

ANALYSIS 7
TECH CAN EXPEDITE
JUSTICE SYSTEM

MONEY 8
GOVT TO INVITE EOIS FOR RS 41,000-CR
PROJECT IN GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND

SPORTS 11
NOVAK IS
GOING FOR 10

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW
BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD

*LATE CITY VOL. 5 ISSUE 92
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NADIYA, IVANA & YOGI
BABU ONBOARD FOR
MS DHONI'S LET'S
GET MARRIED

Page 12

NEW BLOOD TEST CAN DETECT ALZHEIMER'S 3.5 YRS BEFORE DIAGNOSIS

Scientists have developed a blood-based test that could be used to predict the risk of Alzheimer's disease up to 3.5 years before clinical diagnosis. The research, published in the journal Brain, supports the idea that components in the human blood can modulate the formation of new brain cells, a process termed neurogenesis. Neurogenesis occurs in an important part of the brain called the hippocampus that is involved in learning and memory. While Alzheimer's disease affects the formation of new brain cells in the hippocampus during the early stages of the disease, previous studies have only been able to study neurogenesis in its later stages through autopsies.

JUVENILE HELD FOR SNATCHING GROOM'S CURRENCY GARLAND

A 14-year-old boy was apprehended for allegedly snatching a groom's garland carrying currency notes worth Rs 1,64,500, police said on Friday. The incident happened in west Delhi's Mayapuri. The matter came to light on Wednesday when the groom's brother reported that a boy had snatched the groom's garland when he was about to sit on a horse for the wedding ceremony, police said. A case was registered under section 356 (Assault or criminal force in attempt to commit theft of property carried by a person) and 379 (theft) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and an investigation was undertaken, they said.

INFORMERS TAKE ENORMOUS RISK; REWARD THEM TO COME FORWARD: HC

Informers take enormous risks and the government's approach should not discourage them from coming forward with information, the Bombay High Court said recently, directing the Centre to pay reward to the widow of a man who had tipped Customs officials about smuggled diamonds worth nearly Rs 90 lakh in 1991. A division bench of Justices Nitin Jamdar and Abhay Ahuja in its order of January 5, which was made available later, noted that the objective behind offering a reward to informers is to aid the department in taking measures to safeguard the exchequer. The bench was hearing a petition filed by one Jayashree Dhavre, widow of Chandrakant Dhavre, seeking reward given to informers as per government policy.

'RICE-LOVING' JUMBO WREAKS HAVOC IN VILLAGE; DESTROYS RATION SHOP

A rice-loving wild tusker, which frequently strays into human settlements allegedly in search of the grain, destroyed a ration shop in an estate in this Kerala district in the early hours of Friday, villagers here complained. The rogue elephant, known as "Arikomban" among local people due its love for "ari" (rice), has been a nightmare for those in Santhanpara in this high range district for some time. "Ari" means rice and "komban" means tusker in local parlance. However, Wildlife officials said the shop is located in the traditional route of the jumbos and they are yet to confirm whether the same jumbo was raiding ration shops.

Lokesh kickstarts 'Yuva Galam'

Thousands of TDP workers walk with Nara scion in Kuppam

PNS ■ KUPPAM

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, on Friday launched the 4,000 km-long marathon 'padayatra' 'Yuva Galam' at 11.03 am accompanied by party leaders and activists in large numbers. Lokesh offered special 'pujas'

TDP moots one-page manifesto for youth

PNS ■ KUPPAM

The TDP national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, on Friday said that the party will soon bring out its manifesto for the youth and on a single page what the TDP will do for the youth. During the maiden meeting, Lokesh said the party will specify how many jobs will be created and in which sector, both in the private and public sectors. Also, the manifesto will explain how self-employment will be created.

at the temple of Lord Varadaraja Swamy in Kuppam and also offered prayers at the local churches and masjids. He took the blessings of the elders.

The party functionaries showered flowers on Lokesh wishing him all the best in his endeavour. TDP MLA from Hindpur Balakrishna, State president Atchannaidu, party politburo members, and thousands of party workers walked along Lokesh.



The party functionaries showered flowers on Lokesh wishing him all the best in his endeavour.

'Walkathon is my right'

PNS ■ KUPPAM

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national general secretary, Nara Lokesh, on Friday said that he has every right to undertake the 'padayatra' as his party has developed the State.

Addressing his maiden meeting at Kuppam on launching his 'Yuva Galam' 'padayatra', Lokesh

said that soon after he announced 'Yuva Galam', the YSRCP leaders started shivering. "At least, 10 Cabinet Ministers began criticising me asking with what right I am undertaking the 'padayatra'. I have every right as it is the TDP that was behind laying 25,000-km-long cement roads in the State," Lokesh said. Lokesh said, "I am approach-

ing the people as I have provided employment in the IT sector to 40,000 youth as IT minister," and also provided employment to another 40,000 youth in the electronic sector. Stating that he was minister for three portfolios and had every right to undertake the pada yatra, Lokesh questioned the YSRCP as to what the party had done for the State in the past three-and-half years.



Taraka Ratna collapses, hospitalised

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Actor-turned-politician Nandamuri Taraka Ratna collapsed soon after the 'Yuva Galam Padayatra' of TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh got underway in Kuppam on Friday.

Taraka Ratna was shifted to hospital, where he is said to be in stable condition. The incident occurred shortly after Lokesh began his 4,000-km-long 'padayatra' when there was a stampede-like scene outside a mosque he visited.

Veteran Telugu actress Jamuna passes away at 87

HYDERABAD: Veteran actress

Jamuna passed away here on Friday after a brief illness. She was 86. She breathed her last at her residence, family sources said. Jamuna, who acted in around 200 movies in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi, is survived by a son and a daughter. Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu expressed his condolences at the demise of the popular film actress, Filmfare award winner and former MP, Jamuna. She was born in Hampi in Karnataka on August 30, 1936, but her parents Nippani Srinivasa Rao and Kowsalya Devi moved to Andhra Pradesh. She received her primary education at Duggirala in Guntur district and was a stage artist during her school days. Jamuna, whose real name was Jana Bai, made her acting debut at the age of 16 with Puttillu (1953) directed by Garikapari Rajarao. It was LV Prasad's



Missamma (1955) which gave her recognition. She played a supporting character in the film with the lead roles played by NT Rama Rao, Savitri and Akkineni Nageswara Rao. In a career spanning four decades, she portrayed a variety of roles and acted with legendary actors of her time and other top actors of her time.

200 private bouncers for Lokesh

P3



New QR code with more colours in the making

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Japanese engineer Masahiro Hara, known for inventing the ubiquitous 'QR code' nearly 30 years ago, announced on Friday that he is now working on a new version of the popular tracking system.

Unlike the present black and white QR code design, the new version will have more colours and may be rectangular in shape rather than current square pattern, said Hara while talking to reporters on the Karnavati University campus in Uvassad village of Gandhinagar district.



Wet spell likely in coastal AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Indian Meteorological Department has predicted that a low-pressure area is likely to form over the East Equatorial Indian Ocean and the adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal. It is likely to move west-north-westwards slowly during the next three days.

The IMD has further said that a fresh western disturbance was likely to affect northwest India from Saturday. It is very likely to cause light or moderate fairly widespread to widespread rainfall or snowfall over the western Himalayan region and light or moderate isolated to scattered rainfall over plains of northwest India on Saturday and Sunday.

AHOBIAM MUTT TEMPLE SC refuses to entertain plea against AP HC order



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

"Let the religious people deal with it," the Supreme Court said on Friday while refusing to entertain a plea against an Andhra Pradesh High Court order holding that the state of Andhra Pradesh had no authority under law to appoint an executive officer to the Ahobilam mutt temple.

A bench of Justices S K Kaul and A S Oka said Andhra Pradesh has no authority, jurisdiction or entitlement under law to appoint an

"Let the religious people handle this. In every case under Article 136 (special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court), we need not try to settle the law. Sorry,"

executive officer of the 'Sri Ahobila Mutt Parampara Aadheena Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam' (Ahobilam Mutt Temple).

"Let the religious people handle this. In every case under Article 136 (special leave to appeal by the Supreme Court), we need not try to settle the law. Sorry," the bench told the lawyer appearing for the state that had challenged the high court order.

'Family doctor' across AP from March 1

CM asks officials to install cath lab, cancer testing equipment in all teaching hospitals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed the Medical and Health Department officials to implement the 'Family Doctor' concept in a full-fledged manner across the State from March 1.

At a review meeting held here on Friday, the Chief Minister asked them to begin serving ragi malt to students weekly thrice from the same date as part of the 'Jagananna Goru Muddha'.

Directing the officials to take steps to install cath labs, cancer testing equipment and introduce



cancer treatment methods in all teaching hospitals including those under construction, he also said that YSRCP MLAs and people's representatives should start visiting hospitals and interact with the patients and staff to monitor the medical services rendered.

This will help the officials take suitable steps to strengthen the functioning of hospitals and the public health system after taking the feedback from the MLAs and applying corrective measures wherever necessary.

TTD to invite global tenders for gold-plating works

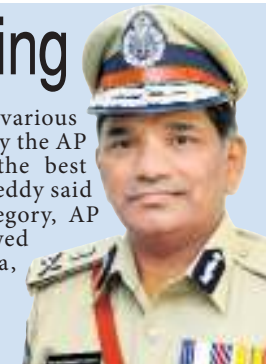
P2

AP tops charts in friendly policing

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP DGP KV Rajendranath Reddy has said that Andhra Pradesh police has stood first in the top five states in terms of public trust, efficiency and honesty in the survey conducted by the Government of India (GoI) and private agencies. He said that it is a moment of pride for the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the

Police department. He said various initiatives taken up last year by the AP Police department yielded the best results. DGP Rajendranath Reddy said that in the Public Trust category, AP grabbed the first place followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, and Delhi.



Large mammals shaped the evolution of humans in Africa

PNS ■ JOHANNESBURG

That humans originated in Africa is widely accepted. But it's not generally recognised how unique features of Africa's ecology were responsible for the crucial evolutionary transitions from forest-inhabiting fruit-eater to savanna-dwelling hunter.

These were founded on earth movements and aided physically by Africa's seasonal aridity, bedrock-derived soils and absence of barriers to movements between north and south.

These features promoted extensive savanna grasslands marked by erratic rainfall, regular fires and abundant numbers of diverse grazing and browsing animals. My lifelong studies have focused on the ecology of Africa's large herbivores and their effects on savanna vegetation. In his recent book, Norman Owen



Smith, University of the Witwatersrand, by linking pre-existing threads together for the first time, explains how distinctive features

of these animals' ecology, founded on Africa's physical geography, enabled the adaptive changes that led ultimately to mod-

ern humans. What emerges is the realisation that this amazing evolutionary transformation could only have occurred in

Africa. This recognition emphasises the deep cultural legacy formed by Africa's large mammal heritage for all of humankind.

HOMO SAPIENS

After 8,00,000 years ago, fluctuations in heat and aridity became more extreme in Africa. Finely crafted stone tools defined the transition into the Middle Stone Age, coupled with the emergence of modern Homo sapiens in Africa around 300 thousand years ago. But despite its hunting prowess Homo sapiens had declined to precarious numbers in Africa by around 1,30,000 years ago, following an especially severe ice age. Genetic evidence indicates that the entire human population across the continent shrank to fewer than 40,000 individuals, spread thinly from Morocco in the north to the Cape in the far south. One remnant survived by inhabiting caves along the southern Cape coast, exploiting marine resources.

TODAY
ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Saptami
Jan 27 09:10 AM to Jan 28 08:43 AM
Ashtami: Jan 28 08:43 AM to Jan 29 08:06 AM

Nakshatram:
Ashwini: Jan 27 06:36 PM to Jan 28 07:06 PM
Bharani: Jan 28 07:06 PM to Jan 29 08:21 PM

Rahukalam: 9:40 AM to 11:05 AM
Yamagandam: 1:53 PM to 3:17 PM
Variyam: 05:12 AM to 06:53 AM
Gulika: 6:52 AM to 8:16 AM
Amritakalam: 11:45 AM to 01:23 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:06 PM to 12:51 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Sunny
Temp: 34°C
Humidity: 56%
Sunrise: 6:39 AM
Sunset: 6:02 PM
Updated: JANUARY 27, 2023 5:00 PM

Nizam is gone, but 'Nizamiyat' is still alive!

Although India attained freedom from the British rule following prolonged struggle and supreme sacrifices on August 15, 1947, it became a Republic on January 26, 1950, by adopting the Constitution drafted under the leadership of Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar. After millennia of rule by monarchs and autocrats, both Indian and foreign, 'We, the People of India', constituted India into a Republic and proclaimed ourselves to be supreme. There is no power higher than the 'People of India'. The heads of our Union and States - the President and the Governors, who represent this great country as the first citizen of the nation and respective states, are appointed by people through their representatives.

We celebrate this supremacy of 'We the people' on

January 26 every year. As representatives of 'We the people', the First Citizens lead the grand celebrations and receive State honours. It is this majestic assertion of our supremacy that Telangana Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao belittled this January 26. Citing a deceitful and laughable excuse - the Covid threat - he downgraded the Republic Day celebrations to humiliate our state's first citizen and Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan personally. The Telangana High Court took no time to expose his subterfuge. It rightly questioned the KCR government why the same Covid threat was not a problem for the BRS party's launch meeting in Khammam, where lakhs of people were mobilised by the ruling party only a few days back. He even disregarded the spirit of the High

KCR thinks he is the new Nizam of Telangana State. Our Chief Minister doesn't believe he needs to respect Constitutional institutions at any level in our three-tier governance structure. Be it the office of the Prime Minister at the Union level, the office of the Governor at the state level or panchayats and municipal bodies at the local level.

Court's directions concerning these celebrations.

The BRS government's utter disregard for institutions, traditions and conventions under the leadership of KCR is an insult to the public of our Republic. KCR brought disgrace to the people of Telangana by repeatedly denigrating constitutional institutions. Even though India overthrew the rule of the Nizams from Telangana way back in 1948, the people of Telangana are experiencing 'Nizamiyat' even today under KCR.

KCR thinks he is the new

Nizam of Telangana State. Our Chief Minister doesn't believe he needs to respect Constitutional institutions at any level in our three-tier governance structure. Be it the office of the Prime Minister at the Union level, the office of the Governor at the state level or panchayats and municipal bodies at the local level. His contempt for Constitutional bodies is not limited to the Executive branch alone. It even extends to the Judiciary, a co-equal branch of the Indian State and the upholder of the rule of law and our Fundamental



KISHORE POREDDY

Rights.

The Telangana CM refuses to receive the Prime Minister on his visits to the state. He uses uncouth language against the PM at his press conferences. His administration has eviscerated the powers of the panchayats and municipalities and made them dummies. His officers routinely disregard

the Judiciary's orders; to the extent that the recently transferred Chief Secretary of the state had hundreds of contempt petitions pending against him in the courts. What's more, our CM's contempt is not limited to our democratic institutions alone. It extends to the traditions and conventions that have evolved over decades and oil the functioning of our democracy.

Three Chief Ministers were on stage at the Bharat Rashtra Samithi's launch meeting in Khammam. All of them had expressed misgivings about the institution of the Governor and its functioning either at the Khammam public meeting or on other occasions. In addition, almost all political parties have expressed disquiet at different times, including the Bharatiya Janata Party. But none of them had undermined the

dignity of this constitutional office as KCR did. Be it denying protocol to the Governor, or disregarding traditions and conventions like bypassing the Governor's address to joint sessions of the Legislature, and, worst of all, scaling down Republic Day celebrations to insult the Governor.

It's time KCR understands that he is where he is because of our Constitution. That he, too, occupies a Constitutional office. However much he dislikes the current Constitution and wants it to be replaced by one to his liking, he cannot disregard the current one, under which our state was formed, and he became its Chief Minister.

Independence Day and Republic Day are the two festivals that unite Indians of every religion, caste, creed, gender, region, and language. These two occasions are

beyond politics. No Telanganaites could have imagined that petty leaders like KCR could abuse them to satiate their egos.

Since renaming the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) as Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), our Chief Minister has lost no opportunity to preach about the need for a 'gunatmaka maarpu' - qualitative change in our country's polity. Additionally, he claims to be the 'Desh ki neta' that India needs to bring about that qualitative change. But, going by his actions and not his words, this is one qualitative change is for the worse. Luckily, India is in no mood to encourage either him or his new national party, which lacks a sense of nationalism.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

Governor takes part in 'Pariksha pe charcha'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan participated in the sixth edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha (PPC-2023), in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with students at Talkatora Indoor Stadium in New Delhi, virtually from Maris Stella College here on Friday.

About 38.80 lakh students, teachers and parents participated in Pariksha Pe Charcha 2023, either physically or in virtual form, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the interaction programme, the Prime Minister advised parents against putting undue pressure on children over marks and also gave tips to students on keeping a balance between hard work and smart work. Later, Governor



Harichandan handed over the 'Exam Warriors' book written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to students of schools and colleges, who participated in Pariksha Pe Charcha. The Governor also planted a tree on the college premises.

RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to Governor, Praveen Prakash, Principal Secretary, School Education, Suresh Kumar, Commissioner of School Education, and the officials of Maris Stella College were among those who attended the programme.

TTD to invite global tenders for gold-plating works

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The gold-plating of Ananda Nilayam, which was planned to begin in February, has been postponed. TTD has decided to go for global tenders for time-bound completion of the gold-plating works to avoid inconvenience to the pilgrims, said Chairman YV Subba Reddy.

Speaking to media persons along with TTD EO AV Dharma Reddy and JEO Veerabrahmam at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Friday, the Chairman said that the gold-plating work taken up in Govindaraja Swamy Temple, which had been given to a local



contractor, had been going on for the past two years.

"But in Tirumala, the works should be completed within the specific time schedule as

the temple is being visited by lakhs of devotees. So we are contemplating seeking global tenders. As such we will come up with some other date after

five or six months and ensure that the works are completed in time to avoid inconvenience to the pilgrims," he said.

Radha Saphthami today TTD is all set for the one-day Brahmotsavam or Radha Saphthami on Saturday, said the Chairman.

The rituals will commence at 5.30 am with Suryaprabha Vahanam and conclude at 9 pm with Chandraprabha Vahanam on Saturday. All the departments including Health and Vigilance have made arrangements to ensure that the visiting pilgrims have a hassle-free darshan of vahana sevas in the four mada streets.

SC refuses to...

Continued from page 1

One petition before the high court stated that the Ahobilam temple, situated in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, has been under the control of Sri Ahobilam Mutt, which is based in Tamil Nadu, since time immemorial.

The state of Andhra Pradesh and others had challenged the October 13, 2022 high court order, which said the Ahobilam temple is an "integral and inseparable part of the Ahobilam Math, which was established as a part of propagation of Hindu religion and for rendering spiritual service for propagating Sri Vaishnavism".

The High Court had said appointing an executive officer for the temple, which is a part of the Mutt, is violative of Article 26(d) of the Constitution as it affects the right of administration of

Jeeyars/Mathadipathis.

The High Court had passed the order on separate petitions questioning the appointment of an executive officer of the 'Devasthanam'.

The State claimed in its plea that the high court had erred in holding that the Commissioner of the Endowments department does not possess the power to appoint an executive officer to take charge of the administration of the temple under section 29 of the Andhra Pradesh Religious Endowments and Charitable Institutions Act 1987 simply because the temple is affiliated with the Ahobilam Mutt.

"The High Court failed to appreciate that the subject temple and the Ahobilam Math are distinct, independent juristic persons and thus, the subject temple's inclusion in the definition of 'Math' is simply incongruous," it said.

Veteran Telugu actress Jamuna passes away at 87

Continued from page 1

Jamuna also acted in 11 Hindi films. She won the Filmfare award for best supporting actress for Milan (1967) starring Sunil Dutt and Nutan. It was a remake of the Telugu movie Mooga Manasulu (1964) which featured Jamuna along with Nageswara Rao and Savitri. Impressed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, she joined the Congress in 1980 and was elected to the Lok Sabha from Rajahmundry in 1989, but quit politics after her defeat in 1991. She later joined the BJP and campaigned for the party during the late 1990s.

KCR said that the passing away of Jamuna is a big loss to the film industry. The Chief Minister remembered Jamuna who acted in hundreds of films as a first-generation actress and emerged as Telugu's favourite star.

KCR said that it is remarkable that Jamuna, who acted in Telugu, Tamil and Kannada and in Hindi films, won people's hearts as a popular actress and also rendered public service as an MP. The Chief Minister conveyed his deepest condolences to the bereaved family.

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

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

Lokesh kickstarts 'Yuva Galam'

Continued from page 1

Women activists gave a grand welcome to Lokesh and the locals of Kuppam raised slogans like 'Chandrababu Bidda (Son of Chandrababu) zindabad'. The Kuppam citizens expressed their complete solidarity with Lokesh and wished him a grand success. He visited Mecca Masjid at Lakshmiapuram and later Hebrass House of Worship Church at Bapunagar where he offered prayers and took the blessings of the community elders.

TDP moots one-page manifesto...

Continued from page 1

He said that every year vacancies will be filled through the DSC and promised to bring back those who migrated to other States and countries and stop migrations from the State.

He stated that the ruling YSRC has failed to do justice

"Walkathon is my right"

Continued from page 1

Criticising the YSRC leaders, Lokesh said that inviting investments does not mean running casinos. Seeking one chance from the voters, the Chief Minister has taken the State back to 67 years.

He said that AP was formed with the sacrifices of Potti Sriramulu, and the self-respect of Telugu has gone up with the efforts of NT

Rama Rao. "The prestige of Andhra Pradesh has reached the global level with the rule of Chandrababu Naidu," he said.

He pointed out that Chief Minister, Jagan Mohan Reddy, destroyed the State, and almost all sections, including teachers, students, farmers, and women, are the victims of this Government. He said he planned to name the 'padayatra' as Yuva Galam

after observing the problems being faced by the youth.

He mentioned that the YSRC government has given notification to fill just 36 vacancies in Group-1 and Group-2 while Jagan Mohan Reddy failed to fulfil his promise to fill 2.3 lakh job vacancies and 6,500 constable posts every year.

He said that Amara Raja Battery company, which was providing employment to thousands of youths, was driven out of the State and further asked what happened to the Special Category Status.

Taraka Ratna collapses...

Continued from page 1

Following Lokesh's exit from the temple, a significant number of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) workers surged forward. The actor collapsed and fainted as the TDP activists tried to have a glimpse of Lokesh in the narrow street. TDP officials in the area took him to a private hospital in

Kuppam. Taraka Ratna's uncle and actor N Balakrishna paid a visit to the hospital. Later, the actor was taken to a hospital in Bangalore. Taraka Ratna was seen being shifted to a hospital by doctors in a widely shared video. He allegedly underwent multiple tests at the hospital, but the doctors have yet to issue an official statement about his health condition.

Wet spell...

Continued from page 1

The IMD officials stated: "There will be no significant change in minimum temperatures over most parts of northwest India during the next 24 hours. The temperature will fall by 2-4°C in the subsequent two days and rise by 3-5°C thereafter. No significant change in minimum temperatures is likely over the other parts of the country during the next five days." As a result, rainfall is likely in south coastal areas in Andhra Pradesh, the weather experts said.

The night temperatures in Agency areas in Rayalaseema and coastal areas have drastically gone down, to 4 degrees Celsius. G. Madugula in Alluri Sitaramaraju district recorded the lowest temperature of 4.3 degrees Celsius on Thursday, as per the IMD weather report.

AP tops charts in...

Continued from page 1

In the Efficiency category, Telugu States Andhra Pradesh and Telangana stood first and second respectively followed by Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The DGP explained that in the Honesty category, Andhra Pradesh got first place followed by Uttarakhand, Telangana, Gujarat and Delhi.

DGP Rajendranath Reddy said that the Union government conducted a DGPs conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah from January 20

to 22 in New Delhi, during which performances of the states were reviewed. The Union government on Friday communicated about the ranks in the survey, he added.

DGP Rajendranth said that the initiatives of AP police like 1.7 crore registrations of Disha applications, shifting to conviction-based investigations, people-friendly policing, quick police response by the usage of technology, and inculcating a sense of discipline among the police had helped AP police. He thanked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led AP government for the support in achieving the results.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT
SHORT TENDER NOTICE
Lr.Rc.No.AJE/1/Short Tender Notice No.14/573-435/2022-23, Dated: 23.01.2023
Tenders are invited through e-Procurement from registered civil contractors for 63 works with an estimated cost of Rs.1167.68 Lakhs for Augmentation of existing water supply schemes and providing FHTCs to various habitations in RWS&S Division, Ongole of Prakasam District. Tender Schedule will be available in e-Procurement platform from 30.01.2023 to 06.02.2023 4.30 PM. Last date for receiving of tenders is 06.02.2023 upto 5.00 P.M. Technical bids will be opened on 06.02.2023 at 5.01 P.M. Financial bid opening date is 07.02.2023 at 11.00 A.M. Tender details are available in the e-Procurement website www.tender.approcurement.gov.in. Ph: 9160121610.
Sd/- Executive Engineer
RWS & S Division Ongole
R.O.No: 768/KLUDAT/7/1/0221-22, Dt: 27.01.2023

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED
e - Procurement TENDER NOTICE
Bids are invited for the Spec. No. e-EHVT-03/2023 for Replacement of badly rusted towers with new towers on LS basis. 1) from Loc No. 1 to Loc No. 14 in Kalapaka - Maradam (old Vemagiri) TMDC line. 2) Loc.No.4, 5&6 of 400kV Krishnapatnam TPP - Manubolu QMDC line & at Loc.No.4 of 400kV Krishnapatnam TPP- Rachagunuri QMDC line. Tenders available in https://www.approcurement.gov.in from 27-01-2023 at 15.00 Hrs. Ph.No. 0866-2429232. Sd/- Chief Engineer
R.O.No: 1527/PCLUDAT/7/1/0221-22, Dt: 27.01.2023
Projects/VS/Vijayawada

‘Lokesh surpassed Naidu in lies’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister and ruling party MLA Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) has alleged that TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh has surpassed his father and TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu in speaking lies.

Speaking to the media persons on Friday, Nani said that Lokesh’s ‘padayatra’ is to prove himself and to get his leadership accepted among TDP activists besides fearing that Nandamuri’s heirs would take over the reins of the party.

Nani finds fault with Lokesh saying that 40,000 IT jobs were given and laying 25,000 km of roads. He alleged that only Lokesh got a job during the TDP regime in the TDP cabinet.

He said that the YSRC government has given 1.40 lakh secretariat jobs, 40,000 pharmacists, and about two lakh jobs in various departments besides 55,000 employees of APSRTC were taken into the government fold.

He said that pension bene-



ficiaries have been increased from 39,000 during TDP to 64,000 after YSRC took the reins.

He criticized Lokesh for lying shamelessly that Chandrababu completed the Handri Neeva project, five lakh jobs were provided during five years of TDP rule, construction of a steel plant in Kadapa was taken up, port in Machilipatnam was also completed and even Amaravati was constructed.

Nani asked if all the projects were completed during the TDP regime and why the peo-

ple rejected TDP. He recalled that “TDP president Achchennaaidu has told the truth about Chandrababu. If Chandrababu is not in power, he will talk about the party activists. Chandrababu would leave the activists if he was in power.”

Nani pointed out that without a police force, the TDP leadership will not step out. From time to time the security for Naidu and Lokesh has been beefed up by requesting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he said.

Nani told Lokesh to ask PM

200 PRIVATE BOUNCERS FOR LOKESH

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Strong private security with 200 bouncers was provided to Nara Lokesh who is on marathon padayatra. Lokesh began his padayatra in Kuppam on Friday.

The Telugu Desam party has provided foolproof security to Nara Lokesh with 200 bouncers besides 400 trained TDP volunteers.

The 200 private bouncers and 400 trained TDP volunteers provide round-the-clock protection to Lokesh. A caravan that was specially designed with all sophisticated amenities is being used by Lokesh. The



Telugu Yovata leaders are making all arrangements for padayatra. Meanwhile, the police deployed four DSPs and 500 police personnel for Lokesh’s public meeting on Friday.

Modi why the Disha Act was not enacted yet. He said that at 40 years old Lokesh was speaking lies flawlessly without any fear.

Nani further pointed out that huge debts left by the

TDP five years rule are being cleared after YSRC took the reins during the three and half years. He further recalled that none of the poor beneficiaries got a free house during the TDP rule.

V&E officials raid fertiliser, pesticide shops across AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vigilance and Enforcement Department carried out inspections on 50 fertiliser dealers and traders and 24 pesticide shops across the State on Friday. They filed 14 cases under section 6A of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 for keeping excess stock beyond limits as per GO Ms No 14 of the Consumer Affairs, Food and Civil Supplies (CS.I) Department.

During the inspection, the Vigilance and Enforcement officials found a few irregularities committed by some traders. The ground stocks of fertilisers did not tally with the e-pos machine and book balance. Some of them also sold fertilisers without “O” form and did not maintain stock registers properly.

The officials filed four cases against the traders who sold fertilisers at rates more than MRP, and seized 170.64 MT fertiliser stocks worth Rs



21,05,519. Three cases were registered for selling pesticides at rates more than MRP and stocks were seized to the tune of 69.69 litres worth Rs 63,690. About 345 kg solid pesticides were seized, which cost Rs 26,560.

One criminal case was booked against a trader and liquid pesticides stocks were detained to the tune of 243.40 litres worth Rs 8,49,398. Solid pesticide stock of 16.75 kg was detained worth Rs 23,566.

The V&E officials also found 6.18 litres of expired herbicides on the premises of a trader. A criminal case was filed before the court of IV-AMM, Repalle.

The Vigilance & Enforcement Department has given statutory warning to wholesale and retail traders, who commit illegal hoarding and black marketing of fertilisers and pesticides, who do not produce good quality fertilisers and insecticides or sell them above MRP.



DELAY IN NOD FOR COMMUNITY HALL

MP pulls up Commissioner

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MP Vallabhaneni Balashowri has expressed his anger at the Machilipatnam Municipal Corporation Commissioner for not giving permission for the construction of a community hall. District development coordination and monitoring committee meeting was held under the chairmanship of the MP on Friday. The MP reviewed the development works going on in the Machilipatnam Municipal Corporation.

The Krishna District Collector informed that 2 acres of land was given for the construction of a community hall in the name of Bhogaraju Pattabhi Sitaramaiah.

The Union Bank has also come forward to construct a community hall.

However, the MP expressed anger over the Corporation for not giving permission for the construction of the community hall. He asked the Commissioner what he was doing by keeping the file with him for six months.

On the permission to community hall, the Commissioner replied that the council has to approve, which is still pending. Not satisfied with the Commissioner’s reply, the MP instructed the Collector to take action against him.

Eastern Coast Guard Commander calls on CM, Governor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Eastern Coast Guard Commander, Additional Director General Sivamani Paramesh called on the Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at his camp office here on Friday.

He explained to the Chief Minister about the various initiatives undertaken by the Indian Navy to overcome the challenges related to maritime security in the Eastern sea-

coast.

Coast Guard higher officials DIG Yoginder Dhaka, Commandant K Murali and Deputy Commandant AB Ramam were also present.

The Additional Director General also paid a visit to Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan at the Raj Bhavan, Vijayawada.

He briefed the Governor about the operational activities of the Indian Coast Guard in the AoR.



Short film contest from Feb 10

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Film Chamber of Commerce and AP Movie Artists Association will be conducting Short Film Competitions on February 10, 11, and 12 to unearth the talents in the Telugu States of AP and Telangana.

APFCC President Ambati Madhumohan Krishna here on Friday said that APFCC and APMAA with the collaboration of Madhu Film Studios Private Limited conducting the short film competitions. He said that today’s youth are using their talent and producing short films as a platform to show their talents, skills, and techniques and the short film contest is very helpful in unearthing

such talent.

Madhumohan Krishna explained that Rs 50,000 will be given as the first prize, Rs 30,000 as the second prize, Rs 20,000 as the third prize, Rs 5,000 each for the best director, best cameraman, best music director, best actor, and best actress. He further said that February 5 has been decided as the last date for the participants of the short film contest.

Explaining the rules to be followed by the producers of short films, Madhumohan Krishna mentioned that the length of the short film should not exceed ten minutes. He said that any meaningful short film without obscenity, without caste and religion conflicts, can be sent, and the selection will

be made only as per the decision of the committee members.

He further said that according to the technical details, only a short film with original music will be eligible for the Best Music Director award.

Bigg Boss Contest and Black Star, Salman Shani called upon all the enthusiasts to take advantage of such an opportunity to show their hidden talents, especially in the youth. Later the short film contest brochure was unveiled by Mahdumohan Krishna, APMAA president Dilip Raja and Committee members. They advised contacting helpline numbers 9848295555, and 9291193333 to get these details and send films for competitions.



Makeover of Nellore Rly Station by May 2024

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

P Uday Kumar Reddy, Additional General Manager, South Central Railway, inspected the redevelopment works of Nellore Railway Station and further reviewed the performance of Krishnapatnam Port. He, along with D Srinivasa Rao, ADRM, Infrastructure, Vijayawada Division, and branch officers, reviewed the progress of the Nellore Station development works at VIP Lounge on Platform No 1.



He advised the officials to expedite the pending works and complete them as per the schedule to meet the target date of May 2024.

Uday Kumar Reddy proceeded to Krishnapatnam

Port and reviewed its performance with the officials of Adani Krishnapatnam Siding. He assured full cooperation for the zone to boost the freight transport from Krishnapatnam Port.

Two national awards for AP Health dept

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare of Andhra Pradesh has won two national-level awards under the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) and School Health & Wellness Programme by bagging the first position.

According to Joint Director Dr. Nirmala Glory, no other State in India except Andhra Pradesh got these

many national awards in the health department.

AP bagged first place in Anaemia Warriors 2022-23 category with maximum coverage (96%) of Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS)-In School. Target adolescents 44,12,717 (In-School) and 56,043 (Out of School Adolescent Girls) are covered under this program.

Meanwhile, in School Health & Wellness Programme 2022-23 cate-

ry is meant for training teachers to deal with adolescent problems. The training was completed so far for 20,200 teachers and 10,000 Principals under this programme for the first time in the country. Instead of 4 aspirational districts (as per GOI guidelines), the Government of Andhra Pradesh implemented the program in all the districts. AP-National Health Mission provided extra funds to

implement the program in the State;

“The Supplementation of the weekly iron-folic acid program under RKSK was launched in 2014. Till 2020 the coverage was 60% only. Taking this as a challenge with the instruction of Minister for Health Medical and Family Welfare Vidadala Rajani and Principal Secretary MT Krishna Babu, the achievement reached 96% in the State,” said Dr. Glory.

Scamster held, diamonds worth Rs 18 lakh seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad police arrested one inter-state attention-diversion offender who arranged a diamonds exchange and scammed the victims. The accused was booked under Cr. No 45/2023, U/s 420,379 IPC of PS Afzalgunj, Hyderabad and recovered 64 carats diamonds worth Rs 18,00,000 from him.

The accused is, Mohammed Ruhila (31) who runs a gem stones business at Alipura, Karnataka. The accused was previously involved in two other cases.

The police revealed that the accused lured diamond sellers by posing as a buyer. Upon seeing the diamonds packet, the accused agreed to purchase them and simply gave the diamonds pack-



et to the complainant’s brother.

The victims later realised that the diamonds were not genuine.

Upon receiving the complaint, a team led by A. Satish, Detective Inspector of Police, Hyderabad with the help of CCTV footage and call detail analysis, identified the accused and immediately rushed to the Alipura, Gowribidanur Taluk, Chikkaballapur district, Karnataka and apprehended the accused within 24 hours and recovered the Intact property.

GUNADALA MARY MATHA FESTIVAL

Officials asked to work in coordination

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Sub-Collector Aditi Singh has suggested that the officials of various departments work in coordination for the upcoming Gunadala Mary Matha feast scheduled to be held on February 9, 10 and 11. The Sub-Collector held a review meeting with the officials of various departments on the arrangements for Mary Matha feast on Friday.

On the occasion, she said that the officials concerned with sanitation, drinking water, engineering, health, VMC, electricity, revenue, and others should ensure that all arrangements are in place for the lakhs of devotees coming from various places.

ACP Khada Basha suggest-



ed places where barricades should be arranged in view of the huge rush during the three-day feast. He also suggested that the VMC officials provide mobile toilets.

Vijayawada Catholic Diocese Monsignor Muvvala Prasad and Rector Yeleti William Jayaraju said that for

this year, they were expecting more than 10 lakh people and the government officials should make arrangements accordingly on the hill, Bishop Grassi High School and other places. The officials briefed the Sub-Collector about the arrangements made for the event.

FAKE NOTE RACKET

Director of Corp sacked

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP State government removed the nominated non-official director Rajaputra Rajani from the Board of AP Bondili Welfare and Development Corporation for involvement in the fake currency circulation case.

Principal Secretary to the Government, BC Welfare Department, G Jayalakshmi, issued the order removing Rajani from the post and instructing the person in-charge of AP Bondili Welfare and Development Corporation to take further necessary action according to rules and procedures.

It may be recalled that Rajani was a YSR Congress leader appointed as the non-official director. She was arrested by Karnataka police recently in the fake currency racket case.

The government issued a removal order on Jan 25 which came to light only on Friday.

Guv, CM condole death of Jamuna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan has expressed profound grief over the passing away of legendary Telugu actor J Jamuna in the early hours of Friday.

Governor Sri Harichandan said that in a film acting career spanning over 70 years, Jamuna immortalised the leading roles she played in several hit Telugu movies like ‘M i s s a m a’, ‘Gundamma Katha’, ‘Donga Ramudu’, ‘Mooga Manasulu’ etc. He said that Smt. Jamuna also served as a

Member of Lok Sabha, having been elected from Rajahmundry, and won several awards for her contribution to the Telugu film industry. The Governor offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed grief over the demise of Jamuna, the film star of yesteryears and former MP. Jamuna’s death brings an end to the golden era artist of Telugu cinema, the Chief Minister said and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

‘Cooperate for road widening’

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Mayor Kavati Manohar Naidu has underlined the need for widening the roads to cope with the increasing vehicular traffic in the city and appealed to the building owners to cooperate for widening roads.

The Mayor, along with city planning officials, inspected the Congress office road widening works near Hindu College junction here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Mayor emphasized the need of widening the roads proportionate to the increasing vehicular traffic and population. He said that the Municipal Corporation appeals to the land and building owners to cooperate for the road widening works as they have to give their lands and for the road widening.

Manohar Naidu said that the Congress office road near Hindu College junction has become congested with heavy



traffic and it had been decided to widen the road. The corporation officials are personally meeting the building owners to explain to them the need of widening the road and seeking their cooperation.

The Mayor said that many roads in Guntur city which already have heavy traffic including Palakaluru road, AT Agharam Road and Kothapet Shivalayam Road were being widened. Steps were taken to widen the Congress Party Office Road

near Hindu College Junction in Guntur as thousands of vehicles coming from Hyderabad, Chennai, Bengaluru, Nellore and Palnadu go through the road every day, and there is a traffic jam even when the ambulances arrive.

According to the master plan, the Congress party office the road should be 120 feet but currently the road is only 60 to 70 feet wide. Now steps were taken to widen the road to 120 feet. He said that in the expansion of the road, land would be

acquired equally towards the Hindu College and towards the Congress Party Office, and the widening would be carried out in full transparency and in accordance with public needs, the Mayor said.

The Mayor assured of extending compensation to those who are losing their sites and building in the road widening works as per the rules. The auto rickshaw union leaders were asked to shift the auto stand to some other place and cooperate with the road widening works. The Mayor directed the officials concerned to issue notices to the building owners on war footing and prepare the Road Development Plan (RDP) as the earliest.

YSRCP State Joint Secretary Ghulam Rasool, Corporators Sadhu Umamaheswari Rajesh, Papatoti Ambedkar, A Kanaka Durga Srinivas, City Planner Murthy, DCP Kotaiah and ACP Ashok Kumar were among those who accompanied them.

Ex-CJI bats for Sanskrit as official language

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Former Chief Justice of India Sharad Bobde on Friday batted for Sanskrit as the country's official language, including for use in courts, and said even the architect of the Constitution and eminent jurist BR Ambedkar had proposed it as per media reports from 1949.

He said Hindi and English are used as official languages in governance and courts as per law, while every chief justice receives representations seeking nod to introduce respective regional languages, which is now a reality in the district level judiciary and some high courts.

Bobde was speaking at the Akhil Bhartiya Chhatra Sammelan organised by Sanskrit Bharti.

Owners to be fined if cattle left on roads

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM



District Collector P Prashanthi has said that cattle should not roam on the streets obstructing vehicular traffic and she instructed the cattle rears to take steps to ensure that the cattle should not come to the streets causing inconvenience to the road users.

The Collector directed the officials concerned to impose fine to the cattle rears if they leave their cattle on the road. In a video conference held with the mandal officials from the collector's office on Friday, the Collector said that the cattle coming on the roads should be stamped once or twice.

A Rs 2,000 fine should be imposed on the cattle rears for the first time and Rs 5,000 for the second time if the same cattle come on the roads. She also directed the officials concerned to take action against the owners of the cattle that

come on the roads for the third time.

The Collector instructed the officials concerned to speak to the pig rears and convince them to shift the pigs to the outskirts and away from residential colonies. She asked them to take action against the pig rears for they let the pig go to the streets to roam.

She directed the veterinary doctors to inspect the slaughterhouses to find out whether the owners are following the gridlines and animals are slaughtered as per the given permissions.

She told them that in every municipality an STP should be set up in every slaughterhouse

and every slaughterhouse should follow sanitation strictly. Steps should be taken to ensure that the slaughterhouses should not release effluents into the drainage.

The Collector suggested that veterinary assistants in every secretariat should be trained in how to treat cattle, and check whether the slaughter house is being conducted properly in villages. She also suggested that all stray dogs should be sterilized to check the stray dog population. Animal husbandry officer Dr. Muralikrishna, DPO M Nagalata, municipal commissioners and animal husbandry officials were present.

RAPE & MURDER OF MINOR

Satyarthi lauds SP over death sentence to convict

PNS ■ ONGOLE



Nobel laureate and child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi appreciated Prakasham district SP Malika Garg for the death sentence to the accused in the rape and murder of a seven-year-old girl.

Kailash Satyarthi telephoned SP Malika Garg on Friday and appreciated her and other police officials for the court awarding a death sentence to the accused in the rape and murder of a seven-year-old girl.

The police registered a case under POSCO Act against the accused for raping and killing a seven-year-old girl and the police proved the case before the court by producing evidence. The court on January 25, 2023, awarded the death sentence to the accused.

The SP constantly monitored the investigation of the case, and the court trial and advised the police officials from time to time which helped the prosecution to probe the case and get the accused punished in the court of law.

Officials told to take effective steps to curb road accidents

PNS ■ ELURU

Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma has said that 80 percent of road accident victims are bike riders and effective steps should be taken to check mishaps in the district.

The SP held a meeting with the police officials here on Friday and made suggestions on steps to be taken to prevent road accidents on the national highway.

Speaking on the occasion, Eluru district has a 232-km-long national highway and 699.9 long state highway, and 80% of road accident victims are two-wheeler riders as per the UN statistics. He asked the police officials to formulate a special plan in two months and implement the same to contain road accidents in the district. He told them to erect sign boards in all police station limits indicating the accident-prone areas.

"The two-wheeler raiders should be sensitized on the use of helmets. Penalties should be imposed if they do not wear a helmet," he told them.



"The two-wheeler raiders should be sensitized on the use of helmets. Penalties should be imposed if they do not wear a helmet"

show the public about the dangers of accidents. Actions should be taken to bring awareness among them.

The SP told the police officials to identify those who are involved in drunk driving and register cases against them. The police officials were asked to organise the 'wash and drive' programme for vehicle drivers on highways during the night. The SP directed them to ensure that vehicles are not parked on roadsides on the highway, and the SP directed the police officials.

SB Inspector V Ravikumar, Eluru Traffic Inspector Durga Prasad, and Nuzvid Town Inspector Murthy were among those who were present.

TS COMMITTED TO FARMERS; SO, THERE IS ZERO SUICIDE IN STATE

It's Mann ki baat, not Dhan ki baat

KCR promises to implement Kisan Bandhu across the country

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao gave a call to make India great.

"Maharashtra tops in farmer suicides. Our heads hang in shame when we read such things. Is Maharashtra short of funds? Telangana is weaker than Maharashtra. But here we strengthened agriculture, brought about changes and stopped farmer suicides. Migration has stopped and they have returned home. Today the farmers of Telangana do not commit suicide and are living in honour. If this is possible in TS, why can't it be done in Maharashtra or Odisha? It is not about Dhan ki baat..it is Mann Ki Baat. There is no shortage of Dhan (money) but there is a dearth of commitment."

Former Odisha Chief Minister Girdhar Gamang and other prominent leaders joined the BRS in the presence of BRS President Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao at the Telangana Bhavan in Hyderabad on Friday.

Stating that the BRS took up the slogan 'Ab Ki Bar Kisan Sarkar' KCR said, "Farmers of this country should learn to wield the pen as well as the plough. Farmers should be elected as MLAs and MPs and go to legislative bodies."

KCR said that there should be a strong political commitment to bring about a qualitative change in the lives of people.

"Today, Telangana is moving forward on the path of progress by providing water to every house, irrigation and electricity to every field. We are providing the same drinking water to the poor in Banjara Thandas and the rich living in Banjara Hills. When this is possible in Telangana why not in the country?" the CM said.

KCR reiterated that If people elected the BRS to rule the country, 24-hour quality electricity will be supplied to the entire country in two years.

"Will give free electricity to agriculture and we will implement Kisan Bandhu for farmers all over the country and Dalit Bandhu for 20 lakh Dalit families every year. Like in Telangana, purified water will be provided all over the country. 83 crore acres of cultivable lands in the country will be provided irrigation," KCR said.



Giridhar Gamang and MLAs joins BRS

Former Odisha Chief Minister and nine-time MP Girdhar Gamang, his wife Hema, son Shishir and a dozen political and farmer leaders from Odisha joined the BRS in Hyderabad on Friday. Former Odisha Chief Minister Girdhar Gamang, Former MP Hema Gamang, Shishir Gamang, Shaurya Gamang, Odisha BJP State Yuva Morcha General Secretary Sheranjan Das, and the Koraput Parliamentary Constituency Party Congress Youth President joined the BRS. The BRS chief welcomed them into his party by presenting party scarves to them. "Odisha needs development, which is yet to start. Our BRS will contest in all the 147 MLA and 21 MP seats in the next election," Shishir Gamang told reporters before leaving for Hyderabad. Sources said the BRS will focus on southern Odisha, especially the Telugu-speaking border constituencies. The party will fight the next election with focus on farmers and tribals. KCR is expected to visit Odisha soon to launch the party's state unit. Meanwhile, the ruling Naveen Patnaik-led BJD and BJP said the



BRS will have no impact in Odisha. Others who joined the BRS are AICC Members Rabindra Mohapatra, Falguni Sabar, P. Gopal Rao, Malliya Ranjan Swain, Convenor of Navinderman Kishan Sangthan, Akshay Kumar, Mayur Bhanj Ex-MP, MLA Ramchandra Hansada, Dhin Kanal Ex-MLA Nabin Nanda, Bandari Pokhri, Bhadrak Ex-MLA, BJD Youth Ex-President Rata Das, Binjarpur, Jaipur Ex-MLA Arjun Das, Balipatna, Kharda Ex-MLA Raghu Shetty, Ex-BJP MLA Brundavan Majhi, Ex-BJD Minister, Ex-MLA Devashish Naik, Ex-MLA of Janata Dal Sonpur Dev Raj Shetty, Ex-BJD, BJP State Vice President Prashann Padi, Ex-Odisha PCC General Secretary (Jan Morcha) Kailash Kumar Mukhi, Pradeep

Pradhan, President of Odisha RTI Activist Forum, State Convenor of Navinderman Krushak Sangathan, BJD State Youth Secretary Sesh Dev Nanda, NKCS State Co-Convenor Umakant Bharat, NKCS State Co-Convenor Nimrai Roy, Odisha High Court Advocate, Human Rights Activist Advocate Khirrot Raut, Kenjor Leader Bishnu Priya Naik, Jharsuguda Trade Union Leader Rakhyakar Anupam, Ranjeet who contested as MLAs. Patnaik, Jag Bandhu Mohta, Odisha Bar Council members Advocate Surya Padi, former Zilla Parishad leader Kashinath Behra, BJD SC & ST President Kailash Chandra Naik, NYCS State Youth Convenor MD. Manwar Ali, NYCS Co-Convenor Amit Kumar Jena, Samaj Newspaper Senior Journalist. Social activist Pramod Kumar Samant Roy, former MP Jai Ram Pangi, leaders Rajesh Putra, Baliguda BJP mandal president Janardhan Mohanty, leaders Dinesh Naik, Sudhir Sadangi, former BSP district president Samanath Khora, Pothangi leader Pratap Chaudhary, Malkangiri public district president Ghenu Mudali.

CRIME BEAT

Seven students hurt as school bus overturns

VIJAYAWADA: As many as seven students of a private school suffered injuries when the school bus overturned at Torreygudipadu village in NTR district on Friday. Police said that the bus was going to school in Nandigama from Somavaram village. The bus veered off the road and overturned into an agriculture field. 9 students were in the bus at the time of the accident of which 7 suffered injuries and were treated at the area hospital. The driver of the school bus was cleaning the windscreen while driving the bus which led to the accident, the students told the media.



Man killed as bus rams lorry

ONGOLE: The cleaner of a private travel bus was killed when the vehicle rammed a lorry from behind on the outskirts of Kambham town on Amaravati-Anantapur national highway on Friday. Police said that the deceased Subbaiah (20) was working as bus cleaner at the Girdhar private travels. The bus rammed a lorry from the rear end killing Subbaiah instantaneously. The deceased belonged to Chintakunta village in Markapuram mandal. The police registered a case and sent the body to the GGH for postmortem.

2 kids killed as SUV collides with tipper

NARASARAOPET: In a tragic road incident, two children were killed and eight others injured when the SUV in which a marriage party was travelling, collided with a tipper lorry at Uppalapadu village in Veldurthi mandal in the wee hours on Friday. Police said that a marriage party was going to Sirigiripadu village in the ill-fated SUV. The SUV collided with a tipper lorry killing Harish (11) and Jashwit (9). The injured were admitted to the GGH in Narasaraopet. The marriage party belonged to Mutukuru village in the Macharla constituency. Bridegroom Veerababu was among those injured. The tipper driver is absconding. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies for postmortem.



Tippler murders wife, mother-in-law

KURNOOL: In a gruesome incident, a tippler hacked to death his wife and mother-in-law when they refused to give him money to buy liquor at Jalavadi village in Peddakadaburu mandal on Friday. Police said that the accused Nagaraju was a habitual drunkard. He had been harassing his wife Santhi (25) and mother-in-law Bhimakka (48) for the last one year for money for which they refused. Bhimakka rebuked him for creating nuisance in an inebriated condition at their house last night. In the wee hours, he hacked the duo to death with a hunting sickle and fled. The neighbours found the woman and her daughter in a pool of blood and informed the police. The deceased Santhi had two sons and a daughter. The police registered a case and sent the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem.

Liquor worth Rs 1.6 L seized

KADAPA: The police seized liquor worth Rs 1.6 lakh at Ravulapalli cross on Mydukur while being brought from Karnataka state illegally in a car on Friday. Police said that the Enforcement Bureau Officials conducted checking of vehicles. The police arrested a man for smuggling liquor from Karnataka worth Rs 1.6 lakh. The police seized the liquor and a car worth Rs 8 lakh. The police gave the name of the arrested person as Nithya Sivaram. Liquor bottles of various



ous brands, worth Rs 1.6 lakh were found in the Mahindra TUV car worth Rs 8 lakh. Additional Superintendent of Police Tushar Doodi appreciated SEB Officials and their team for seizing large quantities of liquor.

Auto workers' union leader murdered

ELURU: An Auto-rickshaw union leader was murdered in broad daylight by miscreants at the busy fire station centre in SR pet here on Friday. Police said that the deceased Manikyala Rao was killed by unidentified miscreants by hitting him with sticks. Old revelry is said to be the reason for the brutal murder. The deceased Manikyala Rao played a vital role in setting up an auto-rickshaw stand near a hotel. The murder created a panicky situation in the area. The two town police officials visited the scene of the crime and began an investigation.



INDIA CORNER

Court orders FIR against six cops for beating up man in Uttar Pradesh

A court in Shahjahanpur district in Uttar Pradesh has ordered the registration of an FIR against six police personnel for allegedly beating up a man and snatching money from him. The police personnel -- an inspector, three sub-inspectors and two constables -- are accused of beating up Venkatesh Mishra following an argument on the road in 2017. "Venkatesh Mishra was taken to a police station and beaten up. The policemen also took away Rs 5,000 from Mishra's pocket," his lawyer Avdesh Singh said. The police also booked Mishra in a case of attempt to murder and sent him to jail. Chief Judicial Magistrate A P Gautam on Tuesday ordered that a case be registered against police constables Ajay Chaudhary and Vijay Veer and sub-inspectors Prakash Singh, Balram Singh and Krantiveer Singh, and inspector D C Sharma under relevant sections of IPC, the lawyer said. Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjay Kumar said on Friday that he had received information about the order of the court and appropriate action would be taken in the matter.



One dead, another rescued after two-storey building collapses

A 37-year-old man died, while another one was rescued after a two-storey commercial building collapsed in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district in the wee hours of Friday, officials said. The incident occurred around 3.30 am in Khadijar locality of the town, they said. "There were seven shops on the ground floor of the building, while the upper ones were occupied by commercial establishments. Soon after the structure collapsed, two fire brigade teams rushed to the spot and launched a rescue operation," an official of Nizampur police station said. The deceased, identified as Maji Vansari, was asleep inside the building when it collapsed. The victim died after getting trapped under the debris, he said. Another person, who also got trapped under the debris, was rescued. He did not suffer any injuries, fire brigade sources said. The age of the building and its condition could not be known immediately as civic officials were not available for comment.



College student held for threatening 14-year-old girl

A 17-year-old college student has been apprehended for allegedly stalking a girl he befriended on Instagram and pressuring her to send him nude photos with the threat of circulating her already available private pictures on social media, police said on Friday. It has also been alleged that the accused, who is pursuing his graduation from the School of Open Learning here, accosted her and demanded sexual favours. Upon checking the accused's phone, it was revealed that he was harassing other girls using the same modus operandi, police claimed. According to them, he had forced his parents to buy him an iPhone which he used to show off to these girls. The accused was apprehended on January 26. The matter came to light when the victim's father complained to police on January 25 that his 14-year-old daughter shared her photos and videos with someone through Instagram chats and he feared that those videos might get circulated.



INDUS WATERS TREATY

India issues notice to Pak seeking modifications

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has issued a notice to Pakistan for modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in view of Islamabad's "intransigence" in the implementation of the pact, inked over six decades back for matters relating to cross-border rivers, government sources said on Friday.

The notice sent on January 25 through respective commissioners for Indus waters, is set to open up the process for making changes to the treaty that was inked on September 19, 1960, they said.

India and Pakistan signed the treaty after nine years of negotiations, with the World Bank being a signatory of the pact which sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between



the two sides on the use of waters of a number of cross-border rivers.

"The objective of the notice for modification is to provide Pakistan an opportunity to enter into intergovernmental negotiations within 90 days to rectify the material breach of IWT. This process would also update IWT to incorporate the lessons learned over the last

62 years," said a source.

It is learnt that India issued the notice in view of Pakistan's "intransigence" on a solution to the differences over the Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects. The notice was sent as per provisions of Article XII (3) of IWT.

India has always been a steadfast supporter and a responsible partner in imple-

menting IWT in letter and spirit, sources asserted.

"However, Pakistan's actions have adversely impinged on the provisions of IWT and their implementation, and forced India to issue an appropriate notice for modification of the pact," said another source.

In 2015, Pakistan requested the appointment of a neutral expert to examine its technical objections to India's Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects (HEPs).

In 2016, Pakistan unilaterally retracted this request and proposed that a Court of Arbitration adjudicate on its objections, the sources said.

They said this "unilateral action" by Pakistan is in contravention of the graded dispute settlement mechanism envisaged by Article IX of IWT.

Ex-Goa minister likens K'taka to Duryodhana

PNS ■ PANAJI

Former Goa minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Dayanand Mandrekar on Friday equated Karnataka's attitude on the Mahadayi river dispute with that of Duryodhana from the epic "Mahabharata", who refused to give any territory to the Pandavas and "bullied everyone".

The former water resources minister was addressing a gathering of former legislators on the Mahadayi water diversion issue, where Goa Assembly Speaker Ramesh Tawadkar was present.

"Goa and Karnataka are neighbours. In our village, we maintain good relationship with our neighbours as we rely on them in good and bad times," said Mandrekar, who was a minister in the Manohar Parrikar-led cabinet between 2012 and 2017.

'Await meeting of like-minded parties for Lok Sabha polls'

PNS ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday said he was "waiting" for a meeting of like-minded parties for the Lok Sabha polls next year once Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra' is complete.

The JD(U) leader, who has the Congress as a junior ally in Bihar, maintained that he viewed the yatra' as a niji' (internal) program of that party, but looked forward to a collaboration in Lok Sabha of all seven constituents of the Mahagathbandhan' (grand alliance).

The CM also said the JD(U) would not like to crackdown on its sulking parliamentary board chief Upendra Kushwaha, whose claim of the party becoming "weak" he rejected.

"I am waiting for the yatra to be over and for a meeting of parties (opposed to the BJP) to be convened. There, we shall



chalk out the strategy for the Lok Sabha polls which is, now, not far away," Kumar told reporters here.

A former NDA ally, Kumar made an abrupt exit in August last year following alleged attempts to split his party, evoking accusations from the BJP that he was betraying people's mandate to fulfil his own national ambitions.

Asked about Kushwaha, the JD(U) leader said, "He knew

that we had won only 43 seats in assembly polls. If things appeared so bleak to him, he should not have returned. He should remember that his return to the party fructified at my instance since many were not in favour of taking him back.

"Our membership drive has swollen the party ranks from less than 50 lakh to 75 lakh. Our tally fell in 2020 assembly polls since our then ally (BJP) did not support us at all."

The JD(U) had blamed its drubbing on a "conspiracy" hatched by the BJP, with the help of the then LJP chief Chirag Paswan, who fielded candidates in all seats the CM's party was contesting and gave tickets to many saffron party rebels.

"Kushwaha should remember that this party has given him a lot. He owes his past stints in assembly and Rajya Sabha, and current membership of the legislative council, to the JD(U)," Kumar added.

Indian economy yet to revive from disastrous effects of pandemic: CPM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Union Budget, the CPI(M) has alleged the Indian economy is yet to revive from the blow it was dealt with during the Covid pandemic and blamed the government for the way it was handled.

The party demanded that taxation and public expenditure be used to tilt distribution in the favour of the working masses, improve the incomes of farmers, generate employment, and attain improved health and educational outcomes.

The latest editorial of the party mouthpiece "People's Democracy" said the budget



for 2023-24 is to be presented before Parliament at a time when both Indian and world economies are facing a grim situation.

"Notwithstanding the tall claims of the (Narendra) Modi government, India's economy is yet to recover from the crippling effects of the Covid pandemic and the disastrous way in which it was handled by the Government of India..."

"India has to, however, be prepared for not merely a temporary world recession, but the possibility of a prolonged world capitalist crisis as the neoliberal 'globalisation' of the last few decades comes undone under the weight of its own contradictions," it said.

The editorial claimed that India's economic development has also reflected these contradictions with an agrarian crisis, wage stagnation and a growing problem of unemployment accompanying even phases of high growth, leading to intensive exploitation of the employed working class and a vast increase in inequality.

Called off walk today because 'police arrangements collapsed'

PNS ■ KHANABAL (J&K)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said he had to cancel his walk for the day because police arrangements by the Jammu and Kashmir administration "unfortunately completely collapsed".

Gandhi, who began his yatra from Banihal in Jammu region, crossed the Jawahar tunnel into the Valley in Qazigund in a bulletproof vehicle but could walk for barely 500 metres after that. He was asked by his security team to stop given the absence of police personnel to manage the large crowd that had gathered to receive him.

"Police personnel who were supposed to manage the crowd



were nowhere to be seen," the former Congress president told reporters here in a brief statement.

He was supposed to walk 11 km to Vessu before halting for the night at the Khanabal dak bungalow in Anantnag district.

"It's the Jammu and Kashmir administration's responsibility to provide security... I hope security will now be ensured for remaining days of the yatra. I don't know why it happened but tomorrow and day after tomorrow it should not happen," Gandhi said in the unscheduled meeting with reporters.

However, he did not take any questions, saying that interaction would be reserved for Sunday. "I had to call off my walk because I can't go against my security people," the Congress leader, who started his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Kanyakumari in September and ends it in Srinagar on January 30, said.

RTE Act: HC allows impleading Delhi govt, CBSE in plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Friday granted time to a petitioner to implead the Delhi government and the CBSE as parties to a petition challenging certain provisions of the Right to Education Act, 2009 for allegedly being arbitrary and irrational, and seeking introduction of a common syllabus and curriculum for students of classes 1 to 8 across the country.

A bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Yashwant Varma allowed the application to make the Delhi government, the Central Board of Secondary

Education (CBSE) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) parties to the petition and listed it for hearing on March 10.

The high court had earlier issued notices to the Union ministries of Education, Law and Justice and Home Affairs on the petition and asked them to respond.

The PIL said existence of sections 1(4) and 1(5) of the RTE Act and the absence of a common curriculum in mother tongue leads to the fostering and perpetuation of ignorance and delays the attainment of fundamental duties.

Punjab govt opens 400 Aam Aadmi clinics

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday launched 400 more 'Aam Aadmi' clinics in the state, calling the event here the fulfilment of another 'Kejriwal ki guarantee'.

The 400 new 'Aam Aadmi' clinics take the total number of these neighbourhood health centres in the state to 500.

Kejriwal, the AAP convenor and Delhi chief minister, said he was happy to note that the Punjab government opened 500 mohalla clinics in just 10 months.

"I am happy to say that

Bhagwant Mann has fulfilled one more 'Kejriwal ki guarantee' (Kejriwal's guarantee)," the AAP chief said while referring to the party's promises made to the people of Punjab in the run up to the 2022 assembly elections.

Five hundred mohalla clinics have been set up in Punjab and, in the time to come, more such facilities will come up, Kejriwal said.

Punjab Health Minister



Balbir Singh and AAP MP Raghav Chadha were also present at the event.

Kejriwal said all the party's "guarantees" would be fulfilled and asked the people of Punjab to "have patience" as he targeted the previous dispensations for "destroying" the system.

The AAP has already fulfilled its poll promise of 300 units of free electricity per month, the Delhi chief minister said. The Mann govern-

ment is taking action against corruption and will not spare anyone found to be involved in corrupt practices, he added.

Heaping praise on the Mann regime, Kejriwal said 26,000 government jobs had been provided in just the past 10 months and called it a "big thing".

Jobs here are being provided on the basis of merit, he asserted. Contractual employees are also being regularised, Kejriwal said.

On the education front, the Mann dispensation is sending 36 government school principals to Singapore for training, the Delhi chief minister added.

Sangh Parivar treating minorities as 'enemies'

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has accused the Sangh Parivar of treating Muslims and Christians as 'enemies of the nation' and urged everyone to unite against such divisive actions, drawing sharp criticism from the BJP.

Vijayan said the Constitution, which was the

best weapon to fight against caste discrimination and religious hatred, was presently under attack.

The CM alleged the Sangh Parivar and the RSS have made it clear that their aim was to turn India into a 'Hindu rashtira'.

He also accused the party in power at the Centre of being followers of a political group which did not take part in the freedom struggle.

"They are attacking the very roots of our country, its democracy and the Constitution," he said while speaking after inaugurating the Constitution Protection

Conference and Secular Meet here on Thursday. In his speech, Vijayan said that if the Constitution was destroyed, everything -- from an individual's dignity to the sovereignty of the country -- would be lost, he said. Meanwhile, the BJP hit back, saying the CM has no moral right to utter a single word on the Constitution.

BJP state president K Surendran alleged that Vijayan does not give any importance to the Constitution and accused him of 'white-washing' extremist and terror groups. The Kerala CM also alleged that besides the attacks on the Constitution, there were also attempts to rewrite history. Examples of the same that he mentioned were -- the terming of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination as a 'death' and the claims from certain quarters that B R Ambedkar was not one of the drafters of the Constitution.



Help me get my 44-day wage: R-day spl invitee to PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A gardener by profession, Sukh Nandan, was among the special invitees to watch this year's Republic Day parade at the revamped Kartavya Path.

Several workers and labourers, engaged in the construction work of the Central Vista project and maintenance activities around the India Gate and along the Kartavya Path, were offered special passes to attend the parade.

They were allocated enclosure number 17 which was right opposite the saluting dais (on the other side of the Kartavya Path) where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu among

other dignitaries were seated.

Nandan, who hails from the Niwari district of Madhya Pradesh, was delighted to share his experience of seeing the PM from such a close distance. He said he was thrilled when the PM went close to the enclosure and waved at them.

"I felt fortunate to be a part of the function. I had never thought that I would be chosen to be among the special guests," the 44-year-old said.

However, when asked what would he have asked the prime minister if given chance, he said, "My last contractor refused to pay wages for 44-day work. I will request PM Modi ji to help me get my wages."

Nandan has been working in the



horticulture department at the India Gate for the past two months. Earlier, he was employed at Andhra Bhawan under a contractor.

"He refused to pay my salary for 44

days of work. I have a copy of the attendance register which proves that I was present on those 44 days," Nandan, who lives in the makeshift tents near India Gate with his wife and two children, said.

"Despite that, the contractor is not ready to release my salary which I deserve. Now, I have also refused to return his brush cutter which I had kept. I have told him that unless he pays my dues, I will not return the brush cutter," he added.

The local bodies outsource various labour-intensive work to private contractors who hire labourers with a promise to pay at the rate fixed by the government.

Many a time these workers are sub-

jected to exploitation and are denied pay by the contractors on one pretext or the other. They can't take recourse under the legal system as they neither have the money nor the time and awareness to do that.

According to Nandan, the monthly wage for gardeners fixed by the local municipal bodies is Rs 14,586. "At this rate, my total dues stand at approximately Rs 21,000," he said, adding that the contractor had offered to pay Rs 6,000 only.

"Now he often threatens me of FIR for taking his brush cutter. I will really be grateful if I get any help from the government," Nandan said, heaping praise on his present contractor for timely payment.

Nothing surprising

Delhi has decided to take on Islamabad over the latter's disregard for the Indus Waters Treaty

India has done the right thing by issuing a notice to Pakistan for modification of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The September 1960 treaty, which came into being after nine years of negotiations between the two countries, is generally seen as one of the most successful water-sharing pacts in the world, with the World Bank also being a signatory. The notice has been necessitated by Islamabad's "intransigence" on the implementation of the IWT. For the last five years, India has been trying to discuss and resolve the issue of India's Kishenganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Projects, but Pakistan has been stubborn, refusing to sort out the matter. India's position, as reported in the media, has always been clear: it wants implementation of IWT in letter and spirit, but Pakistan has been dillydallying. In 2015, it sought a neutral expert to examine its technical objections to the two hydel projects. But, a year later, it withdrew unilaterally and proposed adjudication by a Court of Arbitration. India objected to two simultaneous processes, an objection that the World Bank acknowledged in 2016. This is despite the fact that the IWT allows a mechanism to resolve such issues. The treaty gives control over the waters of the three "eastern rivers"—the Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej—to India and over the waters of the three "western rivers"—the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum—to Pakistan. This gives India control over around 20 per cent of the total water carried by the Indus system, while the rest goes to Pakistan. Even over the west-



ern river waters, as per the IWT, India has the right to do limited irrigation and unlimited power generation, navigation, floating of property, fish culture, etc.

At the heart of the problem is Pakistan's deep-rooted hatred for India. Still smarting from the defeat in the 1971 Indo-Pak War and its dismemberment, it is determined to not give any concession to India. Even though it is obligatory for nations to extend the 'most favoured nation' (MFN) status to all members of the World Trade Organization, and India gave Pakistan the MFN status, Pakistan refused to reciprocate the gesture for two decades; and then India withdrew that. The reason: 'most favoured nation' translates as 'sabse pasandida mulk' into Urdu—something Pakistan's deep state and radicalised society would never allow. Even now, when the Pakistani rupee is in a free fall, the forex reserves are depleting fast, and the economy has all but crumbled, its generals and jihad-compliant politicians and public figures are unwilling to improve ties with India. Trade with India would surely help Pakistan, but such is the pigheadedness of the powers that be in Islamabad and Rawalpindi that they don't want to normalise ties with New Delhi. They can support terror groups, risking the wrath of the Financial Action Task Force or FATF, but can't strive to have better ties with India, even though that would be for its own good. Therefore, there is nothing surprising in Pakistan disrespecting the IWT.

PICTALK



Devotees take Goddess Saraswati's idol for immersion during 'Basant Panchami' celebrations in Patna

PTI

Shadow boxing

Upliftment of the Dalits and OBCs should be the agenda, not creating gulf in the society

Yet another controversy is raging even as the one on 'Pathan' has not fully subsided. This time Swami Prasad Maurya, the OBC leader from Uttar Pradesh has reservations about Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas which according to him spreads hate and has casteist slurs and so should be banned. Swami Prasad Maurya, who switched over to the Samajwadi Party before the 2022 UP Assembly elections, lost his seat in the UP assembly elections. His daughter though continues to be the BJP MP. His new party, however, has taken exception to his criticism of Ramcharitmanas and distanced itself from the statement. It is not the first time Ramcharitmanas has been criticized for casteist slurs or gender bias. In the past too the Epic has attracted criticism and serious debates have taken place on its content.

However, Maurya's statement does no good to either himself, his community, his party, or the society at large. Without going into the merit of his statement, one can deduce that it does not help to point figure at a 16th century writer and ask for a ban on a book that was written some 500 years back. A time span long enough to change the languages, contexts, nuances, and morality. Banning a book or expunging the portions does not make sense, it never has. All it does is to refresh the idea. India has a long list of banned books, plays, and films. Aubrey Menen's 'Rama Retold', was banned in 1955, and EV Ramasamy Periyar's book Ramayana Retold, was banned in 1969. Ideally speaking, a writer must not hurt the sentiments of the people but the downside is if the writers always

write to conform to the prevailing norms, society would never change. Equally pathetic is the reaction of the people who would swear by Ramcharitmanas and would go to any extent to abusing and admonishing him publicly. A person has a right to differ in a civil way, if you do not agree do so in a civilized way not by calling names and demonizing the person. We have enough issues of import to talk about in public life that should get precedence over such shadow boxing matches. If Maurya wants to bring about a real change in the society, he would do well to take up issues of discrimination and mistreatment of Dalits and OBCs on priority rather than rake up issues that would only consolidate the caste lines.



Resetting India Egypt relations

Inviting President of Egypt as the chief guest at Republic day parade can usher in a new era in Indo Egyptian relations



BHOPINDER SINGH

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt made an interesting choice as the Chief Guest for the 74th Republic Day Parade, a first-ever from an Arab country. The choice is loaded with geopolitical and strategic suggestions that are rooted in realpolitik and better senses. As mutual people of civilizations and historical engagements, the bilateral relationship has gone through intermittent ups and downs borne of compulsions of internal political posturing and 'bloc' pressures.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Gamal Abdel Nasser along with Tito, Nkrumah, and Sukarno had jointly floated the Non-Aligned Movement towards, "abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers." In the Indian context, shades of that thought exist in its modern course of 'strategic independence'. However, considerations of co-religiosity had ensured that Egypt stood firmly on the side of Pakistan in the 1965 and 1971 wars, as also, Pakistanis had supplied military wherewithal to the Egyptians in 1967 (Six-Day War) and 1973 (Yom Kippur War). As both were also Major Non-NATO allies, they had a 'bloc' gravitation.

Field Marshal Sisi (former General in the Egyptian Army) who had deposed a democratically elected government (Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood), presided over India's celebration of adopting its Constitution that coup-proofed the Indian narrative with civilian control over the military, was irony at its best. Sisi has supposedly 'won' 97% of popular votes cast after 'technicalities' had disallowed almost all opposition (after imprisoning 40,000 from the opposition). Sisi is an authoritarian from the old school of Hosni Mubarak (also Air Chief Marshal of the Egyptian Air Force) governance style, only more strident. Serendipitously, on Indian Republic Day he witnessed the real and the largest democracy in the world, at the march.

Wounded memories of



Military parades must have crossed Abdel Sisi's mind on 26th Jan in Delhi, as a young Captain in 1981, Sisi's Egypt was rocked by the assassination of President Anwar Sadat (also a former Soldier), also during a Military Parade. As part of marching contingents and weaponry display, an assassin party in one of the trucks towing an artillery piece had suddenly jumped out of formation and attacked the Presidential dais, fatally. Religious extremists from the radical Egyptian Islamic Jihad (also Egyptian Military personnel) were ostensibly upset with Anwar Sadat's secular and pacifist moorings and had therefore undertaken the attack. In Delhi's Republic Day parade, Sisi would have gathered a stark contrarian impression of a highly disciplined, apolitical, and constitutional Military.

Egypt was the fourth country to participate in India's Republic Day celebrations with its marching contingent. Tellingly three of the four foreign contingents to have ever participated had been from Muslim-dominated countries i.e., UAE, Bangladesh, and Egypt (France was fourth). Interestingly, immediately behind the marching Egyptian contingent were the illustrious 61st Cavalrysowars in bay-colored horses, who have had their tryst with an Egyptian

FIELD MARSHAL SISI (FORMER GENERAL IN THE EGYPTIAN ARMY) WHO HAD DEPOSED A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT (MOHAMED MORSI OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD), PRESIDED OVER INDIA'S CELEBRATION OF ADOPTING ITS CONSTITUTION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HATH SE HAATH JODO

Sir — The Congress on Republic Day launched a nationwide 'Hath se Hath Jodo' campaign, under which it plans to reach out to people and make them aware of the "failures" of the Central government. Congress Party after the immense love received for the Bharat Jodo Yatra, they are sure that the Haath Se Haath Jodo campaign will also win everybody's hearts. The party workers will deliver a letter written by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and a "charge sheet" against the Central government to each household.

During the program which is scheduled to end on March 26, party workers will reach out to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, six lakh villages, and 10 lakh booths. In the letter, Rahul Gandhi wrote, "There is a palpable economic crisis brewing - joblessness among the youth, unbearable price rise, severe farm distress, and a complete corporate capture of the country's wealth".

One thing is for sure and we can call it the effect of Bharat Jodo Yatra. The congress worker today is brimming with confidence and taking up the BJP attacks head on. Which is really impressive as earlier the Congress workers were rather shy and apologetic about their role as a national party. Rahul Gandhi's 3,500 kilometer foot march has galvanized the foot soldiers of the congress who are now eager to prepare for the next general elections.

Gandhi wrote, "People are worried about losing their jobs, their incomes are falling further, and their dreams of a better future are shattering and there is a deep sense of hopelessness across the country. With this, it will be testing time for Congress Party's Haath Se Haath Jodo."

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

A NATIONAL CAUSE

Sir — 15th of August and the 26th of January are national holiday and on these days everyone gets a holiday except defence forces and policemen. So on 26th January printing media offices are closed,

True Patriotism



Mahatma Gandhi did not attend the first Independence Day event at Red Fort, Delhi, on August 15th, 1947. He was busy spreading peace and harmony in Kolkata (where communal clashes were going on). Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa lead simple lives without pomp and show, always serving others as individuals

and as a team too (without exploitation and harm). That is called real patriotism and humanity. Every human should emulate such good and angelic nature.

Please make republic day and Independence Day celebrations simple, inexpensive, and compulsory as E- Celebrations. People can stay at home and watch it on TV or computers and save themselves from the cold weather. Saved money to the exchequer can be given for the welfare measures of the poor. Also saved are pollution, and depleting petroleum fuel reserves, as the public need not travel all the way to the celebration point. The public too may give the money saved (on travel etc.) to PM's or CM's poor's welfare fund.

Sahasra Nivriti Vistlesha | Secunderabad

and on the next day we don't get newspapers. The field team of the newspapers does work on the 26th of January and the 15th of August. The offices are generally shut as it is a general holiday in the country. Some employees do work part-time to receive the field information and process it. This is for the online version of the newspapers.

News is a round the clock work. It does not stop any day be it a national holiday or religious festival. I don't quite understand why newspaper offices are closed on Republic day. Journalists work everyday to cover stories of national interest that people should know. So why they should not be doing so on the day of national importance? It is not logical. We know some journalists work hard on Independence and Republic Day to bring out the best for their readers. Some even carry special editions reminiscing the sacrifices of our forefathers. So in the national interest the newspaper offices must remain open in national interest.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

INSPIRING BUDGET

Sir — Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that this budget will be

inspiring, that is, it will take India forward and will be similar to the previous Budget 2023. However, the economic condition of the country is not looking good. Not only India's growth rate estimate for the financial year 2022-2023 has been reduced by many institutions, but the growth rate for the current financial year has also been reduced by RBI to 6.8 percent.

The forthcoming budget in its proclamations will also have to take into consideration the significant challenges predicted for the Indian economy due to the emergence of fears of global recession, and geo-political concerns like the Russia - Ukraine crisis.

The government should also focus on incentivizing or promoting technology in Budget 2023 to make India a talent hub for emerging technologies. Tax incentives for capital expenditure, capacity utilization, and use of new-age technology should be actively considered in this budget.

Ishika Asodiya | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I share your commitment to working together for the success of India's G20 Presidency & 25th anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership. India and France together are a force for global good.

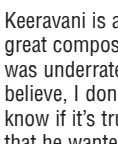


Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



No backchannel talks between Pakistan and India.

Pakistan foreign minister — Hina Rabbani Khar



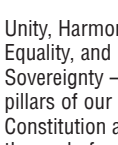
Keeravani is a great composer. He was underrated. I believe, I don't know if it's true, that he wanted to quit music and retire in 2015 and that's exactly when his career started.

Music Composer — AR Rehman



Keeping Players Inspired for All Three Formats is a Global Cricketing Issue.

Former South African cricketer — AB De Villiers



Unity, Harmony, Equality, and Sovereignty — the pillars of our Constitution and the soul of our Republic.

Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

FIRST COLUMN

EXPECTATIONS OF
HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Budget should rationalise import duty
for the healthcare sector



ANURAG KASHYAP

The upcoming Budget is expected to create an enabling healthcare ecosystem with higher allocations and reforms pertaining to long-term credit facilities, a big push for public private partnership (PPP), and tax incentives and relief. High import duty on medical equipment is a major pain point for the hospital sector.

In the upcoming budget, hospitals seek relaxation on imported medical equipment, as they intend to procure state-of-the-art latest technology to treat patients and get the best medical outcome.

Over the years, the import of medical equipment has significantly increased. In 2021-22 imports went up by 41 per cent. As per the industry estimates, India imported medical equipment worth Rs 63,200 crore in 2021-22 compared to Rs 44, 708 crore in 2020-21. On the other hand, Indian equipment manufacturers seek a complete ban on the import of medical equipment or higher custom or import duty and other charges if not a complete ban. The industry has witnessed over 20 per cent hike in the cost of medical equipment import in the last two years.

It would take some more time for large hospitals to work on Indigenous medical equipment. Once Indian manufacturers match the global standards in terms of supply, range, and quality, big hospitals would be in a position to partner with them. Until that time, the government should restrict itself in making imports expensive with heavy duties.



The industry is always keen to be aligned with the 'Make in India' initiative or promote indigenous manufacturers. But, for big hospitals, it is more critical to maintain their global competitiveness. Hence, the sector would be expecting a reduction in import duties on medical equipment. Patients would be the ultimate winner. Currently, with heavy import duties on medical equipment, big hospitals' costs of operations significantly increased and they tend to pass on the burden to patients. So, heavy import duties on medical equipment come as a penalty for patients and must be rationalized.

Yet another pain point of the hospitals is pricing and delay in payments from Government schemes like CGHS and others. The segment would be expecting clear guidelines from the government.

The hospital segment expects a robust credit mechanism to overcome the shortage of funds. Long-term (15-20 years) credit facilities would significantly reduce the burden. Interest rate, tenure, and collateral are the major concerns.

The Government needs to impress upon the RBI to look at this pain point seriously for the sake of the financial health of the healthcare sector. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) on inputs increases the delivery cost by 18 per cent. And the providers do not get any input credit facility. Tax incentives for both existing and new healthcare projects are required. For new or green field projects a tax holiday period of 10 years, as given to Special Economic Zones and Tech Parks, would go a long way to transform the sector. It is strongly recommended that the government should create similar zones for hospitals and extend all the benefits including tax incentives.

This should not be limited to the hospital segment. Service providers, who are associated with hospitals, should also be included in such promotional schemes.

Overall, it is the right time to introduce some radical structural changes combined with the rationalization of taxes. The sector would keep its fingers crossed to see the government's measures and policy reforms.

So far, the government has shown its willingness to address the challenges of the sector and hopefully, this time Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman would walk some extra mile with regard to further strengthening the Indian Healthcare sector.

(The author is Director, Finance & Strategy, TR Life Sciences Private Limited)


Test of success of Bharat Jodo Yatra lies in polls

Journey to power in New Delhi may not be easy for the Opposition against a formidable, well-oiled machine of BJP

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra traversing so far through 10 states, reaching almost the last lap, has stirred the party back to the near centre-stage of Indian politics, with a spontaneous crowd responding to it.

The Yatra has evoked interest among the people with the possibility of the rise of a counter-saffron narrative, its avowed aim. It has given acceptance to Rahul Gandhi as a leader even by the BJP. Their top functionaries now accept he has arrived. But will the emerging Third Front at Khammam at Telangana chief minister KC Rao's rally dampen its effort?

Is the yatra a success? To an extent, it can draw many eminent persons from the society



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The author is a senior journalist)

Tech can expedite justice system

Use of artificial intelligence in Indian courts has the potential to significantly reduce the backlog of cases and fast track justice



The ongoing fight between the Government and the judiciary can have a significant impact on common citizens. It can lead to delays in the delivery of justice, as the judiciary may be overburdened by political considerations and government interference. This can result in citizens waiting for extended periods of time for their cases to be heard and resolved, leading to frustration and a lack of faith in the legal system.

Additionally, the Government and the judiciary may become preoccupied with their own power struggles, leading to a neglect of the needs and concerns of citizens. This can further erode trust in the legal system, and make it more difficult for citizens to access justice and have their rights protected.

The Indian legal system is facing a significant backlog of cases, resulting in delays in the delivery of justice. This is a major concern as it undermines the rule of law, and can lead to a lack of faith in the judiciary and the legal system as a whole.

One of the main reasons for the backlog of cases in the Indian courts is a shortage of judges. According to the National Judicial Data Grid, there are currently over 40 million pending cases in the Indian courts, while the sanctioned strength of judges is only around 20,000. This results in a large number of cases being assigned to each judge, leading to delays in the disposal of cases.

Additionally, the process of appointment of judges is often slow and bogged down by bureaucracy and political considerations, further exacerbating the shortage of judges. Another reason for the backlog of cases is the inefficient functioning of the courts.

The Indian court system is known for its slow pace, with cases often taking several years to be resolved. This is due to a number of factors, such as a lack of technology, inadequate infrastructure and resources, and a lack of training for court staff. Additionally, the legal process is often bogged down by delays and adjournments, further adding to the time it takes for cases to be resolved.

The backlog of cases also has a negative impact on the rights and access to justice for marginalised and vulnerable groups. For instance, the long delays in the disposal of cases can result in the denial of justice to victims of crimes, particularly women and children. Further, the long delays can also result in the release of the accused on bail, leading to the re-victimisation of the survivors of crimes.

The backlog of cases also has a significant economic impact, as delays in the disposal of cases can result in a loss of productivity and economic growth. The delays in the disposal of cases can also lead to a lack of faith in the legal system, which can discourage investments and



GOVERNMENT AND JUDICIARY MAY BECOME PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR OWN POWER STRUGGLES, LEADING TO A NEGLECT OF THE NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF CITIZENS. THIS CAN FURTHER ERODE TRUST IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM, AND MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR CITIZENS TO ACCESS JUSTICE

(The author is a public policy expert)



economic growth.

In short, the backlog of cases in the Indian courts is a major concern that undermines the rule of law and can lead to a lack of faith in the judiciary and the legal system as a whole. The backlog of cases is a result of a shortage of judges, inefficient functioning of the courts, and a lack of resources.

To address the problem of the backlog of cases, there is a need for systemic reforms in the Indian legal system, including increasing the number of judges, improving the infrastructure and resources available to the courts, and implementing technology to improve the efficiency of the courts.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to significantly reduce the backlog of cases in Indian courts. However, it is important to approach the implementation of AI in the legal system with caution and consideration of potential challenges and limitations.

One potential use of AI in the Indian courts is through the use of predictive analytics. Predictive analytics can be used to analyse patterns and trends in past case decisions, allowing judges and lawyers to make more informed decisions in current cases. This could potentially speed up the legal process and reduce the backlog of cases. However, it is important to ensure that the algorithms used for predictive analytics are

unbiased and do not discriminate against certain groups of people.

Furthermore, the use of predictive analytics in the legal system raises concerns about transparency and accountability, as the decision-making process becomes less transparent and more reliant on complex algorithms.

Another potential use of AI in the Indian courts is through the use of automated document review. Automated document review can be used to quickly sort through large amounts of legal documents, allowing lawyers and judges to identify relevant information. However, it is important to ensure that the AI system is able to accurately identify relevant information and is not prone to errors or false positives.

Additionally, there is a risk that the use of automated document review could lead to job loss for court clerks and other legal professionals who currently perform this task manually. However, to mitigate this problem, there can be settled guidelines to be followed wherein the applications can be moved by trained bar council-approved lawyers and every judgment can be vetted by a trained judge to avoid error and technological shortcomings.

AI-powered chatbots can also be implemented in Indian courts especially in the district courts and rural areas to assist overburdened lower judicial staff with the

legal process by providing information and guidance. This can help to reduce the workload of court staff and improve access to legal information for citizens. However, it is important to ensure that the chatbot is able to provide accurate and up-to-date information and is not prone to errors or misunderstandings.



Also, there is a risk that the use of chatbots could lead to a decrease in personal interactions and human empathy in the legal system.

In conclusion, the backlog in the Indian courts just cannot be handled by human intervention, there has to be either a divine or technological intervention required to significantly improve the justice system. The implementation of AI in the Indian courts has the potential to significantly reduce the backlog of cases and improve the efficiency of the legal system.

However, it is important to approach the implementation of AI with caution and consideration of potential challenges and limitations. This includes ensuring that AI systems are unbiased, transparent, and accountable and that the rights of citizens are protected. Additionally, it is important to consider the ethical implications of using AI in the legal system and to ensure that the use of AI does not lead to a decrease in personal interactions and human empathy in the legal system.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

WE'RE ALSO GIVING UKRAINE THE EQUIPMENT TO SUSTAIN THESE TANKS. THIS IS ABOUT HELPING UKRAINE. IT IS NOT AN OFFENSIVE THREAT TO RUSSIA. — US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN




IF THE US DECIDES TO SUPPLY TANKS, IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO JUSTIFY SUCH STEPS USING ARGUMENTS ABOUT 'DEFENSIVE WEAPONS'. — RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE US ANATOLY ANTONOV

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra traversing so far through 10 states, reaching almost the last lap, has stirred the party back to the near centre-stage of Indian politics, with a spontaneous crowd responding to it.

The Yatra has evoked interest among the people with the possibility of the rise of a counter-saffron narrative, its avowed aim. It has given acceptance to Rahul Gandhi as a leader even by the BJP. Their top functionaries now accept he has arrived. But will the emerging Third Front at Khammam at Telangana chief minister KC Rao's rally dampen its effort?

Is the yatra a success? To an extent, it can draw many eminent persons from the society



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The author is a senior journalist)

—the youth and children. His "T" shirt is a great draw and connects. It also shows that Congress can meticulously plan a 3500 kms march from Kanyakumari to Jammu and Kashmir, traversing through 12 states. In every state eminent social persons have been part of it despite severe derisive criticism from a curious or awed BJP and its parivar.

Some of the names include former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan, Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Tushar Gandhi, Shiv Sena leader Aditya Thackeray, NCP's Surpriya Sule, National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, lawyer Prashant Bhushan, activist Harsh Mander, Bollywood actors, former RAW secretary and intelligence bureau ex-chief

AS Dulat, actors Amol Palekar, Riya Sen, Sandhya Gokhale to Swara Bhaskar, singer Sunidhi Chauhan, IIT professors, former defence, police and other officials.

It was touted that though it might succeed in Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, the Yatra might not succeed in the limited areas of Delhi and UP. It surprisingly succeeded in the kisan belt of western UP, Haryana and Delhi the swelling crowds put the city out of gear.

Still the yatra is not beyond it. The best quote has come from Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. He said at a book launch in Kolkata that the Yatra has evoked a massive response. However, has noted: "Translating that into

votes is the next challenge and does not follow automatically." That's the problem.

Rahul Gandhi may have sent a message of love but he has also been seen as "loveable" to the BJP as well. His barbs are soft and he has not yet been critical of the BJP's policies: economic, education, privatisation or simple seizure of 10-year-new cars, tractors or high tolls that make miseries deeper and inflation sharper or even for ballot paper voting.

How many of the nine states going to polls from February can win? Even in Tripura it has entered into an alliance with the CPI-M. Its presence is weak in Meghalaya, Nagaland or Mizoram. The battle will be tough in Karnataka,

Chhattisgarh, MP and Rajasthan. It cannot go alone in Maharashtra, Bihar; it does not have an ally in West Bengal, Odisha. In most states, it has fledgling organisations, not a match against the BJP.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has done well to invite 21 like-minded parties to join the concluding Srinagar ceremony on January 30, Mahatma Gandhi martyr's day. That's where he left the chinks too by not inviting AAP, JD-S, BRS, BJD and Akali Dal.

The latest January 18 Khammam mega rally by Telangana chief Minister and BRS leader K C Rao brings out this weakness and finds presence of a number of them for the launch of a third front and himself as a possible PM.

Rao said, "The Congress and the BJP only indulge in verbal fights". It was attended by Samajwadi leader Akhilesh Yadav, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and CPI general secretary D Raja. How is it to be interpreted? Is it a rally for bargaining seat-sharing with the Congress or splintering its effort? How can the Left ally with Congress in one state and also form the Third Front?

Politics is becoming interesting and intriguing. It is being interpreted as a setback to Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's effort to unite the opposition. There is apprehension that if KCR move succeeds it might dampen what the Congress is trying to achieve against the BJP.

Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee has yet to open her cards.

Most of these parties have splintered away from the Congress whether KCR's BRS or West Bengal's TMC or Andhra's YSR Congress. Even SP and RJD are wary of the rise of the Congress. They fear the minority Muslim votes shifting to the Congress.

The success of the yatra apart, the journey to power in New Delhi may not be easy for the Opposition against a formidable, well-oiled machine of BJP. The Khammam rally may be a new beginning of intense fistcuffs among the opposition ranks. Would it again be advantage BJP or Congress still has something up its sleeves to outshine the run up to 2024? The nation awaits the answer.

MONEY MATTERS

Hitachi Terminal Solutions India opens global cash recycling

Hitachi Terminal Solutions India on Friday inaugurated its global Cash Recycling Machines (CRM) manufacturing facility here, where it plans to employ more than 400 people in future. Spread over 1,08,000 square feet, it will enable the company to triple its current production capacity of 1,000 CRMs per month. The core engine of the CRMs (Cash Modules) are localised and will now be completely assembled in India with a high level of automation in this new facility, a company statement said. Hitachi Terminal Solutions India Private Ltd Managing Director Yoshihiro Nakatani said our estimate indicates that more than 1.1 million cash recycling machines have the capacity to be installed globally by 2024. "Hitachi Terminal Solutions India will continue its efforts for expanding its business ecosystem and developing solutions in India, to further augment the export of our products from India and thus contribute to the development of the Indian economy", he said.



Sensex, Nifty fall in early trade on selling in banking shares,

Equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty fell in early trade on Friday dragged down by banking shares and Reliance Industries along with continuous foreign fund outflows. The 30-share BSE benchmark tanked 578.19 points to 59,626.87 in initial trade. The broader NSE Nifty fell 144.7 points to 17,747.25. From the Sensex pack, ICICI Bank, HDFC, Axis Bank, State Bank of India, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards. Tata Motors, ITC, Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Steel were among the winners. Elsewhere in Asia, equity markets in Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai were trading in the green, while Hong Kong quoted marginally lower. Markets in the US had ended higher on Thursday. Stock markets were closed on Thursday on account of Republic Day. International oil benchmark Brent crude edged up 0.38 per cent to USD 87.80 per barrel.



Commerce Ministry recommends imposing anti-dumping duty on

The Commerce Ministry has the recommended imposition of anti-dumping duty on vinyl tiles coming from China and Taiwan for five years to guard domestic players from cheap imports from these countries. The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has recommended the duty on imports of 'Vinyl Tiles other than in roll or sheet form' from these countries after concluding in its probe that the product has been exported at dumped prices into India, which impacted the domestic industry. "The Authority recommends imposition of the anti-dumping duty on the imports ... originating in or exported from the subject countries, for five years," the directorate has said in a notification. In the market parlance, the product is known as luxury vinyl tiles, or PVC flooring tiles. It mimics the appearance of the natural materials. It is used for covering the floors in the residential and the commercial buildings.



TRANSHIPMENT PORT

Govt to invite Eols for Rs 41,000-cr project in Great Nicobar Island

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways will invite expressions of interest (EOI) from interested players for a Rs 41,000 crore international transshipment port project at Great Nicobar Island in the Bay of Bengal.

The ministry in a release on Friday said that the project is expected to be complete with an investment of Rs 41,000 crore (USD 5 billion), including investment from both government and PPP concessionaire. The EOI will be released on Saturday (January 28).

The proposed port in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will have ultimate capacity to handle 16 million containers per year and in the first phase to be commissioned by 2028 at a cost of Rs 18,000 crore



will handle above 4 million containers.

Other projects planned around the transshipment port include airport, township and power plant, it added.

The project is located on the international trade route, with existing transshipment terminals

like Singapore, Klang and Colombo in proximity.

According to the statement, the project focuses on three key drivers which can result in making it a leading container transshipment port, i.e. strategic location in terms of proximity (40 nautical miles) with the international shipping

The ministry in a release on Friday said that the project is expected to be complete with an investment of Rs 41,000 crore (USD 5 billion), including investment from both government and PPP concessionaire

size for all types of vessels, from feeders to the large inter-continental carriers. Further, the proposed infrastructures facilities shall be such that the service levels and facilities match with that of the global top container transshipment terminals and neighbouring ports.

The proposed facility is envisaged to be developed in four phases.

The estimated cost for Phase 1 of the proposed transshipment port is around Rs 18,000 crore which includes the construction of breakwaters, dredging, reclamation, berths, storage areas, building and utilities, procurement and installation of equipment and development of port colony with core infrastructure is going to be developed with the government support.

India's biopharma and diagnostic industry strategic assets: Mandaviya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The medical emergency over the past few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic has seen India's biopharma and diagnostic industry prove to be strategic assets to meet the public health requirement not just domestically but globally, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Friday.

In his video address to the National Summit on Quality of Biologicals, organised here by the National Institute of Biologicals (NIB), the minister said biological drugs have emerged as a choice of therapy along with conventional chemical drugs.

The National Institute of Biologicals is playing a vital role in ensuring that only quality biological products reach the health system, thereby strengthening the prime minister's mission of ensuring quality health and wellness for all, he said.



The national summit will act as a platform to bring together stakeholders, regulatory authorities and academia for interaction on various aspects of quality assurance of biologicals

"The medical emergency over the past few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic has seen our biopharma and diagnostic industry prove to be strategic assets to meet the public health requirement not only of our country but globally, which has given meaning to the statement of universal brotherhood 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', that is, 'the whole world is one family', he stated.

The national summit will act as a platform to bring together stakeholders, regulatory authorities and academia for interaction on various aspects

of quality assurance of biologicals. These interactions will spearhead capacity building, technology enhancement and development of newer biologicals for promoting and safeguarding public health contributing towards the government's mandate of "Healthy India".

Congratulating NIB for bringing multiple stakeholders in a single platform, the minister said the summit will provide a base for gap analysis in the currently prevalent quality assurance approaches in India.

Adani Group stocks continue to fall

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Adani group stocks continued to remain under pressure on Friday, falling up to 20 per cent in morning trade, after the US-based investment research firm Hindenburg Research made damaging allegations.

Shares of Adani Total Gas plummeted 19.65 per cent, Adani Transmission tumbled 19 per cent, Adani Green Energy plunged 15.50 per cent and Adani Enterprises tanked 6.19 per cent on the BSE.

Also, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone fell 5.31 per cent, Adani Wilmar dipped 5 per cent and Adani Power declined 4.99 per cent.

In the broader market, the 30-share BSE benchmark declined 537.91 points or 0.89 per cent to trade at 59,667.15.

The Adani Group on Thursday said it is examining legal options to take "punitive action" against Hindenburg Research for its 'reckless' attempt to sabotage a



mega share sale at the conglomerate's flagship firm - a statement that the US activist investor responded by saying it stands by its report that alleged "brazen" market manipulation and accounting fraud by the group.

"The maliciously mischievous, unresearched report published by Hindenburg Research on January 24, 2023, has adversely affected the Adani Group, our shareholders and investors. The volatility in Indian stock markets created by the report is of great concern and has led to unwanted anguish for Indian citizens," Adani Group's lead head Jatin Jalundhwal said in a statement.

For Hindenburg Research, Adani Group is a disaster

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In 1937, a hydrogen-powered German airship flying into New Jersey caught fire and crashed, killing 35 passengers on board. It was sort of a man-made disaster as some 100 people were loaded on to a balloon filled with the most flammable material in the universe. The airship was named Hindenburg. Eight decades later, in 2017, a graduate of international business management from the University of Connecticut founded a 'forensic financial research' firm to specialise in spotting wrongdoings and frauds, or what it calls man-made disasters, at companies around the globe and take market bets against them. Founder Nathan (Nate) Anderson

named his firm Hindenburg Research. Last week, a report from Hindenburg Research on Indian tycoon Gautam Adani's business empire sparked a USD 51 billion sell-off in shares of his group companies, pushing him four places down on the world billionaire index. The report said that the Adani Group had "engaged in a brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades". The disclosure came just ahead of Adani Enterprises' Rs 20,000 crore open offer of shares to investors. Adani group has since rubbished the report as a "malicious combination of selective misinformation and stale, baseless and discredited allegations".

Govt gets multiple EoIs for privatising NMDC Steel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has received multiple preliminary bids for the privatisation of NMDC Steel Ltd (NSL), DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Friday.

Currently, the government holds a 60.79 per cent stake in NSL, which is the steel manufacturing facility of India's largest iron ore producer NMDC located in Nagarnar, Chhattisgarh.

NSL is up for privatisation with the government looking to sell 50.79 per cent of its shareholding, along with management control. The government had on December 1, 2022, invited preliminary bids or expressions of interest (EOI) for the strategic sale and the last date for putting in bids was January 27.

"Multiple Expressions of Interest (EOI) received for the Strategic Disinvestment of NMDC Steel Ltd (NSL)," Pandey tweeted.

The transaction will now move to the second stage, he added.

In response to pre-bid queries received from interested bidders, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) had earlier this month said the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on October 6, 2022, approved the demerger of the steel manufacturing unit at Nagarnar from NMDC. The demerged entity would be NMDC Steel Ltd (NSL).

Subsequent to the demerger, shares of NSL will be listed on BSE, National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Calcutta Stock Exchange.

As per current estimates, the targeted date for commissioning of the steel manufacturing plant NSL is March 31, DIPAM said.

NSL is expected to have a production capacity of 3 million tonne per annum (MTPA).

In October 2020, the CCEA gave its 'in-principle' approval to the demerger of the Nagarnar steel manufacturing unit from NMDC and strategic disinvestment of the resulting entity by selling the entire stake of the central government.

Following that the government on December 1, 2022, invited bids for buying a 50.79 per cent stake in NSL. The balance 10 per cent stake of the government would be offered to NMDC after the strategic buyer for the 50.79 per cent stake is selected.

DGCA slaps Rs 10 lakh fine on Go First for Bangalore airport incident on January 9

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation regulator DGCA on Friday imposed a fine of Rs 10 lakh on Go First for the incident at Bangalore airport where 55 passengers were left behind in a passenger coach on January 9, citing various lapses, including "improper communication" between the staff concerned.

This is the third time in a span of eight days that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed penalties on an airline. On January 20 and 24, the watchdog penalised Air India for reporting lapses related to incidents of unruly passenger behaviour onboard two international flights last year.

Following the Go First incident at the Bangalore airport on January 9, the regulator issued a show-cause notice to the airline and the latest enforcement action has been taken after perusing its response.

Patanjali Foods Q3 profits rises 15% to Rs 269 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Patanjali Foods Ltd, which is mainly into edible oil business, has posted a 15 per cent growth in its net profit to Rs 269.18 crore for the December quarter on better sales.

Its net profit stood at Rs 234.07 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing.

Total income rose by 26 per cent to Rs 7,963.75 crore

during the quarter ended December 31, as compared to Rs 6,301.19 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.

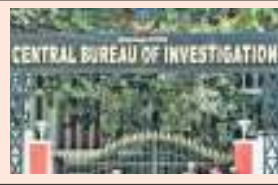
During the April-December period of this fiscal, nine-month period ended December 31, 2022, net profit increased to Rs 622.73 crore from Rs 571.87 crore a year ago, said Patanjali Foods, which is part of Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurved.

CBI books GTL for cheating, fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed an FIR against telecom infrastructure major GTL for allegedly diverting a substantial portion of a Rs 4,760 crore loan availed from a consortium of banks led by IDBI Bank, officials said.

The agency has booked the company, unidentified directors, public officials and vendors under IPC sections related to criminal conspiracy, cheating and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption



The FIR has alleged GTL Limited was extending advances to vendors year on year without supply of material/ goods, and eventually these advances were provisioned

Act, following a preliminary enquiry which showed that GTL had fraudulently obtained various credit facilities from consortium of banks, they said.

According to the FIR, the company allegedly diverted or

siphoned off a majority of the loan amount in conspiracy with its vendors, unidentified bank officers, among others.

The FIR has alleged GTL Limited was extending advances to vendors year on year without supply of mate-

rial/goods, and eventually these advances were provisioned.

"Various vendor companies were created and operated with the malafide intention of siphoning off the bank short term funds and other credit facilities in connivance with borrower i.e. GTL Limited," the FIR has alleged.

The IDBI Bank had conducted a special audit of the company in 2011 and raised the issue of suspicious transaction with the vendors.



‘India needs to set global agenda on smuggling’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government should take up a campaign against smuggling at the global level and a curb on such practices can help the world earn about USD 31 billion per year, a report said.

Eliminating illicit trade would gain governments at least USD 31.3 billion every year, and from 2030 onwards more than 164,000 premature deaths every year would be avoided, the vast majority in middle and low-income countries, the report by Think Change Forum (TCF) said.

India being one of the biggest consumer of smuggled products, the report said. The country loses a significant amount of revenue every year.

So, there is a need for India to take lead on the issue and coordinate at the global forum

as the country suffers more on the revenue front than others because it is a consuming nation.

As per World Health Organization, governments lose USD 40.5 billion every year in revenue from the illicit trade of tobacco products.

To make smuggling an important part of the global narrative, the report said, different wings of the government-the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs-need to come together.

Smuggling is a bigger challenge for developing countries rather than the developed ones. Global brand owners, a majority of whom originate from the developed world, are more concerned about counterfeiting than smuggling.

Indian stock markets switch to T+1 settlement regime

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian stock markets on Friday achieved a complete transition to a shorter settlement cycle or T+1 regime, a move that will bring significant capital efficiencies to the investors and improve risk mitigation for the entire industry.

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).

All trades from January 27

executed in any securities in the equity segment will be settled on a T+1 basis, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) said in a statement.

The journey to shortening the settlement cycle began on September 7, 2021, when capital markets regulator Sebi allowed stock exchanges to introduce the T+1 settlement cycle from January 1, 2022, on any of the securities available in the equity segment.

Following this, all the market infrastructure institutions - stock exchanges, clearing corporations and depositories -- jointly finalised the roadmap for the implementation of the T+1 settlement cycle in a



phased manner. The first batch of securities transitioned to T+1 settlement on February 25, 2022, and

thereafter, every month a batch of around 500 securities transitioned to T+1 settlement. From January 27, all securi-

ties -- equity shares including SME shares, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB), Government Bonds and Corporate Bonds trading in the equity segment will now be settled only on T+1 basis.

Globally most stock exchanges in developed as well as emerging markets follow the T+2 settlement system.

"It's a great achievement for the Indian capital market. The achievement would not have been possible without the continuous guidance provided by Sebi and painstaking effort

taken by all MIIs (Market Infrastructure Institutions), particularly the clearing corporations, trading members, clearing members, custodians, and all other stakeholders in re-engineering the processes and crunching timelines to adapt to shorten the settlement cycle.

"The shortening of the settlement cycle to T+1 will bring in significant capital efficiencies to the investors and improve risk mitigation for the entire industry," NSE MD and CEO Ashishkumar Chauhan said.

The exchange said that achievement is significant considering the NSE size and scale of operations in the equity segment.

Avatar 2 passes Avengers: Infinity War as fifth-biggest movie ever


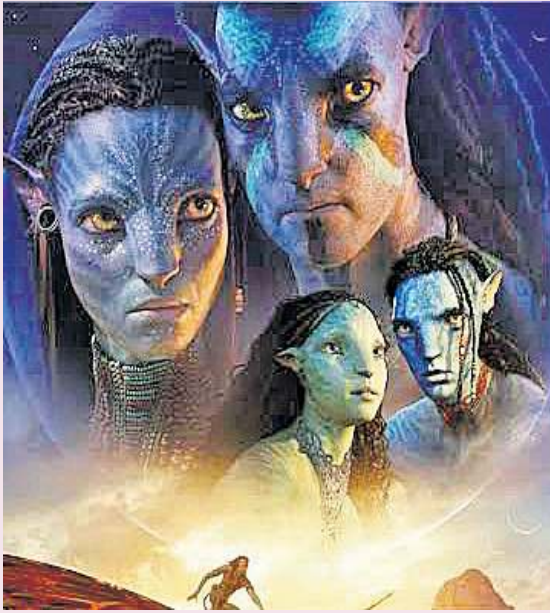
James Cameron's *Avatar* sequel is now the fifth highest-grossing movie of all time, passing *Avengers: Infinity War* to take its spot on Thursday.

Avatar: The Way of Water has now grossed a whopping \$2.054 billion at the global box office. *Infinity War* had an equally impressive \$2.052 billion total, after releasing back in 2018, reports Variety.

Only *Avatar* (\$2.92 billion), *Avengers: Endgame* (\$2.79 billion), *Titanic* (\$2.19 billion) and *Star Wars Episode VII - The Force Awakens* (\$2.07 billion) rank higher on the all-time list. *Avatar: The Way of Water* has also earned more than *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (\$1.92 billion), making it the highest-grossing movie of the pandemic era, reports.

Internationally, *The Way of Water* has grossed \$1.5 billion, making it the fourth-biggest movie in history. At the domestic box office, it's made \$603 million, standing as No. 13 of all time. It's just the sixth movie ever made that has crossed \$2 billion globally, doing so in its sixth week of release.

Sources say that *Avatar: The Way of Water*, which required the development of new technology to shoot



motion-capture scenes under water, needed to earn \$1.5 billion to break even. Most films would have been wildly profitable from that point. Cameron is hoping to turn *Avatar* into a five-film franchise, one that will tell a multi-generational family saga.

The filmmaker not only directed the latest *Avatar* movie, he also co-wrote it with Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver.

Entering its seventh week of release, *The Way of Water* has a good shot at surpassing *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* on the all-time charts, as the next major box office smash, *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania*, doesn't hit theatres until February 17.

Avatar: The Way of Water stars Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Kate Winslet, Stephen Lang and Sigourney Weaver. The sequel earned strong reviews from critics and has been nominated for four Oscars, including for best picture.



THE BEAR STAR AYO EDEBIRI JOINS THUNDERBOLTS

The *Bear* breakout star Ayo Edebiri has joined Marvel Studios' anti-hero team-up feature *Thunderbolts* in an undisclosed role.

Jake Schreier is directing from a script by Eric Pearson. As is the case with every Marvel Studios production, Kevin Feige is producing, reports Variety.

Feige announced *Thunderbolts* at San Diego Comic-Con in 2022, as the climax of Phase 5 of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. It is currently set to premiere on July 26, 2024, reports Variety.

Thunderbolts will bring together several anti-heroes across the MCU, including from *Black Widow*, Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh), Red Guardian (David Harbour) and Taskmaster (Olga Kurylenko); from *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan) and John Walker (Wyatt Russell); and from *Ant-Man and the Wasp*, Ghost (Hannah John-Kamen). Julia Louis-Dreyfus' Contessa Valentina Allegra de la Fontaine - who's appeared in *Falcon and Winter Soldier*, *Black Widow* and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* - will lead the team; Louis-Dreyfus recently told Variety that *Thunderbolts* starts shooting in June.

Edebiri's career has been scorching since FX's *The Bear* debuted on Hulu in June 2022.

She appears opposite Ben Platt in the feature *Theater Camp*, which just premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was promptly picked up by Searchlight, and she'll next appear in the LGBTQ coming-of-age comedy *Bottoms*, set to debut on Amazon Prime Video later this year.



Masaba Gupta marries actor Satyadeep Mishra in a hush-hush ceremony

Ace fashion designer and actress Masaba Gupta surprised everyone on Friday after she announced that she has tied the knot with actor Satyadeep Mishra in an intimate wedding.

Masaba took to her Instagram to share the first pictures from the early morning ceremony. In the image, the designer wore a pink and golden lehenga with jewellery while Satyadeep looked dapper in a blush pink kurta.

She captioned it, "Married my ocean of calm, this morning. Here's to many many lifetimes of love, peace, stability and most importantly laughter. And thanks for letting me pick the caption - this is gonna be great!"

Masaba is the daughter of veteran actress Neena Gupta and former West Indies cricketer Vivian Richards. She made her onscreen debut with *Masaba Masaba* and was also seen in *Modern Love Mumbai*.

Satyadeep Mishra made his Bollywood debut with 2011 film *No One Killed Jessica*. He also holds a degree in law and has worked as a corporate lawyer for some time. He was recently seen as senior inspector in *Vikram Vedha* and as a spy in the web series, *Mukhbir*.

He just saw the release of another web show, *Tanaav*.

Ali Fazal confirms not being part of Fukrey 3

Actor Ali Fazal will not be returning as Zafar in the third installment of *Fukrey 3* as "time and schedules" don't allow him to.

Amid the release date announcement of *Fukrey 3*, the poster created a tizzy as it did not feature the fourth 'Fukra' Ali Fazal. He has now come out with a statement saying that he will not be a part of the third installment.


Ali in a statement said: "So Zafar aayega ya nahi? Sab yahi puch rahe hain baar baar. Sorry saathiyon, iss baari nahi! (Everyone is asking if Zafar will come or. But Sorry, not this time.) Zafar bhai ko kabhi kabhi Guddu bhैया bhi banana padhta hai. Aur do universes overlap ho jaate hain kabhi kabhi. (Zafar sometimes has become Guddu bhैया. Overlapping happens in two universes.) Once a fukra always a fukra so I am around. But I won't be coming on screen for the third outing of the Fukras, Bholi and Panditji! I would have wanted to be part of it but time and schedules didn't allow me to. I will be back in the future at some juncture, maybe sooner than you expect. Zafar will be back after a small detour to entertain you guys!"

The third installment of actors Varun Sharma, Pulkit Samrat, Manjot Singh and Richa Chadha's comedy film *Fukrey* is all set to hit the big screen on September 7 on the auspicious occasion of Krishna Janmashtami.




FUN

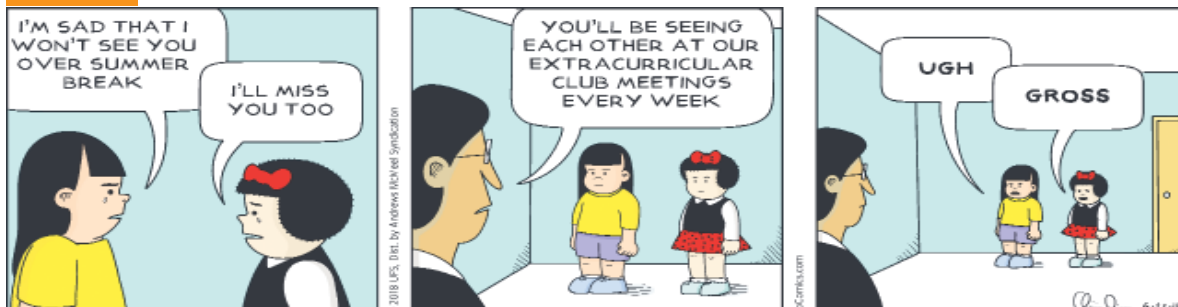
ARCHIE




GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS




CALVIN AND HOBBS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1		2		3	4	5
6				7		8
9		10		11		
12				13	14	
16	17				18	
						19

SUDOKU

	7			8			5
6				8			
				5	3		9
	1		3	5		2	
	4		9		1		5
		6		2	7		9
9		4	5				
		1					6
5			7				2

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

4	9	7	2	5	1	8	6	3
8	3	2	6	9	7	5	1	4
6	5	1	3	8	4	2	9	7
7	2	9	5	1	3	6	4	8
5	8	6	4	2	9	7	3	1
3	1	4	7	6	8	9	2	5
1	4	8	9	7	6	3	5	2
9	7	5	1	3	2	4	8	6
2	6	3	8	4	5	1	7	9

Rules

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

ACROSS

- Air-holes in your nose
- Become larger
- A spider's trap
- by
- Speaks
- The body's pump
- Uncles' wives
- Took away illegally
- Hot coals left from a fire
- Meat from a cow
- Unexpectedly, without warning

DOWN

- A frightening dream
- Small seat without a back
- A feeling that makes you want to scratch

SOLUTION

L	O	W	L	A
C	O	M	M	E
F	S	I	A	O
O	C	T	E	T
R	A	T	L	T
T	H	E	R	M
U	N	T	I	C
N	I	G	H	T
A	A	A	O	P
E	E	E	N	N

Young 'Shepreneur' redefining entrepreneurship in Hyderabad

K. RAMYA SREE

There is no denying the fact that women entrepreneurs are shaping the future of India. At present, India has 432 million working-age women and 13.5–15.7 million women-owned businesses that provide direct employment to 22–27 million people. Statistics have shown that the number of female business owners has increased by 114%.

No surprise that women have made an enormous effort to be present in the world of entrepreneurship. More young women are coming forward into the entrepreneurial world to bring about a change in society and its behavior. For this week's edition of Hyderabadond, we have with us K Manisha, who is here to prove the misconception that "experience leads you everywhere." She says young people are more talented and that with their ideas and thoughts, they can build their own empires.

The "shepreneur" launched her own fitness studio, "Hyki fitness studio" in Kondapur. Wondering

what's so special about it? It is a cutting-edge plush fitness studio where experience counts. In fact, it even attracted legendary cricketer Virat Kohli, who recently visited her studio for a shoot and was mesmerised by its aesthetics.

The 25-year-old speaking about her entrepreneurial journey, informed us, "I was doing my masters in luxury and branding abroad, and I happened to come to India in 2020 for a vacation, and unfortunately, COVID hit us, so I had to stay back. It was at the same time we moved from Jubilee Hills to Manikonda, and we couldn't find any great gym in the area. And it was getting difficult for me and my dad to travel to Jubilee Hills every day. So we decided to set up a home gym, however, a thought struck me: why not a fitness studio in Manikonda itself? It will help many people like me who are looking for experiential fitness studios. That's how Hyki happened."

Wondering what Hyki means? It is apparently a Japanese word that means wellness. It's a lifestyle-changing word.

True to its words, as you walk into Hyki you will be welcomed with



pleasing aesthetics, rich and plush, giving you a push to keep yourself fit. They have different sets for their clients every day. It is not a commercial gym.

"Empower young talent. Experience and old energies are things that do not interest me. I think young people are more talented and capable. I want to prove that young people are more talented, and sometimes with their ideas, if put in the right way, they can be successful too."

Manisha is a true-blooded Hyderabad, born here. And she believes that women entrepreneurs are well-supported in Hyderabad. She said, "I haven't come across anyone putting me down. People in Hyderabad are more courteous. I'm not sure if it's because my father is accompanying me or because of the lineage I receive, but everyone has been very nice so far. I think we are in an era where a lot of women are in this market, and there is a lot of support from the audience. They are very proud to see me, and I had people come to me and tell

me that they are inspired by me and motivated by what I do. Hyderabad is definitely taking me in the right sense."

She feels Hyderabad is an upcoming city, and the people's spending power has also increased. So Manisha is expecting growth in all sectors in Hyderabad. Having lived abroad, when she returned to Hyderabad, she was mesmerised by its growth, she said, "I love the vibrance of the city and its spaciousness."

She feels people here are very calm and down to earth, and that helps her stay calm and keep herself grounded.

Manisha was once over 100 kilos, and now she is a role model in fitness. "People here in Hyderabad are becoming more aware and educated about fitness. The whole social media era has

been moving towards wellness lately. I am sure a lot of people are getting inspired and understanding the importance of fitness and well-being. However, Hyderabad is lacking in good trainers. Trainers are still despised as a profession. I think people are supposed to get educated, and they need to up their game. We need more passionate and creative people."

However, she is a hard-core fan of Biryani. She is not someone who would restrict food. "I don't restrict myself or my clients. Eat whatever you want but in limited quantities, and hit the gym the next day. The food scene in Hyderabad is amazing and growing. A lot of Asian tastes are coming here, and even I am planning to venture into the food scene in the coming months."

Manisha is the daughter of real estate bigwig Gopala Krishna. For her and the family, Hyderabad is everything that made them become who they are today. "My true home is Hyderabad. It's a place that gave me a platform and recognition for me and my family. It is the place where I grew up. This will always hold a special place in my heart. After Hyderabad, my second home is London."



No surprise to the fact that women have come out of their comfort zone and are making their mark in the entrepreneurial world. Today, for our weekly edition of Hyderabadond, we bring to you young 'Shepreneur' K. Manisha, who has turned into a fitness role model for many.

Soulful strings of sitar spreading mental peace

TEJAL SINHA

Mental health is one of the most discussed topics, be it in debates or in raising awareness. Of late, there have been several pieces of research that state that music can lessen the impact of depression and anxiety.

So, today we have with us Rishab Rikhiram Sharma, the brain behind 'Sitar for Mental Health', who found a way to bring peace to other people through the music that had given him so much. Hailing from a family of luthiers, Rishab was always surrounded by musical instruments, music, artists, and the whole culture. But at the same time he laughs out loud and recalls how he was not allowed to touch the Sitar, because his father had such reverence for the instruments. "My father used to always tell me "you have to learn it properly, or you're going to hurt yourself or break the instrument, so once you're of the age you can probably hold a Sitar (he giggles)." However, "he was fairly liberal with me playing the guitar, so I thought about Indian classical vocals first, and then I sort of moved towards western music and picked up the guitar. I thought it was cool to play, and I was very young at that time, so I got this fancy guitar at that time and got very good at it."

But, it was a broken Sitar that made his father realise his potential. How? He says, "My dad once received a broken shipment, a return shipment from a customer of Sitar. Broken instruments are never kept by my father. He always fixes them and keeps them for like donations or other purposes. He fixed the sitar and put it on the wall and I was just watching it. It was not too big or small. It was the right size for me as a 10 to 11-year-old kid. It was one of his own creations. I was just watching this Sitar for 2-3 days and finally built up the courage and asked him "Dad this sitar is already broken how much more can I break this (he laughs)" so can I just try my hands on



it and he was like "yeah sure go ahead". I was very surprised so I picked up the Sitar and figured out 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Da Ni Sa' and in a few minutes I started playing some popular tunes and the song is on the Sitar. He was astonished and so surprised that I was playing all these tunes of the songs and he saw the potential in me and said "From tomorrow you're lessons begin."

Rishab is the youngest and final disciple of Pandit Ravi Shankar, which he says was his breakthrough, and it was after this that he began taking it even more seriously.

No surprise, music has been like a 'messiah' for many of us, be it while

In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, Sitarist and mental health advocate Rishab Rikhiram Sharma, takes us through his melodic journey and how he is using his Sitar to bring out peace for other people.

being upset, happy, or having any other emotions. And, what could be better than listening to soulful music or a performance that in itself becomes a meditation for us. This, is what Rishab too aims to bring with

'Sitar for Mental Health'. "I used to always think about how I could use my Sitar and voice to create more noise about mental health and what a human being, in general, goes through. I should be thankful to my friends and support system, who pushed me and encouraged me to go to therapy and take care of myself. I want to be that for

other people, because sometimes you know you're not feeling well and want someone to help you out. So, that was my idea for raising awareness and destigmatizing talking about mental health: join forces with different people who share the same ethos and have shared the same ideology."

Mental health in the workplace is top of mind for everyone these days. While our understanding of mental health at work is evolving, as is the prevalence of poor mental health, it's worth revisiting the fundamentals. Supporting mental health in the workplace is no longer a nice-to-have but a necessity. Creating wellness solutions to help their employees thrive is the first step. By sharing his own experiences, the Sitarist virtuoso says, "I help my dad with the business. We have also employed people to work with me, and we have created this understanding about mental health. If someone is going through a difficult time, all you can do is be there for them and be understanding, welcoming, and a safe space for them. We have this understanding that if someone is going through something, it's completely fine if we take an off day, or even if they do not want to do anything, that's totally understandable. I understand what we go through, everyone has their own battles. As an employer, artist, or colleague, you can be there for them, and I can offer some Sitar music (he laughs) in my free time."

Youngsters these days have shown immense love and inclination towards Indian classical music. And, so, we wanted to know what the scene was in the sitar community, and he enthusiastically shares, "In India, I think there's this huge community of not just players but also listeners and appreciators of Sitar. These events and collaborations, I believe, have paved the way for many artists to pursue international collaborations and have simply placed Sitar on the map. There are communities not just in India but around the world. It really feels like one big family, and they always talk about "gharanas" and different schools of playing, how we do things differently and how I think of us as "gharanas". We've had all the gharanas under one group, and I feel our business ties all the "gharanas" and communities together, so I have never felt divided. Signing off the conversation with his biggest coping mechanism, he said, "It's been ever since I started playing sitar. Every time I had a bad day at school, I would just come home and practise it out and let my emotions flow and express them through my music."

Soundous Moufakir: I was asked to 'compromise' as a result of a big banner project

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Splitvilla fame Soundous Moufakir always wanted to become an actress and now she has said it out loud! Where she hails from Morocco, acting is always looked upon as a great career choice from the time Nora Fatehi brought honour to the country. She has been roped in to play Roma in the movie *Continuity* made by Soorma filmmaker and she can't be more happier than this!

In an exclusive conversation with us, the bubbly actress says, "Born in Rabat, as soon as I turned eighteen, I moved to Paris to live an independent life. I was doing my masters in finance there! Our Nora Fatehi didn't just rouse a motivation in us Moroccans but artists worldwide. I took the leap of faith, resigned as a financial analyst, and booked my tickets to Bombay to be who I always wanted to be."

Endearing the audiences with her charming personality on *Splitvilla* currently on air, showing how to stand up for friends — the debutant actress continues, "The reality television show *Splitvilla* strengthened me mentally. I would love to be a part of Ekta Kapoor's upcoming season of *Lock Upp* too. Doing such shows on television is like getting yourself

Splitvilla fame Soundous Moufakir is all set to make her acting debut with *Continuity*. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she takes us through her forming days, standing up for her friends on *Splitvilla*, and also makes a shocking revelation at the end.

tattooed, can never be undone what you show. I am not yet done with reality shows (she laughed)."

Ready with her debut film, she shares, "Initially I knew nobody here! I used to watch *Roadies* in Paris, can you imagine? As soon as I signed for these reality television shows: I didn't shy away from showing my bold personality, as I am. You can find me fighting like a courageous warrior everywhere, don't allow anyone else to speak on my behalf. This temperament was liked by the filmmaker and I was signed on. Shit-scared because I didn't know Hindi at all. I learned a cuss word to protect myself in this industry."

Ending the interview with a huge revelation, she revealed, "I was asked to "compromise" as a result of a big banner project and it will always be a haunting memory for me. Yes, I screamed a straightforward NO but what has changed after #metoo movement? I am not a desperate outsider that a casting agent can try to misuse me. It was so embarrassing for me here. We draw a boundary, can't men read it?"



NOVAK IS GOING FOR 10

Djoker's perfect record in Melbourne Park semifinals continues on Friday as he booked a 10th tilt at Australian Open glory

AP ■ MELBOURNE

A rampant Novak Djokovic surged into a 10th Australian Open final on Friday to close in on a record-equalling 22nd Grand Slam crown, with only Stefanos Tsitsipas now standing in his way.

The Serbian fourth seed overcame an early wobble to romp past unseeded American Tommy Paul 7-5, 6-1, 6-2 on Rod Laver Arena in style.

Another title on Sunday will move him alongside Rafael Nadal with 22 Slam wins and see the 35-year-old return to world number one for the first time since last June.

Djokovic played the clash without father Srdjan courtside after he was filmed posing with a man holding a Russian flag featuring Vladimir Putin's face following his son's quarter-final win on Wednesday.

The incident sparked a backlash from Ukraine and led to calls for Djokovic's father to be banned from the tournament.

Srdjan issued a statement ahead of the semi-final saying he would stay away, insisting he "wishes only for peace" and never wanted to cause "disruption".

There was an empty seat next to his mother Dijana during the match.

"I'm really thankful that I have enough gas in my legs to be able to play at this level on one of the biggest tennis courts in the world," said Djokovic, who is now 11-0 for the season and into a 33rd Grand Slam final.

"Of course, I'm not as fresh



as the beginning of the tournament but we put in a lot of hours in the off-season on fitness in order to be in a good condition to play best of five (sets).

"I know what's expected of me, I've been in this situation so many times in my career. Experience helps also," he added of being in another final.

The win extended his unbeaten streak at the Australian Open to 27 matches to claim sole ownership of the Open-era record at Melbourne Park ahead of Andre Agassi.

Djokovic had never played Paul before and said he was wary of a "very explosive, very dynamic player", with the American

initially refusing to go quietly.

The Serb, a hot favourite, attacked his opponent's straight away for an early break, then broke again when the 35th-ranked Paul fired a forehand long to race 5-1 in front.

A run-in with the umpire over using his towel between points seemed to rattle Djokovic

and he was broken twice in a row as Paul came surging back to 5-5.

Djokovic regrouped to hold serve and break again and take the set in 59 minutes.

After that wobble, it was all business, despite clutching his strapped hamstring several times, romping through the

next two sets with minimal resistance.

He will meet Tsitsipas next after the Greek battled into his first Australian final and only second at a Grand Slam.

In the previous one, at Roland Garros in 2021, he fell to Djokovic in five sets after holding a 2-0 lead.



Tsitsipas in dreamland after reaching maiden Australian Open final

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Stefanos Tsitsipas said he was living the dream after reaching the Australian Open final on Friday for a first time and standing on the cusp of becoming world number one.

The Greek third seed showed grit to defeat Russia's Karen Khachanov and set up a final against either nine-time Melbourne champion Novak Djokovic.

The 18th-seeded Khachanov threatened a comeback after saving two match points to force the semi-final into a fourth set, before Tsitsipas triumphed 7-6 (7/2), 6-4, 6-7 (6/8), 6-3.

Tsitsipas can top the world rankings if he wins his first Grand Slam crown on Sunday.

"I dreamed as a kid to maybe one day get to play in this court against the best players in the world," Tsitsipas told a sunny Rod Laver Arena after winning an Australian

Open semi-final at the fourth attempt.

"So I'm happy with the fight I put out there today. I feel blessed, blessed that I'm able to play tennis at this level.

"I've been wanting for many years now to put Greek tennis on the map."

At 24, Tsitsipas is the youngest man to reach the Australian Open final since a 23-year-old Djokovic in 2011.

Tsitsipas has thrived in Melbourne throughout his career, after bursting on the scene at the 2019 event as a 20-year-old when he dethroned defending champion Roger Federer in the last 16.

He went on to reach the semi-finals that year and again in 2021 and 2022, falling one match short on each occasion.

A Grand Slam crown has remained elusive, with his runner-up showing at Roland Garros in 2021 his best result so far, falling to Djokovic in five sets after holding a 2-0 lead.



Sabalenka, Rybakina promise power-packed final

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Two of the biggest hitters in women's tennis go toe-to-toe when Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina clash in Saturday's Australian Open final in Melbourne.

Belarusian fifth seed Sabalenka is in the form of her life and on the brink of a maiden Grand Slam crown.

The 24-year-old comes into the showpiece under the Rod Laver Arena lights on a 10-match unbeaten streak in Australia, having won the Adelaide International and is yet to drop a set in 2023.

She has defeated Wimbledon champion Rybakina in all of their three previous meetings.

Rybakina, 23, has coolly moved through the draw, unfazed by the snub of her opening match being shunted out to the wilderness of Melbourne Park's Court 13.

The Russian-born player, who now represents Kazakhstan, has accounted for three Grand Slam champions on her way to the final, including world number one Iga Swiatek.

Jelena Ostapenko and Victoria Azarenka followed on the back of Rybakina's dominant serve, which has smacked down 45 aces so far, more than any other.

Rybakina's graceful power appears effortless at times, emanating from clean ball-striking and immaculate timing.

Sabalenka is more brutal, her muscles generating spin and driving the ball through the court.

It is a trait Sabalenka has always possessed but was often stymied by her fractious nerves.

But not this year as she finally won a Slam semi-final at the

fourth attempt against the unseeded Pole Magda Linette.

Sabalenka has turned it around by working tirelessly last year with her coaches, a sports psychologist and a biomechanical specialist.

"I was trying to do less screaming after some bad points or some errors," Sabalenka said. "I was just trying to hold myself, stay calm, just think about the next point."

"I'm still screaming 'Cmon!' and all that stuff. Just less negative emotions."

Sabalenka is now so confident of handling her emotions — demonstrated as she smoothly fought back from 2-0 down in the first set against Linette — that she has dispensed with her sports psychologist.

Rybakina, the 22nd seed, will be full of confidence heading into her second major final in the past seven months.

She's lost only one set during the Australian Open fortnight, and that was against last year's runner-up Danielle Collins.

But if her first serve deserts her, Rybakina can come under pressure, as happened against the combative Azarenka in the semi-finals when she was broken three times.

But she is more than just a big serve and has enough all-court game to ward off most danger — her wide reach and ability to hit winners off both wings enabling her to get out of trouble.

With one major victory already achieved, Rybakina believes the experience will give her an edge.

"Everything was new at Wimbledon," Rybakina said. "Now I more or less understand what to expect."

Title eludes Sania in last Grand Slam

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Trailblazing Indian tennis star Sania Mirza capped off her glorious Grand Slam career with a runners-up finish alongside 'best friend' Rohan Bopanna in the Australian Open mixed doubles final here on Friday.

Pairing up with her first-ever mixed doubles partner Bopanna, the unseeded Indian duo went down 6-7(2), 2-6 to the Brazilian pair of Luisa Stefani and Rafael Mataos in the final at the Rod Laver Arena.

"If I cry, these are happy tears. That's just a disclaimer. I'm still going to play a couple of more tournaments but my journey of my professional career started in Melbourne," an emotional Sania said as she struggled to hold back tears.

"Rohan was my first-ever mixed doubles partner when I was 14 and we won the nationals, it was 22 year ago and I couldn't think of a better person, he's my best friend and one of my best partners to finish my career," Sania said, thanking Bopanna, who has one French Open mixed doubles title to his credit.

The 36-year-old, who earlier announced that the WTA event in Dubai next month will be her swansong, is India's most accomplished woman tennis player, having won six Grand Slam title, including three mixed doubles trophies.

She had won the the mixed doubles titles at the 2009



Australian Open and the 2012 French Open with Mahesh Bhupathi and the 2014 US Open with Brazilian Bruno Soares.

The Rod Laver Arena has been a happy hunting ground for the Hyderabad. She has a women's doubles and mixed doubles title each and has finished runner up four times at the Australian Open.

"It started in 2005 when I played Serena Williams in the third round as an 18-year-old

and that was scarily enough 18 years ago. I have had the privilege to come back here again and again, win some tournaments here and play some great finals amongst you all.

"Rod Laver Arena has really been special in my life and I couldn't think of a better arena to finish my career at in a Grand Slam," Sania said.

The presence of her son Ishaan, alongside family and friends made the occasion sweeter.

"I never thought I'd be able to play in front of my child in a Grand Slam final, so it's truly special for me, to have my four-year-old here and my parents here, and Rohan's wife, my trainers, my family in Australia who made me feel like home away from home."

"Cara Black who is my best friend and one of my first partners, it's been truly special I wouldn't be able to achieve anything without you all," Sania said.

Real defeat Atletico to reach Copa del Rey semis

AP ■ MADRID

Karim Benzema and Vinicius Junior's extra-time strikes earned Real Madrid a 3-1 win over rivals Atletico Madrid on Thursday to reach the Copa del Rey semi-finals.

The Brazilian winger's goal was a particularly sweet one for him after a crude effigy with his shirt on was hung from a bridge near Real Madrid's training ground before the game.

The spiky, gripping derby clash turned against Diego Simeone's side in the additional period when defender Stefan Savic was sent off. Atletico took the lead through Alvaro Morata after 19 minutes but Rodrygo's sensational slam run past three defenders and slick finish pulled Madrid level with 11 minutes remaining.

After Savic's 99th minute red card, Benzema tucked home from Marco Asensio's pass and Vinicius netted at the death to send Los Blancos through to the

final four for the first time since 2019. "Today we had a very difficult game but with the character and the players that we have, we were able to turn it around," Benzema told Teledeporte.

"Suffering is not good -- we have to score the goals earlier." The build-up to the derby was tainted by the Vinicius effigy being strung up overnight, which the club described as "a disgusting act of racism, xenophobia and hatred."

"(Vinicius) really wanted to play and he had a very good game," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told a news conference.

"I think the goal was his reward for his great work. What happened is very regrettable." Madrid fans had planned to sing Vinicius' name in support in the 20th minute, matching his shirt number, but were stunned into silence by Morata's goal moments before.

Atletico, hitting their best form of the season, conjured a



brilliant move to break the deadlock, with Morata tapping home after Koke's dink allowed Nahuel Molina to stroke a first-time cross to the back post.

Madrid improved significantly after the break and Rodrygo levelled with 11 minutes to go with his jinking solo effort and subtle near-post finish, taking the clash to extra-time.

Atletico defender Savic foolishly handed Madrid the edge when he was sent off for two yellow cards in two minutes.

With an extra man Madrid capitalised, Benzema striking lethally after 104 minutes when Vinicius miskicked Marco Asensio's cross and the ball travelled through to the striker.

Madrid, who last won the Copa del Rey in 2014, kept Atletico at bay in the final 15 minutes before Vinicius dribbled through and fired home to clinch the victory — celebrating with a now customary dance routine.

Despite their improving performances, the rest of Atletico's season is looking barren, given they were eliminated from European football and are 13 points behind La Liga leaders Barcelona, having played a game more.

"We are out of Europe and now the cup, the team has the second half of the season ahead of them to try and qualify for the Champions League, that's the objective the club needs," said Simeone, who cast some doubt on his future.

The Argentine coach has been at the club since 2011 and has a contract until 2024.

"After that, calmly, we will look at what is convenient for everyone," he continued. "Being at Atletico gives me enormous joy, I will give 1000 percent until the day that I leave."

Earlier Athletic Bilbao won 3-1 at Valencia to join record 31-time winners Barcelona and Osasuna in Monday's semi-final draw.

Self-esteem thy name is Jamuna



B.RAJESWARA PRASAD

Veteran actress Jamuna, who passed away on Friday, as one of the pantheons of Telugu cinema, always prized self-esteem and was a picture of self-confidence throughout her career. Great and versatile actress, Jamuna relied solely on her individual accomplishments and never carried favour of industry legends to remain in circulation by following industry-induced compulsions. With the demise of Jamuna, the golden era of Telugu film industry has effectively ended.

The enduring greatness of Jamuna lies in the fact that she did not confine herself to film-dom as an actor and director, but took active part in social activities with a stint in politics as well when she was elected to the Lok Sabha.

Although the cine journey of Jamuna started with *Puttillu*, she got recognition with the multi-starrer *Missamma*. Thereafter, she never looked back and went on to give many hit movies. Against the backdrop of NTR and ANR refusing to act with her, Jamuna did not lose her courage and in fact that rejection gave her the requisite dose self-confidence that sustained her throughout her career. She did not hesitate to pair with newcomers of the period like Krishna and Krishnam Raju. It is a different matter that she gave a push to their career. She was also not reluctant to act with

Chalam and Ramakrishna, who were virtually non-entities then. She was among the actresses who considered acting to be divinely ordained and performed her role perfectly, irrespective of the popularity of the hero, whoever it may be. She was part of the industry's evergreen classics like *Missamma* and *Gundamma Katha* in which she paired with ANR, while Savitri paired with NTR. The last star of the studded movies left us, leaving behind a great and stupendous three-decade-long career.

Generally a heroine's career gets a boost when she acts with a big hero. But in her career, Jamuna gave life to many heros. She proved to be a role model for many actresses by exhibiting her artistic skills in the portrayal of diverse roles that required heavy dose of emotional content. She got into the skin of characters like Satyabhama, Rani Malani Devi, and Janaki. These three characters brought to light her innate acting skills. Then again we saw her mirroring naïveté as Gowri in *Mooga Manasulu*. After Savitri, it was Jamuna who was considered for many roles that required heavy emotion content. Few actresses can match her in versatility. Jamuna gave life to many roles that will always remain role models. Like Savitri, she has a permanent place in the annals of film history with her remarkable body of work.

In Jamuna's departure the Telugu film industry has lost its sheen further.

From films to politics — a journey on her own

K. RAMYA SREE

Actress Jamuna made her debut into the film industry in 1953 with the film *Puttillu*. In 1953, Dr. Garikipati Raja Rao of the Indian People's Theatre Association, saw her stage show *Maa Bhoomi* and offered her a role in his film *Puttillu*. She rose to fame after appearing in LV Prasad's *Missamma* (1955). It did not even take her a span of three years to become a household name in the southern states. After *Missamma*, there was no looking back for the actress. She then went on to appear in over 200 films, including *Sri Krishna Tulabharam*, *Sampoorna Ramayanam*, *Pandanti Kapuram*, *Bhookailas*, *Mooga Manasulu*, *Ramudu Bheemudu* and many other super hit films.

Jamuna whose real name was Jana Bai, was popularly known as Satyabhama because of the mythical films that she was part of. She began performing in stage plays at an early age, during her school days itself before transitioning to film. Her mother taught her vocal music and harmonium.

Not just Telugu cinema, she gained immense craze and popularity in all southern Indian cinema. While the majority of her films were in Telugu, she also worked in Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi. She received the Filmfare Award for her performance in

the Hindi film *Milan*. In 1972, she won Filmfare Special Award - South for *Pandanti Kapuram*.

Furthermore, she acted in 11 other Hindi films. She was last seen in *Ammamma Gari Manavadu* in 2021. She was also the recipient of Tamil Nadu State Film Honorary Award, NTR National Award, and Padmabhushan Dr. B. Soroja Devi National Award.

She was called the perfect pair opposite NTR and ANR. And all their movies were a super hit of those times.

Even in real life she was a hyperactive person. Even at the age of 70, Jamuna was seen dancing to one of her songs and the video went viral in no time with netizens heaping praises for the actresses' work.

the late 1990s.

She is the mother of Telugu Artist Association, which she founded about 25 years ago. She has been providing humanitarian services to the movie association members ever since.

JAMUNA WAS VERY LIBERAL

Having been born into a family who are very progressive, Jamuna was a very liberal person throughout her life. She was born to a Brahmin father Nippani Srinivasa Rao and a Vyssa mother Kowsalya Devi in Hampi in 1936. Her parents had an inter caste marriage even before independence that led to her having a progressive upbringing at home.

Not just acting, she was also trained in classical music and dance.

In many interviews Jamuna confessed that late actress Savitri was like her elder sister, who showed her the way in the industry and guided her whenever needed.

Jamuna's parents wanted her to marry a well-read intellect and they were in the look out for IAS and IPS officers. But she married a Zoology professor J Ramana Rao and the couple had two children — J Sravanthi, who is now a renowned painter and her son Vamsi, who is a Media Studies Professor in San Francisco.



Several Tollywood celebrities poured in their deepest condolences As a bubbly mischievous girl, fiery sister-in-law, homemaker and above all. As the on-screen Satyabhama of Telugu people, Jamuna garu is unforgettable. My homage to the departed soul.

- Nandamuri Balakrishna

For almost 30 years she reigned over the silver screen. Prayers for her soul.

- NTR Jr

Although her mother tongue was Kannada, she conquered the hearts of Telugu audiences with her performances in several Telugu hit movies.

- Chiranjeevi

Senior actress and former Lok Sabha member Jamuna's death is sad. She has left an indelible impression as Satyabhama in the mythological movies. My condolences to her family.

- Pawan Kalyan

Saddened to hear about the demise of Jamuna garu . Will fondly remember her for her immense contribution to the industry.

- Mahesh Babu

Jamuna Garu. One of most beautiful woman with a childlike heart, a legend in Telugu cinema. Will miss her dearly.

- Vishnu Manchu

Saddened by the passing of legendary actress #Jamuna garu. Will fondly remember her for all her iconic roles and her immense contribution to the industry. My condolences to her family and loved ones.

- K Raghavendra Rao

Heart broken to hear about the demise of Jamuna garu . Condolences to the family , near & dear . Her contribution in the era of classical telugu cinema can never be forgotten . May her soul rest in peace. Om Shanthi.

- Allu Arjun

Heart broken to hear about the demise of Jamuna garu . Condolences to the family , near & dear . Her contribution in the era of classical telugu cinema can never be forgotten . May her soul rest in peace. Om Shanthi.

- Sudheer Babu

Saddened to hear the demise of legendary actress #Jamuna garu, May her soul rest in peace.

- Ananya Nagalla

Shocked to hear about the demise of legendary actress #Jamuna Garu. May her soul rest in peace. Sending my deepest condolences to her near and dear..om shanti

- Nithiin

One of the most impactful actors in the golden age of south cinema, Smt. Jamuna garu. Rest in peace.

- BVS Ravi

#Jamuna garu will be remembered forever for all those iconic roles she outlived.

- Gopichand Malineni

We lost a gem! My heart goes out to Shrivanthi and Koosu. We will miss you amma. Thank you for being what you are!

- Lakshmi Manchu

The story of a legend came to an end. She stood as an inspiration to all of our new generation artists. We will cherish you forever #Jamuna garu. My condolences to her family and dearest ones.Om Shanti

- Sai Dharam Tej

SOME OF HER POPULAR MOVIES INCLUDE

PUTTILLU (1952)
IDDARU PELLALU (1954)
DONGA RAMUDU (1955)
MISSAMMA (1955)
TENALI RAMAKRISHNA (1956)
CHIRANJEEVULU (1956)

MUDDU BIDDA (1956)
BHAGYA REKHA (1957)
JALSA RAYUDU (1960)
GUNDAMMA KATHA (1962)
MANCHI MANISHI (1964)
MOOGA MANASULU (1964)

RAMUDU BHEEMUDU (1964)
SRI KRISHNA TULABHARAM (1965)
LETA MANASULU (1966)
CHADARANGAM (1967)
POOLA RANGADU (1967)
PANDANTI KAPURAM (1972)

Ranjith Jayakodi: I am influenced by International films

The 'good friends' duo Sundeep Kishan and Ranjith Jayakodi are all set to woo the audience with their upcoming film *Michael*. Not even a week left for its release in theaters, director Ranjith in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, opened up about how the casting for the film was done, *Michael* being a visually rich film, and more.

K. RAMYA SREE

Michael, starring Sundeep Kishan, has sparked a lot of interest since its trailer debuted recently. The pan-India film, directed by Ranjith Jayakodi, is gearing up for a grand theatrical release on February 3.

The film has a star cast including Vijay Sethupathi, Varalakshmi Sarath Kumar, Divyansha Kaushik, Varun Sandesh, and Gautham Menon, adding more weight to the film.

This is the third film for director Ranjith, a Chennai native. The director revealed that it was Sundeep Kishan who first initiated working with him. "Sundeep was impressed after watching my second film, and he called me up about the same. Since then, we have been good friends. However, during the second lockdown, he suddenly said, "Let's make a movie together." He was keen on doing an action movie, and at the same time I was also writing the script for *Michael*. That's how *Michael* happened to us," said the director, who clarified that *Michael* is not just an action film, it has period drama, action, romance, and much more.

"The film is set in three periods: 1970s, 80s and 90s. It is a beautiful love story with a gangster backdrop," added Ranjith.

Interestingly, this film will see *Happy Days* fame Varun Sandesh in a negative role for the first time, and



the director informs us that it was Sundeep who proposed to cast Varun in this film. He said, "When I wrote the story, I had another actor in mind for that role. Sundeep was the one who asked me to check out Varun as his face will be fresh for the role. Since Varun had a lover boy image among the audience, I wanted him to give a screen test, and Varun took it very sportively and immediately agreed to the screen test. He had the same energy that an actor has while he auditions for his first film. I could feel Varun's enthusiasm, and he surprised me with his acting."

Furthermore, he said that he want-

ed a pan-Indian star for one of the roles, and since Vijay Sethupathi is his best friend with whom he did his first film, he could convince Vijay easily, and the actor liked the script very much.

Star cast aside, if you have watched the trailer, you will surely know how visually rich this film is. "The plot itself dictates the type of visuals that should be used. The lighting and frames are chosen to complement the tale. My prior films' camera technique was also unique. *Michael* has visuals by Kiran Kaushik. Who would have guessed that this was his first film as a DVP? He did an outstanding job. In terms of filmmaking style, I am influenced by international films. Before I go on set, I focus on the tone of the picture," said the director, who is confident that the visuals in this film will get a good response.

It seems like *Michael* is a film that is being brought to the audience by a group of good friends. While the director already confessed that Sundeep and Vijay are his good friends, the music director of the film, Sam CS, is also his good friend. He came on board to provide some spine-chilling music for the film, and that too even more cautiously because this is his good friend's movie.

Bharat Choudhary and Pushkur Ram Mohan Rao are jointly producing this film, with Narayan Das and K Narang as the presenters.



‘It’s very contemporary the way we shot the show’

Shahid Kapoor is all set to make his digital debut with Prime Video's upcoming crime thriller, *Farzi*. Created by Raj & DK, who are known for their edgy thrillers, the series has already piqued the interest of the audience. As the fans await for the collaboration to create magic on the screen, the lead actor recently opened up about his experience of working with the director duo.

Talking about working with Raj & DK, actor Shahid Kapoor shares, "They really allow the actors to come out and express themselves and sometimes they are really worried with what we are doing with the shots.. But they let you do what you want to do and I felt very free. I also feel that this show has been made in a very fluid manner. It's very contemporary the way we shot the show, the way the characters have been written and developed allows every actor to really dig-in deep because there is enough meat there if you really go looking hard for it and it's very democratic. I think they let everybody bring what they feel and then they kind of final it together to make it what they feel is right. I had a lot of fun. I think they felt very nervous like what's up with him but I was having a great time."

Packed with signature humour, director Raj & DK's *Farzi* is an eight-episode crime thriller. The series revolves around Sunny, a small-time con artist, who finds himself pulled into the dark while planning the perfect con. However, a ferocious and unconventional task force officer has made it his mission to rid the country of the threat he represents.

The series also features an ensemble cast including talented actors Vijay Sethupathi, Raashii Khanna, Kay Kay Menon, Bhuvan Arora, Regina Cassandra, and Amol Palekar in pivotal roles. Produced by D2R Films, *Farzi* will stream in India and across 240 countries and territories starting 10th February 2023.



Nadiya, Ivana & Yogi Babu onboard for MS Dhoni's *Let's Get Married*

Former Indian skipper and star cricketer MS Dhoni is turning producer with his newly launched production company Dhoni Entertainment (DEPL) banner and has now announced the title of his first Tamil film.

The highly-anticipated film, which will star Harish Kalyan, Ivana, Nadia Moidu, and comedian Yogi Babu, is titled *LGM - Let's Get Married*, and will be directed by debutant Ramesh Thamilmani. The upcoming film is touted to be a family entertainer and has been con-

ceptualised by Dhoni's wife, Sakshi Singh Dhoni, who is also serving as the Managing Director of Dhoni Entertainment.

Announcing the title of Dhoni Entertainment's debut production venture in Tamil, a motion poster for *LGM - Let's Get Married* has also been released. The film also includes a talented technical team onboard among whom include cinematographer Viswajith Odukkathil, who is known for his work in Malayalam films like *Hridayam*, *Mukundan*

Unni Associates, and *Gold*, while Pradeep E. Ragav of *Kathakali*, *Tik Tik Tik*, *Comali*, and *Love Today* fame is handling the editing.

Talking about the great bond Dhoni has shared with the people of Tamil Nadu over the years, Dhoni Entertainment (DEPL) in a press release said, "Reinforcing this extra special relationship further, Dhoni Entertainment will be producing its first film in Tamil, a family entertainer conceptualized by Sakshi Singh Dhoni, MD of Dhoni Entertainment."