

ANALYSIS 7
SOME BOLLYWOOD STARS
LIVE IN VIRTUAL REALITY**MONEY 8**
BUDGET PROPOSALS: GOVT TO
TONE UP START-UP ECOSYSTEM**SPORTS 11**
INDIA BRACE FOR
T20 APPETISER AGAINST NZ

VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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ACTOR
SHARWANAND
ENTERS THE
WEDLOCK
Page 12**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).

Pawan Kalyan should clarify on CM candidate in TDP-JSP tieup: Sajjala

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 ques-



tioned 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.

AP ushered in 'Gram swaraj': Guv



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan has said that the essence of the Constitution is being carried out by the State government for the past 43 months. "Establishing that our State government is not a government of words but a government of deeds. We have brought in real Gram Swaraj in just 43 months which is not seen anywhere in the country," he said. Governor Harichandan unfurled the National Flag on the 74th Republic Day at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation stadium in Vijayawada on Thursday. He was joined by Chief

Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Governor said that an unprecedented Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) through which an amount of Rs 1.82 lakh crore has reached the intended beneficiaries till date in a most transparent manner.

The Governor said that 'Jagananna Amma Vodi' aims to see that "No mother shall be deprived of sending her children to school because of poverty". Through 'Mana Badi Nadu Nedu', infrastructure has been revamped in 45,484 government schools, 471 government junior colleges, 151 government

The Government accords top priority to the welfare of farmers and the farming sector as Agriculture is the backbone of our State's economy, the Governor said. Governor Harichandan said that the quality of the Health care system defines the Governance and is the most important factor for human development index.

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**Egypt may allot land to Indian industries in Suez Canal EZ**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Egypt have reaffirmed their commitment to the founding values of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), international law and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states.

It was mentioned in a joint statement released on Thursday, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi held wide-ranging talks covering bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

YSRCP committed to 3 capitals: 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 YSRC 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. YSRC party policy is decentralized 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.

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 hijacked", 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.

'YUVA GALAM' Lokesh's 'padayatra' from today

PNS ■ KUPPAM

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) activists from across the State gathered at Kuppam to express solidarity with the 'padayatra' being undertaken by party national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, from Friday.

With 'Yuva Galam', the 'padayatra' Lokesh aims at bringing awareness among the people on putting an end to the rule of the Chief Minister, Jagan Mohan Reddy, in the State. There was a festive atmosphere at Kuppam as thousands of party activists gathered in support of Lokesh.

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Kuppam turned yellow as TDP flags, balloons and banners appeared at every corner while all the hotels and lodges were filled with party

functionaries. They offered special poojas to Lord Varadaraja Swamy.

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.

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.

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 Saidea 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.

Jana Sena chief's comments led to a new debate in the BJP leaders and they are at crossroads on the continuing alliance with the JSP.

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

DEMANDS FOR SEPARATE STATES

Pawan tears into Dharmana, Byreddy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan has vented his anger over Revenue Minister Dhamana Prasad Rao and Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy for their demand for separate statehood for North Andhra and Rayalaseema regions respectively.

Pawan Kalyan unfurled the National Flag in the party office at Mangalagiri on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he came down heavily on the Dharmana ter and Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy stating that they could see a militant in him if the State is bifurcated again.

"Minister Dharmana Prasad Rao and Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy are making statements



irresponsibly. The minister wants separate statehood for north AP region while Byreddy wants separate statehood for Rayalaseema. If you continue demand for separate statehood, you can see a militant in me," Pawan Kalyan warned.

'Pawan has no right to talk about R'Seema'

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CM attends ‘At Home’



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan along with Lady Governor Suprava Harichandan, hosted ‘AT HOME’ function at Raj Bhavan on the occasion of 74th Republic Day, here on Thursdays.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy along with his wife YS Bharathi Reddy, Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra along with his wife Sucheta Mishra, have attended the function. Governor Harichandan and Lady Governor Suprava Harichandan welcomed the dignitaries on their arrival at Raj Bhavan. Judges of Andhra

Pradesh High Court, Members of AP Public Service Commission, Members of AP Information Commission, Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, DGP KV Rajendranath Reddy, several All India Service officers, several dignitaries including Sportspersons, Padma Award winners, Media persons, Ex-Servicemen and others have attended the function held at the Raj Bhavan lawns in a cordial atmosphere.

Earlier, Governor Harichandan went around and greeted the guests who attended the function. RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to the Governor, personally supervised the arrangements made for the function.

Pawan tears into...

Continued from page 1

The JSP chief recalled that many chief ministers from the Rayalaseema region ruled the State and still leaders like Byreddy demands separate statehood. “What did Chief Ministers from the Rayalaseema region do for the region?” he questioned and asked them what they could do now.

“You are trying to divide the State again for your own political mileage. If you want to divide the State again, we will teach a fitting lesson. We are vexed with your dramas,” he slammed, adding that all the people here belong to this land as well.

“Have you read Constituent Assembly debates? You do not know public policy and

steeped in corruption and you are trying to divide AP again. Do you think we will keep quiet if the State is divided again?” he asked.

The JSP chief asked the leaders to speak about Kadapa Steel Plant and irrigation water instead of dividing the State. “The people should understand the mischievous strategy of some leaders based on castes. Otherwise, the industrial development will go to Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat. AP needs political stability and the Jana Sena will provide it,” he said.

Pawan Kalyan objected to vehemently hurting the sentiments of Hindus by some so-called rationalists. Secularism does not mean abusing Hindu deities and hurting the sentiments of Hindus, he felt. “I

Machilipatnam Port works will begin soon: Collector

Grand celebrations mark R-Day programme in Krishna district

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 74th Republic Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour across Krishna District. District Collector P Ranjith Basha unfurled the National Flag along with District SP P Joshua at the Police Parade Grounds in Machilipatnam and received the guard of honour.

After receiving the salute, he gave the keynote address on the district's development. The Collector said that the district had been going forward in terms of development.

The government is implementing a number of schemes for the farmers' welfare. With the effective implementation of these schemes, the farmers are getting a lot of benefits, he said.

He said that 1.5 lakh farmers had



received around Rs 553 crore under the Rythu Bharosa scheme in the district during the past four years. Meanwhile, the resurvey process was completed in 100 villages in the district. Farmers were also given title deeds.

“The government is committed to fulfil people's long-cherished dream of having a house. In view of this, the government has sanc-

tioned 93,425 houses for Krishna district. Construction of 81,051 houses has also started. All the houses are constructed under Navaratnalu-Pedal Andariki Illu, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and TIDCO,” he added.

Collector Ranjith Basha said that the government was spending Rs 1,674.41 crore for the construction of the houses. On the pension

Pawan has no right to talk about R'Seema: Byreddy

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Taking strong exception to the comments made by Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan on Thursday, Rayalaseema Development Committee convenor Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy said that Pawan Kalyan has no right to talk about the Rayalaseema region.

Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy responded sharply to the comments of Pawan Kalyan while talking to the media on Thursday.

Byreddy strongly objected to Pawan Kalyan's comments that he would be a militant if the State is bifurcated. “What do you think of Rayalaseema? Are you ready for an open debate on Rayalaseema backwardness?

You cannot move in Rayalaseema if you continue to make such comments,” Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy warned Pawan Kalyan and asked him whether he has any sense, adding that Pawan Kalyan is being misled by some leaders. Byreddy alleged that the cinemas depicted Rayalaseema leaders as cruel and the region is faction-ridden and that is why industries are not coming up here, he slammed. Rayalaseema region has earned a bad name due to Cinemas, he flayed.

Byreddy Rajasekhara Reddy said that the people of Rayalaseema do not trust Pawan Kalyan. Pawan Kalyan has to learn a lot in politics, Byreddy said.

Pawan Kalyan...

Continued from page 1

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 33,00,000 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. He claimed that further Naidu government used funds of SCs to 'Anna Canteens', 'Chandranna Kanuka' and social security pensions. 87 per cent of

the jobs were given to SC, ST, BC and Minorities in all sectors including Secretariats.

Sajjala further said that there is no sense in the criticism of conditions for Lokesh's padayatra. Recently, 11 innocent people were killed in two TDP meetings, he said.

He recalled that permission was given to Jagan's padayatra in 2017 with conditions and restrictions which were followed by him and now the same rules and regulations apply to Lokesh.

Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said that no one can stop Jagan from becoming CM in 2024 no matter despite the conspiracies of TDP and JSP.

People insulting 'great men' of sanatan tradition are 'anti-India'

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

Yoga guru Ramdev on Thursday said many people are making controversial remarks against “great men” of sanatan tradition and termed them as “anti-India”.

“Insulting remarks are being passed by many people against great men associated with the sanatan tradition... They are all anti-India and acting at the behest of international forces by showing disrespect to the country. They should be strongly opposed,” Ramdev told reporters in reply to a question about self-styled godman and Bageshwar Dham chief Dhirendra Krishna Shastri. However, the yoga guru admitted people were being misled in the country in the name of miracles.

“People are being misled in the name of miracles. India respects physical reality. There is no place in its culture and religion for hypocrisy. But one cannot deny that if there is a physical science there is a spiritual science too,” he said after hoisting the national flag at Pantanjali Yogpeeth here.

Targeting Pakistan, he said it is on the verge of bankruptcy and will soon be divided into four parts with the POK, Sindh and Balochistan merging with India which will become a super power.

AP ushered in ‘Gram swaraj’: Guv

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Health services are provided by 10,032 YSR Village Health Clinics, 1,142 Primary Health Centres, 177 Community Health Centres, 53 Area Hospitals, 12 District Hospitals, 11 Teaching hospitals and 15 Specialty Hospitals. Apart from these, 542 Urban PHCs are facilitating health access to the people of the State. To ensure every mandal has 2 PHCs, the Government has sanctioned 88 new PHCs.

As per the election promise made, to reimburse the outstanding debts of SHG women, as on 11th April 2019 which amounted to Rs 25,517 Cr, our Government has launched YSR Aasara scheme to repay this outstanding amount in equal instalments in 4 years, the Governor said.

As a great tribute to the architect of our constitution, Government is installing 125

feet Statue of Dr Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and developing a park in an extent of 18.81 acres at Dr BR Ambedkar Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada with an estimated cost of Rs 268 crore.

Andhra Pradesh has witnessed an unprecedented Welfare and development momentum during the last 3 and half years and Government has taken up this programme under which MLAs are visiting all Households in their jurisdiction right from 11th May 2022 to create awareness among people on Government welfare schemes and to address their grievances.

He said that the government is committed to provide permanent houses to all the eligible people by 2024 by providing house sites and Housing in the name of “Pedalandariki Illu” which is included in the Government flagship pro-

gramme of “Navaratnalu”. Government Proposed to take up 30.20 lakh Houses with a project cost of Rs.54,360 Crores. So far, 18.63 lakh Houses with a project cost of Rs 33,544 Crores were taken up and 2.3 lakh Houses were completed and the remaining houses are at various stages of construction.

Our government has taken revolutionary steps to change the facade of the Coastal Area of Andhra Pradesh with the construction of 9 fishing harbours with world class infrastructure to benefit the fishermen, he said.

Government is committed to complete the major ongoing irrigation projects which were taken up under Jalayagnam to provide water for irrigation, drinking and industrial requirements in all the districts of the state, as one of the flagship programmes under 'Navaratnalu', he said.

The Governor said that with efficient functioning of Andhra Pradesh Police, crime has come down significantly in 2022. This was made possible through innovative policing measures. To help women in distress, Disha App was launched by our Government and has received tremendous response with over 1.36 crore App downloads till date and 1.11 crore registered users.

“Ours is the first State in the country which has undertaken a comprehensive land resurvey after 100 years using the most modern and advanced survey technologies for the best accuracy upto 5 cm. The main objectives of this scheme are to ensure the landowners' title security by providing 'Bhu Hakku Pathram' and to secure boundaries by planting 'Bhu Raksha' survey stones, free of cost, added Governor Harichandan on the occasion.

YSRCP committed to 3 capitals: Botsa

Continued from page 1

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

The minister said YSRC is talking about three capitals while Pawan Kalyan is talking about division and three States. YSRC has clearly stat-

ed that decentralised development of three regions is their policy with three capitals. Botsa said that without having basic knowledge Pawan compared decentralisation to the partition of Bengal and Vande Mataram Movement as if he is a wise man. There is no difference between KA Paul and Pawan Kalyan who speak nonsense, the minister

said. Botsa criticised that even after being in politics for almost 15 years the celebrity party leader could not win as MLA at least once.

Botsa found fault with Pawan Kalyan saying time and again that efforts are being made to stop his tour, and makes it clear that no one cares about it.

India committed to working with Prachanda-led govt

PNS ■ KATHMANDU

India's political leadership is committed to working in close relation with the Prachanda-led government for giving further impetus to bilateral ties, India's Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava said here on Thursday as he hosted an event to celebrate the 74th Republic Day. Prime Minister

Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was also present at the reception along with ministers, parliament members, former prime ministers, leaders of various political parties, heads of constitutional bodies, chiefs of the diplomatic missions in Kathmandu, high ranking government officials, business entrepreneurs, and media persons.

FinMin contemplating...

Continued from page 1

“I too belong to the middle class so I can understand the pressures of the middle class. I identify myself with the middle class so I know,” she had said earlier this month.

In the same breath, the minister reminded that the present Modi government has not imposed any fresh taxes on the middle class.

She said the government has taken various measures like developing the metro rail network in 27 cities and building 100 smart cities to promote ease of living.

The minister gave the assurance that the government can do more for the middle class as its population is growing and it has become sizeable now.

“I quite recognise their problems. The government has done a lot for them and continue doing the same,” she said without making any commitment.

Besides tinkering with exemption limit and standard deduction, the finance

ministry is also looking at the possibility of increasing limit under 80C which includes investment in life insurance, FD, bonds, housing and PPF, among others.

Payment towards medical insurance premium is also being looked at, sources said, adding, the government may simplify capital gains tax rules to benefit the middle class investors which have started investing in capital markets.

The insurance industry has been pitching for a separate tax deduction provision for life insurance, tax waiver for annuity income, and higher deductions for health insurance premiums.

If there is an increase in the limit under 80C with special focus on the insurance segment, it will help push term insurance or other protection scheme, which can provide essential financial protection to the family in the event of an untimely death of the earning member, said Max Life Insurance MD and CEO Prashant Tripathy.

BJP angry with JSP for holding talks with Kanna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP leadership is upset with the way Jana Sena Party leaders hold talks with its senior leader and former state BJP president Kanna Lakshminaryana, in a bid to lure him into their party. On the other hand, in the last couple of days, a large number of BJP workers and leaders in different districts have called it quits from the party. They are all said to be defecting to the Jana Sena Party sooner or later. To this the BJP national leadership, which has been adopting a wait and watch approach towards JSP chief Pawan Kalyan on the prospective alliance, is said to be angry with him for encouraging defections from the BJP into JSP.

Interestingly, Pawan Kalyan said the other day at Jagtial that he is still in alliance with the BJP and the future alliances

with new parties would depend on the situation at the time of elections. “Whether somebody will join hands with us or not, but I shall not allow the anti-establishment vote to split. If nobody comes with me, I am ready to fight the next elections independently,” he said.

This has angered the BJP leadership. State BJP leader and MP GVL Narasimha Rao said it was not proper to damage the BJP by engineering defections into Jana Sena, while claiming that the latter was still in alliance with the BJP. GVL said that “We are not going to take it easy but will react strongly to the same.” So far, there has been no reaction from Pawan Kalyan. He is said to be confident that the BJP would have no option but to join hands with Jana Sena-TDP combine, as the part has no strong leadership or cadre base in AP.

Lokesh's ‘padayatra’...

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Wide arrangements are made in an extent of over 10 acres near HP petrol pump in Kuppam from where Lokesh will address a public meeting before taking off on his 'padayatra'.

Lokesh who had the darshan of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala reached Kuppam late but all along his way the TDP functionaries gave a tumultuous welcome to him. Party senior leaders and others welcomed Lokesh at R and B Guest House.

Kuppam voters who elected TDP national president, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, for seven successive terms to the Assembly are ready to extend wholehearted support to Lokesh now.

CENTRE TO BACK NEW AP POWER DISTRIBUTION PLAN



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary Energy K Vijayanand has said that the State government has decided to implement the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) with an investment of around Rs 11,000 crore, with the support of the Union government to provide world-class services to the electricity consumers of Andhra Pradesh. He further said that the State government may get 60 per cent of total investment for the scheme as a grant from the Union government.

Addressing the gathering on the 74th Republic Day celebrations at Vidut Soudha in Vijayawada on Thursday, Vijayanand said, "The State government is taking special measures to increase the power generation capacity in the State under which Damodaram Sanjeevaiah Thermal Power Station (SDSTPS) unit - III (800MW) which was dedicated to the nation by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in October-2022 would become operational by February 2023 and will contribute to meet the ensuing summer demand.

Another 800 MW unit at Dr. NTTPS will be operational by May 2023."

Vijayanand said, "As part of capacity addition in green energy, APGENCO is installing two additional units of 115 MW each at Lower Sileru and expected to generate the power by July 2024. APGENCO is also establishing 12 units of 80 MW capacities at Polavaram, the first 7 units of which are likely to be commissioned in the FY 2024-25 and the remaining units in FY 2025-26. The power utilities would purchase 625 MW power from the Sembcorp thermal power station in Nellore from December 31, 2023 or from the date of completion of the transmission network in our state, whichever is earlier."

Vijayanand stated, "The government has entered into an agreement with Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to purchase 7,000 MW of power to strengthen under which in the first phase, 3000 MW will be available from September 2024, in the second phase, 3,000 MW from September 2025, and in the third phase, up to 1000 MW will be available from September 2026."

Waltair Division marching ahead: DRM

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The 74th Republic Day was celebrated with great fervour by the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway. Anup Satpathy, Divisional Railway Manager, unfurled the National Flag and took the Rastriya salami presented by the contingents of Railway Protection Force, Civil Defence and Bharat Scouts & Guides at the Waltair Railway Football Stadium.

After the fervent Republic Day parade, DRM Anup Satpathy conveyed greetings of the Republic Day and recalled the importance of Constitution & noble ideals of our freedom fighters.

Addressing the gathering DRM said that Waltair Division excelled in all platforms with great deal of relentless efforts. Emphasizing the importance of constructive work, team spirit, positive thoughts and commitment, DRM said that Waltair Division is moving on progressive path and will be a torch bearer to many divisions.



Speaking on the occasion DRM said that despite challenges, Waltair Division consistently performed well in all the quarters and will break the previous records. The Division is leading in all departments like safety, Security, infrastructure development, amenities improvement, asset management, human resource management, innovative initiatives for generating additional revenue etc. He said the Division achieved to load 50 Million

Tonnes freight by the first week of January-23 that showed 4% growth in freight loading and 5.7% growth in freight revenue. The gross earnings achieved to more than Rs 6630 Crores in this financial year till first week of January which showed 9.75% growth.

The DRM announced cash awards to various Departments which have made arrangements for the successful conduction of the Republic day. ADRM (operations) Manoj Kumar Sahoo & ADRM (infra) Sudhir Kumar Gupta were also present at the occasion.

President, ECoRWWO Smt Parijata Satpathy, Vice Presidents Kavita Gupta, Madhusmita Sahoo and Secretary, Priyanka Sridevi of East Coast Railway Women's Welfare Organization gave Health Drinks and fruits to about 120 patients.

A large number of Officers, staff and their families, media, and representatives of Recognized Unions witnessed the 74th Republic Day celebrations.



Republic Day Parade held at ENC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

On the occasion of the 74th Republic Day, Vice Adm Biswajit Dasgupta, FOCinC, ENC reviewed a ceremonial parade consisting of a 50 men Guard of Honour and 18 marching platoons, at Visakhapatnam today. The personnel on parade were drawn from all ships, submarines, air squadrons, naval establishments as well as DSC personnel and Sea Cadet Corps of the Eastern Naval Command.

Vice Adm Sanjay Vatsayan, Chief of Staff, ENC, was the Conducting Officer of the Parade with all Flag Officers, Commanding Officers, naval personnel and their families, including veterans and school children, in attendance. The event was also witnessed by the veteran sailors of the 1973 batch, who were visiting INS Circars for their golden jubilee.

Addressing the personnel on parade, the Commander-in-Chief complimented the smart turnout and excellent parade. He extended his Republic Day greetings to all naval personnel, defence civilians, veterans and their families and congratulated the award winners for their devotion to duty.

While emphasizing on the significance of Republic Day, he extolled the architects of the Indian constitution for not only laying down fundamental rights but also enshrining the fundamental duties of every citizen towards ensuring equality, justice and freedom for all. He urged everyone to abide by their fundamental duties and contribute positively in the growth of the nation.

The ceremony concluded with the singing of the National Anthem by all personnel on parade and the guests.

Students advised to have knowledge of farming

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the 74th Republic Day celebrations, sports, games, essay writing, debate and quiz competitions were held at Aligeni Peda Mutiah Zilla Parishad High School at Kotturu Tadepalli of Vijayawada Rural Mandal. The competitions were conducted for the students for two days. Coromandel International, a subsidiary of Murugappa Groups, sponsored prizes worth Rs.10,000.

On Republic Day, Coromandel HR Senior Manager Kondiparthi Sudhakar presented prizes to the winners, along with Gram



Sarpanch Vuyyuru Gopala Rao.

Speaking on the occasion, Sudhakar advised the students to have knowledge of agriculture. "Farmers are the backbone of the country and they work hard to produce food grains to feed us. Students should not ignore agriculture as it is the main source of income for farmers," he said. His company is working on the development of agriculture and helping farm-

this programme, Rs. 5,000 is given to the first-rank holder while Rs. 3,500 is given to the second-rank holder, he added.

Earlier, ZPH School Headmaster N Kamalakar Rao unfurled the national flag and paid tributes to the martyrs. The Headmaster and the guests received the guard of honour from NCC cadets.

APM ZP High School parents monitoring committee (PMC) chairman Sk Baji, Coromandel International Divisional Agronomist Hari, Manager (Marketing) Prudhvi, Senior Agronomist Prudhvi, Agronomist Satish, HR Gayatri, and school teachers were present.

Similarly, for the past few years, his company has been giving scholarships to girl students in rural areas who are studying in Class 10 and performing well in Class 9. Under

Tableaux feast to eyes of denizens

Housing dept tableau bags first prize

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 74th Republic Day celebrations were held on Thursday at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium, Vijayawada. State Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan unfurled the National Flag. Colourfully decorated tableaux were played during the Republic Day celebrations. At least 13 tableaux of various government departments showcased the various welfare and development schemes implemented by the State government through their respective departments were an eye

feast to the people of Vijayawada as they hit the city roads. After the Republic Day celebrations, all the tableaux took to the roads one by one from the Municipal Stadium to Benz Circle, Nirmala Convent Junction, Ramavarappadu Circle, Gunadala, Chutchugunta, Governorpet and returned to the stadium from the old bus stand via Raghavaiah Park.

The innovative programmes and welfare schemes undertaken by the State government in the last three-and-a-half years were displayed on the tableaux as they hit the streets

of the city. The respective departments have designed tableaux to reflect the State's progress, development and public welfare. Village, Ward Secretariat Department, Rural Poverty Alleviation Agency (SERP), Agriculture Department, Animal Husbandry Department, School Education Department, Social Welfare Department, Medical, Health and Family Welfare Department, Housing Department, Urban Poverty Alleviation Agency (MEPMA), Industries Department and Forest



departments.

The tableau of the Housing department received the first prize, and that of the School Education department (digital

education teaching) received second prize. The third prize went to the tableau of the Village and Ward Secretariat department.

VIT-AP honours 7 'unsung heroes'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of the 74th Republic Day celebrations on Thursday, VIT- AP University felicitated APSRTC drivers B Chenchu Krishnaiah and P Raja Gopal, who was honoured posthumously, five RTC drivers and one conductor, 6 fire services personnel. B Sundar Balakrishna, Special Secretary to Government, Department of IT, Electronics & Communications, government of AP unfurled the national tricolour on this occasion.

Addressing the gathering, he said 'Service to humanity is service to God'. He lauded the university authorities for choosing the prominent days like the Republic Day &



Independence Day to felicitate Unsung Heroes in remembrance of their selfless service to humanity. He also enlightened the audience on the constitutional & moral values and the need for the present generation to upkeep these values.

Special Guest Sandeep Sinha, Senior Consultant,

RTGS (Real Time Governance System), Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Vice Chancellor Dr SV Kota Reddy, Registrar Dr Jagadish Chandra Mudiganti, Student Welfare Deputy Director, Dr Anupama Namburu, family members of unsung heroes, faculty, students and staff were also present.

Two-day State conference on neurology from today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Neuroscientists Association and the Neuroscientists Association Guntur are conducting the State conference, 'NEUROCLINICS 2023', at Guntur Medical College auditorium and Guntur General Hospital Adams Hall on Friday and Saturday. State conference convenor Dr P Vijaya and co-convenors Dr NV Sundarachari and Dr KVV Satyanarayana Murthy said here on Thursday that eminent neurologists and neurosurgeons from all over India would address the conference. Neurologists, neurosurgeons and PG Students of General Medicine, Neurology and Neurosurgery from across the State are attending the conference.

The organisers said that

Andhra Pradesh Medical Council chairman Dr. B Sambasiva Reddy, Guntur Government Medical College Principal Dr C Padmavathi Devi and Guntur Government General Hospital Superintendent Dr G Prabhavathi would be the chief guests.

They said it would be a great learning experience for students, with bedside clinics to clinical scenarios to mini workshops on EEG /NCV/EMG/neuro radiology and video sessions on neurology and neurosurgery. It would be useful for beginners as well as seniors, who wish to have a quick review of important topics in neurosciences. There will be common as well as parallel sessions. The conference has been granted four credit hours by the AP Medical Council.

'Puja' performed to Varahi at Kanaka Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan offered special 'puja' at Goddess Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Jana Sena chief performed a special puja to Varahi (election campaign vehicle) at the foot of Indrakeeladri hill near the toll gate of the Ghat road.

Addressing the huge gathering, Pawan Kalyan said that the main aim of Varahi was to end the demonic rule of the YSRC in the state. He said that puja was performed to the goddess that the state should be prosperous and all communities should be happy. He said that surely he will meet people soon with the campaign vehicle Varahi.

Pawan Kalyan chanted 'Jai Bhavani' after he got into the campaign vehicle after the puja. He wished that the youth should enter politics and wanted both



Telugu states to develop.

Earlier in the day JSP chief Pawan Kalyan and party PAC chairman Nadendla Manohar visited the temple in the morning directly and offered Turmeric, Kunkuma, Saree, Bangles and Flowers to the presiding goddess. Pawan Kalyan was welcomed by temple EO Bhramaramba, temple officials and priests. They performed a special puja. Later, Vedic scholars blessed

Pawan Kalyan and offered goddess prasadam and portrait. He thanked the EO, officials, Vedic scholars, priests, police and other staff of Vijayawada Kanaka Durga Temple who helped in Varahi vehicle puja.

Party leaders Potina Venkata Mahesh, Ammishetti Vasu, A Gandhi, Tangella Uday, Mandali Rajesh, Buragadda Srikanth, Kishore, Boliyashetty Srikanth and others were present.

Gold worth Rs 1.70 crore missing in bank

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A private bank appraiser stole gold worth Rs 1.7 crore from a private bank in Rentapalla village of Sattenapalli mandal in Palnadu district.

Sattenapalli rural police suspect that the bank appraiser is suspected to have played a key role and it has been revealed that gold worth Rs 1.70 crore has been stolen. He is in police custody and being interrogated. More details are yet to be revealed by him, police added.

The issue came to light when a woman mortgaged her gold ornaments with the bank to repay the loan amount and take back her gold. After the payment, the bank staff searched for her gold and found they were missing.

Reportedly, as many as 45 bags of gold from multiple customers have been missing from the bank.

A large number of customers in the village have taken loans for agriculture by pledging gold in the bank. Upon learning of the matter, a huge number of customers turned up at the bank and demanded their gold.

In response to this, the top officials of the bank suspended Branch Manager Rambabu Naik and Assistant Manager Ravi Kumar. So far no complaint has been lodged with the police.

Four bikes set afire

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Four two-wheelers were set on fire by an unidentified miscreant on the intervening night of Thursday in Balaji nagar in Krishna Lanka of Vijayawada. According to the police, the incident took place at around 3.30 am on Thursday. Locals panicked after hearing a loud sound at midnight, caused by the explosion. They rushed out of their homes and found four two-wheelers in flames. The locals immediately managed to douse the fire. Three vehicles were completely gutted while one partially. On learning about the incident, police rushed to the spot and examined the nearby CCTV footage. Police found that a person was seen stealing petrol from 8 two-wheelers on the same street. Later he doused the bikes with petrol and set them ablaze. A case has been registered and an investigation is on. The fire broke out to the height of the two floors of the building but fortunately, did not enter inside the houses and no one was injured.

HORRIFIC MURDER OF MAN ON SUSPICION OF WITCHCRAFT

KARIMNAGAR: A horrific murder of a man on suspicion of practising 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 Naween 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.

Mettapalli Circle Inspector Satyanarayana said that three persons were taken into custody for interrogation on the suspicion of their involvement in the murder. The three persons allegedly confessed to the crime.

It was suspected that two persons, Maddam Nareesh and Pill Satyanarayana, fell seriously ill as Gangaram practised witchcraft on them. The police said three persons had strangled him to death on the night of January 16. The alleged culprits had buried the body on the outskirts of Kopigatturu village. They also burnt the Gangaram's clothes, the police said.



Devotees throng Durga temple on 'Sri Panchami'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of Sri Panchami, thousands of devotees thronged the Durga Temple atop Indrakeeladri on Thursday. On the auspicious day, the presiding deity appeared in Sri Saraswathi Devi alankaram.

A large number of pilgrims, mainly students along with their parents, visited the temple and had Durga darshan. The priests conducted special rituals such as

Saraswathi Mantra Havanam on the temple premises in view of Sri Panchami.

Each student who visited the temple was given a pen, Kanaka Durga's pocket-size picture, Raksha Kankanam, Kunkuma and laddu prasadam. The temple authorities arranged free darshan through the Mukha Mandapam for the students.

Temple EO Bramaramba supervised the arrangements and handed over prasadam to the students.



Focus on farming, irrigation: Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh said that special attention has been laid on the agriculture sector, irrigation projects, industrial development, developing infrastructure and women's welfare in the district.

The Collector hoisted the National Flag on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day held in Police Parade Grounds on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said there is a need for today's generation to remember the sacrifices of the freedom fighters of those days who laid down their lives for the freedom of the country.

He said that quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides are being provided to the farmers through 540 Rythu Bharosa Kendras in the district and free electricity for cultivation.

He said that Rs 223 crore was disbursed to 1.94 lakh farmers as under rythu bharosa and Rs 7,407 crore being provided as crop loans. He said that 42,139 tenant farmers were given loan eligibility cards, Rs 41.64 crore was



extended to them as loans for cultivation, and Rs 10.66 crore was directly deposited in the farmers' accounts as investment subsidy under the free agricultural insurance scheme.

He said that the rehabilitation package for Polavaram Project evacuees would be completed expeditiously and the evacuees would be shifted to the rehabilitation colonies and 32 colonies are being constructed for the evacuees at a cost of Rs 1523 crore.

Under the YSR pension Kanuka, 2,73,867 people in the district are being disbursed pension from Rs 2500 to Rs 2750 from January 1. As part of women's empowerment, Rs 1084 crores is provided as loans to 27,312 DWCRA soci-

eties and additional Rs 109 crore extended as loans to the beneficiaries of Jagananna houses.

"Rs. 276.36 crore have been deposited in the accounts of 1,84,249 mothers under the Amma Vodi Scheme, Rs 106.77 crore under the Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme and Rs 35.12 crore deposited to the accounts of mothers under the Jagananna Vasati Devana Scheme, 1537 government schools are being modernized at a cost of Rs 430.38 crore under the Nadu-Nedu programme. Under the MGNREGA Scheme, 120 lakh working days have been provided to 9.47 lakh wage earners and Rs 246 crore have been paid to them," the Collector explained.

Steps are being taken to provide drinking water to every house through a tap at a cost of Rs.600 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme and drinking water facility. District Judge C Purushottama Kumar, MLC Sheikh Sabji, Eluru Range IG Pala Raju, SP Rahul Dev Sharma and other officials were among those who participated.



'Keep NTR district ahead on all fronts'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has asked all the district authorities to make the district ahead in all aspects by serving the people with the spirit of the Republic day. As part of the 74th Republic Day celebrations, he distributed meritorious certificates to the employees along with Joint Collector Nupur Ajay, Vijayawada DCPs Vishal Gunny and Mary Prasanthi and Sub Collector Adithi Singh at the Police Parade Grounds in Vijayawada on

Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the government had been implementing a number of schemes in the State keeping in view of the people's welfare; like, housing, Arogya, Amma Vadi, YSR Cheyutha, Aasara Pensions and other schemes.

The Collector said every employee must ensure that welfare schemes reach the eligible persons. He asked the officials to make the district a model for all the districts in terms of development, in the State.

'Prakasam dist witnessing progress'

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector Dinesh Kumar has said that the district is witnessing an overall development expeditiously and the welfare schemes are being implemented efficiently for the poor.

The Collector hoisted the

national flag on the occasion of the 74th Republic Day in the police parade ground on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion the Collector listed out the implementation of various welfare schemes and development projects being carried out in the district.

District Judge V Bharati, SP

Malika Garg, JC M Abhishek Kishore, MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, ZP chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma, MLC Tumati Mahava Rao, Mayor Gangada Sujata, ASP Nageswara Rao and a host of officials and leaders were among those who were present.



Children's heart surgeries performed free of cost

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr PV Rama Rao, chief of Children's Services Heart & Brain Institute, Andhra Hospitals, has said that they have been performing paediatric cardiac surgeries in association with a doctors' team from the UK, with a success rate of nearly 100 per cent.

The hospital is organising the 25th Paediatric Cardiac Surgical Camp in association with the team Healing Little Hearts, UK, from January 23 to 28. The team, including six senior doctors and nurses from Freeman Hospitals, New Castle, UK, and Leeds Hospitals, UK, is performing 20 free heart surgeries during this week.

Dr Rama Rao said that the Children's Heart Institute team had been success-



fully performing heart surgeries on kids for the past seven years. "So far, we have successfully performed 3,000 cardiac surgeries and interventions. The

Healing Little Hearts, UK, team has come here 25 times so far and many complex heart surgeries were done with their association. We have performed

the maximum number of children's cardiac surgeries in Andhra Pradesh on an average of 50 surgeries in a month, totaling 600 cardiac surgeries in a year so far, more than any major cardiac centre in Telugu States," he said.

The team includes a paediatric cardiac surgeon, paediatric cardiac intensivists, paediatric intensive care nurses. The team is led by Dr Vikram, K and Dr Dileep from Andhra Hospitals, Dr Mohammed Nassar, consultant paediatric cardiac surgeon, Dr Ramesh Kumar, paediatric cardiac intensivist from UK, Sarah Broch, Chelsee, Rachel Boycs and Ailish Townsend from UK. They are performing very complex heart surgeries to treat TGA, Ebstein anomaly, severe spectrum of ToM and other heart diseases.



NADIKUDI-SRIKALAHASTI RLY LINE

AP govt not cooperating with Centre to complete project: Veerraju

PNS ■ ONGOLE

BJP State president Somu Veerraju has alleged that the AP government is not cooperating with the Central government for the completion of the Nadikudi-Srikalahasti railway line.

Talking to the media here on Thursday, he said that the Nadikudi-Srikalahasti railway project was taken up at a cost of Rs 2,643 crore but the AP government is not cooperating to complete the project expeditiously.

Veerraju said that the Central government has taken up various projects in AP by spending lakhs of crores. Somu Veerraju claimed that the Centre is extending funds for the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme and

modernizing of classrooms in the government schools. The Centre is also extending funds for the maintenance of 108 ambulance services. However, the AP government has owned the Central government sponsored schemes without giving credit to the Centre.

The state government has snatched the funds of pan-chayats, he slammed. The Centre has so far extended Rs 75,000 crore to AP for the implementation of MGNE-GA scheme, he said. State Sanghatana minister Madhukar, state general secretary Suryanarayana Raju and state secretary Ramesh Naidu and Prakasam district president Shiva Reddy were among those who were present.

Govt okays transfers of teacher couples

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

The process of promotions and transfers of teachers will begin in the state on Friday. Education Secretary Vakati Karuna issued GO No: 5 on Thursday regarding this. Transfers and promotions will be done manually through web counselling. Category vacancies and seniority lists of school assistants eligible for promotion as principals will be announced online.

Online applications for transfers will be accepted from January 28 to 30. Hard copies of the applications should be submitted by high school teachers to their respective principals, government primary and secondary teachers to their MEOS, mandal parishad primary and secondary teachers to the respective complex principals, and high school principals to DEOs between January 31 and February 2.

KCR insulted Ambedkar by not holding R-Day function

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan 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 Sounderarajan, the BJP leader wondered whether this is the regard the BRS leadership has towards women.

CRIME BEAT

One killed, five injured as auto overturned



PNS ■ ONGOLE

One person was killed and at least five women were injured when an auto rickshaw in which they were travelling overturned at Jagarlamudi Vari Palem village in J Panguuru mandal on Thursday.

Police said that a group of

women agricultural workers were returning from the fields after their work. The auto rickshaw overturned on the road killing one person. The injured women were admitted to the KIMS hospital Addanki MLA Gottipati Ravikumar spoke to the SP and inquired about the condition of the injured.

One killed as car collides with another car

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

One person was killed and three others were injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with another car at KG Satram at Bangarupalyam village on Chittoor-Bangalore highway on Thursday. Police said that the car driver applied a sud-

den brake to avoid hitting a cow. As the driver was unable to control the car, it mounted the road divider, plunged into the other lane and collided with another which was going on the other lane. The deceased is yet to be identified. The police registered a case and shifted the injured persons to the GGH.



4 thieves arrested, booty recovered

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A four-member notorious gang of thieves were arrested and Rs 20,000 cash and an auto rickshaw were recovered from them.

Additional SP (Crimes) Vimala Kumar told the media on Thursday that the accused Giri Ganga Raju, Jiripati Reddappa, Pattabu Narasimhulu and Andela Kiran were committing burglaries in temples during nights.

They committed burglaries in the Anjaneya Swamy temple in Tiruchanoor police station limits and Vakulamata



temple in MR Palli police station limits. The police recovered an auto rickshaw and Rs 20,000 from them. The offenders confessed the crimes, the additional SP said.

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."

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 with journals 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

KCR must apologise to Gov, says Revanth



Declaring that Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan 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. 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.

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 position 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 Srinivasa 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.

Revanth said that Eatala is also playing a role in KCR's poisonous experiment. KCR is making Eatala to do what he doesn't like, Revanth said.

"Eatala is a Leftist, but KCR made him join a rightist party. Eatala does not want to distribute money during elections, but he spent money during the Huzurabad by-election. Unfortunately, Eatala is now doing what KCR wanted him to do," Revanth said.

Senior Congress leader Dr Cheruku Sudhakar said that Eatala has started speaking shockers.

"The current party of Eatala is not working against KCR. The BJP and the BRS are enacting dramas to defeat the Congress," he said.

There is no use in Eatala getting pained by saying that the BRS is engaging in covert operations, Cheruku Sudhakar pointed out and suggested that Eatala should realise that only the Congress can defeat the BRS.

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

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



RAGHAVENDRA P TIWARI

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

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 Yojna, Gramoday Se Bharat Uday are only a few to name. Such schemes have ensured that

Some Bollywood stars live in virtual reality



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 fathomable. 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

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 Network 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".



Bengal trade body organises startup funding pitch event

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Confederation of West Bengal Trade Association (CWBTAA) 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," CWBTAA president Sushil Poddar told PTI.

'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."

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.

Maruti Suzuki India's pending orders rise to around 4.05 lakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India's pending orders have jumped to around 4.05 lakh units this month as the inflow of bookings continues to be steady, while newly introduced SUVs Jimny and Fronx also added to the numbers, according to a senior company official. The bookings for Jimny have crossed 11,000 units, while that of Fronx is around 4,000 units. In the third quarter ended December 2022, the company's pending customer orders stood at about 3.63 lakh vehicles, out of which about 1.19 lakh orders were for newly launched models. "We are at around 4,05,000 bookings (at present), which are pending, and that means that we are seeing in the flow

of bookings and of inquiries at a pretty good level," Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Officer, Marketing & Sales, Shashank Srivastava told PTI. Compared to January 2022, the inquiry is higher by 28 per cent and bookings by 16 per cent in the same month this year, he said. The increase in pending orders has also been accelerated by the company's two newly introduced SUVs -- Jimny and Fronx -- which were unveiled at the Auto Expo 2023 earlier this month, Srivastava said. "The response has been great, especially for the Jimny, as also for the Fronx...we are getting bookings for the Jimny at the rate of around 1,000 per day. We have so far got over 11,000 orders for Jimny," Srivastava said.



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 statement 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 life-cycle, 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 Gummadi, President of the Americas at Cognizant, said.

Stallone denies Pam Anderson's claim that he asked her to be his No.1 girl



Hollywood star Sylvester Stallone has responded to Pamela Anderson's claim that he once asked her to be his No. 1 girl and offered her a "condo and Porsche."

"The statement from Pamela Anderson attributed to my client is false and fabricated," said the 76-year-old actor's representative. "Mr. Stallone confirms that he never made any portion of that statement," reports aceshowbiz.com.

Pamela made the claim in her new Netflix documentary *Pamela, a Love Story*, which will be released on January 31. In it, the 55-year-old actress recounts when Sly allegedly "offered me a condo and a Porsche to be his No. 1 girl."

Pamela claims that she turned him down. "And I was like, 'Does that mean there's No. 2? Uh-uh,'" she says with a laugh in the doc, per the New York Post.

She later added: "He goes, 'That's the best offer you're gonna get, honey. You're in Hollywood now.' (But) I wanted to be in love. I didn't want anything less than that."

This is the second time just this week a Hollywood star denied the claims Pamela has reportedly made as in a leaked excerpt from her memoir *Love, Pamela*, she revealed Tim Allen flashed her during the very first day of filming *Home Improvement*.

"On the first day of filming, I walked out of my dressing room, and Tim was in the hallway in his robe. He opened his robe and flashed me quickly - completely naked underneath," Pam, who appeared as Lisa the Tool Girl on the hit show, details in her new book.

"He said it was only fair, because he had seen me naked. Now we're even. I laughed uncomfortably," she continues.

Tim, who was 37 at the time of the alleged incident, was presumably referring to Pam's modelling for *Playboy*, which helped turn her into an internationally known sex symbol.

Responding to the allegations, Tim confirmed to Variety that Pamela only tells lies. The *Last Man Standing* star stated: "No, it never happened," before insisting that he "would never do such a thing."

Interestingly, one day after Tim debunked the claims, an on-set video of him flashing his *Home Improvement* co-star resurfaced on the Internet.

In the newly resurfaced footage, Tim was filmed playfully flashing his manhood to Patricia Richardson.

"Tim, who played Patricia's husband on the ABC sitcom, was dressed in a kilt as the actress said: 'Hangs long. I just wish it was shorter.'"



Sanjay Dutt and Arshad Warsi's duo is back after Munna Bhai

Sanjay Dutt fans have been waiting for a long time for him to reunite with his *Munna Bhai MBBS* co-star Arshad Warsi. Now, we have good news for his fans. Bollywood's *Munna Bhai* is set to reunite with Circuit aka Arshad after 6 years. While the project isn't related to the *Munna Bhai* series, the duo's fans are still very excited to witness them together on the big screen.

The *KGF Chapter 2* star took to Instagram to announce his upcoming project with Arshad Warsi. He also unveiled a poster of the upcoming untitled project. It

sees Sanjay Dutt and Arshad Warsi inside a lockup as they stand close to each other. It seems that the two are good friends and are playing cons in the film. Going by the movie's poster, the movie that will be produced under Sanjay Dutt's production house, will be released this year. The movie will be helmed by Sidhaant Sachdev.

Taking to the captions, Sanjay wrote, "Our wait has been longer than yours but the wait is finally over, coming together with my brother @arshad_warsi for yet another exciting movie... Can't wait to show you, stay tuned!"

Britney Spears deletes Instagram account again, leaving fans concerned

Pop icon Britney Spears has deleted her Instagram account after growing concern from her fans over her latest posts. The 41-year-old *Toxic* singer had been reminiscing about her past relationship with Justin Timberlake before admitting "she's learning" and sharing a video as she got a "regretful" tattoo, reports Mirror.co.uk.

She had also changed her name on Instagram to River Red, prompting fans to take to Twitter to share their concern. "River red ?? Britney honey what's going on," one fan asked. Another commented: "So cryptic." As per Mirror.co.uk, before deleting her account, Britney took to the platform on Wednesday (Pacific Standard Time) to share a cryptic post about being different to other people.

She wrote: "Rational people... I had one of these and it disappeared!!!! I could sit back and be like most and not give anyone anything to think about on Instagram. But interest is what serves most and being good!!!!" She added, quoted by Mirror.co.uk: "Being good can and will wrap things up in a seashell!!!! Living the lavidia loco life!!!!"



Britney also wrote: "It gets better because that's what I aim for!!! Keep coughing plays and just remember to watch your back!!!! Or you might just get caught!!!! Yep sucks to be me (sic)."

Finishing her final post, Britney wrote: "Keep talking s**t or maybe it will just rain from the sky!!! Giving someone I love my everything only gives me the dagger in the heart (sic)."

Sunny Deol, Ameesha Patel-starrer Gadar returns with sequel on Aug 11

Bollywood actor Sunny Deol's *Gadar*, which shattered box-office records 22 years ago, is returning with its sequel. The first poster from the sequel titled *Gadar 2* was unveiled on Thursday and it shows an intense Tara Singh, played by Sunny, holding a hammer.

The film has also set its release date as August 11, 2023.

The Sunny Deol and Ameesha Patel-starrer created an insurmountable stir in Bollywood when it released in 2001 and clashed against Aamir Khan's Oscar nominated *Lagaan*.

Actor Sunny Deol stated: "*Gadar - Ek Prem Katha* has been an eminent part of my life, personally as well as professionally. Tara Singh from *Gadar* isn't just a protagonist

but went on to become a cult icon that defied all odds and crossed all boundaries for his family and love.

Collaborating with the team after 22 years was a creatively enriching experience."

Helmed by director-producer Anil Sharma, and produced by Zee Studios, the new movie stars Sunny Deol, Ameesha Patel and Utkarsh Sharma in lead roles.

Sharing his joy over the first poster launch, director and producer Anil Sharma said: "*Gadar - Ek Prem Katha* isn't my film but it's people's film and dynamically shifted the paradigm of the Indian film industry. It went on to become a cult icon wherein people breathed Tara Singh and Sakina's love story. We are absolutely thrilled to launch the first poster."



FUN

ARCHIE



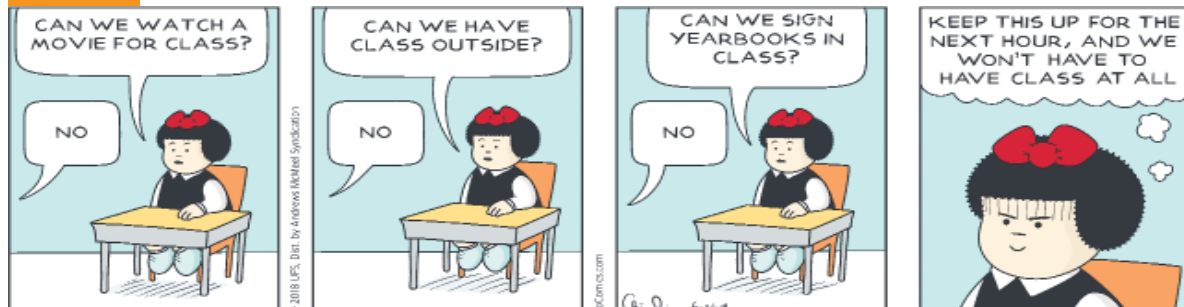
CALVIN AND HOBBS



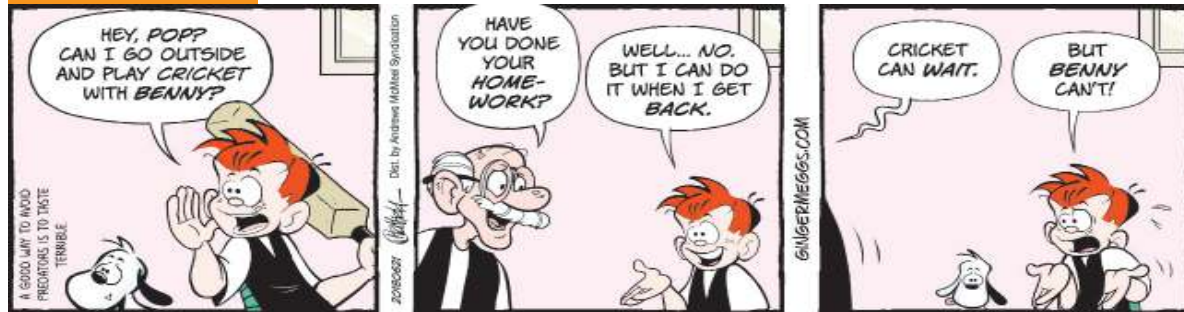
GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



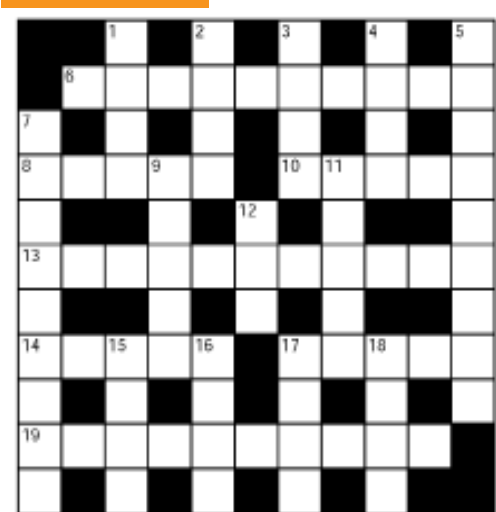
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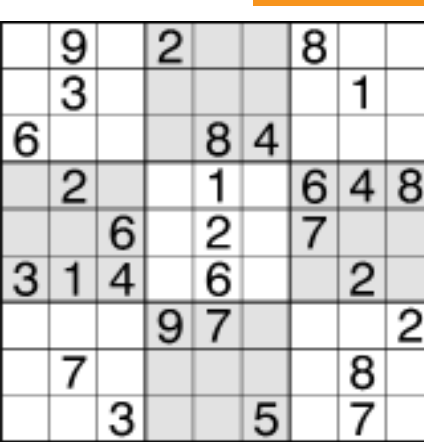
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Television advertisement
- Group of eight
- A black and white animal in China
- A kind of small glass tube for showing temperatures
- Time of darkness
- Comes to a standstill
- Rang up

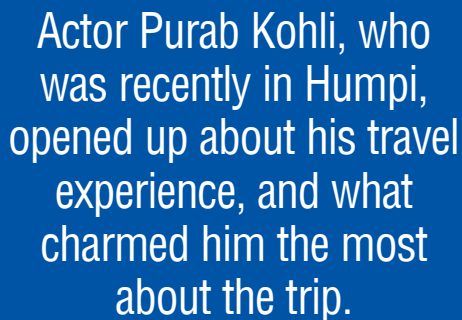
DOWN

- Mistaid
- Leave out
- Put paper around something
- A large African cat
- A very large seabird
- Lucky
- Our planet
- Watchful, ready for anything that might happen
- Plaything
- A very strong wind
- Adhesive strip
- Shortly
- Unlock



PNS| HYDERABAD

He also mentioned that the staff goes out of their



Travel Tales



Building a skill-based organisation:

In the fast-evolving business landscape, organisations are identifying the need for a multi-skilled team that can remain relevant in the highly-competitive environment. The disruption caused by the pandemic has only intensified the need for employees to adopt in-demand skills and become indispensable cogs in their organisations. But, the onus of upskilling and reskilling does not fall on employees alone. Employers, too, must contribute towards building skill-based organisations. In this regard, HR teams need to ramp up upskilling and reskilling initiatives. Skill building must be a regular practice based on current and potential skill gaps.

Over the past few years, the workforce has been increasingly seeking personal value and purpose in their job roles. In 2023, HR professionals must focus on delivering value by sharing the organisation's ESG initiatives with the team. In fact, suggest the ESG performance of a company will become vital to attract and retain the best talent. Laying down clear purpose goes a long way in engaging and retaining them for longer periods. The last few years have seen an increased awareness of social issues among people contributing to changes in responsibilities for HR departments of organisations.

The Chief Human Resource Office (CHRO) of an organisation wears many different hats. Besides leading discussions in board meetings to formulate policies, business, production and employee safety, CHROs are also responsible for leading the ESG goals of an organisation. In 2023, the CHRO must be given a definitive seat at the table with resources, responsibility, and

Deskless workers are those who need to be physically present at their jobs and don't have the option to work remotely, or do not have the flexibility of working hours. According to a report, 37% of deskless workers are expected to leave their jobs in the next six months in view of pay disparity. Hence, it is necessary for HR professionals to offer better career opportunities, compensation and improved working conditions to deskless workers.

In 2023, HR professionals must address and bridge the gap between employers and employees. This can be made possible in several ways such as managers practising an open door policy, business updates being shared with employees regularly, and one-on-one sessions being held with employees and the leadership to avoid a communication gap. When leaders understand and consider employee needs and expectations while making business decisions, employees feel a sense of belonging. This reduces conflict, increases motivation, and may also be a great way to reduce moonlighting.

In 2023, organisations will heavily rely on HR professionals and their experience to tackle the challenges ahead, making it essential for the latter to continue building resilience. Professionals now look for connection and empathy after being subjected to negativities and uncertainties. With the possibility of employee experience taking the centre stage, organisations and HR professionals will have to focus on strengthening the bond between employees and employers. Employee satisfaction, hybrid work, and interpersonal relationships will be prioritised in 2023 with technology playing a vital role in delivering desired outcomes.

“Finding a diet that matches your requirements and lifestyle is wholesome. The 80/20 Rule has to be the greatest diet plan for meeting all of your requirements. Also, this diet will prevent you from putting on weight while making you feel satisfied after every meal. This will help keep you fuller for longer periods, reducing cravings. This method emphasizes both, the nutrients that a healthy body needs and the tiny delights that will satisfy your mood cravings. So, rather than reducing the number of meals

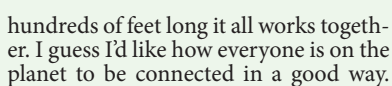
Second, for lunch, opt for the home-cooked fare. White/brown rice/roti, pro-

The best balanced home-cooked meal along with few spaces for treats is your key to losing weight or staying fit. Thus, instead of starving yourself with fad diets this year, enjoy your favourite meals even when on a diet.

TEJAL SINHA

Beginning with her strongest memory from her childhood that inspired her to get into the artistic world, she says, "My mother had a lot of different art books around the house that inspired me. I remember looking at Kandinsky's work, and Paul Klee's work in books she had. I was very drawn to their drawings and their imagery from a very young age and I think this definitely influenced my work to today, he also had some books on Jackson Pollock and that influenced me very much. I went into the garage and

For Lindsey, Scuba diving and technology have been two of the profound influences on her art. "There is this animal that is the second largest animal on the planet. No one talks about this colony creature called a Siphonophore. It's



Another big influence is technology. Since I was a generation where we all started getting cell phones, graduating col-

Recently, she exhibited her artwork in *Reality of Illusions*, where she explored the digitalised connectedness that humans now seek or are sucked into unknowingly. As we were eager to know more about her artwork, she said, “The pieces I created for *Reality of Illusions*, came out during the pandemic. The gridded people series these paintings represented how people can Google search each other, connect with each other through Facebook,

"I find the art scene similar to reality with Instagram and connecting. I feel very much like part of it. Even if I'm not physically there, I can see more shows I can see more people online all over the world. I think for me, I have to stay grounded in a spiritual practice I know that I'm part of this. And not let my ego get ahead of me or behind me, because you never know when you're gonna be in the front or in the back popular or not. It's about making the work and keeping yourself grounded. I try to tell younger artists this because we all want to show in Basel or get those high prices, but it's about creating your vision and sticking to it. I think the world has more love for art and creatives than ever before because there are more fairs and more opportunities," signed off Lindsey, who is going to start making some new, larger bronze sculptures based on neurons and shadows, as well as a new body of paintings similar to the gridded people, but more about borders, and how people are connected with Wi-Fi and technology and erasing the borders through communication on the web and technology.

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 Capers 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.



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.

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.



Ready for Oz series, says Jadeja after seven-wicket haul against TN in Ranji

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 (Hemanshu 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.

REVIEW

Hunt A lazy chase with no highs

AMARTYA SMARAN

Hunt directed by Mahesh Surapaneni and produced by Bhavya Creations stars Sudheer Babu, Srikanth Meka, and Premisthe fame Bharath. Popular music director Ghibran, who predominantly works in the Tamil film industry composed the score. Editor Prawin Pudi masterfully stitched the sequences shot by cinematographer Arul Vincent, while the duo Bryan Vigier- Renaud Favero choreographed the action sequences.

Assistant Commissioner of Police- P. Arjun Prasad (Sudheer Babu) is a tough cop. Mohan (Srikanth Meka) is Arjun's superior and a close friend. The new ACP Aryan Dev (Bharath) strikes a chord with Mohan and Arjun and the trio shares a wonderful bond. However, ACP Aryan gets shot by an unknown sniper in broad daylight soon after accepting a prestigious award. Aryan's best buddy Arjun Prasad takes up the case. However, he meets with an accident and loses his memory in the midst of solving the high-profile murder case. Would ACP Arjun Prasad be able to hunt down the suspects and regain his lost memory?

Director Mahesh picks a rather complicated plot- A ripped athletic police officer trying to solve a gruesome murder mystery while tracing his lost memory!!! Our protagonist joins the police force right after recovering from a serious accident. He doesn't remember the names, places or for that matter, he absolutely forgets the fact that he's a top cop! Thanks to Mohan (Srikanth Meka), who covers up everything and asks Arjun to solve the case. He says to Arjun, "You just lost your memory, not the ability to think!". That's what I'd keep telling myself ahead of every test in school (haha).

It's a wonderful thought but how can someone who just lost all his memory take up such an important case? Alright! It's a movie but did



the creator succeed at telling a compelling story? I'm afraid not! The film is titled 'Hunt' but we don't get to see the director's zest for hunting. Therefore, the lack of energy shows on the screen. The story does have great potential but the director couldn't make the most out of the idea.

The screenplay cuts back and forth between the present and the past. The present deals with Arjun B who is trying to figure out who he is and the past focuses on Arjun A; the ruthless cop who'd go to any extent to solve a case. The cause-effect logic doesn't coherently add up as a result of the constant cuts between the past and present. This doesn't mean the pacing of the film was bad. It sits really well with the screenplay but the only problem here is that the audience is not left

with enough excitement to solve and find out the answers for themselves. For example, there's a good action sequence where Arjun B fights the goons. Why did that even happen? We'll have to wait till the second half only to get a boring answer from a terrorist's son!

Hunt tries to include several themes here. On one hand, we have the cops who set out on a mission to take down terrorists at one point which seeps into the screenplay in a very unusual manner. And then we have this wonderful bromance of the trio coupled with a gory murder and the lead character losing memory. Also, the film touches upon the themes of sexuality and romance in the most casual manner. Following up with the casual treatment of sexuality and romance, one must give it to Sudheer Babu for at least tak-

ing up the challenge. He does shine in one particular scene where he can't identify his long-time lover. Now, that's some good direction from the creator. There's conflict and excitement. You're rooting for the character and begging him not to mess up. You're completely in the scene. Unfortunately, all this happens at the end of the film. If only director Mahesh showed the same skill of building real drama throughout the film.

Mahesh does a good job with this particular dreamlike sequence where Arjun hears all kinds of voices overlapping with the hazy montages on the screen.

Cinematographer Arul Vincent crafts all the shots with great skill and it does show the character's struggle to get back to his old self. The action choreographer duo Bryan Vigier- Renaud Favero do what they do best. The chase

sequences look flawless and thankfully, don't defy gravity for once. There's nothing to complain about that but including more action scenes would make the movie more interesting.

When the trailer came out, people believed *Hunt* to be an action film but it only pretends to be an action thriller. Music director Ghibran doesn't do much to amp up the dry dialogues either. There's one item song in the film and sadly enough, it is only forgettable in all ways possible. The majority of the film relies heavily on lackluster dialogues and explanations. The narration is so flat that the theater literally turned silent after a while and that's unacceptable for a film titled *Hunt*.

Sudheer Babu's *Hunt* tries hard to be an engaging action thriller but everything lacks that oomph factor from the direction to music to performances. Sudheer's fans call him a 'Nitro Star'. Perhaps some 'Oxygen' is what he needs to make a great comeback with his next film.

RATING: 1.5/5


Nandamuri Tarakaratna likely to contest from Hindupur constituency

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor Nandamuri Tarakaratna made it to the headlines recently after he met Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national general secretary Nara Lokesh. His political foray rumours are rampant. Amidst this, Tarakaratna and Nandamuri Balakrishna attended a wedding in Hindupur on Thursday. The duo was spotted sitting together at the wedding, and it was the first time they had met and spoken in a long time.

Now, wondering what is so interesting about this? Nandamuri Balakrishna won elections as an MLA from Hindupur twice. Furthermore, Tarakaratna recently visited Hindupur and is actively involved in the constituency's political

affairs. All this suggests that another family member from the Nandamuri family, i.e., Nandamuri Tarakaratna, might contest from the Hindupur constituency in the coming elections.

Sources close to the actor informed *The Pioneer* that he is actively taking part in election campaigns, touring the constituency, and is now completely focused on his political journey.

The actor had scored a hit with the web series *9 Hours*, and the source further informed us that he has a couple of web series and a film with producer Lakshminipathi as well. However, because of his political interest, they are put on hold at the moment.

It is to be seen if the actor will bag success in politics too, just like in his recent films.



Actor Sharwanand enters the wedlock

Young hero Sharwanand who's one of the most eligible bachelors in Tollywood is all set to end his bachelorhood soon. Sharwa, son of Myneni Vasundhara Devi and Myneni Ratnagiri Vara Prasad Rao, will tie the nuptial knot with Rakshita who is a techie. Rakshita is the daughter of High Court lawyer Pasunoor Madhusudhan Reddy and Pasunoor Sudha Reddy.

On Wednesday, the engagement of Sharwanand and Rakshita was held in a grand way in Hyderabad and the couple exchanged rings in the presence of family members,

relatives, and close friends. The wedding date will be announced soon. Megastar Chiranjeevi's family, Nagarajuna's family, Ram Charan, Upasana, Akhil, Nani, Rana Daggubati, Siddharth, Aditi Rao Hydari, Nithin, Srikanth, Mythri Movie Makers Naveen and Ravi, Sithara Naga Vamsi, producer Chinababu, director Krish, Sudheer Varma, Chandoo Mondeti, Venky Atluri, Abhishek Agarwal, Supriya, Swapna Dutt, Asian Suniel, Sudhakar Cherukuri, Deva Katta, producers of Vyra Entertainment, UV Creations Vamshi and Vikram and many others graced the occasion.

T-Series bags the musical rights of Ari The Movie

Presented by Arvi Reddy, Ari stars Anasuya Bharadwaj, Sai Kumar, Suman, Amani, Srikanth Iyengar, Viva Harsha, Srinivasa Reddy, Chammak Chandra and others, will be seen playing the lead roles in *Ari The Movie*. The subtitle of the film reads, 'My Name Is No Buddy', and the caption given to this movie, Bad is New Good, seems to create interest.

This film is produced by Srinivas Ramireddy and Seshu Maram Reddy under Arvi Cinemas banner. Jayashankar, who gained fame as a talented director through the movie PaperBoy, will also be producing the film. The film is directed by Vijay Shankar.

On Thursday, the team had officially announced that Bhusan Kumar's T-Series has bagged the music rights of the film.

RAKSHIT ATLURI'S INTRIGUING NEXT TITLED OPERATION RAAVAN



Proving that 'Content is the King', young hero Rakshit Atluri's *Sudhas Media* has earlier scored success with period action thriller *Palasa 1978*.

Driving at the same pace, first look of his new suspense thriller titled *Operation Raavan* unveiled on Thursday starring Rakshit in an intriguing look. Sangeethana Vipin is playing the female lead and debutant Venkata Satya is directing it. Holding the caption 'Your Thoughts are your Enemies', first look featured Rakshit with a highway, a city and a suspenseful man inclusively designed to raise curiosity. The first look is launched by Megha and Omega educational institutions chairperson Malathi Reddy.

Wrapping up the shoot of this exciting thriller, the team is now working on post production works at brisk pace.

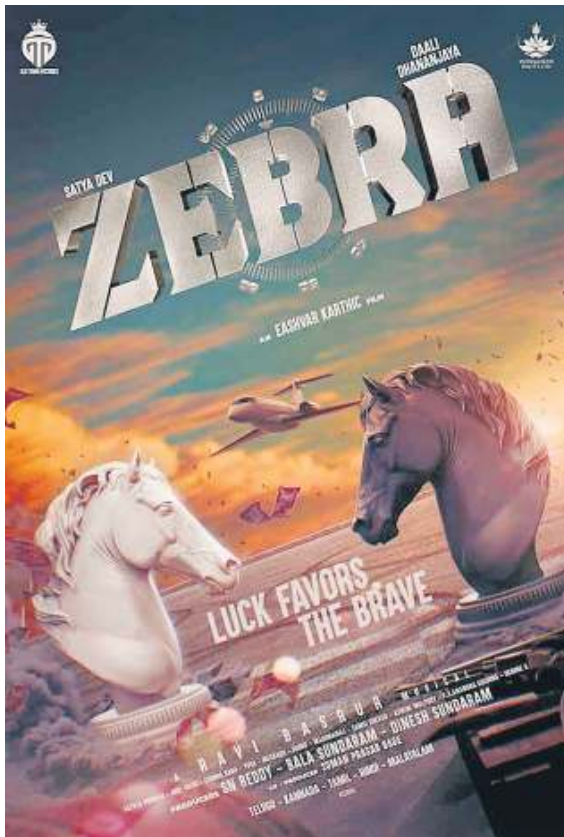
Satyadev and Daali Dhananjaya's 26th Pan-India film titled Zebra

Talented hero Satyadev and Kannada star Daali Dhananjaya are working together for a crime action entertainer under the direction of Eashvar Karthic. This marks the 26th project for both the actors and today (January 26th) the makers announced the title of the movie, on the occasion of Republic Day.

They finalized the title *Zebra* and it sounds quite interesting. There is a speedometer attached to the title logo, wherein we can see Chess pieces- a white knight and a black knight. As is known, the knight is a guileful piece in the game of chess. Luck Favors The Brave is the tagline of the movie. The title poster is as captivating as the title. It surely creates interest on the movie. In fact, the tagline and the things on the poster signify the shrewd nature of the lead characters.

Produced by SN Reddy, Bala Sundaram, and Dinesh Sundaram under the banners of Padmaja Films Private Ltd and Old Town Pictures, stars Priya Bhavani Shankar and Jennifer Piccinato as the heroines, while veteran actor Sathyaraj will be seen in vital role in the movie. Sathya Akala and Sunil are the other prominent cast.

The team has wrapped up its first schedule of 50 days and the remaining shooting is planned in Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai region. The makers of this pan-Indian movie announced India's most wanted music director Ravi Basrur to work on the project. His previous



works like *KGF*, *KGF2* and upcoming projects like *Bholaa* and the most awaited *Salaar* speak about his demand for commercial music.

"He is strong in commercial points. It is going to highlight the pictures to the next level and bring the soul for the film," SN Reddy (Padmaja Films Private Limited).

"It is evident that Ravi sir's work will magnify the stature of this film. We as producers believe his songs

and original background scoring will be a highlight for the film," Bala Sundaram (OldTown Pictures).

Suman Prasara Bage is the co-producer and Satya Ponmar is the cinematographer of the movie. Anil Krish takes care of the editing, whereas dialogues are penned by Meeraqah.

The Pan-India movie will have its theatrical release in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi languages.



First look of Sodara Sodarimanulara unveiled

Sodara Sodarimanulara is the new film written and directed by debutant Raghupathi Reddy starring Kamal Kamaraju and Aparnadevi in lead roles. Vijay Kumar Paindla is bank-rolling the film which is jointly produced by 9Em Entertainment and iR Movies. The film which is having a relevant title has completed its shooting part recently. The film is touted to be an emotional family drama and has completed its filming in 35 days with perfect script and meticulous planning. The team released the first look of the film on the occasion of Republic Day.

The first look poster with tagline Sisters and Brothers

of *Sodara Sodarimanulara* featuring Kamal Kamaraju and Aparnadevi in a serious yet emotional look captures everyone's attention for its portrayal of natural characters.

The title and first look has created an impression that the film is going to be a heart touching realistic drama with relatable characters. The film is undergoing its post-production works. Makers are planning to release the film in Summer. The film has 3 situational songs which are composed by music director Madeen SK while Mohan Chary is handling the camera and Vamsi Krishna CH is the editor.

Legendary director Raghavendra Rao to Produce Sarkaru Noukari

Legendary filmmaker K Raghavendra Rao is producing a film under RK Telefilm Show banner under the direction of Sekhar Gangamouni. The film is titled *Sarkaru Noukari*. Noted Telugu singer, Sunitha's son is debuting as an actor with this period drama which will have theater artist Bhavana Vazhapandal in the female lead role.

The film was launched with a grand pooja ceremony in Hyderabad on Thursday. At the launch ceremo-

ny, Sunitha's husband Ram Veerapaneni directed the first shot while ZEE Studios Nimmakayala Prasad switched on the camera and Raghavendra Rao sounded the first clap.

It is confirmed that the regular shooting for the film will commence on February 6 and more promotional material will follow shortly after. The film will have Akash, Bhavana Vazhapandal, Tanikella Bharani, and others in the lead roles.

