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'Surgical strikes broke back of terrorists'

This medium gives you liberty to play different

Dasara: When a vagabond rises to the occasion

the pioneer Increasing the prices of medicines that save people's lives by 12% is an act of taking away healthcare from poor and middle class people by the Centre. It is extremely disheartening and wicked act. Is this Ache din or Sache din (death days)?

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- T Harish Rao, Minister of Finance of TS

DON'T MISS...

'Paanakam' counters attract voters...

With the Karnataka Assembly elections only a few weeks away, political parties did not miss the opportunity to catch the attention of voters during the Sri Rama Navami festival on Thursday. In keeping with Karnataka's age-old tradition of celebrating Sri Rama Navami by distributing Paanaka' or Sharbat' and 'Kosambari' at public places, various socio-religious groups set up their Prasad' (offerings to God) distribution pandals... -PAGE: 2

South Kashmir woman makes...

Childhood interest in drawing and painting led Mahira Shah to the world of 'mandala' art and today she holds the world record for making the smallest mandala shikara. Mandala is an ancient Indian art pattern which involves drawing of circles in intricate designs. The art form was popularised by Indian artist SH Raza, who created several paintings of the mandala art and became world famous for them. Mahira Shah entered the Indian Books of Records for making..

Shift to products based on...

Apparel exports body AEPC on Thursday asked industry players to take advantage of free trade agreements and diversify to Man Made Fibre (MMF) based products to cater to the global demand and boost exports. Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) also said that it has collaborated with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) to organise a capacity building programme for promoting Noida as an export hub.

-PAGE: 8

IPL turns 'Sweet 16'

The never-ending speculations about Mahendra Singh Dhoni's impending 'last dance', Virat Kohli's endless pursuit of an elusive silverware and Rohit Sharma's customary nonchalance are things that make the IPL starting Friday a heady cocktail of cricket and entertainment. Megastars Dhoni, Kohli and Rohit have been the IPL's driving force in the past 15 seasons, getting the cricket crazy Indian fans hooked on the event for nearly two months every year. As it enters the 16th season..

Ajay Banga to become World Bank chief unopposed

WASHINGTON: Indian-American business leader Ajay Banga is poised to become the next President of the World Bank after the nomination period closed and no country proposed an alternate candidate for the prestigious post. In February, President Joe Biden announced that the US would be nominating Banga to lead the World Bank because he is "well equipped" to

lead the global institution at "this critical moment in history." The World Bank on Wednesday closed a month-long window for nominations for its next president, with no alternatives announced to 63-year-old Banga. The former Mastercard Inc. chief, Banga currently serves as Vice Chairman at General Atlantic. The bank's board is expected to announce the next steps in its selection process on

Thursday, with a view to confirming a new leader by early May. "Over the next few months, you will see the World Bank undergo an important transition. We expect that Ajay Banga President Biden's nominee will be elected President of the World Bank," US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told lawmakers at a Congressional hearing on Wednesday. "He will be charged with accelerating our progress to evolve the institution to better address 21st century challenges This evolution will help the Bank deliver on its vital poverty alleviation and development goals," Yellen said If confirmed, Banga would become the first-ever Indian-American and Sikh-American to head either of the two top international financial institutions: the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Banga is expected to replace the current World Bank

president David Malpass, who will step down in June, nearly a year before his term is scheduled to expire. Malpass faced strong criticism over the bank's commitment to climate action and over his personal views on climate change. Last week, reports emerged that China sounded doubtful about backing Banga, saying it is "open" to supporting "other potential candidates" based on merit. Banga, however, received overwhelming support from major countries across the world, including India. Following Banga's nomination, he has travelled to several countries for support. A coalition of 55 advocates, academics, executives, luminaries, and former government officials -- including four Nobel Laureates -- wrote an open letter to welcome and support Banga's nomination as the next President of the World Bank.

POWER PEAKS IN TS

Among all states, TS consumes maximum electricity for farming

NAVEENA GHANATE HYDERABAD

Telangana has recorded a new peak in power consumption by consuming 15,497 MW, including power from rooftop solar panels. This is the highest power consumption recorded in TS history.

The highest ever demand of 15,497 MW was recorded at 11:01 am on Thursday. Officials revealed that consumption has been of the order of 15,000 MW since the beginning of this month. Telangana is second in electricity consumption in south India.

It is known that on March 14 at 10:03 am, 15,062 MW of electricity was consumed by Transco and Genco, according to CMD Prabhakar Rao. Exactly two weeks later, on Thursday at 11:01 am, 15,497 MW power was consumed.

Officials say that electricity consumption has been increasing by the day in the state. Due to increase in the cultivated area and mounting industrial requirements,the demand for electricity has increased substantially.

It is stated that the agricultural sector accounts for 37 per cent of the total electricity demand in the state. Among all states in the country, Telangana consumes maximum electricity for farming. The consumption was 14,160 MW in March 2022. Last December, 14,750 passing this record.

CMD Prabhakar Rao said that it has been predicted that an electricity demand of 15,000 MW will be recorded in the month of March. He said that as per Chief Minister KChandrasekhar Rao's orders, all arrangements have been made in advance for supplying power without interruption.

It is estimated that there will be a demand for more than 16,000 MW during summer this year. "We are ready to supply electricity without any interruption regardless of demand," he

Health Minister Harish Rao con-

demned the Centre's decision to

hike the prices of essential medi-

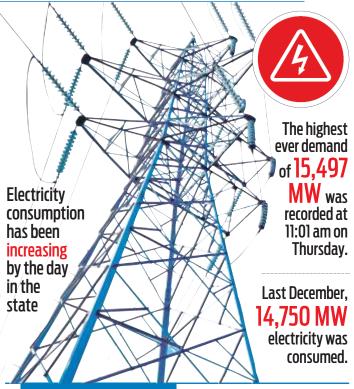
cines by 12 per cent from April 1. He said the BJP governance is

a constant threat to the common

man's life. He added that these

actions prove that the BJP's days

in governance are ending.



Bhiknoor temp touches 43.8°C

elangana experienced the hottest day of this summer so far on Thursday. Bhiknoor in Kamareddv District recorded the highest temp of 43.8°C in the state and Tirumalagiri recorded the highest temp of 39.6°C in Hyderabad city. Parts of Nirmal Siricilla Nizamabad, Siddinet, Nalgonda, Jantial, Adilabad, Kamareddy, Mahbubnagar, Gadwal, Medchal and Vikarabad reported temps above 40°C. In Hyderabad. Tirmualgiri, Serilingampally and

An act against healthcare

"The BJP government is trying to hound commoners. The

Centre, which has been increas-

ing the prices of petrol, diesel and

LPG, is now increasing the prices

of life-saving medicines. This is

a wicked act. Is this the so-called

Amrit Kaal, their Acche Din

(good days) are Sache Din (death

days) for commoners. This denies

healthcare to the poor and the

Saidabad recorded temps above 39°C. Hot weather will continue for another week. On Sunday, the city the IPL match is being held. Sunrisers Hyderabad and Raiasthan Royals will play at the Rajiv Gandhi Cricket Stadium in Uppal from 3:30 pm. The TSDPS said that maximum temperatures are expected to range from 37°C to 41°C, while minimum temperatures will range from 23°C to 26°C from March 30 to April 2. In Hyderabad city maximum temperatures are expected to range from 35°C to 38°C while minimum temperatures

will range from 23°C to 25°C.

painkillers, antibiotics and anti-

infectives are increased along

with medicines used for the

treatment of fever, infections,

BP, skin diseases, anaemia etc to

more than Rs 800, it will be a bur-

den on the poor and the middle

class," Harish said.

Nadda's visit to **TS** cancelled

PNS HYDERABAD

Bjp President Nadda's visit to Télangana visit scheduled on Friday has been cancelled. But Nadda will participate in the inauguration of the B JP's Sangareddy office online from New Delhi on Friday. He will also address BJP workers from there.

Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay, Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, MP K. Laxman, Sivaprakash, Tarun Chugh and Sunil Bansal will attend the Sangareddy programme.
In a statement, BJP state General

Secretary G. Premender Reddy said that Nadda will address BJP workers in Sangareddy district virtually. Similarly, Nadda will also launch the new party offices in Bhupalapally, Warangal, Janagaon and Mahbubabad districts and in the Anantapur and Chittoor districts of AP virtually.

After that, a meeting of state leadcharges will be held as usual at the party's state office in Hyderabad at

Apologise to nation

KTR demands Centre on hiking fuel prices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Demanding that the Centre should apologise to the nation for the skyrocketing fuel prices, Industries Minister KT Rama Rao wrote a strong-worded letter to the Centre criticising it for burdening the common man with increased fuel prices.

He said that the Centre was 'looting' the public by citing international crude oil prices as the reason for the fuel price hike but its deceit has been exposed.

"In 2013, when the cost of one barrel was USD 110, the cost of one litre of petrol was Rs 76. Now, when the cost of one crude oil barrel is USD 66, the cost of one litre of petrol is Rs 110," KTR pointed out.

He added that the Modi government is fleecing the poor and the middle class by increasing fuel prices to help a few companies "Due to the 45% hike in fuel prices after 2014, all essential commodities became costlier," KTR said.

He said that due to the rise in diesel prices, state governments were forced to increase public transport charges and the public transport system is facing a crisis due to the Centre. "Inflation is also at a 45-year high due to the Centre's failures," KTR added. He wondered that although the

Centre makes tall claims about importing crude at lower prices athe benefit is not on to the common man and two oil Parliament. "Rejecting the BJP is the companies are reaping huge profits. only way to stop the Centre's loot and

and selling it to other countries. They are hiding this key information from the public," KTR said. He added that the Centre has also

low prices from Russia, refining it,

KTR, Sanjay lock

horns on Twitter

once again

reduced the windfall tax on fuel to nelp some companies. He took a potshot at Union

Ministers for their remarks that bringing fuel under the purview of GST would reduce prices.

"The price of LPG which is under

GST has been hiked from Rs 400 to Rs 1200, making it the costliest in the world," he said. KTR asked why the Centre couldn't control LPG prices although it is under GST. He said that the Centre is conspiring to stop the "The Centre is importing crude at reduce fuel prices," KTR added.

Clashes mar Ram Navami

11 devotees die after falling into well at temple in MP; riots in Maha, Delhi

PNS NEW DELHI/INDORE/AURANGABAD

Ram Navami was celebrated across the country on Thursday with grand processions and special pujas, but the festivities were marred in Madhya Pradesh where 11 devotees died after falling into a well at a temple, and in Maharashtra where a clash left 12 injured.

In Delhi, a large number of people defied a police order and took out a procession in Jahangirpuri, which witnessed riots last year during Hanuman Jayanti celebrations, while stones were pelted at a march in Gujarat's Vadodara too.

The celebrations remained largely incident-free in the rest of the country with people coming out on the streets with religious fervour and



agencies on the watch. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished people on the auspicious enthusiasm and law-enforcement occasion and said the life of Lord

Ram will be an inspiration for humanity in every era.

Will TDP join hands with BJP in Telangana?

Going by early indications the TDP and the BJP seem to be joining hands in Telangana. So far both parties have not criticised each other openly. The general impression is that the BJP will go for an alliance with the TDP and the BJP is not averse to the

Iana Sena is reportedly bringing pressure on the BJP and the TDP for sailing together in Andhra Pradesh. Political observers say that this deal may extend to Telangana as well.

The TDP does not have any conflict of interest with the BJP support base in TS and can influence many important pockets in Telangana. As of now, the TDP has a definite share decided by the high command." of 5,000 to 6,000 votes in TS constituencies. These votes can become

Instead of condemning Rahul Gandhi's disqualification, the TDP hailed the BJP for releasing a Rs 100 coin to honour NTR.

On Wednesday Chandrababu Naidu said, "The Centre has decided to release a Rs 100 silver coin on the occasion of NTR's centenary. I thank Modi and the Centre for this." Sources in the BIP, however, say

that it is too early to decide on an alliance. "The whole idea of winning over regional parties will be in question. However, as elections are coming, signals will keep coming from everywhere for an alliance. Whether we want an alliance or not will be



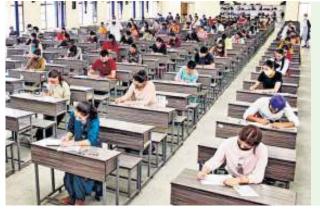
Hopefuls disappointed as TSPSC's schedule gets delayed **DEEPIKA PASHAM**

The Telangana State Public Service Commission's indecision on releasing the schedule for coming examinations is disappointing job hopefuls.

A TSPSC official said that there is a struggle for time in scheduling the dates of forthcoming examinations. Job hopefuls who were rushing to find a chair in the Chikkadpally library are now packing their bags to go back to their hometowns to look into the issue's details.

The hopefuls said that to avoid further expenses on room and food they are planning to take coaching classes at home.

Job hopeful Supriya said, "I took a break from my regular job and am surviving on my savings and preparing for TSPSC exams. I am single here in Hyderabad. We heard different versions about the examination schedule.



SIT questions 3 in TSPSC leak case

 T^{he} custodial questioning of the three suspects in the TSPSC leak case continued for the second day. On Thursday, the police shifted the accused from the CCS office to the Himayath Nagar Special Investigation Team's office. Sources said that SIT officials questioned A10 Shamim, A11 Ramesh and A12 Suresh about the Group-1 test written by them. It seems that the three accused told the SIT that they got the Group-1 question paper from Praveen. The SIT is investigating whether the three gave the question paper to anyone else. It is known that for the AE test question paper, accused Dakiya Naik collected Rs 25 lakh from five persons. Nilesh and Gopal Naik bought the question paper by paying Rs 13.5 lakh. Rajender paid Rs 5 lakh and Prashant Reddy paid Rs 7.5 lakh. SIT officials are examining Dakiya Naik's bank accounts. Meanwhile, the investigation carried out by SIT officials has confirmed that AE test question papers were leaked to 12 people and Group-1 question papers to five people

I think we have two months to prepare. I am planning to go home and study there." We have lots of exams. Banks, UPSC and universities are conducting

exams. So we are struggling to fix a

of exams. After a lot of exercises, we released one schedule and for other examinations, we will be releasing the schedule in a week. When we finalise one exam date we are told that dates

prepared. We have only exams for 100 posts, 50 posts etc remaining," Chairman Dr B. Janardhan Reddy said

Another hopeful says that as he was late in joining coaching he was told time for our exams. We are spending for other exams are coming up. The to pay a very high fee. After bargain-

two to three days deciding the dates schedules for major exams have been ing the coaching centre reduced it. He says that he paid around Rs 25K and took the coaching but now he is sitting in his village doing nothing as exams have been postponed.



VH asks BJP: **What did Modi** do for OBCs?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Lashing out at Prime Minister Modi and BJP leaders for demanding that Rahul Gandhi should apologise to OBCs, senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao asked Modi to reveal what he has done for OBCs during his

VH said that he is holding a round table conference on April 1, 2023, to discuss in detail what previous governments had done for OBCs and what the Modi govern-ment did in the last eight years. VH said that the round table conference will be held at the Somajiguda Press Club

from 11 am to 2 pm.
In a statement, VH said, "Whatever Rahul said was regarding Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi and other scamsters. Rahul said that Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi were looting this country. He did not utter even a single word against the Prime Minister. He did not say anything against OBCs. The issue took place in 2019. It is quite astonishing that after all these years Modi realised that he was an OBC. BJP President Nadda and TS President Bandi Sanjay also began to criticise Rahul to divert public attention from Nirav Modi and others. The Prime Minister is targeting Rahul. He had just spoken on Nirav Modi and Lalit Modi."

Cong sets up panel to intensify Inform about stock market protest against TSPSC leak

The Congress has decided to intensify its protest against the TSPSC leak like the BJP.

The Congress has appointed a special committee like the BJP which had constituted a task force. The committee will mount pressure on the government to identify all the culprits involved in the TSPSC leak.

The Congress appointed a committee as per the directions of TPCC President Revanth Reddy under the chairmanship of Senior Vice-President Dr Mallu

The committee comprises Youth Congress state President K. Shivasena Reddy (Convener), NSUI state President Balmoor

The committee will tour all universities and hold review meetings with students and take their opinion on the TSPSC leak. The committee will also appoint regional committees and coordinators in all universities and would also visit government and private coaching centres, libraries

and study centres and meet unemployed youth.

Venkat Narasimha Rao (Convener), TPCC General Secretaries K. Manavatha Roy (member), R. Bala Lakshmi (member) and PCC insurance and claims chairman Pavan Malladi (member).

Revanth constituted the committee to launch statewide protests in consultation with other political parties and all sections of society like parents, students, unemployed youth and the intelligentsia.

The committee will tour all universities and hold review meetings with students and take their opinion on the TSPSC leak. The committee will also appoint regional committees and coordinators in all universities and would also visit government and private coaching centres, libraries and study centres and meet unemployed youth.

The committee will also arrange people in all the above institutions to intensify their moves against the government and the TSPSC.

The committee will also appeal to students and parents to take part in the fight against the TSPSC and the govern-

India unveils space design lab

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has unveiled a state-ofthe-art design lab in Ahmedabad to enable space sector start-ups to transform their innovative ideas into implementable models at a faster pace. The Space Systems Design Lab of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) was inaugurated by ISRO Chairman S Somanath at Bopal in Ahmedabad earlier this week. The IN-SPACe design lab consists of high-end analysis and simulation software for mission simulation, modelling, visualising, optimising payload and spacecraft, ground station, and launch vehicle avionics, IN-SPACe Chairman Pawan Goenka said.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS and the BJP locked

horns on Twitter on Thursday

with Industries Minister KT

Rama Rao and Bandi Sanjay

criticising each other's party.
Industries Minister KT Rama

Rao took to Twitter and said,

"The four spineless BJP MPs

from Telangana should be held accountable for the Modi gov-

ernment's outrageous flouting of

the AP Reorganisation Act

promises. While Telangana was

PM's home state Gujarat got a Rs

20,000 crore locomotive facto-

ry."
"Prime Minister Modi has

a rail coach

'Paanakam' counters attract voters in poll-

endar year.'

CENTRE TO AIS OFFICERS

authorities to keep a watch over

the transactions in any stock,

share or other investments etc. In

respect of members of All India

Services (AIS), it has been decid-

ed that an intimation may be sent

in the enclosed proforma to the

prescribed authority every year,

if the total transactions in stock,

share or other investments etc.

exceed six months' basic pay of

government servant during a cal-

related transactions'

PNS HYDERABAD

Centre has directed Indian

Administrative Service (IAS),

Indian Police Service (IPS) and

Indian Forest Service (IFS) offi-

cers to inform if their total

transactions in stock, share or

other investments exceed their

six months' basic pay in a calen-

An order from the Ministry of

Personnel, Public Grievances

and Pensions, said: "With a view

With the Karnataka Assembly elections only a few weeks away, political parties did not miss the opportunity to catch the attention of voters during the Sri Rama Navami festival on Thursday.

bound Karnataka

In keeping with Karnataka's age-old tradition of celebrating Sri Rama Navami by distributing Paanaka' or Sharbat' and 'Kosambari' at public places, various socio-religious groups set up their Prasad' (offerings to God) distribution pandals in many parts of the

Paanaka' are generally made of cantaloupe, Bael or lemonade since they -- as also Kosambari (a salad generally made of drenched green gram, grated coconut, and chilli, seasoned with mustard seeds and coriander) -- have a cooling effect on the body to beat the heat during summer.

What was interesting this time was the 'Prasad' counters

put up by political parties. Since the Model Code of Conduct is in force, they chose not to put up their party flags but dropped subtle hints for the people.

It was the flags and festoons that made the distinction for people to identify the political party behind these Pandals.

In Bengaluru, many such Prasad' distribution counters popped up in close proxim-

In Thurahalli, there was a pandal dotted with saffron flags and yellow marigold flowers and those distributing them sported saffron scarves around their neck. Hardly 50 metres away, there was another counter with Torana' made of green' mango leaves. People said they were set up by the BJP and Congress, respectively.

These rules are applicable to members of the three all India services. It referred to Rule 14(1) of the conduct rules that says "no member of the service shall speculate in any stock, share or other investments but this provision will not apply to occasional investment made through stock-brokers or other persons duly authorised on licence under the relevant law".

The order was issued on March 20.

HATE SPEECH Mumbai cops register case against Raja Singh

PNS HYDERABAD

A case has been registered in Mumbai against Goshamahal BJP MLA Raja Singh. The police registered a case against him for making provocative remarks at a public meeting in Mumbai on January 29, 2023.

The Mumbai Police registered a case against Raja Singh under Section 153 Á1 (A) of IPC for allegedly mak-

ing a hate speech.

The Hyderabad Police also issued a notice to Raja Singh for making provocative remarks at an event held in Mumbai on January 29.

It was mentioned in the notice that the Telangana High Court had imposed a condition not to make provocative comments while granting bail in one of the cases. The police asked for an explanation regard-

Court extends interim bail of Mahendru the application seeking exten-PNS ■ NEW DELHI sions made in application, it is

A Delhi court has extended the interim bail granted to liquor businessman Sameer Mahendru on medical grounds in a money laundering case related to alleged irregularities in the nowscrapped Delhi excise policy.
Special Judge M K Nagpal

granted the relief for a week after the Enforcement Directorate said it needed time to reply to

sion of the bail. ED's Special Public Prosecutor N K Matta told the court that the agency has emailed all medical documents of the accused to the doctors/hospitals concerned, but some of the reports are still awaited.

"In view of the above and as requested, the application is now directed to be listed on April 5. However, in view of the submisbeing directed that interim bail granted to the accused by this court vide order dated February 28, 2023 shall stand extended till then," the judge said in an order passed on March 29.

On February 28, the court granted interim bail to Mahendru on medical grounds for a period of 30 days after he claimed he was suffering from

PM visits new parliament building, inspects works

PNS NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a surprise visit to the new parliament building here on Thursday evening and inspected various works as well as interacted with construction workers, sources said.

The prime minister spent more than an hour inside the building.

Accompanied by Lok Sabha Speaker Ôm Birla, Modi had a look at the facilities coming up at both Houses of Parliament, the sources said.

He also interacted with the construction workers, they said. The new building, which was earlier expected to be completed by November last year, is like-

ly to be inaugurated soon.

Tata Projects Ltd is constructing the building after being awarded the project for Rs 971 crore in 2020. However, the project cost is believed to have gone

The new building will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India's democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.

Under the Central Vista redevelopment project, the government will also construct an Executive Enclave that will house a new Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Cabinet Secretariat, India House and National Security Council

foundation stone of the new par-In December 2020, Prime liament building which will Minister Modi had laid the have modern facilities.

An act against Continued from page 1

over 1,000 formulations classified as essential medicines by the government are set to see the highest-ever annual price rise of over 12 per cent, due to a sharp jump in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).

Annual hikes in the prices of drugs listed in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) are based on WPI. These medicines are used in government health programmes apart from being sold directly to retail consumers.

Officials in the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority said that the WPI stood at 12.12 per cent between January 2022 and this year, citing the office of the Economic Adviser in the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Tithi:Dashami:

Nakshatram:

Dashami

Ashlesha

Rahukalam:

Gulika:

Temp: 36°

Humidity: 32%

Sunrise: 6:15 AM

Sunset: 6.25 PM

Month & Paksham:

Chaitra&Sukla Paksha

10:49 AM to 12:20 PM

03:23 PM to 04:54 PM

04:16 PM to 06:04 PM

07:46 AM to 09:18 AM

06:46 PM to 08:33 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 AM to 12:44 PM

Updated: MARCH 30, 2023 5:00 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

KCR insulting Hindus by rejecting ancient traditions

PNS HYDERABAD

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has asked Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao to explain why he failed to attend the Bhadrachalam Sri Ramula marriage ceremony held on March 30. The VHP said that by refusing to follow the centuriesold Hindu tradition KCR is insulting Hindus.

In a statement, the VHP state Prachar Pramukh, Pagadaakula Balaswami, the President and Secretary, Surender Reddy and Pandarinath asked KCR to reveal why he is discriminating against Dakshina Ayodhya Bhadradri.

They said that KCR offered Pearl Talambralu and Vastrams Bhadrachalam Ramulavari in 2015 and 2016 after the formation of Telangana state. Later on, KCR stopped attending the Bhadrachalam Sriramula Kalyanam.

Stating that Pushkara Samrajya Pattabhishekam was held in 2011 and in 2023, VHP leaders said that it is shocking on the part of KCR not to attend such an important function.

They said that KCR has been neglecting traditions introduced by Tanisha in the 17th century of not offering Pattu Vastrams and Pearl Talambralu to Ramulavaru.

The VHP leaders said that KCR was not only ignoring centuries-old Hindu traditions but also insulting Goddess Rama by not allocating funds for the Pushkara Pattabhishekam. Samrajya

KCR allotted a namesake Rs 1 crore on March 29 although the temple authorities had informed the CMO in February that Rs 2.25 crore was needed for special

The situation is such that the temple authorities have to depend on hundi money. The VHP leaders made it clear that the VHP will not keep quiet if KCR adopts anti-Hindu policies.

lashes mar Ram Navami

KTR, Sanjay lock horns on Twitter once again not given us the rail coach factory, the Turmeric Board, the second phase of Hyd Metro, the ITIR project, the Tribal University, the Bayyaram Steel Factory and the national tag for our irrigation project. When Telangana is not among the Prime Minister's priorities why should the people of Telangana prioritise Modi? Why should there be that useless party in

Telangana?" KTR added. Reacting to this, BJP State President Bandi Sanjay said, KCR did not give a place in his party to those who fought in the TS movement, Dalits weren't given the promised three acres, Dalits were not given the CM's

service not filled, no unemployment benefits, double bedroom houses not given. KCR did not give rightful beneficiaries Dalit Bandhu sops, and did not give funds to panchayats and municipalities. Temples not given funds. When the Chief Minister's main job is not to serve people, why should they tolerate you? If KCR removed Telangana from his party name, why should he not be removed from this state?"

post, vacancies in government

Earlier in the da President Bandi Sanjay said, "Highest-paid CM is KCR, Rs 4.1 lakh per month. KCR son's image - Rs 100 crore. KCR

daughter's watch - Rs 20 lakh. What is the worth of the victims of rape, ragging, kids killed by street dogs, and the victims of the TSPSC leak? Justice is locked in the hands of the Dora." In a reaction to this tweet,

KTR re-Tweeted a Tweet of Krishank Manne saying, "Modi Suit - Rs 10 Lakh, Modi Sunglasses – Rs 1.4 Lakh, Modi Shawl - Rs 1.3 Lakh, Modi Mushroom 1 piece – Rs 80,000 and Modi's promised Rs 15 Lakh in banl knows.

Earlier, on Ugadi day too, KTR and Sanjay locked horns

Will TDP join hands with BJP in TS?

Continued from page 1

It may be mentioned here that the TDP supported the BJP in Port Blair. The BJP and the Congress won 10 seats each while the TDP bagged two seats and the DMK one seat. The remaining one was won by an Independent. With the TDP's support, the BJP's tally went up to 12. So an alliance was forged between the two parties. This is likely to have an impact on the Telugu states.

Devotion, fervour mark Navami in AP



Priests performing special 'pooja' at Vontimitta temple on the occasion of the beginning of making of 'Goti Talambralu' for the Sita Rama Kalvanam to be solemnised at Vontimitta temple on April 5

where the RSS organised about Dilip Ghosh performed puja at

Continued from page 1

"Maryada Purushottam' Lord Ram's life was based on sacrifice, tapasya, restraint and resolve," he tweeted. Ten women and a man died

after the roof of a well collapsed

during a havan, a fire ritual, at Beleshwar Mahadev Jhulelal temple in Indore's Patel Nagar, a senior official said. Nearly 30-35 devotees fell into the well after the accident, Indore Police Commissioner

Makrand Deoskar said, citing eyewitness accounts. An eyewitness said the roof of the well caved-in as a huge huge crowd of devotees gathered on it.

In the Aurangabad city of neighbouring Maharashtra, at least 12 people, including 10 policemen, were injured after a mob of around 500 people

went berserk and hurled stones and petrol-filled bottles when the personnel tried to control the situation following a clash between two groups near a Ram temple, officials said on Thursday.

The incident, in which 13 vehicles were torched by the miscreants, occurred during the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday in the city's Kiradpura locality that houses the famous Ram temple, they said.

The police used tear gas and fired some plastic bullets as well as live rounds to control the mob, the officials said, adding that eight teams have been formed to identify and arrest

the perpetrators. Elsewhere, leaders of the BIP and RSS led processions in different parts of West Bengal 1,000 small and large rallies across the state. Chanting slogans of 'Jai Shri

Ram', thousands of people took part in those processions in Howrah, Kharagpur, Barrackpore, Bhadreswar, Siliguri and Asansol. Drumbeats, saffron flags and large cutouts of Lord Ram featured prominently in these processions. Some of those participating in the processions were carrying swords and trishulas.

BJP leader Sajal Ghosh, who participated in one such rally in Howrah's Ramrajatala, said there was a need to use such weapons against the evil. "Lord Rama had used weapons to vanquish the demons," said Ghosh, a corporator of Kolkata.

the 300-year-old Ram Mandir in Ramrajatala. TMC leader Arjun Singh also took part in a Ram Navami procession organised by a religious outfit in Barrackpore in North 24 Parganas district.

The festival was celebrated with fervour and enthusiasm across Telangana with devotees offering prayers and also attending the celestial wedding of Lord Ram and Sita performed in temples. Hundreds of devotees wit-

nessed the 'Sri Sita Rama Kalyanam' at the famous Lord Ram temple at Bhadrachalam, about 300 kms from Hyderabad. Police made elaborate security arrangements for the 'sobha yatras' (processions) on the occasion of Ram BJP national vice-president Navami in Hyderabad.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Sri Rama Navami celebrations were held with devotion at various temples and the sacred Dhwajarohanam and the making of 'Talambralu' began at the famous Sri Kodandarama Swamy temple at Vontimitta on Thursday.

The Sri Rama Navami was solemnised with devotion at various temples. A large num-

ber of devotees thronged various temples across the state. At the famous Vontimitta temple, the making of 'Goti Talambralu' for the celestial wedding of Sri Rama and Sita to be solemnized on April 5, began on Thursday.

Minister for Water resources Ambati Rambabu visited the Vontimitta temple and offered prayers on Thursday. ZP Chairman Akepati Amarnath Unjal Mandapam.

Reddy, Mallikharjun Reddy participated in a special 'pooja' at Vontimitta temple.

The Sri Rama Navami festivities were observed with celestial fervour in Kodanda Ramalayam in Tirupati on Thursday. Áfter performing Abhishekam to Mulavirat in the morning, Snapana Tirumanjanam was rendered to the 'utsava' deities in

Hopefuls disappointed as TSPSC's...

Continued from page 1

Many people have requested

'The Pioneer' to publish the dates of examinations. "Recently at a press confer-

Rama Rao promised to reschedule Group-1 exams. There are many hopefuls who would like to take the Assistant Motor Vehicles Inspector (AMVI) another hopeful.

ence Industries Minister KT

April 23, but no one is speaking about whether it will be held as per schedule or cancelled. We want information on it," said

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Rama Navami celebrations fill city with religious fervour

PNS HYDERABAD

The temples in the city were filled with a festive spirit as they celebrated the birth of Lord Rama to mark Sri Rama Navami. Large crowds gathered at the temples to participate in Ram Navami puja on Thursday. Public representatives and ministers also actively joined in the celebrations with the general public for the

Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav started the yatra to Rama's chariot at Mangalhat in Goshamahal constituency. Addressing the rally organised under the leadership of BRS leader Anand Singh, Minister Srinivas Yadav said, "Telangana government is planning to make strict arrangements to protect our cultural traditions and conduct the festival in a spirit of harmony.

Regardless of caste, religion and politics, everyone should meet with a sense of brotherhood." He said that the state government will officially conduct pujas at Bhadradri Rama

representatives and ministers also actively joined in the celebrations with the general public for the festival. Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav started the yatra to Rama's chariot at Mangalhat in Goshamahal constituency

arrangements have been made for the rally organised under the leadership of Anand Singh which will continue as a procession till Hanuman Tekdi. He congratulated Nandu Bilal and Poojabilal Vyas, who are supporting Anand Singh and who have been celebrating this festival since 15 years with great grandeur.

Meanwhile, Jakkidi Charitable Trust Chairman Jakkidi Raghuveer Reddy handed over a silver makara torana to the Goddess at Sri He said that strict security Gali Pochamma temple in



Yerukala Nancharamma double bedroom residential complex in Mansoorabad division. On this occasion, president of BRS division Jakkidi Malla Reddy and Jakkidi Raghuveer Reddy performed a special puja to the Goddess.

The Sri Sitarama Kalyanam Mahotsav was also held at the Anjaneya Swamy temple in Veliminedu, which is the hometown of Ibrahimpatnam MLA M Kishan Reddy. The MLA said that he prayed to God that all the people of the constituency should be happy

and blessed

Several public representatives and the public participated in the event.

Another Sri Sitarama Kalyan Mahotsav was conducted with great splendour under the guidance of Praveen Chikkoti on the premises of Sri Siddhi Vinayaka temple, Vinay Nagar Colony, IS Sadhan, Old Basti,

Additionally, large groups gathered for the Rama Navami Shoba Yatra on Thursday. The police made elaborate arrangements for the event.

Yatra ends at Hanuman Gaushala

PNS HYDERABAD

Sobha Yatra taken out to mark Sri Rama Navami had begun by the Thursday afternoon from various routes in the city. It began from Akashpuri Hanuman temple in Mangal Hat Market Road and concluded at the Hanuman Gaushala grounds.

Artistes from other states were hired to perform and every small temple performed Sita Ramalula Kalyanam for the first time and over 200 married couples sat in puja at Sitarambagh. Apart from this, hundreds of devotees were seen taking out bike rallies with flags and chanting Jai Sri Ram to join the Sobha Yatra.

Speaking with The Pioneer, the priest at Secunderabad Siva temple said, "This is an auspicious festival for all of us and we perform Sitarama Kalyanam.

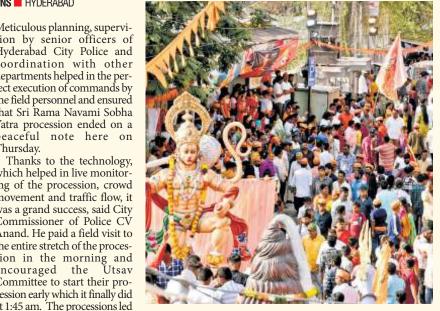
These days we are also conducting Sobha Yatra irrespective of the whether it is big or small temple. It depends on the temple authorities to arrange music. If not traditional dolu and sanai were arranged and devotees sang bhajans for the Sobha Yatra."

Technology helped in monitoring Sobha Yatra, says CP Anand

PNS HYDERABAD

Meticulous planning, supervision by senior officers of Hyderabad City Police and coordination with other departments helped in the per-fect execution of commands by the field personnel and ensured that Sri Rama Navami Sobha Yatra procession ended on a peaceful note here on Thursday.

which helped in live monitoring of the procession, crowd movement and traffic flow, it was a grand success, said City Commissioner of Police CV Anand. He paid a field visit to the entire stretch of the procession in the morning and encouraged the Utsav Committee to start their procession early which it finally did at 1:45 am. The processions led by activist Anand Singh and MLA Raja Singh followed and weaved their way through Mangalhat , Begum Bazaar Chhatri, Siddiambar Bazaar, Gowliguda, Koti areas and finally reached the Hanuman Vyamshala amidst huge and boisterous crowds . All the events were watched closely from the Joint Command



Control Centre in Basheerbagh where the officials of RTC, R&B, GHMC, EMRI, Fire and Electricity departments were

Anand monitored the live drone footage, CCTV feeds and radio communications and gave timely instructions to the field officers. Senior officers descended on the field and

ensured that the procession moved on.

Thousands of police personnel were deployed for bandobust in sensitive areas.

"The procession was completed peacefully with the cooperation of organisers, the government departments ,devotees and general publice,"

HIGHEST NUMBER OF ACTIVE CASES IN LAST SIX MONTHS

17 new Covid cases recorded in Telangana in one day

PNS HYDERABAD

A total of 17 new cases have been recorded in Telangana on Thursday with the total number of active cases sitting at 158 which is the highest number recorded in the state, compared to last few months.

A bulletin released by the state department of public health and family welfare said a cumulative number 8,42,479 cases have been recorded thus far while 8,38,213 have recovered. The state officials revealed that there is extensive testing in the state to control the pandemic.

There were 13,509 active cases in India as on March 30, while most of the big numbers were recorded in Maharashtra, Kerala, Delhi and Himachal Pradesh. The Centre has recently issued a notice to Telangana



The state government has started testing at base level every day. According to the bulletin, 3,780 were tested on Thursday and 147 reports are still awaited. Officials said that there is no need for concern as no deaths were recorded so far. The fatality rate is at 0.49% while the recovery rate is 99.49%. The state has also vaccinated 153 people on Thursday, adding the total number to 7,75,54,31 people.

The officials said that vulnerable age groups are children, less instructed the officials to take above 60 years. They advised the Covid.'

public to avoid going outdoors unless mandatory. They also added that there is a higher incidence of Covid in the age group of 20 to 50 years. Hence, people were requested to exercise due caution while going for work and essential activities.

The bulletin read, "In case of any flu or influenza-like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, running nose, difficulty in breathing, body pains and headache, please report to the nearest government health facility and seek health services without any delay. People with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, diabetes, cardiac illness, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, cancer or any other chronic illness are requested to stay indoors and avoid any kind of travel except for medical care

STANDING TALL



The 125-foot-tall bronze statue of Dr BR Ambedkar to be unveiled on April 14 at Tank Bund. MLC Kavitha shared the picture and said Baba Saheb Ambedkar and the Indian Constitution, standing tall to remind India and every single Indian of their

Internshala launches Grand Summer Internship Fair

PNS HYDERABAD

Internshala launched a Grand Summer Internship Fair (GSIF-2023). The initiative brings 23,000 plus summer internship opportunities for the students from all fields of education.

Interested candidates can apply for the opportunities between April 2 to 20.

In GSIF-2023, 2,800 organisations will be hiring summer interns for a variety of profiles. A number of popular brands will participate in the Grand Summer Internship Fair and offer internship opportuni-ties to students, including Airtel, Decathlon, Dunzo, SnapDeal, Tommy Hilfiger, IIT Bombay, No Broker, Cultfit, Lavie, Caratlane, Times Internet, SBI Fund Management, Bagzone Lifestyles, Lemon Tree Hotels,

and ĆlearTax, to name a few. As part of this initiative, internship is being offered to educational backgrounds. The internship profiles also include marketing, digital marketing, web development, Python

development, content writing, sales, human resources, business development, social media marketing, data analytics, operations, product management, graphic design, video editing, programming and

It provides aspiring students with the stage to secure internship opportunities and earn a stipend as high as Rs 65,000 per month.

Sarvesh Agrawal, CEO said, 'While internships are now being actively pursued by students across the year, summer still stands tall as the peak season to pursue internships. To fulfil this demand for summer internships among students, GSIF brings more internships offering big brands, work-from-home, short-term, part-time, inoffice and PPO internships.

OVER 2,000 PARTICIPANTS EXPECTED

Ahimsa Run in city on April 2

PNS HYDERABAD

Hyderabad will witness the IIFL JITO Ahimsa run being organised in 85 locations in the world on April 2. The marathon comprising 3,000 meter; 5,000 meters and 10,000 meter runs will be held across 65 locations in India and 20 locations abroad.

The marathon aims to create awareness for a better world to stop wars and hatred, establishing peace and nonviolence across the world. Approximately, 2,800 people are expected to participate in the Hyderabad leg of the marathon which will be held at Jalavihar.

The marathon will begin and end at the Jala Vihar parking zone. The route for the run will be from Jala Vihar towards Sanjeevaiah Park and back. The prize money for 10,000 meters is Rs 90,000.



The first edition of the run is being organised by JITO (Jain International Trade Örganisation) Hyderabad Ladies Wing. It is called "IIFL JITO AHIMSA RUN for peace & for non-violence." JITO is a world-ide organisation of businessmen, industrialists, knowledge workers and professionals reflecting the glory of ethical business practices.

JITO ladies wing has been created to empower Jain women and provide a platform where all Jain women regardless of their sects and faith can converge to create a powerful movement for the benefit of all.

JITO Hyderabad chapter was started in the year 2009 under the chairmanship of Gautam Pokarna with D.C Galada as its Chief Secretary. The marathon will also be conducted in the cities of the US and UK. The overall particpatioon in the marathon is estimated to be one lakh peo-

AIG chairman Nageshwar Reddy conferred Charaka Award

PNS HYDERABAD

Institute Gastroenterology (AIG) Hospital Chairman Dr D Nageshwar Reddy was felicitated by the Rotary Club of Guindy on Thursday.

Ramesh Babu S, President, Rotary Club of Guindy said, "It is proud privilege for all to have Dr Nageshwar Reddy as the recipient of the Charaka Award as it symbolises the epitome of medical profession and service to the patient community. We are truly hon-

oured that a Padma Bhushan awardee Dr Reddy accepted our gesture and also addressed the gathering.'

During the felicitation, Dr Nageshwar Reddy said, "The Rotary Club of Guindy has been doing exceptional work in areas such as fighting diseases, providing clean drinking water and maternal health over the last three decades. It was indeed a gratifying moment for me to receive this award and will motivate many to work in the public health domain.'



Two injured as building collapses in Jeedimetla

PNS HYDERABAD

Two persons were injured as an old building collapsed under Jeedimetla police station limits on Thursday.

The old building in

Cherukupalli collapsed while being repaired. Due to the debris falling on three adjacent buildings, the walls were partially damaged. A major accident was avaerted as there was no one in the collapsed building.

Two people in the adjacent building sustained minor injuries. Jeedimetla police said that they have registered a case and are



Direct train from city to Agartala from April 2

PNS HYDERABAD

The South Central Railway (SCR) on Thursday announ ced a special weekly train from Secunderabad to Agartala, train number 07018, beginning from April 2.

The train will leave the Secunderabad station at 11 am on Sunday and reach Agartala at 11:15 pm on Tuesday.

The train will halt at Pagidipalli, Nalgonda, Miryalguda, Sattenapalle, Guntur, Vijayawada, Eluru, Rajamundry, SamalkotJn, Duvvada, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagram, Srikakulam Road, Palasa, Berhampur,

Khurda Road Junction, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bhadrakh, Balasore, Khara gpur Junction, Andul, Dankuni, Bardhaman, Rampur Hat, Malda Town, Kishanganj, New Jalpaiguri, Jalpaiguri Road, Mathabhanga, New Cooch Behar [C], New Alipurduar, Kokrajhar, New Alipurduar, Kokrajhar, New Bongaigaon, Golpara, Guwahati, Jagi Road, Hojai, Lumding Junction, New Haflong, Badarpur, New Karimganj, Dharmangar and Ambassa stations during the journey. It will comprise AC II Tier, AC III Tier, Sleeper and General Second Class coach-General Second Class coach-

PNS HYDERABAD

The state government came to the rescue of Budugu Jangala artist, Moguliah, who rose to fame for his song in recent Telugu movie Balagam. The artist's story surfaced in the media recently, revealing that both his kidneys have failed during Covid pandemic and that his eyesight weakened due to Diabetes.

State IT Minister KT Rama Rao and Health Minister Harish Rao called for action in the matter and announced that the government will support Moguliah and his wife Komaravva, in this regard.

Moguliah's role and song in the movie Balagam, which represented stories of rural Telangana, went viral on the social media for touching sensitive topics and moving the audience to tears. The couple lives in Duggondi mandal centre of Narsampeta, Warangal. Moguliah's wife Komaravva, who also starred alongside her husband, revealed that they had spent around Rs 16 lakh for treatment and they are

stuck in many debts.

Moved by the heart-wrenching story, IT Minister KTR announced that the government will bear the entire cost of medical assistance including



Singer Moguliah hospitalised, state aid announced

dialysis and medicines. The minister also called the local MLA of Narsampet constituency, Peddi Sudarsĥan Reddy, and instructed him to make appro-

priate arrangements. MLA Sudarshan Reddy sent BRS local representatives to visit the couple in hospital and instructed them to ensure proper treatMoved by the heartwrenching story, IT Minister KTR announced that the government will bear the entire cost of medical assistance including dialysis and medicines

Health Minister Harish Rao also directed the officials of the Health Department to make arrangements to provide nec-

essary medicines as per the wishes of Moguliah's family members. He advised them to arrange dialysis services on time and take the patient to the hospital in an ambulance free of cost and after the tests, bring him home in the ambulance. Mogiliah's family members thanked Minister Harish for standing by him. Meanwhile, the Telugu film

industry has also announced its support to Moguliah's family. Balagam Director Venu Yeldhandi has already received financial assistance of Rs one lakh and personnel of Dil Raju Production also promised financial assistance

Traditional grandeur marks celestial wedding of Lord Rama and Sita

PNS BHADRACHALAM

Traditional grandeur marked the celestial wedding of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita at Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Devastanam here on Thursday.

A large number of devotees from across the State and also from other parts of the country thronged the temple to witness the celestial wedding. The devotees witnessed the celestial wedding of the divine couple at Mithila Stadium on the banks of the River Godavari.

The celestial wedding was performed by priests. The ritual was performed from 2 am and 9.30 am.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya and several guests were present at the ceremony. Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitharam, Mp Maloth Kavitha, MLC T Madhushudhan, MLA Podem Veeraiah and Commissioner

were present. District Collector Anudeep Durishetty and Superintendent of Police G Vineet supervised the arrangements.

Minister for Endowments A Indrakaran Reddy presented Pattu Vastrams and Mutyala Talambralu to the divine couple on behalf of the State government. Silk clothes and Mutyala Talambralu were also presented by TTD and Vaddiraju Ravichandra.

Meanwhile, Minister for Finance T Harish Rao celebrated Sri Rama Navami, along with the residents of Siddipet, on Thursday by visiting 22 temples to witness the celestial wedding. He spent six hours visiting temples.

The municipal chairman presented silk clothes to Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy temple in Siddipet town on the occasion of the Sri Rama Navami celebrations. Harish Rao took part in the celebra-



Chinna Jeeyar Swamy at the celestial wedding of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita at Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Devasthanam in Bhadrachalam on Thursday

tions and offered special pujas to the deities.

Taking part in the celebrations held at Prasanna Anjaneya Swamy temple in the town, the Minister presented silver jewellery to the deities.

Taking part in Srirama Navami celebrations at various temples in Mahabubnagar on Thursday, Minister for

Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud expressed the wish that the Mahabubnagar district prospers further with the mercy of Lord Srirama.

He took part in the celestial wedding celebrations held at various places in the town.

In the new State of Telangana, the State government developed Bhadradri,

Yadadri and Vemulavada temples and developed the Manyamkonda temple in an unprecedented manner. The places of worship faced neglect in the undivided AP regime. Development works in Manyamkonda commenced with an outlay of Rs 100 crore.

In Wanaparthy, Minister for Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy and his spouse along with Municipal Chairman Gattu Yadav and other leaders proceeded in a procession carrying silk clothes on their heads and presented them to Lord Sri Rama and Goddess Sita in the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple here. Atchampeta legislator and Government Whip Guvvala Balaraju, along with his spouse, presented silk clothes to Lord Srirama and Goddess Sita at the temple on Sirsanagandla hillock in Charakonda mandal of Nagarkurnool district on

Opposition may adopt differing strategies for LS, Assembly polls SNCN ACHARYULU the BJP in the wake of Rahul's Opposition parties who are opposed to an alliance with the Congress are likely to follow different strategies in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elec-

The disqualification of Rahul Gandhi from the Lok Sabha has changed the attitude of the opposition towards the Congress. The latest statement of Trinamool Congress President West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee indicates this.

Like BRS President Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao, Mamata was also maintaining equidistance from the BJP and the Congress. But on Wednesday Mamata called for a joint front of the opposition and urged opposition parties to join hands ahead of the 2024 LS

Along with Trinamool Congress, the BRS leaders are also attending meetings organ-

disqualification from the Lok Sabĥa. Sources said that opposition parties like the Trinamool Congress, the BRS, the Samajwadi Party and other parties are likely to have an alliance with the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections to defeat the BJP. During Assembly elections, these par-

ties will treat the Congress as

an adversary.
This means that during Lok Sabha elections the Congress will be an ally and during Assembly elections, the Congress will be an adversary. The Congress may have no objection to this as grabbing the Centre is more important than coming to power in states.

The BRS may also have an alliance with the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections depending on Telangana Assembly election results.

As per schedule, the Telangana Assembly elections will be held about six months before the Lok Sabha elections. The main political parties in Telangana are the ruling BRS the Congress and the BJP and they are confident of coming to power in the next Assembly elections.

Surveys indicate that the BRS will retain power. So the BRS may opt for an alliance with the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections depending on BJP's performance in the

Assembly elections.

If the BRS thinks that the BJP will win only a handful of seats in the Assembly elections it may contest alone in the LS polls. But if the BJP wins around 30 to 40 seats in the Assembly elections the BRS may not hesitate to have an alliance with the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections to defeat the BJP.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee may also follow the same strategy. The disqualification of Rahul from the Lok Sabha is helping to unite opposition parties against the BJP. If all opposition parties come together, the BJP will face a tough time in the Lok

Leopard cubs found in agricultural fields

Panic has gripped the Gangaramanda village under Makloor mandal after leopard cubs were found in agricultural fields. Farmers are too scared to go into their

A farmer, while working in his field, spotted two leopard cubs prowling. The farmers in the neighbouring fields took a video of the cubs running in an agricultural field using their mobile phones. The video went viral on social

The police visited the area and assured the people of protection. The Forest officials were alerted. The officials asked the farmers to



A police official examining the agricultural field where two leopard cubs are found prowling at Gangaramanda village under Makloor mandal on Thursday

remain alert.

A police official, who visited the fields where the leopard cubs were seen, walked around the fields. Forest officials arrived in the village. The cubs could have been separated from their mother.

Alcoholic kills wife, son

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

An alcoholic murdered his wife and daughter in Bhupalpally on Wednesday. The incident came to light on Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Rama (43) and Chandana (17). Chandana was studying in the 12th

The police said that the accused, Ramana Charry, returned home in an inebriated state, and demanded money from his wife for buying liquor. When she refused to give money, he picked up a fight with her. As the arguments intensified, he picked up an axe and attacked his wife. He attacked his son also when the latter came to the rescue of his mother.



State Commission for Women Chairperson Sunita Lakshma Reddy speaking at a meeting in Medak on Thursday

50 villages to be free from discrimination

PNS MEDAK

Telangana State Commission for Women chairperson Sunita Lakshma Reddy has said that 50 villages have been identified in Narsapur Assembly Constituency as part of the Commission's efforts to build a society which is free from discrimination.

She participated as the chief guest at the valedictory of the training programme in tailoring held for women under the aegis of AR Education Society

here on Wednesday. She distributed certificates to those who completed the training programme in stitching.

Addressing the gathering, she said that village-level committees are being constituted to check child marriages. The BRS government passed several laws for women and girls. There will be a solution to every problem. But one should be patient enough to find a solution. She advised people not to take extreme steps in the face of hardship.

Earlier, there were instances of couples in the region selling their children. To check the practice, the Purnakumbham scheme was launched to set up Anganwadi centres wherever necessary. She suggested that women should become economically self-reliant.

Additional Collector Pratima Singh, CDPO Hema Bhargavi, MPP Venkata Narsinga Rao, ZPTCs, MPPs, sarpanches and Anganwadi teachers and others took part

Miraculous escape for bus passengers

PNS NALGONDA

Passengers in the Vijayawada-bound TSRTC bus had a miraculous escape when the bus in

which they were travelling caught fire at Moddula Cheruvu in Suryapet district on Thursday. The bus, which belonged to Miyapur dept, hit a motorcyclist and then hit the road divider. It burst into

The bus caught fire as the motorcycle, which was hit, came under the bus. The passengers in the bus got off the bus. The passengers were panicked. The bus was completely reduced to ashes within a few minutes as petrol leaked from an ill-fated motorcycle ignited the fire.

Haridaspur gets best child-friendly village award

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Minister for Finance T Harish Rao on Thursday congratu-lated sarpanch of Haridaspur as the village under Kondapur mandal in Sangareddy district received award as the best childfriendly panchayat. The village received the

state-level award for implementing many novel programmes for the children,

Other villages should derive inspiration from the unity of the people in Haridaspur village, the Minister said.

He wanted the village governing body to exhibit the same spirit in future too. The Minister congratulated the residents of Haridaspur, elected people's representatives and officials on the

SEXUAL HARASSEMENT CHARGE

Slanging match continues between MLA and dairy management

The controversy surrounding Bellampally MLA Durgam Chinnaiah has taken several turns and twists. Chinnaiah denied the allegation of sexual harassment.

Meanwhile, several farmers have alleged that Origin Dairy has cheated them promising milch animals. The diary management allegedly collected lakhs of rupees from the farmers and several unemployed accused the dairy management of duping them promising jobs to them in bulk milk chilling units. However, the managing director of the diary Adinarayana vehemently

denied the charge.

Meanwhile, the Origin Dairy managing director Kandimalla Adinarayana and director Bodapati Sailaja levelled allegations against Bellampalli MLA Durgam Chinnaiah that the MLA influenced the police to foist false cases against them as the management did not meet his

Against the backdrop of the



allegations of the farmers and the unemployed, the diary case took a new turn.

According to allegations, Origin Dairy managing director Adinarayana, who hailed from Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh and director Sailaja, who came from Anantapur district, and six others, launched Origin dairy in Bellampally in Mancherial district, are accused of collecting Rs 1.75 lakh from dairy farmers, in some cases Rs 2 to 3 lakh, promising milch animals and securing Rs 5 lakh loan for each farmer and

In the name of partnerships and providing jobs to the unemployed, the dairy management collected money and got temporary sheds built and got them inaugurated by MLA Durgam Chinnaiah.

Afterwards, the management disappeared for eight months forcing the farmers and unemployed to lodge a complaint with the police.

However, the managing director claimed that he did not cheat anyone. He said that he sustained a loss to the tune of Rs 1.50 crore because the MLA demanded that his relatives be taken as partners in the firm. He sought partnerships for his relatives in the diary as a condition to ensure that a loan is granted to the dairy under Dalit Bandhu. The MD alleged that the MLA took Rs 20 lakh from him for identifying suitable land for dairy construction and showed the land belonging to Shinde Devanand, a Lavuni patta landholder, as the site for the construction of the dairy.

CRPF gifts tricycles, bicycles to poor

PNS JAYASHANKAR

Kataram DSP Rammohan Reddy and CRPF DSP Komal Preeti Kaur on Wednesday said that they felt satisfied after helping the

Under the civic action programme of the CRPF G/58 and D/58 battalions, held separately in Kataram and Palimela mandals, the authorities distributed tricycles to five physically challenged persons, sewing machines to five poor women, five bicycles to the youth and sports T-shorts to five sports persons.

They said that helping the poor through civic action programme by the CRPF personnel working in forest areas under hard conditions was a notable development.

Mahadevpur and Kataram Circle Inspectors of Police Kiran and Ranjit Rao, Palimela battalion in-charge Subbaraju, Sis Srinivas and Arun and sarpanches took part in the event.

Prohibitory orders to be in force at SSC exam centres

PNS MAHABUBNAGAR

Prohibitory orders under Procedure Code will be in force within 500 yards in and around all Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination centres. The prohibitory orders, which ban the assembly of more than four persons in public, are intended to ensure smooth conduct of examination according to District Superintendent of Police K Narasimha on Thursday.

There are in all 59 examination centres in the district. The examinations are scheduled to be held between 9.30 am and 12.30 pm from April 13. The Superintendent of Police said that the prohibitory orders and also some security measures would be taken during the days when the examinations are held.

Apart from prohibitory orders, all photocopying centres in the vicinity of the examination centres should remain closed, he said. Students would not be allowed into the examination hall after the main gate is closed.



Mobile phones and smart watches are banned inside the examination hall. Invigilators and Examination Chief Superintendent also would not be allowed to carry mobile phones and smartwatches in examination halls, he said. He advised the students and the staff to dial 100 or report to the police in case of any problem.

FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

Margadarsi accountant held, sent to judicial remand

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department (AP-CID) police arrested Margadarsi Chit Fund Private Limited's accountant and auditor, Kudaravalli Shravan, on Thursday on charges of financial irregularities. Shravan was produced in the third additional chief metropolitan magistrate court and was sent to 14 days of judicial remand.

The CID officials said that Shravan had admitted that he had not done due diligence in verifying branch-level financial statements or bank statements before certifying the financial statements of the Margadarsi. It has also been found that principles of auditing kets.

were conveniently ignored at various levels by Shravan, especially when it comes to financial statements of bank balances - both current and fixed deposits.

The CID is investigating the charges of non-payment of monthly subscriptions/instalments in respect of multiple tickets held in the name of the Margadarsi, which were later substituted with new subscribers

The CID is also probing the charge that Margadarsi was illegally diverting the amounts deposited by the chit subscribers towards mutual funds, etc., to enable huge and unauthorised investments into speculation mar-

CM meets FM, seeks funds

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy called on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here on Thursday and urged her to release the NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme) arrears of Rs 2,500 crore due to the State besides increasing its credit limit.

The Chief Minister appealed to her to enhance the credit limit of Rs 17,923 crore which was reduced from Rs. 42,472crore in 2021-22 for no fault of the State Government and take steps to ensure that the Telangana Government clears Rs. 7,058 crore outstanding from the TS Discoms to APGENCO for the power supplied between 2014 and 2017.

He urged her to release the

pending amount of Rs. 36,625

crore under Resource Gap Funding for the fiscal 2014-15 to the State, sanction Rs.10,000 crore immediately on an ad-hoc basis to expedite the construction of the Polavaram Project and another Rs. 2020 crore to fill the scourge pits formed at the main Dam site due to the washing away of diaphragm wall in

the flash floods AP has so far spent Rs. 2600.74 crore on Polavaram Project from its exchequer, he said and sought the reimbursement of the same from the Central funds and accept the Technical Advisory Committee's revised estimates of Rs. 55,548 crore on Polavaram Project.

The Chief Minister also urged her to implement the promise of granting Special Status to the State.

TDP lacks proper leadership at segment level: JC Prabhakar

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Criticising the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), senior party leader and Tadipatri Municipal Chairman, JC Prabhakar Reddy has said that the TDP has a strongly committed cadre but lacks proper leadership at the constituency level.

The senior TDP leader who joined party general secretary Lokesh's padayatra in the Tadipatri area said that the TDP lacks proper leadership at the constituency level.

He said that the party workers have been struggling a lot for the last four years, but the leaders have disappeared and

left the party in a lurch. He advised Lokesh not to entertain leaders who become active only during elections an ordinary worker.

and further said that those should not be given tickets, irrespective of their seniority. It is better for the TDP leadership to encourage fresh leaders by fielding them in the elections. They will win the seats with the support of a strong cadre, he said.

JC asked the party leaders to come out of their slumber and fight against the government. What will happen?

The government may file cases against you. They filed 72 cases against me. Nothing happened to me. We need to fight with courage and conviction," he said.

JC said he, too, was not expecting any party tickets in the next elections, and he was ready to work for the party as

CBI arrests Safdarjung Hospital neurosurgeon on corruption charges

he Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a neurosurgeon of Safdarjung Hospital here and his four accomplices, who allegedly forced patients into buying surgical equipment from a particular establishment at exorbitant prices, officials said on Thursday. The agency raided several Delhi and Uttar Pradesh locations linked to Manish Rawat, the neurosurgeon, and busted the nefarious nexus, they said. After a thorough investigation, the CBI sleuths arrested Rawat and four of his cohort, including

Deepak Khattar, the proprietor of Kanishka Surgical in New Delhi, and middlemen Avnesh Patel, Manish Sharma and Kuldeep, a CBI spokesperson said. The charges levelled against them pertained to bribery and corruption. The CBI has accused Rawat of colluding with his accomplices to extract payment from patients for medical consultations and surgical procedures while flouting the hospital's established protocols.



Financial consultant duped of Rs 1.38 lakh while buying wine online

73-year-old financial consultant here lost Rs 1.38 lakh to cyber fraud while purchasing A bottle of wine through online search, police said on Thursday. As per the complainant, a city resident, he came upon a contact number while looking to buy a bottle of 'Creme De Cassis' online on March 21. He called the person and ordered the bottle for Rs 1,650, he said. The person asked for his credit card number, expiry date and CVV which the complainant provided, the First Information Report registered at Colaba police station said. Soon, he received

messages notifying that his credit card had been charged Rs 1,650, Rs 91,449 and Rs 45,725. He called the 'seller' again. The man told him that it was a mistake and the extra money charged will be returned. The complainant then informed his bank and blocked the card. Sometime later he received a message that another payment on his card had been declined. which meant someone was trying to withdraw money again.



No need to panic amid spurt in Covid cases: Delhi Health Minister

elhi Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj held a meeting with experts on Thursday to assess the Covid situation in the national capital and said there was no need to panic because of a spurt in cases. The meet came a day after Delhi's COVID-19 cases climbed to 300 for the first time since August 31 last year, while the positivity rate rose to 13.89 per cent, according to the data shared by the health department. Two Covid-related deaths were also reported, it said. Addressing a press conference

Bharadwaj said they were getting some indicators about the spike in Covid cases but they are fully prepared. "Last night, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called me to discuss about the Covid situation and he asked me to convene an emergency meeting on Thursday. In the meeting today, epidemiologist, genome sequencing expert, special secretary (health) were present and we analysed the situation closely," he said.



INDIA'S BORDERS FULLY SECURE

Surgical strikes broke back of terrorists: Rajnath

PNS NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said Índia's borders are "fully secure" and asserted that surgical strikes conducted by India have broken the back of terrorists.

Addressing a conclave here, he also said that whether it was the "standoff with China or any ill intentions from Pakistan" Indian armed forces have been giving a "befitting reply"

Singh further said that India has led the world on issues like terrorism and has been successful in garnering support to eliminate the menace.

'Our borders are fully secure. Whether it was the standoff with China or ill intentions from Pakistan, our armed forces have been giving a befitting reply, whenever required.

The surgical strikes against terrorism have broken the back of terrorists. A strong and clear message has gone to the world that India has the

strength and it can strike (against terrorism) on its own soil, and if need be, on their (foreign) soil as well," he said. This is the result of strong

will of the government, the

defence minister said. He emphasised that countries, which use terrorism as a tool, are well aware of the fact that India never harms anyone unnecessarily, nor does it spare anyone who tries to hurt its unity, integrity and sovereign-

He was speaking at the 'India Rising Conclave' organised by a leading television media net-

"This is a conclave on rising India. And, the idea of rising India has been described dif-

ferently by different people. Some economists see it as a rising economy of India, while some sociologists describe it as betterment in social living. Some political scientists term the political stability in the country and strengthening of democratic values as rising India," Singh said.

However, some people speaking contrary to this too are also active, and for them, 'democracy seems to be on the wane in India', but such peo-ple are very few and far

From secure borders and self-reliance to a strong economy and transformed global image, India is rising as one of the "strongest countries" under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the defence minister said.

He termed the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir as another example of the strong will of the government, asserting that the Union territory has ushered in a new era of peace and progress due to the decision.

"One can assess this from the fact that Congress party while carrying out its 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' did not face any difficulty. The Yatra left Kashmir without any issue," he said.

Singh said that the government is carrying forward the vision of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, under whose leadership nuclear test was conducted in Pokhran in

"Today, we are producing big missiles, tanks, weapons and ammunition on our land.

South Kashmir woman makes world's smallest 'mandala' shikara

PNS ■ PAHALGAM (JK)

Childhood interest in drawing and painting led Mahira Shah to the world of 'mandala' art and today she holds the world record for making the smallest mandala shikara.

Mandala is an ancient Indian art pattern which involves drawing of circles in intricate designs. The art form was popularised by Indian artist SH Raza, who created several paintings of the mandala art and became world famous for them.

Mahira Shah entered the Indian Books of Records for making the world's smallest shikara in mandala art.

The artwork is more or less the size of an A3 sheet.

"During my free time, I would try my hand at mandala (art)

My husband and father-inlaw noticed that I had some talent and they encouraged me to take it up," Shah told PTI from her Pahalgam home.

Born and brought up in Tral township of Pulwama district, Maĥira Shah got married to Inamul Haq who hails from Pahalgam.

SAYS WASTE DISCHARGED INTO RIVERS, RIVULETS

SC concern over treatment of sewage in villages, cities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has expressed concern over the treatment of sewage generated in villages, towns and cities and said untreated waste is discharged into rivers and rivulets polluting the very sources of water upon which the survival of the population and bio diversity depends.

The top court asked the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to ensure that an accountable mechanism is set up in Uttar Pradesh to take stock of the performance of the sewage treatment plants (STPs), providing for adequate funds for upgrade and maintenance as required and for attending to all other administrative issues and problems.

The Uttar Pradesh government said that total sewage generated in the state is 5500 MLD, which is one of the highest in the country and 100 per cent treatment of sewage in the state would be done by June

A bench of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and justices PS Narasimha and JB Pardiwala passed the order after hearing

an application of Uttar Pradesh government seeking more time to install and operationalise 100 per cent STP coverage in the state.

The top court had on February 22, 2017 directed the states to adhere to the mandatory timelines for the setting of common effluent treatment plants and STPs within a period of three years for treatment of untreated wastes generated in different villages, cities an towns.

The Uttar Pradesh government contended in its application that timelines which were provided by the court in 2017 are impractical and artificial and impossible to implement in the time frame, given present funding and institutional tive priorities of the state"

The state government said that the total sewage generated in Uttar Pradesh is 5500 Million Litres Per Day (MLD) and it has operational 122 STPs with a treatment capacity of 3860 MLD, 52 STPs with a treatment capacity of 1004 MLD are under construction and are to be commissioned by December 2024.

"15 STPs with a treatment capacity of 854 MLD are under 'tendering' and are proposed to be commissioned by June 2025," the state government said, adding that 317 STPs with a treatment capacity of 1593 MLD would be installed by December 2025.

he bench noted that in sum and substance, it has been submitted by the state government that 100 per cent treatment of sewage would be envisaged by June 2025.

It said that the mere setting up of STPs is not enough and the maintenance of the STPs and their performance and capacity to deal with sewage which is generated is another matter which has to be duly scrutinised and monitored.

Mamata gives 'aur ek dafa Delhi chalo' call to oust BJP from power

PNS KOLKATA

attack against arch-rival BJP, other schemes of the housing Banerjee, who has been on an overnight 'sit-in protest' here against the Centre's alleged discrimination against West Bengal, called for an "aur ek dafa Delhi chalo" (another

march to Delhi) to oust the rightwing party from

A day before, the West Bengal chief minister and stormy petrel of Indian politics had in a change of stance urged all parties in the country to unitedly fight the BJP in

next year's Lok Sabha election, a departure from an earlier decision to remain equidistant from both the Congress and

the saffron party.
The "aur ek bar Delhi Chalo" call made from the feet of the Dr B R Ambedkar's statue on Kolkata's Red Road, an obvious take on Netaji Subhas Bose's more famous "Delhi Chalo" clarion call delivered in Singapore 80 years ago, resounded well with her supporters, who had thronged the venue of the sit-in, in large numbers.

Banerjee had started the two-day demonstration on

Wednesday noon against the Centre's "stoppage" of funds to the state for MGNREGA and and public works departme

> against the BJP and defeat it. If needed, we will march to Delhi to protest against the Centre's attempts to destroy the country's federal structure and keep states ruled by non-BJP

"All of us have to unite, fight

parties bereft of "I was under the impression that the Union government would communi-

cate and inform us that it would pay our dues. But, nothing like that has happened. The BJP is running a govern-

ment by the (central) agencies and of the agencies. The party is trying to project all opposition parties as corrupt, and itself as saint," she said.
Stating that the 2024

Parliamentary polls will be a fight between the citizens of the country and the BJP, Banerjee had Wednesday said people across religions must unite to defeat the saffron party and save the poor of the

She described the BJP as 'Dushasana' and 'Duryodhana' the two antagonists from the epic Mahabharata'.

DMK convenes Opposition meet in Chennai

PNS NEW DELHI

DMK president and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin has called a meeting of opposition parties in Chennai on Monday to discuss issues relating to social justice in the

Leaders of around 20 parties, including the Congress, are slated to attend the meeting either in person or virtually, opposition leaders said.

The meeting will discuss the topic: "Taking social justice in India forward - Social Justice, the Way Forward".

Among the speakers who have confirmed their participation include Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav, National Conference patron Farooq Abdullah, BRS leader K Keshav Rao, CPI(M)'s Sitaram Yechury, CPI's D Raja, AAP leader Sanjay Singh and TMC's

Derek O'Brien. The BJD's Sasmit Patra and YSRCP's A Suresh are also among the likely attendance of the state of dees. If they do, then their parties would be attending such a meeting for the first

time, sources said. However, the two parties are yet to confirm their presence to the DMK.

CONG ON LALIT MODI'S 'WILL TAKE RAHUL TO COURT' TWEETS

'Global scamsters' coming to PM's defence'

PNS NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday used embattled IPL founder to take Rahul Gandhi to court, to attack the BJP and said that "global scamsters" were now coming to the defence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Former IPL chief Lalit Modi,

accused of financial irregularities in India, launched a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi on Thursday, and also hit out at the Congress party for referring to him as a "fugitive of justice" even though he had never been convicted of any charges.

Reacting to his remarks,



Congress general secretary incharge organisation K C Venugopal said,"Lalit Modi is a fugitive in multi-million dollar frauds whose cowardice made him run away. He now enjoys a plush life abroad thanks to BJP's inaction. It's laughable if he thinks anyone takes him seri-

"A new low for PM Modi, that global scamsters are coming to his defence," Venugopal said. Taking a dig at the BJP, department chief Pawan Khera said,"Is now Saheb taking help from abroad to threaten Rahul i with legal action?"

"Will pressure be put on Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, Vijay Mallya etc. to file a case against Rahul Gandhi?" Khera said. The Opposition party has been relently attacking the BJP for allegedly allowing economic offenders such as Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi and Mehul Choksi get away and flee abroad with people's money.

20 litres free drinking water for Pondy BPL families along coast

PNS PUDUCHERRY

PWD Minister Puduchery Lakshiminarayanan told the territorial Assembly on Thursday the government had drawn up a plan to supply 20 litres of drinking water, free of cost, to families living below the poverty line in coastal villages that fall in the salinity zone in the Union Territory.

Replying during the debate on demands for grants to departments including the PWD in the Assembly, the Minister said families in the "red zone areas' would be supplied 20 litres drinking water in cans daily. The "red zone

areas" are identified as pockets where the level of TDS (total dissolved solids) is high.

Lakshminarayanan also said a necessary survey was being conducted now for construction of a road-overbridge (ROB) linking the airport junction to Indira Gandhi Square through Rajiv Gandhi Square. This project would involve an expenditure of Rs 440 crore, he added.

Under the centrally sponsored 'Swadesh Darshan scheme', a sum of Rs 5.9 crore had been spent to give a facelift to the famous shrines of Gangai Varaha Natheeswarar in neighbouring Tirukanchi village and Tirukameeswar in Villianoor.

Karnataka HC disqualifies JDS MLA for electoral malpractice

PNS BENGALURU

constituency in Karnataka D C been announced. qualified by the High Court of Karnataka on Thursday in a case relating to alleged electoral malpractice. The Court, however, kept

the disqualification in suspension for one month, allowing Swamy to file an appeal in the

Supreme Court. A single-judge bench of the high court was delivering its verdict on a petition filed by defeated BJP candidate B Suresh Gowda, which alleged electoral malpractice by

Swamy for distrib-

uting fake insurance bonds to voters during the 2018 Karnataka Assembly election. The disqualification, under Section 101 of the The Representation of the People Act, comes five years after the

original complaint by Gowda. Justice S Sunil Dutt Yaday, who had reserved the judgment after completion of arguments on February 17, dictated the orders on Thursday from the Kalaburagi bench of the Karnataka High Court. The advocate for Swamy, Hemanth Raj, sought the suspension of the order as per Section 116(B) of the Act to allow him to file an

appeal before the Supreme Court, as elections to the MLA from Tumakuru Rural Karnataka Assembly had already

> upcoming elections, the high court was told. Though the advocate for complainant Gowda opposed this request, the HC allowed the plea and kept the order in suspension.

Apart from Swamy, the court also found the other accused, Balanetraiah, Arehalli Manjunath, Krishnegowda, Renukamma and Sunanda, guilty of corrupt election practices. The suspension of the

order was only in respect of Swamy and not the other accused, the HC said. After the Model Code of Conduct came into force on March 27. 2018, Swamy and his associates allegedly distributed fake insurance bonds to 32,000 adults and 16,000 minors, thereby violating Section 123 of the Act, the election petition by Gowda had

He had approached the high court in July 2018 and the judgment has come a day after the Election Commission announced the election schedule for the 2023 Assembly election, as per which polling will take place on May 10.

ANOMALY IN CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

Law panel recommends amending sub-rule

PNS NEW DELHI

The Law Commission has recommended amendment to a sub-rule of Code of Civil Procedure to remove an anomalv for the convenience of courts, lawyers, litigants, and the general public.

The report "Urgent need to amend Rule 14 (4) of Order VII of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908" was submitted to the government earlier

this week. In its 18-page report, the Commission, headed by Justice

Ritu Raj Awasthi (retd) point ed out that in sub-rule (4) of Rule 14 of Order VII, mention is made of the cross- examination of the plaintiff's witnesses. The words "plaintiff's witnesses" mentioned in sub-rule (4) of Rule 14 of Order VII require to be corrected as "defendant's witnesses", it said.

"A plaintiff cannot, except as provided in Section 154 of the Evidence Act, put questions which might be put in crossexamination to his own wit-

"Sub-rule (3) of Rule 1 of



Order XIII also makes the position clear when the expression "cross- examination of the witness of the other party"

is employed therein. Therefore, the anomaly in sub-rule (4) of Rule 14 of Order VII is evident," it said. The Supreme Court in Advocate Bar Association vs. Union of India dealt with the various amendments made to the Code of Civil Procedure by the 1999 and 2002 amendment acts.

While dealing with Rule 14(4) of Order VII, the Supreme Court took note of the anomaly and held that the words "plaintiff's witnesses' are to be read as 'defendant's witnesses' till the time the legHon'ble Supreme Court pointed it out in the year 2005, the Parliament has not so far made any amendment to Rule 14 (4) of Order VII to rectify the anomaly," the report observed.

The Commission said is of the considered view that subrule (4) of Rule 14 of Order VII requires to be amended by substituting the words "the defendant's witnesses" for the words "the plaintiff's witnesses".

Simply put, a plaintiff is a person who files a case in a islature corrects it, the report court. Defendant is the one against whom a case is filed. read. "However, even after the

Govt to buy 3 lakh tonnes of onion in Rabi season: Goyal

Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday announced that the government agencies will buy 3 lakh tonnes of onion once the winter harvest starts com-

Goyal, who handles the Consumer Affairs, Food and Public distribution portfolio, said that last year, the overall buying of the rabi harvest stood at 2.5 lakh tonnes.

"I have already ordered an

increased onion purchase from Rabi harvest from 2.5 lakh tonnes last year to 3 lakh tonnes this year to ensure that farmers get a fair price," Goyal told reporters here.

He added that the National Cooperative Consumers Federation and National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (Nafed) have also been instructed to pick up 'late kharif' harvest stocks, but are not finding the produce in the markets now.

been protesting after a steep fall in onion prices over the last month. Marketplaces, including the largest one in Nashik district's Lasalgaon, have been shut down and onions have also been dumped by farmers.

Farmers claim they are get ting very low rates for the harvest, which is a fraction of the input costs and have been demanding the state agencies to step in, given the wide-ranging

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Fighting hate speech

Some sort of mechanism must be developed to curb hate speech, but it'd be better if it is informal

■he Supreme Court and the Government made important points about hate speech on Wednesday. A bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna said, "Hate speeches are like a vicious circle. One person will make it and then another will make it. When our Constitution was founded, there were no such speeches. Now cracks are coming up in the idea of fraternity. There has to be some restraint. Some sort of mechanism needs to be developed by the state so that we can curb these kinds of statements." The apex court's insistence on restraint is welcome, but the objective conditions are not conducive for it. The biggest reason is that politics, as



practiced by all parties, has been reduced to realpolitik, in which principles and scruples play a very little role; emphasis is on winning elections, whatever be the cost. Hence mindless populism, with politicians vying with each other in offering freebies, throwing fiscal prudence and caution to the wind. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has underlined the perils of freebie culture but there is little to suggest that parties are willing to behave responsibly. Then there is the instinct to play to the gallery and appeal to the lowest common denominator. There are leaders who became popular and important not by public service but by making deplorable remarks. This is not surprising because political debate is rarely illumined

by cogent arguments and elevating oration; it is rather animated by loud sloganeering and sanctimonious posturing.

On the subject of hate speeches, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta also made an important remark: such speeches are also made against Hindus. On the face of it, this might appear whataboutery, but this is factually accurate. Two wrongs don't make a right, so statements against Muslims or Christians are not justifiable because similar ones are also made against Hindus. Mehta informed the court that in Tamil Nadu, "a spokesperson of DMK" said "whatever Periyar says should have been done... if you want equality, you must butcher all Brahmins." Against such a backdrop, as the Supreme Court said, some mechanism has to be developed, but it would be better that this mechanism is informal rather than formal. There are already a zillion laws; what is needed is a code of behaviour that political parties, rather than the Indian State, should evolve together. Something like the model code of conduct that governs the behaviour of parties and candidates before elections. It is not legally enforceable, yet it is widely adhered to. We should not forget that behavioural patterns are difficult to change with laws, rules, and fiats; when people themselves realise that something should be avoided, they avoid that. After all, politicians do observe the code of conduct. Therefore, the best way out would be a consensus among politicians and parties that decency in political discourse would be nice.



Artistes dressed as Hindu deities distribute sweet juice and buttermilk to celebrate Ram Navami, in Bengaluru

China resorts to 'buying' support



Globally, China is rapidly gaining influence over the US and asserting its diplomatic muscle by investing disproportionately in seedy regimes

n 2000, China accounted for less than 2% of South America's exports which spiralled thereafter at over 30% annually to reach \$180 billion in 2010, \$450 billion by 2021, and expected to exceed \$700 billion by 2035! Beijing is now South America's top trade partner with countries like Chile accounting for nearly 40% of their exports to China. It didn't happen by chance, but by concerted Chinese design. China had invested disproportionately and knowingly with a 'no-strings-attached' policy that necessitated no preachy conditions or reform insistence. This leniency appealed to a host of illiberal and undemocratic regimes (e.g., pariahised Venezuela was given loans of more than \$64 billion, causing fears of a debt trap to arise) China's internal 'South-South cooperation' policy was further bolstered by the inclusion of initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or even the more recent 'Covid-19 diplomacy' that ensured transactional support and investments. Besides the reciprocal gratification of raw materials and the emergence of an alternative power centre, China replaced US control and assert its diplomatic muscle and leverage on the world stage.

One obvious element of quid pro quo sought by the Chinese for oosening their purse strings in economically struggling South America was the switch to derecognize its nemesis Taiwan (Republic of China) to the 'One-China' policy (with the assumption that Taiwan is an essential part of the Chinese mainland, to be reunified one day). South American countries were especially in large numbers among those who recognised Taiwan as the Chinese had little or no leverage, historically – today, with its deep pockets and flexing of bargaining muscle, one South American country after the other flipped sides in favour of China. ndia remain vested in the 'One-China' stance, grandstanding and sabre-rattling notwithstanding.

Honduras became the latest to fall prey to the Chinese 'buyout' as its President, Xiomara Castro, did a brazen flip-flop within weeks of downplaying



SIMPLY 'BUYING OUT' THE LAST **BASTION IN** SOUTH AMERICA, AS THE USA CANNOT MAKE A COUNTEROFFER THAT IS FINANCIALLY ATTRACTIVE ENOUGH TO SPURN BEIJING'S

QUALMS ABOUT

piece, Global Times noted bluntly, "The US does not have enough resources to assist Honduras or make any effective pledges to Honduras in exchange for Honduras' change of mind. The case of Honduras shows that as long as countries stay firm, US obstruction and interference will not work. This will have a domino effect on Taiwan's remaining "allies" such as Guatemala, Belize and Paraguay." The Chinese have no qualms about simply 'buying out' the last bastions in South America, as the USA cannot make a counteroffer that is financially attractive enough to spurn Beijing's advances. As if to confirm its intent, the Global Times concludes, "The sleepwalking of 'Taiwan independence" is end-

Taiwan or its allies in Capitol Hill cannot compete with the Chinese coffers and are getting outbid, but that does not mean that there are authorities that there is "only no underlying concerns in accepting the Chinese terms. The reality of Chinese debt ic stands are over, and comtraps is legendary and short- merce and coercion define the term bailouts do not end well. Micronesia's outgoing President, David Panuelo had accused Beijing of 'political warfare' by insinuating that it was interfering and preventing the switchover from China to Taiwan. China remains hyper-

Why not set up a JPC on Adani?

sensitive to the Taiwan issue and shows very short patience with what it insists are its internal issues. Recent developments in the wars in Afghanistan and Ukraine have exposed the limits of the socalled 'superpowers' ability to take over and control the targeted landmass infinitely. Therefore, ensnaring and controlling those regions through 'buyouts' is decidedly easier, and even more sustainable.

Honduras recognised the Taipei government for 82 years. However, the wanton lure of a hydroelectric dam and billions of dollars in 'aid' was irresistible. Not too many believe the Chinese line of Honduras sees through 'Washington's bullying diplomacy' as the pattern and accompanying terms of the switchover are eerily consistent and seemingly generous (initially). The price for the switchover was the upfront admission by the Honduran one China in the world". The days of principled diplomatnew global order. China is the high temple of realpolitik.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)



and that Honduras was in desperate need of finances as its urgent requirements were, "drowning the country"! This leaves the shrinking list of those countries that still recognise Taiwan to just 13 out of the 193 UN member states i.e., the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Tuvalu, Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Paraguay, the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis, St Lucia, Eswatini, the Holy See and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Access to the Chinese market and Treasury triumphs over all moral and diplomatic positions. Ironically, Taiwan remains formally unrecognised even by its most prominent allies, the USA (despite bipartisan unity on Taiwan). Jimmy Carter's Oddly enough, even the US and abandonment of diplomatic ties with Taiwan to recognise Beijing instead, initiated a complexity and absurdity of relationship that the USA con-

ADVANCES tinues to grapple with as it sup-

THE EDITO

WELCOME MOVE BY HIMACHAL DY CM

plies weapons to a nation that

China's unofficial mouth-

it does not fully recognise.

Sir — Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri who announced in the HP Vidhan Sabha on March 28 that no appointment would be made on an outsourced basis in the Jal Shakti Department in future is a praiseworthy decision. Outsourcing recruitment is a backdoor entry. It violates all recruitment requirements, such as ads inviting applications, competitive tests followed by personal interviews, meanwhile germinating corruption and exploitation by service providers because it is typically only known individuals who are appointed. The employees recruited through the outsourcing method need to be stopped in every department which generates corruption and hampers government functioning. The government should appoint the required staff regularly in all departments after following the due selection

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

RAHUL'S MANOEUVRES Sir — After being disqualified as an MP, Rahul Gandhi appeared before the media and said that whatever may come, he would keep asking questions in the Adani case. Rahul Gandhi's attention is more focused on the political fight than on the legal fight. Rahul Gandhi and Congress want to turn this court sentence into BJP revenge. But Rahul Gandhi and Congress have to accept that Rahul Gandhi has been punished for defamation. Rahul Gandhi has 30 days to appeal. It will be interesting to see how elections in India as the winning chances Rahul Gandhi's politics overshadow the BJP in the coming days and how Rahul Gandhi overcomes these difficulties..

AMERICA'S DIVERSIONARY TACTICS

a superpower and are not ready to face about its own economy's revival, the show

ddressing a gathering after inaugurating an extension of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters in Delhi, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi linked the coming together of opposition parties against the BJP to his Government's campaign against corruption and said "anti-India" forces are attacking constitutional institutions — the "strong foundation of a rising India" — to stall the country's growth. To hear this, an aam aadmi with heavy hearts wants to know from PM Modi, why the Government is not investigating Adani. In addition, what about shell companies, stock parking, and stock inflation? And don't forget the recent controversy over Elara and Shell's companies receiving defence contracts what is going on there? People want to know if corporate cronies were given undue favours ter. Alas! He has no courage to jump from 600 to the top 10 in top business

rankings under your rule? They also want to know if the Government was involved.

Moreover, why the reluctance to call out fugitives Lalit Modi, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi and Vijaya Mallya? The public wants transparency and accountability, and it's time for the government to answer these burning questions. Not only this, PM Modi fought to change the election funding law to secretly allow black money. Is PM Modi not the same who supports his Karnataka MLAs to take crores of bribes? He remains silent even when BJP politicians get caught "red-handed" there, with crores of cash? Why are there no investigations by the CBI, ED or IT? Why do corrupt politicians from opposition parties join the BJP, and cases against them miraculously disappear? It means all BJP MPs/MLAs/politicians are absolutely above corruption. As people wonder when the honest PM Modi implemented demonetisation and secretly converted his friend's money from Black to White, or who changed coal mining tender rules for Adani so that he would benefit from them? Is he not the PM who doesn't have a problem with foreign companies owning defence projects? And the list goes on and on. In view of this, before PM Modi's declaration that all those involved in corruption have come together on one platform, the anti-corruption crusader should set up a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to investigate the Adani mat-

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

are dim. It is impossible for a country as large and about to be the most populous in the world as India to function according to the whims and fancies of Johnnies and Alices in Wonderland at the US Department. The US has no locus stan*di* to lecture India on democratic values. As the US's pathetic position worsens, they left their business and entered the Indian politics scene.. When the US could

diverted towards India. That country's GDP is falling drastically and there is no hope for immediate improvement. India is better placed and so it could not see Indian progress and wanted to exhibit and poke its nose into Indian political scenario. However, India stands united and the erroneous elements will be eliminated sooner or later.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Let them write an essay on Khalistan



This protest has no content except vilification and terror. It dodges issues of territory, Government form, State-religion ties and economy

ndian diplomatic missions in the UK, USA, Australia and Canada have recently been subjected to violent and abusive protests by pro-Khalistan Sikhs. If I were at Ground Zero, I would have simply walked around with a sheaf of foolscap papers and asked the agitators to write an essay about the proposed Khalistan. The essay must address the issues of territory, a form of government, the relationship between the state and church (SGPC), economy, demography (38 per cent non-Sikhs in Punjab, and Sikhs in the rest of India) etc. However, the essay reveals the "Khali-stan" (empty space) that exists in their minds.

Over the last 50 years, the 'movement' has preferred to dodge these fundamental questions. Thousands of lives have been lost in an organised misconception. Territory is the basic component of a sovereign state. The maps of the proposed Khalistan are ludicrous. In the 1980s, Khushwant Singh purchased a Khalistan map published in England, for £2. "According to this map", he wrote in 1992, "Khalistan will include

Jammu, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, New Delhi, chunks of UP, Rajasthan and Saurashtra to give the state an

outlet to the sea. By rough reckoning, the Sikh population will be 13 per cent. What kind of Sikh state will this be? Clearly, not democratic." (My Bleeding Punjab, P.155-156). A recent example of this lack of clarity is the fanciful Khalistan map issued by Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, of Sikhs For Justice, in June 2022 at the Lahore Press Club. Besides the Indian

Punjab, it encompasses

almost the whole of Haryana,

Himachal, five Rajasthan dis-

tricts, several Úttarakhand

districts (including Dehradun

and Haridwar), and a number

of districts of UP. It included

was actually found pasted on the Assembly Building at Dharamsala (Kangra district) on May 8, 2022, and scribes in Himachal Pradesh received pre-recorded Khalistani threat calls on their mobiles. However, in the Melbourne round of a referendum by the outfit in January, the question was whether "Indian-governed Punjab should be an independent country— Yes or No". Where does that leave the June 2022 map? As per the referendum,

left out. Shimla was the capital of Khalistan, though Sikhs

comprised 1.95 per cent of the

city. Pro-Khalistani graffiti

sovereign Khalistan would be a landlocked country between India and Pakistan. Punjab farmers, overwhelmingly Jatt Sikhs, are heavily dependent on rice and wheat from the Centre. This was borne out by the massive farmers' agitation (2020-21) compelling the Government to cancel the farm laws. One would be interested in knowing how Khalistan proponents plan to offload Punjab rice and wheat mounds.

Nobody has yet seen a draft Khalistan constitution

Gurugram, though Delhi was even after 50 years. The Khalsa Raj Party Constitution issued by Lt Col Partap Singh (Retd) on May 15, 1991, at Chandigarh, issued towards the end of the Khalistani insurgency, was expected to condense all wisdom on Khalistan. It advocates an independent, sovereign Sikh homeland and restricts its boundaries to Punjab and adjoining Punjabi-speaking areas 'fraudulently kept out during a Punjab reorganisation in 1966". Herein, Lt Col Singh assumes all Punjabispeaking persons in India are Sikhs, and vice versa, wherein in reality 38 per cent of Punjab population according to Census 2011 is Hindu.

Will Khalistan be a democracy and a theocracy at the same time? It is open to multiple interpretations but it says nothing about the SGPC. The 'movement' is a bundle of imponderables, deliberately retained by its sponsors. It fits American author Paul Elridge's description, "Man is willing to die for any idea, provided that idea is not clear to him.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi)

Rohit Pandey | New Delhi

Sir — Playing blame games is the order of the day. As a result, our politicians play a crucial role in making the public feel bad about our country's expansion abroad. Moreover, they seek the help of not play a decisive role in bringing

FIRST COLUMN

JAPANESE THRUST TO OUR LOOK EAST POLICY

The policy needs more push for stronger relations with SE Asia through NE States



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

ndia's vision of a 'Look East' policy and Japan's vision regarding a free and open Indo Pacific meet in India's landlocked northeast. India for long has championed its 'Look East' policy. This aims to develop deeper relations with countries in South East Asia and the Bay of Bengal region through northeastern (much to be tapped) States as a major gateway. Meanwhile, for more than a decade, Japan has been focusing on free, open and fair Indo Pacific policy, with emphasis on free movement of people, trade across land, sea and air routes, all through the region. India's northeastern States form an important access node.

Last week Japanese Prime Minister Kishida, during his India visit, reemphasised the desire to pursue a more engaged Indo Pacific policy. This has for the past two years become the most strategic foreign policy component for the US and Europe. It is also the glue holding together India, US, Australia and Japan in their QUAD grouping. Japan has been promoting key infrastructure projects in India's



northeast to create seamless trade and transport routes. It has been assisting in developing northeast road network connectivity improvement projects in Assam and Meghalaya, sewage and water supply projects in Assam, development of schools in Manipur, projects related to forest management in Tripura and Nagaland and sustainable agriculture projects in Mizoram. Japan's investment in the northeast is \$2 billion so far. In addition, the Japanese Government has picked up key infrastructure projects such as the MatarBari deep water port in Bangladesh. This will be complemented by the construction of connecting roads in Assam, Mizoram and Tripura. Once completed, these infrastructure projects would provide seamless access from the northeast to Bay of Bengal sea ports. In addition, they would serve as a major trade transit route for goods from Southeast Asia and beyond.

This promises to bring more prosperity to the entire region, not just within India's geographical boundaries. It fits well into the Japanese vision of comprehensive economic and regional development, based on law. It may be noteworthy that the other Asian giant, China, has rapidly expanded its sphere of influence in the region through its opaque Belt and Road Initiative. This has tied many of these countries into multiyear fatal debt traps. India and Japan are the major economies not part of China's debt trap infrastructure financing projects. Their vision for the Indo Pacific is different from China's.

India and Japan, during the leadership meeting in New Delhi, highlighted the need for expanding the partnership to more ASEAN countries. Even the QUAD Foreign Ministers' meeting in March emphasised the centrality of ASEAN and the need for greater engagement. It is significant that Japan is working in a structured manner in India's neighbourhood. This is with some of India's most trusted allies such as Bangladesh on a path of regional prosperity. Japan has been working with India since 2017 to support NE's development. Japan has clearly articulated that it is keen to tie the two ports, one in Bangladesh and the other in India's NE, for greater economic cooperation.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for External Affairs Rajkumar Ranjan Singh while addressing a BIMSTEC meet in Kolkata this week stressed the need for India's north eastern region to be the leading edge of India's Act East diplomacy. He emphasised the need for developing transportation facilities and trade within BIMSTEC partners. His caution for BIMSTEC countries was to follow a modest yet practical approach. Any creative solutions for increasing trade in this region also click well with Japan's push for increased economic prosperity and connectivity for the Indo Pacific.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Societal needs stretch beyond skill formation VINAYSHIL GAUTAM



The current overemphasis on acquiring skills at the cost of compromising life fundamentals would be counterproductive in the long run and needs a relook

owadays, the most popular phrases are skill formation and employability. There's nothing wrong with that. These are apparently innocent favourites which also contribute to social growth. Even innocent phrases can have ramifications, even for the purpose of social growth. Illustratively, skill formation would reference educational institutions. Educational institutions cannot just focus on 'skill formation' and 'employability'. Educational institutions must have as their priority training the mind, educating a person and making him a worthy member of society capable of contributing to overall growth. There is indeed a school of thought which argues that education requires as its end objectives character building, preparing for responsible citizenship and the like. Ever since the current system of university education with its segmented approach to degrees came into being, there has been a running debate on the objectives of edu-

Mind training and general orientation towards learning are multi-layered processes. Liberal education is supposed to cater for them. It is difficult to conceive of a skilled person who is not a good human being, ethical and contributes to collective welfare.

Individual growth, by definition, is embedded in a social environment with sound values and norms. There is clearly not much debate on the issues outlined above. However, factoring in the economic context, including gaps and shifts in livelihood processes, becomes a poignant element in its own right. An illustration may be in order; consider India's rural sector. There are various processes and learning segments in agriculture which give the farmer a position of primacy in

the country's economic framework.

However, a closer look at the lay of the land, both literally and methodologically, will show two things. The amount of land on the subcontinent is constant. Other variables are not. The number of people who rely on a livelihood from agri-culture has exponentially increased. This means, the number of people deriving their livelihood from agriculture has grown to the extent that the land available per head has substantially 'receded'. Further even as the productivity of agriculture has grown, the revenues to the farmer per head have declined. This is, also, because the portion of land per head has become smaller with an increasing

That is not the end of the story. Additionally, there is the factor of the switch in crops, at times, from cereal to cash crops, and from cash crops to cereal. This means that, in certain cases, the total income from agricultural products has gone down for various reasons. Not the least of which would be the consequences of continuing cereal cultivation. Further, however, if the farmer switched to cash crops, it would be difficult to sustain. This is due to a lack of understanding of how to choose, cultivate and mar-

ket cash crops. The problem does not end there. There are other shifts because of the economic transition as cereal land value declines. There emerges an exponentially rising demand for tertiary sector earnings in rural areas, such as for carpenters, blacksmiths, electrical workers, and the



LEVEL, FEW STATES HAVE SHOWN A TENDENCY OR **PROPENSITY** TO FRAME **ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT WOULD HELP** CREATE A SOCIAL **FEEDBACK** LO_{OP}



changed all that. Technology caused a serious disruption of the economy and disturbed the economic viability and health of the existing socio-economic system of the villages. The present excessive serenading of technology virtues eschews taking a balanced view of the prerequisites and consequences of the technol-

from agriculture in any significant

way. In agriculture itself the mar-

ket was not a prime determinant

of switching from cash to cereal

crops or vice versa. The market

remained essentially local. The

introduction of technology

ogy factor. To illustrate the point, consider a family of five young men living with an elderly gentleman (their father?). If three of them entered the wage market of the tertiary sector and two of them continued making their livelihood by tilling the land, even then there would be further land fragmentation. As a result, the return per head would go down since the 'elderly gentleman"s labour and talent would now be split among two

heads. This would be a generational issue.

Whether the output was cereal or cash crops would be a separate consideration. The one producing cash crops would likely be better off than the one producing cereals. So in effect, among the five young men in the family, there would be an income differential among those (three of the five) who earned from the tertiary sector and even between the two still tilling the land. This economic reality is the

outcome of social disturbances, which could affect the collective social fabric of the village's occupational profile. If allowed to run its course, the real need is economic policies at a local level. This would rationalise and smoothen the disruptions caused.

Unfortunately, at a local level, few states have shown a tendency or propensity to frame economic policies that would help create a social feedback loop. This will grow talent in each of the required income-generating avenues.

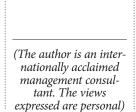
This is a serious matter that seems to be escaping the attention of policymakers at a time when it needs to be addressed. For a stable society, with proper wageearning channels and comparable lifestyles arising therefrom, a requirement is viable and organic economic growth. Having a system nomics, is something which so severely divided will create requires a good second and third gaps in the economic framework

in general, not only in the hinterland but elsewhere. This could lead to manpower shortages in critical sectors of the economy and, among others, encourage population growth in urban areas. Social and economic equity require talent and compensation to be available in equal measure in all critical sectors of the nation's life.

As noted earlier it is not as if in the earlier dispensation the blacksmith and the cobbler were not required. It has also been analysed how, as the population grows and the income from the tertiary sector in the rural areas grows, fewer and fewer people take an interest in the tilling of the land. Further, even in the tilling of the land, cash crops are preferred over cereals.

It has further been argued that this is a serious distortion of the economy. It creates dissonance in the economic viability and health of the social fabric of the villages. Many professionals and policy makers seem to have missed the point, and employment promotion based on catchy slogans seems to confuse the issue.

To conclude, nobody grudges the emphasis on skill formation, but like everything else, overemphasis on skill formation to the neglect of fundamentals of life and distorted by profit oriented ecorequires a good second and third



A film festival with its heart in the right place

The Habitat International Film Festival, an annual treat for the Delhi-NCR film lovers, was back in its full-fledged form this year

he 10-day Habitat International Film Festival (HIFF) was a visual treat for film-loving communities in Delhi and the NCR. Thanks to Sunit Tandon (Director, India Habitat Centre) and Vidyun Singh (Programme Head) along with her team to bring the awardwinning, critically acclaimed films from Cannes, Berlin and other renowned film festivals.

This year, HIFF screened 60 films from 20 countries, with Australia as the focus country. From factual to fantastical, from surreal to sci-fi, this edition took place from March 17 to 26.

Tandon says, "The HIFF is back in its full-fledged form this year. We also bring a cutting-edge VR Section to the festival for the first time.



(The writer is a Delhi-based

film festival curator,

freelance writer,

filmmaker and producer)

opportunity provided by Kieslowski Film School Documentary Workshop."

From Australia, six of the finest contemporary films of 2022 and 2023 have been screened with the opening film, The Dreamlife of Georgie Stone, showcasing the elliptical memories of the teen activist's historic fight for transgender rights; Ivan Sen's Limbo arrives fresh off the boat from its Berlinale 2023 premiere; others include The Lonely Spirits Variety Hour, Sweet As,

and Survival of Kindness. Filmmakers and editors from the Kielowski Film School from Poland trained the young minds in a four-day documentary workshop. Grzegorz Paprzycki, an

Aspiring filmmakers will not want to miss the unique acclaimed upcoming voice in contemporary Polish cinema and Kieslowski Film School alumni was one of the workshop trainers. A hands-on workshop, with live editing sessions, discussions and practical exercises designed to hone their skills as filmmakers was an added advantage for the local young filmmakers.

For the first time as part of the festival, cinema's latest innovation — VR and 360° video — was presented in partnership with the Goethe Institute. The Virtual Reality programme — a package of animation, short and documentary films — explores the relationship between the past and present. It also adds a whole new dimension to film watching for the audience.

Friday section that approach of 16 awards and 51 nominathe anarchy of love and its expression across different eras — the classic In The Mood For Love by Wong Karwai, to the contemporary Paris, 13th district by Jacques Audiard and The Worst Person in the World by Joachim Trier, even the futuristic Crimes of The Future by David Cronenberg.

Eight biggest attraction at HIFF were: *Elvis*, the buzzing Austin Butler-starrer, Baz Luhrmann biopic that premiered at Cannes (and has won many awards subsequently); Rheingold, Fatih Akin's (Germany, Netherlands, Morocco, Mexico) highoctane adaptation of the swagger and bombast of German rap star Xatar's 2015 autobiog-Four films in the MUBI raphy 'All Or Nothing'; winner

coveted Golden Bear (Berlinale 2022) - Carla Simón's (Spain), Alcarras, a deeply intelligent and empathetic humane drama that engulfs you in the heat and dust and dysfunction created by market forces; Perfect *Number* - the return of veteran Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Zanussi and his search for philosophical answers in mathematical theories; the poignant We are Still Here, an anthology film about stories of indigenous heroes from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific; winner of the Best Screenplay at Cannes 2022, Boy From Heaven, takes us into

the heart of a ruthless power

struggle between Egypt's reli-

gious and political elites; the

tions, including the much-

latest Berlinale awardee (2023), The Survival of Kindness, follows a black woman's escape from a cage in the middle of the desert to the city, recapture, and tragedy; and Oscar nominee 'EO' by Jerzy Skolimowski (Poland) follows a donkey that encounters good and bad people, experiences joy and pain, exploring a vision of modern Europe.

Further enriching the feature line-up are some equally remarkable documentaries, shorts, and animation films. DOC NYC 2022 nominee Closed Circuit by Tel Inbar (Israel) is a documentary that captures the heart-pounding trauma of the 2016 terrorist attack in Tel Aviv's Sarona Market; Winner of 'Best Documentary Feature' at The

Festival and Filmocracy Fest, Hostile by UK filmmaker Sonita Gale explores the UK's complicated relationship with its migrant communities; Winner at the Warsaw Film Festival 2022, Region of Heroes by Artur Lerman (Ukraine) is the story of those who selflessly saved thousands of Úkrainians during the Russian occupation; winner of the Special Jury Award at Roxbury Film Festival and the International Humanitarian Award at Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival, The Bengali by Kavery Kaul (USA) is the story of a writer from Louisiana who embarks on a quest to India to look for her grandfather's descendants. Curated packages from Poland and Sri Lanka Roxbury International Film also embellished the festival.

HYDERABAD | FRIDAY | MARCH 31, 2023

Domestic stainless steel demand will continue to see growth

ne pioneer

Softbank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho has crossed the 11-lakh sellers milestone on its platform, with more than 6 lakh small businesses signing up in the last one year, the company said on Thursday. The company has achieved this feat in eight years of its inception and claims that half of the total sellers registered belong to tier 2 and smaller towns. "Meesho recently crossed the milestone of 1.1 million sellers on its platform," the company said in a statement. The unicorn e-commerce firm said that over 80 per cent of

its 11 lakh sellers are new-to-ecommerce and Meesho was their first exposure to the world of online selling. "Nearly 50 per cent of these sellers come from Tier 2+ regions and deep corners of the country like Pulwama in Kashmir, Una in Himachal Pradesh, Nagamangala in Karnataka, Jowai in Meghalaya and Mount Abu in Rajasthan -- validating the company's mission to democratize internet commerce for everyone and bring the smallest seller online," the company said.



SpiceJet CMD Ajay Singh takes over as Assocham President

piceJet's Chairman & Managing Director Ajay Singh has assumed charge as the President Assocham, replacing Renew Power MD Sumant Sinha after the completion his tenure. Sanjay Nayar, founder and Chairman of Sorin Investment Fund is the new President Assocham, replacing Renew Power MD Sumant Sinha after the completion of Senior Vice-President of Assocham, the industry body said in a release on Wednesday. "I am taking over at times which are both exciting and challenging. As an economy, India stands out as a robust economy in the midst of global headwinds. Even when major economies of the

world are facing the threat of recession, the Indian economy is growing between 6.5-7 per cent," Singh said. He emphasised that the chamber would stay engaged with the government, Centre and states, leading academicians, economists besides corporate leaders to find solutions to the issues, which may crop up in a fast-changing global economic and political landscape. Singh studied at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, where he received a degree in engineering, and got his Master's degree in Business Administration from Cornell University in the US.



Punjab govt sets up panel to look at alternative crops to paddy

unjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday said he has formed a committee Dunder the chief secretary to look at alternative crops that require less water compared to paddy. Mann said sowing of the paddy crop over the years has led to several problems including depletion of underground water table and issues related to stubble burning. He said he has formed a committee under the chief secretary which will meet farmers in different villages and see which crops consume less water and bring

more income to farmers as a replacement of paddy. The committee will submit the report to him, he said in a video message. The CM said his government was taking steps to promote basmati, cotton, moong and pulses. He said his government wanted to increase the area under the cotton crop. The CM said from April 1, canal water will be made available for irrigating cotton crop up to tail ends. He said 33 per cent subsidy was being given on cotton seeds which are certified by the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU).



Credai urges RBI not to hike repo rates

• Says any rise in borrowing cost may hit housing sales

PNS NEW DELHI

Realtors' apex body Credai on Thursday requested the RBI not to increase the repo rate in the upcoming monetary policy as this would raise the borrowing cost of builders and customers, impacting housing sales.

With retail inflation remaining above the comfort level of 6 per cent and most global peers, including the US Fed, continuing their hawkish stance, industry experts feel the Reserve Bank of India may go in for a 25 basis points hike in the bi-monthly monetary policy to be announced on April

Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of



India (Credai), having more than 13,000 developers as members, has "urged the RBI to not to increase the repo rate any further, citing the financial challenges faced by developers and the potential impact on housing sales due to the consequential rise in prices and home loan rates".

In the last one year, the body said, the repo rate has increased from 4 to 6.5 per cent and another hike would lead to even higher borrowing costs for developers.

Credai National President Harsh Vardhan Patodia said, "In the last 1 year, the cost of construction has risen rapidly due to the gradual increase in repo rates by the RBI, which has adversely impacted many developers as they struggle to cope financially. Another repo rate hike would not only make certain projects financially unfeasible, but it would also deter homebuyers as home loan rates will be at an all-time

HCL Tech to hire 1,000 people in Romania

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT services company HCL Technologies will hire 1,000 people in Romania in the next two years as it scales up operations in that country.

HCL Tech, which completed five years of operations in Romania, will ramp up its offices in Bucharest and Lasi.

A third of the new roles will be offered to graduates recruited through partnerships with leading Romanian universities, the company said in a statement on Thursday.

The company plans to hire 1,000 people in the next two years in Romania.

Currently, it employs nearly 1,000 people in Romania to serve global clients by leveraging its portfolio across digital, cloud, engineering and

India needs \$540 bn investment by 2029 to meet renewable targets: S&P Global Ratings cash flows.

PNS NEW DELHI

India needs USD 540 billion of investment between 2020 and 2029 to meet its ambitious targets for electricity generation from renewable sources, S&P Global Ratings said on Thursday as it saw private-sector-led energy transition entering a new phase.

India is targeting to cut its emissions to net zero by 2070. In the transition to that, it is targeting 500 gigawatts (GW) of non-fossil electricity capacity, half of the energy from renewables, a reduction of emissions by one billion tonne and an emissions intensity of the GDP by 45 per cent by

"Meeting India's renewables target of 500 GW by 2030 requires more than 40 GW of new capacity additions annually (compared to 10-15 GW actual)," it said.

In its report 'Asia-Pacific's



Different Pathways To Energy Transition', S&P Global Ratings said the addition of renewables capacity in India is outpacing coal, but demand growth and intermittency issues are leading to greater coal usage and new coal plants.

"Policies are creating an enabling environment while private sector investments will lead the energy transition," it

said, adding investments of USD 540 billion are required from 2020 to 2029 to meet

India's renewables target. Half of these investments will be in renewables and batteries, and another third in

strengthening the grid. "Private sector will lead generation capex while public sector utilities will likely lead grid investments," it said. "Domestic available against projects and

There is, however, limited appetite for unsecured holding company funding.

India is the world's fourth biggest emitter of carbon dioxide after China, the US and the EU. But its emissions per capita are much lower than other major world economies. India emitted 1.9 tonnes of CO2 per head of population in 2019, compared to 15.5 tonne for the US and 12.5 tonne for Russia that year.

Net zero, or becoming carbon neutral, means not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Energy transition refers to the shift from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption - including oil, natural gas and coal - to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, as well as lithi-

Office space demand in Jan-Mar at 6-quarter low

PNS NEW DELHI

Net leasing of office space fell 34 per cent in January-March to 7.63 million square feet across seven major cities as corporates were cautious on expansion amid global uncertainties, according to JLL India.

The net leasing fell to the lowest in six quarters, as per the data by real estate consultant Chennai, India. Hyderabad, Mumbai and Pune

O Net leasing down 34 pc in top 7 cities: JLL India

saw a decline in demand, while office space absorption rose in Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru and Kolkata.

Net leasing stood at 11.55 million square feet in the yearago period across seven cities Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune.

JLL India attributed the fall in net leasing or absorption of office space to reduced expansion activity, delayed space plans and a hybrid workplace strategy that is still evolving.

'Companies were consolidating and relocating to save on real estate costs, while there were fewer pre-commitments

in new completions during the quarter. This reflects the challenges faced by the corporate world amid global headwinds and an uncertain business environment,"

explained. Net absorption is calculated as the new floor space occupied less floor space vacated. Floor space that is pre-committed is not considered to be absorbed until it is physically occupied.

As per the data, Bengaluru witnessed a 14 per cent increase in net office leasing to 1.91 million square feet in January-March 2023 from 1.67 million square feet in the yearago period.

Net office leasing in Delhi-NCR rose 47 per cent to 1.96 million square feet from 1.34 million square feet.

Small stocks lag behind in FY23;

BIF for comprehensive framework to address digital age issues

PNS NEW DELHI

A new report by Broadband India Forum (BIF) mooting suggestions for the proposed Digital India Act has underlined the need for improved institutional frameworks to deal with cybersecurity, establish processes for oversight of surveillance, enable fairer con-

tent curation decisions and grievance redressal. As the country moves forward on the Digital India vision, it becomes imperative that the proposed Digital India Act (which will replace IT Act) promotes trust in the digital ecosystem. BIF noted that this requires careful balancing of multiple interests such as national security and

public order, online safety, protection of fundamental rights, and promoting innovation.

In the report, Rishab Bailey, Visiting Research Fellow, XKDR Forum, highlighted how they have examined the proposed law in how it dealt with four focus areas -- online censorship. intermediary liability, surveillance, and cyber security.

To repay US\$ 23 billion debt

Adani pins hopes on 20 pc earnings growth every year

PNS NEW DELHI

Embattled Adani Group is looking at a 20 per cent growth in earnings across businesses spanning from sea ports to airports, edible oil and commodities, energy, cement and

data centres, to repay about USD 23 billion of debt over the next 3-4 years in a comeback strategy, sources said.

Adani group executives have met bankers, bond holders, analysts and investors from Singapore to the US in the last three weeks to address stakeholders' concerns in the aftermath of a damning US short seller report that ripped off USD 135 billion

panies of the conglomerate. Sources aware of the development said Adani at these roadshows presented the

growth story of the sprawling

conglomerate that is refocusing its energies on higher efficiency in business and bringing down debt rather than breakneck speed expansion.

The group saw a 20 per cent growth in EBITDA or earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization, help-

ing it pare debt. Between 2013 and 2022, earnings grew by 22 per cent year-on-year. And a 20 per cent growth will help bring down the debt-to-EBITDA ratio from 7.6 per cent to 3 per cent by

CAG red flags slow development of hydro power

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said out of 374 identified project sites with power generation MegaWatts, only 10 projects with 79.75 MW capacity had been commissioned with time overrun ranging between four months and seven years.

The hydro power potential of Jammu and Kashmir has been estimated at 20,000 MW which includes 1,500 MW in respect of small hydro projects.

take bigger hit than bluechip firms

PNS NEW DELHI

Small stocks have lagged behind the equity benchmark Sensex in 2022-23, falling nearly 6 per cent amid a host of negative factors like higher interest rate regime, high inflation and the Russian-Ukraine war. According to market analysts, it was a tumultuous year for the

Indian equity market. The Russian-Ukraine war made the first quarter of the Indian equity market particularly difficult, but the second and



noted. Headwinds such as high inflation, the Russia-Ukraine war and higher interest rates hit investors' appetite for small stocks. With just one day of trading left in the current fiscal, the BSE smallcap gauge has fallcent so far in 2022-23. The midcap index is down 270.29 points or 1.12 per cent in the 2022-23 financial year. In comparison, the BSE Sensex has declined 608.42 points or 1.03 per cent.

"Many factors contributed to the underperformance of the Indian stock market in FY23. The Indian market performed remarkably well in FY21 and FY22, as both the Nifty and Sensex produced double-digit returns. When the Indian stock market performs strongly for two years in a row, profit booking is inevitable in the

Shift to products based on manmade fibre

APEC TO INDUSTRY PLAYERS

PNS NEW DELHI

Apparel exports body AEPC on Thursday asked industry players to take advantage of free trade agreements and diversify to Man Made Fibre (MMF) based products to cater to the global demand and boost

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) also said that it has collaborated with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) to organise a capacity building programme for promoting Noida as an export hub.

Speaking at the programme Additional DGFT Gangadhar Panda said the government's supportive policies can further help capturing the great market demand owing to FTA and reorienting of supply chain.

Naren Goenka, Chairman AEPC said that it is promising



being taken by multiple stakeholders across the value chain to adapt to these new sustainable practices. Mithileshwar

Secretary General, AEPC stated that with the same level of investment, the employment generation capacity in the apparel sector is more than six times as compared to other sectors. He also appealed to the members of trade and industry to "take advantage of FTAs signed by the government recently and requested them to diversify to Man Made Fibre (MMF) based products to cater to the global demand and boost

in market value of listed com-

TAKING INDIA'S GOODS AND SERVICES EXPORTS TO USD 2 TRILLION BY 2030 India to unveil new Foreign Trade Policy 2023-28 today

PNS NEW DELHI

India will unveil its muchawaited new Foreign Trade Policy 2023-28 on Friday, with a view to boost exports amid slowing global trade.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will announce the foreign trade policy, according to the min-

The current foreign trade policy (2015-20) is in force till March 31, 2022.

The term of the previous five year policy had ended in March 2020. However, it has been extended repeatedly in wake of Covid outbreak and

resulting lockdowns. The last extension was given in September 2022 till March 31, 2023

Goyal will announce the foreign trade policy which is expected to outline the vision statement for taking India's goods and services exports to USD 2 trillion by

The country is likely to end this fiscal year with total exports of USD 760 billion as against USD 676 billion in

third quarters witnessed a en by 1,616.93 points or 5.73 per respectable rebound, they third year. **CURRENT SAVINGS, INVESTMENT RATES CAN'T**

PROPEL GDP TO 8% GROWTH ORBIT: REPORT PNS MUMBAI

Clawing the economy back to an 8 per cent growth path will require bringing savings and investment rates closer to 35 per cent on a ture, which can help revive

30.2 and 29.6 per cent, respectively, in FY22, according to a report.

As per India Ratings, a large part of investments will have to be in infrastrucsustained basis, which were private investments by easing

supply constraints and offset the weakening of external demand due to global head-

Higher investments will have to be accompanied by higher domestic savings to keep the savings-investments report noted.

gap under check. The big missing link now is the government's focus on steppedup capital expenditure on infrastructure, but not enough commensurate steps to encourage savings, the

FSSAI allows labelling curd in regional names

PNS NEW DELHI

Food safety regulator FSSAI on Thursday revised its order and allowed the use of regional names in printed labels of curd packets amid political controversy in Tamil Nadu.

Food Business Operators (FBOs) are now allowed to use the term 'curd' along with any other prevalent regional com-mon name in brackets on the label. For example, 'Curd (Dahi)' or 'Curd (Mosaru), 'Curd (Zaamutdaud)', 'Curd (Thayir)', 'Curd (Perugu)' can be used, the Food Safety

Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said in a statement.

The order has been revised following various representations received recently on the omission of the term 'curd' from the Standards of Fermented Milk Products and only the word 'Dahi' was mentioned.

The controversy erupted after the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers Federation -- which sells dairy products in brand name Aavin declined to use the Hindi term 'Dahi' in its printed sachets as directed by FSSAI



and said that it would only stick On Wednesday, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to the Tamil word 'Thayir'.

decried the move as an attempt to "impose Hindi". Dairy Development Minister SM Nasar said the government had received a letter asking it to implement the directive before August. "the unabashed insistences of

#HindiImposition have come to the extent of directing us to label even a curd packet in Hindi, relegating Tamil & Kannada in our own states. Such brazen disregard to our mother tongues will make sure those responsible are banished from South forever," Stalin said in a tweet.

the pioneer Hyderabad

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Friday March 31, 2023

Actress Avantika Dassani is soaring to the heights of success ever since her debut with Mithya, starring opposite Huma Qureshi. And so, *The Pioneer* connects with the actress for our weekly segment of Travel Tales, and she joyfully speaks to us about her trip to Bangkok.

Dassani

awaits a rooftop inn on a holiday

SHIKHA DUGGAL

alking along the lines of history, some culture and architectural beauty was the latest actress in line Avantika Dassani, also the daughter of desirable actress Bhagyashree.

Avantika made a name for herself by giving a blockbuster hit series titled *Mithya* opposite Huma Qureshi and since then she is only soaring to the heights of success. Very swiftly, she agreed to do a special travel tales segment with us and we get to hear a lot about her time in Bangkok.

"This trip to Bangkok almost fell like a homecoming, these trips are something that mom and I started as a ritual for taking short holidays together. It's our favourite way to bond! Sometimes dad and brother tag along, however, we know how to reminisce about our time together and enjoy ourselves even though others are

So very recently they went for a celebration and, "We celebrated my birthday at a lovely rooftop bar called Pastels and it had fabulous service. There were live performances by a musician playing the djembe and saxophones for us. Whenever on a holiday, I always look forward to a rooftop bar like this. There were other places like pastels where we went to grab some drinks and just take in the view of the

Bangkok nightlife." Totally agreeing with us that sometimes the hotel that one chooses is a stavcation on its own and describing to us her

favourite hotel hues, she says, "There was a wedding to attend and we were staying at

> too — "I went on a trip to Edinburgh with my best friend that included a bunch of haunted tours for us. Post having dinner, we went to our rooms and sort of tried

to catch up with each other and didn't realise the time. We rushed out hoping to make it our last tour and while we were walking we got lost on our way back. Really quiet and dark lanes, we crossed under a bridge and

hotels. Give us an incredible view of Bangkok. So any spot where I can see a water body or sun setting is like my thing. Everyone knows I am a Bombay girl, grew up with the privilege of having Juhu Beach around but now that I have grown older I want some solace in the views that I see. It should be a lake view and I have never met a sunset that I can ever dislike." Yes, she had a frightening moment

Riverside Resort, a

stunning property

with connected

saw a huge castle looming over us and its shadow on the road. We ran our feet way back to the hotel, anyhow."

The next location she would like to tick off her bucket list is South America. Why so? because she really wants to see the Bora Bora islands and Peru. It's her dream destination! Sunny climate and a sandy beach will seal the deal for her. And if it's about Peru, she thinks that while travelling if you watch multi-cultural and colourful places it liberate you even more.

Adding to it, "Shooting in Darjeeling, hands down became my favourite place. The tea plantations and a nearby forest were the best places to be at while shooting with Huma Oureshi.

Though it was her debut, what a debut at a hill station!

ctress Donal Bisht has been

one of the most celebrated faces of the television industry. She is popularly known for her portrayal of Sharanya Bisht in Ek Deewaana Tha' and Ishika Patel in Roop - Mard Ka Naya Swaroop, and Kavya Thapar in Tu Zakhm Hai.

Donal, who is currently enjoying the success of the new season discusses with The Pioneer over an exclusive chat, about reprising her character,

what was something that she enjoyed

playing Kavya Thapar, and more. While she's known and been loved for

playing strong characters, in Tu

Zakhm Hai, it was for the very first time that she played the character of a

psychologist. In fact, she also revealed that she always wanted to be a psy-

chologist, and it happened with the series. "When I got to know that I had

ups and downs in Kavya's emotions so

I think I was well prepared (she laughs) for playing this. Since I had already studied psychology in my 11th

research, and a lot of googling went on so that I could play the character well,

playing. I always wanted to be a psychologist also and hence this medium,

the film industry gives you the liberty to play different parts on screen."

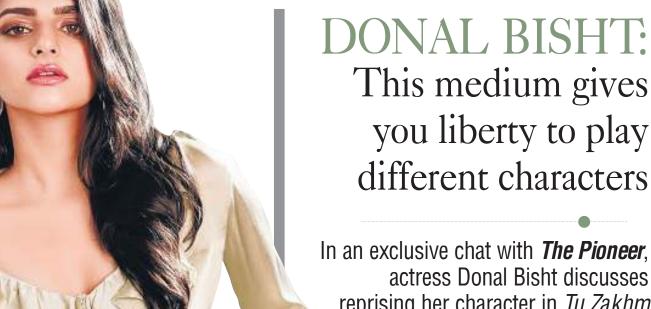
and 12th, I was very excited to play

as it is very important to study the background of the character you're

the character. I had done a lot of

to play a psychologist role and there will be a lot of variations and lots of

TEIAL SINHA



actress Donal Bisht discusses reprising her character in Tu Zakhm Hai, what she enjoyed the most playing the character, and more.



What should you look for in a

MOBILE PAYMENT SYSTEM?

Money moves across the spectrum in terms of refunds, cashbacks, rewards, and so on. Payments have undergone several changes in the last 4-5 years. With a goal to make payments convenient, instant, secure, invisible, and low-cost, we have seen many countries in developed markets achieve all of these, and this was possible by using cutting-edge modern technology to power digital payment rails like UPI in India.



MERCHANT ACCEPTANCE: We will

TOKENISATION: In the year 2023, we will see more and more cards getting tokenised, introducing customers to a more secure and reliable payment experience wherein a 16-digit card will get tokenized into a unique code that varies every time a transaction

have more and more merchants accept digital payments by deploying QR codes, M-PoS, and contactless payments like TapNpay using NFC (near-field communication technology).

Mobile Wallets: They will continue to play a pivotal role in making cashless transactions possible. Newer use cases will emerge for mobile wallets in the next 2 years; wallets will be interoperable; and new use cases like mass transit, employee benefits, expense management, corporate gifting, rewards and recognition, banking for teenagers, etc. will grow over 3X in the next 2 years.

GEN Z: More specifically, the teen population of the Gen Z segment is a more tech-savvy or techexposed generation. This generation is ready to experiment, wants instant gratification, and will raise the demand for digital payment systems in 2023.

audience. And so, sharing about what was something that she'd enjoyed the most playing the character, she mer-rily replied, "The different kinds of emotions. Every scene is very different and the part that Kavya is playing with every different character is very different. I also enjoyed playing the character because of the thriller part of it actually. She is a hostage and captive yet she falls in love with the captor and how everything happens and the whole process of it and get-ting so good reviews from the viewers of it. I am happy that the kind of graphs the makers had given to Kavya is amazing and when people are able to connect to it, people said that it's very touching it feels great when you give your 100% to a project and then when it comes it's flying colours come in." As we moved forward in the

The way Donal transformed her-

self into the character of Kavya is much appreciated by the fans and

interview. Donal described the char-

BUY NOW, PAY LATER:

its affordability and easy

cases using Standing

a convenient payment

option, increasing

merchant sales and

allowing lenders to offer

simple repayment terms

small-ticket loans with

while earning interest

Instructions (SI)

This has scaled because of

repayment process in most

Customers find BNPL to be

acter as 'Ulta Coconut'. Seemingly, "(She laughs) Kavya might be soft and sweet but inside she's like this ulta coconut, outside needs to be soft and inside needs to be strong so aisa characters I get to play and with versatility definitely. It's great to play that sort of a part and people get inspired by what you're playing on the screen. People are still like we want a girl like Ishika from *Roop* in our house and the aunties and mummies were mailing me that 'we want a bahu like you'. So in this playing Kavya, people are very interested because she's the girl who understands everybody, understands everyone's emotions very differently and that is how Kavya is and that is why it's very very relatable to the people. I loved playing Kavva and also the love that we are getting from around the world outside. People have sent me videos of people watching the show and people are asking me about when is the 3rd season coming out."

In the year 2023, we will see the following trends in mobile payments across the world:

BIOMETRIC AUTHENTICATION: With the increasing trend and risk of identity theft and fraud, biometric authentication can become a reliable and secure option for all digital payment transactions. Further biometric authentication also helps reduce the cost of authenticating a digital payment transaction.

CENTRAL BANK DIGITAL CURRENCY: Like India, we will see the central banks of various developed countries and economies pilot and launch their own digital currencies in 2023. Digital currency, like the e-Rupee in India, is issued in the form of a digital token that represents legal tender. It is being issued in the same denominations as the fiat currency (modern paper currencies).

FRAUD AND RISK MANAGEMENT:

With the increase in digital payments, we will also see an increase in fraudulent transactions. Modern RBA (riskbased authentication) will be used by banks and payment companies to detect and prevent fraudulent transactions while facilitating digital payments. We will see more tech service providers offering fraud and risk management solutions to banks and payment companies in 2023.

(The author Mehul Mistry is the Global Head-Strategy, Digital inancial Services & Partnerships at Wibmo, a PayU company)



what's brewing?













Kuchipudi Kalamrita presented the "Sobhamrutam: The Bond," a solo Kuchipudi recital by Amrita Singh, a disciple of the renowned Padma Shree Dr. Sobha Naidu, at Ravindra Bharati in Hitech city, Hyderabad.





Almond Board of California hosted a panel discussion on 'Achieving holistic health with Ayurveda and Nutritional science' featuring celebrity fitness trainer Kiran Dembla, nutrition and wellness consultant Sheela Krishnaswamy and Ayurveda expert Dr. Nitika Kohli. RJ Shezzi moderated the panel.



Nourish You, announced that the acclaimed actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu has invested in the company. Samantha Ruth Prabhu's investment comes as part of Nourish You's seed funding round, which had earlier attracted pedigreed investors, including Y Janardhana Rao of Triumph Group; Rohit Chennamaneni, co-founder, Darwinbox; and Nikhil Kamath, co-founder, Zerodha, among oth-



LISTINGS

Ahimsa run is to be held worldwide across 85 locations including Hyderabad, the US and the UK.

IFL Ahimsa Run for peace and non-violence, which is being organized across 85 locations all over the world on a single day, will be held in Hyderabad on April 2 at 5 am. The IIFL Jito Ahimsa Run aims at creating awareness for a better world to stop wars, and hatred and bring peace and nonviolence in our surroundings. More than one lakh to participate in the 85 Runs that will be held in 65 locations in India and 20 Global Locations including US and UK This run is expected to mark its entry into the Guinness World Records, Word Records India, and the Limca Book of Records for the most runners to run in multiple locations for the cause of Ahimsa (non-violence). Over 2800 participants are expected to participate in 3 Run in Hyderabad categories 3K, 5K and 10K to be held Jala Vihar, PV Narasimha Rao, Marg, Hyderabad

All ages and genders can run for Peace & Non -Violence. One can register for IIFL JITO Ahimsa Run at https://jitohyderabad.org/about-us/ to become a part of the

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance launches an innovative savings product

CICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched ICICI Pru Gold, an innovative long-term savings product designed to enable customers to create an additional income stream to meet their diverse income requirements. Besides receiving guaranteed lifelong income, the life cover component in the product provides financial security to the family. To cater to the varied income needs of customers, this product is available in three variants i.e. Immediate Income, Immediate Income with Booster and Deferred Income. Customers opting for the 'Immediate Income' variant can choose to receive income after 30 days from the date of policy issuance, enabling them to immediately create a supplementary source of lifelong income.

BKT affirms alliance with Sunrisers Hyderabad as the 'Official Tire Partner'

 $B^{alkrishna\ Industries\ Ltd.\ (BKT),\ the\ Indian\ multinational\ company\ and}$ $B^{alkrishna\ Industries\ Ltd.\ (BKT),\ the\ Indian\ multinational\ company\ and}$ Partner' of Sunrisers Hyderabad, in the upcoming T20 League 2022, for the second consecutive season. The 16th edition of the T20 2023 cricket season will commence on March 31, 2023.

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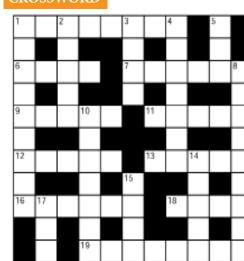
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6 Tumble over and over 7 Young cows

9 A tall type of building 11 A feeling of rage

13 One third of twenty-one

16 Instructions for cake making 17 Pixie

12 Bees make this

or share what you have

19 Always ready to give away

 A thing with handles for carrying an injured person



4 Complete quiet

8 People unknown to you

10 The late part of the day 14 A machine that can

record television

programmes 15 A type of blood vessel

5 Tell a fib

GINGER MEGGS







tollywood

Dasara: When a brooding vagabond rises to the occasion

rikanth Odela's debut film *Dasara*— starring Nani, Keerthy Suresh, Dheekshith Shetty, and Shine Tom Chacko in important roles is set in a small village called Veerlapalle. This not-so-scenic village surrounded by traces of murky coal dust is located approximately eight kilometres away from Singareni eight kilometres away from Singareni quarters near Godavarikhani.

The filmmaker took inspiration from major real-life incidents that occurred within the region. Thus, right off the hook, we are introduced to the world of

It is 1995! The then Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, N.T. Rama Rao announces a statewide liquor ban. The men of Veerlapalle have a major drinking problem, but they think it's their tradition to booze their guts out. The camera points to Kanakayya, owner of Silk Bar(named after late actress Silk Smitha). The rather

owner has a reality check as he sees the CM make the announcement. Sarpanch Nambayya makes the most out of this crisis. His sons Rajanna (Sai Kumar) and Shivanna(Samuthirakani) part ways after Nambayya's death; each forms their own little parties. Shivanna's son, Chinna Nambayya(Shine Tom Chacko) plays a role in retaining the family's monopoly over the liquor bysiness and manager to over the liquor business and manages to put Rajanna on the sidelines. This sets the tone for village politics which drives the film forward.

In the midst of all this, you've got three childhood friends-Dharani(Nani),

Soori(Dheekshith Shetty), and Vennela(Keerthy Suresh). Dharani can take a bullet for Soori and vice-versa. The young Dharani falls for Vennela for the first time in his childhood. You can call that true love. It is made really clear from the onset that Dharani is someone who's timid. A cat meowing in the middle of the night can make him pee. One day, the boy fights his way to the counter outside Silk
Bar. By the way, people from the lower
classes are not allowed inside the bar.
Alright! Dharani buys a mini alcohol

bottle, runs home and gives it to his grandmother and asks out of curiosity, "Why do you drink?" She replies, "For courage!" A quick transition makes

way for a bril-liant introduction of our hero. Two mini bottles tied to his waist, lungi and a messy shirt with sleeves folded. Nani looks fabulous. When he's not drunk, Dharani is coy and reluctant but when he pops a few bottles and gulps down the alcohol; he's the most cocky per son on the field He fights, makes over

He fights, makes over the top promises and even succeeds and loathes his life like a perfect filmy vagabond. Vennela on the other hand is an Anganwadi teacher. She's bubbly, brave and naughty. Soori, Dharani's best friend doesn't differentiate between classes. He stands by his friends and unlike Dharani, he's super brave.

Dharani, he's super brave.

The background score is one of The background score is one of Dasara's biggest strengths. Santosh Narayan puts his heart and soul into this film. Each tune is so pure and reflects nothing but honesty. While Dhoom Dham Dhosthaan underscores the trio's friendship, Ori Vaari reminds Dharani that the girl of his dreams is out of his reach and the reel worthy Chamkeela Angelesi is a cute wedding gir that ignites Angeelesi is a cute wedding gig that ignites

feelings of trust and renewed love. Santosh Narayan brilliantly uses the background Narayan brilliantly uses the background score to immerse you so deeply into the film that you'll think of that clinking of glasses' beat that plays soon after Vennela asks Dharani if he ever loved someone. Sathyan Sooryan brings every element on the screen to life with his cinematography. A special shout out to Kolla Avinash(production design) — the set pieces, houses, the lone standing Silk Bar and entire set in the climax. A freaking visual treat.

The film falters a bit here and there. It hits the highest of the high notes and spends a few minutes in the shallow darkness. All that is covered up with stylistic

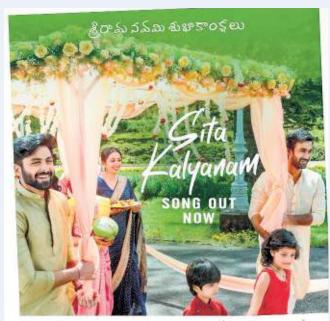
ness. All that is covered up with stylistic cinematic choices, music and acting by the lead cast. A few shots will just stay with you. Pre-interval and climax sequences matter a lot for the Indian audisequences matter a lot for the indian audience. I sat with my mouth open after the pre-interval scene played. It took me a few moments to sink in what I just saw. Nani is one of the few stars who can actually act and I wish the director left the camera hanging for a few more moments in the

act and I wish the director left the camera hanging for a few more moments in the interval bang to make us weep a bit more. The climax is as intense and over the top as the interval bang.

Dasara is not just about the village politics or how Chinna Nambayya(Shine Tom Chacko) lusts after women; he is a crook of the first kind. Shine Tom Chacko is cheeky and with with his performance cheeky and witty with his performance here. The film is about friendship. How far would you go to stand up for your friend? Srikanth Odela could have easily gone wrong with the film but the way he blocks the scenes and takes the film forward with almost no filmmaking experience is shocking. The originality of the story and the performances are sure to stay with you. Yes! There are flaws but if you can sit through a few negligible moments of dullness, nothing like it. A fontagic debut and even with all its bru fantastic debut and even with all its bru-tality, the director manages to bring sensi-tivity to his characters. Especially in the form of Vennela. He brings to the fore the inherent problem of the cast and class division masterfully. If you don't want your favourite stars to resort to remakes... support original films like *Dasara*.

Rating: 3/5

Sita Kalyanam from Anni Manchi Sakunamule is a wedding anthem



Anni Manchi Sakunamule, a feel good family entertainer has all the positive vibes surrounding the film. Right from the production house to director and promotional material, everything gives a positive feel towards the film. This summer release starring Santosh Sobhan and Malvika Nair is said to provide wholesome entertainment in the cinemas.

The teaser, then the title song generated interest towards the movie. On Thursday, on the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami, the makers came up with the second single Sita Kalyana Vaibhogame. This is an ideal song for Sri Rama Navami. This is going to be the wedding song of the season. The visuals indeed show

wedding celebrations.

Director Nandini Reddy showed her mark yet again in picturising the song in a pleasant manner composed by Mickey J Meyer. Oscarwinner Chandrabose penned the lyrics, while Chaitra Ambadipudi and Sri Krishna lent the vocals. The song is shot aesthetically and will.be a feast to watch on the big screen.

Anni Manchi Sakanamule features Rajendra Prasad, Rao Ramesh, Naresh, Gauthami, Sowcar Janaki, Vasuki and many more prominent actors in important roles. The movie is produced by Priyanka Dutt, in association with Mitra Vinda Movies. The movie is scheduled for release on May 18th.

Makers unveiled the divine poster of Adipurush



With the gleam of lights and echo of the chants, the makers of *Adipurush* release the glorious poster of the film on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami. The poster depicts Prabhas as Raghav, Kriti Sanon as Janaki, Sunny Singh as Shesh, and Devdatta Nage bowing down to them as Bajrang. The film carries forward the virtue of Prabhu Shri Ram that entails Dharma, Courage and Sacrifice which rightly reflects in the elegant poster. As Ram Navami celebrates the birth anniversary

of Lord Shri Ram and beginning of goodness, the makers reveal a significant symbol of divinity that marks the establishment of dharma to beat adharma. Indian epic Ramayana, Adipurush is all set to hit the big screen on 16th June, 2023 in IMAX and 3D.

Adipurush, directed by Om Raut is produced by T- Series, Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar, Om Raut. Prasad Sutar and Raiesh Nair of Retrophiles and will be released globally on 16th June 2023.

Saagar K Chandra to team up with **Bellamkonda Sreenivas**

opportunity to helm Bheemla Nayak in which Power Star Pawan Kalyan and Baahubali fame Rana Daggubati played the lead roles. In the past there was a strong buzz in the film industry that Saagar K Chandra would team up with the young hero Bellamkonda Sreenivas. Finally, today on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami, the official announcement came about this association. Accordingly, Saagar K Chandra will direct the 10th film of Bellamkonda Sreenivas.

The industry tracker Ramesh Bala confirmed

Sagar K Chandra came into the limelight in Telugu Film Industry with the film Appatlo Okadundevadu. Then he got the golden @BSaiSreenivas's next to be directed by the MASSively talented @saagar_chandrak Produced by @RaamAchanta & #GopiAchanta under @14ReelsPlus #BSS10."

The upcoming project #BSS10 will be bankrolled by Ram Achanta and Gopi Achanta under the banner of 14 Reels Plus. Currently the makers are in the hunt for a female lead and soon the announcement regarding the remaining cast and crew will be made. On the other side, Bellamonda Sai Sreenivas is currently working for his upcoming Hindi film Chatrapathi under the



direction of VV Vinayak. In this film which is a remake of the same title, Sreenivas is reprising

Lyrical song Padipothuna from Game On released



ame on movie starring Geetanand, NehaSolanki, Madhoo Bala, Adithya JMenon, Vasanthi Krishnan, Kireeti Geetan and and Neha Solanki are acting in lead roles in the movie.

Madhoo Bala, who is a very well known senior actress, is acting in an important role in the movie.

Ravi Kasturi is producing this movie under the banner Kasturi Creations and Golden Wing Productions under the direction of Davanand

Ánd music by Ashwin-Arun and Nawab gang who sung mega star Chiranjeevi *Bhola Shankar* movie title song and they done great job in the movie, whole team is very happy

awaited teaser

he much-

well known that Chatrapathi is an official remake of

same title.

Basrur has scored the background music, and Tanishq

Bagchi has rendered the tunes for the songs. Veteran

Bollywood filmmaker and distributor Jayantilal Gada has bankrolled the project in association with Dhaval Jayantilal Gada and Aksshay

Jayantilal Gada under Pen Studios

banner.

for the tremendous response form audience

for songs Lyricist Kittu Vissapragada has given beautiful lyrics for this song. Singers Anurag Kulkarni and Harika Narayan have sung this song with their euphonious voice and cinematographer Arvind Vishwanathan has

given great visuals. On this occasion, Producer Ravi Kasturi said that the movie came out really well with the support of all the technicians and actors. We are very happy to release our movie songs through T-Series. He also said that all the post production work is completed and preparations are being made for the movie to be released in theatre soon.

HanuMan's first single Hanuman Chalisa to come out on April 6

PAN Indian films to arrive this summer. Directed by Prashanth Varma, this is the second film for the actor-director duo after Zombie Reddy. The teaser has left one and all in amusement with its amazing visual

After a long wait, the makers have finally announced the release of the first single. Titled Hanuman Chalisa, the song would come out on 6th April on the eve of Hanuman Jayanthi. The

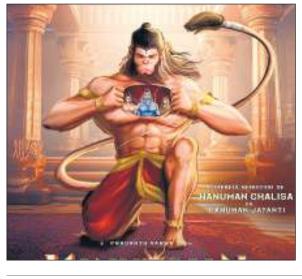
anuMan, starring Teja Sajja, is team released a terrific poster of Lord Hanuman to announce the song's arrival.

Produced by K. Niranjan Reddy under Primeshow Entertainment's banner, the movie has the gorgeous beauty Amritha Aiyer as the female lead. Ýaralaxmi Sarathkumar, Vinay Rai, Raj Deepak Shetty, and Vennela Kishore play key roles. Gowra Hari, Anudeep Dev, and Krishna Saurabh are combinedly scoring the music.

HanuMan releases on 12th May

Chatrapathi's actionfor young Tollywood packed teaser action entertainers specialist VV Vinayak's maidunveiled en Bollywood film, Chatrapathi, has been unveiled today on the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami. It's





PL TURNS 'SWEET

he never-ending speculations about Mahendra Singh Dhoni's impending 'last dance', Virat Kohli's endless pursuit of an elusive silverware and Rohit Sharma's customary nonchalance are things that make the IPL starting Friday a heady cocktail of cricket and entertainment.

Megastars Dhoni, Kohli and Rohit have been the IPL's driving force in the past 15 seasons, getting the cricket crazy Indian fans hooked on the event for nearly two months every year.

As it enters the 16th season, innovations introduced in the form of potential game changer like the Impact Player' rule, DRS on wides and waist-high no balls, and two broadcasting giants locked in an ugly war of 'TV vs Digital' act as ingredients garnishing the mouth-watering dish, which will be devoured by millions for more than 50 days.

However, the product will remain the driving force and players the main stakeholders, as the likes of Dhoni, Kohli and Rohit set the narratives for their respective franchises with amazing fan bases.

Nearing 42, Dhoni has defied the law of diminishing returns when it comes to his manic following among CSK fans, who thronged the Chepauk to see their 'Thala' hit towering sixes at his spiritual home.

They say it will be his last year in the 'canary yellow' jersey, but when it comes to MSD, never say never. Even Rohit agrees with that, and won't be surprised if his "captain" continues playing till 45.

Having finished outside the playoffs in 2022, Dhoni would like to equal Mumbai Indians' record with five titles, and he knows how to get the best out of the resources available at his disposal.

He will have Ben Stokes in his roster to give him the firepower in batting — in powerplay and at the

Devon Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad both understand the grammar of IPL cricket and Ambati Rayudu with the willow and Deepak CSK, MI remain premier contenders as RCB eye fresh start



Chahar with the white Kookaburra have all been there and done that.

CSK have never been a grooming school. There it's more about the finished product or those in whom the skipper sees the potential, like he saw in Simarjeet Singh last year, or someone like Matheesa Pathirana, who could be an 'Impact Player' if the CSK begin with three foreigners. Stokes, Moeen Ali and Conway look sure-shot starters as of now.

For Rohit, it will be a season in which he would like to sing the redemption song. Rohit has a casual exterior but scratch the surface, and he can be as intense as anybody, and being the most successful skipper in the history of IPL, losing isn't an option. Before last year, Rohit never knew what it feels to be the wooden spooner. This season however, Mumbai Indians appear to be the

team to beat, at least on paper. A lot will depend on the skipper's own batting form and the two marquee men in Ishan Kishan and the world's No. 1 T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav, who would like to brush off the three first-ball ducks against Australia recently as an aberration in an otherwise sterling journey.

Jofra Archer's presence does boost the pace attack, but Jasprit Bumrah's absence, to some extent, nullifies the advantage.
But what MI is doing is to pre-

pare a team for the next five years with young guns like Dewald Brevis, Tim David, Cameron Green, Tilak Verma, Hrithik Shokeen and Kumar Kartikeya set to serve them for the longest time. This core will be a formidable one in the years to come.

Just like Dhoni and Rohit, Kohli has landed up in every IPL with fire in his belly, but the rub of the green hasn't gone his way.

He has had a 973-run season, in 2016, something that will be difficult to surpass even in these day and age where the shelf life of records is too less. He has played a few finals but, as far as winning the title is concerned, the IPL has had a fickle relationship with one of India's greatest batters. He is no longer the skipper and is probably in the best mental phase that he has been in the past hree to four years.

The hunger is intact, but the desperation isn't there. The swagger remains, but the aggression is no longer there to be found.

Maxwell and Dinesh Karthik ready to do the heavy-lifting, Kohli will be free to play his own game and also help skipper Faf du Plessis in putting his best foot forward.

This season holds special significance for Hardik Pandya. Having led Gujarat Titans to title triumph in only their inaugural year, the 16th IPL will be a platform for Pandya to soar high-

er and higher with bigger ambitions.
With coach Ashish Nehra for company, he would want the Rashid Khans, Mohammed Shamis and the Shubman Gills to maintain the tempo of last year from start to finish. An encore would certainly make him Rohit's heir apparent in the ODI format post the World Cup.
The only tactical shift is the

absence of Lockie Ferguson and the jury is still out on whether trading him to bring in Shivam Mavi was a good choice or not. For Aiden Markram, it will be an onerous task to lift a perennially under-performing Sunrisers Hyderabad. However, the composition is

better compared to previous years with talented Indian players like Mayank Agarwal, Rahul Tripathi and Abhishek Sharma in their ranks. Glenn Phillips and Harry Brook are among some top overseas batting recruits.

However, bowling remains a worry with Umran Malik, now well studied by analysts, and Bhuyneshwar Kumar past his prime. A lot will depend on whether SRH are able to use their fourth foreign player as per conditions. There is Marco Jansen with his left-arm seamers and Adil

Rashid with his wrist spinners.
Punjab Kings under Shikhar Dhawan is another team that has never believed in continuity and never got results since their runnersup finish in 2014.

They have kept on changing captains, unceremoniously dumping coaches after one bad season, and the team never had any stability. This time they have got Sam Curran in excess of USD 2 million dollars.

A good start is key but not getting Liam Livingstone (injury), Kagiso Rabada (national duty) in the first couple of games could upset the team's tempo.

Save Arshdeep Singh, the Indian pace unit lacks quality and the PBKS could again be out of the play-off race. The team simply doesn't inspire confidence and the composition

indicates lack of proper homework.
KL Rahul is having a nightmarish 2023 and a good IPL can raise his profile which has been on a downward spiral despite him being a top performer in the league. Rahul's captaincy has been devoid of any tangible improvisation and his style of run gathering is archaic.

LSG have a balanced team and in Gautam Gambhir a tactician par excellence, one who could safely be called the non-playing captain. The presence of utility players like Krunal Pandya, Deepak Hooda and Ayush Badoni in the middle-order adds a lot of depth, while Mark Wood's 150 click thunderbolts will be a nightmare for the opposition.

Nicholas Pooran, who was paid an astronomical Rs 16 crore, would look to justify that billing after a forgettable last season with SRH.

When it comes to remote-control captaincy, there can't be a better example than KKR head coach Chandrakant Pandit, who will have to do all the planning and plotting on behalf of Nitish Rana, who will be leading a side that isn't looking very strong in the absence of regular skipper Shreyas Iyer.

In fact, Andre Russell and Sunil Narine's form will dictate how far

KKR progress. Ditto for Delhi Capitals, who will find it difficult to have anyone get remotely close to Rishabh Pant's impact, even though David Warner wouldn't mind winning a second IPL

Amid all the chaos in some teams, Rajasthan Royals look the most sorted outfit. The world's most dangerous T20 hitter Jos Buttler, wily wrist spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, and the best cricketing brain, R Ashwin, will look to ensure that the legend of skipper Sanju Samson grows exponentially.

Its Dhoni vs Hardik in IPL 2023 opener



PTI AHMEDABAD

Hardik Pandya's youthful leadership template will meet its match in Mahendra Singh Dhoni's time-tested improvisations as defending champions Gujarat Titans clash with eternal title contenders Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League opener here on Friday.

The 2022 was Pandya's first year as an IPL captain and despite his flamboyance on and off the field, he did invoke a certain sense of calm in Titans' campaign that had the an identical start to finish tempo, unmatched by any other team.

With Shubman Gill in the form of his life, Rashid Khan not losing one bit of his consistency and Pandya himself having his worth weight in gold, Gujarat are once again the team to beat.

David Miller's absence from the opener due to national duty will reduce some

middle-order muscle but Rahul Tewatia, who has improved by leaps and bounds in recent years, could compensate for the temporary miss.

Kane williamson might not be most sought after in this format but in low-scoring games on difficult surfaces, he could still be the man to watch out for.

Pandya has never shied away from admitting that he has learnt the ropes of leadership from Dhoni, who has always been his 'Mentor'.

But at 42, playing from IPL to IPL, Dhoni knows the template of IPL success only too well. There have been blips here and there, like last time when they failed to qualify for the play-offs but even with shut eyes, one can vouch that there was no fault in planning but the execution wasn't on expected lines.

On Friday, as the 16th edition starts, it will be very different from earlier ones as 12 players per side will take part in the pitched battle at the Motera Stadium with the 'Impact Player' rule coming into play for the

Dhoni, who manoeuvres his resources having put in a lot of thought into his actions, might well make himself the 'Impact Player' if need be during chases.

That for sure won't happen in the first few games as both teams try to make optimal use of the rule.

For CSK, the presence of Ben Stokes is sure to make the opposition wary but to the England tain perhaps won't bowl at least in the initial phase of the tournament.

That makes him an ideal candidate as 'Impact Player' depending on whether the team bats first or second and accordingly Dhoni can think of playing three foreigners instead of four.

Devon Conway, Stokes and Moeen Ali at this point look the non-negotiable three starters in the playing eleven.

A lot will depend on how well Ravindra Jadeja, Ambati Rayudu and Dhoni himself perform with willow as the Indian pace bowling unit of Deepak Chahar and Simarjeet Singh will have their task cut out.

How well Dhoni can use either spinner

Mahesh Theeksana or slinger Matheesa Pathirana will also go a long way establishing a pattern in selections. As far as GT is concerned, there is one strategic decision which has been baffling

and that is release of tearaway quick Lockie Ferguson and bringing in Shivam Mavi. However Alazarri Joseph's presence is a bit reassuring in this format.

Save $\bar{\mbox{M}}\mbox{ohammed}$ Shami, the only other pacer of repute is the skipper himself. Yash Dayal had a good first season hasn't been in great form in Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy with only 2 wickets from 6 games but to be fair, he was coming back from injury. Pradeep Sangwan and Mohit Sharma are both experienced campaigners but they are now well past their prime.

The other cause of worry for GT will be keeper's slot. While Wriddhiman Saha was decent as an opener last year, they have a better T20 batter in Kona Bharat this time round, who incidentally bats in the top order in the shortest format

Vice-captaincy is reward of my hard work: Patel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Axar Patel is excited about his new role as Delhi Capitals vice-captain, terming the responsibility entrusted upon him as a reward for all the hardwork he has put in for the franchise over past few sea-

"In my opinion, if you have gotten this role that means you are growing as a senior player. that you've done for the team. I'm excited about this role," the lanky all-rounder said in a video posted on DC's twitter

"Our team is mostly the same, we have the same players from the last 3-4 years. We know our players well and that will be an important point."

Axar will be deputy to

Australian David Warner, who has been named as DC skipper for this season in place of Rishabh Pant, who is currently undergoing rehabilitation following a horrific car accident in December.

provide full support to new skipper Warner.

David is a talented player. I will provide him with an atmospĥere where he can make



ferent feeling altogether when you join DC Camp. It's been 3-4 years with the franchise now and it feels like home," Axar DC will start their cam-

best use of his abilities. It's a dif-

paign with an away game against Lucknow Super Giants on April 1 before returning to their home base to play defending champions Gujarat Titans on April 4.

Kotla after so long. I feel it will be really important. We will have our fans here and I'm sure the fans would be excited to cheer for us," Axar said.

Guwahati gears up

The Northeast is all set to debut as an Indian Premier

League (IPL) host for the first

ment started, with two Rajasthan

Royals' 'home' games sched-

uled in Assam's Ğuwahati next

ciation (ACA) Stadium has been

designated as one of the 'home'

venues for RR, which will take

on the Punjab Kings on April 5

"We were allotted two IPL

and Delhi Capitals on April 8.

The Assam Cricket Asso-

time since the marquee tourna-

IPL beckons

Northeast as

for 2 matches

PTI GUWAHATI

1PL-16 wonderful opportunity for Bharat to showcase talent'

PTI CHENNAI

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m F}^{
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m committee}$ rational selection MSK Prasad says the IPL-16 is a wonderful opportunity" for wicketkeeper KS Bharat to showcase his talent in white-ball cricket and stake a claim for

India selection. "Bharat is a Test cricketer and now he has an opportunity to showcase his talent in white-ball cricket. So, it will be a wonderful opportunity for him to do that," Prasad said of the Andhra stumper, who made his Test debut in the recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia.

The wicketkeeper, however, came in for some criticism over his not being able to make big contributions with the bat.

Prasad, a former India player, said in an interaction, "He (Bharat) is there in a good franchise like Gujarat Titans, so, it's a good opportunity for him to showcase his talent as a whiteball cricketer, too.'

Noting that Bharat has performed reasonably well in domestic cricket (in whiteball), Prasad said it was a chance for him to deliver again.

See, now it is in his hands. So he has done reasonably well in domestic cricket, so in a few opportunities that he got for RCB, he did well. So, this is a wonderful opportunity for him to again deliver in white-ball cricket and put himself in a strong position," he added.

Bharat was drafted into the Test XI after the flamboyant Rishabh Pant was unavailable after being injured in a horrific road mishap late last year.

Speaking about this year's IPL beginning on Friday, Prasad, a Star Sports Telugu commentator, said defending

champions Gujarat Titans would be expected to do well though they face a tough chal-

He also said he expected the MS Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings to bounce back strongly after a poor run in the 2022 edition.

"Gujarat because it is a young side, it has got a very good balance and it is led by a good captain also. CSK will come back very strong this time. Why, because they have had one of the worst seasons last year. So, they will come back strong and you never know, there are a lot of rumours that this could be Mahi's (Dhoni's) last year or something

"So they will come with two energy, to give a fitting tribute to what MS has done in the IPL

times more vigour and more

matches of RR in 2020. But, the matches couldn't happen due to the outbreak of COVID-19. We are happy two games have been scheduled here this year," ACA secretary Tridib Konwar said.

He said preparations are in full swing, and ACA is working in close coordination with the Rajasthan Royals team.

'We urge the cricket lovers of Assam as well as the entire Northeast to come and watch the matches. Rajasthan Royals has already started online ticketing for the games," Konwar said. The Jaipur-based franchise had earlier partnered with the association for a cricket academy, which is now functional at

the ACA Stadium.

Devajit Saikia, joint secretary of the BCCI, said there are a lot of aspiring cricketers who cannot make it to the national side due to tough competition, and the IPL is a good opportunity for them. All eyes will be on local boy Riyan Parag, who plays for the Rajasthan Royals, during the two matches.

Sindhu, Srikanth enter quarterfinals of Madrid Spain Masters

Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth moved to the singles quarterfinals of the Madrid Spain Masters badminton tournament with straight game wins here on Thursday. Two-time Olympic medallist, Sindhu dispatched Putri Kusuma Wardani of Indonasia 21-16, 21-14 in a little over half an hour to enter her first quarterfinal in 2023.

World no. 21 Srikanth, on the other hand, pulled off a 21-15, 21-12 second round win over compatriot B Sai Praneeth.

Ŝecond seed Sindhu has been struggling for form this

season since returning to action following a long injury lay off. It is the first time in 2023 that the 27-year-old former world champion has crossed the second

Sindhu, who has dropped out of the top 10 for the first time since November 2016, will take on 25-year-old Danish Mia Blichfeldt in the last eight stage of the Super 300 tournament.

While World no. 21 Srikanth, seeded fifth, has a tough contest ahead of him as the former world No. 1 is pitted against top seed Kenta Nishimoto of Japan in the quarterfinals.

Nishimoto was handed a walkover by France's Arnaud



Merkle in their second round contest. Kiran George and Priyanshu Rajawat crashed out of the men's singles event after suffering second round defeats.

While George went down to Denmark's Magnus Johannesen 17-21, 12-21 in 31 minutes, Rajat was outplayed 14-21, 15-21 by eight seed Toma Junior Popov of France. Later in the day, Aakarshi Kashyap, Ashmita Chaliha Malvika Bansod and Sameer Verma will play their second round matches.

The men's and women's doubles pair of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila and Sikki Reddy and Arathi Sara Sunil will also

Hazlewood to miss initial stage of IPL Maxwell uncertain for RCB's opener

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

R oyal Challengers Bangalore fast bowler Josh Hazlewood is set to miss the initial stages of the Indian Premier League beginning in Ahmedabad on Friday. According to a report in cricket.Com.Au, Ha?zlewood is, however, hopeful of playing a part in the later stages of the T20 tournament.

The 32-year-old is currently recovering from an Achilles problem which kept him out of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in India. Hazlewood will consult Cricket Australia's medical staff



before deciding on his participation in the IPL, the report said.

In another big development, all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, who missed Australia's final two ODIs against India earlier this month, is also doubtful for RCB's opening game against Mumbai Indians on April 2 in Bengaluru as he is yet to recover from a leg injury.