

CM: Over 500 sportspersons in UP to get govt jobs

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'India exploited 29% of HYDROPOWER potential'

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Faria Abdullah: I kind of crave privacy SOMETIMES

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-Allola Indrakaran Reddy, Minister

P4

DON'T MISS...

Fasting has long-term...

With Ramzan slated to begin on March 23, a lot of emphasis is being put on various foods that are consumed during the holy month. However, one often neglects the effect it has on our mental health. This reporter reached out to Zara Siddiqui, a counselling psychologist and lifestyle expert and a former Head of Department at St Ann's College, in order to understand how Ramzan ...

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Doctor accused of leaving cloth...

The family members of a 58-year-old man have accused a doctor here of operating on him without their consent and leaving cloth in his stomach during surgery, police said on Tuesday. Kavita, daughter of the patient Veerpal Singh, alleged that AK Verma, who runs a nursing home in Civil Lines area, had advised her father to undergo gallbladder operation after he regularly complained of abdominal pain. On March 16, when Singh visited Verma, the doctor admitted...

-PAGE: 5

Indian restaurants abroad to serve ...

Indian restaurants globally are expected to serve more millet flour-based dishes in near future, given the health benefits of these multi-grains among the busy urbanites, a Singapore-based Indian restaurateur has said. The UN has declared 'The Millet Year 2023', which the 40-year maritime industry veteran believes has the strong support of the Indian Government on international platforms. 'There is a growing trend of eating healthy food, ...

-PAGE: 8

Want to try out various ...

He is more than happy with the takeaways from the nine home ODIs that Indian team has played and has already narrowed his World Cup core team to 17-18 players, head coach Rahul Dravid said on the eve of the series decider against Australia. India are going into the decider having already played eight home games — three versus Sri Lanka, three versus New Zealand and three against Australia finishing on Wednesday. Did he achieve what he had set out to in nine home ODIs, keeping World Cup in ...

-SPORTS

Kavitha calls out ED

Produces phones the agency claimed she had destroyed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Called for the second consecutive day, BRS MLC Kavitha walked out of the ED office on Tuesday, after nearly 10 hours of questioning. This is the third time that she has been questioned. The Supreme Court will be hearing her plea on the ED summons on March 24. On Tuesday, Kavitha said she was submitting the phones used by her so far to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), as she appeared for questioning before the central agency in the Delhi excise policy linked money laundering case. In her letter to the ED, the 44-year-old daughter of Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said, "These phones are submitted without prejudice to my right and contentions whether a woman's phone can be checked as it violates her right to privacy." She said that the actions of the ED are ex facie mala fide. Accusing the ED of making insinuations against her, she said that she was submitting the phones to dispel the notion or "adverse impression" that the ED had been trying to create. The "deliberate leakage of false information" to the public, she charged, had led to a political sluffest, and her political adversaries had been using the false charges to accuse her of destroying evidence, causing great harm to her image and attempting to defame her and her political party. "It is unfortunate that an agency like the ED is becoming a party to these acts and sabotaging its duty to conduct a free and fair investigation at the altar of vested political interests," Kavitha is also understood to have been confronted with the statements made by Hyderabad-based businessman Arun Ramchandran Pillai, an arrested suspect in the case who allegedly has close ties with her

Points from letter to Central agency

'These phones are submitted without prejudice to my right and contentions whether a woman's phone can be checked as it violates her right to privacy.'

It is unfortunate that an agency like the ED is becoming a party to these acts and sabotaging its duty to conduct a free and fair investigation at the altar of vested political interests,"

Kavitha is also understood to have been confronted with the statements made by Hyderabad-based businessman Arun Ramchandran Pillai, an arrested suspect in the case who allegedly has close ties with her

Shubhakruth Nama Ugadi augurs well for TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the occasion of 'Shubhakruth nama' Ugadi festival, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao extended his greetings to the people of Telangana. KCR greeted Telangana and India will achieve further development in the year of Shubhakruth Nama. KCR expressed the hope that Ugadi, which is considered an agricultural year, will bring good fortunes to farmers and people in all fields. The Chief Minister said that Telangana is flourishing with abundant irrigation water, drinking water and green crops. KCR said that by developing the agriculture sector, its allied sectors and professions can be strengthened and the Telangana state's rural economy is sustaining. Ugadi celebrations will be held at Ravindra Bharathi this year after moving it to Pragathi Bhavan in 2018. KCR will be the chief guest. The celebrations will start at 10:30 hours with Nadaswaram. The Chief Guest will join the Poornakumbham followed by a Prayer Song, Vedisarchanam, Panchanga Patanam and felicitation of Vedic scholars, priests and spiritualists.

NSUI PETITION ON TSPSC LEAK

High Court posts hearing to April 11

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The HC postponed the hearing on the NSUI petition in the TSPSC leak case to April 11 and ordered the government to submit a status report on the case within three weeks. The HC said that the petitioners did not submit any evidence to prove their argument that a proper investigation is not taking place. The HC also directed the government to submit a counter affidavit in the TSPSC leakage case. The Telangana government argued persons in the case. Prasad said the petitioner NSUI State president Balmoor Venkat Narasimha Rao has no locus standi in the case. On Tuesday, the HC heard the NSUI petition on the TSPSC leakage case. Arguing for the NSUI, Congress Legal Cell Chairman SC lawyer Vivek Dhanka said that there is a conspiracy angle as IT Minister KT Ramarao said that only two persons are guilty when the SIT's investigation is going on.

Rs 4,304 cr for Pattana Pragathi

Govt sanctioned Rs 2,276 crore to the GHMC and Rs 2,028 crore to the remaining 141 municipalities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government released Rs 4,304 crore to 142 municipalities including the GHMC from February 2020 under the Pattana Pragathi scheme. Of these funds, Rs 3,936 crore, that is, about 92% of the funds have already been utilized by municipalities. The government sanctioned Rs 2,276 crore to the GHMC and Rs 2028 crore to the remaining 141 municipalities. The government is releasing funds every month under the Pattana Pragathi scheme. The Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department released Rs 116 crore per month till February 2022-23. Of these, the government sanctioned Rs 61 crore to the GHMC and Rs 55 crore to 141 other municipalities every month. The 141 municipalities are collecting 4,356 tonnes of garbage every day. 2,165 new sanitation vehicles have been procured to collect 100 per cent of garbage from houses. Earlier, only 2,675 tonnes of garbage were collected by 2,548 vehicles per day. The number of sanitary garbage collection vehicles has increased to 4,713. A total of 1,233 acres of dump yards have been set up in 141 municipalities to process the garbage. 206 dry source collection centres have been set up to separate the garbage. plants has been completed. Works in 14 places are in the final stage and work in another 49 places is in various stages. Tree parks are being developed under 'Prakriti Vanalu' (urban natural forests) in 141 municipalities. Under this programme, 34.59 lakh saplings have been planted since 2021. A large-scale plantation drive was undertaken under Haritha Haram for Telangana.

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Jagan jolted to redraw 2024 poll strategies

Even a small pebble can cause far-reaching ripples in placid waters. The jolt that AP Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy received from the outcome of the recent MLC polls has apparently prompted him to redraw his 2024 Assembly poll strategies.

The results of the three Graduates constituencies of the AP Legislative Council came as a rude shock to the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). All these days, the top brass as well as the rank and file of YSRCP were cocksure that the 2024 polls would be a cakewalk for them, given the largesse delivered to the masses as part of the government's welfare agenda. For, the results of the three Graduates constituencies reflect the mood of people spread over nine combined districts (out of 13) across the state. In the Graduates constituencies of West Rayalaseema (comprising Kadapa, Kurnool and Anantapur districts), East Rayalaseema (Chittoor, Nellore and Prakasam) and North Coastal (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam) that went to polls; more than seven lakh voters (graduates) exercised

Aside from these three Graduates seats, the other categories of seats, viz. Local bodies, and Teachers, have of course been pocketed by YSRCP. However, those are the seats that can be bagged based on the strength of the party in the respective body. Noticeably, Teachers constituencies have gone in favour of YSRCP, though the teachers community per se has been sore at the ways of the government.

their franchise. That means there is a tide against the YSRCP government. These graduates constituencies are spread over 108 assembly seats in the nine combined districts across Andhra Pradesh. In other words, only four Central Coastal combined districts -- East Godavari, West Godavari,

Krishna & Guntur – were left out of these elections. Not less than 5,000 votes were polled in each of the total 108 Assembly segments. That is, out of 175 Assembly constituencies, 108 segments have taken part in this gigantic poll exercise and at least 5,000 voters in each of these seats



have turned against the YSRCP government headed by Jagan. In all the three Graduate constituencies, the

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) nominees have won with huge margins over their YSRCP rivals. The negative outcome in West Rayalaseema constituency is significant because Jagan's native district of Kadapa falls in this seat. The winner in this constituency, Bhoomireddy Ramgopal Reddy, is a prominent leader of TDP in the Pulivendula area. Jagan may be loath to look at Bhoomireddy's face just as Nara Chandrababu Naidu may abhor Chevireddy Bhasker Reddy, who had won the native seat of the TDP chief.

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bodies, and Teachers, have of course been pocketed by YSRCP. However, those are the seats that can be bagged based on the strength of the party in the respective body. Noticeably, Teachers constituencies have gone in favour of YSRCP, though the teachers community per se has been sore at the ways of the government. The state government had strategically kept teachers away from poll duties, risking action by the Election Commission. Despite the odds, YSRCP managed to bag the two teachers constituencies.

As for the MLC elections from the Assembly quota, in which MLAs would elect

members for six vacancies, principal opposition TDP is contesting for the seventh seat, creating ripples in political circles. TDP is believed to be short of only one vote. Interestingly, the fate of four TDP MLAs who had switched loyalties to Jagan, will be hanging if TDP issues whip for all its members, including these four. Two YSRCP MLAs have also kept distance from their party. Should both parties issue whips for their members, turncoats would have to defy the whip to please their present boss. In such eventuality, there might be bypolls for those seats. This is something that the ruling party would try to avoid at any cost.



Mahatma's granddaughter Usha passes away

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Mahatma Gandhi's granddaughter Usha Gokani passed away in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Gokani, aged 89 years, was ailing for the last five years and was bedridden for last two years, Mani Bhavan executive secretary Meghshyam Ajaonkar told PTL.

Gokani was the former chairperson of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Mumbai, housed in Mani Bhavan which has a special significance in the history of India's freedom struggle.

She spent her childhood in Wardha's Sevagram Ashram, which Gandhiji founded.

Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Mumbai was established with the object of conducting and promoting manifold constructive activities with which Mahatma Gandhi was associated during his lifetime.

TSPSC PAPER LEAK CASE HC asks SIT to file status report on probe

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday asked the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the question paper leak case of a recruitment test conducted by the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) to file a status report in the matter.

While hearing a plea of a State Congress leader seeking CBI probe into the question paper leak case, the High Court directed the SIT of State Police to furnish the status report on the investigation within three weeks and also asked the State government to file its counter affidavit. The court posted the matter to April 11.

The Telangana Advocate General opposed the petition seeking CBI investigation.

The Telangana Police which has handled high-profile cases is competent to investigate into this (paper leak) case, he submitted adding electronic evidence which is gathered needs to be

The petitioner's counsel further submitted that the State's IT Minister K T Rama Rao convened a press conference and stated, "It is the fault of two individuals"

thoroughly examined.

So far nine people were arrested and the SIT has taken them into custody and further investigations were on, the AG said.

Expressing doubts over the SIT probe into the issue, the petitioner's counsel submitted before the court that they may not be fair and transparent investigation by the SIT and sought a comprehensive inquiry into the paper leak issue by the CBI.

The petitioner's counsel further submitted that the State's IT

Minister K T Rama Rao convened a press conference and stated, "It is the fault of two individuals". "How can it be stated that only two persons are involved when the matter is still in the initial stages of the investigation," the counsel contended.

The TSPSC on March 15 had cancelled the Assistant Engineers (AE) exam held on March 5, following allegations of the question paper leak.

Amid protests by opposition parties and students' groups for the past several days over the alleged question paper leak, the Commission on March 17 cancelled the Group-I preliminary exam and two other tests.

Nine people, including an Assistant Section Officer in the TSPSC, a contract employee of the Commission, two candidates and a police constable were arrested on March 13 over their alleged involvement in the data breach, for stealing and leaking of TSPSC's Assistant Engineer (Civil) examination question paper.

ED may arrest KTR in two months: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BJP and the BRS are one and that the ED drama will go on, TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that the ED will arrest Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao's son IT Minister KT Ramarao within two months.

But he did not reveal in which case KTR will be arrested but just said that both the BJP and the BRS will continue the drama.

"Why I am saying this is because the ED could have arrested Kavitha within 15 days if it had wanted but it is continuing the drama for the last six months," he said.

Speaking at the CLP office on Tuesday, Revanth said that the TSPSC leak cannot be solved by the SIT as SIT means just 'Sit and Stand'. "Where have all the earlier SIT cases like drugs, Nayeem land, Gold Stone Prasad, Housing Board, attempt to buy MLAs cases gone?" he asked. He said that they had urged the HC to make the government upload details of the jobs filled by the TSPSC and that the court had prepared a three-page report, he said.

Take CM's message to people

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS Hyderabad district in-charge, Dr Dasoju Sravan & Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, gave a call to BRS leaders and cadres to expose the narrow minded politics of the BJP, done with the sole motive of damaging KCR's image at a time when, visionary leader is taking steps to expand the good governance of Telangana all over India.

BRS leaders fired on PM Narendra Modi for harassing MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha in a false case with an ulterior motive of attacking KCR Sarkar. BRS leaders gave a call to city leaders to take the achievements and good work done by KCR Sarkar to every household with regular activities over the next six

BRS leaders fired on PM Narendra Modi for harassing MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha in a false case with an ulterior motive of attacking KCR Sarkar.

months at the Athmeeya Sammelan of Hyderabad TRS leaders and cadres held on Tuesday.

Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav presided over the meeting attended by Home Minister Mahmood Ali, MLA Danam Nagendar, Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi, Deputy

Mayor Sripathi Reddy and others. "It is extremely unfortunate that PM Modi is harassing our leader Kavitha in a false case, unable to take on KCR directly. At a time when KCR is expanding the BRS across India and fighting to bring in a Kisan Sarkar at the Centre, the BJP is busy attacking political opponents using central agencies like the ED and the CBI. While the BJP High Command is busy plotting against opponents, its leaders and cadres are busy spreading fake news and false propaganda. It is the responsibility of every TRS leader and worker to hit back at BJP's misdeeds and expose its true nature to the people of Telangana," appealed Dr Dasoju Sravan to the TRS cadres.

SIT issues notices to Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) issued notices to Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday asking him to appear before the SIT on March 24 in the TSPSC leakage case.

The SIT mentioned in its notices that Sanjay has to appear before the SIT with the evidence he has as they will be helpful for further investigation. The notices said that Sanjay has to provide evidence regarding his allegations made in connection with the TSPSC paper leakage.

The SIT pasted the notices to the walls of his residence while informing the watchman of the Sanjay's residence located in Banjara Hills, Road Number 3 as Bandi Sanjay was not available at the time and SIT officials went to Sanjay's residence. They asked Bandi Sanjay to appear before it at its Himayat

Nagar SIT office.

It may be recalled that the SIT had already served notices to TPCC President Revanth Reddy asking him to appear before it on March 23 with the evidence he has in regard to TSPSC paper leakage. It may also be recalled that Sanjay said that the children and relatives of BRS public representatives, Sarpanches and others got more than 100 marks in the Group-I prelims examination.

On the other hand, the BJP decided to take the opinion of students of all universities of Telangana on the TSPSC leak. The party also decided to conduct round table meetings in districts. The party decided to open an office in Ashok Nagar or Hyderguda to receive the grievances of the unemployed youth. The party would open a helpline centre in this office for the sake of those who are not in a position to lodge their complaints.



Theenmar Mallanna, Telangana Vittal arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police arrested Theenmar Mallanna alias Chintapandu Naveen and Telangana Vittal on Tuesday night. Theenmar Mallanna was taken into custody. But it is not clear in which case he was arrested.

Around 20 policemen raided the Q News office in Boduppal Raghavendra Colony on Tuesday night. Later, Mallanna was detained and computer hard disks were seized. However, details regarding this is not known.

Kavitha calls out ED

Continued from page 1

Kavitha left the ED office at around 9:15 pm on Monday after she was questioned and her statement was recorded as investigators put around a dozen questions to her.

Kavitha is also understood to have been confronted with the statements made by Hyderabad-based businessman Arun Ramchandran Pillai, an arrested suspect in the case who allegedly has close ties with her, apart from those of others involved in the case.

The politician asserted that she had done nothing wrong and alleged that the BJP-led Centre was "using" the ED as the BJP could not gain a "backdoor entry" into Telangana.

Pillai, the ED had said, "represented the South Group," an alleged liquor cartel linked to Kavitha and others that paid kickbacks amounting to about Rs 100 crore to the Aam Aadmi

Party (AAP) to gain a larger share of the market in New Delhi under the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy for 2020-21.

The South Group, according to the ED, comprises Sarath Reddy (promoter of Aurobindo Pharma), MaguntaSrinivasulu Reddy (YSR Congress MP from Ongole Lok Sabha seat in Andhra Pradesh), his son Raghav Magunta, Kavitha and some others.

The ED also alleged in Pillai's remand papers that he "represented the proxy investments" of Kavitha in the case.

Kavitha was earlier questioned by the CBI in connection with the case at her residence in Hyderabad. The ED has so far arrested 12 people in the case, including former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister AAP leader Manish Sisodia.

It has also recorded the statement of Butchibabu, a chartered accountant, allegedly linked to Kavitha, in which he said that

"there was a political understanding between Kavitha and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia. In the process, Kavitha also met Vijay Nair on March 19 and 20, 2021."

Nair was arrested in the case by both the ED and the CBI. Butchibabu has been arrested by the CBI and has been questioned recently again by the ED.

According to Butchibabu's statement, Nair was "trying to impress Kavitha with what he could do in the (excise) policy."

"Vijay Nair was acting on behalf of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia," the statement recorded by ED read.

It is alleged that the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22 to grant licences to liquor traders allowed cartelisation and favoured certain dealers who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge strongly refuted by the AAP.

TRIAL OF LAWMAKERS IN CRIMINAL CASES

Cannot pass omnibus directions, says SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it cannot pass an "omnibus" order asking all high courts to ensure that special trial courts exclusively deal with criminal cases involving lawmakers and not take up other matters before concluding such trials.

A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha made the observations while dealing with the 17th report of amicus curiae and senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, who has been assisting in the hearing of a PIL seeking expeditious disposal of criminal cases against MPs and MLAs.

"How can we pass omnibus

directions to all the high courts? In some special courts, the number of pending cases against lawmakers may be less in comparison to other courts," said the bench.

It said that a report on the pendency of such cases in a particular district may help in passing a specific order on speedy trial. "Let the high courts (registry) look at the suggestions made in the 17th report of the amicus and submit a status report in this court," the bench said. At the outset, amicus curiae Hansaria said he was seeking directions to ensure expeditious disposal of long-pending trials against MPs and MLAs as there were over 5,000 cases against such politicians.

Political parties in Telugu states targeting their rivals' VIPs

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The mainline political parties in both the Telugu states are targeting the VIPs of their adversaries in the Assembly elections.

In Telangana, the BRS, the Congress and the BJP are the main political parties. In Andhra Pradesh, it is the YSR Congress and the TDP.

In Telangana, the ruling BRS is targeting TPCC President Revanth Reddy, Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar, BJP MLA Eatala Rajendar and some others.

The Congress and the BJP are targeting Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao and his son IT Minister KT Rama Rao.

In Andhra Pradesh, the ruling YSR Congress is targeting TDP President N. Chandrababu Naidu his son Nara Lokesh and AP TDP President K. Atchannaidu. The TDP is targeting Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and some prominent ministers.

During the last TS Assembly elections, the BRS succeeded in defeating Revanth Reddy and Bandi Sanjay Kumar. In the coming Assembly elections, the BRS wants to repeat this.

In Gajwel, defeating KCR

and in Sircilla defeating his son KTR is an uphill task for the opposition. Similarly, defeating CM Jagan in Pulivendula is not an easy job for the TDP.

Once defeating TDP supremo Chandrababu in Kuppam was very difficult for the opposition. But the YSR Congress started targeting Chandrababu in Kuppam from the very beginning.

Even now defeating Chandrababu in Kuppam is not an easy thing for the YSR Congress but if one analyses the majority of Chandrababu in the last Assembly elections and the results in Kuppam local elections it can be seen that now it may not be very difficult for the YSRC to defeat Chandrababu in Kuppam.

During the last Assembly elections, Nara Lokesh was defeated by the YSRC in Mangalagiri. In the coming Assembly elections too Nara Lokesh will contest from Mangalagiri and the YSR Congress is aiming to defeat Nara Lokesh.

While in Telangana the opposition targets KCR and his son KTR, in Andhra Pradesh the YSR Congress targets TDP supremo Chandrababu and his son Nara Lokesh.

The victory in three graduate MLC constituencies has raised the morale of the TDP and has increased its hopes of coming to power in the next Assembly elections. At the same time, the YSR Congress is disturbed by the results of the MLC elections.

The Left which has lost its hold in Telangana is likely to play a "side hero" role by joining hands with the BRS. In Andhra Pradesh, the Jana Sena has not revealed its political strategy in the next Assembly elections.

There are speculations that the Jana Sena may end its ties with the BJP and opt for an alliance with the TDP. Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan has given some indications of this.

After the MLC election results in which the TDP won three seats, the Jana Sena's alliance with the TDP has gained strength. If the TDP and the Jana Sena have an alliance the Chief Minister candidate will certainly be Chandrababu.

If Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan accepts this condition of the TDP to defeat the YSR Congress power star Pawan Kalyan who is an unstoppable hero in Telugu films will become a "side hero."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Sukla Paksha

Tithi:Pratipada: Mar 21 10:53 PM

Dwitiya: Mar 22 08:21 PM

Mar 22 03:32 PM

Mar 23 02:08 PM

Nakshatram:

Uttara Bhadrpada: Mar 21 05:25 PM

Revati: Mar 22 03:32 PM

Mar 22 03:32 PM

Mar 23 02:08 PM

Rahukalam:

12:23 PM to 1:53 PM

Yamagandam:

7:52 AM to 9:22 AM

Varjyam:

02:50 AM to 04:20 AM

Gulika:

10:53 AM to 12:23 PM

Amritakalam:

11:07 AM to 12:35 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

Nil

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny

Temp: 31°C

Humidity: 53%

Sunrise: 6:19 AM

Sunset: 6:27 PM

Updated: MARCH 21, 2023 5:00 PM

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TO LAUNCH DESTINATION CELEBRATION CAMPAIGN

GMR airport to expand capacity targeting 34M passengers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of its 15 years anniversary, GMR airport plans to expand its capacity to cater to over 34 million passengers per annum (MPPA).

GMR Hyderabad International Airport launched #Destination Celebration campaign to commemorate the 15th anniversary of the airport. The campaign brings to life the airport as a destination of emotions from every walk of life. The Hyderabad airport is a destination to celebrate from where you start - the thrill of a new journey - an experience, a memory, hope, expectations, aspirations and beyond. The campaign captures the various emotions of celebration.

Hyderabad Airport is operated by a joint venture company promoted by the GMR Group (63 per cent) in partnership with Airports Authority of India (13 per cent), the



Government of Telangana (13 per cent) and Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (11 per cent).

Hyderabad airport was commissioned in a record time of 31 months with an initial capacity of 12 million passengers per annum (MPPA) and 1,50,000 MT of cargo handling capacity per annum. GHIAL was initially designed for 12 million passengers per annum (MPPA). To meet the passen-

ger demand, work is in progress on the expansion of the airport which will enable the airport to enhance its capacity over a period of time to cater to over 34 MPPA.

As part of the first phase of the expansion, the East Pier (straight) portion area was commissioned. Spread across 15,742 square meters in three levels, the newly expanded part of the terminal is integrated with the present terminal.

The new International Departure Hall at the airport became operational on November 28, 2022. The newly built International Departure Hall is also integrated with the existing terminal building.

As we move into the post-pandemic era, we are seeing a fast recovery and an uptick in passenger traffic which is a positive sign for the industry and the economy as a whole. GMR Hyderabad International Airport recorded over 1.75 million passenger footfalls in May '22.

The airport witnessed over 1.5 million domestic passengers and around 0.27 million international travellers, in May '22. Recently, the airport recorded over 1.82 million passenger footfalls on Feb 23 and witnessed over 1.5 million domestic passengers and around 0.28 million international travelers, the airport authorities said.

WORLD WATER DAY

HMWSSB calls for judicious use of water

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) Managing Director M Dana Kishore on Tuesday urged people to use water judiciously in the coming days in order to avoid water crisis.

Speaking during the World Water Day celebrations at the HMWSSB, Kishore said, "Telangana is the first state to provide drinking water in every household and 99.16 % of people in Hyderabad receive water from the HMWSSB."

He further said, "By July this year, Hyderabad will be the first city in the country to treat 100 per cent sewage water. Water Digest magazine has already given the best STP award to the Jalmandali in the government sector and Union Water Power Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat praised it while presenting the award.

He congratulated the engineers, officers and staff who



played an important role in achieving this feat."

Kishore further said, "Once the Sunkishala project is completed, it will address the water issues of Hyderabad for the next 40 years, even if the population increases by three times. 12,000 samples of water are being tested on a daily basis."

He further stated that 10-day awareness programmes on prevention of water pollution will be taken up by the

board. The board is implementing a three-step chlorination process for water supply. In the first stage, booster chlorination is done at Water Treatment Plants (WTP), in the second stage at Main Balancing Reservoirs (MBR) and finally at Service Reservoirs.

Apart from this, care is taken to ensure that the water supplied to the public has exactly 0.5 ppm of chlorine. It takes all scientific precautions as per ISO 10500 - 2012 to provide clean water to the people of the city.

Among those present during the event were ED Dr M Satyanarayana, ENC, Director Operations-1 Ajmira Krishna, Project Director Sridhar Babu, Revenue Director VL Praveen Kumar, Director Operations-2 Swamy, Technical Director Ravi Kumar, Rainwater Harvesting OST Satyanarayana, Brahma Kumaris Anjali Devi, Didi Shobhadevi, representatives of NGOs and other officials.

Three accused in TSPSC paper leak suspended

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two accused employees, teacher Renuka and her husband Dakya Nayak and Medchal police constable Srinivas were suspended from their jobs. Renuka works as a Hindi teacher in a residential school in Wanaparthy district. Dakya Nayak is working as an employment guarantee technical assistant in Vikarabad district.

Orders have reportedly been issued that both of them are suspended from duty. It is known that Renuka is in Chanchalguda women's jail. The police have added the names of Renuka as A3 and Dakya Nayak as A4 in the paper leak case. SIT officials are getting vital information from the accused in the TSPSC paper leakage case. It is learnt that the main accused Praveen Kumar and Rajashekar Reddy started trying for Group-1 paper from June and stole the paper in the first week of October. SIT officials interrogated nine accused in the paper leak incident for the third day. On the first two days, the SIT interrogated both of them individually and on the third day they interrogated all of them together for a short time.

Minister urges banks to encourage dairy farming

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjana Reddy said that demand for milk could not be met from within the state and is procured from other states. He requested the banks to encourage dairy farming to make the state self-sufficient in dairy and dairy products.

He spoke at the State-level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) meeting convened on Tuesday to review the performance of the banks for the quarter ended December 2022.

Amit Jhingran, Chief General Manager, SBI and President of SLBC, presented the performance of the banks during the current financial year upto December 2022. He said total deposits of the banks have increased by Rs 15105 crore during the current financial year and the total deposits were at Rs 647,630 crore.



During the current financial year, banks have lent short-term production loans amounting to Rs 42,499 crore achieving 62.62% of the annual targets. Banks have disbursed Rs 31,843 crore as investment credit to agri. allied, infra and ancillary activities achieving 90% of the targets.

Under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhyasan, banks have sanctioned Rs 10,342 crore and disbursed Rs 9,371 crore to beneficiaries under Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line of 30%. Under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, banks

have sanctioned Rs 872 crore against a target of Rs 3,075 crore set for four years (from FY 2020-21).

K Ramakrishna Rao, Special Chief Secretary (Finance), complimented the banks for the achievements under priority sector lending and urged the banks to continue the efforts to achieve the targets.

M Raghunandan Rao, Secretary (Agriculture), Ronald Rose, Secretary (Finance), Y Haragopal, General Manager, NABARD and KS Chakravarthy, DGM, RBI, spoke on the occasion.

Six held for refilling cylinders for commercial use

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Special Operations Team of the Balanagar zone, in coordination with Jagatgirigutta police, on March 20 arrested six persons for refilling domestic cylinders for commercial use.

The accused were identified as Gunnam Shiva (34), a gas supplier and resident of Jagatgirigutta, Nookathottu Naresh (27), also a resident of Jagatgirigutta, Boyani Suresh (35), a driver; Garala Mahesh (28), a gas supplier and resident of Bachupally, Sadladi Nagaraju (39), a gas supplier and resident of Bachupally and Suruvula Karthik (21).

Other two accused identified as Abdul Khadar and Kalvagada Krishna are absconding. The Special Operation Team of the Balnagar zone was informed of the illegal sale of cylinders at Allwyn Colony.

Upon reaching the spot, the police teams found three

of the accused unloading the cylinders from a truck and an auto trolley. Shiva confessed to buying cylinders from Mahesh and sold them to customers.

Naresh and Suresh also confessed to being part of the crime. Upon being interrogated, Shiva revealed the location and person from whom he purchased the cylinders.

The police then searched Mahesh's residence where they found three other vehicles and arrested Karthik as well.

In all, 190 commercial cylinders, 67 HP cylinders, six mobile phones, five vehicles including a trolley and four trucks, 26 filling pipes and four weighing machines were seized from the accused.

They were charged under Sections 3(a) 9(b), and 4 of the LPG Regulations and Supply Act of 2000 along with Section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act.

HDRF LAUNCHES CENTRE IN CITY

Vaccination drive for stray dogs on Mar 24

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hermione Duncan Reddy Foundation (HDRF) on Tuesday launched its centre in Hyderabad.

The HDRF, which is an offshoot of the SEVEN OAKS pet hospital in Florida, USA, will conduct a vaccination drive for stray dogs on March 24. Speaking at the launch, Dr Sree Reddy, Founder & President HDRF, said, "India currently has 32 million pets, and the population is growing at a rate of more than 12% per year. During the pandemic, it grew to 32 million, which is almost a two times growth in the last couple of years. In all, 14 million pets die annually to treatable illnesses due to families being unable to afford pet care."

"However, while the industry has grown significantly, there



are still challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges facing the pet care industry in India is the lack of a robust and organised pet care community. Many pet parents in India rely on local veterinarians, who may not have the necessary training or resources to provide adequate care for their pets," the president added.

Shedding light on the challenges faced by pet-parents, Reddy said, "There is a shortage

of pet-specific products and services in many areas, which makes it difficult for pet parents to find the products and services that they need for their pets. Apart from the pet centre, HDRF intends to establish a hospital and diagnostic lab for the treatment of animals.

Actor-director R Sarath Kumar, who was the chief guest said, "Living and staying with pets will increase our productivity besides relieving stress."

Ocular TB discussed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of the World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, the LV Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI) on Tuesday highlighted the spread of Ocular TB.

Explaining the possibility of Ocular TB, Dr Soumyava Basu, Network Head, Uveitis Services, LVPEI, said, "TB could spread from lungs to any part of the body. Is there tuberculosis (TB) in the eye? How do you get TB in the eye? This question is often asked not only by the public, but also by physicians who treat patients with TB. This is surprising as the TB bacteria was first discovered in the eye in 1884."

It was discovered two years after Dr Robert Koch announced the identification of the bacterium that causes TB, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, in 1882 on March 24. Hence, it is now being recognised as World TB Day by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

SCR ticket checking staff collect Rs 9 crore in fines

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The South Central Railway has been continuously undertaking intensive ticket checking drives to curb unauthorised travel and curtail any inconvenience to the bona fide rail users.

In this direction, teams of ticket checking staff have been putting in relentless efforts leading to the improvement in ticket sales over the zone. Nine ticket checking staff of SCR collected a record fine Rs 1 crore each from commuters travelling without ticket, irregular travelling and un-booked luggage. The nine staff members collected a whopping Rs 9.62 crore from 1.16 lakh commuters through their intensive ticket checking drives in various trains.

Each of the nine ticket checking staff through their dedicated efforts, have made it to the One Crore Club in the current financial year 2022-23.



This is the first time in the history of South Central Railway that any individual ticket checking staff has crossed Rs 1 crore in earnings. The staff included seven from Secunderabad division and one each from Guntakal and Vijayawada divisions. T Natarajan, Chief Ticket Inspector or Sr DCM Batch of Secunderabad division is the highest earner and realised an amount of Rs 1.16 crore from 12,689 passengers travelling without ticket or irregular tickets and carrying un-booked luggage.

Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, South Central Railway, commended the ticket checking staff for their exemplary performance and dedication. He also congratulated the entire commercial wing for their continuous efforts in curbing ticketless and irregular travel. He stated that ticket checking is one of the critical mechanisms which helps in reducing unauthorised travel in trains while also building confidence among the genuine rail passengers. He appealed to all the rail passengers to travel with valid railway tickets.

283 people died in road accidents till Feb: TSRTC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has declared that in this financial year till February, 283 people died in road accidents. There are 71 pedestrians and 25 per cent of those who died due to road accidents were pedestrians.

TSRTC officials conducted a thorough investigation into the nature of the accidents and it revealed that pedestrians die in road accidents due to

lack of proper understanding of traffic rules. It was also said that TSRTC buses are prone to accidents because some pedestrians do not follow minimum precautions.

TSRTC is taking all measures to prevent road accidents. Special training has also been given to around 4,000 rental bus drivers recently. To prevent road accidents, safety wardens have been appointed at every depot. But TSRTC buses are prone to road accidents due to small mistakes made by pedestrians knowingly or unknowingly. These accidents are caused by carelessness.

"If we look at the road accidents, it is clear that they do not have proper understanding of traffic rules. That is why pedestrians should always be alert on the roads. The danger is to the lives of those who behave carelessly," TSRTC Chairman, Bajireddy Govardhan and MD VC Sajjanar warned.

Pedestrians should use footpaths. Pedestrians cross nation-

als and state highways in rural areas carelessly. Use the zebra line while crossing the road. Where there is no zebra line, the road should be crossed only when there is no vehicular traffic on either side. Don't be distracted, he added.

Pedestrians should use flash lights while crossing the road at night.

It is dangerous to cross the road while using cell phones and headphones. They may not hear the honking of vehicles, said the officials.

QR code for open spaces initiated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The municipal department on Tuesday announced the initiation of QR inventorisation of open spaces to prevent their encroachment.

Principal Secretary of Municipal Administration and Urban Development Arvind Kumar took to Twitter and announced that the exercise has been done in five areas, includ-

ing Bandlaguda Jagir, Adibatla, Kamareddy, Shamshabad and Narsingi. He further stated that the inventorisation of other parks and open spaces will also be initiated.

Kumar also shared details of the inventorisation of the five locations. The authority has conducted the survey of the open spaces in these locations based on the total area of the space and its present usage.

CP asks officials to stay alert ahead of Ramzan, other fests

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police CV Anand on Tuesday asked security personnel to be alert ahead of Ramzan, Hanuman Jayanti and Ramanavami, which will be observed in the following days.

Anand called for traffic monitoring and management at religious places in order to avoid inconvenience to commuters. SHO and detective Inspectors were instructed to stretch beyond their working hours during the festive month.

He also stressed the need to keep a close tab on hate-mongers and netizens who post blasphemous or instigating posts on social media. Filing cases and expediting issuance of notices to the perpetrators were the directives given.

Addressing a review meeting, Anand said, "Bind over all communal rowdies, suspects sector-wise and PS wise. Revive peace committees and on board members who have genuine intent to serve the community."

The commissioner also appraised police officials regarding Drones & Cameras Maintenance Organisation (D-



Camo) which will be used by all police stations to monitor repair works in their respective areas.

He also asked attendees to take up installation of new CCTV cameras in their respective areas.

Anand also reviewed the progress of the attendees on the FitCop app, and emphasised the importance of anti-sabotage checks, liaising with other emergency services during the upcoming festivals.

He urged everyone to work together to ensure that the celebrations are conducted peacefully and without any untoward incidents.

Fasting has long-term mental health benefits

MOHAMMED BALEEGH ■ AMARAVATI

With Ramzan slated to begin on March 23, a lot of emphasis is being put on various foods that are consumed during the holy month. However, one often neglects the effect it has on our mental health.

This reporter reached out to Zara Siddiqui, a counselling psychologist and lifestyle expert and a former Head of Department at St Ann's College, in order to understand how Ramzan affects mental health in the long term.

Speaking of the holy month, Siddiqui said, "The impact of Ramzan on one's mental

health is felt over time when endorphins are released while adapting to the changes. Initially, it may lead to an adrenaline rush which may lead to dehydration, nausea, and acidity, among others. Those who are spiritual are better prepared to handle the shift since they have a calming capacity," she said.

Elaborating on the psychological effect, Siddiqui said, "The brain creates self stimulation which makes people feel relieved of their stress and depression."

"The food that we have also impacts our mental health. Frozen and fried food have a long-term impact on a person's



mental health affecting neurological activity. It may lead to exhaustion and disturb the

sleep cycle." "Fasting helps us cleanse the digestive system and reduces fatigue leading to

lower stress levels," she added.

Addressing a query on women's mental health during Ramzan, the psychologist said, "The Asian culture is a different ballgame altogether. They go through a lot of physical and emotional turmoil during Ramzan.

Despite being the jack of all trades, they are likely to experience more mental health issues than men."

"Reportedly due to the obsessive compulsive behaviour of constant cleaning, managing kitchen, household chores and a career, women are at a risk of suffering from situational anxiety, hormonal imbalances leading to irritable

mood, nausea, or frequent headaches and migraines. Poor sleeping habits or disrupted sleep cycle, fatigue, nervous and emotional breakdowns due to excessive pressure among others," she explained.

"A few steps to keep ourselves away from the chaos include, practicing routine cleaning rather than only festive cleaning and dividing the work among family members. This creates positive self affirmations and breaks the gender biased stereotypes; dining simple and light, refrain from processed, deep fried and frozen foods. They create an impact both on mind and body," Siddiqui concluded.

BJP-led Centre undermining democracy, say Ministers

PNS ■ NALGONDA/
KARIMNAGAR

Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy and Minister for Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakar went at the BJP-led Central government hammer and tongs for its anti-people policies. They criticised the Centre for undermining democracy.

While Jagadish Reddy scoffed at the Centre for Delhi "concocting excise scam," though there was no such scandal at all. It was Delhi excise policy only. The BJP was painting the policies as "scams" to unleash a campaign of vendetta against its opponents.

Speaking at Atmiya Sammelan at Ramannapet under the Nakrekal Assembly constituency, Jagadish Reddy made it clear that the Delhi government had designed a new excise policy. It was not a scam at all. The CBI and Income offi-



Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy speaking to the media at Ramannapet in Suryapet district on Tuesday



Minister for Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakar speaking at BRS party meeting in Karimnagar on Tuesday

cials were aware of the facts. The BJP-led Centre weaponised the Enforcement Directorate to harass the opponent. The BRS MLC K Kavitha had done nothing wrong, he asserted.

Kamalakar and Jagadish Reddy appealed to people to strengthen the hands of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. Kamalakar said that the Congress and the BJP are "Delhi

parties." "If they come to power in the State, they will deprive the State of natural resources," Kamalakar warned.

Speaking at the BRS meeting in Karimnagar, the Minister stressed the need for unity in party ranks. The BRS alone can ensure a bright future for the youth. The BRS is the party for the weaker sections. The State government launched several

welfare schemes for the poor and senior citizens, he pointed out. Telangana is known for communal harmony and co-existence, he said.

While the Chief Minister launched a welfare programme for women, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was reducing womenfolk to tears. "When women cry, it does not bode well for the nation's future," he said.



Inter-state gang selling fake gold busted

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The Nalgonda police busted an inter-state gang which cheated the people by selling fake gold in the district on Tuesday. The police arrested three persons.

District Superintendent of Police K Approva told the media that the gang from Rajasthan cheated some persons in the district by selling fake gold. They lured the gullible by offering genuine gold at a very low price. Once the customer was convinced, they got the jewellery made out of cheap metals and thus cheated the people.

BRS reduced to Kavitha Rakshana Samithi: Madhu Yashki

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BRS has become Kavitha Rakshana Samithi (KRS), TPCC Campaign Committee Chairman Madhu Yashki Goud wondered whether Telangana Ministers are functioning as a protection ring for BRS MLC Kavitha in New Delhi.

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan here on Tuesday, Madhu asked why BRS leaders, particularly Kavitha, did not protest when BRS MLC Padi Kaushik Reddy made inappropriate comments against the Governor, Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan.

The ED arrested former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who benefited through the BRS, but why is it that the ED is not arresting the liquor scam mastermind Kavitha in the Delhi



liquor scam case.

From where did Kavitha get costly watches and villas, he asked and demanded that the ED and the CBI should probe the source of liquor supplied in Telangana.

Madhu said that both the BJP and the BRS are one and that they are trying to deflect public attention from the Adani scam by bringing the Delhi liquor scam on to the screen.

He said that Rahul Gandhi didn't speak in an insulting manner about the nation but only spoke about the conditions in India.

Alleging that the Kalvakuntla family earned thousands of crores from the sand and liquor mafia, Madhu said that the people have to bury politically the Kalvakuntla family for looting Telangana.

He said that Kavitha herself earned thousands of crores in the name of Bathukamma and asked people to think about the Kalvakuntla family which was once not in a position to purchase even a flight ticket but is now roaming around on special flights.

He said that Kavitha started her liquor business from AP and later took it to Delhi. He asked Kavitha to explain why she did not approach the Supreme Court if she had not committed any offence.



Villagers taking out a procession on Medaripet national highway in Mancherial district on Tuesday with the body of student Saisham who committed suicide due to alleged harassment by a youth

STUDENT SUICIDE

Family members and villagers want accused to be brought to book

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

The family members of Saisham, a student who committed suicide after being allegedly harassed by a youth at Kotha Mamidipally village under Dandepally mandal, staged a road blockade on Medaripet national highway. The family members of the girl were supported by the villagers.

The family members and the villagers demanded that the police arrest N Vinay Kumar, who allegedly harassed and girl in the name of love. The youth allegedly exerted pressure on the girl even after her parents fixed a date for her marriage, the vil-

lagers said.

The family members, supported by the villagers, took out a procession with the girl's body and demanded that the Commissioner of Police give an assurance of action against the guilty.

They sought severe punishment for the youth for allegedly driving Saisham to commit suicide. The police persuaded the protesters to lift the blockade.

According to villagers, Saishama consumed pesticide on March 18 after she was harassed by the youth. She was rushed to NIMS in Hyderabad for expert treatment. She died while undergoing treatment on Monday.

‘EXORCIST’ EXTORTS RS 60 LAKH FROM FAMILY

Fake Baba making waves in Nagarkurnool

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Beware of fake godmen! The rationalists keep warning the people, but the gullible people keep falling into the trap of the Babas. The latest episode of a family falling victim to an alleged fake Baba came to light in Nagarkurnool

The fake godman, who masqueraded as an exorcist, allegedly wangled up to Rs 60 lakh from a family and threatened the family members with "dire consequences" when they asked him to return the money. The family now approached Nagarkurnool District Superintendent of Police K Manohar and lodged a complaint with the police.

The alleged godman, according to the complaint filed by the family, claimed to be an exorcist and that he would weed out evil spirits that possess human beings. The Baba lured the gullible people by distributing amulets, claiming that these ornaments would give protection against evil, danger or disease for those who tie them to their hands.

As he gained fame, a man approached him after his daughter took ill. The Baba allegedly misled the man by saying that the girl was possessed by an evil spirit and it should be weeded out. He forged a close friendship with the girl's family and started



Victims of alleged fake Baba submitting a memorandum to Nagarkurnool District Superintendent of Police K Manohar in Nagarkurnool

going to their house. The Baba, the complaint said, had managed to persuade the family to lend him Rs 60 lakh over a period of time. The family borrowed the money to lend to the Baba. He wangled the

money by appealing to the family members that he needed the money desperately.

The officials, when contacted, said that an investigation was launched into the activities of the so-call godman. He reportedly claimed to be an expert in exorcising persons of evil spirits. The officials also received a complaint that he had misbehaved with a woman.

On learning the episode, rationalists cautioned people not to fall victim to superstitions and lose their hard-earned money to fraudsters.

It is not unusual for some persons to be affected by mental and neurological disorders at some point in their lives.

14 cows killed as private bus ploughs into herd

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Fourteen cows were killed when a private bus ploughed into the herd at Buggabavigudem village in the district on Tuesday. Six more cows were injured.

The bus was on its way to Hyderabad from Chennai when it crashed into a herd of



Carcasses of cows died in a road accident in Nalgonda district on Tuesday

cattle. The people in the village accused the bus driver of being responsible for the accident. The farmer, who herded the cattle, had a narrow escape, the villagers said. The farmer, who owned the cattle, suffered a huge financial loss.

The police registered a case and the investigation is on.

GHMC panel approves 23 proposals

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi chaired the standing committee meeting held on Tuesday and approved a total of 23 items to finish constructions.

The approved list includes the beautification of Central Median in Brahmakumari Circle from Gachibowli in Serilingampally Zone under Corporate Social Responsibility for a period of three years i.e. from January 2023 to December 2025.

Acquisition of 178 properties for construction of link road from Khaja Mansion Function Hall Road to Sarojini Devi Road for 18 meters was also approved.

The committee approved acquisition of 29 properties for widening of the proposed road from Heritage Building to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 12 meter road from Heritage Building to King Koti and from St Joseph Degree College back to King Koti under Strategic Road Development Plan.

The committee approved acquisition of 136 properties for 30 meter road width near Johara Bhi Dargah.

Collector warns doctors, health workers of action against laxity

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

District Collector Bhavesh Misra has called upon the District Medical and Health personnel to provide better healthcare to people in government hospitals and asked them to work with commitment and sincerity. Otherwise, disciplinary action would have to be taken against them, he said.

He reviewed the progress of medical and health services available at the district hospital, sanitation on the premises of the hospital, the institutional deliveries conducted in the government hospitals, the number of vacancies in hospitals and how to fill them, salaries of the outsourcing



Jayashankar Bhupalapally Collector Bhavesh Mishra holding a review meeting with officials of Medical and Health Department in Bhupalapally on Tuesday

staff, their attendance and leaves with concerned officials in the chamber of the medical superintendent on Tuesday.

He said that the state government took measures to ensure that doctors and paramedical staff are available in

the hospital and basic amenities to provide better services to patients at the hospital. Therefore, the hospital should extend better medicare to the people in tune with the amenities. He said that under no circumstances there should be a dereliction of duty at the district hospital. He asked the medical officers to always remain accessible to the people and extend better amenities. He asked the DMHO to remove negligent doctors and para-medical staff from government rolls and replace them with new staff.

DMHO Dr Sriram, Medical Superintendent Dr Jeedi Tirupati, medical officers and paramedical staff and others took part in the meeting.



12 persons injured as bus hits tree

PNS ■ YADADRI-BHUVANAGIRI

At least 12 passengers in a TSRTC bus suffered injuries when it crashed into a roadside tree at Padmavativarigudem under Valigonda mandal in the district on Tuesday.

There were in all 26 passengers in the bus when the accident happened. The bus driver was trapped in the mangled cabin as the front of the bus suffered severe dam-

age. The local people came to the rescue of the driver and managed to extricate him from the mangled cabin. The driver suffered serious injuries.

The police, who arrived at the scene, shifted the injured passengers to Bhuvangiri Area Hospital. Tahsildar Ganesh and sub-inspector of police Prabhakar rushed to the scene of the accident and helped the passengers injured in the accident.

Plea to compensate farmers for crop loss due to freak rains

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

TPCC leader and Congress in-charge for Bhupalapally constituency Gandra Satyanarayana Rao has demanded that the State government come to the rescue of the farmers affected by the recent unseasonal rains.

He inspected the damaged crops due to unseasonal rains in Buddhaharam village of Ganapuram mandal of the district on Tuesday. He said the farmers invested lakhs of rupees to raise chilli, maize and paddy crops. But the unseasonal rains played spoilsport with the standing crops. Therefore, he wanted the state government to stand by the



TPCC leader Gandra Satyanarayana Rao interacting with farmers at Regonda village in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district on Tuesday

farmers and demanded it to pay a compensation of Rs 70,000 per acre for chilli crops and Rs 50,000 per acre for maize crops.

Later, he undertook door-to-door visits in Regonda village as part of Hath-Se-Hath Jodo Yatra and educated people on the failures of the state and central governments.

TSPSC PAPER LEAK

Students’ unions lock horns on political lines

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The day ended at Osmania University with various demands of the united student unions. One group claimed to resolve the TSPSC paper leakage issue by dethroning Minister KT Rama Rao and also announce the job calendar immediately.

However BRSV president Srinivas Yadav gave a counter that allegations on the ruling party are a political conspiracy and condemned Revanth Reddy's visit to Osmania University.

Srinivas Yadav said, "The opposition speeches are creating confusion among job aspirants. The claims against



Minister KT Rama Rao and his PA are false. We believe that MP Revanth Reddy is behind the wife of the accused filing a petition in the High Court. The ruling party has transferred the case to SIT and investigation will punish the culprits. There are instances of question paper leakage in BJP- ruled states. Did any Chief Minister or minister resign? Then why should the leaders demand the resignation

of BRS party leaders?"

The students must prepare for the examinations and they will be given justice with further notifications as BRS always stood with job aspirants in the state, he added.

Sharath Naik, state president of Girijana Shakthi said, "IT minister KT Rama Rao should be removed from the Cabinet in connection with the TSPSC exam paper leakage

case. The state government should announce a job of Rs one lakh to the 33 lakh unemployed students registered in the TSPSC.

TSPSC Chairman, Secretary and members should be removed. Job calendar should be announced immediately. The matter of leakage of TSPSC examination papers should be investigated by the CBI or sitting judge." The united students wing said that on the 24th and 25th of this month, an unemployment rally will be held at Arts College from 1 pm. Congress Party President Revanth Reddy and leaders of public organisations will participate in support of this programme.



Paper leaks common: Oppn making fuss, says Indrakaran

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister Indrakaran Reddy commented that the question paper leak is quite natural and commonly occurring thing, like Tenth, Intermediate (examination) paper leaks happen in many ways.

However, it is wrong to blame Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao in the matter.

"Calling KTR the culprit, or wanting to send notice to CM, the opposition is making baseless charge".

The Minister said, "PCC chief Revanth Reddy is speaking without any evidence.

What is wrong if SIT asks Revanth Reddy for evidence...?. BJP State president Bandi Sanjay himself doesn't know what he speaks". Indrakaran Reddy asked how the opposition leaders spoke about the leaks without evidence.

Responding to Indrakaran Reddy, BSP's R S Praveen Kumar said, "This is the knowledge of our Ministers. If such people are in power, why wouldn't leaks happen? Don't know how many were passed thru the backdoor by these leaders.

How many years did this scam run?"

‘Young achiever’ award for Class 9 student

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

It was a proud moment for the Paramita educational institutions as its student Shubhashree Sahu, a ninth-class student, received the young achiever of Telangana award for her innovation in science from Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

At a programme organised in Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad on the eve of the Subhakaruth Ugadi festival on Monday night, the Governor presented the award to Shubhashree Sahu, guide teacher Lalit Mohan Sahu and Paramita schools chairman E Prasada Rao.

Incidentally, Shubhashree is the only student from the school segment in the State to receive the award among the 13 young winners.

Shubhashree Sahu, a ninth



Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan presenting the 'young achiever' award to Shubhashree Sahu at Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad on Monday

student from Paramita Heritage School (CBSE) in Karimnagar town, designed a science project "Multi-functional Eco-friendly Agro machine" won several national awards, including the winner of the CBSE National Science exhibition and was adjudged as the best project under the theme 'Environment concern' among all the participating CBSE schools in the country in New Delhi from February 7 to 9, 2023.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
WORKS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER

• NIT No. 06/SCDF/SD/CE/R&B/RR/2022-23. Dt: 20-03-2023.
1. Tenders are invited for Two (02) Road works sanctioned under SCDF Scheme i.e. One (01) work in Madak District (one) work in Nalgonda District respectively & Two (02) Bridge works sanctioned under 1 in SCDF & 1 in STDF Scheme in Nalgonda District & Madak District respectively vide Chief Engineer (R&B), Rural Roads, 2. Tenders can download the tender schedules & Further details at i.e. <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/> from 27-03-2023 from 4:00 PM last date 2023 up to 5:00 PM. Sd/- For Chief Engineer (R&B), Rural Roads, Hyd.
R.O. No.: 1476-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NIT No. EE/IS/DIV-XIV/RJNR/GHMC/2022-23. Date: 21-03-2023
Name of Work: for 05 No. works of Construction of Compound wall and repairs to Bathroom, Laying of damaged occipities / Stretches and Laying of CC Road in Rajendranagar Circle-11, GHMC. Estimate Amount/ECV: Rs. 55.28 Lakhs. Downloading Start Date & Time: 23.03.2023 at 2.30 P.M. Last Date & Time for receipts of Bid: 27.03.2023 at 2.45 P.M. Name & Address: E/EE: Executive Engineer, Rajendranagar Div. No.11 GHMC, Cell No. 9989930906, e-mail id: eec11.ghmc2@gmail.com Sd/- Executive Engineer
R.O.No: 13589-PPCL/ADVT/1/2022-23, Dt. 21.03.2023 Division-XI, (R&NR), GHMC

NORTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
CIN No. U40509TG2005SGC034119.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE No. 03/2022-23 OF DEIOPHHK
WITH SPECIFICATION No. 01/2022-23

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors of Warangal District (Eerstwhile) for erection of 1 No. additional 8 (8MVA PTR by providing 1 No. 33KV VCB and 2 No's 11KV VCB to overcome the up-coming load in summer in 33/11 KV KUC SS of Naimargam Section of Naimargam Sub-division in Hanamkonda Town division in Operation Circle Hanamkonda. The details of the works and other information can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in. Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Hanamkonda

TENDER NOTICE No. 19/22-23 of DEIOPNHKOTHAUDUM
WITH SPECIFICATION No. 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07 & 08 / 2022-23

Sealed tenders are invited from TSNPDCL registered contractors for fixing of agency for Estimate for execution of various works in Yellandu Rural, Gadagupally, Paloncha Town-1, Mulakalpalay & Kothagudem South Sections in Kothagudem Division of Bhadrachal Kothagudem Circle. The details of the tender can be obtained from our website www.tsnpdcl.in. Sd/- Divisional Engineer, Operation, Kothagudem
R.O. No.: 1417-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2022-23

Elusive fugitive

Khalistani leader Amritpal Singh dodges 80,000 Punjab cops, and yet Kejriwal lauds CM Mann

Politics, Niccolo Machiavelli said, has no relation to morals. Often, it also has no relation to facts, commonsense, and decency. Nothing else explains Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's praise for his Punjab counterpart and party colleague Bhagwant Mann for the latter's handling of the situation arising out of Khalistani leader Amritpal Singh's inflammatory remarks and violent activities. Amritpal has the temerity to take on the entire official machinery of Punjab. The Central Government believes that Amritpal is a Pakistani agent. He openly supports Khalistan, makes anti-national statements, and disregards the Indian Constitution; his followers, protesting against the arrest of one of Amritpal's supporters, attack a police station, leaving many cops injured. The result? The cops meekly endure the assaults; and his follower is released the next day. When an attempt is made to arrest Amritpal, he dodges the police. Even after a number of days, in which many of his supporters were arrested and many arms recovered from them, police are unable to find him. And yet, Kejriwal has the cheek to say, "I want to congratulate Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann for maintaining the law and order situation in a patient and mature way." Congratulate for what? Letting a non-entity emerge as a great rebel? Restraining the police to act against an anti-national character so that he grows bigger, becomes Bhindranwale 2.0? Letting violent Khalistanis attack a police station — and getting away with it? Party camaraderie and partisanship are important but more important is national interest.

Instead of lauding his party leader and Punjab CM, Kejriwal should pay heed to what the Punjab and Haryana High Court said on Tuesday. Blasting the Punjab police for their inability to arrest Amritpal who heads an outfit called Waris Punjab De, the court said, "You have 80,000 cops. What were they doing? How did Amritpal Singh escape?" The Punjab Police informed the high court that, in a major crackdown against Amritpal Singh and his outfit, they arrested 120 of his supporters, but that didn't impress the court. And rightly so. He should have been under watch — very strict watch. After all, he not only promotes secession but also assassination. Former Punjab CM Beant Singh was blown up by Dilawar Singh, who acted as a human bomb. Amritpal Singh says that many Dilawars are ready in Punjab. But the Mann Government did not do that. Bharatiya Janata Party national executive member Sunil Jakhar correctly said, "The operation that could have been carried out without any force and show-off is now today being done in front of the whole country." It looks like the Aam Aadmi Party, which rules Punjab, is weighing political gains and losses before doing anything against Amritpal Singh. AAP leaders became successful by making all manner of statements and distributing freebies. But you need more than fiscal profligacy to tackle separatism.



Missing the chorus chirping

It is far better to hear the chirping, rather than the numb silence. The sparrows have disappeared so quietly that no one noticed them go

A little bird, with plumage brown,
Beside my window flutters down,
A moment chirps its little strain,
Ten taps upon my window-pane,
And chirps again, and hops along,
To call my notice to its song;
But I work on, nor heed its lay,
Till, in neglect, it flies away.



people have been too busy to even notice their choral chirping, let alone miss their presence. The house sparrow (Passer domesticus) is no longer what it used to be — our 'common' friend. According to scientists, sparrows thrived around human beings and where grain was abundant. Lack of nesting sites in modern concrete buildings, disappearing kitchen gardens and a general apathy of humans towards this small but attractive bird have deprived them of their general habitat.

We remembered this 'common' household member on "World Sparrow Day" on March 20 — a result of a vigorous campaign by scientist-conservationist Mohammad Dilawar, founder of "Natura Forever". But we also need to be serious as this little bird is gradually edging towards

extinction and is listed in the Red List of endangered species of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as well as of the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB), United Kingdom.

There is a sharp decline in many places in India such as Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal, Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, etc. However, a ray of hope has emerged with the "State of India's Birds 2000" report, which suggests that the population of House Sparrows has been fairly stable for the past 25 years. The report is based on 10 million observations contributed by over 15,500 birdwatchers since 2000, to an online portal called eBird. It suggests that the population of House Sparrows has been fairly stable for the past 25 years.

The history of the house sparrow is also fascinating. It was the ancient Romans who introduced the house sparrow to Europe from North Africa and Eurasia. Scientific studies also point to the astonishing fact that wherever there is a human population, sparrows follow them there. Fossil evidence from a cave in

Bethlehem dating back 4,00,000 years suggests that the house sparrow shared its space with early humans. Conservationists attribute the decline in the population of house sparrows to the unfriendly architecture of our homes. This is because of chemical fertilisers in our crops, noise pollution that disturbs the acoustic environment and noxious exhaust fumes from vehicles. A report further attributed the depleting population of sparrows to the increased use of packed food, insecticides in farming, and changing lifestyles. This resulted in inadequate food supplies for the birds. They also feel that unlike pigeons that can make nests on ledges, sparrows need cavities to build their nests. Since the newly constructed defective architectural matchbox style buildings don't have cavities, sparrows are left homeless. Ornithologists suggest that people should provide some places in their homes for shelter, where sparrows can easily make their own nests and lay their eggs.

(The writer is programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti)



RAJDEEP PATHAK

It is strange that when we can experience bliss everyday, a day is earmarked by the U.N. General Assembly to create awareness about the value of happiness in one's life. It passed a resolution to the effect on 12 July 2012 and proclaimed 20 March as the International Day of Happiness. While it is astonishing that mankind has devised a benchmark for calculating the happiness index, the true nature of happiness cannot be ascertained. It is relative and differs from person to person. For some, money, muscle power, well paid jobs, and material achievement constitute happiness. On the other hand, others hark back on name, fame, social status, family life to be happy. Still others equate happiness to leading a luxurious life.

We tend to let our desire to achieve something fade away at some point in our lives. Our sorrow originates from these reasons, and leading a content life helps us balance it. Studies have also demonstrated that work-life balance is a necessary prerequisite for harmonious living. However, there is consensus that happiness is a state of mind. Still, more often than not people fail to remain satisfied based on their past experiences. This is because they forget the fact that true happiness cannot be found in the past or worrying about the future. Instead, it can be found in concentrating our body, mind and soul in the present state of affairs or living fully in the present.

It does not come from getting what you want but emanates from wanting what you have.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

THE VALUE OF HAPPINESS

Sir — It is strange that when we can experience bliss everyday, a day is earmarked by the U.N. General Assembly to create awareness about the value of happiness in one's life. It passed a resolution to the effect on 12 July 2012 and proclaimed 20 March as the International Day of Happiness. While it is astonishing that mankind has devised a benchmark for calculating the happiness index, the true nature of happiness cannot be ascertained. It is relative and differs from person to person. For some, money, muscle power, well paid jobs, and material achievement constitute happiness. On the other hand, others hark back on name, fame, social status, family life to be happy. Still others equate happiness to leading a luxurious life.

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GRAVE SITUATION FOR ADIVASIS

Sir — Adivasis are suppressed and still remain backward in our society and are treated shabbily despite decades having rolled by since India's independence. It is common at major festivals to see Adivasis depicted as 'noble savages', dancing in feathers and grass skirts. This is for an uninformed public to gawk at like creatures in a zoo. Even as there were celebrations at Droupadi Murmu becoming the first

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Open letter to the BJP president



ir your speech after virtually inaugurating the National Youth Parliament of BJP Yuva Marcha rightly asserted that those who do not believe in democracy cannot participate. Rahul Gandhi was definitely in mind when you said the above words. According to Rahul Gandhi, democracy is under threat under BJP's rule. Is it not true Naddaji? You said that Rahul Gandhi has crossed all bounds of democracy and instigated foreign powers like US and European countries to interfere in India's internal affairs. But will you show any one of the videos of the UK, in which Rahul Gandhi said foreign countries interfere in India? No you cannot. In Fact there are numerous videos circulating in YouTube of the PM. Narendra Modi insulting India in foreign countries. You have for-

Adivasi and the youngest to become president of the country, how many people in this country really know about the lives of different Adivasi tribes? The average Indian citizen has little to no knowledge about Adivasis, their varied cultures, religions and beliefs. The Adivasi communities, constituting about 40 percent of the displaced, therefore earnestly look forward to president Murmu to immediately look into their grave situations and reduce the pain of their displacement through her good offices.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

OPPOSITION SOLIDARITY

Sir — It is obvious that if the opposition does not come together, then the BJP's majority in the upcoming 2024 elections is certain. Uniting the opposition is extremely difficult. There are the following reasons

gotten that the PM also humiliates the citizens by saying nothing was done in 60 years and insulting India by claiming that the people lamented what sin they committed to have been in this country. You are asking Rahul Gandhi to apologize for his comments. Will you dare to ask the PM to apologize for his comments? No you don't. If it is wrong to Peter it is also definitely wrong to Paul also.

You claimed that Rahul Gandhi has become a permanent feature of the 'anti-nationalist tool kit'. What proof do you have of it Nadda Ji? You've forgotten that Rahul Gandhi comes from a patriotic family, his grandparents and father have sacrificed their lives for this country. The great grandfather of his father distributed all his wealth to this country and joined the freedom struggle. Finally, what is your contribution for this country? In eight years of rule instead of giving two crores of jobs to youth as you and your party promised, how many jobs were given to youth? Instead in this eight years of your rule your party has made the youth hate mongers among two communities. So please kindly introspect, Naddaji.

Zeeshan I Kazipet

for this. In Bihar, RJD and JDU together are creating an atmosphere to make Nitish Kumar as the prime minister of India. On the other hand, in the last election, the coordination of BSP and SP with Congress did not prove successful.

Turning to other parties, there is a direct contest between TMC and Congress in some political areas. And the Aam Aadmi Party, which has recently emerged as a national party, is in the process of replacing the Congress and becoming the opposition itself. Although not impossible. For a better position the opposition will have to focus more on ground issues like inflation, employment, education and poverty.

Rohit Pandey | New Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Fake diagnosis, fake prescription

Peddlers of the vehicles-pollute-Delhi narrative are silent over the most comprehensive study which blames biomass burning for the mess

If there is anything more polluted than Delhi's air, it is the discourse on the environment. For years, we were told that vehicular emissions were the root cause of dirty air in the national capital. Now, the most authoritative study on the subject has pointed out that the real reason is something else: biomass burning. The proponents of the vehicles-pollute-Delhi narrative are conspicuous by their silence on the matter.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, "Biomass is a renewable organic material that comes from plants and animals." It includes wood and wood processing wastes, agricultural crops and waste materials, biogenic materials in municipal solid waste, and animal manure and human sewage.

The study, led by the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, had contributions from 19 scholars and experts from the Physical Research Laboratory, IIT Delhi, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI), Switzerland, and University of Helsinki, Finland. Researcher Suneeti Mishra and Prof Sachchida Nand Tripathi, both from the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Kanpur, co-authored the paper.

In the study, published in the prestigious Nature Geoscience journal, the scholars "observed intense and frequent nocturnal particle growth events during haze development in Delhi from measurements of aerosols and gases during January-February at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi... We estimate that this process is responsible for 70 per cent of the total particle-number concentration during haze."

It went on to say "that the condensation of primary organic vapours from biomass burning is the leading cause of the observed growth." It further said, "As uncontrolled biomass burning for residential heating and cooking is rife in the Indo-Gangetic plain, we expect this growth mechanism to be a source of ultrafine particles, affecting the health of 5 per cent of the world's population and impacting the regional climate."



In other words, the health of almost 40 crore people is adversely affected by biomass burning.

Switzerland-based IQAir's recent World Air Quality Report confirmed this. It ranked Delhi and Rajasthan's Bhiwadi fourth on the list of 50 most polluted cities in the world in 2022. In addition, six Indian cities figure in the top 10 most polluted cities, 14 in the top 20, 39 in the top 50, and 65 in the top 100. In 2021, there were 61 in the top 100.

No one disputes that the quality of air is extremely poor in not just the national capital but also in entire northern India. It is a diagnosis that is not just wrong but also dangerously misleading. In addition, there has been a persistent effort on the part of doctrinaire environmentalists to distract attention from the real cause.

It is not that a non-vehicular source of pollution was never suspected or detected. In July 2021, for instance, a study by IIT Kanpur's Tripathi found that in summer, 52 per cent of Delhi's PM 2.5 concentration was because of dust.

Yet, the entire debate about the cause of air pollution revolved around vehicles, especially cars. This was the reason that the Delhi Government

“FEW ARE INTERESTED IN THE REAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION. THE FLOURISHING TRIBE OF ACTIVISTS IS CERTAINLY NOT INTERESTED IN ANYTHING THAT HURTS THEIR SHIBBOLETHS. BESIDES, IT IS EASIER TO BLAME EVERYTHING ON CAR OWNERS

under Arvind Kejriwal opted for the odd-even scheme to curb it.

Nothing could be further from the truth. According to the latest National Family Health Survey-5, just about 8 per cent of Indian households own cars. In Delhi, one in five households owns a car. In comparison, in Helsinki, the third cleanest city in the world, there are more than two cars for every individual. In general, Western nations have more cars per household than in India, and yet the air there is much cleaner than in our country.

At the heart of the problem of air pollution in India is not automobile density (which is low anyway) but illegal urbanisation; slums and unauthorised localities are destroying our cities. The consequences are rampant encroachments, unregulated and dangerous construction, solid waste dumping, contamination and death of water bodies, drying of aquifers, and countless more. Unsurprisingly, many areas become dust bowls—and are shrouded in a haze caused by biomass burning.

Addressing these issues presupposes a fundamental change in governance and politics. This certainly involves actions that would be disliked



RAVI SHANKER KAPOOR

by the beneficiaries of chaotic urbanisation: the residents, the local authorities, the local politicians, the bleeding-heart activists, even certain sections of the media. Anybody determined to clean up the mess runs the risk of being branded as 'anti-poor', heartless, etc.

It begins with a win-win situation. The original landowners get much higher prices than they would have got had they sold it as farmland; those with meager resources get a house of their own; the officials concerned get bribes; local politicians provide protection from legal action and get votes in return; and all manner of employers get a cheap workforce.

Few are interested in the real analysis of the situation, for that would mean challenging the dogmas of received wisdom.

The flourishing tribe of activists is certainly not interested in anything that hurts their shibboleths. Besides, it is easier to blame everything on those who are better off, like car owners. So, fake analysis continues, with horrifying consequences, as underlined by the IQAir report.

(The writer is Resident Editor, The Pioneer, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

FIRST COLUMN

NEP AND THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

It is a visionary document that takes school education to the next level



RADHIKA ZAHEDI

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 lays out an educational vision with a lot of promise for the future of education in India. One of the things it suggests is a revised structure for school education in India, known as the 5+3+3+4 model. This proposed structure proposes that we replace the existing 10+2 structure that has been in place for several decades. This is in order to provide a more flexible and holistic approach to education. Let's take a closer look at the 5+3+3+4 model, how it differs from the previous structure, and why it might be better for education in India in the future.

The 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 Model

The 5+3+3+4 model is the latest structure for school education in India that is proposed in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The "5" in the model refers to the foundational stage, which includes the first five years of schooling, from ages 3 to 8. The focus at this stage is on play and activity-based learning, with an emphasis on the development of cognitive and social-emotional skills. The first "3" in the model refers to the preparatory stage, which encompasses the next three years of schooling, from ages 8 to 11. The focus at this stage is on introduction to language, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts, with an emphasis on learning through inquiry and discovery. The next "3" in the model relates to the middle stage, which includes the next three years of schooling, from ages 11 to 14. The focus during this stage is on deepening the students' understanding of core subjects. The final "4" in the model refers to the secondary stage, which includes the final four years of schooling, from ages 14 to 18. The focus during this stage is on providing students with a broad-based education that prepares them for higher education, as well as for vocational or technical education, if they choose to pursue that path.



Starting with holistic and moving to specialisation

One of the main advantages of this structure is that it suggests that the educational journey starts with a more holistic or trans-disciplinary approach to learning when students are younger, and then over the years progresses to a more specialised or disciplinary approach.

A holistic/trans-disciplinary approach to early education allows for a holistic and comprehensive understanding of a subject, as it integrates multiple disciplines and perspectives. This approach is especially beneficial for young children as it helps them to make connections between different areas of knowledge and develop critical thinking skills.

Starting with Strong Foundations and moving to Better Choice

Strong foundational learning leads to a more equitable education, where all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their background. The revised model places more emphasis on key foundational skills like literacy and numeracy. Educational research has shown us that gaps in literacy in early childhood can result in an educational 'Matthew Effect' of sorts. This is i.e., the high achievers get better, and the low achievers get worse over time. The NEP also emphasises the role of play and activity-based learning during the early years of schooling. Research has shown that play and activity-based learning can have a positive impact on the development of cognitive and social-emotional skills in young children. One of the main differences between the 5+3+3+4 model and the previous 10+2 structure is that the revised model focuses on providing a more flexible and holistic approach to education. The traditional 10+2 model of education often results in students being forced to make early decisions about their future careers, which can limit their options later on. The revised education policy aims to address this issue by providing more flexibility in the structure of school education. This will enable students to explore different options before making final decisions. (The writer is School Director, The Green Acres Academy)

Schooling and underage marriages

There Should be more efforts to create an enabling framework for improving girls' enrollment in schools, instead of penal actions

Assam is on a vigorous drive through penal actions under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA). Over 4,000 cases have been registered and more than 3,000 people arrested, including many fathers, brothers and Muslim and Hindu priests, as 'facilitators'. The Assam Chief Minister vowed to eliminate the menace of child marriages in the state by 2026.

Amid massive public outrage, the Gauhati High Court criticised such large-scale arrests with non-bailable charges, and insisted on 'society-driven change'. The Opposition claimed it was for 'political gains'. Many legal experts vouch



ARCHANA DATTA

(The author of a former Director General of Doordarshan and All India radio)

for the law as a means to set new norms and practices. India had the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, subsequently replaced by the existing PCMA, 2006, raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for women and 21 years for men.

Now, a move is afoot to make it gender-neutral at 21. It was claimed by the votaries of the amendment Bill that the move would enhance girls' agency, their reproductive autonomy, and reduce gender inequality. However, opponents contended that "it is not a sufficient condition to bring in changes in the mindsets of people," as it fails to address the underlying socio-economic and cultural factors that push many resource-poor families, who are also the worst victims

of emergencies, such as internal conflicts, natural disasters or the pandemic, into underage marriage of girls, either to avoid higher dowry or as a way to 'protect' the girls.

A national network of adolescents from rural and semi-urban areas suggested to the task force set up for the purpose that focus should be more on "the disadvantaged rural contexts through adequate resourcing for quality education, employment, safety, mobility, and the freedom to choose when, and who to marry, as child marriages are closely tied to low levels of education and poverty"

While, as per the NCRB data, an abysmally low number of cases booked under the PCMA, only 785 in 2020, and a study by the Partners for Law

in Development found that 65 per cent of them are filed by disapproving parents against eloping daughters, and male partners of their choice have been punished as criminals. Child rights activists fear the proposed legislation would further increase the misuse of the law, criminalising all adolescent sexuality.

However, in today's society, the existing PCMA has undoubtedly created some awareness, encouraging many girls to stop or delay their marriages. The successive NFHS data also registered a declining trend in the proportion of girls marrying below 18 years from 47 per cent in NFHS-3 (2005-06) to 27 per cent in NFHS-4 (2015-16), and now, to 23 per cent in NFHS-5 (2020-21).

Studies also ruled out that

early marriage is linked to high fertility. In most of the states, including states with relatively high prevalence rates of child marriages, fertility rates have been dropping.

The NFHS-5 data corroborated that mother and child health indicators like MMR, have decreased by 80 per cent (113 per lakh live births in 2016-18 from 556 in 1990), and, the IMR by 69 per cent (35 per 1,000 births in 2019-21, from 114 in 1990). A parliamentary question in 2021, confirmed that there is no credible data to suggest that child marriage is the major reason for affecting the IMR and MMR. Instead, factors like health, nutrition, and lack of medical facilities adversely impact them.

Moreover, a correlation

study in 109 districts of 19 states by the CRY, analysing NFHS-5 data and Education Ministry's Performance Grading Index scores of Districts (PGI-D) (2019-20) on indicators like effective classroom transactions, infrastructure and students' entitlements, school safety, etc, found that "education remains the most powerful tool to curb child marriages." For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, the districts with comparatively higher percentage of women having 10 or more years of schooling like Lucknow (51.9 per cent), Gautam Buddha Nagar (51.9 per cent), Varanasi (55 per cent), and Allahabad (47.6 per cent) had significantly lower percentages of child marriage cases—9.9 per cent, 13.5 per cent, 10.4 per cent,

and 13.8 per cent, respectively. While districts like Badaun (21.6 per cent), Lakhimpur-Kheri (28.7 per cent), and Kaushambi (31.9 per cent) with lower percentage of women having 10 or more years of schooling, had higher percentage of child marriage at 22.9 per cent, 19.7 per cent, and 17.6 per cent, respectively. Over 10 million girls have been married as a result of the pandemic, according to UNICEF's report last year. As an antidote, it urged nations to "invest more in girls' education, secondary education, in particular." In addition, it was found that "better educated women tend to participate more in the formal labor market, earn higher incomes, and thus, lift their families out of poverty..."

Trust Prachanda to build relations with Nepal



ASHOK K MEHTA

With Prachanda at the helm in Kathmandu, New Delhi can start with a clean slate. A fresh approach can put Indo-Nepal relations back on track



On Monday, Nepalese Prime Minister Prachanda won the confidence vote to start his third term. India has had far better relations with Maoist leader Prachanda than with former PM KP Oli of CPN (UML). Nepal's pro-China policy took a visible turn during Oli's term. He politically exploited India's apparent rejection of the Constitution, then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar's virtual diktat to alter and not promulgate it and the 53-day-long and painful border blockade. Oli signed agreements with China on trade and infrastructure, thus replacing India as the country of last resort.

India's inept handling of the Kalapani border dispute allowed Oli to unilaterally incorporate the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiadara areas in Nepal with an unprecedented 100 per cent parliamentary vote. Zealous and overconfident, he accused India of cheating Nepal and hurled insults at us. The war of words abated only after New Delhi launched its charm offensive by sending R&AW chief Goyal, former Chief of Army Staff Gen Naravane, and former foreign secretary Shringla.

This helped mend relations. The visits paid off and it was business as usual, as Oli realised that no Nepal government could tread on India's toes and survive. Oli's transformation, rather than his taming by New Delhi, was a lesson in diplomacy.

Oli's survival as Prime Minister was aided by President Bidya Debi Bhandari (UML). She violated norms and even the Constitution by ensuring Oli's longevity as leader of the House till the Supreme Court intervened, not once but twice. The new pro-China Left alliance collapsed much to



HE IS PRO-NEPAL AND KNOWS THAT NEPAL CAN BENEFIT FROM TWO FAST-GROWING ECONOMIES

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

the dismay of Beijing which had invested considerable resources in its survival.

Third time Prime Minister Prachanda has played the long game. He was compelled by the former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, who served five terms, to jump ship to support Oli as Deuba vacillated offering prime-ministership to Prachanda. For Prachanda's party, the Maoists, had won only 32 seats in the elections.

Still Prachanda claimed he commanded the support of 64 seats. When Deuba hesitated, without blinking, he joined the perennial foe Oli. But Prachanda was never comfortable with his decision to join Oli and had sought to return to Deuba. The opportunity was provided by President Paudel. Prachanda argued that when Oli became Prime Minister, the top three positions — of the PM, the President and the Speaker — would be from the same party, leading to authoritarian rule.

Prachanda is no longer a big fan of China. During the Civil War era, Maoists fancied Mao and other communist leaders but saw communist states on the decline. He is pro-Nepal and knows that Nepal can benefit from two fast-growing economies.

Unfortunately for him, India-China relations have plummeted after the Chinese aggression in Ladakh. When he first became prime minister in 2008, his first visit was to China for the Olympics.

But his first political visit was to India, for which he has a soft corner. Nine out of ten years he directed the Maoist insurgency, mostly from Noida, UP. Maoists used to say nasty things about India and the US during those days, but acknowledged India's role in ending the conflict and paving the path for peace and democracy.

Prachanda will shortly expand his cabinet to accommodate the 11 parties that support him. As he replaces his foreign minister, the parliamentary foreign affairs committee will be responsible for making a decision on the Agnipath Scheme, which has been pending for nine months now. The feedback from Nepal is not encouraging, as the ruling party will be constrained by UML and other communists from supporting the four-year recruitment scheme with no post-retirement outlets.

Communists in Nepal have always criticised Gorkhas joining foreign armies, especially the Indian Army. In addition, the Prachanda Government's support for the scheme drew criticism from UML for being pro-India.

Agnipath is discriminatory and in breach of the tripartite agreement 1947. This is because Indian Agniveers will have 10 per cent reservation in the Border Security Force and the Central Industrial Security Force, but Nepalese citizens are not eligible for these organisations.

People also say that 90 per cent of those who join the Indian Army

are Jan Jatis and not Brahmins and Chhetris who constitute decision-making at political and bureaucratic levels. They will not worry about the Indian and Nepali Armies' relationships and history. India could have helped end the problem by simply removing the Nepali Gorkhas from Agnipath.

On 10 March was Nepal Army Day. The Nepal Embassy commemorated the event by highlighting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in the Nepalese Parliament: "India has fought no war in which Nepali blood has not been shed." Given the warped Agniveer idea, soon there may be no Nepalese joining the Army. It's time Modi's most trusted Foreign Minister Jaishankar devoted more time on Nepal, further fostering India's Neighbourhood First Policy.

Prachanda's first visit abroad is to India next month, though China's Ambassador Chen Song tried to get him to China first. India's impeccable conduct of non-interference during elections in stark contrast to traditional charges of micro-management in the past has won it kudos.

With Prachanda at the helm, New Delhi can start with a clean slate. Just as Jaishankar has won over Sri Lanka with economic sustenance, he can begin the recovery programme in Nepal. With Deuba as leader of a single largest party and a prime minister, India has a winning hand to play the game. The ball is in Jaishankar's court

MONEY MATTERS

Govt extends deadline to apply for CCI chief's post till March 27

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has extended the deadline for submitting applications for the post of Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) till March 27. Earlier, the deadline to submit the applications was March 9. The last date for receipt of application has been extended up to 27th March 2023, according to a notice issued by the MCA on Monday. "The candidates who had applied earlier in response to the previous advertisement/ vacancy circular dated 26th July, 2022 inviting applications for the post of Chairperson need not apply," the notice said. Last month, the government had invited applications for the post of Chairperson of the fair-trade regulator. The post has been lying vacant since October 25. Sangeeta Verma, a CCI member, has been the acting chairperson since October last year. Recently, her tenure was extended by the central government for three months.



Lupin receives USFDA approval for generic medicine

Pharmaceuticals firm Lupin Ltd on Tuesday said it has received approval from the US health regulator for its generic Brexpiprazole tablets used to treat the symptoms of schizophrenia and depression. The approval granted by the US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) is for the abbreviated new drug application for Brexpiprazole tablets of strengths 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 2 mg, 3 mg, and 4 mg, the company said in a regulatory filing. These are generic equivalent of Rexulti tablets of Otsuka Pharmaceutical Company Ltd, it added. "This product would be manufactured at Lupin's Pithampur facility in India," the company said. Lupin said Brexpiprazole tablets 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, 1 mg, 2 mg, 3 mg, and 4 mg, had an estimated annual sales of USD 1,575 million in the US, citing IQVIA MAT December 2022 data.



Gold plunges Rs 470; silver declines Rs 420

Gold price plunged by Rs 470 to Rs 59,480 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at Rs 59,950 per 10 grams. Silver also declined Rs 420 to Rs 68,550 per kilogramme. "Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at Rs 59,480 per 10 grams, down Rs 470 per 10 grams," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas market, gold and silver were trading lower at USD 1,967 per ounce and USD 22.39 per ounce, respectively. Comex gold prices traded lower in Asian trading hours on Tuesday. Gold prices have corrected almost 2 per cent after prices hit a fresh 52-week high of USD 2,010 per ounce on Monday as short-term traders took profit and fears of a full-blown banking meltdown eased, Gandhi said.



No caps on airfares: Bansal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is not in favour of interfering in a free market economy by putting caps on airfares, Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Bansal said on Tuesday amid concerns over possible predatory pricing of air tickets.

The remarks also come against the backdrop of a Parliamentary panel, earlier this month, asking the civil aviation ministry to cap the upper and lower levels of airfares, and ensure that predatory pricing mechanism is not adopted by airlines under the cloak of free market economy.

"Fundamentally, putting (fare) caps and interfering in the market economy is not good and we are not in favour of it. We are not in favour of putting lower or upper caps. I don't think the government should interfere in a free market economy at all..." Bansal said.

However, he said "we have taken up with airlines to see that passengers are not unduly charged or inconvenienced because of very high fare buckets, the highest bucket".

According to him, tickets are sold in around 16 fare buckets.

Fundamentally, putting (fare) caps and interfering in the market economy is not good and we are not in favour of it. We are not in favour of putting lower or upper caps. I don't think the government should interfere in a free market economy at all...



"I would feel that the lower fare buckets on any sector are comparable to AC train fares..."

In its report tabled in Parliament on March 13, the panel also said a perfect balance has to be maintained between the commercial interest of the private airlines and the interest of passengers.

The recommendations have been made by the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture in its report on the ministry's demand for grants

for 2023-24. Airports at major metro cities are expected to have a total passenger handling capacity of 500 million in the coming years, Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Bansal said on Tuesday.

"We have all ingredients in place... huge demand in domestic and international (sectors)," Bansal said as he highlighted the growth potential of the country's aviation sector.

He mentioned about the expansion and growth of airports at Delhi, Mumbai,

Chennai, Kolkata and Bangalore.

Airports at these metros will soon have a total passenger handling capacity of around 320 million in the near future, he noted.

With Jewar airport in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Navi Mumbai airport in Maharashtra -- both are expected to be opened by the end of next year -- the total passenger handling capacity at airports at major metros will be around 500 million in the coming years.

'India exploited 29% of hydropower potential'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has exploited 29 per cent of its hydropower potential against over 80 per cent and 70 per cent developed by the US and European Union respectively, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

As per the Reassessment Study carried out by the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) during 1978-1987, the assessed hydropower potential in the country is about 1,45,320 MW (for projects with capacity above 25 MW), Power Minister R K Singh said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha on



Tuesday. Singh said that 42,104.6 MW (29 per cent) out of 1,45,320 MW has been developed and 15,023.5 MW (10.3 per cent) is under construction.

As per reports of the International Hydropower

Association (IHA), the US has developed more than 80 per cent of its hydropower potential and the EU (European Union) has developed more than 70 per cent of its hydropower potential, he told the House.

The main challenges in the development of hydroelectric potential in the country are remote location, unpredictable geology, natural calamities, environment and forest issues, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) issues, law & order issues and interstate issues, he stated.

In a separate reply, Singh

told the House that as on March 14, 2023, the total coal stock at Thermal Power Plants in the country is 33.3 MT (million tonnes) which is only 49 per cent of the Normative Stock Requirement.

The coal stocking norms of the Central Electricity Authority mandate the power plants to maintain coal stock which varies from month to month basis.

The stocking norms are 20 to 26 days in non-pithead plants and 12 to 17 days in pithead plants so as to ensure sufficient coal stock at power plants to meet demand, it stated.

Larsen & Toubro bags major orders for hydrocarbon business

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Tuesday said it has bagged major orders in the range of Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 7,000 crore for its hydrocarbon business.

The scope of work comprises engineering, procurement, construction and installation of offshore structures and upgradation of existing facilities.

"The hydrocarbon business...of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has secured multiple offshore packages from a prestigious overseas client," the engineering and construction conglomerate said in a regulatory filing.

Domestic tyre industry back on growth path

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic tyre industry is expected to witness double-digit growth next fiscal with the automobile industry back on full swing, JK Tyre Chairman and Managing Director Raghupati Singhania said on Tuesday.

JK Tyre, which on Tuesday introduced a tyre brand -- Levitas Ultra -- to cater to the luxury car segment, is also expected to follow the industry growth path and report a double-digit sales growth next financial year, he noted.

"Tyre industry had undergone a bit of a rough patch in the last couple of years back when the auto industry was in a bit of a slowdown due to Covid and all that... Now with

the economic activity improving the tyre industry is coming back on full swing," Singhania said.

He noted that demand remains strong across most segments of the domestic automobile industry.

The industry has also gained immensely from the government's push to boost local manufacturing, Singhania said.

"Over the next 2-3 years, demand for tyres in the country is expected to grow stronger, in view of an uptick in economic activities and the big push envisaged for infrastructure growth," he noted.

Even this year despite the headwinds and challenges plaguing the global economy, the domestic industry is on track to post double-digit



growth, Singhania said. He noted that the commercial vehicle movement is on the rise with the enhanced economic activity and as a result the trucking business is expected to witness a 5-7 per cent growth. "So we also expect the tyre demand to grow," Singhania said.

Similarly, with passenger vehicle industry doing well, it will obviously help the tyre industry grow, he added.

He said that the slowdown in the entry level car was a challenge but termed it a temporary phase.



Honda to launch new car every year till 2028

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Japanese car maker Honda will introduce one new product every year for the next three to five years to raise its market share in the Indian market, a company official said.

Honda Cars India presently has two models in the country, a compact sedan and a sedan, which accounts for 2.5 per cent market share in the country.

"We are going to launch one new model every year for the next three to five years. These could be either new models or variants", Kunal Behl, VP (marketing and sales), Honda Cars India said.

Behl said that there are also plans to re-launch an SUV in the first half of the next fiscal year to ride on the booming segment in the country.

He said that Honda in India is expected to grow eight per cent in the current fiscal year, with around 92,000 units.

Besides, the company is also exporting cars from India to Türkiye, Mexico, South Africa and West Asia, comprising 23,000 units in the current fiscal.

Sensex, Nifty rebound nearly 1% on firm global trends, buying in Reliance

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty rebounded nearly 1 per cent on Tuesday amid firm trends in global equities and buying in index major Reliance Industries and banking stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 445.73 points or 0.77 per cent to settle at 58,074.68. During the day, it rallied 504.38 points or 0.87 per cent to 58,133.33. The broader NSE Nifty advanced 119.10 points or 0.70 per cent to settle at 17,107.50.

"Global markets recovery ushered in gains in domestic equity indices as both the benchmarks ended above the psychological levels on the back of strong gains in finan-



cial. However, the optimism may face hurdles as the recent turmoil in large banks in the US and Europe has shaken investors' sentiment," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd. said.

The US FOMC meeting on Wednesday on interest rate decision would be keenly eyed as any hike surpassing street expectations could unsettle investors, he said, adding that falling crude oil prices at a

faster pace is raising concerns over the weakening global economic health.

Among the Sensex stocks, Reliance Industries climbed the most by 3.11 per cent, ending its eight-day slide.

Bajaj Finance, Titan, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement, Larsen & Toubro, HDFC Bank, HDFC and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the other major winners. Power Grid, Hindustan Unilever, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Asian Paints were among the biggest laggards.

In the broader market, BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.66 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.50 per cent.

NTPC arm signs pact with Indian Army for setting up green hydrogen plants

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC REL), an arm of NTPC Ltd, has signed an agreement with the Indian Army for the implementation of green hydrogen projects in armed forces establishments.

Under the MoU (memorandum of understanding) with the Army, a joint identification of potential sites would be undertaken for setting up of green hydrogen projects for supplying electricity, in a phased manner, NTPC said in a statement.



"NTPC REL has signed an MoU with the Indian Army for setting up green hydrogen projects in its establishments on build, own and operate (BOO) model. The intent is to reduce complex logistics, dependence on fossil fuels and to accelerate decarbonisation," it said.

India may require 31,000 pilots in next 20 years: Boeing

PNS ■ MUMBAI

US aircraft maker Boeing has said India may require 31,000 pilots and some 26,000 mechanics over the next 20 years amid the growing order book of the aircraft original equipment manufacturers.

Speaking on the sidelines of a CII event here, Boeing India President Salil Gupta also said the South Asian region is expected to remain the fastest growing market globally over the next 20 years.

"India is going to need over 31,000 pilots and 26,000 mechanics over the next 20 years to take care of the aircraft coming in.

India is going to need over 31,000 pilots and 26,000 mechanics over the next 20 years to take care of the aircraft coming in. This is as important a part of the Indian growth story as the aircraft (orders)

This is as important a part of the Indian growth story as the aircraft (orders)," Gupta told reporters.

He said considering India's air traffic growth, a lot of focus has to be on making infrastructure

robust, both hard infrastructure which includes airports as well as critical infrastructure, which includes pilots, among others.

It may be mentioned here that Tata Group-owned Air India had last month announced placing orders for a total of 470 planes with both Boeing and European aviation major Airbus. Last September, Boeing had projected India's air traffic growth at around 7 per cent through 2040.

He also said that after coming out of the pandemic, the recovery in air travel demand has stunned the world and Boeing does not see any impact of the financial crisis on air travel growth.



Yellen says bank situation 'stabilising'; system is 'sound'

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is trying project calm after regional bank failures, saying the U.S. banking system is "sound" but additional rescue arrangements "could be warranted" if any new failures at smaller institutions pose a risk to financial

stability. Yellen, in an excerpt of remarks prepared for delivery to the American Bankers Association on Tuesday, says that overall "the situation is stabilizing." "And the U.S. banking system remains sound," Yellen says.

Yellen's remarks come after a series of troubling bank developments this month.

Indian restaurants abroad to serve more millet foods

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Indian restaurants globally are expected to serve more millet flour-based dishes in near future, given the health benefits of these multi-grains among the busy urbanites, a Singapore-based Indian restaurateur has said.

The UN has declared "The Millet Year 2023", which the 40-year maritime industry veteran believes has the strong support of the Indian Government on international platforms.

"There is a growing trend of

eating healthy food, especially among busy executives in bustling cities, and millets as well as other such cereals, I believe, shall be widely accepted as organic food with many health benefits," Capt. Inderjit Singh, the 60-year-old owner of the Yummy Punjabi (YP) Restaurant.

"We had been contemplating introducing various such flour breads," said Singh, noting the importance of these multi-grains underlined by the Global Millets conference held recently in New Delhi. "We have been serving



missi roti with saag for 11 years and are loved by many. We shall soon be introducing millet & other flour-based bread for our multi-national patrons," said

Singh, who has managed to keep his passion afloat for more than a decade, despite the numerous obstacles faced as an SME including the recent Covid-19-

pandemic.

He also said that Indian restaurants globally are expected to serve more and more millet flour-based products in near future, given the health benefits of these multi-grains among the busy urbanites.

Singh pointed out that millets are good sources of fibre, proteins, vitamins and minerals.

They have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties which are good for cardiovascular, and diabetes, helping people achieve and maintain healthy weight and lifestyle.

Such healthy foods are being valued worldwide, observed Singh who has sailed aboard Merchant Navy vessels for 25 years and has built a global network.

Singh wants to introduce more north Indian cuisines and continually motivates his staff to be innovative. In addition to Millet chapatis, he wishes to introduce makhana, the famous white butter which his mother used to churn from milk cream with her own hands. This pure white natural butter is seldom found overseas.

Armaan Malik: I've always felt India should also have its own musical Avengers

TEJAL SINHA

Armaan Malik, the global heartthrob musical icon's music tunes out way louder about him and his work. Little could anyone ever think of seeing a jingle singer and voiceover artist who started at the age of eight, become a global icon, and the first internationally known global popstar from the country.

The crooner has several melodies mainly *Chale Aana*, *Jab Se Mera Dil*, *Pehla Pyaar*, *Main Rahoona Ya Na Rahoona*, *You/Tu and De Taali*, to name a few to his credits. All through his journey, he has been a part of different aspects of the music industry, be it a reality show contestant, singing for children's movies, releasing a non-film album to making his debut in Bollywood as an adult playback singer. Not to forget, he is not just one of the most loved vocalists in Bollywood but also South. Why not! For instance, his voice with the moves of Allu Arjun in *Butta Bomma* made us all grove, in fact to date (wink).

It was a dream of the *Sun Maahi* singer, just like anyone of us to have our very own pop star, and so he becomes one. "Today I'm very happy and proud to say that I'm able to put out music in any language that I feel like putting out and representing my country on a global stage. It's always been a dream of mine that while there's Justin Bieber from Canada, Beyonce and Lady Gaga from the US, why doesn't India have a pop star of its own. I've always chased that dream. I've always felt India should also have its own musical Avengers. And hopefully, the pop space is led by me. That's my dream. And I've taken a few steps in that direction. I've released a lot of English music. And that music has fetched me a lot of global acclaim and awards as well. Not saying that it is the main thing but it does give me the confidence that yes, this journey is leading somewhere. And hopefully, I can make that difference for Indian artists that we have not seen in the last few years. I'm very hopeful for my future and the Indian music future, and can't wait to take Indian music globally."

Armaan not only pulls on the hat of just a singer but a songwriter and composer too. Oh and how can we miss out, he'd also lend his voice to *Aladdin* and *Lion King Simba* in *Lion King*.

Wondered what he enjoys the most. Let's hear what he's got to say, "Well, I learned quite a few hacks. I am also a voiceover artist, which I enjoy. So for me, doing all these different things is what excites me. But yeah, singing live on stage is something that brings me a lot of joy. This is why I'm super excited to be part of the Royal Stag Boombox because I'm going to be able to put out a concert for all my fans in Jalandhar, who haven't seen my performance before. And being able to present a very fresh pop concert is something that I'm looking forward to. And yeah, I think singing live is something that I really, really look forward to."

As he mentions the Royal Stag Boombox, how could we not ask him about his association? "Royal Stag Boombox is a very unique IP. I feel like the whole concept is getting Bollywood and hip-hop together. These are two genres that people wouldn't think would fit together. But, they have made it happen. And there are a lot of eclectic genres that are going to be mixed in this IP. A lot of exciting artists and performers are going to come together to make very interesting and unique music for the audience. And while you know, there's a studio aspect to the IP, there's also a life on the ground aspect to the IP, which I'm very excited to be part of. And I can't wait to bring my mindset to the Royal Stag Boombox and have a fun time with all the audiences in Jalandhar," says the songster, who believes that every time you say, Armaan Malik, the two songs that pop up in anyone's head are *Main Rahoona Ya Na Rahoona*, and *Bol Do Na Zara*. And, why not? These were also the songs that took us to a whole new world. "If I have to mark out two songs in my discography, these will be the songs that I feel gave me that big push as an artist."

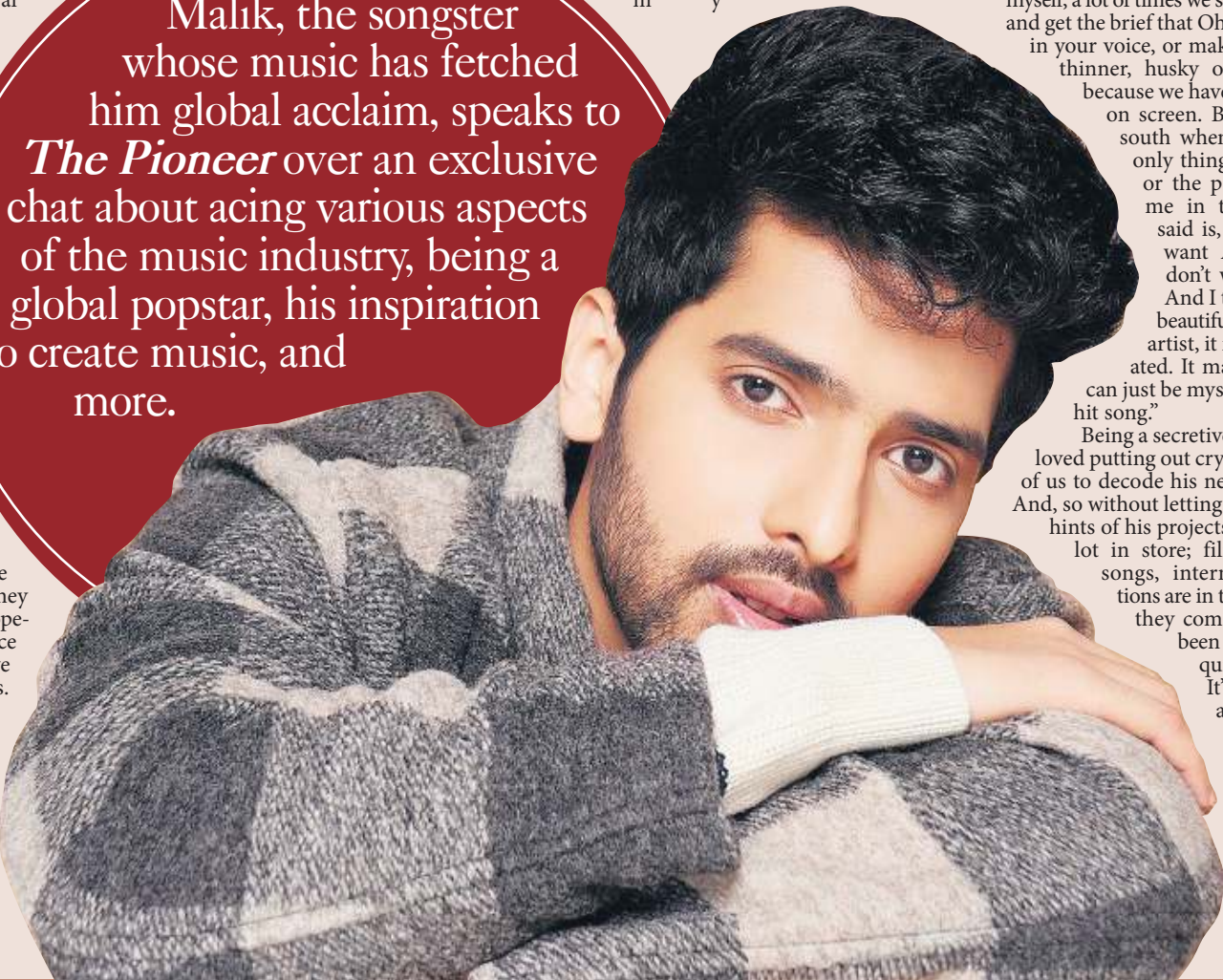
Music has lately become more experimental and in fact, 90 percent of his music is non-film. So when a song is in the making, what kind of music does he wish to create? He enthused, "Sometimes I get inspired by what I'm hearing and listening to because there are a lot of exciting artists right now in the Indian scene. I listen to them. And I'm like, "Wow, this music exists in India, I didn't know". So I'm glad that through the advent of all these different streaming platforms, I'm able to hear these different new artists. So sometimes it's getting inspired by these artists and coming up with something of your own. Or it's something that you've always known for. I'm always known for my romantic ballads and my romantic pop songs. So that is something I know my fans are eagerly waiting for. But at the same time, I also want to give them something fresh, which makes them feel that okay, our man normally does romantic stuff, and *Nakhrey Nakhrey* (2022) was one of my songs, which was a pop electro-dance song, and I was dancing in the video for the very first time. So my fans got to see a very new and different side of me, rather than me just sitting with a guitar and singing love songs. That's something everyone has seen me do. So for me, as an artist, I try to push the envelope, I try to break new boundaries, try to experiment, and try new genres. I want to do as many things as possible to express my artistic versatility."

It was once that popular American actor Val Kilmer said, "It's important to be yourself. What art does for everyone, helps you understand yourself and in a distilled way. It distills something about everyday life that can be important to you." And we're sure many of us believe this too, and so does Armaan. Having given some marvelous hits down the south like *Kalisunte*, *Menu Agamu*, *Butta Bomma*, *Ninne Ninne*, *Yedo*, and *Yennainado*, to name a few, we were super eager to know what's something that he enjoys the most when singing a South language song. He blissfully said, "I think the fact that I'm able to be myself, a lot of times we sing songs for movies, and get the brief that Oh, can you factor that in your voice, or make your voice a little thinner, husky or bold? Obviously, because we have to sing for an actor on screen. But somehow in the south whenever I've sung, the only thing that the composer or the people who directed me in the recording have said is, "Please be you, we want Armaan Malik, we don't want anything else". And I think that's the most beautiful thing. For me as an artist, it makes me feel liberated. It makes me feel okay, I can just be myself and still deliver a hit song."

Being a secretive person, he's always loved putting out cryptic messages for all of us to decode his next song or projects. And, so without letting out many secrets or hints of his projects, he said, "There's a lot in store; film songs, non-film songs, international collaborations are in the works. Hopefully, they come out this year. I've been working on them for quite some time now. It's all about timing and whenever it comes out, it's going to be the right time."

Well! We cannot wait for it just like you'll, but for now, just get ready for a new playlist on the loop (wink).

Armaan Malik, the songster whose music has fetched him global acclaim, speaks to *The Pioneer* over an exclusive chat about acing various aspects of the music industry, being a global popstar, his inspiration to create music, and more.



A new age & culturally relevant diet for people with Diabetes

Diabetes is a major health concern around the world – especially in developing economies, like India where more than 77 million people are diabetic. Data shows that this number is set to rise to 135 million by 2045. In fact, according to ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) guidelines 2022, the past three decades has witnessed a 150% increase in the number of people with diabetes in the country. Despite the high prevalence and associated burden, diabetes, along with other non-communicable diseases (NCDs), remain neglected.

The dramatic rise of diabetes prevalence can largely be attributed to the rapid changes in demographic, socioeconomic, and nutritional factors. Coupled with this, a predominantly sedentary lifestyle has led to an increase in obesity and other diet-related noncommunicable diseases.

Speaking on how to manage the condition, Dr. Irfan Shaikh, Head of Medical Affairs at Abbott's Nutrition business says, "Diabetes is a chronic condition that needs attention. If left undiagnosed, over time, increased glucose levels can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disorders. Early interventions such as lifestyle management plays a crucial role in managing diabetes. Understanding the role of nutrition such as that of diabetic-specific nutrition supplements (DSNS) and physical activity on glucose levels is essential for the optimal management of the condition.

Abbott, through various initiatives, is committed to raise awareness and highlighting the need for right nutrition for managing the condition."

Emphasising on the importance of nutrition for diabetes, transcultural Diabetes Nutrition Algorithm (tDNA) is a new-age tool introduced to aid in providing nutrition therapy to people with Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) and prediabetes in diverse cultural and geographical settings. tDNA targets interventions for prediabetes and T2D, considering variations in cultural practices and comorbidities, and addressing interventions at all levels where current clinical practice guidelines for diabetes may not be portable to diverse cultures.

Dr. Osama Hamdy, medical director, obesity clinical program, director of the Inpatient diabetes program at Joslin diabetes center says, "It is generally observed amongst diabetics that when they are shifted to healthy diets, it often means dropping decades of acquired eating habits thus, leading to a poor adherence rate as low as 38%. Hence, the transcultural Diabetes Nutrition Algorithm (tDNA) is a therapeutic tool intended to foster the implementation of lifestyle recommendations and to improve disease-related outcomes in prediabetes and T2D patients ensuring nutritional interventions through a structured lifestyle intervention which can help improve a patient's eating self-efficacy, maintain weight loss and glycemic control."

Brewing dreams through crafted beers

As India is a nascent craft beer market and exponential growth is going on, *The Pioneer* connects with Karan Jain, CEO at Ace Aloha Group to know more about craft beer.

K. RAMYA SREE

Did you know? The craft beer is considered as healthy than the bottled beer? Apart from the western cultural influence, the taste and health consideration is leading to a huge demand for craft beer in India.

Currently, India is a nascent craft beer market and exponential growth is going on. The Indian market is currently where the US market was in the early 90s when a growth rate of 150 and 200% year on year had become the norm. So we are looking at the inflation point in the Indian market where the big brewers are growing at a consistent 8 to 10% but graph theorem is growing at more than 150% year on year.

We have with us Karan Jain, CEO at Ace Aloha Group, who brought the uncompromising craft beer brand BrewDog to India in 2021, who informed us that the craft beer revolution in India started in 2008 with India's first microbrewery in Pune and there has been no looking back

ever since.

For the unversed, Karan explains the difference between draught beer vs. bottled beer, "Any beer poured from taps is a draught beer and bottle beer is in bottles. The real question here is the difference between craft beer and industrial beer. Craft beer is about respecting the recipe, the ingredients, and the process and ensuring that the customer gets a good variety to choose from. You will find it interesting to know that there are more than 3000 styles of beers in the world, way more than the number of wines."

He stressed that the beer market in India is growing at just about 2% but the craft beer market is growing more than 140% year on year.

The market is still in its nascent stages. Speaking about the current trends that he is looking at right now, he informed, "The craft beer market started with the introduction of lagers and wheat but now you have more unique styles like IPA. Did you know the name IPA or India Pale Ale is Indian? This trend is also often called the ghar-wapsi

of IPA."

Also tapping into some of the misconceptions that people have about craft beer, he cleared the air saying: "Many people think that beer is a simple drink which is not true. It has a lot of nuances like aroma, appearance, color, etc. It is the oldest beverage in the world and we are happy to be the proud flag-bearers of great craft beer for all. Beer aficionados are now well-informed and knowledgeable. There is a premiumisation in the market and guests are willing to pay extra for a better product."

Lastly, sharing about the brand that he is most proud and content of, he explained, "We are a pet-friendly, all-inclusive, safe space for people from all walks of life and choices. We are passionate about beers and strive hard for our quality. We are the world's only carbon-negative beer brand. Brewdog is the largest and fastest craft beer brand in the world. We have a portfolio of more than 400 beers worldwide. We hold some fascinating records like the world's strongest beer etc and we are here to take the Indian craft beer scenario higher!"





Vennela Kishore to host *Ala Modhalayyindhi*

Star comedian Vennela Kishore is getting ready to host a comedy show titled *Ala Modhalayyindhi*. Top production house People Media Factory will be entering the small screen with a comedy show.

Sharing the details, they posted “@peoplemediafcy & @etvteluguindia Proudly presenting the The Brand New Show #AlaModhalayyindhi with Brand New Anchor @vennelakishore garu Get Ready for the Hilarious ride Launching soon#BoddanapalliSarith @vishwaprasadtg @vivekkuchibotla #AlaModhalayyindhi onEtv”

The show will be aired on popular channel ETV. The new poster showed Vennela Kishore in a hilarious pose and this increased expectations among movie lovers. Earlier a superhit film *Ala Modhalayyindhi* came which featured Nani, Nithya Menon in the lead.

Vennela Kishore is playing hilarious roles in most of the films and he is creating a laughing riot with his performances on the screen. The makers feel that the presence of Vennela Kishore will entertain people on the small screen. More details about the show will be revealed in the coming days.

Faria Abdullah: I kind of crave privacy sometimes

AMARTYA SMARAN

Although Merlapaka Gandhi's *Like, Share & Subscribe* failed to impress the audience last October, it looks like actress Faria Abdullah didn't lose her confidence one bit. The actress, who took the Telugu states by storm with her portrayal of Chitti in Anudeep KV's *Jathi Ratnalu* is pumped up about the release of Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's *Ravanasura*. The film is slated for its grand release on April 7 and our Chitti will be seen playing lawyer Kanaka Mahalakshmi.

When we say lawyer, we're sure your mind immediately takes you to *Jathi Ratnalu* courtroom scenes where Faria delivers a hilarious performance but don't worry. This time, she is donning the role of a serious senior lawyer (Ravi Teja is a junior lawyer, by the way). At least, that's what she says. She even revealed that she has a separate love track with mass hero Ravi Teja, who's relishing the success of two back to back 100 crore blockbusters. The song, *Pyaar Lona Paagal* is a proof that the audience would get to see some great chemistry between the duo.

Wait! How could Ravi Teja be a junior when Faria is a senior lawyer? Aren't you also thinking the same? Well! Faria cleared it for us, “Logically, there's a thing to it. Of course, age-wise, it's not being shown as I'm older to him. He's just playing my junior lawyer, but because of the chemistry that the two characters have it kind of excited me. I knew I could play around with something like this. So, I went for it.”

The actress informed us that the character didn't demand any kind of serious preparation where she had to meet lawyers and take notes in order to ace the character. However, to add that extra oomph to the character, she says she tried something different with her hair.

“Scenes in court were very few, but that's her background,” said the *Jathi Ratnalu* star. “There was nothing significant to prepare to play the character of a lawyer. She's a married woman and there's got to be some maturity in her body language. I had to create a separate mindset to play the character. I wanted to play this character differently, so I straightened my curls this time. You won't see my usual curly hair. I hope

people will like it.”

Speaking of her journey, she remarked, “It's just begun. So, there's not a lot to look at but I know the growth has been very rapid. And I'm excited to see what's more to come. There's a lot that's been learned and I'm putting that to use as well.”

Her career skyrocketed post the unexpected success of *Jathi Ratnalu* and sort of made her an overnight star. A career that several lakhs of aspiring young actors would like to have, but struggle to get the same kind of a break that the actress got. “I took my time around it to get used to it,” shared the professional dancer talking about how she took to fame. “To kind of understand that this is going to be life now. Even now, sometimes I get slightly shaken with all the public attention and kind of crave privacy sometimes. However, I understand that life is like this as an actor/public figure. Every day, it's a new learning, but every day there's also thoughts as to how I can do better. I think that's the part that I want to focus on.”

Dance! Is the charming actress' first love. Take a look at her instagram profile and you'll find numerous videos where she's trying to perfect each and every step. We asked her if it's something that she does to preserve her inner child and she replied, “Definitely! It keeps all parts of me alive. It is because of dance that I'm able to do all the things that normal human beings are required to do. It's such a core part of my life that there's no way I can ever let it go or think of not doing it. I think it helps me a lot in acting and focusing. Also, even fitness wise, dance is a good support!”

In our last interaction right ahead of the release of *Like, Share & Subscribe*, she said she'd love to direct a film and she's extremely influenced by artsy films. So, who are her influences and what kind of films would she like to make? “Because dance is such an essential part of my life, a musical is something that I would like to direct or something that has dance as a strong element. At least for the first film. I'm inspired by a lot of world cinema; French cinema. For example, there's *La La Land*, *In the Heights*, *Climax*, and *Elvis*. All of these films have great editing and a different kind of narrative style. Gaspar Noé, the director of *Climax*. He's a really cool guy. Of course, Christopher Nolan! The way he kind of tells his stories.”

“I think I'm grateful that the next day after *Like, Share & Subscribe* was released, I jumped into shooting for another project,” said Faria in response to the film's failure at the box-office. “I kind of detached myself from the process of output. And, I think that's a smart thing to do because not every time you can be responsible for the output. No matter how much you try.”

Ravanasura is produced by Abhishek Nama and Ravi Teja under the banners of Abhishek Pictures and RT Teamworks respectively. The film is directed by Sudheer Varma, who's best known for *Swamy Ra Ra* and recently he directed a picture called *Saakini Daakini* which didn't do as expected at the box-office. The action thriller also stars Sushanth, Srikanth, Jayaram, Anu Emmanuel, Megha Akash, Daksha Nagarkar, and Pujitha Ponnada. While Srikanth Vissa penned the story, Vijay Kartik Kannan shot the film. The music is composed by Harshavardhan Rameswar and Bheems Ceciroleo.



Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's *Ravanasura* is all set to hit the theaters on April 7. Ahead of the film's release, actress Faria Abdullah speaks to *The Pioneer* over an exclusive chat about her character, preps for the role, her first love, and more.



Allu Arjun's *Pusha 2* teaser to release on April 8

Attention! Here comes a major update of Allu Arjun's upcoming *Pushpa: The Rise*.

Allu Arjun, one of the most celebrated star of the Telugu film industry established himself as one of the most sought-after pan-Indian stars in the country with the massive success of *Pushpa: The Rise*. The project, which is helmed by celebrated filmmaker Sukumar, is set in the backdrop of red sandalwood smuggling rackets, in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. Allu Arjun, who played the titular character Pushpa Raj in the film, stunned the audiences with his drastic makeover for the project.

The highly anticipated official teaser of *Pushpa: The Rule*, which started rolling in Andhra Pradesh recently, has finally got a release date. According to the latest update, the much-awaited teaser, which has been named the 'First glimpse video' will be released on April 8, this year on Allu Arjun's 41st birthday. The exciting update was confirmed by the makers with a special poster, recent-

ly. As per the reports, the official teaser will feature a 3-minute-long concept video, which will feature a high voltage action sequence featuring leading man Allu Arjun. Even though nothing much has been revealed about the first teaser, the rumour mills suggest that the first glimpse video of the Sukumar directorial will have a special surprise for Allu Arjun's fans.

There have been reports stating that the film will not be released in January 2024. “Sukumar doesn't want to rush to complete the shoot and hence, the makers have decided to release *Pushpa 2* somewhere in March-April 2024,” confirmed the sources close to the highly anticipated project.



Tollywood veteran actor Kota Srinivasa Rao on Tuesday responded to rumours of his passing away that have been spreading on social media, and in a message clarified that he is alive and well.

In a short video message he said and the news of his demise was sad and untrue. He expressed his concern about the fake news that has

the rumours of his death started spreading on social media.

Rao made it clear that he is healthy and is not suffering from any illness.

He also appealed to his fans and the general public not to spread rumours about the death of celebrities without verifying the news.

Rao is a well-known figure in Tollywood and has acted in over 500 films. He has won several awards for his performances and is respected by both his fans and his peers in the film industry.

Malavika Mohanan onboard for *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*



The maker of power star Pawan Kalyan's upcoming film *Ustaad Bhagat Singh* had announced the film. Director Harish Shankar is making arrangements for the first schedule which is expected to start next month. The female leads are being confirmed. There are two female leads in the film.

Malayalam actress Malavika Mohanan is finalised as one of the two heroines. Malavika is known for Tamil and Malayalam films.

She made her debut in Tollywood with Rajinikanth's *Peta* and later also starred in Vijay's *Master*. Malavika is currently playing as one of the female leads in Prabhas - Maruthi's film. Now, with the offer playing opposite Pawan Kalyan, Malavika got a chance to turn big heroine in Telugu.

Apart from Malavika Mohanan, the film also has another female lead for which the makers are considering Pooja Hegde or Sree Leela. Initially when the film was announced as Bhavadeeyudu Bhagat Singh, Pooja Hegde was on board as heroine. But later on due to delay and the film gets changed to *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*, her dates should be taken again that's why they are also considering Sree Leela along with Pooja Hegde.

Recently, the team has scouted for the locations to start filming. Naveen Yerneni and Ravishankar are producing the film under Mythri Movie Makers banner. Though there is no official word about it, the film is loosely based on Vijay starrer *Theri* with numerous changes.

‘I’m not dead, social media killed me,’ clarified Kota Srinivasa Rao

been circulating on social media platforms.

“I was busy with preparations for the Ugadi festival tomorrow when I received a series of phone calls and 10 policemen came to my residence for security,” Rao stated.

He urged people not to believe such rumours.

The actor has a huge fan following and his fans were concerned after



Trinadha Rao Nakkina announces his next film

Dhamaka fame Trinadha Rao Nakkina has announced his next project. The director will be working next in a film produced by Usha Mulpuri and Shankar Prasad Mulpuri, under their Ira Creations banner. The yet-to-be-titled film is reportedly going to be helmed on a high budget. This upcoming film will be Trinadha Rao Nakkina's eighth film. The movie was officially announced. A formal cheque of advance has been

handed over to the director.

The announcement, launch will take place very soon. According to reports, it is said that the film will star Naga Shaurya in the lead.

However, there's no official confirmation about the lead casts and other crews.

Meanwhile, Naga Shaurya is currently doing a film #NS23 with Director Pawan Basamsetti under the production of SLV Cinemas banner produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri.

The title of the film will be announced tomorrow on Ugadi.



INDIA EYE SERIES WIN AGAINST OZ

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The prima donnas of Indian batting will have to put their best foot forward while tackling the lethal in-dippers from Mitchell Starc when they face Australia in the series-deciding third ODI here on Wednesday.

If Starc is giving sleepless nights to the batters, the other 'Mitchell — Mitchell Marsh — has sent the Indian bowlers on a leather hunt by hitting nearly a dozen sixes (11) across two games. Tackling 'Mitchell The Menace' will be topmost on the Indian team's agenda.

The series is locked at 1-1 and the starry quartet of Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav will have to bat out of their skins to stop the left-arm pacer, who is gearing up to once again bring the ball back viciously into the right-handers while taking a few away.

A sea change on the technical aspect, as well mental make-up, will be the need of the hour, and Starc has exposed their frailties pretty badly.

The white ball games in India are mostly played on flat decks, where one can get away by hitting through the line, where one doesn't need too much of feet movement. A batter can plonk the front-foot and hit deliveries across the line with a fair degree of success.

But Starc, blessed with better skill sets, changed the questionnaire with deliveries that would either straighten in the off-middle line or cut back sharply towards leg-middle after a fair amount of deviation in the air.

The Indians have known what Starc has done for the longest time but they failed to factor in that conditions in Mumbai and Visakhapatnam would assist his bowling a bit more. In Mumbai, there was

help off the surface but in the coastal city of Visakhapatnam, the ball did more in the air than off the surface.

The refurbished Chepauk, with all its stands being open for public viewing, will be hosting an international game after quite some time and the re-laid pitch will attract a lot of attention.

Normally, Chepauk produces a track that is effective for slow bowlers and run-scoring in the middle overs might be difficult.

However, an interesting aspect of this year's pitch preparation will be keeping Chennai Super Kings' strength in mind and one might see some initial nip off the surface for the fast bowlers.

SURYA'S PROBLEMS

Suryakumar Yadav in T20Is can do no wrong with his aggressive shuffling inside the crease but that exaggerated movement across the crease has led to a couple of identical first-ball dismissals for him in both ODIs.

To play swing and seam, one needs to maintain perfect balance and play the ball as late as possible. Surya always tries to play late in T20s and hence it is a bit surprising that he is trying to meet the ball early in this format. With no Shreyas Iyer for sometime, this is actually Surya's best time to grab the opportunity and seal an ODI World Cup berth, but he has been far from convincing so far.

"Of course, we have seen and he knows that he needs to do well in the slightly-longer format of the game as well. Things are there in his mind as well. Guys with potential will have enough run so that they don't feel like 'okay I wasn't given enough chances in that particular slot,' skipper Rohit had said after the last game.

"Surya got out in the last two games and in the series before



that as well. He needs that consistent run, like back-to-back games, 7, 8 and 10 games like that. So that he feels more comfortable," the skipper had assured.

The next run of ODIs will only be in June-July and there is a possibility that Iyer could be fit by then to reclaim his place and Surya might find it difficult to get his share of chances.

BOWLING ATTACK

The Indian bowling attack needs to take its workload management seriously but, truth be told, the bowlers haven't had much work to do as they have bowled a total of 47 overs (36 and 11) across the two games. That is not even half of the 100 allocated overs.

Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj wouldn't mind making first use of the Chepauk surface if Rohit happens to win the toss.

The key question is if Shardul Thakur, or Jaydev Unadkat for his left-arm variation, will be used as third specialist seamer, or both spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel will get another game alongside Ravindra Jadeja.

TEAMS

India: Rohit Sharma (captain), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, KL Rahul (wk), Hardik Pandya, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Washington Sundar, Ishan Kishan, Jaydev Unadkat, Yuzvendra Chahal, Umran Malik.

Australia: Steve Smith (captain), Mitchell Marsh, Travis Head, Marcus Stoinis, Glenn Maxwell, Marbnus Labuschagne, Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis, Mitchell Starc, Sean Abbott, Adam Zampa, Ashton Agar, David Warner, Alex Carrey, Jos Iglis.



Want to try out various combinations so that we aren't surprised during WC: Dravid

PTI ■ CHENNAI

He is more than happy with the takeaways from the nine home ODIs that Indian team has played and has already narrowed his World Cup core team to 17-18 players, head coach Rahul Dravid said on the eve of the series decider against Australia.

India are going into the decider having already played eight home games — three versus Sri Lanka, three versus New Zealand and three against Australia finishing on Wednesday.

Did he achieve what he had set out to in nine home ODIs, keeping World Cup in mind? "We have to a large extent. We have got a lot more clarity at the end of these nine games irrespective of what happens tomorrow. We need to keep building on that clarity.

"For us it is now the different playing XI combinations and just ensuring that we play different combinations at times just to ensure that we are able to do that in the World Cup and we are not surprised by anything in the World Cup," Dravid told mediapersons here on Tuesday.

The head coach rued the absence of an injured Shreyas Iyer, who had been earmarked to bat at No. 4 in the World Cup. The coach at the same time was sympathetic towards Suryakumar Yadav, who hasn't yet set the ODI stage on fore unlike T20 format.

"Obviously. It is unfortunate for Shreyas to get injured. He is probably one of those guys who would bat at No.4 and given a lot of time at that position. If you notice we have stuck to the people in positions. For two years leading into this run, there is a lot of T20 cricket played and we did not have a lot of one-day cricket and if there are injuries and all that, we do have options."

But does Surya's first-ball ducks isn't really worrying Dravid.

"Not really concerned about Surya. He got two very good balls. One of things about Surya is that he is learning the 50-overs game. The 'T20 is slightly different. In T20, he has played 10 years of IPL.

"He (Surya) has played a lot of T20 cricket. He has played a lot of high pressure T20 games. Even though he has played a lot of t20 cricket

I think he has not played a lot of one-day cricket. We need to give him some time and be patient with it. We certainly see the upside of him doing well."

HAVE NARROWED CHOICE

This leg of home ODIs were very important as the players will now get into IPL and after that there is the big WTC final, followed by a tour of West Indies and a possible Asia Cup in Dubai. "Probably not going to get too many more games in our conditions. We had the opportunity to play in these conditions which is great. Yeah, coming out of the IPL to a large extent we are pretty clear about the kind of squad and the players we want. We have narrowed it down to 17-18 players."

Injuries to Jasprit Bumrah, Iyer, Prasodh Krishna, Deepak Chahar does remain a concern but Dravid insisted that the team is in a good head space.

"We have some guys who are recovering from injuries and will come into the frame based on their recovery. All in all, we are pretty much in good space. We are able to give those who we have zeroed in on as many playing opportunities.

"There are a couple of different combinations that we would like to try. It is a big tournament, a long tournament in India, we want to have that flexibility in our squad. Some times four fast bowlers, sometimes three spinners. Within the squad we will like to keep the options. Just to ensure that we have covered all our bases for all conditions."

Kerr powers MI to four-wicket win over RCB



PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians on Tuesday reclaimed the top spot in the points table with a four-wicket victory against Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Women's Premier League, riding on Amelia Kerr's allround heroics.

Chasing a modest 126 to win here at the DY Patil Stadium, Mumbai Indians stuttered post a fiery start and also failed to knock off the target in 11.3 overs — a condition that would have helped them improve net run rate over Delhi Capitals.

Mumbai Indians eventually finished at 129 for 6 in 16.3 overs.

RCB, however, signed off from the competition with their

sixth loss in eight league matches.

All-rounder Kerr was at top of her game with figures of 4-0-22-3 and an unbeaten 31 from 27 balls (4x4s) to take Mumbai Indians over the line.

Kerr added 47 runs for the fifth wicket with Pooja Vastrakar (19) to revive Mumbai Indians who were rocked twice in quick succession.

Sobhana Asha halted Nat Sciver-Brunst's charge by dismissing her for 13, while captain Harmanpreet Kaur (2) fell for her first single-digit score in the competition.

Kanika Ahuja claimed two wickets in one over to finish as the pick among the bowlers for RCB.

At the start, the opening pair

of Hayley Matthews (24 from 17 balls, 2x4s, 1x6s) and Yastika Bhatia (30 off 26 balls, 6x4s) laid the foundation with a 53-run stand.

Delhi Capitals will face UP Warriorz in the final league game later in the day at the Brabourne Stadium, post which the WPL points table would be finalised.

While the team finishing at the top will get a direct entry into Sunday's final, the second and third-placed teams will battle in the eliminator on Friday to fill up the second slot of the summit clash.

Earlier, Kerr snapped three wickets as Mumbai Indians produced a disciplined effort to restrict RCB to 125 for nine.

Kerr (3/22) validated MI

captain Harmanpreet Kaur's decision to bowl first, taking full advantage of a spin-friendly track, while Matthews (4-0-18-0) and Saika Ishaque (1/30) were also on the money.

Both Kerr and Ishaque joined Sophie Ecclestone of the UP Warriorz for most wickets (13) in WPL.

Mumbai made an early breakthrough when a horrible mixup between Devine (0) and Smriti Mandhana culminated in the former being run out.

Mandhana continued to drive herself back into form, hitting a few exciting shots to make 24 from 25 balls with three fours and a six, before her innings was ended by Kerr off a mistimed stroke.

Ellyse Perry (29 from 28 balls, 3x4s) took time to settle down and opened up only in the 10th over, hitting Ishaque for consecutive fours. At the halfway stage, RCB were 56 for 2.

Heather Knight perished for 12 in the 11th over with Kerr bagging her second wicket and the slide continued for RCB with the Kiwi spinner striking again, getting Kanika Ahuja (12) stumped by Yastika Bhatia.

Nat Sciver-Brunst returned for her final over to finish at 4-0-24-2, dismissing Perry and Shreyanka Patil (4) to mark yet another poor show for RCB with the bat. Isabelle Wong (2/26) also clipped in, removing Richa Ghosh and Disha Kasat in the last over.

Ghosh cracked three fours and two sixes to make 29 off 13 balls, with her innings helping RCB move past the 100-run mark.



MI need David, Green to fill shoes of Pollard and Pandya in IPL: Harbhajan

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh feels Tim David and Cameron Green will have to fill in the shoes of Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya for Mumbai Indians, if the five-time champions want to taste success in the upcoming Indian Premier League.

Stressing on the fact that a positive start to the tournament is paramount for success, Harbhajan told Star Sports: "Well, they (David and Green) will be successful if Tim David can do the same thing that

Pollard was doing and whether Green can do what Hardik was doing." But yes, they do have the potential, but IPL is such a tournament that if you start to get going from day one, you will have a good season. If you don't get going, and you have to find that rhythm, it gets very difficult," he added.

Mumbai Indians will be looking for redemption in this edition's IPL after finishing at the bottom of the table in 2022.

Mumbai Indians will open their campaign against Royal Challengers Bangalore in Bengaluru on April 2.

Delhi Capitals qualify for WPL final

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Alice Capsey produced a fabulous all-round display, snaring three wickets and smashing a 31-ball 34 as Delhi Capitals thrashed UP Warriorz by five wickets to directly qualify for the final of the Women's Premier League here on Tuesday.

Chasing 139-run target, built around Tahila McGrath's 32-ball unbeaten 58, DC romped home scoring 142 for five in 17.5 overs to finish at the top of the table, topping Mumbai Indians on the basis of better net run rate.

With Delhi grabbing a direct spot in the final, Mumbai Indians and UP Warriorz will now face off in the eliminator for the other final spot.

MI had defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by four



wickets earlier in the day, leaving DC with the task of not only winning against UPW but also maintaining a better run-rate to directly book their final spot.

Meg Lanning and Co did just that as they restricted UPW to a modest 138 for six after winning the toss and opting to

bowl.

Chasing, the opening pair of Lanning and Shafali Verma then went on a boundary hitting spree as they knocked off 56 runs off 29 balls.

If Lanning set the ball rolling with three fours and a six in a 20-run first over off

Shabnim Ismail, Shafali had four hits to the fence in her 16-ball 21-run cameo.

Once Shafali was holed out to Soppadhani Yashasri off Sophie Ecclestone's bowling, Ismail returned to trap Jemimah Rodrigues and then removed Lanning, who was caught by Simran Shaikh in the deep, as suddenly DC slumped to 70 for three.

UPW tried to tighten the screws but Capsey produced three boundaries in four balls off Ecclestone to keep DC in the hunt. Marizanne Kapp (34 not out off 31) smashed another maximum as DC reached 130 for three in 16 overs.

Ecclestone managed to sent back Capsey after two balls, while a mix-up cost Jess Jonassen's wicket but Kapp kept her cool to hit the winning runs.

Cherish being able to rub shoulders with Starc: Ellis

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Being able to pick Mitchell Starc's brain, Bhave him as a "calming influence" during ups and downs are some of the perks of being an Australian cricketer that young Nathan Ellis is enjoying a lot.

Ellis, who got Virat Kohli in the second game spoke extensively as to how Starc's influence on him has grown over time.

"Starcy (nickname) has been huge for me. For me personally, he is someone I looked up to him a lot of time. He presented me my first Australia cap too. He is a big part of my Australia journey. Even the other day, speaking to him pre-game and post-game," Ellis told mediapersons ahead of third ODI against India.

"He (Starc) is a calming influence. He is also someone who has been there and done almost everything the game has to offer, whether it is the ups or down. Being able to rub shoulders with Starc and sort of bounce ideas off and de-brief games... It is something that I have cherished. It is invaluable," Ellis

Starc has already taken eight wickets in two games and Ellis termed his performance as "amazing".



"Starcy (Mitchell Starc) the other night was nothing short of amazing. It was great to watch. It was great to be a part of. Hopefully, he can repeat those tomorrow (Wednesday)," he added.

I ADJUST MY LINE

Ellis believes is being flexible and his tactics change as per conditions of the track.

If the track offers bounce then he has a different ace up his sleeve.

"For me, I am not necessarily a bouncy bowler as it is. As I said before, it is a matter of assessing the wicket on the day and adapting my sets of skills to the wicket. Whether it is adjusting my line, being a bit

straighter.

"If it is not as bouncy, slower balls if needed and changing my lengths. Tomorrow is about not going with any pre-conceived ideas," he added.

As for the pitch at Chepauk, he said, "I am not sure with the team selection or what the team will look like. Obviously, it is going to spin here. For me, the slower balls might come into play. I think it will be a matter of assessing the wicket if we are bowling first."

"We get a bit more information for the batters who will come out in the second innings and vice versa for batting first... relaying the message back on what the wicket is doing and adapting as the game sort of progresses. It has not been a high-scoring series so far, so we will have to adapt to the wicket and what is presented to us on the day.

He accepted that it was a great opportunity for the team members to play ODIs in India where the World Cup (50-overs) would be held later in the year.

"Yeah, I guess so. I mean, it is obviously a great opportunity for us as a squad to play one-day cricket in the place where we will be playing the World Cup at the end of the year.