

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), in a statement, said the aggregate amount exempt from income tax under section 10(10AA)(ii) shall not exceed the limit of Rs 25 lakh, where any such payments are received by a non-government employee from more than one employer.



# No similarity between Parl & Sectt inauguration

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

Are not inviting the Governor for the inauguration of the new TS Secretariat building and not inviting the President for the inauguration of the new Parliament building the same? Some political leaders in the state are comparing them both after the Congress-led opposition made the inauguration of the Parliament building a controversy. Experts say that both are not the same and it is not possible to compare the inauguration of the Secretariat building and the Parliament building.



They say that the secretariat is the centre of the state administration and the place where the policies and programmes of the state government are formulated. Experts say that even though the Governor is the constitu-



tional head of the state she has no role in the secretariat where the government's day-to-day administrative activities are done. Regarding parliament, experts say that the Indian Parliament includes the

President and both the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha. The President is part of Parliament. That is why the President addresses both Houses at the beginning of the first session of each year. In the states, the Governor addresses both Houses at the beginning of the first session every year. The secretariat building is different from the Parliament building. The secretariat is the place for formulating government policies and Parliament is the place for passing rules. So there is no similarity between the secretariat and Parliament, experts said.

# KCR to focus on getting rid of 'corruption' narrative

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

KCR is keen on ensuring that corruption does not become a narrative in the 2023 TS Assembly elections. With both the BJP and the Congress constantly poking BRS over corruption, the BRS party supremo wants to get rid of such remarks. In the run-up to the Karnataka elections, the Congress capitalised on the '40 per cent commission' label, making corruption their primary electoral plank against the BJP government. Like the Congress has done in Karnataka using the slogan '40% Sarkara, BJP means Brashtachara', the BJP and the Congress have already coined

slogans like "Sir-Car 60% commission sarkar" and "30% sarkar" respectively. Almost all opposition parties, specifically the national leaders of the BJP and the Congress have been alleging massive corruption by the KCR government and is branding BRS as the "Bhrashtachari Rashtra Samithi". KCR reportedly wants to ensure that all narratives of the opposition are countered before his term ends. The Congress has the label of corruption and at the national level it continues to be difficult for the party to shed the tag. "There is an anti-incumbency factor which is common for any government. But when a

corruption tag comes to it, then it is difficult to survive," BRS sources said. "So far none of the opposition parties were able to prove their allegations of corruption. Did any party show any evidence so far? In fact, even the 30% in Dalit Bandhu that they are alleging was the media report of a meeting. There was a warning given by Chief Minister on ensuring welfare schemes reach the beneficiaries in April 2023. When a corruption tag is attributed to an MLA, no party would want to take the risk of taking him. No party has come out with proof of corruption in the Kaleshwaram Project except talking about cost escalation," BRS sources said.

## 'CBI, ED and IT...

Continued from page 1

"Revanth Reddy does not like development and is spewing poison on the ORR lease. He is misrepresenting facts. The IRB pays money to the government as per norms. Revanth's claim that 10 per cent of the money should be paid upfront is completely wrong. There is no such provision," he said. "Revanth only wants to block development. The Congress defeated the BJP government in Karnataka by raising the 40 per cent commission issue. If we are accused of 30 per cent commission here it will not work for the Congress. The brand ambassador of commissions is Revanth," he added. "PCC President Revanth Reddy is disillusioned. Congress seniors too are criticising Revanth. He should immediately apologize for making inappropriate comments on the foreign tour of KTR.

# Why didn't Chhattisgarh Govt invite Guv for Secretariat inauguration: Laxman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Opposition parties are unable to digest the fact that many foreign nations are praising Prime Minister Modi, BJP Rajya Sabha Member Laxman said. If Modi is inaugurating the new Parliament building, the opposition cannot digest it, he added. He said that regional parties and the Congress are criticising the Centre unnecessarily. He said that they are unable to realise the fact that if they criticise Modi without reason they will look absurd before the public. He said that only parties with foreign ideologies and fans of the British are speaking

against Modi. He asked in what capacity did Sonia Gandhi negotiate with foreign countries and attended the Pujas of Chhattisgarh's new Assembly building. Why was the Chhattisgarh Governor not invited? Do you think Chhattisgarh Governor Anasuya was insulted as she is a tribal woman? He said that on the day of



independence, according to the Chola tradition in Tamil Nadu, the baton of Dharma was exchanged. It is a shame that Tamil people are being insulted if the baton received by Nehru is kept near the Speaker, he added. Rajiv Gandhi inaugurated the new library building of the Parliament in 1985. At that time the President was said to have been insulted. Laxman reminded that KCR did not invite the Telangana Governor during the inauguration ceremony of the new TS Secretariat, Laxman said.

# 'I approached CBI as Govt did not respond on ORR tenders'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dubbaka BJP MLA M. Raghunandan Rao said that HMDA officials are acting as they like when it comes to ORR tenders. "Why is the IRB given too much leeway? Raghunandan said that he had to go to the CBI as the government did not respond to allegations against granting the ORR tender. Where is the IRB and who owns it? The government should respond to the illegal ORR tenders," Raghunandan said. Raghunandan was addressing the media at the BJP state office. He asked why IT Minister KTR is not responding to ORR's illegal tenders.



He said that a corporation must be set up for ORR and that there are allegations against IRB that it won the ORR tender by illegal means. He said why they are not talking about the tenders that generate billions as revenue. He asked why KCR is not responding if there are so many frauds in tenders.

# Orders issued for timely payment to contract staff

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana government issued orders extending the date of people working on contract basis up to May 30. As per the GO issued by Finance Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, "Government, after careful examination, has decided and hereby ordered that the services of those persons permitted to work on contract / outsourcing / honorarium basis up to March 31, 2023 with government orders and awaiting continuation orders for the financial year 2023-24, be extended up to May 30, 2023, subject to fulfillment of conditions.

# 3 versions of Vande Bharat trains by Feb-March next year

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

There will be three versions of Vande Bharat trains -- Vande Chair Car, Vande Metro and Vande Sleepers -- by February-March next year, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday. These indigenous semi-high speed trains, which are being prepped to replace Shatabdis, Rajdhani and local trains, are being made at the Integrated Coach Factory in Chennai. In an interview with PTI, the minister said in the next three to four years, railway tracks will be upgraded to support the maximum speed of 160 kmph of Vande Bharat trains. "There are three formats of Vande Bharat. Vande Metro for less than 100 kilometres, Vande

Chair Car for 100-550 kilometres and Vande Sleepers for a journey beyond 550 kilometres. These three formats will be ready by February-March (next year)," Vaishnaw said after the launch of a Vande Bharat train from Uttarakhand's Dehradun to the Anand Vihar Terminal Railway Station in Delhi. The Delhi-Dehradun Vande Bharat Express was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Equipped with state-of-the-art amenities for passengers, the first such train for Uttarakhand reduces the journey time between state capital Dehradun and the national capital to four and a half hours from the six hours and 10 minutes it took the Dehradun-New Delhi Railway Station Shatabdi Express.

# Rice millers dictating to Govt, says Jeevan Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Asking whether rice millers working under the BRS government or the BRS government is working under rice millers, Congress MLC Jeevan Reddy said that the government is working as per the dictates rice millers. He said that rice millers are looting five kg from every quintal. Jeevan Reddy, while addressing the media at the Assembly Media Hall on Thursday, said that no receipt is being given to farmers anywhere at the purchase centres in the state. He said that fraud is taking place in the purchase of paddy. Jeevan said that all subsidies available to farmers in united AP state have been removed and only Rythu Bandhu is being given. He said that farmers are struggling that farmers do not have faith in the government. If they are doing this in this election year, then you can understand what the government is thinking about farmers, Jeevan said. He said that the government is unable to control rice millers and that the entire paddy must be purchased before May 31.

# New Parliament building...

## Show big heart and attend...

Continued from page 1

"We all respect the President, I don't want to drag the post of the President into any controversy today by recalling what Congress said about her. But India's prime minister is also an important part of Parliament. The prime minister also holds constitutional responsibility," he told reporters. Prasad urged the opposition leaders not to use the boycott of the event as a platform to forge opposition unity, saying they will have

more opportunities to do so. "Mughals built Lal Quila, Jama Masjid and Humayun's Tomb. Qutab-ud-din Aibak built Qutab Minar, they claim. The British built North Block, South Block, President House which was called Viceroy House, and a Sansad Bhavan," Prasad said, and asked "What did we built in 75 years of independence?" "After 75 years of independence, why India should not get a Parliament built by Indians," he added.

## Oppn accuses...

Continued from page 1

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the "arrogance" of the Modi government has "destroyed" the parliamentary system. "Mr. Modi, Parliament is the temple of democracy established by the people. The office of the President is the first part of Parliament. The arrogance of your government has destroyed the parliamentary system," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "140 crore Indians want to

know what do you want to show by taking away the right of the President of India to inaugurate the Parliament House?" the Congress chief said. The Congress' attack comes a day after as many as 20 opposition parties announced their decision to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Modi. Nineteen Opposition parties, including the Congress, Left, TMC, SP and AAP, came together to jointly announce the boycott, saying

# Guv says 'states shedding crocodile

Continued from page 1

The Governor said that she was not invited to the inauguration of the new Telangana Secretariat. She said that the President was a non-political individual. "Recently, the Telangana Secretariat was inaugurated by

the CM. Everyone asked whether the Governor was invited. (They said) no, as the CM is the one who rules. Not even an invitation for that ceremony was given (to me). You (Opposition) say that the President is a non-political person but why don't you say this for Governors?" she

asked. However, the BRS said that the Governor should not engage in politics. BRS social media is abuzz with the Governor's earlier statement that new buildings do not constitute development. Why does she want to get invited to the secretariat inauguration

then, they asked. "It is not appropriate for the Governor to talk politics. May God give her a good mind. KCR will take a decision on whether the BRS would attend the inauguration of the new Parliament building," BRS MLA Sudheer Reddy said.

# Senior IPS officer Praveen Sood takes over as new CBI Director

Continued from page 1

Sood is a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Karnataka cadre and was the state's director general of police, officials said. He is the senior-most IPS officer in the country after Jaiswal. Sood's name was cleared in a meeting of a high-powered committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. Chowdhury, a Congress leader, had reportedly given a dissent note on the selection of Sood as the next CBI director

In an order, the Department of Personnel and Training had said, "Approval of the competent authority is hereby conveyed to the appointment of Praveen Sood, IPS (KN:86) as Director, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a period of two years from the date of assumption of charge of the office vice Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, IPS (MH:85) consequent upon completion of his tenure."

# KTR showcases 'The Telangana...

Continued from page 1

"The most encouraging aspect of the trip is the creation of around 42,000 direct jobs. Each direct job generates at least 3 to 4 indirect jobs. Tier 2 towns like Nalgonda, Karimnagar and others also are attracting investors," KTR said in a tweet. During the trip, KTR attended meetings in London, New York, Washington DC, Houston, Henderson and Boston bagging investments. These investments span sectors like BFSI (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance), Emerging Technologies, IT and ITES, Media and Entertainment, Aerospace and Defence, Life Sciences, Medical Devices, Digital Solutions, Innovation and Data Centre, Automotive and EV etc, and reaffirmed Telangana's position as a glob-

al investment hotspot. The companies which have announced investment and expansion plans are Warner Bros. Disney, the global media power house; Medtronic, a global leader in healthcare technology; State Street, the world's largest asset management company; Bain Capital-owned VXI Global Solutions; and the London Stock Exchange Group. Other big companies are DAZN, a global leader in sports live streaming, Technip FMC, a French American Oil and Gas giant; AlliantGroup, a top global consulting and financial firm; StemCures, a specialist in stem cell therapy; Mondeo, the world's largest B2B2C Travel Marketplace and Technology Innovation Company, ZapCom Group, a product engineering and solutions company.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha  
Tithi: Saptami: May 26 05:19 AM to May 27 07:43 AM

Nakshatram: Ashlesha: May 25 05:53 PM to May 26 08:50 PM  
Magha: May 26 08:50 PM to May 27 11:43 PM

Rahukalam: 10:36 AM to 12:13 PM  
Yamagandam: 3:27 PM to 5:04 PM  
Varjyam: 10:16 AM to 12:04 PM  
Gulika: 7:22 AM to 8:59 AM  
Amritakalam: 07:02 PM to 08:50 PM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
Temp: 37°C  
Humidity: 39%  
Sunrise: 5:42 AM  
Sunset: 6:46 PM

Updated: MAY 25, 2023 5:00 PM

**CH. CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY, MEERUT**  
(NAAC ACCREDITED with A++ Grade)

**Admission Announcement : 2023-24**

Applications are invited for admission to **M.Ed.** and **L.L.M.** (through Entrance Test) and **B.P.Ed.** and **M.P.Ed.** (through Physical Fitness Test) in Ch. Charan Singh University Campus and Affiliated Colleges. Application form and admission rules will be available on the University website [www.ccsuniversity.ac.in](http://www.ccsuniversity.ac.in) w.e.f. May 25, 2023 to June 25, 2023. REGISTRAR



# Ward system to help solve administrative problems

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi said that Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has implemented ward system across the city to provide better administration to the people. On Thursday, Mayor Vijayalakshmi, along with GHMC Commissioner Lokesh Kumar and Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board MD Dana Kishore started a training programme for the ward officers at the GHMC headquarters.

Speaking on this occasion, Mayor Vijayalakshmi said that following the vision of the Minister of Municipal Administration KT Rama Rao, one ward is being established for a population of 50,000. As part of this, the ward system will work with the aim of providing information to the complainant by taking prompt action on the complaints received from the public. She said that the authorities concerned will look into the problems of drinking water, sewerage, sanitation, town planning etc at the ward level and



work hard to solve the problem based on the citizen's chart.

She said that the officials should listen carefully to the problems of citizens, collect applications and take immediate steps to resolve the problems. She said that the officials should fulfill the goals of the government with a positive attitude, patience, transparency and accountability.

Ward-level officials should be available to corporators and public representatives. On this occasion, the Mayor unveiled the rule book related to ward administration.

**GHMC Commissioner Lokesh Kumar said that by establishing the ward system, it will be possible to solve the public problems coming from all corners of the city very easily and quickly**

ward office and then the officials will thoroughly examine and solve their problems.

He said that most of the complaints are coming on sanitation, town planning and engineering departments. Ward-level staff should first visit the ward in the morning and work to solve the problems of the people.

Everyone should be in the ward office from 3 pm to 5 pm. The matter should be forwarded to the concerned authority and the matter should be conveyed to the complainant after the problem is resolved, he said.

## Direct flight from Hyd to Frankfurt from January '24

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GMR Hyderabad Airport has introduced Lufthansa's maiden direct flight from Frankfurt to Hyderabad. This will commence from January 16, 2024 with a Boeing B787-9 Dreamliner.

The aircraft will have 26 Business Class, 21 Premium Economy and 247 Economy Class seats. The inaugural flight to Hyderabad will take off from Frankfurt at 10am (LT) and will reach Hyderabad at 11pm (LT). For the return journey, the flight will depart from Hyderabad at 1am (LT) and reach Frankfurt at 6:10 am (LT).

The eight hours thirty-minute flight will operate between Frankfurt and GMR Hyderabad Airport thrice a week and Frankfurt to Hyderabad on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. The return flights will depart from Hyderabad on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The new route will connect travellers from Telangana and the nearby catchment regions to Europe with its numerous cities.

## Potential for growth high in Telangana districts: IIFCL

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana is one of the most important locations when compared to any other state. The observation towards its development is from a renewed perspective. Over a period of time, the state has started having its own growth path, said PR Jaishankar, MD of India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL).

"Infrastructure development is hand-in-glove along with roads and highway projects. Districts are also witnessing a change such as the potential there is for water

resources, agriculture development and metro expansion. Hyderabad has a maximum number of developers and it happens to be the centre to have significant change in the market.

It will help us play a role in financing major projects. We are a financial institution and suppliers of 70 percent and we need to have a dialogue with them and we have to be in coordination with the trends. In Hyderabad lot of projects are coming up and supported the infrastructure development with Rs 40 crore, he added.

"We have financed Outer

Ring Road, GMR Airport, power projects, highway projects and waste-based projects. In Telangana, IIFCL has provided finance to about 30 infrastructure projects with a total project outlay of Rs 40,017 crore. GMR Hyderabad-Vijayawada Expressways, HKR Roadways, GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited, L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad), Warora Kurnool Transmission Limited, and Telangana Super Speciality Hospitals Corporation Limited (TSSH-CL) to name a few projects in the state are done by us," he added.



## Preparations in full swing for CM Cup

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Sports Authority (TSSA) is gearing up for the Chief Minister's Cup to be held from May 28 to 31. Approximately 10,000 sportspersons are expected to participate in the event.

Ahead of the sports meet, competitions were organised at the district level. In all, 18 different sports will be played during the tournament.

"Logistics arrangements should be made for catering to sportspersons arriving at the tournament," said a press release from the TSSA. The tournament will be held across six stadiums in Hyderabad.

Telangana Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao will be the chief guest for the opening ceremony.



ny to be held at the LB stadium on May 29. Khel Ratna, Arjuna Awards, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan award winners will be felicitated during the inaugural ceremony. Telangana Sangeet Natak Academy chairperson Deepika

Reddy's dance performance, along with singer Rahul Sipliganj's music programme will be held.

Following the review, the jerseys for the competition were unveiled by

Sports secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania. SATS - OSD Dr Lakshmi, Telangana Tourism Development Organisation MD Manohar, SATS senior officers Sujatha, Dhanalakshmi, DYSOs Sudhakar, Venkateswara Rao, Ravinder and Telangana Olympic Association Secretary Prem Raj were among those present.

## Auction of 9,627 vehicles fetches Rs 6 cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Commissioner of Police M Stephen Raveendra on Thursday said that the commissionerate has earned Rs 6 crore by auctioning 9,627 abandoned vehicles.

He further informed that these vehicles were auctioned in 10 phases. "Eight proclamation notices have been released with regards to 4,702 abandoned and unclaimed vehicles within the jurisdiction of the Commissionerate," he added.

He said that over 6,000 abandoned vehicles placed in traffic and law and order police stations will be auctioned soon. All the details related to the vehicles are included in the website.

Owners who have objections are advised to contact the concerned police station authorities with the documents related to the vehicles within six months.

## TSRTC launches general route pass for GHMC limits

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) on Thursday launched the General Route Pass, passengers commuting within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) can avail the service. The pass will be available from May 27.

The TSRTC has designed this route pass for those traveling short distances. The pass will be applicable within 8 km. It is to be noted that the corporation also provides services such as T-24, T-6 and F-24 tickets to passengers.

The Ordinary Route Bus Pass is priced at Rs 600. The price for Metro Express Route Pass is Rs 1,000, it will be valid for one month. An additional fee of Rs 50 has to be paid for the ID card. First, this pass will be given to passengers on 162 routes in Hyderabad. The company has provided an unlimited number of buses within the 8 km radius of



these route passes. You can travel with this pass on Sundays as well as holidays.

The price for Ordinary Bus Pass is Rs1150 and Metro Express Bus Pass is Rs1300. These passes can be used to travel from anywhere in all buses plying within the city suburban area. The survey conducted by the organisation revealed that only those going to distant places are buying these passes. It has been found that employees and small traders traveling short dis-

tances are reaching their destinations by alternative routes instead of buses.

"TSRTC has already announced several concessions to reduce the financial burden on commuters in Greater Hyderabad. T-24, T-6, F-24 tickets have been made available. These services have received good response from the public.

In this background, the company has launched General Route Pass to reach more passengers. We are giving route passes only to students in the state. For the first time, the organisation has decided to give it to common passengers. Usually, it is Rs 800 for Ordinary Route Pass and Rs1200 for Metro Express Route Pass. With a discount of Rs 200 in the initial context, we are offering City Ordinary Route Bus Pass for Rs 600 and Metro Express Route Pass for Rs1000. Currently," TSRTC Chairman Bajireddy Govarthan, MD VC Sajjanar, said in a statement.

## Sajjanar calls for action against Herbalife over fraud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) Managing Director VC Sajjanar on Thursday called for action against Herbalife, a multi-level marketing company, for scamming people. The MD also urged the management of the Indian Premier League (IPL) to reconsider its partnership with the firm.

Sajjanar took to Twitter expressing concern and said, "Concerns arise over the practices of multi-level marketing companies such as Herbalife, who are accused of deceiving unsuspecting individuals. Leveraging their association with #IPL, they promote their products extensively. IPL management should reconsider aligning with such questionable organisations as official partners. It is essential for law enforcement agencies to take appropriate legal action against Herbalife and put an end to these fraudulent activities."

Addressing the issue, Sajjanar said, "The firm has

carried out enrollment schemes which are banned under the Prize Chits and Money Circulation Act of 1978. It is an illegal scheme; unfortunately enforcement authorities aren't taking action. The Telangana CID has registered a case and there are a few more in other parts of the country. The firm is punishable under Section 420 of the IPC and Section 3 of the Prize Chits and Money Circulation Act."

In 2019, the United States Department of Justice charged two of the firm's employees with conspiracy in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). They were accused of bribing Chinese officials in order to procure sales permits and to influence an investigation into Herbalife. They were also accused of offering bribes to China Economic Net in order to influence their media coverage. In August 2020, Herbalife agreed to pay \$123 million to the US Department of Justice and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

## Temple thief arrested; two cases solved

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Habeeb Nagar Police, in collaboration with the Nampally Police, apprehended a habitual burglar involved in temple theft cases, within a span of one hour, and recovered a sum of Rs 36,650 in cash and silver ornaments weighing 70 grams, with an estimated value of Rs 60,000.

The accused, identified as Sunil Chawan, a 35-year-old labourer of Vikarabad, was subsequently taken into custody.

The police revealed that on May 25, at approximately 6:30 am, the Habeeb Nagar Police received a call reporting the theft of cash from the hundi and the vandalism of the matha idol at Katta Maisamma temple, located in Habeeb Nagar. The police examined the CCTV footage obtained from the temple.

## Actor Naresh's third wife files plea to halt release of movie *Malli Pelli*

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ramya Raghupathi, the wife of actor Naresh Vijaya Krishna, has approached the court seeking to block the release of the film *Malli Pelli*, scheduled to hit the screens on May 26. A petition was filed in the Kukatpally family court in Hyderabad, where Ramya Raghupathi stated that certain scenes in the movie were demeaning to her.

Meanwhile, Naresh and Pavitra Lokesh, the lead actors of the movie, have confirmed their relationship and plans to get married soon, which has stirred much controversy.

It may be mentioned here that Naresh and Ramya Raghupathi have allegedly had conflicts of interest, while Naresh's alleged closeness to



Pavitra Lokesh has also been a subject of discussion.

In light of these events, Naresh's announcement of the film 'Malli Pelli' came as a surprise to many. Several people believed that the movie would be based on the events that unfolded in his personal life. The recently released teasers and trailers seemed to support

this notion.

On the other hand, Actor Naresh on Twitter said, "All legal issues cleared for Malli Pelli. Gearing up for a grand release in theatres tomorrow! My heartfelt thanks to all the media, my well-wishers & friends for their continuous support throughout this journey."

## Eight held for child trafficking

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Anti-Human Trafficking unit on Thursday arrested eight persons involved in child trafficking.

An operation was carried out the Secunderabad Railway Station along with the Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF) and an NGO, Bachpan Bachao Andolan. The accused were identified as Ramjan Malla (19), a native of West Bengal, Shaik Saiful (27), also a native of West Bengal who worked as a goldsmith near Charminar; Pinto Das (30) a resident of Jharkhand; Susen Tudu (37), Priyarlal Sheik (30), Shaik Jakir Ali (20); Abdul Alamin Mondal and Suroji Santra all natives of West Bengal.

The accused confessed to bringing children to push them into labour.

## Students call for setting up Tribal University in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Rashtra Samithi Vidyarthi Vibhag (TRS-V) leader Srinu Naik said that the tribal community of Telangana condemned BJP Central government's attitude towards establishing a Tribal University in the state and their constant disparity towards the state.

Srinu Naik on Thursday expressed disappointment that Andhra Pradesh had successfully established a tribal university in 2019, following the provisions of the Partition Act of 2014, while Telangana is yet to witness any progress in this regard.

"It has been four years since the Act was implemented, and the Central government has failed to initiate even the basic

process for establishing a tribal university in Telangana. The detrimental impact of this neglect is on hundreds of tribal students who are being deprived of higher education opportunities. The chance for tribal students in Telangana to pursue research on their dreams, culture and literature is being lost," he said.

He further said that Chief Minister KCR is addressing tribal issues by providing reservations and implementing various welfare measures.

He said that the establishment of institutions such as Sewalal Banjara Bhavan and Adivasi Bhavan were seen as steps toward self-respect for tribals in Hyderabad.

In response to the Central government's indifference, the

TRS-V leaders warned that if BJP party representatives, including the Governor, central minister and MLAs, fail to respond to the tribal university demand, they will be met with resistance during the upcoming elections.

They threatened to boycott visits by the BJP representatives to Thandasa and Gudams, the tribal settlements, and even besiege the residences of BJP party MPs at the central office.

Tribal student union leaders including Naresh Naik, Kurra Vamsi Naik, Sangeeta Naik, Kishan Naik, and Motilal Naik, who voiced their support for the cause, called for urgent attention to the educational rights of tribals in Telangana.

## Lecture on Biodiversity Finance held at NIRD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of the World Environment Day, the National Institute of Rural Development on Thursday conducted a lecture on Biodiversity Finance.

The lecture was delivered by C Achalender Reddy, Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Government of India. Speaking of the significance of finance, Reddy said, "Biodiversity Finance is the practice of raising capital and managing funds for biodiversity conservation. The focus of biodiversity finance is shifting towards sourcing finances

across a variety of funding sources from public, private and non-profit agencies."

"The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is piloting Biodiversity-Financing globally. It works with 41 countries across the globe to create sustainable financial solutions that can not only protect biodiversity, but will also let it flourish. In India, BIOFIN is led by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and hosted by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) working with the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) of Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and

Maharashtra. India's Biodiversity Finance Plan suggested 12 potential finance solutions to bridge the finance gap taking into account all existing financial instruments. Finance is critical to implement the entire CBD Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework (GBF), including its 23 targets and four goals," he explained.

Professor Ravindra Gavali, Head, Centre for Natural Resource Management, NIRDPR and Dr Kathiresan, Head, Centre for Research & Training Coordination & Networking (CRTCN) among others were present during the lecture.

## MHRC set to get freehold on govt land

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

One of the city's first charitable healthcare organisations, Mahavir Hospital and Research Centre (MHRC) is all set to receive freehold on the land allotted for lease in 1975.

The hospital management announced that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has approved MHRC as freehold land. A Government Order is set to be released soon in this regard. The hospital is currently under a spree of expansion following the new update.

On Thursday, Mahavir Hospital and Research Centre Managing Committee and Standing Committee organised

a meeting to express gratitude to CM KCR, Health Minister Harish Rao and Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav for their support to uplift the hospital and the Jain community.

Mahendra Ranka, Chairman, Sushil Kapadia, Vice-Chairman, Sunil Pahade, Managing Trustee, Sushil Sancheti, Treasurer and others participated.

Mahendra Ranka said, "On completion of the 30 years the lease, it was further extended in the year 2007 for the period of 30 years. It leased three-and-a-half acres of land at a nominal least amount of Rs 12 per year for 30 years. Since Bhagwan Mahavir Memorial Trust



(BMMT) is a charitable institution with a nature of services and run 'not for profit' basis, it appealed to the authorities to accord a freehold on the land." Sushil Kapadia, Vice-Chairman, said that the hospital has grown. It is a 220-bedded hospital with all the specialities and providing

yeoman services to the community.

"Mahavir Hospital is the first one to start a dialysis centre in the state to treat patients with chronic kidney diseases. The centre used to be one of the largest dialysis centres with 63 dialysis machines. It served 3,750

dialysis per month to the poor and needy at Rs 300 per dialysis. More than 1,000 kidney transplantation operations were carried out," he said.

The committee members further added that they are expanding their Gastroenterology department, Cardiology section, Gynecology and Oncology treatments with corporate level equipment at affordable prices. They are also revamping their ICU units. They said that their ultimate goal is to offer corporate-level treatment at affordable prices to every person with no discrimination. The hospital has made major strides in TB research and earned recognition world-wide.



# Free State from clutches of BRS govt: Himachal CM

Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu appeals to people to vote for Congress to usher in a welfare state

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has called upon the people, especially the youth and students, to cast their vote for the Congress to usher in a welfare state.

"Sonia Gandhi granted statehood to Telangana to stop suicides by the youth," he said.

Addressing a public meeting at Jadcherla on Thursday in connection with the People's March of Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, the Himachal Chief Minister said that Sonia Gandhi was moved by the sacrifices made by youth and students for the statehood cause and ensured that the demand for Telangana State was granted. He exuded confidence that the Congress would come to power in the next elections.

Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu expressed his solidarity with the government employees



Congress leaders at a public in Jadcherla in Mahabubnagar on Thursday

fighting for the restoration of the "old pension scheme." The old pension scheme, he said, would ensure that the employee, after retirement, leads a dignified. "If the Congress leaders are harassed by the government, the Karnataka results will repeat in Telangana too, he predicted.

Former prime ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv

Gandhi sacrificed their lives for the unity and integrity of the nation. Indira Gandhi declared that "every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation and strengthen it."

He accused the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government of holding the State to ransom. He called upon people to help free the State from the clutches of the BRS govern-

ment. AICC in-charge for Telangana Manikrao Thakre, TPCC president A Revanth Reddy,

former MP Mallu Ravi, senior leaders and MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, former MLA Sampath Kumar, former minister Nagam Janardhan Reddy and others were present.



## Municipal workers protest councillor's highhandedness

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The workers in the Kamareddy Municipality on Thursday staged a protest in front of the Municipal office to highlight the alleged highhandedness of the councillors.

The workers staged a sit-in outside the Municipal office and demanded action against the seventh ward councillor for allegedly abusing a worker. The councillor, the workers said, had abused the worker in connection with water bills.

The councillor, Raju, used offensive language against him in the presence of the Municipal Commissioner. The councillors were subjecting the workers to harassment on one or other pretext, they said.

The workers announced that they would not perform their duties until the councillor tendered an apology to them.

# DRI sizes alprazolam worth Rs 31.14 cr from poultry farm

- The authorities, during the raid, found a makeshift laboratory to manufacture the drug
- The farm is located a stone's throw from the Excise office at Vattem village in Nagarkurnool

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on Thursday raided a poultry farm amid agricultural fields and seized 1.42 kg of Alprazolam worth Rs 3,14 crore in Nagarkurnool district. The poultry was located on the outskirts of Vattem village under Bijinepally mandal in the district.

The DRI authorities, according to sources, were shocked to find a makeshift laboratory to manufacture the drug in the poultry farm.

Alprazolam is used to treat anxiety disorders and panic disorders. It is a prescription drug and its misuse may lead to memory impairment, sleeplessness, nausea, constipation, and impaired coordination, etc, the official said.

Though the poultry farm was located at a stone's throw from the Excise office, the officials failed to bust the racket which was run uninterrupted for six years. The Central Agency, DRI, acting on a credible tip-off, raided the



Officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence searching poultry farm where a biggest haul of narcotics was discovered near Vattem village in Nagarkurnool district

poultry farm and busted the racket, the sources said.

The failure on the part of Excise officials aroused suspicion whether the racket enjoyed patronage by highly influential people. The DRI officials were reluctant to identify the source who tipped off the information about the racket.

The poultry farm from the drug was sized belonged to a person, identified as Hanumanth Reddy. The DRI authorities arrested him. He allegedly has a previous history of manufacturing drugs.

Meanwhile, the BJP leaders demanded an investigation

into the racket to find out whether the officials concerned were hand in glove with the racketeer. They said that they would submit a memorandum to the officials to order an investigation into the incident. If the officials failed to pay attention to their plea, they said that would lay siege to the house of Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud.

The BJP leaders and activists staged a protest also. The protest was led by Poldar Ramu, Karkonda Srinivas Goud, former ZPTC member Krishnanath, Surampalli Sudhakar and others.

## IAS officer MVS Prasad passes away at 70

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IAS Officer MVS Prasad passed away at the age of 70, on Thursday in Hyderabad. Born in 1953, he belonged to the 1977 batch of the Andhra Pradesh cadre of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).

Throughout his career, Prasad held various significant positions, leaving an impact on the administrative setup. He served as the Collector and District Magistrate in both Ranga Reddy and Vizianagaram districts. He also served as the Commissioner of Information & Public Relations and had worked as the Executive Officer of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD).

Noteworthy among his achievements, Prasad served as the Principal Secretary to the Government in the General Administration Department (GAD). He concluded his active service as the Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) in 2003.

Following his retirement, Prasad embarked on philanthropic endeavours and established the M e l l a c h e r u v u Foundation, a family trust dedicated to supporting the education of underprivileged children and providing them with opportunities to pursue higher studies. His commitment to education and uplifting the less privileged has positively impacted numerous lives. Additionally, Prasad served as the Dharmadhikari for the Sringeri Shankaracharya Mutt located in Shamsabad.

Family members of Prasad revealed that the funeral ceremony will take place on the morning of May 27.



Kamareddy Additional Collector Chandra Mohan at meeting in Kamareddy on Thursday

## 4-day auction of govt sites, houses from June 5

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Additional Collector Chandra Mohan has announced that the house sites and houses at Dharani township will be auctioned on June 5.

Addressing a pre-bid conference at Collectorate here on Thursday, he said that the auction would take place at the Collectorate between June 5 and 8 from 9 am onwards. Those interested may take part in the auction by paying a demand draft for Rs 10,000 drawn in favour of the Collector, Kamareddy.

Those who want to take part in the bid should bring Aadhaar Card, PAN card,

bank account number and so on. A 100 square yards site can be owned at a cost of Rs 8 lakh, including registration charges.

The Dharani township is situated at a distance of 44 to 200 meters from the National Highway.

The house sites and houses under construction that are free from legal problems can be owned through the auction, he said appealing to the people to make good use of the auction.

Collectorate Administrative Officer Ravinder, Rajiv Swagruha AGM Satyanarayana, supervisor Sai Bhujanga Rao and others took part in the event.

# BJP workers urged to spread Modi's achievements among people

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has praised PM Naredra Modi calling him as "the boss" and it is a matter of great pride for the country, said BJP national executive member Jitender Reddy.

He was addressing the BJP executive at the party office here on Wednesday and gave directions to the party workers. He said that now is the time to take the achievements of Modi to the masses. The country witnessed development under Modi's leadership and maintaining cordial relations with global nations, he said adding that global nations are appreciating Modi's administration.

The people are not in a mood to give credence to the BRS and Congress in



BJP national executive committee member Jitender Reddy speaking at a meeting in Mahabubnagar on Thursday

Telangana, he said. Since only four months is left for the elections, therefore every party activist should explain the BJP's development schemes to the people at the ground level, he said.

Jan Sampark Abhiyan would be held from June 1 to 30 to explain the people the success achieved in the nine-

year rule of Modi, he said. Under the programme, several activities are planned under LS constituency, Assembly constituency, mandal level and Sakti Kendra and polling booth level, he said. It is the duty of every BJP workers to make the programmes a grand success, he said.

# State govt fails in paddy procurement drive: Sridhar Babu

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLI

AICC secretary and Manthani MLA D Sridhar Babu has alleged that the State government totally failed to procure Yasangi paddy from farmers. As a result, the farmers are finding it difficult to sell the paddy.

He alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao and his Cabinet colleagues failed to fulfil promises made to the farmers.

The MLA, following a complaint from farmers, inspected the PACS procurement centre at Garepalli under Kataram mandal. The farmers said that they brought the paddy on May 5, but so far the officials did not procure their paddy. The officials reduced the weight of the 41 kg bag by 4 kg to 37 kg on the pretext of moisture. Once the paddy is weighed, the farmers should be given the truck sheet. Subsequently, money should be credited to the farmers' bank accounts. When the



Congress MLA D Sridhar Babu interacting with farmers at a procurement centre at Garepalli in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district on Thursday

MLA questioned the farmers about these, the farmers replied in the negative.

Later speaking to the media, the MLA said that the farmers are facing a lot of problems in selling their produce and called it unprecedented. Having weighed the paddy, the officials at the procurement centre are not giving the truck

sheet. The rice millers, having unloaded the paddy, are discounting the paddy in the name of wastage. The farmers are completely left at the mercy of the millers, he said. There is no relation whatsoever to the sayings and doings of the government, he lamented.

The farmers are losing up to Rs 15,000 because of the rice

millers discounting the paddy. Therefore, the input subsidy being given by the government to the farmers is wholly inadequate, he opined.

This is attributed to a lack of proper action by the officials at the field level. Non-supply of tarpaulins to farmers at the paddy procurement centres and giving tarpaulins only to

those farmers whose paddy has been weighed.

Despite weighing the paddy, the procurement centre officials are not allotting lorries leading to the paddy bags remaining untransported at the procurement centres themselves, he said.

Upon weighing the bags at the rice mill, the weight is not up to the mark leading to the rice mills discounting the paddy, he said describing it as not a good practice

In Vilasagar village, farmers sold paddy in Vanakalam season, but they did not get money for the paddy sale even after six months, the MLA said quoting the farmers as saying.

The MLA spoke to district officials from the procurement centres and asked them to step up the procurement process.

District Congress president Aita Prakash Reddy, leaders Vemunuri Prabhakar Reddy, Karemgala Tirupati Goud, Cheerla Tirupati Reddy, Cheemala Sandeep and farmers were present.

# Rice millers asked to unload paddy swiftly

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Additional Collector Ramesh has directed rice millers to deploy hamalis and take steps to unload the bags of the paddy procured from farmers as early as possible so that the lorries would be used for loading at the paddy procurement centres.

He was inspected Navadurga Rice Mill, Sainadha Rice Mills in Toopran town on Thursday and asked the personnel there to take urgent steps to unload the paddy bags.

Further, he advised against discounting paddy in any form and issuing truck sheet immediately. Further, he wanted the rice millers to meet the pending Custom-Milled Rice targets by May-end and send the CMR rice to the FCI.

The officials have been monitoring the paddy procurement operations to rule

out the shortage of gunnybags and lorries to transport the paddy to ricemills, he said asking the officials to remain on the alert and ensure that the paddy procurement operations continue and play an active role to avoid problems in unloading of paddy at rice mills.

In case of any problems, complaint should be lodged with the control room established in collectorate. So far, 1,43,362 tons of paddy worth Rs 295.33 crore has been procured from 33,776 farmers. In the bank accounts of 1,03,796 farmers, Rs 84.76 crore has been deposited.

The tab entry of the paddy procured is progressing at a brisk pace, he said adding that the money would be deposited in the bank accounts of other farmers too soon. RDO Shyam Prakash, Tahsildar Gyan Jyoti and others were present.

# NAAC continues inspection of MG University unit

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council's (NAAC) visit to the MG University continued for the second day on Thursday by inspecting the activities of the National Service Scheme, University Sports Board, Sahayam Counselling Center, Placement and Alumni Centre, Competitive coaching centre and all the statutory bodies, including Student Welfare Office and Public Relations Office and Internal Quality Assurance Cell.

The NAAC members inspected all the objective



Mahatma Gandhi University Vice-Chancellor Ch Gopal Reddy holding discussions with NAAC members in Nalgonda on Thursday

evidence of the respective offices and suggested that all its members maintain thor-

ough records for any claims. Later the members interacted with the parents, alumni and

present students separately to know about the then facilities and situations, services provided by the university. A closed-door meeting was conducted with the students to enable them to express their views freely.

University Vice Chancellor Ch Gopal Reddy, Prof Tumma Krishna Rao, EC member B. Krishna Reddy and other members, Prof Aluvala Ravi, Dr Sridevi, Dr A Ravi, Dr Anji Reddy, Dr Laxmi Prabha, dr Miryala ramesh, Prof Rekha, Dr Maddileti, dr Prem Sagar, Dr Upendar Reddy Dr Y Prashant were with the team members.

## Youth falls prey to suspected honour killing

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The murder of a youth at Koppolu village under Gurrampode mandal in the district has caused a furore on Thursday.

Boddu Santosh (20), a resident of Duginepalli village under Kattangoor mandal was reportedly in love with a girl from Koppolu village under Gurrampode mandal. The youth and girl were colligmates.

Santosh's family members alleged that the girl's relatives attacked him and he succumbed to injuries.

Gurrampode police registered a case and an investigation is on.

## NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

# Jagan to give sites for poor

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will formally launch a programme to distribute house site pattas to 50,793 women beneficiaries in 1,402 acres, along with the construction of 5,024 TIDCO houses in the CRDA region. The project is estimated to cost Rs 443.71 crore and will take place in Venkatapalem, Thullur mandal, Guntur District.

This initiative aims to provide house site pattas and build houses for the underprivileged in the CRDA area.

Despite facing various obstacles, and legal complications, the State government, led by CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, is committed to ensuring that every poor individual has the opportunity to reside in the CRDA area.

Under the leadership of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, the state government will distribute 300 sq ft TIDCO houses to 143,600 beneficiaries across the state for a nominal fee of Re 1, granting them full ownership rights. This move is set to benefit women beneficiaries with a total amount of Rs 9,406 crores statewide.

In the previous government, these same women beneficiaries had to pay Rs 7.20 lakhs, including principal and interest, for a similar house.

To ease the financial burden on the beneficiaries, the government is offering a 50% rebate on the advance payment. Additionally, the Jagananna Government is bearing the cost of Rs 482 crores, providing Rs 25,000 to each of the 44,304 beneficiaries who own 365 sq ft TIDCO houses, and Rs 50,000 to each of the 74,312 beneficiaries who own 430 sq ft TIDCO houses.







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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Unedifying

Neither the Oppn nor the Govt has covered itself in glory over the inauguration of new Parliament

By boycotting the inauguration of the new Parliament building, the 20 Opposition parties have not covered themselves in glory, notwithstanding their loud rhetoric. In a joint statement, 19 Opposition parties said that the President is not only the Head of State in India but also an integral part of Parliament as she summons, pro-rogues, and addresses it. "Yet, the Prime Minister has decided to inaugurate the new Parliament building without her. This undignified act insults the high office of the President, and violates the letter and spirit of the Constitution. It undermines the spirit of inclusion which saw the nation celebrate its first woman Adivasi President." While their argument is not without merit, the accompanying bombast—"undignified act," violation "of the Constitution," undermining of "the spirit of inclusion"—is unwarranted and unnecessary. The Opposition's conduct would have been dignified and praiseworthy had it slammed the Government without boycotting the inauguration. After all, the event is about Parliament and Indian democracy, not about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's participation in it. One has to be viscerally anti-Modi to believe that his Government has disrespected President Droupadi Murmu. We should not forget that she became President during Modi's tenure as Prime Minister. The Opposition is making a mountain out of a molehill. In general, the Opposition—indeed the entire political class—must acknowledge the fact that there are ways of expressing one's displeasure over something other than boycotts and bans.



If the Opposition has not reacted appropriately to the inauguration of the new Parliament building, the Government too has not shown great sagacity in handling the issue. And this is not just about propriety and this particular instance. Its continuously aggressive stance towards the Opposition has generated a great deal of divisiveness in our polity. Till a few years ago, many foreign observers were impressed by the fact that politicians in rival parties had good interpersonal relationships; they would fight fiercely each other in Parliament and in public debates, but remained friends otherwise. Healthy dialogue and good relations are also needed because politicians have to interact and work together all the time. For example, there is considerable interaction between the Centre and States, and often both are run by different parties. Unfortunately, the interparty bonhomie is diminishing rapidly. This has also had an effect on public discourse and political debate, which are increasingly becoming bitter and dirtier. From the Bharatiya Janata Party's perspective, its recent rise in political strength and the concomitant rise in assertiveness seem to be bringing various Opposition parties together. Fear is a very strong sentiment; it can work as an effective glue in politics. It has united 20 parties over the Parliament inauguration issue; it can do more in the foreseeable future.

### PICTALK



An employee checks Rs 2000 currency notes given by customers at a petrol pump in Gurugram

PTI

## Terrorists are using newer ways of executing their acts

The world is reeling under the shadow of terrorism. Middle East and North Africa were worst hit in 2022, write **SUNIL GOYAL & DIMPLE KHOKHAR**

Since the turn of the millennium, few topics have shaped the global discourse as much as terrorism. Following the 9/11 attacks in New York, on September 20, 2001, the U.S. president at the time, George W. Bush, declared a "War on Terror" and sent America to war with Al-Qaeda. The USA first invaded Afghanistan in 2001 to evict the Taliban regime and to chase Osama Bin Laden. Then, two years later, the country invaded Iraq due to highly disputed claims about the regime of Saddam Hussein positing weapons of mass destruction.

Many commentators argue that, rather than solve the problem, the War on Terror served only to validate the use of terrorist tactics, and that it threw these countries into further chaos. The Global Terrorism Index is an annual ranking produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace. As even the definition of terrorism is hotly debated, it is essential to highlight that the methodologies used to measure terrorism are also contested. The Global Terrorism Index ranks 163



countries on four indicators weighted over five years. These four factors are the number of terrorist incidents per year, the number of fatalities caused by terrorists per year, the number of injuries caused by terrorists per year, and the total property damage caused by terrorism per year. The global terrorism index systematically ranks countries of the world according to their terrorist activity. As per the data released by Statista, in 2022, Afghanistan ranked first on the global terrorism index with a score of 8.82 points, making it the country most affected by terrorism on Earth. The ranking also shows that Afghanistan suffered

from the highest number of terrorist attacks and the highest number of fatalities from terrorist attacks. Although terrorism is a worldwide problem, its victims are highly concentrated in certain areas of the world. The area that saw the highest number of terrorist attacks in 2022 was the Middle East and North Africa. According to Institute for Economics and Peace, the terrorism Index in India decreased to 7.43 in 2021 from 7.67 in 2020. Terrorism Index in India averaged 7.65 Points from 2002 until 2021, reaching an all-time high of 8.12 Points in 2011 and a record low of 7.22 Points in 2004. India Terrorism Index - values, historical data and charts - was last updated in May of 2023. A report based on the Global Terrorism Index noted India has a number of low-level conflicts in some of the border areas but the vast majority of the country's population lives outside of these India was among the 25 worst terror-hit countries but also among 56 of the 120 nations surveyed with no respondents selecting war and terror as the biggest threat to their

daily safety, according to the 10th edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI). The international community holds a collective view that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations must be condemned. There cannot be any exception or any justification for any act of terrorism, regardless of the motivations behind such acts. We also recognize that the menace of terrorism cannot be and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. However, in spite of the progress we have made to tighten the legal, security, financing and other frameworks to combat terrorism, terrorists are constantly finding newer ways of motivating, resourcing and executing acts of terror. Unfortunately, there are also some countries that seek to undermine or subvert our collective resolve to fight terrorism. That cannot be allowed to pass. (Prof. Sunil is Dean and Chairman of - the Board of Studies at Dr BR Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Ambedkar Nagar and Dimple Khokhar is a research scholar)

# A fairy tale that is The Kerala Story

The Kerala Story has been making waves ever since it opened in theatres but its content is far from reality, it is a fantasy at best



DEEPAK SINHA

The central theme of the film revolves around three girls who fell victim to "manipulative conversion" to Islam that practically destroyed their lives. The main protagonist is Shalini Unnikrishnan, a convert to Islam. She narrates her ordeal from her prison in Afghanistan, of how she once wanted to become a nurse but was brainwashed and manipulated by religious vanguards, turned into an ISIS terrorist and sent on her way to Syria.

It is loosely based on the accounts of three women from Kerala who converted to Islam and travelled with their husbands to join ISIS in Afghanistan between 2016 and 2018, along with two other women and their husbands. Their husbands were killed in the fighting and these women remain in an Afghan prison. Incidentally, only one of these women, Nimisha Nair alias Fathima Isa, was Hindu and married to a Christian, who subsequently converted to Islam as well. The other two women were Christians before their conversion. The Government of India has refused to repatriate them as they remain hardcore adherents of ISIS philosophy, unlike what has been depicted in the movie.

While it has been alleged there are many more such people in prison in Afghanistan, official records only point to four. The film-makers have also suggested that there are "many girls" who have been manipulated into converting to Islam and in support quote then Chief Minister of Kerala, V S Achuthanandan, who, in 2010, said that fundamentalist Muslim organisations were using "money and marriages to make Kerala a Muslim majority state".

In that context, the issue of "manipulative conversion", commonly termed "love jihad", is concerning and cannot be wished away. Not because of the conversion itself, our Constitution allows us the freedom to practice as we wish, but



because of the motive and the manner such conversions are undertaken. It must be added that such allegations of fraudulent conversions have been made against some Christian denominations as well. Such actions damage the secular fabric of our society, which is why we have stringent laws against it. One estimate suggests about 7000 girls from the State converted to other religions over the last decade and the total number of Indians who joined ISIS was not more than 250, with about 20% from Kerala.

Critics agree that the movie is watchable as a work of fiction, but what detracts and gives weight to allegations that it is nothing more than a propaganda film, is its adverse depiction of all Muslims in general and repeated assertions that there are over 32000 such cases. This is untrue and a Bench of the Supreme Court has reproached the producers of the film for distortion of facts, directing them to add a disclaimer to that effect.

However, this is a theme that resonates greatly with the Hindutva lobby, as we saw from the Prime



TAKEN AT FACE VALUE THIS MAY SEEM TRULY SCARY, BUT THE TRUTH IS IT HAS NO BASIS IN FACT AND IS AIMED AT SPREADING FEAR AND CONSOLIDATING VOTES

Minister's exhortations to the public to see the movie, during his election rallies in Karnataka. Recently, Mr Amit Malviya, head of the BJP IT Cell, wrote on Twitter that "love Jihad is real and dangerous. Our girls are being lured away and used as cannon fodder for radical terror organisations. We can bury our heads in the sand, like an ostrich, at our own peril. It will engulf the rest of us sooner than we think. The Kerala Story is a grim reminder of what lies ahead if we don't act now".

Taken at face value this may seem truly scary, but the truth is it has no basis in fact and is aimed at spreading fear and consolidating votes. Comparison of census data from 2001 and 2011 shows that the Hindu population in Kerala, for example, declined from 56.16% to 54.73%, or 1.43%, while the Muslim population increased from 24.70% to 26.56% or 1.86%. A simple interpolation, at existing growth rates, suggests that the Muslim population would equal that of the Hindu population only by the last decade of this century. Unlikely, as growth

rates overall are on the decline. If anything, in the coming years Kerala's problems will not be about religion, but managing migrants from other states that keep its economy ticking!

Similarly, Mamata Banerjee's ban on the film presently stayed by the Supreme Court, and its "voluntary" non-screening in Tamil Nadu by movie theatres, is over the top and only feeds the long-standing narrative of minority appeasement. We must acknowledge that to be truly secular, breaking the stranglehold of those who benefit by dividing us through religion is inescapable. An essential step in this direction can be the introduction of the long overdue Uniform Civil Code (UCC), which would codify and apply a set of uniform laws related to personal matters such as marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance to all citizens, regardless of their religion.

(The author, a military veteran is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with the Peninsula Foundation, Chennai)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MANIPUR UNREST CONTINUES

Sir — As per report the house of Manipur PWD Minister Konthoujam Govindas in Bishnupur district was vandalized by an irate mob on Wednesday, claiming that the state government has not taken any sufficient and appropriate steps to protect locals from armed militants belonging to another community. Govindas, who also holds the Youth Affairs and Sports portfolio, is a senior BJP member. The minister and his family members house was attacked by 100 agitated people, mostly women, ransacked the house in Ningthoukhong Bazar area of Bishnupur district and damaged the gate, windows, a furniture, electronic gadgets and vehicles parked at his residence. This is for the first time a minister and a senior BJP leader's house was vandalized after the ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki community people broke out in Manipur on May 3, claiming the lives of at least 71 people and injuring over 300. With this all is not well for the BJP government in Manipur and have to face the anger of the people.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING IS READY

Sir — The day has finally come when Independent India will have its own, first of a kind Parliament without any colonial influence. May 28th of the year 2023, will be written as a golden day in India's political history as we gave our nation our new Parliament building with more advanced technology, space and improved system. Now that we are almost ready to enter to new building which will be the house of making legislation, relating this to our special history is also very important. The Sengol and all other related aesthetics with are the part and parcel of India's glorified history and rich culture will be put in place on this special occasion.

It is a big day for every Indian, in our 75th year of Independence, we are proudly moving ahead with the spirit of self-reliance and Aatmanirbharta. We are no more in the mortar and brick estab-

### Kazi Nazrul: The rebel poet



A part from his literary works on religious harmony with humanitarian lines like 'Are they Hindus? Are they Muslims? Who asks questions so asinine! O Captain! Pray tell them 'tis your brothers dying, children of your Mother!' ; the pen of Kazi Nazrul Islam also used to act as a sword while protesting against atrocities by the British, thereby earning him the epithet of "rebel poet" and also finding himself landed in prison for urging the youth (through his mighty poems) to engage in a revolution against the imperialist force.

In the current communally-vitiated environment in the society, it would not be out of context if we take a look on Nazrul's opinion on religion as practiced in the society :--

"No prophet has said, 'I have come for Hindus/ I have come for Muslims/ I have come for Christians.' They have said, 'I have come for the humanity for everyone, like light'. But the devotees of Krishna say, 'Krishna is for Hindus.' The followers of Muhammad says, 'Muhammad is for the Muslims.' The Disciple of Christ says, 'Christ is for Christians.' Krishna-Muhammad-Christ have become national property. This property is the root of all trouble. The matter which deserves to be noticed is that Nazrul's comments were highly relevant then, extremely relevant now and probable to remain relevant after centuries. It is high time we learn to jump into the waters and save the drowning person by seeing the human being in him/her instead of contemplating whether he/she is a Hindu or a Muslim. After all, at the end of the day, we are all children of that Ultimate Divine!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

lishment of Britishers. Lutyens and Baker's Parliament is now replaced with domestically made new Central Vista, which reflects the democratic and aspirational spirit of state of the art architecture design. India had come so far and now we are ready to get rid of colonial establishments where laws for modern India are drafted.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

### WOMEN TOPPERS IN UPSC

Sir — Four women Civil Services Examination-2022 aspirants occupying the top four positions, actually underlines the palpable change taking place in the otherwise male dominant scenario in most of the walks of life in the country now, thanks to the Union Public Service Commission's (UPSC) adamant stance keeping the political duress at bay. The icing on the cake, a record over one-third of the successful candidates comprise women- Hats off to Ishita Kishore,

Garima Lohia, Uma Harathi and Smiriti Mishra quad for their perseverance, dedication, grit and indefatigability winning them the laurels on the first four slots respectively. Interestingly, a Delhi Police head constable with 667th rank is also on the UPSC list. I squarely acquiesce with the editorial view that the Union Public Service Commission, a Constitution Body, has been doing its jobs professionally in a country where many an institution has been intruded upon by some political powers that be, adversely affecting the institution's public image of stern rectitude. Thankfully, most of the bureaucrats are impartial bearing no political leanings and keeping this prestigious institution clear of any gender bias as is evident from the record in the last couple of years.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

WORLD IS UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION

That day is not far wherein every being would be divine and have a purity of character




RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

That day is not far when we would see a world of purity of character and values, where every being would be divine and would coexist in harmony with nature.

Most of the religious scriptures are known to have described heaven, and paradise in detail as a period of peace, prosperity and happiness which is said to have existed thousands of years ago. That is why the whole concept of paradise has fascinated humans for centuries. However, in reality, paradise or heaven is not a different world but rather a period when everything in this world was perfect and harmonious. In the cycle of time, heaven, which is also called the Golden Age, occurs in the very beginning.

It is followed by the Silver Age, which is characterised by a lesser degree of perfection but is still free of negativity. By the time the Silver Age ends, the human souls lose some of their spiritual energy, and as the Copper Age starts, they are no longer soul-conscious and begin to come under the influence of vices. These vices bring sorrow as well as fear, repentance and a longing for a world without suffering, which the souls remember existed in the past.

Hence, in the hope of regaining that lost world of unalloyed joy, humans start remembering or praying to a Supreme entity who they believe can remove all their sorrows. Now, what needs to be understood practically is that – the same souls, who were divine humans, at the start of the cycle of time, end up becoming vicious and with devilish tendencies. It is at this point when one cycle of time is near its end and a new one is about to begin, that Supreme Power descends on earth to uplift mankind and rejuvenate the whole world, including the elements of nature. God explains to the souls about the cycle of time and the law of karma, whereby they realise that vices are at the root of all the suffering and that one can accumulate a fortune by performing elevated actions.




Not many are aware that the much-awaited greatest event of human history has already occurred. But a majority of humans are still in a deep slumber of ignorance and are still looking for God. In Bhagavad-Gita, Almighty Supreme clearly says that humans cannot reach God by prayer, penance, reading scriptures or doing charitable deeds. HE gives HIS introduction to everyone when God comes to this world at the end of the Iron Age when unrighteousness has reached extreme proportions and humanity is experiencing great sorrow.

He also reminds us of our true identity, that we all are eternal souls and not bodies and finally HE teaches us the unique art of Raj Yoga, by which the souls can cleanse themselves of all their sins and become worthy of taking birth in the Golden Age where there is complete peace, purity and happiness.

That day is not far when we would see a world of purity of character and values, where every being would be divine and would coexist in harmony with nature. There will be no form of violence, be it physical, mental or emotional. Every person will be an embodiment of truth and divine virtues. Pure love and respect will form the basis of relationships. They will be completely free from and ignorant of evil, vices and suffering. Materially, they will be living in opulence and abundance. Science will be used for creating perfect technology and comforts that are foolproof, eco-friendly and safe. People will enjoy perfect health, natural beauty, and a long lifespan and there will be no sign of sickness or untimely death. Everybody will be happy and content. There will be lightness, innocence, purity and joy in every action. This process of world transformation is underway right now.

*(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK)*

Who will end the free-run of freebies?



UTTAM GUPTA

Political parties don't want freebies to go. It is their much-cherished tool to harness votes. And they know it works like a charm



In the just concluded assembly elections in Karnataka, the grand old party (GOP) Congress had promised five guarantees viz. Gruha Jyoti, Gruha Lakshmi, Sakhi programme, Yuva Nidhi, and Anna Bhagyain in its manifesto.

Having got a decisive mandate to form the government, Congress pledged to approve all the five guarantees in the very first meeting of the Cabinet. The big question is: is it worth spending so much of taxpayers money?

The guarantees are intended to be a welfare scheme. Under it, the government should ensure that (i) the assistance goes to a person who is desperately in need (one who is poor or very poor); (ii) it should be given for a 'limited period' after which she should stand on her own and (iii) the scheme should be funded in a manner such that it doesn't destabilize the budgetary position.

Under Gruha Jyoti, the GOP promises to provide 200 units of free electricity a month for every single household (HH) in the state. The very idea is abhorrent. It presumes that every HH is so poor that it can't afford to pay even Rs 1000 a month being the cost of 200 units of electricity @ Rs 5 per unit.

Further, in the absence of any mention of 'for how long', it is assumed that free supply will continue for the full term of this government i.e. 5 years. The scheme will impose a 'needless' burden on the state exchequer for that long.

It will also strain the finances of power distribution companies which will have to supply zero tariff power to all HHs on behalf of the state government and won't get paid by the latter in time or paid less or not paid at all as is the case in many states who are already supplying power free or at concessional tariff.

Under Gruha Lakshmi, Every Woman head of a house will get two thousand rupees a month. This again is bizarre! Going by the manifesto, even a billionaire woman is eligible. Distributing money in this manner is a sheer waste of scarce resources. The GOP says "We are keeping the money in the hands of women to

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EMBOLDENED BY ITS VICTORY IN KARNATAKA, THE GOP WILL USE FREEBIES EVEN MORE BRAZENLY IN STATE ELECTIONS SLATED TOWARDS THE END OF 2023 AS ALSO DURING GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 2024

”

(The writer is a policy analyst)

ensure that they're in control and in charge of their own life".

The idea of empowering the woman is fine. But, we must not forget the context. For schemes like PM Awas Yojna where houses are built for the poor and the ownership is vested with the woman head, this makes eminent sense. But, to give money to all and sundry and then trumpet about women's empowerment looks ridiculous. The Sakhi programme under which free bus tickets for all women to travel in Karnataka are provided too suffers from the same absurdity.

Under Yuva Nidhi, the government will provide support to the Youth of Karnataka for two years by paying Rs 3,000 to unemployed graduates and Rs 1,500 to unemployed diploma holders every month. Prima facie, this may be in sync with the principle of extending support to a person who needs it. But, it can't be divorced from the economic status of the family she belongs to. If an unemployed youth belongs to a rich family which can take care of her during the difficult period i.e. when she remains without a job, there is no need for state support.

State support should be given only if the unemployed youth is from a poor HH. That apart, while choosing the beneficiary, the government must ensure that she is not self-employed. The manifesto doesn't talk of any of these riders. Finally, under Anna Bhagyain, the GOP has promised to give 10 kgs of rice per person per month to BPL families. Such families are already getting 7 kg of food per person per month under the National Food Security Act or NFSA (2013).

Redeeming these guarantees will cost around Rs 62,000 crore a year which is even higher than the States' fiscal deficit or FD (excess

of expenditure over receipts) of Rs 60,500 crore during 2022-23. Unless there is a cut in expenditure under some head or an increase in receipt for an equivalent amount, the FD would be Rs 122,500 crore. Expressed as a share of the state gross domestic product (SGDP) this would go beyond 5 percent against the 3 percent ceiling fixed under Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.

The guarantees don't follow the cardinal principles of a welfare scheme. These are neither directed to the needy nor have any terminal date and will have a destabilizing effect on the budget. These benefits distributed by Congress using public money for garnering votes are known in common parlance as 'freebies'. The menace has gripped most of the political parties that use freebies as the key to winning elections.

Emboldened by its victory in Karnataka, the GOP will use freebies even more brazenly in state elections slated towards the end of 2023 as also during general elections in 2024. This will force others including the ruling BJP to offer similar or even more tempting allurements (already, BJP top brass has started galvanizing its thought process in that direction). This rat race will have devastating implications for the finances of both states and the Centre.

**Is there any way this menace could be reined in?**

To get an answer, let us look at a judgment of the Supreme Court (SC) in S Subramaniam Balaji vs the Government of Tamil Nadu & Ors delivered way back in July 2013. It has been observed that the distribution of freebies of any kind influences all people. "It shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree." This would have led any logical person to believe that the SC would give a strict direction to stem the rot. But, what followed was a lame-duck order.

The SC had held that promises in the election manifesto cannot be construed as "corrupt practice" under the Representation of People Act (RPA), or any other prevailing law and, hence, distribution of freebies can't be stopped when the ruling party uses public funds for this purpose through the passage of Appropriation Acts in the state Assembly.

In the same order, it directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) "to frame guidelines that could govern the contents of the election manifesto of all the recognized political parties as when it had acted while framing guidelines for general conduct of the candidates, meetings, processions, polling day, etc". Further "this can also be included in the model code of conduct - under a separate head for guidelines for election manifesto - for guidance of political parties and candidates".

**The ECI never came out with any such guidelines.**

After a long hiatus, hearing a PIL seeking directions against 'freebies' on January 25, 2022, the SC observed "this is no doubt a serious issue. Budget for freebies is going above the regular Budget. This disturbs the level playing field". Its concern this time was more intense than it was in 2013. But, what about the action?

On August 3, 2022, the SC asked the parliamentarians to enact a law on curbing freebies but only after a committee set up by it examines all pros and cons. But, the majority of political parties don't want freebies to go away. It seems, India will have to live with this menace eternally.

# India to be a major player in the multipolar world

A multilateral world would be to India's advantage. It would also be welcome by the Global South which looks up to India for direction and leadership

There is a shift underway in the international system. The ongoing Ukraine conflict, the emergence of the Indo-Pacific as a centre for global politics, and the relentless rise of China have all resulted in a move away from a unipolar or bipolar world order to a multipolar one. This move is also one which suits India very well. As India positions itself globally as the leader of the Global South and a rising power, multipolarity assures India a position as one of the centres of power. This thought was very evident in the address made by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar at the recently held EU-India Pacific Ministerial Forum in Sweden where he pointed out that,



SIMRAN SODHI

*(The author, a Delhi-based journalist and foreign affairs analyst, holds a Masters in International Relations from the US University)*

"The more European Union and Indo-Pacific deal with each other, the stronger will be their respective appreciation of multi-polarity. A multipolar world is feasible only by a multipolar Asia."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rather busy calendar is another indication in this direction. The G7 Summit in Tokyo which also saw a Quad Summit on the sidelines, a visit to Papua New Guinea and then Australia all tie in to this thought. The PM's much-anticipated visit to the United States next month, which is only the third State visit by a foreign leader in US President Joe Biden's tenure, will further cement not only India's growing stature on the world stage but also be a timely pointer towards multipolarity. It is a



With Russia is at a record high. Despite the never-ending critique, India continues to buy oil from Russia. It is also worth remembering here that Russia used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) many times when resolutions on Kashmir were tabled. The fact that India has done this fine balancing act, of maintaining and strengthening ties with both the US and Russia, makes it a unique power centre in itself.

Another point in the study is, of course, the Quad (a grouping of the US, India, Japan and Australia). It would not be an overstatement to say that the Quad today is one of the most influential groupings in the world of geopolitics. It is also essentially a

forum to check China. As the politics of the Indo-Pacific take centre stage in the world, India becomes an even more valuable ally not just to the US, but to the entire Western world.

For India, China remains the biggest worry. China's aggressive behaviour at the border and its expansionist agenda in the South China Sea have almost every world leader worried. The Ukraine conflict has also seen another related development and that is the tightening of embrace between China and Russia. And that is unlikely to make India comfortable. That somewhere again takes us back to the argument that for India, censuring Russia over the Ukraine conflict would only result in a closer China-

Russia nexus. Both Russia and China are wary of the West and critical of a world they feel is dominated by Western ideals and nations. The US-China trade wars and the sanctions against Russia by the Western powers have helped consolidate that feeling and what one sees is the beginning of an anti-West Block.

A multilateral world would be to India's advantage and would also be welcome by the Global South. One of the end games of course would be a much-needed change in the structure of the UNSC and a permanent seat for India. That would also be more representative of the present world. The beginnings have been made but it's still quite a long road ahead.



MONEY MATTERS

## Emami consolidated net profit down 60 pc in Q4 FY23

F MCG major Emami Limited on Thursday posted a 60 per cent drop in consolidated net profit to Rs 142 crore for the quarter that ended March 2023, on muted demand. The company posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 354 crore in the corresponding period of FY22. Revenue from operations during the quarter was up nine per cent to Rs 836 crore, from Rs 768 crore registered in Q4 of FY22. The company attributed the decline in net profit to muted demand for personal care products and excessive rainfall in many parts of the country in March, which impacted the demand for summer products. "Inflation in rural areas reached 6.8 per cent in FY23, the highest level in the previous nine years, and rural inflation surpassed urban inflation for the first time since FY18. Additionally, excessive rainfall in many parts of the country in March impacted the demand for summer products," the company said in a statement.



### THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

# We will ensure 'insurance for all by 2047': IRDAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IRDAI Chairman Debasish Panda on Thursday said the regulator is working on three-pronged approach -- availability, accessibility and affordability -- to ensure 'Insurance for All by 2047'.

India will attain 100 years of independence by 2047 and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has taken several steps in the last 10-12 months to enhance penetration and density of life cover plans.

"We are also working with the councils of both life and general insurance to have a UPI-like moment for the insurance sector. A conceptual framework has been contemplated," he said, adding that this is being proposed through the Bhima trinity Bhima Sugam, Bhima Vistar, and the woman-centric Bhima Vahak.

Speaking at an CII event here, Panda said IRDAI is



moving from a rule-based approach to a principal-based approach, that the opportunity to invest in the insurance sector is immense given the size of the market, and low insurance penetration.

Sharing some of the reforms undertaken in the last one year, Panda said the authority introduced use and file system, stopped micro mangement of expenses, a lot of prior approvals done away with and reduction in regulations.

As many as 70-odd regulations have been repealed, 1,000-odd circulars have been done away with and rationalised 79 returns, he said.

Such reforms have facilitated the ease of doing business, promoted healthy competition and encouraged the use of technology, he said.

Further, he said, to meet the distribution challenge, the authority has increased the number of tie-ups that insurance companies can undertake with banks.

Observing that Indian economy today is at an inflection point, he said, the country is among the fastest-growing economies in the world, with strong demographics, large domestic market size and a robust stock market, among others.

"Hence, there is optimism about India, which is drawing investors who are keen to establish a footprint in the sector. India has the largest market as it has 1/5th of the world population. Hence in a world starved of opportunity, India is a beacon of hope and this is rightly termed as the India Century," he said.

Technology adoption is changing the insurance landscape in the country, he said, adding, the use of big data, AI, ML are impacting the sector in more ways than one.

The regulator is encouraging insurtech, regtech, and fintech to provide ease of insurance, he said.

## LIC shares settle nearly 2% higher after Q4 earnings

S hares of LIC on Thursday ended nearly 2 per cent higher after the company posted more than five-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 13,191 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023. The stock ended with a gain of 1.69 per cent at Rs 603.60 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 3.72 per cent to Rs 615.65. At NSE, it advanced 1.62 per cent to settle at Rs 603.55. The company's market valuation climbed Rs 6,356.63 crore to Rs 3,81,776.86 crore. In traded volume terms, 2.55 lakh shares of the company were traded at BSE and over 51.87 lakh shares on NSE during the day. The insurer had earned a profit of Rs 2,409 crore in the same quarter a year earlier. However, total income during the March quarter declined to Rs 2,01,022 crore from Rs 2,15,487 crore in the same period a year ago, LIC said in a regulatory filing on Wednesday.



## Gold plunges Rs 430; silver down Rs 750

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price plunged Rs 430 to Rs 60,250 per 10 gram in the national capital on Thursday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had ended at Rs 60,680 per 10 gram in the previous trade. Silver also tumbled Rs 750 to Rs 72,450 per kg. "Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at Rs 60,250 per 10 gram, down Rs 430 per 10 gram," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the overseas market, gold and silver were quoting lower at USD 1,960 per ounce and USD 23.09 per ounce, respectively.

Comex spot gold price moved lower on the back of rally in the dollar and US treasury yields, Gandhi said.

# Crackdown soon on developers of delayed power projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will crack down on developers of power projects, who miss the scheduled commercial date of operation or deadline to complete the project, Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister RK Singh said on Thursday.

Addressing a CII conference, Singh said the electricity generation capacity addition is a big challenge, as people are sitting on several projects won under the bidding process.

Singh said that all these projects (power) are won under the bidding process and if they miss the SCOD (scheduled commercial date of operation or deadline to complete the project), then the developer will be banned from participating in project bidding for one year.

On the second such incident, the developer will be banned for five years, Singh said, adding that he is going to put this (rule) in (policy).

Power project developers are waiting for demand to grow but



this will not happen, he said.

Singh also said that until battery energy storage becomes viable, India would have to add thermal power capacity to meet the demand.

At present the battery storage is Rs 10 per unit and the energy rate is Rs 2.30, he explained.

The minister also said that he is pushing the case for another production-linked incentive scheme for grid-scale battery energy storage.

Talking about buoyancy in the sector due to high power demand, Singh said he is not seeing any power project going to the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal).

## Indian Steel Association, AISC to unlock sectoral opportunities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body Indian Steel Association (ISA) on Thursday announced signing an agreement with ASEAN Iron and Steel Council (AISC) to unlock new avenues of growth and sustainability in steel sector.

ISA is the apex industry body which represents the issues and interests of the domestic steel industry.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations was signed on Sunday May 21, 2023 in Manila, Philippines, ISA said in a statement.

"ISA and AISC signed a MoU for bilateral cooperation. It aims to leverage the strengths, expertise, and resources of both organizations to unlock new avenues for growth, innovation, and sustainability in the steel industry," it said.



## Strong performance of Indian banks to continue: S&P

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

S&P Global Ratings on Thursday said Indian banking sector profitability will stabilise at a healthy level, and asset quality will continue to improve.

"Indian banks' earnings will likely remain healthy. The sector has improved substantially in the past seven years, from a period when many public-sector lenders were grappling with bad loans," S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Deepali Seth Chhabria said.

A strong recovery is underway in the Indian banking sector, and lenders have just reported their best results in a decade, S&P Global Ratings said. It expects the sector profitability to stabilise at a healthy level, and that banks' asset quality will continue to improve.

Indian banking profitability is benefiting from higher net interest margins and lower credit costs. We estimate a system-wide return on average assets (ROAA) at 1.2 per cent for fiscal 2023 year ending March 31, 2023. System-wide ROAA will likely hover around 1.1 per cent in fiscal 2024.

"The formation of new non-performing loans will remain at cyclical low levels, despite pressure from higher interest rates," S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Geeta Chugh said.

# DGCA asks Go First to submit revival plan in 30 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aviation watchdog DGCA has asked cash-strapped Go First to submit a comprehensive plan for the revival of its operations, including details about the availability of operational planes and pilots, within 30 days, a source said on Thursday.

The no-frills carrier, which is undergoing a voluntary insolvency resolution process, stopped flying on May 3 and lessors are looking to take back aircraft leased to the carrier.

The source at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said the regulator advised the airline on May 24 to



submit a comprehensive restructuring plan for a sustainable revival of operations. The plan has to be submitted within a period of 30 days, the source added.

Go First has been asked to furnish the status of the availability of the operational aircraft fleet, pilots and other personnel, maintenance arrangements, funding

and working capital, and arrangements with lessors and vendors, among other details.

The revival plan, once submitted by Go First, would be reviewed by the watchdog for further appropriate action, the source said.

The airline had submitted its response to the show cause notice issued by DGCA on May 8.

In its reply, Go First requested that it may be allowed to use the moratorium period to prepare a comprehensive restructuring plan for restarting operations and present the same to DGCA for approvals before restarting operations, the source said.

## Signs of private sector investment cycle unfolding, says CEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran on Thursday said there are signs of private sector investment cycle unfolding and sectors like steel and cement have reached a stage where greenfield investment will take place.

"We do see signs of corporate sector beginning to make investment. There are some new investment announcement," he said at an event organised by CII.

Based on data available for the first six months of the last three years, he said, it was Rs 2.1 lakh crore in

2020-21, it was Rs 2.7 lakh crore in 2021-22 and Rs 3.3 lakh crore in 2022-23.

"So, it has been rising and once we get the full year data, the picture will be clear. We know that internal resource generation of the companies are at very high level. Therefore, they may not necessarily have to tap either the capital market or the banking channel," he said.

Expressing optimism about private sector capital formation cycle in the country, he said, "we have been waiting for it. It's already unfolding...it is unfolding at steady pace.

# Highway contractors can convert bank guarantees into surety bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said the finance ministry has agreed to allow contractors engaged by state-owned NHAI and NHIDCL to convert their bank guarantees into insurance surety bonds.

Gadkari had recently said changes will be made to the surety bond offering to make it more lucrative as no contractor is buying it because of the strict conditions imposed by insurance regulator Irdai.

"I conveyed to the road transport secretary that he should talk to the finance secretary once to give it (allowing conversion of bank guarantee to surety bonds) from



retrospective effect.

"In NHAI, in the road ministry and NHIDCL whatever bank guarantees are there, if they want, they can convert them into insurance surety

bonds. Permission should be given for this," Gadkari said on Wednesday at an event organised by the National Highways Authority of India. Last year in December,

Gadkari launched the country's first-ever surety bond insurance product with an aim to reduce the dependence on infrastructure developers on bank guarantees.

"I am happy to tell you that the road transport secretary talked to the finance secretary and the finance secretary has agreed. Now you can convert it," the road transport and highways minister said.

**HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
Swarnajayanti Commercial Complex, Ammerpet, Hyderabad - 500082

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

As part of the cadastral corrections, the Survey Numbers: 246 and 261 of Muppidreddipalle (V), Manoharabad (M), Medak District falling in the Metropolitan Development Plan (MDP) 2013 for Hyderabad Metropolitan Region (HMR) approved by the Govt vide G.O.Ms.No.33, Dt. 24-01-2013 are incorporated/ corrected as per the revenue village map. As per the Government Letter No: 3966/Pig.1 (I)/2018, Dated: 23-12-2022, the above cadastral corrections are for information of public.

020 No. 215-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24, Dt. 25.05.2023 Sd/- Metropolitan Commissioner, HMDA

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

**e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

NIT No. E15626/1/2023-24/123, Date: 25.05.2023

Name of the Work: For (1) Work) "Supply and fixing of way to ward office signage boards in 11, 12, 13 & 14 wards of Hayathnagar Circle-3, GHMC", Estimate Amount: Rs. 8.73 Lakhs, Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 27.05.2023 at 11.30 AM, Name & Address Officer Call No.: Sri K. Ramesh Babu, Executive Engineer, Hayath Nagar Circle-3, GHMC, (M): 8790374055 & 7331189513. For further details can be seen at e-procurement@http://www.eprocurement.telangana.gov.in/ Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.O.No: 2273-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24, Dt. 25.05.2023 Hayath Nagar Circle-3, GHMC

**HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
4th Floor, Swarna Jayanti Commercial Complex, Ammerpet, Hyderabad-500038.

**Public Notification U/s. 15 (3) of HMDA Act, 2008.**  
**(Government Memo No. 7275/Pig.1(I)/2022 dt. 27.04.2023)**

In exercise of powers conferred by Sub-Section (1) of Section 15 of HMDA Act 2008 (Act No. 8 of 2008), it is proposed to make the following draft variation to the land use envisaged in the Revised Master Plan of erstwhile MCH area (HMDA core area) approved by the Government, vide G.O.Ms.No.363 MA&UD dt. 21.06.2010.

Four (04) small Master Plan roads proposed through land in ward No. 146-Block No.A - Municipal Ward No. 10-1432 to 550 and TSLR ward No.121 Block No.F old Sy.No. 1718 situated at Chilikalguda, Secunderabad, as shown in the revised Master Plan of erstwhile MCH area (HMDA core area) approved by the Government, vide G.O.Ms.No.363 MA&UD dt.21.06.2010, are now proposed to be deleted and realigned all along the inner boundary of above premises and open spaces shown in the Master Plan are now proposed to be relocated at one place (as part of 10% open space).

The details of the above are available in websites <http://gazette.telangana.gov.in/> and <http://hmda.gov.in/>. Objections/Suggestions would be considered from any person/body to the said proposals. They can submit objections/suggestions in writing either to the M.C. HMDA or to the Special Chief Secretary, MA&UD Dept., Telangana Secretariat, Hyderabad within Fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of this Notice.

R.O. No: 216-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24 Sd/- For Metropolitan Commissioner, HMDA

# Indians dominate UK's skilled worker and student visa tally

PNS ■ LONDON

Indian nationals top the tally of skilled worker and student visas issued by the UK over the past year, according to official immigration statistics released in London on Thursday.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) data collated by the UK Home Office shows that Indian nationals were the top nationality for cross-sector skilled work, including specifically targeted healthcare visas aimed at filling staff shortages in the National Health Service (NHS).

They also made up the largest group of students granted visas under the new Graduate post-study work route, representing 41 per cent of grants.

"Indian nationals were the top nationality for visas in the Worker' category, representing one third (33 per cent) of grants, and were by far the top nationality for both the Skilled Worker' and Skilled Worker-Health and Care' visas," the Home Office analysis notes.

"A total of 92,951 Graduate route extensions were granted to previous students in the



year ending March 2023. Indian nationals represented the largest group of students granted leave to remain on the Graduate route, representing 41 per cent

of grants," it said.

According to the latest statistics, skilled worker visas granted to Indians rose 63 per cent, from 13,390 in 2021-22 to

21,837 in 2022-23. In the healthcare visa category, Indians registered an even higher 105 per cent hike from 14,485 to 29,726.

"There were 138,532 sponsored study visa grants to Indian nationals in year ending March 2023, an increase of 53,429 (+63 per cent) compared to year ending March 2022 and the largest number of study visas granted to any nationality. Grants to study for Indian nationals have risen markedly since year ending March 2019 and are now around seven times higher," the analysis

notes.

"Nigeria had the highest number of dependants (66,796) of sponsored study visa holders in the year ending March 2023, increasing from 27,137 in the year ending March 2022. Indian nationals had the second highest number of dependants, increasing from 22,598 to 42,381," it notes.

The latest data comes days after UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman announced a clampdown on the right of student visa holders to bring dependent family members, limiting it only to PhD level students.





# Hansika Motwani is a city slicker by all means



SHIKHA DUGGAL

Krabi was less busy than the quintessential Phuket and more beautiful for Hansika Motwani; it was one of the top places on her travel itinerary, and that's what made us feature her for our exclusive travel tales segment this week. Just to know about the most talked-about islands and how she made her Instagram followers jealous.

We are just kidding! The even more celebrated actress in the Tamil film industry tells us, "I had been to Thailand a couple of times but never got a chance to see Krabi. The best part about my trip to Krabi was the hotel hues! The sea life out there is stunning."

There were wild beach parties and natural features for Hansika to observe. The newly married actress continued her rice and noodle culture in Krabi! The development abroad was something to unlock for her, and anyhow, she found the soul of her favourite Asian cuisine with the help of the original taste and flavours around her. She continued, "I was in Maya Bay; a very famous movie was shot there. You'll see baby sharks at the shore! It's like an island paradise there."

The islands that are peaceful, the swathes of green jungles, and a cosy beach bar are her likeness, most probably. The Ritz-Carlton is continuing its historical heft even in Krabi, and Hansika Motwani got to feel the continuing cachet of this property. She described it as being so upscale yet having the humdrum of a conventional hotel, and has so many timeless luxuries inside that served excellence to the actress!

There was an extravagan-



Hansika Motwani, who had recently visited southern Thailand's west coast Krabi, speaks to *The Pioneer* about her travel experience, the next locations she'd like to tap into, and more in this week's edition of Travel Tales.

za of lush gardens, an infinity pool, and private villas that were away from the busy lands. "I love visiting concrete jungles! Take me to Paris, Dubai, London, or New York City. Pressure or no pressure, I am always ready to take off to any one of these cities."

So, she's a city slicker, huh? Yes, she's happier in the concrete jungle than in the great outdoors and seems to have an intimate connection with the ideas of forward-thinking modernism. The next location she would love to tap into must be Korea or the Northern Lights — let's see what works out best for her. She's not overlooking it as a tourist destination but wants to see the old and new together. And time and time again, she has seen the northern lights documented in so many famous movies that she really wants to see this magical mysticism in person!

On a concluding note, "I travel for the experience — hotels do have relevance while I travel anywhere across the world. If I am going to the Maldives, my hotel shouldn't be less than a staycation for me! If I am going to Ibiza, I really don't care about the boutique resorts over there because I'll be spending most of my time on the beaches. I do become a big spender when I am shopping in the famous concrete jungles, as mentioned above! And I remember my trip to Greece too, where I had my bachelorette; it was on my bucket list. And as all my fans already know, my husband has made Paris a memorable place for me forever. We are going back again this year, just for the fun of it! "I will not miss exploring Portugal with my husband."



# 'I don't believe in slapstick comedy, nor is Jogira Sara Ra Ra one'

Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and Neha Sharma starrer hit the theaters today. Ahead of the film's release, *The Pioneer* interacts with the lead actress, who shares some insights about working in the film, her bond with Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and more.



Neha Sharma is not just an actress, but a social media bee. She's one of the social media sensations, who's always kept her fans and audience intact with her posts.

Neha made her debut into the big screens with the Telugu film *Chirutha*, and later in the Hindi film industry starring alongside Emran Hashmi in *Crook*. Neha, who was last seen in *Aafat-e-ishq*, is back with a quirky rom-com *Jogira Sara Ra Ra*. The film stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui, and Sanjay Mishra. The film revolves around Jugadu Jogi (Nawazuddin Siddiqui), the proprietor, of a firm that handles all the wedding needs, and Dimple (Neha Sharma), who seeks his assistance to get out of her marriage but in a turn of events, Jogi ends up marrying her.

Recently, Neha who was here in the 'City of Nizams', speaks to *The Pioneer* in an exclusive chat, sharing insights about the film. Speaking of what drew her to this situational comedy, and the similarities she feels with her character Dimple. "*Jogira Sara Ra Ra* is a family comedy film. A lot of films being made nowadays are dark and intense and the audience comes out with a heavy head. A film like this is the need of the hour! One that is light, fun, and entertaining. My character and I are both outspoken but the rebellious streak in her is a quality I don't relate to."

We totally agree with this. You'd all agree to this too. Today films that tick-

le our funny bones are the films that we all look for.

Now, going ahead something that we'd really wanted to know about was the bond that the *Crook* actress had shared with her co-star Nawazuddin Siddiqui. She revealed that while working in the film, she got to learn a lot from him, and their mutual love for cinema was the center of most of their conversations, which she found quite rare, since according to her, all that one talks about is box office numbers and fashion trends.

Extracting all the particulars about cinema and acting from a method actor like Nawazuddin Siddiqui is truly a dream for many and a reality for just a few. Comedy as we know is a tough genre to crack, making people laugh is truly an art. The *Illegal* actor further expresses that the entire cast has brought about great comic timing across the film. "I don't believe in slapstick comedy nor is this film one, in a situational comedy we let the moment talk and that is why the film is very organically comic."

The movie was filmed in Lucknow, and using actual locales enhances the film's depth and authenticity, making it even more appealing. Neha recalls a funny incident during the shoot, as she says, "Nawaz and I were travelling on a truck filled with sacks, which seemed like the hottest day in Lucknow. My eyes kept trailing back to his jacket that I wanted as it protected him from the scorching heat. We eventually improvised the

scene and Nawaz ended up giving his jacket to me which translated well on screen."

The advent of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms has most definitely impacted our industry but every coin has two sides. Having worked in several OTT shows she says, "It has impacted the industry hugely. The positive aspect is that it has helped generate a plethora of work for not just actors but for the industry as a whole. The flip side is that the audience has gotten used to sitting at home and watching films and shows that allow them the liberty to control how they watch the film. They can pause a film and wish to continue it as they, please."

A sense of reluctance has developed within the viewers that are not permitting them to go to the theatres as they don't have the independence a pause button offers. We also get comments that the price of the popcorn and beverages have increased which is also a contributing factor to this hesitation. The reality is that we are still figuring the particulars out. Both Nawaz and I feel that the story can be viewed on OTT but the glint in the eye and emotion of the actor can only be viewed on a big screen."

The *Crook* starrer conveys that *Jogira Sara Ra Ra* has a lot of love and laughter to offer and wishes the audience to come to support them as a little laughter in this time of stress would be a great stress buster.

# Combating stigma and strengthening AWARENESS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

It's only in the mysterious equation of love that logical reasons can be found." Russell Crowe as 'John Nash', *Beautiful Mind*, 2001, this landmark movie on a severe mental disorder made us believe that mental problems can be treated with love, support, and social effort. The protagonist, John Nash, emerged as a legendary mathematician while struggling with one of the most disabling mental disorders ever, schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is one of the severe mental disorders that is often labelled in society. It is one of the most disabling and economically burdening diseases, as it mostly affects young adults in the productive age group, with a chronic course in some. One in every hundred people experiences schizophrenia, and men are twice as likely to develop this condition as compared to women. People with this condition have double the risk of death due to suicide compared to the general population. Along with mental well-being, this disorder also affects a person's social and occupational lives.

Dr. Debanjan Banerjee, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist, Apollo 24/7 & Apollo Multispecialty Hospitals, Kolkata, shares, "Most of the time, they are isolated, or worse, get thrown out of their families due to carer frustration or poor understanding of illness. Due to the behaviour changes, many get 'polarised' as 'pagals' (Hindi for 'lunatic') and end up on the streets or resort to addictions. Often, people with schizophrenia are portrayed as dangerous, violent, or psychopathic by the media through movies and television shows, which is ironically just the opposite. A person with schizophrenia is not more dangerous or 'criminal' than anyone else; rather, they often fall victim to violence, abuse, and fraud themselves. They are more likely to harm themselves and are aggressive only when provoked or ridiculed, as suspiciousness can be a major symptom of this illness. Often, the affected person might not have the understanding to avail himself of profes-



**ALTHOUGH SCHIZOPHRENIA IS A SERIOUS MENTAL DISORDER, IT IS HIGHLY TREATABLE. SPECIFIC MEDICATIONS CALLED ANTIPSYCHOTICS ARE USED EFFECTIVELY FOR THEIR TREATMENT. THIS SHOULD BE STARTED EARLY, ALONG WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING THAT CAN HELP AN INDIVIDUAL SUFFERING FROM SCHIZOPHRENIA ATTAIN COMPLETE RECOVERY.**

sional help on his own. This is what makes our awareness about this disease all the more important, contrary to the 'mysticism' and 'paranormalcy' that it is equated with in the popular media."

The term schizophrenia comes from the Greek words "schezein" (to split) and "phrenos" (mind), which roughly translate to "splitting of the mind." It intends to describe the separation of daily function from the way a person thinks, speaks, and perceives the world. In that way, it is a disorder of the 'processes of mind and thinking'. People affected often have their own 'imagined' world in which they live and believe, detached from reality. It can lead to self-absorption and excessive communication with oneself.

Schizophrenia is not entirely genetic, though the presence of illness in the family plays a role.

Symptoms of schizophrenia can be seen in terms of muttering to oneself (they may hear voices commanding or discussing them in the absence of any) and having false, unshakable beliefs that cannot be changed by evidence. These are termed "hallucinations" and "delusions," respectively. They may also suffer from suspiciousness (they may feel people are conspiring against them), muddled or disrupted thoughts, which can be expressed through comprehensive speech, or unusual behaviour. There can also be another set of symptoms like poor emotional

response or expression, poor self-care or personal hygiene, withdrawn behaviour, attention, concentration, and memory issues. Sometimes, inappropriate social attitudes and smiling can occur as the 'sense of social context' is lost. Research, however, shows patients with schizophrenia are rarely violent.

Although schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder, it is highly treatable. Specific medications called antipsychotics are used effectively for their treatment. This should be started early, along with psychological counselling that can help an individual suffering from schizophrenia attain complete recovery. More than two-thirds can improve with proper treatment. Patients need to continue medication and treatment as per their doctors' advice and stay in regular touch with health care. Contrary to popular belief, these medicines are not 'addictive drugs' and do not 'damage the brain'. Antipsychotics need at least 4 weeks to show their effects and need to be continued long enough for recovery. Research shows that the rate of recurrence of problems is higher if medicines are stopped suddenly, and hence it is vital to have a regular discussion with the treating doctor.

The earlier the treatment starts, the better it is. Besides medication, vocational rehabilitation is vital. Besides the reduction of the symptoms of schizophrenia, individuals need to regain their jobs, rela-

tionships, and daily life activities for a 'true recovery'.

Community acceptance against stigma towards this illness and meaningful social participation for those living with schizophrenia are a must.

## The Way Forward

Awareness, identification, and care are the three main pillars of managing any mental disorder. Community awareness about the early signs of the illness and sensitising family members and primary health care workers are extremely important in this regard. All levels of stakeholders need to assume collective responsibility, and the media has an integral role to play in it. Authentic information-education-communication (IEC) material can be referred to for detailed information (ex: official websites of the National Institute of Mental Health, US, or the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, NIMHANS, Bengaluru, and other national institutes). Books like *The 'Belgrano'* and *Me* by Stephen Sharp and *Surviving Schizophrenia* by Dr. Fuller Torrey give realistic narratives of people living with the illness and the challenges they face.

Seek and encourage help if anyone you know suffers from this disorder.

To end with the quote that we started with, empathetic solutions lie only in the "mysteries of care and love".







# ‘I’M A VERY SURE-FOOTED ANIMAL — LIKE A LEOPARD’



AMARTYA SMARAN

While most celebrities shy away from letting the public in on their private lives, actor Naresh Vijaya Krishna makes no qualms about producing and starring in a movie titled, *Malli Pelli*, documenting his much talked about relationship with actress Pavitra Lokesh. The duo's film hit the screens today, and ahead of the release, the *Malli Pelli* actor schmoozed with the local media. *Malli Pelli* is directed by veteran producer and director M. S. Raju. In a career spanning 50 years, the second half of Naresh's career, in particular, flourished like no other. His performances in films like *100% Love*, *Chandamama Kathalu*, *Bhale Bhale Magadivoy*, *Subramanyam for Sale*, *Sammohanam*, *Rangasthalam*, and *Ante Sundaraniki* have cemented his place as an A-list character artist. *Malli Pelli* marks the *Jamba Lakidi Pamba* star's return to the silver screen as a leading man. From what we've noticed, he was extremely confident that the film would turn out to be a roaring hit at the

box office. His confidence? The youth! The story was initially conceptualised for the family audience, but the increasing controversy surrounding the couple has also sparked enormous interest among the youth. In fact, it is true that Naresh and Pavitra Lokesh are the most happening couple in Tollywood. Well! The most beloved too. At least, that's how the makers sold the product. It's better to not talk about meme pages, because the couple is all over the gram. When director M.S. Raju approached Naresh with a subject that held striking similarities to the actor's life, the *Anni Manchi Sakunamule* actor chanced upon the occasion, and took the responsibility of re-launching production activities under his own banner, Vijaya Krishna Movies. Another thing to remember is that Naresh's divorce with his third wife Ramya Raghupathi is ongoing. That is what makes the story compelling, because usually people would like to have sneak peek into 'thy neighbours' affairs. The divorce case is ongoing, the film is released, and what does all this mean for the actor? Could any of the subject matter shown in the film play the spoilsport? "This film has been censored," explained Naresh. "Even in the case of *The Kerala Story*, the Supreme Court has given a clear verdict that a film needn't be reviewed after it's been greenlit by the censor. We don't have that fear, and we're ready to go to the court if needed. All this controversy took place only after we applied for divorce. Five-six years before that, we both split. The clear proof is that my passport doesn't have my ex-wife's name.

One of the most talked about films in Tollywood, *Malli Pelli* hit the theaters today. Ahead of the film's release actor Naresh Vijaya Krishna schmoozed with the local media speaking of the subject matter in the film, bringing sensitivity in his performances, and more.

Simple! We went for a divorce for various reasons, but I don't think this film will hamper the divorce issue." He further continued: "There is a possibility that they might go to court, but we will face it. I'm not nervous about it. Basically, I'm a very sure-footed animal—like a leopard. When I hit something, whether it is MAA elections, or my personal life, I go sure footed. The result is up to god. *Malli Pelli* will reach its targeted audience." Even amidst all the chaos, the *Guntur Talkies* actor put forward some brilliant performances. Although *Ante Sundaraniki* didn't yield the expected results at the box-office, Naresh's performance stands out to be the highlight of the film during the last thirty-five odd minutes. How then, is he able to bring such sensitivity to his performances? The media is bashing him, the memers are making fun of him, and there's

severe judgement from society because of his relationship with Pavitra. "I don't have to fear anybody if my intentions are right. If I commit a mistake, I will definitely face the consequences. There are unforeseen incidents which pounce upon you during these situations. I have suffered...I have suffered. More than me, Pavitra has suffered. But then, we just didn't suffer and kept quiet. We went straight and battled whether it's in Karnataka, or back home," affirmed the star. Talking about how he manages to deliver such good performances despite being phased by extreme pressure, he ended, "It's a switch on/switch off method. I am a method actor. It is my conviction that I am right. These things (controversies) won't hit me. If I fail as an actor, it is going to be a big hit on my life. For example, Sukumar asked me to use glycerin for the entire song. I was like, 'Okay! But can you play the song?' He played the song, and I cried. There was no glycerin the whole day. I follow the school of method acting. I just get into the mood of the character."

## VK Naresh's ex-wife moves to court to stall Malli Pelli

Naresh and Pavitra Lokesh starrer *Malli Pelli* has hit the theaters today. Meanwhile, while on one hand the film has been creating a buzz, on the other hand, Ramya Raghupathi, VK Naresh's estranged wife, requested that the Kukatpally Family Court put a hold on the movie's release. What made her want to delay the film? Well, *Malli Pelli* according to her allegedly tries to damage Ramya Raghupathi's reputation. Since the preview for the movie was made public, the lawsuit has actually



been anticipated. After the caravan was made available, it was more clear. *Malli Pelli*'s Vanitha Vijaykumar persona is certainly modelled after Ramya. She seemed to have received a negative portrayal in the film.

Naresh, the movie's protagonist and producer, has insisted that it is up to the viewer to choose whether the story is based on his life in order to avoid legal repercussions. When questioned about Vanitha's personality, Pavitra Lokesh questioned, "Who is Ramya?" The real-life couple, Naresh and Pavitra, hope that *Malli Pelli* will persuasively argue their position. If the court takes Ramya's appeal seriously, there may be some immediate legal repercussions.

## Rockstar DSP's preparation for Malaysia tour is in full-swing

With such a killer preparation, Rockstar DSP's time in Malaysia will be raving Success for sure! Rockstar DSP is currently gearing up for his Malaysia *Oo Solriya* tour. A glimpse of what to expect from his upcoming tour was also revealed recently. Fans in Malaysia have an elevation of excitement after the video. Keeping the excitement in the clouds and beyond, DSP has now unveiled a glimpse from his prep and we have already got goosebumps. In the video we can see DSP dancing, singing high on energy and these moves will make you sway as you instantly get attracted to the music and moves. Rockstar DSP ends the video by saying "Let's sing, dance and rock together." With such a promising video the excitement has crossed the temperature. For the unversed, Rockstar DSP's Malaysia tour is on May 27th 2023. On the professional front,



the lucky star of Bollywood in the music space, Rockstar DSP's *Drishyam* is all set for a

Korean remake. DSP also has *Pushpa 2*, *Suriya 42*, and more in the pipeline.



## Ram Charan supports emerging talent through V Mega Pictures

Global star Ram Charan, who gained worldwide popularity with the Oscar-winning *RRR*, joins hands with his friend Vikram Reddy of UV Creations, to announce 'V Mega Pictures', a production house estab-

lished with the intention of encouraging new and young talent. With this development, the production house will cater to Pan-Indian audiences, while giving emerging talent a platform to shine. The dynamic and innovative production company is ready to captivate audiences with exceptional storytelling and groundbreaking

entertainment. Led by a visionary team with an unparalleled passion for the art of filmmaking, V Mega Pictures is committed to providing a platform for underrepresented voices in the industry. Ram Charan says, "We at V Mega Pictures are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment that

embraces diversity and welcomes fresh perspectives. By championing creativity and pushing boundaries, we aim to create a lasting impact on the entertainment industry and pave the way for new and emerging talent." Meanwhile, Vikram of UV Creations, "We are delighted to embark on this exciting journey. By collaborating with talented artists, writers, directors, and technicians, V Mega Pictures aims to push the boundaries of storytelling and bring fresh perspectives to the screen."



## Is Mahesh Babu going to produce a Sumanth Prabhas project?

Actor Mahesh Babu is currently busy shooting for his upcoming project *SSMB28*. Amidst this, here comes the latest development about his next project. If the latest buzz is to be believed, Mahesh Babu has confirmed his next project. Well he's not going to play the leading man, but will be producing the project. Recently, the actor took to his Twitter and shared his review of *Mem Famous*, which hit the theaters today. "Just watched *Mem Famous*. Brilliant film. Blown away by the performances of each and every actor in the film, especially writer, director, and actor Sumanth Prabhas, what a talent. The visuals, background score, and all the crafts sit perfectly. Can't believe a bunch of debutants made this film. Congratulations to Sharath,



Anurag Reddy and the young team for this film. Proud of you guys for backing this talent." That's a huge comment coming from an actor like Mahesh Babu. Feeling grateful for being appreciated by the star, actor Sharath Chandra asked the actor that he along with Sumanth Prabhas is planning for another film, and said, "It'll be amazing and an absolute

honour if GMB Entertainment can produce it as well." To this, the actor gleefully shares that he'll be more than happy to back this young talent. It appears that Sarath Chandra of Chai Bisket Films and Mahesh made this announcement in order to generate excitement for *Mem Famous*. Seems like the strategy worked out perfectly!



## Karthi in & as Japan in his 25th film

Hero Karthi who is riding high with consecutive hits is presently doing an out-and-out adventurous thriller *Japan* directed by Raju Murugan of Joker fame. Produced by SR Prakash Babu and SR Prabhu under Dream Warrior Pictures, *Japan* marks Karthi's 25th film. Wishing Karthi on his birthday an intro glimpse of his character from the movie is unveiled. Karthi is introduced as *Japan* who seems to be playing a peculiar character. Different people have

different opinions about him. He is a hero, comedian, and villain for three different people. Karthi appeared in a different look with curly hair in the glimpse and it was hilarious. As the glimpse assures, *Japan* is going to offer an adventurous ride in cinemas. As announced by the makers, *Japan* will hit the screens for Diwali, this year. Anu Emmanuel is paired opposite Karthi for the first time. Actor Sunil will be seen in a vital role in the movie that marks the acting debut of

popular cinematographer Vijay Milton. GV Prakash Kumar is composing the music for the film. Philomin Raj is in charge of the editing. Vinesh Banglan, the National Award-winning production designer (Kammarasambhavam) is taking care of the production design for *Japan*. The trio of Rajumurugan - Karthi - Dream Warrior Pictures have already created enough buzz among the audience with expectations mounting. The glimpse has increased curiosity.



# FINAL CALL ON ASIA CUP VENUE TO BE TAKEN AFTER IPL FINAL: BCCI SECY

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A decision on Asia Cup's fate will be taken on the sidelines of the IPL final, which will be attended by a host of top Asian Cricket Council (ACC) dignitaries, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Thursday.

Pakistan have the hosting rights for this year's Asia Cup but with BCCI deciding against sending its team to the neighbouring country without government permission, PCB chairman Najam Sethi had proposed a 'hybrid model' where they will organise at least four games on home soil and India will play their matches at a neutral venue.

It couldn't be confirmed whether Sethi has been formally invited for the IPL final.

"As of now, the decision with regards to hosting of Asia Cup hasn't yet been finalised. We are busy with IPL but the top dignitaries of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), Bangladesh and Afghanistan Cricket Board are coming to watch the IPL final. We will have a discussion and take a final decision in due



course," Jay Shah told PTI.

It has been learnt from ACC sources that Sethi's proposed hybrid model looks like a feasible solution although ACC had made no formal statements. According to the model, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan play

four preliminary matches in Pakistan and India would play all their games at neutral venues.

The two India-Pakistan games will also be held in Sri Lanka although the PCB wants them in Dubai. The weather in UAE in September is not at all

conducive for 50- over games although to make the 'hybrid model' work logistically, UAE is a far better option for the Asian Cricket Council.

"ACC head Jay Shah will summon an executive body meeting where a formal announcement will take place.

The PCB doesn't mind playing India at a neutral venue. "PCB would prefer Dubai because it would lead to more gate receipts but it is open to playing in another country (read Sri Lanka) provided the ACC matches the gate receipts amount (USD 0.5 million) that Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) received in 2022 from the Indo-Pak games in Dubai," an ACC source privy to development told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The window for the Asia Cup this year is between September 1-17.

## FORMAT AND OTHER MODALITIES

The six teams in the Asia Cup are India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal.

One group will have India, Pakistan and Nepal while the other group will comprise Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

According to ACC sources, if the hybrid model goes ahead, then Pakistan would like to host the following four games in their country.

These games are Pakistan vs Nepal, Sri Lanka v Bangladesh, Bangladesh vs Afghanistan and Afghanistan vs Sri Lanka.

As per the format, the top two teams from each group will constitute Super Fours where they again play against each other. After the Super Four round robin phase, the top two teams will play the final.

The Super Fours will ensure that at least two Indo-Pak encounters are guaranteed, which is profitable for the host nation, broadcaster as well as ACC.

If India and Pakistan qualify for the summit clash, then it will be three matches between the arch-rivals.

"Sethi has said that in preliminary round, Pakistan is only playing Nepal. His proposal is to make it six games with two Super four non-India matches, involving Pakistan to be played in Pakistan," the ACC source added.

As far as final is concerned, even if India doesn't qualify, the ACC will conduct it at a designated neutral country — Sri Lanka or UAE.



## MI face IPL champ GT in Qualifier 2

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Kash Madhwal's breathing performance against Lucknow Super Giants in the Eliminator would have given five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indians wings and they would be fancying their chances against defending champions Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 to be played in the world's largest stadium here on Friday.

Mumbai Indians, riding on magical figures of five for five produced by Madhwal at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Wednesday night, knocked out LSG from the race to the final with an 81-run win.

The massive MI victory was a warning to the rivals that they could lift their game according to the occasion even in the absence of star pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Jofra Archer and batting mainstay Tilak Varma.

MI pride themselves on thriving when the odds are stacked against them, something they have done throughout the season. Having finished last in the previous edition, Rohit Sharma's team has ground it out this season to remain in contention for a sixth IPL title even with limited resources.

The likes of Cameron Green, Suryakumar Yadav and Tim David have responded well to the challenges and now form the backbone of the batting department with the young Nehal Wadhwa too making a huge impact, and the opening pair of Rohit and Ishan Kishan doing a fair job.

It will be a stern test for the Titans' bowling attack, led by Mohammad Shami (26 wickets in 15 matches), to get the better of MI's bat-

ting, which has improved drastically towards the business end of the tournament.

Madhwal has been a revelation with the ball. The right-arm bowler returned a dream spell of 3.5-0-5-5 against LSG to put his side into the virtual semifinal after a three-wicket burst that set up victory in their crucial last league game against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Veterans Piyush Chawla (21 wickets in 15 matches) and Jason Behrendorff (14 wickets in 11 matches) have also been impressive, while an otherwise expensive Chris Jordan also enjoyed a fine outing of 2-1-7-1 in the Eliminator.

Gujarat Titans, outclassed and outgunned in Qualifier 1 by Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings, will have one last chance to gather themselves up and put their best foot forward in familiar conditions here in order to qualify for their second IPL final on the trot.

It will be imperative for the defending champions that their batting clicks in unison, since Shubman Gill and Vijay Shankar have done bulk of the heavy lifting with the bat in the last few games.

Gill might have had an off day against CSK but his two centuries in the closing stages of the league round make him the biggest threat for Mumbai Indians.

With 722 runs in 15 matches at an average of 55.53, including two centuries and four fifties, the India batter has 421 runs more than the second-best GT batter — Shankar with 301 runs in 12 matches — and is also just eight runs short of going past RCB's Faf du Plessis to finish with most runs in this IPL.

## Khelo India University Games kick-starts in UP

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has become a 'sangam' of sportspersons from across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday after inaugurating the Khelo India University Games.

Addressing the inaugural event virtually, Modi said the Commonwealth Games scam demonstrated the approach of the previous government towards sports.

The scam had surfaced during the tenure of the Congress-led UPA II Government in 2010.

"Earlier no attention was paid to the development of sports. It was considered that sports is a means only to spend spare time. But today, I am happy that the perception of society and parents has changed in the country," the prime minister said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and



Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur were among those present at the event.

This year, the Khelo India University Games are being held from May 25 to June 3 in Uttar Pradesh. Over 4,750 athletes from more than 200 universities will be competing in 21 sports. The competitions will be organised in Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Lucknow and Gautam Buddha Nagar.

The university games are part of various schemes launched by the government to support budding sportspersons and efforts have been put in to strengthen the sports ecosystem in the country.

The mascot of the games is named 'Jitu', which represents Swamp Deer (Barasingha) - the state animal of Uttar Pradesh. The closing ceremony of the games will be held in Varanasi on June 3.

## Individuals showed lot of character to reach successive WTC finals: Rohit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Captain Rohit Sharma feels all individuals showed a lot of character and stepped up when needed to take India to the World Test Championship final for the second consecutive time, especially after losing in the inaugural edition in 2021.

India will take on Australia at The Oval in the 2021-2023 cycle WTC final, starting June 7.

"After the World Test Championship (2021 final) in Southampton, we quickly had to regroup and get ready for the next cycle," Rohit said in a video posted by BCCI on its website.

"I thought in that cycle we played some really, really tough cricket. We were challenged a lot of times and I thought to come out of that was obviously going to take a lot of character from not just a few individuals, but everyone." Rohit was full of praise for the fighting character of his teammates after the disappointment of losing the inaugural WTC final to New Zealand in 2021.

"Look, it's a cycle of two years and we play a lot of Test



matches during that period. Lot(s) of players have played in that cycle," he said.

"Different individuals have stepped up, putting the performances that we were looking for from the individual."

In the upcoming WTC final, India will be without the services of three key players — Rishabh Pant, Shreyas Iyer and Jasprit Bumrah. While Bumrah and Iyer are down with injuries, Pant is recovering from a horrific car crash earlier in the year.

Besides Rohit, Pant and Iyer were the only two Indian batters to average over 40 in the inaugural WTC, scoring more than 500 runs, while Bumrah picked up 45 wickets from 10 Tests during that period.

Senior India batter

Cheteshwar Pujara said the team should recognise the contributions of the trio.

"There have been many players who have contributed to the team. Some of them are not part of this squad currently, but it's important that we recognise all the players that have contributed in this cycle," Pujara said. "It's been a great team effort... The team management, captain, everyone has been looking forward to this moment where we qualify for the WTC finals and the guys are really excited to play at The Oval. We've got some good memories playing against England in UK. Overall, if I look at the last couple of years, it's been a very good journey for the Indian Test team."

## I am not Bumrah's replacement: Madhwal

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Kash Madhwal, who engineered Mumbai Indians' comprehensive 81-run win over Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL Eliminator, doesn't consider himself as Jasprit Bumrah's replacement and is happy to fulfil the responsibility entrusted on him by the team.

Madhwal, an engineer from Uttarakhand, returned impressive figures of 5 for 5 in 3.3 overs as MI inched one step closer to the IPL summit clash on Wednesday night.

"I am trying my best to fulfil the responsibilities given to me by the team. I am not Bumrah's replacement but I'm trying my best to do what I can," Madhwal told reporters after the match.

Though the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai has not benefited the pacers much this season, Madhwal spoke about what worked for him.



"The wicket at Chepauk was good. As you saw, the ball was not gripping but skid-

ding. I am a swing/sling bowler, and I pitched my deliveries in hard lengths

aiming for wickets," he said. Madhwal said skipper Rohit Sharma knew his strengths and how to use him.

"Rohit bhaiya knew that yorkers were my strength but during the nets and practice matches, he also found that I can bowl well with the new ball," he said.

"So he had an idea as to how to use me as the situation warranted. I'm also very chilled out and relaxed and I'm having fun because I'm pursuing my passion."

Meanwhile, LSG bowler Naveen-ul-Haq said he enjoyed the "Kohli, Kohli" chants at the stadium on Wednesday as it gave him the passion to play well for his team.

During the league stage of the ongoing IPL, Naveen-ul-Haq had a heated chat with Royal Challengers Bangalore star Kohli. After the RCB-LSG game, the Afghan even posted Instagram stories

about mangoes whenever the Bangalore-based outfit did not perform well in their matches.

"I enjoy it. I like everyone in the ground chanting his (Virat Kohli) name or any other player's name."

"It gives me passion to play well for my team," he said after his brilliant spell of 4/38 against MI, albeit in a losing cause.

"Well I don't concentrate on the outside or the noise from outside or anything else. I just focus on my own cricket and my own process. Crowd chanting or anyone saying something doesn't affect me."

"As professional sportsmen you have to take this in your stride. When you don't do well for your team, fans are going to give it to you. And when you do good for your team, (the) same people are going to chant your name. Basically this is part and parcel of the game," he added.

## Bharat would be obvious choice to go with in WTC final: Shastri



PTI ■ DUBAI

Former India chief coach Ravi Shastri feels KS Bharat would be the "obvious choice" of the team management for the wicketkeeper's role in the World Test Championship final against Australia to be played in England next month.

With India's first-choice wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant recovering from a horrific car crash and his back-up KL Rahul recuperating from a surgery on his right thigh, the

Indian team management is in a dilemma on who to select between Bharat and Ishan Kishan as its first-choice gloveman for the WTC final at The Oval starting June 7.

Shastri said since Bharat had kept wickets during the Border-Gavaskar series earlier this year, he expected the 29-year-old to get the management's nod ahead of Kishan.

"You have to see who's a better keeper. Is it Bharat or Ishan Kishan? Now, the fact that Bharat was given a run against Australia, where he played all the Test matches, I think he would be the obvious choice to go with," Shastri said on the ICC Review. While Bharat gave a good account of himself behind the stumps, he was below-par with the bat, managing just 101 runs from six innings on turning tracks.



## MI peaking at right time: Cameron Green

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Cameron Green is finally justifying his Rs 17.5 crore billing just when Mumbai Indians needed him the most and is happy that his team after initial struggles is now a step away from the IPL summit clash.

Having pummelled Lucknow Super Giants by 81 runs in the Eliminator, MI will face defending champions Gujarat Titans on Friday in the second Qualifier to decide Chennai Super Kings' opposition in Sunday's final.

Green in fact said even skipper Rohit Sharma told newcomers in dressing room that the five-time champions are slow starters.

"Obviously, all experience that he (Rohit) has got for India and in IPL, he kind of knows. I think MI never won the first game of IPL and he tries to mention that to us," Green told Star Sports after having scored 40 odd and effecting two run-outs in LSG innings.

## Jason wants to renegotiate ECB contract in order to play MLC T20 in US

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Opener Jason Roy is mulling over renegotiating his contract with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in order to take up lucrative offers to play in the first season of the upcoming Major League Cricket (MLC) in the United States of America.

With global cricket ecosystem witnessing an increasing loyalty shift towards franchise-based T20 leagues, a lot of English cricketers like Roy would be sought after in every

league and it might make them think about the amount of time they want to devote in national duty.

Six players from England - Roy, Topley, Harry Brook, David Malan, Matthew Potts and David Willey - have incremental contracts with the ECB. The report informed that these contracts are worth around GBP 66,000 per year and act as a 'top-up to County salaries'.

Apart from the right-handed opening batter Roy, who recently played for the two-time Indian Premier



League winners Kolkata Knight Riders, fast bowler Reece Topley is also considering making the same move.

However, Topley's decision could be influenced by his fitness status following a surgery to his shoulder, reported ESPNcricinfo.

Topley was also last seen in the IPL, wherein he played a few initial matches for the Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The report added that England players, who are full central contracts, are not likely to feature in the MLC this

year but Roy has an incremental deal with the ECB, is planning to terminate it, which would help him to take up a role in the league to be played in the US.

The MLC is slated to be held from July 13-30 this year at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Texas.

The league has considerable backing from India and Australia, with four IPL team owners investing in as many MLC franchises and Australia's Cricket Victoria and Cricket New South Wales have stakes in

the remaining two teams.

The MLC's first edition is also set to clash with the English summer as the semifinal and final of the T20 Blast will be on July 15, whereas two County Championship games will also be in the same duration. Additionally, the ECB's Hundred starts on August 1.

Due to these fixtures, ECB will not issue NOCs which would enable their contracted players to take part in the MLC. While the fully-contracted players will not be able to negotiate a release with the

ECB, those who have incremental contracts are in a position to do so.

Meanwhile, Surrey are expecting Roy to play the MLC, most likely for LA Knight Riders, which will be between the end of the T20 Blast and the beginning of the Hundred.

Australia's Marcus Stoinis, South Africa's Quinton de Kock, Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga, South Africa's Anrich Nortje and New Zealand's Glenn Phillips have been revealed as the overseas signings in the MLC.