

Jagan jolted to redraw 2024 poll strategies

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

The results of the three Graduates constituencies of the AP Legislative Council came as a rude shock to the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). All these days, the top brass as well as the rank and file of YSRCP were cocksure that the 2024 polls would be a cakewalk for them, given the



largesse delivered to the masses as part of the government's welfare agenda. For, the results of the three Graduates constituencies reflect the mood of people spread over nine combined districts (out of 13) across the state. In the Graduates constituencies of West Rayalaseema (comprising Kadapa, Kurnool and Anantapur districts), East Rayalaseema (Chittoor, Nellore and Prakasam) and North Coastal (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam) that went to polls; more than seven lakh voters (graduates) exercised

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Seven temple vehicles to power campaign to preserve 'Hindu Dharma'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Endowments Kottu Satyanarayana has said that with an aim to preserve Hindu Dharma, a campaign will be launched through seven prominent temple vehicles. The third meeting of the Andhra Pradesh state Dharmika Parishad Committee was held on Tuesday.

On this occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said that it is the responsibility of all the people to make sure that regular 'puja' programmes should be carried out in various temples across the State properly without any shortfall. He said that the programme of the Hindu Dharma campaign is being carried out. He made it clear that the main aim of this religious campaign is to promote the importance of the family system and to develop



spiritual feelings and moral values among the people.

He said that by publishing and distributing small books related to the 'Puranas' and epics on the topic of preserving the 'Sanatana Dharma', the awareness of the preservation of Hindu Dharma will be increased. These campaign vehicles will announce the dates and times of the visits to

the respective villages and towns in advance and involve various temples, spiritual institutions, and spiritual leaders in this programme and make the people more involved. He directed the officials to ensure that more people participate. Moreover, he suggested that a team should be formed for each campaign vehicle and through them organize the e-

dharma campaign. Similarly, TTD EO Dharma Reddy along with Pedda Jeyangar, and Pushpagiri chiefs participated in the programme virtually and gave many valuable suggestions. The Minister said that appropriate measures should be taken in coordination with the Departments of Religion and related departments on the date, time, and other arrangements related to the management of this scheme.

Endowments Commissioner and Secretary Hari Jawahar Lal, Additional Commissioner Ramachandra Mohan, Regional Joint Commissioners Azad, Bhramaramba, Rana Pratap, Suresh Babu, Sagar Babu, Trinadha Rao, Chandra Shekhar Reddy, Deputy Commissioner Vijayaraju, State Institute of Temple Administration Director Ramachandra Rao and others were present.

AP govt creates R-5 Zone in Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has taken another significant decision by creating the R-5 Zone in Amaravati region. The government here on Tuesday issued a Gazette notification in this regard.

About 900 acres of Krishnayapalem, Nidamaru and Kuragallu villages in Mangalagiri mandal as well as Mandadam and Inavolu villages in Tulluru mandal were brought into the ambit of R-5 Zone.

The GO creating R-5 Zone was issued on October 22 itself but the farmers approached the court against it, stating that the government had not taken the opinion of farmers on creating the R-5 Zone. The government suddenly issued the Gazette notification today on the creation of the R-5 Zone. The farmers are planning to approach the court against the Gazette notification again.

BJP will expose YSRCP govt's failures: Veerraju

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will release a charge sheet against the ruling YSRCP government and expose its failures through the 'Praja Poru' programme, said party AP unit president Somu Veerraju. Campaigns will be organised to awaken the public about the crores of the contribution of the BJP government led by PM Modi to AP for development and welfare.

Addressing the State BJP office-bearers' meeting here on Tuesday, Veerraju asked the cadre to strengthen the party from the booth level, to follow the instructions given by the central leadership, to prepare a charge sheet on anti-public activities of the Jagan government, to go ahead with the 'Praja Poru' (public struggle) with the agenda of explaining Jagan's failures and Modi's development to the people.



Regarding MLC elections, Veerraju said that MLC results in the state are not final, earlier in the 1996 elections BJP got 16 percent voting in AP, and in 1998, they won two MP seats with 35 percent vote share. He explained that later Saffron party vote share

dropped to one percent, but again it increased to 14 percent. He said that 12 percent of votes were received in the fresh MLC elections. He said that there is serious opposition to the government in this state, and people gave their second priority to BJP putting faith in the Modi government.

National Co-Sangathan general secretary Siva Prakash, national general secretary Daggubati Purandeshwari, national secretary, Booth Swashakti Karan Abhiyan Incharge Arvind Menon, National Secretary, AP incharge Sunil Deodhar, national secretary Y. Satyakumar, State officials, district party presidents, and party in-charges participated and discussed the party's plan to increase its cadre base.

Paper leaks common: Oppn making fuss Indrakaran

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

However, it is wrong to blame Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao in the matter. "Calling KTR the culprit, or wanting to send notice to CM, the opposition is making baseless charge".

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

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

Political parties in Telugu states targeting their rivals' VIPs

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Gajwel, defeating KCR and in Sircilla defeating his son KTR is an uphill task for the opposition. Similarly, defeating CM Jagan in Pulivendula is

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

not an easy job for the TDP.

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

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

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

is aiming to defeat Nara Lokesh.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hearing in...

Continued from Page 1

there is a conspiracy angle as IT Minister KT Ramarao said that only two persons are guilty when the SIT's investigation is going on.

He said that they have doubts about 20 persons from a single mandal scoring more than 100 marks. He said the TSPSC had cancelled the AE, Group-I, AEE and DAO exams.

He said that there is a need for a comprehensive probe into the TSPSC leakage. How can KTR declare that only two are involved when the probe is in the preliminary stage, he asked.

Dhanka argued that his client has no confidence in the TS police and wondered why the TSPSC is keeping the list of candidates who cleared Group-I prelims.

He requested the HC to order a CBI or a probe by any other agency into the case. He recalled that the SC had handed over the Vyapam scam probe to the CBI.

TDP's dilemma...

Continued from Page 1

However, TDP leadership still wants an alliance with BJP keeping in view other reasons. The TDP leadership hopes that the BJP will come to power at the Centre again in the next elections. If the TDP goes ahead without the BJP, it will help the YSRCP in the State as the BJP may align with Jagan's party, he said.

There is no need for the TDP to carry the BJP on its shoulders. Kanna Lakshminarayana quit the BJP after realising that he had no political future as long as he was in the BJP, a senior TDP leader pointed out.

Moreover, some TDP leaders warned the party leadership that if it joined hands with the

BJP that would alienate the Muslims' votes. Against this backdrop, some TDP senior leaders favour maintaining a distance from the BJP.

"Somu Veerraju is still continuing as the State president since the BJP central leadership has no firmness to make the party stronger in AP. The people of AP believe that the BJP betrayed AP in VSP privatisation, railway zone, SCS, and other issues," a TDP senior leader commented.

Former MLA and BJP senior leader P Vishnu Kumar Raju made it clear that the people of AP are under the impression that the BJP is working with the YSRCP. The BJP is not fighting against the YSRCP's anti-people policies strongly.

Governor, CM greet...

Continued from Page 1

peace, prosperity, happiness and to all sections of people in the southern state. Describing the Ugadi Pachhadi, a pickle made on this auspicious festival, Nazeer said it contains all the tastes of life, symbolically reminding everyone to be ready for all kinds of flavours that life throws at them throughout the year. He added that the Ugadi pickle contains the tastes of sweetness, sourness, bitterness, saltiness, spiciness, and pungency, reflecting all the seasons of life.

CM Jagan said that the Ugadi, which begins with 'Shadruchu Sammelan' (mix of all tastes) is bringing the beauty of the New

Year to the Telugu people and wished to contribute to new goals, new ideas, a bright future for everyone, and thus the overall development of the state. He wished that in the name of Sobhakrut, all good things happen to the people of the state; that there should be abundant rains; The Chief Minister wished that crops grow well, farmers benefit, people of all professions be happy, the state be prosperous, every house in the villages and towns be filled with art, and our cultural traditions flourish forever. CM Jagan stated that in the year named Sobhakrut, it is wished that all the houses will be filled with health, wealth and happiness.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Sukla Paksha

Tithi:Pratipada:

Mar 21 10:53 PM to Mar 22 08:21 PM

Dwitiya:

Mar 22 08:21 PM to Mar 23 06:21 PM

Nakshatram:

Uttara Bhadrapada:

Mar 21 05:25 PM to Mar 22 03:32 PM

Revati:

Mar 22 03:32 PM to Mar 23 02:08 PM

Rahukalam:

12:23 PM to 1:53 PM

Yamagandam:

7:52 AM to 9:22 AM

Variyam:

02:50 AM to 04:20 AM

Gulika:

10:53 AM to 12:23 PM

Amritakalam:

11:07 AM to 12:35 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms

Temp: 33°

Humidity: 74%

Sunrise: 6:10 AM

Sunset: 6:19 PM

Updated: MARCH 21, 2023 5:00 PM

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‘Serious lapses’ found in Margadarsi dealings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Registration and Stamps Department in Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday stated that the department has conducted searches/inspections in 18 offices of M/s Margadarsi Chit Funds Private Limited (MCFPL). During the searches large-scale violations, financial mischief, and procedural irregularities were noticed. The Registrars of Chits have sought explanations from the concerned branches regarding major anomalies in MCFPL.

The Registration and Stamps Department officials in a release stated that in view of the serious lapses observed, the accounts of MCFPL have been audited, and based on the findings of the auditor, it concluded that an amount of Rs 459.98 crore has been invested in Mutual Funds, Government Securities and equity instruments, both quoted and unquoted including subsidiaries and associates; and MCFPL col-



orfully have been diverting the subscribers' money for their personal gain with the subscribers' amounts and are indulging in commission of offences under various provisions of law and placing the hard earned monies of the gullible subscribers under risk.

The officials said that various Assistant Registrars of Chits viz., Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Eluru, Vijayawada, Guntur, Palnadu, Kurnool, and Ananthapur have lodged complaints with the Crime Investigation Department for further investigation, and based on the complaints made, the CID

has registered FIRS against Cherukuri Ramoji Rao, Chairman of M/s. MCFPL; Sailaja Cherukuri, Managing Director of M/s. MCFPL; and The concerned Branch Manager of M/s. MCFPL and four foremen were arrested out of which three foremen were remanded to judicial custody in view of the irregularities committed by MCFPL.

The officials stated that M/s. MCFPL is occupying vacant chits in addition to foreman chits. For the mandatory chit ticket to be in the name of the Foreman as well as for the extra tickets occupied by MCFPL in a chit

group, the foreman is not contributing anything to the kitty of the chit but every month, MCFPL claims 5% of the chit amount as its Foreman's Commission without paying the subscription amounts.

The officials further stated that, on evaluating 5 chit groups in the Guntur district, it was observed that the Foreman so far claimed Rs 1,18,35,000 as Foreman's Commission and Rs1,73,00,000 as the Gross Chit amount which can be claimed by the Foreman in the second month of the Chit. However, when it came to the payments as subscription of foreman tickets and vacant tickets held by the Foreman, the company failed to show proof of payment of Rs 6,98,71,445 towards its subscriptions to the chits being managed by it and where it was responsible to pay on par with other chit group subscribers for the Foreman's ticket and other tickets in a chit group held by the Foreman company.

Govt's efforts for uplift of Muslims laudable: Noor Baba

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Sayyad Sadat Sangha Adhoc Committee convenor Hazrat Noor Baba claimed that the efforts of the State government towards the welfare of Muslims in the State are commendable.

The state Sayyad Sadat Committee meeting was held on the premises of Kondapalli Dargah here in Vijayawada, during the meeting Noor Baba was chosen as the committee convenor. Representatives of many Sayyad communities across the state and supervisors of various famous dargahs participated in the meeting on a large scale.

On the occasion Noor Baba said that the successive governments have failed to give any reservations to Sayyads in the state, despite several requests. However, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy gave an assurance to set up a special corporation to meet the problems of the Sayyads and welfare, he added.

Lokesh expresses solidarity with Anganwadis

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Expressing solidarity with the agitating Anganwadis, the TDP general secretary, Nara Lokesh, on Tuesday demanded that the State government immediately consider the demands of the workers.

In protest against the repressive attitude of the State government adopted towards Anganwadis, Lokesh and all his followers were seen wearing black badges. Later, Lokesh said that taking into custody those who raised their voice for their rights reflects the dictatorial tendency of the ruling dispensation.

Earlier, the elected MLCs met Lokesh at the campsite near the Kadiri RDO office. The TDP secretary congratulated them on their victory in the polls and also felicitated them.

He told Ram Gopal Reddy, Kancharla Srikanth, and Vempada Chiranjeevi, to continue their war on the floor of the Council too for the people's cause. The MLCs-elect said



that they will strive hard for the success of the TDP in the coming Assembly poll.

The Kadiri Assembly segment witnessed all kinds of development only during the TDP regime, including the construction of the Government Residential Hostel for Muslim Minority girls near CPI Colony Hostel with Rs 17 crore. Though 80 percent of the works of this

hotel are complete, the Jagan Mohan Reddy government did not bother to complete the remaining 20 percent works.

Also, the TDP has the credit of supplying the Handri Neeva water to Cherlopalli reservoir in Kadiri mandal through Bonthalavaripalli lift irrigation to meet the drinking as well as irrigation water needs of the people here.

Demand to open KRMB office in city

AP Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samithi urges Ministry of Jal Sakti to construct Dr KL Rao Memorial Museum

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samithi leaders have demanded that the Central government set up the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) office in Vijayawada. Also, they wanted the government to construct Dr KL Rao Memorial Museum in Vijayawada.

The Samithi leaders led by convenor and former minister Vadde Shobhanadreeswara Rao met Pankaj Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Jal Sakti, and submitted a representation in this regard, in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Later, Vadde Shobhanadreeswara Rao spoke to media persons at Andhra Bhavan and said that as per the Andhra Pradesh Bifurcation Act-2014 and the Panyan Committee report, the Polavaram Project should be constructed with a height of 150 feet. The project would store 194 TMCs of water if its Full Reservoir Level (FRL) is 150 feet, he said.

He further said Polavaram was the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh and it was the responsibility of the Central government to build that project.



Meanwhile, he said former Central minister, engineer and Padma Bhushan Dr KL Rao's memorial museum should be constructed adjacent to his mausoleum near the Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada. The memorial museum would be very useful for the Water Resources Department officials, he explained.

Andhra Pradesh Water Users Associations' Federation

president Alla Venkata Gopalakrishna Rao said that as per the AP Bifurcation Act - 2014, the Krishna River Management Board should be set up in Vijayawada. During the TDP rule and the present YSRCP rule, Chief Secretaries of the State urged the Ministry of Jal Sakti to set up the KRMB office in Vijayawada. Unfortunately, the State government decided to set up the KRMB office in

Visakhapatnam, which is 400 km away from the Krishna basin. It is against the Bifurcation Act, he said.

Polavaram Sadhikara Samithi Chairman GVR Shastri, Telugu Rythu leaders K Narendra, G Uma Vara Prasad, V Srinivasa Rao, Nallamada Rythu Sangham president Dr K Raja Mohan, Prakasam Zilla Abhivruddhi Vedica convenor Ch Ranga Rao and others were present.

Ragi malt drink distribution begins

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of Jagananna Gorumudda, distribution of the ragi malt drink began at the zilla parishad, government and aided schools in NTR and Krishna districts on Tuesday. Both districts' Collectors Dr S Dilli Rao and P Ranjith Basha, along with respective people's representatives, started the ragi malt drink distribution at the collectorates.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy formally launched the drink distribution at his camp office at Tadepalli near Vijayawada.

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao started the distribution of the ragi drink for school children along with Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu and Vijayawada West MLA V Srinivasa Rao, at the video conference hall on the premises of the collectorate in Vijayawada.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector said that the State government was aiming to make students healthy by providing ragi malt drink. To prevent anaemia, the State government is distributing iron, and calcium tablets to the students. As part of Jagananna Gorumudda, around 15 varieties of nutritious food along



2,28,727 students in NTR and Krishna districts benefiting from the initiative

with milk, egg, and others are provided, he added.

He further said with this scheme, around 1,25,000 students who are studying in 921 ZP, Government and Aided schools will be benefiting from the ragi drink every day in the morning. This drink would increase children's strength and they will concentrate on their studies, he said.

Vijayawada Central MLA and Planning Commission Vice Chairman Malladi Vishnu

said Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was giving utmost priority to education and no other CM in the State has implemented such schemes. Every poor student should go for higher education and for that, the government is implementing Amma Vodi, Jagananna Vidya Deevena, Vidya Vasathi and Vidya Kanukas, he added.

Vijayawada West MLA V Srinivasa Rao said with the prestigious scheme Mana Badi Nadu - Nedu, the government schools' atmosphere has

been changing in the state. The State government is releasing crores of rupees to provide infrastructure facilities in all schools, he said.

MLC Md Ruhulla, Deputy Mayor Avuthu Sri Sailaja, AP Gouda Corporation Chairman M Sivaramakrishna, Viswabrahmana Corporation Chairman T Srikanth, Durga Temple Trust Board chairman K Rambabu, NTR DEO CV Renuka, Deputy Inspector of Schools Konda Ravi Kumar and others were present.

In Krishna, 1,03,727 students to get benefit

In Krishna district, Collector P Ranjith Basha, Zilla Parishad Chairperson Uppala Harika, RTC Regional Chairperson Tatineni Padmavathi, Machilipatnam Mayor Moka Venkateswaramma and Deputy Mayor Tantipudi Kavitha distributed ragi malt drink to school students at the video conference hall in Machilipatnam.

Speaking on the occasion, ZP Chairperson Uppala Harika said that 1,03,727 students from 1,365 ZP, Government, and Aided schools are having the drink. The students would develop mentally and their knowledge would be improved, she said.

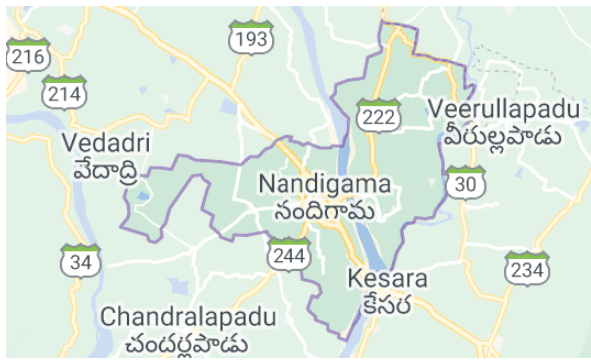
Krishna DEO Tahera Sultana, ICDS PD Suvarna, DM and HO Dr Geethabai, DRDA PD PSR Prasad and others were present.

Nandigama made Grade-II municipality

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has upgraded the Nandigama nagar panchayat in NTR district to a Grade - 2 municipality. Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department Special Chief Secretary Y Sri Lakshmi issued G.O.Ms.No.37 in this regard on Tuesday.

The State government said that the GO would come into force with immediate effect. Also, the government issued a gazette notification in this regard.



Nandigama panchayat was upgraded to nagar panchayat in

2013 before the bifurcation. The nagar panchayat was divided

into 20 wards and the State Election Commission (SEC) conducted the first elections in the Nandigama nagar panchayat in 2014.

After the election results were out, TDP councillor Yarragorla Padmavathi became the first chairperson of the nagar panchayat. Now, YSRCP's Mandava Vara Lakshmi is the chairperson.

Nandigama nagar panchayat has a population of 55,000 and 35,000 voters. Based on the population, the State government has upgraded the nagar panchayat to a Grade - 2 municipality.

Actor Suman visits Mopidevi temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Film actor Talwar Suman visited the Sri Valli Devasena Sametha Subrahmanyeswara Swamy at Mopidevi in Krishna district on Tuesday.

Temple priests gave him a warm welcome and provided Swamy Vari darshan. Later, Suman performed special pujas by pouring milk into the snake pit. The priests offered him Swamy Vari Prasadam.

"I am working for the development of ancient temples around Hyderabad. Several temples have thousands of years of history, but they do not get

attention. We have recognised such temples," he said while addressing media persons.

Suman said that he had been lucky to perform a lot of mythological characters in films after NTR, of which he was really proud. His work in 'Annamayya' brought laurels to him, he said. He has acted in 700 films in 10 languages over the past 45 years. God knows what to give to one and when, he added.

Challapalli ZPTC member Rajulapati Kalyani, YSRCP leader Rajulapati Siva Prasad, Telugu Yuvaatha Guntur district president Ede Murali Krishna and others accompanied Suman.



Cop feted for rescuing of woman from Godavari river

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

A police constable was feted by the Andhra Pradesh government for gallantly rescuing a woman who jumped into the Godavari River to commit suicide recently.

Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police (DGP) K V Rajendranath Reddy felicitated constable Anganti Veerababu from Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema district on Monday for this act with a cash award as well.

"Veerababu's name has also been recommended for Prime Minister's Police Medal for Life-Saving," said an official in a statement on Monday night.

According to the police, Veerababu was proceeding to attend his maternal grand-



mother's final rites on Friday evening when he noticed a woman jumping from the Yedurlanka bridge into the gushing Yanam Godavari river. He immediately jumped

into the river estimated to be gushing over a depth of 40 feet to rescue the woman and handed her over to her parents.

A video of Veerababu's heroic act went viral.

SRM students shine at intl meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Students of SRM University-AP exhibited incredible talent at the conference organised by the International Model United Nations (IMUN) at the British University in Vietnam from March 11 to 14. The international conference was conducted in collaboration with UNICEF, UNO, and UN Women. University students from 35 countries participated in the four-day-long conference.

Durgapraveen, Ishita, Sahana, Navya, Praveen Kumar, Venugopal, Satwik Suhas, Nitish, Rameez, and Satwik Sai were the students of SRM University-AP who participated in the conference. The students prepared detailed draft copies on contemporary social issues and engaged in group discussions with the students from different coun-



tries to showcase their potential. BSc Computer Science student Durgapraveen and Engineering students Venugopal and Satwik Suhas proved India's eminence on the international platform as they were chosen as best commentators at the conference.

Students of SRM-AP, along with students from different countries, presented a report

with details on social problems like cancer treatment, mental health problems, child marriage, and their solutions. The committee considered these the best presentations and handed over certificates of appreciation. Pro-Chancellor of SRM AP Dr P Sathyanarayanan, Vice-Chancellor Prof Manoj K Arora, Director of

International Relations and Higher Studies Dr Naga Swetha Pasupuleti and others praised the students who made the varsity's voice heard at the international event.

The conference was part of the four-day Vietnam Immersion Programme organised by the Directorate of International Relations and Higher Studies of SRM-AP.

2-year jail term for AP Transco AE

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Panchakatta Satya Narayana, Additional Asst Engineer, AP Transco, T Narsapuram, West Godavari District was pronounced a judgment of Two years rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 5,000 by the judge AV Ravindrababu, AP High Court.

Earlier in 2006 P Satya Narayana was caught red-handed by the ACB officials while accepting a bribe of Rs 4000 from Thota Peddi Raju of Kethavaram Village, T Narsapuram Mandal West Godavari District to give a service connection to the Bore well of his son. In this regard, Eluru ACB officials registered a case in Cr. No.16/RCT-ACB-EWG/1999.

Final victory is ours: Ambati

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Minister for Water Resources Management Ambati Rambabu has said that the people of the State strongly wish that Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy would come to power again.

He participated in the training classes of secretariat conveners and Grhasaradhulu at Ganapavaram village in Rajupalem mandal on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that despite all wolves coming together, the YSRCP would emerge victorious finally.

Ambati Rambabu predicted that Pawan Kalyan would become a scapegoat if he blindly supported Chandrababu Naidu. He asked Pawan Kalyan if he really trusts Chandrababu Naidu and wants an alliance with the TDP.

Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government is providing a transparent government and implementing many welfare schemes to uplift the poor. Some leaders are trying to



contest from the Sattenapalli constituency but the final victory is his, he claimed.

Refuting the Opposition leader's malicious campaign that there is no development in the state, the minister said that Rythu Bharsa Kendras, secretariats, and wellness centres are being constructed in every village across the state

spending crores of rupees, he said and asked were not development.

He called upon the YSRCP leaders, representatives of the people, Gruhasaradhulu, and activists to hit back against the malicious campaign of opposition leaders and take the welfare schemes to the people. Mandal convenor Eperi

Srinivasa Rao, Sarpanch Ganupally Venkata Ramana, MPP Telukutla Rajeshwari, ZPTC members Donthi Reddy, Sunitha Reddy, Rajupalem Mandal Secretariat Convenors Incharge Pulibandla Ashok, and Sattenapalli Market Yard Committee Chairman Pendum Babu Rao were among those who were present.

CPM seeks revocation of GO No. 1

PNS ■ ONGOLE

CPI (M) State secretary V Srinivasa Rao has demanded that the government revoke the controversial GO No 1 and condemned the attack on TDP MLA in the Legislative Assembly.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, he condemned the attack on TDP MLA Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy by YSRCP MLA in the Assembly.

"It is improper for the ruling party MLAs to attack the Opposition MLA. The ruling party members should exercise restraint even if the Opposition members act aggressively. It is not proper for the Assembly Speaker to reject adjournment motion on the GO 1 issue," the CPM leader flayed.

He described as ridiculous the YSRCP MLAs' claim that they rushed to the Speaker's podium to protect the Speaker. He asked the ruling party MLAs whether the Speaker sought their help to protect him. The marshals are there to

protect the Speaker and it is not the duty of MLAs to rush to protect the Speaker in the Assembly, he opined.

"Steps should be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur in the Assembly in the future. The attack on the TDP MLA diverted the issue of debate on GO No 1 revocation," he stated. Referring to the agitation of Anganwadi workers, Srinivasa Rao said that the Anganwadi workers were detained at various places in railway stations themselves.

The CPI leader felt that organising protests during the Assembly sessions by organisations and parties is common and there is no need for the government to oppress the agitations undemocratically.

"The Dharna chowk in Vijayawada was closed and the police did not allow any protests there. The government should consider the demands of Anganwadis and also think why they are carrying out massive agitations across the state," he said and demanded the government to



concede the legitimate demands of Anganwadi workers.

The CPM state secretary recalled that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy assured to enhance their wages more than the wages being paid in Telangana state. Since the government did not invite the Anganwadi workers for negotiations they organised agitations, he defended.

He said that the government failed to spend the allocations made for the irrigation projects. He questioned the government on how the Veligonda project could be completed

with the meagre allocation of Rs 101 crore. The R&R package for evacuees of the project has not been implemented. The compensation to the evacuees has not been paid, he lamented.

"The Chief Minister did not pay attention to the important issues but he spent four hours of time with Adani, Ambani and his family. The reputation of the country vitiated with the scam of Gautam Adani. The government is not interested in opposing the privatization of the Visaka steel plant. The MPs remained mute spectators in the Parliament without raising the issues," Srinivasa Rao slammed.

Referring to the graduate MLC constituency election results, the CPM state secretary said that the people of the state are against the YSRCP and the election results reflected it. The Left party candidates lost elections in the Teachers' constituency due to a split of votes, he claimed. CPM district secretary Sayyad Hanif and other leaders were present.

JAGANANNA GORUMUDDA

Ragi malt for over 2 lakh students in Prakasam

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar said that as part of Jagananna Gorumudda, Ragi Java would be provided to 2,00,565 students studying at 2,371 schools in the district. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the Ragi Java programmes virtually from his camp office in Tadepalli. On the occasion, a programme was organised here on Tuesday which a large number of school students attended.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the state government is giving high priority to the education sector, adding that modern facilities are being provided in schools through the Nadu-Nedu scheme and through the Jagananna Gorumudda scheme, students are being provided with one type of nutritious food every afternoon.

In addition to this, in order to prevent anaemia and to be more physically fit, measures are being taken to give Ragi Java, a



liquor made of millet, to the students in the morning every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in government and aided schools, Collector Dinesh Kumar said. Ragi Java is being given to 2,00,565 students in 2,371 primary, higher primary, and high schools in the district, the Collector said stating that the number of students enrolling in government and aided schools in the district has increased significantly due to the measures taken

by the government to provide better education facilities and nutrition.

ZP chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma said that Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy is giving a big boost to the education sector in a way never seen before in the history of the state. She asked the officials to monitor the quality of Ragi Java as prescribed by the government. Arya Vysya Corporation Chairman Kuppm Prasad, Madiga

Corporation Chairman K. Kanaka Rao, Ongole Mayor Gangada Sujatha, and ODA Chairman Meenakumari were among those who were present.

Later the Collector held a special review meeting on issues related to land acquisition at the Spandana hall on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion Collector Dinesh Kumar said that as the land acquisition works for various projects have almost reached the final stage, the pending works should be completed soon and the revenue machinery should focus more on the resurvey.

The Collector said that more than 90 percent of the land acquisition works for the construction and expansion of the road and railway lines passing through the district have been completed.

He said that other works should also be expedited, stating that the Tahsildars along with the project officers should also be with them at the field level during the stone plantation and necessary survey activities.

All students to write exams as per CBSE syllabus by 2025

Minister Jogi Ramesh distributes ragi malt drink in Pedana ZP High School

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing Jogi Ramesh has revealed that the State government would introduce the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) syllabus in all the schools in the State to make the students able to compete at the national level. He added that the students studying in the State syllabus would be appearing in examinations in the CBSE syllabus by 2025.

The minister inaugurated the distribution of ragi malt drink to the students at BGK ZPH School at Pedana in Krishna district on Tuesday. He also drank the drink along with the students.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that the State government had been giving top priority to the education sector. He also said under the Jagananna Gorumudda, the



government was providing fortified food to the students. He added that the ragi malt, to be distributed on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, would be useful to avoid malnutrition and anaemia among the children.

The new initiative would benefit around 37.63 lakh students across the State and the government was spending

another Rs.86 crore for this, he added. He said the government was implementing Amma Vodi, Jaganna Vidya Kanuka, Vidya Deevena, Vasathi and various other schemes to help the students.

Municipal Chairperson Jyostna Rani, MEO Rani, Municipal Commissioner Anjayya and others attended the programme.

CRIME BAET

9 red sanders logs seized, 1 arrested

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

The task force police seized nine red sanders logs and arrested one smuggler at Nagapatla village in Bhakarapet mandal.

Police said that on Tuesday the police team conducted combing in the forest area. They spotted some red

sander smugglers carrying logs at the Nagapatla section limits.

Noticing the police, the red sanders smugglers fled the scene leaving the logs at the place.

The police overpowered one of the smugglers and seized 9 logs weighing 205 kg worth Rs 2.10 lakh.



Hash oil, 4 kg ganja seized, three arrested

PNS ■ ELURU

The police seized hashish oil, worth Rs 5 lakh, and four KGs of ganja at Marribandal village in Nuzvid mandal and arrested 3 persons.

DSP Ashok Goud told the media on Tuesday that three persons brought the liquor

ganja and 4 KGs of ganja powder from Paderu in the Visakhapatnam district.

On a tip-off, the police conducted a checking of vehicles and found the hash oil and ganja powder and seized it. The police also seized three mobile phones, 5 ATM cards, and a two-wheeler from them.

14 cows killed as private bus ploughs into the herd

PNS ■ NALGONDA

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

The bus was on its way to Hyderabad from Chennai when it crashed into a herd of cattle. The people in the village accused the bus driver of being responsible for the accident. The farmer, who herded the cattle, had a narrow escape, the villagers said. The farmer, who owned the cattle, suffered a huge financial loss.

The police registered a case and the investigation is on.



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

‘EXORCIST’ EXTORTS Rs 60 LAKH FROM FAMILY

Fake Baba making waves in Nagarkurnool

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

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

The fake godman, who masqueraded as an exorcist, allegedly wangled up to Rs 60 lakh from a family and threatened the family members with "dire consequences" when they asked him to return the money. The family now approached Nagarkurnool District Superintendent of Police K Manohar and lodged a complaint with the police. The alleged godman, according to the complaint filed by the family, claimed to be an exorcist and that he would weed out evil spirits that possess human beings. The Baba lured the gullible people by distributing amulets, claiming that these ornaments would give protection against evil, danger or disease for those who tie them to their hands.

As he gained fame, a man approached him after his daughter took ill. The Baba allegedly misled the man by saying that the girl was possessed by an evil spirit and it should be weeded out. He forged a close friendship with the girl's family and started going to their house. The Baba, the complaint said, had managed to persuade the family to lend him Rs 60 lakh over a period of time. The family borrowed the money to lend to the Baba.



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

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

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

It is not unusual for some persons to be affected by mental and neurological disorders at some point in their lives. It is not a disease and those, who are affected by such disorders, should not approach quacks, the rationalists summed up.

Complaint lodged against film director RGV, ANU V-C

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Women lawyers lodged a complaint in the Pedakakani police station against film director Ram Gopal Varma and the Vice-chancellor for the obnoxious comments, which RGV made while speaking at the academic exhibition programme at Acharya Nagarjuna University a few days ago.

The women lawyers handed over their complaint against Ram Gopal Varma and the VC to Pedakakani



Circle Inspector Suresh. At the academic exhibition programme, Ram Gopal Varma made some absurd comments

degrading the women. RGV has no respect for women, the women lawyers criticised. The women lawyers con-

demned RGV's comments that all men should die but he should live. They described Ram Gopal Varma as a 'pervert' and they demanded action against the Vice-chancellor for inviting RGV as a guest for the programme.

RGV has no social responsibility and he treats women as a luxurious commodity, the women lawyers slammed. The CI took the complaint and said that he would go ahead on taking action against RGV and the VC after taking the legal opinion.

12 persons injured as bus hits tree

PNS ■ YADADRI-BHUVANAGIRI

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

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

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

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



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

student from Paramita Heritage School (CBSE) in Karimnagar town, designed a science project "Multi-functional Eco-friendly Agro machine" won

several national awards, including the winner of the CBSE National Science exhibition and was adjudged as the best project under the theme

'Environment concern' among all the participating CBSE schools in the country in New Delhi from February 7 to 9, 2023.

INDIA CORNER

Man lynched on suspicion of being thief in Gujarat's Kheda district

A man hailing from Chhattisgarh was beaten to death on suspicion of being a thief in a village in Gujarat's Kheda district, police said on Tuesday. The victim Ramkeshwar Kherwar was lynched by a group of people in Vansol village on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, Deputy Superintendent of Police V R Bajpai said. Kherwar, who sustained injuries to his head and a fracture on his right hand, was rushed to the Ahmedabad civil hospital in an ambulance, but was declared dead, he said. "Villagers nabbed the man suspecting him of being a thief and beat him to death. No arrests have been made in the case so far. But some suspects are being questioned," Bajpai said. An FIR was registered against unidentified persons under sections pertaining to murder, rioting, unlawful assembly, among others of the Indian Penal Code, at Mehmedabad police station on Tuesday, he said.



Noida: Six held for fraud in raid at fake call centre

The Noida Police on Tuesday said they have arrested six people on charges of fraud worth "lakhs of rupees" after a raid at a fake call centre. The centre was being run as a front of a 'Panchkarm Chooran' (herbal powder) company, and the accused sold adulterated product for Rs 3,000 to Rs 6,000 per bottle, police said. Once in possession of data of users of the herbal powder, accused duped them on the pretext of helping them with bank loans and job opportunities at leading private companies, police said. "The accused gave these offers to gullible people over phone calls that were made by them through the call centre, located in the Industrial Sector 63," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Ram Badan Singh said. The fake call centre was busted following a raid during by Sector 63 police station team which nabbed six people from the spot, he said.



Restore Red Notice against Choksi: CBI to Interpol body

The CBI has asked an Interpol body to restore the Red Notice against fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi terming its earlier decision to drop his name from the list had 'serious shortcomings, procedural violations, overreach of mandate and mistakes'. The Commission for Control of Interpol's Files (CCF) which had removed Choksi's name from the list of fugitives based on his appeal last year is a separate Interpol body which is "not under the control" of the Interpol Secretariat and is mainly staffed by elected lawyers from different countries where people can challenge decisions to declare them fugitives. Based on repeated appeals from Choksi, who is wanted in the Rs 13,000 crore bank fraud in Punjab National Bank and is holed in Antigua and Barbuda after fleeing from India in 2018, the CCF removed his name from the Red Notice list in November 2022, the CBI said in a statement.



Irresponsible Opposition wilfully stalling Parl: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday accused the Opposition of wilfully stalling Parliament with its "irresponsible" comments and "unfounded" allegations to mislead the country amid global recognition of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Goyal, joined by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, accused the Opposition of repeatedly insulting Rajya Sabha Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar by refusing to even meet him.

Even on Tuesday, some parties including the Congress did not attend the meeting called by him, he said. Though they were present in the meeting called by Speaker Om Birla.

The Congress hit back at Goyal, saying this accusation is coming from the Leader of the House who got his MPs to prevent Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun



Kharge from speaking twice after the Chairman had permitted him.

"Piyush Goyal is accusing Oppn of boycotting meeting called by Chairman RS. This is from the Leader of the House who got his MPs to prevent LoP Kharge ji from speaking twice after Chairman had permitted him. Silencing of LoP is also an issue quite apart from the JPC on Adani," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said on Twitter.

In another tweet, Ramesh

said, "How can the Oppn demand for a JPC into the PM-linked Adani scam be linked to the BJP's demand for an apology from Rahul Gandhi on totally baseless accusations. The JPC is on a real, documented scam. The apology demand is a hoax being raised to divert attention from the Adani scam."

Ramesh said this morning Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Kharge was given permission by the Chairman to speak and got up to do so but

was not allowed by sloganeering BJP MPs.

Chairman then adjourned RS. How can the logjam be broken if Modi Government behaves like this," he said.

Goyal told reporters that at a time when the Union budget has drawn all-round praise, Modi is being recognised as the most popular leader in the world and the BJP has won polls in northeast states, opposition parties, especially the Congress and its allies, are trying to mislead the country.

His attack on the Opposition came after a Business Advisory Committee meeting called by the Rajya Sabha chairperson and an all party meeting called by Lok Sabha speaker failed to offer any breakthrough in breaking the continuing impasse in Parliament's budget session.

With Opposition members protesting from the first floor of Parliament complex, Goyal said they were resorting to petty tactics to remain in headlines as they lacked any solid argument.

'World Trade Centre' to come up in Kolkata's Salt Lake area

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A US-based trade association on Tuesday joined hands with real estate developer Merlin Group to set up a World Trade Centre' in Salt Lake area near the metropolis.

The proposed structure would be built at a cost of Rs 1,500 crore and has the potential to create "30 lakh jobs".

Chairman of Merlin Group Sushil Mohta said the 3.5-million-sq ft WTC will be the first of its kind in eastern India.

Mohta said the proposed facility will help in attracting business from overseas and also promote trade through 320 such WTCs spread over 100 countries.

In a statement, Scott Wang, head of the Asia-Pacific region of World Trade Center Association (WTCA), said it is a non-profit international trade body formed in 1970 and is headquartered in New York.

'SCURRILOUS' CLAIMS MADE AGAINST ME

Have right to respond in Parl to 'unfair' charges: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has asserted that he has the right to respond in Parliament to the "totally baseless" and "unfair charges" hurled at him by senior ministers in the Lok Sabha over his democracy remarks.

In a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Gandhi invoked Rule 357 which allows for "personal explanations" and also cited the example of BJP MP and then minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, who invoked the Rule to give an explanation regarding comments made by Jyotiraditya Scindia in relation to him in Parliament.

"I am making such a request again. I am seeking this permission under the conventions of Parliamentary practice, the constitutionally embedded rules of natural justice and Rule 357 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha," he said in his letter to the Speaker.

Citing Rule 357, Gandhi said, "A member may, with the



permission of the Speaker, make a personal explanation although there is no question before the House, but in this case no debatable matter may be brought forward, and no debate shall arise."

The Congress leader said members of the ruling regime have made "scurrilous and defamatory claims against me" both within and outside Parliament.

"As a result of these allegations, and the rules invoked by these individuals, it is only appropriate that you kindly allow me a right to reply as contained in Rule 357 which allows for 'personal explanations,'" he said.

BJP is just a tenant, not owner of democracy: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday said the ruling BJP is just a tenant and not the owner of democracy and asserted that holding the government to account does not amount to criticising the nation.

Congress spokesperson and chief of the party's media and publicity department Pawan Khara also said that the BJP was resorting to "theatrics" and "drama" to divert the country's attention from the Adani issue.

Taking a barb at the BJP, he said the party will be seen as "Jai Chands" in history and claimed its ideological forefathers were known apologisers of the British, after the BJP attacked Rahul Gandhi as "Mir Jafar".

SC to Centre: Clear all OROP arrears by February 28 next yr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Centre to clear all One Rank One Pension (OROP) arrears totalling Rs 28,000 crore for ex-servicemen by February 28 next year, saying the government is duty-bound to comply with its 2022 judgement on the matter.

A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud took note of the financial difficulties pointed out by the Centre in paying the entire Rs 28,000 crore OROP dues in one go, and laid down the schedule to the Ministry of Defence to pay the arrears to the ex-servicemen, categorised under several heads. It noted that out of 25 lakh Defence pensioners, four lakh did not qualify for the OROP scheme as they were getting enhanced pensions.

During the hearing, it also took strong note of the Centre's sealed cover report giving details on the payment of the OROP dues to retired military personnel, saying it wanted to "put an end to this sealed cover procedure" which is "fundamentally contrary to the basic principle of fair process in a court of law".

"While on the one hand, the Union government is bound to comply with the terms of the OROP scheme and as a matter of fact the UOI is duty-bound to comply with the judgement of this court in terms of the OROP scheme.

Doctor accused of leaving cloth inside stomach during surgery

PNS ■ BADAUN

The family members of a 58-year-old man have accused a doctor here of operating on him without their consent and leaving cloth in his stomach during surgery, police said on Tuesday.

Kavita, daughter of the patient Veerpal Singh, alleged that AK Verma, who runs a nursing home in Civil Lines area, had advised her father to undergo gallbladder operation after he regularly complained of abdominal pain.

On March 16, when Singh visited Verma, the doctor admitted him to his Ashoka Hospital and operated on him without the consent of the family members, Kavita alleged in her complaint to police.

When Singh's condition deteriorated, the doctor gave him injections and asked him to leave the hospital, but the family members opposed. Verma the called an ambulance and



There is a clear instruction of the Supreme Court that action should be taken in such cases only on the basis of the report given by the panel constituted by the district magistrate under the direction of the chief medical officer

referred the patient to a Bareilly hospital, where he was operated again at the Medicity Nursing Home and three blood-stained clothes were found inside his stomach. The doctors at

Medicity confirmed that three pieces of clothes were found inside Singh's stomach.

Following the allegations, Verma told reporters he did the surgery on Singh using the tele-

scopic method. When bleeding started, a major operation had to be performed as there was a threat to the life of the patient. There was no time to walk out of the operation theatre and

inform the relatives about it, Verma said.

He claimed Singh's surgery was successful but he had to refer him to Bareilly after his condition deteriorated and there was no emergency facility available at his nursing home.

Verma said the allegations against him were baseless and said he would cooperate fully with the police investigation.

SP (City) Amit Kishor Srivastava said Kavita has filed a complaint against Verma and it is being probed.

"There is a clear instruction of the Supreme Court that action should be taken in such cases only on the basis of the report given by the panel constituted by the district magistrate under the direction of the chief medical officer," Srivastava said. He said an FIR will be registered only on the directions of the DM after getting a report and action will be taken accordingly.

Nagaland Guv for expediting peace talks

PNS ■ KOHIMA

Nagaland Governor La Ganesan on Tuesday called for an early conclusion of peace talks and said the state government would continue playing an active role of a facilitator.

In his maiden address to the newly constituted assembly, he said the state government

will not come in the way of an honourable and inclusive agreement that is arrived at through the peace process.

"Our people and society as a whole have not been able to fully realise their potential due to the decades-long peace process. It has hindered the growth of the state," he said.

On the statehood demand in eastern Nagaland, he said a

team constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs is holding consultations with the Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation, the apex tribal body in the region, for a harmonious and sustainable resolution of the matter. "My government is committed to assisting the entire process so that all of us move together for suitably addressing the griev-

ances of the people of eastern Nagaland, and bridge the development deficit and bring these areas on par with the rest of the state at the earliest," he said. The governor said that as per the directions of the Supreme Court, the state government has initiated the process for conducting the long-overdue elections to urban local bodies.

Over 500 sportspersons in UP to get govt jobs: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said more than 500 sportspersons from the state will be absorbed into the police force and other administrative departments here soon.

The chief minister made the announcement at the opening ceremony of the five-day 71st All India Police Athletics



Cluster Championship being organised at the PAC Ground. "The event is taking place in

the state after a gap of 10 years. I am also glad that the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), which is performing its duty on India's borders with Nepal and Bhutan very efficiently, is one of the organisers of the event," Adityanath said in a statement. The participation of 1,300 sportspersons from 32 districts has taken the championship to a new level this year, he said.

NSA INVOKED AGAINST AMRITPAL SINGH

Punjab govt tells HC; faces rap over 'intelligence failure'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The stringent National Security Act has been invoked against Amritpal Singh, the Punjab government on Tuesday told the high court which rapped it over the "intelligence failure" that led to pro-Khalistan preacher giving police the slip.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court was hearing the habeas corpus petition filed by

advocate Imaan Singh Khara, seeking the "release" of Amritpal Singh from alleged police custody. Justice N S Shekhawat asked Punjab Advocate General Vinod Ghai how Amritpal Singh gave police the slip when the whole operation was meticulously planned, and called it an intelligence failure, a lawyer said.

Police on Saturday had launched a major crackdown

against Amritpal Singh and members of his outfit 'Waris Punjab De.' The elusive preacher himself, however, gave the police a slip and escaped their dragnet when his cavalcade was intercepted in Jalandhar district. In his petition, Khara sought the production of Amritpal Singh from alleged police custody. Khara is the legal advisor of Amritpal Singh and his outfit 'Waris Punjab De.'

'POSSIBILITY OF REFORMATION'

SC commutes death penalty of convicted man

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday commuted the death sentence of a man, who had kidnapped and killed a seven-year-old boy in Tamil Nadu in 2009, to 20-year imprisonment, saying there was "possibility of reformation" even though he has committed a ghastly crime.

Observing that there was no reason to doubt the guilt of the man, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud held that the man would undergo life

imprisonment for not less than 20 years without reprieve or remission.

The commutation of the death sentence came after taking note of the arguments that hearing on the sentence has not been conducted separately in the trial court and mitigating circumstances have not been considered in the appellate courts before awarding the capital punishment.

The top court's judgement came on a review plea filed by Sundar alias Sundarrajan who



picked up the victim while he was returning from school in the school van on July 27, 2009.

On the same night, the victim's mother received a call on her mobile phone from Sundar,

demanding a ransom of Rs 5 lakh for his release. On July 30, 2009, the police raided Sundar's house and arrested him along with a co-accused who was later acquitted.

He confessed to strangling the boy, putting his body in a gunny bag and throwing it in the Meerankulam tank.

The Madras High Court had on September 30, 2010, confirmed the conviction and the award of the death sentence, which was upheld by the top court on February 5, 2013.

Sundar had filed a plea before the top court in 2013 seeking a review of his conviction for the offence of murder and the award of death sentence on the basis of the decision of a Constitution Bench in Mohd. Arif vs Registrar, Supreme Court of India.

The Constitution Bench had held that review petitions arising from conviction and the imposition of the sentence of death must be heard in open court and cannot be disposed of by circulation.

Elusive fugitive

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

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

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



Missing the chorus chirping

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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RAJDEEP PATHAK

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

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

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

At the heart of the problem of air

FIRST COLUMN

NEP AND THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

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



RADHIKA ZAHEDI

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

The 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 Model

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



Starting with holistic and moving to specialisation

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

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

Starting with Strong Foundations and moving to Better Choice

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

Schooling and underage marriages

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

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

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



ARCHANA DATTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Studies also ruled out that

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

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

Moreover, a correlation

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

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

Trust Prachanda to build relations with Nepal



ASHOK K MEHTA

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

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

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



Lupin receives USFDA approval for generic medicine

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



Gold plunges Rs 470; silver declines Rs 420

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



No caps on airfares: Bansal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chennai, Kolkata and Bangalore.

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

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

'India exploited 29% of hydropower potential'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

As per reports of the International Hydropower

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

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

In a separate reply, Singh

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

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

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

Larsen & Toubro bags major orders for hydrocarbon business

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Domestic tyre industry back on growth path

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



Honda to launch new car every year till 2028

PNS ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PNS ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

Silicon Valley Bank, based in Santa Clara, California, failed on March 10 after depositors rushed to withdraw money amid anxiety over the bank's

health.

It was the second-largest bank collapse in U.S. history. Regulators convened over the following weekend and announced that New York-based Signature Bank also had failed. They said that all depositors at both banks, including those holding uninsured funds, those exceeding USD 250,000, would be protected by federal deposit insurance.

And last week a third bank, San Francisco-based First Republic Bank, was fortified by USD 30 billion in funds raised by 11 of the biggest U.S. banks in an attempt to prevent it from collapsing.

The government is now determined to restore public confidence in the banking system and to prevent any more turmoil.

The Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission have launched investigations into the Silicon Valley Bank collapse, and President Joe Biden has called on Congress to strengthen rules on regional banks and to impose tougher penalties on executives of failed banks.

Indian restaurants abroad to serve more millet foods

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

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

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

"There is a growing trend of

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

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



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

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

pandemic.

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

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

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

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

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

SOLUTION

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

TEJAL SINHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

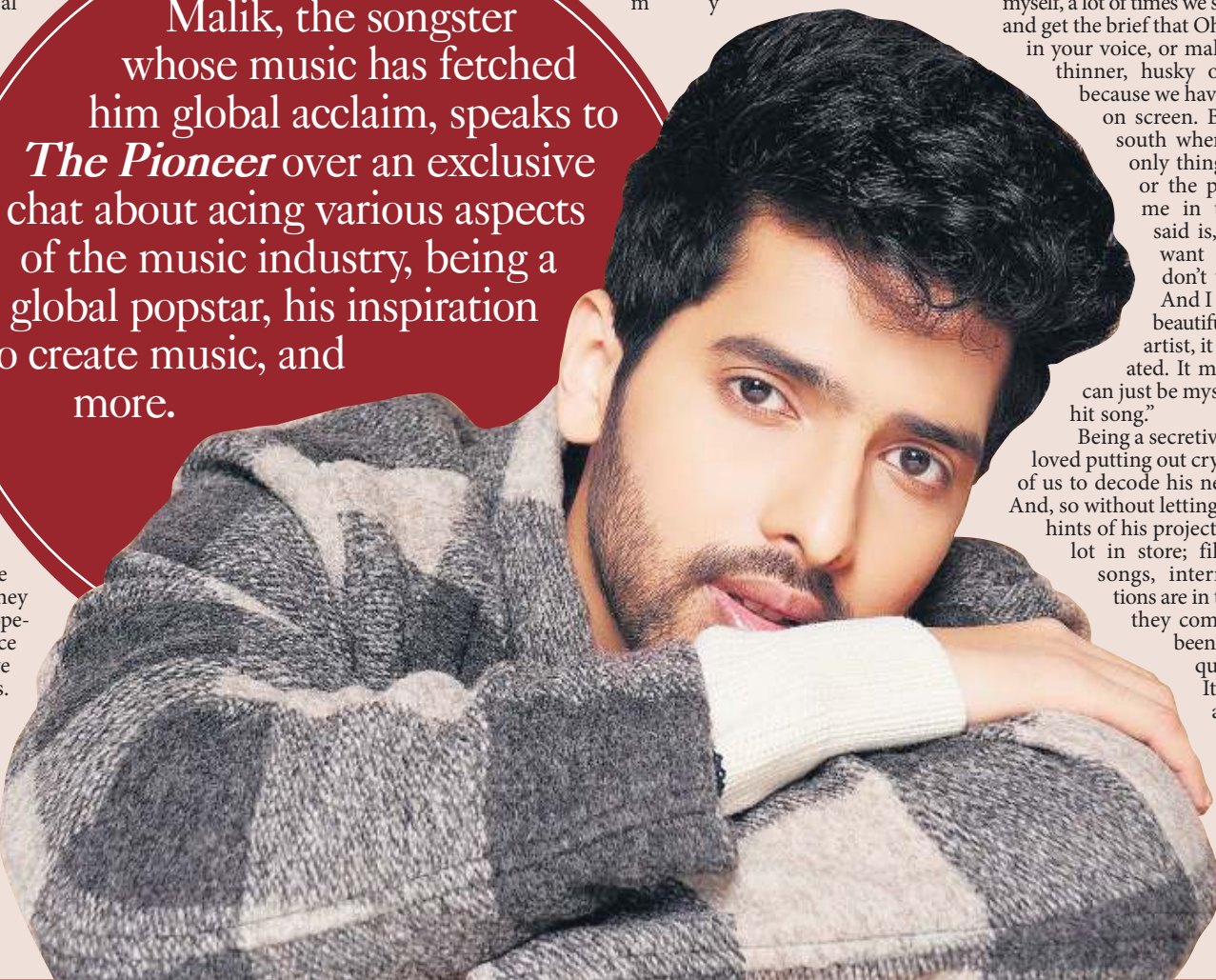
Music has lately become more experimental and in fact, 90 percent of his music is non-film. So when a song is in the making, what kind of music does he wish to create? He enthused, "Sometimes I get inspired by what I'm hearing and listening to because there are a lot of exciting artists right now in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

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

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

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

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



A new age & culturally relevant diet for people with Diabetes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brewing dreams through crafted beers

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

K. RAMYA SREE

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

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

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

ever since.

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

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

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

of IPA."

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

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



INDIA EYE SERIES WIN AGAINST OZ

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SURYA'S PROBLEMS

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

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

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

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



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

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

BOWLING ATTACK

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

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

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

TEAMS

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

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



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

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

"Obviously. It is unfortunate for Shreyas to get injured. He is probably one of those guys who would bat at No.4 and given a lot of time at that position. If you notice we have stuck to the people in positions.

For two years leading into this run, there is a lot of T20 cricket played and we did not have a lot of one-day cricket and if there are injuries and all that, we do have options."

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

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

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

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

HAVE NARROWED CHOICE

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

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

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

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

KULDEEP WILL GET LONGER RUN

Consistency in selection has always been key for Dravid and right now, if there is one wrist spinner, who will get a long rope, it will be Kuldeep Yadav and not Yuzvendra Chahal.

"We are always presuming that the wickets will spin in India. We just actually presume. I don't think the last 2 spun at all. We never know what we are going to get in the World Cup," Dravid said.

"In the league phase, nine cities, it is in October, the wickets won't be as tired as they probably are in the IPL and (that too) at the back-end of our summer. You just have to get all your bases covered."

Kerr powers MI to four-wicket win over RCB



PTI ■ NAVI MUMBAI

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

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

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

RCB, however, signed off from the competition with their

sixth loss in eight league matches.

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

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

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

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

At the start, the opening pair

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

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

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

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

Kerr (3/22) validated MI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

Cherish being able to rub shoulders with Starc: Ellis

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

I ADJUST MY LINE

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

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

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

straighter.

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

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

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

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

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

Delhi Capitals qualify for WPL final

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

MI had defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by four



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

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

bowl.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Vennela Kishore to host *Ala Modhalayyindhi*

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

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

The show will be aired on popular channel ETV. The new poster showed Vennela Kishore in a hilarious pose and this increased expectations among movie lovers. Earlier a superhit film *Ala Modhalayyindhi* came which featured Nani, Nithya Menon in the lead. Vennela Kishore is playing hilarious roles in most of the films and he is creating a laughing riot with his performances on the screen. The makers feel that the presence of Vennela Kishore will entertain people on the small screen. More details about the show will be revealed in the coming days.

Faria Abdullah: I kind of crave privacy sometimes

AMARTYA SMARAN

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

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

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

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

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

people will like it."

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



Malavika Mohanan onboard for *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

been circulating on social media platforms.

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

He urged people not to believe such rumours.

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

the rumours of his death started spreading on social media.

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

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

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



Trinadha Rao Nakkina announces his next film

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

The movie was officially announced. A formal cheque of advance has been

handed over to the director.

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

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

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

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

