

- Harish Rao, Minister **PAGE - 4**

2

Cong can improve tally in TS if it openly embraces BRS

After the Congress' convincing win in the Karnataka Assembly elections, the party unit's leadership in Telangana wasted no time in claiming that the result was a harbinger of change across India. They proclaimed the Karnataka verdict to be a barometer of the changing public mood across India and a resounding rejection by the public of the Bharatiya Janata Party's ideology and Prime Minister Modi's waning popularity among the electorate. The Congress party's leaders and spokespersons, especially from its Telangana unit, in television debates and on public platforms, declared that the victory of the Congress party in the Telangana Assembly elections, which are due in six months, and the General Election early next year, are thus a foregone conclusion.

While the exuberance and cheer among the Telangana Congress leaders on their party's victory in the Karnataka elections are understandable, their extrapolations do not stand the test of either logic or history. Today, the electorate across India has been unambiguous in differentiating between national and state elections and elections in two states for their Assemblies. The results of the 2018 Assembly elections in Karnataka and the 2019 Lok Sabha elections clearly show that the electorate treats the state and national polls disjointedly. In the 2018 Assembly elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won 104 seats and stood as the single largest party (SLP). On the other hand, the Congress party won 80 seats and formed the government along with the Janata Dal (Secular), which won 37 seats.

It is widely acknowledged across the state that there's a huge anti-incumbency against the current Bharat Rashtra Samiti government headed by Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhara Rao (KCR), and the voters are looking for a party that can provide an alternative by defeating the BRS.

The results were starkly different in the Lok Sabha elections while the Congress-JD(S) government was in power in the state. The BJP won 25 seats, while the Congress, the JD(S) and an independent won one seat each. One can see a similar pattern repeating across many states all over India in the last election cycle. Prominent examples include Rajasthan, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh.

Later in 2018, just a few months before the General Election, the Congress secured clear majorities in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh Assembly elections. Though it fell just two seats short of an absolute majority in Madhya Pradesh, it formed governments in all three states. In the Lok Sabha elections held only a few months after, the Congress won a paltry three out of 65 seats up for grabs in the same three states. On the other hand, the BJP won a landslide 61 seats from these three states, nine more than the 52 seats Congress won from all the 29 states and



KISHORE POREDDY

seven Union Territories in India.

Coming to the Congress party's argument that their party's victory in Karnataka portends a similar win for it in the Telangana elections due in five months, once again, a look at the last election cycle will be instructive. Months after the Congress

performed decently well in Karnataka and formed a government along with JD(S), the Congress could only win 19 seats in the 2018 elections in Telangana, compared to the 21 seats it won in the 2014 elections. Moreover, in Andhra Pradesh, the other Telugu state neighbouring Karnataka, Congress lost every seat it contested. But, of course, even the BJP's performance in these two states did not correlate with its performance in Karnataka.

Suppose a victory in one state were to influence the results in another. In that case, BJP must have won the Karnataka election, which followed only a few months after the BJP's spectacular seventh straight victory in Gujarat.

Also, the recently held Gujarat and Himachal elections and the 2018 Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan,

Chhattisgarh, and Telangana elections demonstrate that even in states that go to elections the same day return different verdicts. While BJP won in Gujarat, it lost to the Congress party in Himachal Pradesh. Similarly, the Congress saw a decline in Telangana, while it gained sharply in the other three states.

By now, it is clear that every state's voters vote with their minds when it comes to state elections, and Telangana's voters are no exception.

It is widely acknowledged across the state that there's a huge anti-incumbency against the current Bharat Rashtra Samiti government headed by Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhara Rao (KCR), and the voters are looking for a party that can provide an alternative by defeating the BRS.

While the Congress party could convince the voters in the last two elections that it is the main opposition to BRS, voters in the state no longer believe the Congress to be fighting the BRS. Most MLAs who won on the Congress ticket in the 2014 and 2018 elections joined the BRS within months of winning.

On the one hand, the BJP victories in the GHMC and MLC elections, and in the by-polls to the Assembly after 2018, clearly show that the electorate believes that a vote for the Congress eventually leads to another seat for BRS. Indeed, the Congress may have better chances of improving its tally in the state, but only if it stops trying to deceive the voters that it is fighting the BRS and joins it in an open alliance.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

Liquor scam in Telangana too, says Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that a liquor scam had taken in Telangana too. He demanded that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao should find out who is behind the liquor scam.

Sanjay said that cheap liquor is being sold with expensive labels and challenged KCR to order an inquiry into this.

He said that Kavitha must be punished if she had a role in the Delhi liquor scam. He said that KCR and IT Minister KT Ramarao know that Kavitha is involved in the Delhi liquor scam, that's why they are not speaking about that.

He said that the BJP will not tolerate corruption and there is no scope for corruption under the Modi government.

No differences with Rajgopal & Eatala: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that he has no differences with party leaders Eatala Rajender and Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy.

He said that reports about differences in the Telangana BJP unit are a creation of the media and that the media has been trying to play down the BJP. He said that a section of the media has been conspiring to connect the BRS and the Congress.

Speaking to the media at Karimnagar on Friday, Sanjay said that Joining Committee Chairman Eatala Rajender would work as per the directions of the high command. "We will discharge our



responsibilities as per the high command's orders," he said. Sanjay said that there is no change in the BNJP's voting percentage in Karnataka. He said that KCR has been spending Rs 150 crore to show his existence. He asked KCR to reveal

why the state is spending so much when it is not in a position to pay salaries on time. He said that KCR had deployed 16 Intelligence officials to keep tabs on him and dismissed allegations that there was a secret understanding between him and

Minister Gangula Kamalakara.

Making it clear that he did not get any bribes from granite businessmen, Sanjay asked to show evidence if any regarding that.

Terming KCR as a 'bunking master', Sanjay said that KCR has been avoiding the Prime Minister's programmes, President's Dinner, Republic Day celebrations at the Raj Bhavan and other functions. KCR also did not meet the public, he said.

He asked KCR whether KCR is boycotting the inauguration of Parliament's new building and added that KCR has been behaving insulting the Constitution drafted by Ambedkar and the spirit of the federal system.

Revanth again asks BJP leaders to join Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BJP brass has admitted that BJP is third in Telangana, TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that the BJP's objective now is to prevent the Congress from winning and ensure the victory of the BRS.

Addressing the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Friday, Revanth said, "As we have been saying before the BJP and the BRS are one. KCR and Modi are inseparable twins. We need to understand this clearly. The Congress needs to win in Telangana."

ATTRACTED TO PINK PARTY



Praveen Shinde, senior Shiv Sena Party (Shinde Group) leader, joined the BRS in the presence of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao on Friday

Future is in Hyd, says Eric Garcetti

Continued from page 1

He said it is the dream of any ambassador for the President to visit their country and that he has been lucky that as Modi and Biden met thrice.

"Recently the PM met in Japan. Now, it is the third time in history that an Indian Prime Minister visits the White House and then Biden will be coming to India for G20. This is a pivotal relationship between not just India and the US, but the entire planet is counting on this relationship. This is not a transaction between two countries but a relationship. We are working towards the 4Ps, prosperity, planet, people and peace."

Speaking on cultural ties he said, "It is culture and people ties which are reflected. It is Tollywood that created the best song of the movie 'Naatu Naatu' and won an Academy Award this year." Speaking about IPL, he said he would be going for the finale and said "Sorry for Hyderabad." He read out a poem of Sri Sri, "maro prapancham pilchindi andariki mundhu podham pai paiki." Reporters were quick to point out that the author was a staunch Communist. Responding Eric said, "Regardless of our philosophies we should have a communitarian relationship."

Cong appoints panel to study GO No: 111 cancellation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has appointed a 7-member fact-finding committee to study the cancellation of GO No: 111. Kisan Congress Vice-President M. Kodanda Reddy will head the committee.

TPCC Working President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said that Ram Mohan Reddy, Narsimha Reddy, Gnaneshwar, economist Lubna Sharwat, and Dr Jaswin Jairath will be members of the committee. The committee will study the effects of the cancellation of GO No: 111 on the Himayat Sagar and Osman Sagar reservoirs.

Kodanda said that the committee will examine the effects at the ground level and prepare a comprehensive report.

On Friday, TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that KCR cancelled the GO after the sale of all lands coming under the limits of GO No: 111 and that there was a big scam behind the cancellation of the GO.

TS irrigation projects need national tag: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao said that Telangana projects need the national tag.

In a tweet he said, "A contributing state to the nation's growth needs to be recognised by the Centre. Once a parched area today Telangana is turning into the granary of India. We have requested the Centre in the past and once again reiterate that Telangana irrigation projects should be supported by conferring them National Project Status."

He shared a clipping of "The Pioneer's report on May 6 which read, 'Telangana seeks national status for two of its irrigation projects'. The 13th meeting of the Standing Committee of Southern Zonal Council was held at Chennai where Telangana raised the issue of conferring National Project status for the Kaleshwaram Project and the Palamuru Rangareddy (LIS) Irrigation Projects.

Businesses...

Continued from page 1

They said that they are aware that it is a violation but their management did not give them any update.

They said that they are not accepting Rs 2000 notes until clear guidelines are issued for shops. Only a few banks are accepting Rs 2000 notes and it took us a lot of time to find those banks."

Tiwari Raju, the owner of a medical store in Banjara Hills, expressed his discontent. "It is unacceptable to burden shopkeepers with the responsibility of getting rid of these notes. If the public wants to exchange them, they should go to banks and deposit them. They are trying to unload these notes on us. We will not accept them," he said. An online survey conducted by an independent organization called 'Local Circles' revealed that 91% of respondents faced problems when attempting to use the Rs 2,000 note for transactions.

HMDA issues legal notice to...

Continued from page 1

"However, as the Concession Agreement is yet to be concluded no requirement of any payment by the concessionaire has emerged so far as falsely alleged by Revanth Reddy who has made wild allegations without verifying information and facts," the HMDA said.

The HMDA said that the statements made by Revanth Reddy reeks of malice and

CVC accepted...

Continued from page 1

He said that he had mentioned in his complaint that the Telangana government will incur a loss of around Rs 15,000 crore.

were made with the intention to gain political mileage and a false, concocted narrative is

being built by him to destroy public confidence in the state's executive machinery.

"The legal notice clarifies that the TOT process has been strictly carried out in accordance with rules," the HMDA said. The HMDA says that while a political discourse on an issue cannot be prevented, it cannot be maliciously utilised to defame a person or entity without due verification of facts.

SC stays part of HC...

Continued from page 1

The bench was hearing two petitions, including the one filed by Vivekananda Reddy's daughter, Suneetha Narreddy, challenging the high court order granting conditional bail to T Gangi Reddy, while allowing a plea for its cancellation. The other petition was filed by T Gangi Reddy challenging the high court's order cancelling the bail. "Re-list on July 14. Till the next date, the

following part of the order dated April 27 passed by the high court shall remain stayed..." the bench said. In its April 27 order, the high court had said, "Accused No.1 (T Gangi Reddy) is directed to surrender on or before May 05, 2023. On his surrender, he shall be remanded to judicial custody till June 30, 2023, which is the outer limit fixed by the Supreme Court for completion of investigation by CBI."

Jagan knew about Viveka murder much before news broke out: CBI

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada: In an interesting twist in the Viveka murder case, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has mentioned the name of CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in a fresh additional counter affidavit filed before the Telangana High Court vacation bench on Friday. The CBI claims that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was informed about the death of his uncle Vivekananda Reddy, much before the news was broken to the outside world by the slain former minister's PA MV Krishna Reddy.

While listing out the 'fresh grounds' for it to oppose the anticipatory bail to YSRCP MP YS Avinash Reddy, the CBI, in its additional affidavit, said: "It is submitted that further investigation on the larger conspiracy aspect revealed that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the present CM of Andhra Pradesh, had been informed about the death of YS Vivekananda Reddy in the early hours of March 15, 2019, much before the information about the death of YS Vivekananda Reddy broke out through MV Krishna Reddy at around 06:15 am.

Rahul gets court NOC for...

Continued from page 1

Therefore, this court after going through the submissions of both the sides and after perusal of the record is of the view that ends of justice would suffice if the applicant is granted NOC for renewal of the passport of the applicant as per rules for a period of three years," the judge said.

Gandhi is scheduled to visit the United States in the first week of June during which he

will attend meetings and interact with university students. He is slated to visit Washington DC, New York and San Francisco. The Congress leader will likely address Indian Americans, meet lawmakers at the US Capitol, and interact with members of think tanks, Wall Street executives and university students during his stay.

The magisterial court, in the forenoon, reserved its order on Gandhi's plea for grant of

NOC after hearing submissions of his lawyers and Swamy.

Swamy opposed the application, saying it was "devoid of any merit" and insisted the passport should be issued only for one year and renewed every year thereafter.

"It is a special case. The passport should not be issued for 10 years. It seems wrong," he said, and claimed Gandhi's Indian citizenship was under question.

KCR to...

Continued from page 1

The Telangana Police has been number one in the country for the last eight years in completing the passport verification process.

Hyderabad city will witness patrol cars and a Blue Colts rally on Necklace Road and all those under the jurisdiction of Hyderabad, Rachakonda and Cyberabad Police Commissionerates will participate. A demonstration with police bands will be held in front of the Ambedkar statue from 4 pm to 7 pm. An exhibition on the theme 'Know Your Protectors', and various other programmes will be held along with performances by troupes of police vigilance artists.

K'taka CM...

Continued from page 1

Former TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that Congress MPs are not attending the inauguration of the new Parliament building.

He said that Article 79 made it clear how Parliament should be. But Prime Minister Modi has been behaving as if 'Modi means Parliament'.

AICC secretary Manthani MLA D. Sridhar Babu said that people have clarified their decision in the election results of Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. He said that they will expose the BRS government's failures during the 20-day programme.

Bonalu from June 22, Rs 15 crore ...

Continued from page 1

The Minister said that after the formation of Telangana state, Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao had declared it a state festival and is being organised grandly.

He said that the government has allocated Rs 15 crore for the Bonala Utsavam which will start on June 22. Bonalu will start in Golconda on June 22, the Secunderabad Mahankali Bonalu on July 9 and the Old City Bonalu on July 16.

He explained that as per the Chief Minister's orders, this year the Bonala festival will be organised in a peaceful manner without any trouble for devotees.

He said the government provides financial assistance to many private temples for organising Bonala festivals grandly, and that no government is providing financial assistance like this anywhere in the country.

Around Rs 200 crore will be spent on arrangements under various government departments on the occasion of Bonalu. During Bonalu festivals lakhs of devotees come not only from the city but also from other states to visit the goddess and offer bonalas and pray.

Govt committed to providing quality healthcare to people

PNS ■ NALGONDA

The State government has adopted innovative methods to provide quality healthcare to people, according to Minister for Health T Harish Rao on Friday. Harish Rao, along with Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy, laid foundation stones for several development activities and also inaugurated projects. The Minister laid the foundation for the new village panchayat building at Vemulapally. The government released Rs 21 lakh for the construction of the building. They also inaugurated the “dedicated paediatric care unit.” They laid the foundation stone for a building to double the bed strength from 100 to 200 in Area Hospital in Miryalaguda. The government earmarked Rs 14.60 crore for the buildings. They also laid the foundation stone for buildings in various mandals to house Palle Dawkhanas (village dispensaries). The buildings would be built at a cost of Rs 5.60 crore. Rajya Sabha member Badugun Lingaiah, Miryalaguda MLA N Bhaskar Rao, and Devarakonda MLA Ravinder Kumar were also present.

‘Frustrated oppn parties spreading lies against govt’

PNS ■ NALGONDA

“Frustrated opposition is spreading lies against the government,” said Minister for Finance T Harish Rao on Friday and vowed to give a “befitting response to the vicious campaign.”

Speaking at Atmeeya Sammelan at Miryalaguda in Nalgonda district, the Minister asked the party cadre to reach out to people and apprise them of the unprecedented development during the last nine years. “We have a weapon to nail the lies. That is development. By creating awareness among people about the government’s welfare schemes and development activities,” he observed.

Harish Rao pointed out that Telangana secured awards at the national level because of its remarkable performance. The nation was proud of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. Under the Congress regimes, all the nine undivided districts in Telangana regions, except Hyderabad, remained backward in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. “If the BJP unleashes vicious campaign, the BRS activists must teach a lesson to the leaders of the saffron party by educating the people,” Harish Rao pointed out. The Congress government during its 10 rule had created just 6,000 jobs. The BRS government, however, filled 1.35 lakh vacancies in the State. “There is no unemployment in Telangana. But, there is political unemployment in the Congress



Minister for Finance T Harish Rao speaking at a meeting in Miryalaguda on Friday

party,” he said and asserted the people voted for KCR for two consecutive terms and the ruling party would emerge victorious for the third consecutive term, he asserted. The Congress would find it difficult to get candidates in 40 to 50 constituencies, he said.

Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy, who participated in the meeting as chief guest, recalled that the farm-lands in the Telangana region were left parched for 16 years in the combined Andhra Pradesh. The Ministers from the Telangana region remained

mute spectators for the sake of power, he said. “In double engine government, 35 to 40 per cent of people are suffering from starvation. Telangana made rapid strides to development on all fronts,” he said.

Under the KCRs rule only, Krishna water was released 16 times for irrigation to help farmers in the Nalgonda district, he reminded the people. The paddy yield touched 40 lakh tonnes in Nalgonda district from mere 3.5 lakh tonnes in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. He exuded confidence that the BRS would win all 12 Assembly constituencies in the district. Local MLA N Bhaskar Rao presided over the meeting.

Cong insulted Telangana Formation, martyrs: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Formation Day on June 2 is a Festival of four crore people. The Congress wants to celebrate Formation Day as a “fail Telangana programme.” “Will anyone celebrate a good occasion like this? Telangana has not failed, Congress has failed.” He was speaking at BRS Atmeeya Sammelan at Huzurnagar. “You did not come together during the Telangana movement and even didn’t resign for the cause of statehood. The Congress turned its back and fled. They did not come together in the movement then, they are not coming together in development today. They are not coming together to celebrate with the people of Telangana.” The Congress insulted the formation of the Telangana State, the Telangana race and the sacrifices of Telangana martyrs. KCR changed the fate of Telangana. If Telangana practised, then the country will follow. Kishan Reddy, who did not resign from Telangana, announced that Telangana Utsav would be held. He questioned the merging of seven

mandals in AP, not giving Bayyaram steel factory, and not funding Mission Bhagiratha, Kakatiya, medical colleges, and tribal universities. “One says that Telangana has failed, the other says that we have done something for Telangana and celebrates. Kishan Reddy, you have no right to celebrate till what is due to Telangana comes”, Harish Rao said. “Revanth Reddy has a twisted mind. He speaks a lot of crooked words. He doesn’t even know how jobs are filled. Vacancies are not filled by TSPSC alone. As you said, we have filled 37,000 posts through TSPSC alone. I said the same. You don’t understand the real thing and you ramble on. TSPSC is not the only one filling jobs. Telangana State Level Police Recruitment Board, Junior Panchayat Secretaries, Singareni Coalies Company Limited, By power companies, DCCBs, Through TRT, teacher posts in gurukula. Replacement of doctors by Telangana Medical Recruitment Board. Thousands of jobs have been filled like this.” He said In total, the government has filled 1,32,899 jobs so far. Another 80000 posts are being filled.

Niranjan warns Cong against ‘tongue-lashing’

PNS ■ WANAPARTHI

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy on Friday went at the Congress leaders hammer and tongs for spewing venom against the State government. “The four-and-half decade Congress rule was responsible for the ills plaguing the Mahabubnagar district,” he pointed out.

Reacting to the criticism by the Congress leaders at Jadcherla public meeting on Thursday, the Minister said, “The Congress government in the past failed to provide succour to people. It resulted in a large number of people from the district migrating to far-off places in search of livelihood. A large number of farmers, too, committed suicides.” He wondered whether Congress leaders had no shame to ask for votes now after committing the sin of depriving the people of their livelihood in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.

In sharp contrast to the Congress rule, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government rolled out more welfare schemes and implemented developmental activities in the district. The migration of people from the district to far-off places in search of liveli-

hood was reversed.

The people in the undivided Mahabubnagar district voted for BRS candidates in 13 of 14 Assembly constituencies. The Congress leaders cannot atone for their sins even if they served the people throughout their life. The Congress leaders cannot mislead the people in Telangana, he said.

The Congress leaders, Niranjan Reddy said, have been dreaming about coming to power after the party won the elections in Karnataka. The Congress leaders embarked on a people’s march and padayatra for the sake of power. The people in the district knew that the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation project was stalled by the Congress leaders.

In the new State of Telangana, the BRS government changed the face of Palamuru district. With the government providing irrigation, the people, particularly the farmers, were no long migrating to far-off places in search of livelihood, the Minister said. “Gruel centres were opened during the Congress regime. Now, in the new State of Telangana, we opened paddy procurement centres,” he remarked.



Revanth is spreading falsehood, says Srinivas Goud

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Minster for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud on Friday came down heavily on Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president A Revanth Reddy for “spreading falsehood.”

Speaking at a media conference here, the Minister described the TPCC president’s claims as ridiculous. “If the Congress developed the Palamuru district, the need for a movement for the statehood of Telangana would not have arisen.

Before the formation of Telangana State, Mahabubnagar district was consistently listed among the most backward and drought-prone in India. The district was synonymous with the migration of the poor to far-off lands in search of livelihood. The people in the district used to get drinking water once in 14 days during the Congress rule. “Now, the BRS government under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has been supplying potable water to people daily,” he said. The government has also been providing round-the-clock, he pointed out.

Telangana was the only State which was providing input subsidy to farmers under the Rythu Bandhu scheme,



Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud speaking at a media conference in Mahabubnagar on Friday

Srinivas Goud said and asked why the Congress-ruled States have not implemented the scheme in their States. There were just 30 hostels before 2014 and now the BRS government has set up 140 Gurukula Schools to provide quality education for students from poor families. The Chief Minister said that the Gurukula Schools would be upgraded into degree colleges soon, he said.

The BRS government completed the projects which were left incomplete. The Congress government abandoned several projects after laying foundation stones, he pointed out. While the successive Congress governments constructed projects and provided irrigation

for just 2 lakh acres since Independence, the BRS government during the last nine years provided irrigation to 8 lakh acres in the Mahabubnagar district, he observed.

Srinivas Goud pointed out that the Congress government had failed to complete even the Kalwakurthy lift irrigation project which has just 2 tmc ft capacity. The State government has now been constructing the massive Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation project with 70 tmc ft capacity, he said.

The youth were attracted to Naxalism because of poverty, he said and added that Congress was responsible for it.

KCR criticised for staying away from crucial meeting

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government should reveal why the Governor was not invited to the inauguration of the Secretariat, Union Tourism Minister G. Kishan Reddy said.

He said that KCR’s refusal to attend meetings convened by the Centre is an act of irresponsibility.

Addressing the media on Friday in Hyderabad, Kishan said that if the BRS does not come should the inauguration of the Parliament building be postponed?

He said that his name, the local MP, was not even on the plaque of the twin towers and that the BJP is not in a position to argue with the BRS.

Kishan said that opposition parties are making unnecessary noise regarding the



inauguration of the new Parliament building. It is irresponsible for KCR not to attend meetings convened by the Centre.

Boycotting Saturday’s NITI Aayog meeting was a mischievous act, he said and added that due to the attitude of KCR, Telangana state which was achieved through a long struggle, is losing.

He said that it is a shame that the Chief Minister did not

attend the Prime Minister’s official functions and that the state is losing due to the confrontational attitude of KCR.

Kishan said that KCR has failed to make Telangana’s voice heard where there was an opportunity and Telangana will suffer due to this.

KCR has time to go to Maharashtra, but he has no time to go to garland the statues of Ambedkar or Jagjivan Ram, he said.

CM skipping NITI Aayog meeting does not augur well for TS: FG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Forum for Good Governance requested the Chief Minister of Telangana to attend the “NITI AAYOG” (National Institution for Transforming India) meeting and mention the grievances of the State and try to get them solved.

Padmanabha Reddy in a letter said, “The State government may be having differences with Union Government, one of the forums to address the grievance is the platform of NITI AAYOG. Continuously boycotting the NITI AAYOG will not augur well for the people of Telangana. The

Civil Societies have a reason to believe that personal ego is overtaking the interest of the State.”

The letter was based on reports in the media that the Chief Minister of Telangana is not attending the meeting being held on 27 May in New Delhi. Since the last couple of years the Chief Minister of Telangana is not attending the NITI AAYOG meetings.

In this regard, Forum for Good Governance - a Civil Society Organization - said, “In a democracy, there will be many political parties with different ideologies but when it comes to governance they all follow the constitution. In

India the states are not independent though they are autonomous in the fields allotted to them, they are still dependent on the union for several purposes.”

NITI AAYOG is a body headed by the Prime Minister and all the Chief Ministers, Central Ministers, L.t Governors of U.T.s. sa members. Inter-alia, the objectives of NITI AAYOG are: To evolve a shared vision of national development priorities with the active involvement of states. To faster Cooperative federalism recognizing that a strong state makes a strong nation. To pay special attention to the upliftment of needy people etc.

‘Development is conspicuous by absence under BRS rule’

PNS ■ GADWAL

BJP national vice-president D K Aruna on Friday claimed that the district witnessed development in all sectors when she was the minister. During the last nine years, the development was conspicuous by its absence, she said.

Speaking at a meeting, shortly after hoisting party flags at Ryalampadu, Marla Beedu, Bhureddyally, Chennareddyally and Dadoor villages, the district would have turned into a desert but for the Nettekpadu project.

The State government, she said, has laid cement concrete roads with the funds given by the Centres. The Centre has been funding the mid-day meal programme, Anganwadi and nutritious food provisions. She wondered whether the government building double bedroom houses in urban areas or rural areas.

Aruna said that the BRS was speaking about the schemes only ahead of the elections. They claimed to



BJP national vice-president D K Aruna speaking at a meeting in Gadwal on Friday

have been implementing schemes like double bedroom houses, sheep distribution, etc only ahead of elections.

Under the BRS rule, Telangana was not turned into “Bangaru Telangana,” but it benefited the KCR family and party activists, she alleged. She said that the BRS had looted funds in the name of projects. The surface of the road started peeling off, but there were no repairs, she said.

Aruna appealed to people to reject the BRS in the next elections and elect BJP.



BJP to hold mega job mela on June 3, 4

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP will organise a mega job mela on June 3 and 4 in Hyderabad with the cooperation of the Central government.

Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy on Friday said that this mela is the first sort of it in South India. He asked the unemployed youth to register their names for the mela.

He said that the jobs will be for the 8th class to PhD. He suggested that the unemployed youth come along with their certificates, he said.

Former MLA joins Cong



PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Former MLA Patlolla Sashidhar Reddy on Friday joined the Congress party in the presence of TPCC president A Revanth Reddy and AICC in charge of Telangana Manikrao Thakre.

Sashidhar Reddy won from the constituency in 2004 on the Janata party ticket. He continued as a Congress party associate member till 2009. He was defeated in the 2009 Assembly elections. He recently joined the BJP, but he could not continue in the party. He returned to the Congress party fold now.

Sashidhar Reddy’s brother Upender Reddy contested on the Congress ticket in 2018 but failed to win.

NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

Pattas for social justice in Amaravati: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy formally launched the programme of distribution of house site pattas to 50,793 poor women beneficiaries in the R-5 zone spread over Guntur and NTR districts. The Chief Minister also formally launched the programme of handing over to the beneficiaries 5,024 TIDCO houses constructed at a cost of Rs 443.71 crore in CRDA region.

Addressing a huge public meeting of beneficiaries here on Friday before distributing the house site pattas, the Chief Minister said construction of houses in all 25 layouts will begin on July 8 coinciding with the Jayanti of his father and former chief minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy. In the next one week, geo-tagging of all beneficiaries would be completed, he said.

Government will spend Rs 2000 cr for the construction of houses and providing infrastructure in 25 layouts benefiting 23,762 poor women who got house site pattas in 11 layouts in Guntur district and 27,031 women who received the pattas in 14 layouts in NTR district.

The day remains special not only



in the State history but also in the history of the country as the TDP-backed farmers fought in vain to stop the distribution of house sites by creating legal hurdles and approaching even the Supreme Court saying demography of the CRDA would be disturbed.

“These are not just house site pattas, they are social justice instruments too,” he said and described the event as historical and unprecedented.

Explaining about the three options under which the houses would be constructed, he said under the first option, the Government would transfer Rs 1, 80,000 directly into the bank

accounts of beneficiaries who want to construct the dwelling units on their own. Under the second option, the Government would transfer the labour expenses directly into the bank accounts of beneficiaries after supplying cement, steel and door frames and under the third option, the Government will fully take upon the responsibility of construction.

In all options, sand would be provided free to the beneficiaries while quality steel, cement and door frames would be supplied at subsidized rates as per the policy adopted in all Jagannanna colonies across the State, he clarified.

Government would also arrange bank loans up to Rs 35,000 each for all beneficiaries at 25 paise interest for expediting the construction, he said, adding the beneficiaries are free to choose the option.

So far, house sites were given to 30, 75,000 poor women across the State, out of which 21 lakh women were sanctioned houses each worth Rs. 2. 5 lakh, he said, adding that the worth would go up to Rs 5 or Rs 10 lakh. This amounts to creating property worth Rs 3 lakh crore on the whole, he said.

Yechury raps Union govt for not extending invite to Prez

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

General secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), Sitaram Yechury, announced that 19 opposition parties had opposed and boycotted the inaugural programme of the new Parliament building. However, he raised concerns about the absence of the President of India during the inaugural ceremony, despite the President’s role as an integral part of Parliament.

Sitaram Yechury, the prominent leader of the CPM, addressed the media at the MBVK in Vijayawada on Friday, accompanied by politburo member MA Baby and State secretary V Srinivasa Rao.

He alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s disregard for the President of India was a violation of the



Indian Constitution. Referring to Article 79 of the Constitution, Yechury highlighted that the President of India holds the responsibility for the functioning of Parliament and the Rajya Sabha.

Furthermore, Yechury emphasised that Prime Minister Modi should recognise that his role is that of the leader of the ruling party, not the leader of Parliament. He asserted that the leader of the opposition party should have the rank of a cabinet minister. Yechury also stressed that the President of India’s approval is

necessary for the ruling party’s proposed bills to gain legality, as all rights ultimately rest with the President.

Addressing the issue of accountability, Yechury stated that the government should be answerable to Parliament, just as Members of Parliament are answerable to the people. He called upon everyone to condemn the discriminatory treatment of the President of India.

In addition, Yechury emphasised the need for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to investigate financial irregularities involving Adani. He criticised what he perceived as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s authoritarian rule, highlighting the potential danger it poses to the country. He also criticized the demonetization and referred to it as an impulsive decision, drawing a parallel to historical actions taken by Tughlaq.

Danger of populism

The Karnataka election may spur competitive populism among various political parties

The Congress' impressive victory in the Karnataka Assembly election has not just added a new dynamic in national politics but also cast a shadow on the future of economic reforms. In general, reforms are put on the back burner in the period before a general election. PV Narasimha Rao carried out the historic liberalisation in the first three years of his tenure (1991-96). Similarly, in the last year of his tenure, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, another great liberaliser, also did not privatise any public sector undertaking (PSU). Once again, there are news reports that the Narendra Modi Government will not take up any new PSU for sale, though the Government would continue with the ongoing deals involving disinvestment in IDBI Bank, Shipping Corporation, BEML and Container Corporation of India (Concor). An official was quoted in a report, saying, "Even the proposed privatisation of two public-sector banks and a general insurance firm has been postponed." The reasons are not difficult to find. It is very easy for socialists and vested interests to find fault with any privatization deal. They malign everything and everyone—the idea of privatization, the process, the privatisers, the government that does it, the economists and experts who favour the sale of PSUs. They deploy all tricks and proffer fallacious arguments in their jihad privatization: sale of family silver to pay the grocer's bill, national assets being sold for a song, etc. If they fail to stop a privatisation, they begin harassing the privatisers. Arun Shourie, disinvestment minister in the Vajpayee cabinet, is still facing court cases decades after the transactions were made.



Besides, the political cost of liberalisation is high—or at least politicians believe that. Vajpayee's defeat in 2004, for example, was falsely attributed to his government's liberalising moves. It was not just Left-leaning intellectuals but also many RSS luminaries linked his unexpected loss with the reforms his government carried out. Public discourse at that time—and to some extent even now—was heavily influenced by socialist dogmas. The most prominent dogma sees the economy as a zero-sum game: one gains only at the expense of the other. So, if India was shining, as the BJP claimed, Bharat must be whining. In such a milieu, the Congress shrewdly coined the slogan, 'Aam aadmi ko kya mila.' In such a social, cultural and political milieu, the Modi Government should be lauded for just slowing down and not discarding privatisation. But the danger of populism is real—and it might grow. The grand old party took recourse to populism in Karnataka, and handed over a bill of Rs 50,000-60,000 crore to the State's taxpayer. The GOP and other parties are likely to come up with more freebies and entitlements; the BJP, willy-nilly, may be forced to enter the race of competitive populism. If that happens, economic reforms will suffer a terrible setback.

PICTALK



Deer play inside an enclosure at the Bikaner zoo, on Friday.

PTI

Who bears the huge cost of freebies?

The concept of a welfare state is always a welcome idea but the cost of welfare should not be such that it crumbles the state itself

Siddaramaiah has taken oath as CM for the newly elected Karnataka government and the first googly has come out on the five promises which were hyped by Congress scion Rahul Gandhi. In the election manifesto, the Yuvanidhi scheme was announced to give Rs. 3,000 per month for two years to unemployed graduates and Rs. 1,500 per month for two years to unemployed diploma holders. However, minister Priyank Kharge has clarified that it would be affected for the academic year 2022-2023.

As per the initial estimates, the annual cost of five promises would be Rs. 50,000 crores but the actual numbers might exceed this. Debt levels of Karnataka have more than doubled over five years and the 'Debt: State GDP' ratio has increased from 18.4% in 2018 to 23.4% in 2023. Certain parts of the increase in debt can be attributed to external factors like the Covid-19 pandemic but there is an important factor that we all must understand.

Some of the existing welfare schemes might be withdrawn by the new govern-



ment to save some money while new schemes get introduced. In this case, people will benefit only from the differential. The fiscal deficit for FY23 was estimated at around Rs. 61,564 crores and it will exceed Rs. 1 lakh crore with the additional expense even if a tax buoyancy of 10% is factored YoY. It's important to highlight that the GST compensation cess is no longer there to fund the extravaganzas of politicians. For perspective, the compensation cess in Karnataka budget was Rs. 25,267 crores in FY 2021-22 which came down to Rs. 5,000 crores in FY 2022-23.

If we keep politics aside, it can be seen from the state finances that the debt level has gone up for almost all the

states (except a few like Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh) over the last five years. Political compulsion will never allow the politicians to extend their vision beyond the short-term electoral gains and therefore India needs a law on the freebie culture. Of course, it is going to be a tough exercise because no one would like his hands tied by a piece of legislation and its hard to avoid the temptation which brings you close to the power but we need some fiscal prudence if this country does not choose to be walking on the similar path like Sri Lanka and Venezuela. The Finance Commission, which is a constitutional body, has already highlighted the risk of state debts reaching an unsustainable limit.

The concept of a welfare state is always a welcome idea but the cost of welfare should not be such that it crumbles the state itself. Politicians and activists who keep floating their utopian ideas and taking shelter of our constitution for all their stupidity, forget that Article 292 and 293 of the same constitution talks about borrowings and mandates it to be within the

limits specified by the legislature. The Constituent Assembly of India discussed these articles on 10th August 1949 and thought in a different context but the importance of the purpose of the loan was highlighted by Shri H. V. Kamath. Existing political leadership across the board might be shortsighted but Ananthasayanam Ayyangar emphasised the impact of borrowings in the constituent assembly discussion and his words can be referred to in today's context 'So far as borrowing is concerned—they may be short or long-term, imposing heavy obligations upon not only the present generation but future generation also'.

We must remember that nothing comes free in this world. If the cost of freebies is curtailing the capital expenses, piling up the debt, and slashing the social sector expenses like education, healthcare etc. then freebies are not free at all and we all will be paying the price one way or the other.

(The writer is a chartered accountant, and policy analyst. Views expressed are personal)



SHASHANK SAURAV

FIRST COLUMN

**FAITH AS INTERACTION,
NOT AS KNOWLEDGE**

We must approach God by exercising our free will, which can be done in multiple ways



AJIT KUMAR **BISHNOI**

Yes, it is not a matter of knowledge. With the advent of the internet, who is not aware of God? But how many pursue this knowledge? Very few to say the least. Why? Because faith comes from interaction with God. We approach God and He responds, otherwise this relationship is a non-starter. A simple example will help. I don't have any interaction with a particular resident of my neighbourhood. There will be no progress in my relationship with that person. Yes, we must get in touch with God, who limits himself to instruct us through bonafide scriptures, preachers, who have a wide following, etc. We must approach God by exercising our free will. And we can do so in multiple ways like praying to God, going to a temple, chanting God's name, etc. Every such act is taken notice of by God, who responds appropriately.

To bring clarity to this phenomenon, I will narrate my experience in this connection. The very first thing God notices is our dutifulness. We, human beings, have been given the responsibility of doing our duties according to time, place and circumstances. This is how the creation can go on. Lord Krishna warns that even maintenance of the body will not be possible through inaction. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 3.8) God gets interested in those who are dutiful. The next thing, which impresses God is obeying dharma. After all, dharma is the bedrock on which the creation rests. God even incarnates to re-establish dharma. (4.8) Now such persons are keenly watched because such people become good people. The mode of goodness in them becomes predominant by overpowering the other two modes of passion and darkness. (14.10) If such a person requests help, God is prepared to do so; one just has to sincerely pray for it.



We normally seek help from God in two ways. One is to get out of some trouble and the other is to gain something material like a decent job. What is God's response? Let us understand one simple rule: God is always just; He couldn't be favouring someone at the cost of another, as will be in the case of landing a job. However, God can be more generous in case of helping someone to recover from a major illness. In this case, also, God has to determine if the sick person deserves such a favour and how much. But all said and done, God does respond. How much and when is decided by God, as found appropriate by Him. No request for help is ignored; only the quantum and the quality are to be decided.

In one matter, God is more forthcoming, i.e. to guide. If a person is sincerely seeking guidance to do something noble, God will be very keen to help, because being the owner of everything, He must encourage what suits the creation. Don't we need good people to keep all of us going? God gives the right intelligence, as in the case of medical scientists. If someone is genuinely looking for a medical solution, which can help millions, and the motive is not to encash it to the fullest extent, God will help. What do you think we will do if we were to decide? God gives me spiritual solutions to common problems about which I can write. One may call it realisation as it really helps me personally. What more than any other favour reinforces faith is peace, which we all know is sought by everyone, but only a few manage it.

The conclusion is to approach God in ways, which please Him, about which He has given detailed instructions. Swami Ravi Das was a leatherworker. He had no formal education, but he became a great devotee of God. Knowledge is helpful only as a tool, even spiritual; it must be practised. Spiritual activities take us to a higher level. Therefore, let us get going and link with the owner of the creation. He is waiting and He has plenty to give.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

The tragedy for workers in today's 'gig' economy

All temporary, freelance and contract workers must be properly defined and identified to ensure minimum wages, maximum working hours and social security

You see many youths around you, who deliver the goods coming via e-commerce apps and websites. Similarly, millions of drivers all over the world provide app-based taxi services. E-commerce and technology-driven businesses have become a major part of the economy these days. This section of the economy is known as the 'gig economy' and the people working there are called 'gig' workers. Recently, the delivery workers of an e-commerce company named 'Blinkit' went on a one-day strike, which was also given a lot of importance by the media. The case was that a company called 'Blinkit', which claims to supply consumers with their grocery requirements in 10 minutes to half an hour, had reduced the



ASHWANI **MAHAJAN**

payment to its delivery agents by half. Significantly, before this change, the company used to pay Rs 25 to the delivery agent for each delivery. Till about a year ago, the delivery agents were given Rs 50 per delivery. Delivery workers' complaint is that fuel costs have skyrocketed during this period, but their wages have shrunk to a quarter.

The reality is that today youth in big and small cities are forced to work as delivery agents in the absence of any decent employment. In the initial phase, these workers also used to earn sufficiently, but due to low payouts, now their economic condition has become very pathetic. The reality is that in the absence of alternative employment, it has become almost a compulsion

for the youth to work as delivery agents.

On the other hand, companies like 'Ola' and 'Uber' providing app-based taxi services have also started charging highly exploitative commissions from taxi drivers. Due to this, the drivers of 'Ola' and 'Uber' have also resorted to agitational means like strikes many times. But the exploitative commission policy of 'Ola' and 'Uber' continues unabated. Despite the strike by Blinkit's delivery agents, no solution is in sight.

Gig workers like drivers of 'Ola', 'And Uber', delivery agents of 'Blinkit', 'Zomato', 'And Swiggy' etc. or any other type of workers registered with any other app-based service provider, whose employment depends on the mercy of

these app companies, businesses or whose livelihood depends on the delivery of goods or ordering of services based on messages received from these apps, are today suffering from the exploitation by these companies.

Nowadays the word gig is very much in vogue. Till two-three decades ago, the word gig was not much in use. It has become necessary to understand the meaning of the word 'gig' and the terms such as 'gig economy' and 'gig worker' etc. and their effects on society.

A few decades back, there were only two types of workers. One, the salaried employees and the other, the casual workers. Salaried workers are generally employed on a permanent basis with a fixed salary and other facilities. A

certain procedure has to be followed for the removal of these workers from employment. On the other hand, casual labour means daily wage workers. These labourers are paid wages on a daily basis and have to go in search of employment every day.

In the organized sector, earlier most workers were generally employed on a permanent or regular basis and their employment was also fairly secure. In the unorganized sector like agriculture, construction and sometimes in manufacturing, the practice of daily wage labourers is seen. Generally, educated and trained workers were mostly salaried workers and most of the daily wage laborers used to be uneducated and untrained workers. But these days even

organised sector employers have found an easy way to employ gig workers or sometimes on contract or on fixed term; where workers lack job security and social security. Further, there is the absence of regulations like working hours and working conditions, as these workers in order to earn sufficiently have to work for longer hours and under precarious conditions.

This new class of labour, namely, gig labour is the outcome of the emerging gig economy, based on new technology. This new category has emerged in the form of online platforms, cloud working, freelancing, e-commerce, supply chain, etc. That is, it can be said that new technology and new business models are the creators of this new labour class.

These workers who are serving based on work/order provided by the apps are clearly working under the instructions of the apps owned by e-commerce companies, but in government definitions, they are not considered workers, they are called 'freelancers'.

All such gig, temporary, and contract workers will have to be properly defined and identified while ensuring minimum wages, maximum working hours and various types of social security for them. If this does not happen, this system will be called nothing more than 'Jungle Raj', whose rule is 'survival of the fittest'. The Government of India is expected to make policies for the social security of the workers of these online platforms i.e., gig workers.



US must undertake a midcourse correction



K A **BADARINATH**

Even if the US revises its debt ceiling of \$31.4 trillion, its risk-ridden economy may precipitate a global crisis of a larger magnitude



With the looming debt crisis in the United States with the potential to default, a showdown between Republicans that control the House and the democratic white house may not augur well for the global economy and developing countries like India. Owing unsustainable economic policies over a few decades and irresponsible handling of resources has led the largest global economic powerhouse into a big mess of its own making. Even if president Joe Biden manages to clinch a last-minute deal with Republican top leadership to push up the debt ceiling beyond us \$ 31.4 trillion, larger questions continue to haunt the Americans. Mobilizing loans through US bonds or debt paper may not be the immediate concern but potential default on June 1 is what may turn catastrophic to not only Americans but the entire world. For Americans, it means that democrats will not be able to fund their fancied social security payments on medical and health insurance, pension or social development projects.

President Biden and his Democratic administration will have to put on hold all fancy projects like waiving student loans or fees to provide personal tax concessions to youngsters and new taxpayers democrats understand the full importance of lifting the already unsustainable debt limit of \$ 31.4 trillion. In fact, this also explains US President Biden's decision to forgo the scheduled quad summit in Australia and head back home after the G-7 leaders meeting in Hiroshima. Eventually, the quad summit had to be called off with heads of the US,



THERE IS EVERY POSSIBILITY OF US MOVING INTO ECONOMIC RECESSION. THEREBY STYMIEING DEMAND FOR GOODS AND SERVICES GLOBALLY

(The author is the director and chief executive of this non-partisan think tank based in New Delhi)

Australia, Japan and India meeting briefly at Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G-7 congregation. The larger issue that confronts us and the world is a wee bit different and difficult.

There is every possibility of us moving into economic recession thereby stymieing demand for goods and services globally. This will hit the economic growth sentiment internationally big time. Secondly, the possibility of banks getting stuck with worthless dollar-denominated bonds or debt paper in the medium term cannot be ruled out unless both the federal reserve and political leadership in the US take recourse to the mid-course correction that involves massive spending cuts or improve the country's revenues. Such a policy may be very unattractive for Democratic voters when they have to elect their president in 2024.

Thirdly, containing the contagion effect of the US economy moving into the abyss will be a herculean task. One cannot easily forget the global financial crisis triggered by real estate-linked mortgages that turned worthless in 2007-08. This housing bubble stirred a perfect storm to impact both large developing countries like India as well as least developed countries alike. Excessive risk exposure taken by banks was the biggest element in this crisis of the worst kind after the great depression of 1929.

Fourthly, if the US default finally happens, then countries like India having huge exposure to American greenback will also face the heat.

But, this diversification should go the whole hog and consciously lead to pursuing the de-dollarization of the Indian economy as a state policy. Fifthly, while exports to the US become attractive and import bills get squeezed, a demand slump globally will negate the advantages gained in trade deals. There is no reason why India should not pursue a more independent trade and currency policy keeping herself at a safe distance from the federal reserve and recalibrating her linkages with Washington DC. Sixthly, Democrats and Republicans must work towards mid-course correction on the economic and development front rather than recklessly going for borrowing more from Tom to pay Peter.

Limiting the fresh debt limit to us \$ 1.5 trillion till March 31, 2024, and achieving concomitant cuts in spending by us \$ 1.47 trillion would save the perilously placed our economy. Seventhly, precipitating a perfectly cooked crisis is not in anyone's interest and hence reining in the fresh spending to less than one per cent as per the limit, save, grow act of 2023 makes eminent sense. On the parallel, limiting the mop-up of fresh debt and gradual reduc-

tion in existing debt stock would augur well for the US economy that's seeking to reposition itself and instil confidence in its trading and investment partners.

The debt-to-GDP ratio was approximately 97 per cent at the end of FY 2022, and under current policy and based on this report's assumptions is projected to reach 566 per cent in 2097, it pointed out. While pursuing a revised economic policy dispensation, president Biden should not easily forget the 2011 crisis that was triggered by our congress. This pushed up the borrowing costs for the treasury by a humongous us \$ 1.3 billion in just one year. Also, we should not provide any leverage to China for en-cashing its crisis. China is easily the largest holder of us debt paper, notes and long-term bonds with valuations ranging from \$ 859.4 billion to \$ one trillion.

China may like to leverage our debt paper to rebalance its own resources position which again may not be looking too good. China's own debt of us \$ 14.34 trillion as of April 12, 2023, and swelling at a whopping \$ 3.81 trillion annually may not be something to brag about by president Xi's oligarchs driven communist party. Potential defaults in us, and machinations in China have valuable lessons for India that are overtly conservative on borrowings, especially by the Narendra Modi government.

MONEY MATTERS

India's export share in world trade in pharma, footwear dips

Share of India's exports in the world trade in sectors such as pharma, gems and jewellery, leather, and footwear declined in 2022 as compared to 2015, according to a report by think tank GTRI. However, there is an increase in the share of electronics, machinery, petroleum, auto parts, iron and steel, and aluminium products' exports during the period. "India's global market share in sectors like apparel, leather, shoes, and marine products has been decreasing, primarily due to concerns over quality rather than pricing issues," Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Co-founder Ajay Srivastava said. The report said that the key sectors that witnessed a higher share in global trade are electronics, telecom, mobile phones, and electrical equipment, as well as machinery. This is noteworthy as these product groups hold substantial importance in world trade, which exceeds USD 6 trillion. India's historically low share in these sectors is gradually but decisively improving, Srivastava said.



India witnessing 'snowball effect'; exponential growth

India is expected to clock the highest growth among the world's big economies this year and the country's economy is witnessing the "famous snowball effect" that will lead to more investments and more jobs, according to World Economic Forum (WEF) President Borge Brende. "There have been reforms that have led to less red tape, better climate for investments and also the digital revolution is really happening in India," Brende said and stressed that he is "very bullish and optimistic" about the country's growth trajectory but not so optimistic about global growth. India, which currently holds the G20 presidency, is one of the fastest growing key economies in the world and WEF has had close collaborations with the country for the past many years. "When the snowball starts to roll, it gets bigger and bigger, and that is what is happening with the Indian economy."



EU's carbon tax won't affect trade relationship with India

European Union's climate policy chief Frans Timmermans on Friday said the bloc's proposed carbon tax will not have any negative effect on its trade relationship with India and that it would do nothing that is in violation of World Trade Organisation rules. The EU plans to implement a carbon import tax of 25 to 30 per cent on high carbon goods such as steel, cement, aluminium, iron, fertilisers, electricity and hydrogen. This has led to concerns about the impact on developing nations heavily reliant on carbon-intensive industries. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), expected to be introduced in its transitional phase from October, is part of the EU's larger climate strategy which focuses on incentivising member countries to reduce their carbon emissions and adopt greener practices.



Success of G20 meet in Srinagar will boost tourism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The third G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting held in Srinagar was "very successful" and this will contribute to boosting of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and help in "allaying any fears" in the minds of visitors in future, a top official said on Friday.

Addressing reporters here, Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh also said that during the TWG meet held from May 22-24, G20 member countries, invited countries, and international organisations gave inputs and feedback on the GOA Roadmap for tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals and G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration.

There were two documents were the two key deliverables of the tourism track meet in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, and Singh said, G20 members have broadly reached an agreement on the five inter-connected priority areas green



tourism, digitisation, skills, tourism MSMEs and destination. These priorities are key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and achieve the targets for 2030 SDGs.

"Some members will give their suggestions in writing by today, and then the final draft will be prepared," he said.

The final versions of the documents will be placed in the fourth TWG meeting and Ministerial meeting, slated to take place in Goa next month. The 'GOA Roadmap and a ministerial communiqué endorsing it will be released after the last meeting of the

G20 tourism working group that will take place from June 18-22.

"We have had three meetings of the G20 Tourism Working Group so far. The third one being just held in Srinagar, and it was very successful," the Union Tourism Secretary said.

At the media interaction held on the G20 meet in Srinagar, Tourism Ministry officials made a presentation on the host of events held as part of the meeting, which included various events on promotion of films and visit to scenic places such as Nishat Garden and Pari Mahal, shikara ride on the Dal Lake

and a meet at Royal Spring Golf Course, on the banks of the Dal Lake.

Asked if the G20 meeting held in Srinagar will bolster tourism in Jammu and Kashmir, Singh said, tourism in general will get a fillip from it, and film tourism in turn will get promoted which will feed into overall growth of tourism in the region.

He shared that in 2022, Jammu and Kashmir registered a record footfall of 1.88 crore tourists, out of whom 26 lakh had visited the Kashmir valley, adding that the number is expected to cross the two crore-mark for the year 2023.

These are domestic tourism figures, but foreign tourists arrivals is also expected to grow after the devastating impact on the sector by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In fact, a group of tourists from Singapore had arrived in Kashmir in a chartered flight recently, around the time the G20 meet took place, he said.



Ambani on advisory committee of COP28

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Ltd head Mukesh Ambani has been named as a member of the international advisory committee that will provide guidance and counsel to the presidency of the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28).

Ambani, who is steering Reliance's pivot toward renewable energy and diversifying away from its traditional crude oil refining and petrochemicals, is among 31 international experts named on the panel.

"The COP28 UAE Advisory Committee brings together the climate expertise of thought leaders from countries across 6 continents.

Move to link tax collected at source with tax deducted at source: CEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is attempting to link tax collected at source for payments made by individuals with tax deducted from their income sources, a move that will help in ensuring cash flows of the individual taxpayers are not impacted, according to a senior official.

The move also comes at a time when the government is set to impose a 20 per cent Tax Collection at Source (TCS) on certain international spends from July 1.

Generally, TCS is the tax collected by a seller at the time of sale of goods or services while Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) is the amount levied as tax by the government.

The government has exempted transactions up to Rs 7 lakh from the TCS, providing relief to small taxpayers. So, bulk of the transactions made by most will not be covered under 20 per cent TCS, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran has said.

Defending the decision, he said, "And it (government) also attempts to link the TCS with your TDS such that if there are TCS payment made



Generally, TCS is the tax collected by a seller at the time of sale of goods or services while Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) is the amount levied as tax by the government

by you it has to reflect a lower TDS. Such that it simply is a matter of making sure that you are not affected from a cash flow perspective."

It will also provide a huge amount of relief for people who are concerned about this annoyance or irritation of seeing this TCS apart from TDS, he said at industry body's CII's event on Thursday.

The 20 per cent TCS levy on international credit card spends is to come into force from July 1.

Facing backlash, the finance ministry last week, exempted up to Rs 7 lakh spend from the TCS ambit.

"The exemption was done... The pass through of TCS into TDS deduction will also make sure that ordinary taxpayers do not see impact as far as they are concerned," he said.

Further, CEA said one point of view is that all that "you needed was to levy 1 per cent or 5 per cent so that you can track it".

But there are people who are happy to stay out of tax net by even paying 1 per cent or 5 per cent. So there has to be a deterrent effect as well, he noted.

According to him, data is available with the government that do point out that this mechanism has been not just abused by a small set of people but the volumes involved are fairly substantial.

Currently, overseas medical treatment and education expenses up to Rs 7 lakh a year is exempt from TCS. A 5 per cent levy is charged on expenses exceeding Rs 7 lakh.

For those who have availed education loans, the rate of TCS is 0.5 per cent.

Equity markets rally for 2nd day; Sensex jumps 1%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices extended their previous day's rally on Friday, with the Sensex climbing 1 per cent, amid buying in index major Reliance Industries, fresh foreign fund inflows and a largely positive trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 629.07 points or 1.02 per cent to settle at 62,501.69. During the day, it rallied 657.21 points or 1.06 per cent to 62,529.83. The NSE Nifty climbed 178.20 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 18,499.35.

From the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries jumped 2.79 per cent. Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel and Titan were among the other major gainers.

Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and NTPC were the lag-gards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai ended in the green.

Equity markets in Europe were trading lower. The US market ended mostly with gains on Thursday.

Grasim Industries Q4 profit down 42% to Rs 2,355 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aditya Birla Group firm Grasim Industries on Friday reported 42.12 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,355.67 crore for March quarter 2022-23 on account of tax write-backs and other one-off items.

In last financial year, Grasim crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore revenue mark, joining a select club of companies in India. Its revenue from operation was at Rs 1.17 lakh crore.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 4,070.46 crore during January-March 2021-



22, Grasim Industries said in a regulatory filing.

Revenue from operations was up at Rs 33,462.14 crore during the quarter under review from Rs 28,811.39 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

"Grasim's consolidated revenue for Q4FY23 stood at its highest levels of Rs 33,462

crore, reflecting a growth of 16 per cent YoY mainly contributed by the strong performance of key subsidiaries," said an earning statement from Grasim Industries.

Total expenses were at Rs 30,354.70 crore as against Rs 25,786.54 crore a year ago.

Total income in the March quarter was at Rs 33,682.49 crore, up 16.18 per cent.

During January-March, revenue from viscose-pulp, viscose staple fibre (VSF) and filament yarn segment was marginally down to Rs 3,764.06 crore from Rs 3,766.49 crore a year ago.

ZEE-SONY MERGER

NCLAT sets aside NCLT order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has set aside the order of NCLT directing bourses NSE and BSE to reconsider their approval for the Zee-Sony merger.

A two-member NCLAT bench has asked NCLT to consider the merger of Zee Entertainment with Culver Max Entertainment (earlier known as Sony Pictures Networks India) afresh, after hearing all the parties.

The appellate tribunal order came on hearing the appeal filed by Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL)



against the order passed by the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on May 11, 2023.

The NCLT had directed NSE and BSE to reconsider their prior approvals for the merger of ZEEL and Culver Max Entertainment. It had also asked the bourses to reassess the non-compete fee under the clause of the merger.

Mahindra Q4 PAT at Rs 2,637 cr

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Driven by robust performance across business verticals, Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported an 18 per cent jump in consolidated profit at Rs 2,637 crore for the March quarter and highest-ever annual profit of Rs 10,282 crore in FY23.

The Mumbai-based company had reported a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 2,237 crore in the January-March quarter of 2021-22 fiscal.

Revenue increased to Rs 32,366 crore for the fourth quarter of FY23, as compared to Rs 25,934 crore in the year-ago period.

For the year ended March 31, 2023, the company posted a consolidated PAT of Rs



10,282 crore, up 56 per cent, from Rs 6,577 crore in FY22. The company said the FY23 PAT is its highest-ever profit reported in a fiscal year.

Revenue rose to Rs 1,21,269 crore last fiscal, as against Rs 90,171 crore in 2021-22 fiscal, an increase of 34 per cent.

M&M said the automotive business led the way last fis-

cal with 62 per cent growth, driven by strong execution of launches and an improvement in supply chain related issues.

Besides, Mahindra Accelo grew by 37 per cent; Mahindra Logistics, by 24 per cent; and Club Mahindra by 22 per cent.

"It has been a blockbuster year for the group. Auto led

the way with record-breaking launches, as we regained the #1 position for SUV revenue market share," M M Managing Director & CEO Anish Shah said.

Light commercial vehicles (LCVs), farm equipment, and electric three-wheelers continue to strengthen the company's leadership position, he added.

"We are very well positioned for the future, based on a strong presence in key industries, leadership in technology and a growth mindset, coupled with fiscal discipline," Shah said.

The company reported highest-ever automotive segment volumes of 6.98 lakh in FY23, up 50 per cent, from 4,65,601 units in FY22.

Rupee rises 14 paise to close at 82.58 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 14 paise to 82.58 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, supported by foreign capital inflows and a positive trend in domestic equities.

However, the elevated level of the US dollar against major crosses overseas restricted the upward movement in the domestic unit, forex traders said.

The dollar index is trading above the 104-level on safe-haven appeal, as US President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy are reportedly close to reaching an agreement on the US debt ceiling.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit

opened at 82.73 against the US dollar and settled at 82.58 (provisional), up 14 paise over its previous close.

During the day, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 82.56 and a low of 82.73 in the day trade.

On Thursday, the rupee closed at 82.72 against the US currency.

"The Indian rupee erases weekly losses amid a rally in the domestic equities followed by foreign fund inflows and recovery in the Asian currencies," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Investors are keeping an eye on a potential debt-ceiling deal, which could happen over the weekend ahead of the US Holiday on Monday.

73% women want firms to allow them take menstrual leave

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 73 per cent of women want companies to allow them to take menstrual leaves while 86.6 per cent are in favour of a menstrual-friendly workplace where hygiene methods and support infrastructure are available to women, according to a recent study.

The Menstrual Hygiene Survey 2023, conducted by Everten, a feminine hygiene brand, also revealed that 71.7 per cent of the participants in

the survey do not want the menstrual leaves to be paid, fearing that it may make companies reluctant to hire female employees.

Nearly 10,000 women in the age group of 18 to 35 years participated in the survey that was conducted in multiple cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Patna.

The survey report was released ahead of the global



Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28.

"While 73 per cent of

women want that companies should allow them to take menstrual leaves, 71.7 per

cent of them do not want these to be paid and fear that it may make companies reluctant to hire female employees.

"Also, 86.6 per cent of women are in favour of the concept of menstrual friendly workplace where females are not hesitant in discussing the subject openly, and menstrual hygiene methods and support infrastructure is made available to women.

Besides, 68.9 per cent of women have taken a leave of absence from work during

menstrual periods," the survey stated.

Chirag Pan, CEO of PAN Healthcare said, "Corporates need to make it a priority to adopt practices for a menstrual-friendly workplace.

"Our survey shows that only 5.2 per cent of women feel comfortable discussing menstrual periods with their manager while 39.9 per cent of women do not prefer to discuss menstrual periods at the workplace, even with their female colleagues," he said.

THIS WEEK FOR OUR WEEKLY EDITION OF HYDERABOND, THE PIONEER INTERACTS WITH THE SENIOR PHYSICIAN DR. MAHESH MARDA ON HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE CITY AND MORE.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

During the pandemic when a lot many doctors were protesting on roads against the violence and insufficient salaries that were given to them, there were many who tried to spin varied narratives on them. But as we speak to Dr. Mahesh Marda who hails from Kurnool, a senior physician for our special weekly column, he describes to us that those doctors from his fraternity were not delegitimising it by adding political violence to it, just wanted the movement to take momentum.

So as we speak to this doctor in our casual style, we begin, "As soon as I completed my studies in Kurnool, I switched to Hyderabad. Also, my father was a really old chief accountant here. I am talking about 1984 and since then I am practicing here. My father was looking after two of the major factories in Hyderabad. If he retired, he did so in Hyderabad, not Kurnool. However, I completed my



MBBS in my hometown."

Not that Kurnool isn't a reformist town, but the family had their own reasons to be more liable to Hyderabad. "It was just a mere positioning of where my father was getting transferred and we had to fol-

low along. So in the house premises itself, I started a clinic of my own! In the same building, I gradually built my own hospital. As we hit the year 2004, I shifted my base to Kakatiya Nagar. Then in 2010, my son joined me and he's taking it for-

ward now."

Tutored in a Telugu-medium school, "I am more fluent in the Telugu language in comparison with others, though my mother tongue is Rajasthani! We speak Hindi in our house. I am surrounded by

Telugus though. Even after getting my MBBS degree in hand, had to wait for the next two years to be placed. Not to lower the medical colleges in Kurnool, to your wonders, Kurnool medical colleges most have gold medalist professors to teach medicine to us, there. We have a WhatsApp group of 200 doctors through which we stay connected."

The senior physician who has also practiced as a company medical officer elaborates further, "It's sheer hard work in this fraternity, we multitask too. But what I have noticed in this city is its unified city culture that can coexist with traditional cultures also. And, every neighborhood has its unique identity. The residents here are sophisticated and worldly. I am assuming our city

will now turn out to be the number one city in this country very soon."

Recounting the medical culture over here, he says, "The group of physicians are really good, they are well-versed in academics. But there is no control over the non-degree holders who enter medical! Their involvement is increasing day by day, which is unacceptable to us as seniors. Corporate hospitals have commercialised themselves totally! Defensive practices have entered too because patients are trying violence against us! That leads to unnecessary investigations in the hospital premises and it's not that place. Those doctors were suffering from too much injustice, how can a doctor who symbolises god or who saves your life can bear violence?"



Amyra sheds her sweet image with *Kya Loge Tum*



Actress Amyra Dastur, who recently appeared alongside Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar in the music video for the single *Kya Loge Tum*, revealed that she unintentionally broke character because she was really moved by her co-star's performance during the shoot of the song.

In the song, Amyra plays the character of a woman who is caught cheating on Akshay's character of a singer.

Recollecting the incident, Amyra says, "I remember when there's a part when everybody gets

up and starts clapping. I was so enamoured by sir's performance that even I started getting up and clapping and our director was like, No no Amyra, you have to be sad, you have to cry, you don't clap, he is talking about leaving you! Everybody started laughing. All in all, it was a wonderful shoot, and even though I was basically crying throughout the song I still had a lot of fun shooting it and I really look forward to part two."

She further mentioned, "Usually when it comes to songs you see the heroine charming the hero, but here it's actually the hero putting in all the work and efforts and he is calling out the heroine. That's what I really liked about it."

The actress also said that she loves heartbreak songs. She says, "The fact that B Praak was singing it and Jaani composed it for me — that's a great combination because I genuinely think he is one of the best singers in India today. Then I found out that Akshay sir was going to be in the song and for me, it's just a wonderful opportunity to work with such talented and amazing people. Each man in this song even our director, they are a leader in their own field. So for me, the opportunity to work with people of this caliber was too good to pass."

"I have said before, for me the fact that it was a beautiful 'dardnaak' song and where the girl is actually playing the villain, gave me an opportunity to also break away that sweet innocent image that you know I have and that people know me for. We shot the song in two days. The song was fully shot in Mumbai. I just remember I had so much fun shooting the song and I was in such awe watching Akshay sir perform as well because it's not easy to perform in a room with so many people, get the lip sync right, do the dance step properly. So I think this time what I found really fun was the fact that the heroine actually had less work than the hero," she added.



Calming down your stressful pups

With life becoming more hectic and fast-paced every day, stress is an inevitability. This holds true not just for us, but for beloved pets as well. Ever our most faithful companions, dogs have acclimated to life alongside us across generations. However, given the strenuous nature of modern urban life, it is important now more than ever for us to give them a hand so that we can continue to flourish together in today's rapidly changing world.

The hectic and overstimulating nature of urban life is quite different from what dogs have naturally been attuned to. Having descended from wolves, dogs have ancestrally been accustomed to living in nature on a diet of meat and protein with vast, open spaces to explore and exercise in. The compact, noisy, and urbane environments in cities don't afford such a life anymore and bring further challenges such as noise, pollution, and isolation. These factors combine and leave dogs prone to stress.

Prateek Raj Singh, CEO & Founder of Fabled Pet Food shares, "The most common signs of stress in dogs will show up in their behaviour. A major sign of tension in dogs is excessive shaking. While shaking is a common way for them to dry themselves, if you find your dog trembling then it may well be a sign that they are feeling distressed. Another common indicator of stress is pacing. Dogs may pace restlessly the same way humans tend to pace when faced with anxiety. Excessive or uncommon barking and whining are also ways in which dogs express discomfort and are likely signs that they are anxious. Bodily changes such as shedding, panting, or excessive licking, and shifts in body language such as rapid blinking, excessive urination, and refusal of food are also common markers of stress in dogs. It is essential to know the behaviour patterns and body language cues of your dog. If you find them reacting unnaturally or uncharacteristically, then it may be an indicator that all is not well with them."

If you find your dog displaying signs of stress, the first step is to identify what is causing it and if possible, remove it from their vicinity. Creating a safe space in your home can go a long way in helping with this. If your dog has a quiet spot with familiar items and comforting scents, they can use it as a space to regroup from whatever is stressing them. Similar to humans, grounding behaviours can help dogs contend



with stressful situations. Familiar commands such as 'sit' or 'come' can be great grounding mechanisms for dogs as they restore a sense of normalcy and safety. Exercise can also be a great reliever of stress. Taking your dog for a walk or playing games such as fetch with them can occupy their mind and relieve them from stress by producing endorphins. Comforting them by petting, cuddling, and massaging can have a much-needed soothing effect as well.

In the long term, being mindful of your dog's overall well-being is crucial in helping them adapt to tension. Stress in today's world is inevitable, and the best we can do is prepare them so that they can thrive in the face of it. Make sure your dog is getting adequate exercise and stimulation in their day-to-day life to keep their mind and body active. Exploring, going on walks and tools such as puzzle toys can be very effective ways of ensuring this. Alongside this, make sure to

set aside enough quality time to spend just with them. Try going

DOGS MAY PACE RESTLESSLY THE SAME WAY HUMANS TEND TO PACE WHEN FACED WITH ANXIETY. EXCESSIVE OR UNCOMMON BARKING AND WHINING ARE ALSO WAYS IN WHICH DOGS EXPRESS DISCOMFORT AND ARE LIKELY SIGNS THAT THEY ARE ANXIOUS

wholesome sources. This could include chicken, turkey, duck and tuna. This protein needs to be balanced by the right amount of organic botanicals and nutritional powerpacks such as berries. Finally, it needs to be rounded out by inclusions of healthy fats such as chicken oil or coconut oil. Look for foods that check all these boxes without leaning on filler ingredients and artificial additives.

To thrive in today's ever-changing world, our beloved furry companions need our support. In the same way, they have stood by us and comforted us through endless challenges, we need to lend our support to them so they can adapt to modern-day stresses. The only way to enable this is by being mindful of what causes them stress and adopting a holistic and lifestyle-appropriate approach to their care.





Major Ram Kumar, director, NIEPID, along with Rajan Sood, MD, Navsys Marine Technologies Pvt Ltd, inaugurated the Expressions paintings exhibition, organised by artist Karishma, 4 differently able children and 20 Kerala women artists. The exhibition will end on May 28, 2023.

Aakash BYJU's opened its new classroom centre at Suchitra, to offer direct and hybrid classes to local students. The new classroom centre marks their 9th centre in Hyderabad. The Centre has 21 classrooms and can offer direct classes to 1500+ students.





Delfrez, from the house of Suguna Foods makes its entry into Hyderabad, with the launch of its four standalone outlets in Madhavapuri Hills, Kondapur, Chandanagar, and Manikonda.

LISTINGS

Asia's leading business coach Rajiv Talreja hosts billionaire Nithin Kamath and 650+ MSMEs

On May 23 and 24, QL One, Asia's largest Business Coaching company hosted an event celebrating MSME business owners. Proficor 2023 began with 650+ people traveling from all corners of Asia, to Bangalore to attend 2 eventful days. The event hosted 6 iconic speakers and business leaders who spoke to this crowd of enthusiastic business owners. The speakers included-Billionaire Nithin Kamath, founder of Zerodha, India's largest stock broking company,



Prashant Pitti founder of EaseMyTrip, Bhavesh Bhatia, the founder of Sunrise Candles; Rajesh Dembla, founder of Zozole who is building India's largest Micro Distributor network for digital commerce; Raghunandan and Siddhant Kamath, founders of Naturals Ice Cream, one of India's most loved ice cream brands. At Proficor, founder and co-founder of Qlone, Rajiv Talreja and Karan Hasija respectively, also announced the launch of the Qlone App, tailor-made for MSME business owners with a range of features that will help them in business growth.

Mango extravaganza!

Experience a Mango Extravaganza brunch like never before. Enjoy a delectable spread of mango-inspired appetizers, main courses, and desserts that highlight the unique flavours and textures of different types of mangoes. From the sweet Alphonso to the tangy Kesar, indulge in the ultimate mango feast with family and friends.

Where: Food Exchange at Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre, Hyderabad, Telangana.**When:** May 30, 2023 **Time:** 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm **For Reservations** call: +91 9642326162

Elevate your holiday looks with Platinum Evara

It's that time of the year, when beach hats are seen peaking out of travel totes and exciting new summer looks are revealed in style. Jewellery is an essential part of these summer travel looks and the right pieces have the power to elevate the entire look. Contemporary designs from Platinum Evara can be easily worn across different attires and occasions to add a touch of subtle glam and elegance to your personal travel style. With a preference to travel light, versatility has become the mantra for all travel essentials, including jewellery. Crafted from 95% pure platinum, each piece in the Platinum Evara collection can easily be styled to complement and uplift various travel looks. Whether you are seeking the beach boho glam or the effortless yet chic city explorer vibe, minimalist platinum jewellery with its clean lines and delicate forms, promises to take your desired look to the next level.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor flags off the first zonal drive of its 'Great 4x4 X-pedition'

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) flagged off its highly anticipated 'Great 4x4 X-pedition', marking the beginning of an extraordinary three-day adventure for motoring enthusiasts across the country. This thrilling drive aims to captivate and engage the 4x4 SUV fans through an unparalleled off-roading experience, encouraging them to go beyond the ordinary, by igniting the spirits of adventure, and create lasting memories through this exciting journey with Toyota. This endeavour is poised to deliver "Mass Happiness" to all the participating 4x4 community. The Great 4x4 X-pedition by



Toyota commenced this morning from Bangalore with the participation of 4x4 enthusiasts from Southern India. It will traverse through the exhilarating routes of Hassan and Sakleshpur over next two-days with an impressive convoy of 4x4 SUVs, driven by off-roading enthusiasts to unleash the true potential of their proudly owned vehicles, including the legendary Hilux, Fortuner 4x4, LC 300, Hyryder AWD, as well as other SUV brands of vehicles.

Celebrate Telangana Formation Day with 'A Taste of Telangana' at Sheraton Hyderabad

Discover the essence of regional flavours at the Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel's 'The Taste of Telangana' food festival, celebrating Telangana Formation Day. The week-long event showcases Telangana's diverse culinary heritage, featuring the signature dishes of home cooks Meera Girija and Kanisetty Sravani. Indulge in an extraordinary culinary experience at Sheraton Hyderabad that will tantalize your taste buds, from heavenly Ragi Mudda, Sangati, Kadak Jawar Roti, Gutti Vankaya, to spicy Natakodi Pulusu/ Miriyala Kodi, Talakaya Mamsam, Rohu Chepa Fry, Pachi Mirpa Kodi Pulao this festival guarantees an unforgettable gastronomic journey. The dessert menu is exhilarating with the likes of Bobbatlu, Bellam Garelu and Moong Daal Paayasam.

What: Taste of Telangana
Where: The Feast, Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel
When: May 29, 2023 to June 3, 2023 (12.30 pm – 3.30 pm and 7.00 pm – 11.00 pm)
For Reservations: +91 73373 58581

ITC launches SunfeastFarmlite super millets cookies


In line with the core purpose of 'Help India Eat Better', ITC Foods launched its first millet cookies as part of SunfeastFarmlite. The launch of SunfeastFarmlite Super Millets Cookies is in conjunction with ITC Mission Millet initiative. Available in two variants – Multi Millet & Choco-chip Multi Millet, the millet cookies are made from a blend of millets, including ragi, jowar (sorghum) and contain no added maida. Both variants of

SunfeastFarmlite Super Millets Cookies come in packs of 75g, and are priced at Rs. 50 per pack. They are available in retail stores across Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Delhi + NCR, Kolkata, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Bangalore Kerala and ITCStore.in.




FUN


ARCHIE




GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS




CALVIN AND HOBBS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6			7		8
9			10		
			11		
12	13			14	15
				16	
17				18	
19					

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- This small sea creature might sting a swimmer
- Does a signature on
- Telling untruths
- Very uncommon
- The tiredness you get after a very long plane flight
- A paper hanky
- A hard black fuel
- The opposite of tails
- Train tracks
- A month

DOWN

- Very keen
- Misplaced
- Recorded with a movie camera

SOLUTION

S	C	A	L	P	E	L	S		
G	O	N	U	E	E				
Y	O	L	K	S	S	T	E	A	M
M	V	W	H	C	P				
N	E	E	D	E	E	C	H	A	R
A	L	E							
S	A	V	E	C	A	N	O	E	S
I	T	G	N	N	S				
U	N	D	E	R	A	L	I	V	E
M	E	I	N	O	S				
M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N		

#MenToo:

Haphazardly Mansplained



AMARTYA SMARAN

MenToo-Being a man is not easy, starring Naresh Agastya, Brahmaji, Harsha Chemud, Sudharshan, Riya Suman, et al is a film that mansplains the concept of feminism. The main issue that it deals with is the problem of pseudo feminism. We've seen instances of women conveniently using the woman card. Three friends Aditya (Naresh Agastya), Sanju (Kaushik Ghantasala), and Munna (Mourya Siddavaram) meet at a pub called StagsOnly. As the name suggests, only stags are allowed into the club. Sure! A great idea. In this bar you've got all sorts of men, and each man goes through his share of girlfriend/wife problems. Aditya is a sales guy who finds a job in a female dominant company where clients prefer women to come and give presentations. Munna is a

mechanic who hates women, and keeps swiping left on Tinder. Sanju is a green card holder who doesn't like setting his foot in America, and is in a dilemma whether he has to take his relationship forward with his stand-up comedian girlfriend. Her dream? Moving to the USA, and doing stand-up.

When the trio spot Rahul (Harsha Chemudu)—a manager who's been fired from his software company for allegedly sexually harassing a co-worker—they instantly take pity on him. Rahul feels horrible that the Human Resource department doesn't even consider listening to his side of the story. When he begs, and pleads the authorities to remove the 'sexual harasser' tag, the management simply denies. Filmmaker Srikanth G Reddy uses this as his primary hook to prove his point that society doesn't pay heed to men. Neither at the workplace nor at home.

For instance, one of the clients of Aditya's sales company seems utterly disinterested to even listen to his pitch, and continues checking out hot models on his phone. However, when Aditya's colleague calls him back, the client decides to take up the project. The filmmakers point being, why do we need to show double standards? When all women want is equality, why focus on gender to listen to ideas?

One song in the early stages of the film—a montage—has documented footage of all the 'pseudo feminist' incidents that took place over the years. It is as if the makers were trying to underscore the important fact that men often bear the brunt of such ignorant behaviour. The scene where Munna and Sanju travel in the auto and are forced to sit in the driver's seat just because a woman can sit comfortably is equated with the lack of understanding of 'gender equality'.

The major problem with the film is its setting in the StagsOnly bar run by Brahmaji, who's married to a women's association president. How likely is it that people literally share each other's problems across the table? The film doesn't seem realistic in its commercial setting. The idea that men are losing out because of a minority of pseudo feminists is propagated in this film. The narrative is singular and only scratches the surface. The film is rather a grand idea and lacks a gripping narrative. The music (scored by Elisa Praveen G and Osho Venkat) doesn't match the scenes. On a few occasions, it really gets along well with the mood

and setting. The background score in the scene where Sanju breaks up with his girlfriend right before her stand up show is out of sync. It alters the mood of the viewers. The cinematography too, except for the aerial shots of the picturesque valley in the second half, is textbook like. However, the composition of shots is only defined by the story and setting. Here, the screenplay hampers the cinematographers creativity.

Remember the ex-manager Rahul? In one scene when he's seen crying, Aditya goes up to him and tries to pacify him. At one point he says, "Stop crying. Be a man and grow balls." To which Rahul replies, "I can't even do that because I am gay." Superficial treatment like this has spoiled what otherwise would have been an enthralling watch. It is true that men in the present day and age are struggling to search for a perfect definition of masculinity. The film lacks direction and conviction. If only the treatment could've been better, #MenToo would be a perfect satire on today's scenario.

Keerthy Suresh starrer

Raghuthatha wraps up its final schedule

Hombale Films, the acclaimed production house behind blockbuster hits like *KGF Chapter 2* and *Kantara*, is delighted to announce the successful completion of the shooting for their upcoming Tamil film, *Raghuthatha*. This highly anticipated movie, directed by the award-winning writer of *Family Man*, Suman Kumar, promises to captivate audiences with its powerful storytelling and remarkable performances.

Starring the immensely talented national award-winning actor Keerthy Suresh in the lead role, *Raghuthatha* marks Hombale Films' first venture into Tamil cinema. Keerthy Suresh, known for her exceptional acting skills and extensive body of work in Malayalam, Tamil, and Telugu films, has once again delivered a stellar performance that is sure to leave audiences in awe. *Raghuthatha* is an empowering tale of a young woman's journey to save the identity of her people and land. Producer Vijay Kiragandur expresses his enthusiasm for the project, stating, "Raghuthatha is the story of a courageous woman who fearlessly fights for the rights of women and more. It portrays the challenges faced by a young girl and her unwavering determination to carve her own path. We believe this film will inspire audiences to question societal norms and empower themselves, initiating positive change."

Hombale Films has established a reputation for delivering exceptional cinematic experiences, evident in their recent successes with *KGF Chapter 2* and *Kantara*.

Having completed the shooting for *Raghuthatha*, Hombale Films now embarks on the post-production phase, bringing together the creative efforts of a talented crew. The film features a stellar ensemble cast, including veteran actor M S Bhaskar, Devadarshini, Ravindra Vijay, Anandsami and Rajesh Balakrishnan, who have delivered impactful performances in their respective roles.

The production team of *Raghuthatha* consists of accomplished professionals who have contributed their expertise to create a captivating cinematic experience. Ramcharantej Labani serves as the production (art) designer, music director Sean Roldan, known for his work in *Jai Bhim*, has composed the film's score and national award-winning costume designer Poornima has crafted the characters' distinctive looks. Anand has lent his skills as the sound designer, while Yamini Y has skillfully captured the film's visuals as the cinematographer. T S Suresh has taken charge of film editing, ensuring a seamless and engrossing narrative.

Raghuthatha is set to enthrall audiences when it releases in the third quarter of 2023. Hombale Films has a huge line up for the next 2 years. *Salaar* starring Prabhas is slated to release in September

2023, *Dhoomam*, starring Fahadh Fasil due to release in June 2023. In addition to these, there will be two more regional releases this year from the production house.



Prabhas' Salaar

teaser expected to be released alongside Adipurush

Prabhas has got two big and most-anticipated releases this year- Prashanth Neel's *Salaar* and Om Raut's *Adipurush*. Ever since he starred in the SS Rajamouli's *Baahubali*, he has become one of the most bankable stars, which turned him into a pan-India star. Now, moviegoers can't wait to know what's in store for them. While *Adipurush* is all set to hit the big screens on June 16, Prabhas fans are eagerly waiting for an update on *Salaar*.

According to the latest buzz, the much-awaited first teaser of *Salaar* might be attached with *Adipurush*. However,

there is no official announcement regarding the same yet. The audience is definitely waiting for some massive and eye-catching visuals in *Adipurush* and *Salaar*'s teaser with it, will be a double celebration for Prabhas' fans. The makers of both, *Salaar* and *Adipurush* have geared up to bring these cinematic wonders to the cinema halls soon.

Salaar is helmed by Prashanth Neel and produced by Vijay Kiragandur of Hombale Films. The much-awaited Pan-India project also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran, Shruti Haasan, and Jagapathi Babu.



Grey: The Spy Who Loved Me: Stays

loyal to its core plot

Cast: Arvind Krishna, Prathap Pothen, Ali Reza, Urvashi Rai.

Director: Raj Madiraju **Cinematography:** M.R. Chetan Kumar

Music: Nagaraju Talluri **Producer:** Kiran Kallakuri

Plot:

At the start of the film, a scientist perishes in a mysterious circumstances. Nuclear physicist Sudarshan Reddy, (played by Pratap Pothen), was shot dead. If this is a murder or a suicide, needs to be determined. The deceased person's wife, Aarushi Sharma (played by Urvashi Rai), who has an age difference of 20 years, is the only one who knows the reason behind it. Aarushi's background is investigated in depth by the officer played by Ali Reza who believes that she may have ordered the murder of her husband.

The narrative of the film also involves an intellectual doctor named Raghu (played by Arvind Krishna), international travel, a hard drive valued at \$50 million, and other intriguing elements.

Performances:

Pratap Pothen and Urvashi Rai offer the audience some daring experiences. They flirt and talk about having sex in code. Pothen's performance exudes assurance. From the very beginning, Urvashi surprises. She possesses all the characteristics of a femme fatale, a victim, a damsel in distress, and everything in between.

Ali Reza, Arvind Krishna, and others

were fine in their respective roles.

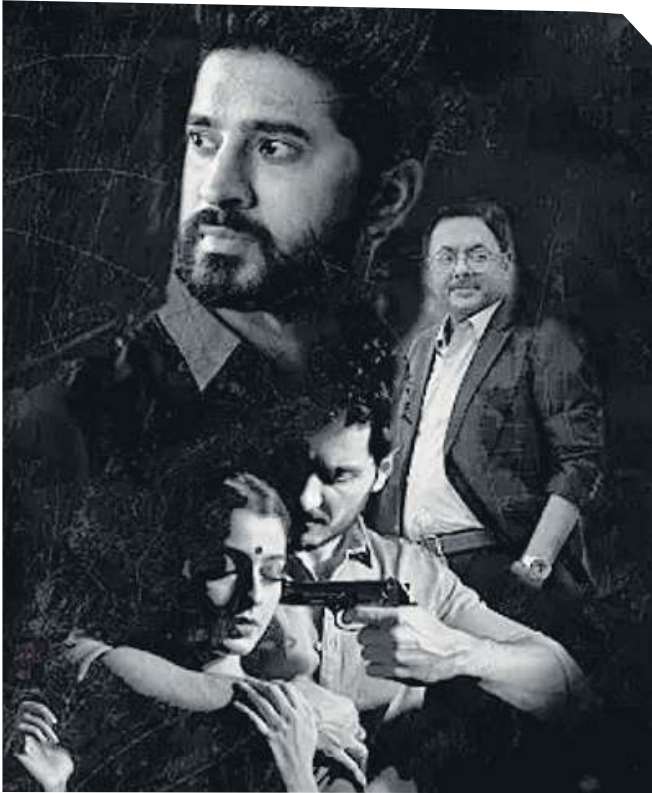
Analysis:

The film's concept is sound. This movie analyses one potential or real reason for one of the many unexplained deaths of Indian scientists, turning the second part of the movie into a classic thriller. Both the pre-climax and the climax have been handled really effectively.

You'll be delighted by a few sporadic twists and excitement components. It was interpreted decently and without any deceptive features. However, the sluggish narration in the first half can make you lose interest. The movie's soundtrack and editing also plays a spoilsport. In the opening moments, cinematographer Chetan Madhuranthakam displays some creativity (observe how the camera moves when Ali Reza's character first appears in the scene).

Conclusion:

Grey first seems to be an erotic thriller passing for a criminal novel. However, it really excels when it stays loyal to its source material and fulfills the promise offered by the opening titles.



Director Atlee and his wife

grace Cannes red carpet

The helmer of blockbuster successes like *Theri*, *Mersal*, and *Bigil*, amongst others, director Atlee is currently generating waves not just across the nation but also the globe with the anticipation and excitement for his upcoming film *Jawan* starring Shah Rukh Khan and Nayanthara.

Adding another feather to the cap, director Atlee and his wife Priya made their debut at the coveted Cannes Film Festival. Atlee was spotted wearing a tux, while Priya chose to keep it ethnic and wore a black saree.

They looked beautiful together at the film festival. Twinning in black for the event, the duo radiated royalty.



Mahesh & Namrata overjoyed with

Sitara endorsing a jewellery brand

Sitara Ghattamaneni, daughter of Superstar Mahesh Babu and Namrata Shirodkar, is one of the most happening kids in Tollywood. She has been very active on the social media platform, Instagram, and steals the hearts of people with her style and elegance. Sitara is the first star kid to endorse a major brand on television.

Recently, Sitara has seized a great opportuni-

ty for a brand endorsement. She will now appear on television for a major jewellery brand advertisement. Sitara has already appeared in a few advertisements with her father, Mahesh Babu. There are a few snaps regarding this on social media, in which the star kid is seen working on sets for the shoot. This will be a grand launch for her on the television commercial platform.

Mahesh Babu and Namrata are overjoyed and proud of Sitara. Sitara Ghattamaneni is a bundle of joy who has nearly 1.2 million followers on Instagram. Superstar Mahesh Babu is currently working on the much awaited film *SSMB28*, directed by Trivikram Srinivas. The film is going to release a major update soon. According to the latest update, the actor is going to reveal the title of *SSMB28* on his father veteran actor Krishna's birthday on May 31.



