

ANALYSIS 7
'PARKINGSON'S LAW
OF MOBILITY, AND US

MONEY 8
REGULATIONS STRICTLY FOLLOWED
WHILE MAKING INVESTMENTS

SPORTS 11
WPL AUCTION: 409 PLAYERS
TO GO UNDER HAMMER

VIJAYAWADA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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'AUDIENCE WILL GET
TO SEE A MATURED
PERFORMANCE
FROM ME IN VBVK'

Page 12

9-YEAR-OLD GIRL SUFFERS SEIZURES AFTER APPLICATION OF 'MEHNDI'

New Delhi, Feb 7 (PTI) Doctors at a leading private hospital here on Tuesday said they have reported an "unusual" case of a nine-year-old girl who suffered epileptic seizures triggered by the smell of "mehndi" applied on her hand. The case study has been published in the January 2023 edition of the Clinical Neurophysiology, the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said in a statement. The department of neurology at the hospital recently reported "an unusual case" of a nine-year-old girl who was suffering epileptic seizures after application of "mehndi", it said. When she had suffered her first convulsion after application of "mehndi", she had "abrupt loss of consciousness, leading to fall and convulsions for 20 seconds", doctors at the hospital said.

MUSHARRAF LAID TO REST; SERVING MILITARY OFFICERS ATTEND FUNERAL PRAYERS

Pakistan's former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf was on Tuesday laid to rest with military honours in an army graveyard here in the presence of his relatives and several retired and serving military officers. The former president's namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayers) were held at the Gulmohar Polo Ground in Malir Cantonment in the afternoon in a low key ceremony which was neither attended by President Arif Alvi, nor Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. However, Joint Chiefs of Staff General Sahir Shamshad Mirza and former army chiefs - Qamar Javed Bajwa, Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Aslam Beg - attended the funeral.

MAN SHOT, CARS DAMAGED IN CLASH AFTER INTER-FAITH MARRIAGE

A man was shot at and vehicles were damaged in a clash between two groups allegedly after an inter-faith marriage in Haryana's Pataudi area, police said on Tuesday. On January 30, a Muslim man from Pataudi's Baba Shah locality lodged a police complaint alleging that his 22-year-old daughter had gone missing. It was later found that she had married one Rakesh, they said. After the wedding, Rakesh had started receiving threat calls. He informed his relatives in Rewari about the calls and they reached out to Bajrang Dal members for help. A group of men led by the outfit's leader reached the man's house where the clash erupted, they said.

15 MILLION PEOPLE LIVE UNDER THREAT OF GLACIAL FLOODS

As glaciers melt and pour massive amounts of water into nearby lakes, 15 million people across the globe live under the threat of a sudden and deadly outburst flood, a new study finds. More than half of those living in the shadow of the disaster called glacial lake outburst floods are in just four countries: India, Pakistan, Peru and China, according to a study in Tuesday's Nature Communications. A second study, awaiting publication in a peer-reviewed journal, catalogs more than 150 glacial flood outbursts in history and recent times. It's a threat Americans and Europeans rarely think about, but 1 million people live within just 6 miles (10 kilometers) of potentially unstable glacial-fed lakes, the study calculated.

CM may shift 'camp' to Vizag on March 22

Sources said the works on the official chief minister's bungalow on the Visakhapatnam-Bheemili beach road are in full swing and they would get ready in a couple of weeks.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is all set to shift his camp office to Visakhapatnam in the third week of March. There were reports that Jagan Mohan Reddy has fixed March 22, coinciding with the Ugadi festival, as the 'muhurtham' for commencing his operations from Visakhapatnam. The Chief Minister is said to be firm that there would be no further change in the 'muhurtham'.

Though Jagan was expecting that there would be favourable judgment from the Supreme Court by now, it did not happen despite the best efforts by the government counsels. The next hearing has been postponed to February 23 and there is no guarantee that there would be any positive decision in favour of the government by then.

At the same time, the works on Rushikonda hills for the construction of the official complex have also not been completed and it is unlikely that they would be ready for occupation by March 22. The entire area is still chaotic and even if the officials race against time, they may not be able to complete the same.

Sources in Visakhapatnam said the works on the official chief minister's bungalow on the Visakhapatnam-Bheemili beach road are in full swing and they would get ready in a couple of weeks.

The officials are now contemplating constructing a camp office adjacent to the residential bungalow on the lines of the Tadepalli camp office. Since it is only a make-shift official camp office, till the completion of the Rushikonda project, it might not take much time to complete the same, sources said.

Alternatively, the Visakhapatnam district official machinery is also sprucing up the IT Tower for the camp office. The existing government buildings at Madhurawada or Kommati are also being examined to house the office building to accommodate the CMO. "The bungalows of Andhra University Vice-Chancellor and registrar are also being considered for the CMO if Jagan is interested in the same," sources said.

AP govt okays NTPC's Rs 1.1L cr energy park

CM directs officials to provide 75% jobs to locals in industries cleared by SIPB

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Public sector power generator NTPC is to set up a 'New Energy Park' at Pudimadaka in Anakapalli district of Andhra Pradesh to produce products out of green hydrogen, green ammonia and green methanol at a cost of Rs 1,10,000 crore in two phases.

NTPC will set up New Energy Park at Pudimadaka in Anakapalli district to produce products of green hydrogen, green ammonia and green methanol with a total investment of Rs. 1, 10,000 crore in two phases with each phase receiving an investment of Rs. 55,000 crore. The first and second phases with employment opportunities to 30,000 and 31,000 people would be completed by 2027 and 2032 respectively.

The Andhra Pradesh State Investment Promotion Board



(SIPB) has cleared a chain of investment proposals for establishing several heavy industries in the State on Tuesday.

According to a press release by the AP government, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy presided over the SIPB meeting. He directed the officials to take all necessary steps to stand by the industrialists and investors and ensure that all projects are launched within the stipulated time.

He told them to ensure that 75 per cent of the jobs in all emerging industries are given to locals as per the law enacted, and directed the officials to set up a state-of-the-art IT Park at Bhogapuram in an area of 90 acres.

Rs 16,400 cr for 5 solar parks in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Under the Solar Parks Development Scheme, five solar parks with a capacity of 4,100 MW have been sanctioned to Andhra Pradesh by the Union Minister for Renewable Energy and Power RK Singh.

Answering a question asked by YSRCP member V Vijayasai Reddy in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said that 590.80 crore was released under the Central government's financial assistance

No share for states in cess: Sitharaman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has clarified that the states will not have a share in the cess and surcharge on taxes collected by the Centre for specific purposes.

Answering a question asked by YSRCP member V Vijayasai Reddy in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday, the Finance Minister said that the amount collected in the name of cess, surcharge, and other duties will be fully utilised by the Central government.

The Union Finance Minister said that for the year 2021-22, the amount of cess collected was Rs 3,52,728

crore. The Minister was replying to another question about the details of the formula recommended by the 15th Finance Commission on the share of the taxes collected by the Centre to the states.

The 15th Finance Commission recommended that 41 percent of the taxes collected by the Centre be distributed to the states. The 15th Finance Commission award, which will be in effect from 2020-21 to 2025-26, has prescribed certain criteria for the distribution of tax shares to states. The State has given weightage of 15 percent to the population, 15 percent to the geographical area, 10 percent to forest and environment, and 45 percent to revenue sources.



The 15th Finance Commission recommended that 41 percent of the taxes collected by the Centre be distributed to the states. The 15th Finance Commission award, which will be in effect from 2020-21 to 2025-26, has prescribed certain criteria for the distribution of tax shares to states.



HC notices to AP govt on Kapu quota; next hearing on Feb 20

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Chrgondi Harirama Jogaiah filed a petition in the AP High Court seeking 5 per cent reservation for Kapus under the EWS quota. On Tuesday, the counsel for the petitioner argued in the court that the denial of reservation to Kapus is a political conspiracy. He said that the Kapus are still financially backward. The counsel for the petitioner brought to the notice of the High Court that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government is opposing the reservation because it believes that if the Kapus get 5 per cent reservation, they will gain economic strength. The High Court directed the AP government to file a counter in this regard. The hearing on the petition has been postponed to February 20.

Pawan Kalyan calls Jagan 'Appu Ratna'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan slammed Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for keeping AP on the top in debts.

On Twitter, he ridiculed: "My special congratulations to the Chief Minister for bringing a good name to AP in debts. Keep it up. Do not forget to increase your personal wealth. Let the State wealth & progress go to 'Dogs' but your personal wealth & assets..." Never. That's the spirit... CM". Pawan Kalyan also tagged a cartoon which depicted the Chief Minister as 'Appu Ratna'.

Meanwhile, JSP Political Advisory Committee chairman Nadendra Manohar ridiculed Jagan Mohan Reddy by calling him "Appu Ratna". He said that the government is borrowing loans to the tune of Rs 205.759 crore per day. The AP government is paying Rs 65 crore interest for the loans per day, he stated.

Manohar demanded the government disclose the CAG report on the financial situation of AP. Though hundreds of crores of money is borrowed the government is not in a position to disburse salaries to government employees in time.



"Since the formation of the government by Jagan Reddy, the government employees have not received their salary on the first of the month. So is the situation of retired employees as they are not being paid pension," Manohar lamented.

Manohar said "All are not rich like you and they have not earned thousands of crores like you. They depend on salary only. The monthly budget of government employees is getting affected by the ineptness of the government," he lashed out.

Probe into Kandukuru stampede postponed to Feb 15

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Retired Judge Justice Seshasayana Reddy's Commission on Tuesday questioned Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders Inturi Nageswara Rao and Inturi Rajesh in the Kandukuru stampede incident on Tuesday. As the TDP leaders asked for some time, the commission officials postponed the inquiry to February 15.

TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu organized a huge public meeting in Kandukuru of Nellore district on December 28 as part of



the 'Idem Karma- Mana Rashtratik' programme. A stampede took place as thousands of people came to that meeting, and unfortunately, 8 people died in the stampede. Regarding

'As we don't have any information, we asked for some time to be given which the commission agreed to,' they said.

that incident, the state government has ordered a judicial inquiry. To this extent, the High Court has formed a commission headed by retired judge Justice Seshasayana Reddy.

On Tuesday the Kandukur TDP leaders attended the inquiry. The leaders told the media that the investigation continued for almost two hours. The leaders said that the commission has investigated the

EXCISE POLICY SCAM MEDIA LEAK

HC judge recuses from hearing plea by Vijay Nair

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi High Court judge on Tuesday recused from hearing a plea by businessman Vijay Nair, an accused in the Delhi excise policy case, in which he has alleged that sensitive information was being leaked to the media by the investigating agencies.

After going through the list of respondents in the petition, Justice Prathiba M Singh said she cannot hear this matter.

The petition was filed by Nair, an accused in the cases related to



alleged irregularities in the excise policy being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED). Nair moved the court in

November 2022, claiming that sensitive information in relation to the case was being leaked to the media by the investigating agencies which was adversely impacting his right as an accused. During the brief hearing, the counsel for ED submitted that as the criminal case is pending before the trial court, the parties rely on a host of material and evidence, and being an open court, it remains packed with media persons.

He said that on being chased by media persons, the ED officials and lawyers try to run away and this is all they could do.

POACHING CASE



TS govt moves SC against HC verdict

K. VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Challenging the High Court's verdict of handing over the MLAs' poaching case to the CBI, the Telangana Government approached the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

Government Counsel Dushyanth Dave asked the SC Chief Justice's bench to consider the petition immediately. He expressed concern that if the CBI investigates the case all evidence will be destroyed.

The CJJ clarified that if these matters are brought to the notice of the bench on Wednesday, they will allow a hearing next week itself.

The State government had approached the High Court seeking a stay on the decision to hand over the MLAs' purchase case to the CBI. The government asked the High Court to suspend its verdict for three weeks to challenge it in the Supreme Court. The government filed this petition in the High Court on Tuesday morning and approached the Supreme Court in the evening.

Quake death toll over 5,000

Rescue teams racing to find survivors

PNS ■ ADANA (TURKIYE)

Rescuers raced Tuesday to find survivors in the rubble of thousands of buildings brought down by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake and multiple aftershocks that struck eastern Turkey and neighbouring Syria, with the discovery of more bodies raising the death toll to more than 5,000.

Countries around the world dispatched teams to assist in the rescue efforts, and Turkey's disaster management agency said more than 24,400 emer-

gency personnel were now on the ground. But with such a wide swath of territory hit by Monday's earthquake and nearly 6,000 buildings confirmed to have collapsed in Turkey alone, their efforts were spread thin.

Attempts to reach survivors were also impeded by temperatures below freezing and close to 200 aftershocks, which made the search through unstable structures perilous.

India extends a helping hand

Sends 2 IAF planes to Turkiye with relief material, rescue and medical teams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday sent to Turkiye relief materials, a mobile hospital and specialised search and rescue teams in two C-17 Globemaster military transport aircraft to help the country in the wake of the devastating earthquake and multiple aftershocks that killed over 4,000 people.

Two more flights are expected to carry more relief items, including medical supplies, soon to Turkiye while another one is set to be sent to



Syria which was also hit by the earthquake on Monday, people familiar with the matter said. Several countries around the world have extended help

to both countries in their rescue and recovery efforts.

"India expresses its solidarity at this challenging moment," External Affairs

Minister S Jaishankar tweeted. In another tweet, Jaishankar said he contacted his Syrian counterpart Faisal Mekdad to express solidarity and convey India's support.

"Two C-17 Globemaster III heavy lift aircraft of #IAF have departed India for T rkiye carrying #NDRFHQ teams and #HADR equipment. India stands in solidarity with the people of T rkiye in this difficult time," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Tritiya: Feb 08 04:28 AM
to Feb 09 06:23 AM
Chaturthi: Feb 09 06:23 AM
to Feb 10 07:58 AM

Nakshatram: Feb 07 05:45 PM
Purva Phalguni: to Feb 08 09:14 PM
Uttara Phalguni: Feb 08 09:14 PM
to Feb 09 10:27 PM
to Feb 07 05:45 PM

Rahukalam: 12:30 PM to 1:55 PM
Yamagandam: 8:14 AM to 9:40 AM
Varjyam: 04:06 AM to 05:51 AM
Gulika: 11:05 AM to 12:30 PM
Amritakalam: 01:10 PM to 02:56 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 36°

Humidity: 58%

Sunrise: 6:36 AM

Sunset: 6:07 PM

Updated: FEBRUARY 7, 2023 5:00 PM



Will KCR be able to sustain any anti-Modi front?

Although Bharat Rashtira Samiti (BRS) president and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao is making all-out efforts to bring anti-Narendra Modi forces together, there is a question mark over his ability to sustain such a front, whatever be its form ultimately. Given KCR's oratorical skills in English, Hindi and Urdu languages, expansion of BRS may not be a difficult task when it comes to garnering the support of like-minded parties. After nearly four decades, he is the first leader from south trying to make an impact in north India. Thespian NT Rama Rao, founder of Telugu Desam Party and four-time chief minister of combined Andhra Pradesh, was the first political leader who could



mesmerise even people in north India. Those days NTR addressed several election rallies in Haryana in support of Devi Lal during the Assembly elections of 1987. KCR addressed his first ever public meeting beyond TS in Nanded (Maharashtra) recently for promoting BRS. Former chief minister of Odisha and former Lok Sabha member from Koraput (ST) constituency Girdhar Gamang also joined BRS recently. Gamang had drawn the nation's attention by voting in favour of the no-trust motion against the Vajpayee government in 1999, necessitating fresh General Election. Historically speaking, Andhra Pradesh was formed on the basis of the linguistic

If KCR wants to sustain himself in any anti-Modi front, he must have a flexible approach towards the Congress. In Karnataka also, KCR's task of bringing anti-Modi forces together is not easy with both Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) playing politics. KCR has good relations with former CM of Karnataka H. D. Kumara Swamy, who once shared power with BJP as its coalition partner.

policy of the thirties that was given final shape in 1956. Andhra Pradesh, meant for Telugu-speaking people, comprising the Telangana region of the erstwhile Hyderabad State and the state of Andhra that had been carved out of the composite Madras state in 1953, came into existence on 1 November, 1956. The original Telangana movement started in less than a decade and peaked in 1969. The 1971

General Election reflected the mood of people seeking a separate state for Telangana region. Yet, then PM Indira Gandhi rejected outright the demand for a separate state of Telangana. Successive governments could rule the state for nearly six decades with the original T movement in limbo. KCR launched Telangana Rashtira Samiti solely for the purpose of achieving statehood for Telangana in 2001,



after differences with his political guru N. Chandrababu Naidu. During the regime of Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, KCR faced rough weather politically with the latter's attempts to destabilize TRS by attracting its MLAs into

Congress' fold. After YSR's demise in 2009, KCR got an opportunity to rebuild TRS. He fanned Telangana sentiment so much so that even national parties, Congress and BJP, had to adopt a soft corner towards the demand for separate Telangana. With just two of his party's members in Parliament, including himself, KCR realized his dream of separate statehood for Telangana. Later, as CM of the new state, KCR adopted 'anti-Andhra' approach to get closer to people of his state and retained power in the 2018 elections in which TDP had truck with then principal opposition party Congress. Now, KCR is going to face third consecutive election amid anti-incumbency factor. BJP has since emerged stronger in Telangana State.

During the days of combined Andhra Pradesh, the influence of Muslims was confined to some pockets in the state. Muslims have since become a considerable political force. During his first term (2014-18), KCR was in the good books of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP won only one Assembly seat in 2018, though it won four Lok Sabha seats exactly four months later. BRS' political friend MIM has since won its second Lok Sabha seat from Aurangabad (Maharashtra). MIM has to work directly against BJP in TS tomorrow for its own existence. KCR may have soft corner for the Congress party in the larger interests of his goal of defeating Modi. If KCR wants to sustain himself in any anti-Modi front,

he must have a flexible approach towards the Congress. In Karnataka also, KCR's task of bringing anti-Modi forces together is not easy with both Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) playing politics. KCR has good relations with former CM of Karnataka H. D. Kumara Swamy, who once shared power with BJP as its coalition partner. TDP supreme Chandrababu Naidu also is a very good friend of father-son duo H. D. Deve Gowda & H. D. Kumara Swamy. Since Naidu has a soft corner for BJP now, it is difficult to assess who will join hands with whom. It will be interesting to see the approach of various political players before and after polls. KCR's 'anti Modi front' hangs by this slender thread.

Merugu dares Lokesh for debate on SC welfare

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarjuna has announced that if Nara Lokesh comes along with his father Chandrababu Naidu, his party is ready for a public debate on the welfare of SCs in the State. Lokesh and Naidu were asked to tell when and where to come for public debate. The Minister strongly condemned the allegations of Lokesh that there was no development of Dalits, and said that the then Telugu Desam government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, never worked for the Dalit welfare and development during five years tenure.

Lokesh threw a challenge to YSRC government and Minister Nagarjuna alleging no development and increased attacks on Dalits. Responding



to the challenge, Minister Nagarjuna said that Lokesh did not win even the sarpanch election so he will not join the debate. He challenged that he will join the public debate if Lokesh comes with Naidu and will prove the cheating of the Dalits by the TDP government in its five-year rule. He said, "We are ready to tell you (Lokesh) where and how Chandrababu Naidu did injustice to the Dalits as he will forever remain in history as an

anti-Dalit."

Minister Nagarjuna said that the YSRCP is ready to prove the role of the then minister K Atchannaidu in the attack on Kalyani in Srikakulam district, the incident of insulting a Dalit woman in Visakhapatnam- Jerripotula Palem, confinement of Dalits in Amalapuram, and the incident in which 400 families were exposed for putting up a statue of Ambedkar in Garagaparru.

He further said, "We are ready to discuss the incident in Agiripalli where a boy was taken to the police station and beaten up, the 98 acres of land seized in Devarapalli, the incident in Pathirikuppam, the way Chandrababu Naidu acted in the case of the attack on Vasantha Rao in Kurnool, as well as all the social inequalities

in Kuppam. Nagarjuna claimed that Lokesh is throwing futile challenges through provocative words to attract public attraction as the people are not coming to his 'padayatra'.

He commented that Lokesh should know that his father Chandrababu Naidu had destroyed SC and ST sub-plans by diverting their funds. He alleged that Naidu had spent the 2018-19 sub-plan funds on Polam Badi, sanitary napkins for DWCR women, social security pensions, 'NTR Sujala Sravanti', 'Chandranna Pelli Kanuka', 'NTR Udyoga Nidhi', 'Ma Inti Mahalakshmi', and other schemes.

He said that Naidu restrained Dalits and other sections of society by creating hurdles to English medium education.

Quake death...

Continued from Page 1

Nurgul Atay told The Associated Press she could hear her mother's voice beneath the rubble of a collapsed building in the city of Antakya, the capital of Hatay province, but that her and others efforts to get into the ruins had been futile without any rescue crews and heavy equipment to help.

"If only we could lift the concrete slab we'd be able to reach her," she said. "My mother is 70-years-old, she won't be able to withstand this for long." Across Hatay province, just southwest of the earthquake's epicentre, officials say as many as 1,500 buildings were destroyed.

HC notices...

Continued from Page 1

Hari Rama Jogaiah in December requested CM Jagan to provide 5 per cent reservation to Kapus in the 10 per cent of EWS quota allotted to the poor among the upper castes. As the State government did not respond to this, Hari Rama Jogaiah took up a fast-unto-death, but the police foiled it.

Later, Jogaiah moved the court demanding reservation to Kapus under the EWS quota.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹205
Without Skin	₹215
Broiler at Farm	₹190

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	462
HYDERABAD	460
VISAKHAPATNAM	460
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.62

Online quota of 'Seva' tickets from Feb 22-28

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) is set to release the online quota of 'Arjita Seva' tickets of various formats for the period February 22-28 on different dates as follows. The Online Arjita Seva (virtual participation) and connected darshan quota for 'Kalyanotsavam', 'Unjal Seva', 'Arjita Brahmotsavam' and 'Sahasra



Deepalakara Sevas' at Srivari Temple in Tirumala will be available for booking from February 22 to 28 by 10 AM on February 9.

The registration for 'Srivari Arjita Seva' tickets in electronic DIP for February 22-28 will be open from 10 am February 8 to 10 am February 10. 'Srivari Arjita Seva' tickets from February 22-28 are available for booking from 12 noon of February 8 (in FIFO method).

The devotees can book the 'Arjita Seva' tickets accordingly through TTD web address: <http://tirupatibalaji.ap.gov.in>

TS govt moves SC...

Continued from Page 1

In fact, the Telangana High Court conducted a single bench hearing on the government's petition in the Moinabad farmhouse case. A petition was filed to extend the suspension of the earlier order for three weeks.

The government requested the HC to stay the verdict so that it can go to the Supreme Court. The High Court asked the government whether the CBI has registered a case. The Advocate General told the High Court that the CBI has not yet registered a case and that the CBI is pressing to hand over the files.

The High Court asked how much time it would take to go to approach the Supreme Court. The AG replied that it would take a week to file the appeal. Responding to AG's comment, the Court directed the AG to take permission from the Chief Justice's bench. The AG said that a mention will be made in the Chief Justice's court on Wednesday.

The single bench adjourned further hearing till Wednesday. BRS MLAs Guvvala Balaraju, Beeram Harshavardhan Reddy, Rega Kantha Rao and Pilot Rohit Reddy complained to the Moinabad police that they were offered money for quitting the BRS at the Moinabad farmhouse on October 26, 2022.

As a result, the accused Ramachandra Bharati, Simhayaji and Nandakumar were arrested by the police. After that, the TSD government handed over the case to the SIT.

But the accused approached the High Court saying that the SIT's investigation was not proper and that the case should be handed over to the CBI. After hearing arguments on this petition, the High Court issued an order on December 26, 2022, disbanding the SIT and handed over the case to the CBI.

India extends a helping...

Continued from Page 1

Rescue workers in Türkiye are racing against time to save people trapped under the rubble of thousands of buildings. The first C-17 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force, carrying a group of search and rescue personnel, specially

trained dog squads, drilling machines, relief material, medicines landed in Adana in the quake-hit country in the morning.

A second IAF plane with similar consignments was sent to Türkiye around noon. "First Indian C17 flight with more than 50 @NDRFHQ

Search & Rescue personnel, specially trained dog squads, drilling machines, relief material, medicines and other necessary utilities & equipment reaches Adana, T rkiye," Jaishankar said on Twitter.

Adana is one of the areas affected by the 7.8-magnitude earthquake.

5 solar parks in AP...

Continued from Page 1

for the development of two solar parks in Anantapur, one each in Kurnool and YSR Kadapa districts, and solar wind hybrid parks in Ramagiri.

The minister said that Rs 244.81 crore for 1400 MW Solar Park-1, Rs 91.24 crore for 500 MW Park-2 in Anantapur. Rs 54.25 crores for 1,000 MW Solar Park in YSR Kadapa district and Rs 200.25 crores for 1000 MW Park in Kurnool, he said, and added 1400 MW Solar Park-1 in Anantapur and 1000 MW Solar Park in Kurnool are working at full capacity up to their installed capacity.

The Minister said that 250 MW of the 1000 MW

capacity in YSR Kadapa district and 400 MW of the 500 MW capacity of the second solar park in Anantapur are working.

He said that an approved solar wind hybrid park with a capacity of 200 MW is yet to start in Ramagiri.

An average of Rs 4 crores will be spent to set up One MW of electricity in a solar park.

To this end, the minister said that the cost of 5 parks with a total capacity of 4100 megawatts will be around Rs 16,400 crores. He said that the centre will pay Rs 25 lakhs per solar park DPR.

The minister said that this scheme has been extended till March 2024 to complete the solar parks.

Pawan Kalyan...

Continued from Page 1

The police personnel are not being paid salaries in time either and they are not getting their TA and leave encashment amounts.

"What is the government doing with the borrowed money? The contractors are not filing tenders for work. Irrigation and road works have come to a halt. The farmers are not being paid input subsidy," Manohar said and demanded the disclosure of the CAG report.

JEE MAINS

20 candidates score perfect 100

Vja institute excelled in JEE Mains result

VIJAYAWADA: The students of Sri Srinivasa Gravity institute secured 100 per cent percentile in JEE Mains 2023 results that were announced on Tuesday, according to the institution chairman Dr Paruchuri Srinivas Rao. He congratulated the students who excelled in the examination. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the institute is the only in the city to secure 100 per cent percentile in the JEE Mains results. He congratulated student Somishetti Rahul Kaushik who secured 100 percent percentile in Chemistry, B Likitha and 11 other students who secured 100 percent percentile. He said that every year the institute has been securing top results in JEE Mains results, he added.

99,99041.

The candidates who scored 100 NTA scores are Abhinnet Paruchuri Srinivas Rao, Abhinnet Majety, Amogh Jalan, Apurva Samota, Ashik Stenny, Bikkina Abhinav Chowdary, Deshank Pratap Singh, Dhruv Sanjay Jain, Dnyanesh Hemendra Shinde,

Duggineni Venkata Yuges, Gulshan Kumar, Guthikonda Abhiram, Kaushal Vijayvergiya, Krish Gupta, Mayank Son, N K Vishwaajith, Nipun Goel, Rishi Kalra, Soham Das, Suthar Harshul Sanjaybhai and Vavilala Chidvilas Reddy.

AP govt okays NTPC's Rs 1.1L cr...

Continued from Page 1

The press release said Accord Group would set up a Rs 10,000-crore factory at Ramayapatnam to make special minerals like copper cathode, copper rod, sulfuric acid and selenium.

The facility would directly provide 2,500 people jobs and see work start from May 2023 and end by June 2025, according to the release.

Andhra Paper Mills at Kadiyampudi would go for an expansion at an investment of Rs. 3400 crore. The expansion would be completed by 2025 and provide direct employment to 2,100 people, it further said.

Vizag Tech Park Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of

Adani Enterprises, would establish a 100- MW data centre at Kapuluppada in three years at a cost of Rs. 7,210 crore by setting up a 10 MW capacity unit in the first phase.

This would offer direct employment to 14,825 people and indirect employment to 5,625. This is in addition to the 200-mg data park which is coming up.

Avisa Foods and Fuels would establish a Rs 498.84 crore ethanol manufacturing unit at Mallavalli Park in Krishna district to produce 500 kilo liters of ethanol daily and would provide employment to 3,300 persons directly and indirectly. The work is proposed to begin by June and be complete in one year, the

press release said.

Electro Steel Casting Ltd would set up two factories at Sri Kalahasti and Punganur to manufacture Ferro Alloys and DI pipes with an investment of Rs. 1087 crore providing direct employment to 2350 persons. Out of this, Rs. 915.43 crore would be invested at Sri Kalahasti and construction of both factories would be completed by December 2023.

The press release further said JSW Aluminium Ltd, which has withdrawn its proposal to set up an Aluminum factory in the backdrop of the YSRCP government banning bauxite mining in the State, proposes to set up an MSME Park in the acquired 985 acres of land. This was also

approved by the SIPB.

Ecoren Energy India Pvt Ltd would set up wind and solar power projects with 1000 MW capacity each in Anantapur, Sri Sathya Sai, Nandyala, and Kurnool districts in four phases with an investment of Rs. 10,500 crore. These power units, scheduled to be completed by March 2027, will provide employment to 2000 persons.

The Chief Minister said that after the YSRCP government came to power, important changes were brought in the energy policy and the Government is paying Rs. 31,000 for each acre of leased land for the farmers and the Government is also getting Rs. 1 lakh for each Mega Watt from the power companies.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
MIT No. 25/ATQ/2022-23 Dated: 31-01-2023
Online tenders are invited for execution of a work at a cost of Rs 1730.00 lakh in West Godavari with R and R (Polavaram Irrigation Project) grant. The submission of tender documents will be entertained from 06-02-2023 to 3.00 pm on 20-02-2023. For details, contact www.approcurement.gov.in.
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Panchayat Raj Circle, Eluru
R.O.No: 7864/CLADVT/11/2021-22, Dt. 07.02.2023

ఆంధ్రప్రదేశ్ ప్రభుత్వము
రెవెన్యూ మరియు భూమి సంస్థ
సం. 51/అప్రో/2022-23 తేదీ: 06-02-2023
ఆ-ప్రభుత్వం ప్రభుత్వం ద్వారా సం. 42.20 బిల్డింగ్ రెవెన్యూ ప్రిజెంట్ బిల్డింగ్ ప్రభుత్వం ద్వారా తీసుకు వస్తున్నది. తీసుకు వస్తున్నది రెవెన్యూ సం. 09-02-2023 నుండి 13-02-2023 వరకు ప్రభుత్వం 3.30 వరకు ప్రభుత్వం ఆ-ప్రభుత్వం పై ఆంధ్ర www.approcurement.gov.in ద్వారా ప్రభుత్వం. పి.ఎస్. 9440618056.
R.O.No: 7862/CLADVT/11/2021-22, Dt. 07.02.2023 రేట్ & ప్రభుత్వం రేట్ ప్రభుత్వం

Municipal Corporation
Aurangabad (M.H.).
(Mechanical Section)
Tel No : (0240)2331530-40 Add : Aurangabad Municipal Corporation
Fax No. : (0240)2331213 Aurangabad.
Executive Engineer (Mechanical)
Head Office : Town Hall
Aurangabad - 431001
E-Tender (Contact)
Cell:- 9764999565
No./AMC/Mech/02/2023
Date : 03 /02/2023
Sr. No. Name of Work Bid Submission End Date
01. Supply of Bio Mining Machine with Test & Trial -01 No. Capacity : 100 TPH (+/-10%) (Tender Amount: 1,75,00,000/-) 17.02.2023
Note : Detail Information available at Website www.mahatenders.gov.in
Sd/-
Executive Engineer (Mech)
Municipal Corporation Aurangabad.
9440618056 / 9764999565

Centre's 'PM SHRI' modelled on AP's 'Nadu-Nedu': Kolusu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister and YSRC MLA from Penamalur, Kolusu Parthasarathy elaborated on the exemplary work done by CM Jagan Mohan Reddy in the field of Education.

Speaking to media persons at a press conference held at the party office in Vijayawada, he said, the Central government had also decided to start 14,500 schools across the country with all facilities as 'PM SHRI' (PM Schools for Rising India) on the lines of Nadu-Nedu.

The MLA said, "Our government's greatest investment is in the field of education as CM Jagan firmly believes in the development of a strong and capable human capital for Andhra Pradesh. We are revolutionizing the education system in AP with a focus on free & quality education for all, regardless of socio-economic status." He said, "Earlier, everyone wanted private sector type education which was only for the privileged. The private education player's (BYJUStype) content was exclusively



reserved for the upper classes, but today, given Andhra Pradesh's inclusive model of development, we can see how a government school student is holding a tablet filled with digital education content and is getting the same exposure like any other child in the most cosmopolitan city in the country. The reforms and schemes are it 'Videshi Vidya Deevana', 'Nadu-Nedu', or 'Amma Vodi', they are all unprecedented in the history of Andhra Pradesh."

MLA Parthasarathy further hailed how the AP government's steps in the education sector are being followed worldwide. He

"Our government's greatest investment is in the field of education as CM Jagan firmly believes in the development of a strong and capable human capital for Andhra Pradesh."

said, "Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation (SALT), a new programme supported by World Bank is being implemented with a view to strengthen the foundation schools and provide training and skill development to teachers. The central government has also decided to start 14,500 schools all across the country with all facilities. They have just renamed Nadu-Nedu as PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India)."

He said, during the TDP's tenure, Andhra Pradesh was one of the worst-performing states, ranked 24 in the country as far as the Education Ministry's Performance Grading Index is concerned. Today, under the

leadership of CM Jagan, Andhra Pradesh has jumped to rank 7. In fact, as per the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2021, enrolment in government schools has increased from 62% in 2018 to 71% in 2021."

The MLA alleged Chandrababu Naidu for divide-and-rule ideology and reminded everyone about Naidu's Janmabhumi committees and corruption-infested schemes. He said, "It is CM Jagan's commitment which has ensured that all eligible beneficiaries avail the schemes without any corruption, delay or bias. One such example is how a TDP leader's daughter was given financial aid of over Rs 84 lakh under the 'Jagananna Videshi Vidya Deevana' scheme."

Youth found dead in house

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



A 29-year-old man was found dead at his residence at Peda Avutapalli of Unguturu mandal in Krishna district

on Tuesday morning. Uppalapati Deepthi Chand was found by his mother in a pool of blood on the bed short of breath. He died as soon as he was taken down from the bed.

The Atkur police rushed to the spot and started an inquiry after registering a case. Gannavaram Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) K Vijay Paul visited the scene and shifted the body to the government hospital for postmortem.

Speaking on the occasion, DSP Vijay Paul said that Depthi Chand's parents did not have any suspicions against anyone. The incident occurred when his parents were not at home.

"As of now, the parents do not have any suspicion towards anyone. Full details will come out only after the postmortem. The police have registered a case and the investigation is going on," he added.



TDP will return to power: Lokesh

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

TDP national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, on Tuesday expressed confidence that the party will certainly come back to power in the State as the people are fed up with the style of functioning of Chief Minister, Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Addressing a public meeting as part of the ongoing pada yatra, Lokesh said that Jagan Mohan Reddy lost the people's confidence and the count-down has begun for the YSRC Government. "Jagan is unable to move among the people while the TDP leaders are moving among the public

freely as we have their support," Lokesh said, adding that with the blessings of the people the Yuva Galam is a success.

Lokesh said after coming back to power judicial inquiry will be ordered against the officials who filed cases against the TDP activists violating the norms. Lokesh asked Jagan who is giving the slogan of 'why not 175', can say why not Special Category Status, Lokesh questioned.

Observing that the local MLA, Srinivasulu Reddy, illegally occupied over 300 acres and looted the exchequer by Rs 500 cr, he said and felt that the

local MLA lost the people's confidence and it is the TDP that is coming to power again in the State. "The drinking water scheme will be completed within one year of the TDP assuming charge," Lokesh said and promised to set up an electronic manufacturing cluster at Chittoor to provide employment to the local jobless youth.

Lokesh exposed the spiralling prices of petrol and diesel in the State and on Tuesday he stopped at a local petrol pump at Chittoor and explained to the people the difference in prices of petrol and diesel between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

30-day e-waste collection drive begins in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao inaugurated the world's biggest electronic waste (e-waste) collection drive at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Tuesday. He took part in the rally organised by Lions International as part of the drive.

Dilli Rao participated in the e-waste collection drive, which will go on for 30 days, and urged the people to bring down pollution in Vijayawada with the support of non-governmental organisations because e-waste could have harmful effects on society in future.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the use of electronic goods such as

e-waste can cause cancer, heart diseases, lung problems etc.

computers, laptops, printers, fax machines, cell phone, land phone, chargers, microwaves, electric cookers, TV, DVD, and others had increased. "We are living in a world where not even a moment passes without using electronic goods," he said.

Led, Cadmium, Mercury, Beryllium and other elements in electronic goods are dangerous for the environment. There is a chance of contamination of drinking water due to chemicals because electronic waste is abandoned by people in open places, he said.

He further said this e-waste would affect people's health and



cause cancer, heart diseases, lung problems etc. "NGOs

should assist in collecting e-waste and creating awareness

among people on the harmful effects of damaged electronic goods. Everyone should strive to make NTR district pollution-free," he said.

Meanwhile, he assured that special steps would be taken for setting up e-waste collecting centres in the industrial areas. "The State government is planning to implement e-waste processing and for that, government officers will visit the private organisations that are working in this area," he said.

Also, steps should be taken to maintain e-waste at the government offices, for which the State government has issued

necessary orders, he said. An e-waste and flower waste processing unit has been started at Ajith Singh Nagar in public-private partnership and with this, Vijayawada would be turned into a pollution-free city, he hoped. He lauded the Lions Club representatives for participating in e-waste collection. Lions Club has collected around 1,000 tonnes of e-waste in the erstwhile Krishna district, he said.

Lions International District Governor Damerla Sri Shanti, representatives P Shubhasan Babu, A Sudhakar Reddy, K Vijay Chand, G Sheshagiri, M Venkateswara Rao, M Upendra, M Prabhakar Rao, K Sanjeeva Rao and others were present.



SRM-AP clinches natl-level volleyball title at BITS Pilani

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP won the national-level volleyball competition held at BITS Pilani Hyderabad campus held from February 2 to 5 as part of Arena 2023. In the finals held on Sunday, the Women's Volleyball team of SRM University-AP won the trophy with a 3-0 score against the St Francis College for Women, Hyderabad.

The arena is an annual national-level sports festival of BITS Pilani, Hyderabad campus, for university-level students. Arena 2023 competitions were held in the first week of February 2023. Bhavishya, the team captain of SRM AP's Women's Volleyball team, co-

players Jhansi, Anishka, and others showed immaculate talent and brought the team to the shores of victory.

Similarly, Nayan, a CSE student of SRM AP, bagged second place in the powerlifting competition in the 80 kg category. Nayan proved his talent and won the silver medal. T Vamsi coached the volleyball team under the guidance of Dr Vijay Kumar Upadhyay, Director of Sports, and Abdul Mohimin, Assistant Director of Sports. The winners were felicitated by Pro-Chancellor Dr P Sathyanarayanan, Vice Chancellor Prof. Manoj K Arora, and Registrar Dr R Premkumar of SRM University-AP.

GUNADALA MARY MATA TEMPLE

CP inspects security arrangements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada city Police Commissioner Kanti Rana Tata inspected the bandobast arrangements at the Gunadala Mary Mata temple on Tuesday. The three-day Gunadala Mary festival celebrations will begin on February 9 and to prevent any untoward incidents, the officers and staff inspected the law & order bandobast arrangements, traffic bandobast arrangements and parking arrangements and provided suitable suggestions and advice to the Gunadala Mary temple administrators.

On this occasion, Police



Commissioner Rana said that during the Gunadala Mary Mata festival celebrations in Vijayawada city from February 9 to 11 tight security arrange-

ments have been made with 1500 police officers and personnel under the supervision of an IPS officer. In addition to installing CC cameras at all

important places, moving parties will be arranged and proper precautions will be taken to prevent the rush of devotees.

Later, the Police Commissioner visited all the roads leading to the Gunadala Mary Temple and told the concerned officers to ensure that traffic and parking arrangements should be taken care of with proper arrangements. Traffic DCP K Srinivasa Rao has been given suitable suggestions. Central ACP Khadhar Basha, Machavaram Inspector Ghunaram, Traffic Officers, Staff and managers of Mary Mata Temple were also present.

CAMPUS SELECTIONS

10 PB Siddhartha students get placements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ten MBA students of PB Siddhartha Arts and Science College have got placements in the campus selection, conducted by renowned telecom giant Vodafone Idea Limited.

The 10 final years MBA students got placements as cluster executive trainees, College Principal Dr Meka

Ramesh said here on Tuesday.

Vodafone Idea company HR General Managers Hemanth Makhijani and Sailendra Rajora conducted an online examination, group discussions, and HR interview and selected 10 MBA final year students, including six girl students, for placements at the Vodafone Idea company.

College director Vemuri Babu

Rao congratulated the students stating that the students got placements as cluster executive trainees at Rs 5.50 lakh annual salary. Siddhartha Academy president Dr.Chadalavada Nageswara Rao, Secretary Paladugu Lakshmana Rao, College convener Sureddy Venkateswara Rao and dean professor Rajesh Jampala congratulated the students.



TS Eamcet dates

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE) has announced the dates for the common entrance test for various undergraduate and post-graduate courses in the state.

The Telangana CET is scheduled to be held from May 7. While announcing the CET dates, the council said that the dates are tentative. While the test for TS EAMCET for engineering is scheduled to be held between May 7 and 11, TS EAMCET for agriculture and pharmacy will be held between May 12 and 14.

KHELO INDIA YOUTH GAMES

Two more medals for Andhra Pradesh

Nagidi Gayathri wins silver and Vemula Achuth Kumar bags bronze in Canoe Slalom

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh contingent has won two more medals in the fifth Khelo India Youth Games being conducted in Madhya Pradesh. The AP kayaking and canoeing team won a silver medal and a bronze medal on Tuesday.

Nagidi Gayathri, hailing from Nagayalanka in Krishna district, won a silver medal in Canoe Slalom in the under-18 girls category. Vemula Achuth Kumar from Tadepalli in



Guntur district won a bronze medal in the Canoe Slalom event in the under-18 boys cat-

egory.

The competition was conducted in River Narmada

Sahasradhara in Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh. With these two medals, the State's medal tally rose to eight (two gold, two silver and four bronze) and it continued in the 15th position.

Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) coaches M Srinu and T Nagababu trained the medal winners. The Kayaking and Canoeing Association's representatives in Krishna and Guntur districts congratulated both the winners.

Demand to complete RuB works

Andhra Pradesh Poura Samkshema Sangham stages protest

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Poura Samkshema Sangham staged a protest at Madhuranagar in Vijayawada on Tuesday, demanding completion of the Rail under Bridge (RuB) and the removal of the drinking water meters installed for household connections.

The Sangham leaders and activists showed placards and raised slogans against the State government and the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation for neglecting the RuB for the past four years.

Speaking on the occasion, Sangham central city secretary B Ramana Rao said that though the RuB works were started four years ago, it was yet to be completed. He said that the people of Madhuranagar had been facing severe problems due to the non-com-



pletion of the RuB.

"The RuB, when completed, will serve around one lakh people. Even the approach road was not in a suitable condition for vehicular traffic and both sides of the road are damaged. Two-wheeler riders and pedestrians are facing difficulty in crossing the Madhuranagar railway gate," he said.

Meanwhile, he demanded that the VMC officials remove the drinking water meters installed for household tap connections. The State government as well as the VMC authorities stopped the RuB works. Meanwhile, the VMC authorities are spending lakhs of rupees on water meters to fill their treasury, he alleged.

Besides, he made allegations against Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu for not taking serious action for the completion of the RuB and removal of water meters. "If the government does not respond to these issues, Andhra Pradesh Poura Samkshema Sangham will continue its agitation," he added.

Sangham leaders P Krishna Murthy, K Durga Rao, Y Krishnaiah, V Jagadish and Y Lakshmi were present.

Govt giving priority for education: Botsa

The Minister opens Pharmacy college building on AKNU campus

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Higher Education Botsa Satyanarayana inaugurated the newly-constructed building of B.Pharmacy on the campus of Adikavi Nannaya University in Tadepalligudem on Tuesday.

The new building was constructed for the B.Pharmacy at a cost of Rs 13 crore. The minister also inaugurated a girls' hostel building constructed at a cost of Rs 3 crore on the campus.

The Minister directed the registrar of the university to provide all needed facilities within 15 days to the students. He also asked the officials concerned to take up the construction of a



road leading to the university at a cost of Rs 5 crore. He asked the students to bring to his notice if they have any problems and he would take steps to resolve them.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister exhorted the students to decide their goals to be

achieved in life now itself. He said that the State government is giving priority to the education sector. The government is making efforts to bring reforms to the education system. In order to provide equal opportunities, the National Educational Policy is being implemented, he

added.

Botsa Satyanarayana said that in school education, teachers have been appointed for every subject from the 3rd class, stating that the last 6 months of internship in higher education would be implemented and higher education is being provided in such a way as to achieve global success. The minister said that Rs 30,000 crore was allocated for the education sector. If one person in the family pursued higher education that would help to uplift the family.

Deputy Chief Minister Kottu Satyanarayana said that Rs 150 crore worth of land was allocated to Nannaya University. The minister suggested that the university staff strength should be

enhanced and playgrounds and roads should be constructed. He asked the education minister to introduce M.Pharmacy, M.Com, MCA, and M.Sc Data Analysis courses at the University.

Civil Supplies minister Karumuri Nageswara Rao exhorted the students to excel in their studies. The state government is giving priority to education, he said, adding that AP stood at 14th place previously and now has stood at second place. Vice-chancellor GV Prasad Raju, SP U Ravio Prakash, Joint Collector JV Murali, University Registrar Ashok, and Principal Ramesh were among those who were present.

RPI chief's office torched

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Unidentified miscreants set on fire the office of Borugadda Anil, who threatened YSRCP rebel MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy with dire consequences if he continued his tirade against Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Borugadda Anil is the state-working president of Republican Party of India (RPI). His camp office is located at Donka Road in the city. Miscreants barged into his office after midnight, poured petrol, and set it on fire. Furniture and other articles were destroyed in the incident.

The watchman of the office said that six miscreants poured petrol and set fire to the office furniture. The fire brigade put out the flames. The police



registered a case and began an investigation.

Borugadda Anil warned YSRCP dissident MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy over the phone of dire consequences if he continues to criticise Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Talking to the media, Borugadda Anil alleged that

Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy's brother Giridhar is behind the incident. TDP leader and former minister Nakka Ananda Babu extended his support to him, he alleged and claimed that he is an ardent supporter of Jagan Mohan Reddy and he would not be scared of such incidents.



Officials pulled up for attending meeting without details

PNS ■ BAPATLA

District Collector Vijaya Krishnan expressed anger over the officials for coming to the meeting without details and knowledge on issues.

The Collector here on Tuesday held a meeting with the revenue officials and reviewed various issues. She asked the Bapatla and Karlapalem Tasildars to explain to her on which government's directions they issued NOCs to lands for mines. The Tahasildars could not answer which angered the Collector.

She instructed the officials to study well before issuing NOCs pertaining to the mines. She directed them to know the guidelines before issuing the NoCs. "How are you doing

duties without knowing the government rules," she questioned them. She warned the officials of taking stringent action if they were indifferent in discharging duties.

The Collector instructed the officials to take steps to resolve the Spandana grievances in time. The illegal layouts should be regularized under One Time Settlement after collecting fines, she told the officials.

Lands should be allocated for the construction of buildings for the government office and for the crematoriums and graveyards. Joint Collector K Srinivasulu, DRO K Lakshmi Shiva Jyothi, Bapatla RDO B Ravindar, Sarojani, Parthasarathi, and administrative office Parvati were among those who were present.

‘NDRF teams should be ready to swing into action at any time’

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector P Prashanthi has said that the NDRF teams should be ready to swing into action at any time to rescue people during calamities and underlined the need for proper training for them.

Addressing a meeting with the NDRF teams here on Tuesday, she said that the district is prone to cyclone and flood disasters and the NDRF teams must have an understanding of the area. She said that proper training should be given to the NDRF teams to



face any eventuality.

"Cyclones and floods cause devastation in the district often. The local people should take all precautions instead of waiting for the NDRF's help during the calamities like cyclones and floods," she said, adding that if the people

respond appropriately the loss could be minimised.

The Collector said that the Apadamitra teams have been selected in the district and training has also been imparted to them, adding that the related materials have also been handed over to them.

Police rescue 9 youth stranded in sea

PNS ■ NELLORE

The police rescued nine youth who got stranded in the sea at Chennayapalem on Tuesday. Nine youth went into the sea on a fibre boat on a jolly trip but they got stuck at about 1.5 km from the shore.

They informed the matter to the police by dialling 112. The Kavali rural police reached the youth on another boat and brought them to the shore safely. The youth thanked the police. DSP Venkataramana appreciated the Kavali police personnel for their timely action.



New trust board for Dwaraka Tirumala temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has constituted a trust board for the famous hill shrine Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple of Dwaraka Tirumala. The government appointed S V Sudhakar Rao as chairman of the board with 14 members. The members are: NKVS Lakshmi, Ch Mani, M Srinu, PV Padma, N Ammaji, M Subba Rao, T Ganga Raju, P Mangatayar, M Sampath Kumar, P V Rao, BD Mounika, A Anasuya, G Suryavati and V Ramakrishna Rao.

RBKs a boon to farmers: Dwivedi

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Agriculture Special Chief Secretary and Rythu Bharosa Kendras chief Commissioner Gopal Krishna Dwivedi has claimed that the RBKs are helping the farmers a lot and the milk procurement through the Jagananna Palavelluva scheme is being implemented satisfactorily.

Talking to the reporters at Nambur on Tuesday he said that the RBKs have come as a boon to the farmers as several services are being provided to them, he said, stating that the government is aiming to make more services available to the farmers through the RBKs. He said that he is visiting RBKs at various places to know the ground realities and resolve the problems if any. He said that he is interacting with the farmers and taking their advice in this regard.

Gopal Krishna Dwivedi visited the RBK at Nambur village in Pedakkakani mandal on Tuesday along with the Agriculture special commis-



sioner Harikiran and district Collector M Venugopal Reddy.

The officials explained to Gopal Krishna Dwivedi about the beneficiaries of RBK, paddy testing, functioning kiosks and e-cropping. They also informed him about conducting of 'Polam Badi' and 'Vyavasaya Yantra Seva' scheme implementation.

On this occasion, Gopalakrishna Dwivedi suggested that arrangements should be made so that the farmers themselves could get information about fertilisers, pesticides, seeds, orders and other aspects related to cultivation through the Kiosk at the Agricultural Resource Centre.

He said that details should be collected on the equipment provided to the Farmers through RBK and the way they are being used, and steps should be taken to provide better services to the farmers through the RBKs.

On this occasion, many farmers told him that they have benefited a lot from the purchase of paddy at MSP and private traders also bought it by giving more cash than the support price due to the measures taken by the government.

"Rythu Bharosa Kendras will be very useful for farmers in crop cultivation and other aspects," the farmers told

Dwivedi. In addition to providing loans for the purchase of buffaloes to increase the livestock wealth in the village, assistance should be provided through animal husbandry for the production of good quality fodder locally, the farmers urged. They also pleaded with him to set up paddy dryers in rice mills. Dwivedi assured the farmers of taking steps after speaking to the officials to meet their requirements.

Gopal Krishna Dwivedi also visited the veterinary hospital at Namburu and inspected the auto milk collection set up as part of the 'Palavelluva' scheme. District Agriculture Department Officer N Venkateshwarlu, Horticulture Department Officer Sujatha, District Cooperation Department Officer Veerachari, District Animal Husbandry Department JD Venkateshwarlu, Tahsildar Ratnam, MPDO Malleswara Rao and Mandal Agriculture Department Officer Sandhyarani were among those who were present.

CRIME BEAT

Three killed as car rams stationary lorry

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Three persons, including a six-year-old girl, died in an accident near Pempbarthi in jangaon district on Tuesday.

The deceases were identified as V Rajashekar (33) of Tirumalagiri, Abdul Rahimkhan (47) of Hyderabad and the girl. The accident happened when the car rammmed a stationary truck that was stopped on the highway to fix a flat tyre. As the driver Abdul Rahimkhan, along with the lorry cleaner, was busying replacing the flat tyre,

the speeding car rammmed into the stationary truck. The lorry driver and cleaner were killed on the spot. The girl in the car was also killed in the incident. The car overturned after it rammmed into the truck. Two occupants in the cars suffered injuries and they were ferried to the Government Hospital. According to police, the car was on its way to Hyderabad from Kazipet. It is suspected that the car driver could have fallen asleep at the wheel and failed to notice the parked lorry. Police registered a case and the investigation is on.



2 gangs held in TOEFL and GRE cheating scam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two gangs consisting of seven members involved in cheating in GRE and TOEFL exams were arrested by Cyber crime police on Tuesday. Two of the accused are absconding. The two gangs have been giving advertisements through social media to enable cheating to get good marks in GRE and TOEFL exam, required for higher education in the USA and charged Rs 20,000 each. Two of the accused are BTEch students at NIT Raipur. The arrested accused are Mandala Sharvan Kumar, Mandala Sai Santhosh, P Kishore, Arkatala Kiran Kumar. Accused GSJ Aditya and Guna Shekar, of the gangs are currently absconding. Both the gangs are booked under Section Cr.No. 159/2023 U/sec.

66 (C) (D) ITA act 419, 420 IPC. The police seized mobiles phones, four Airtel Sim cards, one HP laptop and two Asus laptops. Hyderabad cyber crime police revealed that Shravan Kumar and Aditya, who are BTEch final year students at NIT Raipur, used to help their friends by writing the GRE or TOEFL exam. After that, they began to attract students who have applied for the GRE or TOEFL exam by giving advertisements on social media to get a good score, and charged them Rs 20,000 each. Due to Covid protocols, GRE and TOEFL began to offer students an option to attend from home. Shravan and Aditya allegedly collect details of students through social media ads and write the exam at a friend's house in Hashthinapuram.

SAAP members accuse VC & MD of corruption

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) board members have rebelled against Vice-Chairman and Managing Director (VC&MD) Dr N Prabhakar Reddy alleging corruption and neglect of the development of sports infrastructure in the State. Even SAAP Chairman Byreddy Siddhartha Reddy did not respond when the members asked about the fraud committed by the VC&MD, they alleged.

The 81st board meeting of SAAP was chaired by Chairman Byreddy Siddhartha Reddy at its office on the premises of the Indira Gandhi

Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

When the meeting started, four members of the board -- Kaluva Narsimhulu, Daniel Pradeep, Varalakshmi and Bhimireddy Nagendra -- requested the Chairman and the VC&MD to allow the media to cover the meeting, but they rejected the proposal.

Subsequently, they came out from the board meeting and talked to the media persons at the stadium. They said that the SAAP authorities did not allow them to speak to the media persons at the IGMC stadium. They alleged that Prabhakar Reddy misused the funds which were sanctioned by the



Central and the State governments. They said the MD approved a tender work costing 10 times of its original worth Rs.65 lakh.

Also, they spoke about the

corruption in SAAP. The price of a hockey stick was Rs.750, however, Prabhakar Reddy made a bill for Rs.10,020. The VC & MD did not give any clarification on the issues

which were raised at the board meeting. Siddhartha Reddy, too, did not respond, they added.

"When we demanded sternly, the VC&MD walked out from the meeting. He is not working for the development of sports stadiums and not encouraging sports. When we asked, he said there were no funds in the SAAP. He is not bothered about the CM Cup," they alleged.

Further, they said the SAAP officials proposed ineligible sports persons for group-1 posts. He recommended several people and the government offered the jobs, they said. Due to the behaviour of Prabhakar Reddy, the State

government has faced several allegations from Opposition parties, they said.

"Because of the VC&MD's behaviour and his one-sided decisions, sportspersons suffered losses. He did not provide either sports materials or sportswear to the players. We raised these all issues during the board meeting, but he did not give us proper answers. Even SAAP did not sanction funds for players to go to tournaments. So, four members came out of the meeting and told the truth to the media. We spoke about these issues after collecting facts regarding the VC&MD's corruption. We are not afraid of any threats from anyone," they said.

Chairman, VC&MD condemn charges

However, the SAAP Chairman and the VC&MD condemned the board members' allegations and they made it clear that there was no proof for the charges. They spoke to media persons after the board meeting. Chairman Siddhartha Reddy said that any issues regarding sports should be discussed at the meeting. "Allegations shouldn't be raised in public. SAAP is working for the development and welfare of sportspersons without expecting profit," he said. There was no scope for corruption in purchasing sports materials. He made it clear that high bidders were rejected. He urged the four members not to disrespect the board and requested them to show any proof at the meeting. "There is only of a lack of

coordination with the VC&MD. SAAP will encourage sportspersons and do anything for them," he explained. Prabhakar Reddy said that sports activities had increased in the State during the past one-and-a-half years. SAAP has distributed sports materials and around 42,000 sportspersons were trained at 1,350 coaching camps. Also, Jagananna Kreedha Sambaralu was conducted, he said. He said that after securing permission from the State government, the CM Cup must have been conducted in January. "SAAP is ready to conduct the tournament based on the dates given by the State government. Some people complained when he toured foreign countries, but those were baseless," he said.

INDIA CORNER

SC dismisses plea to restrain Gowri from taking oath as HC judge

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to entertain a plea seeking to restrain lawyer Lekshmana Chandra Victoria Gowri from taking oath as an additional judge of the Madras High Court, saying a "consultative process" had taken place before her name was recommended by the collegium for the appointment. The apex court said Gowri has been appointed as an additional judge and if she is not true to the oath or does not discharge her duties in accordance with the oath, the collegium is entitled to take a view of that, while pointing out that there have been instances where people have not been made permanent judges. Minutes before the top court dismissed two pleas against Gowri's appointment, she was administered the oath of office as an additional judge by Madras High Court's Acting Chief Justice T Raja at around 10:48 am. "We are not entertaining the writ petition.



AgustaWestland chopper scam: SC denies bail to alleged middleman

The Supreme Court on Tuesday denied bail to Christian Michel James, an alleged middlemen in AgustaWestland chopper scam cases, who is being probed by both the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate. The alleged Rs 3,600-crore scam relates to the purchase of 12 VVIP helicopters from AgustaWestland. A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala said that argument of James that he be released on bail on ground that he has completed half of maximum sentence in the cases cannot be accepted. It, however, said that James may pursue his remedy of regular bail before trial court in the case. James has sought bail under section 436A of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) which says that a person can be released on bail if he has completed half of the maximum sentence prescribed for the offence. Advocate Aljo K Joseph submitted that after his extradition from Dubai in 2018, he has spent over four years in jail.



16 lakh people visited prestigious Kolkata book fair in a week

The ongoing Kolkata book fair one of the most prestigious annual events of the city -- has registered a high footfall thus far, with 16 lakh people having visited the literary carnival in the first seven days, organisers said on Tuesday. The fair, which is hosting over 950 book stalls this time, has recorded 6-10 per cent rise in sales, on an average, compared to last year, Tridib Chatterjee, the general secretary of Publishers and Booksellers Guild, said. "Between January 31 and February 6, more than 16 lakh people were found to have thronged the book fair ground at Central Park in Salt Lake," Chatterjee maintained. Going by the trend, it seems that the 46th edition of the fair, set to conclude on February 12, is set to break previous records of footfall and book sales, he claimed.



BUDGET HAS SOMETHING FOR ALL SECTIONS

Poor people's interests central to our budgets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the recent Union Budget has something for every section of the society and asserted that the interests of the poor have been at the centre of every budget presented by his government.

Addressing the first BJP parliamentary party meeting after the budget was presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1, Modi said no one is calling it a "chunavi budget" (budget influenced by polls) even though it was the last full-fledged one before next year's Lok Sabha election. Overall development and the interests of every section of the society have driven the budget proposals, he added.

Even those who are ideologically opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have wel-



comed the budget, Union minister Pralhad Joshi told reporters, quoting Modi's speech to the MPs.

Asking the MPs to inform their constituents, including the poor and middle class, about the relevant aspects of the budget, Modi recalled his electoral experiences as the

chief minister of Gujarat to say that when work is recognised by people, there is nothing like anti-incumbency, sources said.

Underscoring the wide acceptance of the budget, the prime minister said it is at times difficult to cater to everyone's taste at a family function of merely 25 guests, but the

budget proposals have managed to meet the expectations of different sections of the society in a country of more than 130 crore people.

Modi highlighted his involvement with budgets over the years, noting that he has been associated with about 25 of them, including as the Gujarat chief minister between 2001 and 2014, and 10 of them, including interim budgets, at the Centre.

The prime minister also asked the MPs, especially those from cities, to organise sports meets, noting that there is a view that youngsters in urban centres are not much involved in sports.

Modi has repeatedly asked lawmakers to organise sports meets. In his address, Modi said India has organised about 20 G20-related meets at different places so far and foreign guests have appreciated their conduct.

Arunachal by-poll: BJP nominee likely to win unopposed

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

BJP nominee Tsering Lhamu is the sole candidate for the February 27 by-poll to Lumla seat in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, an election official said here.

As no other nominee has submitted papers till the last date on Tuesday, Lhamu is likely to win unopposed. The result will be declared on Friday after scrutiny of her papers and the time for withdrawal of candidature is over.

Though the Peoples' Party of Arunachal (PPA), the lone regional political party of the state, had nominated a former village headman as its candidate, he withdrew from the race and did not file nomination. "BJP nominee Tsering Lhamu is the only candidate for the by-election," the official said adding that the papers will be scrutinised on Wednesday. Lhamu is the wife of Jambey Tashi, a sitting MLA whose death necessitated the by-election.

No proposal at present to increase amount under PM-KISAN: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday informed Parliament that there is no proposal at present to increase the amount under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) from the existing Rs 6,000 per annum per beneficiary.

The PM-KISAN was launched in February 2019 but implemented with effect from December 2018.

Under the scheme, eligible farmers are provided with a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 each every four months. The fund is directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

"There is no such proposal at present," Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said in his written reply to the Lok Sabha when asked if there is any proposal to increase the amount under the PM-KISAN.

As of January 30 this year, more than Rs 2.24 lakh crore



Under the scheme, eligible farmers are provided with a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 each every four months. The fund is directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries

have been disbursed to eligible farmers through various instalments as income support to take care of expenses related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs, he said. PM-KISAN is a central

sector scheme with 100 per cent funding from the central government. The state government and UT administration identify the farmer families that are eligible for support as per scheme guidelines.

No. of medical colleges in India has gone up to 654

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There has been a 69-per cent increase in the number of medical colleges in the country, from 387 before 2014 to 654 as of now, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.

Further, there has been a 94-per cent rise in the number of MBBS seats, from 51,348 to 99,763, and a 107-per cent increase in the number of post-graduate (PG) seats, from 31,185 before 2014 to 64,559 as of now, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

In order to increase the number of doctors in the country, the government has hiked the number of medical colleges and consequently, that of MBBS seats, she said.

The steps taken by the government to increase the number of medical seats in the country include a centrally-sponsored scheme for the establishment of new medical colleges by upgrading the district and referral hospitals, Pawar said, adding that 94 of the 157 new medical colleges approved are already functional. A centrally-sponsored scheme for



strengthening or upgrading the existing medical colleges run by the state or the central government has been implemented to increase the numbers of MBBS and PG seats, the minister said.

Under 'upgradation of government medical colleges by construction of super speciality blocks' of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), a total of 75 projects have been approved, of which 60 are complete, she added.

Under the central sector scheme for setting up new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), 22 such facilities have been approved and undergraduate courses have started in 19 of those, Pawar said. She said relaxations in the norms for setting up medical colleges in terms of the requirement for faculty, staff, bed strength and other infrastructure have also been allowed.

Among the other measures, the DNB qualification has been recognised for appointment as faculty to take care of the shortage of faculty and the age limit for appointment or extension or re-employment against posts of teachers, deans, principals and directors in medical colleges has been increased to 70 years, Pawar said.

Over 83,000 posts vacant in Central Armed Forces: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 83,000 posts were lying vacant in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), such as the CRPF and the BSF, as on January 1, against the total strength of 10,15,237 posts, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday.

The forces in which the posts are lying vacant are Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Assam Rifles.

"The current number of vacancies as on January 1, 2023 in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Assam Rifles are 83,127 against total sanctioned strength of 10,15,237," Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

He said 32,181 people were recruited between July 2022 and January 2023 and an additional 64,444 vacancies have been notified and are at different stages of recruitment, adding that it has been planned to conclude the exercise in 2023 itself.

It will be incorrect to say that



the vacancies are leading to overtime work for the existing personnel, the minister added.

He minister said filling up vacancies is a continuous process and added that the home ministry has been taking

and will continue to take earnest steps to fill up the vacancies expeditiously through UPSC, SSC and the forces concerned.

The CRPF is deployed for internal security duties, main-

tenance of law and order and anti-militancy operations in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast.

The BSF guards the country's 3,323-kilometre-long border with Pakistan (except the 740-km-long Line of Control) and the 4,096-km-long border with Bangladesh.

The CISF guards vital installations, such as nuclear plants, key industries, metro networks and other important government buildings.

The ITBP guards the 3,488-km-long Sino-Indian border.

The SSB guards India's borders with Nepal (1,751 km) and Bhutan (699 km).

Virginity test on female accused unconstitutional: Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday ruled that conducting a "virginity test" on a female accused is unconstitutional, sexist and in violation of the right to dignity.

The court observed that there is no legal procedure that provides for a "virginity test" and such testing is a form of inhuman treatment.

The order was passed by Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on a plea moved by Sister Sephy, who sought to declare the conduct of a "virginity test" on her in connection with a criminal case over a nun's death in Kerala in 1992 as unconstitutional.

"It is declared that the virginity test conducted on a female detainee, accused under investigation, or in custody, whether judicial or police, is unconstitutional and in violation of Article 21 of the Constitution, which includes right to dignity," Justice Sharma said.

"This court, therefore, holds that this test is sexist and in violation of the human right to dignity even of a female accused if she is subjected to such a test while being in custody," the judge said. The court emphasised that the concept of "custodial dignity" of a female includes her right to live with dignity even while in police custody and conducting a virginity test on her not only amounts to interference of the investi-



gating agency with her bodily integrity, but also with her psychological integrity. "Strangely, though the word 'virginity' may not have a definite scientific and medical definition, it has become a mark of purity of a woman. The intrusive testing procedure, as has

been held in several judgments of the Hon'ble apex court, does not have a medical standing," the court observed.

"It will be difficult for this court to hold, being guided by the constitutional principles of fundamental rights, that a person in custody of the authorities surrenders the right to bodily integrity and submits to bodily intrusion for the prosecution to find evidence through its body.

"The feeling of being demeaned by such treatment in custody by bodily invasion through conducting a virginity test also brings forth the undesirable and abhorrent notion of differentiation on the basis of gender and stereotypes," it said.

Accident victim's body dragged under car for 10 km in Mathura

PNS ■ MATHURA (UP)

Weeks after the Kanjhawala case in Delhi, a man was killed in a road accident and his body dragged under a car for nearly 10 kilometres on the Yamuna Expressway here, police said.

The driver of the Maruti Suzuki Swift only detected the body after a toll plaza employee alerted him early on Tuesday morning and the police informed.

"The driver has been taken into custody and his car impounded," Superintendent of Police (Mathura Rural) Trigun Bishen said.

The driver has been identified as Virendra Singh, a resident of Sangam Vihar in Delhi. He was returning from Agra with four family members after attending a wedding. A detailed investigation was initiated after the toll plaza employee informed the police, Bishen said.

Bloodstains have been found at the Kilometre 106 marker in the Jamuna Paar area. It appears that the accident took place there and the body later got stuck under the car passing the point, the senior police official added.

HIGH NITRATE CONTENT IN NORTHEAST: CGWB REPORT

Groundwater brackish in most parts of Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The groundwater in most parts of Delhi is brackish in nature and the nitrate concentration is high in the northeastern parts of the capital, the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has said in a report.

"Chemical analysis of ground water samples collected in May 2021 showed that nitrate content in groundwater is within the permissible limit of 45 micrograms per litre in most of the state. However, concentration in the north-eastern parts of Delhi is high," the CGWB's groundwater year book 2021-22 said.

Except a few locations in the

northern and western parts of the city, all areas have a fluoride concentration within the permissible limit of 1.5 micrograms per litre, it said.

The eastern parts of Delhi, especially the areas around the Yamuna floodplains and the Delhi Quartzite Ridge zones, have an electrical conductivity (EC) within the permissible range of 0 to 2,250 microsiemens per centimetre, the CGWB said.

"The rest of the capital, barring some pockets of south-west, northwest and west districts, has EC value of more than 3,000 microsiemens per centimetre. It is also observed that water from deeper aquifers have greater EC value



than the water from shallow aquifers. The EC value increases with depth," it said.

Salinity, the measure of the amount of dissolved salts in water, is directly proportional to electrical conductivity (EC).

In general, fresh water has an EC of less than 1,500 microsiemens per centimetre,

brackish water between 1,500 and 15,000 microsiemens per centimetre and saline water has an EC of more than 15,000 microsiemens per centimetre.

The chloride content in the groundwater is mostly below 250 micrograms per litre except in cases where inland salinity is prevalent.

According to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the desirable limit of chloride in drinking water is 250 micrograms per litre. However, it can be extended to 1,000 micrograms per litre in cases where no alternative source of water with the desired concentration is available.

"Chloride concentration in groundwater of Delhi is related with the EC content. It is observed that in areas having EC values within permissible limits (2,250 microsiemens per centimetre to 3,000 microsiemens per centimetre), the chloride content also lies within the permissible limit of 250 micrograms per litre.

'Glamour of conflict' attracts youth to armed movements: VK Singh

PNS ■ AMINGAON (ASSAM)

'Glamour of conflict' attracts the youth to armed movements, which is also fuelled by various other socio-economic factors like 'widespread unemployment', Union Minister VK Singh said here on Tuesday.

Force against conflict can be used for a positive outcome but the whole process of reconciliation involves several steps like equal opportunity and transparent process, Singh, a former Army chief said.

Speaking in the same vein on youth caught in conflicts, Lok Sabha MP Tejasvi Surya stressed on the need to include the voice of the youth while



discussing peace as this section of the populace is 'disproportionately affected' in times of conflict.

They were speaking at a panel discussion on 'Peace Building and Reconciliation: Ushering in an Era of No War' at the Youth 2020 inception meeting here. "Diversity of a nation contributes to differing

perceptions. It can create disharmony if not managed properly, otherwise it becomes the nation's strength," Singh said.

Social economic conditions create haves and have-nots. Dissatisfaction in minds lead to conflicts, he added.

Dissidence leads to conflicts and 'widespread unemployment' widens the conflict, with various factors like 'external support' and 'internal political conflicts' fuelling it further, he said.

The perpetrators of conflicts create a fear psychosis so that people are made to join them even if they were not willing themselves, he claimed.

A friend in need

India has been prompt in sending the relief teams to Turkey which has been devastated by three quakes

Turkey is pleasantly surprised by India's assistance at the time when it has been hit by a natural calamity. Three earthquakes in a span of 24 hours have left thousands dead and caused mass devastation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was prompt to offer condolences to the loss of life; more importantly, the expression of sympathy was more than verbal; relief to the quake-hit was immediately organised; by the time of writing of these lines, an Indian Air Force plane with a relief team from India had already reached Adana in Turkey. Evidently, Ankara did not expect such a friendly gesture from New Delhi, for the former has been quite critical of the Modi regime for some time. In September last year at the UN General Assembly session, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raked up the Kashmir issue during his address to world leaders, much to the anger of India. "India and Pakistan, after having established their sovereignty and independence 75 years ago, they still haven't established peace and solidarity between one another. This is much unfortunate. We hope and pray that a fair and permanent peace and prosperity will be established in Kashmir," he said. Turkey has also tried to embarrass India at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In this, it has been aided by Pakistan, a close ally of Turkey's. Erdogan, in particular, seems to nurture the ambitions of becoming some kind of Caliph; the nurturing has coincided with the oil-rich Arabs, especially



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), losing interest in spreading jihad worldwide. Erdogan has almost undone the secular legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the father of modern Turkey. While Atatürk promoted Turkish nationalism, Erdogan has been a votary of Islamism. Three years ago, Erdogan had transformed Istanbul's iconic Hagia Sophia, a historic monument, into a mosque. He even led worshippers in the first prayers in it. Against this backdrop, it must have delighted the powers that be in Ankara that New Delhi did not let its antipathy towards them colour its reaction to the calamity. Turkish Ambassador to India Firat Sunel tweeted: "'Dost' is a common word in Turkish and Hindi... We have a Turkish proverb: 'Dost kara gunde belli olur' (a friend in need is a friend indeed). Thank you very much India." Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan visited Turkey's embassy. Rescue and medical teams have already left from India to Turkey. The Prime Minister's Office held a meeting, where it was decided to send two teams of the National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF). The teams will include 100 personnel with specially trained dog squads and the requisite equipment. It may be mentioned here that such endeavours are not an exception but the rule; in the past too India helped other countries, including the hostile ones, when they faced humongous crises. PM Modi himself spearheaded Vaccine Maitri. The MEA must capitalise on the equity created by India's generosity.



An airplane passes in front of a full moon as it descends for landing in Mexico City

Aussies show the way

Australia moves out of the colonial past without much fuss

Australia is slowly but surely moving out of its colonial past. It is taking small yet effective steps that would snap its colonial ties. The recent announcement to do away with the picture of the British Monarch from its 5-dollar bill is a case in point. Though history cannot be wished away it can definitely be rectified. Australia is reevaluating its history and cultural identity in two ways: first by getting rid of the symbols that remind it of its colonial past and second taking firm steps to make its Constitution and policy more inclusive, giving proper space to the indigenous people of Australia. What is remarkable about Australia's approach is that it is doing so without creating any ill-will and hatred with the erstwhile colonial masters. The country is undergoing a cultural revolution of sorts as it acknowledges the injustices committed against Indigenous Australians, and the effects of colonization on their culture, language, and way of life.



This includes the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families, the loss of traditional lands and cultural practices. The recognition of the First Nations peoples in the Australian constitution and the creation of Indigenous-led initiatives and programs aimed at preserving Indigenous cultures and languages are some very substantial measures. Moreover, Australia has also been actively working to eliminate the symbols and monuments of its colonial past, with many cities and towns removing statues and monuments that commemorate controversial historical figures and events. This is part of a larger effort to decolonize public spaces and to recognize the contributions and experiences of Indigenous Australians and other marginalized communities. The education system is also being revamped, with a growing emphasis on teaching accurate and inclusive history in schools. This includes incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum and teaching students about the history of Indigenous culture. Though getting rid of the colonial past is a long and ongoing process, these changes would result in big dividends. As the country continues to acknowledge its history, it will be able to move forward and create a brighter future for all its citizens. Perhaps India could take a leaf from Australia and do better than just changing the nomenclatures of streets. A thoughtful approach would be more in line with the course the country must take as a confident and independent nation.

Invest in defence modernisation

The Government should shed the illusion of strength; we need modern warfare technology to face the menacing China threat

The only surprise in the defence budget was no surprise: static, in real terms, a negative budget for modernization- the litmus test of capability enhancement for maintaining deterrence in order to meet the two-and-a-half threat challenge plus government articulated missions of retaking PoK and Aksai Chin. Much of the capital is consumed by committed liabilities - payment for equipment already ordered and in the pipeline. Overconfidence in a strong government and leader, the chimera of G20 grandeur, and 'it is not an era of war' but 'Amrit Kaal has ruled out conflict with China and Pakistan. Northern Army Commander, Lt Gen Dwivedi earlier and former Army Chief, Gen Naravane, only last month, revived illusions of 'we are in a position of strength' in Ladakh. In the last nine years, the ruling government has invested more in lip servicing and symbolism than in closing the capability gap with China as defence budgets have hovered between 1.5 and 1.6 percent of GDP. Former Defence Minister Arun Jaitley would admit: "we have no money, we can't put cess on defence". So the government has renamed anonymous islands after PVC winners, built giant statues, installed tall flags, and embellished Jai Jawan Jai Kisan Jai Vigyan with Jai Anusandhan.

In the current fiscal defence has dropped to 1.4 percent of GDP and for the first time in decades, dipped below 2 percent of GDP if the pension bill is included. The capital acquisition increased from Rs 12,000 crore to Rs 1.6 lakh crore just an 8 percent increase well below inflation and the falling rupee. As there is no National Defence Strategy and a Policy, Plans, and Budgeting System to evaluate inter se capabilities, allocation is erratic and prioritized by CDS. IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhuri has thrice publicly mentioned the dangers of combat squadron strength dwindling to 28/30 squadrons against the authorized 45 squadrons. PM Modi acquired 38 Rafales against 126 MRCA urgently sought by IAF.



Its requirement of 114 MRCA has been languishing for years: Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) is still not fructified i.e. forget it.

Similarly, the Navy, whose missions have multiplied - from the Gulf of Aden to the Indo-Pacific - is woefully deficient in submarines, and the indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant is minus aircraft and other subsystems. At this pace of modernization, the third aircraft carrier is a mirage. Manpower-intensive Army needs a new tank, a light tank, and a new gun. The increased capital segment of the revenue budget is to make up for deficiencies in ammunition and equipment to fight a 30-day war not 10 days of intense conflict. Neither the hand-picked service chiefs bar Chaudhuri, nor the deeply-selected CDS Gen Anil Chouhan, has pointed to shortfalls in the modernization budget. They are unlikely to do so in the prevailing environment when discretion has become a better part of valour. Young officers have proven the backbone as an ADC of President Murmu gently ticked off Modi when he tried to step ahead of her during the Republic Day parade. Two instances need recall. Former Army Chief, Gen Shankar Roy Choudhury warned the government that Army will not be responsible

for any operational mishap due to inadequate funding and

THE GOVERNMENT TOOK HUGE OPERATIONAL RISKS BY KEEPING THE ARMY ALONE DEFICIENT OF 300,000 SOLDIERS: NO RECRUITMENT WAS DONE FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS DUE TO COVID

former CNS Adm Vijay Shekhawat declared at a press briefing that naval shipyards not receiving ship orders will have a negative effect on naval capabilities. The next day Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav invited Shekhawat to breakfast. It is inconceivable that the highly nationalistic government that has excelled in capex - infrastructure hikes and doubled railway budget - has kept the sword arm insufficiently sharpened.

The government took huge operational risks by keeping the Army alone deficient of 300,000 soldiers: no recruitment was done for the last three years due to Covid. While the annual demobilization of 65,000 soldiers continued, no salaries had to be paid for the void in recruitment. Only now will 46,000 Agniveers be recruited on a low salary and no pension. It's OROP whose cost equaled modernization allocation but has reduced to Rs 1.3 lakh crore that is hurting. OROP arrears worth Rs 23000 crores are due by 31 March. Modi must rue his 2014 BJP election manifesto in signing up for OROP. This is indeed an era of war. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine enters its second year, India has to review its relations with Russia which has China, a no-limit strategic partner-



ASHOK K MEHTA

ship. India is still dependent on Russian military hardware, technology, and spares. Serge Chemezov, CEO of Russia military industrial Rostek was in India last month for payment of dues on account of Russian oil and S400 AD systems. The Americans are making determined efforts including the use of sanctions and diplomatic pressure to wean India away from Russian equipment. All European countries are increasing defence budgets to meet twin Russia-China challenges. The UK, France, and even Germany have reached 2 percent of GDP spending levels. Japan has erased the one percent GDP embargo and will spend USD332bn over the next five years. In Asia Pacific, South Korea, and the Philippines are increasing defence capabilities by 8 and 5 percent respectively. Despite active LAC and LoC and a sensitive internal environment, the Modi-Shah government is happy to let China march ahead with a defence budget thrice India's size. There is an urgent need for recapitalization of defence to deter China.

(The writer, a retired Lt Gen, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, & founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNEXPLAINED WRATH OF NATURE

Sir — Man's science and thinking are a complete failure in front of nature and its upheavals. Millions of human beings consider themselves knowledgeable and scientific. But what is happening inside the earth, they have no idea. The latest proof of this came in South Turkey and North Syria on Monday morning with an earthquake. So far, only 4,000 people have been reported dead but this figure can easily touch 40,000 with the passage of time. Because such incidents of repeat earthquakes, measuring quite high on the Richter scale and that too at a depth of only 10-17 km below the earth's surface, don't happen very frequently.

The result is that almost all the houses and structures in 10 provinces of Turkey have suffered damage. It is said that 70,000 lives were lost in an earthquake in Turkey in 1939. We blame climate change for floods, droughts, landslides, storms, snowfall, expansion of sea coast, melting of glaciers, rise in temperature etc. But who is to blame for the earthquake? No science has given us the answer to this to date. It can neither be stopped nor predicted. We just have to bear its horror silently.

It must be said that India has done the right thing in providing the timely succor in the time to the two devastated countries and it bodes well for India's underlying philosophy of 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam'. India has behaved as a president of a G20 nation should. It deserves all the praise for its effort.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

BUDGET HAS NOTHING NEW

Sir — The absolute figures in the Union Budget speak louder than the Finance Minister's speech. The increase in the budgetary estimate of net tax revenue for 2023-24 over the revised estimate for 2022-23 is just ₹2.44 lakh crore. This is only 52 per cent of all receipts. Debt receipts made up 40 per cent. According to the IMF, India's debt-to-GDP ratio reached 84 per cent by 2022 end. A recent study has established a threshold of 77 per cent as the right debt-

A serious matter, this



Once, former PM Chandra Shekhar was on a long trip when a woman sought his help in solving the drinking water problem in her village. Chandra Shekhar said he had no power but he could raise this matter in Parliament, with the result that the problem was solved. Now, Rahul Gandhi has followed Chandra Shekhar's example by sharing his experiences during Bharat Jodo Yatra and explaining how the youth are facing problems getting jobs even after getting college degrees and diplo-

mas, how the farmers and poor families in rural India are facing problems as well as the lack of infrastructure. However, he devoted most of his speech time on Adani, which appeared to be an out of proportion outburst.

The image of Rahul has improved from being a 'Pappu' and his Parliament speech was a matured one. He mentioned that a Bangladeshi power contract was allotted to Adani due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pressure. It is a serious charge: If it is proved wrong, then Rahul should apologise, and if the allegation is found correct, a detailed investigation should follow. Rahul made two more allegations claiming that Modi was helping Adani secure the maximum share of contracts available. Since the tone of Rahul's speech was serious, its reply is also expected to be in the same manner as the image of the PM is involved.

Yash Pal Raihan | Jalandhar

to-GDP ratio. Debt above that affects the annual real growth. Interest payments and servicing debts surged from ₹8.05 lakh crore in 2021-22 (Actuals) to ₹9.41 lakh crore in 2022-23 (RE) and to ₹10.80 lakh crore in 2023-24 (BE).

The budgeted expenditure for fiscal year 2023-24 shows an increase of ₹3.16 lakh crore over the RE of 2022-23. The Finance Minister reduced the outlays for schemes/projects coming under certain Ministries and departments to keep the increase in expenditure at the targeted level. The Budget numbers betray the envisaged capital expenditure of over ₹10 lakh crore. The Budget offers little for ordinary people in the absence of new policy initiatives or mitigating measures.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

FORLORN UK AWAITS MESSIAH

Sir — The colonial British Empire that appropriated wealth from subjugated nations had been thriving on indentured immigrants for ages. Over time, reduced to a mere kingdom with the centres of economy shifting elsewhere, it found

some eminence together with the EU. Thus was the rise of Rishi Sunak to eminence, though his parents were immigrants. Now three months into office as the PM of UK, Sunak is already facing dissent. His choice for the office was not predicated on any illusions to ethnic equity but to have him wrestle with Britain's highly skewed economy in the aftermath of an ill-thought Brexit.

Expectedly, odds against him are only increasing with high inflation and strikes. The 1980s saw the UK in identical straits when it took a Margaret Thatcher to wield an iron hand to restore economic order. In the past three years, as many PMs have met their Waterloo and thus Sunak's political longevity was suspect *ab initio*. Now, neither the change of a Tory PM nor opting for a Labour Government can redeem the UK's economic trajectory till it comes together in bipartisan pragmatism and reinvents its multifaceted links with European nations.

R Narayanan | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

The propaganda was to target the government and make allegations using HAL's name. Such falsehood, no matter how big, frequent or high, is always defeated in the face of truth.

Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

They have recovered some remnants off the surface of the sea...We have no intention to return spy' balloons Debris to China.

US Security Council spokesman — John Kirby

Adil has finally decided to leave me and stay with Tanu. He used me to enter Bollywood. I will go to court. He has taken my money. I have all the evidence.

Actor — Rakhi Sawant

India can go to hell if they don't want to come to Pakistan to play cricket. It does not make any difference to us.

Former Pakistan Cricketer — Javed Miandad

There can be only one reason (for Mamata's silence) - her closeness with Modi and new friendship with Adani. She might have instructions from Modi or the Adanis to not do anything that will go against the group's interests.

Senior Congress leader — Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

FIRST COLUMN

AFTER COVID, NURSING MOVES CENTRE-STAGE

Upskilling of nursing can prove to be transformative




DEEPAK SHARMA

Nursing has become an important part of the healthcare industry post-Covid. As technology takes center stage in nursing after the pandemic outbreak, the profession has gone through significant changes. The transformation in nursing care calls for upskilling of healthcare workers across the world.

Right from monitoring patients remotely to using tools to understand a patient's needs, hospitals need to train their nurses following huge technological intervention in the post-Covid era.

Nurses account for more than half of all the world's health workers, providing vital services throughout the health system, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Not only in the past, but today as well, nurses are at the forefront of fighting epidemics and pandemics that threaten health and human life across the globe. As they responded to an unprecedented crisis with bravery and courage, never has their value been more clearly demonstrated.



Nurses are the backbone of any health system, and they were on the frontline in battle against the pandemic. Today, there are just under 28 million nurses worldwide. Nursing numbers increased by 4.7 million worldwide between 2013 and 2018, but this still leaves a global shortfall of 5.9 million. The greatest gaps have been found in countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region as well as some parts of Latin America.

Well trained nurses with certifications in basic life support and advanced cardiovascular life support can make a huge difference in a hospital's ability to successfully deal with critical care and emergencies. While imparting such skills has been a time-taking and costly process for hospitals, including training and equipment, technology disruption has enabled digital learning solutions for healthcare professionals.

Today, there are complete online resuscitation and cardiac training modules for hospital staff that have made upskilling faster and better. Upskilling nurses can also solve the care home crisis due with an increase in elderly population. Also, upskilling is imminent in the era of telehealth, when nurses should be able to monitor and analyse the body parameters of a distant patient and raise an alarm by quickly informing doctors in case of emergency. The nurses will be able to handle a critical situation only if they are aware of new technologies such as wearable bands, computers, tablets, or smartphones.

While the upskilling or reskilling concept is relatively new to the US healthcare industry, other countries like India have been using upskilling with great success. During the pandemic, an online upskilling initiative had prepared over one lakh Indian nurses to fight Covid-19.

From recording audios to translating them using tools to understand a patient's needs, nurses are using as many tools as possible today. This rapid use of technology began after the pandemic outbreak. Hospitals can also invest in such tools to upskill their nurses, to take the patient care at a new level. For instance, if a patient is from another country or state, nurses can be trained in using specific tools or software that can translate what they are saying and then cater to their needs.

Similarly, virtual reality and Artificial Intelligence enabled tools can be used by nurses to transform the patient care. Recently, IIT Madras had joined hands with the state unit of the National Health Mission (NHM) to prevent maternal and neonatal deaths and improve the overall health of newborn babies and their mothers by upskilling healthcare workers.

According to a report, nursing makes up 50 per cent of the healthcare workforce and by 2022, it will be the most in demand profession in the US. Upskilling nurses by harnessing technology and developing new care models will help hospitals and for this they will need to invest in training and tools to empower their healthcare staff.

(The author is Co-founder & CEO of MedLern)


Mother tongue is a medium for higher studies

The disadvantaged sections will gain from the adoption of mother tongue in higher education institutes

The Budget is a carefully crafted document aiming to cultivate voters of nine states going to polls this year with largess showered on agriculture and infrastructure projects. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is right in believing that the voter wants the glitz of infra in every field. It is a politically paying proposition.

Mother tongue is the ideal medium for expressing one's thoughts and feelings because language is such a potent tool. It is the language that a child picks up without his or her conscious effort while interacting with members of his or her own social group.

From the very first years of school, UNESCO has been setting the example and promoting multilingual education based on the mother tongue.



SASHWATI BANERJEE

(The author is Founder, Top Parent)

tion based on the mother tongue. According to research, mother tongue education is essential for inclusivity and high-quality learning. It also enhances learning outcomes and academic achievement. Most importantly, mother tongue-based multilingual education gives all students the ability to participate fully in the society. Moreover, in India, the promotion of Indian languages in higher education is in sync with one of the focal points of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. About 95 per cent of students, who receive primary education in their mother tongue, face difficulty during their Higher education and should not be left out in their pursuit of higher studies.

‘PARKING’Gson’s law of mobility, and us



SANJAY CHADHA



PRIYANKA NAVLE

Since the demand for parking is insatiable, new mobility services and mass transit must complement each other

As we celebrate hosting this year's G-20 annual forum, our resolve to organise over 200 meetings in 50 cities across 32 different work streams spotlighting LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment) may put to test the rigours of urban mobility. The congestion on roads and pressure for parking already make for a stressful experience as is evident from the frequent road rage incidents in India.

Though new technologies and business models have helped to improve transportation systems and services in the direction of a more sustainable mobility approach, it is shared mobility that has emerged as a possible answer to the rising number of vehicles. Shared mobility or shared transportation—where commuters can share resources such as vehicles, bikes, and parking space—has the potential to emerge as the most practical solution to meet a city's urban transportation needs without unduly adding to the parking pressures. It can help cities maximise the use of public spaces and symbiotically aid ride hailing firms to generate revenue, and consequently employment.

Yet, it remains a concept well resonated but seldom seeded in our policy initiatives on the ground. Shared mobility must be principally enabled as a commercial choice rather than a regulatory one.

On its part, the Central Government has expressed a larger intent of promoting shared mobility. The enabling provisions of the 'Cab Aggregators Guidelines' of the Ministry of Road Transport allow for bikes, scooters, motorcycles, three wheelers, and cars to be on a single tech platform to be used throughout the day by several people for different trips.

However, hailabids do not necessarily get incubated into a single aggregators' license issued by the state government. This is due to narrow interpretations driven by local political imperatives. Only a few states have shown the progressive intent to issue a single licence to aggregate 'Bike Taxis, Autorickshaws and Cabs'. Most, on the other hand, have not adopted this universal interpretation but instead choose to promote a multiple licensing regime, almost reminiscent of the pre-1991 license era.

This selective interpretation leads to suboptimal regulations. For instance, the 'Bike Taxis', which are extremely popular in Goa do not find an expression in the regulations of some of the large congested cities, despite their growing popularity despite being quick and light and best suited to avoid traffic snarls.

A larger auto or cab gets thus deployed for a single passenger leading to a bigger than necessary carbon footprint. The other aspect of alleviating parking pressure and the attendant congestion and pollution lies in the larger outlook of States towards land required to park vehicles. Most cities are still trying to fulfill the insatiable demand for parking, using up large tracts of the scarce land, even as real estate development has gone vertical.

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CARS OR TWO-WHEELERS ACCOUNT FOR 85 PER CENT OF PARKING SPACE USAGE BUT PROVIDE FOR ONLY 4-5 PER CENT OF TRAVEL DEMAND. IN CONTRAST, CABS ACCOUNT FOR 4-5 PER CENT OF PARKING AND ON AN AVERAGE CARRY 15-20 TIMES MORE PASSENGERS THAN A PRIVATE CAR



ever-rising parking demand in urban areas. It estimated that the annual additional demand for parking spaces can be equivalent to as much as 471 football fields in Delhi, 100 in Chennai, 58 in Chandigarh, and 179 in Gurgaon.

The Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA), has gone on record to state that provisions of parking for personal vehicles cannot be considered a matter of public good. Land is a limited resource, so there is a limit to the additional parking spaces that can be created in a city. Decades of experience in India and across the world bear testimony to the fact that the demand for parking is insatiable. New mobility services and established mass transit must complement each other to build systems that serve consumers regardless of where they live within the cities or their circumstance.

Already, for many of the millennials and Gen Z in India, the car has gone from being seen as a property asset to becoming a service that young people pay for only when they need it. It is expected that by the end of the decade, more apps, shared services, and electrification will significantly expand mobility's scope and modes. New mobility services have the potential to carve out a meaningful role in future mobility for themselves. These are cues for policymakers to get more actively involved in envisioning these new services in the urban transportation system. One of the most powerful outcomes of shared mobility is the impact on the environment. The ability of states to garner revenues to combat the environment lies in innovative regulations. A commercial vehicle contributes substantially higher taxes, tolls and GST—a part of which needs to be channelised right to get this segment to grow. Despite the Green fund subsidies for manufacture of EVs through the FAME schemes, the current sales of electric vehicles (EV) is less than five per cent of the total vehicle sales against an ambitious target of a complete switch over for all new vehicles by 2030.

Due to a higher initial capital cost, a loan for purchasing an EV entails higher EMIs than its fossil fuelled equivalent, offsetting some of the advantage of the lower running cost. A targeted interest subvention scheme for purchase of EVs by the marginal earners of commercial vehicles would create excellent self-employment opportunities. Further, Priority Sector Lending (PSL) for green mobility can be expanded to the last mile to cover purchase loans, especially for women drivers which would enable more women to earn their livelihood with complete flexibility in working hours.

The tech platforms could also provide enhanced safety for women riders by mapping them to women drivers as a preference. The possibilities to convert this into an opportunity are endless.

However, state governments must be exhorted to bring out the attendant rules and regulations to enable the tech platforms to aggregate all vehicles without an exception—through a single licence. The road to success need not be lined with many tempting parking spaces.

Cars or two-wheelers account for 85 per cent of parking space usage but provide for only 4-5 per cent of travel demand. In contrast, cabs account for 4-5 per cent of parking and on an average carry 15-20 times more passengers than a private car.

The study also highlighted the vast land usage committed to this

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

ALLOWING NOMINATED COUNCILLORS TO VOTE (IN THE MAYORAL ELECTION) IS ILLEGAL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL. THIS IS OPEN HOOLIGANISM.

— DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER MANISH SISODIA



IF THE AAP DECIDES TO MOVE COURT, IT SHOULD FIRST GIVE A COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY THE COURT'S DECISION.


— DELHI BJP SPOKESPERSON PRAVEEN SHANKAR KAPOOR



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(The author is Founder, Top Parent)

NEP provides for higher education institutions and programmes in higher education to use the mother tongue or local language as a medium of instruction, besides offering programs bilingually. According to research, having a strong mother tongue foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum as well as a more positive attitude toward school. It simultaneously fosters a whole host of other essential skills, such as critical thinking and literacy skills. Thus, it is critical that children keep their first language when they start school in a different language, as it also equips children with the skills they need to learn additional languages, allowing them to transfer their understanding of the structure of language to several new languages.

Moreover, research by Yared Seid showed that when children were taught in their primary schools with their mother tongue as the medium of instruction, it did improve their education outcome.

It also enhances the attributes of learning for students such as emotional development, besides having a very powerful impact on the formation of the individual. Mother language has such an important role in framing one's thinking, emotions, and spiritual world, because the most important stage of one's life, childhood, is spent in its imprints.

This is especially relevant for students who are first-generation learners (the first ones in their entire generation to go to school and receive an education) or the ones coming from rural areas, who may feel intimidated by unfamiliar concepts in an alien language.

In terms of education, the mother tongue, home language, or first language refers to the language that a child uses to communicate with others, interact with the outside world, and make sense of their surroundings.

There is an impending challenge to ensuring the availability of 'Quality Material in Regional Languages' such as textbooks and scholarly literature. Along with availability, ensuring quality control of the translations has become pivotal. Attracting and retaining quality teachers who are willing and able to teach in regional languages is a challenge. Language diversity is important for the balance of cultures, whereas focusing on one language can restrict exposure to different places and cultures due to language barriers. We may lose our advantage of being multilingual, for which ensuring a balance of languages is important. Moreover, a strict focus on regional languages can slow down the capacity of competing at global levels of education. Delivering technical courses in regional languages may prevent students from competing in global labor and education markets, where fluency in English yields a distinct edge. It is important to create a strong and successful bilingual/multilingual programme in the early years of schooling in a multilingual nation like India. The goal of teaching English in the early years should be to achieve basic conversational ability. However, when using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, the accessibility barrier is removed because it accepts prospective students and their parents.

For multilingual children, there isn't a single model that fits all of their learning needs and contexts. Each school and community should determine what works best for them in terms of multilingual and mother tongue education. However, in general, the educational benefits that can be predicted are larger the longer a child can learn in and through his or her native languages.

MONEY MATTERS

IFFCO eyeing nano urea exports to 25 countries

Fertiliser major IFFCO Ltd is eyeing nano urea exports to 25 countries and expecting that output is likely to be 30 crore bottles by December 2024, a top company official said on Tuesday. The company is currently exporting the fertiliser to five countries, he said. "We have already produced six crore bottles of 500 ml each and have sold five crore units to farmers, which is equivalent to 22 lakh tonne of solid urea or conventional urea...We are already exporting to Sri Lanka, Nepal, Kenya, Suriname and Mexico," Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) Managing Director US Awasthi told PTI in an interview. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the world's first nano urea plant at Kalol in Gujarat last year, the company is exporting the fertiliser product, which has the potential to cut down the use of conventional urea, the most used Nitrogenous fertiliser, by 50 per cent or more, to the five nations, he said.



Sebi returns Go Digit General Insurance IPO papers

Markets regulator Sebi has returned the preliminary IPO papers of Go Digit General Insurance Ltd, a firm backed by Canada-based Fairfax Group, and now the company is looking to refile the documents with certain updates. The company had filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in August 2022 to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO). Go Digit's proposed IPO comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth Rs 1,250 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 10.94 crore equity shares by a promoter and existing shareholders. In the OFS, Go Digit offers to sell 10,94,34,783 equity shares. According to an update with Sebi on Tuesday, the markets regulator has returned the draft papers on January 30. In a statement, the insurance company said the DRHP (Draft Red Herring Prospectus) has been returned in terms of Sebi's ICDR (Issuance of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) rules.



K Satyanarayana Raju appointed as new MD & CEO of Canara Bank

State-owned Canara Bank on Tuesday said the Union Government has appointed K Satyanarayana Raju as its Managing Director and CEO, with immediate effect. He will be replacing L V Prabhakar who demitted office on December 31, 2022. Raju, who is a Physics Graduate, Post Graduate in Business Administration (Banking and Finance) and CAIIB (Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers), had earlier served Canara Bank as Executive Director since March 10, 2021. He has a very rich and vast experience in all segments of banking including Branch Banking, Corporate Credit, Retail Credit, Agri Financing, Credit Monitoring, Credit Recovery, Compliance etc. Also his rich experience and exposure led to digital transformation of banking products and services, the bank said in a release.



Regulations strictly followed while making investments

LIC tells govt amid concerns over exposure to Adani group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid concerns in certain quarters over LIC's exposure to Adani group companies, the government on Tuesday said the insurer has informed that it strictly follows the statutory framework and regulations while making investments.

Last week, state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) said it has investments of Rs 35,917.31 crore in Adani group's debt and equity securities. The amount is 0.975 per cent of the insurer's total assets under management of more than Rs 41.66 lakh crore. The total purchase value of equity, purchased over the last many years, under all the Adani group companies is Rs 30,127 crore and the market value for the same as at close of market hours on January



LIC has informed that all investments of LIC are carried out strictly as per the statutory framework of the Insurance Act, 1938 and the IRDAI Investment Regulations, 2016 and are guided by a detailed governance mechanism

27, 2023, was Rs 56,142 crore, as per LIC. "LIC has informed that all investments of LIC are carried out strictly as per the statutory framework of the Insurance Act, 1938 and the IRDAI Investment Regulations, 2016 and are guided by a detailed governance mechanism," Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad told Rajya Sabha in a written reply on Tuesday. To a question by BJP mem-

ber Sushil Kumar Modi regarding the stakes held by LIC in various companies of the Adani group, Karad said, "LIC has also confirmed that most of the information with regard to its investments is already available in the public domain". Adani group has 10 listed companies.

Stocks of the Adani group companies have taken a beating, losing billions of dollars in market value, after US-based

activist short-seller Hindenburg Research in a report dated January 24 made a litany of allegations, including fraudulent transactions and share price manipulation at the Gautam Adani-led group.

The Adani group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements. The opposition, however, has been calling it a big fraud.

India's non-fossil power generation capacity touches 174 GW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's non-fossil fuel-based power generation capacity was at 174.53 gigawatt (GW) at the end of December 31, 2022, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

The country's total power generation capacity, including 235.81 GW from the thermal base, was at 410 GW at the end of 2022, Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy R K Singh said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

"So far, a total of 174.53 GW power generation capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources has been installed in the country as on 31.12.2022," he said.

The capacity includes 63.30 GW solar power, 46.85 GW large hydro, 41.93 GW wind power, 10.73 GW bio power, 4.94 GW small hydro power and 6.78 GW nuclear power.

Puri: Energy transition has to ensure surviving present

PNS ■ BENGALURU

India, the world's third largest oil consumer, on Tuesday said it is committed to energy transition but surviving the present and cushioning the vulnerable from price volatilities is essential before moving to clean and green energy.

India has committed to net zero carbon emission by 2070 and has repeatedly emphasised that 'dirty' fuels like oil and coal, on which the economy is two-thirds dependent, will have to continue to be in use in the foreseeable future.

An immediate shift from low-priced coal and oil to expensive fuels of the future such as hydrogen will entail huge costs in a nation with low per capita income.

"Unless we survive the present, we will not be able to go into the world of clean and green energy," Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said at India Energy Week here.



Unless we survive the present, we will not be able to go into the world of clean and green energy

petrol and diesel, and rates of natural gas - which is used to make CNG, electricity and fertilizer - shot up to record high. Countries in Europe switched back to coal-fired power plants as gas became unaffordable to many.

"We have to make sure our transition entails surviving the present and cushioning the vulnerable from volatility," he said, adding the transition has to be affordable and sustainable particularly for vulnerable sections.

"We are actively conscious of the need to facilitate energy transition and in the interim insulate consumers."

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports to meet its oil needs and roughly half of its gas requirement too comes from overseas. And the spike in global energy prices meant it had to shell out more for imports. To insulate domestic consumers, it had to cut taxes as well as ask oil companies to hold prices.

'Budget to help in reducing capital cost for Indian companies'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Appreciating Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for continuing fiscal consolidation in the Budget for 2023-24, Niti Aayog member Arvind Virmani on Tuesday said it would help in reducing the cost of capital for Indian companies.

Virmani further said the large increase in capital expenditures by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore for infrastructure development will accelerate India's economic growth.

"On fiscal consolidation, the Finance Minister has reiterated that she will stay on it (the path of fiscal consolidation).



"... So, in a situation where there is a lot of global uncertainty, it is very important because it will have an effect on interest rates available to Indian companies," he told PTI.

Sitharaman in her fifth straight budget has raised the capital expenditure by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore for infrastructure development in 2023-24.

Electric passenger vehicles retail sales decline 10.51%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Electric passenger vehicles retail sales declined by 10.51 per cent sequentially to 3,346 units in January 2023 over 3,739 vehicles sold in December last year, according to automobiles body FADA.

Tata Motors's electric PV sales were down 17 per cent at 2,426 vehicles in January as against 2,926 units delivered in December 2022.

MG Motor sales volume also dropped 12.55 per cent to 425 units against 486 units sold in the month earlier.

Sebi to auction properties of six firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To recover investors' money



auctioned include land parcels, storied buildings, flats and a commercial space, situated across West Bengal, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a notice. Inviting bids, Sebi said auc-

Sebi on Tuesday said it will auction 22 properties belonging to companies of MPS Group, Tower Infotech and four others on March 3 for a reserve price totalling Rs 91 crore in a bid to recover investors' money.

Apart from MPS Group and Tower Infotech, the regulator has put on block properties of Vibgyor Group, Prayag Group, Multipurpose BIOS India Group and Waris Finance International Group.

These companies had raised funds from investors without complying with regulatory norms. The 22 properties to be

it in sale of the properties.

The regulator said the bidders should make their own independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims, among others, prior to submitting their bids.

"The properties are being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to Sebi. Sebi shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues, etc," the notice said.

Sebi had earlier attached some of their properties after directives asking them to refund investors' money along with interest did not materialise.

Over 3,600 firms prosecuted for selling low quality pesticides

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 3,600 firms have been prosecuted for manufacturing, sale and illegal import of sub-standard pesticides in the last five years and 137 companies were convicted by courts after they were found to be guilty, the government said on Tuesday.

"In last 5 years (2017-18 to 2021-22), Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine & Storage under the Ministry of Agriculture has analysed 3,40,479 pesticide samples, and 3,639 cases have been prosecuted against the firms who were found involved in the manufacture, sale and illegal import of sub-standard/low-quality pesticides, and in 137 cases the firms have been convicted by the Court after finding guilty," Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Bhagwanth Khuba said.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, the minister said the chemical sector is de-licensed and de-regulated.

The agriculture ministry has notified the Insecticide Act, 1968, wherein, there is no provision of spurious pesticides, however, under section 3k, the definition of 'misbranded' pesticide is clearly defined.

To ensure the availability of quality pesticides to farmers, the minister said provisions have been made that no insecticide can be manufactured, stocked, sold or exhibited for sale without a license granted by the licensing officer appointed by state governments.

'India can be superpower in defence sector'

PNS ■ PUNE

Lauding the private sector contribution in defence manufacturing, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Tuesday said India has the potential to emerge as a superpower in making military equipment and has displayed wherewithal to develop big and complex platforms.

Referring to the inauguration of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd's new helicopter factory -- India's largest chopper manufacturing unit -- in Tumakuru district of Karnataka on Monday,

Sensex, Nifty decline for 2nd day on selling in FMCG, steel stocks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower for a second straight day on Tuesday due to selling in FMCG, metal and auto shares ahead of the RBI monetary policy.

The 30-share BSE barometer declined further by 220.86 points or 0.37 per cent to close at 60,286.04, as 22 of its constituents ended in the red. The index opened flat amid mixed global trends. It moved in a range of 60,655.14 to 60,063.49 in the day.

Profit-taking in the FMCG and auto majors was weighing on the sentiment while buying in select heavyweights in banking and financials capped the fall

The broader Nifty of the National Stock Exchange fell by 43.10 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 17,721.50, with 31 of its scrips ending in the red. The index touched a high of 17,811.15 and a low of

17,652.55 during the session. Profit-taking in the FMCG and auto majors was weighing on the sentiment while buying in select heavyweights in banking and financials capped the fall, analysts said.

"Sentiments in the domestic market were hammered by bears that dominated the US market post the release of strong jobs data. Global markets are currently driven by central bank policies and the surge in bond yields in expectation of more rate actions," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The Ramco Cements Q3 profit down 31.9% at Rs 51.2cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ramco Cements on Tuesday reported a 31.93 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 51.21 crore for the third quarter that ended on December 31, 2022, on account of a rise in fuel prices.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 75.24 crore in the October-December period a year ago, The Ramco Cements said in a regulatory filing.

However, its total income was up 29.61 per cent to Rs 2,020.37 crore as against Rs 1,558.69 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal year.

Bharti Airtel Q3 net profit zooms 91.5% to Rs 1,588 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Tuesday reported a 91.5 per cent year-on-year rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,588 crore for the October-December quarter of 2022-23.

Total revenue rose nearly 20 per cent year-on-year to Rs 35,804 crore in the December quarter (Q3FY23) "backed by strong and consistent performance delivery across the portfolio", the company said in a statement.

Its consolidated net income (after exceptional items) stood at Rs 1,588 crore for the just ended quarter, translating into an increase of 91.5 per cent



year-on-year. The consolidated net income (before exceptional items) at Rs 1,994 crore, was up by 147 per cent year-on-year, it added.

Bharti Airtel Managing Director Gopal Vittal said the company delivered another quarter of consistent and competitive growth across businesses. "Revenue grew sequentially by 3.7 per cent, while EBITDA margin expanded to 52 per cent.

AERO INDIA

Boeing to showcase initiatives to boost 'Make in India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US aerospace major Boeing on Tuesday said it will showcase at the upcoming Aero India its focus on boosting local services, investments and partnerships in complimenting India's ambitious goal of achieving self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

The 14th edition of 'Aero India', known as Asia's largest aerospace exhibition, will be held in Bengaluru from February 13 to 17.

Boeing said a key strategic goal for it in India is to strengthen and leverage local

talent and its growing network of more than 300 supplier partners. "The Indian aerospace and defence industry is poised for growth and offers significant opportunities for Boeing with our proven portfolio of products and services," said Salil Gupte, president, Boeing India.

"Boeing is committed to supporting and enabling this progress with a vision to bring the best of Boeing to India and take the best of India to the world," he said. Boeing's displays at the Aero India will be built around the theme of "The Runway to a Billion



Opportunities" highlighting local partnerships and investments in India, according to the company.

The exhibits will also feature a range of advanced products including the F/A-18 Super Hornet, P-8I, CH-47 Chinook,

737, 787 Dreamliner and 777X.

The F/A-18 Super Hornet is in contention with Dassault Aviation's Rafale M for the Indian Navy's requirement for 26 deck-based jets for aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

The Indian armed forces operate a sizeable number of Boeing-manufactured military platforms that included 11 C-17 heavy-lift transport aircraft, 22 AH-64 Apache helicopters (with six more on order), 15 CH-47 Chinook choppers, 12 P-8I long-range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft.

India also has three Boeing VVIP aircraft, and two Head of State aircraft. In addition, more than 150 Boeing airplanes, including the next-generation 737, 737 MAX, 757, 777, and 787 Dreamliner, are operated by India's leading commercial airlines.

The joint venture between Boeing and Tata Advanced Systems Ltd -- Tata Boeing Aerospace Limited (TBAL) -- recently delivered the first fuselage for six AH-64 Apache attack helicopters ordered by the Indian Army from its state-of-the-art facility in Hyderabad.

ED attaches Rs 859 cr proceeds of crime in illegal loan app cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Enforcement has attached proceeds of crime worth Rs 859.15 crore generated by accused persons/entities through illegal loan apps, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said on Tuesday.

Further, assets amounting to Rs 289.28 crore have been seized under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999.

In a written reply to a query in Rajya Sabha, Karad said Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has furnished the list of Digital Lending Apps (DLAs) being

used by regulated entities of RBI to the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY).

MeitY has shared the list with respective intermediary (App Stores) and requested them to ensure that only the apps figuring in the list are hosted on their app stores.

The RBI's digital lending guidelines issued in September advises measures, including due diligence of Loan Service Providers (LSPs), direct disbursement of loan from bank account of lender to bank account of the borrower without any pass-through/pool or third-party account to avoid layering.

“The one that has stuck with me is Rekha ji,” said Jacqueline Fernandez on her favourite style icon from Bollywood

The stunning and ever-gorgeous, Jacqueline Fernandez recently graced the cover of an international magazine and it was all things hot and sexy. While the sunshine woman is always there to raise the temperatures with her glamorous pictures, she is all set to continue treating her fans with newer roles on the work front too.

Talking about her glamour and style, Jacqueline has always been a fashion icon for the youth and the industry. While revealing whose fashion sense it is, that stands out for her the most in the Bollywood fraternity, Jacqueline shares, “I think when it comes to the styling game, a lot of people come to my mind, but one that has stuck with me is Rekha ji. Even back then, her photo-shoots were so creative! So

inspiring and ahead of her time. Fast-forward to now — those saris that she wears... gosh, to die for. The way she accessorises herself, the way she carries her attitude. It's so admirable.”

The actress is always leading the game in fashion and is also busy with a packed line-up of films and we are all for it. Moreover, she will be seen in *Crack* alongside Vidhut Jammwal, she also has 'Fateh' with Sonu Sood which was recently announced. The song *Applause* from her big Hollywood project *Tell it Like a Woman* was recently nominated for the Oscars too starring a mega ensemble including Margherita Buy, Eva Longoria, Cara Delevingne, Anne Watanabe, Jennifer Hudson, and Marcia Gay Harde along with the Indian actress.



Ben Stiller is nearing a deal to star in a limited series adaptation of the documentary *Three Identical Strangers*, *Variety* has learned.

The series hails from writer Amy Lippman with Sony Pictures Television producing it along with SK Global and TriStar Television. Like the documentary, the series would focus on the true story of Bobby Shafan, David Kellman and Eddy Galland -- identical triplets who were separated at birth only to be reunited later in life.

Stiller, who's executive producing via Red Hour Films, would star as the three adult brothers. Lippman, meanwhile, would serve as showrunner and executive producer.

The role would mark a rare television appearance for Stiller and one of his first major acting

Three-In-One: Ben Stiller to play identical triplets separated at birth

roles in years, notes *'Variety'*. He has made cameo appearances in films like *Hubie Halloween* and *Bros* of late, as well as appearing in the 2021 film *Locked Down*. His last starring role was in *The Meyerowitz Stories* in 2017.

Stiller's other notable acting roles include *Zoolander*, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, the *Night at the Museum* franchise, *Dodgeball*, and *Meet the Parents*. He also won an Emmy in 1993 for *The Ben Stiller Show*.



Jennifer Love Hewitt, Freddie Prinze Jr in talks for I Know What You Did Last Summer reboot

Sony Pictures is looking to reboot *I Know What You Did Last Summer* with Jennifer Kaytin Robinson (*Do Revenge*, *Someone Great*, *Sweet/Vicious*) set to direct, reports *'Variety'*.

The project is in early development at the studio, with the franchise's original stars Jennifer Love Hewitt and

Freddie Prinze Jr in talks to reprise their roles. Leah McKendrick is on board to write the script for the project, which she developed with Kaytin Robinson. It is set to bring a fresh perspective to the franchise to Sony.

News of the relaunch comes following the successful reboot of the *Scream* franchise, which continues with *Scream*

VI hitting theatres on March 10, according to *'Variety'*.

The film also follows Kaytin Robinson's *Do Revenge*, which featured Sarah Michelle Gellar, who along with Ryan Phillippe, rounded out the original *I Know What You Did Last Summer* quartet.

Directed by Jim Gillespie and written by Kevin Williamson, the 1997 slasher film saw four teens from a small seaside town haunted (or, more literally, stalked) by a hook-wielding maniac after getting into a hit-and-run accident that they'd tried to cover up, *'Variety'* notes.

The film earned more than \$125 million at the box office and spawned the direct sequel *I Still Know What You Did Last Summer*, which starred Hewitt, Brandy, Mekhi Phifer and Matthew Settle. In 2021, the franchise got a streaming reboot with Amazon Prime Video's *I Know What You Did Last Summer*.

Swara Bhasker embodies vintage fashion, to play 9 characters in her next

Bollywood actress Swara Bhasker, who is known for films like *Raanjhanaa*, *Anaarkali of Aarah*, *Veere Di Wedding* and several others, is set to portray 9 characters in her upcoming film.

The actress has replicated the vintage fashion from the year for her upcoming film *Mrs. Falani* in which she will be seen in 9 varied avatars pulling off 9 different characters. The characters range between 30 to 42 years and shall belong to 9 different states.

Sharing her experience, Swara said: "Mrs. Falani is going to be the most challenging film of my life. Undoubtedly, it is every actor's dream to play so many different charac-

ters in one film. I am amazed at learning the intricacies that range from home-maker to home-maker every ten miles. I am really stoked about it!"

Interestingly, Swara shall be playing a home-maker representing different states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab apart from others and reportedly, Swara has also got her nose pierced for the film.

Earlier, Priyanka Chopra too has pulled off a similar feat as she played 12 characters in the rom-com *What's Your Raashee?* The film, which also starred PC's then rumoured beau Harman Baweja, received positive response for its music.

For its storytelling and direction? Not so much.

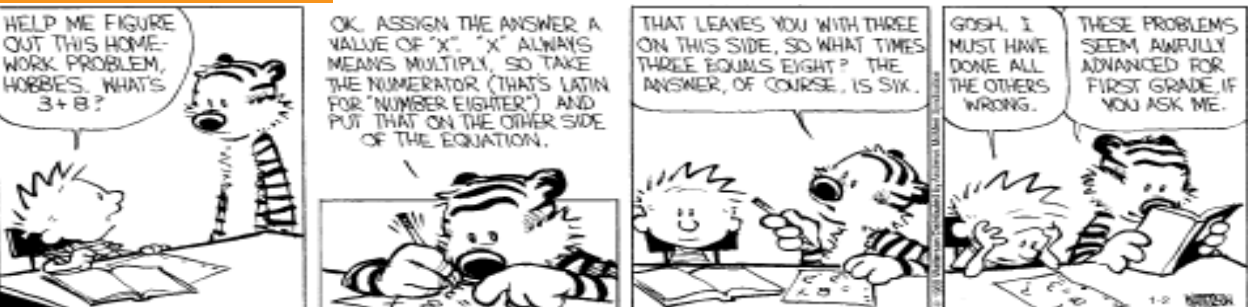


FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



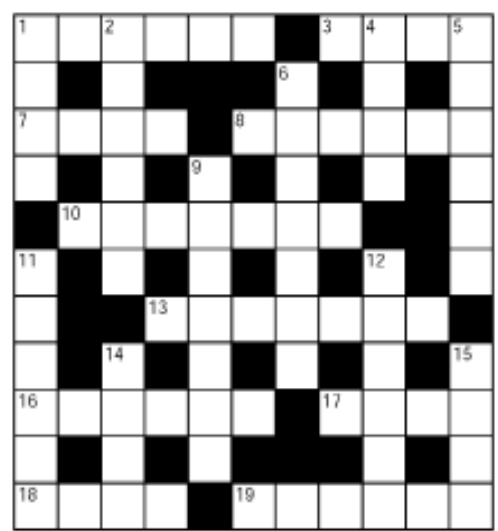
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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	1	6			4			8
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	7			6	2	9	3	

Yesterday's solution								
6	5	2	1	3	9	7	8	4
9	1	4	7	6	8	2	5	3
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3	6	8	9	5	1	4	7	2
1	7	9	5	2	4	3	6	8
5	4	3	8	9	6	1	2	7
2	8	6	3	1	7	5	4	9

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

ACROSS

- A season
- Strike with an open hand
- Jump over
- Having a sharp sour taste
- Applauded
- Bumped
- Sleepy
- A biting, jumping insect
- Require
- Something built over a river

DOWN

- Not sick
- Just about
- Overdue
- A talking pet bird
- A permit to drive
- The language of Spain
- Concealed from view
- Shouted
- Gown
- A strong box for storing valuables



Seema Pahwa: Theatre will definitely make you a better actor

TEJAL SINHA

Veteran actress Seema Pahwa has won hearts for all the obvious reasons. Before she could make her entry into the cinema world, she had worked extensively with theatre groups in Delhi at a tender age.

In fact, in a recent interview, the *Ferrari ki Sawari* actress recalled her theatre days, stating that there was a Punjabi theatre group that performed at Sapru House, which was dubbed “vulgar theatre” because all their dialogues had double meanings and she wasn’t aware of that.

When we asked her about it, she recalled saying, “Yes, I was very young and slowly began to realise that what I was saying had a very different meaning because people would laugh at my lines. It was then that I began to grasp the language.”

However, theatre is something that she has always loved to date. She had worked extensively in various Delhi theatre groups before making it big with *Hum Log*. Taking us through what made her get into theatres at a young age, she shared, “My mother was a veteran actress, and because of her, I came into this field very early. When I did theatre for the first time, I came face to face with the audience, and the live energy was absolutely invigorating. I may have done more work in cinema and on television, but I still love theater, which I think is the best medium for any actor because it reveals your weaknesses and strengths and gives you a better grasp of your craft. Cinema may or may not make you a better actor, but theatre definitely will, and that is why I am still associated with it.”

It was later in 2019 when the *Bareilly ki Barfi* actress made her directorial debut with the critically acclaimed *Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi*. But did you know that directing was never in her plans? “I had never thought about directing and always wanted to be an actor first. In fact, I was looking for a director for *Ramprasad Ki Tehrvi*, but everyone refused and told me, “Seema, this is your world, and you know it best, so you are the one who is going to direct it.” This made me gain more confidence, and I decided to give it a try. And now, of course, I am directing *Koi Baat Chale* by Zee Theatre.”

Zee Theatre had recently presented *Koi Baat Chale*, another pathbreaking series of dramatic readings, as part of their promise under the proposition of ‘Har



Din Naya Drama’. And, for the unaware, the series is being directed by the *Badhaai Do* actress.

Talking about the main focus behind directing the series, she shared, “With *Koi Baat Chale*, my intention is for Indian literature to reach this generation so that it can discover the treasure trove of great stories penned by iconic writers. Today’s youth are not well aware of our own literature, and maybe through the dramatic readings by accomplished actors in *Koi Baat Chale*, they will get interested in these stories and explore more works by these writers. If, out of 10 people, even two develop a connection with literature through this teleplay, I will consider that we have succeeded in our mission to some extent. We have curated six classic stories that are very different from each other. We have two short stories penned by Munshi Premchand, three tales by Manto, and one by Harishankar Parsai. Through this mixed fare and variety, we hope to reach all kinds.”

With such a format, we asked if an actor needs any additional skills to do justice to this medium. To this, the virtuoso enthused, “It’s not easy to perform solo because you have no co-actor to support you on stage, and you have to be the narrator and also portray all the characters in the story. For instance, in ‘Idgah,’ Vinay Pathak plays a child, a grandmother, a shopkeeper, and all the other characters that are

In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, veteran actress-director Seema Pahwa recalled her theatre days, her transition into direction, directing Zee Theater’s *Koi Baat Chale*, and more.

ents would tell us about in the past. *Koi Baat Chale* brings those memories back to us in a different format. Sharing about choosing these six stories, she said, “This is a bit difficult to say as we have such great literature, and it was a tough task to pick and choose only a few stories. There are stories that are close to your heart, and so those were the ones that came to my mind instantly. Story-telling is a continuous process, so I hope that the project will live up to its name, *Koi Baat Chale*. There are many more stories we want to bring to the audience.”

For sure, the act might have demanded actors with a different set of skills. As a director, one has their own set of lists for the actors while casting them. Wondered what she was looking for in the actors while casting them? She said, “I looked for actors who were capable of doing justice to all the characters in the story and also being strong narrators. In these times, it takes very little to just change the channel, so it is crucial to grab and hold the attention of the audience from start to finish. All our actors are renowned and established, and they have succeeded marvellously in

There were several stories that our grandpar-

keeping the audiences totally engrossed.”

With OTT gaining huge prominence over time, she believes, “This is a great initiative. Initially, I myself was sceptical about bringing theatre to the small screen, but when I saw a few teleplays, I came to realise that this can be a great medium to bring wonderful plays to the audience in the comfort of their homes.”

From Shyam Benegal to Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Seema has worked with some of the biggest names in the film industry. Ending the conversation on a lighter note, she signed off by saying, “Every director has their own way of working, be it Shyam Babu or Sanjay Ji. A director’s work has various focus points. Shyam Babu’s focus is on actors working on their characters with a certain liberty and ensuring that story-telling is at its best, while Sanjay Ji’s focus is on making every shot beautiful and perfect in terms of the performance, the set, the props, etc. He not only focuses on these details but also on creating great music as well. So every director has his or her own charm, and I have been lucky to work with so many of them.”

Further, he said, “The honeybees are so smart that anyone will fall

Taking the plunge into bee wrangling

HoneyVeda recently appeared on Season 2 of the business show *Shark Tank*. The ‘sharks’ were impressed with the honey idea. *The Pioneer* connected with the founder of HoneyVeda, who shared his experience.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

It is the responsibility of the beekeeper to clean hives, harvest honey and royal jelly, and maintain the health of the hive. Little did the founder of HoneyVeda, Hardik Ajaybhai Joshi, know that his passion for beekeeping would land him on *Shark Tank India* for the way he used his extensive knowledge to make cruelty-free products out of it.

Along with their scientific beekeeping process, they follow the beehive-to-bottle policy. It makes sure you receive the best possible natural honey. Every time! “To get into this business, it was important for me to learn beekeeping myself. The desire to work outdoors made me gain some information about animal science. Indeed, it’s a nightmare to even go near a bee hive, but accidentally I did, and here I am today with a newfound love for a bee. They are natural pollinators, and hardly anyone is aware of them! When different flowers produce different types of honey, the light bulb went off. None of our honey products mention the flora information; how is the taste always similar? This led me to introduce HoneyVeda,” said Hardik Ajaybhai Joshi.

The bee life cycle and hive social construct were so fascinating for him that they first carefully selected the site from which their little friends, the honeybees, would collect nectar.

And that’s also the secret to why their monoflora honey sells out so fast! Then, honeybee colonies are a set of wooden houses where bees deposit nectar. The right placement and careful planning help bees stay healthy and efficient. He waits and lets the bees take their time converting nectar into honey. Any accelerated or pasteurised processing can effectively eliminate all of honey’s benefits!

Furthermore, he said, “The honeybees are so smart that anyone will fall

in love with them. It’s a hobby best entered into with preparation. We have to save bees just like we do for humans! Without these pollinators, not only would our natural world look bleak, but our food supplies would collapse. The farmers are also in the loop with us; we lease their farms for the beekeeping process. Sometimes, there is colony collapse disorder too, which is a bit more mysterious. Almost all the worker bees disappear and leave behind a viable queen, brood, and food stores. Climate change is the cause of it.”

He pours his heart into bringing us the smooth goodness of raw honey—no heating, no processing. Before bottling and packing, HoneyVeda uses simple gravity filtering to remove unwanted particles. It’s a simple process that doesn’t change your honey at all! He explained, “It took me four years to establish myself as a “bee entrepreneur.” I wondered—the kind of information and revelations I know about, commoners do not know about them, so why don’t we turn this into a business? To do beekeeping, we even went to Spiti Valley. Yes, there is a chance to get stung all the time, but I always wear protection. The other aspect is the pain felt by farmers as our “main” pollinators become extinct as pesticide use increases. How will the ecosystem move forward? Furthermore, we have bees, and moving them is very disruptive to their work. As a commercial beekeeper that relies on honey harvest, I have to move them quite a few times a year, and that’s quite unfortunate for the bees.”

Beekeeping has to be about the bees and not humans! He continued, “The beekeeping process going by the market value is very manual. We had to migrate the bees at a certain height, hence, we chose Spiti Valley. But it was getting difficult for us to reach those heights along with the bee boxes. As a beekeeper, it was my responsibility to care for the welfare of my bees and do the best I could to make sure they thrive. I got stung a lot, but my main goal was to keep the bee alive. An unknown fact: if a bee stings a human, it will die there and then. I wasn’t afraid of getting stung; I just didn’t want my honeybees to die. I want to support pollination.”



Creating equal opportunities for women in IT

The tech industry must create equal opportunities for women professionals to grow and lead from the front,” says Alok Bansal. The MD of Visionet Systems India and the Global Head of BFSI Business reasons for more gender inclusivity in the IT industry.

Media reports in 2021 stated that Indian women make up nearly 43 per cent of the total graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) but just constitute 14 per cent of scientists, engineers, and technologists in research development institutions and universities.

Alok Bansal, MD Visionet Systems India and Global Head of BFSI Business addresses this anomaly and says, “Women face gender-specific professional challenges all over the world. In fact, a 2022 study by LinkedIn states that 72 per cent of women in India are rejecting jobs due to lack of flexibility. This study should be a constant reminder to companies to reevaluate their employment policies and make

them more accommodating. The tech industry must create equal workspace opportunities for women to grow and lead from the front.”

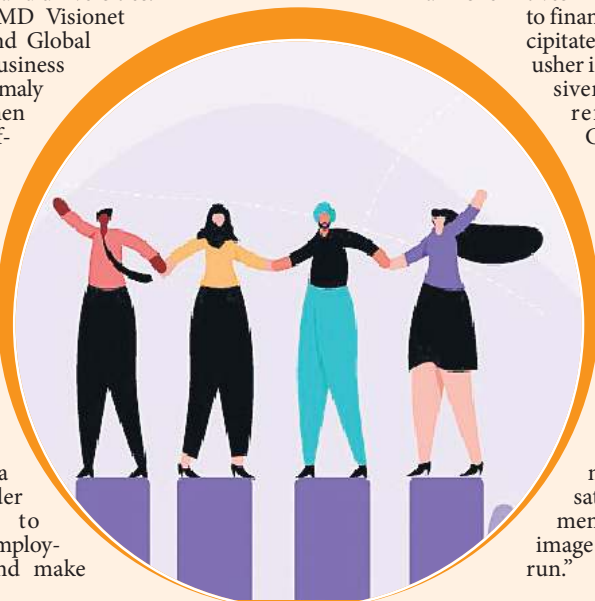
Women, he says, often suffer from the ‘broken rung,’ a phenomenon where their promotions happen at a slower rate than their male counterparts. Lack of female role models, gender bias, unequal remuneration and stunted growth opportunities are some of the factors that hinder the progress of women in the tech field. Alok adds,

“Many women also

have to take a sabbatical to manage caregiving or child-rearing responsibilities. To ensure that when they return, their skill sets are second to none, companies should promote reskilling, upskilling, and mentorship programmes. Ensuring a proper work-life balance, flexible timings, timely increments and fair growth opportunities will go a long way in retaining women in the workforce.”

He believes a larger percentage of female leaders and representatives in boardrooms not only leads to financial gains but can also precipitate a trickle-down effect to usher in more diversity and inclusiveness in workplaces. He refers to McKinsey & Company’s Diversity Wins Report 2020’ which states “companies whose boards are in the top quartile of gender diversity are 28 per cent more likely than their peers to outperform financially”.

He concludes, “Women in powerful positions tend to safeguard the interests of female employees and also foster a culture of multi-perspective organisational feedback that augments the company’s brand image and its growth in the long run.”



The role of Edtech in 2023

The use of technology in education has been around for some time now. However, it has certainly gained a lot of attention and adoption in recent years, particularly due to the widespread shift to remote learning brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is likely to continue to grow and play an important role even after the pandemic subsides. In fact, experts predict that the global EdTech market will reach \$300 billion by 2029.

With this in mind, it’s worth considering the increasing significance and potential of technology in education. It can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education. It allows educators to make their content more engaging, interactive and personalised.

Additionally, technology has enabled the development of virtual and augmented reality tools that can help to create immersive learning environments and foster communication and collaboration among students and teachers.

In 2023, edtech will empower teachers with the tools and technology they need to educate their students effectively. Teachers today can make the learning experience more engaging, efficient, and effective for their students with the use of edtech.

In addition, edtech can play a significant role in maximising learning outcomes by incorporating quality in both offline and online learning through a blended learning approach.

Blended learning is an instructional method that combines traditional face-to-face classroom methods with online learning methods. By inte-

grating EdTech into a blended learning approach, students can get the flexibility they need to learn at their own pace and access online resources and activities in and out of the classroom. Simultaneously teachers can use technology to personalise instruction, provide immediate feedback and monitor student progress.

It can help the government democratise access to technology and educational resources. By providing a means for delivering educational content and resources to a wider audience, including those in underserved or remote areas, edtech aids in the accessibility of education.

Moreover, online courses on Edtech platforms allow educators to create and deliver online courses on a wide range of subjects. These courses can be accessed by students from anywhere in the world, providing access to education to those who may not have access to traditional educational institutions.

Today as we stand in 2023, the government is taking a proactive and supportive approach to edtech and is working closely with them to create a brighter and more equitable future of education.

Another important aspect of edtech is its role in the development and adoption of analytics in education.

Analytics has become an increasingly important part of the learning process as it enables educators to measure a student’s engagement and academic performance.

One way that edtech contributes to the use

of analytics in education is through the development of adaptive learning algorithms. These algorithms use data on student performance to create customised learning paths for each student.

Lastly, Edtech can help students develop a range of technology skills essential for many jobs in the modern economy. This includes skills like coding, data analysis, and the use of productivity tools and software.

It will also help them develop problem-solving skills and collaboration skills that they will need to succeed in a rapidly changing and increasingly technology-driven world. For instance, students can develop problem-solving skills through interactive learning activities and simulations.

Similarly, tools like virtual classrooms and collaboration platforms can help students develop aptitudes for teamwork, communication, and cooperation.

Edtech has the power to revolutionise the way we approach education, and it’s not just a temporary solution brought on by the pandemic. It has the potential to transform education and prepare students for success in a constantly evolving future.

As we look to the future, it’s clear that edtech will continue to play a significant role in how we approach education.

(The writer, Rishabh Khanna, is the founder and CEO of Suraasa)

'Audience will get to see a matured performance from me in VBVK'

AMARTYA SMARAN

Kiran Abbavaram is perhaps one of the few actors in the Telugu Film Industry to have attained such massive fame in a short span. This success has raised many eye-brows and led to a lot of negativity on social media platforms. However, not giving in to the vicious trolling, Kiran Abbavaram is ready to prove his mettle as an actor with *Vinaro Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha* (VBVK), which is going to be released on February 17.

With *Sammathame* and *Nenu Meeku Baga Kavalsinavaadini* underperforming at the box office, the actor is hoping to score the much needed hit with *Vinaro Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha*. The film is produced by Geetha Arts and directed by Murali Kishor Abburu. VBVK marks Kiran Abbavaram's biggest film to date solely considering the production size. The teaser of the film received quite a good response. On Tuesday, the makers had launched the trailer of the film.

"This film is going to be very nice and you all will love it. We tapped in a new concept all together with this film. I feel blessed to have gotten the chance to work with such a big banner in the early stages of my career. Everything worked out so well and I really love the way in which the producers treated all of us. I'm super proud that *Vinaro Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha* is a Geetha Arts production," said Kiran.

The *Sammathame* actor was apparently so excited upon hearing the script, that he greenlit the project without any second thoughts. "When I first listened to the story, especially the climax, I was sure that everybody in the theater would clap. People might have liked different shades of my characters in different films, but in this film you'll see a complete package. The audience will get to see a matured performance from me; they will actually notice my growth as an actor in this movie," informed the star.

One of the first things that an actor looks for is the relatability of a character. If the character's over the top and nowhere close to reality, it takes a lot for the actor to perform on screen. "This character is quite relatable to me in real life as well. I didn't have to do any special preparation for the role. Let it be the way he treats people around him or the way he talks to someone, all that was not far away from me. So, it was easy for me to play this character on the screen," said the actor in an upbeat tone.

Every film brings with it a bunch of good memories. Talking about one such moment, he recalled, "We were shooting this fight sequence at the famous Govindaraja Swamy temple in Tirupati. Nobody has ever shot as extensively as we did in those premises. We'd start shooting for this massive fight sequence after 11 p.m. because the location would be filled with devotees until then. I felt this strong vibe while shooting in front of the temple which I can never forget. That's the most memorable moment from the VBVK shooting process."

Allu Aravind is one of the finest and the most trustworthy producers in the industry. So, we asked Kiran if there's anything that he learned from the successful producer. "I observed that Sir learns everyday. In all his interactions with youngsters, he really learns from all of them. He keeps himself updated and never stops learning," explained Kiran.

Likewise, the SR *Kalyanamandapam* actor had some great things to say about director Murali Kishor Abburu, "He's a wonderful person and a great writer. You can spend hours together with him discussing ideas and never get bored. He has a fantastic sense of humour and I love the way puts the dialogues across. The audience will certainly take notice of the dialogues in the film and talk about it."

In our conversation with the actor, we noticed that he isn't someone who takes things for granted. Looking back at his previous films which didn't do well at the box-office, he poignantly said, "I knew in the process (*Nenu Meeku Baga Kavalsinavaadini*) itself that something was missing. And while we all unitedly worked for the success of the film, things didn't work out in our way. I try not to repeat the same mistakes over and over again. I'm not someone who makes false promises to the audience. For all my films, I don't exaggerate about the content. I try my best to honestly promote the film. In the present day situation, we never know what's going to work. We can't really predict. We should be careful in promoting our films. I don't push the content of the film if it's bad."

There's a lot of negativity surrounding

the actor and he couldn't care less about the trolls circulating on social media. The actor was quick to deliver a dialogue from his latest film, "Negativity spreads easily but it will definitely stop somewhere. It might take time for positivity to spread but once it does, it catches on like wildfire," expressed Kiran, and continued, "I'm sure that if someone spreads negativity, it's not going to turn out to be the truth. I'm sure the negativity will stop. People who know me through my films and inter-

In an exclusive interaction with *The Pioneer*, actor Kiran Abbavaram, who is super excited for his upcoming film *Vinaro Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha*, shares some interesting insights about the film, memorable moment while shooting, negativity surrounding the actor, and more.

views know what I am and for the most part I get to meet a lot of positive people. There may be around five or six trolls who're trying to spread negativity. Now that I'm in the limelight, people will talk about it more."

All said, Kiran emanated nothing but confidence in our quick telephonic interaction. Before signing off, he reiterated, "I can proudly say that we

made a good film. The audience will definitely enjoy watching *Vinaro Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha* on 17th February. This Shivaratri, you all can watch it with your family and enjoy thoroughly and this is my promise. Please watch the film. I am happy because I know the film's result is going to be great. My only intention is that more people should know about this film and watch it in theaters."



Samantha's Shaakuntalam postponed, again

Sensational Samantha Ruth Prabhu starrer *Shaakuntalam*, based on a popular play Abhigyanam *Shakuntalam* by Kalidasa, has been postponed indefinitely.

The official handle of Sri Venkateswara Creations confirmed the news on social media, it said, "The theatrical release of *Shaakuntalam* stands postponed. The new release date will be announced soon @Gunasekhar1 @Samanthaprabhu2 @ActorDevMohan @neelima_guna #ManiSharma @GunaaTeamworks @SVC_official @tipsosocial @tipsmusicsooth"

The note read, "We regret to inform our beloved audience that we would not be able to release *Shaakuntalam* this 17th of February. We would be announcing the release date soon. Thank you for your continued support and love"

Written and directed by Gunasekhar. It is produced by Neelima Guna under Gunaa Teamworks and distributed by Sri Venkateswara Creations.

The film features Samantha in the titular role of Shakuntala and Dev Mohan as Dushyanta, the king of Puru dynasty along with Mohan Babu, Jisshu Sengupta, Madhoo, Gautami, Aditi Balan and Ananya Nagalla in supporting roles.

Tamannaah Bhatia becomes Myntra's brand ambassador

Myntra announced its association with the celebrated actor and fashionista, Tamannaah Bhatia, as its brand ambassador, further raising the celebrity quotient associated with one of India's leading fashion, beauty and lifestyle shopping destinations. Tamannaah will be seen in Myntra's latest brand campaign which is slated to go live shortly. Along with Vijay Deverakonda, who continues to be one of Myntra's brand ambassadors, the popular actors who are adored for their fashion sense as they are for their acting acumen, are all set to create a unique and impactful brand campaign for Myntra.

Speaking of the association, Tamannaah Bhatia, said, "It's so exciting to be associated with a brand that is a pioneer in the space of fashion! Glad to be a part of Myntra's brand campaigns, making fashion even more accessible to my fans across the country, and helping them elevate their everyday style with Myntra."



Aadi Sai Kumar-starrer CSI Sanatan on March 10

The makers of actor Aadi Saikumar's *CSI Sanatan*, under the Chaganti Production, recently unveiled the character of Aadi in the upcoming film. The actor will be seen playing the character of an investigative officer, who is trying to solve a murder case. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the makers had announced the release date of the film. The film is going to hit the theaters on March 10, 2023. The film stars Misha Narang, and Vasanthi Krishnan in prominent roles.



Kabzaa to hit screens on Puneeth Rajkumar's b'day

The much-awaited Kannada movie, *Kabzaa*, which is a pan-India release starring Upendra, Kichcha Sudeepa and Shriya Saran, will be released on the silver screen on March 17. The day also marks the birth anniversary of late Kannada superstar Puneeth Rajkumar.

Fans are celebrating the announcement of the film's

team. The movie's title song, which was released recently, has become an instant hit among the audience. The movie's posters and rushes have also garnered love and affection.

Kabzaa is directed by the acclaimed director R. Chandru, who has delivered a number of superhits. The film has already earned its place on IMDb's list of most-awaited movies.

Chiranjeevi's Waitair Veerayya to arrive on Netflix on Feb 27

Veteran star Chiranjeevi's hit Telugu film *Waitair Veerayya* is set to premiere on Netflix on February 27, the streaming platform announced on Tuesday.

The streamer shared the digital premier date of the film on Netflix India South Twitter page.

"In front there is Mega Force festival! *Waitair Veerayya* is coming to Netflix on 27th Feb and we can't keep calm," the tweet read.

The Telugu action movie stars Chiranjeevi in the titular role along side Ravi Teja, Shruti Haasan, Prakash Raj and Catherine Tresa. Directed by Bobby Kolli, *Waitair Veerayya* released in theaters on January 13. It has been produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar.



Siddhu joins hands with SVCC & director Sukumar

The young and talented Siddhu Jonnalagadda, has been wearing multiple hats as an actor, screenwriter, co-editor and creative producer. He attained phenomenal success with the film *DJ Tillu*. This movie stood out among the massive influx of Telugu films that have been released since the second wave of the epidemic. He is being choosy in selecting his films. And the actor locked his upcoming project.

On Tuesday, the actor celebrated his 31st birthday and announced his upcoming film. The new film which is the 8th film in his career is bankrolled by the popular producer BVSN Prasad under Sri Venkateswara Cine Chitra banner along with Sukumar Writings. The film which is tentatively titled *#Siddhu8* will be helmed by debutant Vaishnavi. The actor is currently working on much awaited sequel of *DJ Tillu* titled *Tillu Square*. He will soon start this exciting project and more details about the cast and crew will be announced soon. Now this exciting collaboration is unexpected and Siddhu is working back to back on top production house projects.

