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banks. Some private banks, on the other hand, are demanding the serial numbers of each note. This has become a problem for students like us. Despite being informed of the violation of government orders, shopkeepers remained unresponsive." Tarun Kumar, an IT professional said, "A supermarket refused the note. They said that they are aware that it is a violation but their management did not give them any update. They said that they are not accepting Rs 2000 notes until clear guidelines are issued for shops. Only a few banks are accepting Rs 2000 notes and it took us a lot of time to find those banks."

Cong can improve tally in TS if it openly embraces BRS

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

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

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

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

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



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

performed decently well in Karnataka and formed a government along with JD(S), the Congress could only win 19 seats in the 2018 elections in Telangana, compared to the 21 seats it won in the 2014 elections. Moreover, in Andhra Pradesh, the other Telugu state neighbouring Karnataka, Congress lost every seat it contested. But, of course, even the BJP's performance in these two states did not correlate with its performance in Karnataka. Suppose a victory in one state were to influence the results in another. In that case, BJP must have won the Karnataka election, which followed only a few months after the BJP's spectacular seventh straight victory in Gujarat. Also, the recently held Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan,

Chhattisgarh, and Telangana elections demonstrate that even in states that go to elections the same day return different verdicts. While BJP won in Gujarat, it lost to the Congress party in Himachal Pradesh. Similarly, the Congress saw a decline in Telangana, while it gained sharply in the other three states. By now, it is clear that every state's voters vote with their minds when it comes to state elections, and Telangana's voters are no exception. It is widely acknowledged across the state that there's a huge anti-incumbency against the current Bharat Rashtra Samiti government headed by Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), and the voters are looking for a party that can provide an alternative by defeating the BRS.

While the Congress party could convince the voters in the last two elections that it is the main opposition to BRS, voters in the state no longer believe the Congress to be fighting the BRS. Most MLAs who won on the Congress ticket in the 2014 and 2018 elections joined the BRS within months of winning. On the one hand, the BJP victories in the GHMC and MLC elections, and in the by-polls to the Assembly after 2018, clearly show that the electorate believes that a vote for the Congress eventually leads to another seat for BRS. Indeed, the Congress may have better chances of improving its tally in the state, but only if it stops trying to deceive the voters that it is fighting the BRS and joins it in an open alliance.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

Protests staged against house sites distribution for poor in Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amaravati supporters, along with the Opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders and activists, staged a protest wearing black badges, blind-fold and black balloons against the allotment of house site pattas to the poor people in R5 Zone in Amaravati. The pro-Amaravati supporters squatted with black balloons in the protest camps at Thullur, Mandadam and others when Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was conducting the distribution of house sites titles to beneficiaries on Friday. The police have been heavily deployed to prevent pro-Amaravati supporters, farmers and women from coming out of protest camps and the Amaravati JAC leaders were placed under house arrest. The pro-Amaravati supporters including farmers and women rushed to the protest camps on Friday morning wearing black badges and holding black balloons and



airing slogans against Jagan Mohan Reddy government. The protest camps in Velagapudi, Mandam, Thullur and Krishnayapalem filled with pro-Amaravati supporters showing placards and black balloons. The protestors raised slogans asking poor beneficiaries not to trust the

fake pattas given by Jagan government when the buses going to the distribution of house sites titles meeting under the leadership of the Chief Minister passed the protest camps. The angry pro-Amaravati supporters and farmers claimed that the fall of the

The pro-Amaravati supporters squatted with black balloons in the protest camps at Thullur, Mandadam and others when Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was conducting the distribution of house sites titles to beneficiaries on Friday.

government was inevitable and alleged that the Jagan government had taken measures to damage the Amaravati master plan with the aim of destroying the capital and affirmed that such acts will not be tolerated. They warned that the government with destructive ideas is bound to fall in the coming days

It's a defeat for anti-poor parties: YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ruling YSRCP leaders have announced that political parties and people's organisations normally stage protests for house sites for the poor. However, in Andhra Pradesh, it is the government that fought for securing house sites for the underprivileged sections. Ministers Adimulapu Suresh, Jogi Ramesh, Meruga Nagarjuna, and Mangalagiri MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, representing the ruling party, have expressed their determination to ensure the completion of houses in the R5 zone by Sankranthi 2024. They say that housewarming ceremonies will be conducted shortly after the New Year celebrations in 2024. Minister Adimulapu Suresh emphasised that today marks the defeat of 'anti-poor' political parties, including TDP, and recognises CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's determination to prioritise the well-being of the less privileged. He referred to it as a day of triumph for the poor, equating it to their coronation with land rights. He further mentioned that Chandrababu's attempts to dis-

rupt Jagananna's grand initiative to provide shelter to the poor in Amaravati had been thwarted. Minister Suresh strongly objected to Chandrababu's comparison of housing sites for the poor with graveyards, asserting that the impoverished, including Dalits, would instead build a political graveyard for Naidu and the TD in the upcoming elections. Meruga Nagarjuna, the Minister of Social Welfare, regarded this day as a momentous occasion for social justice, deserving to be enshrined in history. He acknowledged that, previously, communist parties had protested and demonstrated for housing rights, but now their stance remains unclear as they have aligned with Chandrababu, who opposes providing homes for the less privileged in Amaravati. He cautioned that Chandrababu had resorted to legal measures against providing house sites for the poor, and if TDP were to come to power, Naidu would likely revoke the housing titles. Therefore, he called upon supporters of democracy to rally behind and strengthen Jagan's cause.

Man assaulted by irate Amaravati farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amaravati farmers assaulted a man for raising slogans hailing Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The farmers of Amaravati, who staged novel protests in Thullur and Mandadam on Friday, assaulted one person for raising slogans in favour of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The incident happened during the day-long sloganeering by the farmers against YS Jagan. The farmers and their women family members

organised the protest to register their resentment against the distribution of house site pattas in the R5 Zone of Amaravati capital region to the poor. As part of their black balloon protest, the agitators raised slogans like 'Down Down CM'. But to their shock, one of the men in the group countered them by shouting in praise of the Chief Minister (Jai Jai Jagan). Infuriated by this, the agitators pounced on him and launched an assault on the hapless person.

Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, the MLA of Mangalagiri, criticised Chandrababu for failing to adhere to the CRDA norm of reserving 5 percent of housing for the economically weaker sections (EWS). During his five-year tenure, Chandrababu had shown no interest in providing homes for the underprivileged. In contrast, CM Jagan has demonstrated solidarity with SC, ST, BC, and minority communities by allo-

cating houses to them in Amaravati. MLA Ramakrishna Reddy appealed to CM Jagan to expedite the construction of houses and organise housewarming ceremonies during the Sankranthi festival in 2024. He praised CM Jagan for becoming a beacon of hope for the poor and setting an example for the nation by ensuring that no impoverished individual remains homeless.

Future is in Hyd, says Eric...

Continued from page 1

The US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, said that Hyderabad has captured his imagination. Addressing a press conference here on Friday at the T-Hub, Eric said, "If you want to see the future, it is right here in Hyderabad. You can see it in the enthusiasm of the people and you can feel it in a space like this (T-Hub). You can feel the growth, construction and momentum of the city." "We are proud of opening the latest US consulate anywhere on this globe right here in Hyderabad which is more evidence of how important it is for us. You see how much we prize our relationship with the city and how quickly we have grown

and the ambitions that have come together in this great city. The US consulate is an investment for our relationship with India, Telangana and our future together as partners," he said. He termed it a city of belonging. "Driving at night through this city, I could see an India that Indians and certainly Americans have only closed their eyes and dreamt of. But as I said this is right here in Hyderabad." He said it is the dream of any ambassador for the President to visit their country and that he has been lucky that as Modi and Biden met thrice. "Recently the PM met in Japan. Now, it is the third time in history that an Indian Prime Minister visits the White House

and then Biden will be coming to India for G20. This is a pivotal relationship between not just India and the US, but the entire planet is counting on this relationship. This is not a transaction between two countries but a relationship. We are working towards the 4Ps, prosperity, planet, people and peace." Speaking on cultural ties he said, "It is culture and people ties which are reflected. It is Tollywood that created the best song of the movie 'Naatu Naatu' and won an Academy Award this year." Speaking about IPL, he said he would be going for the finale and said "Sorry for Hyderabad." He read out a poem of Sri Sri, "maro prapancham pilchindi andariki mundhu podham pai paiki."

SC stays part of HC order ...

Continued from page 1

"In case, the accused ... fails to surrender before the court concerned on or before the said date, CBI is at liberty to take him into custody as provided under law and produce him before the court of Principal Special Judge for CBI cases, Hyderabad," it had said. "The Court is directed to enlarge the petitioner on bail on July 01, 2023, on his executing a personal bond for a sum of Rs 1 lakh with two sureties for the like sum each to the satisfaction of the said court," the High Court had ordered. During the hearing on Friday, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for Suneetha, told the bench that the CBI has filed its

counter affidavit on her plea. He said the CBI has said in its counter that the High Court order is a "bad precedent". "We will take it up after vacation. The last portion (of the High Court order), we will stay that," the bench said. During the hearing on May 24, the CBI had termed "inherently contradictory" the High Court order granting bail to the accused and told the bench that it supports Suneetha's plea challenging this verdict. "We have never heard of it that the order which cancels the bail allows the bail. How is it possible? Inherently contradictory," Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain, appearing for the CBI, had told the bench.

Energy Spl CS flays propaganda against govt over Hinduja payment

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

K Vijayanand, Special Chief Secretary Energy, strongly condemned the articles published in a section of media against the government as favouring Hinduja National Thermal Power Corporation, false and baseless. Addressing media persons here on Friday, Vijayanand said that the media conference was organised to bring many facts related to Hinduja National Thermal Power Corporation to the notice of the public. He made it clear that the State government has taken the decision regarding the payments to Hinduja only after examining the orders of the High Court, Supreme Court and Electricity Regulatory Commission, in accordance with the law, according to the advice and



instructions of the legal experts and keeping in mind the interests of the people and the electricity distribution companies. Vijayanand said that according to the current electricity regulatory laws and regulations, when an agreement is entered with any power purchase company, as per the power purchase agreement, if the electricity supply is to be purchased before the expiry of the agreement, fixed charges

and variable charges are usually payable. He said that as long as there is a PPA, the fixed charges must be paid whether the electricity is consumed or not. In this context, he clarified that the government has paid money is untrue and baseless. He said that after March 2022, the state government has purchased 1040 megawatts of electricity from Hinduja. Additional 15 million units of electricity are being supplied to the state.

Bitter foes in ...

Continued from page 1

Although Naidu is making considerable efforts to align with the BJP and be part of the NDA, the BJP leadership does not seem inclined to consider this option. "The BJP-led Central government seeks the support of both the YSRCP and TDP due to its insufficient strength in the Rajya Sabha to pass bills. This explains why the BJP leadership maintains a cordial relationship with both parties. The TDP refrains from criticising the Central government on issues such as the railway zone, VSP privatisation, and the granting of the SCS," pointed out a political analyst.

In Andhra Pradesh, BJP leaders Satya Kumar, CM Ramesh, Sujana Chowdary, Purandeswari, and Adinarayana Reddy vehemently criticise the YSRCP. Interestingly, the YSRCP disregards the allegations made by State BJP leaders and maintains cordial relations with the BJP in Delhi. "Naidu aims to reinstate the TDP-BJP-JSP alliance before the 2024 elections, which explains his vigorous attempts to align with the BJP. Naidu recognises that facing the YSRCP led by Jagan Mohan Reddy in the next elections would be challenging without the support of the BJP," opined a political analyst.

'Do not believe ...

Continued from page 1

You can believe even Narakasura but not Nara Chandrababu Naidu," he said, adding that Naidu is trying to create obstacles even after the apex court of the country gave nod for distribution of house sites for the poor in the R-5 zone. "Just think why Naidu failed to implement the welfare programmes which the Government is implementing now, though the budget was less now percentage wise," he said, adding Naidu only implemented the policy of plunder, stash and devour while his foster son and friendly media had silently supported him. The Chief Minister further said that the Government has been fighting a class war unleashed against it by the TDP which is against the poor. "You should not fall prey to the evil designs of the TDP and the gang of thieves," he appealed to them.

Rahul gets...

Continued from page 1

Rahul Gandhi is an accused in the case in which Swamy is the complainant. "This court has to take into account the public interests involved and also has to keep in view the rights of the applicant to travel abroad. Therefore, this court after going through the submissions of both the sides and after perusal of the record is of the view that ends of justice would suffice if the applicant is granted NOC for renewal of the passport of the applicant as per rules for a period of three years," the judge said.

Pattas for social justice in Amaravati: CM

Continued from page 1

In all options, sand would be provided free to the beneficiaries while quality steel, cement and door frames would be supplied at subsidized rates as per the policy adopted in all Jagananna colonies across the State, he clarified. Government would also arrange bank loans up to Rs 35,000 each for all beneficiaries at 25 paise interest for expediting the construction, he said, adding the beneficiaries are free to choose the option. So far, house sites were given

to 30, 75,000 poor women across the State, out of which 21 lakh women were sanctioned houses each worth Rs. 2.5 lakh, he said, adding that the worth would go up to Rs 5 or Rs 10 lakh. This amounts to creating property worth Rs 3 lakh crore on the whole, he said. Speaking about the TIDCO houses, he said the Government has been handing over the 300 square feet TIDCO houses just for Re 1 to 1, 43,000 beneficiaries with full rights while the TDP Government tried to exploit the beneficiaries by forcing

them to pay Rs 7.20 lakh per each TIDCO flat in instalments over several years. It amounts to cheating the beneficiaries, he remarked. Guntur District Collector M Venugopala Reddy, Municipal Administration Minister A Suresh, Social Welfare Minister M Nagarjuna, Housing Minister J Ramesh and YSRCP Mangalagiri MLA A Ramakrishna Reddy also addressed the public meeting. Some of the beneficiaries from Guntur and NTR districts also spoke praising the Government's initiative.

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INAUGURATION OF NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

Yechury raps Union govt for not extending invite to Prez

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

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

He alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's disregard for the President of India



CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury, addressing a press conference in Vijayawada on Friday. Pic by Vijaya Bhaskar

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

Furthermore, Yechury emphasised that Prime Minister

Modi should recognise that his role is that of the leader of the ruling party, not the leader of Parliament. He asserted that the leader of the opposition party should have the rank of a cabinet minister. Yechury also stressed that the President of India's approval is necessary for the ruling party's proposed bills

to gain legality, as all rights ultimately rest with the President.

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

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

Pawan inaugurates admin block at JSP State office

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan took all the party leaders and activists by surprise as he suddenly visited the State office at Mangalagiri where he inaugurated the administrative block.

Without informing the JSP leaders or the media, Pawan Kalyan arrived at Gannavaram airport on Thursday evening. He went to the party state office and inaugurated the administrative block. No JSP leader was allowed into the party office. The media was not informed and allowed into the party office either.

According to reliable sources, Pawan Kalyan held a meeting with a private agency which conducted a survey on in which constituencies the JSP is strong and winning chances of the candidates are bright.

It is learnt that the JSP entrusted the assignment of conducting a survey to identify the strong constituencies of



Pawan Kalyan condoles death of film director K Vasu

VIJAYAWADA: Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan condoled the death of film director K Vasu. In a message here on Friday, Pawan Kalyan said the demise of K Vasu saddened him. "K Vasu directed the film 'Pranam Khareedu' in which my brother Chiranjivi played a lead role. We can not forget him as Chiranjeevi appeared on the silver screen for the first time with the film," he stated. Pawan Kalyan recalled that K Vasu directed 'Sri Shirdi Saibaba Mahatyam' which popularized the history of 'Shirdi Saibaba'. "I convey my deepest sympathies to the bereaved family," he said.

JSP to a private agency. The agency reportedly conducted the survey and handed over the report to Pawan Kalyan.

However, it is not known what the survey report or recommendations are. It may be mentioned here that Pawan Kalyan made it clear that the JSP would have an alliance with the TDP to ensure that the anti-YSRCP votes would not split.

Pawan asks govt to extend aid to cop

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan expressed grief over the death of a constable with a snake bite.

In a release here on Friday, he said that it is unfortunate that constable Pawan Kumar died of snake bite. The constable went to Tulluru on bandobast duty and he was bitten by a snake when he was asleep in an open area, he said adding that he felt saddened at the death of constable.

"The incident exposes the lack of facilities to the police personnel who are on duty. How are the food and accommodation facilities for the police personnel, who are going on duty to the outside areas being provided, should be assessed under the supervision of an SP level officer," Pawan Kalyan said.

The Janasena chief demanded the government to extend adequate compensation to the bereaved family.

Plea to revoke suspension of Ward sanitation secys

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Ward Sanitation & Environment Secretaries Association's (APWS&ESA) honorary chairman Gujjula Eswaraiah has demanded that the State government fix their working hours as per the government orders. As per the G.O. 650, these employees must work from 10 am to 5 pm, he pointed out. He also demanded steps to lift the suspension and stop harassment of the Ward Sanitation & Environment Secretaries. Otherwise, the association will move the court, he warned.

In view of the pressure being faced by Ward Sanitation & Environment Secretaries from Municipal Commissioners, Eswaraiah, who is also a CPI State secretariat member, made an ultimatum to the government on Friday.

He alleged that although the people were against collecting garbage tax, the State government issued orders to cut the salaries of the Ward Sanitation & Environment Secretaries. He



demand that the Commissioners and the Sanitary Inspectors should explain how many Municipal Health Officers' salaries were cut. "Also, immediately withdraw the suspension orders issued by Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and Narsapur Municipal Commissioners," he said.

Further, he said the State government had not maintained timings for the Ward Sanitation and Environment Secretaries for the past three-and-a-half years. He expressed unhappiness over duties being assigned to these secretaries on the lines of sanitation mastery and workers, though their education quali-

cation was graduation and post-graduation. As per the G.O., these secretaries are supposed to do technical jobs, however, the government is assigning other works, he alleged.

"Scores of secretaries committed suicide due to harassment and several staff have undergone treatment for ill-health. Some of the youths resigned from their posts because of harassment," he said. He made it clear that if the government did not revoke the orders, his association would fight the government legally.

He further said that those employees did not have a job chart. The Commissioners and the Sanitary Inspectors treated them as municipal workers. The State government should take steps to give them duties such as issuing birth and death certificates, NOC, and marriage certificates, supervising the environmental duties etc., he demanded.

Any Commissioner or Sanitary Inspector taking any action against these Secretaries will face legal action, he warned.

COURTESY VISIT



Michaela Kuchler, Consul General, German Consulate in Chennai, called on Governor of Andhra Pradesh S Abdul Nazeer at Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Friday.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The National Council of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), at a meeting, elected new office-bearers for 2023-24. R Dinesh, Executive Vice-Chairman of TVS Supply Chain Solutions, has assumed office as the president of CII for the period. He takes over from Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman and Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Limited.

Dinesh is a fourth-generation TVS family member. He has been engaged with CII for

CII elects new office-bearers

many years at the State, regional and national levels. Dinesh started TVS Supply Chain Solutions (erstwhile known as TVS Logistics) in 1995. The company, under his able leadership, has grown multifold to become a billion-dollar company. The company has a presence across continents making it a truly global company and serving customers in over 50 countries.

Dinesh has won many awards including 'Icon of the Year' from ICT Academy of Tamil Nadu for the year 2018, Entrepreneur of the Year Award for 'Services' category by Ernst & Young in 2017. He is also the recipient of TIECON's "Next Gen Entrepreneur of the Year 2014" award and 'Emerging Entrepreneur' award by CII in 2010.

Meanwhile, Sanjiv Puri took

over as president-designate of CII for 2023-24. He is the Chairman and Managing Director of ITC Limited, one of India's foremost conglomerates with business spanning FMCG, hotels, paperboards and packaging, agri-business and information technology. Spearheading the ITC Next vision, Sanjiv has driven an extensive strategy reset to define new vectors of growth

for each business with greater focus on consumer-centricity, agility, resilience and innovation to build an even more competitive, future-ready, climate positive and inclusive enterprise.

Rajiv Memani is new vice-president of CII. He is the Chairman of the India region of EY (Ernst & Young), a leading global professional services organisation. He is also a member of EY's global management body as the chair of its Global Emerging Markets Committee.

Sportswear distributed to students taking part in summer camps

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sportswear was distributed to the students, who are actively participating in the summer camps organised by the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) and the NTR District Sports Authority (DSA) at the Koneru Basavaiah Chowdary Zilla Parishad High School at Patamata in Vijayawada, on Friday.

School Headmaster KA Prem Sagar distributed the sportswear, sponsored by Industries Department Assistant Director M Madhu and Advocate Koneru Rajes.

As many as 100 students are taking part in the summer coaching camps at the KBC ZP High School at Patamata. Basketball, sepak takraw and handball coaching camps are being conducted this year. School Physical Education teachers S Ramesh and L Durga Rao are leading the camps.



Speaking on the occasion, headmaster KA Prem Sagar said that taking part in sports and games would improve physical fitness among students, keeping them healthy and active. Talented sports persons will get reservations for higher education and job recruitment, he added.

Adv Koneru Rajes said summer coaching camps were helpful in creating awareness

among the students of the importance of sports, he said.

M Madhu said students should maintain the spirit of sportsmanship whether they win or lose in the competitions. He praised coaches Akash, Satish, Danel and Eswar for helping the students.

NTR DSA basketball coach S Santosh Kumar and others were present.

Health Minister launches mobile dental clinics

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Health Minister Viddala Rajini inaugurated a mobile dental clinic on the APIIC premises in Mangalagiri on Friday. As part of National Health Mission (NHM) and National Dental Health Programme (NOHP), the dental vehicles are inaugurated to treat the oral health problems of the people. Of the two vehicles provided by Colgate company, one was assigned to the Vijayawada Government Dental College and the other to the Kadapa Dental College.

Dr. Srinivasa Rao, Principal of Government Dental College, Vijayawada explained that basic dental



services such as, fillings and tooth extractions related to dental problems will be provided in the mobile dental vehicle. Plans have been made to serve the nearby primary medical centers, old age homes and schools, visually impaired schools and deaf and dumb schools through the mobile dental vehicle, he added.

Special Chief Secretary of Medical and Health MT Krishna Babu, Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare J Nivas, State Programme Manager Dr Venkata Ravi Kiran, National Oral Health Programme State Nodal Officer Dr E Prashanth, State Oral Health Consultant Dr Saujanya Lakshmi and others were present.



MPs urged to raise voice to solve farmers' crisis

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sanghala Samanvaya Samiti convener and former minister Vadde Shobhanadreeswara Rao has urged the government to implement Professor Swaminathan Commission's recommendations. The Central government should ensure the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all crops and for this, people's representatives should be extending their support to farmers' agitations, he said.

Vadde Shobhanadreeswara Rao, along with the Sangham leaders, submitted a representation to Rajya Sabha member Kanakamedala Ravindra Kumar at his office in Vijayawada on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, Vadde Shobhanadreeswara Rao said that Samyuktha Kisan Morcha was going to fight the Central government in view of the crisis being faced by the farmers. The Sangham urged MP Ravindra Kumar to

give support to their protest. The MPs should raise their voice to help the farmers overcome their problems, he added.

Samiti senior leader Y Kesava Rao said that the Central government should drop all cases registered during the farmers' agitation, and demanded compensation for those who died during the agitation.

Andhra Pradesh Kouluru Rythu Sangham State general secretary P Jamaliah said that the Centre and the State governments should waive all the debts of farmers and tenant farmers in the country. MPs should put pressure on the Central government during the Parliament sessions, he added.

Later, Ravindra Kumar said that he would fight the Central government to help the farmers. Andhra Pradesh Saguneti Sanghal Samakhyha State president Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao and others were also present.

SCR, NDRF hold mock drill at Bitragunta Railway Station

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

South Central Railway, Vijayawada Division jointly conducted a mock drill in association with NDRF 10th Battalion and Civil Defence Organisation, SCR under the supervision of M Srikanth, Additional Divisional Railway Manager, Operations, Vijayawada Division at Bitragunta Railway Station near CnW Office on Friday. Dr VB Manoj, Assistant Chief Medical Superintendent, Railway Hospital, Vijayawada, also took part in the Mock Drill exercise.

Self Propelled Accident Relief Medical Van (SPARMV) staff of Vijayawada, CDO staff and 10th Battalion NDRF jointly performed the Mock Drill exercise.

The basic objective of conducting this mock drill is to train the staff working in medical and accident relief trains to play a vital role in extraction of passengers and move them to the nearest hospital for treatment, which will help in saving precious lives and minimize the casualties.

A total of 150 railway staff taking part in rescue and restoration operations, a condemned coach and Medical Relief Van were placed at the Bitragunta for the purpose of a mock drill exercise. This exercise is not only aimed at training the staff in using the state of art Hydraulic Rescue Devices that are available in ART's, but also to train them in



entering the derailed coaches in typical situations where all possible ways of entering the blocked coaches. The site of the accident was perfectly replicated by the staff. All the coordinating teams of State govt like 108 services, Fire Safety, GRP and RPF took part in this multi department exercise

M Srikanth, Additional DRM briefed the media regarding the Do's and Don'ts for passengers while undertaking journeys to avoid any fire accidents. He said that it is a multiple department exercise, as a part of periodical training to the staff of Mechanical, Safety, Medical and S&T Departments

to help them be prepared in times of exigency for quick and swift response to undertake rescue operations in minimum possible time to reduce rail passenger's casualties. ADRM appreciated the NDRF, Civil Defence and SPARMV staff of Vijayawada for conducting the mock drill efficiently and rescuing the stranded passengers in the golden hour.

J Srinath, Sr DSO; M Ravi Kiran, Sr DME, PV Ramana Rao, Sr DEN, South, Dr P Sudhakar, DMO, Bitragunta, Ch Suresh, AOM Subramaniam ADME Robin Kumar, Inspector, NDRF 10th Battalion T Sudheer Babu, Sr CDI; Pradeep Kumar, Inspector, 10th Battalion, NDRF, other officials and staff were present.



Sarpanches demand NREGA funds for panchayats

PNS ■ ELURU

Andhra Pradesh Sarpanches Association (APSA) and Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Chamber have demanded that the State government provide the funds of NREGA to village panchayats under 2006 Act.

AP Panchayat Raj Chamber president YVB Rajendra Prasad also demanded the payment of honorarium Rs 15,000 to MPTCs and gram sarpanches, Rs 30,000 to MPPs and ZPTCs.

The AP sarpanches association and Panchayat Raj Chamber organised a meeting of village sarpanches of combined West Godavari district here on Friday.

Addressing the meeting YVB Rajendra Prasad said that the village sarpanches who were elected two years ago were facing many problems and they are now unable to carry out any development at



their respective villages due to lack of funds.

The sarpanches have to be given due funds as per the 73 and 74 amendment to the Constitution but the AP government is not extending funds to the gram panchayats.

“The AP government has taken Rs 8,660 crore funds, released to the village panchayats by the 14 and 15

Finance Commission and diverted the money to other purposes. The Centre has to give Rs 2020 crore to the village panchayats,” he said, expressing doubt whether the AP government will give the Rs 2020 crore to the village panchayats or divert the same to other purposes.

Rajendra Prasad demanded the AP government to return

Rs 8,660 crore to the village panchayats. He warned of intensifying the agitation, if the government did not concede their demands.

Meanwhile, Paladugu Lakshman Rao was elected the president of WG district sarpanches association and Tammishetti Satyanarayana as general secretary at the meeting.

15 injured as truck, RTC bus collide

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As many as 15 people were injured when the RTC bus they were travelling in met with an accident at Ramavarappadu ring in Vijayawada on Friday. The incident took place when a truck hit the RTC bus. The injured were shifted to the Government General Hospital where they are undergoing treatment.

NTR District Collector S Dilli Rao and Central MLA Malladi Vishnu visited the hospital and enquired about the condition of the injured. They appealed to the hospital authorities to provide better treatment to the injured.

On the occasion, the collector and the MLA distributed Rs 25,000 each to the injured.



13 PHCs will be expanded in remote areas: Collector

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector P Prashanthi said that 13 PHCs would be expanded to provide more medical services in remote areas. The Collector held a meeting with the health and other officials concerned and reviewed the construction of health clinics.

Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector said that Rs 1.28 crore was sanctioned for the construction of the first floor to provide six beds in 13 PHCs in remote areas in the district.

She said that the construction would be undertaken in Tundur, VR Gudem, Vallur, Manchili, Undi, Alamuru, Yalamanchili, Penumantra, Pentapadu, Siddhantam, Marteru, Torpu Talla and Endagandi PHCs. The Panchayat Raj has ordered the engineering officials to take immediate steps for the construction of the same.

“Five block public health units will be constructed at a cost of Rs 50 lakh each with



The District Collector said that Rs 1.28 crore was sanctioned for the construction of the first floor to provide six beds in 13 PHCs in remote areas in the district.

the funds being provided by the 15 Finance Commission. These constructions will be carried out in LB Charla of Narasapuram mandal, Doddipatla of Yalamanchili mandal, Yandagandi of Undi mandal, Poduru mandal of Poduru and Athili PHC of Athili mandal,” the Collector stated.

Collector Prashanthi said

that out of 276 health clinics sanctioned to WG district, 91 clinics should be handed over by Monday, she instructed the officials. She said that the construction of 120 other health clinics should be completed by September. Health clinics nodal officer Dr. Keerthi, Panchayat Raj engineering officer KSS Srinivasa Rao and DWMA PD STV Rajeswara Rao were present.



3 drowned in stream

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Three people, including a boy, were drowned in a stream at Siraladoddi village in Yemmiganur mandal in the district on Friday.

Police said that a group of women went to the stream to wash their clothes. One of the

deceased, Lokesh (5) slipped in the stream and drowned. Two women Salomi (25) and Mariyamma (28) went to his rescue but they were also drowned. The three bodies were fished out from the stream. The police registered a case and sent the bodies to the GGH for postmortem.

Min inaugurates new building of polytechnic

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Transport Pinipe Viswaroop inaugurated the newly-constructed Polytechnic building at Jangareddygudem on Friday. The polytechnic building was constructed at a cost of Rs 7.55 crore.

Talking to the media on the occasion, the minister said that the government is committed to provide free education from KG to PG to the poor students. The minister said that the AP government is giving the highest priority to the education sector like no other state in the country.

He said that the Chief Minister's ambition is to provide education to every poor student, and his vision of social development through education is ideal for the country.

Viswaroop said that the flagship schemes like 'Amma Vodi',



and 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' schemes are giving a lot of support to educational development.

By implementing the 'Vasati Deevena', accommodation and other facilities are being provided to the students. By implementing the Nadu-Nedu programme better infrastructure is being provided in all the government schools of the state. By

providing high quality education to poor students through government schools with digital classrooms the dream of Dr. B R Ambedkar is being realised.

District Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that the job and employment opportunities are being improved by providing training in skill development to those who have completed col-

lege education in the district.

RDO K Jhansirani, Municipal Chairman Bathina Nagalakshmi, ZPTC Babji, Municipal Commissioner Bhavani Prasad, AMC Chairperson Janaki Reddy, Women Child Welfare Regional Coordinator Saibala Padma and College Principal Subrahmanyam were among those who were present.



IIM students complete internship

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Eleven first-year students of the 2022-24 Post Graduate Programme (PGP) of the Indian Institute of Management-Visakhapatnam have successfully completed their internship at Rasapoorna Foods Pvt Ltd, Visakhapatnam.

Prabhakar Varma, Director of Rasapoorna Foods Pvt Ltd, said that internships played a crucial role in shaping one's career. It not only helps undergraduates and graduates gain real exposure to working environments, but also helps them develop the necessary skills required to stand out in the job market.



Woman ends life by jumping before from train

PNS ■ BAPATLA

A woman committed suicide by jumping before a running train at Eepurupalem village in Chirala mandal in Bapatla district on Friday.

Police said that the deceased Shrevani prepared for the Civil services examination in Delhi.

She had to attend the examinations in Vijayawada on Sunday.

In the wee hours today, she ended life by jumping before a running train.

She was immediately shifted to the area hospital in Chirala where she died while undergoing treatment.

The police registered a case. YSRCP leader Karanam Venkatesh and MLC Potula Sunita consoled the bereaved family members.

Free chess workshop from today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Global Chess Academy is going to organise a free chess workshop at PVP Mall in Vijayawada on Saturday and Sunday, said Global Chess Academy Director and FIDE Instructor Shaik Khasim in a press release here on Friday.

He said that the workshop would be conducted for two days from 5 pm to 7 pm. It will be a good opportunity for chess players in the city, he said.

Interested players may register their names to participate in the workshop. For details, contact 9849514138, he added.

Grand fete planned on NTR's birth centenary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Nandamuri Tarak Rama Rao's birth centenary celebrations will be organised grandly in Vijayawada on Sunday, under the aegis of NTR's Satha Jayanthi Utsava Committee, said organisers Tumati Premnadh, Koner Basaveswara Rao and Guttikonda Sri Ram.

NTR's Satha Jayanthi Utsava Committee's preparatory meeting was held at Vijayawada on



Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Tumati Srinadh said that they were planning magnificent celebrations at Mogalrajapuram

Siddharth College Auditorium in Vijayawada.

He said that as part of the celebrations, a free medical camp would be organised at 4

pm and cultural activities would be held at 5 pm. The main programme will commence at 6 pm. They will felicitate the persons who were closely attached to NTR on the occasion.

Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Ram Mohan Rao, former Home Minister Vasantha Nageswara Rao, former ministers Vode Sobhanadreswara Rao, Yerneni Seetha Devi LB Sriram, Gajal Srinivas and others will grace the occasion, he added.

40 pleas received on 'Police Welfare Day'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Police Commissioner Kanti Rana Tata organised 'Police Welfare Day' at his chamber on the premises of the Police Commissioner's office in Vijayawada on Friday.

Following the directive of the Director General of Police (DGP), the police observe Police Welfare Day every Friday to solve the police personnel's issues and duty-related problems. The



Commissioner received a total of 40 petitions from cops relating to transfers and other service issues. He directed the officials concerned to resolve

the issues as early as possible. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner asked the police personnel and staff to utilise such opportunities.

'Services of psychologists in society commendable'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Acharya Nagarjuna University Vice-Chancellor Patteti Rajasekhara has said that the services rendered by Spandana Eda International Foundation are commendable. The VC also appreciated the role of psychologists in the development of society.

The university has organised a two-day workshop for psychologists in association with Spandana Eda International Foundation (SEIF). Speaking on the occasion, Rajasekhara said that psychologists should have subject knowledge, besides cultural and social conscientiousness. They should understand the root cause of the problems faced by



the victims in many aspects and respond accordingly and put them in the correct path. He said that the present youth should build mental strength and should not be depressed by every small problem.

SEIF Chairman Dr Ida Samuel Reddy said that their foundation was taking various steps to strengthen the youth

in Telugu States and many other areas mentally. If a situation arises that any student wants to end their life, they should think about their parents and family who cannot live without them, he said.

University Distance Education Centre Director Prof B Nagaraju and others were present.

Collector asks officials to speed up Jagananna house works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector P Raja Babu has instructed all the officials concerned to expedite house construction works by taking special care towards the Jaganna housing colonies.

He inspected the Kara Agraharam housing layout where 4,318 houses are being built in 12 blocks in Machilipatnam on Friday.

During his visit, the Collector checked the layout maps and the ongoing constructions in the D block and L block. Later, he interacted with the beneficiaries and enquired about the facilities such as drinking water, electricity etc.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector ordered the offi-



cial to take measures to flatten the layout premises and assured that the soil for the purpose would be provided free of cost. The Collector further directed the MEPMA officials to encourage the beneficiaries to complete the works soon.

The Collector further warned that if any beneficiary didn't take up the construction,

their allotment of the house would be cancelled. He insisted on reviewing the work progress every day and asked the officials to submit the details from time to time.

Housing PD Siva Narayana, GV Surya Narayana, Municipal Commissioner Chandrayya, RDO I Kishore and others accompanied the Collector.

Gas cylinder filling racket busted; 3 held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Mangalhat Police conducted a raid on an illegal gas refilling house located at Takkerwadi, Dhoolpet, and arrested three individuals. The police seized several gas cylinders and related equipment.

The accused have been identified as Bidaniya Ravi, aged 42, Makadiya Sunil Kumar, aged 52, and Bidaniya Rakesh Singh, aged 39, all residents of Takkerwadi, Dhoolpet, and Mangalhat. The raid, which took place on May 26, resulted in the seizure of various items associated with the illegal gas-refilling operation. They were booked under Crime No. 166/2023, U/s. 336, 285, 286 IPC, Sec.7 of Essential Commodities Act, with the assistance of Mangalhat Police Station.

The seized property includes 15 domestic gas cylinders, 26 commercial cylinders, 78 mini cylinders, five refillers, and one weighing machine. In total, 119 cylinders were recovered from the premises. The accused were taken into custody and will face legal consequences for their involvement in the illegal gas refilling activity.

The Mangalhat Police emphasised that the refilling of gas from larger cylinders into smaller ones poses a serious threat to human life and property. Such activities are in violation of the Essential Commodities Act.

Cong insulted Telangana Formation, race and martyrs: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Formation Day on June 2 is a Festival of four crore people. The Congress wants to celebrate Formation Day as a "fail Telangana programme." "Will anyone celebrate a good occasion like this? Telangana has not failed, Congress has failed."

He was speaking at BRS Atmeeya Sammelan at Huzurnagar.

"You did not come togeth-

er during the Telangana movement and even didn't resign for the cause of statehood. The Congress turned its back and fled. They did not come together in the movement then, they are not coming together in development today. They are not coming together to celebrate with the people of Telangana."

The Congress insulted the formation of the Telangana State, the Telangana race and the sacrifices of Telangana

martyrs. KCR changed the fate of Telangana. If Telangana practised, then the country will follow.

Kishan Reddy, who did not resign from Telangana, announced that Telangana Utsav would be held.

He questioned the merging of seven mandals in

AP, not giving Bayyaram steel factory, and not funding Mission Bhagiratha, Kakatiya, medical colleges, and tribal universities.

"One says that Telangana has failed, the other says that we have done something for Telangana and celebrates. Kishan Reddy, you have no right to cele-

brate till what is due to Telangana comes", Harish Rao said.

"Revanth Reddy has a twisted mind. He speaks a lot of crooked words. He doesn't even know how jobs are filled. Vacancies are not filled by TSPSC alone. As you said, we have filled 37,000 posts through TSPSC alone. I said the same. You don't understand the real thing and you ramble on. TSPSC is not the only one filling jobs. Telangana State

Level Police Recruitment Board, Junior Panchayat Secretaries, Singareni Coalries Company Limited, By power companies, DCCBs, Through TRT, teacher posts in gurukula. Replacement of doctors by Telangana Medical Recruitment Board. Thousands of jobs have been filled like this."

He said in total, the government has filled 1,32,899 jobs so far. Another 80,000 posts are being filled.

Danger of populism

The Karnataka election may spur competitive populism among various political parties

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



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

PICTALK



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

PTI

Who bears the huge cost of freebies?

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SHASHANK SAURAV

FIRST COLUMN

FAITH AS INTERACTION,
NOT AS KNOWLEDGE

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



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

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

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

for the youth to work as delivery agents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



US must undertake a midcourse correction



K A BADARINATH

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

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

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



India witnessing 'snowball effect'; exponential growth

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



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

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



Success of G20 meet in Srinagar will boost tourism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Ambani on advisory committee of COP28

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 629.07 points or 1.02 per cent to settle at 62,501.69. During the day, it rallied 657.21 points or 1.06 per cent to 62,529.83.

The NSE Nifty climbed 178.20 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 18,499.35.

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

Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and NTPC were the laggers.

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



22, Grasim Industries said in a regulatory filing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ZEE-SONY MERGER

NCLAT sets aside NCLT order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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



Axiscades Technologies Q4 net profit grows 55% to Rs 16 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering solutions provider Axiscades Technologies has posted a 55 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 16.05 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2023, backed by higher income.

It had clocked a net profit of Rs 10.64 crore during the January-March quarter of the preceding 2021-22 fiscal, the company said in a regulatory filing on Thursday.

The company's total income rose to Rs 222.07 crore in the March 2023 quarter from Rs 195.55 crore in the year-ago period.

In a statement, the company said it has also signed a strategic partnership with auto components maker Mangal Industries Ltd, a part of the Amara Raja Group, to provide engineering services.

Its CEO and MD Arun Krishnamurthy said: "The quarter & year under review mark a significant achievement along with significant improvement in profitability. Our integration with Mistral business is progressing as per plan and we continue to synergise our offerings to our current and potential customer base across the group".

Mahindra Q4 PAT at Rs 2,637 cr

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rupee rises 14 paise to close at 82.58 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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



to reaching an agreement on the US debt ceiling.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.73 against the US dollar and settled at 82.58 (provisional), up 14 paise over its previous close.

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

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

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

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

73% women want firms to allow them take menstrual leave

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

The survey report was released ahead of the global



Menstrual Hygiene Day on May 28.

"While 73 per cent of

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

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

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

Besides, 68.9 per cent of women have taken a leave of absence from work during menstrual periods," the survey stated.

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

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

Sun Pharma posts consolidated net profit of Rs 1,984 cr in Q4

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries on Friday said its consolidated net profit stood at Rs 1,984 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2023, aided by robust sales across markets.

The Mumbai-based company had reported a net loss of Rs 2,277 crore in the January-March quarter of last year.

Excluding the exceptional items, adjusted net profit for the fourth quarter last fiscal stood at Rs 2,156 crore, up 36 per cent, over the fourth quarter of 2021-22 fiscal, Sun Pharma said in a regulatory filing.

Total revenue from operations rose to Rs 10,931 crore for the March quarter as compared with Rs 9,447 crore in the year-ago period.

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

SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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



MBBS in my hometown."

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

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

ward now."

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

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

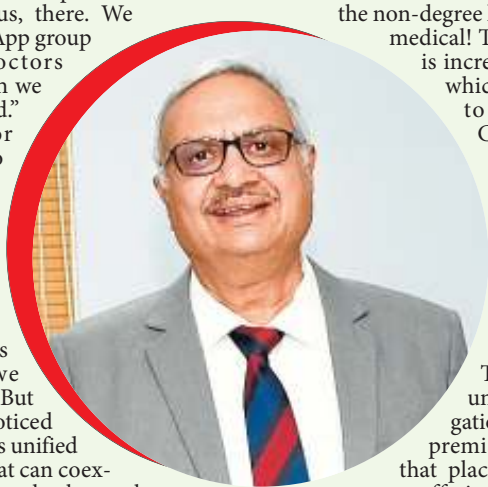
The senior physician who has also practiced as a company medical officer elaborates further, "It's sheer hard work in this fraternity, we multitask too. But what I have noticed in this city is its unified city culture that can coexist with traditional cultures also. And, every neighborhood has its unique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

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

Recounting the medical culture over here, he says, "The group of physicians are really good, they are well-versed in academics. But there is no control over the non-degree holders who enter medical! Their involvement is increasing day by day, which is unacceptable to us as seniors.

Corporate hospitals have commercialised themselves totally! Defensive practices have entered too because patients are trying violence against us! That leads to unnecessary investigations in the hospital premises and it's not that place. Those doctors were suffering from too much

injustice, how can a doctor who symbolises god or who saves your life can bear violence?"



Amyra sheds her sweet image with *Kya Loge Tum*



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Calming down your stressful pups

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



#MenToo: Haphazardly Mansplained



AMARTYA SMARAN

MenToo-Being a man is not easy, starring Naresh Agastya, Brahmaji, Harsha Chemud, Sudharshan, Riya Suman, et al is a film that mansplains the concept of feminism. The main issue that it deals with is the problem of pseudo feminism. We've seen instances of women conveniently using the woman card.

Three friends Aditya (Naresh Agastya), Sanju (Kaushik Ghantasala), and Munna (Mourya Siddavaram) meet at a pub called StagsOnly. As the name suggests, only stags are allowed into the club. Sure! A great idea. In this bar you've got all sorts of men, and each man goes through his share of girlfriend/wife problems. Aditya is a sales guy who finds a

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Keerthy Suresh starrer Raghuthatha wraps up its final schedule

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

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

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

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

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

Raghuthatha is set to enthrall audiences when it releases in the third quarter of 2023. Hombale Films has a huge line up for the next 2 years. *Salaar* starring Prabhas is slated to release in September 2023, *Dhoomam*, starring Fahadh Fasil due to release in June 2023. In addition to these, there will be two more regional releases this year from the production house.



Prabhas' Salaar teaser expected to be released alongside Adipurush

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

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

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



Director Atlee and his wife grace Cannes red carpet

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

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

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



Mahesh & Namrata overjoyed with Sitara endorsing a jewellery brand

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

Recently, Sitara has seized a great opportunity

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

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



Grey: The Spy Who Loved Me: Stays loyal to its core plot

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

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

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

Plot:

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

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

Performances:

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

Ali Reza, Arvind Krishna, and others

were fine in their respective roles.

Analysis:

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

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

Conclusion:

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

