ANALYSIS 7

A NEW GREAT GAME

BEGINS IN AFGHANISTAN

the pioneer

SAMANTHA TO BEGIN SHOOTING FOR KUSHI & CITADEL SOON

VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW

BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

BHUBANESWAR RANCHI **DEHRADUN HYDERABAD**

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Page 11





Relief to salaried, josh to unemployed

'Amrit Kaal Budget'

FM unveils income tax relief, small saving sops a year before elections

Highlights of **Budget**

in Parliament on Wednesday

Per capita income has more than doubled to Rs 1.97 lakh in around 9 years

Indian economy has increased in size from being 10th to 5th largest in the world in the past nine years

New Infrastructure Finance Secretariat established to enhance opportunities for pvt investment in infrastructure

The maximum deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme to be enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh.

Fiscal Deficit targeted to be below 4.5% by 2025-26.

Investment of Rs 75,000 cr, including Rs 15,000 cr from pvt sources, for 100 critical transport infrastructure projects, for last and first mile connectivity for food grains sectors.

Outlay for PM Awas Yojana is being enhanced by 66% to over Rs 79.000 crore.

Capital outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore has been provided for the Railways, which is the highest ever and about nine times the outlay made in 2013-14.

PAN will be used as the common identifier for all digital systems of specified government agencies to bring in Ease of Doing **Business.**

30 Skill India International Centres to be set up across different states to skill youth for international opportunities

Revamped credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs to take effect from 1st April 2023 through infusion of Rs 9,000 crore in the corpus. This scheme would enable additional collateral-free guaranteed credit of Rs 2 lakh crore and also reduce the cost of the credit by about 1 per



PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday raised the personal income tax rebate limit, doled out sops on small savings and announced one of the biggest hikes in capital spending in the past decade as she did a tight rope walk in the Budget between staying fiscally prudent and meeting public expectations in the year before general elections.

The personal income tax rebate limit has been increased to Rs 7 lakh from the fiscal year starting April 1 under the new tax regime from the previous Rs 5 lakh. Tax slabs has been cut to five from seven earlier. Also, the maximum income tax rate has been reduced to about 39% from 42.7% after a reduction in the highest surcharge to

The first budget of the "Amrit Kaal" provides foundation to fulfil the resolve for a developed India while giving priority to deprived sections of the society as well

- NARENDRA MODI,

WHAT'S CHEAPER WHAT'S COSTLIER?

Articles made from gold bars □ Cigarettes □ Imitation Jewellery □ Silver □ Electric kitchen chimney Imported bicycles and toys Electronic vehicle imnorts

Parts for mobile phones Parts for TV panels Machinery for lithium ion batteries 📮 Raw materials for EV industry

NEW Rebate limit increased from INCOME TAX TABLE Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh a year



No tax Taxed at 5% Taxed at 10% Taxed at 15% Taxed at 20% Taxed at 30%

Union Budget drives digital agenda

conducting interdisciplinary research,

developing cutting edge applications

and scalable problem solutions in the

areas of agriculture, health, sustainable

cities," she said. Sitharaman said that a

17,05,610 17,10,828

NEW DELHI: Three centres of excellence for artificial intelligence in top educational institutions and 100 labs in engineering institutions for developing applications using 5G services will be set up, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Wednesday. The finance minister made the announcement in her budget speech in Lok Sabha. "Three centres of excellence for artificial intelligence will be set up in top educational institutions. Leading

Sensex jumps over 1,200 points

MUMBAI: Benchmark BSE Sensex zoomed over 1,200 points in the afternoon trade on Wednesday as market investors cheered the Union budget proposals presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha. The 30-share BSE barometer zoomed 1.223.54 points or 2 per cent to its intra-day high of 60,773.44.

Over Rs 946 crore allocated to CBI

NEW DELHI: The Centre has allocated Rs 946 crore to the Central Bureau of Investigation in the Union Budget 2023-24 announced on Wednesday, a slight increase of over 4.4 per cent from FY 2023. The country's premier probe agency is over-stretched in terms of human resources to tackle emerging crime scenes

Rs 15,000 crore for implementation of Pradhan Mantri PVTG **Development Mission** over the next three years under the Development **Action Plan for** Scheduled Tribes.

'Centre of Excellence'

a facelift as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced that it will be supported as 'Centre of Excellence' for producer and second largest exporter of Shree Anna' (millets) in the world, which has numerous health benefits and also an integral part of food for centuries. "Now to make India a global hub for 'Shree Anna', the Indian Institute of Millet Research, Hyderabad will be supported as the Centre of Excellence for sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level," she said. Reacting to the proposal, Krishna Ella, Founder and Executive Chairman Bharat Biotech International Ltd in a statement said the upgradation of the Millet Research Institute is a clear indication of the government's commitment to rural development and food

Rs 10 lakh crore capital investment, a steep increase of 33 per cent for third year in a row, to enhance growth potential and job creation; crowd-in private investments, and provide a cushion against global headwinds.

IIMR in Hyd becomes

Resources transferred to States and UTs

HYDERABAD: The Indian Institute of Millet Research here will soon get sharing best practices, research and technologies at the international level. In her Union Budget speech, she noted that India is the largest

engineering institutions in

collaboration with various authorities,

regulators, banks and other business

for developing applications using 5G

Taxes comprise 58 paise of every rupee

NEW DELHI: For every rupee in the government coffer, 58 paise will come from direct and indirect taxes, 34 paise from borrowings and other liabilities, 6 paise from non-tax revenue like disinvestment and 2 paise from non-debt capital receipts, according to the Budget documents for 2023-24. Goods and Services Tax (GST) will contribute 17 paise in every rupee of revenue, while corporation tax will account for 15 paise. The government is also looking to earn 7 paise out of every rupee from excise duty and 4 paise from customs duty. Income tax will yield 15 paise. The collection from 'borrowings and other liabilities' will be 34 paise, according to the Budget 2023-24

Receipts 16,2 Expenditure

Budget at a Glance

2021-22 2022-23 2022-23 2023-24

If deduction, exemption claims less than Rs 3.75 lakh,

OPT NEW TAX REGIME

NEW DELHI: A taxpayer whose deductions and exemption claims are less than Rs 3.75 lakh annually would be advised to opt for the new income tax regime and pay less tax than they gave in the old regime, a senior finance ministry officer said Wednesday. The Income Tax Department has arrived at the figure after making due calculations for ensuring a "hasslefree and less tax rate" filing regime for the assessees, he said. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting the Budget for 2023-24, said the government has made the new income tax regime more attractive for taxpayers bringing "substantial changes" in its structure for the benefit of the middle class. According to the changes proposed in the Budget, no tax would be levied on people with an annual income of up to Rs 7 lakh under the new tax regime but it made no changes for those who continue in the old regime that provides for tax exemptions and deductions on investments and expenses such

Fully imported cars, EVs, to cost more

NEW DELHI: Fully imported cars, including electric vehicles will cost more

with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing hike in customs duty. Customs duty on vehicles in completely built units (CBUs) costing less than USD 40,000 or with engine capacity less than 3,000 cc for petrolrun vehicles and less than 2,500 cc for diesel-run vehicles has been raised from 60 per cent to 70%. Similarly, customs duty on electrically operated vehicles in CBU form, other than with cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value of more than USD 40,000, has also been raised to 70% from 60%. The Budget also outlined that customs duty on vehicles, including electric vehicles, in semi-Knocked down (SKD) form will rise to 35% from 30% earlier. Already, cars imported as CBUs with CIF more than USD 40,000 or with engine capacity more than 3,000 cc for petrol-run vehicles and more than 2,500 cc for diesel-run

vehicles attract 100% customs duty.

Adani group calls off FPO. money to be returned to investors

BENGALURU: As it's stocks plunged with flagship Adani Enterprises dropped by 28%, Adani Group late Wednesday night decided to call off its 20,000 crore Follow on Public Offer (FPO) in a rare move amidst the growing impact of the Hindenburg report raising allegations of "stock manipulation and accounting fraud." The company in a statement issued said that it will return money to its investors. It said that the decision to cancel the offer was taken in the interests of its subscribers. Gautam Adani, Chairman, Adani Enterprises said that the decision was taken amid the fluctuations the group's stocks saw during the day's trading. Billionaire Gautam Adani lost his title as Asia's richest person on Wednesday as his conglomerate plunged again in the wake of a US shortseller report.

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM

The issue over alleged tapping of phones of certain legislators by the state government took an New twist interesting turn on Wednesday with ruling party MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy adducing evidence of to phone tapping his phone tapping, while dragging Intelligence Additional DGP P Additional Sitaramanjanayulu also into row

The allegations relating to phone-tapping have triggered a debate among

police officials, creating ripples in the administration. It has also become a hot top topic of discussion in political circles across the state. Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, who created a sensation on Tuesday by claiming that his phone was being tapped, spoke to media persons on Wednesday. He said he had phoned his close friend and spoken to him. Subsequently, Intelligence Chief and Additional DGP Sitaramanjaneyulu sent him an audio clip of that telephonic conversation with his friend and questioned him as to why he was speaking against the government. "The Intelligence chief spoke

in a threatening manner", the MLA

alleged. Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy main-tained that the audio clips of his conversation with his friend that the Intelligence chief had sent him through phone 98499 66000 clearly proved that his phone was tapped. "If my phone were not tapped, how could the Intelligence Chief send voice clips to me?," he questioned. It may be mentioned here that another ruling party MLA, Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, had also

tapped.

alleged that his phone was being

Railways gets highest-ever capital outlay of Rs 2.40 lakh crore



The capital outlay for the railways has been increased to the highestever Rs 2.40 lakh crore in the Union Budget for 2023-24, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday.

Presenting the budget in Lok Sabha, Sitharaman said the outlay for the railways is nine times the amount provided in 2013-2014.

She said 100 critical transport infrastructure projects for last- and first-mile connectivity for coal, fertiliser and food grain sectors have been identified and will be taken up on a priority basis with investment

including Rs 15,000 crore from private sources, she said.

Budget papers showed that the net revenue expenditure of the railways is placed at Rs 2,65,000 crore in the Budget Estimate (BE) 2023-24 as against Rs 2,42,892.77 crore in Revised Estimate (RE) 2022-23.

 $Re imbursement\ of$ losses on operation of strategic lines has been kept at Rs 487.51 crore in BE 2023-24 as against Rs 2,461.90 crore in RE 2022-23. An amount of Rs 780 crore has been provided in BE 2023-24 towards debt servicing of market borrowings for national projects.

The total outlay provided for capital expen-diture in the Budget Estimate 2023-24 of Rs 2,60,200 crore includes Rs 2,40,000 crore from general revenues, Rs 200 crore from Nirbhaya Fund, Rs 3,000 crore from internal resource and Rs 17,000 crore from internal and extra budgetary resources.

The total receipt of the railways comprising revenues from passenger, goods, other coaching, sundry other heads and Railway Recruitment Boards have been placed at Rs 2,65,000 crore in BE 2023-24 as against Rs 2,42,892.77 crore of RE 2022-23.

GOVT DOUBLES DEPOSIT LIMIT FOR SENIOR CITIZEN SAVINGS SCHEME TO RS 30 LAKH

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday proposed to double the deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme to Rs 30 lakh and Monthly Income Account Scheme to Rs 9 lakh.

In her Budget Speech, the minister also



announced a new small savings scheme for women. "The maximum deposit limit for Senior Citizen Savings Scheme will be enhanced from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 30 lakh," the minister said in her 87-minute long speech.

She also proposed that the maximum deposit limit for Monthly Income Account Scheme will be enhanced from Rs 4.5 lakh to Rs 9 lakh for a single account and from Rs 9 lakh to Rs 15 lakh for a joint account.

Announcing a new 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Mahila Samman Bachat Patra', Sitharaman said a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, will be made available for a two-year period up to March 2025. This will offer deposit facility up to Rs 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for a tenor of 2 years at fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with partial withdrawal option,

The minister also announced to that an integrated IT portal will be established for investors to reclaim unclaimed shares and unpaid dividends from the Investor

Education and Protection Fund



Rs 1.96 lakh crore for Home Ministry

PNS NEW DELHI

Sending a clear message about its internal security priorities, the Modi government on Wednesday allocated Rs 1.96 lakh crore to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with a majority of the spending on Central Armed Police Forces such as CRPF and intelligence gath-

ering. The 2023-24 budget allocation to the MHA, helmed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, is Rs 1,96,034.94 crore. The budget 2022-23 had earmarked Rs

1,85,776.55 crore. A substantial amount has also been allocated for improving infrastructure along the international border, police infrastructure and modernisation of police

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for 2023-24 in Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

The bulk of the amount of the MHA, Rs 1,27,756.74 crore, has been allocated to the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in comparison to Rs 1,19,070.36 crore in 2022-23.

CORP AFFAIRS MINISTRY GETS RS 756 CR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Corporate Affairs Ministry will get a budgetary allocation of Rs 756.19 crore in the next financial year, higher than the amount earmarked for the ongoing fiscal ending March 31.

In 2022-23, the total allocation was initially at Rs 733.02 crore, and the same was sharply revised to Rs 630.36 crore, according to the Union Budget 2023-24 presented in Parliament on Wednesday. The Budget documents showed that out of the total amount of Rs 756.19 crore for the next fiscal, Rs 714.19 crore will be from the revenue side and Rs 42 crore from the capital side for

The funds towards regional directors, official liquidators and other expenditures with reference to various bodies under the reference to various bodies under the Companies Act have been hiked to Rs 330 crore for the next financial year over the current fiscal. Another expenditure pertains to expenses of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), National Financial Reporting Appellate Authority (NFRAA) and Investors Education and

Food, fertiliser, petroleum subsidies up 17% to Rs 5.21 lakh cr

PNS NEW DELHI

Protection Fund

(IEPF) Authority,

The Competition Commission of

The government's subsidies on food, fertilisers and petroleum are estimated to rise 17 per cent this fiscal year to Rs 5.21 lakh crore and have been pegged lower by 28 per cent to nearly Rs 3.75 lakh crore in FY24.

According to the Budget document, the

India (CCI) has been allocated Rs 51 crore, which is higher than Rs 46 crore given in 2022-

23. As per the document, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBBI) will receive Rs 41.85 crore next fiscal. The amount is less than Rs

58.02 crore initially allocated for this financial

year but the figure was lowered to Rs 32.06

pegged total subsidies on food, fertilisers and petroleum at Rs 5,21,584.71 crore in its revised estimate (RE) for 2022-23, as against the actual budget of Rs 4,46,149.24 crore in last fiscal

Of the total subsidies on these three items, the food subsidy is estimated to decline marginally to Rs 2,87,194.05 crore in current fiscal year from Rs 2,88,968.54 crore in 2021-22.

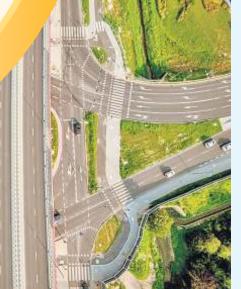
However, the fertiliser subsidy is estimated to increase to Rs 2,25,220.16 crore during this fiscal from Rs 1,53,758.10 crore in the last financial year as subsidies on both urea as well as

non-urea nutrients like DAP (diammonium phosphate) surged. Subsidy on urea is set to rise

to Rs 1,54,097.93 crore from Rs 1,00,988.13 crore, while that on phosphatic & potassic (P&K) fertilisers to Rs 71,122.23 crore from Rs 52,769.97 crore.

Petroleum subsidy, too, is estimated to rise to Rs 9,170.50 crore from Rs 3,422.60 crore in the said





Rs 5.94 lakh crore for Defence

PNS NEW DELHI

The defence budget was increased to Rs 5.94 lakh crore for 2023-24 from last year's allocation of Rs 5.25 lakh crore.

In the Union Budget presented in Parlimament by Finance Minister Nirala Sitharaman on Wednesday, a total of Rs 1.62 lakh crore has been set aside for capital expenditure that includes purchasing new weapons, aircraft, warships and other military hardware. For 2022-23, the budgetary allocation for capital outlay was Rs 1.52 lakh crore but the revised

estimate showed the expendi-

According to 2023-24 budget documents, an allocation of Rs 2,70,120 crore has been made for revenue expenditure that includes expenses on payment of salaries and maintenance of establishments. The budgetary allocation of revenue expenditure in 2022-23 was Rs 2,39,000

In the budget for 2023-24, the capital outlay for the Ministry of Defence (Civil) has been pegged at Rs 8,774 crore while an amount of Rs 13,837 crore has been set aside under capital outlay.

Boost to EVMs: Nearly Rs 1,900 cr allocated

Nearly Rs 1,900 crore has been allocated in the Union Budget to the Union Law Ministry to buy electronic voting machines ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

According to the budget document, Rs 1,891.78 crore has been allocated for purchase of EVMs by the poll panel.

The provision is meant for providing funds to the Election Commission for procurement of ballot units, control units and



voter verifiable paper audit trial units (papertrail machines) and ancillary expenditure on EVMs and destruction of obsolete EVMs," it said.

One control unit and at least one ballot unit makes

bly polls this year and Lok Sabha elections in 2024,

for an EVM. Ahead of several assem-

the Union Cabinet had last month approved a law ministry proposal for funds to procure additional electronic voting machines for the Election Commission.

Sources had then said that more of the same type of electronic voting machines, which are in use at present, will be procured from Bharat Electronics Ltd and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd, the two PSUs which had been manufacturing the machines since they were introduced.

Infrastructure development

Capex hiked to Rs 10 lakh crore

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced hiking the capital expenditure by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore for infrastructure development for 2023-24 and will be at 3.3 per cent of the GDP. Presenting the Budget for 2023-24, she said the newly established infrastructure finance secretariat will assist

in attracting more private

investment. "Capital investment outlay is being increased steeply for the third year in a row by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore, which would be 3.3 per cent

"This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20," Sitharaman said.

According to the minister, the Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure will be reviewed by an expert com-

mittee for recommending

the classification and financing framework suitable for Amrit Kaal.

She said one hundred critical transport infrastructure projects for the last and firstmile connectivity for ports, coal, steel, fertiliser and foodgrains sectors have been identified.

"They will be taken up on priority with an investment of Rs 75,000 crore, including Rs 15,000 crore from private sources," she said.

Union Budget drives digital agenda

Continued from page 1 "To realise the new range of opportunities, business models and employment potential, the labs will cover, among others, applications such as smart classrooms, precision farming, intelligent transport systems and healthcare appli-

cations," she said. The finance minister announced that to address learning loss incurred during the pandemic years, a national digital library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating availability of quality books across geographies, languages and genres.

As many as 38,000 teachers and support staff to be recruited in the next three years for 740 Eklavya Model Residential Schools serving 3.5 lakh tribal students, she said.

'Amrit Kaal Budget'

Continued from page 1 Besides, the deposit limit for senior citizen savings schemes has been doubled to Rs 30 lakh and for Monthly Income Account Scheme to Rs 9 lakh. A new small savings scheme for women, offering 7.5 per cent interest rate on deposits of up to Rs 2 lakh for a tenor of 2 years, has been announced.

Sitharaman's fifth straight budget comes at a time when the economy is slowing due to global headwinds and there is a need for increased spending on social sectors as well as ramping up incentives for local manufacturing.

She also announced customs duty relief on mobile phone components, as well as on capital goods for lithium batteries and other such items to boost green energy and exports. This is the final full budget before the general elections in April/May next year. An interim budget, called vote on account, is to

be presented in February next vear and the new government will present the full budget sometime in July 2024

For 2023-24, capital investment outlay has been increased steeply for the third year in a row by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore, which would be 3.3 per cent of the GDP. This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20.

Since coming to power in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government has ramped up capital spending, including on roads and energy, while wooing investors through lower tax rates and labour reforms, and offering subsidies to poor households to clinch their political support.

"This Budget hopes to build on the foundation laid in the previous Budget, and the blueprint drawn for India@100," Sitharaman said in her budget speech in Lok

Sensex jumps over 1,200 points

Continued from page 1 The broader NSE Nifty jumped 310.05 points or 1.75 per cent to 17,972.20. "The market had mixed expectations on the budget presuming it to be populist and low elbowroom for the government ahead of the

slowing economy, high inflation and interest rates. However, the government has taken it to a new zone with a well-tuned perfection between growth and stabil-"The rise in capital expen-

diture by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore is the shot in the arm heading a multiplier effect on the economy. While high amount of schemes and tax benefit to rural economy and taxpayers will enhance consumption growth in India. Much beyond expectations, a win-win for households and corporates. It is a 10 on 10 budget," said Vinod Nair, head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Over Rs 946 crore allocated to CBI

Continued from page 1 dominated by artificial

intelligence, cryptocurrency, darknet, and conventional crimes like bank fraud cases and ongoing high-profile extradition cases in courts abroad, in addition to criminal cases handed over by various states, High Courts and the Supreme Court.

The agency received Rs 841.96 crore to manage its affairs in the Budget Estimates

for 2022-23, which was later increased to Rs 906.59 crore in the Revised Estimates.

The Government has allocated Rs 946.51 crore to the agency for 2023-24, the Budget document presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday. "The provision is for the

establishment-related expenditure of the Central Bureau of Investigation, which is entrusted with investigation

and prosecution in corruption cases against public servants, private persons, firms and other cases of serious crimes, the Budget document said.

It also includes provision for various projects such as the modernization of CBI's training centres, establishment of technical and forensic support units, comprehensive modernization and purchase of land/construction of office/residence, it said.

Adani group...

Continued from page 1 It comes just a day after the group managed to muster support from investors for a \$2.5 billion share sale for flagship firm Adani Enterprises on Tuesday, in what many saw as a stamp of investor confidence.

The report by Hindenburg Research last week alleged improper use by the Adani Group of offshore tax havens and stock manipulation.

New twist to phone tapping row

Continued from page 1 Kotamreddy Sridhar

Reddy declared that he would complain to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs about the phone tapping. Should there be no response to his complaint, he would approach the court, he stated.

A police official said that if the MLA complained to

the Union Home Ministry, the Intelligence chief would face problems.
"If the Union Home

Ministry takes the tapping of MLA's phone seriously, Intelligence chief Sitaramanjaneyulu will be in trouble," police sources said.

Further, should the MLA approach the Court on the

phone tapping issue, the Intelligence chief would have to appear before the court if he is summoned. The court may direct officials to seize the intelligence chief's phone and extract call data for analysis on the phone tapping case,

sources added. If the phone tapping is proved, action could be initiated by the court, a senior lawyer said.

versations

Meanwhile, Industry Minister Gudivada Amarnath opined that the Intelligence chief could have sent recorded conversations to the MLA. He sought to make a distinction between phone tapping and sending recorded con-

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India's skilling ecosystem to be expanded; stipend support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's digital ecosystem for skilling will be further expanded with the launch of a unified Skill India Digital platform, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Wednesday, with the Budget laying the roadmap to train lakhs of youth in the next three years.

Presenting the Union Budget for 2023-24, Sitharaman said stipend support will be provided to 47 lakh youth in three years via direct benefit transfer through roll out of a pan-India National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme.

"Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 will be launched to skill lakhs of youth within the next three vears. On-job training, industry partnership, and alignment of courses with needs of industry will be emphasized," the Finance Minister stated.

She shared that the scheme will also cover new age

courses for Industry 4.0 like coding, AI, robotics, mechatronics, IOT, 3D printing, drones, and soft skills.

Moreover, to skill youth for international opportunities, 30 Skill India International Centres will be set up across different states, Sitharaman said.

The digital ecosystem for skilling will be further expanded with the launch of a unified Skill India Digital platform for enabling demand-based formal skilling, linking with employ-

improve value

chain efficiencies

Customs duty on

manufa.cturing of shrimp feed will

also be reduced to

promote export of

marine products,

natural farming,

government will

facilitate 1 crore

farmers for this

the FM said the

For adoption of

and expand the

fishery market.

key inputs for

domestic

she said

ers including MSMEs, and facilitating access to entrepreneurship schemes, the Finance Minister informed.

This is the last full Budget of the second term of the BJP-led NDA government ahead of the general elections in 2024.

Sitharaman presented her fifth full Budget after she took over as Finance Minister in July 2019 from late Arun Jaitley, who opted out due to health reasons.

38,800 teachers will be hired for Ekalavya Model

PNS NEW DELHI

As many as 38,800 teachers will be hired for Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on

Wednesday.
Presenting the last last full
Budget of the second term of the BJP-led NDA govern ment ahead of the general elections in 2024, she said a national digital library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating quality books. She also said the Centre will provide Rs 5,300 crore assistance to drought-prone central region of Karnataka.

National Digital Library for children, adolescents to be set up

PNS NEW DELHI

A National Digital Library for children and adolescents will be set up for facilitating the availability of quality books across geographies, languages, genres and levels, and device agnostic accessi-bility, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced Wednesday.

In her Budget speech, she said states will be encouraged to set up physical libraries for them at panchayat and ward levels and provide infrastructure for accessing the National Digital Library resources.

To build a culture of reading and to make up for pandemic-time learning loss, the National Book Trust,

Children's Book Trust and other sources will be encouraged to provide and replenish noncurricular titles in regional languages and English to these physical libraries. "Collaboration

with

NGOs that work in literacy will also be a part of this initiative. To inculcate financial literacy, financial sector regulators and organizations will be encouraged to provide age-appropriate reading material to these libraries,"

Sitharaman said. The proposal has been welcomed by stakeholders in the education sector.

According to Tanvi Miglani, spokesperson of the HLM Group of Institutions,

setting up a National Digital Library is a great policy measure to make learning resources available in various subjects for children and adolescents on a consolidated digital platform.

Union Budget: Lokpal gets Rs 92 cr

The government has allocated Rs 92 crore to anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal in the Union Budget for 2023-24 to meet its establishment and construction related expenditures, a dip of over Rs 105 crore from the

revised estimates of the current fiscal. The Lokpal was given Rs 34 crore in 2022 23 which was revised to Rs 197.50 crore, according to the Union

Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday. A total of Rs 92 crore has been allocated for the next fiscal to meet its establishment and

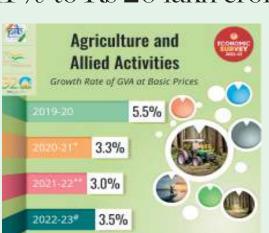
construction expenditures PNS NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday announced an 11 per cent hike in agriculture credit target to Rs 20 lakh crore for the next fiscal with focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries, a move aimed at providing higher farm loans at a subsidised rates to the

farming community.

Among other big ticket announcements for agriculture and allied sector, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman -in her budget speech -- said the government will launch a new sub-scheme of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana with an investment of Rs 6,000 crore to

Govt raises farm credit target by 11 % to Rs 20 lakh crore



purpose and will also set up 10,000 Bio-Input Resource Centres for creating a national-level distributed micro-fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.

Further, the government will incentivise state governments and Union Territories under the Pradhan Mantri Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of

Mother Earth (PM-

Rs 27,150 cr allocations for Telangana

PNS HYDERABAD

PRANAM) to promote alternative fertilizers and balanced use of chemical fertilizers.

That apart, the govern-ment will launch an Atmanirbhar Clean Plant Program to boost availability of disease-free, quality planting material for high value horticultural crops with an outlay of Rs 2,200 crore, she said. To encourage agri-startups by young entrepreneurs in rural areas, the FM said the government will set up an Agriculture Accelerator Fund (AAF). A digital public infrastructure for agriculture will also be built to enable inclusive, farmer-centric solutions.

Rs 1,11,169 crore was spent on the

100 days of wage employment in a

financial year to at least one

member of every household

whose adult members vol-

unteer to do unskilled

manual work. It also

earmarks at least

one-third of jobs

for women.

Primary Deficit

7,79,022

7,20,545

ments.

scheme as per previous budget docu-

The scheme provides guaranteed

As per the latest available data, the allocations for Telangana under the Union Budget add up to Rs 27,150 crore. This includes Rs 1,650 crore for Singareni, Rs 300 crore for IIT Hyd and Rs 1,473 crore for the Heavy Water Plant, Telangana will draw money from the combined

allocations. This includes Rs 6,835 crore for 22 All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), including the ones in Mangalagiri of Andhra Pradesh and Bibi Nagar of Telangana. A sum of Rs 37 crore has been allocated for Tribal Universities and Rs 357 crore for all muse-ums, including the Salar Jung Museum.

Andhra Pradesh is estimated to have got Rs 41,338 crore, including the combined allocations. This includes Rs 47 crore for AP Central University, Rs 168 crore for Petroleum University, and Rs 683 crore for the Vizag Steel

'Replacing old political...', when Sitharaman's budget speech

Whether it was just a slip of tongue or a tongue-in-cheek swipe at opposition parties, Finance Minister Nirmala before correcting it with "old polluting vehicles" triggered moments of mirth all round during her budget speech in Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

important continuing pol-

icy. Replacing the old political..." Treasury

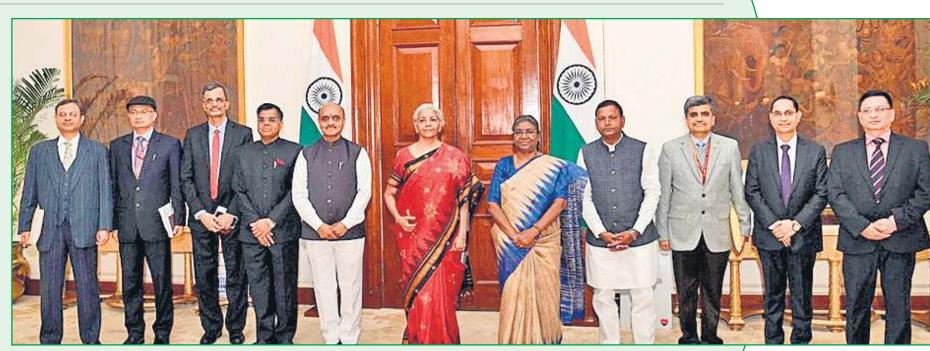
benches had a good

Sitharaman's mention of replacing "old political" speaking on the vehi replacement measures to curb pollution, she said, "Vehicle replacement is an

laugh as the slip, deliberate or not, appeared to be aimed at the opposition Congress, India's oldest political party which has been replaced by the BJP as the country's most powerful party. Smiling, she quickly fol-

lowed up with a sorry and continued. "Replacing old polluting vehicles, may be applicable, right... Replacing old polluting vehicles is an our economy. In furtherance of the vehicle scrapping policy mentioned in the Budget 22-23, I have allocated ade-

quate funds to scrap old vehicles of the central gov-



Rural Ministry, MGNREGS witness cut in allocations



PNS NEW DELHI

The Rural Development Ministry has been allocated Rs 1,57,545 crore in the Union Budget for 2023-24, around 13 per cent less than the estimated expenditure made by the ministry in the current fiscal.

The allocation for the flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) too has been cut by almost one-third.

According to Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday, Rs 1,35,944.29 crore was allocated to the Rural Development Ministry initially

However, according to the revised estimates, which is a mid-year review of possible

expendi-

ture, it has gone higher to Rs 1,81,121 crore. The actual expenditure for the Ministry in 2021-22 was Rs 1,60,433.4 crore. MGNREGS has been allocated Rs 60,000

crore for 2023-24, almost 32 per cent lesser than revised estimates for last fiscal. In 2022-23, the government had allocated Rs

73,000 crore for MGNREGS in the Budget, while the expenditure as per the revised estimates was Rs 89,400 crore. The Economic Survey released on Tuesday stated that the number of persons demanding

work under MGNREGS is back to the pre-pandemic levels from July to November 2022.

The survey attributed it to the "normalisation of the rural economy" and "swift recovery from Covid induced slowdown"

In 2021-22, Rs 73,000 crore was allocated to the Ministry, while Rs 98,467.85 crore was actually spent on MGNREGS, while in

2020-21,

FUEL SUBSIDIES ARE BACK

Oil cos to get Rs 30,000 cr for holding petrol, diesel prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Budget for 2023-24 will dole out Rs 30,000 crore to state-owned fuel retailers to make up for the massive losses they ran because of holding petrol and diesel prices despite rise in cost in a bid to help the government contain inflation.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has allocated the money under the head "capital support to oil marketing companies". It offered no explanation why the blue chip, cash rich oil PSUs should need capital support.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) haven't changed petrol and diesel prices since April 6, 2022, despite input crude oil prices rising from USD 102.97 per barrel that month to UŠD 116.01 per barrel in June and falling to USD 80.92 per barrel this month.

No capital gains tax if physical gold converted

PNS NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Feb 1 (PTI) The government on Wednesday said there won't be any capital gain tax if physical gold is converted to an Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) and vice versa.

Announcing this in her Budget speech for the 2023-24 fiscal, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said: "The conversion of physical gold to Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) and vice versa is proposed not to be treated as a transfer and not to attract any capital gains."

This would promote investments in electronic equivalent of gold,

EGRs are depository gold receipts traded on the stock exchanges.
Under this form, investors buy the gold in dematerialised form and are given gold receipts instead of physical gold. The BSE was the first stock exchange to launch EGRs on its platform.

7,06,845

8,14,668

UNION **Key Numbers** UDGET 2023-24 In ₹ crore 2022-23 2022-23 2023-24 2021-22 (Budget (Revised (Budget Estimates) Estimates) (Actuals) Revenue Receipts 21,69,905 26,32,281 22,04,422 23,48,413 Capital Receipts 16,23,896 17,40,487 18,38,819 1,870,816 Total Receipts 37,93,801 45,03,097 Total Expenditure 37,93,801 39,44,909 41,87,232 45,03,097 Revenue Deficit 10,31,021 9,90,241 11,10,546 8,69,855 Effective Revenue Deficit 7,88,375 6,72,598 7,84,958 4,99,867 Fiscal Deficit 16,61,196 17,55,319 17,86,816

■ National Data Governance Policy to be brought out to unleash innovation and research by start-ups and

■ 'Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes', MISHTI, to be taken up for mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands, through convergence MGNREGS, between CAMPA Fund and other

sources. To commemorate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a one-time new small savings scheme, Mahila Samman Savings Certificate, to be launched. It will offer deposit facility of up to Rs 2 lakh in the name of women or girls for tenure of 2 years (up to March 2025) at fixed interest rate of 7.5 per cent with partial

withdrawal option.

Fiscal Deficit of 3.5 per cent of GSDP allowed for states of which 0.5 per cent is tied to power sector reforms. ■ The fiscal deficit is 6.4 per

cent of GDP for the current fiscal, adhering to the Budget Estimate. ■ The gross market borrow-

ings for 2023-24 are estimated at Rs 15.4 lakh crore.

 To further improve tax payer services, proposal to roll out a next-generation Common IT Return Form for tax payer convenience, along with plans to strengthen the grievance redressal mecha-

Rebate limit of Personal Income Tax to be increased to Rs 7 lakh from the current Rs 5 lakh in the new tax regime. Thus, persons in the new tax regime with

income up to Rs 7 lakh not to pay any tax.

■ Tax structure in new personal income tax regime, introduced in 2020 with six income slabs, to change by reducing the number of slabs to five and increasing the tax exemption limit to Rs 3

■ Highest surcharge rate reduced from 37 per cent to 25 per cent in the new tax regime. This to further result in reduction of the maximum personal income tax rate to 39 per cent.

The limit for tax exemption

on leave encashment on retirement of non-govern-

reduced to 13 from 21

ment salaried employees to increase to Rs 25 lakh. Number of basic customs duty rates on goods, other than textiles and agriculture,



SHORT TAKES

Budget 2023-24 has vision for 'New India': UP CM Adityanath

PNS LUCKNOW

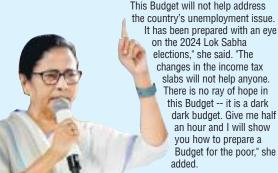
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the Union Budget 2023-24 has a vision for 'New India'. "The budget talks about the vision for New India, the country's prosperity and aims to serve 130 crore Indians," he said in a series of tweets in Hindi. "The budget will fulfil the expectations and aspirations of all sections of society, including the poor, farmers, youth and women. Undoubtedly, this budget will prove to be a milestone in making India an economic

superpower," he added.

Budget 'anti-people', 'opportunistic', says Mamata Banerjee

PNS ■ BOLPUR

Terming the Union Budget "anti-people", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said it will deprive the poor. Addressing a government function at Bolpur in Birbhum district, she claimed that the changes in the income tax slabs will not help anyone. "This Union Budget is not futuristic, totally opportunistic, anti-people and anti-poor. It will benefit only one class of people.



Sitharaman's daughter, relatives watch from LS gallery as she presents Budget

PNS NFW DFI HI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's daughter and relatives watched from the visitor gallery in Lok Sabha as she presented the Union Budget for 2023-24 on Wednesday. The visitor gallery was full as the last full-fledged budget of the second Narendra Modi government was presented. Among those present were Sitharaman's daughter Vangmayi Parakala and many of her relatives. Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and several Rajya Sabha members were also present and were seen taking notes as various proposals were announced. In her budget speech, Sitharaman said the world has recognised India as a bright star as the country is recording healthy economic growth despite global uncertainties. India's growth at 7 per cent in the current fiscal is the highest among major economies and the Indian economy is on the right track, she said. In the 75th year of Independence, the world has recognised India as a bright star, the minister said, adding the world appreciates the country's achievements

It's 'Amrit Kaal' for PM Modi, not for common people: AAP hits out at Budget

PNS NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday questioned Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's claim about doubling of per capita income since 2014, saying it is 'Amrit Kaal' for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, not for the common people of the country. Highlighting the achievements of the Modi dispensation so far, the finance minister in her budget speech said the government's efforts since 2014 have ensured for all citizens a better quality of living and a life of dignity. The per capita income has more than doubled to Rs 1.97 lakh, she added, "Neither did the MSP of

crops increase nor did the youth get employment. But this is Amrit Kaal for Modi ji. Nirmala ji is saying per capita income has doubled," AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, who is also the party's national spokesperson, said in a series of tweets in Hindi, wondering "whose income" doubled. The AAP leaders said the Union Budget for 2023-24.

TAX RELIEF TO COOPERATIVE SECTOR

Budget outlay at Rs 1,150.38cr

PNS NEW DELHI

To promote the cooperative sector, the government on Wednesday announced a slew of measures, including a concessional tax of 15 per cent to promote new societies focusing on manufac-turing and a higher limit of Rs 3 crore for TDS on cash withdrawal.

For the cooperation ministry, the government made a total budget outlay of Rs 1,150.38 crore for 2023-24, lower than the revised estimate of Rs 1,624.74 crore for 2022-23.

In her budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman announced a higher limit of Rs 2 lakh per member for cash deposits and loans in cash by Primary Agricultural Co-operative Societies (PACS) and Primary Co-operative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (PCARDBs).

The government also provided an opportunity to sugar cooperatives to claim payments made to cane growers for the period prior to the assessment year 2016-17 as expenditure. This is expected to provide them with a relief of almost Rs 10,000 crore.

These measures come

amid the government promoting a cooperative-based economic development model, especially for small and marginal farmers, and other marginalised sections.

To realise the vision of Sahakar Se Samriddhi', Sitharaman said the government has already initiated computerisation of 63,000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) with an investment of Rs 2,516 crore. In consultation with all stakeholders and states, model bye-laws for PACS were formulated enabling them to become multipurpose PACS. A national cooperative database is

being prepared for countrywide mapping of cooperative societies. "With this backdrop, we

will implement a plan to set up massive decentralised storage capacity," Sitharaman said, adding that this will help farmers store their produce and realize remunerative prices through

sale at appropriate times.

The government will also facilitate setting up of a large number of multipurpose cooperative societies, primary fishery societies and dairy cooperative societies in uncovered panchayats and villages in the next five years, she said.

Budget reduces

surcharge

on HNIs

The Budget 2023-24 proposes

to lower India's highest rate of

42.74 per cent at present, by reducing the surcharge applica-

ble on high net-worth individ-

uals. Finance minister Nirmala

income tax regime, which was

originally introduced in 2020-

21 fiscal but had not received

much traction, by raising the

plifying the tax slabs.

basic exemption limit and sim-

The highest surcharge rate of

ble on those individuals with

income above Rs 5 crore, has

been brought down to 25 per

cent. This means that, with

effect from April 1, 2023, all

be subject to 25 per cent sur-

In her 2023-24 budget

speech, Sitharaman said the

highest tax rate in the country

income above Rs 2 crore would

37 per cent, which was applica-

Sitharaman on Wednesday

proposed to tweak the new

income tax to 39 per cent, from

PNS NEW DELHI

Inflation 13.0 Combined 2021-2022-23

Sitharaman, sixth FM to present budget 5 times in a row

PNS NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is the sixth minister in independent India to present five consecutive budget, joining a select league of legends likes of Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley and P Chidambaram.

Sitharaman's budget for the fiscal year starting April 2023 is her fifth straight since 2019. Other ministers who have presented five straight annual financial statements include Arun Jaitley, P Chidambaram, Yashwant Sinha, Manmohan Singh and Morarji Desai.

After taking charge of the Finance Ministry in the Modi Government in 2014, Jaitley presented five budgets in a row from 2014-15 to 2018-19. It was in 2017, that Jaitley departed from the colonialera tradition of presenting Budget on the last working day of February to 1st of the month.

Piyush Goyal, who was holding the additional charge of the Ministry due to ill health of Jaitley, presented the interim budget or vote on account for 2019-20. After the 2019 general

elections, in the Modi 2.0 Government, Sitharaman

was given the Finance portfolio. Under Sitharaman, India has weathered the Covid pandemic with an array of policy measures announced for the poor and continued its tag of the fastest growing major economy and a 'bright spot' in world economy.

COVETED CLUB OF FIVE BUDGETS IN A ROW

Jaitley's predecessor and Congress' P Chidambaram in the UPA government had presented five budgets in a row from 2004-05 to 2008-09. In the BJP-led Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government, Yashwant Sinha as finance minister presented the interim and final budgets for 1998-99. After the general elections in 1999, Sinha presented four budgets -- 1999-2000 to 2002-03.

It was under Sinha that the time for presentation of the Budget was changed to 11am from 5 pm. During Narasimha Rao Government, Manmohan Singh was given charge of the Finance portfolio and he presented budgets from 1991-92 to 1995-96. Singh's 1991-92 Budget with a host of economic reforms to liberalise the economy, gave a new direction to Índia.

UPPER BHADRA PROJECT

Poll-bound K'taka gets Rs 5,300 cr

PNS HAVERI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the Centre would provide Rs 5,300 crore assistance for the Upper Bhadra project in Karnataka, an announcement cheered by the Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai.

Several BJP leaders, including National General Secretary C T Ravi and state party chief Nalin Kumar Kateel praised the budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha, calling it "farsighted and pro poor". "Rs 5,300 crore has been announced for the Upper Bhadra Project, which is a major irrigation project from Karnataka and ĥas a status of national project. I welcome this, as the project is important, aimed at providing irrigation and drinking water to vast areas of drought affected central districts of the state," Bommai



Speaking to reporters in Haveri, he said this is the first project with a status 'national project' in the state, and large funding to it has made us happy. "Earlier too funds had come to this project under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP), now as it is a national project, such a large fund is coming," he added. In her budget speech, Sitharaman, a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, said: "In the drought prone central regions of Karnataka, a central

assistance of Rs 5,300 crore will be given for the Upper Bhadra Project."

Welcoming the announcement, Health Minister K Sudhakar said: "This will immensely benefit the people of Chikkamagaluru, Chitradurga, Tumkur and Davangere districts by providing irrigation facility to farmers and recharging the groundwater table to provide drinking water in droughtprone taluks of these districts".

Tribals below 40 to get sickle le cell anaemia status and given pre-marital counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. Health Minister Marital Counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. Health Minister Marital Counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. Health Minister Marital Counselling about the risk of their child getting the disease if they marry another affected person. cell anaemia ease if they marry another affected person, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Wednesday.

PNS NEW DELHI

Tribals aged below 40 will be pro-

The government will take up the eradication of sickle cell anaemia in a mission mode and conduct massive screening in

affected tribal areas for early detection of cases, Mandaviya said after the presentation of the Union

is 42.74 per cent.

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), a genetic condition, is widespread among the tribal population in India and in other vulnerable populations, Mandaviya said.

ment will also issue cards after screening to tribal persons below 40 years affected by the disease mentioning their sickle cell

anaemia status and also provide pre-marital counselling to make the patients aware of the detrimental effects of the disease if they marry another sickle cell anaemia patient and give birth," he said.

The screening is aimed at reducing the prevalence of the dis-

The Union health ministry in collaboration with the tribal ministry and states has prepared a

roadmap to screen around 7 crore

people under the age of 40 in 200 districts with the most affected

The screening will be done using the rapid "point of care" histological test for which a person will just have to give blood.

Another major highlight of the

Budget on the health front, a said is that 157 nursing colleges will be established in co-location with the existing 157 medical colleges established since 2014.

'Nirasha' instead of 'asha' to

PNS LUCKNOW

people of India: Akhilesh

Samajwadi Party chief

Akhilesh Yadav on

Wednesday said the

Union Budget for 2023-

24 has given "nirasha" (despair) instead of

"asha" (hope) to

country. He also

budget further increases inflation

claimed that the

people of the

'Big on announcements, short on delivery'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday termed the Union budget for 2023-24 "big on announcements and short on delivery" as he accused the BJP government of making the common man's life dif-

Alleging the Narendra Modi government has "looted" the country by increasing prices of flour, pulses, milk and cooking gas, he claimed that the budget is proof that people are "continuously losing faith in the BJP".

"Overall, the Modi government has made life difficult for the people. The country's economy has been deeply hurt. The Modi government has done nothing except loot the country's wealth. This budget will be called 'Naam Bade Aur

Darshan Čhhote Budget' (big on announcements and short on delivery)," Kharge said after the presentation of the Union Budget.

The Congress president alleged that the budget has been made with elections and not the country in mind. "No effort has been made in this budget to find a solution to massive unemployment. Inflation is hurting every household and the common man is in trouble. There is nothing in the budget that would reduce prices of items of daily use," he said. Kharge claimed that there is nothing

in this budget for the welfare of Dalits, tribals and backward classes or to protect their rights.
"MNREGA budget reduced by Rs

38,468 crore. So what will

happen to the poor? There is no boost

to the education and health budgets, in fact, they have been reduced. 'The antifarmer

Narendra Modi government has given nothing in the budget for farmers! It was promised to double the income of farmers in 2022. Why was it not fulfilled? Where is the MSP guarantee?

The neglect of the farmers continues," he alleged. The Leader of Opposition in Kajya Sabha accused the Modi government has ruined the banking sector. The fugitives looted the country and fled, he said, alleging that wilful defaulters are to the tune of Rs 3 lakh crores. There is a slippage of Rs 36 lakh crores

more than Rs 1.75 lakh crore income tax last year.

STEP-MOTHERLY TREATMENT AGAIN

Delhi got only Rs 325 cr despite paying

PNS NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said despite paying more than Rs 1.75 lakh crore income tax last year, the city was allocated only Rs 325 crore in the Union Budget 2023-24. Accusing the Centre of meting out stepmotherly treatment to the national capital, he said the budget has offered no respite from the twin problems of inflation and unemployment. "Step-motherly treatment again with the people

of Delhi. The people of Delhi paid

more than Rs 1.75L cr income tax: Kejriwal Rs 325 crore was given for the devel-

> This is a gross injustice to the people of Delhi," Kejriwal said in a series of tweets. "There is no relief from inflation in this budget. On the contrary, this budget will increase inflation. There is no concrete

plan to remove unemployment. Unfortunate to reduce education budget from 2.64 per cent to 2.5 per cent. Reducing health budget from 2.2 per cent to 1.98 per cent is harm-

ful," he said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha on

Wednesday.

and unemployment Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 in Lok Sabha on Wednesday

and said it hopes to build on the foundation of the previous budget and blue print for India@100. "The BJP is completing a decade of its budgets, but when it did not give anything to the public earlier, what will it give now?" Yadav tweeted

Budget puts India on path to become world champion: India Inc

PNS NEW DELHI

India Inc on Wednesday described Union Budget 2023-24 as a road map for nation building, growth-centric and fiscally pru-dent with continued focus on capex and inclusion.

With vision, structure and discipline it puts India on the path to become "the world champion", industry leaders said.

Industry body CII Director General

Chandrajit Banerjee said the Budget is growth-oriented and fiscally prudent with continued focus on capex and inclusion.

The Finance Minister delivered a growth-centric budget building further on the strategy of high capex. The first Budget of India's Amrit Kaal also lays strong foundations for a Viksit Bharat by 2047," he

The continued thrust on capital expenditure will



boost overall economic productivity, crowd in private investment, and drive growth through a multiplier effect, Banerjee added.

FICCI President Subhrakant Panda said the announcements captured the pulse of the economy while retaining credibility both in terms of projections as well as committing to the fiscal consolidation glide path.

Most importantly, he said a "historic outlay" for public capex is a continuation of the heavy-lifting since the time of the pandemic and will have a multiplier effect across

myriad sectors of the economy besides crowding in private investment. A push to investment

and consumption was required to keep the growth cycle in motion. We are happy to note that the government has continued the thrust on capital expenditure with a 33 per cent increase in the capital outlay to Rs 10 lakh crore representing 3.3 per cent of GDP," Panda said, adding it was a step

in the right direction amid a global economic situation which is still not at

Another industry cham-

ber ASSOCHAM said the Budget for 2023-24 is a road map for nation building with continued focus on massive public expenditure on infrastructure, sustainable economic growth, encouraging consumption demand while staying on course of strict fiscal prudence.



Validity of G.O.Ms.No. 74 extended by another year

7,210 house plots to be exempted from registration fee and stamp duty

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The State government has decided to extend the time limit of G.O.Ms.No.74, dated January 28, 2019, for another year from the date of issue, for providing benefits of concessional registration fee and stamp duty to the remaining unregistered 7,210 house plots in Vijayawada.

In this regard, Rajat Bhargava, Special Chief Secretary for the Revenue (Registration) Department, issued G.O.Ms.No.32 on Wednesday.

According to the GO, 6,499 plots in the Vambay scheme and the remaining 711 old



plots would be registered under concessional registration fee and stamp duty in Vijayawada

The GO says to adopt the concessional rate of Rs.100

case of allottee and alliance excluding the full value of structure existing in any, as a special case. It directs that the Commissioner and Inspector General of Registration and Stamps should take necessary action on this matter accord-

Earlier, the G.O.Ms.No.1067, dated October 22, 2003, granted exemption from payment of stamp duty, registration fee and transfer duty on the existing houses in the plots allotted by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation in rehabilitated colonies and also permitted the allottees to register their houses with the concessional rates of stamp duty. Later, the government extended the validity of the GO several times. Meanwhile, at the request of

Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu and Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, the government has agreed to extend the time limit stipulated in G.O.Ms.No.74 for one year.

Apart from these 7,210 house plots, the State government granted permission to register another 18,000 house sites in Vijayawada and provide the right of sale after the registration. For that, the State government has issued another GO. Around 25,000 beneficiaries would benefit from

CM invited to Srisailam **Brahmotsavams**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has been invited to participate in Maha Shivaratri Brahmotsavams at Bhramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy Devasthanam in Srisailam from February 11 to 21.

Endowments Minister Kottu Satyanarayana called on the Chief Minister at his camp office here on Wednesday and invited him to participate in the Brahmotsavams. He was accompanied by

Deputy Chief Minister and

Srisailam MLA Silpa Chakrapani Reddy, Srisailam Temple Trust Board chair-man R Chakrapani Reddy and Temple EO S Lavanna.

The temple priests blessed the Chief Minister with vedic hymns and offered him prasadam and a photo frame of the deities.

Centre considered State's suggestions: Minister Buggana

AP suggested implementing a pumped storage system, asked for a policy on this, which was announced in Union Budget

PNS VIJAYAWADA

AP State Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath has said that the Centre considered the advice and suggestions given on behalf of the State government in the pre-budget meetings and included them in the 2023 Union Budget. He said that AP suggested implementing a pumped storage system, asked for a policy on this and the policy was announced.

Speaking to media persons, the Finance Minister said that the budget presented on Wednesday was beneficial to all the people. A few decisions in the budget were taken in accordance with the schemes being implemented in the State. The budget was advantageous to all the States across the country in terms of roads, railways, airports, ports etc., the minister said.

The minister added that reduction in fiscal deficit was a positive development in the budget presented by Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. He welcomed the tax concession being announced on personal income tax that would benefit the common man. It was useful for allocating funds for nursing colleges, skill development centres, airports, ports, ITDA, aquaculture, housing and setting up of Ekalavya



schools.

According to Buggana Rajendranath, Andhra Pradesh State stood as a role model for the world in the pump storage system. He added that decentralisation of development was the policy of their government.

He said that the Budget 2023-24 had been designed with the aim of giving priority to seven important sectors under the name of Saptarushulu' for the development of everyone in villages and towns. It stressed on endto-end development programmes, allocations or stalling, roads, railways, telecommunications, harnessing national energy, special attention to pollution-free solar, wind, green hydrogen power and harnessing youth

"Capital expenditure has increased from Rs 7.28 lakh crore last year to Rs 10 lakh crore this year, which means an increase of 2.5 lakh crore. The reduction of the fiscal deficit from 6.4 percent to 5.9 percent in two years due to Covid is a good development for the country. Tax revenue is currently Rs. 33.60 lakh crore, in 2022-23 it will be Rs. 30.43 lakh crore, an increase of 3 lakh crore," he pointed out.

"Andhra Pradesh's share was 9.15 lakh crore for the year 2022-23, but now it is estimated to be Rs.10 lakh crore. If we look at the total of tax and nontax revenues, according to last year's revised estimates, it was Rs 23.48 lakh crore and now it is Rs 26.32 lakh crore, which means an increase of 3 lakh

"The debt last year was Rs.17.58 lakh crore and this year it is Rs 17.98 lakh crore, which means an increase of approximately Rs 50,000 crore. The revenue was Rs 41.90 lakh crore and this time it is Rs 45 lakh crore. Allocations in some areas of expenditure are less and in others, more. Allocations for fertilisers, urea, rice and wheat subsidies have been reduced, while those have been increased for roads and railways," the minister

Nick Vujicic calls on CM Jagan

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Motivational speaker Nick Vujicic called on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at his camp office here on Wednesday.

Nick Vujicic said that he had travelled to around 78 countries and had never seen a person like YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, who was providing equal opportunities to all in the fields of education, medicine and agriculture. "The Chief Minister is working with high ambition for a higher goal," he said.

Over 45,000 government schools in Andhra Pradesh are working with the great goal of providing equal opportunities on par with the private schools. Significant progress is already being made in the government schools with world class facilities and this should be known to all.

He also expressed happiness over the State government introducing his life story titled Attitude is Altitude as a lesson in Class X English textbook.

Nick further said that he was working towards providing equal opportunities to all in the field of education, with a long-term goal for better results. There are good opportunities for the growth of children in the field of education,

Secretary Principal (Education) Praveen Prakash, Guntur District Collector Venugopal Reddy, Advisor to the Chief Minister R Dhanunjaya Reddy and the CMO officials were also pre-





okesh assures assistance to sugarcane farmers

Farmers complain they are not getting benefits of Rythu Bharosa, Amma Vodi schemes

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh, on Wednesday, promised the sugarcane farmers all possible assistance, including supply of quality fertilisers and pesticides. On the sixth day of his padayatra, Lokesh met the sugarcane farmers at Sake Vuru of Baireddipalle mandal. The farmers narrated their problems including the heavy investment. As a result of the increase in labour charges and prices of seed, fertilisers and pesticides, they were incurring heavy

losses, they complained.

The farmers also said that they were not getting the benefits of the Rythu Bharosa scheme and even the Amma Vodi scheme as they had two children each. They wanted the problems of the sugarcane farmers to be resolved after the TDP came back to power.

Later, Lokesh addressed the Valmiki community leaders at Belupalle of Baireddipalle mandal, where he said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy had deceived the community by not fulfilling the promises that he had made. "There



is no response from the government on the demand of the Valmikis to include them in the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) and the community members are suffering due to lack of employment opportunities.

"During the TDP regime, the Satyapal Committee was formed to study their problems and a resolution was passed by the Assembly in 2017 to include them in the STs' list," the TDP general secretary pointed

Promising the Valmiki community that separate companies would be set up in this area to provide employment to them, Lokesh said that he had personally written to Jagan to include the community in the list of

Lokesh also mentioned that not even a single investor had set up any unit in the State during the YSRCP rule. Of the six investors who addressed the recent Global Investors Summit in Davos, four companies were set up in the State during Chandrababu Naidu's regime while one each was established when the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy and Kiran Kumar Reddy were the chief ministers, he stated.

SC to take up Amaravati case on February 7

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Supreme Court Bench comprising Justice KM Joseph and Justice BV Nagaratna, which was supposed to take up the hearing of capital Amaravati case on Tuesday, did not take it up as it was not listed due to the heavy workload of cases. The Bench posted the case to February 7. In the meantime, another public interest litigation filed by one Mastan Vali of

Prakasam district in support of decentralised administration also came up for hearing. It was clubbed with the original petitions and the SLP of the Jagan government. While the Supreme Court

lifted the stay on the six-

month time frame fixed by the

High Court, it did not grant

any stay on the High Court

A miracle is about to unfold

in the sky with the appear-

ance of a rare green comet,

last seen thousands of years

ago in the Ice Age.

The Green Comet named C/2022 E3 (ZTF) is visible in

the southern hemisphere on

clear skies. After nearly

50,000 years, this comet is coming back our way.

From February 1 to 6,

become a hindrance to the Jagan government to go ahead with its three-capital plan.

However, the Chief Minister has decided that he would shift administrationVisakhapatnam in the coming months, irrespective of the

High Court judgment, since there is no bar on the place of operation by the Chief Minister. Meanwhile, the

Amaravati farmers are said to be planning to file a contempt of court petition in the Supreme Court on the Chief Minister's statement

Visakhapatnam was going to be the capital of the State. They are questioning how the Chief Minister could make such a statement when the issue was in the Supreme Court. This petition is also expected to order declaring Amaravati as the only capital. This has come up before the bencl February 7, sources said. come up before the bench on

Naidu hails Union Budget

get was a positive

TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu has said that the Union Budget 2023-24 presented by the BJP government will achieve the goal of inclusive development. Chandrababu Naidu said it was a great thing that India's economy, which had been ranked 10th in the world in 2014, was now ranked 5th. He said that allocation of investment expenditure of Rs 13.7 lakh crore in the bud-

Chandrababu welcomed thinking towards the design of schemes and programmes 2047. leader through Vision-2047. He said that the goals can be achieved through macro level planning and micro level imple-

for the next 25 years expressed hope that India will become a world mentation in all sectors. He welcomed the allocation of Rs 20 lakh crore for agriculture loans, Rs 79,000 crore for house construction and Rs 6,000 crore for aqua sector under the PM

The State BJP hailed the Budget that gave priority to each village in the country, which was a first after Independence. The Budget presented by Nirmala Sitharaman adopted seven priorities, which complemented each other and "acted as the Saptarishi guiding us through the Amrit Kaal". The budget is meant to benefit the rural and poor people. The Central government has designed it in such a way that

all areas, communities and sectors benefit and the fruits of development are achieved. Prof Sankaran

of AIIMS-Mangalagiri said it was a welcome move from the Central government to allocate funds to AIIMS for the development and infra works. Dr Swapna Vunnam, econ-

omist, Associate NCC officer, Andhra Naval Unit, Maris stella College, Vijayawada, said: "The budget is very impressive and innovative. There is no doubt that it is a people-friendly budget. Allocations for AP in the education and the medical sector are also impressive."

Congress, Left parties call budget 'disappointing'

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget-2023 in Parliament on Wednesday. However, the budget was disappointing for Andhra Pradesh with regard to the promises made under the AP State Reorganisation Act of 2014. The Centre has not allocated funds for the Polavaram project and the lack of mentioning the railway corridor

was a letdown. The funds allocated to Andhra Pradesh in the budget are Rs 37 crore for tribal universities, Rs 47 crore for AP Central University, Rs 168 crore for AP Petroleum University, Rs 683 crore for Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, and Rs 6,835 crore for 22 AIIMS hospitals across India that include AIIMS in Mangalagiri. AP's share in Central taxes is Rs 41,338 crore

APCC president Gidugu Rudra Raju has severely criticised the budget presented by the BJP-led Union government, saying injustice had He expressed concern over not mentioning the funds in the budget regarding backward areas of North Andhra and Rayalaseema. Even for the Polavaram project, the Central government was proactive in allocating funds besides not paying due attention to Amaravati and not allocating

funds for the constructions. CPM State secretary V Srinivas Rao said that the Centre had once again shown empty hands to Andhra Pradesh in allocating funds in the budget. There was no mention of funds to Visakha railway zone, Kadapa steel factory etc. Besides, no allocation was made for the development of backward areas like Uttarandhra, Rayalaseema and Prakasam district. It is unjust that 15 per cent less funds were allocated compared to previous year for tribal universities in both Telugu States. He pointed out that keeping the elections in mind, the Centre made new special allocations for Karnataka and neglected the



Minister distributes community pensions

Minister for Housing Jogi Ramesh distributed community pensions at the beneficiaries' doorstep at Pedana in Krishna district on Wednesday. He spoke to the beneficiaries regarding the implementation of welfare schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Jogi Ramesh said that to see the happiness in the eyes of the elderly, the State government was distributing community pensions on the first day of every month. After receiving the pensions, the beneficiaries give blessings to

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, he said. He specially thanked the volunteers for disbursing the

pensions on day 1 of every month. He handed over the pensions to the weavers and enquired about the implementation of welfare schemes. More than 4,555 beneficiaries are getting pensions in Pedana town, he added. Municipal Pedana

Chairperson B Gnana Jyotsna Rani, Vice-Chairman MD Khaja, councillors B Gangaiah, M Subrahmanyam, Commissioner M Anjaiah and

Green Comet returns after 50k yrs Say no to drugs, Vijayawada cops tell youth PNS VIJAYAWADA

PNS VIJAYAWADA

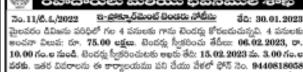
Commissioner (Admin) Moka Sathi Babu has asked the youth to stay away from drugs and intoxicating substances, which will have a profound effect on their lives. Following the direc-tive of Director General of Police (DGP) KV Rajendranath Reddy, the Vijayawada police have been organising an anti-drug drive in the city for students and youth, namely 'Say No

(SEB) jointly organised an awareness programme at the Police Command Control Room in Vijayawada on Wednesday. During the meeting, prominent psychiatrists, along with the police, gave

counselling to the youth and students.

Speaking on the occasion, DCP Moka Sathi Babu said that He asked the participants to inform him in case they came

across any drug peddlers. He told them that drugs would destroy lives, so stay away from them. Task Force ACP GV Ramana Murthy, psychiatrists Dr Sankar, Dr Śravani and Tejovathi, and SEB AES D



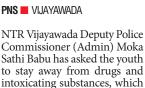
కార్వనిర్వాహిక ఇంజనీరు (6.భ.) డివిజను, ఏటారు వారు త్రింద వివరించిన పార్ట్ బెందర్ నోటీసు నెం. 18(టిక్క/2022-23, తేది. 27.01.2023 లో 5 సమలకు మొత్తం విలువ 81.60 లక్షలకు బెందర్ అహ్వానించరమైనది. బెందర్ స్వీకరించు **వేడీలు. 01.02.2023** మండి **07.02.2023 వరకు.** తరుపరి వివరములకు ఆఫీసు వేశలో సంభవించవలెను. **ఫోన్**:

R.O.No: 1712/CL/ADVT/1/1/2021-22, Dt. 31.01.2023

residents of Vijayawada city can have a clear view of the Green Comet. According to NASA, the comet visited Earth during Neanderthal times. This time, it will come within 26 the time



million miles (42 million kilometers) of Earth, go fast again and will not return for millions of years. Astronomers first spotted the comet in March last year with the Wide Field Survey Camera at the Zwicky Transient Facility and it was orbiting Jupiter at



As part of this, the commis-

sioners of the Task Force and the

Special Enforcement Bureau

the programme's ultimate aim was to make the State drug-free.

Prabhakar were present.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Good Budget

Budget 2023-24 has something for everyone, and yet there has been no fiscal profligacy

here is a term often used for pre-poll budgets, mostly by the Opposition to disparage the government of the day — 'political budget.' Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget 2023-24 certainly doesn't fall under this category. One of the biggest political budgets was the one that the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government made in 2008. It announced a Rs 60,000-crore farm loan waiver, which went up to almost Rs 72,000 crore. The waiver helped the UPA's return to power next year. There was a strong correlation between the amount spent in states and the UPA's electoral fortunes in it. Thankfully, Sitharaman has steered clear of the reprehensible populism the UPA exhibited 15 years ago. Yes, she can be accused of



trying to placate income-tax payers by giving them relief, but the fact is that it was long overdue. The point to be stressed here is that the biggest beneficiaries are those who are in the lowest brackets. This means more money in the pockets of common people which they will either invest or spend — and thus boost demand and savings, both of which are desirable. Micro, small and medium enterprises have also been extended income-tax benefits. What is conspicuous about personal income-tax cuts is the fact that the people in the highest tax slab have also been given relief. The highest tax rate in our country is 42.74 per cent, which is among the highest in the world. She has proposed to bring this down to 39 per cent.

This is a very courageous step in a country where it is fashionable to slam the rich — and especially when her party is gearing up for the general elections in 2024.

In line with the Narendra Modi Government's emphasis on infrastructure, the Finance Minister has steeply increased, third time in a row, the capital investment outlay by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore. This is around 3.3 per cent of the gross domestic product or GDP. This will be almost three times the outlay in 2019-20. She went on to point out that the direct capital investment by the Centre is complemented by the provision made for creation of capital assets through grants-in-aid to states, thus making the 'effective capital expenditure' to Rs 13.7 lakh crore. She rightly emphasised upon her Government's focus on capital expenditure to enhance growth potential, generate jobs, crowd in private investment, and provide a cushion against global headwinds. A good thing about the Budget is that, even though it has something for everyone — from the middle classes to the rich, from MSMEs to big corportations — fiscal prudence has been maintained. While pegging the fiscal deficit for 2023-24 at 5.9 per cent of GDP, she pledged to tread "the path of fiscal consolidation, reaching a fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent by 2025-26." The fiscal deficit already came down from 6.7 per cent in 2021-22 to 6.4 per cent in 2022-23 (revised estimates). In a nutshell, Budget 2023-24 is good.



Preparations are underway for the G20 meeting, in Agra

Not in good humour

Rajinikanth's public notice stopping mimicry artists from mimicking him is rather harsh and uncalled for ■ imicry and stand-up comedy are 'national' pastimes of people in the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Specialists in mimicry eke out a living caricaturing their favourite film stars and politicians and these programs are the most wanted ones in star-studded stage shows in India and abroad. Earlier there were only one or two comedy artists to mimic film stars and their mannerisms. In South India where film stars are adored like demiGods, their fans go berserk when the comedy artists dish out the mannerisms and style of their superstars. In yesteryears, there were fashion stores and hairdressing saloons named after M G Ramachandran, Shivaji Ganesan, and Jaishankar, the Tamil matinee icons. Not long ago, we had Khusbu Wines in Chennai named after the diva of Tamil films. Many restaurants in Tamil Nadu serve

the delicious Khushbu Idly, known for its softness and distinct taste. At no point in



time MGR, Shivaji, or Khushbu have questioned the propriety of the persons who 'misused' their names and style to entertain people. Last week, the reigning superstar of Tamil films Rajinikanth came out with a public notice he issued through his lawyer declaring that whoever mimics his style and mannerism and makes use of his name for commercial purposes stand to face civil and criminal cases.

The public notice portrays him as an actor with a humongous reputation and he enjoys a celebrity status and has the 'personality/publicity/celebrity/rights over all facets of his personality'. No one can blame Rajinikanth for questioning the propriety of businessmen and entrepreneurs exploiting his name in com-

mercial ventures. But his decision to say no to poor mimicry artists would rob them of a chance to earn a livelihood and this is certain to cast a shadow over the goodwill enjoyed by the superstar. There was a lot of heart burning when superstar Amitabh Bachchan, music maestro llayaraja, and playback singer K J Yesudas demanded that they be paid royalty by performers who make use of their acting and singing talents. The Indian Copyright Act has indeed put restrictions on the wanton misuse of such works by vested interests. But the truth remains that a true artist should not be greedy and ask the wannabe artists for royalties because it would be like robbing from begging bowls. The mimicry artists should show restraint and stay away from spoofing the maestros and superstars. One should not set the house on fire to kill a rat.

Economic reality check on China



China though making strides in the economic field is on a slippery slope. Its economic model exploits countries and is hegemonistic in approach

hina has been hog-ging the bright limelight for the last two decades, almost since the beginning of the current century for a growing economic powerhouse status and a country destined to overtake the US in economic and geopolitical might. The way it was developing its infrastructure and creating a most cost-competitive global manufacturing base was, to say the least, mind-boggling. But what was being projected and envisaged in 2003 is not being reiterated today, twenty years later. What is the reason?

The last two years have shaken the economic pillars of China. The real estate sector which accounts for nearly 30 percent of the Chinese economy has slipped into deep recessionary doldrums. Evidenced by the collapse of the Evergrande, the real estate busiess entity stricken by high debts and its serviceability crisis, the overall picture of the country's economy and its short and medium-term outlook is anything but bright. The writer happened to visit China in 2014 and is privy to scores of high-rise multistoried residential buildings on the outskirts of its IT hub city Cheng Du and all the buildings are vacant-looking like deserted ghost houses.

The situation is, regrettably the same, nay worse, nine years later in 2023. The flats remain unsold in large numbers with the allottee- buyers unable to pay their housing loan installments due to shrinking or unsteady incomes. The writer also saw that at that time, the average cost of goods and services in China was times that of India, which today is more than 4 times. Let me cite a few figures in regard to China's economy vis- a -vis India. Central Govt. debt (percentage of GDP) is 76.89 for China and 83.4 for India. While the GDP growth rate for China is three percent, for India, it is 6.84. The Debt per capita (in USD) in China is 7164 and rate (percent) for China is 2 percent and for India, it is 6.89.

The above is 2022 figures extracted from www.statista.com. What do the above figures con-



vey? Let me put point-wise analytical inferences.

The economic soundness indices of China and India are quite comparable, with important parameters tilted heavily in India's favor. The reason? China has grown too fast too much and its growth is unsustainable. The figures speak for themselves. China's model of economic growth is undemocratic, with capitalist processes foisted on a communist, totalitarian base. This provides an unstable, unsustainable model of economic growth. China has kept the inflation rate low by artificially tight fiscal means through restricted resort to printing more currency, even during the Covid-19 period when GDP and income growth sharply declined. This, seen along with the Communist regime's restriction on citizens' savings and withdrawals from their bank accounts, is already causing grave social distress leading to protests and uprisings. With the growth rate declining to 3 percent and the country now in the grip of a most serious Covid-19 pandemic, the short-term economic outlook of the country looks extremely grim.

China's past been fuelled by exports rather than domestic consumption but with the recent global economic downturn caused by Covid-19 and now the pro-

CHINA HAS KEPT THE INFLATION RATE LOW BY **ARTIFICIALLY** TIGHT FISCAL MEANS THROUGH RESTRICTED RESORT TO PRINTING MORE CURRENCY, EVEN DURING THE COVID-19 PERIOD WHEN GDP AND **INCOME GROWTH** SHARPLY DECLINED

tracted Russia-Ukraine war, global demand has heavily declined and China's huge factories are idling to the extent of 40-50 percent on an average. This is exacerbating the already burgeoning domestic debt crisis, with many banks going bust.

It is relevant to observe that China is also present in the midst of an energy crisis with its huge thermal power electricity generating plants starving of coal whose imports from Australia have declined in the recent past due to the worsening of its political relations with that country. The shortage of electricity has put that much additional strain on its manufacturing industry.

The worst thing that could have happened to China is its much-touted BRI running into a quandary. Thanks to China's opaque policies and systems and unabashedly hegemonic designs, its BRI investments in many countries have run into logjams and the BRI project is turning out to be an unqualified failure. Taking over ports and establishing military bases in the BRI host countries has sullied China's image and shown it as a businessunfriendly hegemonic power

It is also important to note India's advantageous position over China under the present economic circumstances. India's cost of production is less

than one-fourth of China's and with a much younger labor workforce; it sits on a much better pedestal for manufacturing sector growth. It can easily wrest from China the position of the global manufacturing hub. The most important factor in India's favor is its present geopolitical goodwill and China's worsening relations with major countries owing to its dubious role in the Covid-19 pandemic. In the present situation of political, economic, and social turmoil all over the world in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war with overt or covert military involvement of many other countries, India is poised well to take the big economic

leap forward ahead of China. China's economic model has shown now beyond a semblance of doubt that the economic progress of a country is long-term sustainable only with a fair model delivering equitable benefits to collaborating countries. It can never provide long-term, stable economic progress with an exploitative model and undemocratic systems behind it, which are not compatible with the natural development patterns of humans

> (The writer is a Management Consultant based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMBIGUOUS STAND

Sir — When US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv this Monday, it appeared that he might have planned to visit, given the heightened tensions between Palestinians and Israelis. But no, it was decided three months back. But the purpose of his coming, which must have been at that time, completely changed after his arrival. West Bank and went to Ramallah.

When he met Benjamin Netanyahu, appealed to him to maintain peace. When he met Mahmud Abbas, he expressed concern over the settlement of Israelis. Also repeated the same old tune that every US representative has been repeating since 1974. That is the matter of adopting a 'two state' policy is the only solution to the problem. The United Nations had described this policy as the only solution to the problem.

But Israel rejected it outright. Because to obey it would mean that the Israelis would have to free the Arab lands captured in the brief Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. In the present situation, Israel would like to shift the entire Palestinian population to Antarctica and hand over the entire land to the Jews. On September 13, 1993, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization negotiator Mahmoud Abbas signed a Declaration of Principles

on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, commonly referred to as the "Oslo Accords", at the White House. When Netanyahu took power for the first time in 1996, he immediately threw that agreement in the wastebasket. Well, now the world's most fanatical religious government is in power in Israel, in such a situation only blood will be shed there. The solution has now gone further than even a dream.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

CANDLEMAS DAY

Sir — February 2, is the Feast of the

Unstoppable Novak



winning a record-extending tenth title. By winning a record-extending tenth title, Novak Djokovic has renewed his affinity with the Australian Open. The Serb's straight sets win over Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas has tied him with Rafael Nadal for the all-time Grand Slam men's record of 22 titles

Djokovic even sported a jacket with "22" emblazoned on the front while celebrating his victory. With the Australian Open win, Djokovic also jumps back to world No.1.

He already holds the record for the most weeks atop the world rankings at 374, and this number will continue to swell. The win at Melbourne Park serves as yet another feather in Djokovic's cap and is solid proof that the Serbian great still has in him what it takes to win a Major. With an astonishing 64 collective Grand Slam titles, the triumvirate of Djokovic, Nadal, and Federer have created incredible metrics that in many

ways redefined tennis greatness. Ranganathan Sivakumar I Chennai

Presentation is when the Blessed Mother Mary and Joseph brought the Child Jesus to the Temple to be dedicated to God.

On Candlemas Day, followers of Jesus Christ celebrate His Presentation at the Temple and the Virgin Mary being purified, with many of the faithful bringing candles to their churches to be blessed. Thereafter, where they're lit and placed on window sills to ward off evil. The candles represent Jesus and the day of His induction into Judaism, and they go toward explaining the name of the holy day, Candlemas.

This act of humility can inspire each of us to strive to be more obedient to God's will in our lives. When Mary and Joseph met Simeon in the Temple, Simeon thanked God for revealing the Messiah to him. He called the Child "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles" (Luke 2:25-32). These words are the basis for the custom of blessing candles representing the light of Christ.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

A GOOD SCHEME

Sir — The PLI is an innovative scheme Presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ in that provides incentives in terms of cash the Temple, which is also the fourth Joyful to various companies for enhancing Mystery of the Holy Rosary. The their domestic manufacturing apart from

focusing on reducing import bills and improving the cost competitiveness of

local goods. PLI scheme offers incentives on incremental sales for products manufactured in India. PLI Scheme, as the Production Linked Incentive Scheme is commonly abbreviated, is an initiative started by the Government of India to not only encourage foreign companies to find a workforce in the country and thereby generate employment but also encourage domestic local production to create micro-iobs.

The PLI scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing has attracted investments of Rs 4,784 crore as of September 2022, and led to a total production of Rs 2,03,952 crore, including exports of Rs 80,769 crore. It may be noted that the PLI scheme has seen significant participation from the private sector. It would be great if the scheme succeeds as in India today we need jobs than anything else. A jobless growth would be meaningless. PLI rightly address this very major issue.

Prachi Bagoriya | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Hindenburg posed 88 questions to the Adani Group which responded with a 413-page rant. Why hide behind

'an attack on me is an attack on India' nonsense? It isn't!

> Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesl



Worshippers weren't killed during pravers even in India or Israel but it happened in

Pakistan Defence Minister – Khwaja Asif

We are just grateful to be working, and living our dreams on a daily basis. We belong to our audience and they

can say whatever as long as we

are entertaining them



The T20 series started in Ranchi so maybe that calm attitude came from there. But I guess a lot of domestic cricket which I played

— Alia Bhatt

before making the international debut has helped me a lot. Indian batter

— Suryakumar Yadav

The downside risk is higher because currently industrial production, credit growth, private sector investment.



rate and the trend will continue. Chief Economic Advisor

— V Anantha Nageswaran

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FIRST COLUMN YES BANK AT1 BONDS **AFTER THE HC VERDICT**

Investors have lost their life savings in bonds of Yes Bank



S KALYANASUNDARAM

our institutional and three individual investors challenged the decision of Yes Bank Limited to write off AT1 bonds from their books in the Bombay High Court. The decision to write off was quashed. Apparently, Yes Bank Limited had sold these bonds to individual investors (apart from institutional investors), terming it as Super Fixed Deposits.

Commenting on the judgment of Bombay High Court, Yes Bank MD & CEO Prashant Kumar said that there was no compulsion on the bank to pay interest on or redeem its additional tier-1 (AT1) bonds, which are the subject of litigation with investors. While commenting on the possible impact on the balance sheet of the bank, he said that "the worst case scenario for the bank was that the common equity tier-1 capital - consisting of pure equity without any subordinate debt - would come down. However the capital adequacy would be maintained as the AT1 capital increases."

He has also claimed that it is the discretion of the bank to pay coupon (interest) on the bonds and there is no cumulative nature of coupon payment and in a financial year when the bank is in losses, the bank cannot pay the coupon.



It is true that the information memorandum submitted to SEBI at the time of AT1 bond issue contains the following terms and conditions: (Section 3.f) "Non-Payment due to Bank's weak capital position: Potential investors should be aware that in case the Bank's capital falls below the regulatory requirements, it may not make the payment of the coupon due on the Debentures. The Bank can exercise the said right at an early stage of risk detection."

The following was also there under Clause 54 of the Information memorandum: "Coupon Discretion (i) The Bank shall have full discretion at all times to cancel Coupon either in part or full. On cancellation of pavment of Coupon, these payments shall be extinguished and the Bank shall have no obligation to make any distribution/Coupon payment in cash or kind. (ii) The Bonds do not carry a 'dividend pusher' feature i.e. if the Bank makes any payment (coupon/dividend) on any other capital instrument or share, the Bank shall not be obligated to make Coupon payment on the Bonds....

Hence, the above statement from the bank's spokesperson is perfectly right. But there is another dimension to the cancellation of writeoff. At the time of writing off AT1 bond from the books, the bank could have taken the amount to its Profit and Loss Account. Now when the court has disallowed the write off, the reversal entry will be to debit the Profit and Loss Account and bring back the AT1 bond outstand-

Hence, the bottom line in the balance sheet will take a hit. The spokesman from the bank has not clarified how the bank will account for it now and what will be its impact.

It is clear from the terms of the AT1 bonds that the bank can decide not to pay any coupon (interest) on the bonds for any number of years. It can also decide to write off the bonds, of course subject to conditions of wiping out equity capital also. Which individual investor could have subscribed for the bond, if she knew that the bank might not pay any interest or even might not pay the principal at all?

It is understood that the bank will approach the Supreme Court against the High Court verdict. It may take any number of years to get the final verdict. Both the regulators, SEBI and RBI, may at least direct the bank for payment of coupon on the debentures to individual investors. Most of these individuals are senior citizens above the age of 70 years and they had given their entire life savings because they were mis-sold these bonds.

(The author is a retired banker)

A new Great Game begins in Afghanistan KAUSHIKI



Pakistan might be tempted to test Indo-US strategic ties by launching terror strikes in Kashmir through proxies

fter the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the relations between the US and Pakistan have strategically declined. However, Pakistan's fight with TTP, apart from the China-induced economic crisis and the denial of a loan package by the IMF, has renewed American interests in Pakistan.

Reasons for the American interests are varied and have deep connections with the history of South and Central Asia. Despite Islamabad's active support to the Taliban, the American interests will bring the much-required finance and military sup-port, as it has done in the past. The development increases opportunities for Washington to adopt a leapfrog approach again in the two regions to enhance its strategic outreach.

Pakistan lies at the cusp of the two regions. To be more specific, its location to the south of Russia and its 'strategic backyard,' i.e. Central Asia makes it relatively important. Historically, the US and Pakistan were joined by China, and their efforts were based on shared interests against the Soviet Union apart from limiting India's political and geostrategic influence in the South Asian region.

From Pakistan's perspective, the US interest allowed it to put forward its 'geostrategic marketability' and extract military leverage against India. In 1954, the US government announced a military aid package of \$500 million instead of its mutual defence assistance agreement. Further, from 1967-1980 the US provided military and technical assistance of around \$6 billion.

Pakistan used this aid against Indian interests. Thus, it adopted the approach of buck passing, which was relatively cheaper than internal and external balancing and bandwagoning. Before any conflict, Pakistan expected the US to guarantee its security. In the first case, before the 1965 war, Ayub Khan had demanded that the United States should accept securing Pakistan against India's "aggression" as an essential component of guarantees provided through an alliance with the US. Although defeated, one cannot deny the US military supplies to Pakistan that made it believe that it could fight India. But Islamabad, too, realized that Washington was not prepared to issue a "blank check' against India. The tables were turned again against India in the 1971 war. Even though Pakistan launched a pre-emptive war against India in 1971, the US' seventh fleet ensured that India did not consider retaking PoK while liberating East Pakistan.

Later, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan gained financial support \$3.2 billion from 1980 to 1990, aiding the Mujahideen to fight against the Soviet Union. Additionally, the US supplied Pakistan with F-16.

After the nuclear tests, Pakistan adopted a similar approach and always used its



IT IS PERTINENT TO MENTION THAT THE US NATIONAL **SECURITY STRATEGY** (2022) HAS **EMPHASISED** THE ISSUE OF TERRORISM BUT **DELIBERATELY OMITTED TO** NAME THE

> TERROR MODULES IN PAKISTAN AS A SOURCE OF TERROR BUT MENTIONS THE TALIBAN AS A CHALLENGE

(Nishtha Kaushiki is Associate Professor in Central University of Punjab, Bathinda; Nikhil Sharma is a research scholar)



Islamic state status quo of possessing nuclear weapons, thereby extracting substantial advantages through its nuclear blackmailing. Despite India's readiness to take a limited military action against Pakistan after the Kargil crisis and the attacks on Parliament, it was the US that intervened on the grounds of restoring "normalcy" and substantially limited India's response.

The 9/11 again brought the US and Pakistan in a more tactical embrace with each other. Pakistan embrace with each other. Pakistan became a major non-NATO ally, and as per the SIPRI data, during 2002-14, it got military aid worth \$5.81 billion, of which the arms sales component was \$3.2 billion. After the killing of Osama in Abbottabad, as per the C.R.S. report, in 2014-15, the total financial and military aid decreased to cial and military aid decreased to 40 per cent from 2011-2015. In the years preceding the US exit from Afghanistan, Washington had become diplomatically and strategically dependent on Islamabad to help it handle the coerced talks with the Taliban and smartly ensure its safe exit from the region.

In the process, it made the Taliban and itself essential stakeholders in the region Pakistan's case study proves that the weak states thrive on the great power insecurities and mismanagement of international politics. In the contemporary situation, the renewed interest of the US in Pakistan has historical interlinkages between Russia and Pakistan apart from the triangular dynamics between Russia, China and Pakistan. Russia has been making positive overtures to Pakistan much before the outbreak of the Ukraine War. Starting from the Iran-Pakistan pipeline in the news in mid-2010, one has witnessed rapid convergences between Russia,

the two have broadened the horizon of their strategic relations, which included a defence agreement, supply of Mi-35M Hind-E helicopter and joint military exercises apart from signing a 'Rare Military Cooperation Pact' in 2018. Interestingly, Pakistan's military arsenal includes Russia's Klimov RD-93 engine used to make JF-17 Thunder aircraft.

Russia has reignited its interest in the pipeline politics of Iran and Pakistan and has expressed a willingness to supply crude oil to Pakistan. The deal is to be materialized in the "currency of friendly countries", which might slightly dent the Western sanctions on Russia. Further, the Kazakhstan-Pakistan pipeline also has the potential to turn the tables and form new energy architectures. From another perspective, Russia and Pakistan agreement on "practical engagement" on the Afghan Taliban issues have serious undertones for the two regions.

It is pertinent to mention that the US National Security Strategy (2022) has emphasized the issue of terrorism but has deliberately omitted to name the terror modules in Pakistan as a source of terror but mentions the Taliban as a challenge. The document speaks of increasing its "cooperation and support to trusted partners" and "shifting from a strategy that is 'US-led, partnerenabled to one that is 'partner-led, US-enabled". The document further hints that the US might be interested in exploiting the emerging faultlines of Russia-China relations which have emerged as the fallout of the Ukraine war.

Additionally, the US will make

its presence felt in Central Asia in the coming few days through the C5+1 diplomatic platform (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the United States).

Now, one needs to brainstorm what position Pakistan will occupy in this "'partner-led, US-enabled" strategy to finish terror? The most pertinent question is how Pakistan would exploit the insecurities and fear of Russia, the US, and China vis-à-vis each other? What military and financial packages will Pakistan get hold of in this new emerging great power game? Will the Afghan Taliban, Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and other Islamic groups be finally crushed? Will there be another military onslaught in Afghanistan as it was in 1979-80?

From an Indian perspective, while coordinating with the US to crush the TTP, Pakistan might be tempted to test the Indo-US strategic relations by launching simultaneous terror strikes in Kashmir through its proxies. If so, would the US be neutral again and insist on "normalcy"? Pakistan thus has a well-designed strategy to play the US and Russia off of to enhance its security against the possible Indian response to its misadventures in India, gain military and financial packages and finally, slow down the US-China hostility.

All these factors may constrain India's options to enhance its posturing on crucial future developments. The emerging faultlines remind us of an American mathematician John Allen Paules who stated: "Uncertainty is the only certainty there is, and knowing how to live with this insecurity is the only security".

THIS BUDGET IS ONE OF THE BEST BUDGETS EVER, TRULY INCLUSIVE AND ADDRESSES THE ASPIRATIONS OF EVERY SECTION OF SOCIETY. — VEDANTA CHAIRMAN **ANIL AGARWAL**





THIS IS A CALLOUS BUDGET THAT HAS BETRAYED THE HOPES OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE. - FORMER FINANCE MINISTER **P CHIDAMBARAM**

Disruptive innovation often shakes up an industry

For disruption to happen, a company has to target an overlooked customer base, provide a right fit of product or service

nnovation, which is advancement over an exist-Ling product or idea, is a prerequisite for continuous improvement. But a disruptive innovation shakes up an industry once in a while. Disruptive innovation in business is not a new concept. It took birth in 1995 when it was proposed by one of the world's leading thinkers on innovation Christensen along with his co-authors.

However, over the years, this concept has been misunderstood. It has generally been misapplied to a situation where the industry norms are shaken up and existing players stirred. And here's where the catch is. Originally, Christensen ideated the concept of disruption, more like a David and Goliath situa-



(The author is an

educator)

challenging an established business

Established businesses in their effort to retain their

tion- a smaller company with

fewer resources successfully

existing majority target customer base, focus mainly on improving their present products or services and largely ignore other market segments. New entrants that sense this gap provide products or services lucrative to the overlooked segments.

While the established businesses do not pay heed to these new entrants, they slowly make inroads into upmarket, providing the same products or services to the majority customers whilst retaining their earlier advantage-lower prices. Once these main-

the new products or services, ket. Additionally, disruption in large quantities, one can say disruption has occurred.

According to Christensen, potential for disruptive innovations arise because established businesses ignore both low-end and new markets. In an attempt to be more profitable, established businesses concentrate on providing mainstream customers with high quality products and services and commit resources in upgrading, enhancing and perfecting their existing products and services, all the while ignoring the low-end market. Sensing this opportunity, new entrants foray into this gap by using a low-cost business model. A low-end disruptor snatches the market share in this segment and pushes the stream customers embrace established businesses upmar-

can occur by creating new markets where none existed, by developing new products for consumers, at a lower price and an acceptable quality. Arrival of personal computers, and later smartphones are perfect examples of new-mar-

et disruption. The first computers, known as mainframes, were huge and very expensive. With costs as high as \$2 million and size as big as to fill an entire room, computing technology was out of bounds for the common man. With the invention of the personal computer, a small and affordable piece of machine, a new market segment of individuals was created.

Over the years, with continuous improvement in its consumers who need rides

capabilities, a humble personal computer made the mainframe computers virtually obsolete. The next step in new market disruption is the emergence of smartphones, which are creating disruptions at two levels. One, the ability to use the internet in a phone at a fraction of cost of a personal computer is making usage of personal computers less necessary. Two, smartphone photograph taking capabilities are set to disrupt the digital photography industry.

However, over the years, the above concept has been misused by many who have not given a serious thought about the notion itself. Internationally, Uber has been touted as a disruption. It uses mobile applications to connect

with drivers who are willing to provide them. Founded in 2009, the company has enjoyed fantastic growth and is still expanding. It has reported tremendous financial success, with funding rounds and soaring valuation. No doubt, Uber has transformed the

business of transportation. But has it brought about disruption? For disruption to happen, a company has to target an overlooked customer base, provide a right fit of product or service, usually at a lower cost. Uber connected the end users, i.e., customers used to taking cab services, to service providers. So, Uber did not fulfil any of the two conditions to become a disrupter – firstly, it did not bring the market segment that did not use cab services aries of any industry.

into its fold; and secondly, cab and taxi services were definitely not a new market. Finally, there is no threat to the car industry from Uber.

A well-known quote prevalent in Silicon Valley disrupt or be disrupted" says it all. All businesses are continuously looking for opportunities to become disruptors with new innovative ideas, products or business models. But only a few are able to become disruptors. Disruptive innovation transforms complex and expensive products or services into simple and reasonable options. Although very time-consuming and enormously risky, creating disruption shakes up the existing established products and services by pushing the boundthe pioneer



Intelligence Chief tapped my phone

The ruling party rebellion MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy alleged that his phone was tapped by Intelligence DGP P Sitaramanjaneyulu and made it clear that he is not going to contest in the next election on the YSRCP ticket.

Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, he said that without the permission of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy or Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy the Intelligence DGP would not tap his phone. "I spoke to my close friend on my phone. The conversation with my friend was tapped and the same was sent to me from the phone 98499 66000. The Intelligence DGP questioned me why I spoke against the Chief Minister," the MLA said, adding that it is itself clear evidence of phone tap-

Kotamredy said that his friend did not record the conversation and asked how DGP



Sitaramanjaneyulu got the conversation. He said that he had trusted YS Jagan Mohan Reddy fully but he did not trust him, adding that he could not stay where he was being suspected.

"I will take the phone tapping issue to the Central Home Ministry. If I do not get a response, I will approach the court," the dissidence MLA said. 30 MLAs, 2 MPs and 2 ministers told me that their phones are also being tapped," he stated. The MLA said that he suspects that the phones of IAS, IPS and High Court Chief Justice are also being tapped, adding that tapping phones amounts to threatening the

"Though I have been loyal to Jagan Mohan Reddy for a long time, I was suspected by him. I feel pain for that," Kotamreddy said.

He said that he has doubts on the Chief Minister on the phone tapping but he did not have any evidence. If he discloses further information that would trouble two IPS offi-

He made it clear that he wanted to quit the YSRCP silently but such a situation was created in which I was forced to show evidence of phone tapping before the media. Kotamreddy said his brother was asked by MLA Balineni Srinivasa Réddy to meet him but he did not meet him on his own.

Kotamreddy said that he is ready to face any eventuality in the backdrop of his disclosure of phone tapping and making allegation against the YSRCP leaders. He said that his followers

asked him the future plans of him and he told them that he has intention of contesting in the election on the TDP ticket but Chandrababu Naidu has to take a decision on this.

Meanwhile, rebellion MLAs Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy and Anam Ramanarayana Reddy's allegations against the YSRCP leadership caused an uproar in the party and led to political debate across the



2 bikes collided. teenager charred alive

PNS KAKINADA

A teenager was charred alive and three persons critically injured when two motorcy-cles collided at Vetlapalem village in Peddapuram constituency in the wee hours Wednesday.

Police said that when the motorcycles collided the petrol tank of one of the motorcycles caught fire. A 19 years old boy charred alive in the flames. The injured persons were shifted to the GGH in an ambulance. The deceased is iet to be identified, police said.

Minister Suresh inaugurates girls' high school building

Minister for Municipal Administration Audimulapu Suresh inaugurated SC girl's high school constructed at a cost of Rs 1.94 crore at Vaidipadu village in Peddaraveedu mandal on Wednesday.

The minister also inaugurated the school building, constructed at a cost of Rs 60 lakh under Nadu-Nedu programme, Secretariat building constructed at a cost of Rs 40 lakh and Rythu Bharosa Kendra building constructed at a cost of Rs 20 lakh.

The minister visited the village, interacted with the people inquiring whether they are getting the benefits of welfare schemes and knew their problems. He spoke to the officials to resolve the problems. The minister responded immediately to the complaints from some people that they were not issued ration cards



and house sites were not allocated. The minister directed the officials to take steps to

issue them ration cards. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that good governance is being provided by the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government. Many welfare schemes are being implemented under the Navaratna programme. ZPTC Yeruva Chalama Reddy, MPP Bezawada Pedda Guravaiah, mandal party president Palireddy Krishna Reddy, ZP officer Narayana Reddy, Divisional development officer Sai Kumar, MPDO Raju

Kumar and other officials

among those who accompa-

nied the minister.

Take up developmental programmes under CSR

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has called upon the industries and public sector organizations to participate in the implementation of com-munity development programmes such as education, medicine, and environmental protection through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

A meeting was held with the members of the CSR Fund Monitoring Committee under the District Industries Centre at the Gauthami meeting hall in the Collectorate on Wednesday, presided over by the Collector.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that if the industries spend funds under CSR according to their own plans, there might be an audit problem and there would be a chance for unimportant matters. If the Government or other organizations have taken up the same programme, there is a possibility of non-stop duplication, so if they put their proposals before the district CSR committee, such problems would not arise, the Collector added. If the committee reviews and approves relevant certificate would be issued to the companies, he

"Keeping this in mind, the owners of the respective industries should participate in the



development of the society through CSR with the view of what we are giving back to the society that has given so much to our growth. According to section -135 of the Companies Act, 2013, companies with a net profit of Rs 5 crore and above are required to spend at least 2 percent of their annual net profit under CSR," the Collector made it clear.

With the help of CSR funds, special development programs should be carried out in the areas of education, health, environmental protection etc. in the district, the Collector stated. In view of the fact that there is no necessary trauma care centre to provide emergency treatment to those who have suffered serious injuries National highway, steps have been taken to establish a trauma care centre at Bhimadole

He said that an industrialist has come forward to construct the required building for the trauma care centre and provide other infrastructure facilities such as medical equipment to be established.

He said that the district

administration would provide full cooperation towards encouraging the aspiring industrialists who come forward to set up industries in the district, adding that allotment of land required for the establishment of industries that contribute to economic development and other permissions would be provided through a single desk. More employment and development could be created through the establishment of industries,

Joint Collector P Arun Babu. P Yesu Dasu, ZP CEO K.Ravi Kumar, Panchayat Raj SE Chandra Bhaskara Reddy and Pollution Control Board EE Venkateswara Rao were among those who were present.

Officials directed to expedite construction

PNS BHIMAVARAM

District Collector P Prasanthi directed the officials of housing construction department to take steps to expedite the construction of houses in the Jagananna colonies.

The Collector visited the construction of houses at a layout at Cherukuvada village in Undi mandal on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector told the officials that the construction of houses should be completed expeditiously.

She said that the required infrastructure should be provided to the layout at the earliest. The officials and staff should work in coordination arrangements for the setting



to bring good results and the stage conversion should be done every day in house constructions from BBL to BL, BL to RL and RL to RC.

The District Collector directed the officials to make

up brick units at suitable places in the house construction layouts. The officials of the housing department and the engineering staff of the secretariat should stay at the field level and focus on the

construction of houses. If the

outs should be seen during the next visit, she told the offi-The Collector asked the beneficiaries to complete the construction of their houses in the allocated house sites and become house owners. Housing construction project director Alluri Venkata

Ramaraju, EE B Venkataramana, Tahasildar M Ravindra Kumar and MPDO V Appa Rao were among those who accompanied the Collector.



Lorry catches fire, driver charred alive

PNS NELLORE

A lorry driver charred alive and cleaner escaped with injuries when the vehicle caught fire at Damavaram village in Dagadarthi mandal on the national highway on Wednesday.

Police said that an Eicher lorry rammed another lorry from the rear end. A cooking gas cylinder in the lorry burst into flames under the impact of collision.

The lorry driver struck in the flames and burnt alive in the vehicle. However, the lorry cleaner escaped with injuries. The Eicher lorry was completely gutted in the fire accidents. The ill-fated lorry was transporting coffee seeds from Narsipatnam to hennai when the accident

The deceased lorry driver is yet to be identified. The fire tenders put out the flames but by the time the lorry had

Notorious bike lifter arrested, 14 bikes seized

PNS TIRUPATI

The police arrested a notorious bike lifter and seized 14 bikes from him. CI T Abbanna told the media here on Wednesday that the police conducted checking of vehicles at the RTO office area in the

wake of complaints of missing mikes. The accused Sheik tried to escape but the police apprehended him. The accused Mastan confessed to stealing bikes at various places. The police seized 14 bikes worth Rs 20 lakh

Student killed as bike collides with van

PNS KURNOOL

In a ghastly road accident, a school student was killed and two other students were critically injured when the motorcycle on which they were going collided with a transport van at Model school at Dhone

on the NH 44 on Wednesday. dents were going to school on the motorcycle which collided with the van killing Jayakrishna (16) instantaneously. The injurested were shifted to the GGH in Dhone.



The condition of the injured students is said to be very crit-

destroyed in the flames.

took place.

YSRC leaders condemn allegations of Kotamreddy

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The ruling YSRCP leaders have strongly condemned the comments made by Nellore rural MLA from the YSRCP, Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy. Responding to the comments, YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said that after deciding to join the Opposition TDP, Sridhar Reddy was commenting against the ruling YSRCP. He questioned, "What is the

need to take action on Kotamreddy? What actions will be taken after he clarified his intentions? However, our government

does not need to do phone tapping. Chief Minister Jagan is ruling by trusting the people. Sajjala said that no one had been appointed

as the in-charge of the Nellore rural constituency there. He commented that the leader of Opposition Chandrababu Naidu knew how to lure some people and was doing conspiracies against YSRCP.

Former Minister Balineni Srinvias Reddy commented that Nellore Rural MLA Sridhar Reddy was speaking been recorded for TDP. He alleged that recording app.

Sridhar Reddy and Anam Ramanarayana Reddy were playing drama with the excuse that they had not been given the ministerial post. He challenged Sridhar Reddy to prove that the phone was tapped and questioned why the matter was not disclosed for so many days and stated that there would be a new in-charge appointment in two or three days for Nellore Rural.

Former minister Kodali Srivenkateswara Rao (Nani) refuted the allegations of Sridhar Reddy and said that Chandrababu Naidu had the habit of doing

that work. He

that Chandrababu had offered the post of minister to Sridhar Reddy and

> ping.
> Former minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) said that CM Jagan was giving posts to the weaker sections. He claimed that Sridhar Reddy would tell lies bluntlv. He stated that call recording from iPhone to iPhone was possible and stated that the audio clip might have been recorded through a call

he wanted to change the

party, so he was making

accusations of phone tap-

National Apprenticeship Awareness Workshops on Feb 2, 3

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Recognising the need for simplifying the process of apprenticeship and to make apprenticeship aspirational for the youth, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) will organise a two-day workshop in Vizag starting from Thursday. The Regional Directorate, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (RDSDE), will oversee the events at respective loca-

The vision is to accelerate the implementation of apprenticeship reforms and training. The planned workshops have a dual objective of improving the branding and communication for apprenticeship at both the demand and the supply side, while awareness will be built around key apprenticeship schemes such as the National Apprenticeship and Micro, Small and Medium

Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and the National Apprenticeship and Training Scheme (NATS).

The first day of the workshop, to be held at Government Polytechnic College, Kancharapalem, will be attended by the representatives of Central, State and private establishments, DET, Andhra Pradesh government and private Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Ministry of

Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSS-DC) and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). K Srinivas Rao, ISDS, Regional Director (AP & TS), will inaugurate the workshop on the first

day.

The second day of the workshop will be held at the Industrial Training

the trainees of ITIs and other vocational courses, during which they will be made aware of the online registration process including the ways to update profiles, training details how the certificate can be downloaded from the portal upon completion of training. They will also be informed of the means to receive notifications of Central and PSU apprenticeship training opportunities.

Tension as bus station on 'donated' land dismantled

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Tension prevailed at the bus station in Garepally village of the district on Wednesday as TS RTC senior officials and donors of the land clashed over halting the buses there. Some vested interests dismantled the bus station and planned to sell the

land by dividing it into plots
The RTC authorities went there to implement the High Court verdict which directed the authorities to use the bus station.

Earlier, the site was donated for building the bus station. The bus station was built there three years ago. But some vested interests removed the structures there.

A dispute between the donors of the land and RTC authorities was taken to the High Court. The High Court in December ruled that the RTC can halt its buses at the disput-



The RTC officials urged the police to protect the buses halt-ed there. They submitted memoranda to Kataram police authorities and also to District Collector Bhavesh Misra. The High Court directed the RTC to halt the buses at the disputed bus station by Feb 3. Therefore RTC regional manager of Karimnagar, Deputy regional

manager Chander Rao and Siva Sankar respectively made the buses halt.

Donors and some others supporting the donors objected to As precautionary measures, the Kataram police prevented the RTC buses from entering the bus station. They sent out the buses and halted the bus station

Kataram sub-inspector Srinivas has asked both sides to come to the police station.

As tension prevailed at the bus station, the police took precautionary measures. The RTC officials allege that the police are not cooperating with them though the High Court made it clear that none should object to halting the buses.

State-level Atal Tinkering Lab Hub established

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Commissioner of School Education and Samagra Shiksha State Project Director S Suresh Kumar said the students and teachers should take advantage of Atal Tinkering Labs and thereby create innovations and discoveries and make our State first in the

country. The Commissioner inaugurated the Atal Tinkering Lab State-level Hub & Training Centre at the Zilla Parishad High School at Penamaluru in

Krishna district on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Andhra Pradesh Education Department was implementing a series of programmes and bringing out the talent and creativity of the students and making them innovators. He said the first State-

level Atal Tinkering Lab State

Hub & Training Centre has been set up in Andhra Pradesh for the first time in the country with the support of UNICEF and Vigyan Ashram.

He informed the students that the State hub would serve as a training centre for the 713 Atal Tinkering Labs supported by AIM –Niti Ayog, New Delhi, that were already established in schools. This year UNICEF has selected 30 Hubs and 150 Atal Tinkering Labs in the state. There are five spokes (schools) attached under each Hub ATL, he added.

"These 30 Hub Atal Tinkering Labs in charge teachers will be trained at the State Hub Training Centre every month. The Štate hub ATL & Training Centre has 3D printers, mechanical, electronics, drone, robotics, sewing machines, science and math equipment," he informed.

what's brewing?

Kriti Sanon: I want to shift gear constantly and not stay in a particular zone

the films in her pipeline for this year prove the same.

Talking about what audiences can expect from her in 2023, Kriti said: "The audience can probably look forward to far more versions of me. It starts with a very glamorous one which is a family entertainer, followed by probably my biggest film, Adipurush, which I am extremely proud of. Then there is a lot of action coming

together, having a lot of fun and creating something amazing."

She also spoke about how she

Bollywood actress Kriti Sanon, who is gearing up for her upcoming film Shehzada, likes to walk the fine line between high-content and high-entertainment films and the films in her pipeline for this year prove the same.

Talking about what audiences can expect from her in 2023, Kriti said: "The audience can probably look forward to far more versions of me. It starts with a very glamorous on the sand only for her upcoming film will see me ride a dirt bike, throw kicks and punches and also use a weapon."

She added: "I am also doing a quirky love story with Shahid Kapoor. We are teaming up on screen for the first time, so you will see fresh chemistry. Then there is The Crew, which has three women (Tabu, Kareena Kapoor Khan and me) coming together, having a lot of fun and tioned: "Till Bareilly Ki Barfi, I was getting small-town roles one after the other. So, I did the war epic drama Panipat. Then I took up a strong and meaty role in Mimi and moved on to the next level. I want to shift the gear constantly and not stay in one particular zone. You have to move on and think what's next, otherwise you will stagnate."

The actress, who is at the top of her game, hopes to surprise

of her game, hopes to surprise audiences with some exciting projects that showcase different sides of her persona and talent in 2023 with Shehzada, Adipurush and Ganapath.



Will Smith, Martin Lawrence announce fourth Bad Boys movie

The Bad Boys are officially returning, with Will Smith and Martin Lawrence blockbusters.

at the worldwide box office as one of the last pre-pandemic era blockbusters.

ahead by releasing a reunion video on social media with the caption, "It's about that time!" announcing that they'll reunite for a fourth film in the franchise

Sony Pictures confirmed that the untitled sequel is in early preproduction with Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah returning to direct, reports Variety.

The filmmakers, who also helmed Warner Bros' scrapped Batgirl movie, directed 2020's Bad Boys for Life, which reunited Smith and Lawrence as Miami-Dade detectives Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett, 25 years after the first Bad Boys film was released. Shortly after the threequel hit

theatres, Sony announced that a fourth Bad Boys film was in development, and Bad Boys for Life went **Vikramaditya**

on to earn \$426.5 mil-

On Tuesday morning, Smith



and Lawrence announced that the upcoming movie was officially

caption, "It's about that time!"

The video follows Smith as he

drives to Lawrence's home, saying: 'Yo, I've got an announcement. Y'all better stop scrolling." As a little hint, Smith plays the opening bars of "Shake Ya Tailfeather," Nelly, P. Diddy and Murphy Lee's song from the 2003 Bad Boys II soundtrack. "I wish I was you, not knowing what I'm about to show

Arriving at Lawrence's door, the duo declare that the fourth film is officially on the way. "It's about that time!" Lawrence yells.

"We shouldn't have called it that though," Smith quips.

As such, the yet to be titled sequel is produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, Smith for Westbrook, Doug Belgrad and Chad Oman; with Lawrence,

James Lassiter, Mike Barry Stenson, Waldman and Jon Mone serving as executive producers.

Shekhar Ravjiani drops first song Love under his Indie record label

omposer and singer Shekhar Ravjiani, who is currently riding high on the massive success of the music of Pathaan, has dropped his first track titled Love under his recently announced indie record label 'Garuudaa Musiic'.

The first song dropped by Shekhar and Garuudaa Musiic, *Love* is a pop ballad that celebrates the greatest feeling in the world.

Released a week ahead of Valentine's Day, Love is deeply soulful and relatable and with this song Shekhar has explored a whole new sound that sets the bar high for the refreshingly unique brand of music that Garuudaa Musiic will bring to our world.

Talking about the song, Shekhar said: "Love is a heartfelt declaration of the love that a boy feels for a girl. The

happen between two people." 'À limitless connection between two souls that must slowly brew into a beautiful bond. The song comes from a very special place in my heart and I am delighted that it is my first release through my record label 'Garuudaa Musiic' and the

kind of love that is destined to

The song composed and sung by Shekhar Ravjiani, and penned by Rashmi

first of many many more to

New DCU unveils 10 projects: Superman: Legacy, Batman & Robin among many others

T's been three months since James Gunn and Peter James and myself." Safran officially started running the newly created DC Studios within Warner Bros. Discovery, the co-chiefs have now announced the first 10 film and TV titles within the rebooted DC Universe.

On Monday, Gunn and Safran met with press on the Warner Bros. studio lot to present what they said was the first part of Chapter 1 of the DCU, which they are calling "Gods and Monsters," reports Variety.

There are titles based on marquee DC heroes - including the previously announced Superman feature written by Gunn, now officially titled Superman: Legacy, a Batman and Robin movie, a Wonder Woman prequel series and a Green Lantern mystery series - as well as titles featuring lesser known characters, including Booster Gold and Swamp

The DCU exists as a multiverse, Safran said, but the titles will exist in one singular universe. Overall, the slate represents the

most robust vision for DC's future in scripted entertainment since Warner Bros' first attempt in 2014 to build a universe

to rival that of Marvel Studios. "DC Studios is unprecedented," Safran said. "It is a standalone production entity and studio. It is the first time ever that everything DC related - film, television, live-action, animation, gaming - is all centralized under one creative vision, that of

Given that the DCU is still very much in its earliest stages, the execs were light on some specifics: No directors have been attached to any projects (although they said they're "very close" on signing at least a couple), and no actors are attached, either. The exception is Viola Davis,

> Max series Waller as the amoral, selfimposed superintendent of the DC universe, Amanda Waller. She originated the role 2016's Suicide Squad. The plan, Safran and Gunn said, was to release roughly two films and two TV series per year into the

who will star in the HBO

That output will not, however, sacrifice quality to meet deadlines. Gunn and Safran were adamant that films and series will not go into production until scripts are finished, which is not the norm for pricey tentpoles

that need to create awareness by planting flags on the calendar. All in, the slate that the co-leads announced on Monday will run through 2027. Only Superman:

Legacy and The Batman Part II have set release dates.

cyber-thriller produced by Nikhil Dwivedi

Motwane and Ananya

Panday come together for a

nanya Panday is all set to headline a cyber-thriller directed by celebrated filmmaker Vikramaditya Motwane and produced by Nikhil Dwivedi of *Veere*

After winning praise for critically acclaimed movies like Udaan, Lootera, Bhavesh Joshi Superhero, and AK vs. AK, Vikramaditya Motwane is back in the director's seat for this gripping, edge-of-the-seat thriller. Produced by Nikhil Dwivedi's company -Saffron, the untitled film is a cyber thriller in which the young popular actress takes on a part she has never

Vikramaditya Motwane shares, "This is a thriller with modern-day appeal and very relevant to our times. It's going to be really interesting to see Ananya Panday in this role since it's something she hasn't attempted

Meanwhile, Ananya Panday said, "When Vikramaditya Motwane approached me with this story, I just knew I had to be part of it. As a filmmaker, he has been on my wish list for as long as I can remember and I feel really lucky to be working with him this early in my career.'

Adds Producer Nikhil Dwivedi, "When Vikram shared the script with me to produce, it was one of the most interesting material I had laid my hands on in recent times and I decided within a few hours to participate in this. Ananya is a commendable artist and someone to watch out

for in times to

come. I am excited that she is in



ARCHIE









REALITY CHECK

TIME MACHINE

RENTAL RETURNS

IN THE FUTURE? PLEASE BE KIND REWIND



SPEED BUMP

O Romeo, Romeo!!!

Romeo ? (1) (2) (2)

Wrfr art thou reply





GARFIELD



I LOVE THE FEEL OF NATURE

BETWEEN MY TOES



NANCY! COME IN





SUDOKU

THE PASTURE



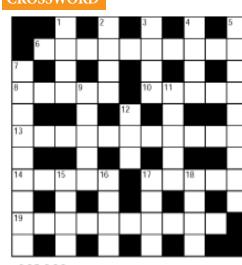


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Rules Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.

The sum of all numbers in

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

6 A machine in a kitchen 8 Frequently

10 A room just under the roof

13 A country famous for making watches

14 Imagine things while you

are asleep

17 Normal

19 A large African animal

DOWN

1 Fog

4 Closed

2 Skinny 3 Molten stuff from a volcano

5 A large reptile with a long

body and sharp teeth



7 Thinks over

11 Speaks

12 Not many

building

17 Second-hand

18 On

15 A door out of a

9 More than is needed

16 This orbits the Earth

RIGHTO, GINGER. YOUR SHOW'S OVER, TIME FOR

GINGER MEGGS







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Thursday February 2, 2023

Sensitising people for responsible pet parenting

It is important for potential pet owners to know that responsible pet parenting means committing to caring for their pets for their entire lives. With a similar aim, we have Phillip Butt, the secretary of the Hyderabad Canine Club, who puts the spotlight on responsible pet parenting and also speaks up on the recent recurring incidents.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Por the Hyderabad Canine Club, it's become an annual tradition. The whole team didn't choose one pet but brought together hundreds of show dogs under one roof.
They learn something new about pets every day and have found babies in them.

When we interacted with Phillip Butt, the secretary of the Hyderabad Canine Club, we learned how he ensures so many pets come together to be crowned best in the show, and that's his way of experiencing absolute pleasure.

"Responsible pet parenting is the only way forward to avoid recurring freak incidents like the recent one that took place in the city, where a food delivery boy jumped off a building to escape a doc and subse building to escape a dog and subsequently died. Our clubs' main focus is awareness: pet owners all over the city should enjoy more mutually loving and rewarding relationships than ever before. Attending our pets' gatherings like these puts a stamp on

humanising your pet. Increasingly urban societies attend every year, and we see how they know about veterinary telehealth, first-class dog food, their accessories, and

The Hyderabad Canine Club's love for animals is so great that they are letting people know that dogs are not scary to be around, despite a few strange incidents across the country. "Pets own the city now — they have taken on the role of playmates. Whenever I see so many breeds of animals coming together for our shows, it's like peacekeepers coming with elan. This is not our bread and butter; it's our sheer love for them. And we are overjoyed to be organising such shows for pets all over the city.

It's a known fact that the majority of the millions of dogs don't bite. "For the dogs that do attack, it's usually because they are acting out of fear rather than aggression. Pet adoption multiplied during the pandemic. The challenge came when there was no pet education! You can't train out all of a dog's natural instincts because many will protect





aggressive; it's a stereotype. They love to chase, but we must requires plenty of time, energy, and not get overexcited. Socialize them by

making them meet other breeds! They were isolated by the pandemic, and now they are suddenly out of that space — they are biting by accident

treats. The purebred dogs that you see on the premises are show dogs for a moment, but please remember that they are fam-

in an

ily pets at the end of the day. They all take home the best in the show in

Make your fitness effective with smart gym equipment

K. RAMYA SREE

The fitness industry is rapidly transforming all over the world, especially in India. The importance given to health and fitness is at an all-time high. In fact, the total revenue in the health and fitness industry is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2022–2026) of 5.62%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$55.68m by 2026.

As gym owners and fitness centres began offering their services online, it became easier for Indians to incorporate fitness into their weekly routines. The outcome? During the lockdown, 84% of Indians attempted online fitness classes at least three times a week. According to recent studies, millennials in India spend on average INR 4,000 per month on wellness services and goods.

Equipment plays a key role in fitness. With the right equipment, you can achieve the desired body shape.

Prateek Sood, a trustee of Fit India Trust, has Prateek Sood, a trustee of Fit India Irust, has been in the fitness industry since 1992, open-ing over 2,000 gyms and selling nearly 2 mil-lion pieces of gym equipment (including out-door and home use equipment) in more than 25 states. He speaks to us about the technolog-ical advancements in fitness equipment and

Speaking about bringing new equipments to the Indian audience, Prateek said, "Technological advancements in fitness equip-

ment have fundamentally changed how people maintain their physical fitness. In the past, people had to manually keep track of their advancement and outcomes. On the other side, modern technology has made tracking progress and setting new marks simpler than ever. Similar to Advagym by Sony, it not only provides clients with fitness content but also allows them to track with fitness content but also allows them to track their workouts to make sure they are improving and pushing over their boundaries. Clients will be able to monitor their development wherever they complete their workouts. The Advagym app will also display clients' exercise histories, enabling them to make the most of each session, enhance their outcomes, and maintain motivation as they would towards and maintain motivation as they work towards new,

maintain motivation as they work towards new, more challenging goals. The popularity of smart gym equipment is rising as a result of the more customised workouts it offers."

What's interesting about this brand is that they offer personalised best practices for each consumer's needs on a global scale. He said, "The Fitness industry is changing rapidly with new and advanced features, we have been at the forefront of personalized best practices for each consumer's needs on a global scale. Our goal is to build the finest relationships possigoal is to build the finest relationships possible with our clients in the following year and to attract a large customer that represents a variety of institutions and businesses. With its recent cooperation with Advagym by Sony, which will take the fitness age to the next level by monitoring, directing, and aiding you in your training programme, we are taking steps to ensure the same legacy in the coming years."





Maestro Ilaiyaraaja set to mesmerise **Hyderabad**

people in a way that's truly special," said the legendary Indian film composer Ilaivaraaja.

The maestro will be performing LIVE at the Gachibowli Stadium on February 26. The live-in concert will feature an ensemble of 100 musicians on stage and is expected to attract over 20,000 attendees to witness the spectacular event and savour the magic of his music.

"It's a honour to be back on stage and connect with my fans through the power of music. I can't wait to share this night of unforget-table performances and memories with all of you," added the music Maestro Ilaiyaraaja.

Hyderabad Talkies, known for its legacy events including A.R. Rahman in 2017 and Arijit Singh in 2019, has once again raised the bar by bringing the maestro to the city, including film fraternity members, political leaders, celebrities, and business leaders.

'Ilaiyaraaja's music is known for its fusion of Indian classical music with traditional and western Indian film music!

usic has the power to evoke emotions and connect with soul-stirring compositions and has been an inspiration to many aspiring musicians. His music has the power to evoke emotions, and the fans are expecting a spellbinding performance from the maestro," says Sainath Goud Malkapuram, founder of Hyderabad

The My Music My Country (#m3c) initiative by Hyderabad Talkies aims to re-introduce the ethnicity of Indian Music and treat the music-lovers of the city to the best of the songs of the legendary artists. The platform has already made the city groove to foot-tapping numbers and exquisite music, with a show by youth sensation Sid Sriram in February 2020 attracting a footfall of over 60,000.

So gear up, get ready, to be transported to another world with the soul-stirring sounds of Ilaiyaraaja . A musical extravaganza that promises to be a night to remember for the lifetime. Book your tickets now to bask in the brilliance of Illayaraja, the maestro of

'If you love acting, nothing is challenging'

Young actress Riva Arora has not only

been a social media

sensation but also

a great actor at a

very young age.

Riva, who was

recently seen in

Chhatriwali,

speaks to *The*

Pioneer about

working on the

film, balancing her

acting life with the world of content

creation, and more.

AMARTYA SMARAN

Riva Arora, who amassed a massive social media following for her charming looks and acting skills, was recently featured in Zee5's *Chhatriwali*, starring Rakul Preet Singh, Sumeet Vyas, Satish Kaushik, and Prachee Shah.

In one of her Instagram posts, the actress wrote, "I can't thank everyone enough for all the support, but really, thank you so much for your love and support." This shows how overwhelmed she is by the response the film overwhelmed she is by the response the film has garnered over the last few weeks since its release on January 20. *Chhatriwali* has racked up over 100 million watch minutes within just a few days of its release on the OTT platform. The film tells the story of Sanya Dhingra, who tries her best to break the taboo of sex education while actively seeking a full time job. ing a full-time job.

Just one day ahead of her birthday, on the cusp of entering a rather exciting adulthood, Riva Arora interacted

with The Pioneer via with *The Pioneer* via Zoom. The *Uri* actress discussed working on a social drama like *Chhatriwali*, acting alongside Rakul Preet Singh, balancing acting life and creating content for the gram, and her desire to dabble with international film industries industries.

"Chhatriwali happened in the most beautiful way. We were at the RSVP office for a meeting. I auditioned from home in 2021 because the pandemic was still on, back then. When they told us about the script, we really loved it. We were just like, We have to do this film because it has such a beautiful story,""shared Riva.

Riva has around 9.6 million followers on Instagram, and the number doesn't seem to stop growing. We asked her whether all the praise and adulation ever got to her head. To ever got to her head. Io which she replied, "Acting is what I love, and I will continue doing that. Being both a creator and an actress, I always try to balance both. Whenever I get free time, I make a video or click a picture and tell my fans on Instagram about what's happening. Even when I'm on the set, I always inform my fans online."

Guess what? The Mom star doesn't feel acting is as challenging as it seems if one really loves it to the core. "Well! If you love acting, you don't find any-thing extremely challenging because if you really want to do it, it will come automatically," said Riva. All said, she

shared one partic-ular instance where she found it hard while filming Chhatriwali. "The emotional scene that I had to perform with Rakul di was difficult because there was this wedding that was happening near the shooting spot," shared Riva with a chuckle. "We had to shoot that multiple times because all we could hear was the noise from the venue. The acting part was not difficult, but dubbing for it was a challenge. I had to dub in the exact same way. The first take turned out great, and Tejas sir was there to sup-port me through-

out the process."
The Gunjan Saxena actress

was all praise for her co-star Rakul Preet Singh, "It was amazing working with Rakul di, Rajesh sir, and Prachee ma'am. I got to work with some great actors, and I learned so much from them. There was this positive vibe on the set, and we all started bonding on the very first day. Everybody was so friendly, and I'm grateful to be working with them. I'd say working with them was one of the best experiences. Rakul Di and I already share a good bond, so it was easy to work with her even on the emotional scenes. It was a joy sharing screen space with all of them."

As we've informed you earlier that Chhatriwali deals with breaking the shackles of social conventions such as sex education in India, Riva feels it's imperative to talk about such topics in the open and spread awareness among the youth. "Yes! Definitely, for people who don't know much about it and aren't aware of what's going on in the world; I feel it is important to talk about how miscarriages and abortions happen. It's rather important for teenagers to know about it.

And this movie has been getting so much love and support for its content. I'm super happy and grateful for that."

Speaking of the best performance that she's witnessed in recent years, she said, "It was a pleasure working with Vicky Mamu at *Uri*. He's such a talented actor, and he's so down to earth. His acting in the film was one of the finest performances that I've seen in recent times. Also, the entire cast of *Chhatriwali* has outdone themselves in terms of their per-formances." The Bharat actress further added, "I want to do great in Bollywood and I also want to work down South. I'd also love to enter the Hollywood and Korean industries and learn as much as I can from all the industries across the world."

The Chhatriwali



SENSATIONAL GILL SEALS T201 SERIES

Shubman Gill smashed a whirlwind unbeaten maiden century in the shortest format as India thrashed New Zealand by 168 runs, their biggest ever win in terms of runs, in the third and final T20 International to pocket the hard-fought series 2-1 here on Wednesday.

India's second highest margin of victory was 143-run win over Ireland in Dublin in 2018.

Gill continued his fine form and showcased his array of shots, hitting the New Zealand bowlers to all parts of the Narendra Modi Stadium to score 126 not out off just 63 balls balls with the help of 12 fours and seven sixes.

Riding on Gill's brilliance, India posted 234 for 4 after electing to bat.

New Zealand never got going in the huge chase as Indian bowlers performed in unison to bowl out the visitors for a mere 66 in 12.1 overs, the third lowest score for the Kiwis in this format.

Skipper Hardik Pandya led the bowling department with figures of 4/16, while Umran Malik (2/9), Shivam Mavi (2/12) and Arshdeep Singh (2/16) scalped two wickets each.

New Zealand lost Finn Allen in the fifth ball of the opening over bowled by Pandya, caught by Suryakumar Yadav.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep struck with his first delivery, as Devon Conway lobbed a fuller delivery to Pandya at mid-off.

New Zealand continued to lose wickets as Mark Champman got a faint inside edge which went straight to Ishan Kishan off Arshdeep's last delivery of the over.

Wickets kept on tumbling like of pack of cards for New Zealand with Glenn Phillips becoming the next victim, caught by Suryakumar at slips off Pandya.

Down at 13 for 4 after three overs, it was all but over for New Zealand.

The situation became even worst for New Zealand when Michael Bracewell was cleaned up up by a fast delivery from Umran Malik.

New Zealand skipper Mitchell Santner (13) and Daryl Mitchell (35) then added 32 runs for the sixth wicket before Shivam Mavi dismissed the former, caught by Suryakumar at deep midwicket fence as the left-hander



Tendulkar felicitates women's U19 WC-winning cricket team

PTI AHMEDABAD

Sachin Tendulkar on Wednesday felicitated the India U-19 women's cricket team for its triumph in the inaugural ICC T20 World Cup in South Africa, saying the feat will encourage many girls to take up the sport and realise their dreams.

"I would likely to congratulate you on the magnificent achievement. The entire nation will celebrate (the triumph) for years to come.

"For me, my cricketing dreams started in 1983 but by winning this

World Cup, you have given birth to many dreams. It was a magnificent performance," Tendulkar said during the felicitation ceremony.
"By winning this World Cup,

you have given a dream to young girls in India to represent the country. "The beginning of the WPL

(Women's Premier League) is going to be the biggest thing. I believe in equality for men and women, and not just in sports. There should be equal opportunities," he added.

Tendulkar said the BCCI is doing its best for the growth of women's

cricket in the country.

"What BCCI has been able to do and the officials' contribution in helping women's cricket prosper, I think it's a sign that we will really do well (in future).

During the brief felicitation function, which was also attended by BCCI secretary Jay Shah, president Roger Binny, vice-president Rajeev Shukla and treasurer Ashish Shelar, the dignitaries handed over a cheque of Rs five crore to the victorious India U-19 women's team as announced by the board secretary earlier.

Mavi struck again a ball later, removing Ish Sodhi (0) caught by Tripathi at backward point as New Zealand slumped to 53 for seven in nine

Thereafter, it was just a formality for India and the hosts romped home in

Earlier, the start was far from rosy for India after electing to bat as Mitchell Santner made a master-stroke decision by handing Michael Bracewell the sec-ond over and the off-spinner reposed his captain's faith by removing an out-of-form Ishan Kishan, who was adjudged LBW with the second ball of the over.

In-form Gill struck two boundaries off Lockie Ferguson in the next over. Gill was at his ominous best, be it pick up hits, drives or pulls to contin-

ue his onslaught.

He hit Blair Tickner for three fours in the fifth over as India reached 44 for

Young Rahul Tripathi (44 off 22), who has immense potential but yet to fire in the series, then struck Ferguson for a boundary and a six in consecutive

balls to keep up the tempo.
Tripathi then pulled Santner over short-fine leg before coming down and lofting the left-arm spinner for a straight six. Tripathi showed his attacking class and dispatched Ish Sodhi over extra cover for his third six of the innings but perished in the next ball in search of one too many, holing out at deep square leg to Ferguson.

Gill reached his maiden T20I fifty

off 35 balls with a single off Santner.
While Gill held one end,
Suryakumar Yadav (24 off 13) showed glimpses of his class but fell in the 13th over, brilliantly caught by Bracewell at mid-off as the batter mistimed his

Gill brought up his century with a four over the mid-off fielder off the bowling of Ferguson in the first ball of the 18th over. He broke free and clobbered Ferguson over mid-wicket for a huge six in the next ball.

It was mayhem as skipper Pandya (30 off 17) too went ballistic

But it was Gill who stole the show as he continued with his attacking shots after the ton, finding the boundaries at will as New Zealand attack



India seek tri-series title going into T20 WC

PTI ■ EAST LONDON

With the Women's T20 World Cup days away, India will look to conclude the final leg of their preparations with a win in the tri-series final against South Africa here on Thursday.

India, following their 1-4 series loss to Australia at home, have bounced back with three wins in the tri-series and would be hoping to end the tournament on a high before they enter the 10-team global competition beginning on February 10. India had got the better of South Africa in the triseries opener before their repeat league fixture was washed out. India beat West Indies twice to enter the final.

However, in the World Cup, India's main challenge will be to outsmart the likes of England and Australia.

With eight wickets in three games, all-rounder Deepti Sharma will be the go-to bowler for India in the final.

Under fire batter Jemimah Rodrigues got much needed runs in the final league game against West Indies and would be aiming for consistency.

A big positive for India was the return of Pooja Vastrakar, who had been out of action due to an injury.

The India U-19 women's team lifting the inaugural U19 World Cup in Potchefstroom could be the motivation for Harmanpreet's side to go all out in the final, and then go on to win an elusive ICC title.

India Women: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Anjali Sarvani, Yastika Bhatia, Harleen Deol, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Amanjot Kaur, Sabbhineni Meghana, Meghna Singh, Shikha Pandey, Sneh Rana, Renuka Singh, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Devika Vaidya, Pooja Vastrakar, Sushma Verma, Radha Yadav.

South Africa Women: Sune Luus (c), Chloe Tryon (vc), Anneke Bosch, Tazmin Brits, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Lara Goodall, Shabnim Ismail, Sinalo Jafta, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Masabata Klaas, Tebogo Macheke, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Tumi Sekhukhune, Delmi Tucker, Laura Wolvaardt.

Ballance in Zimbabwe squad for Windies Tests

Former England batsman Gary Ballance was included on Tuesday in a 16-man Zimbahara and former transfer. babwe squad for a two-Test series against the West Indies.

Harare-born Ballance plaadopted country during the last Under International Cricket

Council (ICC) rules a player can switch from one full member nation to another after a threeyear stand-down period, which the 33-year-old has served. Ballance was released by English county Yorkshire last

racist language against former teammate Azeem Rafiq, and signed a two-year contract with Zimbabwe. Revelations by Rafiq, who was born in Pakistan, of institu-

year after admitting he used

tional racism triggered wholesale changes at Yorkshire. Ballance debuted for Zimbabwe this month in a T20I against Ireland in Harare, scoring 30, but missed the other two

due to concussion. He then made 23 and top scored with 52 in two ODIs against the Irish before the series decider was washed out.



Star white-ball batter Sikandar Raza will miss the series, starting on Saturday in Bulawayo, as he is playing franchise cricket in the United Arab Emirates.

Ryan Burl, potentially highly effective both with bat and ball, also misses out as he is fulfilling franchise commitments in Bangladesh. A fractured finger sidelines regular Test captain and all-rounder Sean Williams so white-ball skipper Craig Ervine stands in.

Pacemen Tendai Chatara and Blessing Muzarabani will be absent due to thigh injuries as Zimbabwe seek a first Test win over the West Indies after three draws and seven losses.

Gill & Surya to compete for Iyer's slot in middle order

The Indian team management could consider playing Shubman Gill in the middle order ahead of Suryakumar Yadav in the first Test against Australia after Shreyas Iyer was ruled out of the

series opener due to a back injury.

Iyer failing to recover from back spasms will certainly open one spot in the Indian batting order and the choice will be between Surya, a career middle Gill, who has mostly opened for the national team in Tests.

Iyer, who has been a consistent performer in his short Test career, was India's stand out batter in the 2-0 series win in Bangladesh in December.

When New Zealand came to India in late 2021, Shubman Gill was being considered for middle order as KL Rahul was supposed to open with Mayank Agarwal. Then Rahul got injured and Gill opened. Then he got injured again. He was being considered for middle order in red ball," a BCCI source privy to development said.

With skipper Rohit Sharma and vice captain Rahul being the first choice openers in the squad, followed by Cheteshwar Pujara and Virat Kohli at numbers three and four respectively, the number five slot becomes very important in the Indian context as that individual is expected to play the second new

In case of Gill, being a Test regular and having originally started his red ball career as a middle order batter, certainly helps his case.



"When Rahul Dravid manned India A, Gill had played in middle order in a West Indies A tour where he had a double hundred in one of the Tests. To be fair, he was originally a middle order batter, who was converted into an opener," the former national selector said.

In case of Surya, his dominance against spinners on wickets offering turn is a key factor.

"In case Nathan Lyon gets to turn his off breaks big, then SKY can dismantle him with his footwork. But against Cummins, Hazlewood, Gill could be a better bet," he added.

Iyer, who missed the limited overs home series against New Zealand, has not yet fully recovered from his back injury and remains at the National Cricket Academy for rehabilitation.

SKY remains at top of ICC rankings

Swashbuckling Indian batter Surya-kumar Yadav continued his stay at the top in the ICC rankings released on

Suryakumar reached the rating of 910 points after he stroked a quick-fire India's ongoing series against New Zealand in Ranchi as the exciting righthander maintained his healthy lead at the top of the T20I rankings for batters.

While Suryakumar played a more composed knock of 26 not out in the second match of the series, the 32-year-old dropped back to a total of 908 rating points as a result. It also means Suryakumar remains within striking distance of England batter Dawid Malan in the race to hold the highest rating of all time for men's T20I batters.

Malan achieved a rating of 915 points in Cape Town back in 2020, but Suryakumar now holds the second highest rating of all time for T20I batters following his recent heroics with the willow.

He claimed the top ranking for current batters while scoring a total of 239 runs from six matches at last year's T20 World Cup and only last month was deservedly named the ICC T20 Cricketer of the Year. No other Indian featured in the top 10 of the batters or bowlers list while Hardik Pandya remained third among all-rounders.

defending champions to 144 for 4 at

stumps to seize control of the

of 262 for 2, things did not go

Andhra's way as the hard-working

MP bowlers hit back after toiling

hard during the massive 251-run

stand between Ricky Bhui (149) and

balls even as Bhui kept going to frustrate the home team's bowling

Agarwal (4 for 72) broke the partnership when he got Shinde to nick

one to wicket-keeper Himanshu

innings ended when he was caught

by Saransh Jain in the covers off

Mantri with the score at 323.

Shinde reached his ton off 254

Medium-pacer Anubhav

Five runs later, Bhui's marathon

Karan Shinde (110).

Resuming at the overnight score

Visa delay forces Khawaja to miss his flight to India

PTI SYDNEY

A ustralia opener Usman Kha-waja was forced to miss his flight to India on Wednesday due to a visa delay.

the high-profile four-Test series against India without Khawaja, who is now expected to depart on Thursday. "Me waiting for my Indian

Visa like... #stranded #dontleaveme #standard #anytimenow, wrote Khawaja while posting a meme on social media. The Pakistan-born batter has played 56 Tests, 40 ODIs and

nine T20s for Australia. The 36year-old also featured in the IPL back in 2016. He was named Australia's

Test Player of the Year on Monday, an award named after the legendary Shane Warne. Australia will have a four-

day training camp in the outskirts of Bengaluru before moving to Nagpur for the first Test beginning February 9. The other venues are Delhi, Dharamsala and Ahmedabad.

Both teams are in the running to reach the World Test Championship final.

Batters put Karnataka in command against Uttarakhand

PTI BENGALURU

Karnataka, riding on veteran all-rounder Shreyas Gopal's unbeaten 103, took a massive 358-run lead against Uttarakhand on day two of their Ranji Trophy quarter-final

match here on Wednesday. On a day when runs flowed freely for the hosts, skipper Mayank Agarwal (83) was involved in a 159run opening partnership with Ravikumar Samarth (82) before Devdutt Padikkal (69) and Nikin Jose (62) too scored half centuries as Karnataka ended the day at 474 for

None of the Uttarakhand bowlers seemed effective against the batterheavy Karnataka side at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, with pace bowler Deepak Dhapola, who had career-best figures of 8/35 in an innings during the Ranji Trophy group phase this season, returning empty-handed on Wednesday.

With the Uttarakhand strike bowler seemingly ineffective, there were four half-centurions and a century-maker in Karnataka's lineup.

no loss, overnight batters Agarwal and Samarth, who were on 65 and 54 respectively on Tuesday, flourished in favourable home condi-

However, the pair departed in quick succession with Uttarakhand pacer Abhay Negi accounting for both in the first session of Their departure, however, did-

n't end Uttarakhand's misery with Padikkal and Jose guiding the hosts past the 300-run mark. Their partnership yielded 118 runs and broke the back of the visitors' bowlers.

But more misery was about to unfold for the visitors later in the day as veteran all-rounder Gopal struck his fifth first-class century and, in the process, crossed the 3,000-run mark to put Karnataka in an almost invincible position.

Going by Uttarakhand's capitulation in the first innings, Karnataka could declare their innings in the first session and finish the contest on day

PRABH, NAMAN HIT 100s

Rajkot: Openers Prabhsimran Singh and Naman Dhir struck sparkling centuries to give Punjab the upper hand on the second day of their quarterfinal match against Saurashtra.

Resuming the day at 3 for no loss in reply to Saurashtra's first innings total of 303 all out, Punjab were 327 for 5 from 91 overs at the close of second day for a lead of 24 runs with Prabhsimran and Naman scoring 126 and 131 runs respectively.

Prabhsimran faced 158 balls from which he struck 13 fours and three sixes, while Naman hit nine fours and seven sixes during his 180ball knock. Prabhsimran was the first to go

lunch session while Naman stayed a little longer and was the third Punjab batsman to get out. One-down Pukhraj Mann (1), Anmolpreet Singh (9) and Nehal Wadhera (4) did not contribute

at the team score of 212 in the post-

innings total.

Mandeep was batting on 39 off 120 balls, while Malhotra was giving him company on 16 off 57 deliveries when the stumps were drawn. For Saurashtra, Dharmendrasinh much but captain Mandeep Singh Jadeja and Yuvrajsinh Dodiya took and wicketkeeper Anmol Malhotra wickets apiece while Parth Bhut got took Punjab past Suarashtra's first

VIHARI BATS LEFT HANDED

Indore: In an act of bravery, Andhra ond day of the quarterfinal.

skipper Hanuma Vihari batted lefthanded and defied the speedy Avesh Khan to add 26 runs for the 10th wicket to help the team reach 379 against Madhya Pradesh on the sec-

Agarwal. The MP bowlers then got into the act and struck at regular intervals to leave Andhra at 353 for 9 when Vihari walked in to bat.

Batting left-handed after injuring his left hand wrist, the Andhra Andhra then reduced the captain managed to hit a couple of

boundaries to make sure the team total swelled to 379. He batted with only one hand.

He was dismissed LBW by Jain for 27. He had retired hurt on Tuesday on 16 after being hit by a bouncer from Avesh Khan.

BENGAL TAKE 1ST INN LEAD Kolkata: Skipper Abhimanyu Easwaran and Sudip Gharami struck half centuries as Bengal took a slender first innings lead against Jharkhand on day two of their

After bowling Jharkhand out for 173, Bengal were 238 for 5 at the end of the second day with a crucial 65run first innings lead.

quarterfinal.

Abhimanyu (77) and Gharami (68) displayed a dominant show with the bat after rookie opener Kazi Junaid Saifi (1) was adjudged LBW off Ashish Kumar in the ninth over of the day.

From there on, Abhimanyu and Gharami added 136 runs for the second wicket to put the home side to touching distance of claiming a first innings lead.

tollywood

'Original films didn't penetrate the local areas in our states

PNS HYDERABAD

Butta Bomma, named after the Telugu hit song from Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo is a remake of the Malayalam superhit film, Kappela. The makers adapted the story line to match up to the taste of the Telugu audience. The film is produced by Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas, which stars Anikha Surendran, Surya Vashista and Arjun Das in prominent characters. Butta Bomma which is all set to hit the theatres on February 4 is directed by debutant Sowri Chandrasekhar T Ramesh.

In a candid conversation with the local media ahead of Butta Bomma's release, Sowri Chandrasekhar opened up about his passion for cinema, the idea behind the film's script, casting choices, and the best compliment he received in the due process.

The filmmaker always believed that getting a basic education was essential to survive if things go haywire. Therefore, before entering into the tinsel town of Tollywood, Sowri Chandrasekhar pursued an MBA in Marketing. He started his journey with Varma Corporation and further worked under the guidance of director E Nivas for films like *Shool, Love ke Liye Kuch* Bhi Karega, Bardaasht, and Dum. Later, after his father had passed away, he had to move back to Hyderabad. It was at that time, he met filmmaker Sukumar, who recently scored a hit with Pushpa, and travelled with the ace film right from

Pushpa, and travelled with the ace film right from Jagadam to Pushpa 2.

The director shared he was confident since day one that Kappela could be remade into Telugu, "I happened to watch Kappela during Covid and I really liked the screenplay of the film. Only a few films can be remade into other languages. When it comes to Kappela, it is a script based film so it can be made into any language. That's film, so it can be made into any language. That's the reason I chose this particular film and more than anything it excited me as a filmmaker. And I always had the confidence that it would go well with our audience. Later, I got to know that Sithara Entertainment bought the rights for the film and I approached them."

The film is being appreciated for the casting choices and the debutant said, "We were searching for someone who'd look really innocent. In that process, I happened to see Anikha in Gautham Vasudev Menon's web series and I felt she's the right fit for the role. When it comes to Arjun Das, our producer Naga Vamsi was really excited to see him play the part. And after looking at Surya Vasishta's audition clips, we locked in on him after discussing with the producers. All the three actors will surely create an impact on the audience. I don't know whether I can say this or not but Anikha, Surya and Arjun will go places after the release of the film."

While dealing with a film made for a different region, the director should see to it that it doesn't get lost in transla-

tion. Remaking a film isn't as easy as it seems. Right from casting to adapting the story to a region's sensibilities, everything poses a challenge. "Our Telugu culture is a lot different when compared to Kerala. We changed much of the first and made sure not to change the main plot of the film. There's also a major screenplay change in the first half and I think after watching Butta Bomma, even the Kappela director might envy that particular change. Apart from that we tried our level best to capture those nuances that the story demanded. I am not worried about comparisons. And I feel the original films didn't penetrate the local areas in our states. So, I thought we could take a chance," informed the *Butta Bomma* creator.

gested any changes to the script, he replied, "He never interfered while we were shooting for the film but after watching the film in its entirety, he suggested a few changes and we

work. No matter who the star is, if the film doesn't have the potential to get through the audience, it won't perform well. I felt really happy when Chinna Babu garu complimented me after watching the movie. I can't reveal as to why he complimented me because I'd be letting you all in on an important twist," assured the

cess of Butta Bomma and is keen on making films in the action genre. character and the story. Everything depends on the script,"

Everyone is aware of the close relationship that Sithara Entertainments holds with master director Trivikram Srinivas. When the first timer was asked if Trivikram Srinivas ever sug-

immediately made all those changes."

There's this idea that romantic films only garner critical success and don't make astro-

nomical box-office numbers. "I never believed in that philosophy. I feel it all depends on its merit. If you're able to honestly instil emotions with your story and keep the audience hooked to the seats, that film is bound to director. Sowri Chandrasekhar T Ramesh looks super confident about the suc-

"I don't have any reservations in terms of who I want to cast in my films. I'm open to casting anyone who goes well with the

h a l a p a -thy67 is one of the most touted films from Tamil Cinema. The 67th film of Thalapathy Vijay, was officially launched recently. Many vague details referring to the star cast of the film have been making rounds regularly since director Lokesh approved that he is joining with

Thalapathy Vijay.

The makers have now made the official announcement of the enire starcast, and also unveiled the character posters. While, earlier it was officially confirmed that the senior Bollywood star

Sanjay Dutt is making his Tamil debut in Vijay's film, by playing the lead antag-onist, Arjun Sarja, who is best known as the 'Action king' of South cinema, is playing a pivotal role in *Thalapathy 67*.

Thalapathy67 features an ensemble cast including Sanjay Dutt, Priya Anand, Arjun Sarja, Gautham Menon, Mysskin,

Mansoor Ali Khan, Mathew Thomas, and Sandy Master. Now, Trisha Krishnan comes on board as the leading lady opposite Vijay in the movie. This will be the fifth movie for Trisha with Vijay. The magical pair is set

to work together after 14 long years.
Rockstar Anirudh Ravichander scores the music for the movie, while Manoj Paramahamsa handles the cinematography. Philomin Raj takes care of editing and N. Sathees Kumar is the art director. Ramkumar Balasubramanian is the



to the release of the upcoming film Butta Bomma, director Sowri Chandrasekhar opened up about his passion for cinema, the idea behind the film's script, casting choices, and the

> compliment he received in the due process.

Samantha to begin shooting for *Kushi* & Citadel soon

A Samantha Ruth Prabhu has been one of the most loved actresses of the Indian film industry. Her Oo Antava turned out to be a global hit. With her recently released *Yashoda*, the actress has received immense love from all around the world.

And here comes two of the biggest announce-ments of the actresses" projects; Kushi and Citadel.

While there were talks that the Yashoda actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu will be starring in the Varun Dhawan starrer Citadel, Prime video on Wednesday had officially announced that the actress will be starring alongside Varun in the Indian instalment of the Citadel universe, the global-event series from Prime Video and the Russo Brothers' AGBO.

The untitled *Citadel* series based out of India is being helmed by renowned creator duo Raj & DK (Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK), who are the showrunners and directors. The local instalment is written by Sita R. Menon, along with Raj & DK. The streaming service also confirmed that the production is currently underway in Mumbai.

Sharing her excitement on fan of the

When Prime Video and Raj & DK approached me with this project, I decided to take it up in a heartbeat! After working with this team on *The Family Man*, it is homecoming for me. The *Citadel* universe the interconnected story. universe, the interconnected storylines between the productions across the globe, and most importantly, the script of the Indian instalment really excit-

ed me. I am thrilled to be a part of this brilliant universe conceptualised by the Russo Brothers' AGBO. I am also looking forward to working with Varun for the first time on this project. He is someone who is full of life and cheer

when you're around him." While, the actress has been trending on all social media platforms ever since it was announced the actress being part of Citadel, there have been reports that the makers of her upcoming Telugu film, Kushi, are upset with her as she had allotted dates for Citadel. However, in a tweet, the actress dropped an update about *Kushi* and revealed that she will soon begin the shooting for Kushi, and apologised to the team.

Wednesday, after announcement related to Citadel was done, a

actress took to Twitter and asked her about her upcoming film, Kushi. Replying to him, the actress wrote, "#*Kushi* will resume very soon .. my apologies to @TheDeverakonda @ShivaNirvana @MythriOfficial (sic)."

Meanwhile, Deverakonda acknowledged her tweet and wrote, "We all await wait your return in full health and your big s m i l e



Reintroducing Brahmanandam like never before in Keedaa Cola

delivered consecutive hits with his first two very first feature-length production of VG Sainma. The film is being produced by Bharath Kumar, Sripad Nandiraj,

Upendra Varma, Srinivas Kaushik, Saikrishna Gadwal, Vijay Kumar, There are 8 main characters in this film and it will not have heroes or heroines. Comedy King

Brahmanandam is playing one of the crucial roles in the movie. Director Tharun Bhascker's statement reads: "When I was supposed to cast I had immense pressure. The pressure of working with a star was becoming a burden and I didn't want to fall prey to that. This is a crime comedy and say it with me who's the star of comedy? The OG meme god?Re-Introducing Mr.Brahmi! Like never before.

Watch him in

The extremely talented Tharun Bhascker, who delivered consecutive hits with his first two - "Thatha". VaradhaRaju is the mean old grandpa who you'll films is presently working on his third directorial venture *Keedaa Cola*, a crime comedy. It's the with a disposable urine attachment, the man's only super-

power is sarcasm. "Peru Varadha, posedhi pithukantha." Watch him deliver a fine performance that's subtle yet immensely funny ee sari mr.B meeku kharchulaki ichesthadu and leave you saying - "He paid

> Brahmanandam's first look poster has been unveiled on the occasion of his birthday and it shows Brahmanandam with a puzzled

Your world is going to get weirder," reads the poster.

AI Aaron is taking care of the cinematography, while Upendra Varma is the editor and Ashish Teja Pulala is the art director. Tharun Bhascker penned the

Keedaa Cola will be released sometime this year.

arjuna & Pooja Hedge aaza's new campaign

aaza, Coca-Cola India's homegrown mango drink, has unveiled its new 'Aam Wali Dildaari, Bina Naam Wali Dildaari' campaign.

Maaza has on-boarded the iconic south Indian superstar, Nagarjuna, as the new face of the brand With this new campaign, Maaza extends its spirit of benevolence and encourages anonymous acts of kindness to spread joy and happiness. The campaign further highlights the fulfilling mango experience that brings out one's selfless personality.

The light-hearted storytelling in the TVC depicts Amitabh Bachchan or Nagarjuna as a passionate Maaza lover while Pooja Hegde is an

inquisitive kind citizen who loves to take part in social service activities. The two ad films portray the spirit of Indian citizens who like to indulge in the act of generosity by contributing to society. It also highlights the message of how true generosity comes with anonymity. Pooja Hegde, Indian actress & star of the new Maaza campaign, said, "I am proud to be associated with Maaza for over a year now. The

brand's philosophy of true generosity and acts of kindness is something I personally relate to. The brand brings nostalgia and takes me back to my childhood days of enjoying fresh mangoes and sharing joyous moments with my loved ones."

Ruchira Entertainments & N Cinemas bags the Telugu rights of Kabzaa

igh octane Kannada action drama Kabzaa starring Real Star Nimma Upendra, Kichcha Sudeep and Shriya Saran is due for its release on March 17. Ít's a known fact that Nimma Upendra shares a great fan base in the Telugu states. Now, here's the good news; N. Sudhakar Reddy's Ruchira Entertainments & N Cinemas bagged the Telugu rights of the film for a huge price.

Actor Nithiin, popular Tollywood star and N. Sudhakar Reddy's son took to his twitter account saying, "Happy to bring you all @nimmaupendra Garu & KicchaSudeep Garu's #Kabzaa in Telugu through our #RuchiraEntertainments and N Cinemas."



Sonu Sood pledges 1 crore in scholarships for cyber security enthusiasts

onu Sood's Sood Charity Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting education and skill develop-ment, has announced the launch of the "Mera Bharat, Surakshit Bharat Initiative" in association with EC-Council, the world's largest

cybersecurity certification body.
India is currently facing a high number of cyber-attacks, with 18 million attacks daily in the first quarter of 2022. The program provides an opportunity for individuals to gain the necessary skills and knowledge to defend against cyber threats and secure a fulfilling career in the cybersecurity industry.

career in the cybersecurity industry.

The scholarship offers full funding for EC-Council's Certified Cybersecurity Technician program, a globally recognized certification that can help individuals build skills in ethical hacking, network defense, digital forensics, and security operations that are required for in-demand job roles in cybersecurity. The program is created by the team behind the renowned Certified Ethical Hacker Program and is sure to impress recruiters and open doors to a successful cybersecurity career for

"Our country is facing a significant resource crisis in cybersecurity, and I am proud to be a part of the solution through the 'Mera Bharat, Surakshit Bharat Initiative' scholarship program with EC-Council. By helping students and entry-level professionals gain the necessary skills and knowledge to defend against cyber threats, Sood Charity Foundation aims to build a stronger and more secure India. I urge all those passionate about cybersecurity to apply for the scholarship and take the first step towards a fulfilling career



in this industry," said Sonu Sood. The scholarship program is open to applicants who are committed to pursuing a career in cybersecurity and have the desire to contribute to keeping their country safe. Deserving applicants will be selected based on their career goals

and potential for success in the field.

The application period for the scholarship is now open and interested applicants can