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Providing house site pattas and building houses to the poor in the CRDA region after overcoming all the obstacles created, resolving all the legal complications and fighting and winning against the evil designs of the privileged rich class to not allow any poor to reside in the CRDA region..

Distribution of 50,793 House Site Pattas.. Houses.. to the Women beneficiaries in CRDA region.. .. a Victory of Poor Women

Jagananna Government is also distributing 5,024 TIDCO houses to the Women beneficiaries TODAY, constructed at a cost of Rs. 443.71 Crores in the CRDA Region..



Sri. Y.S Jagan Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister to formally launch the programme of DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSE SITE PATTAS to 50,793 Women Beneficiaries in 1,402 acres & 5,024 TIDCO HOUSES in CRDA Region constructed at a cost of Rs. 443.71 Crores to the women beneficiaries, Today in Venkatapalem, Thullur Mandal, Guntur District...

Privileged Rich — The Poor

Conspiring to benefit their own people -
They created legal complications..
They teased that there's no place for the poor in CRDA..
They gave skewed logic that demographic balance will go for a toss, if the poor are given a house in CRDA..
They ridiculed these house sites as graves..

...Yet, with a firm commitment to help poor women -
To see joy in their faces..
To provide a happy nest for the homeless poor..
To see that their future is secured..
With tenacity of purpose and with a firm resolve to stand by the poor, Jagananna Government had overcome all the hurdles and is distributing house sites to 50,793 women beneficiaries Today..

Standing by the TIDCO Beneficiaries:

- Distribution of 300 Sq.ft TIDCO houses to 1,43,600 beneficiaries across the State for only Re.1 with full rights, thus benefitting Women Beneficiaries across the State with Rs.9,406 Crores. In the Previous Government, the poor women beneficiaries had to pay Rs.7.20 Lakhs as principal and interest for the same house..
- Jagananna Government has given a rebate of 50% of the upfront contribution to be paid by the beneficiaries of 365 sft and 430 Sq.ft Houses by bearing a burden of Rs.482 Crores. This would provide a relief of Rs.25,000 to each of 44,304 beneficiaries of 365 Sq.ft houses and Rs.50,000 to each of 74,312 beneficiaries of 430 Sq.ft TIDCO houses..
- Free Registration for TIDCO Houses, thus, providing a benefit of Rs.60,000 to each beneficiary..
- Jagananna Government is providing a benefit of Rs.18,714 Crores to 2.62 Lakh TIDCO house beneficiaries across the State, which includes Rs.14,514 Crores as subsidy, Rs.1,200 Crores in the form of free registrations and Rs.3,000 Crores for infrastructure..
- Jagananna Government is providing TIDCO Houses with all the infrastructure whereas the Previous Government has not cared to provide even basic facilities like drinking water, roads, electricity and drainage for Tidco Houses..

Assisting the poor Women Beneficiaries:

- Total 25 Layouts in CRDA region with full infrastructure under "Navaratnalu - Pedalandariki Illu"...
- 11 Layouts for 23,762 Women Beneficiaries of Guntur District..
- 14 Layouts for 27,031 Women Beneficiaries of NTR District..
- Erected 80,000 Boundary Stones..
- Construction of Internal Transport System with gravel for 232 KM..
- Besides providing house site pattas in this CRDA Region, Jagananna Government is also providing Houses for the poor in these layouts with a cost of almost Rs. 2,000 Crores which includes Rs.1,280 Crores for house construction and Rs.700 Crores for infrastructure.

Distribution of Free House Site Pattas & Houses in the name of Women Beneficiaries to empower them.. So far, distributed 30.60 Lakhs House Site Pattas across the State.. Construction of over 21 Lakhs House.. Each women beneficiary getting a benefit of Rs. 5 Lakhs to Rs. 15 Lakhs.. Wealth of Rs.2 Lakh Crores to Rs. 3 Lakh Crores in the hands of women beneficiaries across the State..

Call Toll free
1902
for assistance
and complaints
regarding
"House Site
Pattas"

Sri. Jogi Ramesh,
Hon'ble Minister for Housing

Sri. Audimulapu Suresh,
Hon'ble Minister for MA & UD

Sri. Dharmana Prasada Rao,
Hon'ble Minister for Revenue, Stamps & Registration

JAGANANNA GOVERNMENT BUILDING HABITATIONS, NOT JUST HOUSES...

Note: Sri. Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Hon'ble Chief Minister to distribute House Site Pattas & TIDCO Houses at 10:00 AM on 26th May, 2023 in Venkatapalem, Thulluru Mandal, Guntur District.. Do watch the programme live on all popular news channels..

Issued By: Commissioner, Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh

Minister invites Amaravati ryots to sites distribution

'CM ensuring social justice'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In an effort to promote the equitable development of Amaravati, Housing Minister Jogi Ramesh has urged Amaravati farmers to attend the upcoming house sites distribution programme. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy plans to distribute house site pattas to approximately 50,000 deserving beneficiaries, aiming to create a historic moment that welcomes all sections of society without bias.

Minister Jogi Ramesh said that CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's initiative signifies a significant milestone in the State. He commended the Chief Minister for championing the cause of the poor, especially those from marginalized communities such as SC, ST, BC, and minorities. The Minister urged Amaravati farmers, including women, not to be swayed by Chandrababu's tactics and to instead support CM Jagan's vision for the development of Amaravati.

Highlighting the opposition's



Chandrababu Naidu's actions demonstrated his unsuitability for politics and his alignment with real estate interests, evident in his opportunistic involvement in the capital's development.

exploit workers akin to slaves, hence their resistance to housing schemes for the poor.

The Minister concluded that Chandrababu Naidu's actions demonstrated his unsuitability for politics and his alignment with real estate interests, evident in his opportunistic involvement in the capital's development.

The Housing Minister extended an invitation to all, including Amaravati farmers, to participate in the momentous occasion of distributing house sites to 51,000 deserving individuals. Addressing recent concerns, he clarified that Chandrababu Naidu's distorted interpretation of the Supreme Court verdict was an attempt to provoke certain women in Amaravati. He urged the people of Andhra Pradesh to observe and understand the immoral politics of Chandrababu, encouraging Amaravati farmers to see through the manipulation and actively participate in the house sites distribution festival scheduled for Friday.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was doing social justice by allotting house sites to the poor belonging to SCs, STs, BCs and minority communities in Amaravati, said Social Welfare Minister Meruga Nagarjuna. The minister alleged that TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu was hell bent on cooking up conspiracies, ignoring the orders of the courts. He further said that a grand social justice festival was going to be held on Friday in the capital region Amaravati.

The minister stated that no matter how many conspiracies Chandrababu came up with, the festival of distribution of house sites to the poor will be celebrated. CM Jagan has decided to build more than 50,000 houses in the capital region and each house costs



about Rs 10 lakh, which is history.

Minister Nagarjuna said that cheating the people of the State and messing with their lives was the habit of Chandrababu and further said that the former CM was playing a game with farmers and other people, especially in the capital region. He cheated the farmers by turning into a real estate broker and telling them lies.

He alleged that Chandrababu did not want the poor to have a place in Amaravati and played many

tricks at all levels to block the distribution of house sites to the poor by moving the High Court and even the Apex court. But in the end, justice prevailed as the Supreme Court also declared its support to CM Jagan, who fought for the poor.

Minister Nagarjuna said that after coming to power, CM Jagan wanted all the people in the capital region, including the farmers, tenant farmers and farm labourers, to be well but Chandrababu was against the poor in Amaravati. It is shameful how those who have formed parties in the name of Ambedkar are obstructing the construction of houses for the poor. The minister affirmed that no matter what Chandrababu did, CM Jagan would help the SC, ST, BC and minority beneficiaries and in any scheme, the top priority was the poor.

Farmers to stage 'black balloons' protest

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amaravati Bahujana JAC President Potula Bala Kotaiah has announced that Amaravati farmers will stage protest by wearing black badges and flying black balloons against the public meeting by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy held on Friday for the distribution of 1400 acres of land to the poor in R5 Zone in Amaravati.

He recalled that as the leader of opposition, Jagan Mohan Reddy did not promise to give one cent of land to the poor in Amaravati for houses.

He alleged that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was giving and donating lands of the Capital and trying to suppress the rights of Amaravati farmers through power.

He stated that they are not against distribution of house sites to the poor but it is good if the Jagan government distributes two cents of land to the beneficiaries.

Kanakamedala to represent TDP at new Parl building inaugural

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Rajya Sabha member, Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar, will be attending the inauguration of the new Parliament building in New Delhi.

On receiving an invitation from the Secretary General, Lok Sabha, TDP national president, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, has directed Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar to represent the party at the grand inauguration of the Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on May 28.

Traffic diversions for Jagan's Amaravati visit today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Police department imposed traffic diversions on the occasion of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy conducting free house title distribution programme for the poor and further public meeting on May 26 in Amaravati. The police stated that the changes were made to enable proper regulation of traffic from 4 am to 4 pm on Friday. CM Jagan will distribute house site titles to 51,000 poor people during the programme held at Venkatapalem adjacent to Venkateswara temple in Thullur mandal in Amaravati.

Heavy goods vehicles from Chennai side towards Visakhapatnam via Vijayawada and towards Ibrahimpatnam, Nandigama, will be diverted towards Visakhapatnam and Ibrahimpatnam via Chirala- Bapatla - Repalle- Avanigadda- Palmeru - Gudivada - Hanuman junction from Throvagunta in Ongole district.

Vehicles going towards Hyderabad from Chennai should go to Hyderabad via Medarametla, Addanki, Pidugharas, Nadikudi, Miryalaguda, Nalgonda, Narketpalli.

Vehicles going towards Visakhapatnam from Chilakalurpet will be diverted from Chilakalurpet on NH-16, Kakumanu, Ponnur, Chandolu, Cherukupalli, Bhattiprolu, Penumudi Bridge via Avanigadda, Pamarru- Gudivada - Hanuman Junction towards Visakhapatnam.

Vehicles going from Chennai to Visakhapatnam will be diverted towards Visakhapatnam via Boyapalem Cross, Unnam Village, ABPalem Vallur, Pandrapadu, Ponnoro, Chandolu, Cherukupalli, Bhattiprolu, Penumudi Bridge, Avanigadda, Palmeru - Gudivada - Hanuman junction.

Vehicles going to Visakhapatnam from Guntur will be diverted towards Visakhapatnam via Budampadu via Tenali, Vemuru, Kollur, Vellaturu

The police said that the changes were made to enable proper regulation of traffic from 4 am to 4 pm on Friday during the CM's programme of distribution of house site titles to poor people at Venkatapalem adjacent to Venkateswara temple in Thullur mandal of Amaravati.

Junction, Penumudi Bridge, Avanigadda, Pamarru - Gudivada - Hanuman Junction.

Lorries and heavy vehicles from Visakhapatnam towards Chennai will be diverted from Hanuman Junction via Gudivada - Pamarru - Avanigadda - Repalle - Bapatla - Chirala - Throvagunta and Ongole.

Vehicles heading towards Hyderabad from Rajahmundry will be diverted via Dewan Cheruvu, Dhavaleswaram Bridge, Kovvuru, Jangareddy Gudem, AswaraoPeta, Sathupalli.

Lorries and heavy vehicles heading towards Hyderabad from Visakhapatnam will be diverted from

Hanuman Junction towards Nujiveedu- Mylavaram- G Kondur and Ibrahimpatnam.

Vehicles from Gannavaram towards Hyderabad will be diverted towards Kesarapally, Mustabadd, Inner Ring Road, Pipula Road and Ibrahimpatnam.

Hyderabad bound vehicles from Hanuman Junction will be diverted towards Gannavaram Gandhi Bomma, Agiripalli, G Kondur, Ibrahimpatnam.

Heavy goods vehicles will be diverted towards Gannavaram, Agiripalli, G Kondur, Ibrahimpatnam.

Vehicles going towards Chennai from Hyderabad side have to go to Chennai via Narket Palli, Nalgonda, Miryalaguda,

Nadikudi, Piduguralla, Addanki and Medarametla.

Lorries and heavy vehicles going to Visakhapatnam from Hyderabad side will be allowed from Ibrahimpatnam at G - Konduru - Mylavaram - Nuziveedu - Hanuman Junction.

Multi-axle Goods vehicles going towards Visakhapatnam from Chennai side will be halted at Chilakaluripet, Ongole and Nellore near National Highway without any diversion. Those vehicles will be allowed after 4 pm.

Multi-axle goods vehicles going from Visakhapatnam towards Chennai will be stopped at Hanuman Junction and Pottipadu Toll Gate near National Highway. Those vehicles will be allowed after 4 pm.

Parking location of vehicles coming from Pedakakani side to Tulluru Mandal Venkata Palem.

Vehicles coming from Takkellapadu, Uppalapadu, Namburu, Agatahara padu, Takkellapadu should come from

Kantheru Tadikonda Pedaparimi Thullur Rayapudi seed access road from Koppuravuru.

Vehicles coming from Mangalagiri Town, Khaja, Atma Kuru, Pedavaddurru, Nidamarru, Kurakallu, VIT College Junction, behind Assembly, should come to Seed Axis via Velagapudi Church Centre.

Vehicles coming from Tadepalli should come from inside AIIMS Hospital Mangalagiri Bridge Don Bosco School Yerrabalem Krishnapalem, Mandam, take right near Velagapudi Church and come to Seed Access N9 Junction Vehicles from Vijayawada side should take Krishnaya Palem via Undavalli, Undavalli Caves, Penumaka, take the right side to the metal road and reach Venkatapalem parking place.

Vehicles coming from Vijayawada side via Vijayawada AIIMS via Brahmanandapuram Railway Gate Nulakapeta Undavalli Center, Undavalli caves to Seed Access Road.

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

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

There will be three versions of Vande Bharat trains -- Vande Chair Car, Vande Metro and Vande Sleepers -- by February-March next year, Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday.

These indigenous semi-high speed trains, which are being prepped to replace Shatabdhis, Rajdhani and local trains, are being made at the Integrated Coach Factory in Chennai. In an interview, the minister said in the next three to four years, railway tracks will be upgraded to support the maximum speed of 160 kmph of Vande Bharat trains.

"There are three formats of Vande Bharat. Vande Metro for less than 100 kilometres, Vande Chair Car for 100-550 kilometres and Vande Sleepers for a journey beyond 550 kilometres. These three formats will be ready by February-March (next year)," Vaishnaw said after the launch of a Vande Bharat train from



Uttarakhand's Dehradun to the Anand Vihar Terminal Railway Station in Delhi.

The Delhi-Dehradun Vande Bharat Express was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Equipped with state-of-the-art amenities for passengers, the first such train for Uttarakhand reduces the journey time between state capital Dehradun and the national capital to four and a half hours from the six hours and 10 minutes it took the Dehradun-New Delhi Railway Station Shatabdi Express. Vaishnaw said every state will get a Vande Bharat train by

mid-June. The production of these trains is being expedited, the minister said.

"Every eighth or ninth day, a new train is coming out of the factory. Work is going to start at two more factories. We will have a new train coming out of these factories once their supply chain gets stabilised," Vaishnaw said.

Vande Bharat trains are designed with a top speed of 160 kmph but they will run at a speed of up to 130 kmph according to track capacity.

"Old tracks were designed to support speeds between 70 and 80 kmph. 30,000-35,000 kilometres of tracks are being upgraded to support speeds of 110 kmph, 130 kmph and 160 kmph. It will be done in the next three to four years," Vaishnaw said.

The minister said the railways is expeditiously working on a rail connectivity projects for border areas. Steps are also being taken to provide 4G-5G services to train passengers, Vaishnaw said.

Plea in SC seeks inauguration of new Parliament building by Prez, says she heads the institution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A PIL was filed in the Supreme Court on Thursday seeking a direction to the Lok Sabha secretariat for inauguration of the new Parliament building by President Droupadi Murmu, who is the "first citizen of India and the head of the institution".

The petition says the respondents--the Lok Sabha secretariat and the Union of India--are "humiliating" the president by not inviting her for the inauguration.

The petition by an apex court lawyer comes amid a massive controversy over the scheduled inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 28.

Some 20 opposition parties have decided to boycott the ceremony to protest the "sidelining" of the President.

In a joint statement on Wednesday, 19 political parties said, "When the soul of

democracy has been sucked out of Parliament, we find no value in a new building."

The BJP-led NDA shot back, condemning the "contemptuous" decision.

"This act is not merely disrespectful; it is a blatant affront to the democratic ethos and constitutional values of our great nation," parties belonging to the ruling NDA said in a statement on Wednesday.

The PIL filed by advocate Jaya Sukin contended the statement issued by the Lok Sabha secretariat on May 18 and invite issued by Secretary General, Lok Sabha about the inauguration of the new Parliament building are violative of the Constitution.

"The President is the first citizen of India and head of the institution of Parliament," it noted and sought a direction from the Supreme Court to facilitate the inauguration by Murmu.

Senior IPS...

Continued from Page 3

Chowdhury, a Congress leader, had reportedly given a dissent note on the selection of Sood as the next CBI director

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

Show big heart and...

Continued from Page 3

But India's prime minister is also an important part of Parliament. The prime minister also holds constitutional responsibility," he told reporters.

Prasad urged the opposition leaders not to use the boycott of the event as a platform to forge opposition unity, saying they will have more opportunities to do so.

"Mughals built Lal Quila, Jama Masjid and Humayun's Tomb. Qutab-ud-din Aibak built Qutab Minar, they claim. The British built North Block, South Block, President House which was called Viceroy House, and a Sansad Bhavan," Prasad said, and asked "What did we built in 75 years of Independence?"

"After 75 five years of independence, why India should not get a Parliament built by Indians," he added.

Prasad said the new Parliament building is an "exemplary model" of Indian Vaastu Kala (architecture) and it has been built according to Indian 'sanskar'.

"I would say to the Congress leaders and other opposition leaders that you come and attend the programme."

Oppn accuses...

Continued from Page 3

"Mr. Modi, Parliament is the temple of democracy established by the people. The office of the President is the first part of Parliament. The arrogance of your government has destroyed the parliamentary system," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

"140 crore Indians want to know what do you want to show by taking away the right of the President of India to inaugurate the Parliament House?" the Congress chief said.

The Congress' attack comes a day after as many as 20 opposition parties announced their decision to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Modi.

Nineteen Opposition parties, including the Congress, Left, TMC, SP and AAP, came together to jointly announce the boycott, saying they find no value in a new building when the "soul of democracy has been sucked out". Separately, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said if Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla does not inaugurate the new

Parliament building, his party would not attend.

"Boycott of #ParliamentBuilding opening by 20 parties representing the diversity and pluralism of India is a response to boycott of parliamentary traditions by an authoritarian government. The 'NDA statement' pulled out by BJP is telling. A once large coalition now virtually extinct!" said Derek O' Brien, TMC MP and leader of the party in Rajya Sabha.

CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury highlighted how the president and not the prime minister should inaugurate the new building.

"Modi to inaugurate new Parliament building! The President of India is not only the head of the Republic but also the head of the Parliament. PM is head of the govt- Executive- & not of the Legislature," he said. TMC spokesperson Saket Gokhale referred to the prime minister inaugurating every Vande Bharat train and his photo on Covid vaccinations and said it was a "hallmark of authoritarians".

TODAY

ALMANAC

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

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

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

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 42°C
Humidity: 41%
Sunrise: 5:34 AM
Sunset: 6:35 PM

Updated: MAY 25, 2023 5:00 PM

Govt insulting tribals...

Continued from Page 3

Narendra Modi inaugurating the new Parliament building rather than the president is an "insult" to democracy.

"For the first time a tribal is the president, we have a woman president. This (inauguration by the PM) is an insult to tribals and women. The President is an important part of Parliament as it is the president that addresses the joint session of Parliament. It is the President who should inaugurate Parliament," Moghe said. "I don't know whether this is happening because we are tribals," said the chief of All India Adivasi Congress department under the Indian National Congress. Moghe's attack on the government came a day after 20 opposition parties announced their boycott of the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Modi.

Nineteen Opposition parties, including the Congress, Left, TMC, SP and AAP, came together to jointly announce

the boycott, saying they find no value in a new building when the "soul of democracy has been sucked out." Separately, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said if Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla does not inaugurate the new Parliament building, his party would not attend the event. Moghe said even when the 'bhumi pooja' of the new Parliament complex was done, the then President, Ram Nath Kovind, was relegated to back seat. "Both the times, Modi ji came forward to carry out inauguration," He alleged that the move was intended by the Modi government to insult backward classes as it is "against tribals."

"Tomorrow, we will carry out a nationwide agitation at block, village, district level, against this attempt to insult tribals and women of the country. We want the president to inaugurate the new Parliament and not the prime minister. There is still time, the PM should change his mind and let the president inaugurate the new parliament

building," he said. "We will also protest against the government policies targeting the tribals. We will peacefully protest in a democratic manner. They are using tribals for politics, we will protest against it," Moghe said. Earlier in the day, the Congress attacked Modi saying "one man's ego and desire for self-promotion" has denied the first tribal woman president her constitutional privilege to inaugurate the complex. After the Opposition's boycott call, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance also launched a sharp counterattack, calling its stand a "blatant affront to democratic ethos and constitutional values of our great nation."

The 19 opposition parties in their joint statement said Prime Minister Modi's decision to inaugurate the new Parliament building by himself, "completely sidelining President Droupadi Murmu, is not only a grave insult but a direct assault on our democracy which demands a commensurate response."

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
MUNICIPALITY WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT

T.N. No. 37-542023-2024 **Dated: 22-05-2023**

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Tenders called for 18 works of Providing Permanent Water Supply and FHTCs to JHC Layouts in Kakinda District under JJM grant with an estimate cost of Rs.1095.07 Lakhs. The tender details are available in the portal www.tender.approcurement.gov.in and the schedules can be downloaded from 29-05-2023 at 10.30 AM. Last date and time will be 5.00 PM on 14-06-2023.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer
RWS & S Projects Circle, Kakinda

R.O. No: 9699/CLAD/VT/11/2021-22, Dt. 25.05.2023

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

Admission Announcement : 2023-24

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



-PAGE: 4

-PAGE: 5

-PAGE: 8

-SPORTS

-Pic by Ch.Vijaya Bhaskar

2

2

Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance)," Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said. "This challenging night landing

TDP forgot manifesto after coming to power, says Min Malladi Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Planning Board Vice-Chairman and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has said that people are laughing at Chandrababu Naidu when he mentions the word 'manifesto'. The MLA criticised that the TDP was copying the manifestos of other parties. After coming to power, he would destroy the manifesto. "It is the habit of the Telugu Desam Party to prepare a manifesto like a booklet, release it with a lot of hype, and forget everything after coming to power," he said.

As part of the ongoing Gadapa Gadapaku Manaprabuthvam programme, the Planning Board VC said that Chandrababu had a history of using the manifesto to attract people for votes during the election times. He said that the TDP leaders, during the Mahanadu, should reply to the people of Andhra Pradesh whether their party had implemented any promises made in the 2014 manifesto. He pointed out that the TDP had promised to unconditionally waive the loans of farmers



and after coming to power they formed the Kotaiah Committee and did injustice to the farmers. While the agricultural loans were Rs 87,612 crore, it was reduced to Rs 24,000 crore and paid in four to five installments, resulting in huge interests on loans and forcing the farmers to commit suicides.

MLA Vishnu said that the loan

waiver of Dwra women and handloom workers was also completely suppressed. Although the Kotaiah Committee recommended the waiver of Dwra loans in its report, Chandrababu did not implement it. Finally, the women had to receive notices from the banks as the interests piled up. Malladi Vishnu said that he did not understand

why they were shamelessly introducing the manifesto in Mahanadu.

He further said that arrangements were in place for the distribution of house titles to the poor under CRDA, and 51,392 poor families were participating in the programme. He said that there were 7,211 beneficiaries from Vijayawada Central constituency and 1,238 families from Division I. Vishnu said that all the plots had already been allotted numbers in the layouts and marking was completed.

The MLA alleged that the TDP had hatched several conspiracies to prevent the poor from getting houses in the R5 zone.

DE (Engineering) Gurnatham, DE (UGD & Water Supply) Ramakrishna, CDO Jagadeeswari, 29th Division Corporator Kongithala Lakshmiipathy, YSRCP activists Uddhanti Suresh, Konda Maheshwar Reddy, Bandi Venu, Kanaka Rao, Mandadi Venkatarao, Nagaraju, Kolakaleti Ramani, Bhagyalakshmi, Y Srinivas, officers of all departments and Secretariat staff were present.



TTD Chairman lays stone for Balaji Institute of Oncology

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Board Chairman Y V Subba Reddy laid the foundation stone for the construction of Balaji Institute of Oncology here on Thursday.

The Balaji Institute of Oncology will be constructed at a cost of Rs 124 crore on the premises of Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences. Speaking on the occasion, YV Subba Reddy said that the Oncology institute would provide medical treatment to the cancer patients. Most modern medical medical equipment would be installed and most advanced treatment would be provided in the cancer hospital, he stated. Subba Reddy said that the construction of the cancer hospital would be carried out at cost of Rs 124 crore and informed that the foundation stone of the crucial bunker block was laid today.

Modern equipment worth Rs 200 crore would be installed in the cancer hospital to provide the best treatment to the patients. The hospital building construction would be completed by December 2023, he stated, adding that the hospital will have 400 beds. The cancer hospital would come in a spacious 3 lakh SFT. Subba Reddy said that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy asked to operate pink buses in every district, stating the pink buses have been sent to all corners of Chittoor and Tirupati district and screening would be carried out for cancer patients. Tirupati MP Gurumurthy, TTD Governing Body Member Pokala Ashok Kumar and TTD officials participated in this programme.

Probe ordered into bus accident at Tirumala ghat road

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy directed officials to conduct an inquiry into the bus accident that occurred on Wednesday on the Tirumala Tirupati down ghat road and submit a detailed report on the same.

TTD Chairman on Thursday visited the site where the bus mishap happened and reviewed the issues connected with the accident.

Speaking to the media later he said the Olectra company and RTC officials had informed that there was no technical fault but over speeding and human error

shall be probed.

The Chairman said fortunately with the benign blessings of Venkateswara Swamy none of devotees injured and RTC made all alternative arrangements ensuring safe transportation of passengers to Tirupati.

He said officials concerned have been instructed to give more training to drivers on electric buses and ensure safety of passengers.

TTD CVSO Narasimha Kishore, Transport GM Shesha Reddy, RTC RM Chengal Reddy, Olectra electric bus manufacturing company representatives were present.



Collectors to take responsibility for Haj vaccination drive

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District collectors should take responsibility for the ambitious vaccination programme being undertaken by the Central government for Haj pilgrims. Advisor of the National Minorities Commission M Arshad Ayub Khan directed the Chief Secretary of the State on Thursday to strictly follow the rules and regulations laid down by the Union Health Department and to take action against the officials who do not comply.

He stated that in the past, due to miscommunication, vaccination programmes were conducted on roads

and mosque premises instead of PHCs or District Hospitals. However, the Government of India has issued instructions that the vaccination process for this year's Haj should be conducted directly by the Health Department in the respective districts to prevent such mistakes from happening.

The Collectors should take full responsibility for taking steps to conduct complete medical examinations for the Haj pilgrims.

If the Immunisation SOP process is not followed, strict action will be taken against the officials concerned, said the Advisor of the National Minorities Commission.

State-of-the-art diagnostic laboratory launched

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Global pharma major Lupin Limited launched its satellite laboratory in Vijayawada on Thursday. The move is part of Lupin Diagnostics' ongoing expansion aimed at enhancing access to high-quality testing services and increasing the diagnostics network. The newly-launched laboratory complements an extensive network of 27 laboratories and over 410 collection centres across India.

Lupin's new laboratory in Vijayawada is equipped with state-of-the-art diagnostic technology and staffed by a team of highly qualified clinical experts. This advanced infrastructure empowers Lupin Diagnostics to offer reliable and high-quality diagnostic



services to the local community. The integration of cutting-edge technology and expertise ensures accurate and efficient testing, enabling timely diagnosis and improved patient care. In addition to routine and specialised tests, the newly-launched laboratory in Vijayawada offers an extensive range of diagnostics services. These include clinical pathology, microbiology, hematology, biochemistry, serology, and immunology.

"Accurate diagnosis is the first step towards managing diseases and identifying suitable treatment," said Ravindra Kumar, CEO, Lupin Diagnostics. "With our cutting-edge technology and personalised smart reports, patients and doctors gain valuable insights into health trends, enabling informed decisions. Our mission is to make quality diagnostics affordable and accessible to everyone in India," he added.

Eight held for child trafficking

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Anti-Human Trafficking unit on Thursday arrested eight persons involved in child trafficking. An operation was carried out at the Secunderabad Railway Station along with the Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF) and an NGO, Bachpan Bachao Andolan. The accused were identified as Ramjan Malla (19), a native of West Bengal, Shaik Saidul (27), also a native of West Bengal who worked as a goldsmith near Charminar; Pinto Das (30) a resident of Jharkhand; Susen Tudu (37), Priyarl Sheikh (30), Shaik Jakir Ali (20); Abdul Alamin Mondal and Suroji Santra all natives of West Bengal. The accused confessed to bringing children to push them into labour. A case was registered by the GRP police under Sections 34 and 374 of the Indian Penal Code.

Cong denounces use of 'excessive force' against Amaravati farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kolanukonda Sivaji, a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), strongly denounced the excessive use of force by the police against protesting farmers in the Amaravati region.

During a press conference held here on Thursday, Sivaji expressed his dismay over the disrespectful behaviour exhibited by the police towards peaceful farmers demonstrating against the relocation of the executive capital from Amaravati. He criticised the authorities for their rough treatment of the farmers, including the forceful removal of women from the protest site and their subsequent detention at the police station.

Sivaji vehemently accused the ruling YSRCP of employing unjust tactics to suppress the Amaravati farmers' protest



against the capital city's relocation. He highlighted the fact that these farmers had willingly given up over 33,000 acres of their land for the development of the capital.

"The YSRCP-led government is allocating housing sites in the R-5 zone of the Amaravati region, which was originally designated for the establishment of an electronic city. This action goes against the provisions outlined in the CRDA act, which clearly states the designated

areas for providing housing to the poor. Granting house sites to the underprivileged within the 900-acre plot designated for the electronic city undermines the construction of a world-class capital city for Andhra Pradesh," criticised Kolanukonda Shivaji.

He also highlighted that the government led by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had borrowed approximately Rs 10 lakh crore thus far, while the central govern-

ment had only released Rs 10,000 crore recently, despite the promised allocation of Rs 2 lakh crore to Andhra Pradesh.

In reference to the inauguration of the newly constructed Parliament building, Sivaji opined that it should be inaugurated by the President of India. He further derided the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Andhra Pradesh, claiming that it had split into two factions—one supporting the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the other supporting the ruling YSRCP.

Kolanukonda Sivaji revealed that they have plans to invite Congress MP Rahul Gandhi to visit Amaravati in the near future. The press conference was attended by APCC vice-president Dhanekula Murali, state youth congress leader Allam Rajesh, and Sevadal state general secretary Gouse.

Sultan and Prime Minister of Malaysia visit INS Kavaratti

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

His Royal Highness Al-Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah, the Sultan of Kedah Malaysia, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia & senior Malaysian dignitaries that included Foreign Minister Dr Zambry & Deputy Chief of Navy Vice Adm Sabri visited the Indian Navy ship INS Kavaratti the indigenously built ASW Corvette at Langkawi, Malaysia.

INS Kavaratti is participating in the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition LIMA 2023, conducted by the Royal Malaysian Navy.

The Sultan, who is also a graduate of the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, was briefed on the design &



capabilities of the ship and was hosted for dinner onboard. In a separate visit, Admiral Abdul Rahman bin

Ayob, Chief of Navy, Royal Malaysian Navy also visited the ship INS Kavaratti.

Consul General of Germany visits Skill College in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Michaela Kuchler, Consul General of Germany to India, visited the Skill College in Government Polytechnic College, Vijayawada, on Thursday. She was accompanied by Amitha Desai, Honorary Consul to India, Dr Vinod Kumar V, MD&CEO of APSSDC, and BR Kranthi Kumari, Executive Director of APSSDC & General Manager of OMCAAP.

Dr Vinod Kumar briefed the team and the students on the skill cascading ecosystem and skill international programme for employment opportunities across the globe. He requested the Consul General of Germany to establish a German Language Lab for the job aspirants of AP and explore the possible areas to establish strategic partnership,



to which Michaela Kuchler has agreed.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has initiated a holistic strategy to improve access and quality of the skill development initiatives through a Skill Cascade System. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has prioritised the Cascade Skilling concept, which is being implemented through collaborative efforts of

the Department of Skill Development & Training, Department of Employment & Training, Technical Education, Collegiate Education, Department of Industries and others. The APSSDC is acting as the nodal agency for all the initiatives planned under Cascade Skilling and has established 192 Skill Hubs and 21 Skill Colleges across Andhra Pradesh.

The State government led by CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was planning to undertake skills development initiatives to tap the overseas placement opportunities in identified priority sectors. In this connection, SD&T has designated APSSDC as the nodal agency for the Skill India International programme. The specific focus has been on regions like the Middle East, the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan and the USA. In order to create an internationally benchmarked quality skills ecosystem and provide global career mobility opportunities for overseas candidates, APSSDC is reaching out to major industry partners and international institutes, who can partner with the AP Government and support the overall framework. It is also trying to collaborate with various foreign dignitaries.

Steps taken for speedy convictions in SC/ST cases: SP Malika Garg

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district SP, Malika Garg, commended the police officers and staff for their instrumental role in bringing the accused to justice within a year. In a special meeting with the police officers, SP Garg provided clear instructions and guidelines regarding the thorough investigation of SC/ST Atrocities cases, ensuring timely arrests, filing of comprehensive charge sheets with all witnesses, and effective monitoring of the trial in court. These efforts resulted in the swift conviction and sentencing of the accused.

The incident involved D. Rathamma (52 years old, widow of Late Nagayya, belonging to the Erukula caste) and G. Srinu (55 years old, belonging to the Budabukkala caste) residing together in a



house at Line 2 of Nehru Nagar, Cheemakurti. They earned a living by collecting old iron, plastic cans, and tins. On the night of February 13, 2022, during an altercation over money for liquor, Srinu struck Rathamma forcefully on the head and face with a brick, resulting in her immediate death. The incident led to the registration of an SC/ST case under Cr.No.33/2022, U/s

302 IPC, Sec.3(2)(v) of SC/ST(POA) Act-1989 at Cheemakurthi PS.

Following the registration of the case, Ongole DSP and Ongole Rural CI conducted a meticulous investigation, leading to the arrest of the accused on February 17, 2022. The police subsequently filed a charge sheet in court. The accused was presented before the VIth ADJ

Court Judge, Ongole T. Raja Venkatadri, by the police, represented by PP Srinivasamurthy. Under the guidance of the District SP, the trial was conducted diligently, with solid evidence presented, proving the guilt of the accused in the lady's murder. On May 25, 2023, the court sentenced the accused to life imprisonment along with a fine of Rs. 10,000.

District SP Garg expressed special appreciation for the exemplary contributions of then Ongole DSP U. Nagaraju, then Ongole Rural CI R. Rambabu, Court Liaison HC Srinivasa Rao, and Chimakurthy Court PC Hari Krishna. Their pivotal roles in providing accurate evidence in court and effectively monitoring the trial were crucial in securing the conviction of the accused.

Heavy rain wreaks havoc in Bapatla

Huge loss of horticultural crops in Vemuru segment

PNS ■ BAPATLA

Heavy rain, accompanied by gusty winds, damaged horticulture crops in several villages in Vemuru constituency on Thursday.

The downpour damaged plantain, betel leaf, and maize and chilli crops in Kolluru, Potarlanda and Donepudi mandals. Plantain plants were raged to the ground while other horticulture crops were in one foot water. Electrical poles and trees were uprooted, resulting in several villages being plunged into darkness. Huge quantities of maize produce which was left at the fields for drying purposes were drenched in the rain and soaking in the water. The farmers expressed grief over the loss of standing crops.

The farmers told the media



that they were making preparations for harvest and the untimely rain accompanied by gales damaged their crops. The farmers invested lakhs of rupees to raise their crops now they lost their investment, a group of farmers lamented. The farmers have to pay Rs 50000 to the owners as lease amount and they invested Rs 50,000. Now the farmers have to bear Rs 1 lakh loss per acre, they deplored. Maize crops in hundreds of acres were inundated in rain

water. The rain affected farmers appealed to the government to extend them financial help.

Blurb Heavy rain damaged plantain, betel leaf, and maize and chilli crops in Kolluru, Potarlanda and Donepudi mandals. Plantain plants were raged to the ground while other horticulture crops were in one foot water. Electrical poles and trees were uprooted, resulting in several villages being plunged into darkness.

Fake job offer: TTD IT wing lodges complaint

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The IT wing of TTD has identified some fake websites and social media handles which are cheating the unemployed people by offering jobs in TTD with a salary of Rs 1 lakh for 10th pass qualification.

IT General Manager LM Sandeep Reddy lodged a complaint against eight such social media platforms at the One Town Police Station in Tirumala on Thursday. The IT wing of TTD has also identified the addresses of these fake social media handles during their routine monitoring of websites.

TTD has urged the devotees not to believe such false news and become prey to fake social media handles. Anything related to TTD will be informed through its official website only.

3 killed as car rams stationary lorry

PNS ■ NELLORE

Three persons, including a three-year-old boy, were killed and five others were injured when the car in which they were travelling rammed a stationary lorry at Baddevolu village near cross roads in Manubolu mandal.

Police said that eight people were going to Chennai in an Innova car from Damigunta village in Kodavaluru mandal. The family of either were taking a boy treatment in a private hospital in Chennai. Their innova car rammed a stationary lorry from rear end killing Rama Rao (40), Mercy (15) and Sanat Teja (3). The car became an iron mangle under the impact of the collision. The injured were admitted to a private hospital here. The family was taking Sanat Teja to Chennai for treatment in a private hospital but he also died in the accident.

The police with the help of locals extricated bodies and the injured from the ill-fated car after struggling over two hours.



The car was going at a high speed when the mishap took place, police said. Though the airbags were opened they could not protect the deceased.

The traffic on the Chennai-Kolkata highway was disrupted following the accident and the police regulated the traffic. The lorry driver parked the lorry on the

busy Chennai-Kolkata highway in a negligent manner resulting in the car ramming from the rear end, the eye witness told the media.

Suicide pact: Woman & son die, daughter survives

PNS ■ ELURU

In a suicide pact, a woman, her son and daughter jumped before a running train at Paturu Subramanya Swamy temple in Tadepalligudem on Thursday. While the woman Satyaprabha and her son Tribhuvan died, her daughter Amruta survived the suicide attempt.

Police said that the trio jumped before the Visakhapatnam-Tirumala express train.

Satyaprabha and Tribhuvan

died instantaneously. However, Amruta was critically injured in the suicide attempt and she was admitted to the Eluru GGH. The deceased Tribhuvan passed Intermediate and Amruta passed 10 th class recently. Gutti Shiva Anjaneyulu, the husband of the deceased Satyaprabha, is a garlic trader.

The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem examination. The exact reason for the suicide is yet to be ascertained, police said.



CM invited for 'Maha Samprokshana' of Srivari temple at Jammu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was invited to participate in the 'Maha Samprokshana' ritual of the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple built in Jammu by the TTD.

TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy and the New Delhi-based SV Group of Temples Chairman Vemireddy

Prashanti Reddy called on the Chief Minister here on Thursday and extended the invitation to grace the ritual to be held from June 3 to 8.

The ritual will consist of 'Dwajarahana', 'Kalavahana' and 'Aradhana'.

The main programme will be held on June 8 in the most auspicious time of 'Mithuna Lagnam'.

Dhulipalla visits TDP activist who attempted suicide

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and former MLA Dhulipalla Narendra visited TDP activist Chilumuri Kannaiah, who attempted suicide unable to bear the harassment of MRO, in hospital in Ponnuru on Thursday.

Narendra met the family members of Kannaiah and infused them courage and assured them of standing by and extending all needed help.

Talking to the media on the occasion, Dhulipalla Narendra said that TDP activist Kannaiah's family members purchased four cents of land in 1960. The government officials

tried to acquire the land recently. In protest against acquiring his land, Kannaiah attempt suicide, he stated.

The land is the only source to Kannaiah to eke out livelihood which the officials acquired now, the TDP leader lamented. When the victim explained the same to the MRO, he spoke in a ridiculous manner, Narendra alleged.

"The TDP continues to stand by the victims and extend all required help to them. We demand to take stringent action against the MRO and other officials who are responsible for Kannaiah's attempt to end his life," Narendra demanded.



7 passengers injured as pvt bus overturns

PNS ■ KADAPA

As many as seven passengers were injured when the private bus in which they were travelling overturned at Kukitamanugadda village on the Bangalore-Tirupati highway in Annamayya district on Thursday.

Police said that the private bus was going to Tirupati from Bangalore with about 55 passengers. The bus driver tried to avert hitting a car but

failed to control the vehicle resulting in the bus veering off the road and overturned on a road side field.

Seven persons suffered bleeding injuries in the mishap and they were sent to the GGH in Madanapalle in ambulances. The rest of the passengers were treated for minor injuries. Madanapalle RDO Murali, DSP Seshappa and other police officers visited the scene of mishap and registered a case.

Minister launches lift irrigation scheme works

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Minister for Irrigation Ambati Rambabu formally performed bhoomi pooja for the lift irrigation scheme works to resolve the drinking water crisis in Chejerla.

The minister performed 'bhoomi pooja' for the works and later unveiled a plaque at Chejerla village on Thursday. The lift irrigation scheme is being taken up at a cost of Rs 3.47 crore.

The lift scheme is completed that would resolve the drinking water shortage in Chejerla and also provide water



to irrigate 197 acres.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambati Rambabu said that

the villagers of Chejerla have been facing acute drinking water shortage for the last sev-

eral years. The government sanctioned a lift scheme to be taken up at a cost of Rs 3.47 crore to fill the Chejerla irrigation tank.

The Minister said that the lift scheme would be constructed on the Nagarjuna Sagar Right (Jawahar) canal at 92.20 km point through which 4.92 cusecs of water would be pumped for 16 hours a day for 100 days to the irrigation tank at Chejerla. Aarogyasri trust Executive chairman Dr.B Sambashiva Reddy, officials and YSRC leaders were present.

SP pays homage to cop who died of snake bite

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police Malika Garg paid homage to constable E Pawan Kumar, who died of snake bite, while discharging duty at Tulluru village in Amaravati region.

The SP paid tributes by placing a wreath on the mortal remains of the constable at Cheemakurthi on Thursday. The SP consoled bereaved family members. The last rites of the constable were held with police formalities.

The deceased constable Pawan Kumar was bitten by a



viper snake when he was asleep at Tulluru in Amaravati region.

He was deployed for bandobast as the Chief Minister is to dis-

tribute house sites in R-5 zone. The body was taken to his native village Chimakurti today. Trainee SP Ankita Surana, DSP Narayana Swamy Reddy, SEB DSP B Mariyadas and a host of other police officials were among those who paid tributes.

The SP assured of extending all required help to the bereaved family. Steps will be taken to disburse all dues to the family, she promised. The deceased constable Pawan Kumar joined the police department in 2012 and he is survived by wife, daughter and son.

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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

It may be mentioned here that Naresh and Ramya Raghupathi have allegedly had conflicts of interest, while

Naresh's alleged closeness to Pavitra Lokesh has also been a subject of discussion.

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

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

'Govts shedding croc tears over Parliament building inauguration'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Governor, Dr Tamilisai Sounderrajan, reacted regarding the inauguration of the new Parliament building and said, "State governments which do not respect Governors are shedding crocodile tears saying that the constitutional head of the country has not been invited to the inauguration of the new Parliament building."

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

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



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

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

VC Sajjanar calls for action against Herbalife over fraud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

Addressing the issue, Sajjanar said, "The firm has carried out

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

In 2019, the United States Department of Justice charged two of the firm's employees with conspiracy in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). They were accused of bribing Chinese officials in order to procure sales permits and to influence an investigation into Herbalife.

They were also accused of offering bribes to China Economic Net in order to influence their media coverage. In August 2020, Herbalife agreed to pay \$123 million to the US Department of Justice and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

189 missing mobile phones worth Rs 45 lakh recovered

PNS ■ KADAPA

The YSR district police have recovered Rs 45 lakh worth of 189 mobile phones that were reported to be missing and handed them over to their respective owners on Thursday.

Superintendent Of Police KKN Anburajan handed over the recovered phones to their owners at an event that was held at the District Police Office.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Anburajan said that people were upset after losing their mobile phones as so much crucial data, including personal pictures, are stored on them. Kadapa police recently launched a novel initiative through which victims who lost their mobile phones could send a WhatsApp message to the designated police number 9392941541 without having to physically go to the police station to lodge a complaint.

This was started through a unique Missing Mobile Tracking System (MMTS) website. This special initiative to trace missing mobile phones with the help of cyber crime technical wing began December 1st of 2022, he added.



The SP said that the victims can register their complaint by messaging 'Hi' via whatsapp, stating that there has been tremendous response to the new initiative through which the police department has received nearly 5000 complaints. The police have recovered Rs 1.75 crore worth of 669 mobile phones till date, he said.

The other mobile phones would also be recovered soon, SP said and cautioned the public not to buy a used phone without a proper authenticated bill. The SP congratulated the Cyber crime technical wing under the supervision of Additional SP (admin) Tushar Dudi, Cyber Crime Inspector Sridhar Naidu, Sub Inspectors Madhumalleswar Reddy, Ravi Kumar for their efforts in recovering the lost phones.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Unedifying

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

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



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

PICTALK



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

PTI

Terrorists are using newer ways of executing their acts

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MANIPUR UNREST CONTINUES

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

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING IS READY

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

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

Kazi Nazrul: The rebel poet



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

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

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

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

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

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

WOMEN TOPPERS IN UPSC

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

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

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



DEEPAK SINHA

A fairy tale that is The Kerala Story

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



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

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

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

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

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

FIRST COLUMN

WORLD IS UNDERGOING TRANSFORMATION

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




RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

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

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

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

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




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

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

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

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

Who will end the free-run of freebies?



UTTAM GUPTA

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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(The writer is a policy analyst)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Is there any way this menace could be reined in?

To get an answer, let us look at a judgment of the Supreme Court (SC) in S Subramaniam Balaji vs the Government of Tamil Nadu & Ors delivered way back in July 2013. It has been observed that the distribution of freebies of any kind influences all people. "It shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree." This

would have led any logical person to believe that the SC would give a strict direction to stem the rot. But, what followed was a lame-duck order.

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

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

The ECI never came out with any such guidelines.

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

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

India to be a major player in the multipolar world

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

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



SIMRAN SODHI

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

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

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



shift India well understands and is cautiously working towards.

The Ukraine crisis has hastened this change. While the US and its Western allies have and continue to routinely condemn Russia over its actions, India has stuck to its guns and played it according to her interests. There was much pressure on India during the first few weeks of the conflict to censure Russian actions but the fact that India did not do so and eventually it also brought about a change in Western attitudes has been a fine diplomatic victory for India. In March last year Biden had termed India's response to the Ukraine conflict as 'somewhat shaky'. But with time the messaging out of Washington changed with a gradual accep-

tance of India's position.

India has consistently abstained from the United Nations at resolutions brought in by the Western world against Russia. This has helped India retain an old friend. About half of India's military supplies come from Russia. Courtesy of the Ukraine conflict, India's trade

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

Emami consolidated net profit down 60 pc in Q4 FY23

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



LIC shares settle nearly 2% higher after Q4 earnings

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



SBI penalised for sending bills to man despite credit card's expiry

Delhi consumer forum has directed the SBI Cards & Payments Services Pvt. Ltd. to pay Rs 2 lakh to a person here for sending him bill even after his card's expiry and blacklisting him for non-payment of the charges. The New Delhi District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum comprising its president Monika A Srivastava and members Kiran Kausal and Umesh Kumar Tyagi directed the company to pay the amount to M J Anthony, a former journalist, for "deficiency in providing services". The forum noted that the company had blacklisted him in the CIBIL system of the wilful defaulters maintained by the RBI, which resulted in the rejection of his applications for credit cards from another bank where he had maintained regular account for nearly two decades. "This Commission is of the view that the SBI Cards & Payments Services Pvt. Ltd.



THREE-PRONGED APPROACH

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Speaking at an CII event here, Panda said IRDAI is



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Gold plunges Rs 430; silver down Rs 750

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Crackdown soon on developers of delayed power projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Power project developers are waiting for demand to grow but



this will not happen, he said.

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

At present the battery storage is Rs 10 per unit and the energy rate is Rs 2.30, he explained. The minister also said that he is pushing the case for another production-linked incentive scheme for grid-scale battery energy storage.

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

Indian Steel Association, AISC to unlock sectoral opportunities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



Strong performance of Indian banks to continue: S&P

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Indian banking profitability is benefiting from higher net interest margins and lower credit costs.

We estimate a system-wide return on average assets (ROAA) at 1.2 per cent for fiscal 2023 (year ending March 31, 2023). System-wide ROAA will likely hover around 1.1 per cent in fiscal 2024.

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

DGCA asks Go First to submit revival plan in 30 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Signs of private sector investment cycle unfolding, says CEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Highway contractors can convert bank guarantees into surety bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"I conveyed to the road transport secretary that he



should talk to the finance secretary once to give it (allowing conversion of bank guarantee to surety bonds) from retro-

spective effect.

"In NHAI, in the road ministry and NHIDCL whatever bank guarantees are there, if they want, they can convert them into insurance surety bonds. Permission should be given for this," Gadkari said on Wednesday at an event organised by the National Highways Authority of India.

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

21,837 in 2022-23. In the healthcare visa category, Indians registered an even higher 105 per cent hike from 14,485 to 29,726. "There were 138,532 sponsored study visa grants to Indian nationals in year ending March 2023, an increase of 53,429 (+63 per cent) compared to year ending March 2022 and the largest number of study visas granted to any nationality. Grants to study for Indian nationals have risen markedly since year ending March 2019 and are now around seven times higher," the analysis

notes. "Nigeria had the highest number of dependants (66,796) of sponsored study visa holders in the year ending March 2023, increasing from 27,137 in the year ending March 2022. Indian nationals had the second highest number of dependants, increasing from 22,598 to 42,381," it notes. The latest data comes days after UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman announced a clampdown on the right of student visa holders to bring dependent family members, limiting it only to PhD level students.

Indians dominate UK's skilled worker and student visa tally

PNS ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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



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

of grants," it said. According to the latest statistics, skilled worker visas granted to Indians rose 63 per cent, from 13,390 in 2021-22 to



Markets bounce back from intra-day lows; settle higher

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices bounced back from intra-day lows to settle in the positive territory on Thursday helped by bag-end buying.

In a volatile trade amid the monthly derivatives expiry, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 98.84 points or 0.16 per cent to settle at 61,872.62. During the day, it hit a high of 61,934.01 and a low of 61,484.66.

The NSE Nifty gained 35.75 points or 0.20 per cent to end at 18,321.15 after beginning the trade on a weak note.

"Markets oscillated in a narrow range on the monthly expiry day and settled marginally higher. After the flat start, the Nifty slipped gradually lower however support around the 18,200 zone trig-

gered a steady rebound in the final hours," Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Nestle, Asian Paints and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the major gainers.

Wipro, Tata Motors, IndusInd Bank, HDFC, Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India and Tata Steel were the major laggards.

"On the day of monthly expiry, the Indian stocks traded with high volatility," said Deven Mehata, Equity Research Analyst, Choice Broking.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.36 per cent and smallcap index gained 0.27 per cent.



Ranveer Singh's first look from *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani* will leave you spellbound

Superstar Ranveer Singh has established himself as one of the most versatile actors in the Hindi Film Industry, delivering iconic characters and blockbuster films throughout his illustrious career. From his breakthrough performance in *Band Baaja Baaraat* to his captivating portrayal in *Gully Boy*, and his powerful roles in *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, and *Padmaavat*, Ranveer continues to mesmerize audiences with his unparalleled talent. Now, he is set to enchant us once again with the eagerly awaited *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani*.

The makers have unveiled the first look of the film, and it has already captured the hearts of fans. Ranveer's portrayal of Rocky is truly All Heart, leaving audiences spellbound and yearning for more. Directed by the master of the genre, Karan Johar, *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani*, marks their first collaboration, raising the excitement levels even higher.

Coinciding with Karan Johar's birthday on May 25, which also marks his 25th year in the film industry, the unveiling of the first look adds an extra layer of celebration and anticipation. It's a perfect occasion to introduce the world to the magical world of *RRKPK*.

In addition to Ranveer Singh's magnetic presence, the film stars the immensely talented Alia Bhatt as Rani, creating an electric on-screen chemistry. Their previous collaboration in *Gully Boy* was met with widespread acclaim, further heightening expectations for their reunion in *RRKPK*.

As we eagerly await the release of *RRKPK*, it's clear that Ranveer Singh's captivating performance and the film's heartfelt narrative will once again leave an indelible mark on our hearts. Get ready to embark on a journey of love, passion, and enchantment with *RRKPK*.

K-pop artist Aora belts out *Disco Dancer's* golden hit *Jimmy Jimmy* in KPop Style!




Popular K-pop singer, rapper, and music producer, Aora, known for his successful solo career and his ebullient presence on the YouTube channel, 'HBC HOUSE' is on an extraordinary musical journey to blend Indian and Korean music. For the very first time, Aora has partnered with India's oldest music label Saregama to recreate a K-pop version of Bappi Lahiri's cult melody, *Jimmy Jimmy*, which will be released on May 25.

Says Aora, "I am thrilled to sing in Hindi for the very first time and present the K-pop version of a beloved Bollywood song like *Jimmy Jimmy* which happens to be one of my favorites. This collaboration exemplifies my deep admiration for Indian music and my desire to create something truly special that resonates with fans from both cultures."

In February 2023, Aora mesmerised Indian audiences with his sensational concerts in Mumbai and Jammu and is now determined to foster cultural exchange between India and South Korea with his music. This revamped version of *Jimmy Jimmy* will seamlessly blend Aora's distinct style with Saregama's expertise in curating unforgettable musical experiences.

He says, "It has been such an honour to be able to work with India's most prestigious label Saregama and to infuse the K-pop flavour in a wonderful song like *Jimmy Jimmy*. I had so much fun working on it, and it was also challenging to recreate it in the K-pop style while maintaining its original essence. Between me and my music producer Friday, we were however able to create a sound that I am very proud of. I hope that all my fans will remember this version for a very long time."



Schwarzenegger makes cheeky remark about his sex life ahead of OTT show release

The *Terminator* star Arnold Schwarzenegger made a cheeky remark about his sex life during a recent interview, as he promoted his latest docuseries that's set to be released next month.

The actor, 75, is the subject of the upcoming three-part series *Arnold* on Netflix in which the former bodybuilder and former politician will "tell his own life story," reports Mirror.co.uk.

He is set to speak candidly about various aspects of his life and career in the project, which was teased by a trailer from the streaming platform earlier this month.


The Hollywood star has already been giving some insights into his life and personality in interviews though, including him making a playful remark about his sex life recently.

As reported by the Daily Mail, when asked for his euphemism for sex, he joked in an interview with Men's Health: "Why would you use a code word? At my age, sex is becoming a four-letter word. 'Help!'"

As per Mirror.co.uk, Arnold's personal life has attracted much attention over the years, particularly his past marriage to Maria Shriver. He's currently said to have been dating Heather Milligan since 2013.

During his recent interview with the outlet, Arnold shared his workout routine and teased that he now trains to "stay alive" so that he can continue to work.

Prior to his acting career, Arnold received acclaim as a bodybuilder. He's said to have won Mr Universe championships in four consecutive years starting in 1967.



Anurag Kashyap's *Kennedy* gets 7-minute standing ovation at Cannes

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap is back at the Cannes Film Festival with his film *Kennedy* and has once again registered a resounding response like all his earlier films such as *Raman Raghav 2.0*, *Ugly*, *Bombay Talkies* and the two-part gangster drama *Gangs of Wasaypur* that made it to the festival.

Kennedy, which is a police noir film, received a 7-minute standing ovation at The Grand Lumiere Theatre where it was screened under the midnight screening section at 12:15 a.m. on Thursday (France local time).

Kennedy follows the story of an insomniac cop who dwells in different circumstances while looking for redemption. Kashyap was joined at the festival by his friend and frequent collaborator Vikramaditya Motwane and his actors Rahul Bhatt and Sunny Leone along with Shariq Patel, Ranjan Singh, Kabir Ahuja, Bhumika Tewari, Neeraj Joshi, Ashima Awasthi have joined the filmmaker at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival.

Talking about the film screened at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, Anurag Kashyap said: "It's always special to show your film to the world at Cannes and it's a lifetime moment to play at the Grand Theatre Lumiere. *Kennedy* is a very special film to me and extremely personal too. We have put our heart and soul into making this film. The 7-minute long standing ovation from the audience has made me full of gratitude. I am very grateful and excited at the same time."

Talking about her Cannes debut, Sunny Leone said: "I am thrilled to make my Cannes debut with *Kennedy* being screened here. It's only a dream few actors get to live, and I take a lot of pride in being a part of such a prestigious event. I cannot wait to see how the global audience reacts."


The music of the film is composed by Ashish Narula with Aamir Aziz and Boyblanck.

Rahul Bhatt said: "*Kennedy* is our labour of love. The film is exciting, it keeps you gripped. And as I, along with my team, enter the coveted red carpet of Cannes and show our film to the world, I am full of gratitude for everyone, especially Anurag, who made this possible."


The film has been produced by Zee Studios and Ranjan Singh and Kabir Ahuja of Good Bad Films.

FUN


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD



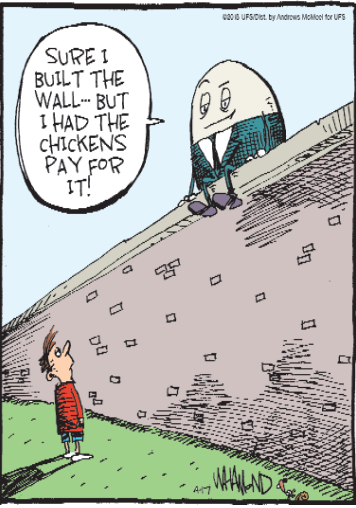
NANCY




GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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7			8		
9				10	
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12	13		14		15
			16		
17				18	
19					

ACROSS

- A surgeon's knives
- Egg centres
- Water vapour
- Required
- Burn black by being too close to heat
- Rescue
- Paddle these boats
- Below
- Living
- A very large hill

DOWN

- Find the solution to
- Reply
- Shove
- A flat kind of worm that sucks blood

SOLUTION

D	I	A	M	O	N	S	W
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L	O	O	M	S	L	E	I
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Hansika Motwani is a city slicker by all means



SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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

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

There was an extravagan-

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



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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Combating stigma and strengthening AWARENESS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA



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

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

Dr. Debanjan Banerjee, Consultant Neuropsychiatrist, Apollo 24/7 & Apollo Multispecialty Hospitals, Kolkata, shares, "Most of the time, they are isolated, or worse, get thrown out of their families due to carer frustration or poor understanding of illness. Due to the behavioural changes, many get 'polarised' as 'pagals' (Hindi for 'lunatic') and end up on the streets or resort to addictions. Often, people with schizophrenia are portrayed as dangerous, violent, or psychopathic by the media through movies and television shows, which is ironically just the opposite. A person with schizophrenia is not

more dangerous or 'criminal' than anyone else; rather, they often fall victim to violence, abuse, and fraud themselves. They are more likely to harm themselves and are aggressive only when provoked or ridiculed, as suspiciousness can be a major symptom of this illness. Often, the affected person might not have the understanding to avail himself of professional help on his own. This is what makes our awareness about this disease all the more important, contrary to the 'mysticism' and 'paranormalcy' that it is equated with in the popular media."

The term schizophrenia comes from the Greek words "schezein" (to split) and "phrenos" (mind), which roughly translate to "splitting of the mind." It intends to describe the separation of daily func-

tion from the way a person thinks, speaks, and perceives the world. In that way, it is a disorder of the 'processes of mind and thinking'. People affected often have their own 'imagined' world in which they live and believe, detached from reality. It can lead to self-absorption and excessive communication with oneself.

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

Symptoms of schizophrenia can be seen in terms of muttering to oneself (they may hear voices commanding or discussing them in the absence of any) and having false, unshakable beliefs that cannot be changed by evidence. These are termed 'hallucinations' and "delusions," respec-

tively. They may also suffer from suspiciousness (they may feel people are conspiring against them), muddled or disrupted thoughts, which can be expressed through comprehensive speech, or unusual behaviour. There can also be another set of symptoms like poor emotional response or expression, poor self-care or personal hygiene, withdrawn behaviour, attention, concentration, and memory issues. Sometimes, inappropriate social attitudes and smiling can occur as the 'sense of social context' is lost. Research, however, shows patients with schizophrenia are rarely violent.

Although schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder, it is highly treatable. Specific medications called antipsychotics are used effectively for their treatment.

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

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

The earlier the treatment starts, the better it is. Besides medication, vocational rehabilitation is vital. Besides the reduction of the symptoms of schizophrenia, individuals need to regain their jobs, relationships, and daily life activities for a 'true recovery'.

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

The Way Forward

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

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

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



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FORMAT AND OTHER MODALITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



MI face IPL champ GT in Qualifier 2

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Khelo India University Games kick-starts in UP

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

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

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and



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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Senior India batter

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

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

I am not Bumrah's replacement: Madhwal

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

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



MI peaking at right time: Cameron Green

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the remaining two teams.

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

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

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

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

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

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



AMARTYA SMARAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



Ram Charan supports emerging talent through V Mega Pictures

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

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

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

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



Is Mahesh Babu going to produce a Sumanth Prabhas project?

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



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

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



Karthi in & as Japan in his 25th film

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

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

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