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## FIRST MOBILE CREMATORIUM IN KARNATAKA LAUNCHED IN KUNDAPUR

The first mobile crematorium in Karnataka has been launched at Mudoor in Kundapur of Udupi district. The Mudoor primary agricultural cooperative society took the decision to address the cremation issues of mortal remains people belonging to rural areas, society president Vijaya Shastri and CEO Prabhakar Poojary said in a release. There are around 600 houses in Mudoor village and if anyone dies, the mortal remains need to be taken to Kundapur crematorium ground which is 40 km away. Considering the plight of the villagers, the society purchased the mobile crematorium costing Rs 5.8 lakh from a Kerala firm.

## R-DAY FLY-PAST: POOR VISIBILITY CURTAILS EXCITEMENT

Spectators could not fully enjoy the fly-past during the Republic Day parade at the Kartavya Path as a layer of fog lowered visibility levels to around 800 metres in the national capital on Thursday. The fly-past is one of the major attractions during the parade. Fifty aircraft took part in the 74th Republic Day celebrations that included an aerial display by Rafale, Mig-29 and Su-30 MKI fighters as well as C-130 Super Hercules and C-17 Globemaster transport planes. People stood at their places with their phone cameras open but faced trouble capturing aircraft formations due to the layer of fog and smoke cloaking the capital.

## ED'S POWER CONFINED TO PROBE MONEY LAUNDERING OFFENCE: HC

The Delhi High Court has held that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has the power to investigate and inquire into an offence of money laundering under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) only and it cannot assume that a predicate offence has been committed. The high court said the predicate offence has to be necessarily investigated and tried by the authorities empowered by law in that regard and the ED cannot possibly arrogate unto itself the power to investigate into the alleged commission of those offences. "What needs to be emphasised is that the PMLA empowers the ED to investigate Section 3 offences only.

## 9-YR-OLD TEACHES WB GOVERNOR HOW TO WRITE BENGALI ALPHABET

West Bengal Governor CV Anand Bose performed Hate Khadi', a ritual to teach the Bengali alphabet to a child, on the occasion of Saraswati Puja on Thursday in presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and other dignitaries. The governor, whose mother tongue is Malayalam, got the Bengali lesson from three children. Bose was taught how to write the first letter of the Bengali alphabet by nine-year-old Diyangshi Roy, a class 3 girl of a convent school in Chandannagar, on a blackboard. Ranjana Biswas and Subhajit Dhar, class 4 students of Raj Bhavan Free Primary School, taught him the meanings of two Bengali words Maa' (Mother) and Bhumi' (Earth).

# KCR's defiance a strategy

CM WANTS TO SEE BJP WALKING INTO HIS TRAP



NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

There is a strategy behind Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy's defiance. He is the only Chief Minister in the country who didn't celebrate Republic Day with the Governor. He celebrated R-Day at the Pragathi Bhavan, honoured the day, the martyrs and displayed his

patriotism. For the Chief Minister who is so particular about maintaining the federal structure and upholding the values of the Constitution, this defiance seems strategic. The Governor, Dr Tamilisai Sounderrajan, said that she would send a report to the Central Government on how the state government failed to follow guidelines on Republic Day and the

sequence of events. Political analysts believe that the Chief Minister wants the Centre to take a tough stand against him and thereby walk into his trap. Like his opponents, KCR is aware that the Telangana sentiment will no longer fetch him votes. Even the Delhi liquor scam,

### CM unfurls flag

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao unfurled the National Flag at Pragathi Bhavan and paid tributes to soldiers who had laid down their lives for the nation during 74th Republic Day celebrations of the country on Thursday. KCR celebrated Republic Day in a grand manner at the Pragathi Bhavan. He garlanded the portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and the architect of the Constitution, Dr BR Ambedkar, and paid floral tributes to them. The Chief Minister also remembered their services to the country.

### BRS 'thanks' Guv for echoing KCR's vision

The BRS in a quick rebuttal to the Telangana Governor said that her speech echoed the vision of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao's vision of choosing the country's infrastructure over the central vista during the pandemic. Kavitha, the daughter of the CM responded to Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Sounderrajan's Republic Day address. Kavitha in a Tweet reply to 'The Pioneer' said, "Choosing the country's infrastructure over the central vista during the pandemic is what we demanded."

### Ready to take taunts: Tamilisai

**PUDUCHERRY:** Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Thursday said the state government has 'undervalued' the importance of the Republic Day and has not held any official function to mark the occasion. Soundararajan, who is the Lt Governor of Puducherry, voiced concern over violations in observing conventions by the BRS regime in Telangana, which went against the vision of Dr B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution.



## REPUBLIC DAY CAPTURES CULTURAL DIVERSITY

## INDIA SHOWCASES MILITARY MIGHT



## A few shouldn't have farmhouses, says Guv



Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan took a swipe at Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao saying that a few people should not have farmhouses. The Governor hoisted the national flag at the Raj Bhavan here on Thursday on Republic Day. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao did not attend the event. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumar, DGP Anjani Kumar and other officials were present. The Governor, who was upset over the state

government confining R-Day celebration to the Raj Bhavan for a second year in a row, indirectly targeted KCR. She said that she wasn't given a speech to read out Raj Bhavan initiatives and so she had prepared it herself. "New buildings do not constitute development. Nation building is development. All farmers and marginalized people should get farms and houses."

## At-Home held at Raj Bhavan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The ceremonial At-Home was held at the Raj Bhavan. Even though the ruling BRS leaders gave it a miss, opposition leaders attended the event hosted by the Telangana Governor.

Bureaucrats also attended the event. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumar and DGP Anjani Kumar were present at the event. Special Chief Secretary Rama Krishna Rao, CEO Vikas Raj, Sunil Sharma, and Mahesh Bhagwat were also seen.

Among BJP leaders Sanjay, Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy, Vivek Venkatswamy, Babu Mohan, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy and Ramchander Rao were seen. Sanjay was seen introducing BJP leaders to the Governor.

The Governor greeted the guests and dignitaries at the At-Home organised on the occasion of Republic Day at the Raj Bhavan. Retired bureaucrat Ajay Mishra was also present.

## Congress sending feelers to Eatala, Vivek & Konda

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has been sending feelers to BJP's Huzurabad MLA Eatala Rajender. On Thursday, some Congress leaders including TPCC President Revanth Reddy and others shared the pain that Eatala Rajender had and indirectly signalled to attract Eatala towards the Congress.

It seems that the Congress has been trying to bag not only Eatala but also Vivek Venkata Swamy and Konda Vishweshwar Reddy by exploiting Eatala's 'covert' words in the last couple of days. Eatala had said that KCR's agents are present in all political parties and so leaders are not coming forward to join the BJP as KCR is blocking them.

TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that "the purpose for which Eatala Rajender went to the BJP has not been fulfilled."



## KCR must apologise to Guv, says Revanth

Declaring that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao mocked democracy by limiting Republic Day celebrations to the Pragathi Bhavan and Raj Bhavan, TPCC President Revanth Reddy demanded that KCR should apologise to the Governor unconditionally for creating a situation forcing the High Court to tell the government to celebrate Republic Day.

## KCR insulted Ambedkar by not holding R-Day function

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao has no moral right to live in this country as he failed to uphold democracy and insulted the Constitution, judiciary and the national flag, BJP's Telangana president Bandi Sanjay Kumar said on Thursday. Addressing party functionaries at

the BJP state headquarters after unfurling the tricolour on the 74th Republic Day, Sanjay said the Chief Minister had humiliated Dr BR Ambedkar by not organising Republic Day celebrations at the Secunderabad parade grounds, despite directions from the High Court.

Accusing KCR of repeatedly insulting Governor Dr Tamilisai

Soundararajan, the BJP leader wondered whether this is the regard the BRS leadership has towards women. "KCR has been inviting chief ministers of other states to prop up his BRS, but does he have the guts to ask them not to invite the Governors of their states to Republic Day functions?" he asked.



## FinMin contemplating sops for middle class

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry is considering proposals to benefit the middle class in its last full Budget of the Narendra Modi 2.0 government to be presented on February 1 in the Lok Sabha. The finance ministry is looking into proposals sent by various government departments on specific steps which may be announced in the Budget, benefitting a large section of the middle class, sources said.

The government has not raised income tax exemption limit from Rs 2.5 lakh which was fixed in 2014 by the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his first Budget.

Also the standard deduction has remained at Rs 50,000 since 2019. Several experts are of the opinion that the exemption limit as well as standard deduction need to be increased to compensate salaried middle class for elevated level of inflation.



## 'Halwa' ceremony returns... PAGE:8

The recent statement of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that she was aware of pressures of the

middle class has raised hope that some incentives may come for them in the upcoming Budget.

## YSRCP committed to 3 capitals concept: Botsa

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education Botsa Satyanarayana has reaffirmed that the YSR Congress government is committed to the development of three regions of AP State through three capitals under decentralised development policy. He objected to the provocative statements of Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan against decentralised development of AP and felt that Pawan has no subject and his party has no public policy.

The Minister slammed Pawan Kalyan for foul-mouthing on the Republic Day and said that he did not see such a shameless fellow like PK in his entire political career. He said that Pawan Kalyan does not know about the SC Sub-Plan and was ignorant that the Planning Commission had abolished it in

2014 itself and now at present it is called SC component. The YSR government has provided more than Rs 60,000 crore benefits to the SCs through 32 schemes under the DBT and non-DBT system and more than Rs 16,000 crore benefits to STs.

Botsa said that Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan share the same stand on decentralisation and are against it. YSRCP party policy is decentralised development and not three states but comprehensive development of three regions in the state. Time and again the CM has made this clear, he said.

Jagan Mohan Reddy has knowledge, experience, commitment and won 151 MLA seats and 22 MPs, the minister said.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
**Month & Paksham:** Sukla Paksha  
**Tithi:** Shashthi: Jan 26 10:28 AM to Jan 27 09:10 AM  
**Saptami:** Jan 27 09:10 AM to Jan 28 08:43 AM  
**Nakshatram:** Revati: Jan 26 06:56 PM to Jan 27 06:36 PM  
**Ashwini:** Jan 27 06:36 PM to Jan 28 07:06 PM  
**Rahukalam:** 11:04 AM to 12:28 PM  
**Yamagandam:** 3:16 PM to 4:40 PM  
**Variyam:** 03:01 PM to 04:39 PM  
**Gulika:** 8:16 AM to 09:40 AM  
**Amritakalam:** 04:14 PM to 05:49 PM  
**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 12:06 PM to 12:51 PM  
**HYDERABAD WEATHER**  
**Forecast:** Sunny  
**Temp:** 30°C  
**Humidity:** 51%  
**Sunrise:** 6:53 AM  
**Sunset:** 6:04 PM  
**Updated:** JANUARY 26, 2023 5:00 PM



## BJP brass meets to finalise candidates for Tripura polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Top leaders of the BJP including party chief J P Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and others met here on Thursday to finalise candidates for the upcoming Tripura assembly elections. The meeting was also attended by Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, BJP's state incharge Mahesh Sharma and Rajya Sabha MP Biplob Deb.

Earlier in the day, BJP's Tripura unit core group members met at party leader and northeast incharge Sambit Patra's residence.

The BJP is likely to finalise its candidates for the Tripura assembly elections on Friday in its central election committee meeting.

The 60-member Tripura assembly will go to polls on February 16. The last date for filling nominations is January 30.

# Even brief exposure to air pollution may impair brain function

PNS ■ TORONTO

Just two hours of exposure to air pollution may impair human brain function, according to a study.

The researchers found that exposure to diesel exhaust for just two hours causes a decrease in the brain's functional connectivity - a measure of how different areas of the brain interact and communicate with each other.

The study, published in the journal Environmental Health, provides the first evidence in humans, from a controlled experiment, of altered brain network connectivity induced by air pollution.

"For many decades, scientists thought the brain may be protected from the harmful effects of air pollution," said senior study author Chris Carlsten, a professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in



Canada.

"This study, which is the first of its kind in the world, provides fresh evidence supporting a connection between air pollution and cognition," Carlsten said.

The researchers briefly exposed 25 healthy adults to diesel exhaust and filtered air at different times in a laboratory setting.

They measured the brain activity before and after each exposure using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

The team also analysed changes in the brain's default mode network (DMN), a set of inter-connected brain regions that play an important role in memory and internal thought.

The fMRI revealed that participants had decreased functional connectivity in widespread regions of the DMN after exposure to diesel exhaust, compared to filtered air.

"We know that altered functional connectivity in the DMN has been associated with reduced cognitive performance and symptoms of depression, so it is concerning to see traffic pollution interrupting these same networks," said Jodie Gawryluk, a professor at the University of Victoria in Canada and the study's first author.

"While more research is needed to fully understand the functional impacts of these changes, it is possible that they

may impair people's thinking or ability to work," Gawryluk said.

The researchers noted that the changes in the brain were temporary and participants' connectivity returned to normal after the exposure.

Carlsten speculated that the effects could be long lasting where exposure is continuous. He said that people should be mindful of the air they are breathing and take appropriate steps to minimise their exposure to potentially harmful air pollutants like car exhaust.

"People may want to think twice the next time they are stuck in traffic with the windows rolled down," said Carlsten.

"It's important to ensure that your car's air filter is in good working order, and if you're walking or biking down a busy street, consider diverting to a less busy route," he said.

## Playing 'Sarinja' never fetched me financial security, rues Roy

PNS ■ JALPAIGURI

Centurion folk artist Mangala Kanti Roy, who plays a bowed instrument, 'Sarinja', said that he was happy to have been chosen for Padma Shri, but lamented the art form never fetched him any financial security.

A resident of remote Dhawlaguri village in Jalpaiguri, Roy recalled that he had started playing the instrument when he was just five years old.

Having mastered the art of extracting bird calls and other animal sounds at an early age, he reproduces these with his instrument, much to the delight of the



audience.

"I am happy to have got this honour, but financial security

has always eluded me despite my commitment to the art form," the 101-year-old folk artiste, who leads a very modest life in his village, said.

He rued the deterioration in his living condition owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, with calls for performances at cultural events and programmes having dried up over the past two years.

The artiste has three sons and one daughter but lives alone.

"I just want to leave the world without much suffering," he said. Roy was conferred 'Banga Ratna' by the Mamata Banerjee government in 2017.

## Upset over delay, passenger tweets flight hijacked held

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A man was arrested for allegedly falsely tweeting that a flight going from Dubai to Jaipur had been hijacked, police said on Thursday.

The incident took place on Wednesday.

Moti Singh Rathore, a resident of Nagaur in Rajasthan, arrived at the Indira Gandhi International Airport after a Dubai-Jaipur was diverted to Delhi due to bad weather, Deputy Commissioner of Police (airport) Ravi Kumar Singh said.

The flight landed at 9:45 am and was given clearance to depart at 1:40 pm. Meanwhile, Rathore tweeted "flight hijack", the police said.

Rathore was offloaded from the flight with his bag and the flight was allowed to leave after the necessary checks. He was handed over to the local police for further action, they said.

The accused told police that he posted the tweet as he was frustrated over the flight being stranded, they added.

A case was registered in the matter and Rathore was arrested, the police said.

## 70% more than...

Continued from page 1

that is 7,778 MW. Projects with a capacity of 8,085 MW are in various stages of development to meet the growing needs of lift irrigation, industrial consumers and other categories.

In an effort to become self-sufficient on the power front, all four units of the Bhadradi Thermal Power Station (4 X 270 MW) were commissioned and works at the 5 X 800 MW Yadadi Thermal Power Station have been expedited and all five units will be commissioned by the end of next year. The transmission and distribution network is being strengthened with an investment of Rs 38,070 crore. Telangana has become the first state to provide 24-hour free power supply to the agriculture

sector with a huge base of around 28 lakh agricultural connections from 01.01.2018 onwards.

As per the directions of the Chief Minister to maintain uninterrupted power supply to the twin cities the 400 KV Ring System has been established around the GHMC area by laying 142 circuit kilometres (CKM) of 400 KV lines interlinking six 400 KV substations and constructing eight 220 KV substations around the city. The CMD said that the Chief Minister has hailed the efforts of power utilities on many occasions.

"I appeal to all engineers and employees to focus on improving the overall performance of power utilities through modern techniques to maintain the image created over the last few years and for improvement of the TS power sector," he said.

## Cong files plaint against Kaushik, KTR for using offensive words

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has filed a complaint with the Union Home Ministry requesting it to probe and take action against BRS MLC Padi Kaushik Reddy and IT Minister KT Ramarao and other BRS leaders who used offensive language against the Governor under IPC Sections 124 and 124A.

Former TPCC general secretary Bakka Judson on Thursday filed the complaint that as per IPC Section 124 which states that whoever with the intention of inducing or compelling the Governor of

any State, to exercise or refrain from exercising in any manner any of the lawful powers of such President or Governor, assaults or wrongfully restrains, or attempts wrongfully to restrain, or overawes, by means of criminal force or the show of criminal force, or attempts so to overawe, such President or Governor shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

He said that according to IPC Section 124A whoever by words, either spoken or writ-

ten, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with fine.

He said according to the two above Sections MLC Kaushik Reddy and Minister KT Rama Rao insulted the Governor Chair with offensive language and disgraceful words.

## KCR's defiance a strategy

Continued from page 1

the MLAs' poaching case and continuous raids by Central agencies didn't create any public sympathy for the BRS. At the moment, KCR wants to be at the receiving end and let the Centre take a tough stand against him. KCR

wants the Governor to complain so that the Centre will take cognizance of the issue, will take a tough stand against the state and may be even impose President's rule.

Political analysts believe that if there is a ceasefire violation by the Centre, the public mood will shift in

favour of the BRS. In tune with this, KCR is gearing up for holding elections at any time. The massive reshuffle of IPS officers, the expected one of IAS officers and the early budget session are indications of his preparedness.

Even if the Assembly is dissolved early, KCR will be the interim CM and

Governor Dr Tamilisai will be at the helm of affairs.

Political analysts believe that if the Governor is given administrative powers things will turn difficult for KCR and his government. KCR thinks that he can then play the sympathy card and turn the wind in his favour.

## BRS 'thanks' Guv for echoing KCR's vision

Continued from page 1

Choosing farmers, labourers, and unemployed youth over focusing on wealth generation for a few is exactly what we have been fighting for. Thank you for echoing the vision of CM KCR Garu." Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav said that it is not appropriate for the Governor to talk politics on Republic Day. He said that the Governor spoke against the spirit of the Constitution and that he will write a letter to President Draupadi Murmu regarding the Governor's stand as in matters concerning the Governor, the President should be informed. He said that it is not right to act in favour of a party while holding a Constitutional post. Talasani Srinivas Yadav said that it is not appropriate to use the day when the Constitution came into force for politicking. Gutta Sukhender Reddy said that democracy has been upheld in Telangana. He said that it is sad that people in higher posts are not paying attention to the development of Telangana. Those who criticise the state government should also say what the Centre has done. When asked what the Centre has done, he criticised them for talking only about National Highways. He said that everyone is happy in Telangana and that if the development of the state is not seen by some nothing can be done about that.

## A few shouldn't have...

Continued from page 1

Only a few shouldn't have farmhouses. That is not development," said Dr Tamilisai.

"Our children should study in universities which have world-class infrastructure. That is development. Sending only my child abroad is not development," she added.

Opposition parties, especially the BJP, have been targeting KCR for his farmhouse and his palatial official residence Pragati Bhavan built a few years ago.

The Governor's comment came amid her growing rift with the KCR government. On many occasions, she had trained guns on the government for not respecting the office of the Governor while the ruling BRS attacked her for acting like a BJP leader.

During her Republic Day speech, the Governor praised the Modi government for sanctioning National Highways and a Vande Bharat train for Telangana. The Governor called for protecting the honour of Telangana, and safeguarding democracy. She said that her bond with Telangana goes beyond the three years she spent here as Governor.

Dr Tamilisai said she would continue to play a role in the development of

Telangana. "My strengths are hard work and sincerity. Some people may not like me but I like Telangana and that's why I will continue to work for Telangana despite all difficulties," she said.

The Governor also referred to what she called stressful conditions in Telangana. "National statistics show that every day 22 people commit suicide in Telangana. That is approximately one suicide every hour," she said and appealed to youngsters saying that life is challenging and that we have to face challenges bravely.

The Governor said all institutions of democracy like Constitutional authorities, the elected government, public representatives, public servants and individuals must carry out their duties strictly as the Constitution mandates.

She said the very creation of Telangana was in the true spirit of the Constitution. Article 3 of the Constitution made the creation of Telangana possible as per the aspirations of the people of Telangana after their relentless fight for almost six decades.

She described Telangana as a unique blend of history, heritage and modernity which is known for its unity and diversity and is loved all over the world.

## Ready to take taunts: Tamilisai

Continued from page 1

The Governor said she was, "fed up with such breaches" and "as the going goes, even if someone spits at me, I will simply wipe off." Seen as a hint at the strained relationship between the Telangana Raj Bhavan and the state government and taunts hurled at her, the governor said the scenario would not deter her from working for the people's welfare in the Telugu state. By not holding any official function, the BRS government has 'committed violations' and this necessitated a citizen in the State to move the High Court for relief, she told reporters here on the sidelines of 'At Home' reception in Raj Nivas.

The Telangana High Court has also 'strongly condemned' the state government for its failure to celebrate the day in the state. "I have however felicitated some persons at Raj Bhavan and gave respect to the national flag before coming to Pudukcherry," she said. Soundararajan, who flew down to Pudukcherry from Telangana said she had written to the Centre on the developments. "I keep sending reports to the Centre on several developments in Telangana every month," she noted. The Telangana government should have held the ceremonial function at Parade Ground in Hyderabad.

Continued from page 1

Eatala joined the BJP to topple KCR but he realised that KCR's agents are present in the BJP too. The situation is such that Eatala now has to find another way to achieve his goal, Revanth said.

"The leaders who had joined the BJP to overthrow KCR's dictatorial government are now not happy with the BJP," he said. Revanth said that the fact that the BJP and KCR are one is clear from the words of Eatala. So people should think about it, he said.

In a chat chat with journo at the Gandhi Bhavan after unfurling the national flag on the 74th Republic Day on Thursday, Revanth said that Eatala Rajender, Vivek Venkataswamy and Konda Vishweshwar Reddy do not subscribe to the BJP ideology but all three oppose KCR. "The BJP ideology does not matter to Eatala, Vivek and Konda," he said.

Revanth said that there is some dissatisfaction in the BJP as Eatala said that KCR's agents are present in the BJP too.

Eatala is now in such a posi-

tion that he cannot move either forward or backward, Revanth said. Although Eatala joined the BJP to defeat KCR, he is now unhappy as his goal has not been achieved.

"Eatala, Vivek and Konda are looking for other options. They should go by the principles they believe in," Revanth said.

The TPCC President said that whether it is Huzurabad or Munugode, BJP's votes depend on the situation. But on other occasions the BJP will not get votes, he said.

Revanth said that CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has been speaking to BRS leader Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy. The party high command has assigned to Bhatti the responsibility to speak to Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, he said.

Revanth said that the Congress will tighten the anti-defection law if it comes to power at the Centre.

"We will reduce the age to contest in Assembly elections from 25 years to 21. When a 21-year-old can become a collector why cannot a 21-year-old become an MLA?" he asked.

Continued from page 1

He said that it is shameful that the BRS government failed to place the huge Ambedkar statue even though years have gone by and said that the conditions that now exist in the nation are similar to British times. Speaking after unfurling the national flag on Thursday on the 74th Republic Day, Revanth said that everyone has to recall the greatness of the nation.

He said that the Congress had "given" the nation a wonderful Constitution, but some came to power speaking lies.

He said that the Modi government has been "selling" the assets of PSUs to private companies. The Centre has been selling assets worth thousands of billions for "peanuts," he added.

Revanth said that a conspiracy is going on to cut off the poor from reservations. The BJP toppled nine state governments mocking the Constitution, he said and added that there is a need to give strict punishments to defectors like the ones given to murderers and rapists.

## Book tracks concept of democracy since its beginning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From the popular assemblies of Syria-Mesopotamia and the Indian subcontinent to present-day challenges around the world, John Keane, the co-author of much-acclaimed "To Kill a Democracy", tells the history of democracy in his latest book.

"The Shortest History of Democracy", published by Pan Macmillan India, traces byzantine history from the age of

assembly democracy in Athens to European-inspired electoral democracy, and the birth of representative government to our age of 'monitory democracy'.

"The book tracks the long continuities, gradual changes, crises and sudden upheavals that have defined its history. It pays attention to past shocks and setbacks when democracy suffered a crushing blow, or committed genocide.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹180
Without Skin	₹190
Broiler at Farm	₹140
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	529
HYDERABAD	527
VISAKHAPATNAM	525
RETAIL PRICE (IN VJAYAWADA)	₹5.29

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# Republic Day marked by pomp, gaiety across city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Various government offices across Telangana and Hyderabad on Thursday celebrated the 74th Republic Day.

Telangana Information and Civil Relations Department Director Rajamouli hoisted the national flag at Samakhara Bhavan at Masab Tank FDC Complex on Thursday. He said, "Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao developed the state in all fields with the inspiration of the Constitution and set Telangana as an example for the country."

Chairman of Telangana State Film Development Corporation Anil Kurmachalam, Additional Director of Information Public Relations Department, Nagaiah Kamble, Joint Directors Jagan, Srinivas, CIE Radhakishan, officers, and staff participated in the programme.

The Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi celebrated the Republic Day. Speaking on the



occasion, Resident Commissioner Gaurav Uppal said, "The TS-iPass single window system implemented in our state is very attractive to the people."

"After the implementation of this new policy, many new policies were brought to the state. Apart from that, Telangana state has emerged as a strong power in the IT sector and Hyderabad city has become a major IT hub in the world," he said

Telangana Home Minister, Mohammed Mahmud Ali hoisted the national flag at the

minister's quarters. At the Regional Passport Office in Hyderabad, the national flag was hoisted by Regional Passport Officer and Head of MEA Branch, Secretariat, Hyderabad, Dasari Balaiah. Amit Kumar Singh, Protector of Emigrants, Indu Bhusan Lenka, Deputy Passport Officer, along with staff and officers of RPO, Protector of Emigrants, and MEA Branch Secretariat were present.

Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation Ltd, Vice Chairman & Managing Director, E.Venkat

Narasimha Reddy, hoisted the national flag at Parishrama Bhavan, Basheerbagh. During the celebrations, Vedulla Madhusudan, CEO, TSIC, B Sunitha Bai, CGM, N Shiva Kumar, SDC, N Andalu, GM, K Ram Reddy, DGM, and R Vittal, DGM and other senior officials were present.

The Telangana State Minorities Finnacle Corporation chairman Mohammed Imtiyaz Ishaq, along with the president of the Telangana Urdu Academy, Mohammed Khaja Mujeebuddin hoisted the national flag at the Haj House ground. At the Telangana State Information Commission, Information Commissioner Khaleelullah hoisted the national flag. At the Cyberabad Commissionerate, M Stephen Raveendra hoisted the national flag and paid tribute to the freedom fighters. "Although we got independence on August 15, 1947, many nobles who felt that we were still following the British monarchy took steps towards writing a Constitution," he said.

Future generations must get pleasant environs: Talasani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Animal husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Thursday said the future generations must be given a pleasant environment.

The minister inaugurated a Nursery Mela organised at People's Plaza on PV Narsimha Rao Marg. He visited the stalls set up with plants brought from different states of the country and examined the plants.

"We all have a responsibility to protect the environment. To protect it and increase the greenery in the state, the Telangana state government under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has undertaken a great programme called Harita Haram and planted crores of plants every year."

"It is said that if we plant saplings today, it will be good for future generations," Yadav added.

He then appreciated the organisers for putting up the grand Nursery Mela. Varieties of plants available in different parts of India are available at the mela.

# 11 SRDP works to be completed by Jan 2024

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Commissioner DS Lokesh Kumar said that GHMC is working hard to provide infrastructure and facilities to meet the growing population of the city. The commissioner unfurled the national flag at the GHMC headquarters on the occasion of Republic Day on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said that 42 works have been undertaken under the State Rural Development Plan (SRDP) in Hyderabad and 31 works have been completed so far. Out of them, 18 flyovers, five underpasses and 7 ROB/RUB have been made available. He said that all the remaining 11 works will be completed by January 2024.

He said that the Comprehensive Road Maintenance Programme (CRMP) aims to re-carpet 811.96 km of road and so far 744.46 km has been re-carpeted.

He said that 35 works have been undertaken at an estimated cost of Rs 733 crore under the GHMC to solve the flood problem for the city dwellers



living in the low-lying areas. Out of them eight works have been completed so far and the remaining works will be completed on war footing, he said.

He said that Hyderabad is going ahead in the construction sector and building permits will be given promptly in a transparent single window system. In this order, permission has been issued for 13,724 house constructions so far, he said. A total of 1,778 TDRs were issued in lieu of cash compensation for land acquisition of assets.

The Commissioner said that 10,021 works have been undertaken at an estimated cost of Rs 2,250.27 crore this year for the development of internal roads, storm water drains, drainage,

construction of compound walls, community halls and graveyards of all religions. He explained that while 4,225 works have been completed so far, the remaining works are in various stages of progress.

Lokesh Kumar said that innovative 29 model corridor roads have been taken up to provide facilities to the people at the level of world cities. He said that parking, cycling, vending zones and greenery facilities are being provided in these corridor roads. He said that the city will be developed as a pedestrian-friendly city. He said that while there were 20 foot-over-bridges in the past, 22 new foot-over-bridges have been constructed at a cost of around Rs76 crore.

# SCR registered gross revenue of Rs 13,787 crore in '22

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway (SCR) General Manager Arun Kumar Jain on Thursday said, "The SCR has registered a gross originating revenue of Rs 13,787 crore between April and December 2022."

"This is significantly high by about 35% over the same nine month period of the last fiscal. History has been created during the period, with freight loading of SCR scaling new heights to cross 100 million tonnes mark in the shortest-ever period right since the zone's inception," he added.

He was speaking at the Republic Day celebrations organized by the SCR here on Thursday. "The celebrations this day merit an opportunity for us to analyse the performance of our zone in the current financial year and formulate plans to attain the best results by the end of the fiscal."

He further said, "A milestone has been achieved in just



nine months and nine days. The freight revenue also surpassed the Rs. 10,000-crore mark in just nine months and 16 days during the financial year, signifying zeal to reach the zenith."

"The same positive approach drives us through the balance period of the current financial year, as SCR is well on course to achieve highest-ever freight loading for any financial year," Jain added.

"The parcel segment too contributed its share, with well-planned movement of parcel special trains, milk carrying "Doodh Duroto" special trains and such innovative measures as joining hands

with the Indian Postal department to introduce the concept of end-to-end parcel transportation from originating to the destination place," he remarked.

"In the passenger traffic segment, SCR has carried 189 millions from April till December 2022, generating revenue of Rs 3,782 crore, which is 86 % high over the same period during the last fiscal," the General Manager said.

Shedding light on the last-mile connectivity project of the SCR, Jain said, "198 km of track has been added to the zone's network in the form of new lines, doubling and tripling. The projects completed this year include Bhadrachalam-Sattupalli new rail line with electrification, Bethampudi Bye-Pass, Vijayawada - Gudivada - Bhimavaram - Narsapur; Gudivada - Machilipatnam; Narsapur - Nidadavolu Doubling and electrification project."

# Inter-state drug peddling duo arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A team of the Commissioner's Task Force, South Zone, in coordination with the Chatrinaka police, on Thursday arrested two persons involved in inter-state drug peddling.

The two accused were identified as 26-year-old Sultan Malik and 32 -year -old Chandan Naveen. Both of them are natives of Madhya Pradesh. The police seized, 9.315 kg of ganja, two mobile phones and a motor cycle from the accused.

The accused Naveen aka Chandan worked as a car driver at Malkanjigiri in Odisha. Upon learning of the demand for ganja in Hyderabad, he decided to sell the contraband to the needy customers in the city. Naveen used to visit Hyderabad to meet his friend, Malik who is residing in Hyderabad. He worked as a decorator in marriage halls. Chandan explained his plan of selling ganja in Hyderabad, Malik also agreed to do it.



# City tops in vehicles registered in 2021-22

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rangareddy district topped the state in the registration of cars, registering a total of 38,074 cars in 2021-22, according to Telangana State Statistical Abstract.

Rangareddy district is followed by Medchal-Malkajigiri district and Hyderabad.

However, Hyderabad district ranked number one in the state in the registration of all kinds of vehicles.

Hyderabad district achieved the distinction of the district

having registered the most number of vehicles. In 2021-22, 1.43 lakh vehicles were registered in Hyderabad, followed by Medchal-Malkajigiri district (1.27 lakh) and Rangareddy district (1.24 lakh).

Of the total 8.79 lakh vehicles registered in the state, 3,94,476 were registered in Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Medchal districts. Of the total vehicles registered, 3,49,500 vehicles were non-transport vehicles.

The sex-ratio in the state

was put at 988 females for every 1,000 males. Rangareddy has only 950 females for every 1,000 males, the lowest in the state. However, Hyderabad district has 954 females for every 1,000 males. There are 957 females for every 1,000 males in Malkajigiri district.

According to the sex ratio, among the children aged 0-6 years, the number of females for every 1,000 males is as follows: Hyderabad-914, Medchal-934 and Rangareddy-925.

# R-Day celebrated at Nehru Zoological Park

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 74th Republic Day was celebrated on Thursday at Nehru Zoological Park. The national flag was hoisted by curator S Rajashekhar.

On this occasion, appreciation certificates and prize money were awarded to the employees who rendered the best services in their allotted field and sections. Speaking on the occasion, Rajashekhar requested all the employees to work hard with dedication to make it the best zoo in the world. "Our zoo is having many feathers of initially introducing the display system of moats, Safari park complex and Nocturnal animal house," he added.

The curator thanked all the higher officials of the Forest Department for supporting Nehru Zoological Park. He congratulated all the award winners and thanked all the employees for rendering their valuable services to the zoo.

# Govt nod for transfers of teacher couples

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has taken a decision to transfer the teacher couples (husband and wife) to one place. It has been decided to transfer couples in 12 districts which were stopped earlier. It has issued orders to transfer 427 teachers in 12 districts except Suryapet.

On the other hand, the process of promotions and transfers of teachers will begin in the state from Friday. To this extent, Education Secretary Vakati Karuna issued GO No.5 on Thursday. Transfers and promotions will be done manually through web-counselling. Category vacancies, seniority lists of school assistants eligible for promotion to principals will be announced online.

Online applications for

**The process of promotions and transfers of teachers will begin in the state from Friday. To this extent, Education Secretary Vakati Karuna issued GO**

transfers will be accepted from January 28 to 30. Hard copies of applications should be submitted by high school teachers to the respective principals, government primary and secondary teachers to the respective MEOs, Mandal Parishad primary and secondary teachers to the respective complex principals, high school principals to the DEO, between January 31 and February 2.

# LIC forging ahead in tech services

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

LIC Zonal Manager I Mukkavilli Jagannath unfurled the national flag on Thursday marking the 74th Republic Day celebrations and addressed all the employees, development officers and agents.

In his address, Jagannath said that LIC is providing best services to the policyholders with its innovative technological advancements. Several facilities came up that are facilitating the customer to get services in minimum possible time. He called upon everyone to adapt to the changes that are coming about, which can contribute to the growth of the self as also of the organisation.

Vidyanand Jha, Vineet Srivastav, Sainath, K Muralidar, Regional Managers and Rajiv Biswas, senior DM were present.

# KCR meets Chatrapati's descedant Sambhaji Raje

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former MP Chhatrapati Sambhaji Raje, who is 13th descendant of Maratha hero Chhatrapati Shivaji, grandson of Sahu Maharaj, successor of Kolhapur princely state and Swaraj movement activist, paid a courtesy call on Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao at Pragati Bhavan on Thursday.

The Chief Minister welcomed Sambhaji Raje by presenting a shawl and a flower bouquet and hosted lunch to Sambhaji Raje. They held deep discussions on many issues. Sambhaji Raje enquired about the public welfare and development achieved by the Telangana State within a short time and stood as a role model for the country.

Shambhaji Raje is keen to know the operational procedures followed by the Telangana State government in providing welfare to the people of all sections, including farm-



ers, SC, ST, BC and Minorities. He expressed wish that Telangana development model and welfare schemes should be implemented in Maharashtra as well. He opined that the magnificent Telangana devel-

opment model should not be limited here but also extend to all other states including Maharashtra.

Apart from development issues, KCR and Sambhaji Raje had a lengthy discussion on the

political situation in the country. The Chief Minister and former MP opined that an innovative agenda aimed at public welfare is necessary to come before the people for the integrity of the country. They

both decided to meet again and discuss all the issues if necessary depending on the occasion.

They both recollected the services rendered by the ancestors of Sambhaji Raje from Shivaji Maharaj to Sahu Maharaj to the country. KCR opined that their rule towards equality and public welfare will remain in the history of the country with golden letters.

In the discussion, the Chief Minister made it clear that, with their inspiration, people's rule will continue in Telangana without caste and religious discrimination.

On this occasion, Shambhaji Raje presented the book 'Rajarsi Sahu Chhatrapati' to KCR. Minister of Roads and Buildings Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Chamakura Mallareddy, MLCs Kavitha, Madhusudhana Chari, Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and representatives came on behalf of Sambhaji Raje and others were present in the meeting.

# Blood stocks dwindling in city banks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Blood banks in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation are finding blood stored at them is inadequate to the increasing demand for blood, according to those who are running the blood banks.

The increased surgeries in government private hospitals, which are put at least 3,000 per day, patients making a beeline to Hyderabad not only from other states but other countries, has put pressure on the blood banks.

In fact, the number of blood

banks in the state has increased from 174 to 274, but there is always shortage of blood. In GHMC limits alone, there were over 83 blood banks, but their number has increased to 100.

On a normal day, all blood banks would be able to supply 150-200 units of blood of all groups. The blood banks store the blood given by near and dear of patients and blood units collected through blood donation camps.

Prior to Covid-19, educational institutions and government and private organisations used to organise blood



donation camps and supply the same to blood banks. On the occasion of birthdays of political leaders, political outfits conduct the blood-donation

camps. Currently, such activities have dwindled.

There are over 10,000 WhatsApp and Twitter groups in the city as far as blood-dona-

tion is concerned. Some twitter and Facebook pages are devoted to blood-donation alone. If any posts message seeking blood, donors in the vicinity will go to hospitals and donate blood. After the Covid-19, many of these groups are not active.

Thalassemia and sickle cell anaemia patients require monthly transfusion of blood. They register their names with the nearby blood banks. Several blood bank organisers say that they are able to supply blood to these patients and also delivery cases where blood transfusion

is necessary. Cancer patients require transfusion of white blood cells. But the white blood cells stocks have also exhausted with the blood banks. The organisers of the blood bank indicate that it would be a Herculean task for them to supply if the number of surgery cases increase in the city.

Some private and corporate hospitals are not entertaining blood units brought from outside. Surgeries are being postponed for patients having some rare blood groups with blood units matching their group not available.

# DGP holds first crime review meeting after rejig

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana DGP Anjani Kumar held his first-month crime review meeting with all IPS officers, emphasising key points on to face challenges, how to adapt proactive policing to increase the conviction rate and maintaining the safety and security of Telangana citizens at the top. This meeting comes after 91 police officers were reshuffled.

He said, "Any organisation, including police forces, should work together without regard to anything. Held a first-month crime review meeting with all IPS officers, emphasising key points on how to handle pressure, face challenges, adapt proactive policing to increase conviction rate and remove indifference within the police force. Keeping Telangana citizens' safety and security as a priority," he added.







# BJP trying to detect KCR's agents in its ranks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has suffered a lot due to the word 'coverts'. Congress leaders criticised their own leaders saying that some of them are functioning as agents of the BRS and the BJP.

But the 'covert' phenomenon is now troubling the BJP also. BJP National Executive Committee Member Huzurabad MLA Eatala Rajender said that BRS President Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's agents exist in all political parties in Telangana. He also stated that they are trying to find out KCR's agents inside the BJP.

Eatala's comments created a flutter in the BJP. Party leaders have been holding discussions to find "the agents of KCR in the BJP". This has become a hot topic in the party and now BJP leaders are busy discussing about agents inside the party.

When contacted, the Telangana BJP's official



**Eatala's comments created a flutter in the BJP. Party leaders have been holding discussions to find "the agents of KCR in the BJP."**

spokesperson NV Subhash said that KCR concentrates on other political parties' moves rather than his own party's. So Eatala might have said that there are enemy agents in the party.

"KCR should concentrate on public welfare instead of wasting time on covert moves.

We have been making our moves openly and have been inviting leaders to join the BJP if they like our policies. I don't think the BJP has agents. We have only full-time workers."

However, Eatala has been saying that KCR has agents in all political parties. Congress

leaders like TPCC President Revanth Reddy, senior leader M. Kondanda Reddy and Dr Cheruku Sudhakar tried to exploit Eatala's comments. They said that BJP leaders Eatala Rajender, Vivek Venkataswamy and Konda Vishweshwar Reddy are unhappy.

# Rythu Sangham warns of 'backlash' if Centre pursues anti-farmer policies

**A massive rally was organised demanding that the BJP-led Union government withdraw Electricity Reforms Bill**

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The BJP-led government at the Centre is conspiring to bring back the "black farm laws" stealthily to help the corporates to rule the roost over the farmers, according to State Rythu Sangham. A massive tractor rally was taken out in response to the call given by Telangana Rythu Sangham. The farmers took part in the rally carrying the national flags.

Rythu Sangham State unit leaders Bontala Chandra Reddy and Mudireddy Sudhakar Reddy, while addressing the rally, expressed concern over the BJP-led Union government "conspiring" to bring back the three black farm laws in a different form. They exhorted the farmers to be ready to organise agitation if the Centre tried to harm the interest of the farmers.

The rally was organised on



Farmers taking out a tractor rally in Nalgonda on Thursday

Republic Day to highlight the problems being faced by farmers. The leaders demanded that the Centre legalise minimum support price for agricultural produce, withdraw its proposal to fix meters to agriculture pump sets and implementation of other laws for the benefit of farmers.

The tractor rally started from the District Collectorate and went through the main streets of the town. The farmers, while speaking at the rally,

went at the Central government hammer and tongs for trying to help the corporates by harming the interests of the farmers. The farmers, instead of celebrating Republic Day at their respective places, had to take to roads to protest because of the present government's anti-farmer policies.

The farmers alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been supporting capitalists, industrialists and corporates and harming the interests of

the farmers. The policies being pursued by the Centre have led to depriving the farmers and farmworkers of their livelihood. The farmers warned the Centre of 'backlash' if it did not withdraw the electricity reforms bill. They demanded that the government extend benefits to tenant farmers, too. They appealed to the State and Central government to allot sufficient funds for the benefit of the agriculture sector.

## TOWERING FEAT



State Government chief whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar, Warangal Mayor Gundu Sudharani, Warangal MP P Dayakar, KUDA chairman Sundar Raj and GWMC Commissioner P Pravinya at unfurling of the national flag on a 150-foot flagpole at Bhadrakali Bund. The flagpole was erected at a cost of Rs 25 lakh.

# Students told to develop patriotic spirit, work hard

PNS ■ WARANGAL

A grand celebration was organised on the occasion of Republic Day at Kakatiya Institute of Technology and Science, Warangal (KITSW), an autonomous institute under Kakatiya University. Principal Prof K Ashoka Reddy unfurled the national flag on the occasion.

Former MP Rajya Sabha and KITSW chairman V Lakshminikantha Rao and treasurer, P Narayana Reddy and KITSW additional Secretary, Husnabad MLA Vodithala Sateesh Kumar congratulated and appreciated the faculty, staff and students for the grand celebration of republic day.

Speaking on this occasion the principal highlighted the history of the Indian



KITSW principal K Ashok Reddy speaking at the Republic Day celebration at KITSW in Warangal on Thursday

Constitution and the supreme sacrifices of freedom fighters and soldiers. He exhorted the young budding engineers to develop patriotic spirit and work for the prosperity of the nation. For the past ten years, KITSW was recognised as the gold category institute by AICTE-CII. "Our manage-

ment has established a Centre for innovation, incubation and Research" worth 10 crores," he said.

The management provided basic research facilities through the centre of excellence, composite material lab, artificial heart lab facility, NI lab view academy and Robotic Process Automation on the campus. KITSW has been concentrating on disruptive technologies. The Students and faculty have been working together in line with the institute's mission of "Making our students technologically superior and ethically strong," he added. In this celebration Administrative Officer Prof P Ramesh Reddy, dean of students affairs Prof G Raghotham Reddy, and associate dean M Narsimha were present.

# Govt blamed for rise in crime against women

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Mahila Morcha State unit president Geethamurthy on Thursday alleged that IT Minister KT Rama Rao's followers were harassing tribal and Dalit girls.

While speaking to the media on Thursday, Geethamurthy claimed that there was a rise in crime against women. She said that the government in the State failed to check crimes against women.

It should be held responsible for the rise in crimes against women. There was no protection for women in Telangana. She further said that the Governor was being insulted everywhere and the way MLC Kaushik Reddy spoke against the Governor was shameful.

# Good days ahead for Telugus as poll campaigns begin

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

Good days are here again for the commoners of the two Telugu states. Without much work, they can now earn money every day. The reason is that all major political parties have decided to hit the roads in both the Telugu states ahead of the Assembly elections.

In the past elections used to be a festival for common people. Gradually, the common people made the elections become very expensive. Political parties now consider everything that can give them political mileage. In the same way common people too are dealing with political parties in a give-and-take manner.

In Telangana, all political parties are in election mode. Some leaders have decided to launch marathon padayatras and some political parties are planning a series of public meetings.

In Andhra Pradesh TDP leader Nara Lokesh and Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan are launching a marathon

padayatra and bus yatra respectively. Without public attendance, these political yatras do not get publicity and bring political mileage.

During the times of Chief Ministers NT Rama Rao and YS Rajasekhar Reddy when they launched their Chaitanya Ratham yatra and Praja Prasthan Maha padayatra people attended voluntarily and thousands walked for miles with them. But now political parties have made politics a business and they have made it a habit to get things done by giving money.

The gatherings for yatras or the public meetings of political parties depend on the money spent by that party. Political parties are spending money to mobilise the public by giving them 'daily wages' apart from providing transport, food and liquor.

Due to this nowadays no one goes to the programmes of political parties voluntarily. Some activists of political parties have also stopped going voluntarily to their party programmes.

Political parties are competing with each other in mobilising the public to show their clout.

After governments introduced welfare schemes farmers are facing a problem in harvesting crops. As political parties have started their moves agricultural workers may not be available in villages as they are going to be busy.

Political parties and their leaders should maintain some dedicated workers to mobilise the public. Till elections are over every day is 'gana bhajana' for the commoners of Telugu states.

Earlier, political parties and their leaders used to start spending money around 40 days before elections. Now political parties have started spending money a full year before elections.

Common people are 'encashing' the competition between political parties. Governments are providing them with many sops and now political parties too are helping them to earn without much work thanks to democracy. What more do they want?

# Cong leader Rajanarsimha's brother Ramchander to join BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Election Management Committee Chairman Damodara Rajanarsimha's younger brother Ramchander Rajanarsimha is preparing the ground to join the BJP.

Ramachandrar met Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay and the affair has led to a big debate in Telangana politics.

Ramachandrar is not the only one joining the BJP. He is going to join the BJP with Sangareddy district leaders.

If everything goes according to plan, Ramchander is going to join the BJP in two or three days. If that happens, it will be a big shock for Damodara Rajanarsimha.

However, this is not the first time that such shocks have come from one's own family during elections. During the last election, Rajanarsimha's wife Padmini Reddy joined the BJP. Padmini planned to contest the elections two or three times but that did not work out.

Padmini joined the BJP after she got an assurance

that she will be given a ticket to contest the Assembly elections. But she did not stay in the BJP even for a single day. She joined the BJP in the morning and went back in the evening. Despite this, Damodara Rajanarsimha did not win the last election.

Then the wife and now it can be said that his younger brother has shocked Damodara Rajanarsimha. There are local rumours that it will not be surprising if the younger brother joins the BJP and contests against the elder one. If that happens, the situation will change completely.

Activists and followers say that if the brothers cross swords a third person is likely to win.

However, flexes have already been displayed in front of the State BJP office on Thursday. It is learnt that the party postponed the joining of Ramachandrar Rajanarsimha due to former minister Babu Mohan's objection. When contacted, BJP state general secretary G. Premender Reddy said that Ramachandrar will join soon.

# Horrific murder of man on suspicion of witchcraft

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

A horrific murder of a man on suspicion of plasticising witchcraft came to light on Thursday in Jagtial district. The police registered a case based on the complaint filed by Village Revenue Assistant.



Mallapur Sub-Inspector Navewen Sangham, after obtaining permission from Tahsildar, had the body exhumed. The deceased was identified as Nukattu Gangaram, a resident of Mallapur. The body was shifted to the Government Hospital for post-mortem.

The police, after examining the injuries on the body, concluded that Ganaram was brutally murdered. Mettappalli Circle Inspector Satyanarayana said that three persons were taken into custody for interrogation on the suspicion of their involvement in the murder.

# R-day celebrations in districts marked by fervour

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Patriotic fervour and gaiety marked the Republic Day celebrations across Telangana State. District Collector, after unfurling the national flag, inspected a guard of honour. The celebrations were marked by the exchange of greetings and felicitation of freedom fighters.

**Sangareddy District**  
District Collector A Sharat unfurled the national flag at the newly built Integrated Collectorate Complex. Later, he addressed the gathering explaining the developmental initiatives implemented in the district. Impressed by cultural events presented by school students, he announced Rs

10,000 cash prize to KGBV at Osman Nagar, Rs 7,500 to the TSWREIS, and Rs 2,500 each to Kotwal High School and MPPS in Kandi Mandal and Karuna High School in Sangareddy.

He disbursed Rs 174.22 crore among SHGs of the district under the bank-linkage scheme under the aegis of the Rural Development department of the district. Also, he disbursed Rs 91.23 crore among SHGs under MEPMA.

**Nizamabad District**  
District Collector C Narayana Reddy unfurled the tricolour at the Integrated Collectorate Complex here.

He delivered a keynote address highlighting the implementation of developmental



programmes implemented in the district through various government departments. City Mayor Neetu Kiran, District Judge K Sunita, and City Police Commissioner KR Nagaraju were prominent among those who took part in the celebrations.

Later, the District Collector went round various stalls

installed by government departments.

Government residential schools' students presented Mera Bharat Mahan dance show, while Vasudha Imperial School students gave a dance performance to Vandemataram.

Abhyasa School students presented the Dharani Dandalamma dance, while KGBV at Indalval presented the folk dance.

**In Mahabubnagar**  
District Collector S Venkata Rao, after hoisting the tricolour, called upon the people of the district to cooperate with the district administration for the development of the district.

He listed out various govern-

ment schemes being implemented for the development of the district. Excise Minister Dr V Srinivas Goud is implementing comprehensive measures to eradicate poverty and to develop the district comprehensively, he added.

The District Collector briefed the gathering about the programmes to be implemented in future for the development of the district.

JP Chairperson Swarna Sudhakar Reddy, local bodies additional collector Tejas Nandlal Pawar, District SP R Venkateswarlu, additional collector K Sitaramulu, and additional SP Ramulu were prominent among those who were present on the occasion.

**In Nalgonda**

District Collector T Vinay Krishna Reddy unveiled the national tricolour at the Collectorate here on Thursday. Earlier, he inspected a guard of honour presented by the police.

JP Chairman Bandla Narender Reddy, MLC Kotireddy, MLA Kancharla Bhupal Reddy, Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha chairman R Mallikarjun Reddy, Municipal Chairman M Saidi Reddy, SP Rema Rajeshwari and others were present on the occasion.

**In Suryapet**  
District Collector Patil Hemant Kesav has maintained that the district administration is working hard to ensure that the government schemes reach every household in the district.

## NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

# Will BJP go to polls in alliance with Jana Sena?

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM  
■ VIJAYAWADA

It seems the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders have no clarity on whether the alliance with the Jana Sena will continue in the future or go to polls in tieup with the Pawan Kalyan's party.

The BJP AP affairs in-charge and Union Minister Muralidharan and national co-general secretary Siva Prakash, addressing State executive meetings held in Bhimavaram four days ago, suggested that the BJP in Andhra Pradesh not align with any party and it should become an alternative force by increasing its strength.

At the same time, the resolution introduced in the BJP executive committee meeting said that the BJP should align with the like-minded parties, causing embarrassment to State party leaders as the BJP is already in alliance with the Jana Sena.

The BJP State executive meeting has failed to send a clear signal to the cadre that the party would continue its alliance with the JSP in AP.

Causing more embarrassment to the leaders and cadre, some BJP senior leaders confirmed that the BJP's alliance with the JSP would continue. Significantly, Union Minister Muralidharan spoke against the regional parties stating



that the regional parties are detrimental to the progress of the country and the regional parties are also family parties.

The BJP leaders recalled that BJP aligned with the Shiv Sena, Janata Dal (S), Janata Dal (U) and several other regional parties previously. Jana Sena is also a regional party with which the BJP aligned in AP, a BJP leader said.

The then Palnadu district president Saيدا Rao told the media that he was asked by a State general secretary why the Jana Sena flag was placed in BJP meetings. This clearly indicates some BJP leaders are against working with JSP, a BJP said.

In the backdrop of Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan meeting recently, Pawan Kalyan and JSP were not mentioned in the BJP executive committee meetings.

Meanwhile, Pawan Kalyan's recent statement that, if needed, he would go for a new alliance with other parties to ensure that anti-YSRCP votes would not split, put the BJP leaders and cadre in confusion.

# 'Pawan should clarify on TDP-JSP CM candidate'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Advisor to Government (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has demanded that Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan first decide who will be the Chief Minister of his alliance with clarity before bringing down the present government. He claimed that YSR Congress (YSRC) will not fear facing political parties individually or as a group or as a political alliance. He further claimed that Pawan is talking against the Jagan government whenever Chandrababu Naidu presses the remote button and AP public is aware about the role of Pawan in politics.

Sajjala told the media persons that CM Jagan announced about contesting all 175 seats by YSRC and questioned if Chandrababu and Pawan have courage to announce the same. He further questioned whether Lokesh is really asking to make his father the Chief Minister again or he wants to become CM, or does he sit behind the scenes and spin the wheel. He asked Lokesh that if their alliance gets majority, would he say that Pawan Kalyan and TD will share two-and-a-half years each, or Pawan Kalyan will be the Chief Minister and if Chandrababu would support him. He sought to know if



TDP and JSP have faith in winning elections and then they should talk about power sharing.

Sajjala said that Pawan Kalyan's alliances are strange and his aim is to make Chandrababu as CM. Hence, Pawan mentions options without clarity. Demanding that Jana Sena should first decide who will be CM - Naidu, Lokesh or Pawan - before forming alliance, he further demanded Pawan say that he will work to make Chandrababu CM like in 2014.


He said that Telugu Desam and Jana Sena spread bad publicity about cuts in funds to SC and ST welfare but people will not believe the propaganda as they are receiving welfare schemes directly in their bank accounts. He said that during Chandrababu's regime, Rs 33,000 crore was spent on the welfare of SCs in five years but the Jagan government had spent Rs 78,000 crore in these three-and-a-half years through DBT and non-DBT schemes.



INDIA CORNER


### Padma Shri winning artist dedicates award to lovers of ‘zadipatti’ theatre

Parshuram Khune, a veteran ‘zadipatti’ theatre artist from Gadchiroli in Maharashtra who has won the Padma Shri award, dedicated the honour to the lovers of the folk theatre form he is associated with. Speaking to PTI on Thursday, Khune said, ‘I dedicate my award at the feet of zadipatti theatre lovers, who gave me love and encouragement during the last 50 years of my journey in this field.’ Khune said he has been associated with drama and theatre since his childhood as his father and brother also worked in this field. As per a government website, zadipatti derives its name from the local name zadi’ for rice. The zadipatti theatre form is practised in the eastern region of Maharashtra, especially in Chandrapur, Bhandara, Gadchiroli and Gondia districts. Performed in the rice-cultivating region during the harvest season, it is a blend of commercial and folk theatre form. Live music is a vital part of the zadipatti theatre form and actors are singers as well, it said.



### 13 students detained for organising BBC docu screening at Jamia released: Police

Thirteen students detained for organising a screening of the BBC documentary on the 2002 Gujarat riots at Jamia Millia Islamia on Wednesday have been released, officials said. The detained students were released after the Republic Day parade on Thursday, a senior police officer said. The government had recently directed social media platforms to block links to the documentary titled ‘India: The Modi Question’. The External Affairs Ministry has trashed the documentary as a ‘propaganda piece’ that lacks objectivity and reflects a colonial mindset. Scores of students were detained on Wednesday as they gathered outside the university gate to protest against the detention of four Students’ Federation of India (SFI) activists hours before the proposed screening. While the police released a majority of the detained students on Wednesday evening, 13 remained in detention, the SFI had claimed. The SFI announced the screening of ‘India: The Modi Question’ on Wednesday.



### G-20 meet in J-K is ‘message to enemies of humanity’: LG Manoj Sinha

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday said the upcoming G-20 meeting in Jammu and Kashmir is a ‘message to the enemies of humanity’ and urged people of the Union territory to come forward and make it an ‘inclusive’ event. ‘The G-20 meeting being held in Jammu and Kashmir in May this year is a message to the enemies of humanity who were attacking the interests of our citizens through cowardly acts of terrorism for decades,’ Sinha said while addressing a Republic Day function here. He said that Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India, is the ‘life blood’ of the country. Sinha said it is the guiding lamp of the civilization and ‘eternal sound of our social consciousness’. ‘Jammu and Kashmir today stands tall with self-confidence, encompassing the great heritage and cultural values of the world’s largest republic. Today, J&K is marching forward on the path to progress,’ he said. ‘I urge every section of the society to come forward and make the G-20 an inclusive event,’ the LG said.



# India showcases military might



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India’s military prowess infused with a spirit of ‘aatmanirbharta’ and diverse and vibrant cultural heritage were showcased on the Kartavya Path as the nation celebrated its 74th Republic Day on Thursday. ‘Nari Shakti’ was predominantly the theme of the celebrations with President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a host of other dignitaries joining people and members of the armed forces in marking the august occasion. Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was the chief guest at the ceremonial event.

A combined band and marching contingent of the

## Indians abroad celebrate R-Day



**NEW DELHI:** Indians across the world on Thursday celebrated the 74th Republic Day with global leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, Israeli, Australian and Bhutanese Prime Ministers, extending their greetings, highlighting their strong friendship with India. In Beijing, officials and diaspora members attended the flag unfurling ceremony in the premises of the Indian Embassy.

Egyptian Armed Forces also took part in the parade that started around 10:30 am and ended close to noon after a fly-past. The Egyptian contingent included 144 soldiers representing the main branches of the Egyptian Armed Forces and it

was led by Col Mahmoud Mohamed Abdelfattah Elkharrasawy. The ceremony commenced with Prime Minister Modi visiting the National War Memorial and paying tributes to the fallen heroes by laying a wreath.

## Republic Day captures nation’s cultural diversity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Republic Day parades capturing India’s rich diversity were held across the country on Thursday as states listed their achievements and outlined development agenda, with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan saying his government was working on a new excise policy to discourage liquor consumption.

In a major announcement, apparently eyeing the Assembly elections slated to be held by the end of this year, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said unemployed youth will be given a monthly allowance from the next financial year.

The celebrations, however, could not gloss over the differences between the Telangana

government and the Raj Bhavan over protocol and other issues. After unfurling the national flag at the Raj Bhavan, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan said she would work for the people of the state though ‘some may not like her’. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao did not attend the event.

‘New buildings are not only for development. Nation building is for development.’

All the farmers and marginalised people should have farms and houses. Few should not have farmhouses. That is not the development,’ she said. Noting that Telangana is also witnessing a tremendous expansion of national highways, she thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allocating the lion’s share in the sector to the state.

# BSF, Pak Rangers exchange sweets along border

PNS ■ JAMMU

The BSF and Pakistan Rangers exchanged sweets and greetings at various outposts along the International Border in Jammu on the occasion of India’s 74th Republic Day on Thursday, officials said. The Border

Security Force offered sweets to Pakistan Rangers and they reciprocated, the officials said. The exchange of sweets took place at border outposts in Akhnoor, Samba, Kathua, Arnia and R S Pura in a cordial manner, a Border Security Force official said. Indian Army troops also exchanged sweets and greetings with their Pakistani

counterparts at forward posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri and Poonch districts, according to the officials. Republic Day was celebrated at the frontier headquarters here.

BSF Inspector General D K Boora unfurled the tricolour on the occasion and conveyed his warm wishes to all ‘Seema Praharis’ serving at the

International Border and the LoC and their families. He also recalled the supreme sacrifices of BSF troops.

The IG said the BSF has always faced all challenges firmly to ensure the safety of Indians and will always be committed to the security of the nation

# Mandaviya unveils world’s first intranasal Covid-Vax

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday unveiled the world’s first intranasal Covid vaccine iNCOVACC and said it marks a ‘glorious tribute to the call for Atmanirbhar Bharat’.

He launched the vaccine in the presence of Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Jitendra Singh.

The Union health ministry said the roll-out of iNCOVACC is expected to begin in private hospitals which have placed advance orders for the same.

Although the initial manufacturing capacity of several million doses per annum has been established, it can be scaled up to a billion doses as required. iNCOVACC is priced at Rs 325 per dose for large volume procurement by state governments and the Government of India.

The company, in a statement, said the vaccine is now available on CoWIN, and priced at Rs 800 for private markets and Rs 325 for supplies to the central and state governments.

Developed by Bharat Biotech, iNCOVACC is the world’s first intranasal COVID-19 vaccine to receive approval for the primary two-dose schedule, and as a heterologous booster dose for adults. It is developed by the Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) in collaboration with the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a PSU under the Department of



Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology.

Expressing his elation at the event, Mandaviya said over 65 per cent of vaccines supplied in the world are from India.

Congratulating the BBIL team and the Department of Biotechnology for bringing about the vaccine, he stated that ‘being the world’s first intra-nasal COVID-19 vaccine, this marks a glorious tribute to the call for Atmanirbhar Bharat’.

The health minister added that India’s vaccine manufacturing and innovation capability is appreciated all over the world as it has made a mark in producing quality and affordable medicines.

He also highlighted that BBIL in collaboration with ICMR had introduced Covaxin in India within a month of the launch of the first Covid vaccine in the world.

Congratulating BBIL for innovating another vaccine in collaboration with BIRAC, Jitendra Singh said, ‘India has taken a lead in developing vaccines and medicines for diseases common in the developing world.’

## Change in BJP poster stokes hope in Vasundhara Raje camp in Rajasthan

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan politics is abuzz with speculations on return of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje as the BJP’s CM candidate, ever since she has appeared on a poster outside the party’s office here.

Raje’s picture in the poster outside the BJP’s state headquarters has stoked her supporters’ hope that the leader may yet again be made the party’s CM face in the state. The poster had been replaced recently ahead of the party’s working committee meeting which was held on Sunday and Monday at Entertainment paradise, with the concluding session address by BJP president JP Nadda. The earlier poster bore photos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief JP Nadda on one corner, and those of BJP state president Satish Poonia and Leader of Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria on the other, with the name and symbol of the party in the middle. In the poster that hangs now outside the party office, Raje finds



a place between Poonia and Kataria. Her supporters believe her picture is a message from the party high command that she may be made the CM candidate in the coming election. However, the anti-Raje camp dismissed the change in poster as a mere balancing act ahead of the elections, which they say has been done in several other states before a major poll.

Raje’s supporters feel that the two-time chief minister has been sidelined by the party after her defeat in 2018, even though the leader continues to mount a show of strength through rallies such as one she did on her birthday in March to keep her presence palpable.

‘She is back in the poster and the message is clear that the party is giving her importance and this is connected to the upcoming elections. She is a stalwart leader and the party cannot ignore her,’ said a Raje supporter.

A leader from the Satish Poonia camp said there is nothing unusual in her appearing in the poster.

‘Her photos were there on posters during the ‘Jan Aakrosh Yatra’. Her photo appearing in posters is not a new thing,’ he said.

Just like Congress, the BJP in Rajasthan is also beset with infighting, with Poonia and Raje, currently the party’s national vice president, engaged in a polar battle.

Asked about the change in BJP poster, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said that it was an internal matter of the party.

‘It is an internal matter of their party, whether they want to give attention (to her) or not, our path is clear. When our government came in 1998, we had 156 seats, I was the PCC chief then.

## 32 lakh devotees take holy dip in Ganga, Sangam

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ (UP)

Thirty-two lakh devotees took a dip in Ganga and Sangam on the occasion of Basant Panchami -- the fourth bathing festival of the ongoing ‘Magh Mela’ -- here on Thursday, officials said.

Sangam is a confluence of three rivers -- Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati. Additional Mela Officer Vivek Chaturvedi said, ‘From 4 am to 4 pm on Thursday, 32 lakh devotees took a dip in Ganga and Sangam.’ Kashi Sumeru Peethadishwar Swami Narendranand Saraswati said the goddess of knowledge, Saraswati, was born on the day of Basant Panchami. That is why this day is celebrated as the birth anniversary of Mother Saraswati.

More than 5,000 police personnel have been deployed at the fair for security. Senior Superintendent of Police (Magh Mela) Rajeev Narayan Mishra said.

Arrangements have also been made for river ambulances and floating police posts. The crowd is being monitored through CCTV, body and drone cameras, he added. The next bath will take place on ‘Maghi Purnima’ on February 5. The ‘Magh Mela’ will conclude with a final bath on the occasion of ‘Mahashivratri’ on February 18.



## CHINA HAS STRONG ECONOMIC, STRATEGIC NEED IN EASTERN SECTOR ‘Aggressively building its army to dominate’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

China has a strong economic and strategic need in the Ladakh sector, which is why it is aggressively building its army to dominate the unfenced locations on the Indian side to lay claim on more areas, according to an official paper circulated at a high-level meeting.

The paper, prepared by Indian Police Service officers and submitted at the DGPs/IGPs meet held last week, said the country’s border defense strategy should be given a new meaning and purpose with an economic incentive for the future, given India’s limitation to be a part of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) or

the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

The paper suggests the strategy needs to be area-specific e.g. border tourism can be promoted aggressively in the Turtuk or Siachen sector, and Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) or Depsang plains.

On the Karakoram pass in the DBO, the paper said it is an ancient connection to India’s silk route history, and opening the area to domestic tourists shall counter the remoteness of the idea.

It suggested that expeditions on the pass which were famous since the 1930s can be restarted and trekking and hiking areas be opened in a limited manner.

## PRIMARY PAYLOAD HANDED OVER TO ISRO

# Mission to study Sun likely to be launched by June

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) on Thursday handed over to ISRO, the Visible Line Emission Coronagraph (VELC), the primary payload on board Aditya-L1, which is India’s first dedicated scientific mission to study the Sun, to be launched by June or July.

The handing over ceremony

was held in the presence of the ISRO Chairman S Somanath at the Centre for Research and Education in Science and Technology (CREST) campus of IIA near here. IIA said it has successfully finished assembling, testing and calibrating the VELC, which is the largest and one of the most technically challenging of the seven payloads/telescopes that will fly on Aditya-

L1, at its CREST campus.

ISRO will now conduct further testing of VELC and its eventual integration with the Aditya-L1 spacecraft, it said in a release.

Congratulating the VELC team, Somanath said the launch of Aditya-L1 is expected to be around June or July.

He said, ‘Understanding the effect of the Sun on Earth and its surroundings has



become very important now and Aditya-L1 aims to shed light on this topic. It has taken 15 years for VELC from concept to completion, and this period was needed for a complex system like this. The VELC has been the finest collaboration between IIA and ISRO’ Aditya L1 is the first space-based Indian mission to study the Sun from a halo orbit around the Lagrangian

point 1 (L 1) of the Sun-Earth system. This mission with seven payloads on board to observe the photosphere, chromosphere and the outermost layers of the Sun (the corona) will provide greater advantage of observing the solar activities and its effect on space weather, according to officials of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Spirit of India

President Murmu's speech will inspire some people to imbibe the essence of her address to the nation

In her address to the nation on the eve of the 74th Republic Day, President Droupadi Murmu began with her emphasis on "the spirit of India" which, she said, has remained undeterred despite long foreign rule. We have succeeded as a democratic republic because so many creeds and so many languages have not divided us, they have only united us, she said, adding that that is the essence of India. This was in tune with the famous lines of the national song *Saare jahaan se achha*... where Iqbal said, "*Kuchh baat hai ki hasti mitati nahin hamaari*... We fought against the British Empire, but this fight didn't embitter against the British or Western civilisation; so, when the Constitution was prepared in the late 1940s, the founding fathers and mothers (for there were also 15 women in the Constituent Assembly) of the Republic went through, in the President's words, "a long and profound thought process" which culminated in our Constitution. Revolutionaries and reformers, visionaries and idealists helped us learn about our age-old values of peace, brotherhood and equality, she said. Those who shaped the modern Indian mind also welcomed progressive ideas from abroad. This was in consonance with the Vedic prescription, "Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions." This is how the ancient civilisation and modern republic made a tryst with destiny.

President Murmu underlined the progress made on the economic front: India becoming the fifth largest economy in the world against the backdrop of high economic uncertainties around the world; its ability to rise after the devastating effects of Covid-19, with most sectors shaking off the pandemic effect; the Government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. Economic development has accompanied concern for "those on the margins." Being the first President of a tribal origin, she knows this very well. She showered fulsome praise on the generations of people for their invaluable contribution in the development story of our Republic so far. Her speech should be appreciated and its messages imbibed in our lives, be it about national unity, economic development, inclusiveness, concern for the environment, or healthy lifestyles. But, unfortunately, such speeches are received with insouciance. From the man on the street to the high and mighty, most people don't pay attention. One reason is that there is a great deal of cynicism in our politics and public life. Politicians and public intellectuals say nice things about the nation, economy, society, etc., to achieve their own goals; and once their personal targets are achieved, they become part of the very system they had criticised in the not-so-distant past. Idealism becomes a vehicle to reach their destination; once they reach where they wanted to, they usually abandon the vehicle. Hopefully, President Murmu's speech will inspire some people, particularly those who matter, to imbibe its spirit.

### PICTALK



Folk artists perform during the 74th Republic Day parade at the Kartavya Path, in New Delhi

PTI

## News Jihad

The Supreme court says news channels create divisions in society

The supreme court recently made an observation that is apt and timely. The Supreme Court on Friday said the television channels are creating divisions in society, as they are agenda-driven and compete to sensationalize the news. The apex court also asked the news channels to do away with the anchors who create a schism in society while anchoring the news programs and debates. Sadly, this is true and continues despite the Supreme Court's earlier warning. Hate-mongering on the news channels has now become a norm. Divisive agenda and hate mongering has grown exponentially in recent years as news channels as also their anchors are immune to legal action, hiding behind the shield of freedom of Press. In the guise of news agenda-driven propaganda is being dished out to the people while engaging them in toxic communal debates that only lead to hatred in the society. The court observation comes from a bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna



who observed that channels seem to sensationalize issues and work in tandem to promote a specific agenda. It is bizarre that often, even the vocabulary used by the news anchors is the same on a topic. This cannot be a mere coincidence.

A free and fair press that talked about the issues of the people and had people's interests in the heart is long gone. It suits the news channels to have toxic debates as news gathering and research is a costly proposition while having a debate in the studio is easy; all you need is a foul-mouthed anchor to provoke the panel. This is a win-win for everyone; news channels get TRPs, anchors, get popularity, and panelists get mileage to set shop based on their TV appearances. Nupur Sharma got her chance to indulge in blasphemy on a TV channel (which caused uproar and led to the loss of lives) thanks to a TV anchor. While FIR was lodged against Nupur, the TV channel and the anchor got away without a blemish. If one digs deeper, it is not only about the TRPs alone but also about pleasing powers that be who benefit from such toxic debates as the people's attention is deflected from the main issues and the irrelevant issues become the talk of the town. Such polarization comes in handy at election time. The Govt has informed the court that a comprehensive amendment to CrPC is in the pipeline and the Govt is in the process of taking people's suggestions. One can only hope that such a law would rein in the errant anchors and their bosses.

# Tragedy of the commons

A knee jerk approach won't help. A fresh development strategy for the Himalayas based on its ecosystem, needs to be worked out

The media is agog with the breaking news "Joshimath is sinking" and there is a situation of alarm around. However, the symptoms of this tragedy were visible for a long time and people in the town have been pleading for assistance from the state and district administration to help mitigate the damage or find solutions to the problem which has affected their health and home. In August 2022, experts from reputed institutions.

IIT-Roorkee, the Geological Survey of India, Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee, and the Uttarakhand Disaster Management Authority shared their apprehensions of an approaching disaster. They warned about the cracks surfacing not only in Joshimath but also in other areas of the Chamoli district. However, nobody took notice and worse still the officials turned a blind eye. Now, that the damage has been done, the government is proactive and has announced a host of remedial measures like ceasing the construction of the NTPC Hydro Power plant and along the Helang Bypass till further orders and all sorts of technical resources from far and wide are being summoned to Joshimath to mitigate the situation which has gone out of hand.

At this critical juncture, we need to analyze the reasons for the prevailing situation and try to find solutions. The first reason for this sorry state of affairs is that despite the suggestions of an expert group appointed by the Supreme Court that 'the terrain above the Main Central Thrust (MCT) in general and above the winter snowline in particular, should be kept free from hydropower interventions', the Central government allowed the commissioning of large Hydropower projects even after the 2013 Kedarnath tragedy. Again, in December 2014, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change in an affidavit warned of direct and indirect impact on hydropower projects in



the aggravation of floods in 2013 and suggested that 'it is essential to demarcate areas in the higher Himalayan region that are naturally unstable for hydropower projects. In 2016, the Ministry of Water Resources told the Apex Court that a review of such projects was essential to protect the safety of people living in these areas. Instead of taking notice of these timely warnings, the Centre abated another assault on the Himalayas. In 2016, the Central government approved the 800 Km four lane Char Dham Highway Project in the hills which led to the widespread cutting of trees, destabilization of valley slopes, destruction of natural springs, and dumping of muck and debris in valleys below.

The second reason is the blatant disregard for following environmental norms while executing the projects. All large projects are subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and must have an Environment Management Plan (EMP). The Char Dham project was broken into 53 projects of less than 100 Km each to escape these regulatory requirements. So, given the fact that the projects harmed the environment, the projects escaped all regulatory scrutiny and the need for a remedial EMP. Worst still, as per the study of the Vidi Centre for Legal



AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE, WE NEED TO ANALYSE THE REASONS FOR THE PREVAILING SITUATION AND TRY TO FIND SOLUTIONS

Policy, between 2020 to 2022, 123 regulatory changes were made in environmental rules to relax rules and give exemptions to projects from the statutory requirements. The third reason was the unregulated promotion of religious tourism in ecologically sensitive areas at the cost of environmental degradation. The Himalayan terrain demands sustainable tourism and not mass tourism as is happening at present. The records indicate that during last year the daily footfall of tourists along the Char Dham route was reported to be around 58,000 and due to the convergence of tourists in such large numbers the plastic waste dumped in pits and cleaning operations resorting to open burning is highly hazardous. The Kedarnath floods in 2013 which were directly proportional to the unregulated rise in tourism, leading to the construction boom in the unsafe zone such as river valleys, floodplains, and slopes vulnerable to landslides was a wake-up call.

Now, let us focus on the solution part. The April 2022 report of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) shows the mirror stating that 'in the long term, it will be necessary to focus on finding alternative sources of energy, as the area appears to be environmentally sensitive.'

A fresh development strategy for the Himalayas based on the region's natural resources such as forest, water, biodiversity, and ecotourism needs to be worked out. The focus should be on small projects that would help provide a local energy supply without causing environmental degradation. The majority of the farmers in Uttarakhand Himalayan districts have given up traditional farming and most of the land lies fallow. There is a need to formulate an appropriate strategy for the well-being of the local population which should be based on traditional knowledge, environmentally friendly agricultural practices, construction practices, and local cultural aspects.

Joshimath episode is yet another timely warning to stop intrusive anthropogenic activities in the form of massive construction projects of building townships, highways, tunnels, railway tracks, and dams. The holistic approach toward the sinking Himalayas is the need of the hour. The sooner we understand, the better it is for the coming generations.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman of the Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. This is the concluding part of two-part series on the Joshimath disaster. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INDIA ON TOP

Sir — On 1 July 2023, India will be World's largest population, 1,428 billion, beating China. India is a rich country with poor people. More than poverty in terms of money it is poverty in thoughts that matter. It is said that the mind is the reason for liberation and the mind is the reason for bondage. And there is no bondage except those we acknowledge. Let us break free, dream big, think out of the box. Let us recall our strength is our diversity, our UID's unique identity is unity in diversity.

TS Karthik | Chennai

### SNUB FOR DIGVIJAY SINGH

Sir — Snubbing former two-time Chief Minister (CM) Digvijay Singh for questioning surgical strikes, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi termed his comments "ridiculous" and said the armed forces are doing their job "exceptionally well" and do not need to give any proof. In this way, Rahul Gandhi, not only once and for all, has put a lid on the controversies related to the surgical strikes in the wake of the terror attacks by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, but also, he has positioned himself as a leader for whom the national interest comes first. In this way, he supported the army, and never asked for proof, aligning himself with the valour of soldiers and their actions.

Side by side Rahul is adopting a similar stand as the Modi government of the day, but at the same time, he is making it clear that he is no less nationalist and supporter of the army action (of surgical strikes) than the men in power at this time. Unable to understand that even after Rahul Gandhi's snubbing Digvijay Singh questioning surgical strikes, once again BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad demanded the Congress to "clear its stand" over the issue of terrorism and national security. Why? Has Rahul not given his statement? Ravi Shankar, you are the one now using the army for your political gains. It's BJP's tradition that it is dragging it (army, Kargil war, or

## Debt, unemployment rising



As per the report the debt, unemployment, and inequality have risen in the country and the debt of every Indian has increased by 2.5 times in the last few years. The astronomical increase in the government's debt has crushed the common people as the debt per Indian has increased from Rs 43,124 to Rs 1,09,373. In absolute terms, the debt per Indian has

increased by Rs 66,249 in the last nine years.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for 2022, India's debt to GDP was 83 percent, far above other emerging markets and developing economies that have an average debt of 64.5 percent. According to the Oxfam report, the wealthiest five percent in India own more than 60 percent of the country's wealth, while the bottom half of the population (50 percent) together share just three percent of the wealth. On the other side, 64 percent of the Rs 14.83 lakh crore collected in Goods and Services Tax (GST) came from the bottom 50 percent of the population, with only three percent of the amount coming from the top 10 percent. With this India is heading for bankruptcy and a disastrous economy.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Pulwama) just for the sake of generating a vote bank as always. When on the back foot, BJP has always tried to take political advantage of the martyrdom of our soldiers.

Bidyut K Chatterjee | Faridabad

### NEXT YEAR'S ELECTIONS ARE CRUCIAL

Sir — Next year's Lok Sabha polls, also seen as 'the-2024 final' across the country's political corridors, assume a great deal of significance for both the opposition parties as well as BJP-led ruling dispensation at the Centre alike. This is evident from the desperate endeavours for building yet another 'Third Front' against the formidable BJP ahead of the Parliamentary Election have been hogging the media headlines once again, even though all the Third Fronts have thus far had short shelf lives thanks to many a political stalwart who are avidly ambitious of becoming the next Prime Minister of this largest democracy in the world. In her article in this prestigious paper's edition today, revered columnist Kalyani Shankar has elaborated on all the pros and cons of this Opposition's big dream.

Verily speaking, the most significant and inevitable element for the Opposition's

sought-after unity that's the 'convergence of views' among them is miserably missing owing to the Himalayan egos these opposition leaders harbour. Ironically, a couple of former Chief Ministers including Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal to name also overtly show aversion to the grand old party's inclusion in the grand alliance of the non-BJP parties. But this will simply prove to be a tall order for them because through its Rahul Gandhi-led ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', the Congress has succeeded in ameliorating its public image- going by the warm welcome the foot march has received from the people across the states it traversed- and thereby brightened its electoral prospects as well which can be cashed in on by making the Congress their part and parcel. The author's sage advice that a united Opposition with a consensus Prime Ministerial face, as well as a common minimum program alone, stands a chance of coming to power at the Centre after as many as ten years, merits serious reflection.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

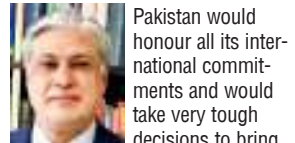
Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

I believe all rectifications have been made in it (film). The Censor Board has made corrections. Controversial words have been removed. So, I don't see any point in protesting now.



MP Home Minister — Narottam Mishra

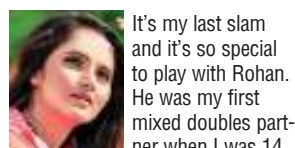


Pakistan would honour all its international commitments and would take very tough decisions to bring economic stability to the country. Pakistan Finance Minister — Ishaq Dar



(Pathan is) Brilliantly directed and conceptualised by Sid Anand! And as for the KING! He went nowhere, he just waited for the right time to RULE!

Filmmaker — Karan Johar



It's my last slam and it's so special to play with Rohan. He was my first mixed doubles partner when I was 14 and today, I'm 36 and he is 42 and we are still playing. Tennis player — Sania Mirza




Sorry, I haven't been elected to represent the world's largest democracy to accept censorship. TMC leader — Mahua Moitra



FIRST COLUMN

BUDGET: A TIGHT-ROPE WALK FOR THE FM

She has to strike a balance between prudence and populism



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Budget for 2023-24 will be presented in less than a week's time. However, there are additional policy documents such as the Economic Survey which really are a better report card of the country's economic health and the direction it will take in the medium term.

Last year's Economic Survey was a clever document which insisted on a "agile approach" in policy response, for an economy facing the downturn and uncertainty of a once in a century pandemic. It was pointed out that some of the elements in the "policy feedback loop" were always present, however, the agility in policy making became the key element with the boom in datasets available to policy makers on a real time basis. Put simply it means policy makers had access to huge swathes of datasets such as digital payments, movement of trucks across highways, railway freight, trade numbers, etc., at the click of a button and it helped them tailor-make policies for a specific sector or target group.

The second theme highlighted in last year's Economic Survey was the "art and science of policy making during extreme uncertainties." This was a great attempt to provide a curious person, peek into the minds of the lawmakers. The survey stated "that various policies of the Government of India are all about protection from or taking advantage of an uncertain future." The uncertainties highlighted were rapid shifts in technology, consumer behaviour, corporate work styles, geopolitical calibration, climate change, etc., in the post-Covid world.



The Economic Survey is a less glamorous document (generally in two volumes) as compared to the Budget, providing diagnosis on the economic health and suggested remedies, or wellness solutions.

The Govt of late, keeping with the times, started to make this document less of a statistical aggregate and more of a short nonfiction novel. This is a welcome change and it would be worth a wait if, Finance Ministry officials and the Chief Economic Advisor, take a cue from information technology ministry colleagues, who have started attaching an explanatory note on all major policy documents. The Economic Survey is not a regulatory policy document, but more of a diagnostics report, written in simple language with ample real-life illustrations, could make it more reader-friendly. Meanwhile, the extreme uncertainties impacting global growth have increased significantly. Last year the economic survey hadn't factored the ongoing war in Ukraine, which has pushed global growth rates further south. The uncertainty over fuel prices, rapid changes in geopolitical alignments, the heightened threat from non-state actors using emerging technologies such as AI to disrupt critical national infrastructure, slowdown in the US and Europe, post-zero-Covid China, emerging cyber-security challenges, have just been added to the list.

Some of these are sure to find their place in the economic survey for FY 2022-23 and more importantly the final full budget of the Government. The task set out for the Finance Minister and her team is to find a judicious balance between fiscal discipline and populism. She will have to, more than in any other year, present a right mix of political populism while leaving ample trails for the fiscal prudence glide path. To paraphrase PM's now famous quote, this is not a time for wasteful expenditure. The spending power of the common household will be the deciding factor for the Finance Minister, as she would like the economy to pick up towards the third quarter, once some of the larger shocks in the global economy have passed. The Govt's current policy of investing heavily in creating public infrastructure, pushing enterprises and global businesses to set up factories through various incentives and schemes, thereby creating more skilled jobs are in the right direction. However, persuading the private sector, which is more sensitive to 'extreme uncertainties' as a result of global headwinds, to start investing in the domestic economy again, would be critical.


*(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)*

# East meets West for fusion of learning in NEP2020

It will be good for aspiring students to study in premier institutes of the world without leaving their homeland

It is a well-established fact that India is essentially a welfare state and has shown exemplary commitments for inclusive development. Apart from reservation in education and employment, India has been successfully implementing several other welfare measures aimed at raising the quality of lives of the underprivileged sections of the society.


The Narendra Modi Government has added many new schemes to the kitty of welfare measure bonanza. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Shramew Jayate Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Gramoday Se Bharat Uday are only a few to name. Such schemes have ensured that



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

(The author is Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda)

# Some Bollywood stars live in virtual reality



SUMMEET BHASIN

## Utterances and actions of the Aam Aadmi Party clearly reveal that they are living Bollywood

Bollywood has entertained the people for decades. Films have fired the dreams of audiences. They have also made the people laugh and cry. But in the age of virtual reality when the lines are fast getting blurred, Bollywood has sneaked into the daily lives.

The election for Delhi mayor could not be held. The circumstances under which the mayor poll was not held have been seen by all with dismay. It's disheartening to see that the MCD House, in which once political luminaries sat, has now become a place for hosting theatrics.


Utterances and actions of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) clearly reveal that they are living Bollywood. They see a film star in Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Stages are set, and scripts are written for him to enact the roles, which the party cleverly crafts, to fool the people in the national capital.

Students of political science may take time to research and find out a list of films of Bollywood and stars, which have been embraced by the AAP and its akas in Delhi. By the evening of Monday, the AAP camp was shivering with reports that a number of councillors in their ranks were opposed to the choice of mayor, who was chosen by a few at the top of the leadership of the party without consultations with others.

Within the MCD House, during the swearing in of the members ahead of the mayoral poll, the managers of the AAP were working their phones in desperation to reach out to the missing party councillors. It had become all clear that if the election was held for the post of mayor, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would have easily won the coveted post. So, the mayor election had to be sabotaged, and it was done as part of a script perfectly staged by the AAP leaders, essaying their roles with finesse, which may give a run for money to the theatre actors.

In fact, the public utterances and also within the Constitutional body such as the Delhi Assembly of the chief minister are baffling to the extent that they look unreal, as if the cine screen has been transported into the real life. The insinuations made against the office of the Delhi Lieutenant Governor and the languages used by Kejriwal may fail to find a parallel in Indian political history. To say that he is an anarchist and is presiding over anarchy in the national capital will be too mild a criticism, for there is something deeper and more sinister, which is seeping into the polity of the country.

We are in the midst of the pandemic and several ailments are infectious. Even the political virus of anarchism thriving in the laboratory of AAP in Delhi is threatening to infect others. Looking at Congress and the utterances of the party's former president Rahul Gandhi, one gains an impression that Bollywood has



CONSTITUTION HAS LAID DOWN THE WORKING FRAMEWORK FOR THE ORGANS OF THE STATE. IF VARIOUS CONSTITUENTS IN THEIR BID TO PLAY TO THE GALLERY RESORT TO TRAMPLE UPON THE CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, POSTERITY WILL SUFFER A HUGE BLOW

*(The author is a political analyst)*



indeed infected the very core of the Opposition parties. Rahul Gandhi is truly living in the dreamland in the company of fantasy kings of his party.

Rahul Gandhi's policy prescriptions are borrowed from the holy book of freebies of Kejriwal. Rahul Gandhi is in a hurry to beat Kejriwal in his game of freebies. The rush for the restoration of the 'Old Pension Scheme', which has invited the ire of the former deputy vice chairman of the erstwhile Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia is a classic case of Congress taking the Bollywood route on its inglorious path.

In Tamil Nadu and Telangana, their respective Chief Ministers are espousing utter disregard to the Constitutional norms. MK Stalin and K Chandrashekar Rao are resorting to extreme theatrics against the Constitutional positions in their clear attempts to play to the galleries. The films made in Hyderabad and Chennai borrow scripts from the dream land, driving high doses of fantasy intoxication. They seem to have also infected the conduct of their respective Chief Ministers. Sluggish in Tamil Nadu and Telangana against the Constitutional arrangements do not augur well for the healthy democracy and also the spirit of cooperative federalism.

The judiciary too is in some way not immune to the Bollywood virus. The vicious attempt to protect hegemony over the collegium system without offering cogent reasoning is failing Indian conscience, which is based on rationality. There was a selective leakage from the top court to reveal the details of the exchanges with the government over appointment of judges, yet the Supreme Court wants to stay away from the public scrutiny. Such pick and choose in the way the top court deals with the people is indeed weird.

Also, there is an explicit celebration of rigidity on the parts of the judiciary and a section of the judicial luminaries. Time changes and newer challenges emerge in the country and the society. How could a society be fixated to what had been thought as the best possible framework decades ago? The intransigence against flexible outlook and resistance to adjust to the emerging challenges of the nation is also borrowed from the theatrical attitude.

Judges appoint judges and they will not take accountability for the millions of cases pending in courts are strange for a 21st Century India, which is in a leadership role in technology adoption. The judiciary goes on vacation, while the country works 365 days a year. Such irony cannot be fathomed. Also, the judiciary's aversion to people's mandate is totally unexplainable.

At a time when the country is celebrating the Republic Day and patriotism is high among the people,

it will augur well for the judiciary to be subject to the timely reforms, which cannot be delayed any further. Timely access to justice is a right of the people. The litigants cannot wait for ages for resolution of cases. The status quo will amount to failing the Constitution. The judiciary should be subject to reasons, and stop taking refuge in what had been decided decades ago.

The Constitution has laid down the working framework for the various organs of the State. If various constituents in their bid to play to the gallery resort to trample upon the Constitutional arrangements, posterity will suffer a huge blow. They will fail to see the template on which they will build the country for the future generation.

In the eagerness to gain quick glory, the actors of today may leave behind sour taste for the future generation. It has to be known to the core of the heart that today's actors have to discharge their duties in undiluted commitment to the best interest of the country and the people. Virtual reality should, as a technology, work in the interests of the people. The speed to fame inspired by Bollywood in public life may take the actors in the political and other arena to the fast path of destruction. The actors who are camouflaging must be exposed by people. If there is a need, let there be changes in Constitution to stem the rot.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

HE (MAURYA) NEVER MADE SUCH STATEMENTS. AFTER JOINING THE SP, STATEMENTS DISRESPECTING HINDUISM IS COMING FROM HIM.  
— UP BJP SPOKESPERSON RAKESH TRIPATHI



PM MODI TALKS ABOUT 'VASUDEV KUTUMBHAKAM'. EVERYONE SHOULD TRY HAVING A BIGGER HEART, ELSE WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FULFILL HIS DREAM.  
— BJP LEADER SANGHMITRA MAURYA

East meets West for fusion of learning in NEP2020

It will be good for aspiring students to study in premier institutes of the world without leaving their homeland

It is a well-established fact that India is essentially a welfare state and has shown exemplary commitments for inclusive development. Apart from reservation in education and employment, India has been successfully implementing several other welfare measures aimed at raising the quality of lives of the underprivileged sections of the society.

The Narendra Modi Government has added many new schemes to the kitty of welfare measure bonanza. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Shramew Jayate Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Gramoday Se Bharat Uday are only a few to name. Such schemes have ensured that



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the poor sleep under a roof with at least a square meal. The education sector is no exception to this trajectory of development.

Students of all levels from the underprivileged sections of society enjoy reservations in admissions to various professional and traditional programs of study, apart from enjoying various types of scholarships and fellowships. People from such sections have also been beneficiaries of reservations in teaching and non-teaching recruitments. While such reservations and facilities have ensured inclusivity, the net impact of these in the quality of education is a point worthy of serious discourse.

Some sections of the academia, especially in the Modi

era, are strategically engaged in a debate detrimental to the Indian learning ecosystem. Today's youth live in the era of 4.0 Version of Education which is outcome-based and can be realised through quality education only.

Moreover, we urgently need to develop global competencies in our learners to empower them with skills to face the challenges of the highly uncertain and volatile future that 21st Century has in store for them.

A recent case in point is the draft document of the University Grants Commission on 'Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India Regulations'. This regulation stipulates a standard

operating procedure for maintaining and operating campuses in India by the top 500 foreign universities. A major bone of contention in this context is the lack of provision for social equity especially with regard to reservations to the underprivileged.

Moreover, it is alleged that such campuses will essentially serve the cause of the affluent sections of Indian society. However, even if only some so-called upper sections of the social strata were beneficiaries of the education system prevailing from the dawn of the Indic civilization, the majority of them were as poor as the others, and they got enlightenment under extreme poverty in thatched huts in forests, strictly adhering to the doctrine of 'Less is More'. They created a plethora of doctrines of a supreme quality, such as the Vedas and the Upanishad, which have relevance across time and space.

If human civilization progresses along the contours of these doctrines, its longevity, quality, vitality and health can be ensured. The moot questions, thus, are: Can we recapitulate and recapture this supreme quality in sharpening minds for the creation of abstract knowledge again? Should we not desist from criticism and downplaying of such policies which aim at restoring much-needed universal quality in education? Should we not exclude such policies from the basket of policies in vogue for the uplift of the underprivileged sections?

Why should affluent sections from our own society be deprived from access to quality education merely on the grounds that the underprivileged sections will be left behind? The quality bars and the rigorous process of recruitment of faculty and staff, pay-package and amenities, admission criteria, infrastructure, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment tools, skill development and campus placement initiatives, etc., on such campuses should be similar to the main campus of foreign universities. These campuses should be allowed to offer new-age programmes only.

It will be good for aspiring students to study in premier institutes of the world without leaving their homeland. This may also work as a stimulus to

Indian institutions.

Moreover, this may also discourage our youth from studying abroad at an exorbitant cost and will eventually halt currency, brain and cultural drain. Lastly, the argument that our youth will fall prey to foreign culture in these campuses holds no water as the all-encompassing Sanatan culture is robust enough to embrace all other cultures and yet maintain its unique traits.

After all, one of our cultural traits is 'Aano Bhadra Kritvo Yantu Vishwatah'. In essence, this regulation will facilitate the fusion of learning systems of the East and the West in Modi's India and pave the path for the internationalization of education—one of the key elements of New Education Policy or NEP2020.



MONEY MATTERS

## Macleods Pharma recalls 10,000 bottles of anti-bacterial medication in US

Macleods Pharmaceuticals is recalling around 10,000 bottles of generic antibiotic medication in the US market due to a labelling error, according to the US health regulator. As per the latest enforcement report by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Macleods Pharma Inc, a US-based unit of the company, is recalling 10,052 bottles of Levofloxacin tablets, which are used to treat different types of bacterial infections. The company is recalling the affected lot due to 'mismatching of the embossing on the tablets with the embossing mentioned in the package insert in the distributed bottles.' Macleods manufactured the affected lot in its Baddi-based manufacturing plant in Himachal Pradesh. The company initiated the Class III recall in the US and Puerto Rico on January 5. As per the USFDA, a Class III recall is initiated in a 'situation in which use of, or exposure to, a violative product is not likely to cause adverse health consequences.'



## Adani group looks to invest in petrochem, mining in Azerbaijan

Asia's richest man Gautam Adani's group is eyeing petrochemical and mining projects in Azerbaijan as the ports-to-energy conglomerate looks to expand the business beyond Indian shores. Adani met Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev in Davos last week, according to a statement from the office of the President of Azerbaijan. "During the conversation, the parties discussed Azerbaijan's attractiveness for foreign direct investments, the development of the country's economy, and the prospects for cooperation with the Adani Group in petrochemical, mining and metallurgical industries, as well as other areas of mutual interest," it said. Adani, in recent years, is on a rapid diversification spree, expanding an empire centred on ports and coal mining to include airports, data centres and cement as well as green energy. A first-generation entrepreneur, Adani, 60, founded the Adani Group in 1988 as a trading company, and its interests now span real estate, ports, airports, power generation, green energy, cement, coal and FMCG.



## Suzuki Motor Corp to launch six battery electric vehicles in India

Japan's Suzuki Motor Corporation on Thursday said it will introduce six battery electric vehicles in India by FY2030 as part of its growth strategy and achieve carbon neutrality by 2070 as per the target set by the government. In the growth strategy for FY2030 shared on BSE by its Indian arm Maruti Suzuki India, Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC) said in India, it will provide not only battery EVs but also carbon-neutral internal combustion engine vehicles using CNG, biogas and ethanol mixed fuels. On its battery EV introduction plan, SMC said, "In India, we will introduce the SUV battery EV announced at the Auto Expo 2023 in FY2024, with six models to be launched by FY2030". By FY2030, the company said battery EVs will account for 15 per cent of its total product portfolio, while internal combustion engine vehicles will be 60 per cent and hybrid electric vehicles at 25 per cent.



# Budget proposals: Govt to tone up start-up ecosystem

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is expected to announce in the forthcoming Budget steps to further strengthen the startup ecosystem in the country and address inverted duty issues in certain sectors to promote domestic manufacturing, official sources said.

Fiscal incentives under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme to some more sectors are also likely to be announced in the Budget, which will be presented on February 1.

Besides, the government may consider providing funds to infrastructure projects approved by the National Planning Group (NPG), constituted under the PM Gati Shakti initiative, they said.

On October 13 last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Gati Shakti - National Master Plan aimed at developing integrated infrastructure to reduce logistics costs.

The NPG has representations from various connectivity infrastructure ministries/departments involving their heads of network planning division for unified planning and integration of the proposals.

All these departments approach the NPG first for approval before making a DPR (detailed project report) at the planning stage.

Inverted duty structure refers to taxation of inputs at higher rates than finished products that results in build-up of credits and cascading costs.

## 'HALWA' CEREMONY RETURNS



**NEW DELHI:** The 'halwa' ceremony, an annual ritual that heralds the Union Budget, returned after a year's break with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday stirring a 'kadhai' to mark the traditional event. The ceremony is an annual ritual in which traditional dessert 'halwa'

is prepared and served to officials and staff members of the finance ministry who were involved in the preparation of the Budget. It is organised every year in the basement of North Block, which houses the ministry in the national capital, and is attended by the finance minis-

ter and other high-ranking officials. The ceremony was curtailed last year in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and instead sweets were distributed to the core staff. This year, the customary 'halwa' ceremony, performed every year before the 'lock-in' process of Budget preparation begins, coincided with Republic Day. Besides Sitharaman, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary and Bhagwat K Karad and other senior officials including Finance Secretary T V Somanathan, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, and Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra were present at the ceremony on Thursday, visuals of the event shared on the official twitter handle showed.

## Indian stock markets migrating to T+1 settlement cycle today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian stock markets are embarking on a shorter settlement cycle or T+1 regime for the final list of large stocks from Friday, a move that will help reduce margin requirements for clients and boost retail investment.

T+1 (trade plus one) means that market trade-related settlements will need to be cleared within one day of the actual transactions taking place. Earlier, trades on the Indian stock exchanges are settled in two working days after the transaction is done (T+2).

The stock exchanges -- NSE and BSE -- in November 2021 in a joint statement announced that they will implement the T+1 settlement cycle in a phased manner, starting February 25, 2022, with the bottom 100 stocks in terms of market value.



Thereafter, 500 stocks were added based on the same market value criteria from the last Friday of March and so on every following month.

From January 27 onwards, all trades in the equity cash segment (including Futures and Options on stocks) will be conducted on a T+1 basis.

The final batch of securities -- including stocks, ETFs, debt instruments, real estate investment trusts (REITs) and infrastructure investment trusts (

InvITs) -- will be moving to the T+1 settlement cycle from Friday, information available with the Zerodha website showed.

This is not the first time that markets regulator Sebi has chosen to shorten the settlement cycle. Earlier in 2002, the capital markets regulator had cut the number of days in the settlement cycle from T+5 days to T+3 days, and then in 2003, it was reduced to T+2 days.

## Vertex signs deal with Tata Chemicals Europe for sale of low-carbon hydrogen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Essar group-promoted Vertex Hydrogen has signed a deal for the sale of over 200 megawatts of low-carbon hydrogen to Northwich-based Tata Chemicals Europe (TCE), the firm said Thursday.

"Under the new offtake agreement, Vertex will supply TCE with hydrogen as the manufacturer continues to decarbonise its operations in the UK with a target of achieving 'net zero' manufacturing by 2030," Vertex said in a statement.

TCE is one of Europe's leading producers of sodium carbonate, salt, sodium bicarbonate and other products used in the manufacturing of food and animal feed, glass, detergents, chemicals and several other industry applications.

In June 2022, Tata opened the UK's first industrial-scale carbon capture and usage plant. The 20 million pound investment captures 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, equivalent to taking over

20,000 cars off the road.

Vertex Hydrogen is a joint venture between Essar Oil UK and Progressive Energy. It is building the UK's first low-carbon hydrogen production plant.

Joe Seifert, CEO of Vertex Hydrogen, said: "We are thrilled to sign these Heads of Terms with TATA Chemicals Europe, as an industry leader driving tangible change to reduce emissions. This agreement marks another major step forward in the North West's energy transition, as Vertex continues to help build the UK's low carbon energy future".

Martin Ashcroft, Managing Director of Tata Chemicals Europe, said: "We have been supporters of Vertex and the low carbon hydrogen segment as a real opportunity to further reduce emissions at our world-class CHP facility. This agreement marks the next step in our relationship as we continue our journey as a leader in industrial decarbonisation".



## 'India a 'bright spot' in world economy right now'

PNS ■ UNITED NATIONS

India is a "bright spot" in the world economy currently and is on a "strong footing", projected to grow at 6.7 per cent next year, a very high growth rate relative to other G20 member countries, a top UN economist said.

These remarks were made by the Chief of the Global Economic Monitoring Branch, Economic Analysis and Policy Division, UN-Department of Economic and Social Affairs Hamid Rashid.

"I think India is a bright spot



in the world economy right now," Rashid said at a press conference here Wednesday at the launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2023 report.

The flagship report said that India's GDP is projected to moderate to 5.8 per cent in

2023 as higher interest rates and global economic slowdown weigh on investment and exports.

India's economic growth is expected to remain "strong" even as prospects for other South Asian nations "are more challenging."

India is projected to grow at 6.7 per cent in 2024, the fastest-growing major economy in the world.

Rashid said, "we believe the Indian economy is on a strong footing given the strong domestic demand in the near term."

## IndiGrid Q3 profit up 27% to Rs 120 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



at Rs 119.78 crore for December quarter 2022-23. The infrastructure investment trust logged a net profit of Rs 94.38 crore in the year-ago period, as per a BSE filing.

Total income also increased to Rs 607.06 crore in the quarter from Rs 580.96 crore in the same period a year ago.

## DLF sales bookings rise 45% to Rs 6,599 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Realty major DLF Ltd has achieved a 45 per cent growth in sales bookings to Rs 6,599 crore in April-December this fiscal on better demand and is on track to achieve its annual sales guidance of Rs 8,000 crore, a senior company official said.

DLF's -- the country's largest realty firm in terms of market

capitalisation -- sales bookings stood at Rs 4,544 crore in the year-ago period.

"We have achieved robust growth in our sales bookings in

the first nine months of this fiscal year. The sales are driven by demand for good quality products," DLF Group Executive Director and Chief Business Officer Aakash Ohri told PTI.

He said the company has launched apartments and independent floors at different price points, which helped in achieving better sales.

DLF has launched residential projects in Delhi,

Gurugram, Panchkula and Chennai.

Asked about sales bookings for the entire fiscal, Ohri said the company has given a guidance of Rs 8,000 crore for the 2022-23 fiscal and is expected to achieve it comfortably.

"We are on track to meet our sales booking targets. We may even do better than that. But we are sticking to our guidance," he added.

## Bengal trade body organises startup funding pitch event

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Confederation of West Bengal Trade Association (CWBT) hosted a funding pitch event on Thursday for 97 startups offering solutions to various sectors before 100-odd investors at the Bengal Global Trade Expo.

The event was organised in association with knowledge partner PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and Freeflow, a startup incubator and accelerator company.

"In order to promote self-reliance in India, a unique activity of Pitch Battle among nearly 100 startups started today. In the activity, the startups will pitch their ideas and display the products to secure funding and partnerships," CWBT president Sushil Poddar told PTI.

## WHEAT PRICES MAY COME DOWN BY RS 5-6/KG

# Millers on govt move to sell wheat in open

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Roller Flour Millers Federation of India (RFMFI) on Thursday hailed the government's decision to sell 30 lakh tonnes of wheat in the open market and said the move will lead to a reduction in wheat and wheat flour (atta) prices by Rs 5-6 per kg.

The Centre on Wednesday announced the sale of 30 lakh tonnes of wheat in the open market from its buffer stock to check the rise in prices of wheat and wheat flour (atta).

The stocks will be sold by the state-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) during the next two months through various channels.

While wheat will be sold to bulk consumers like flour millers through e-auction, the FCI will offer wheat at Rs 23.50 per kg to public sector units/cooperatives/federations, Kendriya Bhandar / NCCF / NAFED for converting the

grain to atta and offer it to the public at a maximum retail price (MRP) of Rs 29.50 per kg.

"We welcome the government decision. It should have been taken a month ago. It is a right step. Wholesale and retail prices will come down by Rs 5-6 per kg," RFMFI President Pramod Kumar told PTI.

As per the government data, the average price of wheat across major cities stood at Rs 33.43 per kilogram on Wednesday, up from Rs 28.24 per kg a year ago. Average prices of atta (wheat flour) stood at Rs 37.95 per kg against Rs 31.41/kg a year ago.

The FCI will offload 30 lakh tonnes of wheat from the central pool stock to the market through various routes under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic), the food ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The ministry had said that sales of wheat in the market through this scheme will have



an "immediate impact on the soaring wheat and atta prices and will help contain the rising prices and will bring much relief to the common man".

In order to address the rising prices of wheat and atta, the group of ministers headed by Home Minister Amit Shah met on Wednesday and discussed the buffer stock position of the country.

The committee decided that wheat will be offered to the flour millers, bulk buyers etc through e-auction for a maximum quantity of 3,000 tonnes per buyer per auction. Wheat will also be offered to states and Union Territories for their schemes without e-auction.

"Wheat will be offered at a concessional rate of Rs 2,350 per quintal to government

PSUs/cooperatives/federations, Kendriya Bhandar/NCCF/NAFED etc without e-auction.

"The sale under this special scheme will be subject to the stipulation that the buyer will convert wheat to atta and offer it to the public at a maximum retail price of Rs 29.50 per Kg," the ministry had said.

The FCI will offload wheat within the next two months to the market. It will start the process of e-auction of stocks immediately throughout the country from January to March 2023.FCI, the government's nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains, had around 171.70 lakh tonnes of wheat as on January 1 in the buffer stock.

Under the OMSS policy, the government allows FCI to sell food grains, especially wheat and rice, at pre-determined prices in the open market from time to time to bulk consumers and private traders.

## Cognizant pact worth US\$ 1 bn with CoreLogic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nasdaq-listed IT company Cognizant on Thursday announced a new 10-year services agreement valued at about USD 1 billion with CoreLogic, a global property information, analytics and data-enabled solutions provider. The deal deepens the scope of the current collaboration with a focus on delivering strong solutions and customer experience through digital transformation and operational excellence, Cognizant said in a statement.

"Cognizant and CoreLogic extend the decade-long relationship with USD 1 billion, ten-year services agreement," the state-

ment added.

Since 2011, Cognizant has been a service delivery partner, offering capabilities in application development and support, analytical modelling and domain-centric business process services to CoreLogic and its customers, primarily in the US mortgage and real estate markets.

"Real estate, mortgage lifecycle, and insurance transactions depend on accurate, timely data and analytics. We are committed to helping CoreLogic provide this critical intelligence to clients while enhancing their user experience and further streamlining operating efficiency," Surya Gummadri, President of the Americas at Cognizant, said.













## AMARTYA SMARAN

**HUNT**  
GUNS DON'T LIE

**TEASER ON SEP 28TH**

A movie poster for the film "Zebra". The title "ZEBRA" is written in large, metallic, 3D letters at the top. Above it, "SATYA DEV" is written. To the right, "BALI DHANASEKARA" is written. Below the title, "by EASWAR KARTIC" is written. The central image shows two chess pieces, a white knight and a black horse head, facing each other. In the background, there's a sunset sky with a biplane flying. At the bottom, the names of the cast members are listed: RAVI DASUR, SUN REDDY, BALI DHANASEKARA, JINER SODARAM, and others. There are also some small logos and text at the very bottom.

## K. RAMYA SREE



# INDIA BRACE FOR T20 APPETISER AGAINST NZ

PTI ■ RANCHI

India are set for a T20 appetiser ahead of their marquee Test series against Australia when they face the touring New Zealand in a three-match series beginning here on Friday.

With less than two weeks left for the Border Gavaskar Trophy matches against Australia that will determine India's World Test Championship Final fate, a T20 series in the midst of a packed ODI calendar ahead of the 50-over World Cup may seem purposeless.

As a result, Hardik Pandya, who led a 2-1 series win over Sri Lanka earlier this month, is back leading the T20 side with some regulars and fringe players in the squad.

While skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami are being rested, the likes of Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Ishan Kishan and Kuldeep Yadav will get an extended run before they assemble for Test series camp at Nagpur from February 2.

There is also the welcome addition of attacking Mumbai opener Prithvi Shaw, who returns to the team on the back of a series of superlative performances in the domestic cricket including a record-breaking 379 against Assam in the Ranji Trophy.

It's been over a year since the 23-year-old last played for India in July 2021 — and it remains to be seen if Pandya is tempted to fiddle his set opening combination of Gill and wicketkeeper



batter Ishan Kishan.

Gill has been in the form of his life, especially in the ODIs where he has scored his career-best 208 to go alongside two centuries in last four innings.

When it comes to the T20 format, the elegant Punjab batter may look a bit iffy but he has showed that he has all the shots in his armoury to cement the opening slot.

In such a scenario, it remains to be seen how Pandya slots in the spirited Shaw as he may have to wait for his chance.

Suryakumar also had a quiet ODI series against New Zealand but when it comes to T20 format the 360-degree batter becomes a dangerous entity as he would look relish the challenge and come back into groove ahead of the Test series.

While the batting looks sorted, it's the bowling department that may demand some attention.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, who returned from injury, was in the eye of storm in the series against Sri Lanka.

He leaked 37 runs in two overs as India lost the T20I in Pune, their only reverse in the 2-1 series win. He would look to come up with a tidy show.

But there was also a bright spot in the bowling department with Shivam Mavi capping an impressive debut with 4/22.

Mavi bowled with pace and the way he cleaned up Pathum Nissanka is still fresh in the mind. The speedster would look to form a potent combination with Umran Malik.

In the last ODI, India had

got a chance to witness 'Kul-Cha' in action after a long time but come the T20s, India may have to fret over the inclusion of either Kuldeep Yadav or Yuzvendra Chahal.

Chahal has been the preferred option in the format and in the absence of Axar Patel it remains to be seen if the leg-spinner is persisted.

India have been at their marauding best in the ODIs they would expect some fightback by the Kiwis team led by Mitchell Santner in the T20 leg.

Left-hander Devon Conway showed his imperious form for the Black Caps scoring 138 from 100 balls as they gave India a run for their money in their defence of 386 in Indore.

Michael Bracewell too was at his consistent best with 188 runs from three matches as they would look to carry their momentum in the T20 leg.

**TEAMS (FROM)**

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

## Hardik says Shaw will have to wait considering how Gill is batting

PTI ■ RANCHI

India skipper Hardik Pandya on Thursday said in-form opener Shubman Gill will start the T20 series against New Zealand ahead of Prithvi Shaw, who has made a comeback to the national team.

Considering Gill's sensational run in ODIs, Hardik said his selection was a no-brainer. Gill has smashed three hundreds including a double ton in his last four innings.

Ishan Kishan is expected to open alongside Gill.

"Shubman has done well and will start the series. The way he is batting and was already in the team," said Hardik ahead of the first T20I.

Hardik bowled with the new ball in the T20Is against Sri Lanka before doing the same in the third ODI against New Zealand on Tuesday with Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj being rested from the game.

Hardik said he likes bowling with the new ball.

"I have always enjoyed bowling with the new ball. Since quite a number of years whenever I bowl in the nets, I pick the new ball. I am used to the old ball so that I don't feel the need to practice with the old ball as much. It has helped in match situations.

"With our two main bowlers rested in the last game, I had to be ready. But (it) has never been about pressure, half of the times pressure is gone if you prepare well," said Hardik.

We now talk more about life than game: Hardik on meeting



Dhoni.

Getting to play in Ranchi also has added benefits for the entire team including Hardik. The players got to meet MS Dhoni at the ground ahead of the game.

"Mahi bhai is here which is good as we get to meet him. We can get out of the hotel also (to meet him). Otherwise, the way we have played in the last one month, it has just been hotel to hotel. "And when we meet we try to talk about life rather than the game. When we played together I learnt a lot from him. I have squeezed a lot out of him (knowledge)... There is not much left," said Hardik.

The skipper also said wick-

etkeeper Jitesh Sharma has been rewarded for his performances in the IPL and domestic cricket but did not commit whether he will be in the playing eleven.

"Our strategy will be seen on the ground. Jitesh has been rewarded for his performances. Unfortunately, Sanju Samson got injured and Jitesh got the opportunity.

"We will try to win obviously. New Zealand is a good team both in T20Is and ODIs. They always challenge you. We will have to be at their best to beat them," he added.

India won the ODI series 3-0 and it is being followed by three T20Is in Ranchi, Lucknow and Ahmedabad respectively.



## Finn Allen experiment failing; look at way Rohit plays: Former Kiwi opener Cumming

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Former New Zealand cricketer Craig Cumming is unhappy with head coach Gary Stead's persistence with opener Finn Allen, who failed with the bat in the recently-concluded three-match ODI series against India.

The hosts whitewashed the Kiwis 3-0 with Allen, 23, scoring two consecutive ducks and a 40, raising doubts about his selection in the New Zealand side with the ODI World Cup in India less than nine months away.



The cricketer had made his 50-over debut last year with a few impressive scores against Ireland and the West Indies but has quickly gone into a downward spiral.

"I'm concerned around the style of cricketers we're trying to produce. I want to produce Devon Conways, I want to produce Kane Williamsons; the guys that have got craft and can bat and they've got more than one (skill)?," Cumming told SENZ Mornings on Thursday.

"Finn Allen at the moment,

he's young, he's learning but (he's in a) really important position for us at the top of the order and he seems to be at the moment a one-pace, one-line hitter.

"At the moment it's failing and maybe Finn's getting the experience, I mean they've got to stick with him, but he's not producing enough at the moment."

Cumming compared Allen with India skipper Rohit Sharma, who is not just a strong hitter of the ball but also has the required skill-set to play according to the situation.



## Santner looks to apply his learnings at CSK as New Zealand captain

PTI ■ RANCHI

Mitchell Santner says that time spent under Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Stephen Fleming at Chennai Super Kings will come in handy as he leads New Zealand in the T20I series in India.

Santner had also led the side in the third and final T20I in India back in 2021. He is captaining the side in the absence of regular skipper Kane Williamson.

"If you look at both of them (Dhoni and Fleming), they're both very calm and very level-headed, which I like as I feel I'm similar in that respect. To work under and alongside MS (Dhoni) has been a pretty cool experience for a few years now.

"I guess it's nice to be back at his home ground as well. And Flem (Fleming) -- he's the same, very level-headed and keeps it pretty relaxed and that's what we try to do in this set-up as well," said the left-hander ahead of the series opener.

ODIs take a precedence

over T20Is in a World Cup year but Santner said playing every game for the country is an honour.

"I guess the way ODI cricket is going at the moment with high scores, you know it's not too different to T20. So, banking the experiences in T20 cricket this year will be similar to what we got in the one-day series, where we saw some high scores and good hitting.

"I guess trying to bank those experiences from that series... yes, we obviously lost 3-0, but we showed glimpses in games that we want to take forward in this series," said the all-rounder.

Would he continue to be calm under pressure now that he is leading the side?

"Yeah, I guess that's my nature, and it has been like that for a little while now. But obviously there's also bit more nerves (now) and very exciting to captain another series in India -- it doesn't get much better than that. So, definitely looking forward to it and it's going to be a challenge, no doubt," he added.

## It's global cricketing issue to keep players inspired for all three formats: AB de Villiers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South Africa great Ab de Villiers feels it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep players "inspired" for all three formats amid the punishing schedule, creating a pressing need for cricket boards and cricketers to have an honest communication over the latter's preferred choice of formats.

The 38-year-old, who shocked the cricketing world with his international retirement in 2018, said his playing career too could have been managed better. Three years later, he retired from all forms of cricket.

He left the game to spend more time with family, something which has become a luxury for an all-format modern cricketer. Considering the ever-crowded international calendar and mushrooming of T20 leagues around the world, playing all three formats has become

impossible without taking frequent breaks in between.

England Test captain Ben Stokes was forced to retire from ODIs last year as he could not go on giving his best across formats.

"That's a tough question," De Villiers told PTI when asked about the need for picking formats amid the relentless scheduling.

"Because I don't want to be the guy to just say give up a format or two. And once again, it's a global cricketing issue at the moment to keep the players inspired to play all formats of the game for their countries."

De Villiers believes the players' careers could be extended if they were clear about their ambitions across formats. He also expects the cricketing boards to clearly communicate to the players over where they stand in their scheme of things.

"But I do think there's room with the various boards around



the world to pinpoint players, to have community discussions and communication early on in players' careers, to understand what they want to achieve, first of all, and secondly, where they fit in with regards to the cricket in their own country to represent the country internationally.

"But also to be happy to play leagues around the world. And to gain experience, it's invaluable. We spoke about it earlier, players like SKY (Suryakumar), Dewald Brevis and myself, the

way we took our games to the next level, largely because of these leagues.

"So ultimately, that is what we want to achieve. If it's not achievable. And if there's a clear sign that a player is maybe a bit weak in one format, or is maybe not as inspired to achieve milestones to go a long way in one or two formats, then yes, but that communication needs to happen.

"And I think during my career communication could have been better from my side, but also from the Cricket South Africa side to make sure that we plan accordingly. So it comes down to communication," said 'Mr.360'.

De Villiers is part of the SA20 commentary panel. The inaugural competition has taken an eight-day break to accommodate the ODI series between hosts South Africa and England, highlighting the scheduling challenges faced by boards.

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, on a comeback trail following a knee injury and a long layoff, said on Thursday that he is ready for series against Australia after picking up seven wickets for Saurashtra against Tamil Nadu in a Ranji Trophy game here. "Yes, yes, yes..." the left-handed all-rounder said in response to a question if he was ready for touring side led by Pat Cummins after the third day's play of the Ranji Trophy fixture at the MA Chidambaram stadium here.

Jadeja's haul helped Saurashtra bowl out TN for 133 in the second innings and the visitors require 262 runs for an outright victory on Friday.

Jadeja last played for India in the Asia Cup in August last year. India take on Australia in the four-Test Border-Gavaskar series beginning at Nagpur on February 9. Jadeja, who is leading Saurashtra in place of the rested Jaydev Unadkat in the final Ranji Trophy league fixture, had figures of 7/53 in 17.1 overs in the second innings.

Jadeja said it was good to pick up a five-wicket haul and

that he was "feeling very good" playing after such a long time.

"Feeling very good, playing a game after a long time. Hopefully I am good to go now. It was tough on the first day but as the game progressed, I was feeling good," Jadeja said.

Asked about bowling 12 overs at a stretch in the second spell, he said, "I (am) used to bowling long spells. Nothing new for me. I was enjoying...Ball was turning..." He further said, "The pitch was assisting me. When we were batting, the odd ball was spinning, the odd ball was keeping low, so I was keen to bowl a long spell. Luckily I got wickets." To a question if he felt he was there in terms of fitness, Jadeja said, "Yes, I am almost there...It is just a matter of little bit of confidence. Luckily I bowled enough overs in the match, like almost 37 overs in the game (41 — 24 in the first innings and 17.1 in the second)."

Asked if he felt any discomfort, Jadeja said, "no discomfort... Not really."

"When you get seven wickets, obviously you feel confident. When you take a five-for in a first-class game it is always good," he added.

## Karnataka thrash Jharkhand by nine wickets

PTI ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Karnataka thrashed Jharkhand by nine wickets at the Keenan Stadium here on Thursday to further cement their position at the top of Group C in Ranji Trophy.

The team, led by Mayank Agarwal, had made it to the quarter-final stage after the previous round of Ranji matches. But following the six points earned from the rubber on Thursday, they have put a huge roadblock in Jharkhand's path to securing a last-eight berth.

Karnataka are now on 35 points, while Jharkhand have 23. Rajasthan (20 points), Kerala (20) and Goa (18) too have a chance of making the last-eight from the group.

Karnataka, who had restricted Jharkhand to 164 in the first innings and then notched up 300 to take a handsome 136-run lead, struck back in the second innings with their veteran off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham grabbing another five-wicket haul.

The hosts were dismissed for 201 in their second essay, giving Karnataka a paltry target of 66 to chase down.



Karnataka achieved victory in the 19th over of their innings with Nikin Jose (42 not out) and Ravikumar Samarth (24 not out) guiding them to the target.

Much of Karnataka's bowling revolved around the 34-year-old Gowtham. He broke partnerships at crucial junctures to ensure Jharkhand batters didn't score big.

Gowtham first dismissed opener Kumar Deobrat, who was caught by Agarwal. The off-spinner then returned to remove the

No.3 and No.4 batters — Kumar Suraj (34) and Kumar Kushagra (36) — who had started to firm up their partnership.

But with Jharkhand folding up at 201 in 78.5 overs, it was a matter of time before Karnataka finished the job.

While Devdutt Padikkal was dismissed in the first over for duck, Ravikumar Samarth and Nikin Jose ensured no more hiccups as Karnataka earned six more points to take their tally to 35 points.

**BRIEF SCORES:** **At Jamshedpur:** Jharkhand 164 and 201 in 78.5 overs (Supriyo Chakraborty 48; Krishnappa Gowtham 5/75) lost to Karnataka 300 and 66 for 1 in 18.1 overs by nine wickets.

**At Raipur:** Chhattisgarh 531 for 9 decl vs Goa 359 in 92.5 overs (Ishaan Gadekar 80, Snehal Kauthankar 147 n.O.; Ravi Kiran 3/66) and f/o 4 for no loss.

**At Puducherry:** Puducherry 371 and 34 for 1 in 14 overs vs Kerala 286 in 113 overs (Akshay Chandran 70; Sagor Udeshi 5/62).

**At Jodhpur:** Services 178 and 276 vs Rajasthan 136 and 107 for 6 in 38 overs (Yash Kothari 72; Pulkit Narang 4/20).

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Left-arm spinner Akash Pandey claimed a career-best six-wicket haul to complement Himanshu Sangwan's menacing spell in the first innings as Railways thrashed hosts Gujarat by an innings and 56 runs in their Ranji Trophy group D match here on Thursday.

Medium pacer Sangwan was the wrecker-in-chief in their first innings as Railways bundled out the home side for 208 in 59.1 overs in the first innings.

Following on, Gujarat's second innings folded for 247 in 69.3 overs with Pandey wreaking havoc this time. Sangwan gave the first breakthrough dismissing Aditya Patel in the first innings.

Gujarat were soon reduced to 33/2 inside 10 overs but



thereafter skipper Het Patel rebuilt the innings with a fighting century before Karn Sharma's double blow derailed

the home side. Pandey then returned to clean up the tail to complete a bonus point victory that came with a day to

spare. Railways had amassed 508 in their first innings.

**BRIEF SCORES**

**In Ahmedabad:** Railways 508. Gujarat 205; 59.1 overs (Hemant Patel 39; Himanshu Sangwan 4/75, Karn Sharma 3/38) and following on and 247; 69.3 overs (Het Patel 84, Umang Kumar 42; Akash Pandey 6/65). Railways won by an innings and 56 runs. Points: Railways 7, Gujarat 0.

**In Indore:** Tripura 362. Madhya Pradesh 159/2; 57 overs (Shubham Sharma 55, Yash Dubey 48 batting, Harsh Gawli 33 batting; Rana Dutta 2/44). Madhya Pradesh trail by 203 runs.

**In Mohali:** Vidarbha 88/2; 31 overs vs Punjab. No play on day three.

**In Chandigarh:** Chandigarh 18 for no loss; 6 overs vs Jammu and Kashmir. No play on day three.