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HYDERABAD, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



'MICHAEL IS A
SEMI-PSYCHO KIND
OF A PERSON WITH
THE RIGHT IDEALS'

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BULGARIA'S PRESIDENT CALLS NATION'S 5TH ELECTION IN 2 YEARS

Bulgaria's president dissolved the National Assembly on Thursday and called early parliamentary elections for April 2 in hopes of resolving the country's bid to settle the European Union and NATO member's prolonged political impasse and biting economic woes. President Rumen Radev also appointed a caretaker government ahead of the snap vote, which will be Bulgaria's fifth in two years. Radev reappointed Galab Donev, a 55-year-old independent politician, to remain at the helm of the interim Cabinet until the next parliament elects the members of a regular government. The move comes after the three largest political groups in the deeply fragmented National Assembly failed to find common ground for a viable coalition government after the last early election, held in October.

SC REJECTS PLEA TO BAR CANDIDATES FROM CONTESTING POLL FROM MORE THAN ONE SEAT

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea seeking to bar persons from contesting elections from more than one seat, saying it is ultimately the Parliament's will as to whether the political democracy in the country is furthered by granting a choice. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud observed that candidates may contest polls from more than one constituency due to a variety of reasons. The bench, also comprising justices PS Narasimha and J B Pardiwala, was dealing with a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, who had sought to declare as invalid and ultra vires to the Constitution section 33(7) of the Representation of the People Act.

I-T DEPT SPENDS 57 PAISE FOR EVERY RS 100 OF TAX COLLECTION: OFFICIAL

Income-tax collection cost that the I-T Department incurs in the country is one of the lowest in the world at Rs 0.57 for every Rs 100 collected as tax, Shishir Agarwal, Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Hyderabad, said on Thursday. He was speaking at a seminar on 'Post-Union Budget 2023-24-Implication for Trade and Industries' organised by the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI). "We spend just 57 paise to collect every Rs 100 income-tax. We are one of the lowest in the world. The UK spends 73 paise, Japan 174 paise, Germany 135 paise, Canada 150 paise, France 111 paise. The USA is the only country that spends less than us," a press release quoted him as saying.

RARE ROCKS FOR LORD RAM IDOL REACH AYODHYA FROM NEPAL

Special rocks from which the idol of Lord Ram will be carved out and placed in the sanctum sanctorum of the Ram Temple has arrived from Nepal, a senior functionary of the temple trust here said. The rocks or 'shilas' arrived here late on Wednesday night. Special prayers were held on Thursday afternoon following which the rocks were presented to the Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. Fifty-one vedic teachers also worshipped the rocks, officials said. Mahant Tapeswar Das of the Janaki Mandir in Nepal presented these rocks to Champat Rai, general secretary of Ram Temple Trust, they said.

Kalatapasvi passes away

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Kasinadhuni Viswanath, legendary Indian film director, screenwriter and actor, passed away on Thursday night.

He has been suffering from age-related ailments for a few days. Due to serious health issues, he was taken to Apollo Hospital in the city. He was born on February 19, 1930 at Repalle in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. He is a recipient of five National Film Awards, seven state Nandi Awards, 10 Filmfare Awards South and a Filmfare Award in Hindi.

He received the Andhra Pradesh state Raghupathi Venkaiah Award, and the civilian honour Padma Shri for his contribution to the field of arts. In 2017, he was conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the highest award in Indian cinema.

Viswanath started his film career as an audiographer and in 60 years, he has directed 53 feature films in a variety of genres, including films based on performing arts, visual arts, and aesthetics.

He received international recognition for his works, and is known for blending parallel cinema with

mainstream commercial cinema. Viswanath has made many films dealing with a wide range of human and social issues: *Saptapadi*, *Sirivennela*, *Sutradharulu*, *Subhalekha*, *Sruthilayalu*, *Subha Sankalpam*, *Aapadbandhavudu*, *Swayam Krushi*, and *Swarnakamalam* have lead characters representing different strata of society, meticulously etched to suit the larger picture. His work *Sankarabharanam* highlights the neglect of traditional Indian music under the increasing influence of Western music.



TS per capita income soaring

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has recorded the highest per capita income in the year 2022-23. This is 1.61 times more than the national average. The per capita income in Telangana in 2022-23 is Rs 3.17 lakh while the national per capita income is Rs 1.97 lakh.

The per capita income in TS has increased from Rs 1.24 lakh in 2014 to Rs 3.17 lakh in 2022-23. This is 2.55 times more than in 2014. The GSDP of Telangana is Rs 13.27 lakh crore. The GSDP of Telangana increased from Rs 5.05 lakh crore in 2014 to Rs 13.27 lakh crore in



2022-2023. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari gave details to a delegation of the National Defence College at the BRKR Bhavan on Thursday.

In other words, the average income per person in Telangana is slightly more than 1.61 times the

Indian average in 2022-23.

The Chief Secretary said that although Telangana is the youngest state in the country, it has charted a growth story which has brought a transformative change in various sectors.

KCR can make India 15 trillion dollar economy



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's Minister of Industries, Commerce and Information Technology, KT Rama Rao, urged politicians to focus on economics rather than politics.

"If only the rest of India can perform like Telangana and if only the rest of India can be led by a leader like KCR, USD 5 trillion will be a joke. We can reach Rs 15 trillion dollars," he said.

He said it was unfortunate that politicians in India focused on politics and not on the economy.

India is in permanent election

We are the world's largest democracy and elections are held throughout the year and leaders are always bothered about politics

mode and politicians are always focused on winning elections than in creating wealth, he said while addressing the NHRD's 'Decode The Future - The National Conference' on Thursday.

"We are the world's largest democracy and elections are held throughout the year and leaders are always bothered about politics," he said.

KT Rama Rao also underlined the need for ensuring an equitable distribution of wealth. India is the most populous country in the world but most of the nation's wealth is owned by a few individuals, he said.

He said it is the primary responsibility of every government to ensure a fair distribution of wealth.

2

DELHI LIQUOR SCAM

Kavitha, Kejriwal figure in ED second chargesheet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader MLC K. Kavitha has been named in the chargesheet filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the Delhi excise case.

Although Kavitha is not listed as an accused, the chargesheet has details of her alleged involvement in the case based on the incriminating statements of the accused.

Apart from Kavitha, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and YSRC MP Magunta have been named in the second chargesheet filed in the Delhi Liquor scam.

In the 468-page supplementary chargesheet filed by the ED in the Delhi Liquor Policy case, Kavitha's name has been mentioned 46 times but there are no new charges against her. Her name comes up as the daughter of Telangana Chief Minister whose name has been mentioned once.

"Mrs K. Kavitha, the daughter of K. Chandrasekhar Rao, the CM of Telangana, is the one who is representing as per the confession of



The alleged Rs 100 crore 'kickbacks' generated in the scrapped Delhi excise policy was used in the AAP campaign in the 2022 Goa Assembly election, the ED claimed in its second chargesheet in the case in which Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is an accused.

Sameer Mahendru," says the ED chargesheet.

Kavitha's name is mentioned



among those who have already been probed. Kavitha's name was also mentioned among those who allegedly destroyed evidence. ED officials said in the chargesheet that Kavitha attended the meetings held at the Delhi Oberoi Hotel.

A part of the alleged Rs 100 crore "kickbacks" generated in the scrapped Delhi excise policy was used in the AAP campaign in the 2022 Goa Assembly election, the ED claimed in its second chargesheet in the case in which Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is an accused.

2

Cabinet meeting on Sunday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A meeting of the Telangana State Cabinet will be held at 10.30 am on February 5 (Sunday) in Pragathi Bhavan. The meeting will be chaired by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Following the budget session of the Assembly, the Cabinet will discuss and approve the state budget.



TELANGANA GETS ZERO

BRS poster comes up in Hyderabad day after union budget. BRS put up posters expressing disappointment over the Union Budget and non-allocation of funds to the state

Adani stock rout rocks Parliament

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Opposition parties Thursday sought a debate in Parliament and a probe by a joint committee into the fraud-allegation-triggered rout in Adani

2

Shah coming on 11th Modi's visit postponed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Telangana has been postponed once again. Modi was scheduled to come to Telangana on February 13. As per schedule, Modi was expected to come to Telangana on January 19. However, it was postponed and Modi inaugurated the Vande Bharat Express running between Secunderabad and Visakhapatnam virtually on January 15.

The PMO informed that Modi will be coming to Telangana on February 13 to lay the foundation stone of the Secunderabad Railway Station modernisation project and will participate in a public meeting at the Parade Grounds. But this has been postponed.

group company stocks, forcing adjournment of proceedings in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in the pre-lunch session.

2

Cause of death not known!

■ 2.42L deaths in GHMC since 2020 April ■ No record of reason

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Days after Telangana recorded zero covid-19 cases, it has been found that the GHMC issued 2.42 lakh Death Certificates from April 1, 2020, to January 15, 2023.

Responding to an RTI query the GHMC said, "The GHMC issued 2,42,195 death certificates from 01-04-2020 to 15-01-2023. The GHMC has no information on the cause of death."

The RTI query was filed by city-based activist Kareem Ansari. "They also mentioned that the GHMC has no information on the cause of



death. My objective in filing the RTI query was not at all served. I asked for information on the number of death certificates issued regarding Covid-19 deaths by the GHMC. If this information is not available to the government how did the government monitor things during the

pandemic? I suspect that the GHMC Chief Medical Officer is hiding facts," Ansari said.

It took almost 1.5 years to get the RTI response.

Ansari filed an RTI application on June 17, 2021, before the PIO, O/o Commissioner, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), Hyderabad requesting him to provide information on the number of death certificates issued for Covid-19 deaths by the GHMC in the GHMC area from April 1, 2020, till now.

2

BUDGET SESSION FROM TODAY

All eyes on KCR-Guv

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

All eyes are on the Telangana budget session starting on February 3, that is Friday, amidst the twists and turns for approval of the fiscal 2023-34 annual budget.

Everyone is curiously waiting to see the conduct of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and the Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, in the Assembly as they have not been on good terms for the last two years.

As per protocol, the Chief Minister, Speaker and others have to receive the Governor when the Governor comes to the Assembly to address the joint session.

Both the Legislative Assembly and

the Legislative Council will commence on Friday. The budget session will commence with Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan's address to a joint session at the Assembly Hall at 12.10 pm. The Governor is going to address the joint session after two years.

The rift between the Governor and the Telangana government widened when the Telangana government avoided the Governor's address stating that the House has not been prorogued and that the session is not a new one.

This year too, the state government tried to avoid the Governor's address. However, the Governor did not give permission to introduce the budget in the Assembly and Council.

Centre undermining MGNREGS: BRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MLC K. Kavitha lashed out at the attempts of the BJP government at the Centre to weaken and eventually wind up MGNREGS, pushing the rural poor into poverty. She said the massive cut in the funds allocated for the scheme in the latest Union Budget indicates the Centre's plans to end it.

After meeting with representatives of the MGNREGS Association here on Thursday, Kavitha said the Union Government allocated only Rs 60,000 crore for MGNREGS, which was the lowest allocation for the scheme in the last five years.



Over Rs 22.76 cr spent on PM's foreign visits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has undertaken 21 trips abroad since 2019 and over Rs 22.76 crore was spent on these visits, the government said on Thursday.

The President undertook eight trips abroad and an amount of over Rs 6.24 crore was spent on these trips since 2019, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muralidharan said in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

The government incurred an amount of Rs 6,24,31,424 for President's visits, an amount of Rs 22,76,76,934 for prime minister's visits and an amount of Rs 20,87,01,475 for External Affairs Minister's visits since 2019, according to the minister.

While the President undertook eight visits abroad, the PM undertook 21 trips since 2019. During this period, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar undertook 86 visits abroad.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Titthi: Trayodashi: Feb 02 04:26 PM to Feb 03 06:58 PM
Chaturdashi: Feb 03 06:58 PM to Feb 04 09:30 PM
Nakshatram: Punarvasu: Feb 03 06:18 AM to Feb 04 09:16 AM
Rahukalam: 11:05 AM to 12:29 PM
Yamagandam: 3:19 PM to 4:43 PM
Varjyam: 07:47 PM to 09:35 PM
Gulika: 8:16 AM to 9:40 AM
Amritakalam: None
Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:07 PM to 12:52 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 31°C
Humidity: 31%
Sunrise: 6:48 AM
Sunset: 6:12 PM
Updated: FEBRUARY 2, 2023 5:00 PM



BRS making all out efforts to make Nanded meeting successful

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The first meeting of the BRS outside Telangana on February 5 at Nanded in Maharashtra may be the turning point in national politics. The BRS selected Nanded as its first stop outside Telangana in its bid to expand across the nation.

The BRS leadership is making everything to make the Nanded public meeting a success as it is the party's first meeting outside Telangana.

BRS MLAs, Ministers and other dignitaries are camping at Nanded to make the February 5 public meeting a big success.

In fact, after launching the BRS, President K. Chandrasekhar Rao thought about holding its first BRS in New Delhi. But for some reasons, the BRS leadership changed its mind and decided to hold the party's first meeting at Khammam in Telangana.

Later, the BRS leadership decided to organise its first public meeting outside Telangana in Nanded. The Nanded district of Maharashtra borders the former TS districts of Adilabad, Nizamabad and Medak. Moreover, Nanded has a large number of Telugus.

It may be recalled that the people of Maharashtra villages

staying on the border of Telangana had demanded their merger with Telangana after getting attracted by the schemes for farmers in Telangana. Some of them wanted a government like the one in Telangana to get their problems solved.

Another reason for selecting Nanded for the first meeting of the BRS outside Telangana is the absence of the language problem. KCR can speak Hindi fluently. So the BRS chief thought that he can explain the purpose of launching the BRS in the people's own language.

While BRS leaders are touring Nanded requesting them to attend the February 5 meet-

ing, KCR is in regular touch with the leaders of Nanded farmers and is asking them to attend the BRS' meeting.

In Maharashtra, the state government is run by the rebel Shiv Sena, BJP coalition. After declaring war against the BJP, the BRS is stepping into a BJP-ruled state. The BRS leadership thinks that if the Nanded meeting is successful, it will have an impact on North Indian states as well and will help to expand the party in those states.

BRS circles strongly thinks that the Nanded meeting will be the turning point in national politics and will help KCR make a grand entry into national politics.

Towards exemption-free tax regime

Govt wants to eventually move with lower taxes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Budget announcement of a revamped personal income tax regime, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra on Thursday said the government would eventually like to move to a simple and exemption-free tax structure with lower rates.

According to an analysis by the Revenue Department, an individual earning Rs 15 lakh in a year will have to claim deductions of at least Rs 3.75 lakh under the old tax regime, otherwise the new revamped tax regime with lower rates proposed in 2023-24 will be more beneficial.

In an interview to PTI, Malhotra said the government does not have any specific



timeline to make the new regime mandatory for taxpayers.

"We would like to move towards a lower tax rate, which is simple and without tax exemptions," Malhotra said. The Budget has proposed changes to the new optional tax regime which provides that no tax would be levied on people

with annual income of up to Rs 7 lakh. It also allowed taxpayers to claim standard deduction of Rs 50,000 under the new regime -- a move seen as a push for the salaried class to switch to the new tax regime where no exemptions on investments are provided.

Malhotra said under the new regime, salary earners with income of up to Rs 7.5 lakh will not have to pay any income tax, after taking into account the standard deduction.

This deduction was earlier available only to taxpayers in the old regime.

The Budget has not given any

relief to taxpayers under the old regime and said that the new tax regime will now be the "default option", meaning that taxpayers will now have to opt for the old regime while filing their tax returns.

In addition to extending the standard deduction, the Budget has also raised the exemption limit and tweaked the tax rates to make the new regime, which was originally introduced in 2020-21, attractive to taxpayers.

Under the revamped new tax regime, no tax would be levied for income up to Rs 3 lakh. Income between Rs 3-6 lakh would be taxed at 5 per cent; Rs 6-9 lakh at 10 per cent, Rs 9-12 lakh at 15 per cent, Rs 12-15 lakh at 20 per cent and income of Rs 15 lakh and above will be taxed at 30 per cent.

KCR backstabbed NTR, says Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that BRS President Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had expelled him from the party, BJP National Executive Committee Member Huzurabad MLA Eatala Rajender said that KCR had turned his back on NTR who had given him a ticket to contest the polls.

Addressing the media on Thursday at the State BJP office, Eatala made it clear that he had not quit the BRS voluntarily but KCR had expelled him. He said that KCR is a leader who will 'bite the hand that feeds him' and that the whole of Telangana knows this. Eatala asked KCR

whether he is ready for a debate on the assets he had in 2014 and what he has in 2023. He said that KCR is not allowing him to enter the Assembly since the last 13 months.

Eatala demanded KCR to prove that he is supplying 24-hour electricity. He said that he is ready to quit politics if KCR proves that he is supplying 24-hour power supply.

He said that Telangana stood on top as it has the highest inflation rate across the nation and that KCR is not in a position to pay salaries to government employees.

He said that KCR had made the state debt-riddled and challenged him to a debate on Telangana's debts and revenue.

Kumaraswamy denies differences with KCR

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

JD(S) leader Kumaraswamy has clarified on reports that he has differences with Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

He said that after his father Deve Gowda, KCR is his ultimate guide in politics and that he has no differences at all with KCR.

Kumaraswamy attended the Pancharatna Yatra held in Raichur along with Narayanpet MLA Rajender Reddy and said that KCR's schemes are the best for the country.

He criticised the Congress and the BJP for pushing back the development of

Karnataka. He said that the Kaleshwaram Project built by KCR helps farmers of 24 districts.

The Mission Bhagiratha scheme provides clean drinking water to every household, he said and added that Telangana schemes will be implemented in Karnataka too if the JD(S) comes to power in Karnataka. He said that KCR is an inspiration for him in governance as well.

Delhi CM Kejriwal, Punjab CM Bhagwanth Mann, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and former UP CM Akhilesh Yadav attended the huge BRS public meeting held at Khammam on January 18. But Kumaraswamy did not attend and it became a topic of dis-

cussion. There led to theories that there were differences between Kumaraswamy and KCR. In fact, on the same day, that is January 18, TPCC President Revanth Reddy had said that Kumaraswamy did not attend as KCR had offered Rs 500 crore to a key Congress leader of Karnataka.

Revanth said the Congress will win 25 to 30 seats from Bellary to Raichur, albeit with a narrow margin. He said that KCR had bargained with a Karnataka Congress leader to try to defeat the Congress in those 25 to 30 seats.

Revanth said that he has proof of his allegations and that Kumaraswamy decided to skip the BRS' Khammam meeting due to this.

BRS MLA meets Ganta & JD Laxminarayana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA KP Vivekanand meet former Minister in AP Ganta Srinivas and former CBI Joint Director Lakshmi Narayana. It seems that Vivek invited both of them to the BRS party. Ganta Srinivas Rao, who is a TDP MLA, is already away from the party and is upset with the leadership. Former CBI JD Lakshminarayana has also resigned from the JanaSena party and is currently an independent without joining any party. In this context, BRS MLA Vivekananda Goud's meeting with them in Visakhapatnam has raised an eyebrow. Sources said that it was a causal visit after a wedding and didn't confirm on joinings.

Aviation Industry in Rs. 28,907 cr losses: Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Answering a question asked by Malkajgiri MP A Revanth Reddy in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, the Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation General Dr VK Singh (ret'd) revealed that in the last three years, the aviation industry suffered losses worth Rs. 28,907 crores. The aviation industry suffered a loss of Rs. 11,658 crore in 2021-22, Rs.12,479 crore in 2020-21 and Rs.4,770 crore in 2019-20, the minister said. Singh said that measures such as the reduc-

tion of VAT on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) used in aeroplanes and the reduction of GST on airport maintenance-related matters from 18 to 5 per cent have been taken to recover from the losses. He mentioned that additionally, for the construction and expansion of new terminals in the next five years, the Airports Authority of India has decided to spend Rs. 98 thousand crores. VK Singh said that the government has also approved the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme to facilitate easy access to loans for airlines.

Stop KCR from opening Secretariat on Feb 17, Paul urges HC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the High Court challenging the inauguration of the new Telangana Secretariat on BRS president Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's birthday.

Praajshanti Party President KA Paul filed the PIL on Thursday. Paul asked the court to direct Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao to open the new secretariat on April 14, Dr Ambedkar's birthday, instead of February 17, which is KCR's birthday.

As the new Secretariat is named after the Constitution's architect, Dr BR Ambedkar, it is appropriate to inaugurate it on his birthday, Paul said. Paul, who will be arguing his case himself, has listed the CMO and the Chief Secretary as defendants.

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had decided to inaugurate the new Secretariat on February 17, his birthday. KCR had invited Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemanth Soren, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejaswi Yadav and others for the inaugural function.

The guests would also attend a public meeting being held at the Secunderabad Parade Grounds after the new Secretariat's inauguration.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹175
Without Skin	₹175
Broiler at Farm	₹140

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	567
HYDERABAD	550
VISAKHAPATNAM	480
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹5.50

Cong seeks Central probe into Mana Ooru-Mana Badi scheme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress filed a complaint with the Central Revenue Department requesting it to probe the irregularities in the Mana Ooru-Mana Badi scheme and to seek utilization certificates from the TS government regarding funds released by the Centre.

The Congress said the Telangana government diverted NREGA funds to its Mana Ooru-Mana Badi scheme and demanded that the Centre should probe the irregularities committed by the TS government in implementing the Mana Ooru-Mana Badi scheme.

Speaking to the media after filing the complaint on Thursday, former TPCC general secretary Bakka Judson

said that there is a scam in every scheme launched by the BRS government in Telangana.

Judson said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao does not authorise any work without kickbacks and that there was corruption in the Mana Ooru-Mana Badi scheme too.

He said that School Education Director Devesana played a key role in this programme and that the Centre must order a probe against her and the TS government to expose the irregularities in the scheme.

He urged the Centre to seek a Funds Utilization Certificate from the State government on funds released by the Centre.

He said that the TS govern-

ment had introduced the scheme costing Rs 7,289 crore to provide 12 types of basic facilities in 9,123 schools across the state.

Judson said the Telangana government had allocated Rs 3,497 crore to execute the first phase of the scheme in last year's budget. The TS government tried to hand over the contract to contractor Megha Krishna Reddy, but that could not be done due to petitions filed in the High Court by many people.

He said the contract finally reached Megha Krishna Reddy indirectly and that he had filed a complaint with the Central Revenue Department requesting it to probe the corruption that took place while implementing the scheme.

He gave me the word

Sharmila on Ponguleti joining YSRTP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy will be joining the YSRTP, YSRTP President YS Sharmila said.

Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy also indirectly commented on his political future during his recent Athmeeya Sannelan gathering that a bird will reach only its nest. In this context, YSRTP president Sharmila's comment has gained importance.

Speaking to the media on Friday at Lotus Pond, Sharmila said that Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy had assured her that he would join her party and added that the media must enquire about details regarding this with Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy himself.

With this, it seems that Ponguleti joining YSRTP is almost certain. A few days ago Ponguleti had met Sharmila, whose office revealed the news.

It may be recalled that Ponguleti had won the LS polls on a YSRCP ticket in 2014 and had later joined the BRS.

Kavitha, Kejriwal figure in ED...

Continued from Page 1

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the cases filed by the agency were "fake" and is aimed at "toppling" governments.

The ED named 17 individuals and companies in this supplementary chargesheet including AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair (39), promoter of liquor company Indospirit, Sameer Mahandru, liquor company Buddy Retail Pvt Limited Director Amit Arora (45), the General Manager of leading French wine company Pernod Ricard Benoy Babu (44), the whole-time director and promoter of Aurobindo Pharma, P. Sarath Chandra Reddy, (37) and Hyderabad-based businessman Abhishek Boinpally, (36). All these people are in judicial custody at present.

A DANICS officer who served as Sisodia's secretary

said that this is the first time that he saw these proposals in the draft GoM report (that is, the document handed over to him) and he was directed to prepare the report on the basis of the said document, the chargesheet said.

It also claimed that a close aide of the Delhi Chief Minister "arranged a video call through facetime (a video calling facility on iPhone) on his phone for Sameer (Mahandru) and Arvind Kejriwal, in which Arvind told Sameer that the aide is 'his boy' and that Sameer should trust him and carry on with him."

These facts, the ED said, are "relevant for mentioning to establish the abatement of his actions in relation to the excise policy scam by the leaders of AAP." The Delhi Chief Minister rubbished the ED chargesheet, saying it has "filed 5,000 chargesheets during the tenure

of the current government."

"How many people have been sentenced? All cases filed by the ED are fake and they are used to topple governments. The ED does not file cases to eradicate corruption. They do it to buy MLAs and topple governments. There is a question on the ED chargesheet," Kejriwal said.

A close aide of Kejriwal (arrested in the case) received kickbacks of Rs 100 crore from a group on behalf of AAP leaders, the ED. "Investigation of this kickback trail has revealed that a part of the funds was used in the AAP's election campaign during the Goa Assembly elections 2022. Cash payments of Rs 70 lakh were made to volunteers who were part of the survey teams," the ED said.

The chargesheet added that the close aide "himself has told certain persons involved in the campaign-related work to receive payments in cash".

"Those who did advertisement/hoarding works were told to raise only part of their claims in their bill and to receive the remaining charges in cash. These part cash payments were managed through hawala channels" by a team led by a close aide of Kejriwal," the ED said. In lieu of these kickbacks, the ED said the "South Group" "secured uninhibited access, undue favours, gained stakes in established wholesales businesses and multiple retail zones (over and above that was allowed in the policy)".

The agency also claimed in the chargesheet that the DAN-ICS officer, who was earlier secretary to Sisodia, recorded his statement with the ED saying he was given the GoM (group of ministers) report on the excise policy in the middle of March 2021 when he was called by his boss to the residence of Kejriwal.

Nobody taking action against hate speeches despite our orders, laments SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday lamented that nobody was taking action against hate speeches despite its orders, and observed that the top court will be left "embarrassed again and again" if it is asked to give further directions to curb such statements. The court's strong observations were made by a bench comprising Justice K M Joseph, Justice Aniruddha Bose and Justice Hrishikesh Roy when a plea seeking to prohibit an event scheduled to be held on February 5 by the Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha in Mumbai was mentioned for an urgent hearing. The bench agreed to hear the plea on Friday subject to instructions and approval from Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on the administrative side.

"We are with you on this, but understand that the Supreme Court cannot be triggered every time there is a rally notified. We have already passed an order which is clear enough".

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Central policies don't favour poor and labour: Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Rural Development and Rural Water Supply Errabelli Dayakar Rao said that the new Central Budget policies don't favour the poor and labour force. The minister interacted with Telangana EGS employees on the occasion of completion of 17 years of Mahatma Gandhi's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) and congratulated them on the success of the programme on Thursday.

Minister Dayakar Rao said, "The Budget for the rural employment scheme has been reduced from Rs 89,000 crore to Rs 60,000, which is proof of the Central policies against the poor and labourers. We have asked the Centre to increase the working days and provide employment to the



Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao unveiling the NREGA calendar with EDC employees

labourers. But the Centre is worsening their conditions."

He further added, "The NREGA scheme was implemented with a good intention of preventing poor and labourers from migrating, hunger

and suicide. Telangana government has done very useful work under the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. It has

been praised by the Central government. The BJP Central government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is undermining this scheme, which guarantees employment to the poor and labourers across the country by cutting funds every year."

On the occasion, Minister Dayakar Rao unveiled Telangana Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Employee Calendar 2023. He promised to take every programme given by the government to the people and work sincerely to make it successful.

EGS association Chairman A. Lingayah, Co-Chairmen Anji Reddy, Vijay Kumar, Venkatrami Reddy, Mohan Rao, Tangella Raghu, Janagiri, Charan Singh, Sudarshan and TCOs President Praveen participated in the programme.

EXPANSION PLANS OF RAJA BAHADUR VENKATARAMA REDDY EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

Stone laid for new dormitory

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ministers Harish Rao and Sabitha Indra Reddy laid the foundation stone for the new dormitory building of Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Harish Rao said, "As part of the expansion of the educational society founded by Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy, we are happy to lay the foundation stone for the new building."

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has allocated 15 acres of government land at Budvel to set up a world-class educational institution and hostel complex to enable the poor rural youth to pursue higher education at a low cost. As per the ambition of the Chief Minister, if any good university comes here to benefit the students, then your society will be proud of it."

He further said Former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, late Ravi Narayana Reddy, former Union Minister S Jaipal Reddy, Justice A Seetharam



Reddy, Justice B P Jeevan Reddy, retired Supreme Court judge Justice B Sudarshan Reddy and many eminent persons stayed in Raja Bahadur hosts.

Raja Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy Educational Society is a service-oriented, non-profit organisation that provides services to the poor rural youth to pursue their higher education at a very low cost.

"We will work hard to release Rs 5 crore for the building construction soon.

Rather than being a money-making educational institution, we want to provide education to poor students and establish high values in society," said the ministers.

Minister Niranjan Reddy, Women Commission Chairman Sunita Lakshmareddy MLC Vanidevi, MLA Madan Reddy, Sridhar Reddy and Raj Bahadur Venkatarama Reddy Educational Society members participated in this programme.

Massive fire in godown at Chikkadpally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A massive fire broke out in a godown at Chikkadpally in the early hours on Thursday. Two shops caught fire which were located near the VST signal beside the godown.

The properties engulfed in the mishap were worth Rs 50 lakh and no casualties were reported, said Chikkadpally police. The fire destroyed tents and decorative items supplied for marriages. Minister Talasani Srinivas inspected the spot and asked the traders to be cautious as fire incidents are on the rise in the city.

The police said on Thursday at 5:40 am, they received a dial 100 call wherein the caller was informed that one building near VST signal had caught fire. The Chikkadpally police immediately responded to the call and rushed to the spot and with the assistance of the Fire fighter teams, and Disaster team, they were successful in extinguishing the fire.

Curbs around Assembly for budget sessions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Police Commissioner C V Anand announced that all public assembly or meeting or procession is strictly prohibited within a radius of four kilometers of the Fourth Meeting of Eighth Session of II Second Telangana Legislative Assembly and 18th Session of Legislative Council, that are set to start from 3 February.

The order was imposed under Section 22(1) (a) to (f) and 22 (2) (a) and (b) of Hyderabad City Police Act. 1348 Fasli (No.IX)

The Hyderabad police has prohibited every kind of gathering that has potential to cause disturbance to the public peace and safety.

This order shall come into force with effect from 6 am on February 3, till Assembly/Council Budget Sessions are over.



Over 500 cops to be deployed for Formula-E race, says CP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police CV Anand on Thursday said approximately 575 police personnel will be deployed to handle security and traffic during the Formula -E race.

The event will be conducted from February 5 to 12. Anand, along with other police officials inspected the 2.8 km track, audience stands, and entry and exit points. He reviewed the preparedness of the organisers and other security aspects. He also appealed to the general public to cooperate with the police and to use Metro services. A total of 16 stands, seven gates and four foot-over-bridges have been set up to facilitate free crowd movement. Announcing the traffic diversions, Anand said, "NTR Marg will be closed on February 5 for completion of pending works on the track and other arrangements. The diversions will remain in place from February 7 to 12 and a notification will be issued soon."

Anand further requested the public to be mindful of the diversions, urging them to use the Metro instead.



Cars arrive at Hyd airport

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of the formula E championship, the Hyderabad airport on February 1 received eight racing cars along with components weighing 90 tons. The shipment arrived by chartered flight from Riyadh and was received by cargo department at the airport. The cargo consisting of 83 boxes of auto components was offloaded from the aircraft parked at the dedicated parking slots. The shipment was unloaded using specially designed cargo handling equipment and moved to an exclusive handling area in the Greater Hyderabad Air Cargo



(GHAC) terminal. A green channel was established from the apron to the landside for cargo transfer. Special regulatory permissions for an immediate onsite custom clearance ensured seamless movement of the shipment across various touch points.

RAJ BHAVAN HOSTS CPR TRAINING PROGRAMME

CPR training crucial in saving lives: Governor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan highlighted the importance of imparting Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) among the public as she called for a public CPR training programme at Raj Bhavan community hall on Thursday. The training programme was organised in association with Gandhi Medical College Alumni Association, Gandhi Medical Global Alliance College and American Heart Association.

Governor Tamilisai said that creating awareness and training more people on CPR would result in saving more precious lives. She said, "All the offices



should conduct the CPR training sessions to create awareness among the staff members. We are witnessing the death of many people due to sudden cardiac arrest as there are no people who are capable of performing CPR in times of emergency. As a medical doctor, I emphasise the importance of CPR. Doctors said that only 2% of the

The Governor said that colleges and universities should make it mandatory to train the students in the CPR techniques. She also instructed that Raj Bhavan staff, police officers, and Red Cross staff must also be trained. The Governor has also distributed the brochures related to the Chancellor Connects Alumni.

Gandhi Medical College AHA International Training centre facilitated the training programme. The training centre team also provided the Raj Bhavan management with an Automated External defibrillator, which is a portable computerised instrument for irregular heart rhythms during cardiac arrests.

Hyd firm supplies critical components for nuclear turbine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AZAD Engineering Private Limited, a Hyderabad-based firm has been approved to sell rotators of the nuclear turbines.

The company has dispatched the first set of critical parts which will be assembled on nuclear turbines manufactured in Belfort, France. The firm has entered into an agreement with GE steam Powers for supply of nuclear turbine parts.

The US-based company provides technologies and services for power plants helping customers deliver reliable power as they transition to a lower carbon future.

Currently, nuclear power is the one of the most cost-effective, clean zero-carbonised electricity sources and is one of the best alternatives available to coal-based power plants. Speaking of the agreement, Managing Director, AZAD, Rakesh Chopdar said, "It is a pleasure to announce that we are the first and the only Indian company to get approved for nuclear parts."

Two UoH professors elected Fellows of Royal Society of Biology

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Professor A S Raghavendra, currently an Institution of Eminence (IoE) Research Chair Professor in the School of Life Sciences and Prof P Prakash Babu, a Senior Professor in the Department of Biotechnology and Bioinformatics, School of Life Sciences, at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) have been elected as Fellows of the Royal Society of Biology (FRSB), UK.

The fellowship is the highest level of membership in RSB and is bestowed in recognition of one's scientific contribution to research in biology. Fellows of RSB are those who achieved distinction in the fields of biological research, teaching or application in Biology.

Prof Raghavendra has been



Prof P Prakash Babu



Prof Raghavendra

with the Department of Plant Sciences, School of Life Sciences since 1985. He has been a Fellow of all the science academies in India (INSA, NASI, IASc and NAAS) besides being a fellow of TWAS. He had been bestowed with several National and International Awards, including the INSA-Young Scientist Medal, DFG-Mercator Visiting Professor and Corresponding Member of American Society of Plant

Biology. Prof Prakash Babu's research group has been working in the area of Brain diseases in collaboration with neuro clinicians. This fellowship is bestowed in honour of recognition of his research, teaching and academic accomplishments. His main research interests are Neurodegenerative diseases, Cerebral Ischemia (Stroke), Cerebral Malaria, Glioma, and Meningioma (Brain tumours).

UpGrad's city learner records CTC hike of 233%

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Hyderabad based student of Edtech platform Upgrad secured a job worth 233 per cent hike in 2022. All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE)'s

recent report highlights that as per 2011 population projections for the 18-23 years age group, GER has increased to 27.3 from 25.6 in 2019-20. Based on the global higher Edtech company's internal Data arm, upGrad

closed the last calendar year with over 130 career transitions in the region alone. Most transitions happened within the MBA domain followed by Data Science, Machine Learning, and Tech.

R-Day NCC contingent makes TS & AP proud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Republic Day contingent of NCC Directorate Telangana and Andhra Pradesh comprising one Officer, 121 cadets and 10 other support staff have returned to Secunderabad after the successful completion of 30 days Republic Day camp at New Delhi.

The cadets from all 28 states of the country participated and competed in various national-level competitions held during the camp.

Sergeant G Prem Krithika of Secunderabad Group HQ made the directorate proud by being adjudged the Best Cadet in the

Senior Wing Army category and was awarded the Best cadet trophy by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the PM Rally conducted on Jan 28 at Cariappa Parade Ground, New Delhi. Cadet Amoghvardaraj Naidu stood third in the Best Cadet Senior Division Naval wing category while Cadet V Siva Ganesh and Cadet CH Neethin Sai were awarded the DG NCC Medallion for standing fourth in Best Cadet Junior Division Army and Junior Division Navy category respectively.

The NCC RDC camp began at Cariappa Parade Ground, New Delhi on Jan 1 with partici-



ipation of 2,155 cadets from across the nation. The camp was inaugurated by the Vice-President of India and was visited by various important dignitaries like Home Minister, Defence Secretary, Chiefs of the three services of Armed Forces,

Chief Minister of Delhi and culminated with the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a matter of pride that nine senior division cadets and nine senior wing cadets of NCC Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Directorate formed part of the

NCC Boys and Girls Contingent that participated in the march past at Kartavya Path on the eve of Republic Day. The training of these cadets begins at sub unit and unit level in the month of September and after intensive training and selections at various levels, finally 121 cadets from all three NCC wings of the two states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana were selected to represent the NCC Directorate AP and Telangana at a national platform. The Republic Day camp is a life-changing experience for a cadet and each one carries fond memories of it for the rest of their life.

Pic 1 Caption: Air

Commodore P Maheshwar, DDG NCC congratulates the Senior Division cadets of the Republic Day contingent at HQ NCC Directorate (AP&T), Secunderabad on 02 Feb 2023.

Pic 2 Caption: Sergeant G Prem Krithika of Secunderabad Group with the RDC Best Cadet trophy (Senior Wing Army) at HQ NCC Directorate (AP&T), Secunderabad on 02 Feb 2023. The trophy was awarded by the Prime Minister during the NCC PM's Rally in New Delhi.

Pic 3 Caption: NCC Cadets of Republic Day contingent with their awards at HQ NCC Directorate (AP&T), Secunderabad on 02 Feb 2023.

IITH's student qualifies for global finale of Falling Walls Lab

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad's Pratik Kumar has qualified for the global finale of Falling Walls Lab in Berlin. Earlier, when IIT Hyderabad hosted its first Falling Walls Lab last year qualifying the winner was Pratik Kumar. Now he is selected for the global finale in Berlin. Imagine rubbing shoulders with Nobel laureates. But before that, imagine condensing four or five years of your research journey and explaining it in a compact three minute-period with no more than two slides. Pratik is the Falling Walls Lab,

Hyderabad winner who qualified for the global finale in Berlin in early November 2022 with his breakthrough pitch on analog VS accelerated technology.

He won a chance to interact and network with the world's movers and shakers of Science, Business and policy-making. The idea of Falling Walls Lab is to pitch an innovative idea that can have a positive impact on Science and society. Renowned academic institutions across the world host the Falling Walls Lab to showcase the quality, diversity, and passion of their region's most innovative minds.

Safety audits done for roads at all stages

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

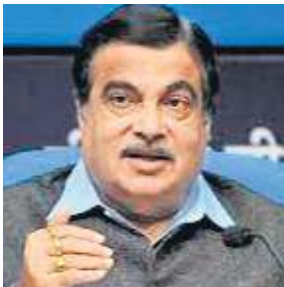
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has declared a sanction ceiling of Rs 113.97 crore during the financial year 2022-23 for road safety works, primarily for taking up the rectification of black spots in Telangana.

This was discussed when Minister Upendra Singh Rawat asked on the number of road accidents registered during the last three years and the current year due to road engineering defects, State or UT wise, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and other metro cities and whether the government has taken up initiatives to restructure and strengthen road safety and if so, the details thereof.

Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari

has said that with a view to providing relevant and reliable data on accidents, Transport Research Wing (TRW) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways collects and compiles accident data from the police departments of all States/UTs. However, TRW does not compile road accidents data on the basis of road engineering defects.

Major initiatives taken by the Ministry based on road engineering to restructure and strengthen road safety in the country are as under Ministry has issued guidelines for conduct of safety audits at all stages (design, construction, and operation). Road safety audit policy has been issued by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) prescribing Audit requirements as per IRC



guidelines in all phase of the project.

He further added that the Ministry has conveyed the sanction ceiling of Rs 1200 crore during financial year, 2022-23 for road safety works, primarily for taking up the rectification of black spots. Under state wise Telangana was allocated 113.97 crores.

Later, Ministers M Srinivas

Reddy and M Ranjanben Dhananjay Bhatt asked the Minister of Road Transport and Highways on whether the Government has received any proposals regarding provision of additional road safety measures along the National Highways in the country, including Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Minister Nitin Gadkari said Road safety measures are adopted on National Highways (NHs) in accordance with Indian Roads Congress (IRC) standards or guidelines on road safety at all stages of project implementation, i.e., design stage, construction stage, pre-opening stage and operations stage. For this the funds sanctioned for Telangana was Rs 171.56 crore and expenditure was Rs 1.89 crore.

Freedom-fighter Sardar Papanna's statue to be installed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister Dr V Srinivas Goud announced that a statue of freedom-fighter and Bahujan leader Sardar Sarvai Papanna will be installed at Tank Bund as he inspected the place of the statue on Thursday.

Minister Srinivas Goud said, "A statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud is going to be installed on Tank Bund soon by the state government. Bahujan hero Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud's history disappeared in the common state of Andhra Pradesh. His history has been preserved by the Central University in London. Prof Pervaram Jagannatham introduced his history to the world. Ever since, the chain ponds and forts built by Papanna Goud have been undertaken for preservation. He built forts in Khalishpur, Tatikonda, Zafargad, Bhuvanagiri, Saidapur in Karimnagar district.

'Only 3 airports proposed by TS technically feasible'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Civil Aviation Ministry has said that only three of the six airports proposed by the Telangana Government are technically feasible and asked to conduct a fresh Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) survey for other proposed places.

The issue was discussed in the Lok Sabha when BRS MPs Kavitha Malothu, B Venkatesh Neta and G Ranjit Reddy raised a question on the status of development of the airports proposed by the Chief Minister KCR.

Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation VK Singh said the Government of Telangana has proposed to take up development of three Greenfield Airports at Jakaranpally, Nizamabad district, Palvancha, Bhadadri Kothagudem district, Devarakadra, Mahbubnagar district and

three Brownfield airports at Mamnoon, Warangal district, Basanth Nagar, Peddapally district and Adilabad district and has appointed Airports Authority of India (AAI) for conducting Techno-Economic Feasibility Studies (TEFS) for these six airports.

The Centre Minister further stated that AAI has submitted the TEFS report for all the above six airports to the State Government. Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) Survey, Soil testing, etc. at all the above sites were conducted and reports were submitted by AAI to the State Government on July 6, 2021.

As per the study, only three locations i.e. Warangal (Brownfield), Adilabad (Brownfield) and Jakranpally (Greenfield) are technically feasible. AAI has requested the Government of Telangana to develop and commission the

feasible sites of three airports for private operations of small aircrafts to avoid immediate requirement of land acquisition.

Accordingly, Master Plans for Warangal, Adilabad and Jakranpally (which were earlier prepared for operations of ATR-72 in Phase-I and AB-320 in Phase-2) were re-worked and toned down for development of these three airports for Aerodrome Reference Code-2B to cater for private operation of general aviation aircrafts. AAI has advised Government of Telangana to carry out fresh OLS survey (for identification of actual physical obstacles as on date) upon taking up actual development of these 03 airports for which approvals are required to be obtained from Ministry of Civil Aviation and other Regulatory or Statutory Authorities.

SHE Teams book 15 for various offences

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The SHE Teams booked 15 persons for various offences against women in January.

In an incident reported from Jidimetla, a school drop-out was booked for harassing a female student of the Government High School. In her complaint via Whatsapp, the victim said that the accused stalked her and watched while she was practicing for a cultural programme in an empty classroom. The victim alleged that the boy misbehaved with her, slapped her and fled the place.

The SHE Teams took cognizance of the complaint and warned the offender in the presence of his parents. He was made to apologise to the girl. In an incident reported from Manikonda on January 27, 11 minor boys were booked for harassing girls. As per a complaint by the teacher, the

accused threw stones at girls in the school, creating panic among them. The SHE Teams carried out a decoy operation and seized four bikes. Since the offenders were minor they were let off after a warning and counseling in the presence of their parents.

In another case, a constable of the City Armed Reserves Head Quarters, identified as Gwala Hariprasada was sent to judicial Custody for cheating and outraging the modesty of a woman and establishing relations with her on the pretext of marriage. The accused was booked under sections 420 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code and sent to judicial custody.

In her complaint the victim alleged that she met Hariprasada on a matrimonial site. He took her to OYO rooms multiple times. After being a relationship for eight months, the constable refused to marry her.



CPI-M central committee member Cherupalli Sitaramulu speaking at a media conference in Nalgonda on Thursday

Union Budget pro-corporate: CPM

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the year 2023-24 was pro-corporate, said Communist Party of India-Marxist central committee member Cherupalli Sitaramulu.

Expressing his displeasure over the budget at a media conference held at Doddi Komuriah Bhavan here on Thursday, he said that the budget meted out grave injustice to Telangana. The budgetary allocation to agriculture was slashed. The Centre allocated Rs 11 lakh crore in the budget to waive loans of the

corporates, but failed to allocate Rs 4 lakh crore for the welfare of the farmer, he pointed out. No concrete measures were announced to implement the minimum support price (MSP) for agricultural produce. The allocation under the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme had been reduced. The Prime Minister would go down in history as anti-farmer, he said.

The Modi government has been pushing the country into a debt trap, he said. He described the budget as retrograde and anti-people budget. The Telangana share in the Central pool of taxes had been reduced greatly.

147 child labourers rescued by Warangal Police

PNS ■ WARANGAL

As many as 147 child labourers were freed under the limits of the Warangal Police Commissionerate between January 1 and 31, according to Warangal Police Commissioner A V Ranganath on Thursday.

The police conducted Operation Smile as part of the campaign to rescue children engaged in child labour. The police conducted the ninth phase of Operation Smile. Nine teams, comprising the police, anti-human trafficking unit and officials of the ChildLine and Labour Department were formed to search and rescue the child labourer. The police



and the officials made surprise raids on brick kilns, crushers, shopping malls and hotels. A total of 147 child labourers, who were below the age of 18, were rescued during the raids, Ranganath said and added that 117 of them were boys and 30 girls. As many as 91 rescued children hailed from different parts of the country.

RPF rescues 27 trafficked children from train

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) on Thursday rescued 27 children from the clutches of a human trafficking gang between Kazipet and Warangal. The police also arrested six alleged human traffickers. The RPF personnel, led by Circle Inspector Sanjeeva Rao, launched a search operation in Danapur-Secunderabad Express Train between Kazipet and Warangal. Acting on a tip-off, the RPF personnel launched the search operation in the train. Senior Divisional Security Commissioner Dibasimta C Banerjee said that he had ordered the search operation following a

tip-off that a gang of human traffickers were transporting children in the train. The train was coming from Danapur to Secunderabad. The trafficked children were identified after surveillance was mounted in the coaches. The traffickers were identified and arrested. They hailed from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The RPF officers recorded the statements of the rescued children after the train reached Secunderabad. B B A Venkateshwarlu, the State Coordinator of the District Child Protection Unit, launched an investigation.

New District Collector conducts special puja

PNS ■ WARANGAL

District Collector of Hanamkonda Sikta Patnaik and additional collector Sandhya Rani on Thursday visited Bhadrakali temple and offered special puja to the deity.

Earlier, the temple executive officer Seshu Bharati along with the main priest Seshacharyulu extended traditional welcome to the officers and conducted special pujas. The temple priests presented silk clothes of the deity and prasadam of the deity and blessed the officials.

The temple authorities explained the significance of the temple. District Revenue Officer Vasu Chandra, Mandal Revenue Officer Raja Kumar, temple officials and others were present on the occasion.

Ensure compensation to all eligible oustees, officials told

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

District Collector Bhavesh Misra on Thursday directed district officials to take necessary steps to ensure that the compensation in lieu of land acquired from people is disbursed to the eligible.

Addressing a review meeting participated by irrigation OSD in the CMO Manohar, ENC of Kaleswaram Project Nalla Venkateswarlu and other higher officials, the district collector said that the government would take measures to acquire lands up to 100 meters of FRL under Kaleswaram project.

He said that 455 acres and 22 guntas of land is yet to be acquired. Barring a portion of the government land, the rest



of the land is needed to be acquired from private individuals, he added.

He asked the authorities to sensitise the people and take steps to acquire the lands. The government would release the necessary funds soon.

He said that some vested interests have been demanding compensation even for the government land and asked

the authorities to not to entertain such elements. He asked them to take stringent measures to ensure justice to the DPs.

He asked the officials to change the title of the lands acquired under Kaleswaram project in favour of the government. He asked them to fix boundaries to the lands acquired by the government and plant saplings in a big way in vacant sites.

Some people have been applying again out of greed to get compensation, he said asking officials to reject such applications summarily. The compensation should reach the eligible.

Joint Collector Swarnalata, RDO Srinivas, irrigation engineering officials and others were present.

Grocer bites customer's finger, lands behind bars

PNS ■ MULUGU

A grocer has landed behind the bars for attacking a customer for disturbing him when he was watching a television serial. The incident happened at Palampet under Venakatapur mandal in the district. The incident came to light on Thursday. According to police, a grocer, identified as Gattu Mogali flew into a fit

of rage when a customer disturbed him while he was watching the final episode of the serial. The grocer allegedly bit the customer's finger. The customer came to the shop to buy a commodity. But the grocer told him to wait until the television episode was completed. When the customer insisted on the grocer promptly delivering the commodity, Mogali

resorted to violence. The serial completed 1,650 episodes.

The customer, identified as Tallapalli Venkataiah, was rushed to the hospital for medical treatment. Based on the complaint filed by Venkaitai, the police registered a case under Section 290 and 324 IPC against the grocer. The investigation is on.

Eye camp exclusively for govt staff inaugurated

PNS ■ MEDAK

Medak legislator Padma Devender Reddy has describe the ongoing Kanti Velugu a boon to all and appealed to all those who have crossed 18 years of age to get their eyes checked at the eye camps.

She was inaugurating the eye camp for the government employees at the Collectorate's Praja Vani Hall

on Wednesday.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, she said of all organs eyes are important. She asked the people to get themselves checked up at the eye camps even if they face even a minor problem, including lack of clarity in vision. The medical teams at the eye camps dispense free of cost medicines like eye drops and spectacles, she said ask-

ing the people to make good use of it.

Earlier, she called on district collector Rajarshi Sha in his chambers as a matter of courtesy and presented him with a bouquet. Besides the district collector, SP Rohini Priyadarsini, Additional Collectors Pratima Singh, Ramesh, DMHO Chandu Naik and others took part in the programme.

BRS leader warns BJP of dire consequences

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) district unit president G V Ramakrishna Rao on Thursday launched a broadside against BJP official spokesperson Rani Rudrama for her 'derogatory comments' on Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao.

The BJP leaders were shell-shocked by the criticism against their party by the Minister at Jammikunta public meeting. The leaders belonging to the saffron party were stunned into silence as their party was losing the people's support in the State. That was why the BJP official spokesperson tried to paint



BRS leader G V Ramakrishna Rao at a media conference in Karimnagar on Thursday

KTR black by raising domestic matters. He wondered whether the "BJP spokesperson

had worked in Pragathi Bhavan." He warned the BJP leaders of dire consequences if

they dared to criticise the family members of the BRS leaders. KTR, he said, is a

strong leader who has been striving to lead the State towards progress. He said the BJP spokesperson could not get votes of educated. He accused her of continuing in the BJP which was trying to hinder the progress in the State. The saffron party has emerged as a millstone around the neck of the State, he said. Ramakrishna Rao said the Centre had meted out injustice to Telangana. The Centre had sanctioned 150 medical colleges and 157 nursing colleges. But it failed to sanction even one medical college or nursing college in Telangana, he said. It showed the BJP-led Central government's step-motherly treatment towards the State, he said.

Dalit assaulted in Vikarabad district

PNS ■ VIKARABAD

A Dalit Man was allegedly beaten up by. The incident happened at Devanoor village in the district on Thursday.

A group of youth under the name of Kula Nirmulana Porata Samithi planned to install the B R Ambedkar statue in the village. But it was opposed by some people belonging to a right-wing organisation. An argument between the two groups led to assaulting of a Dalit, it is alleged.

A few policemen who were present at the scene tried to rescue the youth from being assaulted. But, the right-wing activists pushed aside the policemen, it is alleged. The police filed a case against some persons. A first information report has been filed.



INDIA CORNER

Maha ATS files chargesheet against five arrested PFI members

The Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad on Thursday filed its chargesheet against five members of the now-banned Popular Front of India who were arrested after raids in September last year for allegedly indulging in anti-national activities and waging war against the nation. The chargesheet was filed before special judge AM Patil. The five have been charged under provisions of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Indian Penal Code for various offences, including promoting enmity among different groups and conspiring to commit offences against the State. More than 100 functionaries of the radical Islamist group were arrested in nationwide raids in several states, including Maharashtra, in September last year. Subsequently, the PFI was banned by the Central government through a notification issued on September 27, in which it said the outfit and its affiliates have been involved in subversive activities, thereby disturbing public order and undermining the constitutional set up of the country.



Centre spent nearly Rs 27,000 lakh on preservation of cultural sites

The central government has spent Rs 26,957.32 lakh on conservation, preservation and maintenance of monuments and sites of national importance in 2021-22. Parliament was informed on Thursday. Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy, in a written response to a query, also shared data on the revenue generated through entry fee at monuments and sites at 143 locations in the country during the last three years. There are 3,696 centrally-protected monuments in the country which fall under the purview of the Archaeological Survey of India, including 743 sites in Uttar Pradesh, 506 in Karnataka, and 412 in Tamil Nadu. Reddy also shared details on the expenditure on conservation, preservation and maintenance of monuments and sites of national importance during last three years. In 2019-20, the figures stood at Rs 43,538.76 lakh while the corresponding figures for 2020-21 was Rs 26,083.41 lakh, and Rs 26,957.32 lakh for 2021-22, according to the data shared.



7.81 crore rural households provided tap water: Govt

More than 7.81 crore rural households have been provided tap water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission over last three years, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Prahlad Singh Patel informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday. In a written reply to a question, the minister said as on January 31, 2023, out of 19.36 crore rural households in the country, around 11.06 crore (57.12 per cent) are reported to have tap water supply. At the time of the announcement of JJM, 3.23 crore (17 per cent) rural households were reported to have tap water connections. Goa, Telangana, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Gujarat and Haryana are among the states and Union Territories which have provided tap water to every rural household. The central government, in partnership with the states, is implementing the JJM since August 2019 to make tap water supply available to every rural household in the country.



EAM: Inclusive, resilient growth focus of India's G20 priorities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's priorities for its G20 Presidency are to ensure inclusive and resilient growth with a focus on challenges being faced by the countries of the Global South, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday.

Replying to a question in Rajya Sabha, Jaishankar also listed technological transformation and public digital infrastructure, reform in the multilateral institutions, women-led development and international peace and harmony as key focus areas for India's presidency of the grouping.

India assumed the presidency of the influential bloc G20 at its annual summit in Bali in November with a promise of striving to ensure that the grouping acts as a global prime mover to envision new ideas and accelerate collective action to deal with pressing challenges.



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India is hosting a series of events and meetings ahead of the G20 summit later this year.

"India's G20 Presidency priorities are inclusive and pragmatic, with broad areas of substantive deliberations comprising inclusive and resilient growth, progress on SDGs, green development and lifestyle for environment, technological transformation and public digital infrastructure, reforming multilateral institutions, women-led

development, and international peace and harmony," Jaishankar said.

"It is our endeavour that inputs generated from the 'Voice of Global South Summit' receive cognisance globally, including in G20 deliberations," he said.

The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) are a collection of 17 interlinked objectives designed to serve as a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity in the world.

India officially assumed the G20 Presidency on December 1. India's G20 Presidency has the largest-ever representation from Africa with six participants, Jaishankar said.

He said in addition to South Africa, Egypt, Mauritius, Nigeria, Chair of African Union and Chair of AUDA-NEPAD have been invited to participate in G20 meetings and the summit.

South Africa is a member of the G20.

The African Union (AU) is an influential grouping consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African continent.

The AUDA-NEPAD was established in 2010 to integrate the then New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) into African Union (AU) structures and processes.

Jaishankar said India has always been a voice of the Global South, including for the "African friends and partners".

Colonial sentiments rule in Indian mines: Amitav Ghosh

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

An exploitative economy in all its ruthless facets was the hallmark of colonialism across the globe in the earlier centuries, and the same economics continues to rule in the mineral-rich mines of Jharkhand and Odisha, renowned writer and Jnanpith Award winner Amitav Ghosh said here on Thursday.

Speaking at the opening day of the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters (MBIFL), Ghosh said resources have become the bane of people as their native land comes into the crosshair of exploitative economy.

"The uranium mines of Jharkhand are now being exploited by mining companies at the cost of all the local people whose lives are essentially doomed because of the resources they once had. Another good example is Niyamgiri in Odisha."

Panel for 'specific' study on Mussoorie, remedial steps

○ Says NGT in view of Joshimath disaster

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has issued directions to conduct a specific study of the hill station of Mussoorie and formed a nine-member committee to suggest remedial measures for preventing environmental damage.

The tribunal was hearing a matter where it had initiated suo motu proceedings in view of a media report that the recent Joshimath disaster was a warn-

ing for Mussoorie where unplanned constructions continued. A bench comprising Chairperson Justice AK Goel said a holistic study of the carrying capacity of eco-sensitive areas in the Himalayan regions was imperative for protection of the environment.

The bench, also comprising Judicial Member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and Expert Members A Senthil Vel and Afroz Ahmad, said, "Without undermining the

need for study in all eco-sensitive areas... we direct specific study for Mussoorie..."

"Such study may cover as to how much constructions can be allowed and with what safeguards, what safeguards be used for existing buildings and all other relevant and associated aspects including vehicular traffic, sanitation management, maintaining ecological integrity in terms of soil stability and flora/fauna," the bench said.

BJP to contest all 60 Meghalaya seats, 20 seats in Nagaland

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP will contest on all 60 seats of the Meghalaya Assembly and fight the Nagaland elections in an alliance with the state's ruling Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party, contesting on 20 of 60 seats.

BJP secretary and its north-east co-in-charge Rituraj Sinha told reporters on Thursday that the party will fight the Meghalaya polls under the campaign tagline of "M - Power" (Modi power), asserting that people of the state have trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

They believe Modi is the only person who can ensure a corruption-free government and fast track development, he said, noting that this is the first time the BJP will field candidates on all seats of the Meghalaya Assembly.

Nagaland and Meghalaya BJP chief Temjen Inna Along and Ernest Mawrie, respectively also named party candidates approved by the party's central

election committee.

Sinha claimed that people in the northeastern states are fed up of corruption and slow pace of development, even though central government schemes have reached them. They, though, believe that their implementation could have been better, he said.

Chief Minister Conrad Sangma-led National People's Party is in power in Meghalaya.

Though the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is a part of his government, the relations between the two parties have long been far from smooth.

The BJP had contested on 47 seats in the 2018 assembly polls and had won two.

Sinha expressed confidence that the saffron party will do well in the state polls and noted that Modi has visited the northeast region over 50 times in his term. This is more than the visits of all the previous prime ministers put together, he said, adding that Modi has always been to the region with some development package.



IF BONDS NOT FURNISHED WITHIN MONTH

Consider modifying prisoners' bail: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Noting that a number of under-trial prisoners are in jail even after being granted bail, the Supreme Court has asked courts concerned to consider modifying the conditions imposed if the bonds were not furnished within a month.

Issuing a slew of directions, a bench of Justices S K Kaul and Abhay S Oka said one of the reasons that delays the release of an accused or a convict is the insistence upon a local surety and suggested that in such cases, the courts may not impose the condition of local surety.

"In cases where the under-trial or convict requests that he can furnish bail bonds or sureties once released, then in an appropriate case, the court may consider granting temporary bail for a specified period to the accused so that he can furnish bail bonds or sureties."

"If the bail bonds are not furnished within one month from the date of grant of bail, the concerned court may suo motu take up the case and consider whether the conditions of bail require modification or relaxations," the bench said. The top court also directed that a court granting bail to an under-trial prisoner or a convict would be required to e-mail a soft copy of the order to the prisoner through the jail superintendent on the same day or the next day. "The jail superintendent would be required to enter the date of grant of bail in the e-prisons software (or any other software being used by the prison department)."

"If the accused is not released within a period of seven days from the date of grant of bail, it would be the duty of the superintendent of jail to inform the secretary, DLSA, who may depute a paralegal volunteer or jail-visiting advocate to interact with the prisoner and assist the prisoner in all ways possible for his release," the bench said.

The apex court also directed the National Informatics Centre to make attempts to create necessary fields in the e-prison software so that the date of grant of bail and the date of release are entered by the prison department and in case the prisoner is not released within seven days, then an automatic e-mail can be sent to the DLSA secretary.

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The participants visited CBI headquarters, National Forensic Science University (NFSU), Gandhinagar and Mumbai Police control room.

They were briefed about building trust through community policing and management of mass gatherings like Ganapati festival and challenges of terrorism with specific reference of Mumbai terror attacks, the agency said in a statement.

CBI registers preliminary enquiry against Jalandhar Police Commissioner

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a preliminary enquiry against Jalandhar Police Commissioner Kuldeep Singh Chahal for alleged corruption and misconduct during his tenure as the SSP, Chandigarh, officials said on Thursday.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched the enquiry on a reference from Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Banwarilal Purohit, they added.

The 2009-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, who was on deputation in Chandigarh, was sent back to his parent cadre, Punjab, in December last year even though 10 months were left for the completion of his three-year tenure in the Union Territory.

In a letter to the governor, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had expressed surprise over Chahal's premature repatriation and the handing over of the charge to a Haryana-cadre IPS officer, saying this was going to disturb the balance among the states in running the affairs of the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

More than 340 mobile phones recovered in 2.5 months from Delhi jails

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prisons department has recovered over 340 mobile phones from inside jails in the last two-and-a-half months, an official said on Thursday.

"On Wednesday, the jail authorities conducted a raid in jail number 3 and seized 18 mobile phones and chargers. In the last over two months, the jail authorities have seized 348 mobile phones."

"The jail superintendents have started conducting raids after developing intelligence inside the prisons. Through this, the criminal world is now getting a strong message," Baniwal said.

GLOBALISED CRIME SCENARIO

Increased international cooperation among police agencies needed: CBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

CBI Director Subodh Jaiswal on Thursday called for an "imperative need" for increased international cooperation among police agencies in the Globalised crime scenario.

Addressing the valedictory session of the Interpol Young Global Police Leaders Programme (YGPLP) attended by 59 young police officers from 44 countries in Mumbai, Jaiswal said young leaders should imbibe leadership qualities with a wider international perspective.

"Faced with increasing



transnational and complex crimes, the partnerships across jurisdiction and disciplines shall become an increasingly crucial tool for policing," the CBI, which hosted the programme, said in a statement.

According to the CBI, identification, analysis, visualization of concepts to help build

or maintain trust within global criminal investigation; importance of international cooperation and the role of Interpol as its proponent and global network building would become of essence, it said.

International coaches and trainers interacted with participants during the programme where topics such as emerging trends in policing, issues of growing challenge for law enforcement, need to build trust with citizens and fighting crime in an increasingly digitalized world were discussed.

The participants got an exposure of the Indian Police

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA REVENUE DEPARTMENT NOTIFICATION BY DISTRICT COLLECTOR, JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY FORM-C NOTIFICATION						Inspector, Raja Raja S/o Pochiah Nadigota Ravindra S/o Pedita Sammakiah Bendi Upendar S/o Lachi Reddy Sheela Gouramma W/o Durgiah Uduri Odulu s/o Laamiah Beddi Mahankiah S/o Venkiah Rawla Sammakiah S/o Laamiah Sunani Chandrasekh S/o Laamiah Jangirala Vijaya W/o Lingiah Arunuri Vasanthi W/o Ungemurthy Yeluguri Vijay Kumar S/o Chandrasekh Sheela Laxmi W/o Narayana Dandu Rajamogili, S/o Rajanarsiah Kunti Laxmi, W/o Lingiah Dandu Sudhakar, S/o Rajanarsiah Dandu Ramesh, S/o Rajanarsiah Dandu Naresht, S/o Madhusani Thandra Ashwiniadam, S/o Sammakiah Pulipaka Mallesh, S/o Baniah Bodhula Chamaiah, S/o Maliah Bodhula Pochiah, S/o Sammakiah Kunti Lingiah, S/o Laamiah Indrapu Rajamma, W/o Jakkiah Thandra Sammakiah, S/o Baliah Rawla Sammakiah, S/o Pochiah Indrapu Jakkiah, S/o Gattiah Beddi Mahankiah, S/o Venkiah				
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / Collector, Jayashankar Bhupalpally that a total of Ac. 6-31 1/4 gts land is required in the Kapuram village of Malhar Rao Mandal, Jayashankar Bhupalpally District for publicpurpose namely Tadicherla - I Captive Coam Mine at Tadicherla village of Malhar Rao Mandal.						Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
As per the Right to Fair compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, the District Collector, Jayashankar Bhupalpally (Appropriate Government) declares that the proposed acquisition comes under exempted category as defined under 10 A (1) (b) and 6 (2) of the said act and as such the provisions of Chapter - II and Chapter -III of the act shall not apply to this case.						Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
Therefore it is notified that for the above said project, a piece of land measuring more or less Ac. 6-31 1/4 gts of standard measurement, situated in the Kapuram Village of Malhar Rao Mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally District is proposed for acquisition whose detailed description is as following:						Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
SCHEDULE OF LANDS						Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
Villages: Kapuram; Mandal: Malhar Rao; Dist: Jayashankar Bhupalpally						Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
Sr. No.	Sy. No.	Type of Title	Area under acquisition in Ac-Gts	Name of the Pattadar, Occupant & Enjoyer with Father / Husband Name	Area Structures (sq ft)	Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
1	375	Shikm	3-25	Pattadar as per Dharani Pahari TSGENCO Enjoyer as per Survey report Shikam	-	Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)				
2	488	Govt.	1-06	Pattadar as per Dharani Pahari TSGENCO Enjoyer as per Survey report Chintala Laamiah S/o Ellari (D-06 & Well) Chintala Rajiah S/o Ellari (D-04) Thota Kirishiah S/o Maaniah (D-04 1/2) Thota Pochiah S/o Maaniah (D-04 1/2) Kuna Gattiah S/o Laamiah (D-06) Sheelam Laamiah S/o Laamiah (D-07) Well & Bore) Sheela Ramesh S/o Narayana (D-07) Sheelam Gouramma W/o Durgiah (D-07) Pattadar as per Dharani Pahari TSGENCO Enjoyer as per Survey report Beemuri Pochiah S/o Bondiah (D-04) Chintala Sammakia W/o Pochiah (D-04) Rawla Sammakiah W/o Laamiah (D-03) Kuna Gattiah W/o Laamiah (D-03 & Well) Thota Pochiah S/o Maaniah (D-04) Chintala Rajiah S/o Ellari (D-04) Endarapu Chandraiah S/o Bal Arakiah (D-04) Sheelam Laamiah S/o Laamiah (Well) Sheelam Gouramma W/o Durgiah (D-07) Sheelam Ramesh S/o Narayana (D-07) Kothapelli Rajesh S/o Sampanth	Well-1 Bore-1 Well-1 Well-2	5.586	Govt.	1-00	Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)	
3	489	Govt.	D-33	Pattadar as per Dharani Pahari TSGENCO Tadara Sarithosh Kumar S/o Raja Pochiah Nadigota Raja Sammakiah S/o Pedita Sammakiah Indrapu Sammakiah S/o Chandraiah Indrapu Rajesh S/o Lingiah Putam Ramesh S/o Kirishiah Dandu Sammakia W/o Komuriah Indrapu Durgamma W/o Rayamallu Akkappa Mallesh S/o Lingiah Kanne Rani W/o Sudhakar Indrapu Raja Pochiah S/o Komuriah Sheela Lakshmi W/o Narayana Choppan Rajiah S/o Rayamallu Tippani Rajiah S/o Pochiah Kanna Rajesh S/o Lingiah Dandu Sammakia W/o Komuriah Soppari Ravi Kumar S/o Odulu Jangirala Mallesh S/o Durgiah Dandu Sammakia W/o Komuriah Sheela Mahender S/o Odulu Sheela Laxmiah S/o Maliah Nadigota Sampanth S/o Pedita Sammakiah Kandiah Naresht S/o Laamiah Tippani Rajesh S/o Pochiah Indrapu Mallesh S/o Baddiah Malivenu Laamiah S/o Pedita Ramesh Sheela Laxmi W/o Narayana Indrapu Chandrasekh S/o Balakiah Madravana Lingamma W/o Laamiah Jangirala Vijaya W/o Lingiah Indrapu Mahesh S/o Ramesh Sheela Ramesh S/o Narayana Yeluguri Vijay Kumar S/o Chandrasekh	Well-2	5.586	Govt.	1-00	Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)	
4	574	Govt.	D-07%	Pattadar as per Dharani Pahari TSGENCO Tadara Sarithosh Kumar S/o Raja Pochiah Nadigota Raja Sammakiah S/o Pedita Sammakiah Indrapu Sammakiah S/o Chandraiah Indrapu Rajesh S/o Lingiah Putam Ramesh S/o Kirishiah Dandu Sammakia W/o Komuriah Indrapu Durgamma W/o Rayamallu Akkappa Mallesh S/o Lingiah Kanne Rani W/o Sudhakar Indrapu Raja Pochiah S/o Komuriah Sheela Lakshmi W/o Narayana Choppan Rajiah S/o Rayamallu Tippani Rajiah S/o Pochiah Kanna Rajesh S/o Lingiah Dandu Sammakia W/o Komuriah Soppari Ravi Kumar S/o Odulu Jangirala Mallesh S/o Durgiah Dandu Sammakia W/o Komuriah Sheela Mahender S/o Odulu Sheela Laxmiah S/o Maliah Nadigota Sampanth S/o Pedita Sammakiah Kandiah Naresht S/o Laamiah Tippani Rajesh S/o Pochiah Indrapu Mallesh S/o Baddiah Malivenu Laamiah S/o Pedita Ramesh Sheela Laxmi W/o Narayana Indrapu Chandrasekh S/o Balakiah Madravana Lingamma W/o Laamiah Jangirala Vijaya W/o Lingiah Indrapu Mahesh S/o Ramesh Sheela Ramesh S/o Narayana Yeluguri Vijay Kumar S/o Chandrasekh	Well-2	5.586	Govt.	1-00	Enjoyer as per Survey report Sheela Ramesh, S/o Narayana (D-03) Sheela Laxmiah, S/o Maliah (D-03 1/2) Kothapelli Shaleja, W/o Raja (D-01)	
Total						6-31 1/4				
This notification is made under the provisions of Section-11(1) of The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act no.30/2013), as amended by the Right to Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act, 2016 (Act No.21 of 2017) to all whom it may concern. A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Land Acquisition Officer L.A., and R&R, Irrigation Projects Jayashankar Bhupalpally, on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Collector-cum-Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize the L.A.O. & R.D.O., Bhupalpally and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the sub-soil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section-12 of the said Act. Under section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector. Objections to the acquisition if any, and claims from all the persons interested/affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land within 60 (Sixty) days from the date of publication of this Notification provided under section 15 of the Act, before District Collector/Authorized Officer. Sd/- Land Acquisition Officer, Bhupalpally Sd/- Joint Collector, Bhupalpally Sd/- District Collector, Bhupalpally Sd/- Revenue Divisional Officer, Bhupalpally DIPR No.1195/LA/PP-Pub/2023-23										

Time to act

The Government and regulators must ensure the meltdown of Adani stocks doesn't cause more pain

Amid the war in Ukraine, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message to Russian President Vladimir Putin was: "Today's era must not be of war." With bloodbath on Dalal Street unabated, his Government must send a similar message across the political parties. The facts are horrifying. After the publication of the Hindenburg Research report, the market-cap of seven listed Adani Group companies has declined by about \$100 billion. The Adani Group had to call off its Rs 20,000-crore follow-on public offering (FPO), the largest in the country, to shield its investors from potential losses. Group chairman Gautam Adani said in a statement that "it would not be morally correct" to proceed with the FPO. In fact, the entire stock market, especially banking scrips, has suffered because of the meltdown of Adani shares. Even the excellent Budget, which has been widely hailed as pro-growth, could not lift the investors' spirits. It must be noted here that the free fall of Adani shares should not be seen as something that only its promoters and investors (institutional or retail) should be worried about; this also affects banks which have lent to the group. Furthermore, this also affects the public exchequer, for most banks in our country are in the public sector; and losses to them necessitate recapitalisation, which the taxpayer has to bear. Consider this fact: public sector banks had to be paid Rs 310,997 crore of taxpayer money for their recapitalisation in just four years, between 2016-17 and 2020-21.

Against this backdrop, the response of the political class to the crisis occasioned by the US short-seller Hindenburg's report is anything but responsible; instead of taking on the crisis head on, our politicians are trying to score brownie points. In Parliament, Opposition parties demanded a discussion on the risks Indian investors face because of the unrelenting decline of Adani shares. They also demanded an investigation by a parliamentary committee or one appointed by the Supreme Court. Both Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected these demands, leading to pandemonium in the Houses. The Government's silence over the mayhem in the capital market is not helping anyone. The Adani Group has also failed to convince the investors. Calling Hindenburg as the "Madoffs of Manhattan" which has "no credibility or ethics" doesn't do any good to the conglomerate. Its invocation of nationalism — labeling Hindenburg's allegations as not "merely an unwarranted attack on any specific company but a calculated attack on India" and its growth story — also cut no ice. Not with the investors anyway; the Hindenburg report seems to have woken them up, for it was not secret that Adani stocks were majorly overvalued. Hindenburg's allegations of fraud and market manipulation are new though. Even if the allegations are wrong, one wonders why didn't the regulators never warned and took against overvaluation. It is time for action.

PICTALK



Sand artist Ajay Rawat creates a sand art for the upcoming Jaisalmer Desert Festival 2023, in Pushkar

Don't Weaken MNREGA

Allocation for MNREGA has been slashed in the Budget which would hit hard the downtrodden

While the tax slabs hogged the limelight of the Budget 2023 presented by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, one thing that has been overlooked by most is that the budget for the MNREGA has been slashed along with other social security schemes. The impact of weakening MNREGA could be really bad for the rural poor. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) is the lifeline for poor village women workers who work in the vicinity of their homes to earn their subsistence. The Finance Minister has reduced the allocation to MNREGA to Rs 60,000 crore, the lowest in the last four budgets. This year's budget allocation for the scheme has declined by 29000 crores. The scheme was introduced in 2005 by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance and is aimed at ensuring the livelihood security of households in rural areas. The demand-driven scheme guarantees 100 days of unskilled work annually for every rural household and covers all districts in the country. In fact, it has been so popular that even the World Bank took note of it and praised it. MNREGA has been ranked as the world's largest public works program by the World Bank, providing social security net to almost 15 percent of the country's population.

Besides MNREGS, the government has cut down the National Social Assistance Program to Rs 9,636.32 crore from the 2022-23 revised estimate of Rs 9,652 crore. The program provides financial assistance to the elderly, widows, and persons with disabilities in the form of social pensions. The budget for Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2, aimed at welfare of children and women, has been brought down to Rs 20,263 from the 2022-'23 revised estimate of Rs 20,554. It is rather sad that the Central Government is reducing the subsidies and also weakening the social security net which is the need of the hour, especially after the pandemic as many people who suffered have not recovered fully. MNREGA is an excellent scheme for it provides work and does not give freebies and that too in the vicinity of the beneficiaries so is convenient for the women. In 2022-23 6.49 crore households demanded work under the Scheme. Out of this, 6.48 crore households were offered employment by the government. The budget allocation to MNREGA as for other social schemes must not be cut, it would hit the poorest of the poor. The Govt must revise its budget allocation to strengthen the social security.

Budget booster for tech-economy

The Finance Minister has done well to give a fillip to the tech-based skills in the budget to give a leg up to the economy

This 'techade' (decade of technology) will serve as an important period to close the gaps in digitization and accelerate growth in the nation's technology sector. 2023 has been identified as a crucial year for the elimination of the digital divide, as stated in The NITI Aayog 'India @ 75' report, and aggressively strengthening digital literacy, specifically among rural demographics and marginalized communities, is of the essence. The Union Budget 2023-24, steered by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, by placing emphasis on both inclusive development and youth empowerment among its key economic priorities, sets a positive tone for the way forward.

Several progressive initiatives were announced during the Budget presentation, including the expansion of the Skill India Digital platform and its linking with employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 to skill lakhs of youth in modern technologies like AI, robotics, and soft skills would enable future-ready talent, especially from Tier 2 and 3 cities at scale and foster greater employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship has been given a major fillip through the introduction of collectives formed to support entrepreneurs with product design, branding, product marketing, and market expansion. The efforts of mobilizing resources and enabling entrepreneurship opportunities for rural women will be instrumental in facilitating better livelihoods for marginalized communities. As the technology and skilling ecosystem joins the nation in formulating its vision for 'India @ 100', considering current systemic realities and strategizing solutions to bridge crucial gaps is the need of the hour. The NITI Aayog, in its 'India @ 75' report, identifies a few of these challenges that need to be overcome in order to support the empowerment of marginalized demographics: a) limited industry knowledge and immersion among graduates, b)



little to no integration of the informal sector into the skill economy, c) limited provisions to align skilling certifications with international parameters, d) limited avenues for an apprenticeship, e) little to no inclusion of vocational training as a part of the educational curriculum. Achieving inclusive digitization, catalyzing rural women's empowerment, and accelerating the pace of skilling would call for a comprehensive strategy rooted in an understanding of the complex issues facing each priority area.

Social stigma prevalent in sections of rural society prevents women from gaining access to mobile devices, let alone having access to the internet. Research conducted by J-PAL in Niger reveals that families with women members having access to mobile devices and the internet contributed greatly to their agency in family decisions. Empowering women through access to technology and quality entrepreneurship opportunities has a ripple effect on the local community and the economy at large. Lessons from grassroots initiatives also reveal that connecting digitization and skilling initiatives to a strong objective had a higher degree of success among women beneficiaries. Rural women, for instance, had a greater chance of acquainting

SEVERAL PROGRESSIVE INITIATIVES WERE ANNOUNCED DURING THE BUDGET PRESENTATION, INCLUDING THE EXPANSION OF THE SKILL INDIA DIGITAL PLATFORM

themselves with the internet in order to support their children's education. Encouraging the use of mobile technology among women and sustaining a well-knit entrepreneurial ecosystem with provisions for knowledge sharing can help counter social stigma and restrictive gender ideas.

The Budget announcements tailored to increase the knowledge base of the rural youth can be further complemented by incentives for apprenticeship and mentorship programs. The Union Budget for the previous financial year laid the foundation for digital skilling through initiatives such as the DESH Stack e-portal and the launch of several online courses aimed at increasing employability among the youth and equipping them with the tools to build a stable livelihood. Aligning the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) with the evolving requirements of multiple industries was also a priority. Apprenticeship programs incentivize rural youth to gain employment experience in close proximity to their place of stay and subsequently enrich their community's skill base. Mentorship programs can help them be aware of the career opportunities awaiting them and give them access to hands-on training that will enhance their growth prospects. More

rural youth can be included in the skilled talent pool of India by way of these initiatives.

Acknowledging and understanding the heterogeneity of rural demographics is the first step toward designing, strategizing, and deploying solutions. Placing the user at the center of any intervention and facilitating its seamless integration into their routines are crucial to their success. In a similar vein, programs such as Aspirational Districts and the newly announced Aspirational Blocks Programme can efficiently close the key infrastructure and knowledge gaps in rural regions. Maintaining the momentum of digital skilling drives and expanding its ambit to demographics that have little to no access to the internet or cell phones will remain a key priority for 2023 and the years to come. With the appropriate Budgetary push both at and Union and State levels, many of the challenges that hamper the expansion of upskilling programs can be effectively addressed. All round-stakeholder participation will be required to support the budgetary initiatives and make inclusive digitization a reality.

(The writer is CEO NASSCOM Foundation, a social development sector professional. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DON'T FORGET THE DOWNTRODDEN

Sir — A much popular veteran Bollywood superstar had tweeted with much pleasure that the "whole country" will go to sleep "peacefully" at night from now (following the attainment of that statistical jugglery named "Century of Centuries" by a certain cricketer "God")! That means the poorest of poor dominating the landscape of India were possessing only one aspiration in life — "When that elusive 100th ton would come"! Now that it has come, we can afford to "enjoy" a "sound sleep" or "sweet dreams" every night! What a naked display of inhuman indifference to the plight of millions of Indians who have to go to bed with deadly pangs of hunger in their stomachs night after night! Or might be in the eyes of class-conscious Indians, the marginalised poor simply don't exist or just do not matter at all! After all the country is the "zamindari" of privileged class only; no wonder why "subsidies" to poor are so frowned upon, but tax breaks concessions free medical/travel facilities for the industrialists corporate honchos and high salaried class are always welcomed with open arms in the name of "incentives"! In this pathetic inhumanitarian perspective, it is natural that the trumpet of "Each and every Indian today stands at the summit of self-confidence" would be blown in regular intervals!

When millions are at their wits' end how to survive the day, procure health care with unaccountable children getting brutally exploited in labour market (not to speak of bonded labours) and adults compelled to leave for civil war-torn Middle East or Africa to toil in slave-like conditions; how heartlessly can an image of an exclusive well-fed much-nourished India being blatantly projected either to sweep the scars of the society under "patriotic" carpet or to simply convey that non-privileged Indians do not matter at all in "national consciousness"! Nothing can be more heartless than such a mindset!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

India on top of the world



India is on top of the world, won the 3rd T20 versus New Zealand by a big margin of 168 runs. It won the series hands down 2-1. It fell short of just 5 runs to equal the world record

SAVE TREES, SAVE LIFE

Sir — The Tree is a big creature of nature, it is very beneficial thing for entire world, it purifies the earth from pollution and gives fresh air, most important thing is it gives shade, fruits and food for Animals, its wood have many benefits too, people make different furniture. In India the government forbids people to cut down the tree, but many people do cut down and take their wood for burning and making food, as a result the air has been polluted. If the air is polluted how can we survive?

That is why many of the campaigns to save trees are launched. Your planet needs you, unite to combat, climate change, Pure air is nothing but life. Save forest Save wildlife. Save trees!

Sufyan Nazeer Al Qasmi | Bijnor

THE MALES DOMINATE THE JOBS

Sir — The overall job scenario both in terms of nature and duration of contracts is strongly tilted in favour of males as females often tend to lose job on account of family compulsions, night shifts and other economic constraints that several surveys and studies have clearly demonstrated. Enrollment must increase in S.T. E.M.Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics for women folk so as to make it more representative and economically viable. The All India

margin of Romania. The highest T20 cricket's victory margin records are: 173 runs margin of Romania (on 29th Aug 2019) and 172 runs margin of Sri Lanka (vs Kenya in Sept 2007). India scored a big score of 234 for 4 in the 3rd T20. Indian bowlers mowed NZ to a paltry 66 off 12.1 overs. All cricket fans are waiting for the Australian team's visit to India, for 4 test matches series (9th Feb to 13th Mar 2023) and 3 ODIs series (17th, 19th and 22nd Mar 2023). So long test series of 4 matches, after a long time for India and cricket fans.

PV Srinivas Nivriti | Secunderabad

Survey on Higher Education report (A.I.S.H.E.) 2020 21 report too shows some worrisome trends, like more men opting for sciences and less women folk taking science steam which must change for the better irrespective of the fact that women enrolment has increased manifold from 18.8 million in 2019 .20 to 20.1 million in 2020.21.

However, women are under represented in engineering and management courses i.e. less than 30% and 40% respectively. The U.G.C. has come up with a plan to conduct Social outreach programmes by involving parents special interactive sessions. So, harnessing the true potential of skilled female labour force will not just launch the country on the path of development but also reduce gender disparity apart from making them economically secure. An enabling environment in work places by providing women mentors can be encouraging. The educationalists and policymakers have their task cut out. Let us not forget women are fifty percent of humanity and they deserve a better deal. Give them a better deal and the world would become a better place.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Almora

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Today's budget is against the poor people. It's anti-people. That's why I condemn this budget. There is no light in this budget, it's only darkness. It contains lies, bluff. It's to show people something and misinformation because of upcoming elections.

West Bengal chief minister — Mamata Banerjee

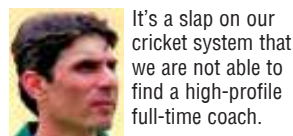


The activists who carried out the demonstrations act as "useful idiots" for foreign powers who want to inflict harm on the Scandinavian country as it seeks to join NATO.

Swedish Prime Minister — Ulf Kristersson

I love my wife. I love my family. I'm in love with life. I think that is what reaches the audience.

Actor — Vicky Kaushal



Former Pakistan captain — Misbah-ul-Haq Misbah

MitrKaal' Budget has: No vision to create Jobs No plan to tackle Mehngai No intent to stem Inequality. This Budget proves Govt has No roadmap to build India's future.

Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

FIRST COLUMN

ECO-POLITICAL SURVEY HAS EYES ON '24 POLLS


It highlights the reforms regime brought in by current Govt



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The Economic Survey is a policy document that gives a diagnostic report regarding the state of the economy and growth prospects. The survey for 2022-23 (based on nearly nine months of economic data for the fiscal) is far more insightful on the tone of the eco-political narrative, which is going to play out in the run up to the mother of all democratic processes, the national general elections of 2024.

In a somewhat break from past Economic Surveys, this year's economic survey seems more of a political document, highlighting through charts, graphs and illustrations, the economic welfare agenda of the current government starting from 2014. It was expected to be in the budget, but with the economic survey grabbing many of those, easy to grasp charts, suggests that the Modi government is really gearing up for pushing India to be the third largest world economy in about a decade's time (caveat that is two new governments, one or both of which is unlikely to have Mr Modi leading the country from the front).



The Economic Survey highlights the reforms regime brought in by the current government immediately after it came to power, which were aimed at enhancing the overall structural efficiency and fundamentals of the economy. The finance ministry's press statement read: "With an underlying emphasis on improving the ease of living and doing business, the reforms after 2014 were based on the broad principles of creating public goods, adopting trust-based governance, co-partnering with the private sector for development, and improving agricultural productivity."

Some examples of those reforms included improved fiscal transparency and realistic revenue assumptions in the budget bringing down extra budgetary borrowings for the government to nearly nil for fiscal year 2023. The major reforms from previous budget documents highlighted in the economic survey included reduction in non-plan expenditure in the budget, thereby, efficiently streamlining government's expenditures towards targeted sectors, while sticking to a fiscal discipline.

The merger of the railways budget with the main budget since fiscal year 2018 helped the government have better management of finances and allowed the finance ministry to focus more money on the integrated infrastructure divisions of railways, roads and ports more efficiently. The Economic Survey did not mention that this smart move brought an efficiency in railways governance, which prior 2014, has been used as a separate vote bank, since some of the most visible and sought after government jobs are in the railways. Finally, the Economic survey does highlight that advancing the general budget to February 1 gives an additional month for all departments of the government for better planning and implementation of the budget schemes.

It is important to understand that the Economic survey presents a macro narrative for the political economy. This document has tons of easily digestible data. The Survey for the first time includes chapters on social sector and climate change and environment, two themes very close to the Prime Minister's inclusive sustainable economic growth agenda. The preface reads, "These chapters highlight how the use of technology has enhanced the quality of life for citizens to ensure the reach of social sector schemes to intended beneficiaries, especially during the pandemic. The transformations in the lives of the citizens happening through the Aspirational Districts Programme, Direct Benefit Transfers, use of Aadhaar and various initiatives in the education, health and basic infrastructure availability are highlights of the chapter."

Clearly the economic report card of Modi government's two consecutive terms is out, and much to the innovative thinking of the current bunch of policy makers, who have pushed it out even before the opposition parties have asked for it. This sets the agenda and helps the political class to take the lead in the perception game. It is up to the various political players within the ruling dispensation to take advantage.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Bringing back OPS may be catastrophic



UTTAM GUPTA

The new pension scheme or NPS has addressed the inequity issue by providing a platform to the private sector

Even as the finances of states were beginning to look better as reflected in decline in the ratio of state government debt to GDP from 31.2 per cent during 2021-22 to 29.5 per cent during 2022-23—as per the budgetary estimate (BE)—the political brass in different states have made populist announcements which don't augur well for the future. One of these relates to the revival of the old pension scheme (OPS).

Making a statement in the Lok Sabha, the Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad said, "The state governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand have informed the Central government about their decisions to restart OPS for their respective employees."

The Congress government in Himachal Pradesh has also announced restoration of OPS. In view of impending elections in nine state assemblies during 2023 and almost all non-BJP parties more than willing to please voters, more and more states are expected to join the bandwagon. As for the central government employees, although for now, Karad informed Parliament that the Centre has no proposal to resurrect the OPS.

At the outset, let us understand pension. A pension provides a person with monthly income when he is old and hence not productive enough to be able to earn. The increase in life expectancy and rise in the cost of living further reinforces the need for assured monthly income for a decent and dignified life in old age.

Under the OPS, retired employees received 50 per cent of their last drawn salary as monthly pension. As on date, the minimum pension paid by the government is Rs 9,000 a month, and the maximum is Rs 62,500 (50 per cent of the highest pay in the Central government, which is Rs 125,000 a month).

Just as the government offers its employees an adjustment in dearness allowance or DA - calculated as a percentage of the basic salary - to offset increase in the cost of living, the monthly payouts of pensioners also increases. Since, the DA hikes are announced twice a year, generally in January and July, a retiree also gets hikes in pension. For instance, with a 4 per cent increase in DA, a pensioner eligible for Rs 62,500 would get a monthly pension of Rs 65,000.

A government employee under OPS could not have gotten anything better. He was entitled to a decent 'pre-determined' monthly amount; the pension was fully protected against inflation and got it as long as he lived. After death, his wife gets the same amount for seven years and thereafter the family pension being around 60 per cent of this till she is alive.

However, from the perspective of the government, the arrangement could not have been worse. Given the architecture of the scheme, there was an inherent tendency of pension liabilities to balloon due



AS ON OCTOBER 31, 2022, APART FROM AROUND 8,200,000 NPS SUBSCRIBERS IN THE GOVERNMENT (STATES 5,900,000 AND CENTRE 2,300,000), THE CORPORATE SECTOR HAD ABOUT 1,600,000 SUBSCRIBERS, AND THE UNORGANISED SECTOR 2,550,000

(The author is a policy analyst)



to addition to the pensioners' club every year, higher salaries of those joining, inflation indexation, increased longevity and so on. The proof of pudding is in the eating.

In 1990-91, the Centre's pension bill was Rs 3,272 crore. By 2020-21, it had jumped 58 times to Rs 190,886 crore. The outgo for all states put together shot up 125 times from Rs 3,131 crore in 1990-91 to Rs 386,001 crore in 2020-21. Overall, pension payments by states accounted for a quarter of their own tax revenues.

For some states, pension payments took away a much higher share of their own tax revenue. For Himachal Pradesh, it was 80 per cent whereas for Punjab and Rajasthan, it was 35 per cent and 30 per cent respectively.

After payment of wages and salaries to the serving employees and other routine expenses, hardly any money was left with these states for meeting development and welfare expenses.

Prudent financial management required that every year, the government set aside capital which together with return accruing thereon would create a growing corpus sufficient to pay for the pension liabilities. This would have provided for a sustainable basis for discharging these liabilities without causing any stress on the budget. In short, there was a need for funding the pension liability. That was never done.

Instead, both the Centre and states have followed 'pay-as-you-go' impacting their budgets in a totally uncontrolled manner, besides making the present generation of taxpayers to bear the continuously rising burden of pensioners. Moreover, given the persistent shortfall in tax revenue, they

were forced to borrow more and more thereby passing on the burden to future generations of taxpayers as well.

According to an expert committee (2000) under S A Dave, a former chairman of SEBI, on Old Age Social and Income Security (OASIS), just 3.4 crore people, or less than 11 per cent of the estimated total working population of 31.4 crore (as per 1991 census), had some post-retirement income security such as government pension, Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), or the Employee Pension Scheme (EPS).

The rest of the workforce had no means of post-retirement economic security. In this backdrop, using a disproportionate share of state resources for benefiting a tiny section of the working population was iniquitous and unconscionable.

To address the above concerns, a new pension scheme (NPS) was introduced for government employees joining service from January 1, 2004. NPS is a contributory pension scheme under which employees contribute 10 per cent of their salary (Basic + Dearness Allowance). The government contributes 14 per cent towards the employees' NPS accounts.

NPS is free from all the malaises afflicting OPS. It offers a self-financing and fully funded arrangement for discharging pension liabilities in which the state knows for certain 'how much it has to contribute'. There won't be any major stress on the budget even as the employee gets a good pension depending on the amount of contribution made, the age of joining, type of investment, and the income accruing from that investment.

Under this scheme, the pensioner enjoys a lot of flexibility; he

can increase the pension amount by asking his fund manager to invest in say a 'growth fund' wherein 50 per cent of the corpus can be put in equity which is capable of generating better returns than investment in corporate bonds or government securities.

The government has made NPS more attractive by offering fiscal incentives such as deduction up to 10 per cent of salary (basic+ DA) within overall ceiling of Rs.150,000/- u/s 80C in respect of employee contribution; deduction up to Rs.50,000 u/s 80 CCD(1B) for additional (albeit voluntary) contribution and deduction up to 10 per cent of salary u/s 80 CCD(2) towards employer contribution (this is over and above the limits u/s 80C).

The NPS has also addressed the inequity issue by providing a platform to the private sector, including the unorganised sector to secure pension post-retirement.

As on October 31, 2022, apart from around 8,200,000 subscribers in the government (states 5,900,000 and Centre 2,300,000), the corporate sector had about 1,600,000 subscribers, and the unorganised sector 2,550,000. In addition, there were around 4,200,000 subscribers under the NPS Swavalamban scheme—designed especially for the poor and the under-privileged citizens.

Having made good progress in providing a sustainable basis for financing pension liabilities under NPS, for states now to go back to OPS is a retrograde move. This must be avoided or else India could plunge into fiscal catastrophe, come 2034 when they will have to start paying pension to the first lot of those who came under NPS in 2004 and now being shifted to OPS.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE INDIAN RAILWAYS CAPITAL OUTLAY HAS BEEN SET AT 2.40 LAKH CRORE, HIGHEST EVER; 9X OF WHAT WAS IN 2013.

— FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN



IS THIS FOR THE EMPLOYEES OR FOR NEW RECRUITMENTS OR IS IT JUST FOR THE MODERNISATION OF RAILWAYS BEFORE SELLING IT TO PRIVATE COMPANIES.

— CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER BHUPESH BAGHEL



Cyber security, technical education on the horizon

The Indian education sector will see a surge in courses such as risk assessment, financial fraud protection, and system auditing

The government has been at the forefront of driving technology-led initiatives through flagship programmes like Startup India and Digital India to foster a favorable business environment for existing and new businesses to become global unicorns. Therefore, it is now the best time to encourage Indian students to choose cyber security as a career option to introduce young talent at the gates of Indian cyber security.

The education sector in India is sprouting with both elaborate masterclasses and crash courses to facilitate technical education among the youth and cope with its trend simultaneously. Cyber security employment will be in a great demand in future if the



ABHISHEK MITRA

(The author is CEO and Founder of Indian Cyber Security Solutions)

current trend continues.

India's cyber security colleges have been offering a variety of courses that are relevant to the shifting conditions. Given India's massive demand for cyber security specialists, anyone interested in studying a cyber-security education will benefit in the long run. Technical education promotes manpower development and equips persons with skills that will enable them to create, develop and establish industries in various areas.

There are several reasons contributing to the buzz across the education sector pertaining to cyber security and technical education. One of the major factors that are causing Indian students to be more inclined towards cyber security and technical education-based

courses is a global wave of demand for skilled resources in these disciplines. This upsurge in demand has come with the advent of the technology-based revolution which positively impacted all sectors from government to banking. This trend is also evergreen by design, as the new frontier of industries will require a knowledge and tech-skill-based workforce. Owing to this, students are demanding more related courses. Also, there is a demand for a sustainable career, which is future shock proof. We are all familiar with the buzz of how growing advancements in the field of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation is causing the eradication of the human labour force.

However, this threat is not

there in the domain of cyber security and other technical-based jobs because it requires constant human intervention and check-ups along with building new frameworks and firewalls; this as of today is not efficiently possible by AI or ML alone. As a result, high schools, community colleges, policymakers, and families are trying to prepare children for a rapidly changing future, and stakeholders across the Indian education ecosystem are competing to provide them with better technical education.

The enormous demand for a competent cyber security savvy and technically sound workforce have arisen across a variety of different sectors as a result of how internet and software integration has affected all industries, sectors, and sub-sectors, bringing about a fundamental change in the way things are done. Financial institutions, law businesses, real estate companies, stock brokerage firms, insurance companies, and many more are examples of the range and amount of demand from which students can choose.

The government realised the significance of technical courses and how they can contribute to the nation's society and economy. Multi-disciplinarity and a holistic education across the technical studies to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge forms is a salient feature of the New Education Policy-2020. The government endeavoured for the promotion of technical education across the country by establishing various Institutes of National Importance that include 23 Indian Institutes of Technology, Scheme for promotion of Research and Academic Collaboration (SPARC), National Initiative for Design Innovation (NIDI), Scheme for Transformational and Advanced Research in Sciences (STARS), etc., are implemented in the Ministry of Education for the promotion of technical education and research ecosystem in Higher Education Institutes.

Auxiliary factors responsible for the rapid growth of the hype in cybersecurity-related courses and other technical courses is the scarcity of efficient talent in the tech-first labor market coupled with the huge and diver-

MONEY MATTERS

Samsung to make premium Galaxy S23 smartphones

Korean smart devices maker Samsung on Thursday said it will manufacture its premium Galaxy S23 smartphones in India to cater to local market requirements. At present, Galaxy S Series smartphones are being manufactured at Samsung's Vietnam factory and the company imports them for sale in India. "All Galaxy S23 smartphones sold in India will be manufactured at the company's Noida factory. Samsung already fulfils a majority of the domestic demand in India through local manufacturing at the Noida factory. Samsung's decision to sell 'Made in India' Galaxy S23 smartphones shows the company's commitment to India's manufacturing and growth story," Samsung said in a statement. The development comes a day after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced removal of duty on import of camera lens, which is one of the key unique selling propositions of Galaxy S series smartphones.



Max Healthcare Q3 PAT rises 7% to Rs 269 crore

Max Healthcare Institute on Thursday reported a 7 per cent increase in its consolidated profit after tax at Rs 269 crore for the December quarter. The healthcare provider had posted a profit after tax of Rs 252 crore in the October-December period of last fiscal. Network gross revenue increased to Rs 1,559 crore, reflecting a 13 per cent year-on-year growth, Max Healthcare said in a statement. "By virtue of focus on healthcare infrastructure, research and skilling as well as ground breaking policies such as National Digital Healthcare Mission, Heal In India and Heal By India, the government has established a solid foundation to enable the private sector players in India to cater to both domestic and global requirements at affordable prices," Max Healthcare Institute Chairman and MD Abhay said. Shares of the company ended 0.23 per cent down at Rs 440.4 apiece on the BSE.



Gold rallies Rs 770 amid strong global trends

Gold price rallied Rs 770 to a record high of Rs 58,680 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a jump in precious metal prices internationally, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had settled at Rs 57,910 per 10 grams. Silver also zoomed Rs 1,491 to Rs 71,666 per kilogram. "Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at a record high of Rs 58,680 per 10 grams, up Rs 770 per 10 grams," said an analyst at HDFC Securities. In the overseas market, both gold and silver were traded in green at USD 1,956 per ounce and USD 24.15 per ounce, respectively. Comex gold prices traded their highest levels in more than nine months in Asian trading hours on Thursday after investors access dovish policy from US Federal reserve, the analyst said. On Wednesday, the Fed hiked 0.25 basis point rate after a year of larger hikes.



India for consensus on regulating crypto currency

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amidst turmoil in crypto currencies market, India is working with the Financial Stability Board (FSB) so that a consensus on a roadmap for regulating virtual assets could be agreed at during India's G-20 presidency itself, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said on Thursday. India as assumed G-20 presidency for 2023. The G20 is a premier forum for international economic cooperation that plays an important role in global economic governance. In an interview to PTI, Seth said that an IMF paper on crypto assets was discussed among emerging economies on January 15 and 16 in Delhi. "We had a one-and-a-half day workshop. Thereafter, they are drafting a paper for a seminar, which will be conducted on the sidelines of G20 Finance



We are also working with the FSB and the idea is that during India's presidency at least the policy stance to crypto assets as well as the roadmap for regulation is broadly agreed upon among the G-20 members

Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Bengaluru that is scheduled on February 23," he said. That seminar is intended at arriving at a policy consensus on crypto assets, he said. At the same time, he said, "We are also working with the FSB and the idea is that during India's presidency at least the policy stance to crypto assets as well as the roadmap

for regulation is broadly agreed upon among the G-20 members." Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman at various occasions had said that India will press for collective efforts to deal with the spillovers of happenings in advanced economies as well as global regulation of crypto assets to check terror funding under its G20 presidency.

The minister outlined eight areas, including reforms in multilateral institutions and food and energy security, for discussion under its G20 presidency which has begun from December 1. The recent collapse of the crypto exchange FTX and the ensuing sell-off in the crypto markets have placed a spotlight on the vulnerabilities in the crypto ecosystem.

FCI sells 8.88L tonne wheat to bulk consumers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) has sold 8.88 lakh tonne of wheat to bulk consumers like flour millers on the first day of e-auction conducted in 22 states, the food ministry said on Thursday. FCI commenced e-auction of wheat on February 1 under Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) for bulk users in order to improve domestic availability and check wheat prices. On the first day, it offered for sale about 22 lakh tonne of wheat against the earmarked 25 lakh tonne under OMSS. "More than 1,100 bidders came forward for participation in the first e-auction. A quantity of 8.88 lakh tonne was sold on the first day of e-auction in 22 states," the ministry said in a statement.

RBI studying banks' exposure to Adani Group



PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has sought details about lenders' exposures to the Adani Group, banking sources said, a day after the conglomerate withdrew the Rs 20,000-crore follow on public offer (FPO) of its flagship firm Adani Enterprises amid the steep fall in its stock prices. On Wednesday, Swiss lender Credit Suisse stopped accepting bonds by Adani group companies as collaterals for margin lending. The going has been tough for the diversified conglomerate over the past week ever since US-based short seller Hindenburg Research levelled a slew of allegations about the

group's operations, calling it the biggest corporate con ever. The Ahmedabad-headquartered group has denied all the allegations but failed to convince analysts and investors. The RBI gets access to banks' large corporate borrowers on a regular basis as part of the central repository of information

on large credits (CRILC) data base, the banking sources said. Many a time bank lending happens against pledged securities and a massive fall in the price of the equity shares of the Adani group's 10 listed entities could have accordingly lowered the value of the pledged securities.

Adani Enterprises shares tank over 26%; most group firms also fall

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Adani Enterprises tumbled over 26 per cent on Thursday, a day after the firm said it has decided not to go ahead with its Rs 20,000-crore Follow-on Public Offer (FPO) and will return the proceeds to investors. The stock tanked 26.50 per cent to settle at Rs 1,564.70 on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 28.88 per cent to Rs 1,513.90 -- its 52-week low.

Most of the other group firms also declined for the sixth day in a row. The 10 listed Adani Group firms have faced a combined erosion of over Rs 8.76 lakh crore in 6 days. Shares of Adani Transmission fell 10 per cent on Thursday, Adani Green Energy tanked 10 per cent, Adani Total Gas 10 per cent, Adani Ports 6.13 per cent, Adani Wilmar 5 per cent, NDTV 4.99 per cent and Adani Power lost 4.98 per cent.

'39 hydro projects under implementation; 9 stalled'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 39 hydro projects totalling 14,623.5 MW capacity are under implementation in the country while nine out of these are stalled, Parliament was informed on Thursday. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Power Minister R K Singh said steps are being taken by developers/government for revival of the stalled projects. "39 Hydro Electric Projects (above 25 MW) aggregating to 14,623.5 MW are under implementation in the country. Out of these, 30 projects aggregating to 13,387.5 MW are under active construction and likely to



be commissioned by 2026-27 and 9 projects aggregating to 1,236 MW are presently stalled (as on December 31, 2022)," Singh said. In order to fast-track the development of HEPs in north-eastern region, a basin-wise indication of projects has been undertaken by CPSUs, he said. As on December 31, 2022, total 211 HEPs aggregating to an

installed capacity of 46,850.15 MW were in operation in the country, he added. In another reply to the House, Singh said that at present, there are 30 large HEPs with aggregate installed capacity of 11,137.50 MW which are being developed in the Himalayan belt across different states in the country. Out of these, 23 projects totalling 10,381.5 MW are under active construction and seven HEPs totalling 756 MW are held up, Singh said adding that besides, there are 87 operational HEPs with an aggregate installed capacity of 22,982 MW in the Himalayan belt across different states.

Monthly GST revenue at Rs 1.50L cr to be new normal next fiscal: CBIC chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Monthly GST collection is expected to average around Rs 1.50 lakh crore and it will be the new normal' in FY24 in view of concerted efforts to check evasion and bring new businesses within the GST net, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) chief Vivek Johri said on Thursday. In an interview to PTI, Johri said the GST and Customs revenue collection numbers as given in Budget 2023-24 are realistic based on nominal GDP growth and import trends, respectively and the indirect tax collection target set for next fiscal will be

achieved. Johri said CBIC has drawn up a strategy to augment GST mop-up by way of stricter audit and scrutiny of tax returns, enforcement action against fake billing and input tax credit claims. "We will focus on increasing the taxpayer base. Even though the growth in taxpayer base has been quite good, we have more than doubled the number of taxpayers from the time we started GST, we feel there are some sectors which have much more potential to increase the taxpayer population. "So I feel we have not reached the saturation level and there is scope for increasing the revenue," Johri said.

Equities end on mixed note; global mkts shrug off rate hike

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity markets witnessed mixed trends on Thursday, with the Sensex climbing over 224 points, while the NSE Nifty dipped almost 6 points in a see-saw session. The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex advanced 224.16 points or 0.38 per cent to settle at 59,932.24. During the day, it hit a high of 60,007.67 and a low of 59,215.62. However, the broader NSE Nifty dipped 5.90 points or 0.03 per cent to end at 17,610.40, weighed down by continuous selling in Adani group stocks. ITC jumped 4.74 per cent to top the Sensex gainers' chart



for the second straight day. The other major winners included IndusInd Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services and ICICI Bank. However, NTPC, HDFC, Titan, Tata Steel, Power Grid,

Bajaj Finance and HDFC Bank were the prominent laggards. Titan slipped 1.80 per cent after the Tata group firm reported a 9.78 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 913 crore for the December quarter, impacted by higher expenses.

Redington records standalone Q3 net at Rs 141.38 crore

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Information technology solutions provider Redington Ltd has registered standalone net at Rs 141.38 crore for the quarter ending December 31, 2022, the company said on Thursday. The city-based company had registered standalone net at Rs 137.45 crore during corresponding period of last year. For the nine month period ending December 31, 2022 the standalone profits grew to Rs 946.97 crore from Rs 811.61 crore recorded last year. Total income for the quar-

ter under review grew to Rs 9,448.40 crore from Rs 7,098.23 crore registered last year. For the nine month period ending December 31, 2022 the standalone total income stood at Rs 26,143.57 crore as against Rs 19,715.73 crore registered last year. "In Q3FY23 our focus on digital transformation combined with our core strength in innovations, technology and partnerships enabled us to fast-track the customer journey of tech adoption by reducing redundancies that cause technology friction," company Managing Director Rajiv Srivastava said in a statement.

Govt to sell some stake in HZL this fiscal: DIPAM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is likely to sell a part of its residual stake in Hindustan Zinc Ltd by next month to help it achieve the revised sell-off target of Rs 50,000 crore for the current fiscal, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Thursday. For the coming fiscal, the government has lined up strategic stake sales in companies like HLL Lifecare, PDIL, Shipping Corporation and BEML to meet the similar disinvestment target set in the



2023-24 Budget. The government currently holds a 29.54 per cent stake in Hindustan Zinc or HZL. In 2002, it sold 26 per cent of

HZL to the mining billionaire Anil Agarwal-led group. Vedanta group later bought 20 per cent from the market and another 18.92 per cent from the government in November 2003, raising its ownership to 64.92 per cent in HZL, which is the world's second-largest integrated Zinc producer and sixth-largest silver producer globally. The government on Wednesday lowered the disinvestment target for the current fiscal (2022-23) to Rs 50,000 crore from Rs 65,000 crore budgeted last year.

India to be world's third largest economy by 2027-28

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Eminent economist Arvind Panagariya has said India is on the cusp of returning to a high growth trajectory and voiced confidence that the country will become the world's third-largest economy by 2027-28. Currently, India is the fifth largest economy "so it's another five years. We are already in (the year) 2023. So 2027-28, India should be the third-largest economy," Panagariya, Columbia University Professor and former Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, told PTI in an

interview here. A day before Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget on Wednesday, the Economic Survey tabled in Parliament pegged India's GDP growth at 6.5% in 2023-24. The International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook update Tuesday said growth in India is set to "decline from 6.8 per cent in 2022 to 6.1 per cent in 2023 before picking up to 6.8 per cent in 2024, with resilient domestic demand despite external headwinds." Last week, the UN said in its flagship World Economic



India is the fifth largest economy so it's another five years. We are already in (the year) 2023. So 2027-28, India should be the third-largest economy

Situation and Prospects 2023 report that India is projected to grow at 6.7 per cent in 2024, the fastest-growing major economy

in the world. Panagariya said his reading of the Economic Survey is that the 'narrative that comes across tells the story of a much

stronger economy" than the one that is growing at 6.5 per cent. "My sense is that given where India stands currently, it

should get back to 7% plus kind of growth rate," he said. He added India is currently in a spot that it was in 2003 when the growth rate picked up to close to about 8 per cent and the country sustained that kind of rate for a few years. Outlining his reasons for high growth ahead, he said several reforms have been implemented and weaknesses in the economy have been cleaned up during the COVID pandemic such as non-performing assets of banks and weak balance sheets of many of the big corporates.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER
1. Tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for 8 No.s road works in Nagarkurnool District under Non-Plan vide this "e" NIT No. E-in C/ DCE(R)/EE/Roads/IDEE-3/AEE-2/2022-23, Dt: 01.02.2023.
2. Tenderers can download the tender schedules at www.aprocurement.gov.in. The last date of receipt is 13.02.2023 upto 3.30 P.M.
Self-Engineer-in-Chief (R&B), State Roads & CRN
R.O.No: 3382-DPCL/ADVT/11/2022-23, Dt: 02.02.2023

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
NIT No.: 'e' Notice No:31CTO/GHMC/2022-23, Dt: 01.02.2023
Name of the Work: Procurement of certain Lorry items to permanent eligible employees of Head Office, GHMC (Package-I to V), Start Date & Time: 01.02.2023 @ 03.00 P.M. onwards, End Date & Time: 06.02.2023 @ 03.00 P.M. Name & Address: Officer Cell No.: 010, Chief Transport Officer, 4th Floor, GHMC, Head Office, Tank bund Hyderabad, Sri. K. Ajay CTO, GHMC, Contact No: 940-29860748 & Mob.No. 7993360314. Address of the officer concerned Chief Transport Officer, GHMC, Ph. No. 940-29860748 & Mob.No. 7993360314. Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.aprocurement.telangana.gov.in
Self-Engineer-in-Chief (R&B), Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation
R.O.No: 12126-PPCL/ADVT/11/2022-23, Dt: 02.02.2023



Leaving the clouds behind, Urvashi Rautela tried skydiving

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The upcoming Tollywood debutant Urvashi Rautela, like others, had her dream country too, and she has crossed it off her bucket list. Wondered which country it was? It's Austria! "I was shooting for my international magazine cover in Vienna, and my motivation to visit that specific place was its small towns too. The breathtaking view will live on in my memory forever! I had never heard of anything called an ice cave, and there was it."

There were plenty of things she tried in Vienna, such as "The museums and the palaces. I was just enjoying my peace along with a glamorous shoot. You'll only find green spaces there, with so many roses blooming. Which girl wouldn't want to be there? Vienna was the city

I really fell in love with, and returning there will always be a big pleasure for me."

Enthusiastically, she shared that another place she's really fascinated with is Tulum, where "It was impossible to look away from its beaches. I happened to experience some jungle thrills too! Nobody should miss this magical trip to this place. It doesn't matter if I spend one day there or stay there longer, I enjoy every single hour in Tulum as it has a special place in my heart now."

She also has her romantic pick. The actress revealed, "In any part of Europe, you are bound to fall in love. The medieval towns evoke romance in you when you are in Europe. There is nothing wrong with the classic dinner date at



a restaurant, especially if it's in Europe. As much as Europe is famous, some cities in it still feel like underrated destinations. It's easy to think that this city is all about monuments, but the truth is that it is much more interesting. To be honest, I was surprised by all the different things to do in Europe, and I was happy to discover its unexpected sides."

We asked her what the quirkiest thing she has ever done on vacation was, and she responded, "One of the very famous influencers from Mexico is a really close friend of mine, and he's a trained skydiver. He made me go skydiving! I put on my harness and helmet, and I was given some instructions by him. After signing a few papers, I was on my

way to the plane! This is when my heart started to beat very fast, and I felt lots of adrenaline. Suddenly, I was 10,000 feet above the ground. I felt the wind rush against my face as I fell to the ground. Everything below me looked so small, and my breath was literally taken away. A once-in-a-lifetime experience, all thanks to my friend."

Waltair Veerayya actress has a world map in her home. It's her everyday morning ritual of ticking off all the places she has been. She's been such a travel enthusiast from the time she became Miss Universe! Because she was born in the lap of the mountains, her first choice will always be those. She explained, "They are awe-inspiring. While growing up, I have seen these magnificent beauties all around me, and what's unforgettable is the serenity it gives. That's why I keep returning to my birth town with my family. Even if you don't climb it, just being around them is an adventure. That's my wholesome experience from childhood."

TICKING OFF TRAVELLING TO HER DREAM COUNTRY FROM THE BUCKET LIST, URVASHI RAUTELA SHARES HER TRAVEL TALES WITH THE PIONEER, AS WELL AS THE QUIRKIEST THING THAT SHE HAS DONE ON A VACATION.

REJUVENATING THE legacy in music

TEJAL SINHA

Having been born into a family of musicians, Kaushiki Chakraborty is much more than just a classical vocalist. While most toddlers love playing with toys, Kaushiki was interested in music. In her illustrious career, she has lent her voice to a number of Hindi, Bengali, and South Indian films.

A ten-day music concert featuring legendary Indian artists was recently held in Hyderabad to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary week of Shri Ram Chandraj Maharaj of Fatehgarh, known as Lalaji—the founder of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission. *The Pioneer* quickly connected with the virtuoso, who opened up about creative challenges, being compared with the veterans, the Indian Classical music scene, and more.

Being the torchbearer of the Patiala Gharana tradition that was popularised by Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Kaushiki feels that creative challenges are a process of growth. "Creative challenges are very personal for an artist and very difficult to put into words. They are a part of the process of growth. As an artist, when you grow, you go through transitions, and there are many phases of transitions. You break yourself and rebuild your craft, and every time you redefine yourself, you position yourself apart from it. So I think it's a constant process. It is not something that has happened in the past and would not happen. It's a constant, throbbing, growing discipline. Whichever way I am perceived now has nothing to do with my personal journey of growing as a musician. Creative challenges are many, and they keep happening. That's how it is and should be. It's a healthy way to develop. When you listen to your 5-year-old's music, you think, "This is not how I want to sing this song again if I get a chance; I would reinterpret that song and rag in a different way," which is my state of mind at the current moment."

They say that being mentally prepared for a performance is just as important as being physically prepared. However, when we asked the artiste about her take on the same, she said, "Mental preparation is not just for a performance, I would say. I always say that the music is not the sound that you produce. Before that, it's the state of mind that you're in. When we learn and when we do our riyaz, we also work on the state of mind, which then translates into the music that we perform. Your state of mind and being has a huge impact on how you translate that into music because music is ultimately the transition between who you are and who you are becoming."

While most musicians prefer to rehearse before the final performance, Kaushiki thinks otherwise. "We don't rehearse the performance, we prepare ourselves as musicians, which takes years of very persistent training, practice, and preparation, but you do not prepare for a particular performance. We don't rehearse, but it's the daily "riyaz". Our performance is absolutely impromptu, improvised, and created on the spot. As I said, the state of mind plays a very important role, we don't rehearse before a performance, but I think we prepare ourselves for every performance that's coming up," enthused the dulcet artiste, for whom music is an expression of life. For her, maintaining a balance among all the elements is an ideal performance.

Kaushiki has been revered for experimenting with her singing, which she believes comes from a great deal of comfort with music. Being one of the most sought-after voices, Kaushiki has been compared to many veteran female singers, but

IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, KAUSHIKI CHAKRABORTY, WHO WAS HERE IN HYDERABAD TAKING THE CITY ON A MELODIOUS RIDE, SHARES WITH US ABOUT CREATIVE CHALLENGES, BEING COMPARED WITH THE VETERANS, THE INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC SCENE, AND MORE.

she remains unaffected and says, "I wouldn't want to be compared with anyone because I'm too small and have always worshipped senior musicians who have inspired me through my journey and who I have learned so much from watching, understanding, and trying to decode their thought process, how they would think. I would consider them a guide; I would rather consider them a guru figure in the journey of learning music. I don't think you can ever compare a junior student's music to that of a senior practitioner. It's unfair, but I see where they come from—the audience or the critics—when they compare. I think they want to find a point of reference. Rather than comparing, they want to relate. As a student of music, I would want to

appreciate and devote myself to respecting their music rather than comparing myself with theirs."

Indian classical music has always been around for over several centuries. However, classical music had faded away a few years ago, with young people becoming more interested in pop songs and other genres. But now, it looks like the Indian classical music scene is back, where many youngsters are much inclined towards the genre. And even Kaushiki couldn't stop herself from agreeing to this.

"About 15 years ago, there was a media frenzy claiming that no young people were attending Indian Classical Music concerts and that no one was interested in it. I'm very happy that now it's changed, and the fact that it's changed at a time when I'm singing makes me happier and more proud of the time that I belong to. Many youngsters are taking a lot of interest in taking it as a career option, learning it, following it, coming to the concert, and getting a lot of inspiration and enthusiasm that I see around these youngsters, which is very inspiring. This ensures that this craft will thrive in the future because if the younger generations do not take an interest, it will be as if you are sowing a seed that you will only water, and there will be no one to care for it after you. My generation is in a beautiful space musically because we carry forward a legacy and we are connected to traditions."

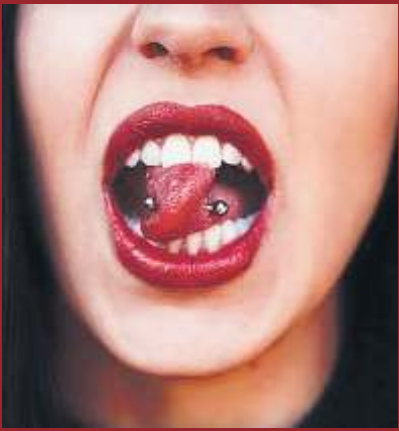
Apparently, there are sacrifices behind every success. But according to Kaushiki, "I would rather say contribution. Sacrifice is sometimes seen as a negative thing, but my parents, my guru, my family, my in-laws, my husband, my son, and myself have all put in our best effort so that music can happen. Everyone has done and not done so many things so that music can happen. Sacrifice only speaks of things that people have not done, but they have done so much with such an open heart and love that it has given me the life that I live now. I am indebted and thankful to God the Almighty for giving me such a beautiful purpose in life. And for every single person who came into my life."



ORAL PIERCINGS AFFECT ON ORAL HEALTH

Piercings have always been in style. It's an adrenaline rush, a way of expression, a sense of freedom, and a style statement. This trend is here to stay. Back in the day people chose a simple minimalist ear lobe or nose piercing but today this trend has found its way to the belly, eyebrows, eyelashes, nose, lip, and even tongue! The question is do we really need to 'hop on the bandwagon' just to 'look cool' without adequate research?

Dr. Kshama Chandan, celebrity dentist, founder of House of Tooth in Mumbai, explains the possible complications oral piercings can cause and how adequate research needs to be carried out before getting a metal poked in your mouth. Talking about oral piercings she states that your mouth is known to contain millions of bacteria and usually infection and swelling are the most common complications post-oral piercings. For instance, your mouth and tongue may swell to the point where your airway is closed or you could choke if the piercing breaks into your mouth.



mind all the sanitisation protocols, is well experienced and adequately trained, and the gloves and needles used are disposable and not reused for anyone else.

Guidelines to avoid complications:

- Immediately just after the piercing make sure that your piercing heals, and doesn't get infected. You can rinse your mouth with salt and warm water or an antibacterial mouthwash. Be patient for about 3/4 weeks till it completely heals. Choose a lightweight plastic piercing to reduce your chances of tooth damage.
- Do not try to remove, disturb or twist your piercing before the area is completely healed.
- Avoid smoking or chewing tobacco as it interferes with the healing process.
- Avoid eating anything spicy, salty, or acidic. Stick to soft meals and comfort food
- No hot drinks, like coffee, tea, or hot chocolate.

Keep checking for any signs of infection after a piercing. If you have an unusual discharge, swelling, tenderness, redness, bleeding, rash and fever, immediately consult a doctor nearby

Is there a safe way to keep an oral piercing?

Dr. Kshama says, "As long as your mouth stays free of infection and your oral piercings don't interfere with your normal dental routine, they can stay in your mouth indefinitely. Practice good oral hygiene, brushing and flossing twice daily. Keep regular appointments for teeth cleanings and check-ups. Those already having a piercing should be screened by a dental professional for early detection of the adverse effects and for possible complications on a regular basis. Just make sure you see your dentist at the first sign of pain or swelling with your oral piercing. There are many other ways to express yourself which do not involve permanently damaging your mouth. But, if you are considering getting on or you already have an oral piercing, be mindful about following the advice and prevent damage."

INFECTION:

Your mouth hosts millions of breeding bacteria which is an ideal environment for an infection to take place. This includes blood-borne hepatitis, angina, and herpes. An oral piercing is a foreign object in the mouth that increases the chances of developing an allergic reaction and soft tissue infection.

INFLAMMATION WITH PAIN:

Pain and swelling are common symptoms of oral piercings. Worst case scenario your mouth and tongue may swell to the point where your airway is closed leading to difficulty in breathing or you could choke if piercing breaks in your mouth.

UNCONTROLLABLE BLEEDING:

If a blood vessel is punctured by the needle during piercing, it could lead to uncontrollable bleeding, gum recession and severe blood loss.

CHIPPED OR CRACKED TEETH:

If you bite too hard on your piercing there's a chance of chipping or cracking the tooth. Constant contact can progress to a fracture which will eventually need tooth removal. Teeth with prosthesis such as crowns or veneers or previously done fillings can also be damaged if the piercing hits against them.

RECEDING GUMS:

Oral piercings can irritate and injure soft gum tissue causing long-term irreversible recession of gums, exposing the root of the tooth, and making the teeth more prone to decay and periodontal disease. Piercings in the mouth can interfere with normal oral function and cause excessive delay in your ability to pronounce words properly, and the flow of saliva and cause difficulty with swallowing and chewing. If you choose to have your mouth pierced or if you already have - don't fret! Make sure you get it done from a shop that is well sanitised and clean. Make sure the piercer keeps in

what's brewing?



The new year has paved way for technology and innovation. In recent times, the internet has made our homes smarter as well. With the HomeConnect feature in Bosch, you can voice command your appliances and control them via Amazon Alexa or Google Home. Here are some more fun ways to make the most of your smart appliances.

Be your own favourite barista and treat yourself to a fresh cup of coffee every morning right when you wake up. Conveniently order your coffee from an automated coffee machine via your phone or tablet. The Bosch coffee machine provides a range of coffee varieties for you to try every time you need that hit of caffeine. Load and let go! Doing the dishes after a long and tiring day can be exhausting. Having to dry your washed clothes because you turned the machine on once you got home can be even more annoying. If only you could tell your washing machine and dishwasher to start their work in advance, right? Well, Bosch's dishwashers, washing machines, and dryers all come with the HomeConnect feature so you can control their settings all from the palm of your hand. The ultimate sous chef. Your oven can be the most integral helper in your kitchen, if only you give it a chance. With a smart oven, you will not have to worry about how cooked your dish is or whether you have left it on. Bosch's Smart Ovens even provides you with a plethora of recipes and tips and tricks, elevating you to be an expert cook.

Rules

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

1 A game with a bat and ball	3 A large group of soldiers
6 A small sharp nail	4 School classes
7 See old stuff on display here	5 A very large bird
9 A stand for holding an artist's painting	8 These are a kind of fungus that people eat
11 Metal money	10 World's highest mountain
12 Opposite of outer	14 A greeting
	15 The tiniest particle
	17 We breathe this



‘Michael is a semi-psycho kind of a person with the right ideals’

Sundeep Kishan starrer *Michael* is going to hit your nearest theaters today. Prior to the release, the actor interacted with the Hyderabad media and shared some interesting insights from the film.

AMARTYA SMARAN

Asking in the glory of a series of Pan-Indian successes from the South Industry, more so from Tollywood, Ranjith Jayakodi's *Michael* starring Sundeep Kishan, Vijay Sethupathi, Divyansha Kaushik, Varalaxmi Sarathkumar, Varun Sandesh and Gautam Vasudev Menon is another flick that has all the potential to score big at the global box-office. A romantic drama set in the evil gangster world of the 80s and 90s, *Michael* simultaneously hit 1500 screens worldwide in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi today. The movie is produced by Karan C Productions and Sree Venkateswara Cinemas.

Despite a dismal stint at the cinemas for many years, Sundeep Kishan's passion and love for the craft remained intact. The buzz around Sundeep not having a market came to an end with *Ninu Veedani Needanu Nene* (2019), which was produced under his own banner—Venkatadri Talkies. While his next release *Tenali Ramakrishna BA. BL* (2019) managed to seep right through the Telugu heartland, *A1 Express* (2021) yet again cemented his place as a bankable hero in the industry. After a turbulent two-year period, the Venkatadri Express star is back with *Michael*.

Ahead of the release, Sundeep enthusiastically interacted with film journalists and shared intricate details regarding the project. He put out his thoughts and feelings in a confident manner and let us in on his future projects.

The actor put everything on the line for *Michael*. At one point, he lived on egg whites and iced coffee for 15 days to pull off an intense sequence which eventually took a toll on the actor. His leg gave up on him but just within a week, he picked himself up, finished the shoot, and again injured himself badly. The makers had to halt the shoot for a month.

Guess what the actor thinks about all this? Let's hear it from the actor, "I never felt it was hard work. It was a great experience and I really enjoyed the process. The technicians worked a lot harder than me and we are all super happy with how the film turned out."

Ranjith delivered something which was way beyond our imagination. When I watched the first cut, I walked out of the screening room feeling this film is going to be so special."

The *Prasthanam* actor informed that he considers *Michael* his biggest success in recent times. "Making the film itself was a huge success and I am looking forward to seeing how people react in the theaters."

With a renewed philosophy of selecting fresh stories that

are visually strong and emotionally sound, Sundeep said, "The theatrical success of a film depends on the promotions and I am very happy that we've got such good producers who've been super supportive throughout the process. If the emotional content of a film is strong, the audience will support the film. I strongly believe that the audience will love how visually appealing *Michael* is going to be. This film is high on emotions and drama and it will surely offer a great visual experience to the audience. I don't think anybody except Ranjith could've done justice to the script."

The *Michael* star is known for his family dramas and romantic films, but with *Michael*, he created a brand new image for himself. We wondered if he even made changes to his acting style and he explained, "*Michael* doesn't have friends, *Michael* doesn't talk to anyone and he's an extreme loner. He's a semi-psycho kind of a person with the right ideals. The things that happen in the movie don't usually occur in the real world. If you ask me if I used any of my personal experiences to enhance my performance, I'd say no. I went by the script and behaved like the character. In my earlier films, there was a possibility for me to use my own experiences but in *Michael*, I used my imagination and emoted accordingly."

The film was shot for 73 days and now that the *Gully Rowdy* actor is placing all his bets on the movie, *The Pioneer* asked him if the thought of the film bombing at the box office bothers him. "I am someone who deeply analyzes everything. When it comes to this film, the script is very fresh, visually it looks good and I have the best actors on board. In the worst-case scenario, people will still walk out of the theatres thinking they've watched a good film. I'd say I'm mostly anxious because so many people told me the film is great. However, I'm waiting for the theatrical response. I am not saying this out of overconfidence, but whatever film I'm doing next, they're all going to be good films," told the actor in an assuring tone.

Michael is Sundeep's statement to the world out there that he's capable of tapping into the experimental stories. The actor has *Ooru Peru Bhairavakona*, *Captain Miller*, and *Buddy* in his kitty.

"I am also working on *Family Man* season 3. There's another exciting film that I can't talk about right now; it's going to be my craziest character to date," concluded the star.



Vedha team expressed their gratitude to Pan-India star Prabhas

Actor Siva Rajkumar is one of the iconic heroes of the Kannada film industry. His upcoming film *Vedha* is going to be a special film for the actor, as the film not only marks his milestone of 125 films, but also his first venture under his home banner Geetha Pictures headed by his wife Geetha Siva Rajkumar.

Directed by A. Harsha, this action drama film released in Kannada on December 23 and created a sensation. Shivanna, Ghanvi Laxman, Aditi Sagar, Swetha

Changappa, Umashree and many others acted in the film. The film will be released in Telugu on February 9. Producer VR Krishna Mandapati said, "The first look of this movie as well as the motion poster have received a good response. This movie is going to be released in Telugu on February 9. I liked the story and bought this movie. A good movie is always appreciated by the Telugu audience. Many people tried to release this movie in Telugu. But I got a chance. We will organize

a pre-release event for this movie soon. Needless to say, how much love the Shiva Rajkumar family has in our Telugu too, we also call them Shivanna. They will also attend this pre-release function. I am going to release more great movies soon under this Kanchi Kamakshi Calcutta Creations banner." Meanwhile, the team of the film have expressed a special gratitude to Pan-India star Prabhas who is supporting this film.

Brahmanandam's heart touching performance in *Rangamarthanda* will get you teary eyed

Legendary Tollywood comedian Brahmanandam celebrated his birthday on February 1st amid the best wishes from his family, friends, fans, and fellow celebrities. On this special day, Creative director Krishna Vamsi shared a glimpse of Brahmanandam's talent with a video showcasing his monologue from the upcoming film *Rangamarthanda*.

The scene, in which Brahmanandam delivers a powerful performance from a



hospital bed, left everyone astounded and served as a testament to his versatility as an actor.

This film marks a departure from Brahmanandam's usual comedic roles and has heightened expectations for the film. The movie, a remake of the Marathi film *Actor Samrat*, features an all-star cast including Prakash Raj, Ramya Krishna, Sivamika, Anasuya, Ali Reza, Rahul Sipiganj and more, making it a must-watch for all movie fans.

Yelelo Yelelo captures different emotions of pregnancy

Samantha starrer *Shaakuntalam* is a Smythological love story between Shakuntala and Dushyanth based on Kalidasa's Sanskrit play 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam'. Gunasekhar, known for mounting such films, is the director. Already the makers launched the trailer



and the first two songs. Now, they launched the lyrical video of the third single, *Yelelo Yelelo...* The song shows Shakuntala being a pregnant lady yearning for love for her husband. It was shot on a boat while the boatman played by Prakash Raj seems to be singing the song.

Anurag Kulakarni's soulful vocals added depth to the song. Mani Sharma's composition sounds soothing and lyrics can be heard clearly with effective use of instruments. Lyrics were penned by Chaitanya Prasad and they depict Shakuntala's pain and anticipation to reach her love. The song visuals also look grand. It was shot aesthetically with night effect surrounded by mountains sailing on a boat in a river.

This Gunasekhar directorial is bankrolled under his home banner 'Guna Team Works' Produced by his daughter Neelima Guna collaborating with Hanshita Reddy and Dil Raju's Sri Venkateshwara Creations banner. There is no mention of a release date.

Chiranjeevi comes to the aid of veteran cameraman Devaraj



Megastar Chiranjeevi is a synonym for kindness and helping nature. Everyone in the industry knew about this and even people also of the same opinion. It's not something he does for a particular occasion. He lends his helping hand whenever, wherever it is necessary and whichever comes to his notice. He always help in whatever way he can. Not only the Charitable Trust where Blood and Eye banks are running. There are numerous times he helped artists, technicians, fans and even common public who are in dire need.

Latest is he has handed over a cheque of Rs 5 Lakhs to a veteran cameraman Devraj. He worked for Chiranjeevi's films during the early time of his career in 1980's. Devraj handled camera for Chiranjeevi's films like *Tinguragadu*, *Ran Kasula Rangamma*, *Naagu*, *Puli Bebbuli*. Knowing about the financial problems of Devraj, Chiru donated Rs 5 Lakhs immediately. Everyone is praising the kind gesture of Megastar. But, these are only those that came into light. He was, is and will be helping many needy people and many will not even come to know the public. Chiranjeevi has recently delivered the biggest blockbuster *Waltair Veerayya*. It registered record collections and emerged as one of the biggest grossers in his career. Currently he is busy with shooting of *Bhola Shankar*.

Nidhi Agerwal makes a special appearance on *Unstoppable*

It is known that Pawan Kalyan recently shot for Nandamuri Balakrishna's blockbuster talk show, *Unstoppable 2*. This is one of the flagship episodes of the show. In the episode that streamed on Thursday, along with Pawan Kalyan, the talented young actress Nidhi Agerwal made a special appearance in the episode. She took part in the show virtually.

It is known that Nidhi is playing the leading lady in Pawan Kalyan's *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*. The duo over a video chat discussed the same in the episode.



Eeswar: *Suryapet Junction* will be close to reality

Kothaga Prayanam fame Eeswar and actress Naina Sarwar have paired up for a massy youthful entertainer *Suryapet Junction* directed by Nadendla Rajesh. The film is jointly produced by Anil Kumar Katragadda, NS Rao and Vishnuvardhan under the banner Yoga Lakshmi Art Creations. On Thursday, the makers had released the teaser of the film.

Speaking on the occasion, Eeswar said, "I am happy that we have released the teaser of the film today. Our media friends who saw the teaser said it was very good. My special thanks to our director, our team, who believed in my story and traveled with me for two and a half years. We tried to make the film seem as close to reality as possible. I want this film to reach as many people as possible."

Actress Naina said, "The director and the team have supported us well. Every actor in the film has done well in their respective roles. This film is our collective effort. I would like to thank everyone who came to this *Suryapet Junction* teaser launch function." Thanking her director Rajesh, Naina said, "Thank you sir for giving me this opportunity in Telugu. I am confident that this film will be a good success."

TACKLING SLIDE SPIN WILL BE KEY TO OZ'S SUCCESS IN INDIA, SAYS McDONALD

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald believes the biggest challenge for his side in the upcoming Border-Gavaskar Test Trophy will be to tackle "slide spin" from the Indian twerkers in the early overs.

As the tourists got down to the business of preparing for the gruelling four-Test series beginning in Nagpur on February 9, McDonald also warned his batters that they will have to come up with individual methods and techniques to counter the sliding deliveries.

The Australians have chosen to train all by themselves instead of playing tour games as they feel practice matches serve little purpose.

Both McDonald and Steve Smith have said that serving green tops for tour games and spinning tracks for actual games defeat the very purpose of playing practice matches.

"I think the new ball is the one that creates more of that slide and when the batters do get done on the inside ... we're preparing for that (during the preparatory camp in Bengaluru)," McDonald had said before the team's departure for Bengaluru on Wednesday. On Thursday, cricket.Com. Au re-tweeted images of the squad training at Alur, clicked by its journalist, which showed the touring party batters going about their paces in the nets.

"That slide spin, we'll expect the spinners to bowl early against our opening batters as well with the new ball so all that is taken care of in the training environment and (batting co-



ach) Diva (Michael Di Venuto) does a fantastic job in preparing. "The key to success there is to have a clear method and that will be individually based and depending on the conditions we're confronted with," McDonald was quoted as saying by Sydney Morning Herald on Thursday.

With prolific Usman Khawaja scheduled to arrive later on Thursday after his visa approval got delayed, he will join the touring party on Friday to prepare for the spin challenge in the right

earnest.

McDonald said that despite the squad training on their own, there will still be variation in the track offered at Alur and the ones on which Test matches will be played, and here batters will have to use their judgement while playing shots.

"We'll be trying to make sure the batters are clear on their method," said McDonald, adding, "You're never going to get exactly the same as you're going to get in a game, and that's one of the real complexities

around preparing for a cricket tour."

The coach, who took over from Justin Langer, said another reason for not playing a tour game in India was to keep players fresh at the back end of the month-long tour.

"We haven't played a tour game, for three years. It's probably not something new to us, put it that way," McDonald said.

"We value freshness at the back end of the tour. Something we've seen teams go there before and expend a lot of energy at the

front end. We feel with the profile of this group, quite an experienced group, quite an experienced batting unit as well, who have been there before, I think 11 out of the squad has been there before.

"A significant chunk of the squad that's been there before, so we feel that better places them leading in and then you never get guarantees over those practice game surfaces you get. Often, there's no real connection

between that practice game into the first Test match. We feel as though we can control the surfaces here," he added. He said the strategy would be to prepare a blueprint while training in Bengaluru and replicate it in Nagpur during the first Test.

"(We'll) get a bit more control in Bangalore to replicate what we're going to come up against and then we go into Nagpur fresh and hopefully it pays dividends at the back end."

Australia will win on 'fair Indian wickets': Healy

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Hosts India will have the upper hand if the tracks are rank turners in the upcoming Test series but Australia will win on "fair" pitches, feels former wicketkeeper Ian Healy.

"I think if they produce fair Indian wickets, that are good batting wickets, to start with, (that) probably spin and spin pretty consistently but spin a long way, late in the match ... we (Australia) win," Healy said on 'SENQ Breakfast'.

"I'm worried about (Mitchell) Starc and (Nathan) Lyon in the first Test ... if they're unfair wickets which I've seen in the last series, where balls were jumping ridiculously and sliding down low from day one, I think India play those conditions better than us," he added.

Healy advised the less-experienced Australian players to soak in the pressure and not commit any fielding lapses.

"I want the players to be very aware if they are escaping that pressure (from the locals) if you're escaping that pressure and hiding in your room using the golf simulator... I think you've got to do something else," he said.

"That's an escape, you shouldn't be doing it, you're dodging, just be very aware of what you are feeling at any given time. Immerse yourself before you really get to deploy your technique... don't drop catches, fielding can be difficult over there.

"What happens in India, to get ten wickets, you'll only get ten chances, whereas in Australia with bounce, carry and speed you can create 13 chances and you can waste a couple... but they don't come along as easy in India. I just think they have to live and breathe that pressure and have a philosophy over there."

Australia haven't won a Test series in India since 2004.

Technically & tactically, it was a near-perfect game for me: Shubman



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Young opener Shubman Gill said his unbeaten 63-ball 126 was "tactically and technically" a near-perfect game as it set up India's massive series-clinching 168-run win in the third T20I against New Zealand.

Gill smashed 12 boundaries and seven maximums in his scintillating maiden century in the shortest format to power India to a mammoth 234 for 4 in the final T20I.

The hosts then bundled out New Zealand for 66 in 12.1 overs to not only win the match but

also secure a 2-1 series win.

"To be able to play how I play, I have to be mentally clear," Gill said during an interaction with skipper Hardik Pandya, a video of which was posted on BCCI.Tv.

"This is what you (Hardik) told me. Every time I hit a six, he came and told me -- hold your shape in the next ball, you don't have to do anything extra, just do what you are doing and don't try to go too hard. Every ball he kept reminding me and that helped.

"In the last over of (Mitchell) Santner, I was in the zone and I was hitting. So, I thought I will go after him but you asked me to hold myself back and target other bowlers because he (Santner) is bowling well in the entire T20 series. So, tactically and technically it was a near-perfect game for me."

Player of the series' Pandya snapped four wickets as he bowled with the new ball to dismiss Finn Allen and Glenn Phillips. He later returned to take two more wickets to demolish the Kiwis.

"Four wickets, to be honest, are just part and parcel of the sport but I think I bowled at 145 (kmph) if I am not wrong and that kind of gave me the happiness and the smile you can see. So, I told him (Gill) today that it is my last game and I am going on a break," said Hardik, who will play his next game in about two months' time.

"So, today (Wednesday) gonna be full all guns blazing and I am going to bowl as fast as possible and, to be honest, the kind of start we got, it made our life very easy."

Malan, Buttler and Archer earn consolation win for England

AP ■ KIMBERLEY

Dawid Malan and captain Jos Buttler hit centuries to set up a 59-run win for England in the third and final ODI against South Africa at the Diamond Oval in Kimberley on Wednesday.

Malan made 118 and Buttler scored 131 in an England total of 346 for seven. South Africa were bowled out for 287 with fast bowler Jofra Archer taking a career-best six for 40.

South Africa had already clinched the series by winning the first two matches but England captain Jos Buttler said Wednesday's win was a reward for the hard work his players had put in during the short series.

"There's been some really good stuff. Guys getting hundreds and Jofra Archer was brilliant. We've got a good thing going. We're building nicely," said Buttler, who was named player of the match and player of the series.

South African captain Temba Bavuma said the series win was important. "We came in under a lot of pressure. We've done ourselves justice and come closer to automatic qualification for the World Cup."

South Africa need one win in their remaining two matches against the Netherlands to move ahead of West Indies into one of the eight qualifying places in the World Cup Super



League, although Sri Lanka could still move ahead of them in a forthcoming series against New Zealand.

The left-handed Malan and his right-handed captain shared a fourth wicket partnership of 232 off 211 balls after coming together with their team in trouble at 14 for three in the sixth over.

A slow start to the partnership became a torrent of runs as they took command on a slow pitch.

England scored 217 runs in the last 20 overs of their innings, scoring rapidly even after the two centuries were dismissed.

Ahmed gets Eng white-ball call-up for B'desh tour

AP ■ LONDON

England picked teenage leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed in their white-ball squads for the first time on Thursday ahead of next month's tour of Bangladesh.

The 18-year-old Leicestershire bowler became England's youngest men's Test cricketer against Pakistan in Karachi in December and marked his debut in style with a five-wicket haul.

Ahmed had played just three first-class matches before making his Test bow, but has more experience in white-ball cricket, having appeared regularly for his county side.

Saqib Mahmood has been

included in the ODI squad for the first time since suffering a stress fracture of the back in May last year.

But there was no place for Alex Hales, with the big-hitting batsman set to honour his contract to play in the Pakistan Super League after only returning to England duty last year.

Hales was a key figure in England's T20 World Cup triumph in Australia in November after a positive test for recreational drug use came to light on the eve of the 2019 50-over World Cup led to more than three years of international exile.

England will play three ODIs and three T20s in Bangladesh from March 1 to 14.

The T20 fixtures are their first in the format since Jos Buttler's men became world champions, adding to their 50-over global title.

SQUADS

ODI squad: Jos Buttler (capt/wkt), Tom Abell, Rehan Ahmed, Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Sam Curran, Saqib Mahmood, Dawid Malan, Adil Rashid, Jason Roy, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, James Vince, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood
T20 squad: Buttler, Tom Abell, Rehan Ahmed, Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Dawid Malan, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood

Hardik doesn't mind playing Dhoni's role for Team India

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Star India all-rounder Hardik Pandya feels he has developed the ability to absorb pressure and doesn't mind playing the anchor role that the great Mahendra Singh Dhoni played for the team.

The 29-year-old has always been known for his batting pyrotechnics but says he has now learnt to take the back seat and anchor the innings, something which master chaser Dhoni did in the fag end of his international career.

"See, to be honest, I've always enjoyed hitting sixes, but I have to evolve and that is life," the stand-in T20 skipper said during the press conference after India sealed the T20 series against New Zealand 2-1.

"I have to take the other part where I've always believed in partnerships. I want to give my team and the other person more calmness and the assurance that at least I'm there.

"I've played more games than any of those guys out there. So, I've known the experience and more than the experience part, it's where I've batted, and I've learnt how to accept pressure and I've learnt how to kind of swallow the pressure and kind of make sure the team and everything is calm," Hardik added.

Dhoni is known for his calm demeanour and Hardik feels now it is his responsibility to step into the legendary wicketkeeper's shoes as a batter and he is ready to sacrifice his strike-



rate to play that role.

"In that way, maybe I have to get my strike rate down or... Taking new opportunities or taking new roles is (something) I've always looked forward to. I don't mind coming in and playing the role which somewhere down the line Maahi (Dhoni) used to play," he said.

Hardik has scored 1271 runs at a strike-rate of 142.17 in 87 T20Is.

"I think at that time, I was young, and I was hitting all around the park, but now since he has gone, all of a sudden that responsibility... It has just naturally come to me, and I don't mind (doing it). We're getting the result we want and it's okay."

During the third T20I against New Zealand, Hardik did just that, allowing the in-form Shubman Gill (126) to take

the attack to the opposition as India posted a massive 234 for 4 and then bowled out NZ for 66 for a 168-run win.

With pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah nursing an injury, Hardik has backed himself to bowl more with the new ball, having bowled 12 overs in the powerplay, conceding 86 runs for two wickets this home season.

"I had to bowl with the new ball (in T20Is) because Arshdeep (Singh)... I don't want any new guy to come and have that difficult role of (bowling first up with the new ball) because if they're put under pressure, then we're chasing the game," Hardik said.

"So, I've always been (like) leading from the front and I've been working on my new-ball skills, which is helping me."

Sai Praneeth enters Thailand Open quarters

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's B Sai Praneeth defeated Korean qualifier Hyeok Jin Jeon in a tough three-game contest to enter the quarter-finals of the Thailand Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Thursday.

Praneeth beat his Korean opponent 24-22, 7-21, 22-20 in the men's singles second-round match.

He will next face sixth seed Li Shi Feng of China in the last-eight round.

Earlier in the day, Kiran George and Ashmita Chaliha put up gallant fights before going down in three games in the second round of their respective events.

While George, the Odisha Open champion, went down 22-20, 15-21, 20-22 to third seed Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong in men's singles, Ashmita lost 21-19, 13-21, 27-29 to sixth-seeded Den Hojmark Kjaersfeldt of Denmark in a gruelling women's singles round-of-16 match.

Eighth seeds Tanisha Crasto and Ishaan Bhatnagar suffered a 19-21, 16-21 loss to Indonesia's Akbar Bintang Cahyono and Marsheilla Gischa Islami in mixed doubles.

N Sikki Reddy and Rohan Kapoor also couldn't cross the second round, losing 11-21, 10-21 to sixth seeded Chinese Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping.

Gopal's career-best 161 puts K'taka on cusp of Ranji semis

PTI ■ BENGALURU

All-rounder Shreyas Gopal stood tall with a career-best 161 not out as Karnataka piled more misery on Uttarakhand with a massive first innings lead of 490 runs in their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal here on Thursday.

At close on day three, Uttarakhand were 106/3, still 384 runs in arrears with Dikshanshu Negi and Swapnil Singh remaining unbeaten on identical scores of 27 in an unbroken 46-run partnership. Vidwath Kaverappa (2/22) claimed the Uttarakhand opening duo of Avneesh Sudha (4) and Jijanjot Singh (24), while debutant M Venkatesh dismissed former Delhi batter Kunal Chandela, who had played in their 2016-17 final against Vidarbha.

Uttarakhand also have wicket-keeper-batter Aditya Tare, the Ranji

Trophy-winning former Mumbai skipper in waiting but it seems a lost battle against the eight-time champions Karnataka who are eyeing their first semi-final appearance since 2020.

Resuming on 474/5, Karnataka had their strategy clear as they batted along with no declaration in sight.

Overnight centurion Gopal, who on Wednesday slammed his first Ranji Trophy century since 2017-18, continued from where he left and in the process completed 3000 runs in first-class cricket.

BENGAL IN COMMAND

Kolkata: Bengal are on course to their third successive Ranji Trophy semi-final appearance after Shahbaz Ahmed produced yet another sparkling all-round show to put them in the driver's seat on the third day of their quarterfinal match against Jharkhand.

Batting at No. 6, left-hander Ahmed top-scored with a gritty 81 off 120 balls (9x4, 2x6) as Bengal posted 328 in their first innings to secure a healthy first innings lead of 155 runs.

At stumps on Day 3, Jharkhand were ahead by just seven runs, with their second innings in disarray at 162 for 7. A total of 11 wickets tumbled on day three.

The lower order Jharkhand batters are now left battling to delay the inevitable with two more days left in the game.

Ahmed, the left-arm spin bowler, also made an impact with the ball, dismissing Anukul Roy (40) and Jharkhand skipper Virat Singh (29) in their second innings.

Opener Aryaman Sen waged a lone battle for Jharkhand with a fighting half century (64 off 132 balls) but Ishan Porel brilliantly set him up with



a bouncer and dismissed him at the fag-end of the day.

It was a total batting failure for Jharkhand as only three batters managed double digit figures with Aryaman stitching two fifty-plus stands with Anukul Roy and then with Singh.

BOWLERS PUT MP BACK

Indore: Defending champions Madhya Pradesh bounced back in contention on the third day of their quarterfinal against Andhra, despite conceding a huge first innings lead, thanks to pacer Avesh Khan's exploits.

Set a winning target of 245, MP ended day three at 58 for no loss after bundling out the opponents for 93 in their second innings.

Andhra skipper Hanuma Vihari, like in the first innings when he returned to bat braving a wrist injury, batted left-handed to score 15 coming in at No.11.

He swatted three fours, including a reverse sweep but could not do much as the team collapsed to 93 all out in 32.3 overs.

Earlier, resuming at the overnight score of 144 for 4, MP was bowled out for 228 with left-arm medium-pacer Prithvi Raj Yarra picking up five wickets.

Prithvi Raj added the scalps of Harsh Gawli (1), Saransh Jain (8), Avesh Khan (15) and Kumar Kartikeya (24, 4 fours) to finish with superb figures of 5 for 26.

The home team looked in danger of being dismissed below 200 before Kartikeya and Avesh stitched a 48-run stand for the ninth wicket to stretch the score to 228.

With a big lead of 151, Andhra was expected to bat well in the second innings to put MP out of contention. However, the MP bowlers ran through the visiting team's batting unit in just 32.3 overs.