the country has a government that is "stable, fearless, decisive", working for all classes without any discrimination and giving thrust to 'virasat' (heritage) as well as 'vikas' (development). Murmu spoke of the government's relentless fight against corruption, the "biggest enemy of democracy and social justice". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said it is the "government's statement that has come through the



President" and there is nothing new in it. "If the government is claiming that the country has progressed so much, then why do the poor people of the country continue to suffer due to unemployment and high inflation," he said and alleged that the schemes "renamed" by the Modi government are not reaching the poorest of the poor. "TMC Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien said that while it is "con-

vention" that the President's address is "written" by the government of India, key issues were absent in her speech. "As is convention, President's Address to both Houses of Parliament is written by GoI. Any line in speech about controlling prices, creating jobs, strengthening (fiscal) federalism, promoting communal harmony, passing Women's Reservation Bill? Oh and 2 miserly lines about the North East," said Brien.

Court sentences Asaram to life imprisonment

○ Told to pay Rs 50,000 fine; defence to move HC

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

A court in Gandhinagar on Tuesday sentenced self-styled godman Asaram Bapu to life imprisonment in a rape case filed by a former woman disciple in 2013 after the prosecution argued for the strictest punishment saying he is a "habitual offender". Additional sessions judge DK Soni also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on Asaram which will be paid as compensation to the victim. The defence said the order will be challenged in the Gujarat High Court. The 81-year-old godman is currently serving a life term in a Jodhpur jail in another case of raping a minor girl at his ashram in Rajasthan in 2013. He was produced in the Gandhinagar court via video link when the judge passed the order on Tuesday. A day earlier, the court had

convicted Asaram in the case registered in 2013 for raping a woman disciple, who hailed from Surat, on several occasions from 2001 to 2006 when she was living at his ashram at Motera near Ahmedabad. Six other accused in the case, including Asaram's wife Laxmiben, their daughter, and four disciples who were accused of aiding and abetting the crime, were acquitted for want of evidence, the prosecution had said. "The court on Tuesday sentenced Asaram Bapu to life imprisonment under sections 376 (2)(C) for rape and 377 (Unnatural offences) of the Indian Penal Code. He was also ordered to pay Rs 50,000 towards the compensation to the victim. In the remaining sections, he was sentenced to one year in jail under each count and slapped with a nominal fine," said special public prosecutor RC Kodekar.



Sonia alone attends joint sitting of Parliament as senior Congress leaders stuck in Kashmir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi sat alone in her designated front row bench in Parliament's Central Hall during the president's address on Tuesday as senior leaders of her party remained stuck in Srinagar due to bad weather, after attending an event to mark the culmination of the Bharat Jodo Yatra. However, a steady stream of leaders from across the aisle approached Sonia Gandhi and exchanged pleasantries. Gandhi, who is usually flanked by senior party colleagues, was also greeted by both President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar. Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, who was sitting near Sonia Gandhi, was also



seen leaning and speaking to her. Gandhi, however, was seen engaged in a conversation for around half an hour with TMC's Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien who was sitting a row behind her. Incidentally, the TMC had earlier said the party had not been called to join the Congress Bharat Jodo Yatra. O'Brien and Gandhi were seen having a

lengthy conversation before Murmu's speech began. Putting political rivalries aside, AIADMK leader M Thambi Durai and DMK's TR Baalu were seen smiling and hugging each other while having a conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the Economic Survey was presented and the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day, PM Modi also engaged with Chirag Paswan about his mother's health. In her first address to the joint sitting of Parliament on the first day of the Budget session, President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said the country has a government that is "stable, fearless, decisive", giving thrust to 'virasat' (heritage) as well as 'vikas' (development) and working for all classes without any discrimination.

K'taka HC warns of contempt proceedings against CS

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday warned that it would be forced to initiate contempt of court proceedings against the Chief Secretary if the State fails to implement its order of providing land for graveyards in all villages and towns within two weeks. A Division Bench of the court is hearing a civil contempt petition filed by one



Mohammed Iqbal who has alleged that the State has failed to follow an earlier order of the HC in 2019 that had directed it to provide land for graveyards in all villages within six

weeks. In September 2022, the State had informed the HC in a compliance report that it had handed over 23,815 burial grounds to local authorities and the process of handing over 3,765 burial grounds was still pending. The government was also in the process of identifying and purchasing land for burial grounds in 516 places where there were no government land available.

Air India urination case: Accused Mishra gets bail

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Tuesday granted bail to Shankar Mishra, accused of urinating on a woman co-passenger on an Air India flight from New York to Delhi. Additional Sessions Judge Hariyot Singh Bhalla granted the relief on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh. The judge was hearing an appeal filed by the accused against an order of a magisterial court that had denied him bail. The metropolitan magistrate had on Jan 11 denied relief to Mishra, saying the act was utterly disgusting and repulsive, shocked the civic consciousness and needed to be deprecated.

'Steady decline in school dropout rate, increase in enrolment'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There has been a steady decline in the school dropout rate and increase in enrolment both in school and higher education, the Economic Survey for 2022-23 tabled in Parliament on Tuesday showed. The gender parity has also improved in this financial year, the survey, tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, stated. "The Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER) in the primary-enrolment in Class 1 to 5 as a percentage of the population in age six to 10 years for girls as

well as boys has improved during the financial year (FY)". This improvement has "reversed the declining trends between FY-17 and FY-19", it stated, adding that "the GER in upper-primary (enrolment in class 6 to 8 as a per cent of the population in age 11-13 years), which was stagnant between FY-17 and FY-19, improved in FY-22". In corresponding age groups in primary and upper-primary levels, the GER for girls is better than that of boys, the Economic Survey for 2022-23 stated. "In FY-22, school enrolment



stood at 26.5 crore children with 19.4 lakh additional children enrolled in primary to higher-secondary levels," it

said. The survey noted that the total enrolment of Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in

FY-22 stands at 22.7 lakh as compared to 21.9 lakh in FY-21, an increase of 3.3 per cent. "The enrolments increased across all levels -- primary, upper-primary, secondary, and higher-secondary, except for the pre-primary level. At the pre-primary level, enrolment reduced from 1.1 crore in FY-21 to one crore in FY-22," it said. "During the year, about one crore children were enrolled in pre-primary, 12.2 crore in primary, 6.7 crore in upper primary, 3.9 crore in secondary and 2.9 crore in higher secondary," it said.

School dropout rates, for both boys and girls, at all levels have witnessed a steady decline in recent years. The availability of teachers, measured by pupil-teacher ratio, an indicator which is inversely related to improvement in quality of education, has improved at all levels continuously from FY-13 to FY-22, the survey said. From FY-13 to FY-22, it improved from 34.0 to 26.2 at the primary level, 23 to 19.6 at the upper-primary level, 30.0 to 17.6 at the secondary level and 39.0 to 27.1 at the higher-secondary level, it said.

Oxford Dictionary adds Indian English pronunciation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pronunciation transcriptions and audio for more than 800 entries associated with Indian English, including words like 'desh' (country) and 'bindaas' (bold), are now available in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). According to Oxford University press, Indian English brings the total number of global varieties covered in the OED's pronunciations to 16 and the recent addition to the world English pronunciation audio archive fills a large gap for the 130 million Indian English speakers in the country. "Ever since we started work to expand and include audio in our coverage of pronunciations for varieties of English besides British and US English, Indian English has been one of our biggest priorities and also one of our biggest challenges," said Dr Catherine Sangster, Pronunciations Editor for the OED. "I am delighted that we have developed a transcription model to capture its complexity and can now offer pronunciations for this extremely important variety of English in the OED," Sangster said. The other Indian words for which pronunciation transcriptions have been added in the dictionary include - 'diya' (a cup-shaped oil lamp, typically made of baked clay, often used on religious occasions such as Diwali festival), 'bachcha' (a child; also a young animal) and 'almirah' (a free-standing cupboard, wardrobe, or other storage unit). Since 2016, the OED has been expanding its pronunciation coverage for numerous global varieties of English.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tender IS.O.No.568/96/2022 (DUB/GM/C) 2022. Dated: 05.01.2023
Nature of the Work: Box tenders invited for Raising of 5' x 5' bagpits (1 Diara for each circle) inward level numerals in Circles of 23-Mosapet, 24-Kukatpally 25-Quilbalugut, 26-Gajulasharam and 27-Awal of Kukatpally Zone, GHMC, during the year 2022-23. Total 05 Nos of works, applicants invited from GHMC/CPWA and other (1 applicant eligible for 1 tender only) (2nd round). Start Date & Time for download of applications: From 04.01.2023 @ 12:00 PM onwards to 04.02.2023 Up to 04.00 PM. Venue of submission of Applications: 1) Circle Zonal Commissioner, Kukatpally Zone, Beside Chaitanyam Temple, Mosapet, (DR) 2) Circle Deputy Commissioner Mosapet Circle, GHMC. 3) Circle Deputy Commissioner Kukatpally Circle, GHMC. 4) Circle Deputy Commissioner Gulbarga Circle, GHMC. 5) Circle Deputy Commissioner Gajulasharam Circle, GHMC. 6) Circle Deputy Commissioner Awal Circle, GHMC. Name & Address of the Officer: Dy. Director, Urban Solidarity, GHMC, Kukatpally Zone, Circle Zonal Commissioner, Kukatpally Zone, Beside Chaitanyam Temple, Mosapet, Col No. 728/923113, Circle Manager Col No: 1/94/0564793, 2/996775986.
R.O.No: 1280-PP/LADVT/1/2022-23, Dt. 01.01.2023

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
ROAD CONNECTIVITY PROJECT FOR LEFT WING EXTREMISM AFFECTED AREAS (RCPLWEA) 2022-23
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
1) Online tenders are invited through e-procurement platform under RCPLWEA scheme for the year 2022-23 for the following works vide NIT Nos. mentioned below in the Districts mentioned:
a) NIT No. 2020/78/3rd call/CE/D&P, LWE, RSW, QC, Adm. & RR/LWE/EE/ DEE/ AEE2/ 2022-23 Dt:30.01.2023 for Seven works (7 No's) in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.
b) NIT No. 2020/79/5th call/CE/D&P, LWE, RSW, QC, Adm. & RR/LWE/EE/ DEE/ AEE2/ 2022-23 Dt:30.01.2023 for Six works (6 No's) in Mulugu district.
c) NIT No. 2020/80/6th call/CE/D&P, LWE, RSW, QC, Adm. & RR/LWE/EE/ DEE/ AEE2/ 2022-23 Dt:30.01.2023 for Two works (2 No's) in Mulugu, One work (1 No's) Jayashankar Bhupalpally districts.
d) NIT No. 2020/81/7th call/CE/D&P, LWE, RSW, QC, Adm. & RR/LWE/EE/ DEE/ AEE2/ 2022-23 Dt:30.01.2023 for Two works (2 No's) in Mulugu, Two works (2 No's) in Bhadrachalam districts.
e) NIT No. 2020/82/8th call/ CE/D&P, LWE, RSW, QC, Adm. & RR/LWE/EE/ DEE/ AEE2/ 2022-23 Dt:30.01.2023 for Two works (2 No's) in Mulugu, One work (1 No) in Bhadrachalam districts, Three works (3 No's) in Mancherial districts.
2) The last date of receipt of tenders for the road and bridge works is on or before Dt: 10-02-2023 up to 4:00 PM. Tenderers can download the tender schedules from e-market place i.e. <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>. Further details can be seen at e-procurement.market.place i.e. <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>
Sd/- Zonal Commissioner, R&B
D&P LWE, RSW, QC, Adm. & RR
R.O.No: 1280-PP/LADVT/1/2022-23, Dt. 01.01.2023



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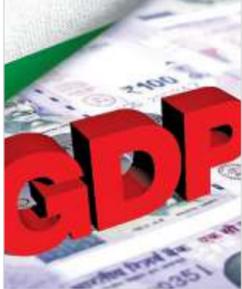
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PAPER WITH PASSION

Pretty picture

Economic Survey 2022-23 is quite bullish on the future, and the optimism is grounded in reality

The GDP growth rate in 2023-24 may be lower than that in the current fiscal but happy days are on the horizon. This is the message that the 400-plus pages of Economic Survey 2022-23 tend to convey. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the survey in Parliament on Tuesday. It goes on to list the grounds for its upbeat message. Even as the survey pegs the growth rate at 6.5 per cent for 2023-24, as compared to 7 per cent in 2022-23 and 8.7 per cent in the last fiscal, it claims that India's recovery from the pandemic was relatively quick, and growth in the upcoming year will be supported by solid domestic demand and a pickup in capital investment. The current growth trajectory, it correctly says, will be supported by multiple structural changes that have been implemented over the past few years (read since 2014). The survey suggests that the "financial system stress"—as reflected in non-performing assets, low credit growth, and declining growth rates of capital formation—was caused by excessive lending in the pre-2014 period. Those stress years are behind us, just like the period of recovery from the pandemic-induced slowdown. Chief Economic Advisor Venkatraman Anantha Nageswaran sees similarity in the situation in the last few years to the one pertaining in the 1998-2002 period. Over two decades ago, transformative reforms were undertaken by the government, but the growth returns were due to temporary shocks in the economy. Once these



shocks faded, the structural reforms paid growth dividends from 2003.

His optimism is grounded not just in history but also in reality. In general, he has presented a rosy picture in the survey: private consumption in the first half of 2022-23 was highest after FY15; capital expenditure by the Central government has crowded in the private capex, thus strengthening the balance sheets of corporations; credit growth in the MSME sector is good; the Indian rupee performed well compared to other emerging market economies in April-December 2022; the urban unemployment rate has declined; retail inflation has been reined in; direct tax collections for the period April-November 2022 were buoyant; with improved and healthier balance sheets, a fresh credit cycle has already begun, apparent from the double-digit growth in bank credit over the past months. The picture, however, doesn't look very pretty when we closely look at manufacturing—the second largest employment generating sector. The survey does admit that foreign direct investment "in the manufacturing sector moderated in the first half of FY23," but then goes on to gloss the dip by saying that "inflows stayed well above the pre-pandemic levels, driven by structural reforms and measures improving the ease of doing business." The fact is that in the January-November 2022 period, actual industrial investment was over 43 per cent lower than that in the same period in 2021. On the whole, however, the survey presents a realistic picture.

PICTALK



Labourers work at a construction site during sunset, in Jalandhar

Wrestlers' fight for justice

Wrestlers are up in arms against the Wrestling Federation of India for harassment, sexual misconduct and irregularities. The Govt must act.



BRIJENDER SINGH PANWAR

The credit for dissolving the recent controversy, though temporarily, where several top-based World and Olympic medalist wrestlers including Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia, and Sakshi Malik staged a protest at New Delhi to probe the allegations of sexual harassment against the chief of the World Federation of India (WFI), Brij Bhushan Sharan, goes to the Union Sports Minister, Anurag Thakur and his team. As the sequence of incidents indicates on January 18, 2023, the wrestlers began the protest at Jantar Mantar, on the same day, the Sports Ministry took swift action by sending a notice to WFI seeking an explanation, met wrestlers and assured them of a free and fair probe leading to calling off the protest. On January 20, WFI replied to the notice rejecting all allegations, and on January 21, the Sports Ministry asked the Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh and WFI Executive Committee to abstain from attending to the activities of the Federation. Although the tussle is far from over, some top wrestlers are upset with the way dharana ended—neither did their demand of disbanding WFI accepted nor did Singh resign as President but merely "stepped aside"—they have taken the matter to the next level and sought a meeting with the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah. All said and done, the issue which would have boomeranged into a major crisis has been contained at an initial level.

The Sports Minister formulated the Oversight Committee under the chairmanship of six-time world champion and Olympic medalist boxer and head of the Indian Olympic Association, M.C.Mary Kom consists of Olympic medalist wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt, Archer Dola Banerjee, former shuttler Alknanda Ashok, Indian Weightlifting Federation President, Sahdev Yadav, advocates Talish Ray and Shlok Chandra. Till that time, the Committee will carry out the day-to-day affairs of WFI. The Committee will probe the allegations of sexual misconduct,



harassment and intimidation, financial irregularities, and administrative lapses and submit its reports within a month. However, the President of WFI, Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, BJP MP from Kaiserganj, Uttar Pradesh—having criminal cases pending against him refused to resign claiming that the protest was a part of a "larger conspiracy to malign and defame him".

Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh (66), a law graduate, has been a controversial figure in the politics of Uttar Pradesh for more than three decades. He emerged as "bahubali" during the phase of unstable political circumstances in UP during the 1990s. He developed a network of supporters not only from its Rajput community but also from other castes to win the Lok Sabha election from Gonda in 1991 on a BJP ticket. He was named as an accused in the Babri demolition case. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Balrampur on a BJP ticket in 2004. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not happy with him, so he left BJP to win the election on an SP ticket in 2009. Again, joined BJP and won the Lok Sabha elections in 2013 and 2019. As per his 2019 election affidavit, the MP faces four criminal cases including serious charges of robbery and attempt to mur-



UNDOUBTEDLY, IT'S COURAGEOUS ON THE PART OF THE WRESTLERS TO CONFRONT A POWERFUL SIX-TERM MP AND PRESIDENT OF WFI WHO HAS BEEN DOMINATING THE GAME OF WRESTLING FOR ALMOST TEN YEARS

der, and was charged under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act for allegedly sheltering shooters of a notorious Uttar Pradesh gang, although later acquitted by the court. In 1993, he was accused of attacking a former State Minister and another strongman Vinod Kumar Singh alias Pandit Singh, his competitor for three decades. In this case, also, he was acquitted by the court. He has been in news for criticizing Swami Ramdev, courting controversies by threatening MNS President, Raj Thackeray if the latter visited Ayodhya.

Undoubtedly, it's courageous on the part of the wrestlers to confront a powerful six-term MP and President of WFI who has been dominating the game of wrestling for almost ten years. Phogat and her wrestler colleagues took up the cause by voicing fear for their lives for taking on "powerful people", speaking on behalf of about 20 girls who have been "exploited in the national camps over the past 10 years" and claiming to have their recordings. She came forward to represent their cause because these upcoming wrestlers come from poor families and are too scared to fight back because they are not "powerful".

However, this case is not

in isolation. At least two recent cases of similar nature come to mind. In June 2021, the sexual misconduct of a Tamil Nadu sports academy coach, P. Nagarajan came to light when a teenage athlete accused him of sexual exploitation from 2013 to 2020 and seven more women who trained under him during his three-decade career accused him of some kind of sexual exploitation. In June last year, the incident of cycling coach R.K. Sharma was in the public domain for sexually harassing a top female cyclist by threatening to derail her career.

It is a matter of pity that India's top-ranking self-made wrestlers come from ordinary families, who have made it big by toiling on the mats and on the ground, following grueling schedules for years to win medals for the country in the Olympics, Commonwealth, and Asian games are forced to sit on dharna in the bitter cold of the national capital. The concerned authorities should act fast to regain the confidence of our 'shining stars' who bring pride to our nation before it is too late.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman of the Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BHARAT JODO YATRA ENDS

Sir — The Bharat Jodo Yatra of Rahul Gandhi finally met the desired end as the Congress leaders successfully unfurl the National Flag at Lal Chowk of Jammu and Kashmir, exactly 75 years after Pt Nehru himself did so. The Yatra has finally reached its wrapping point after collecting baggage of experience and understanding about India which is in its Amrit Kaal. The yatra is extremely rigorous to cover the length and breadth of the Indian territory on foot, thanks to the arrangements and technology that is much more popular than what earlier Congress leaders do so far. Of course, this Yatra is full of experiences and will definitely revamp the way people think about Congress in general and Rahul Gandhi in particular.

But now that this journey is over, Congress has surely picked many unimaginable lessons from this journey of discovering New India which had new vigor, we can expect some new changes to be applied in the existing form of Congress for its overhaul. Though it is quite early to say that Congress will change after this Yatra, yes one thing is very sure this yatra will definitely have long-term effects on the Congress' actual image and this yatra will be a part of the golden history of Congress' evolution in Modern India.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

TUSSLE ENDS

Sir — Since all is well that ends well, it is a happy augury to note that the tussle between the Government and the Governor of Telangana has taken a reprieve through the withdrawal of the case from the High Court by the former. It is always better if the grey relationship between the two remains hassle-free. People expect both to settle any differences diplomatically without both taking any political advantage from their respective sides. The bottom line is that the administration and service to people should not be affected by any skirmish between two constitutional heads.

Investigate Adani group



The Shiv Sena faction led by Uddhav Thackeray, Congress, and all the other opposition parties on Monday demanded a SEBI investigation into alleged stock manipulation by the Adani group and "over exposure" of LIC and SBI funds in shares of the group companies. It also demanded a discussion on the issues relat-

ed to the Adani group flagged in a report of the US-based short seller Hindenburg Research which has accused it of several wrongdoings such as stock manipulation and fraud. At an all-party meeting convened by the government on the eve of the Budget Session of Parliament, SEBI's investigation into charges of stock over-pricing and over-exposure of SBI and LIC must be concluded and discussed. Several opposition parties on Monday raised the Adani issue and the conduct of governors in some states ruled by them at the all-party meeting as the government asserted it was willing to discuss every matter allowed by rules and sought their cooperation. With this, all is not well for the Adani group in the coming days.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

When the Assembly begins as per convention, people would love to see the Governor sharing bonhomie in the public interest as much as they would love the reciprocity from their favorite Chief Minister.

D. Nagarjuna | Hyderabad

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Sir — The Budget session of Parliament begins with the President Droupadi Murmu addressing a joint session, in the Parliament's Central Hall on the first day of the budget session every year. In her speech it's heartening to know that not only a medical college has come up almost every month in India, but also two colleges have been established in the country every day. Side by side one university has been established every week, as a result in the last eight years more than 300 new universities have been added. By this expansion of education in the country one has to recall the great saint Swami Vivekananda, who said: "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand one's own feet." By this way the country is trying to fulfill Vivekananda's

dream, but where is his 'one can stand one's own feet'? We are proudly pats in our back as: India is now the fifth largest economy in the world, and the President in her speech said: A Bharat which has no poverty and where the middle class is also prosperous, but in reality 83 crore (nearly two-thirds) of our population covered under free ration and the way unemployment (there was nothing on unemployment in President's address) rises in the country, then what's the value of this education? President Murmu said that women empowerment has been at the core of all schemes introduced by the central government, but may be debatable. Even that one wants to know from the Modi government that why India ranks 144 out of 193 countries in the representation of women in parliament? Why was The Women's Reservation Bill first introduced in 1996 by the Deve Gowda government, still in the store room in the Parliament? Because they want to prove the country is still dominated by men?

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

All is not well in Ladakh

Unfortunately, Sonam Wangchuk, the man with the mission to save Ladakh was put under house arrest

Sonam Wangchuk, the 57-year-old engineer who inspired the Bollywood blockbuster 'three idiots' was on a five-day fast in Ladakh. He began his fast on January 26 to demand that the Government needs to wake up and stop activities going on in the region and implement the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution as promised. Wangchuk is a man with a mission to save Ladakh from corporate greed. He also sent a message to the Prime Minister saying "all is not well in Ladakh". However, the administration took his hunger strike as a threat and put him under house arrest. What Wangchuk is saying makes a lot of sense as we are seeing catastrophe after catastrophe in the Himalayas and if the mindless construction in the name of development does not stop we may be heading for a calamity sooner than later. Wangchuk contends that the Himalayan environment is fragile and meddling with it would cause the melting of glaciers which might have devastating long-term effects for the country.

Wangchuk is yet another whistle-blower the Government chooses to ignore. Not heading to sane advice has its perils. One of the key solutions which are also his major demand is extending the Sixth Schedule of the constitution to Ladakh which was promised by the government but has not been kept. The sixth schedule allows for forming autonomous administrative areas where the tribal population is more than 50 percent. It permits the creation of independent administrative entities which can enact laws that defend the tribal population's interests and preserve their cultural identity. The Govt's approach to



ignoring Wangchuk's concerns and silencing his voice is not good for the Government or the people of Ladakh. Besides the movement is building up in Ladakh which can snowball into major unrest. Former MP Thupstan Chhewang organized a grand rally against the "failure of the government to protect the identity and culture of Ladakh". So now it is becoming a matter of Ladakhi identity and existential issues that the Government must address. Wangchuk is going to repeat his hunger strike soon. Given the support he is getting it would become a major issue. The safeguards Ladakh enjoyed earlier have been left invalid after the abrogation of Article 370. The government must keep its word and fulfill its promise. What Wangchuk and other protesters are demanding is in the interest of the country at large.

SOUND BITE

I invite you to Visakhapatnam, which is going to be our capital in the days to come. I myself will also be shifting to Visakhapatnam in the months to come.

Andhra Pradesh CM — YS Jagan Reddy

This is no less than an attack on Pakistan. I have no doubt terrorism is our foremost national security

challenge. Pakistan Prime Minister — Shehbaz Sharif

If an unknown guy called Yash can do Rs 500 crore business (with KGF Chapter 2), (then) Shah Rukh Khan doing a 500-crore business is not a big deal.

Filmmaker — Ram Gopal Varma

Today, with immense gratitude and humility, I announce my retirement from all forms of international cricket.

Indian cricketer — Murai Vijay

I announced a five-day climate fast to save and safeguard the Himalayas, the glaciers, Ladakh, and its people.

Environment activist — Sonam Wangchuk



FIRST COLUMN VILLAGE LIFE IN VEIL IN UTTARAKHAND

Women still have to cover themselves in villages



KUMARI KAVITA

"To be veiled is a matter of honor, and the girls who follow it are cultured," said Paruli Devi, an elderly woman from Lamchula village in Bageshwar district in Uttarakhand. She believes that for women and girls to remain 'cultured' and maintain 'respect' for themselves, it is significant to practice the purdah system.

Parul is not the only one to affirm this notion, as two-thirds of rural women (42 per cent) practise purdah, either as victims of this age-old practice or as a symbol of respect. On the other hand, Rekha and Nisha, two adolescent girls from the same village, questioned the veil culture in today's world. But they are aware of how it is given utmost importance in rural environments and how far they will be spared from following it.

"The rural society compels women and girls to practice the veil system by relating it to respect. But we believe women will receive respect when there is equality between men and women and the provision of equal opportunities," the duo said.

"Because of the veil system, women cannot express themselves freely. The practice does not provide any respect to women. On the contrary, it affects their mental health, and should be rooted out of society," they further added.



Although several measures have been taken by the government to curb the purdah system, the practice still persists. According to a Lokniti study conducted in 2019 under the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in 11 states among 6,348 women aged 18 and older, two out of every five Indian women practice purdah.

Focusing on how purdah has been made compulsory for women mostly in rural areas, Sita Devi, the sarpanch of the village, highlighted the difficulties, saying "whenever a woman goes out of the house, it has been made mandatory for her to cover her head. By any chance if she forgets to cover, the society questions her character. The entire dignity and honour of our families are entrusted to our shoulders, and these practices are the means to retain them."

According to her, women need to come out collectively and speak out against these malpractices. Only then, women will be able to get their rights. The purdah system allows men to exert powerful control over women and their bodies. Often, when women revolt against these practices, they are categorised as disrespectful and ill-mannered. This leads to several forms of violence, be they physical or mental.

Bimla Devi, an Anganwadi worker from the village, also spoke on the same lines, explaining how not following the practice often leads to mental harassment and sometimes physical violence. Women are bound to follow it even if they don't want to, Neelam Grundy, a social worker from the area, said, while adding that married women are blamed for not having a cultured upbringing if they believe in doing away with the purdah system.

"Tumhare Ma ne kuch nahi Sikhaya (Your mother did not teach you anything)" is the common phrase used by families to put down their daughters-in-laws. In order to avoid any criticism, women compromise and continue to practice it," shared Neelam. Spreading awareness to eradicate the purdah system is unlikely to work, unless the root cause of patriarchy and its implications are addressed. Clearly, the purdah system and its practice by women, even if they don't want to adhere to it, will follow until these systems are demystified amongst women.

Most importantly, to spark discussions and dialogues within the family system to better understand why women and girls are expected to uphold the family's honour and respect.

(The author is a student of class 12 from Bageshwar, Uttarakhand: Charkha Features)

Wise allocations will boost the economy



RAVI KUMAR GUPTA

ROHAN GUPTA

It is the Government's responsibility to make allocation in the Budget considering all the expectations

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, along with other ministries, has prepared the Budget. Article 112 of the Indian Constitution says that "the receipts and expenditure list of the Government to be laid before the parliament floor" for each financial year (April 1 to March 31).

The Indian economy is showing a high-growth trajectory. It recently crossed the UK and became the fifth largest economy. Healthy and wise allocations in the Budget will boost the economy. The vision that India can become a \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25 can be achieved only when we have the best tenets of the budget and its allocation in various fields.

Many experts and economists believe that the Budget 2023-24 will be balanced. The approach toward the economic growth, focus wisely on every aspect, be it capital expenditure on various infrastructures, education, taxation, provident funds, tax slabs, subsidies, incentives to production linked schemes, push to manufacturing and service sectors, semi-conductor-based industries installations, health, banking, housing, defence, rural need and demands.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukrainian War had created a deep impact on the economy and GDP of the entire globe during 2020-22. India has also been impacted a lot. The overall slowdown in the manufacturing and service sector caused severe employment loss. Hence by a proper budget allocation we can overcome the impacts up to an extent.

Education is an important tool for overall development. The opportunity for education should be given to all. To make education skillful and learning oriented, it needs good books, labs, workshops, infrastructures. The education budget was raised by 11 per cent last year to 3.1 per cent of the total GDP, which is quite less. The expenditure on education is expected to double of the previous year allocation. It should be close to six per cent.

Taxes are the primary sources to the receipts for the consolidated fund of India. Taxes can be direct tax which is collected directly by an individual like income tax, corporate tax, property tax, etc., or indirect taxes like GST, state excise duty etc. In Financial Year 2022, the ratio of tax revenue to GDP was almost 17.11 per cent. We can have a higher expectation in the financial year 2023. GST collection of Rs 1.52 lakh crore has been recorded as of October 2022, indicating a positive output. However, many people still avoid the tax by taking unfair advantages of the shortcomings in the tax rules. A good taxation system consists of five basic conditions --- fairness, simplicity, transparency, adequacy and administrative ease.

Investment in the capital market is important as more infrastructure means more chances for manufacturing, employ-



INDIA HAS CURRENTLY MORE THAN 83,000 STARTUPS AND MORE THAN 100 UNICORNS. DUE TO THE RECESSION AND PANDEMIC EFFECTS WORLDWIDE, THE FUNDING TO STARTUPS HAS DRIED UP. THE BUDGET SHOULD ANNOUNCE FUNDS TO SUPPORT STARTUPS

(Ravi Kumar Gupta and Rohan Gupta teach at Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology, Gorakhpur)



ment, tourism and the market. The money for the capital market basically comes from the provident fund, mutual fund, LIC premiums, NSC, bonds and other government authorised investments which have a sure return after a period of time.

According to income tax exemption under 80(C), we get tax deduction. The expectation is to raise the amount by Rs 50,000, presently it is Rs 1.5 lakhs and has not been amended since 2014, while inflation and many other factors have made Rs 1.5 lakh limit a very lesser value. It should be increased.

The total contribution of the manufacturing sector has decreased in the GDP in recent years. The contribution of the manufacturing sector in GVA was 17.4 per cent in FY-2012, which decreased to 14.5 per cent in FY2021. The government has to step up capital expenditure in this sector. It will help in employment generation as well as more exports can be achieved which will make the target of achieving \$1 trillion of economy true.

By the introduction and use of chips in various electronics devices like vehicles, mobile phones and all other appliances, the demand of semiconductor chips has increased manifold, which is met by imports from Japan, Taiwan and China. The expectation is that the government of India should make a proper allocation of budget with the involvement of private partners

to make and produce the chips.

Disinvestment is the selling of invested stakes. The government sells public sector undertakings (PSUs) and PSU stocks. The government announced many disinvestments in the recent three years, but has been unable to complete the target completely. PSUs like BPCL, OIL, etc., are profitable companies so the expectation is that disinvestment of such companies should not be announced. Even if it is done, there should be moderate disinvestment.

High disinvestment provides revenue while lower disinvestment will save the government for future investment. So, it should be done in a very balanced way.

Our country is the fifth largest economy in the world. The amount of subsidies provided by the government is very surprising, food and fertilizers subsidies amounting to 1/8th (12 per cent) of GDP. Spending on fertilizer subsidy which is Rs 2.3 lakh crore should be reduced to Rs 1.4 lakh crore and food subsidy to Rs 2.3 lakh crore from Rs 2.7 lakh crore. If the government wants to reduce the fiscal deficit, then it should reduce subsidies. It will definitely make the fiscal deficit balanced, which is targeted around 6.4 per cent of the GDP in current fiscal years.

India has currently more than 83,000 startups and more than 100 unicorns. Due to the recession and

pandemic effects worldwide, the funding to startups has dried up. The Budget should announce funds to support startups. It is the major provider of jobs and it is going to cross \$500 billion in valuation very soon. Various schemes and regulations are needed for the ease of doing business for the startups.

The goal of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' can be achieved by enhancing the defence systems. According to a research institute of Stockholm, India ranks fourth among the Indo-Pacific countries in self-reliant production capabilities of arms but India ranks 2nd largest importer of the arms and defence related equipment. However, we have defence exports of Rs 14,000 crore and the target is to achieve Rs 25,000 crore of exports by 2025.

The objectives of fiscal policy and Budget are to increase the ratio of savings to incomes, raising the rate of investment, flow of expenditure in productive areas, price stability, and reduce inequality. If inequality is not reduced, there will be clashes among the people which will affect negatively and generate instability in the economy. The introduction of GST has also helped in collecting the taxes easily and rapidly. A country's budget should be balanced. It is also the Government's responsibility to focus on every aspect and allocate the Budget considering all the expectations.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

CONGRESS IS NEITHER HERE NOR THERE. RAHUL GANDHI'S BHARAT JODO YATRA ONLY ADDS TO THE CONFUSION ABOUT WHAT IT STANDS FOR.

— BJP LEADER
RAKESH SINHA



I HAVE NOT DONE THIS (YATRA) FOR MYSELF OR FOR THE CONGRESS, BUT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY.

— CONGRESS LEADER
RAHUL GANDHI

Finance Minister may opt for a prudent Budget

Budget will probably have something for everybody as political parties have mastered wooing the electorate

One of the important businesses in Parliament is the annual budget presentation. This year too, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the 2023 Budget today.

Why is a Budget important? It gives a bird's eye view of the government's fiscal policy and how it will distribute resources. The 2023 Budget will have revised revenue estimates for the current fiscal and tax collection forecasts for the following year.

The forthcoming Budget is more important as it will be the last full Budget before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expecting to perform a hat-trick in 2024, and the Budget is bound to have some surprises.



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The author is a senior journalist)

The question is: will it be a dream Budget like in 1997 presented by P Chidambaram, which proposed lower slabs of personal and corporate taxes? Or, given the 2023 polls, will it be a populist one?

As usual, several expectations and predictions are floating around from financial experts to ordinary citizens.

The 2023 Budget will probably have something for everybody as political parties have mastered wooing the electorate. Voters are increasingly getting accustomed to new innovative populist schemes that support welfare spending. The common man is interested in what tax breaks he gets in the Budget.

However, some economists, as a contrarian view,

say the Budget will focus on supporting development and balancing fiscal pressures.

The Finance Minister gave some clues while in the US for the annual IMF-World Bank meeting some time ago and said, "Growth priorities will be kept absolutely on the top for the upcoming Budget." The Minister also said that the Indian economy should not lose momentum. In a recent address to Ficci, she declared that the Budget would follow the spirit of previous budgets to prepare India for the next 25 years.

Since attaining freedom in 1947, the Budget presentation has undergone many changes from its colonial past. For instance, earlier the Budget used to be presented in the evening to coincide

with the London timings. A presentation in the evening gave producers and the tax collecting agencies the night to work out the price change.

During Vajpayee's regime, Parliament shifted it from 5 pm to 11 am in 1999. In 2017, the Railway Budget was merged with the annual Budget. Sitharaman had broken from the tradition of entering Lok Sabha with a black briefcase holding Budget papers. Instead, she carries a tablet wrapped in a traditional pouch in line with the digital concept.

Fortunately, the Modi Government is better positioned to take risks, with considerable tax collections in 2022 despite Covid. The direct tax collection stood at Rs 14.71 lakh crore as of January

10, 2023. There have also been some cutbacks after the Government discontinued the scheme of free food programmes for 800 million people during the pandemic. The sale of Air India was also timely, though privatization might shrink closer to the polls.

Voters expect new welfare schemes. A recent Bloomsburg survey predicts that the Finance Minister could increase expenditure by about 12.5 per cent year-on-year to Rs 44.40 trillion (\$544 billion) beginning April. More importantly, Budget 2023 will focus on capital expenditure as a growth driver. Custom duties on non-essential goods and luxury items might be increased to prevent import dependency and promote the domestic industry.

The Government will focus on providing more impetus to the manufacturing sector, concentrating on capital goods, defence, railways, and public sector banks. The rural sector is also essential.

Price rise is the vital issue people face after the pandemic. There is an urgent need to tackle this. The next critical issue is job creation. Many vulnerable workers lost their jobs during the pandemic and are still on the streets without any permanent livelihood. Go to any market, and you will find that most shops are shut or have moved to a cheaper place. In the absence of social welfare schemes, migrant workers suffer a great deal. The government should address the job crisis. The private sector should also be

encouraged to create more jobs. The rising cost of living and falling income has dented the growth of the aspirational middle classes. Senior citizens also demand medical benefits and no tax on their pensions. The government must reduce some direct and indirect taxes so that more money is available to the people. The pandemic showed the need for enhanced outlays towards the health sector to tackle the emerging new Covid variants and better preparedness. More funds are also required for education, rural development, and social sector schemes like NREGA.

One can go on with all sorts of predictions. Overall, the FM may opt for a prudent 2023 Budget, which could be soft and pragmatic.

MONEY MATTERS

Rupee falls 41 paise to close at 81.93 against US dollar

The rupee depreciated by 41 paise to close at 81.93 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday after the Economic Survey 2022-23 said the domestic unit may remain under pressure on account of plateauing of exports and subsequent widening of current account deficit. Forex traders said significant foreign fund outflows and a muted trend in domestic equities also dented investor sentiment. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened weak at 81.61 against the dollar, and lost further ground to fall below the 82 per US dollar level. The rupee finally ended at 81.93, registering a decline of 41 paise over its last close. During the session, the local unit witnessed an intra-day high of 81.58 and a low of 82.07 against the US dollar. In the previous session on Monday, the rupee settled at 81.52 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, advanced 0.15 per cent to 102.43.



IOC returns to black, posts Rs 448 crore profit

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, on Tuesday reported returning to profitability in the December quarter after losses in the preceding six months from holding fuel prices despite a rise in cost. Standalone net profit of Rs 448.01 crore in October-December 2022 compared with Rs 5,860.80 crore net earning in the same period of previous fiscal, and a loss of Rs 272.35 crore in the preceding July-September 2022 period, according to a company's stock exchange filing. IOC and other state-owned fuel retailers did not revise the price of petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG starting April despite a rise in cost. This led to back-to-back quarterly losses. In case of IOC, the loss totalled Rs 2,265 crore in the April-September period. They continue to hold prices but the cost has come down as crude oil prices declined globally. This has helped them recoup some of the past losses and make decent profit.



RBI appoints V Ramachandra as member of Advisory Committee

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday appointed V Ramachandra, former chief general manager of Canara Bank, as a member of the Advisory Committee of Srei Infrastructure Finance Limited (SIFL) and Srei Equipment Finance Limited (SEFL). After superseding the boards of SIFL and SEFL in October 2021, the RBI had appointed a three-member advisory committee to assist the administrator of the two crisis-ridden firms. "Consequent upon the resignation of Shri Feroz N Subedar from the Advisory Committee with effect from January 31, 2023, it has been decided to appoint Shri V Ramachandra as a member of the Advisory Committee with immediate effect," the central bank said in a statement. The Advisory Committee shall advise the Administrator in the operations of SIFL and SEFL during the corporate insolvency resolution process, it added.



Economy poised to do better, inflation to be tamed: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian economy is poised to do better and is expected to grow 6.5-7 per cent in the remainder of the decade, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran said on Tuesday. Addressing reporters here after the tabling of the Economic Survey in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Nageswaran said that by and large, inflation is likely to be "well behaved" in FY2023-24 barring headwinds.



The Economic Survey, which has been prepared by the CEA, stated that RBI's projection of retail inflation at 6.8 per cent in the current

fiscal is neither too high to deter private consumption, nor so low as to weaken inducement to invest. India's economy is projected to slow to 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year starting April but will remain the

fastest-growing major economy in the world as it fared better in dealing with the extraordinary set of challenges the globe has faced, the Economic Survey 2022-23 said. Nageswaran said as long as oil prices remain below USD 100 per barrel, the projected growth rate would remain undisturbed. Nageswaran pointed out that the quality of public expenditure has gone up and the government has become more transparent with budget deficit numbers. There is increased transparency in public procurement, he added. The CEA also said credit growth is picking up across sectors, and credit to MSMEs has grown at 30 per cent since January 2022, while NPAs in NBFCs is lower than what it was 15 months ago. He observed that India is well ahead of its targets for renewable energy mix.

'Govt procurement portal GeM catching up with Amazon, Flipkart'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Healthy growth in the procurement of goods and services by central and state governments through GeM portal is helping the platform to catch up with global e-commerce giants like Amazon and Flipkart, the Economic Survey said on Tuesday. The Government e-Market (GeM) portal was launched on August 9, 2016 by the commerce ministry for online purchases of goods and services by all the central government ministries and departments and other agencies including public sector units. Procurement of goods and services from the portal has crossed Rs 1 lakh crore till November 29 this fiscal on account of an increase in buying activities.

'Uproot licensing, inspection and compliance regime'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Survey 2022-23 on Tuesday recommended "entirely" dismantling the licensing, inspection and compliance regime, and a host of other reforms to accelerate economic growth to sustained higher levels. The Survey tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the reforms undertaken before 2014 primarily catered to product and capital market space. "They were necessary and continued post-2014 as well," it said. The government, however, imparted a new dimension to these reforms in the last eight years. "With an underlying emphasis on enhancing the ease of living and doing business and improving economic efficiency, the reforms are well placed to lift



the economy's potential growth," it said while listing out reforms undertaken by the Modi government since 2014. The Survey has been authored by a team lead by Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran. It said that while the new age reforms undertaken over the last eight years form the foundation of a resilient, partnership-based governance ecosystem and

restore the ability of the economy to grow healthily, further reforms are needed to ensure that economic growth can both accelerate and be sustained at higher levels, to deliver a better quality of life. "The deregulation and simplification of compliances should continue to dismantle the licensing, inspection and compliance regime entirely," it said.

Country needs carefully crafted multi-dimensional mineral policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country needs a carefully crafted multi-dimensional mineral policy to address the issues posed by uneven distribution of rare earth elements, the Economic Survey on Tuesday said. Cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel, and rare earth elements (REEs) are critical for producing electric vehicles and batteries and harnessing solar power and wind energy. "While the demand for critical minerals is set to increase because of the global preference and emphasis towards renewable energy, the global supply chain of the critical



minerals is highly concentrated and unevenly distributed. The skewed distribution of the resource poses a supply risk in the face of its enhanced demand. "A carefully crafted multi-dimensional mineral policy would reduce our dependence and address the problems for the future," the Economic

Survey 2022-23 said. The country has resources of nickel, cobalt, molybdenum and heavy REEs, but further exploration would be required to evaluate the quantities of their reserves. There is a need to create strategic mineral reserves along the lines of strategic petroleum reserves to ensure a continuous supply of minerals, it said. Also, policies should consider investing in internal research, including technological innovation for mineral exploration and processing and the development of recycling, reusing, and repurposing technologies.

'Capital expenditure target of Rs 7.5l cr for FY23 to be met'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital expenditure has started pushing private investment and the Budget target of Rs 7.5 lakh crore for the current financial year is likely to be met, the Economic Survey 2022-23 said. The capital expenditure (capex) of the central government which increased by 63.4 per cent year-on-year in the first eight months of FY23 was another growth driver of the Indian economy, crowding in the private capex since the January-March quarter of 2022, it said. "On the current trend, it appears that the full year's capex (announced in the Budget) will be met," it said.

Disinvestment proceeds of Rs 4.07 lakh cr realised in last 9 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About Rs 4.07 lakh crore has been realised as disinvestment proceeds in the past nine years, and post-2014 the government is engaging with the private sector as a co-partner in the development, the Economic Survey said on Tuesday. In the current fiscal, out of the budgeted amount of Rs 65,000 crore, 48 per cent or over Rs 31,000 crore has been collected as of January 18, 2023. The survey said privatisation



of Air India re-ignited the privatisation drive, and evidence shows that labour productivity and the overall efficiency of

the PSUs disinvested during 1990-2015 has improved. "During FY15 to FY23 (as of 18 January 2023), an amount of

about Rs 4.07 lakh crore has been realised as proceeds from disinvestment through 154 transactions using various modes/instruments," said the Survey tabled in Parliament by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Of this, Rs 3.02 lakh crore was realised from minority stake sale and Rs 69,412 crore was realised from strategic disinvestment transactions in 10 CPSEs - HPCI, REC, DCL, HSCC, NPCC, NEEPCO, THDC, Kamraj Port, Air India and NINL).



I-T dept conducts survey action against Cipla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has carried out a survey action against drug major Cipla, sources said on Tuesday. The department is conducting the surprise action to check the balance sheets and other business documents of the Mumbai-headquartered company as part of an alleged tax evasion investigation, they said. A reaction from the company is awaited. As part of a survey, the Income Tax Department only covers the business premises of a company and does not raid the residences and other locations of its promoters or directors.

Voda Idea board again okays issue of Rs 1,600 crore bond to ATC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Crisis-ridden telco Vodafone Idea on Tuesday said its board has approved an issue of optionally convertible debentures of up to Rs 1,600 crore to vendor American Tower Corporation. After a meeting of the board of directors, the company in a regulatory filing said that it will convene an extraordinary general meeting on February 25 to seek shareholders' nod for the same. "The Board of Directors of Vodafone Idea Limited...has again approved Preferential Issuance of up to 16000 Indian Rupee denominated optionally convertible, unsecured, unrated and unlisted debentures...aggregating up to Rs 1,600 crores, convertible into equity shares at a conversion price of Rs 10 per equity share, to ATC," the filing said. The fresh approval was neces-



sitated as the nod granted by the shareholders had lapsed. "The funds so raised shall be used to pay amounts owed by the Company to ATC under the master lease agreements and, to the extent of the remainder, for general corporate purposes of the Company," the filing said. The shareholders' nod granted on November 21 to issue OCD within 15 days of approval of the proposal had lapsed in the absence of any response from the government on the conversion of interest dues into equity.

The VIL shareholders approved issuing OCDs worth Rs 1,600 crore to ATC Telecom Infrastructure on a preferential basis to settle dues of the infrastructure vendor by converting the due amount into equity, if the amount remained unpaid in 18 months. The OCD issue for ATC was subject to certain conditions, including the approval of the government. VIL was of the view that by the time of issuing OCDs, the government would have converted the interest from deferral of adjusted gross revenue and spectrum dues owed by the company into equity. The government has given telecom operators an option of paying the interest in deferred spectrum instalments and AGR dues by way of conversion into equity of the NPV (Net present value) of such interest amount.

Markets settle marginally higher ahead of Budget

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks ended with marginal gains on Tuesday as investors adopted a cautious approach ahead of the Union Budget presentation and the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision. Fag-end buying helped the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex settle with a gain of 49.49 points or 0.08 per cent at 59,549.90. During the day, the benchmark hit a high of 59,787.63 and a low of 59,104.59. The broader NSE Nifty inched up 13.20 points or 0.07 per cent to close at 17,662.15. From the Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid, State Bank of India, ITC, Titan, Tata Motors and ICICI Bank were among the major winners.

Sugar production to fall 5% to 340 lakh tonnes in 2022-23

More diversion of cane juice to ethanol making

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's sugar production is estimated to fall 5 per cent during 2022-23 marketing year ending September to 340 lakh tonnes as more quantity of sugarcane juice is being diverted for production of ethanol, according to industry body ISMA. Sugar production stood at 358 lakh tonnes in the 2021-22 marketing year (October-September). In a statement, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said sugar production in 2022-23 is estimated at around 340 lakh tonnes after diversion of 45 lakh tonnes of sweetener towards ethanol manufacturing. Sugarcane

juice/syrup and B-molasses are being diverted to ethanol making. In the previous 2021-22 marketing year, 32 lakhs tonnes of sweetener were diverted towards manufacturing of ethanol for blending with petrol. Based on the images of harvested and balance area, field visits, current trend of yields and sugar recoveries, ISMA has released its second advance estimates of sugar production for 2022-23. The actual sugar production

in Maharashtra is estimated to decline to 121 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 from 137 lakh tonnes in the previous year. Uttar Pradesh will see a marginal decline to 101 lakh tonnes from 102 lakh tonnes, while Karnataka may witness a decline to 56 lakh tonnes from 60 lakh tonnes. The government has allowed sugar exports of 61 lakh tonnes for the current 2022-23 marketing year. The country had exported a record over 110 lakh tonnes of sugar in the previous year.

Indian cos raise Rs 5.06L cr via equity, debt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian companies mobilised Rs 5.06 lakh crore through the equity and debt routes during April-November 2022, a drop of 8.5 per cent from the year-ago period, the Economic Survey 2022-23 said on Tuesday. Fund mobilisation through debt contributed a lion's share to the overall fund-raising during the period under review. Out of the cumulative Rs 5.06 lakh crore garnered in FY23 (till November 2022), funds totalling Rs 3.92 lakh crore were mopped up from the debt market and Rs 1.14



crore came in through the equity route, as per the data compiled in the survey. In comparison, firms had

raised Rs 5.53 lakh crore, including Rs 3.71 lakh crore through debt and Rs 1.81 lakh crore through equity, which

comprised Rs 89,166 crore from initial public offerings (IPOs), during April-November 2021. According to the survey, overall, India's capital market had a good year in FY23 though global macroeconomic and financial market developments exercised some influence. "Global macroeconomic uncertainty, unprecedented inflation, monetary policy tightening, volatile markets, etc., resulted in hurting investor sentiments, leading to a downbeat performance of global capital markets in FY23," it

added. Within the equity segment, funds mostly came from preferential issue of equity shares (Rs 54,414 crore), which is one of the fastest mechanisms for companies to raise in funds, during the period under review. This was way higher than the Rs 43,000 crore garnered through the route in April-November 2021. This was followed by the IPO route, which helped 104 companies to raise Rs 48,095 crore during the period under review as compared to 76 firms that collected Rs 89,166 crore in the year-ago period.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
NIT.No. 58/EETCIR-20/SLPZ/GHMC/1-15/2022-23 Dated: 28.01.2023
Category of work: (15) Civil works. Estimate Amount: Rs. 399.54 Lakhs.
Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 31.01.2023 @ 01.30 PM
07.02.2023 @ 01.30 PM, Name & Address, Officer Cell No.: EE, CIR-20, SLPZ, GHMC - 9849906745. Sd/- Executive Engineer
R.O.No: 12829-PVCL/ADVT/1/2022-23, Dt: 31.01.2023

STATE BOARD OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING, TELANGANA, HYDERABAD
Tender Notification (E-Procurement)
Tender No.: SBTE/ES/3/2022-ESTABLISHMENT SECTION, Dated: 31-01-2023
State Board of Technical Education and Training, Telangana desires to engage the outsourcing agency for providing "Housekeeping & Security Services at office of the SBTE, S.V Bhawan, Hazratnagar, Hyderabad". Prospective agencies willing to participate in this tender may visit e-procurement portal: https://tender.telangana.gov.in. Date of commencement of Downloading: 01-02-2023, 10:00 AM. Last Date to Submit bids on e-procurement portal: 16-02-2023, 3:00 PM.
Sd/- SECRETARY

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA POLICE DEPARTMENT
OPEN AUCTION
Rt.No 33/BN QM-12/2023 Date: 25-01-2023
The Open auction for disposal of un-serviceable iron, plastic, fiber, web items and Batteries etc. through open auction will be held on 15-02-2023 at 11:00 am in the Battalion store, Office of the Commandant, 12th Bn., TSSP, Annaparthi, Nalgonda Dist., Telangana State. The interested bidders are requested to participate in the Open auction along with their Ashar Card. Sd/- Commandant, R.O.No: 1285-SPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23 12th Bn., TSSP, Annaparthi, Nalgonda.

'When you are going through your lows, you'll understand showbiz internally'

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, actor Parambrata Chatterjee, who will next be seen in Sudhir Mishra's series *Jehanabad-Of Love & War*, shared some insights about the upcoming series.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

There are some actors dabbling in sci-fi, others dipping their toe into fantasy, and some may even make an appearance in a horror film, but what are they doing? They all are returning to the safety of the genres in which they feel more comfortable. On the contrary, popular Bengali actor Parambrata Chatterjee is chasing award-winning films.

Enjoying and celebrating his character with critically acclaimed director Sudhir Mishra's series *Jehanabad-Of Love & War* — you'll see this fun little actor in a very nuanced avatar. An actor who has also committed to films such as *Kahaani* and others are having a good time right now and talks to us about it. "I am not always so hyperconscious about the roles that come my way — I hate overthinking. The production company, as in the big banners, does not matter to me, the concept does."

An actor who is always on the go for working life and whose parents were themselves, film critics, also informed us, "Everyone would love to leave a lineage behind, for posterity, and would be happy to do so if the stars are aligned. Talking about the series, there is not just Islamic radicalism that's going on around the world — there are other immoderations too. Islam is being abandoned in many corners of the world; it's depressing. Some are even operating cowardly in propagating this exorbitance."

The character actor who is frequently targeted by fundamental-



ists for his secularist views is known for his bravery in embarking on a contentious series like this in which he plays a dark character. He continued, "I protest

against this intemperance. We live in a civilised society, and such groups should be shunned if they only want to spread ignorance. My state isn't devoid of caste politics,

probably it's lacking "caste sensibility." And it's more inclined toward remote areas. When you are in West Bengal, "caste" will never get in the way of your daily interaction."

His roles have always steadfastly stuck with the audiences, and he sees through the heavyweight roles so well. Because of his outspoken nature, Parambrata was probably the right choice for the series that will dive headfirst into the Naxal world. He's got this! He continued, "Not everyone is your friend in this industry, when you really are going through your lows; you'll understand showbiz internally. A gentleman complimented me once: "you do not try very hard to get noticed" and that stuck with me."

He never settled into the bland rut of the A-list movie stars, and if the trailer is anything to go by, it is going to be intense and real. "I was filming continuously in a prison house, which used to be a functioning jail very recently. It was tough: not a bright, vibrant place to shoot. They house people with anger, sorrow, and grief. That was pretty intense on its own. And, as a civilian, I have been hearing folklore since the Naxalite movement was at its peak in our area. Many of my family members sympathised with their "cause", not the means, obviously. More so as a Bengali, who has also grown up with more leftist ideologies. But when I start acting, I do not subscribe to that specific ideology because I am versatile. A goon/murderer cannot be a leftist. So, while playing a Naxalite commander — yes, I sympathised with their cause. They could have adopted the means though."

Blend of art & history

TEJAL SINHA

With a strong belief in the 'Make in India' initiative, Jaipur Watch Company is India's first bespoke watch company. Gaurav Mehta, the founder of Jaipur Watch Company, hails from Jaipur and has always had a hobby of collecting ancient coins. He later founded a company that had an ancient history attached to it.

The brand is recognised for its limited edition watches that showcase India's history and rich heritage. Gaurav's tryst with watches began at a young age. While experimenting with designs, he once embedded a British India 1-pice hole coin as a dial in one of his favourite watches of the time. To his surprise, it became an eye-catcher, after which requests started pouring in from friends and family to buy the watch.

The brand watches are donned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi; actors Amitabh Bachchan, Vidya Balan, Rajkumar Rao, Rana Daggubati, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and cricketers Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, and KL Rahul, among others.

"It will make anyone proud. Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji is the ambassador for Make in India, and when he says this is a good quality product from India, what better feeling can one get? Mr. Bachchan is an avid watch collector, and he loves watches, his look said it all when he held my watch," shared an enthused entrepreneur.

Recently, Gaurav debuted his legacy brand on *Shark Tank India season 2*. Although the brand couldn't bag a deal from the investors on *Shark Tank season 2*, it certainly did turn a lot of heads and made a great impression amongst the sharks. It's Pret and Bespoke collection received rave reviews from critics as one of the most innovative Indian watch brands, beautifully capturing Indian heritage through their watches.

Sharing his experience of being on the show, he said, "*Shark Tank India* has been a game changer for us. We have gained many eyeballs and huge traction on our website and in our offline stores. We have taken valuable lessons back from the tank; we have already opened one store in Delhi and one in Jaipur. We are com-

ing up with another store in Gurgaon and Bangalore. We are working on building our offline presence. We are also consolidating our collections with more focus on the line for scalability."

Ending the conversation on a lighter note, Gaurav shares his piece of advice with those who have ambitious ideas but struggle to put them across. "It's always a challenge to be able to implement your idea into reality as there are risks involved, but the best way to go for it is to first have at least 5-6 months of your current income in savings so that the lives of your loved ones don't get affected by you venturing into something new if it's a switch from a job. And once you roll into the business, patience is the key, there are no shortcuts."



Gaurav Mehta, the founder of Jaipur Watch Company, debuted his legacy brand on *Shark Tank India season 2*. In a conversation with *The Pioneer*, he takes us through his experience with and learnings from the series.

Doodlers creating art from their heart

Instagram scrolling can become tedious and repetitive. When we are surrounded by chaos, all we have is a piece of inspiration in front of us; art takes our hands and leads us there. The creation of such artists is uplifting, aesthetically appealing, and energising visually by reducing an image to its bare essentials while simultaneously making fun of and criticising the reality of the world that we live in. These illustrators explore a variety of sociopolitical subjects in their sketches, including feminism, patriarchal conventions, and sexual empowerment, while simultaneously entertaining and enlightening viewers.

We have curated a list of five illustrators who express themselves through bold colors, firm strokes, and quirky designs. This is what catches the eye in the world we live in.

Ayush Kalra: He has developed the ability to dig deeper into the complexities of digital art, ranging from desi art to contemporary aesthetics. Ayush highlights long-held gender stereotypes in an attempt to challenge them through his creative illustrations. His artistic ability is evident in the fascinating movements he employs to highlight the various characteristics of animated characters. He is a young Delhi illustrator who has already achieved a significant career milestone by being accepted into the prestigious HT 30 Under 30.

Jaideep: A COVID-born doodle artist, Jaideep (21) is just a graduate with a degree in business. However, COVID sparked his interest in illustrating, and now he is making the internet laugh with relatable video-based content. His artwork features pop artists like The Weeknd and issues that everyone has encountered at least once in their life. Jaideep is trying to cover each aspect of comedy with a hint of dark humour. The young artist has been recognised by big league doodle artists, which has further pushed him in this field.

Neha Doodles: Neha Sharma, aka Neha Doodles, is a color-obsessed freelance illustrator, cartoonist, and lifestyle content creator. During her graduation, she realised that CA

was not her passion, but drawing was. While she has grown to become one of the most known and admired illustrators on Instagram,

it took her great courage to take that leap of faith and choose the world of doodling. Also, she creates quirky doodles and traditional Indian comics with a dash of sarcasm. Neha's work has been published on platforms like the Huffington Post, The Tribune, Times of India, The Delhi Times, Tinkle Digest, Cosmopolitan, etc. She makes art and comics for the internet with the intention of showcasing how art can be used as therapy.

Stephy Ann Tomy: She has big curly hair, loves Christmas and Onam, is obsessed with stationery, and sings at random times of the day. Stephy is a self-avowed papad m hogger who strangely enjoys beans. Meet Stephy, the eponymous comic character created by Stephy Ann Tomy, a 24-year-old UK-based illustrator. Her comic strips are single-frame depictions of her daily adventures with friends. Stephy's comics are aimed at young millennials and Gen Zers who are navigating adulthood, careers, love, relationships, and identity. They offer a funny, relatable, light-hearted, and often quirky worldview.

Shivangi Sah: She is a popular YouTuber who works as a user experience designer. Shivangi is well-known for her incredible artistic endeavours and novel ideas. She has 2.44 million subscribers on her YouTube channel. She has been able to establish her own digital brand while exploring the realm of art.

She believes that design is more than just solving problems or improving the user experience; it is also something with which people can connect emotionally.



IS LEPROSY MAKING ITS WAY BACK TO INDIA?

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Mycobacterium leprae*. It affects the skin, nerves, and mucous membranes, causing discoloration, numbness, and disfigurement. Although leprosy is curable with a multi-drug therapy (MDT) regimen, the disease remains a public health concern in many parts of the world, particularly in India.

Leprosy remains a significant public health concern in India. The resurgence of the disease in recent years highlights the need for continued efforts to control its spread. This includes increasing awareness about the disease, reducing social stigma, and improving the health services provided to leprosy patients. By working together, we can effectively control the spread of leprosy in India and improve the lives of those affected by this debilitating disease.

India has the highest global burden of leprosy, with over 130,000 new cases reported in 2020 alone. Even though the country has been implementing a comprehensive leprosy control programme since the 1980s, which has successfully reduced the overall prevalence of the disease. However, the steady increase in the number of new cases in recent years has raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current control measures.

Dr. Saranya Narayan, Technical Director and Chief Microbiologist, Neuberger Diagnostics, shares, "One of the main reasons for the resurgence of leprosy in India is the lack of awareness about the disease among the general population. Many people do not recognise leprosy's early signs and symptoms, leading to delayed diagnosis and treatment. This, in turn,



Even though the country has been implementing a comprehensive leprosy control programme, which has successfully reduced the overall prevalence of the disease. However, the steady increase in the number of new cases in recent years has raised concerns about the effectiveness of the current control measures.

increases the risk of transmission to others and leads to more severe and disabling forms of the disease. Another factor contributing to the resurgence of leprosy in India is the social stigma

associated with the disease. People affected by leprosy often face discrimination and exclusion from their communities, which makes it difficult for them to access health services and sup-

port. This further exacerbates the problem, as people who are afraid of being shunned may be hesitant to seek treatment."

The government of India has been working to address these issues by increasing awareness about leprosy and promoting early diagnosis and treatment. The National Leprosy Eradication Program (NLEP) has provided free MDT to all leprosy patients and provides disability and rehabilitation services to those affected by the disease. Furthermore, the government is also working to reduce the social stigma associated with leprosy by educating the public about the condition and its transmission.

The NLEP was discontinued because it was thought Leprosy was under control, i.e. <1 per 100,000 people, and after this, thanks to Covid, healthcare workers in the Leprosy area were deployed to help with the pandemic. These two are contributing factors that have led to India continuing to be the largest contributor to cases worldwide.

However, there's still a lot more that needs to be done to control the spread of leprosy in India effectively. One important strategy is to improve the quality of health services provided to leprosy patients. This includes training health workers to recognise the disease's early signs and symptoms and providing them with the necessary tools and resources to diagnose and treat it.

Another important strategy is to strengthen the surveillance and monitoring of leprosy cases. This will help identify areas where leprosy is more prevalent and target control measures in those areas. It will also help track the disease's progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the control measures.

what's brewing?



● Priya

● Kathiresan and Nandini

● Nidhi Agerwal

South India actress Nidhi Agerwal, along with Big Boss 5 fame Priya, inaugurated the "Girlfriend Mandi" restaurant at the BBR Arcade in Gachibowli.

● Bhagyashree

● Naga Bhargavi

PARTY



Jayesh Ranjan, principal secretary IT/I&C, Government of Telangana, along with several notable personalities, inaugurated the Petfolk's pet grooming van, a van for pet grooming, pampering and other services at T-Hub 2.0 in Hyderabad.

Photos by SV Chary



Dr. Uma Sekar, Vice Chancellor, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai, along with the presence of Dr. A Rekha, Dean, AIMSAR, and Aparna Reddy, COO, AIMSAR, presented the White Coats for the class of 2022 students of Apollo Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Hyderabad at its white coat ceremony that took place at the RNR Auditorium in Jubilee Hills.

LISTINGS

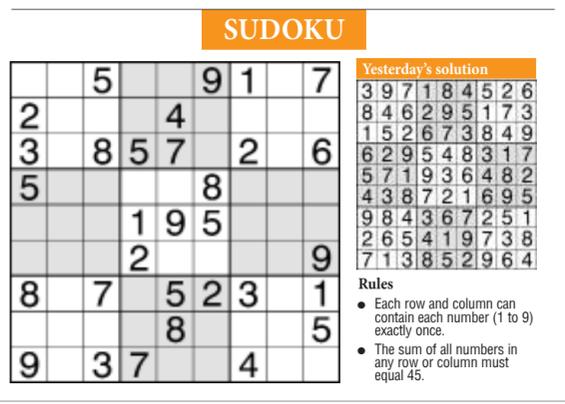
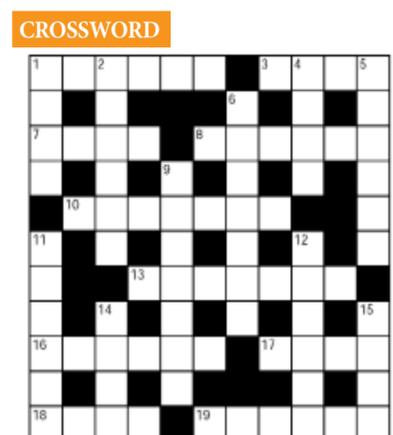
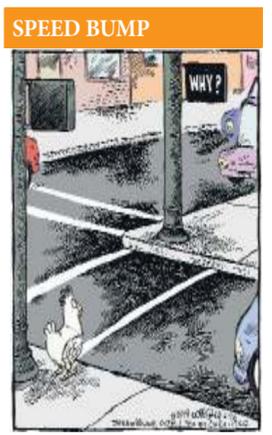
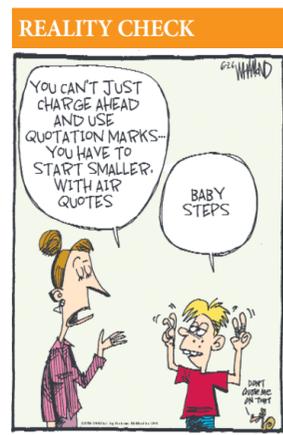
QUANTUMZYME AND BEC CHEMICALS TO COLLABORATE FOR GREEN CHEMISTRY DEVELOPMENT

Quantumzyme LLP (Quantumzyme), a Bangalore-based biotransformation company, focused on clean and green chemistry announced that they have collaborated with BEC Chemicals Private Limited in biocatalysis to develop sustainable biotransformation and biocatalysis solution for the pharmaceutical industry. The agreement grants both parties access to each other's knowledge and expertise to develop novel solutions for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) development. Quantumzyme's expertise in rapid enzyme discovery, enzyme engineering, and pilot validation into early-phase projects complements BEC Chemicals' experience and track record of over 30 commercial manufacturing chemical reactions run on a multi-ton scale. This will give customers of either party access to enzyme expertise and assets resulting in cost-effective, green processing for API manufacturing.



KL Deemed to be University organized a knowledge sharing session as a part of its eminent guest lecture series for management course students at its Global Business School in Hyderabad Campus recently. The session introduced many development views and shifting paradigms in the industry.

FUN



ACROSS
1 Bleeding injuries
3 Counts up
7 This heavy metal is used for making fishing sinkers
8 Took part in a game
10 Write this on an envelope
13 A two-wheeled ride-on you push along with a foot
16 Of greater height
17 Young female
18 Gritty stuff on beaches
19 A small river

DOWN
1 Go on foot
2 Ugandans live here
4 Parts of a week

SOLUTION
SHOULDERS
E G G O T
CRAWL BONES
A V Y I S E
ANSWER COAL
E B E N D
C P A M P E
E L E C T I D E A S
E E N R
I D E N T I C A L

Kavya Thapar: I miss having the global exposure when I entered Tollywood



Kavya Thapar is all set to bring us another path-breaking series *Farzi*, alongside superstar Shahid Kapoor. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, the actress spoke about sharing screen with Shahid Kapoor and more.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Like several other mainstream stars, Tollywood actress Kavya Thapar again decided to make a move with another path-breaking series. She is going to be a part of the upcoming web show *Farzi* which will feature her alongside superstar Shahid Kapoor. This is also going to be Shahid's debut and in a recent interview with us, his co-actor Kavya opened up about sharing the screen with him and more.

"Whether *Farzi* had to be made eight years ago or now — I was destined to be a leading lady. I had no profound relationships with the biggies of this industry, yet I'll acknowledge a sentiment that I had it way easier than most of my contemporaries. Initially, my focus was on business management studies while I was also interested in becoming a star. Although, I had no idea about how to seep into this industry! I was spotted by the famous casting agent Shanoo Sharma from YRF, who actually made Ranveer Singh, Arjun Kapoor, and Bhumi Pednekar stars. She made me take the acting job seriously! From doing commercials, I landed my first ever Telugu film.

When did Raj AND DK spot Kavya? She revealed, "During the pandemic, all the newcomers were supposed to do self-tests. I received an audition call from the duo. I cracked the role in *Farzi* opposite Shahid Kapoor. Post that, the edginess started to kick in because I had never met him before. Heard, he is a tad bit forthright

when he interacts. To me, he's my senior! I couldn't have set my boundaries like a child's play with him. Even on the sets with him, I was wondering how I would do this! From the time his debut film was released, I fell in love with him. From crushing on him to doing a romantic scene with Shahid Kapoor — yes, I was tensed. When I saw him in *Kabir Singh*, the commendation only grew and grew. And now, when he's married: his loveliness is bubbling out even more, especially when he's around Mira Rajput. When the amorous scene began, I didn't know how to react to Shahid. I froze. He started cracking jokes and made me feel comfortable, and we went ahead with the scene."

The series has already piqued the interest of the audience. As the fans await the collaboration to create magic on screen, Kavya also mentioned, "Sometimes having the best directors also on board, can go wrong. Everybody is a 'critic' now! They are judging us even 'off-screen'. Every actor has a point of view today, but as soon as they tweet: they receive backlash. Why? I am not going to hold myself back from being who Kavya Thapar is regardless of criticism. The fate of my series cannot be decided on the basis of 'how I think', *Pathaan's* success is an example of it."

Elaborating further, she said, "Our series is definitely thwarting into a system that's favouring the elite. I have experienced it first-hand in real life. For example, richies get into a club just like that! The bouncers forget about authority and it comes to filling pockets. But, you should never underestimate the intellect of the underprivileged. Today an auto rickshaw driver's kid is also

running for the same league as us. Somehow, by touching upon this theme the directors knew the results were going to be in their favour. Even though my character is smaller in comparison with Raashii Khanna, however, the duo gave me the same importance. I wasn't made to feel lesser than the lead actress ever on the sets of *Farzi*! But, you can never come to Raj and DK sets with the intention of passing time — the schedule is so rigorous.

Packed with back-to-back projects, she continued, "I never knew I would be exposed to the Telugu film industry being a north Indian. For me, initially, movies meant Shah Rukh Khan, and Kareena Kapoor Khan: they were my inspiration. Granted that, I miss having the global exposure when I entered Tollywood. And, on OTT, it's sometimes scary to sign the contract because you'll be signing three seasons back-to-back without anticipating its success. Either you're in it for a gamble or a package deal."

Writer Padmabhushan opts for low ticket rates

Writer Padmabhushan, starring Suhass in the role of a wannabe novelist, is directed by newcomer Shanmukha Prashanth. On Tuesday, Lahari Films and Chai Bisket Films announced that their

film has opted for highly affordable ticket rates.

"We are going for early paid premieres in Hyderabad. The film hits the cinemas on February 3 worldwide. In Hyderabad, paid premieres will be held on February 2. We have decided to make ticket rates accessible in both single as well as multiplex screens," the makers said.

For single screens: Rs 110 (including GST) in both AP and Telangana. Meanwhile, for multiplexes: Rs 150 in Telangana and Rs 177 in AP (include GST) are the ticket rates.

Starring Tina Shilparaj as the heroine, the film has Rohini and Ashish Vidyarthi in key character roles. As per the makers, *Writer Padmabhushan* has got a suspenseful element.



Natural Star Nani for his 30th movie will be helmed by debutant Shouryuv. Mohan Cherukuri (CVM), Dr Vijender Reddy Teegala, and Murthy KS will be producing the movie to be made on a grand scale under Vyra Entertainments with a high budget and lavish technical standards. The film has been launched on a grand note in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

For the muhurat shot, megastar Chiranjeevi sounded the clapboard and Ashwini Dutt switched on the camera. Buchi Babu, Kishore Thirumala, Hanu

Ragavapudi, Vasistha, and Vivek Athreya together directed the first shot. Before that, Vijayendra Prasad handed over the script to the makers to begin the proceedings. Palasa Karun Kumar, Girish Ayer, Devakatta, Chota K Naidu, Suresh babu, Dil Raju, 14 Reels Gopi- Ram Achanta, AK Anil sunkara, Mythri Ravi, DVV Danayya, Sravanthi Ravi Kishore, KS Rama Rao, Sahu Garapati, Asian Sunil, Abhishek Agarwal, Niharika Konidela and Kalyan Dasari were the other guests for the opening ceremony. The regular shoot of the movie will begin from today in Hyderabad.

Mrunal Thakur is the heroine opposite Nani in the movie which will have some young and talented technicians taking care of different crafts. Sanu John Varughese ISC will be cranking the camera, while popular Malayalam composer Hesham Abdul Wahab of *Hridayam* fame scores the music. Mrunal has been shuffling between

Raashii Khanna on bagging *Farzi*, 'Destiny works in mysterious ways

Multilingual star Raashii Khanna has been creating waves with her upcoming show *Farzi*, set to release soon. With her headstrong and impactful role of a woman in a man's world, Raashii has grabbed the attention of the audience, however, not many know that the actress bagged her part in the Raj and DK show basis an audition done years ago!

Not only did Raashii Khanna sign *Farzi* before her digital debut release *Rudra: The Edge of Darkness*, but also her audition for the Shahid Kapoor - Vijay Sethupati co-starrer show was filmed years ago.

The actress shared, "Farzi came to me based on an audition I did for Mukesh Chhabra's cast-

ing agency a few years back. It wasn't particularly for any project, however, it led me to *Farzi*. Apparently, Raj and DK saw the audition tape and had also seen clips of my work in a few South Indian films, and visualised Megha in me. I guess destiny works in mysterious ways."

Raashii Khanna looks forward to an eventful year in Bollywood with two big projects, while currently gearing up for her first release of the year *Farzi*, Raashii also has Dharma Productions' *Yodha* alongside Sidharth Malhotra in July, in addition to a few projects in South.



It's Official! Mani Ratnam's *PS2* to release on IMAX on April 28

After much anticipation, the sequel of *Ponniyin Selvan* finally has a release date. The film is slated to hit the big screens on April 28, 2023.

IMAX Corporation and Lyca Productions on Tuesday announced their plans to release *Ponniyin Selvan II* in IMAX this year. The film marks a sequel to Tamil film *Ponniyin Selvan I*.

Ponniyin Selvan II stars Vikram, Aishwarya Rai

Bachchan, Jayam Ravi, Karthi, Trisha, Aishwarya Lekshmi, Shobhita Dhulipala, Prabhu, Vikram Prabhu and Prakash Raj in pivotal roles. *Ponniyin Selvan II* continues the story of the great Chola emperor Raja Raja Chola, the most powerful King in South at his time. He is chiefly remembered for reinstating the Chola power and ensuring its supremacy in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

The film is helmed by

Mani Ratnam, produced and distributed by Subaskaran's Lyca Productions, which also backed *Ponniyin Selvan I* and *Robot 2.0* among other films.

Megan Colligan, the President of IMAX Entertainment said about the development: "IMAX is coming off its best year ever at the Indian box office thanks in large part to breathtaking local blockbusters like *Ponniyin Selvan I*."



Sanjay Dutt and Priya Anand onboard for *Thalapathy 67*



Popular production banner Seven Screen Studios has officially announced that they are bankrolling the most-anticipated movie, tentatively titled *Thalapathy 67*. Star director Lokesh Kangaraj is the helmer of this biggie.

The makers took to their social media profiles and announced that the Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt is a part of this movie. The movie team released a poster to announce the same. The *KGF* villain is likely to play the antagonist in this movie. Apart from Sanjay Dutt, the makers had also announced actress Priya Anand also onboard for the film.

The movie team flew to Kashmir on Tuesday morning to commence the next schedule. Sanjay Dutt will also join the sets in this schedule, accord-

ing to the latest buzz. Anirudh Ravichander is the music director of this flick, which is a part of Lokesh Cinematic Universe (LCU).

Nani and Mrunal Thakur starrer #Nani30 launched, shooting begins today





There's still enough pull to play for NZ: Ferguson

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

New Zealand pacer Lockie Ferguson empathised with his fellow players giving up central contracts for lucrative T20 league deals but said there is still enough "pull" to represent the country in big-ticket events, such as the World Cup.

Three New Zealand players -- Trent Boult, Martin Guptill and Jimmy Neesham -- gave up their central contracts last year to play in different T20 leagues across the world.

Asked if it would affect the future of T20 cricket in New Zealand, Ferguson said: "I don't think I have the answer. And it's certainly above my pay grade but, from our point of view, you can understand players when they're at the sort of back end of their careers."

"But at the same time, I know they will still want to play for New Zealand. So finding the balance, I'm not sure what that might be. Certainly, as I said, people above the chain to me, will work that out. But I think, from a player's point of view, we love playing for the Black Caps."

"Certainly since I've been playing such a rich history of being very successful, and that's enjoyable to play and seeing the young talent come through and do well as well is very rewarding."

"So, I think, from a player's point of view, we want to play for New Zealand in World Cups. That's sort of what kids dream of, and I think there's still a lot of pull for that."

The 31-year-old, who played under Hardik Pandya as part of Gujarat Titans side in IPL last year, heaped praise on the India T20 skipper.

"Hardik, I have a very high regard certainly from day one, playing underneath him in Gujarat (Titans), he is a clear leader within the group and demands the audience very quickly."

"But, at the same time, I guess, similar to Kane (Williamson) he has time for everyone in the group," Ferguson said.

"He's done well with India. You can see his body language has been fantastic with the group and I think, he is an exceptional leader for the country. But certainly, I enjoyed my time playing under him."

New Zealand suffered a 3-0 loss against India in the ODI series and are currently tied 1-1 in the three-match T20 rubber after losing the second game in Lucknow by six wickets.

"Look, the one-day series was challenging, certainly the first ODI we had our chance to win it. And then, outplayed in the second one, and in the third one, we were sort of lined out well too. So although on paper it's 3-0, I thought it was a pretty competitive series," he said.

"And then, in the T20s, it's been pretty even throughout. So always nice to come to a decider, particularly in a lovely stadium like this."

The pitches used for the two T20 games favoured the spinners a lot with India skipper Pandya criticising the Lucknow track, which saw New Zealand post just 99 in 20 overs.

Ferguson, however, said low-scoring games are good for cricket since T20 is mostly dominated by batters.

"I bowled my four (overs) in the first game and I actually enjoyed bowling the cross seamers, sort of sped a little bit, got a bit of an extra pace and carry. To be honest, even Arshdeep bowling to me in the last game, there was a little bit of pace and carry, but clearly spin was the right option."

"We play a lot of T20s here in India, and around the world and we have those high-scoring games. And as a bowler, I think sometimes those sort of lower scores, probably not the 100, but lower score games actually are just as exciting and brings a good battle between bat and ball."

"So I think for the game, it's great. Certainly I'm sure fans prefer the big, high-scoring matches but, as a cricketer player, that can be pretty exciting."

MEN IN BLUE'S TOP ORDER IN FOCUS IN SERIES DECIDER

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India's young top order will be under pressure to deliver in the series-deciding third T20 International against New Zealand here on Wednesday.

It would be fair to say the trio of Shubman Gill, Ishan Kishan and Rahul Tripathi has not made their opportunities count in the absence of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and K L Rahul.

After the game on Wednesday, India don't play a T20I for a long time, leaving the younger crop to make a statement before the focus shifts to the five-day format.

Kishan has not been able to find rhythm in his batting since his double hundred in Bangladesh while the turning ball has troubled Gill, who has not been able to replicate his ODI form in the shortest format. Tripathi, too, has wasted chances that have come his way in the absence of regular number three Kohli.

If it hadn't been for Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya, India would have struggled to chase down 100 on Sunday.

The surfaces in the series have attracted a lot of attention and it remains to be seen if the players get to negotiate another turning track at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

In the bowling department, Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav playing together has helped India build the pressure on the opposition. With the pitch offering a huge amount of turn, it was surprising that Chahal was used only for two overs after he dis-



missed opener Finn Allen.

After struggling with no-balls, Arshdeep Singh was back to his frugal best in Lucknow and that should give him a lot of confidence going into the decider.

With the series on the line, Pandya is unlikely to change the playing eleven despite clamour for inclusion of Prithvi Shaw, who made a national comeback with this series.

New Zealand, on the other hand, will be expecting more from their middle order. Sensing an opportunity to win a rare series in India, The Blackcaps will be highly motivated for the challenge.

Glenn Phillips has not been at his destructive best but trust him to play a match-winning knock on Wednesday. ODI series sensation Michael Bracewell too is due for a game-changing knock. Number three Mark Chapman will also be looking to make a significant contribution.

New Zealand used as many as eight bowling options in the previous game with four spinners bowling their full quota of overs.

More than 200 runs were scored in the last T20 played here almost two years ago and, after the low-scoring affair in Lucknow, fans would be hoping that normal service is restored.

TEAMS (FROM)

India: Hardik Pandya (captain), Suryakumar Yadav (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Shubman Gill, Prithvi Shaw, Deepak Hooda, Rahul Tripathi, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Umran Malik, Shivam Mavi and Mukesh Kumar.
New Zealand: Mitchell Santner (captain), Finn Allen, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway (wk), Dane Cleaver (wk), Jacob Duffy, Lockie Ferguson, Benjamin Lister, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips (wk), Michael Rippon, Henry Shiple, Ish Sodhi and Blair Tickner.

Lucknow pitch curator sacked for preparing a 'shocker'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The curator of the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow has been removed from his job after preparing a "shocker of a pitch" for the second T20I against New Zealand.

Though India won the game on Sunday with a ball to spare, skipper Hardik Pandya did not mince his words, calling the Lucknow wicket a "shocker".

New Zealand were restricted to 99 for eight and India had a hard time chasing the small target on a turning track.

"The curator has been removed and replaced by Sanjeev Kumar Agarwal who is a very experienced curator. We will turn things around in a month."

"A lot of domestic cricket was already played on all the centre wickets ahead of the T20I and the curator should have left one or two strips for an international game. The surface was overused and due to the bad weather, there was not enough (time) to prepare a fresh wicket," a UPCA source told PTI.

Agarwal, who has prepared pitches in Bangladesh in the past before being removed in October last year, has been tasked to set things right as far as pitch-making is concerned. He will work closely with veteran BCCI curator Taposh Chatterjee, said the source.

Hardik has not been happy with the surfaces on offer so far in the series.

"To be honest, it was a shocker of a wicket. Both the games we have played on so far. I don't mind difficult wickets. I am all up for that, but these two wickets are not made for T20. Somewhere down the line, the curators or the grounds that we are going to play in should make sure they prepare the pitches earlier," Hardik had said after the six-wicket win in Lucknow.

Deepti climbs to 2nd spot in T20I bowlers rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India all-rounder Deepti Sharma has climbed to second spot and has the top position -- currently occupied by England's Sophie Ecclestone -- in her sights in the latest ICC T20I bowling rankings announced on Tuesday.

The 25-year-old off-spinner, who is leading the wicket-taker's list in the ongoing Women's T20I Tri-series in South Africa with nine scalps, has reduced the England left-arm spinner's lead to just 26 rating points.

Deepti (737 points) moved up one spot, while South African left-arm spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba, who has picked four wickets in the Tri-series, also climbed a spot to occupy the third place with 732 points.

If the duo continue their form, they could take Sophie's top spot ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup, scheduled in South Africa from February 10.

India and South Africa



will square off in the T20I Tri-series final in East London on Thursday.

India left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad also improved her rank four places and is currently 14th on the list of T20I bowlers.

There was a lot of movement inside the top-10 among bowlers this week, with Australia pacer Megan Schutt (up six places to fifth) and England seamer Katherine Sciver-Brunt (up two spots to sixth) also gaining spots.

Australia right-hander Tahira McGrath maintained a healthy buffer at the top in the T20I batting rankings, with classy South Africa top-order performer Laura Wolvaardt among the biggest movers behind her.

Laura improved four places to ninth on the back of her strong start to the Tri-series against India and the West Indies, while teammate Tazmin Brits jumped 10 spots to 18th after an impressive half-century last week.

West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews moved four places to 22nd overall on the updated T20I rankings for batters.

The only change inside the top-10 in the list for all-rounders saw Australia veteran Ellyse Perry take the 10th spot from Tahila following a half-century against Pakistan.

Playing tour games on Indian pitches is irrelevant: Smith

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Former Australia skipper Steve Smith says his team is better off training on its own rather than playing tour games on "irrelevant" Indian pitches ahead of the four-Test Border-Gavaskar series.

Australia have decided not to play a single tour game in India during the month-long Test series, primarily due to the hosts serving up green tops for practice matches and spinning tracks for the actual games.

Smith, who won the country's best men's player award for the fourth time in his career on Monday, said nets sessions would benefit his side more than the tour games.

The 18-member squad, led by Pat Cummins, had a pre-series camp on spin-friendly tracks in Sydney and will have a week-long stint in Bengaluru before the first Test in Nagpur from February 9.

"We normally have two tour games over in England. This time we don't have a tour game in India," Smith was quoted as saying by news.Com.Au on



Monday ahead of the team's departure to India.

"The last time we went (to India) I'm pretty sure we got served up a green top (to practice on) and it was sort of irrelevant. Hopefully, we get really good training facilities where the ball is likely to do what it's likely to do out in the middle, and we can get our practice in," said Smith, who beat Travis Head and David Warner to win the Allan Border medal on Monday.

Australia have been criticised for not including tour games, which are an integral part of a long series, in their itiner-

ary. But Smith said rigorous nets sessions will help spinners train better. "We're better off having our own nets and getting spinners in and bowling as much as they can."

Smith, whose side had lost the series 1-2 when it toured India in 2017, indicated a lot of thinking had into the decision.

"We'll wait and see when we hit the ground. I think we've made the right decision to not play a tour match. Like I said, last time they dished up a green top for us (in a tour game) and we barely faced any spin, so it's kind of irrelevant."

Venkatesh takes 5 as K'taka blow away Uttarakhand

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Medium-pacer M Venkatesh sizzled with a five-wicket haul as Karnataka produced a sensational bowling effort to bundle out Uttarakhand for a paltry 116 on the opening day of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal here on Tuesday.

Karnataka were 123 for no loss at stumps. The 22-year-old Venkatesh justified captain Mayank Agarwal's decision to field after winning the toss as he rocked the top-order, removing Avneesh Sudha (17) and Dikshanshu Negi (9) early after Vidhwath Kaverappa (2/17) drew the first blood, dismissing opener Jiwanjot Singh (1).

Vijaykumar Vyshak (1/25) then had Swapnil Singh (0) caught by Samarth R, while Kaverappa cleaned up Aditya Tare (14), as Uttarakhand lost half their side for only 64 in 27.4 overs.

Kunal Chandel (31) tried to hold one end but wickets continued to tumble, with Venkatesh returning to strike twice in the 47th over, sending Akhil Rawat (14) and Abhay Negi (1) back to the dressing room.

The Mysore pacer also had Chandela caught by



Manish Pandey to put the final nail in Uttarakhand's coffin as spinner K Gowtham mopped up the tail with two wickets.

In reply, Karnataka seemed to be batting on a different track as both the openers -- Ravikumar Samarth (54) and Mayank Agarwal (65) -- looked in full flow during their unbeaten fifties.

While Samarth cracked seven boundaries, Agarwal had nine hits to the fence

besides a maximum.

ANDHRA ON TOP

Indore: A fluent century by Ricky Bhui and his association with Karan Shinde helped Andhra overcome the blow dealt by skipper Hanuma Vihari's injury on day one of their quarterfinal against defending champions Madhya Pradesh.

Thanks to Bhui's unbeaten 115 and Shinde's 83 not out, Andhra ended the day at a strong 262 for two.

Sent in to bat by MP captain Aditya Shrivastava, the visiting team got off to a brisk start with CR Gnaneshwar (24) and Abhishek Reddy (22) adding 37 runs.

Reddy was the first to fall, trapped LBW by medium-pacer Gaurav Yadav (2/53), the only MP bowler to pick up wickets on the day.

Skipper Vihari joined Gnaneshwar and the two added 21 runs before the latter was dismissed by Yadav.

Vihari and Bhui played cautiously before the pacy Avesh Khan struck the former with a bouncer. Andhra were 72 for two at that stage.

The blow left Vihari in some discomfort and he subsequently decided to retire hurt. Later, scans revealed that the Andhra captain had suffered a wrist fracture.

The batters though recovered after Vihari's injury and frustrated the MP attack. Bhui, a key member of the visiting team's batting unit, played with a lot of determination, and in Shinde's company, kept the scoreboard ticking.

The duo did not mind playing out a few quiet overs in between but picked up runs when the bowlers erred in line and length. Avesh Khan worked up some pace but sprayed the ball around at times.

BHUT STRIKES CENTURY

Rajkot: Batting at number nine, bowler Parth Bhut shone with the bat and saved Saurashtra the blushes with a gritty century on the first day of their quarterfinal against Punjab here.

Bhut was yet to open his account when Saurashtra lost their eighth wicket for 147 at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium. However, thanks to the 25-

year-old left-arm spinner's unbeaten knock of 111 and his last-wicket partnership of 95 runs with Yuvraj Singh Dodiya (17), the hosts could stretch their total to 303 before getting bowled out with three overs still remaining in the day.

In reply, Punjab faced just one over and were three for no loss when the stumps were called on Tuesday.

Prabhsimran Singh (2) and Naman Dhir (1) were at the crease.

In all, Bhut struck 11 boundaries and four sixes while scoring his runs at a fairly decent strike-rate of 71.61.

Earlier, Saurashtra's decision to bat first after winning the toss backfired as the Punjab bowlers left the home team reeling at 147 for eight.

Opener Snell Patel was the only specialist batter to show a semblance of resistance as he laboured his way to a fighting innings of 70 off 131 balls, hitting 11 fours in the process.

Leg-spinner Markande was the most successful bowler for the visitors, returning with figures of 4/84, while there were three and two wickets for pacers Baltej (3/60) and Siddarth Kaul (2/81) respectively.

Bhut added 61 runs for the ninth wicket with Chetan Sakariya (22) before Dodiya joined the former.

Bengal pacers make merry as Jharkhand dismissed for 173

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Pacer Akash Deep led Bengal's impressive show with a four-wicket haul as Jharkhand failed to last three full sessions and folded for a paltry 173 in their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal at Eden Gardens here on Tuesday.

The Bengal pace trio of Akash Deep, Mukesh Kumar (3/61) and Ishan Porel (1/26) claimed seven wickets between them to revel in bowling-friendly conditions after the home team skipper Manoj Tiwary won a good toss.

More than half of Jharkhand's score was made by their No 3 batter Kumar Suraj, who looked composed and elegant en route to a gritty 89 not out.

The left-hander struck some elegant cover drives, scored on both sides of the wickets using his wrists beautifully but only to be stranded 11 runs shy of a third first-class hundred.

Suraj batted deep into his crease to negate the pace threat by the Bengal pacers and carried his bat through



but wickets kept on falling at the other end.

Jharkhand No 11 batter Ashish Kumar (12 off 8 balls) was one of the four Jharkhand batters to get to a double digit as he lent fine support to brighten Suraj's century prospects.

But Ashish fell after a mix-up as Bengal ended their innings in 66.2 overs. The duo put together 20 runs for the last wicket.

Bad light meant that Bengal could not come out to bat in the first innings as day one ended with 21 overs in arrears.