



For the Fifth year in a row.. First tranche of..

Y.S.R RYTHU BHAROSA – PM KISAN

YSR Rythu Bharosa - PM KISAN assistance of **Rs.3,923.21 Crores** as the first tranche of fifth consecutive year to be provided to **52,30,939** farmers across the State @ **Rs.7500** to each farmer..

Sri. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister to release the assistance with a click of a button, Today, in Pattikonda, Kurnool District.. **Rs. 5,500** to be deposited directly into the farmers' accounts with the click of a button today.. Another **Rs. 2,000** under PM KISAN will be credited into the accounts of the farmers as soon as these funds are released..

In an unprecedented initiative, Jagananna Government is extending the assistance of **Rs.13,500** every year under 'YSR Rythu Bharosa' to all landless **SC, ST, BC, Minority tenant farmers** along with the farmers cultivating **ROFR & Endowment lands** including the eligible farmers cultivating their own lands..

An assistance of **Rs.13,500** under 'YSR Rythu Bharosa - PM Kisan' in 3 instalments every year.. **First instalment of Rs. 7,500** in May at the time of the Kharif sowing season, **second instalment of Rs. 4,000** in October for harvesting Kharif crop and Rabi needs, **third instalment of Rs. 2,000** in January / February at the time of crop harvest..

Earlier than promised - More than assured assistance to the farmers..

Promised in manifesto – Rs.12,500 x 4 years = Rs.50,000

Jagananna Govt., is extending – Rs.13,500 x 5 years = Rs.67,500

Additional amount being given more than manifesto promise Rs.17,500

Total financial assistance provided by Jagananna Government in last 4 years

Name of the scheme	No.of farmers (in lakhs)	Financial assistance (Rs.in crores)
YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan	52.38	30,985.30
YSR Free Crop Insurance	44.28	6,684.84
Input subsidy to farmers	22.74	1,965.43
Paddy procurement (Till Today)		58,485.06
Procurement of other farm produce (Till Today)		7,633.39
Free power subsidy to farm sector		34,200.00
Power subsidy for Aqua farmers		2,967.88
For enhancing the capacity of feeders to supply 9 hours free quality power during daytime...		1,700.00
Bonus for Bengalgram farmers		300.00
Micro Cultivation and Horticulture	4.50	2,012.24
Subsidy for Oil Palm farmers	0.37	171.87
YSR Yantra Seva Pathakam		1,052.16
Subsidy for Seeds	62.16	1,055.00
YSR Zero Interest Crop Loans(Including past Govt dues paid by us)	73.88	1,834.55
Paddy procurement dues (Previous Govt. dues paid by us)		960.00
Previous Govt. Electricity dues (which we've borne ourselves)		8,845.00
Seed subsidy dues by previous Govt.(paid by us)		384.00

Total assistance 1,61,236.72

Call Toll Free number **155251** for assistance and complaints regarding "YSR Rythu Bharosa - PM KISAN"

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Including the present financial assistance of **Rs.3,923 Crores**, Jagananna Government has disbursed **Rs.30,985 Crores** in the last 4 years to farmers under 'YSR Rythu Bharosa - PM KISAN' alone..

Glorious Years of Welfare and Development....

Including today's assistance Jagananna Government has credited **Rs.61,500** in these 4 years to each farmer under 'YSR Rythu Bharosa - PM KISAN' alone..

INPUT SUBSIDY TO FARMERS..

Disbursing compensation for the crop loss by the end of the same season itself during which the loss occurred, keeping up the promise once again..

Sri. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister to deposit an amount of **Rs.53.62 Crores** "Input Subsidy" directly into farmers' bank accounts with a click of a button, Today.. Disbursal of **Input Subsidy** after transparently conducting social audit in every RBK at village level amounting to **Rs. 44.19 Crores** to the **47,999** affected farmers, who lost their crops in **30,382** hectares due to untimely rains in the months of March, April, May 2023, and **Rs. 9.43 Crores** to the **3,469** farmers whose Jowar and Maize crops were damaged by heavy rains after the harvest..

Including the present financial assistance of **Rs. 53.62 Crores** being disbursed today, Jagananna Government has distributed an Input Subsidy assistance of **Rs.1,965 Crores** in these 4 years alone to **22.74** lakh farmers, who lost their crops due to natural calamities..

Our Government

- Rythu Bharosa:** Assistance of **Rs.13,500** under 'YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan' in 3 instalments every year.Jagananna Government has so far credited **Rs.30,985 Cr.** into the accounts of **52,30,939** farmer families..
- Rythu Bharosa Kendras:** Assisting farmers as one stop centres from seed to crop sale right at their doorstep through **10,778 RBKs..**
- Free Crop Insurance:** The Government took the entire burden of paying insurance premiums.. **Regular payment** of insurance claims of a particular season before the commencement of the same season next year..
- Input Subsidy:** Based on e-crop data, crop loss estimate is done in scientific manner.. Input Subsidy is paid to farmers for the crop loss by the end of same season in which the loss occurred..
- Sunna Vaddi Panta Runalu:** Based on e-crop data, interest being waived off to farmers who have taken loans up to **Rs.1 lakh** and repaid on time..
- 9 hours free quality power supply** during day time to farmers.. Enhanced the capacity of feeders with **Rs.1700 Cr.** to supply quality power..
- Power subsidy to Aqua Farmers:** Supply of power at a subsidised price @ **Rs.1.50** per unit.. Spent a total of **Rs. 2,968 Cr.** including the pending arrears of **Rs. 452 Cr.** left by the Previous Government..
- MoU with Amul:** Empowering women of Dairy Cooperative Societies entered a pact with Amul. Farmers getting extra income of **Rs.10-17** per ltr. Ambulance services and free insurance for cattle..

Previous Government

- No.. There was no thought of providing any help to the farmers.. Promised to waive off **Rs.87,000** Crore crop loans in 2014 and paid only **Rs.15,000** Crores during their tenure..
- No basic facilities or services were available to the farmers at any level..
- Farmers have to pay the premium.. One never knew when, how much and how many insurance claims would be paid ..
- Unscientific assessment of crop loss.. Pathetic situation where farmers have to run around the offices, middlemen, yet unsure of compensation.. Discrimination and Corruption prevailed..
- Crippled the Sunna Vaddi Panta Runalu scheme, **Rs.1,180** Crores were kept pending to the farmers..
- Untimely supply of power to the farmers.. Meters got burnt due to poor power supply. Paralysed the scheme by keeping **Rs.8,845** Crores pending for free power..
- Until 2 months before elections, provided power to aqua farmers @ **Rs. 3.80** per unit.. Vowed to supply @ **Rs. 2** per unit ahead of polls and left arrears of **Rs.452Cr.**
- Never cared for benefiting dairy farmers.. Measures only to benefit private dairies of their people.. No provision of ambulance services or free insurance for cattle..

Sri. Kakani Govardhan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture & Co-operative, Marketing and Food Processing

Note: Sri. Y. S Jagan Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister to release financial assistance with the click of a button under "YSR Rythu Bharosa, Input Subsidy" at 11:00 AM on 1st June, 2023 in Pattikonda, Kurnool District. Do watch the programme live on all popular news channels..

Telangana’s special efforts in conservation of forest resources

The landmark Forest Conservation Act of 1980 provided ample scope for the conservation of precious forest resources while putting down the indiscriminate use of forests. To ensure balance between development and sustainability of environment, the Government permitted the use of forests for various non-forest purposes under certain conditions, including the provision of equivalent non-forest land for compensating loss of forest by way of planting in equivalent non-forest land. One of the main purposes behind this condition was to compensate for the depleting forest cover resulting from diversion of forest land.

As per one study, nearly 14,000 sq.km of forest lands have been diverted for various non-forestry purposes since 1980 in the country and, barring a few categories of works like those related to public utility up to a certain extent, use by Central or State government for various projects of national importance etc, all other categories of diversion have been permitted under the mandatory condition of handing over equal non-forest land and its notification as reserved forests.

A cursory examination of most forest land diversion cases post-1980 reveals a lackadaisical approach on the part of the authorities concerned in respect of notification of non-forest lands as reserved forests as mandated in the conditions of approvals of diversion of forest land.

The ever-increasing scarcity of land, and its skyrocketing market value, coupled with poor monitoring of the progress of notification


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and lack of priority among forest and revenue authorities, have also resulted in the neglect of this important aspect of notification of non-forest land as reserved forests.

In the absence of effective demarcation and legal instrument of notification, coupled with huge demand for land, especially in growing cities, to meet the challenges of rapid economic growth and other infra needs, many of these lands handed over to forest staff are subject to problems of encroachment, counterclaims by revenue and other agencies etc. In most of the State Forest departments, the notification and related tasks are considered less attractive or even a punishment posting compared to other tasks, due to which they do not get the required attention.

TELANGANA STANDS OUT

The new Indian state of Telangana has accorded environmental conservation and protection as one of the top



MOHAN CHANDRA PARGAIEN

priorities and launched a flagship programme 'Telangana Ku Haritha Haram' aiming to increase the forest cover to 33 %. In addition to various proactive policy changes, the notification of forest blocks was also given equal importance by the government.

Sl.No.	Period	Number of Non-Forest Blocks	Area	
			Ha	Acres
1	1996 - 2016	14	498.540	1231.890
2	2017 - 2023	103	3501.23	8651.5
3	Under processing	18	1631.678	4031.876
Total		135	5631.456	13915.3251

Another highlight of this notification was adopting land description using the geo-coordinates taken using a state-of-the-art DGNSS survey thereby providing an accurate, foolproof and modern method of land demarcation. In many states, this is being done in a very formal and routine manner without accuracy and proper description of the land, which makes these lands prone to manipulation and likelihood of being exploited by people for their

benefits. From 1996-2016, 14 blocks were notified for an extent of 498.54 hectares, while the Telangana government after its formation, in 2016 notified 103 blocks covering 3501.23 ha over seven years. There are 18 blocks covering 1631.67 ha which are likely to be notified shortly. Showing its equal commitment and concern towards conservation of forests and this neglected aspect of notification of non-forest land nearly 5,132 hectares or

12,676 acres of area has been protected legally.

As per the recently released State of Forest Reports of Forest Survey of India, Telangana registered a remarkable increase of 6.85 per cent in its forest cover from 2015 to 2021. This timely notification of land, based on latest technology, is providing availability of dispute-free and legally supported land for talking up tree planting of various species under the Compensatory Afforestation programme to the forest department. This will help the Telangana to continue its mission to further increase its green cover in addition to improving the biodiversity of local regions.

(The author is a senior IFS Officer Telangana. He tweets as @pargaen Views are personal)

Housing beneficiaries to get LED appliances

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSRCP government has decided to provide energy-efficient electric appliances, a first in the country, to each beneficiary of the Pedalandariki Illu scheme. The government will distribute four LED bulbs, two LED tube lights and two energy-efficiency fans each to the beneficiaries. Pedalandariki Illu, YSR Congress government's flagship mega housing programme, by offering energy-efficient electric appliances, will turn the houses into eco-friendly energy savers helping residents save 734 units of energy per house per annum.

During a meeting between EESL and the AP Housing Department officials on energy efficiency housing, Special Chief Secretary of Housing Department Ajay Jain has requested EESL to supply energy-efficient appliances like LED bulbs, LED tube lights and fans at cost-effective rates

lower than market prices that would be facilitated to the beneficiaries of houses being constructed under Navaratnalu Pedalandariki Illu scheme.

Ajay Jain said it was the first-of-its-kind scheme to facilitate a huge number of LED lights to the beneficiaries of mega housing scheme. He also said that Andhra Pradesh was setting an example to the entire country by constructing YSR Jagananna colonies, providing the best social infrastructure. He also said that Andhra Pradesh would be the first State in the country, which was going to build lakhs of houses with modern technology to improve energy efficiency that would help considerably reduce temperature and substantial energy consumption apart from reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Ajay Jain said it was expected to save around 734 units of energy per house per annum by using LED bulbs, tube lights



and EE fans. He said, "It is estimated that around Rs.352 crore per annum could be saved by using energy-efficient appliances in 15.6 lakh houses that are being constructed under phase-1 of housing scheme. EESL officials indicated that 50, 60 and 90

percent energy savings could be achieved by using energy-efficient fans, LED tube lights and LED bulbs, respectively, when compared to conventional appliances."

Ajay Jain said, "Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is determined to give

the right to beneficiaries to live with dignity, and wishes to provide not just a shelter to the poor but a safe, decent and affordable place to live that make a real difference in the life of a family. Under the Navaratnalu Pedalandariki Illu programme, out of the total sanction of 21.25 lakh houses, around 20.32 lakhs (96 per cent) were grounded so far. The government has spent an amount of Rs. 842 crore in this financial year towards material components like cement, steel, sand etc. and payment to the beneficiaries."

CEO of EESL Vishal Kapoor has deputed a two-member team comprising Animesh Mishra, Head PR & Sales, and Nitin Bhatt, DGM PR & Sales, who have talked to Ajay Jain, APSHCL Managing Director Lakshmi Sha and other senior officials of Housing Department on the largest energy efficiency housing programme of Andhra Pradesh.


AP bags third rank at National Water Awards-2022

Achievement is in Best State category

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, Chief Secretary to the government, has said that AP State has secured the third rank (joint winner) at the National Water Awards-2022 in the Best State category. He said that the Union Jal Shakti Ministry intimated about the rank through a letter. The Union Ministry of Water Resources, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation announced the fourth National Water Awards in various categories.

Secretary of Rejuvenation Department Pankaj Kumar has informed the State government that Andhra Pradesh State has secured the presti-



gious National Water Award for the second time. The CS said that following the directives of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and the Minister for Water Resources Ambati Rambabu, several reforms had been undertaken under the auspices of the Water Resources Department to conserve water resources within a specified period of time.

Dr Jawahar Reddy said that the State achieved the award by taking up programmes especially using water resources efficiently, increasing the capacity of surface and underground water resources and promoting irrigation practices with the participation of all. He explained that moreover, the State government had undertaken and completed various projects in the order of priority to get the award as a source of continuous monitoring with the aim of getting benefits quickly.

He added that the recipients of the fourth National Water Awards would be felicitated with trophies and citations at a ceremony to be held soon.

VMC Commissioner shares inclusive approach at Paris meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar has said that the Vijayawada city administration focuses on sustainable and inclusive approach to end the plastic pollution in the city, for which steps are already being taken by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation in controlling single use plastic in and around the city by educating and motivating the public. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organised the International Forum to End Plastic Pollution in Cities in Paris, France, from May 25-28.

Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar, Pratishtha Mangain, Ambikapur Municipal Corporation Commissioner, and Smitha R, Secretary, Port Blair, were invited to participate in the event and they pre-

sented their views on how to end plastic pollution in the cities.

The VMC Commissioner said that the main aim of the Forum was to end plastic pollution in cities and also to strengthen the national framework for managing plastic waste in close collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India. He stated that it was also proposed in the Forum to establish a national digital platform to monitor the recycling and reuse rates of plastic waste in cities and in States and also to adopt national-level guidelines for plastic waste management.

The VMC Commissioner said that a lunch was hosted by the Mayor of Paris city, where all issues and topics related to urban development were discussed with a special focus on waste management.

TTD is organising the Ankurpanam fete on Saturday for the Maha Samprokshana ritual slated on June 8 in the newly-built Sri Venkateswara Temple at Majin Village of Jammu. The temple provides a divine ambience to devotees proceeding towards the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage. On June 4, the Vaidika programmes of Panchagavya Vasana, Vastu Homam, Akalmasha Prayaschitta Homam and Raksha Bandhanam will be performed in the morning, followed by Agni Pratista, Kumbhashapana, Kumbharadhana and Vishesh Homam in the evening. On June 5, Akshinmochana, Nava Kalasa Snapanam, Panchagavyadhivasam and evening rituals will be held in the yagashala.

On June 6, the programmes include Navakalasa Snapanam, Ksheeradhivasam and Yagashala rituals in the evening.



Jaladhivasam, Ratnanyasam, Dhautivasam, Vimana Kalasa Sthapana and Bimba Sthapana will be conducted on June 7. In the evening, Maha Shanti Tirumanjanam will be performed followed by Sayanadivasam events. On the final day, June 8, the celestial Maha Samprokshana fete will be held in the auspicious Mithuna lagnam between 7.30am and 8.15 am.

The temple will be open for darshan for devotees from 9.30 am onwards and in the evening a grand Srivari Kalyanotsavam will be performed.

TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, EO AV Dharma Reddy, several local public representatives and a large number of devotees are expected to participate in the rituals.

India ranks high...

Continued from Page 3

Abdul Nazeer said that he was happy to learn that JNTU Kakinada had been accredited with an A+ grade recently by the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) and congratulated the Vice-Chancellor and the university team behind the achievement for their sincere efforts and dedication. He also congratulated the winners of gold medals, merit certificates and all the graduates who received their degrees in the convocation ceremony.

Botcha Satyanarayana, Minister for Education, was the guest of honour, while Dr KI Varaprasad Reddy, Chairman of Shanta Biotech, was the chief guest at the convocation and Anil Chalamalasetti was awarded Honoris Causa by the university.

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By laying foundation stones for a slew of developmental works in Vizag, Bhogapuram International airport and Adani Data Centre apart from launching the Rs 5,156-crore worth Machilipatnam deep-sea port works, the Chief Minister proved that industrial growth was equally important.

With the volunteer system playing a key role in the implementation of various welfare schemes in full transparency, the government has also distributed Rs 243.34 crore as cash awards to the 2,33,719 volunteers and felicitating them with Seva Mitra, Seva Ratna and Seva Vajra awards for rendering selfless services.

The month also witnessed the Chief Minister formally launching the programme of de-notification of dotted lands benefiting 97,471 farmer families and distribution of house site pattas to 50,793 poor women beneficiaries in the R-5 zone spread over Guntur and NTR districts after getting the nod from the Supreme Court. He also gave a nod for issuing

Krishna Collector: Expedite...

Continued from Page 3

He said that the government had given three options to the beneficiaries. He asked them to create a WhatsApp group for posting the progress of house construction every day. During the visit, the Collector said that 2,004 beneficiaries were allotted plots on 33 acres and 1,710 SHG members were given bank loans. KRRC Special Deputy Collector B Siva Narayana Reddy, Municipal Commissioner P Venkateswara Rao, Tahsildar Mastan, MPDO Uma Devi and others accompanied the Collector.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

No. 12 to 34/TO/2023-24 Date: 29-05-2023
This official Tender Notice No 12 to 34/TO/2023-24, Dt. 29.05.2023, 293 works an amount of **Rs. 4783.15 Lakhs.** (1st Call). Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) Grant. Last Date/ Time for receipt of tenders **15.06.2023 upto 3.00 PM.** Further details can be seen **www.apesprocurement.gov.in**, Contact Nos. **ATO- 80746 58111, EE- 9100121217.** Sd/- Executive Engineer, RWS & S Division, Bhimavaram
R.O.No: 9652CDLVHT/2023-22 Dt. 31.05.2023

Chief of Naval Staff presents Gallantry and Distinguished Service Medals



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), presented the Gallantry and Distinguished Service awards on behalf of the President of India at an impressive Naval Investiture Ceremony which was held at the Eastern Naval Command at Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. The ceremony was organised to honour and recognize the bravery, leader-

ship, professional achievements and distinguished service of Naval personnel. 33 awards were conferred during the ceremony which included Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) to Vineet Kumar LA(AH) and Cdr Nishant Singh (Posthumous), 13 Nao Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 16 Vishisht Seva Medal, and two Jeevan Raksha Padak. In addition to these awards, the CNS also presented the Lt



VK Jain Memorial Gold Medal for pioneering research in the field of Weapon improvement and Electrical Engineering, as well as the Capt Ravi Dhir Memorial Gold Medal for promoting Flight Safety. The CNS Trophy for Best Green Practice 2023 was

awarded to Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam and INS Tunir in the Industrial and non-industrial categories respectively. The CNS also awarded the Unit Citations to operational units and shore establishments for their outstanding performances over the past year. Indian Naval Ships

Betwa, Satpura, Sutlej and Nireekshak, Kalvari class submarine INS Karanj along with INAS 321 FSS and INAS 318 received the Unit Citation. In the shore establishment category, the awardees were INS India, Tanaji and Valsura, and Material Organisation (Visakhapatnam).

Multispeciality health camp held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of actor Krishna's birthday, actor Mahesh Babu, in association with Andhra Hospitals, organised a multispeciality health camp in Burripalem on Wednesday. In the camp led by Andhra Hospitals, all specialities including General Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Cardiac, Obstetrics and ENT were covered. An awareness session was also conducted on common adult, paediatric health problems, heart diseases,

viral infections during summer etc., All specialty consultations and investigations were done, medicines distributed to patients. Dr PV Rama Rao, Chief of Children's Services & Director, Andhra Hospitals, said this was the 34th camp held so far in the village. A total of 126 children and adults attended the camp. Dr Raghavendra, Dr Vineela, Dr Amar, Dr Pavan Kumar, Dr Ramesh and other team members, nurses, lab technicians and pharmacists provided their services.

Celestial weddings of Lord Sriram, Venugopalswamy held in a festive manner

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The reinstating ceremony of idols of Rukmini Satyabhama Sametha Santhana Venugopala Swamy was held in a festive manner in Chintalapalem village in Inkolli mandal of Bapatla district on Wednesday. The villagers reconstructed the 500-year-old temple. Devotees thronged to the temple and attended the celestial marriages of the deities Lord Sri Rama and Sita, Venugopala Swamy, and Rukmini Sathyabhama Sametha Santhana Venugopala Swamy. As part of the procession, Vedic scholars explained that the idols of the deities have a long history of 500 years. New



poos have been conducted for the last four days. Yachamaneni Nageswar Rao, Sridevi, B Rajasekhar, Radha Devi, Sindhi, Y Jagannadha Rao, Vijaya Rao, Venugopal Rao, and others were also present.

Surprise checks by V&E officials on seeds traders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vigilance & Enforcement officials on Wednesday conducted surprise inspections randomly on 61 seed outlets. Out of 61 inspections, cases were filed U/s 6A of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, on Stock variations between ground balances with stock registers. The V&E officials filed nine cases and seized 39,975 quintals of stock worth Rs 10,49,145 besides stop sales orders were issued to 19 shops and seized 314,285 quintals stock worth Rs 43,17,385. The V&E officials have conducted surprise inspections to control the price and quality of the Seeds for the benefit of farmers for the forthcoming kharif season. The Vigilance &



Enforcement department is giving statutory warning against the seed traders to prevent illegal hoarding, selling of spurious seeds and black marketing of seeds, to ensure sale of good quality seeds in the State for the welfare of the farmers. Severe action may be initiated against

the traders who are violating the rules, by seizing the godowns, shops and cancellation of their licenses and also imposition of PD Act. The farmers are advised to purchase the seeds from authorized dealers, with valid bills only.

Dokiparru Mahakshetra in a festive mood for kalyanam



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Venkateswara Swamy's special celestial wedding was held on Wednesday at the Sri Bhoo Sametha Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Dokiparru Mahakshetra in a festive mood. Just like every year as part of the Mahakshetra eight anniversary, this year too the special kalyanam of the deity was celebrated. Vedic scholars have explained the significance of lord venkateswara kalyanam along with the chanting of mantras, including the good

meanings that come with it. The Mahakshetra was decorated with various flowers to officiate the marriage of lord Sri Venkateswara. Vedic scholars have explained that those who do not have daughters consider Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Padmavati as their own and perform Sri Srinivasa Kalyanam according to the Divyashree Vaikhanasa Bhagavachchrastra path. P Virareddy, Vijayalakshmi, krishnaveni, Prasanna and family members and a large number of devotees participated.

FTPC secures place in World Book of Records

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Film and Television Promotion Council of India, led by its president Chaitanya Janga, and secretary Varma Pakalapati has secured a place in the prestigious World Book of Records for their exceptional contribution to the promotion of cinema. The council's efforts in honoring prominent personalities for NTR Legendary National Awards 2023 on the momentous occasion of the 100th birthday of Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao have earned recognition. The certificate was presented to FTPC president Chaitanya and secretary Varma

Pakalapati by Dr. Rajeev Shrivastav and Akansha Shah (WBR Official) along with dignitaries actor Murali Mohan. The programme was coordinated by Dr Jitendra Matlani (WBR official from Dubai) and Dr PV Rao (Advisor, FTPC). The World Book of Records acknowledges outstanding achievements and contributions across various fields, including arts, culture, health warriors and entertainment. The Film and Television Promotion Council of India's commendable efforts in promoting the Indian cinema industry have now received global recognition through this esteemed accolade.

Krishna police seized 160 Kg Ganja and arrested two persons

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Police arrested two persons and seized 160 kg of Ganja from their possession at the Pottipadu toll plaza on Wednesday. While conducting special checks at Pottipadu Toll Plaza near Unguturu Mandal, the police identified an Innova vehicle which carried ganja and detained the two persons namely Shaik Share Mohamood and Monoj Kambele of Maharashtra. Disclosing the details to the media, at the Special Enforcement Bureau office in Gannavaram, Additional SP



Sri Hari Babu said that the ganja was being carried from Anakapalli to Maharashtra. He said that they arrested the two accused and seized the car. Further, he said that they

had identified some other persons who were also involved in this transport and they would be also arrested. He said that the accused would be presented before the court.

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health warriors and entertainment. The Film and Television Promotion Council of India's commendable efforts in promoting the Indian cinema industry have now received global recognition through this esteemed accolade. Speaking to the media persons on Wednesday, FTPC president and secretary said

that NTR Legendary National Awards 2023, organized by the Council, showcased the immense talent and celebrated the unparalleled legacy of Late Nandamuri Taraka Ramarao. This grand event served as a tribute to the legendary star's 100th birthday, captivating audiences with its splendor and significance.

Implement innovative ideas for schools development

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

B Srinivasa Rao, State Project Director of Samgara Shiksha, said that innovative ideas should be created for the development of the government schools in order to enhance the educational development of the children from the childhood stage, and they will be implemented throughout the state. He further said that to this, planning should be done at the field level and the funds should be utilised. SPD Srinivasa Rao addressed the three-day workshop on Annual Work Plan and Budget in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Srinivasa Rao said that in the next three years, foundational schools should be developed, students and teachers should be trained and interaction with parents is a must to identify



learning differences among students and asked Parents' committees to participate in school level planning. The officials were instructed to create awareness on the things learned through this workshop at the district and mandal level as well and prepare the necessary training manuals. Ch Vasudeva Rao, Joint Director of Comprehensive Education (State Planning

Coordinator), State Academic Monitoring Officer B. Vijay Bhaskar, Sattva-Kaivalya representatives Akanksha, RaviTeja, Department of School Education, Samagra Shiksha, SCERT staff, DIET Principals, District Vocational Education officials, GCDOs, school principals, KGBV SOs, planning coordinators, ASOs and others participated.



Official Language Committee meeting held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 76th Town Official language Implementation Committee Meeting was conducted at DRM Conference hall on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Divisional Railway Manager, Waltair Anup Kumar Satpathy. Heads of member offices of TOLIC, Visakhapatnam and other representatives attended the meeting. The meeting procedure started with the inaugural speech of A Venkateswara Rao, Incharge Secretary, TOLIC cum Rajbhasha Adhikari & Assistant Personnel Officer/E.Co.Rly.WAT. ADMR (Operations) Manoj Kumar Sahoo was also present. In the meeting 3 junior offices and 3 senior offices were awarded with shield and commendation certificates for their outstanding performance and propagation of Hindi. In

the big offices category Divisional Railway Manager's Office was awarded first prize, Eastern Naval Command bagged second and the Commissionerate of Customs was awarded third prize. In the small offices category the Fisheries Survey of India got 1st prize, Kendriya Vidyalaya no.2, Nausenabagh got 2nd, And Kendriya Vidyalaya- INS Kalinga got 3rd Prize. The winners of Hindi slogan writing competition and Hindi Noting & drafting competitions held in the last 6 months under the aegis of TOLIC were also awarded with cash prize and certificates. Chairman Anup Satpathy advised all the member offices to conduct different programmes for propagation of our Official language Hindi. Finally the meeting was concluded by Vote of thanks by Sudipta Bakshi, Sr Translator followed by the National Anthem.

Chief of Naval Staff presents Gallantry and Distinguished Service Medals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), presented the Gallantry and Distinguished Service awards on behalf of the President of India at an impressive Naval Investiture Ceremony which was held at the Eastern Naval Command in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. The ceremony was organised to honour and recognise the bravery, leadership, professional achievements and distinguished service of Naval personnel. As many as 33 awards were conferred during the ceremony, which included Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry) to Vineet Kumar LA(AH) and Cdr Nishant Singh (Posthumous), 13 Nao Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 16 Vishisht Seva Medal, and two Jeevan Raksha Padak. In addition to these awards, the CNS also presented the Lt

VK Jain Memorial Gold Medal for pioneering research in the field of Weapon Improvement and Electrical Engineering, as well as the Capt Ravi Dhir Memorial Gold Medal for promoting flight safety. The CNS Trophy for Best Green Practice 2023 was awarded to Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam, and INS Tunir in the Industrial and non-industrial categories respectively. The CNS also awarded the Unit Citations to operational units and shore establishments for their outstanding performances over the past year. Indian Naval Ships Betwa, Satpura, Sutlej and Nireekshak, Kalvari class submarine INS Karanj along with INAS 321 FSS and INAS 318 received the Unit Citation. In the shore establishment category, the awardees were INS India, Tanaji and Valsura, and Material Organisation (Visakhapatnam).

160 kg ganja seized, two arrested

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna district police arrested two persons and seized 160 kg of ganja from their possession at the Pottipadu toll plaza on Wednesday. While conducting special checks at Pottipadu toll plaza near Unguturu mandal, the police identified an Innova vehicle which carried ganja and detained the two persons namely Shaik Share Mohamood and Monoj Kambele of Maharashtra. Further, he said that they had identified some other persons who were also involved in this transport and they would be also arrested.

Science, Arts most popular streams: MoE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Science and Arts have been the most popular streams among students over the last 10 years while commerce has stagnated with only 14 per cent students opting for it, according to a study conducted by the Ministry of Education. The study, which is an assessment of Class 10 and 12 board exam results, noted that there are huge variations in choice of streams across states. "Only 2 per cent students in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana opt for Arts stream but in states like Tripura and Gujarat over 82 per cent students choose the stream while in states like Punjab and Rajasthan the percent-

Childline 1098 helpful for children in danger

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Childline district coordinator Arava Ramesh has said that Bharosa Childline 1098 will be helpful for children who are in danger. Also, it would keep children happy and create a society without child marriage, he said. Forum for Child Rights, Women Police, and Women and Child Department jointly organised an Open House programme at the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Ward Sachivalayam at Wynchipet on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Ramesh said that Child-line 1098 was serving children in dangerous situations. Due to the lack of awareness, parents are encouraging child marriages, he said. However, it is a crime as per law. Also, Childline is creating awareness among people in this regard, he added.



26 engineering students fall ill, food poison suspected

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

As many as 26 engineering students fell ill after having food in the hostel at Bukkarayasamudram. Official sources said that the students were studying at SRIT Engineering college located at Bukkarayasamudram. The students had dinner on the night of Tuesday and they were served boiled egg, tomato rice and curd rice. After having dinner the students developed vomiting and fell ill. They were admitted to the hospital. Seven of the students were undergoing treatment in the ICU.

Minister denies allegations of irregularities in land purchase

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Minister for Irrigation Ambati Rambabu denied the allegations of irregularities in land purchase and made it clear that he does not heed such baseless allegations. Addressing the municipal council meeting in Sattenapalli on Wednesday, he made it clear that corruption has not taken place in the land purchase in the district. Seventh Ward Janasena Party Councilor Rangashetty Suman alleged that in the purchase of 4 acre land for the construction of sewage treatment plant, Rs 8.8 crore corruption took place. Commissioner Kolimi Shami has explained the full facts regarding the alleged corruption of Rs 8.8 crores.



Responding to the allegations, Minister Ambati Rambabu said that the sewerage treatment plant would be constructed at the place where two drainage canals merge. The revenue department

would acquire the required land. The YSRCP government had given house sites for the poor by purchasing lands but no irregularities had taken place in the process, he claimed.

The municipal council later passed various resolutions unanimously. Municipal chairperson Ch Lakshmi and vice-chairman Koteswarao Naik were among those who were present.

Achieving sustainable growth targeted: Malladi Vishnu

PNS ■ SRISAILAM

State Planning Board Vice-president Malladi Vishnu has said that the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy head government has aimed at achieving the 17 sustainable growth targets, prescribed by the United Nations. Talking to the media here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister is taking the decisions to bring a strong change in the socio-economic conditions of people. As part of it, the Navaratnalu welfare schemes are being implemented in the state efficiently and without compromise. Malladi Vishnu explained that a plan has been prepared to improve the living standards of the poor by taking the government schemes to the grass-roots level to create awareness on the 17 Sustainable



Development Goals and to assess the 487 living standards of people in accordance with them. Malladi Vishnu asserted that the state government mainly focused on reducing anaemia, malnutrition and dropouts in schools, adding that the government is implementing the Amma Vodi scheme to bring more children to school to study. He said that the number of students joining the government schools has increased significantly with the implementation of Nadu-Nedu scheme under which the government schools

are being modernized as par with the corporate schools. When YS Rajasekhara Reddy became the Chief Minister of the combined AP state in 2004, welfare of people was given top priority and progress was achieved in all sectors. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy implemented 98.5% assurances and he dared to open debate with the opposition leaders on the subject. Launching a scathing attack on TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, Vishnu alleged that Naidu is synonymous with deception and conspiracy. When Naidu was the Chief Minister in 2003, drought situation prevailed in the state and suicides of farmers prevalent. Vishnu warned TDP national general secretary to think twice before criticising Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Manifesto released in Mahanadu is only a trailer: Kanna



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam party leader Kanna Lakshminarayana said that the manifesto unveiled in the TDP annual conclave Mahanadu in Rajahmundry is only a trailing. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday, he said that the manifesto consisting of more attractive welfare schemes would be unveiled soon. The TDP would give priority to women's welfare and extend financial help to make them self-reliant. The farmers would be given Rs 20,000 and a job calendar would be released every three

months, he added.

Kanna Lakshminarayana said that the TDP is committed to social justice and the party had given priority to the BCs in the local body elections. There is no leader in the YSRCP who has high standards and vision like Chandrababu Naidu. Except for abusing the TDP leaders by using filthy words, the YSRCP regime has not done anything for the state for the last mmed. The TDP leader said that the sale of fake seeds was rampant in the state but the government failed to contain it. The farmers bear the brunt of fake sees, he lamented.

Collector expresses anger over tardiness in housing construction

PNS ■ ELURU

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh expressed anger over the officials for the tardiness in the construction of houses in the house colonies. The Collector Prasanna Venkatesh held a video conference with the officials here on Wednesday and reviewed the progress of house construction in the colonies. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector vented his anger on the officials who were indifferent in achieving progress in the construction of houses. He said that some of the mandals were lagging behind in achieving progress in the construction of houses which were being constructed for the poor under the Navaratnalu scheme. The Collector inquired with the officials about the delay in carrying out the construction works. The Collector questioned the APOs on the delay in extending Rs 35,000 loan amount to the self help group women for the construction of houses. he Collector directed the DRDA PD to take disciplinary action against the officials who were negligent in discharging



duties. He also directed the officials to complete the target set by mandal officials. The Collector expressed displeasure with the officials of the Fisheries Department who did not complete the target in handing over the Fish Andhra Units provided by the Government to improve the living standards of the fishermen through the Fisheries Department. Collector Venkatesh directed the Fisheries Department ED to complete the target soon and submit the report. He also reviewed the land re-survey process, distribution of land title documents, stone

plantation, and implementation of Jagananna Palavelluva, YSR Cheyuta and YSR Yantra seva schemes in the district. Collector Prasanna Venkatesh also reviewed the disposal of Jaganannaku Chebudam petitions, land acquisition for the BSNL cell towers and Swamitra survey at mandal level and he made suitable suggestions to the officials. Nuzvid Sub-collector Adarsh Rajendran, Eluru RDO K Penchala Kishore, Jangareddygudem RDO Jhansirani, ZP CEO Ravi Kumar, DRDA PD Vijaya Rama Raju, DLD0 Ramana and other officials were present.

3 killed in explosion in firecrackers making unit



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Three persons were killed and two were critically injured in an explosion which took place in a firecrackers making unit at Yellakattava village in Varadaihpalem mandal on Wednesday. Police said that Veeraiah was running a fire cracker making unit illegally. When firecrackers were being made an explosion took place killing three workers on the spot. The deceased were identified as Shankaraiah (45), Yedukondalu (33) and Veeraraghavaiah (26). The bodies were mutilated in the explosion so badly that they were beyond recognition. The human flesh and blood were strewn all over the area. The two injured were shifted to the area hospital in Srikalahasti where their condition is said to be critical. Later they were shifted to the Ruia hospital. CI Shivakumar Reddy registered a case.

Expedite investigation, file charge-sheet quickly: SP



PNS ■ ELURU

Superintendent of police D Marry Prashanthi directed the police officials to expedite the investigation of cases and file charge-sheet in courts at the earliest. The SP held a video conference with the DSPs, Inspectors and SIs of Eluru, Jangareddygudem and Nuzvid sub-divisions on Wednesday and reviewed the pending cases, investigation of cases and filing of charge-sheets. Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that the investigation should be completed quickly in the cases under investigation, the accused should be arrested, the charge sheets should be filed in the respective courts and justice

should be done to the victims. She directed the police officials to ensure that the accused are produced before the court in pending trials and the pending NBW should be implemented. The officials should take steps to produce the witnesses before the APP and ensure that they are deposited before the judge. SP Marry Prashanthi said that in priority cases, the officials concerned should attend the court and inform the witnesses about the details of the case. The District SP gave appropriate instructions, suggestions and orders to the officials during the video conference. SB Inspector M Subba Rao, DCRB Inspector Durga Prasad and SI Sadik participated in this video conference.

Amit Shah has a house at Shamshabad: Asaduddin Owaisi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has a home in Hyderabad. Owaisi said that a big businessman constructed a house for Amit Shah in Shamshabad. He said that Amit Shah will stay here for some days in his Hyderabad house. Owaisi said that the Telangana government should be alert or else the BRS party would be at the receiving end. While speaking to the media on Wednesday, Owaisi said that Amit Shah will stay here and focus on Telangana state to win the next elections. Finding fault with the BJP leader's allegations, Owaisi said that the Hyderabad Old City development would have taken place if BRS steering was in his hands.

Kavitha, Bandi greet each other: Video goes viral



PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLC Kavitha and BJP State unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar greeted each other for the first time at a private function on Wednesday. The two leaders, who are political rivals, came face to face at a function here. The video showing the two leaders greeting each other with a smile went viral on social media. It may be recalled that

Sanjay has been alleging that Kavitha was involved in the Delhi liquor scam. He has also been criticising the Chief Minister and his family time and again. Kavitha and the BRS leaders have been going at Sanjay Kumar hammer and tongs whenever the opportunity arises. The BRS leaders have been accusing the BJP-led Central government of unleashing the CBI and Enforcement Director against rivals.

Leopard strays into Polavaram project area

PNS ■ ELURU

A leopard strayed into the Polavaram project area and it was spotted by some workers on the road in the wee hours on Wednesday. The Polavaram polavaram project is being constructed across the river Godavari at Polavaram village. The workers spotted the leopard while it was crossing the road and they video graphed it from a vehicle. Large number of workers, who are working at the project, expressed fear of working on the open area. Forest range officer Daveedu Raju told the media that the leopard strayed into the project area from the reserve forest in the wee hours in search of food and water. The leopard went to the 901 hill area and later it went towards Polavaram project main road. He said that the vil-



lagers of 19 submergence villages of Polavaram reservoir were evacuated and the villages were vacant now. The forest officials earlier released two leopards into the forest area and the two leopards were roaming in the vacant villages, he said, adding that one of the leopards might have strayed into the project area. In the wake of the leopard straying into the project site, the forest officials warned the workers to be careful and do not go out during the night time alone.

Minister inaugurates home for the aged

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Transport Pinipe Viswaroop along with Joint Collector S Rama Sundar Reddy inaugurated the newly constructed old age home at Chinatimiram village in Bhimavaram mandal on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Vishwaroop said that there is already an old age home in Bhimavaram and this is the second one. The Minister lamented that nowadays children neglect their parents due to various reasons. He said he feels fortunate to inaugurate the old age home. He described the construction of an old age home with all facilities as a good act. Since children live far off, the parents



become destitute and the old age homes take care of such parents, he stated. The minister appreciated the organisers Chilukuru Narasimha Raju and BH Lakshmi for setting up an old age home. Joint Collector Ram Sundar Reddy said that some

more old age homes should be set up in the district. MLA Mantena Rama Raju also spoke. Additional SP AV Subba Raju, DCCB chairman PVL Narasimha Raju Bhimavaram hospital MD Dr.Gadiraaju Gopala Raju were among those who were present.

TDP politburo member Kollu Ravindra questions police action

- He said that they would approach human rights and the court.
- He alleged for two CIs pulled a part of the banner of TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The stance of the Machilipatnam Police has drawn a large level of criticism from the TDP activist as well as commoners as the police involved themselves in ripping a flexi of Telugu Desam Party which was erected at Machilipatnam Bus Stand Centre. On Wednesday, two inspector-level officers rushed along with some police personnel to

the spot and tore up the banner. It may be noted here, generally, if anyone erects a banner without taking prior permission, the concerned municipality or corporation takes responsibility and removes the banner from the location. But, in this matter, the police have interfered directly and split the banner. It should be noted here, flexi war has been occurring between the TDP and YSRCP, Janasena and YSRCP across the state.



Political party leaders are engrossed in erecting the flexes by printing adverse content and derogatory language on the flexes which causes them to whip up the opposite parties' emotions. And the formation of such flexes has increased largely since the last three

days. In view of this, YSRCP leaders allegedly set up some flexes in Machilipatnam with adverse content a few days back. Owing to this, TDP Machilipatnam Constituency Minority leaders also erected a flexi on Wednesday morning

near NTR Statue in Machilipatnam. The flex also has some adverse content against Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Receiving the information, police reached the spot and asked the TDP leaders to remove the banner from there. The TD cadres questioned the police why they were not removing YSRCP flexes which were erected three days back in the city with adverse content against TDP and TDP Supremo Chandrababu Naidu. The police were also asked what their interference was in that matter as that was under the purview of Machilipatnam Corporation authority's limits. Due to this, the police forcibly tore the banner and threw it away and also arrested the TDP leaders. Later, the TDP

leaders and activists staged a protest at the NTR Statue. Reacting to this issue, TDP Politburo Member and former Minister Kollu Ravindra alleged that Chief Minister was doing this type of instigating programmes as he has a fear of debacle in the ensuing elections. He said that CM was making the YSRCP activists and leaders erect banners against Chandra Babu everywhere in the state, and trying to get benefits by creating mayhem among the public. He said that the police only had removed TDP banners citing no permission, but not a single banner of the YSRCP wasn't removed even though they didn't have permission. R Peta CI and Chilakalapudi CI had removed the banners, he added.

TDP: Why are police not removing YSRCP banners?

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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Check hyperbole

Rahul mocks and slams PM Modi at a gathering of Indian diaspora in San Francisco, US

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is at it again: he has lambasted and lampooned Prime Minister Narendra Modi on foreign soil. Addressing a gathering of Indian diaspora in San Francisco, US, he ridiculed Modi for having the pretensions of being omniscient. In fact, he mocked the top leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party of being delusional about their knowledge: “some groups of India think that they know everything. Even if they have a conversation with God, they might explain to him.” He added, “Prime Minister is one of them.” Deriding BJP leaders, Rahul continued: “They can speak to scientists and explain science to them. They can explain history to historians, warfare to the army and flying to the air force. But at the heart of it, they don’t know anything.” Barbed sarcasm can be effective, but Rahul seems to be going too far. His claim that the “normal instruments for doing politics were not working anymore.” He also blamed the Modi Government for threatening people and deploying Central agencies against political opponents. The use of law enforcement bodies to harass the Opposition is old in India; the present dispensation is no exception. But should the underbelly of our country be put on showcase? There is much that is wrong with governance and other aspects of India, but a senior Opposition leader advertising that in the United States doesn’t make much sense. Rahul may succeed in scoring a few political points, but not without damage to India’s image in the world.



To that extent, the BJP’s sharp reaction to his remarks is justified. Information & Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said, “During his foreign visits, Rahul Gandhi insults India, which is unacceptable. He wants to insult PM Modi but ends up insulting India, questioning India’s progress. He is trying to tarnish India at a time the world is acknowledging our growing stature.” Just as in Rahul’s comment, there is also an element of hyperbole in Thakur’s reaction too. Rahul’s remarks are bad for India’s image, but not an insult. Besides, Congress leaders are not the only ones who discuss domestic matters abroad; PM Modi has also criticised previous governments on foreign soil in the past. Indian politicians will do well by scaling down the ingredient of hyperbole in political debate. Gruesome murder of a minor girl in Delhi doesn’t mean that there is no fear of the police in the national capital; unjust arrest of a journalist doesn’t imply that the entire press has been gagged in the country; India leaving the UK behind in terms of GDP doesn’t mean that we have become a developed nation. Also, politicians should grow a thicker skin; every adverse comment their adversaries make against them shouldn’t become an excuse to indulge in rant and cant. And they should also ensure that domestic political disputes are not internationalised.

PICTALK



Volunteers raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco consumption on World No Tobacco Day, in Kolkata

Costly higher education a problem

The escalating cost of education is denying higher education to students who wish to pursue it but cannot afford its prohibitive cost

Baban Bhagat, from Chand Kewari village in Muzaffarpur district in Bihar, works as a daily wage labourer in the nearby town. His meagre income barely covers the subsistence needs of his family, let alone the educational aspirations of his two sons. While his elder son’s academic journey abruptly ended after completing Class 12, his younger son, due to lack of money, just managed to get enrolled in Class 12. “I have tried my best to provide education to both my sons, but our financial circumstances render it impossible for me to bear the equivalent expenses for both of them, even for an undergraduate program at an ordinary institution,” lamented Baban. Presently, his elder son, a high school graduate, has also become a labourer, trapped in the same cycle of limited opportunities.



dren becomes a burden than an investment, especially when it comes to girls. According to Pankaj Kumar, a resident of the same village, due to prevailing poverty, most children can only study up to the 10th or 12th standard. With the increase in enrollment and examination fees for graduation in government colleges, dropout rates have further aggravated. Awadhesh Kumar Das who works as a teacher in a private school in Muzaffarpur, emphasized that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds face significant challenges when it comes to pursuing education in fields like engineering, medicine, or enrolling in coaching classes for exams like the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) or Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC). This difficulty stems from the increasing privatization of

educational institutions. In recent times, several reports have raised concerns about the potential impact of the New Education Policy on the privatization of higher education, leading to increased costs that could make education unaffordable for many students. According to a report, the National Education Policy is designed to support a neo-colonial economic order, favouring those from affluent backgrounds while potentially discriminating against the poor and oppressed. Addressing similar concerns, Devesh Chandra, the former District Councilor of Muzaffarpur, expressed his apprehension that the new education policy could make it increasingly difficult for underprivileged children to access higher education. He emphasized the need for a comprehensive policy that ensures equal educational opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic background. On the other hand, Ajay Kumar Singh, the District Education Officer of Muzaffarpur, reassures that the new education policy is designed to provide equi-

table education to everyone. Whereas highlighting on dropping out of girls from higher education, Dr Shri Bhagwan Rai, an Assistant Professor at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, Muzaffarpur, believes the government and parents share equal responsibility for this situation. “The government can be held accountable for the expensive nature of education, as it has become a major obstacle for girls to pursue higher education. Additionally, parents cannot be absolved of their role in perpetuating gender disparities by treating the education of boys and girls differently,” the Professor expressed. The escalating cost of education has undoubtedly presented formidable challenges for individuals seeking higher education, particularly impacting girls. It is crucial to recognize that girls are disproportionately affected by these financial barriers and encounter significant limitations in the absence of accessible, free, and affordable education. (The writer is Charkha’s Volunteer Trainer)

Charkha Feature



SAPNA KUMARI

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Charkha Feature

Modi’s charisma transcends borders

PM Modi’s recent tour of Japan, Papua New Guinea and Australia can be seen as a marker of his growing popularity and influence



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR



In a world filled with diverse cultures, ideologies, and ambitions, PM Modi Ji’s engagements have gone beyond the realm of mere diplomacy, becoming more of a celebration of India’s global leadership and cultural heritage. The immense respect and goodwill that the world leaders feel for India and its leader, PM Modi Ji is reflected in their various extraordinary gestures—be it President Biden seeking his autograph or Prime Minister James Marape of Papua New Guinea showing his respect by touching PM Modi’s feet at the airport or Australian PM Albanese referring to PM Modi as ‘The Boss’, The New Zealand Prime Minister specially came all the way down to Papua New Guinea to meet our leader, demonstrating a deep appreciation for India’s leadership. All these countries may have varying opinions on several issues, but such heartfelt gestures highlight PM Modi Ji’s popularity and India’s growing stature.

PM Modi Ji also effectively utilized global platforms to showcase Indian culture, values, and ethos. By wearing recycled materials at the G7 and the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), and hosting a lunch for FIPIC leaders featuring Indian cuisine and millet-based items, PM Modi Ji showcased India’s commitment to sustainability. Hiroshima which was the first to face atomic bombing in the history of mankind, today serves as the most fitting setting for commemorating the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and PM Modi Ji’s unveiling his bust in this historic city symbolises the message of non-violence that Gandhi ji stood for.

Also, the release of the timeless Tamil classic, “Thirukkural,” in the Tok Pisin language, was an effort to bring Indian thought and culture closer to the people of Papua New Guinea. In his engagements with industry leaders, scientists, academicians, and cultural icons, PM Modi Ji positioned India as the world’s preferred investment destination, fostering economic growth and job creation. Nobel Laureate Brian Paul Schmidt, who met the PM, highlighted India’s scientific prowess and its ability to undertake world-class

THE WORLD TODAY LOOKS AT INDIA WITH AWE AND RESPECT. UNDER PM MODI’S LEADERSHIP, INDIA’S ASCENT TO BECOMING THE 5TH LARGEST ECONOMY HAS BEEN SWIFT AND PROMISES PEACE, OPPORTUNITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND SUSTAINABILITY

research. “PM Modi is one of the most visible leaders that India has had in my lifetime. He takes an interest in whoever he talks to, whether it’s the President of USA or someone he meets for the first time from society. India’s ability to do world class science has become an order of magnitude higher,” he told reporters after the meeting. In Professor Toby Walsh’s words, India is “absolutely world’s most extraordinary democracy. UPI is a wonderful example of how India can do things itself.” During his diplomatic parleys in the Quad, FIPIC, and G7 summits, the Prime Minister underscored India’s active role in shaping the global agenda and fostering collaborations among nations. He interacted with over two dozen world leaders throughout his visits. The community event in Sydney was attended by around 20 thousand people. In contrast to some leaders who blame others or badmouth the country, PM Modi Ji’s speech singularly focussed on the India Story, highlighting its progress, achievements, and aspirations. From Japan to Papua New Guinea and Australia, the newspaper headlines widely featured PM Modi Ji, capturing the collective attention and fascination of

readers everywhere. The world today looks at India with awe and respect. Under PM Modi Ji’s leadership, India’s ascent to becoming the 5th largest economy has been swift and promises peace, opportunity, development, and sustainability. Opposition politicians, like Rahul Gandhi, have developed a regrettable habit of resorting to abuse and falsehoods. They regularly undermine India’s image, and our democracy and heap insults on our Prime Minister, our government and also our nation and leave no stones unturned to downplay India’s staggering achievements. By this, they are doing a huge disservice to the nation and people will never forgive them. PM Modi Ji’s leadership, diplomacy, and vision have strengthened international relations, garnered admiration from world leaders, attracted investments, and fuelled economic expansion. Without indulging in such petty politicking, we all must work together for India’s progress, celebrate its growth and development, in line with the Prime Minister’s principle of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas. (The writer is MoS, Electronics & Information Technology.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A GOOD OMEN FOR CONGRESS!

Sir — Given that its warring stalwarts namely poll-bound Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot have decided to put their longstanding issues on the back burner for the time being in the party’s interests. After a meeting between the Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and former chief Rahul Gandhi, also participated by Mr Gehlot and Pilot, the latter duo said that the central leadership will decide on the problems between them after the upcoming significant assembly polls in the Congress-ruled Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are over. This rapprochement might help the grand old party replicate its Karnataka landslide win in the rest of the States, going to polls as also in next year’s Lok Sabha polls. However, the Congress, the AAP and the TMC being on different page vis-a-vis The Congress’ inclusion in the proposed United Opposition Front driving at taking on the BJP in the grand finale unitedly, the scenario seems to be going in the BJP’s favour.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

PRANNOY HAS BROKEN THE JINX

Sir — After the USA open title six years ago, in the 2017 Grand Prix, India’s top-ranked men’s badminton player HS Prannoy has broken the jinx of being a giant killer without lifting the trophy by winning the Malaysia Masters 2023 crown. Although Prannoy has beaten contemporary stalwarts like Viktor Axelsen, Taufiq Hidayat, and Chen Long to name only a few, a big trophy consistently eluded him till the win at Kuala Lumpur. Even there, things seem to go awry for the Indian as China’s Weng Hongyang came from behind to equalise at 18-18 in the final set, but Prannoy recouped to have the last laugh. All along, after 2017, the lingering feeling was that despite oodles of talent the 30-year-old was mysteriously unable to click at the right moment when it mattered most.

They are super kings!



The IPL meant CSK aka Chennai Super Kings for many cricket lovers. There is a worthy reason why this team is titled Super Kings. Yes, they are the super kings of the Indian Premier League, as recently the team clinched the Fifth trophy marking one of a kind triumph for itself. MS Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja and Kadamli like legendary stars proved that old is gold for IPL.

Despite fans missing the Helicopter shots of MS Dhoni in T-20, ODI and World Cup-like events, fans are lucky to never miss his magic on IPL pitches. It’s a great victory of the Chennai Super Kings over the Gujarat Titans of Hardik Pandya. It’s time for celebration for entire cricket lovers, Dhoni lovers and CSK lovers. Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Nerves said many, temperament said some, but Prannoy overcame all to finally come up with trumps. The Indian champion has, however, continuously ranked within the top ten in the world. From number nine, now he is ranked seven. En route to the Malaysia Masters title, the hero of India’s 2022 Thomas Cup win had the better of All England Champion Chinese Li Shifeng in round 16 and almost pipped Indonesian Christian Adinata who retired hurt in the semis. Again big names were scalped by Prannoy; the only difference this time was that he went all the way to finish at the top. After Prakash Padukone and Pulella Gopichand, no Indian has been able to lift the All-England title. Lakshya Sen came within striking distance of the crown but fell at the final hurdle in 2022.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

PROOF OF POPULARITY

Sir — If any foreign leader touches the feet of any Indian leader or issues any

statement in praise of him, religiously it needs to be portrayed as the ‘ultimate proof’ of his ‘worldwide popularity and the ‘impeccable stature’ being enjoyed by him in the international sphere! However, when internationally reputed newspapers and journalists speak of the deluge of intolerance as being practised during the ‘regime’ of ‘Good Days’ the ‘saffron mainstream’ immediately brands it as ‘colonial mindset’ and ‘conspiracy’ of the West! As far as the mindset of ‘Head I win, Tail You Lose’ is concerned, the sycophants simply have nopeers! It is high time these set of hypocrites be sternly told that mere popularity does not necessarily bear proof of one’s ‘greatness’ ‘efficiency’ or ‘success’. Also, utterances repeated long shrill and continuous enough do not render utter falsehood into ‘truth’!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

EFFICACY OF SATSANG MUST BE UNDERSTOOD

Satsang is association with good people; It is also about the inner quality of ‘sattva’ or purity



RAVI VALLURI

It was a desolate sight to see my nonagenarian grandmother. A deeply religious person whose life was dedicated to the Almighty, she lay afflicted by Alzheimer’s, in an incapacitated condition in a small nursing home in Bangalore. There was just a nurse to attend to her needs. Misty-eyed, I entered the room along with two gentlemen.

Grandma was quite unexpectedly injected with vital prana as she stared at us. “Moorty garu!” she exclaimed, much to the astonishment of the nurse who was involved in an animated conversation with Moorty garu. As we left, my grandmother looked forlorn and her benefactor blessed her. A somnolent 94-year-old woman abruptly awakening upon seeing Shri VSR Moorty, obviously meant that the satsangs he rendered were exemplary. There was one rendition of the Narada Bhakti sutras at our house in Hyderabad which is etched in my memory bank.

The year was 2014 and it was a crisp and cool morning in early November. I was posted in Secunderabad on South Central Railway. As I was poring over files, I walked Shri VSR Moorty. Moorty Garu focused his attention on my computer screen. Pictures of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar were flipping across the monitor. He looked at Gurudev’s photograph quite intently and uttered, “Ravi, I would like to have an interaction with Guruji.” This interaction or satsang would be recorded by Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel (SVBC).

My jaws fell in astonishment. Millions of devotees of Gurudev wait to have a glimpse of the Master and I had this onerous task of organising an interaction with the Master himself. But that is a challenge for any seeker and I promptly sent a mail to the Master and his secretariat seeking an appointment.



He then shared, “Ravi, the Sankalpa needs to be pure, rest Almighty God will take ensure that things fall in place, Sai Ram.” I was stunned that evening when the Secretariat agreed to fix the appointment at such short notice. We made the peregrination to the Bangalore Ashram of the Art of Living along with the staff from SVBC. For three days and three nights, we were witness to something transcendental. The interaction ranged on a variety of subjects from ancient Hindu practices, and various schools of Hindu philosophy to the present day. It is well-nigh impossible to decode the divine and pen the interaction.

A senior teacher of the Art of Living, Shri Vinod Menon was to tell Moorty Garu, “This is the closest one could unravel divinity, you are indeed blessed, coming so close to the Divine.”

In the amphitheatre on my mind the graphic scene of BR Chopra’s Mahabharata, the television serial played out, where Lord Krishna tells Bhishma, “Arjun woh nar hai jo Narayan ke darshan karwayega.” (That is, Arjuna is the person who will be the medium to reveal the resplendence of Narayana himself). So, this was satsang ... What does one mean by Satsang?

(I quote Yogapedia to describe Satsang) Satsang is a Sanskrit term derived from two roots: sat meaning true and sangha meaning community, company, or association.

It can be translated as “associating with good people” or simply “being in the company of truth.” It refers to the act of gathering like-minded, uplifting people, especially those on a spiritual path. Satsang is associated with the inner quality of sattva (goodness or purity), which is one of the three gunas (natural attributes) alongside rajas (passion) and tamas (inactivity). A sattvic person makes a natural Satsangi, or “seeker of truth.”

So let us all be satsangis in quest of the quintessential truth.

(The writer is an author and a spiritual teacher)

Manual scavenging is a curse, must end now

To end this menace Govt must provide alternative employment opportunities and encourage mechanised cleaning technologies

“Death does not discriminate, but the system does,” cried out Rukmani Devi, a grief-stricken relative who lost her cousin, Nand Kushwaha, and his son Nitesh, in a horrifying incident that unfolded in Bahora Ramnagar village. The tight-knit community mourns the loss of four lives, all victims of the archaic and inhumane practice of manual scavenging. On a sombre Sunday morning, tragedy struck as these brave souls descended into a septic tank, unaware of the deadly consequences that awaited them.

The incident occurred under the jurisdiction of the Nebua Naurangia police station in the Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, a region plagued by the persisting men-



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

(Writer is Political Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow)

ace of manual scavenging. Despite numerous promises and legislative measures to eradicate this degrading practice, it continues to thrive, claiming innocent lives and shattering families.

Manual scavenging, a practice that involves the manual cleaning of septic tanks, drains, and dry latrines, has been banned in India since 1993 under the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act. However, the law remains largely ineffective, with thousands of individuals still forced into this hazardous occupation due to poverty, social discrimination, and a lack of alternative livelihood options.

Incidentally, the government, which has introduced

several measures to prohibit manual scavenging and rehabilitate those involved, does not consider septic cleaning as manual scavenging, despite the National Human Rights Commission’s (NHRC) recommendation to expand the definition of manual scavengers. The incident serves as a stark reminder of the hazardous conditions faced by manual scavengers. “Nand was our sole breadwinner,” sobbed Rukmani Devi, her voice heavy with grief. “We had hoped for a brighter future for Nitesh, but now he is gone too. Why does no one care about our lives?”

The tragedy that befell the Kushwaha family is not an isolated incident. According to a report by Safai Karamchari Andolan, an organization

fighting for the rights of sanitation workers, there have been over 1,800 deaths related to manual scavenging in the past decade alone. In four years, between 2017-2021, 330 people lost their lives due to “hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks” in India, as per the data presented in Lok Sabha in August 2022.

“Each death represents a life cut short, dreams left unfulfilled, and families left devastated,” Dinesh Kanojia, an office-bearer of Safai Karamchari Andolan said and added: “We clean society’s waste, but society refuses to acknowledge us as humans.”

Despite the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and the Rehabilitation Act of 2013, which outlawed the employ-



UTTAM GUPTA

Rs 2k note exchange: Demonetisation 2.0

Rs 2000 note exchange will not have any impact on black money. It will only help hoarders by exchanging Rs 2000 notes without disclosing their identity



In its decision to withdraw Rs 2000 currency notes from circulation announced on May 19, 2023, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stated that they will continue to be legal tender. The notification issued in this regard states:- “...in pursuance of the “Clean Note Policy” of the RBI it has been decided to withdraw the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation. The banknotes in Rs 2000 denomination will continue to be legal tender.”

From the above, prima facie one gets a sense that it is not a demonetization exercise as it happened over six years ago when, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared on November 8, 2016, that Rs 500 and Rs 1000 denomination currency notes won’t be legal tender with immediate effect.

If not demonetization then, what is?

Is it merely a “Clean Note Policy” - as the RBI puts it? The central banks’ argument runs something like this: high denomination notes such as Rs 2000 is normally avoided for cash transactions. Yet, these had to be brought in following the note ban of 2016 to address the logistics of swapping the mammoth old Rs 500/1000 notes for new currency within a short time frame and thus minimize economic disruption. Nearly 90 per cent of the Rs 2000 notes valued at Rs 673,000 crore at their peak as on March 31, 2018, were issued from November 8, 2016, to March 31, 2017.

The intent was to phase them out after the RBI had pumped in a sufficient stock of lower denomination Rs 500 (albeit new) notes to meet the transactional requirements of the economy.

Already, the stock of Rs 2000 notes has declined from Rs 673,000 crore representing 37.3 per cent of notes in circulation on March 31, 2018, to Rs 362,000 crore constituting only 10.8 per cent of notes in circulation on March 31, 2023. Further, these being at the end of their estimated



THE CIRCULAR ALSO ALLOWS A PERSON TO DEPOSIT RS 2000 NOTES INTO HIS BANK ACCOUNT WITHOUT ANY LIMIT. FOR DEPOSITS ABOVE A SPECIFIED LIMIT, THE BANK IS REQUIRED TO REPORT TO THE INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

(The writer is a policy analyst)

lifespan of 4 - 5 years and the stock of Rs 500 denominations adequate to meet the currency requirement of the public, it was logical to completely phase out the Rs 2000 note.

The RBI circular says that beginning May 23, 2023, the public may deposit Rs 2,000 banknotes into their bank accounts and or exchange them with banknotes of other denominations up to a limit of ten notes of Rs 20,000 value ‘at a time’ in banks until September 30, 2023. The facility for the exchange will also be provided at the 19 Regional Offices (ROs) of RBI having Issue Departments.

First, holders of Rs 2000 notes get 131 days to get rid of them which is two-and-a-half times the time given to the holders of Rs 500/1000 notes in 2016 i.e. 52 days to exchange them with the new currency. Second, Rs 2000 notes are only 10.8 per cent of the currency in circulation value-wise (as of March 31, 2023) against old Rs 500/1000 notes being a whopping 86 per cent of the corresponding figure in 2016, this time the load on the system is much less.

Can we simply treat this as a routine exercise?

At a fundamental level, the ‘withdrawal’ of the Rs 2000 banknotes - an exercise that the RBI hopes will get consummated on September 30, 2023 - doesn’t gel with its reiteration that these notes will remain legal tender even after September 30. Imagine a scenario whereby all of the Rs 2000 notes come back to the banks by this deadline then, any talk of whether it will remain legal tender is irrelevant. Look at it from another angle.

If, the intention is to maintain the legal status of the Rs 2000 note even after September 30, 2023, implying that it will continue to be accepted for settlement of payments, then why would holders come forward for exchange or deposit in the bank account? To understand the real intent behind the RBI move, we need to know to what use Rs 2000 notes worth Rs 362,000 crore (as on March 31, 2023) are being put. Do these support legitimate economic activity or people are simply using them to ‘hoard their unaccounted income? It can’t be the former; had it been the case then, given the RBI issuing predominantly Rs 500 notes after March 31, 2017, Rs 2000 notes would have disappeared by now.

The bulk of these notes are likely held as black money. Daily reports of enforcement agencies raids yielding a mountain of cash from the premises of dubious bureaucrats, politicians, businesspersons and so on confirm this. Unfortunately, the measures outlined in the RBI circular and subsequent clarifications given by the governor and public sector banks (PSBs) such as the State Bank of India (SBI) fail to address this menace.

The RBI allows a person to exchange Rs 2,000 banknotes with other denominations up to a limit of ten notes of Rs 20,000 value ‘at a time’ in banks. While exchanging he is not required to share his identity. This means he can visit a branch any number of times in a day and increase the value of exchange. By doing say ten trips, he can get rid of Rs 2 lakhs worth of black money in a day. If this is repeated for 131 days, he can dis-

pose of Rs 262 lakh.

Under such an arrangement which doesn’t insist on the identity at the time of exchange, a person holding say Rs 100 crore in Rs 2000 notes as ‘unaccounted cash’ can get this exchanged with smaller denominations of Rs 500/100 notes by hiring a number of persons to visit branches of any number of banks and repeat for over 4 months. With anonymity preserved, he could go for a less tedious process. He could simply conspire with the bank manager - under a quid pro quo - to have those Rs 100 crore exchanged. All that the latter needs to do is to show in records multiple entries of Rs 20,000 each.

The circular also allows a person to deposit Rs 2000 notes into his bank account without any limit. For deposits above a specified limit (Rs 10 lakh in a savings account), the bank is required to report to the income tax department. But, the hoarder of black cash won’t take this route when the other option (read: exchange) where he can remain anonymous, is available.

To conclude, far from combating black money, the RBI operation will only help hoarders keep it in a safer zone by exchanging Rs 2000 notes with smaller denomination Rs 500 notes without having to disclose their identity. The RBI/government should go for a course correction. First, it should say upfront that ‘from October 1, 2023, Rs 2000 note won’t be legal tender. Second, for every exchange, the bank should insist on a person’s identity either PAN or Aadhaar. Third, for depositing money in the account, the banks should strictly enforce KYC norms.

MONEY MATTERS

Welspun Corp Q4 net profit falls 8.90% to Rs 240 crore

Welspun Corp Ltd (WCL) posted an 8.90 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 240.08 crore for the January-March quarter, hit by higher expenses. It had clocked a net profit of Rs 263.56 crore during the January-March quarter of the preceding financial year (FY) 2021-22, the company said in a regulatory filing. The company's total income rose to Rs 4,132.38 crore, from Rs 2,413.48 crore in the year-ago quarter. Its expenses rose to Rs 3,835.55 crore from Rs 2,033.16 crore in the January-March period of FY22. In a separate statement, B. K. Goenka, Chairman, Welspun Group said, "We have seen flawless execution and delivery for our customers resulting in strong cash flows and a substantial reduction in net debt. The acquisition of the plastic products business of Sintex has given us a head start in our foray into the B2C segment. "This will result in significant value creation for all our stakeholders in addition to providing growth to the existing business portfolio."



Retail inflation for industrial workers eases to 5.09% in April

Retail inflation for industrial workers eased to 5.09 per cent in April from 5.79 per cent in March this year mainly due to lower prices of certain food items. "Year-on-year inflation for the month stood at 5.09 per cent compared to 5.79 per cent for the previous month and 6.33 per cent during the corresponding month a year before," a labour ministry statement said. Similarly, it stated that the food inflation stood at 4.16 per cent against 5.02 per cent of the previous month and 7.05 per cent during the corresponding month a year ago. The All-India CPI-IW (consumer price index for industrial workers) for April, 2023 increased by 0.9 points and stood at 134.2 points. It was 133.3 points in March 2023. The maximum upward pressure in the current index came from Food & Beverages group contributing 0.39 percentage points to the total change.



Rs 2,000 note withdrawal to add up to Rs 1.5 lakh cr in deposits

The move to withdraw Rs 2,000 denomination notes will yield deposits of up to Rs 1.5 lakh crore for the banking system, Axis Bank Chief Economist Saugata Bhattacharya said on Wednesday. "Notes of Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.5 lakh crore will come back into the system as deposits," Bhattacharya told reporters, adding that this should take the overall deposit growth to over 11 per cent in FY24. As per RBI data, the total value of Rs 2,000 notes in the system is Rs 3.62 lakh crore. Holders of the notes can either deposit the notes at banks, or get them exchanged over bank counters. It can be noted that the banking system has been passing through what some call as a 'war for deposits' at present, with a wide gap between the credit and deposit growth numbers. Bhattacharya said he expects the credit growth to slow down to 13 per cent in FY24 from 16 per cent, even as the deposit growth number will rise to 11-12 per cent from the single-digit figure in FY23.



Rs 1 lakh cr to increase grain storage capacity in coop sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a Rs 1 lakh crore programme to create the world's largest grain storage capacity in the cooperative sector to reduce crop damages and prevent distress sales by farmers, besides strengthening the country's food security.

The government is planning to create 700 lakh tonne of grain storage capacity in the cooperative sector over the next five years and said the move will also help in creating job opportunities in rural India.

Briefing media, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the Cabinet has approved the "world's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector".

On investment, he said the programme will start "with an expenditure of around Rs 1 lakh crore".

As per the plan, a godown of 2,000 tonne capacity will be established in each block.



Briefing media, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said the Cabinet has approved the "world's largest grain storage plan in the cooperative sector"

This will help in strengthening the cooperative sector, as Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) can diversify into the storage of food grains. There are 1 lakh PACS in the country, out of which around 63,000 are functional.

Thakur said the country's foodgrains production is around 3,100 lakh tonne, while the storage capacity is only 47 per cent of the total output.

In developed economies, he said, the storage capacities are higher than output.

Asked about the source of

funding, Thakur said the funds available in ministries of agriculture, food processing and food and consumer affairs would be utilised.

At present, the total grain storage capacity in the country is about 1,450 lakh tonne, he said, adding that 700 lakh tonne storage capacity will now be established in the cooperative sector. This will take the total capacity to 2,150 lakh tonne.

On benefits, the minister said the creation of decentralised storage capacity at the

local level would reduce food grain wastage and strengthen the food security of the country.

This would hugely reduce the cost incurred in the transportation of food grains to procurement centres and again transporting the stocks back from warehouses to ration shops, he said.

According to an official statement, the Cabinet approved the Constitution and Empowerment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for the facilitation of the 'world's largest grain storage plan in Cooperative Sector' by the convergence of various schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

To ensure time-bound and uniform implementation of the plan, the Ministry of Cooperation will implement a pilot project in at least 10 selected districts of different states/ UTs in the country.

Centre's fiscal deficit narrows to 6.4% of GDP in FY23

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's fiscal deficit narrowed to 6.4 per cent of the GDP in 2022-23 from 6.71 per cent in FY22, as anticipated by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget in February this year.

In the Union Budget, the government aimed to further bring down the fiscal deficit - a key indicator of borrowing -- during the current financial year 2023-24 to 5.9 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Unveiling the revenue-expenditure data of the Union government for 2022-23, the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) said the fiscal deficit in absolute terms was Rs 17,33,131 crore (provisional), marginally down from the amount projected in the Revised Estimates (RE) in the Budget.

CGA said the government received Rs 24.56 lakh crore (101 per cent of corresponding RE 2022-23 of total receipts) during 2022-23.

It comprised Rs 20.97 lakh crore tax revenue (Net to Centre), Rs 2.86 lakh crore of



non-tax revenue and Rs 72,187 crore of non-debt capital receipts.

Non-debt capital receipts consist of the recovery of loans and miscellaneous capital receipts.

About Rs 9.48 lakh crore has been transferred to state governments as devolution of taxes by the central government, which is Rs 50,015 crore higher than the previous year (2021-22).

The CGA data further revealed that the Centre's total expenditure was Rs 41.89 crore (100 per cent of corresponding RE 2022-23), out of which Rs 34.52 lakh crore was on the revenue account and Rs 7.36

lakh crore on the capital account.

Out of the total revenue expenditure, Rs 9.28 lakh crore was on account of interest payments and Rs 5.31 lakh crore towards major subsidies.

As per CGA, the revenue deficit for the fiscal ending March 2023 was 3.9 per cent of GDP while the effective revenue deficit worked out to be 2.8 per cent of GDP.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist and Head - Research and Outreach, Icr, said the government was able to restrict its FY2023 fiscal deficit at Rs 17.3 lakh crore, a shade below the FY2023 RE, with higher than estimated revenue receipts and a small undershooting in revenue expenditure, offsetting the disinvestment miss and a healthier than expected capex.

"In FY2023, the government's net tax revenues reported a healthy growth of 15.2 per cent, amidst a 17.8 per cent contraction in non-tax revenues, 7.8 per cent increase in revenue expenditure, and a robust 24.2 per cent expansion in capex," she said.

Civil Aviation Ministry comes out with draft aircraft bill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The civil aviation ministry has come out with a draft bill for putting in place a simplified approach for regulations pertaining to the aviation sector.

The Draft Aircraft Bill, 2023, has been prepared after reviewing the existing Aircraft Act, 1934.

As per the preamble of the Draft Aircraft Bill, 2023, it aims to have an Act to make better provisions for regulation and control of the design, manufacture, possession, use, operation, sale, import and export of aircraft and for connected matters.

The bill has been issued by the ministry for public consultations for a period of 30 days, according to a communication dated May 30.

"The existing Aircraft Act, 1934 has been reviewed and accordingly a bill providing for regulating provisions in a simplified manner, identifying existing redundancies and to provide for provisions to meet the current needs for regulation of civil aviation in a simplified language..." the ministry said.



Sensex, Nifty trip over profits in banking, energy shares

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty cut short their four-day gaining streak and closed lower by half a per cent on Wednesday due to profit-taking in banking, energy and metal stocks amid weak trends in global markets.

Snapping its four-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 346.89 points or 0.55 per cent to settle at 62,622.24. During the day, it tumbled 568.11 points or 0.90 per cent to 62,401.02.

The NSE Nifty declined 99.45 points or 0.53 per cent to end at 18,534.40.

In the four-day rally to Tuesday, Sensex advanced by 1,195 points or 2 per cent while Nifty rose by 348 points or 2.26 per cent.

"Markets witnessed profit-taking and shed over half a per cent, tracking mixed cues. After the initial downtick, the Nifty index traded with a negative bias for most of the session however a marginal rebound in the final hours trimmed some losses," said Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

CtrlS Datacenters enter Odisha with greenfield project

PNS ■ HYDERABAD/ BHUBANESWAR

CtrlS Datacenters Ltd, the world's fastest-growing Rated-4 Datacenter company, held its ground-breaking ceremony on Tuesday for its greenfield Edge data center in Odisha.

Naveen Patnaik, the Chief Minister of Odisha, laid the foundation stone for the facility in a virtual ceremony held on Tuesday. The new data center CtrlS Bhubaneswar 1 will be located in the State's capital.

Sridhar Pinnapureddy, Chairman, CtrlS Datacenters Ltd, said, "Odisha is a fast-

growing region in India, making it a strategic destination for CtrlS' expansion. We are excited to bring our expertise to the State. Built ay Infocity in Chandrasekharapur, the data center will be easily accessible to both the city centre and its airport. The Infocity site is an innovation hub and home to a broad community of emerging technologies. CtrlS Bhubaneswar 1 will be embedded into a larger ecosystem, enabling the growth of data and infrastructure-savvy businesses around the facility."

"We are thankful to the Odisha Government for extending all support for our

project. Large IT infrastructure initiatives such as Info Park, Info Valley, Infocity and IT investment regions are under development, giving a big fillip to the IT/ITES sector," Sridhar stated.

CtrlS Bhubaneswar 1 is planned to be a 5 MW facility designed to serve hyperscale, government and enterprise customers and will provide a range of hosting and cloud services.

Phase-wise, the project would eventually scale as a hyperscale data center campus spread across 10 acres. The facilities will have all the sustainability features that CtrlS is known for.

CtrlS plans to invest over Rs 150 crore and create 110 jobs in Bhubaneswar in 10 years. The company's foray and expansion into the State will boost the digital infrastructure ecosystem in the region.

Odisha is a key region for CtrlS as the State has a strong presence in core industries like chemicals & petrochemicals, construction, electronics manufacturing, food processing, metal, mining & quarrying, seaports and textiles. The State has also developed IT-specific SEZs to aid growth in the sector.

CtrlS is on an expansion spree to set up a series of Edge data centers in India, across

tier-2 and tier-3 cities. The company currently operates facilities in Lucknow and Patna. The plan is to set up over 20 Edge data centers in the coming years.

The adoption of technology coupled with the launch of 5G is creating demand for capacity in more locations. This needs a reliable low-latency link (ensuring real-time access to data or applications) with high bandwidth to handle massive data flows, and storage closer to the devices at the 'Edge' of the network. By computing closer to where data is generated, companies are able to improve their sustainability.

Kerala govt raises ceiling on purchase of products from startups to Rs 3 crore

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government has considerably increased the ceiling on purchase of products and services from startups registered with KSUM from Rs 1 crore to Rs 3 crore in its effort to boost the state's startup ecosystem.

The raising of the public procurement ceiling on the purchases by government departments, public sector undertakings (PSUs), boards, corporations, and local self-government (LSG) institutions from ventures registered under the Kerala Startup Mission



(KSUM), was announced by it in a statement on Wednesday.

KSUM is the nodal agency of the Kerala government for entrepreneurship development and incubation activities in the

state.

The increase in the monetary ceiling in public procurement will enable more government departments to leverage innovative technology solu-

tions from startups, it said.

As per the government order (GO) issued in this regard, the benefits enjoyed by IT-related startups have been extended to non-IT ventures as well, thereby enabling PSUs, boards, corporations, and LSGs to purchase products and services from non-IT startups registered under KSUM.

Kerala has 49 parent departments along with more than 1,000 sub-organisations, and, as per the GO, all government organisations can purchase products and services from startups registered under KSUM, the statement said.

NFRA slaps Rs 1.10 cr fine; bans 2 auditors, 1 firm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has imposed a ban as well as penalties totalling Rs 1.10 crore on three entities, including two auditors, for alleged professional misconduct in connection with the audit of Giri Vidhyuth (India) Ltd for 2019-20.

Giri Vidhyuth (India) Ltd (GVIL) is a subsidiary of Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd (CDEL).

The case pertains to diversion of funds worth Rs 3,535 crore from seven subsidiary



companies of CDEL to Mysore Amalgamated Coffee Estate Ltd (MACEL), an entity owned and controlled by the promoters of CDEL.

After markets watchdog Sebi shared its investigation

report in April 2022, the audit regulator started probing the professional misconduct of the auditors of GVIL.

Separately, NFRA imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore on Sundaresha & Associates and slapped a two-year ban on the audit firm.

This debarment period of Sundaresha will start after the completion of two years of debarment period imposed by NFRA through its order in April in the case of Tanglin Developments Ltd, a CDEL subsidiary, for the audit of FY 2018-19.

Sebi to mandate addl disclosure for high-risk FPIs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To bring greater transparency in the Indian capital markets, Sebi on Wednesday came out with a proposal mandating enhanced disclosures from high-risk Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) that have concentrated holdings in a single company or a group firm.

These proposals are aimed at preventing possible circumvention of minimum public shareholding (MPS) requirements and potential misuse of the FPI route to guard against

the inherent risks of opportunistic takeover of Indian companies, Sebi said in its consultation paper.

The proposal has its genesis in the Adani stocks issue where Sebi could not identify the beneficial owners of some foreign portfolio investments in Adani stocks since the existing regulations are lax in identifying the true owners of many investments.

V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said, under the proposal, the regulator said



that high-risk FPIs with concentrated single group equity exposures or significant equity holdings will be mandated to

provide additional granular disclosure. They would be required to identify all entities with any ownership, econom-

ic interest and control rights.

"Such FPIs shall be required to provide granular data of all entities with any ownership, economic interest, or control rights on a full look through basis, up to the level of all natural persons and/or public retail funds or large public listed entities," it said.

Sebi noted that some FPIs have been observed to concentrate a substantial portion of their equity portfolio in a single investee company/company group.

"Such concentrated invest-

ments raise the concern and possibility that promoters of such corporate groups, or other investors acting in concert, could be using the FPI route for circumventing regulatory requirements such as that of maintaining Minimum Public Shareholding. If this were the case, the apparent free float in a listed company may not be its true free float, increasing the risk of price manipulation in such scrips," Sebi said.

Also, the regulator has suggested categorising FPIs based on risk.

Mobec Innovations rolls out doorstep charging services

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Startup electric mobility solutions provider Mobec Innovations on Wednesday announced its service of offering charging facilities for electric vehicles at customers' doorstep.

Initially, the service will benefit over 2 lakh electric vehicle (EV) users across Delhi-NCR, Mobec Innovations Founder and CEO, Harry Bajaj said.

Innovations said in a statement.

By the end of the first quarter of FY23-24, the company plans to expand operations to Tier-I cities, including Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Jaipur, among others, it added.

The company received a strong response from consumers across Delhi-NCR, Mobec Innovations Founder and CEO, Harry Bajaj said.

Akshay Oberoi to join Shriya Pilgaonkar in season 2 of *The Broken News*

Akshay Oberoi has grabbed his next big digital project. Akshay Oberoi will soon join the cast of news drama series *The Broken News season 2*. His character will be a new one and will be introduced in the second season of *The Broken News*. The other characters of the show from the previous season are Sonali Bendre, Jaideep Ahlawat, Shriya Pilgaonkar amongst others.

According to the sources, "Akshay Oberoi will soon be part of *The Broken News season 2*. There have not been many details of his character out yet, since it is in every initial stage. But the film-makers were keen on casting Akshay for the part as he fits the roles."

The shoot of the critically acclaimed show, which is by ZEE5 in collaboration with BBC Studios India, will start soon. Akshay Oberoi is currently busy with *Fighter*, where he plays the role of an air force pilot. The film also sees Hrithik Roshan and Deepika Padukone as Indian Air Force pilots. It is slated for release on January 25, 2024. The film is said to be shot across the world and will pay tribute to the sacrifice of the country's armed forces.



Kate Beckinsale praises Keanu Reeves for saving her from Cannes wardrobe malfunction

Actress Kate Beckinsale is the latest actor to offer up evidence that Keanu Reeves is the nicest actor in Hollywood.

The *Underworld* star returned to the Cannes Film Festival this year, where she attended the annual amfAR charity gala among other events, which must've had her thinking about her first time at Cannes in 1993 for the premiere of Kenneth Branagh's Shakespeare adaptation 'Much Ado About Nothing,' reports 'Variety.'

Following this year's festival, Beckinsale discovered a photo of herself on the 1993 Cannes red carpet and revealed that her co-star Keanu Reeves jumped in to help prevent what could've been a huge wardrobe malfunction on her first Cannes carpet.

"I had bought the bodysuit in the Sock Shop at the airport and when I got in the car to drive to the premiere with Denzel and Pauletta Washington, all the poppers in the crotch popped themselves open and it flipped up like a roller blind," Beckinsale wrote.



Al Pacino to father 4th child with 29-year-old girlfriend

Scarface actor, Al Pacino, 83, is expecting a baby with girlfriend Noor Alfalah, who is eight months pregnant.

He sparked romance rumours with Alfalah, 29, back in April 2022 when the two were seen leaving the Felix Restaurant in Venice, California, together, reports 'E! News'.

Previously, Alfalah dated Mick Jagger for over a year until their 2018 breakup. She was later spotted with Clint Eastwood in 2019 but clarified to the Daily Mail that there was "no relationship" between her and Clint.

As for Pacino, he and former girlfriend Meital Dohan called it quits in 2020.

'E! News' further states that Pacino's bundle of joy will join his three other children: He shares Julie Pacino, 33, with ex-Jan Tarrant, as well as Anton Pacino, 22, and Olivia Pacino, 22, with ex-Beverly D'Angelo.

The *Godfather* star has maintained a close connection with his children, noting that he wanted to be different from his father, who left him and his mother when he was two years old.

"It's the missing link, so to speak," he told The New Yorker in 2014. "Having children has helped a lot. I consciously knew that I didn't want to be like my dad. I wanted to be there. I have three children. I'm responsible for them. I'm a part of their life."

And when he can't be apart of their life, Pacino said it was "upsetting to me and to them. And I get a lot from it."

"It takes you out of yourself. When I do a movie, and I come back, I'm stunned for the first 20 minutes. These people are asking me to do things for them? Huh? I'm not being waited on? Wait a minute. Uh-oh, it's about them! That action satisfies. I like it," he added.



Bhuvan Arora ropes in upcoming project directed by maverick Kabir Khan alongside Kartik Aaryan

Bhuvan Arora, the talented actor who captured the hearts of audiences with his remarkable performance in the hit web series *Farzi* streaming on Prime Video alongside Shahid Kapoor, is ready to embark on new and exciting venture that is set to be a career-defining moment for the rising Bollywood star.

Bhuvan has joined forces with none other than the acclaimed director Kabir Khan, who is known for his incredible storytelling and delivering blockbuster hits like *Bajrangi Bhaijaan*, *Ek Tha Tiger* and *83*, this next one is sure to create waves.

It is worth noting that this big-budget venture is being produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, adding further anticipation to the project. Co-leading the movie with actor Kartik Aaryan, Bhuvan will be seen in an unexplored avatar that will grip the audience.


Expressing his excitement for the upcoming project Bhuvan Arora says, "I am very excited and happy to work with Kabir sir. I have always admired his films and the selection of stories he wants to tell. This one too is a very challenging film which requires a lot of prep work. The film is based on a true story with a larger than life canvas. I will also be seen in a new role that I have never played before."

With both actors known for their ability to connect with audiences and deliver compelling performances, their on-screen chemistry is expected to be an absolute hit.

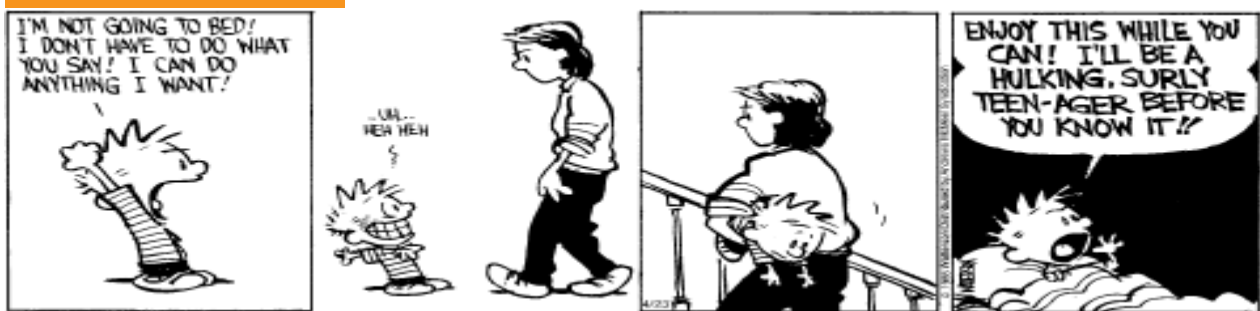
While the specific details of the projects are yet to be revealed, the anticipation surrounding Bhuvan Arora's upcoming project is already at an all-time high. With Bhuvan Arora's undeniable talent, Kabir Khan's directorial finesse, and Kartik Aaryan's appeal, we can not wait to know more about this exciting project.




ARCHIE



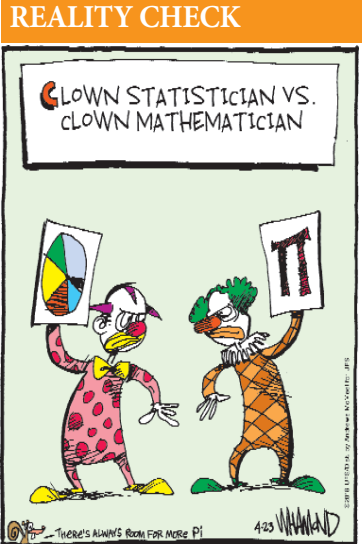
CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK




SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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NANCY



SUDOKU

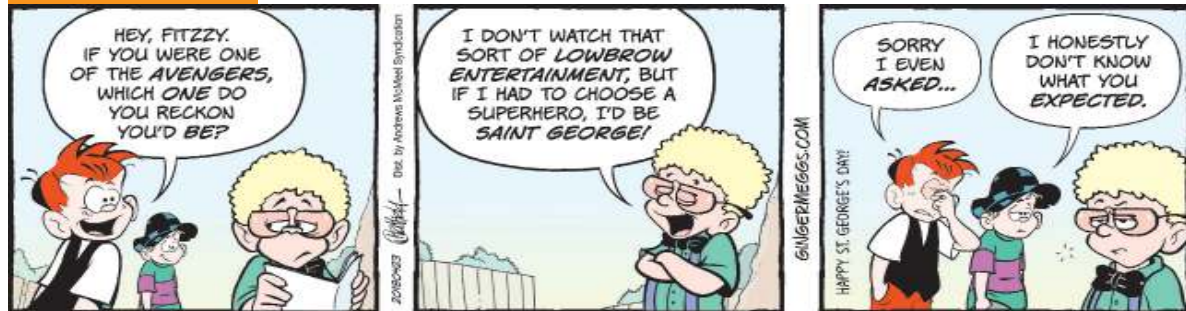
Yesterday's solution

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

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.

GINGER MEGGS



ACROSS

1 A Dutch building with sails

7 A warm thick cover for a bed

8 Prepared

9 Breathe in

10 Say this to make a person or animal go away

12 Small rodents

14 The language spoken in Paris

17 Loud sound

18 Not decorated

19 Sightseers

DOWN

1 Use scales to do this

2 A stinging plant

3 A female horse

4 A dog's lead

5 The things you need for doing something

6 A musical instrument that you hit with a small hammer

11 Make wine from these

13 The capital city of Egypt

15 Gets closer

16 Expensive

SOLUTION

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

Helping acolytes attain liberation

This week for our weekly edition of Community Wise, *The Pioneer* connects with spiritual leader and founder of AiR-Atman in Ravi, founder of AiR Institute of Realisation and AiR Centre of Enlightenment, explaining to us about the foundation.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Are you looking for a spiritual leader who can guide you on your journey to self-discovery and enlightenment? Look no further than AiR — Atman in Ravi, the founder of the AiR Institute of Realisation and AiR Centre of Enlightenment.

This week for our special weekly column, with years of experience in the spiritual and personal development field, we get to know that the founder has helped individuals from all walks of life achieve inner peace, clarity, and purpose. This institute seemed very solitary, so, as a TEDx speaker and sought-after presenter too, he speaks to us and tells us, “The institute has been doing humanitarian work for the last thirty years, realising that serving humanity is like a prayer. Evolving from service to suffering humanity, it now tries to help people realise the truth. I am on a mission to show people the way to eternal happiness through enlightenment by helping them move from the kindergarten of religion to the university of spirituality, to touch, trigger, and transform this world.”

It is understood clearly that through his teachings and practises, he helps individuals realise the ultimate purpose of their lives. He continued, “We expect our organisation to be one that will become a beacon of light to help people overcome the darkness of ignorance. To help people go on a quest and realise the truth! To help people on the path of self-real-

isation, spiritual awakening, and realisation. To help people achieve a state of peace, bliss, and joy. Therefore, we expect our organisation to slowly transform this world from being a material one to a spiritual one.”

AiR — Atman in Ravi’s unique approach emphasises the importance of self-awareness, meditation, and mindfulness to achieve inner peace and happiness. Besides, “Our strategy is very simple: overcome ignorance and realise the truth; ask, investigate, and realise; don’t believe the myth you have grown up with; evolve in spirituality; not just serve and do good karma but transcend karma. This strategy is based on the principles of the truth!” His teachings are grounded in spirituality and are not associated with any specific religion or belief system, making them accessible to individuals from all backgrounds. Anybody can realise God. It is not those who work in the faith community or those who are professionals in the secular field. If you really want to experience God, you must realise that God cannot be seen, touched, or felt. God has to be realised. God is in you, God is in me, God is in the butterfly, God is in the bee, and God is in the tree. God is in every molecule. Everything is a manifestation of God. Consequently, it needs enlightenment, not religion or any other dogma, ritual, or superstition.”

It was his spiritual mentor who guided him to go on a quest to realise the true purpose of existence. Who is he? What is the purpose of his life? Is life just meant to seek pleasures

and to live and die without any purpose? What happens after death? Will he be reborn? Several questions like these took him on a quest to evolve from the peak of achievement through fulfilment to enlightenment, which is the ultimate peak, to realise that we are not this body, mind, and ego; we are the divine soul. So this is what inspired him to realise the truth!

Moreover, “After the light of enlightenment has shown itself on me, not just life has been transformed, but there has also been a transformation from misery to bliss. From running through this rat race to living a life of divine grace. It is not just a transformation; it is a metamorphosis, living as the soul—the spark of unique life—not as the body, mind, and ego that we appear to be.”

There is no question of contributing to the promotion of realisation. This institute is helping people on the path, helping people to open their real eyes, to overcome ignorance, and to question religion and myth. The founder does it through writing books—over 65 books are authored; composing life songs, or Jeevan sangeet; and over 1400 bhajans are written and sung. He also conducts Zoom talks every day, where live answers are given to the seekers. He also answers people on the internet. So he is reaching out in every possible way to help people transform their lives!

Case in point: “People approach him every day on Zoom. People write e-mails, and they contact each other through WhatsApp. People have asked how to deal with life’s issues in stressful situations. How to overcome fear, worry, stress, anxiety, and danger. How to be happy. How to face death. How to understand the complicated subject of rebirth. People have asked questions, and my institute has helped people step by step to overcome these things. These are not pieces of training in the physical world that are called ‘motivation’, these are spiritual ‘inspirations’ that go deep and touch the soul.”



Disha is all ‘minimalistic’ when choosing her jewellery

AMARTYA SMARAN

Actress Disha Patani shares a rather special connection with the city of Hyderabad. She made her acting debut with Puri Jagannadh’s *Loafer* (2015). A year after that, the resounding success of *M. S. Dhoni: The Untold Story* catapulted her to instant stardom. At the time, people affec-

tionately called her ‘National Crush’. Today, she enjoys a great following for her ability to get into the skin of different characters. Especially those parts that require complex action sequences.

Well, once again, Disha was here in Hyderabad, where she’d paid a visit to the Taj Falaknuma Palace, celebrating the rich legacy of Shiv Narayan Jewellers Pvt. Ltd., which

achieved the remarkable feat of bagging eight Guinness World Records.

The *Radhe* actress describes herself as someone who’s minimalist when it comes to her jewellery choices. She doesn’t really prefer wearing heavy designs. However, to be fair, the designs created by the makers are on the heavier side. Although heavy, the craftsmanship and elegance of each piece are astounding.

It looks like the opulence of the set pieces swept Disha off her feet and allowed her to set her minimalist ideology aside for a while. *The Pioneer* questioned her about how she decided to sign up for or represent a brand. Particularly when it doesn’t align with her ideology. Celebrities are usually extremely careful when it comes to representing brands of any kind. *The Project K* star walked into the Darbar Hall of the Falaknuma Palace in a s u p e r b

all-black one-piece and sported a stunning, shiny diamond necklace. “I usually choose brands that I resonate with. If I didn’t resonate with something, I would not do it. And I feel that at this point in time, I can choose, and I just feel like I have changed as a person, and I like to do things that I really want to do,” said Disha.

The *Bharat* actress signed up for two big-budget films: *Kanguva* and *Project K*. The former is a period action drama, and the latter is a mix of sci-fi and mythological drama. It’s a no-brainer that these two films will have room for heavy set pieces and, most certainly, some jewellery.

The stunning actress was almost about to spill the beans regarding her projects but remained tight-lipped, saying, “I may get into trouble if I reveal anything about it... I don’t know (haha)!”

Talking about one design that she doesn’t really like, she said, “I have very small ears. So, anytime they give me very heavy-weighted jewellery, My ears can’t take it. Any piece of design that is extremely (X2) heavy, I avoid for my ear.”

On the contrary, she played an important part in Jackie Chan’s *Kung Fu Yoga*, where she sports a jewellery-heavy look. Asked about it, she wrapped up by saying, “That’s a movie, and that’s my job. I can’t complain about that. I’m working with Jackie Chan! And the last thing I should be thinking about is my jewellery (haha). So, it didn’t really matter.”

Actress Disha Patani, who was here in Hyderabad recently, speaks to *The Pioneer* about how she keeps her choices minimalistic and simple when it comes to her choice of jewellery.



Relax, revive, and restore with massage therapy for your overall well-being

Massage therapy has been practised for centuries and is known for its ability to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and alleviate pain. Whether you suffer from chronic pain or anxiety or simply need to unwind after a long day, regular massage therapy can provide numerous benefits for your physical and mental well-being.

Anoop Singh, Director of Operations at Red Orchid Spa, shares five benefits of incorporating massage therapy into your self-care routine:

Reduces stress and anxiety

Stress and anxiety can significantly impact your overall health and well-being. Regular massage therapy can help ease the physical and mental symptoms of stress, including muscle tension, headaches, and difficulty sleeping. In addition, different types of massage, such as Swedish, deep tissue, or aromatherapy, can target specific areas of the body and promote relaxation.

Improves circulation and flexibility

Massage therapy can improve blood circulation and lymphatic flow, which can help remove toxins from the body and improve overall health. Regular massages can also help increase flexibility and range of motion, making it easier to perform daily activities and reducing the risk of injury.

Relieves pain and muscle tension.

Massage therapy is commonly used to treat chronic pain and muscle tension. Deep tissue massage, trigger point therapy, and myofascial release are all techniques used to release stress and lighten pain in specific areas of the body. Regular massage therapy can also help prevent chronic pain and muscle tension.

Boosts immune system function

Massage therapy has been shown to boost immune system function, which can help reduce the risk of illness and disease. These therapy sessions can also reduce the

production of cortisol, a hormone associated with stress that can weaken the immune system.

Improves mental health and well-being

It can significantly impact mental health and well-being, reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, improve mood and energy levels, and promote feelings of relaxation and well-being. Different types of massage, such as aromatherapy or hot stone massage, can also provide additional mental health benefits.

Incorporating massage therapy into your self-care routine can benefit your physical and mental well-being. When choosing a massage therapist, research their credentials and experience to ensure you receive safe and effective treatment. You can also consider trying different types of massage to find what works best for your individual needs. Making massage therapy a regular part of your self-care routine can improve your overall health and happiness.

ICC seeks PCB assurances on team to India for ODI World Cup

PTI ■ KARACHI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman and CEO are in Lahore to seek guarantees from the PCB that it will not push for implementing a hybrid model for its matches in the ODI World Cup in India later this year.

Insiders confirmed to PTI that ICC chairman Greg Barclay and CEO Geoff Allardice have specifically come to Lahore to get some assurances from the Pakistan Cricket Board on the national team's participation in the World Cup in October-November.

The development comes after PCB chief Najam Sethi made it clear that the team will not travel for the World Cup in India if the Rohit Sharma led side doesn't visit Pakistan for the preceding Asia Cup.

"The ICC and World Cup hosts, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) are concerned with the hybrid



model being pushed by Najam Sethi who heads the cricket management committee of the PCB.

"Although the hybrid model has been suggested by Sethi for the Asia Cup which precedes the ICC event, the concern remains

that once accepted for the regional event the PCB might also then ask the ICC to implement it for the World Cup when it comes to Pakistan playing in India," he explained.

Sethi has already indicated that if the Pakistan government

doesn't give clearance or has security concerns about sending the team to India, PCB could ask the ICC to hold Pakistan's matches at a neutral venue.

"Naturally neither the ICC nor the BCCI want such a situation since Pakistan's unequiv-

ocal participation in matches in India would guarantee the success of Indo-Pakistan matches and also the tournament itself."

Another source said this was the primary reason why BCCI secretary Jay Shah was still reluctant to accept the hybrid model for the Asia Cup and support having three or four matches of the tournament in Pakistan and the remaining games in UAE or Sri Lanka.

Pakistan are the hosts of the Asia Cup and Sethi has said repeatedly that if the tournament is moved to one neutral country from Pakistan, it will not take part in the competition.

He has also hinted that if Pakistan didn't get to host some Asia Cup matches it could have an adverse bearing on the World Cup as well.

"The ICC officials are trying to work as a bridge between the PCB and BCCI and resolve the outstanding issues pertaining to the Asia Cup and World Cup."

Indian bowlers focus on building workload ahead of WTC final

PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

The Indian cricket team is focussing on building workload for the bowlers, who had an extensive run in the IPL, ahead of the World Test Championship final against Australia starting on June 7 at The Oval.

In the bowling department, while the likes of Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel, Jaydev Unadkat and Umesh Yadav were part of the first batch to travel to England, pace spearhead Mohammed Shami's departure was delayed as the IPL final in Ahmedabad last Sunday was moved to the reserve day after incessant rain.

The middle-order mainstay Virat Kohli was also among the players who left in the first batch along with the Rahul Dravid-led coaching staff. Kohli joined the camp on Monday along with Cheteshwar Pujara, who linked up with the squad in England as he was busy playing County Championship for Sussex.

The Indian team is expected to have a few practice sessions at the Arundel Castle Cricket Club in Sussex ahead of the big final.

"The preparation has been good so far. The initial bit was to ease into the practice session but the last two sessions have been pretty happy — I think we pushed them a little bit. Just adding a little bit of workload for the bowlers, just kind of preparing them for the Test match," said India's bowling coach Paras Mhambrey in a video released by the BCCI.

"(We are) happy with the conditions, I think it is a lovely ground, (it is) kind of what you can



expect. The weather is holding up, it has been sunny, a little windy, a little chill but something that we have to get used to (when) playing in England," he said.

India's fielding coach T Dilip said the focus will be on close-in catching since the running part of the fitness drill was covered in the IPL.

"The players have been coming from an IPL so a key thing for us to take care of was the workload, how much they have run, how much they have taken care.

"What we understood and got out of that is things (like) ground fielding have been covered in the IPL, so the focus here was more on the volume of catching, especially when you are talking about close-in catching, the slip catching and the flat catches. These are the catches that we tend to increase the volume (of)," he said.

Mhambrey said while the bowlers will get some rest in days leading up to the WTC final, the group is determined to extract the maximum benefits from the training sessions.



Dhoni will take medical advice for knee injury and decide: CSK CEO Viswanathan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni will be seeking expert opinion from sports orthopedics in Mumbai on the state of his dodgy left knee before taking a call on his treatment, CEO Kasi Viswanathan said on Wednesday.

Dhoni had played the entire IPL season with a heavily strapped left knee and although he looked absolutely okay while keeping, more often than not batted as late as No.8 and didn't look swift while running between the wickets.

"Yes, it is true that Dhoni will be taking medical advice for his left knee injury and accordingly decide. If surgery is advised, it can only be ascertained after reports come out, it will be completely his call," Viswanathan told PTI.

Is there a possibility that Dhoni will decide against playing next season and thus free up a purse of Rs 15 crore for the mini auction, the CEO replied: "Frankly, we are not even thinking on those lines as we haven't reached that stage.

"It will be completely Dhoni's call. But I can tell you in CSK, we haven't entertained those thoughts," Viswanathan said.

Asked if CSK supremo N Srinivasan addressed the players after the fifth IPL Trophy and if celebrations were in the offing. "He is very happy but there were no celebrations. The players dispersed for their respective destinations from Ahmedabad only. Also if you have seen CSK, we are never big on celebrations," the veteran official said.

Asked if the fifth IPL title feels the sweetest, considering the spate of injuries to its top players, Viswanathan said: "It's all about team spirit and every player knowing his role which is very well defined in our set up. "Even a player of Ben Stokes' stature despite his nature was brilliant around the group and the youngsters looked upto to him. This has been possible because of our captain."

What has been CSK's hallmark over the years which enabled them to reach final in 11 of the 14 editions that they have been a part of? "Have been associated with CSK from season 1 and we have never deviated from our process. The key has been to keep things simple and explain every player what is expected of them. In our franchise, the skipper keeps everything uncomplicated," Viswanathan said.

CSK were barred from the league for two editions.

Hazlewood praises Kohli's work ethics

PTI ■ LONDON

Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood has spoken highly of Royal Challengers Bangalore teammates Virat Kohli and Mohammed Siraj ahead of the World Test Championship final against India at The Oval starting June 7.

Hazlewood, who has been battling with multiple injuries over the last six months, had to cut short his IPL stint with a side issue. However, he feels he is not far from bowling full tilt as Australia gear up for the big final.

Talking about Kohli, whose wicket he will be targeting at The Oval, Hazlewood said the Indian superstar's work ethic makes him the player that he is.

"I think it's probably how hard he works (that stands out). His fitness first of all - and then his skill work and batting and fielding in particular. "He is always out there (training) first and leaves last ... and the intensity he trains at all the time is at such a high level it drags everyone else along for the ride. That can lead on to the other players and improve them as well," Hazlewood told the ICC.

On RCB's leading wicket taker Siraj, who is expected to play a big part in the WTC final, Hazlewood said: "I was a bit late getting there (to RCB this year),



but before then he was on fire.

"He is up there at the top of the wickets every time, and the economy rate was probably the best as bowling at Chinnaswamy (RCB's home ground) is impossible sometimes and he was going at six or six-and-a-half an over. His control was great and he is bowling well."

'CLOSE TO BOWLING FULL PACE: The Australian cricket team has been training in Formby in England ahead of the WTC final. Hazlewood trained with the team on Monday and said he is feeling good going into

the big game.

"My fitness is pretty good and it is just a matter of ticking off every session from here until that date (June 7) basically. "We will probably have anywhere from three to four more sessions - bat versus ball and then a couple of longer days in the nets as well or centre wicket down in London — so it is just ticking off those last few boxes and pulling up well from every session," he said.

"It was pretty close (to full pace today). I came down for a little bowl yesterday just to

loosen up and to get a bit more out of today's session, so it is feeling good. It is always good to get the first one out of the way and when we get to London we will steam in," he added.

Hazlewood could feature in only three games in the IPL before his injury flared up.

"In T20 you are bowling a lot of various different balls every over. A wide yorker, to a bouncer, to a slower ball and it probably got jammed up a little bit and a bit of scar tissue from previous injuries flared up.

"It calmed down pretty quickly, I had a week off but I didn't quite get back to going 100 percent at IPL. But the last few bowls have been good and I have been building up nicely," he said.

Having played as many as 15 Tests against India, Hazlewood is looking forward to the challenge of playing the Asian giants at a neutral venue. "It is a strange stat that as I think I have just played a lot of cricket against them. What is going to be interesting is playing them here in England.

"It is going to be interesting for both teams how they go about it and how different it is to playing them in Australia or in India as typically you only play them there," he said.

"That is the exciting thing about it and everyone is looking forward to next week," he added.

Stokes plans to play as allrounder in Ashes

AP ■ LONDON

England captain Ben Stokes Eased concerns about his ability to bowl in the upcoming Ashes series because of longstanding knee issues and said Wednesday he is planning to play every test this summer.

"Unless I can't walk, I'll be on the field," Stokes said with a smile the day before England begins its one-off test against Ireland, which serves as a warmup for the five-match Ashes series against Australia.

After having knee issues during the tour of New Zealand in February, Stokes played only twice for Chennai Super Kings in the recently-finished Indian Premier League, sending down just one over for 18 runs.

However, the 31-year-old Stokes said his knee is much better than it was in New Zealand and he will take his place in the England team as an allrounder against Ireland at Lord's and then Australia.

"What I have done is I have got myself in a position where I'm not able to look back and regret or say I've not given myself the best opportunity to play a full role with the ball this summer," Stokes said.

"I've worked incredibly hard with the medical team in Chennai, liaising with the ECB



guys. I have got myself into a place where I feel like back at 2019, 2020 space in terms of my own body and fitness and everything like that."

Pushed about the exact nature of his knee problem, Stokes said: "We know what it is and it's about managing it."

"It's managing it with workload," he added, "and working it with the med team just to get through it."

England has already named its team for the Ireland test, with seamer Josh Tongue making his debut while fast bowlers James Anderson and Ollie Robinson are rested. Ireland has lost all six of its matches since gaining test status in 2017. That includes a defeat against England at Lord's in 2019.

Captain Andrew Balbirnie has said beating England would be "the biggest moment in Irish cricket history."



Thai Open: Kiran stuns Shi Yuqi

Lakshya, Satwik-Chirag too win, Sindhu makes early exit

PTI ■ BANGKOK

India's Kiran George scripted a stunning straight-game win over world number 9 Shi Yuqi of China but double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu made an opening round exit from the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament here on Wednesday.

Ashmita Chaliha and Saina Nehwal also made winning starts to their campaign in women's singles, while Lakshya Sen and world number 4 pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also progressed to the pre-quarterfinals.

On a day when Kidambi Srikanth and B Sai Praneeth also failed to cross the opening hurdle, 2022 Odisha Open winner Kiran, a product of the Prakash Padukone academy, notched up a 21-18 22-20 win over third seed Shi Yu Qi, who is a 2018 world championships silver medalist. Kiran will take on China's Weng Hong Yang next.

His academy mate Lakshya also dug deep to eke out a hard-fought 21-23 21-15 21-15 win over Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei. He is likely to square off against All England champion Li Shi Feng of China.

Commonwealth Games champion and top seeds Satwik and Chirag too had to work hard to outwit the Danish combination of Rasmus Kjær and Frederik Sogaard 21-13 18-21 17-17 in a thrilling match.

A former world champion, Sindhu, however, faltered in the opening round, going down fighting 8-21 21-18 18-21 to Canada's Michelle Li in 62-minute match. In other matches, Ashmita, who came through the qualifiers, beat compatriot Malvika Bansod 17-21 14-21, while London Olympics bronze medalist Saina defeated Canada's Wen Yu Zhang 21-13 21-7.

Bharat over Kishan, Umesh over Shardul for WTC XI: Sarandeep

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India selector Sarandeep Singh says picking KS Bharat over Ishan Kishan as the wicketkeeper for the World Test Championship final against Australia is a no brainer and he would also choose Umesh Yadav over Shardul Thakur in the playing eleven.

In the absence of the injured Rishabh Pant, Kishan, who is yet to play Test cricket, can provide the x-factor but Sarandeep feels Bharat walks into the eleven as the frontline wicketkeeper.

"KS Bharat for sure. He is a proper Test match wicketkeeper and we saw that against Australia at home, he kept superbly. He has been around for a while and he should get the

opportunity," Sarandeep told PTI on Wednesday. The WTC final will be played at the Oval in London from June 7. The former India spinner said Kishan's time will come.

"Ishan is an opener. I am not saying he is not capable of playing Tests. He is one for the future but he opens in limited overs cricket. Things will be different at number six. "Yes he goes hard from ball one, which can be counter productive in England, but Bharat can also bat well and play shots also," he reasoned.

'Umesh's extra pace and old ball skills will come handy': Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj, who were breathing fire in the recently-concluded IPL, will share the workload in the pace depart-



ment and the Indian team will need to choose between Umesh Yadav and Shardul Thakur as the third fast bowling option.

"I am picking Umesh ahead of Shardul because he has that extra pace and he can reverse the old ball, he can be very helpful on that Oval track," said Sarandeep.

"All of India's batters are in good form going into the one off game and that bodes well for the team," he said.

Pujara's inputs invaluable for Indian batters: Gavaskar

PTI ■ PORTSMOUTH

Former captain Sunil Gavaskar on Wednesday reckoned Cheteshwar Pujara could provide valuable insights to his Indian teammates ahead of the World Test Championship final against Australia, having played extensively in the English County Championship.

With Pujara's knowledge and captaincy experience (at Sussex), his inputs could prove invaluable, especially against Australian batter Steve Smith, who is also a part of his county side.

The WTC final is scheduled to be held at the Oval in London from June 7-11.

"The fact that he is been around will mean that he will have also seen how the pitch has been behaving at The Oval.

"He might not have played at The Oval, he might be in Sussex not too far away from London but he will have kept an eye on what is happening and his inputs will be invaluable as far as the bat-

ting unit is concerned or even as far as the captaincy is concerned," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

"He will have the captains here as far as the Oval pitch is concerned and don't forget he has also been captaining the team, so he definitely will have worked out quite a few strategies seeing that Steve Smith, the Australian is his teammate at the moment."

Gavaskar also said the Indian batters, coming off the IPL, will have to adjust their bat speed ahead of the WTC final, and advised them to play as late as possible.

"I think they are going to look at their bat speed. Coming from T20 where the bat speed is very fast to Test cricket where the bat speeds got to be a lot more control, that is something they'll need to do," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

He also emphasized the need for batters to play as late as possible in English conditions, allowing for swing and avoiding the mistake of reaching out for the



ball.

"They'll need to play in England as late as possible to allow for the swing to do it's bit, not to reach out for the ball which often a lot of people make the mistake having played on good pitches.

"Wherever you play on good pitches, you tend to play through the line, not necessarily half volleys, but in England those deliveries can move just that little bit. So, I think those are the things that as a batter you need to watch out for."

He asked the bowlers to bowl fuller length deliveries to allow the Dukes ball to swing.

"As a bowling unit also you'll need to bowl a much fuller length for your new ball, for the bowlers to be able to get the movement in the air as well as after pitching."

Gavaskar highlighted the challenges India would face playing in English conditions.

"I think the English conditions are challenging because firstly we are used to play with the sun on our backs. When you are playing in England, often you are playing in conditions where there is no sun, it's a little overcast, the weather is a little bit cooler, so you sometimes wear a jumper.

"That's something that you know, the Indian player, West Indian players and Sri Lankan players are not really used to so that can be just a little bit of a dampener, little sort of light but you just feel little bit encumbered by that.

Bellamkonda Ganesh considers himself as a ‘successful actor’

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actor Bellamkonda Ganesh, who made a successful debut with the thriller film *Nenu Student Sir*. Directed by debutant Rakesh Uppalapati, the film is produced by 'Nandi' Satish Verma under the banner SV2 Entertainment. Avantika Dassani is playing the female lead.

Speaking to the media here in Hyderabad, the actor shared, "I always feel like a student. There are many situations in real life. Real incidents have been shown in a very unique way in this movie, and it will create a lot of curiosity till the end. You can't guess who the real villain is until the climax. We can guarantee that one hundred percent."

The film has a story written by Krishna Chaitanya, whereas the screenplay and direction are by Rakesh.

"When Krishna Chaitanya narrated the story, I got extremely connected to the emotion and character arc in it. My character in *Swathimuthyam* is innocent from the beginning to the end. There are different shades in *Nenu Student Sir*. I really liked the character arc of how he got out of the trouble that he faced at the end and a lot of pain and tension in the middle."

Many big heroes have played the role of a student in their second film, and Ganesh feels this film will add more content to his career graph.

Producer Satish Verma gained enough with Nandi, and Ganesh feels that a film coming from a hit film company naturally means that the distributor and exhibitors also have a belief. "Satish Verma worked with a lot of passion for this movie. He used to come to the set first and leave last. Whatever the movie needs, it has been provided without compromise. High build values are visible," he added.

"When *Swathimuthyam* was released, it was said to be a bad release date because it was coming together with Chiranjeevi and Nagarjuna's films. However, it got an amazing response on OTT. Wherever you go, you are praised for making a very good film. I consider myself successful as an actor in this regard. Now we have full confidence in *Nenu Student Sir*. I am coming with a good release date," he said about the average performance of his maiden film at the box office and what he expects from his upcoming film's release.

Speaking about Samudrakani's character in this film, he shared, "Samudrakhani garu is a big advantage to this movie. His screen presence is captivating. And he's got a very good character with enough meat. His acting gave the character more weightage."

On the work front, Ganesh is next doing a crime comedy, which is completely different from his previous films.

Rockstar DSP's fans go berserk on Malaysia's *Oo Solriya* tour

Rockstar DSP's much awaited *Oo Solriya* tour just happened over the weekend and here's everything you've missed out on. Fans have been eagerly looking forward to inside images and moments from the Malaysia tour. Fans who attended the tour cannot stop raving about the most entertaining night.

Fans in Malaysia have not just swayed and tapped their feet to Rockstar DSP's beats in Malaysia but hooted, jumped and also sung along. Rockstar DSP's Malaysia tour has been the most memorable, happening and eventful night and weekend for an audience of different age groups. The images from the electric night are proof. Rockstar DSP knows how to entertain his audience and the craze for his music reflects on how music is always about connecting and enjoying to the fullest.

These images are giving strong energies and one can easily say the audience have enjoyed every moment of this tour. The ones who couldn't attend have also shared how they would be looking forward to his next tour and more.

Sharing a heartfelt gratitude DSP says, "The Malaysia *Oo Solriya* tour was high on energy, performance and songs. The audience was so excited and it was reflected in their hoot-



ing and more. Music is always a connection of the heart, words just help to understand better and this response from a global audience is proof. This has been one of the best weekends and I will surely do more of it. I'm grateful for all the constantly pouring in love from across the world.

On the professional front, DSP also has *Pushpa 2*, *Suriya 42*, and more in the pipeline.

Indian languages highlighted at the British Parliament House



The United Nations World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development was marked at the British Parliament's House of Lords recently, during which 18 languages of India were presented and highlighted.

The founder of Sanskruti Centre, Dr. Ragasudha Vinjamuri, in addition to presenting her own poem in Telugu, spoke on the Tai Khamti language of Arunachal Pradesh. She highlighted how Tai Khamti language is on the verge of decline and how NGOs like Tai Khamti Heritage and Literature Society are working hard on language preservation. Also, on the occasion, an age-old rhyme, 'Koh-ai-Koh', translated into English by Chow Kalingna Mannoi, was included in the booklet Ramaneyam – the

Beauty of Expression brought out on the occasion.

Baroness Rt Hon Sue Garden rendered the opening words, outlining the significance of diverse languages and commended the organisers for bringing together meaningful linguistic content. Poems, mostly self-authored by different diaspora members in the UK, were presented, and rare scripts such as Takri, Sharda, and Mithilakshar were highlighted during the event.

Dhanush's *Hathavidi* highlights Naveen's sad life in a funny style

Aanushka Shetty's next movie is *Miss Shetty Mr Polishetty*. Written and directed by Mahesh Babu P, the movie has Naveen Polishetty as the male lead. As announced earlier, the makers have released the second single from the movie.

Titled *Hathavidi*, the song is a tragicomedy about the sad life of Siddhu Polishetty, played by Naveen Polishetty, and the heart-break he is suffering. The song is composed by Ramajogayya Sastry. It is crooned by the well-known actor Dhanush. The lyrics are captivating and the composition is beautiful.

The film also stars Murali Sharma, Jayasudha, Tulasi, and others in significant roles. Produced by UV Creations, the movie is a pan-South project and will be released this summer in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.



Operation Ravaan promises a mystery filled action thriller

Rakshit Atluri, who won critical acclaim with *Palasa 1978*, is coming up with a unique film, *Operation Raavan*. Bankrolled by Dhyan Atluri under the Sudhas Media banner, this new-age action-suspense thriller has Rakshit Atluri and Sangeethana Vipin in the lead roles.

The film has completed the shooting and is currently undergoing post-production work and is all set to hit the screens soon. Ahead of the film's release, the 'First Thrill' from the movie was launched on Wednesday, and the directors Maruthi and Kalyan Krishna attended this event as chief guests. With this first thrill glimpse, it is understood that the film is a mystery action thriller that revolves around psycho killings. Holding the caption 'Your Thoughts are your Enemies', the film teaser raised curiosity.

Speaking at this event, director Maruthi said, "It is rare for a father to direct his son and that rare incident happened to Raavan. Prasad is a good friend of mine. He has a lot of passion. He used to make films carefully. Palasa and London Babu are examples of that. One fine day, he said that he has written the story and he is directing it as well. I was surprised. Later, after a few days, he showed me the teaser of the film, and it was very promising."

Speaking at this event, director Kalyan Krishna said, "I have heard the name of Rakshit from most of the



directors who are planning to do some innovative films. I think that is his success. Anyone can do regular stories. I wish all his upcoming films *Operation Raavan*, *Narakasura* and *Sasivadana* to be big hits."

Actress Radhika said that it was during the event that she'd got to know that the director and the hero are father and son. She further continued, "When I heard this story, I asked about the hero in the film and the director said Rakshit is going to play the lead actor role. However, as I don't know who Rakshit is, he asked me to watch *Palasa*. I saw *Palasa*. I liked the movie very much, and I saw it again. In this film, the director and his team have never compromised on getting a great output. A lot of effort has been put in, and I can say their hard work will not fail. All the artists in this film have done their part very well. They are all seasoned artists. The director's job is just to bring out their talent, and he has done it perfectly. I always wanted to do

different roles. If Telugu films like this come out for me, I will adjust my dates and will give high priority to those films. Rakshit is a very hard-working and sincere person. His eyes speak a lot. All the best to everyone."

Actor Rakshit thanked the dignitaries who had graced the event and said, "The first success of our film happened when Radhika Garu agreed to do this movie. My father, Venkata Satya Vara Prasad, who is my life, has directed this film. He established Sweet Magic in 1995. We used to have nothing at those times. But now he has given jobs to thousands of people through Sweet Magic. There would be no one in Andhra Pradesh who does not know about the sweet magic. Now, he has taken the megaphone with *Operation Raavan*. I hope this movie will get recognition across the nation. He gave his best as a director and he used to be on the sets early in the morning before everyone else. He has handled the film very well, and that is the reason for our confidence. During a *Palasa* event, I requested the audience to watch the film, and if anyone doesn't like it, they can grab my collar. Now again, I could say the same with the same confidence. heartfelt thanks to everyone who worked on this film. Also, I could never forget the support of my brother and my mother in the journey of this film. It is irreplaceable."

Venkatesh concedes criticism, promises improvement in *Rana Naidu* season 2

Victory Venkatesh debuted in the digital space with the Netflix-backed web series *Rana Naidu*. Although the show garnered a high viewership on Netflix, Venkatesh and his nephew Rana Daggubati faced trolling and criticism. Venkatesh has been busy shooting for his next project and has recently been unavailable to the media.

Venkatesh Daggubati has finally responded to the reception of his series *Rana Naidu* during a press meet for the film *Ahimsa*. When asked about the reaction from fans, Venkatesh stated that Netflix is happy



with the response and they had attempted something new with the series.

Venkatesh acknowledged that it is not always possible to please every section of the audience. Regarding the second season, Venkatesh mentioned that since *Rana Naidu* is original content, they will consider making alter-

ations and try to reach a wider audience. He expressed that they would discuss *Rana Naidu* in the future but kept his initial response short and simple.

Expressing his satisfaction with the response to the show, Venkatesh stated that he always tries something new and will explore the possibility of making changes for the second season of *Rana Naidu*.

Venkatesh is set to resume shooting for his film *Saindhav* in June, with a scheduled release date in December 2023.

Directed by Sailesh, *Saindhav* is an action thriller.

Kamal Haasan to play a negative role in *Project K*



Director Nag Ashwin's *Project K* featuring pan India star Prabhas, Bollywood Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, and Deepika Padukone is a highly anticipated film. This is a never before science fiction drama being made in Indian cinema and the makers are mounting on a huge budget.

Every now and then the team of *Project K* teases the fans with an update but it's hard to understand given the context. Perhaps for the first time

a rumour about the film is making rounds on social media and it excited the fans. The rumour is Universal hero Kamal Haasan has signed to be part of *Project K*.

If the rumours are to be believed, Kamal Haasan is playing a negative role and he has allotted 20 days for the film's shooting. The rumours had also claimed that Kamal is also getting paid a bomb and it is said that Rs 150 crore.

However, according to a few reports, *Project K* has wrapped up nearly seventy percent of the shoot and Kamal coming on board for this project doesn't make any sense. Moreover Rs 150 crore remuneration isn't believable.

There is a chance that Kamal might have been approached for a voice over or a cameo role. Yet these are just rumours and the team of *Project K* has to clarify or acknowledge them. But if it is true, *Project K* becomes mightier with the addition of the actor.

Mahesh Babu's film with Trivikram titled *Guntur Kaaram*

A mass and powerful title, *Guntur Kaaram*, is locked for superstar Mahesh Babu's 28th film under the direction of Trivikram Srinivas.

On superstar Krishna's birth anniversary, the makers released a small glimpse to announce the title and also the tagline- Highly Inflammable.

Guntur Kaaram is a powerful title and the tagline offers mass euphoria to the super fans. S Thaman's high-octane music with oora mass background score creates a double impact.

As the title suggests, the story of the movie is set against a Guntur backdrop, and *Guntur Kaaram* seems to be high on action and mass, laced with family elements.

Mahesh Babu transformed himself into a slick and stylish get-up to play an action-packed character in the movie.

Trivikram Srinivas, who brings the best out of his actors, will be presenting Mahesh Babu in a never-seen-before avatar.

S Radhakrishna of Haarika & Hassine Creations is prestigiously making the movie on a massive budget, with Pooja Hegde and Sreeleela playing the heroines.

The movie *Guntur Kaaram* is set to make Sankranti festivities more entertaining, as the movie is arriving for the festival.



Bus carrying *Pushpa 2* artistes meets with accident in Telangana

Two persons were injured when a bus carrying film artistes who were returning to Hyderabad from neighbouring state Andhra Pradesh after shooting of *Pushpa 2*, met with an accident in Telangana's Nalgonda district on Wednesday.

The bus carrying the film artistes hit a stationary RTC bus near Narketpally on Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway.

Two artistes sustained minor injuries in the accident. The artistes were returning to Hyderabad from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh after completing a shooting schedule of *Pushpa 2* starring Allu Arjun.

The RTC bus driver had stopped the vehicle by roadside after developing some technical problem. The driver of the bus carrying the artistes failed to notice the RTC bus and rammed into it.

The makers of the movie had last month released the first look poster of *Pushpa: The Rule*, the much-awaited sequel of *Pushpa: The Rise*.

The makers had released the poster and a special video on the eve of Allu Arjun's birthday.

Directed by Sukumar, the movie is likely to release in summer of 2024.