

SCAMGRESS

◦ The Grand Old Party's History of Corruption ◦

CONGRESS' SAGA OF SCAMS: Rs. 48,20,69,00,00,000 PUBLIC MONEY LOOTED

Aug 22, 2019. ZEE NEWS

The oldest political party in India looted a staggering amount of Rs. 48,20,69,00,00,000 through various scams and corruption cases.

The A to Z of SCAMGRESS

Jeep Scandal Case-1948 INA Treasure Chest-1947 BHU Funds-1956 Maruti Scandal-1974
St. Kitts Forgery-1989 Bofors-1987 Cement Scam-1981 Jalgaon Housing Scam-1997
Telecom Scam-1996 Fertiliser Import Scam-2007 Purulia Arms Drop Case-1995 UTI Scam-1993
Sugar Import Scam-1994 Harshad Mehta Scam-1992 Palmolein Oil Import
Scam-1993 Volkswagen Scam-2005 Vadhra DLF Land Grab-2013 Thorium Scam-2014
National Herald Scam-2012 Oil Scam-1976 Telgi Scam-2002
2G Spectrum Scam-2008 Note-For-Vote-2015
Commonwealth Games Scam-2010 Devas-Antrix Scam-2011 Adarsh Scam-2012
Coal Scam-2012 Tatra Truck Scam-2012 IPL Scam-2013 AgustaWestland Chopper
Scam-2013 Kuo Oil Scam-1976 Nagarwala Scam-1971 Cobbler Scam-1995 Goa SEZ Scam-2009
Meghalaya Forest Scam-1995 Rice Export Scam-2007 LIC Scam-1957 Airbus Scam-1984
Scorpène Submarine Scam-2005

Due to lack of space, we are stopping this list here.

A GRAND LEGACY
OF SCAMS
THAT WILL LOOT
OUR FUTURE TOO.
VOTE WISELY.

Vote for Car
Vote for
Telangana





‘Parivarvaad’ should be discarded: Gadkari

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Attacking the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led BRS government in Telangana over its alleged corruption and dynastic politics, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday urged the people to elect the BJP to power to rid the state of family rule and to ensure the state's prosperity.

Addressing a public meeting at Yellareddy assembly constituency, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways alleged that "the Telangana Chief Minister does not care about the youths here. His only concern is on how his son and daughter get employment. This is 'parivarvaad' (dynasty) politics".

For Telangana's progress, 'parivarvaad' should be discarded, he said.

What will happen to party workers if the children of chief ministers, MPs and MPs succeed their parents in politics, he asked.

The senior BJP leader recalled that a small-time party worker like him who used to paste posters went on to become BJP's president and

added it was only possible in the BJP as it is a party of workers.

Gadkari further said that he had given permission for the Kaleswaram project when he was Union Water Resources Minister, but now feels sad that a lot of loss was caused to Telangana due to "faulty

designs" of the project "prepared by the state government in a hurry which led to present damage" (at Medigadda barrage where recently the piers were reportedly sinking).

The state government is responsible for the faulty design, he alleged.

‘Congress assurances impossible to implement’

BJP State president and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy

commented that the Congress party is giving assurances, which are not possible to implement, just to come to power. Kishan Reddy alleged that the Congress party gave several guarantees since the nation attained freedom.

However, it has left a tragedy for the people of the State and the nation. He complained that Telangana experienced severe loss due to the Congress. Kishan Reddy said, "The Congress was responsible for the deaths of 365 students in the first phase of Telangana agitation and 1,200 students



and youth in the second phase. People do not trust the Congress for its guarantees as it had failed to implement them in both Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh. It was not committed for the development of Telangana," said Kishan Reddy.

Yadadri temple competing with Tirupathi, says KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KTR addressed large gatherings during his roadshows in Yadagiri Gutta, Bhuvanagiri and Miryalaguda on Monday.

"KCR made Yadagiri a new district, developed the Yadagiri Gutta Temple, gave Rythu Bandhu to farmers, gave electricity, water, the KCR kit and also a degree college," KTR said.

He asked what the Congress did for the people of Yadadri. KTR said that Yadadri was being transformed significantly and is now competing with Tirupathi.

He said that this election will decide the fate of Telangana and that people should make a wise decision while voting on November 30.

Speaking at the roadshows, KTR said that KCR is the only leader who could come up with a farmer-friendly scheme

like Rythu Bandhu and that KCR must be re-elected to continue the Rythu Bandhu scheme in Telangana.

Ridiculing Revanth Reddy's comments in which he indicated that Congress had a patent on free electricity supply, KTR asked where was quality power supply when Congress was ruling. KTR added that before 2014 the Congress promised six hours of power supply but couldn't even give three hours.

KTR said that Revanth's three-hour power supply and the use of a 10 HP pump for farming reflect his ignorance about farming. "Only KCR can give 24-hour free power supply. If supplying electricity is so easy then why couldn't the Congress do it," he said.

"Do you want electricity or the Congress?" KTR asked the people. He also asked people to decide if they wanted to vote for the Congress which gave Rs 200 as pension or the BRS



which gave Rs 2,000 as pension.

He said that Modi when in the opposition had cried over the LPG price hike, but after becoming PM he increased the price of LPG to Rs 800 per cylinder. He said that KCR will provide LPG for Rs 400 a cylinder to the people of Telangana.

He said the Congress couldn't develop Yadagiri Gutta, failed to give safe water supply and electricity and did not implement the schemes which were being implemented by the BRS government.



KCR lying on implementing Cong's 5-guarantees in K'taka: Muniappa

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Consumer Affairs Minister KH Muniappa said that Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is telling lies regarding the implementation of the five guarantees of the Congress in Karnataka.

Speaking to the media on Monday at Gandhi Bhavan, Muniappa said that the Congress delivers whatever it promises. He said that they had implemented all the assurances given in Karnataka within 100 days. He said that KCR is lying that the



Karnataka Congress government is not implementing the assurances it had given to the public.

Muniappa said that they introduced the Gruhalaxmi scheme in Karnataka first. He

said that the Congress had given six guarantees in Telangana and it will certainly implement them and appealed to the people of Telangana to vote for the Congress.

He said that the Congress will execute development projects like it was done during the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy's tenure as CM in the United Andhra Pradesh.

The Karnataka Minister asked KCR to reveal what he has done for the TS in the last 10 years and added that KCR's rule is filled with corruption.

Muniappa asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to

issue an ordinance and bring it to Parliament if he really wants to help the SCs and that the Congress will support it.

In another press meet, Karnataka MLC BK Hari Prasad said that KCR is trying to saving his daughter from going to jail. He said that the BRS is facing elections with the money it made using the Telangana liquor policy.

He said that KCR is speaking lies and that the BJP and the BRS are making JDS leader Kumaraswamy speak against the Congress. He made it clear that the Congress government is providing 10-hour power supply in Karnataka.

BRS Govt will speed up...

Continued from page 3

KTR said that the suggestions given by the students will be taken forward. He announced that group-2 jobs will be increased by 1,000 and notifications will be issued soon.

In addition, he assured that the job calendar will be released immediately after the BRS comes to power.

KTR said that as a young man, he had the experience of working in the private sector for almost a decade, and he can understand the challenges behind getting a government job or a private job. After the two-hour conversation with KTR, the candidates preparing for government jobs thanked him.

"What was Governor doing for 3 years?"

SC questions in granting assent to Bills

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday questioned the delay on the part of Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi in granting assent to several Bills passed by the state Assembly, asking as to why should governors wait for parties to move the top court with their grievances.

Posing tough questions, a bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud asked what

was the governor doing for three years, noting that the Bills were pending since January 2020.

Observing that the issue was whether there was a delay in the discharge of the constitutional functions entrusted to the office of the governors, the court also said it would deal with the question whether a governor can sit over the Bills without sending them either back to the Assembly or to the President.

The top court made the observations as it deferred the hearing on the Tamil Nadu government's plea alleging delay by Governor Ravi to December 1 after Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Office of the Governor, sought a postponement.

The court, while adjourning the hearing, took note of the fact that the TN Assembly has re-adopted 10 Bills returned by the governor.

HC grants regular bail to Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Monday granted regular bail to TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu in the AP State Skill Development Corporation scam case giving a much-needed relief to the opposition leader.

The single-judge Bench made 'absolute' the interim bail granted to Naidu on October 31 on medical grounds. This comes as a huge relief to Naidu, who was on four-week interim bail and was earlier directed to report to



Rajahmundry Jail on November 28.

Justice T Mallikarjuna Rao ordered that Naidu be released on regular bail on the bail bond already furnished by him. The judge directed that the condi-

tion imposed on Naidu over participating in public rallies and meetings will be relaxed from November 29.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief has been directed to produce the medical reports, regarding his treatment, before the Special Court, Vijayawada on or before November 28. The judge, who had reserved his orders on a regular bail petition on November 17, pronounced the same on Monday.

Senior lawyer Siddharth Luthra had represented Naidu while the Andhra Pradesh

Investigation Department (CID) was represented by Additional Advocate General P Sudhakar Reddy.

The arguments centered on the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 invoked by the CID and the degree of Naidu's role in the alleged scam. Naidu, 73, was released from jail after 52 days on October 31 after the court granted him interim bail.

The CID had arrested Naidu on September 9 in the Skill Development scam which allegedly took place when Naidu was the Chief Minister.

BJP is peoples'...

Continued from page 3

We will organise Liberation Day celebrations on September 17 every year officially in addition to constructing the Martyrs Memorial at Bairanpally," said Amit and added that the BJP is committed to the development of Telangana, BC categorisation and a BC will be made the Chief Minister of Telangana. Declaring that the BRS is running the most corrupt government in the country, the Home Minister said that there was massive corrup-

tion while executing the Kaleshwaram project, Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya. He promised to order an inquiry by a retired Supreme Court Judge on corruption during BRS rule and ensure that those who were involved in corruption were punished.

"The name and fame of India has touched new heights under Prime Minister Modi. We have constructed a new Parliament House. The world is looking at India for guidance and leadership," said Amit while addressing the meetings.

‘People are not...

Continued from page 3

"Tomorrow, you will say that they should be permitted to walk or stroll on a highway and the cars should stop. How can that happen?" the bench asked. When the lawyer again referred to the statistics and said the number of deaths from such accidents has gone up, the bench said, "That is because highways have increased ... our discipline has not increased." It said the high court had granted liberty to the petitioners to approach the ministry concerned.

"You can never have a variety of traffic on highways, including pedestrians on highways. You be happy with what you have got," the bench said, adding, "If people violate the norms, how can the court say they can violate the norms?" It said people are not found roaming around on highways anywhere in the world. "This is a petition totally without logic. This should have been dismissed with cost," the bench observed, adding, "You have still got something from the high court."

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Navami: Nov 21 03:16 AM to Nov 22 01:10 AM
Dashami: Nov 22 01:10 AM to Nov 22 11:04 PM
Nakshatram: Shatabhisha: Nov 20 09:26 PM to Nov 21 08:01 PM
Purva Bhadrapada: Nov 21 08:01 PM to Nov 22 06:37 PM
Rahukalam: 2:48 PM to 4:12 PM
Yamagandam: 9:14 AM to 10:38 AM
Varjyam: 02:03 AM to 03:33 AM
Gulika: 12:01 PM to 1:25 PM
Amritakalam: 01:15 PM to 02:45 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:39 AM to 12:24 PM
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 32°C
Humidity: 54%
Sunrise: 6:24 AM
Sunset: 5:40 PM
Updated: November 20, 2023 5:00 PM

Cong leaders..

Continued from page 3

An IT tower has also come to Nalgonda. Around 1500 people are getting jobs there," the CM said.

"K o m a t i r e d d y Venkat Reddy was the MLA here for two decades. What did Nalgonda town look like during his time? During the 50 years of Congress rule, the erstwhile Nalgonda district did not get even a single medical college. Today there are three medical colleges. A super speciality hospital with 500 to 600 beds has come up in Nalgonda. We are moving ahead respecting all castes and religions equally," KCR said.

KCR promises...

Continued from page 3

The BRS chief reiterated that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure was filled with starvation deaths, Naxal violence and encounters with the police.

He recalled that until former Chief Minister NT Rama Rao (undivided AP) came to power and offered rice at Rs 2 per kg to the people it was a life of starvation for commoners.

He also slammed the BJP and Prime Minister Modi for not sanctioning even one medical college and a Navodaya School to Telangana.

"As we are producing crores of tonnes of paddy we will be setting up food processing units wherever they are required so that local people will get employment. We will

be constructing double-bedroom houses on a war footing in the next five years," he said.

KCR said that due to the pro-farmer welfare policies of his government, the state now tops paddy production in the country with an output of three crore tonnes annually. "Around 7,500 paddy procurement centres were set up across the state to purchase paddy from farmers although the government suffered losses to some extent. Today, we are producing three crore tonnes of paddy," he said, listing out the measures taken for the growth of the agriculture sector.

Attacking the Congress, he said its leaders say that KCR is wasting taxpayers' money and giving Rythu Bandhu (a support scheme for farmers) to farmers.

‘KCR made...

Continued from page 3

The Congress included Lambadas in the STs list and gave Indiramma houses to them. He said that Congress governments distributed 25 lakh acres of assigned land to SCs and STs during Indiramma Rajyam.

Indiramma Rajyam also provided irrigation to farmers by constructing irrigation projects, he said and added that the KCR family would have been begging if Sonia Gandhi had not given Telangana state.

He also recalled that Congress gave the Siddipet single window chairman post to KCR then. KCR should not forget that Indira Gandhi's son Sanjay Gandhi made KCR the Youth Congress president, Revanth pointed out.

Breakthrough at...

Continued from page 3

"We have sent the pipe 53 metres to the other side of the rubble and the trapped workers can hear and experience us," he said.

"First achievement, big achievement. The next step is the more vital one and the most important that's to get them out intact, happy," his colleague Col Deepak Patil said.

Drones and robots from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have also been brought to the site to look into the possibility of other escape routes for the trapped men.

Rescue workers were yet to resume the horizontal boring through the debris after a boulder appeared to block the progress of the heavy-duty

auger machine earlier this week. But an official statement said this was scheduled to begin in the evening.

The first machine for construction of a vertical rescue shaft possibly around 80-metre deep by drilling from near the hilltop has also reached the tunnel. A road to the hilltop has been laid, and the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is arranging for more equipment, the statement said.

Also, work has begun on drilling from the other side, the Barkot-end, of the tunnel, it said.

International tunnelling expert Arnold Dix also reached the disaster site to review rescue efforts. He heads the Geneva-based International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association.

Modi to campaign...

Continued from page 3

Speaking to the media on Monday, Premender said that Nirmala would campaign in Jubilee Hills on November 21 and Fadnavis in Musheerabad.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah who participated in the election campaign on Monday in Telangana, would come to Telangana on November 24, 26 and 28.

He said that BJP President JP Nadda will tour Telangana on November 23, 25, 26 and 27. Nadda will participate in campaigns in Mudhole, Sangareddy and Nizamabad Urban and in a roadshow in Hyderabad.

Premender said that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adithyanath would attend 10 public meetings in Telangana on November 24, 25 and 26.

IIT-M launches info platform on incubators & accelerators

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre for Research on Startups and Risk Financing (CREST), an Institute of Eminence Research Centre at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) has developed India's first information platform on incubators and accelerators.

The platform, developed in partnership with YNOS, an IIT Madras-incubated startup, contains comprehensive information on incubators and accelerators, which play an important role in helping startups navigate an uncertain entrepreneurial ecosystem.

While India had about 1,000 active incubators, currently, the information about them was scattered and not easily available in a single location. Entrepreneurs had to spend a lot of time and effort to identify the incubator most suitable for their start-up.

The platform developed by CREST addresses this pain-



Prof Thillai Rajan with Telangana IT Secretary Dr. Jayesh Ranjan

founders to identify, compare and analyse incubators very easily. Called 'Incubators', this artificial intelligence (AI)-pow-

ered platform will help startup

founders to identify incubators and accelerators across India and shortlist one that best fits their requirements.

Dr Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Departments of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications, Industries and Commerce, Government of Telangana, and Member, Board of Directors of T-Hub, the largest incubator in India, formally launched the 'Incubators' platform at Hyderabad in the presence of Prof. Thillai Rajan A, Professor at the Department of Management Studies, IIT Madras, and Principal Investigator of CREST. Prof. Thillai Rajan is also the Founder and Director of YNOS Venture Engine.

The incubators platform includes data on more than 920 incubators and accelerators, with comprehensive information on each incubator such as host organisation, startup funding agency, number of startups supported, investors who have invested in the startups supported by the incubators, among others.



Scientist Manikyamba selected for SGAT Award

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - National Geophysical Research Institute (CSIR-NGRI) Emeritus Scientist Dr C Manikyamba was selected for the SGAT Award of Excellence 2023 on Monday. She has been selected by the Society of Geoscientists and Allied Technologists (SGSAT), Bhubaneswar, for her pioneering research contributions in the field of Geosciences related to the growth of continental crust and its mineral resources including iron, manganese, gold and PGE in the Precambrian terranes of India.

Dr Manikyamba has published 130 research papers in peer-reviewed international journals and supervised 12 PhDs. Her research work focuses on biogeochemical studies related to Fe-Mn formations, stromatolites and carbonaceous shales of Dharwar Craton, Proterozoic Cuddapah and Phanerozoic K-G basin.

Basti voters not satisfied with govt welfare schemes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

One of the highest Andhra settlers in the GHMC are there in Kukatpally constituency. In spite of settlers, Basthi (slums) voters are also an important factor to decide the fate of the MLA candidates. People got welfare schemes in the nine-and-a-half rule of BRS government, but not all. Even migrated workers from other states of Telangana are affected in this constituency.

Voters from many areas in this constituency say that the migrants are staying here for work though they have land at their native places. A few of them accuse the Dharani portal for being given less land than they have back home, and cents of land transferred to others. One of residents of the Amruth Nagar Basthi, Gouthami said, "Out of the 120 households, we got only 70 houses in the double bedroom scheme. They are saying that after the elections they will allot the rest of them in the scheme."

Jinkalwada, Amruth Nagar, Samatha Nagar, Goutham Nagar and Bharat Nagar voters are saying that the BRS government has not satisfied all the voters in the constituency.

Raghu, one of the residents of Jinkalwada, said, "My basti



Amrith Nagar Basthi

residents came here though they have land in their hometown. In the Dharani, we have lost much of the land, as it was transferred to others."

BRS candidate Madhavaram Krishna Rao has won in 2014 and 2018 elections on a TDP ticket and changed his allegiance to the BRS. He has been hoping that along with the works he accomplished in the constituency, settlers would vote for him.

Congress party candidate Bandi Ramesh, who fought in the 2009 Assembly elections on a Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) ticket from Serilingampally constituency, lost the seat. Then he joined the BRS and later the Congress after he did-

n't get a ticket. He is hoping that anti-incumbency votes and rising of the graph of the party may turn the votes in favour of the Congress.

Among the eight seats Janasena got from the coalition, this constituency has dominated by the settlers. Janasena candidate Premkumar joined the BJP in August from the TDP and he switched to the JSP a day before getting the ticket. The party is hoping that Pawan Kalyan charisma and anti-BRS wind will turn to the tide in their favour. Just nine days are left for the polls but the party president did not participate in any campaigning in the State, as speculated.

OWAISI CRITICISES BJP'S MANIFESTO FOR TS POLLS

Country needs jobs, not UCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) President and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday criticised Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) manifesto for Telangana elections and said that India needs employment and not the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

Addressing a public meet, Owaisi said, "UCC is not a requirement in the country. What the country requires is freedom of speech and a surge in the employment rate." It is to be noted that the BJP manifesto promises the formation of a committee on UCC in Telangana.

The AIMIM President also criticised the BJP for vowing to scrap religion-based reservations in the State. He claimed that the removal of reservations equals to depriving backward Muslims of employment opportunities. Owaisi stressed that only listed Muslims in the backward class receive reservations.



He further criticised the BJP saying, "In the last 9.5 years, the BJP government has weakened the economy, destroyed small businesses, failed in their promise of providing jobs and as a result we have high inflation and highest unemployment of youth."

"It is our hard work of 65 years that is reflecting here. Neither the Congress nor the BJP will benefit here. Both the Congress and the BJP's politics are built upon hate," the Hyderabad MP added. Accusing the Congress leaders of being close to the RSS, Owaisi claimed that people have now understood the

strength of AIMIM in Telangana.

The MP also took a dig at Union Home Minister Amit Shah and said, "As far as the Uniform Civil Code is concerned, I hope Amit Shah goes to Adilabad, Khammam and Warangal and stands in the midst of all Adivasis and tells them that we are going to implement UCC."

The BJP's manifesto mentions farm investment support schemes like the ruling Bharat Rashtra Samithi's (BRS) Rythu Bandhu or free power to the farm sector, which both the BRS and Congress have pledged.

The manifesto states the party's intent to form a committee to draft a new Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for the State, a move already undertaken in other BJP-ruled states. It promises to redistribute the Muslim quota to OBCs, SCs and STs and reiterated the party's commitment to appointing a CM from a Backward Class community.



Kris Gopalakrishnan bags ISB Research Catalyst Award

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian School of Business (ISB) will bestow Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman of Axilor Ventures, with the ISB Research Catalyst Award for his pioneering role in the growth of the research ecosystem in India at the 'ISB Insights Forum' on November 24, at the Mohali campus of the ISB. The felicitation programme will be followed by a fireside chat featuring Kris Gopalakrishnan, Rakesh Bharti Mittal, Vice-Chairman of Bharti Enterprises and Member, ISB Executive Board, and John Reed, South Asia Editor of Financial Times.

International Child Rights Day observed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has observed the International Child Rights Day on Monday with a pledge in all the government and private educational and child care institutions committing towards fulfilling the rights of the children without any discrimination based on caste, class, creed, religion, gender and disability. The theme for this year during this occasion is "For every child, every right".

The key intent of the pledge was to sensitise the children and the stakeholders on the significance of the rights and to build responsibility among them.

The Secretary of School Education, the District Collectors and the District Educational Officers have played a vital role by ensuring the government and private educational institutions, child care institutions to observe the International Child Rights Day with a pledge during the school assembly/prayer time across the state.

The Government of India has acceded to the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Child (UNCRC) on December 11, 1992. Whereas, on November 20, 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly and was widely acclaimed as a landmark achievement for human rights, recognising the roles of children as social, economic, political, civil and cultural actors.

The convention guarantees and sets minimum standards for protecting the rights of children in all capacities.

Hyd to host Freemason Organisation's meeting

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 293-year-old Freemason Organisation's meeting will host a Grand Festival 23 which will be held on November 25 and 26 at Imperial Gardens in Secunderabad. It is hosted by the Freemasons of Telangana.

It is the city's first-ever grand festival in the 62-year history of the Grand Lodge of India. The event is also being clubbed with another landmark milestone - the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Supreme Grand Chapter of India.

About 1,200 plus Freemasons from across India and abroad are expected to participate in the event. Delegates from several different Grand Lodges of countries such as the United Kingdom, Scotland,

Paraguay, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Russia and Mauritius are expected to participate.

Anish Kumar Sharma, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of India and the head of Freemasonry in India said, "It is a historical moment as the Grand Festival is being held in Hyderabad for the first time in the 62-year history of the Grand Lodge of India. Grand Lodge is the apex body of Freemasons in India, which was formed in 1961. Freemasonry traces its roots in India in the early years of the 18th century. In 1730, officers of the East India Company held their meetings in Fort William in Calcutta. Hence, it is a historical moment all the Freemasons in Telangana should be proud of."

No strikes in TSRTC from Dec 1

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana government on Monday issued an order banning its employees from going on strike for the next six months from December 1, 2023. Keeping in view the public interest and considering the request of the Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, TSRTC, VC Sajjanar, the government has decided to prohibit strikes in any service under the corporation for next six months. On November 30, the previous GO of banning is going to expire. Hence, Sajjanar has requested the government to extend the order for six more months. There are about 45,000 employees working in the corporation. Out of them 40,000 are regular workers and 5,000 are contract or outsourcing.

Hyd CP Sandeep Shandilya hospitalised

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Sandeep Shandilya was on Monday admitted to Apollo Hospitals due to spondylitis.

The newly-appointed CP reportedly felt uneasiness in the office, and the police officials rushed him to the hospital. The medical reports revealed that the Commissioner was diagnosed with acute spondylitis (a type of arthritis). As a proactive measure to curb the spread of misinformation, Shandilya shared his video clip with the media persons in which he said, "Hi, this is Sandeep Shandilya! Today I had a bit of giddiness and came to Apollo Hospitals. Tomorrow I will be coming to work. I am fine and thank you."

GMR Hyd Intl Airport hosts CBRN Training programme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) hosted a five-day training programme on Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Emergency Management conducted by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) which began on Monday and will conclude on November 24. Pradeep Panicker, CEO of GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd, inaugurated the programme.

The basic training aimed to enhance the preparedness of airport emergency handlers in responding to CBRN emergencies, covering potential threats involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear materials within airport environments. The comprehensive



training included lectures, field exercises, and live demonstrations, focusing on detection and decontamination procedures. In addition to equipping emergency handlers with the skills to manage CBRN emergencies, the programme is aimed to enable them to provide medical first aid and initial psycho-social support.

The training programme will comprise theoretical sessions by

experts and scientists of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC), Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

Hyd office market shines with sharp jump in demand-supply

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In Hyderabad, the leasing of office space jumped 270 per cent to 3.7 million square feet. New supply soared 175 per cent to 5.5 million square feet, while India's most prominent office market Bengaluru remained slow during the July-September period as office space gross leasing fell by 28 per cent year-on-year while new supply declined 25 per cent, according to the Vestian report.

As per the data, the absorption of office space in the July-September period rose 21 per cent year on year to 15.9 million square feet across seven major cities, which are Bengaluru, Hyderabad,



Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, Delhi and Kolkata. Across these seven cities, the new office space supply increased 26 per cent annually to 13.4 million square feet during the third quarter of this calendar year.

Shrinivas Rao, CEO, Vestian, said, "In Q3 2023, the Indian office sector witnessed heightened real estate activities as

absorption reached the highest level since pandemic and new completions increased to a five-quarter high." "The sector also reported healthy vacancy levels with an appreciation in average rentals. This showcases the robust fundamentals of the sector and a healthy demand for quality office spaces in India," Rao added.

SCR to run 22 Sabarimala special trains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In order to clear the extra rush of Sabarimala pilgrims, the South Central Railways (SCR) will run 22 Sabarimala special trains between various destinations from November 22 to December 8.

Train No 07129 (Secunderabad - Kollam) will depart from Secunderabad at 4:30 pm on November 26 and December 3 and will arrive at Kollam at 11:55 pm on November 27 and December 4 while Train No 07130 (Kollam - Secunderabad) will depart from Kollam at 2:30 am on November 28 and December 5 and will arrive at Secunderabad at 8:55 am on November 29 and December 6.

En route, these special trains will stop at Nalgonda, Miryalaguda, Nadikude,

Piduguralla, Sattenapalli, Guntur, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole, Kavali, Nellore, Gudur, Renigunta, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thrisur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chenganacheri, Tiruvalla, Chengannur, and Mavelikera stations.

Train No 07123 (Kacheguda - Kollam) will depart from Kacheguda at 5:30 pm on November 22, November 29 and December 6 and will arrive at Kollam at 11:55 pm on November 23 and November 30 and December 7 while Train No 07124 (Kollam - Kacheguda) will depart from Kollam at 2:30 am on November 24, December 1 and December 8 and will arrive at Kacheguda at 10:30 am on November 25,

December 2 and December 9. These special trains will stop at Malkajigiri, Nalgonda, Miryalaguda, Nadikude, Sattenapalli, Guntur, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, Renigunta, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thrisur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chenganacheri, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Mavelikera stations in both the directions.

Train No 07125 (Kakinada Town - Kottayam) will depart from Kakinada Town at 5:40 pm on November 23 and November 30 and will arrive at Kottayam at 10 pm on November 24 and December 1 while Train No 07126 (Kottayam - Kakinada Town) will depart from Kottayam at 12:30 am on November 25 and

December 2 and will arrive at Kakinada Town at 4 am on November 26 and December 3.

En route, these special trains will stop at Samalkot, Anaparthi, Rajahmundry, Nidadavolu, Tanuku, Bhimavaram Town, Akividu, Kaikaluru, Gudivada, Vijayawada, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, Renigunta, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thrisur, Aluva and Ernakulam Town stations.

Train No 07127 (Secunderabad - Kollam) will depart from Secunderabad at 3 pm on November 24 and December 1 and will arrive at Kollam at 7:30 pm on November 25 and December 2 while Train No 07128 (Kollam - Secunderabad) will depart from Kollam at 11 pm on

November 25 and December 2 and will arrive at Secunderabad at 4:30 am on November 26 and December 3.

These special trains will stop at Kacheguda, Umdanagar, Shadnagar, Jadcherla, Mahbubnagar, Wanaparthy Rd, Sriramnagar, Gadwal, Kurnool City, Dhone, Goity, Tadipatri, Yerraguntla, Kadapa, Razampet, Renigunta, Tirupati, Chittoor, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thrisur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chenganacheri, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Mavelikera stations in both the directions.

These special trains consist of first-tier AC, second-tier AC, and third-tier AC, sleeper class, and general second-class coaches.

INDIA CORNER

EPFO adds 17.21 lakh net members

Retirement fund body EPFO recorded a net addition of 17.21 lakh members in September, according to payroll data released on Monday. Month-on-month comparison of payroll data shows an increase of 21,475 net members over August 2023, a labour ministry statement said. Year-on-year comparison of payroll data reflects an increase of 38,262 net members over September 2022. Around 8.92 lakh new members enrolled during September 2023, the ministry said. Among these newly joined members, the age group of 18-25 years constitutes 58.92 per cent of total new members added during the month. This demonstrates that a majority of the members joining the organised sector workforce of the country are youth, who are mostly first-time job seekers, it explained. Payroll data shows that approximately 11.93 lakh members exited but rejoined EPFO, it stated. These members switched their jobs and re-joined the establishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement thus, extending their social security protection, it explained.



Court acquits man of cruelty, dowry death charges

A court here has acquitted a man of the charges of cruelty and dowry death, saying the prosecution had "miserably failed" to establish that he had subjected his deceased wife to any cruelty or harassment. Additional Sessions Judge Manika was hearing a case against Jitender Gahlot, against whom the Dabri police station here had filed a chargesheet under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 498A (husband or relative of husband of a woman subjecting her to cruelty) and 304B (dowry death). According to the prosecution, Gahlot's wife Neelam committed suicide by hanging on January 24, 2018 as she was subjected to cruelty and harassment for dowry. It had said the accused married the deceased on July 31, 2017. Taking note of the testimonies of the prosecution witnesses, the court, in a recent order, said, "The prosecution has failed to prove that there was any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security made by the accused, Jitender Gahlot, from the deceased or any person related to her."



Adoption: SC to states, UTs: Carry out drive to identify children for adoption

Noting the "mismatch" between the number of children legally available for adoption and registered prospective adoptive parents, the Supreme Court on Monday directed all states and the Union territories to carry out a drive every two months to identify the children in abandoned and surrendered (OAS) category in child care institutions. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, Justice J B Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra said the first of such an exercise should be carried out by December 7. "All states and UTs are directed to ensure that within every district Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA) shall be set up by January 31, 2024. The nodal department in charge of implementing the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 shall positively communicate compliance to the director, Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) and secretary Ministry of Women and Child Development by January 31, 2024," the bench said.



US envoy pitches for deeper Indo-US conversations on AI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti on Monday made a strong pitch for "deeper conversations" between New Delhi and Washington on a regulatory framework on artificial intelligence, saying it could be an example of "multiplicative relationship" between the two democracies.



US increasing staff, opening new consulates

NEW DELHI: The US is increasing staff strength and opening new consulates, including in Ahmedabad, to reduce the waiting time for issuance of visas from India, US Ambassador Eric Garcetti said on Monday. One consulate was recently opened in Hyderabad and premises are being looked at in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad for new consulates, he said during an interactive session, organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) here. "I had a look at the new premises for establishing a consulate in Ahmedabad yesterday. Some more people have already joined the Hyderabad consulate as we are increasing the staff strength in the city and premises are being taken up in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad for setting up new consulates," he said. He said the number of US visas being issued in India had increased by one-third in recent weeks and the embassy was likely to issue 10-15 per cent more visas than usual in the current calendar year. Garcetti said the delay in issuance of visas was due to the large number of applicants, and other large countries such as Brazil and Mexico were facing similar issues.

logue last week, Garcetti said the two sides took important steps towards strengthening the major defence partnership which continues to grow and increasing the acceleration seen through initiatives such as the US-India roadmap in industrial cooperation and defence.

He stressed that New Delhi and Washington should deepen their Artificial Intelligence (AI) conversation.

He pitched for India-US collaboration and cooperation in emerging domains.

"...we sometimes just focus on weapons and what is being sold, or potentially co-developed, but the operational level of our militaries...is as critical as any equipment," he said.

He also said the countries should "discuss ways to deepen our science and our technology partnerships to harness technology for the global good instead of technology that harms us and divides us."

The US envoy said that the joint statement issued after the 2+2 Dialogue reflected the resolve of the US and India to promote resilient rules-based international order to safeguard a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific through the QUAD and other metrics, global issues.

Bogus news meant to generate euphoria: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress took a swipe at the ruling BJP on Monday for claiming that India's GDP has crossed the USD 4-trillion mark and alleged that the "bogus" news is only for generating euphoria and doing headline management.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said some Union ministers and the Maharashtra deputy chief minister have made a "fake" claim.

"Between 2:45 pm and 6:45 pm yesterday, when the nation was glued to watching the cricket match, various drum-beaters of the Modi government, including senior Union ministers from Rajasthan and Telangana, the Deputy CM of Maharashtra, as well as the PM's most favoured businessman, tweeted that yesterday itself India's GDP had crossed the USD 4 trillion mark," Ramesh said.

"This was totally fake and bogus news meant to generate more euphoria and a pathetic attempt at both sycophancy and headline management," he alleged.

In a post on X, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said on Sunday, "This is what dynamic, visionary leadership looks like! That's what our New India progressing beautifully looks like."

TRANSFER OF JUDGES

SC flags issue of 'pick and choose' by Centre in clearing names

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday flagged the issue of "pick and choose" by the Centre in clearing the collegium's recommendations for transferring high court judges and said this does not send a good signal.

The court observed that of the 11 names of judges recommended by the collegium for transfer, five have been transferred but six are still pending -- four from the Gujarat High Court and one each from the high courts of Allahabad and Delhi.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sudhanshu Dhulia said of the recently recommended names for judgeship in high courts, eight have not been cleared and some of these judges are senior to those who have been appointed.

"As per my information, you have issued transfer orders for five judges. For six judges, you have not issued. Four of them are from Gujarat. Last time also, I had said this does not send a good signal," Justice Kaul, who is also a member of the apex court collegium, told Attorney General R Venkataramani.



Asserting that this is not acceptable, the judge said, "Last time also, I did emphasise that don't do selective transfers. It creates its own dynamics."

Observing that the government is following a "pick and choose" policy regarding the names recommended by the collegium for transfers, the bench said, "Just look at it. What is the signal you are sending?"

The bench was hearing two petitions, including one alleging a delay on the Centre's part in clearing the names recommended by the collegium for appointment and transfer of judges.

During the hearing, the top court said a problem arises when selective appointment takes place as people lose their seniority.

"Why will people agree to become judges?" it asked, adding, "This is something on which we had commented earlier that if a candidate does not know what seniority he would stand as a judge, it becomes difficult to persuade other eligible and deserving candidates."

It also referred to some older recommendations made by the collegium and said it included names that have either been reiterated once or twice.

'Prime interest in IFFI growing'

■ Anurag says new film policy on anvil

PNS ■ PANAJI

Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur on Monday said the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) has been attracting a lot of interest worldwide and the annual event has taken a "new flight". He also said a new film policy will be unveiled by the central government soon.

Talking to reporters at the red carpet on the sidelines of opening ceremony of IFFI 2023 in Goa, he maintained the high-profile film festival has taken a "new flight" (nayi udaan).

The minister informed that

there were 3,000 film submissions from across the globe for the 54th edition of the festival which, he said, shows the "interest in IFFI has increased".

Thakur said India's media and entertainment industry is clocking an annual growth rate of 20 per cent and added post-production work is creating different kinds of interest in the country.

The minister informed a new film policy will be in place soon and added the Cinematography (Amendment) Bill, 2023, passed recently by Parliament, has stringent provisions to curb piracy.

Murmu urges writers to create awareness among tribals

PNS ■ BARIKAPADA (ODISHA)

President Droupadi Murmu Monday stressed on creating awareness among tribal communities and urged writers to be involved in it.

The President said that literature is a mirror to the culture of a community and urged writers to write about the lifestyles of tribal communities so that others know about their life values. Most of the Santali literature is available in the oral tradition and writers play a big role in popularising any language, she said addressing the 36th Annual Conference and Literary Festival of All India Santali Writers' Association.

DYNASTIC POLITICS EVERYTHING FOR CONGRESS

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the Congress government in Rajasthan cannot think of anything except appeasement politics and wants to eradicate sanatana dharma.

Ahead of the November 25 assembly polls in Rajasthan, the prime minister addressed rallies in Pali district and in Pilibanga in Hanumangarh district on Monday.

At the election rally in Pali district, he asserted that Rajasthan needs a government which gives top priority to development, whereas for the Congress there is nothing more important than corruption and dynastic politics.

He also accused the Congress



and its allies of having an anti-women mindset.

"Ever since the law giving reservation to women (in Lok Sabha and state assemblies) was passed, they have started a campaign against women. The leaders of 'ghamandiya' alliance have made very objectionable comments about our mothers and sisters," he charged.

Prime Minister Modi has often targeted the Indian

National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) as "ghamandiya" (arrogant) alliance.

The prime minister said the Bihar chief minister used derogatory words against women in the assembly but no Congress leader said anything about this. "This is the real face of Congress, which the people of Rajasthan have recognised," he said. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, while emphasising the importance of education among women to control the population, had recently put forward a vivid description in the state assembly of how an educated woman can restrain her husband during intercourse. He had later apologised for his remarks.

FROM PORTS TO AIRPORTS,

Modi 'controls' everything

■ Congress chief Kharge in Rajasthan

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "controls" everything - from ports to airports - and he is working towards making people "slaves".

Addressing a public meeting in Anupgarh in Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan ahead of the November 25 assembly polls, Kharge said the Congress will work to address people's issues and concerns and deliver on the promises made to them.

"Perhaps the prime minister is also touring this area. Wherever we intend to go, we do not get permission to fly. This means everything is under his control. Air, land, ports and airports, all are under his control. He is working towards making people slaves," the Congress president said, without elaborating.

Prime Minister Modi addressed a few election rallies in Rajasthan on Monday.

Kharge said, "They may try to intimidate us. But we are not going to be afraid. We will fight for the poor and remove their difficulties."

Modi lends strong voice to global south

Million of Indians, including the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, supported Indian cricket team playing the World Cup final match on Sunday winning nine matches at a stretch. However, the team lost in the finals. It was a painful matter indeed.

However, a proud moment for the country took place on Sunday.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) declared that the Indian economy crossed \$ 4 trillion on Sunday. When PM Modi declared that the country targeted to become a \$ 5 million economy by 2025, many opposition leaders heckled Modi criticising it as impracticable.

The IMF attributed India becoming \$ 4 trillion economy to good governance by Modi government and its strategic policies. It became clear that India is set to become a \$ 5 trillion economy by 2025 as targeted.

Not only did the IMF but also several international agen-

cies described India as one of the fastest growing economies in world. Economists and industrialists praised the leadership of the country stating that the world came to know about the leadership with foresight.

The IMF exuded confidence that India, from the perspective of the global GDP, would surpass Japan's economy - \$ 4.4 trillion - and German economy - \$ 4.3 trillion and set to emerge as the third biggest economy in the next two years.

RBI Governor Saktikanta Das said that the country is set to achieve the most surprising results if the economic activities that gained momentum in the country were any indication.

Economic Advisor to the Union Government Ananta Nageswaran exuded confidence that India will emerge as the \$ 7 trillion economy in the next seven years. The startups would have a crucial role in the phenomenon. Director-General of Foreign Trade Santosh Kumar Sarangi

Soon after coming to power, Modi prepared a road map to transform the country into a \$ 5 trillion economy. However, because of the Covid, the economy slowed down in 2019 to an extent. The Ukraine-Russia war, Israel-Palestine clashes put many challenges before India. In spite of all this, the country's economy is recovering beyond all expectations because of the economic policies being pursued by Modi.

declared that the e-commerce exports also play a significant role in the country's economic growth. He predicted that the e-commerce exports would cross \$ 2 trillion from the current annual \$ 800 billion.

The living standards of people have increased and poverty has come down significantly in India, remarked economist Vivek Rathi.

In 1990, after 60 years of India becoming independent, it became a \$ 1 trillion economy. In 2014, i.e. after

14 years, the GDP of the country touched \$ 2 trillion-mark.

Soon after coming to power, Modi prepared a road map to transform the country into a \$ 5 trillion economy. However, because of the Covid, the economy slowed down in 2019 to an extent. The Ukraine-Russia war, Israel-Palestine clashes put many challenges before India. In spite of all this, the country's economy is recovering beyond all expectations because of the econom-



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

ic policies being pursued by Modi.

Modi government's economic policies stand as proof of the country emerging as the fifth largest economy in world, surpassing Britain, by achieving 7.2% growth rate in 2023.

Strategic liberalisation policies, the insolvency and bankruptcy code, demonetisation, reduction in the GST and corporate taxes and introduction of reforms in the tax regime, production-linked incentives, make-in-India policy, reduc-

tion of wasteful expenditure, doing away with the outdated Acts, pursuing the competitive federation policy among states, fiscal disciplinary measures to prevent states from borrowing excessively, unprecedented digitalisation of services and production sectors lend much fillip to the economy.

Modi undertook several foreign jaunts and restored ties with various countries and succeeded in transforming the personal contacts into economic ties. Through the improvement of strategic relations with Japan, Australia and the USA, India joined the Quad, entering into business and technological ties with Israel, UAE, Canada, European Union and the African nations and hosting global events like G-20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, Modi lent a strong voice to the global south.

One can say with authority that no other PM than Modi

had realised the significant role of development of infrastructural amenities in the development of the country. Allocation of Rs 10 lakh crore in the last year's budget under the head capital expenditure stands as a testimony to this fact.

Prior to 2014, the development of metro lines was only 600 metres a month, as against 6 km a month during the Modi regime. Today, rural road network spread over 8 lakh km in the country as against less than 4 lakh km of rural roads prior to 2014.

The country had only 70 airports prior to 2014 as against the current 150. Today 600 cities have the city gas distribution system as against only 60 prior to 2014.

Under the name of AMRUT Kaal, Modi designed programmes for the rapid development of the nation during the next 25 years.

The country emerged as an attractive destination for glob-

al investors during the Modi's regime. At the same time, the NitiAyog report said that the poverty in the country has come down significantly under the Modi regime. Over 13.5 crore persons managed to come out of poverty, the report added.

Providing food security to over 80 crore population by providing free food grains to them is a significant achievement. Eliminating the middlemen, money is deposited direct into bank accounts of people under various government welfare schemes. It was hailed as a wonderful achievement.

The government policies helped the sectors of fruits and vegetables, dairy and animal husbandry products and fisheries achieved unusual development. While the whole world recognises these achievements, it was unfortunate to note that our opposition parties and some members of the intelligentsia have no other agenda except criticising Modi.

Lasting ordeal

Despite the ongoing multi-pronged rescue approach, the trapped workers are still fighting for life

For nine long days and nights, the 41 construction workers trapped inside the Uttarkashi tunnel have been bereft of sunlight, a cool breeze and normal life where they can move around at will. Best efforts using the best machinery by several Government agencies notwithstanding, these men await evacuation from what used to be their workplace after the Silkyara-Barkot underconstruction tunnel suddenly collapsed on November 12. The ill-fated workers – mostly natives of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand – face the ordeal of their way out being blocked by rubble and debris. This incident has not only tested the resilience of these workers but also triggered a massive, coordinated effort to rescue them. The location of the tunnel – part of the Narendra Modi Government's 'Char Dham' all-weather accessibility project – in a remote mountainous area presents a logistical nightmare for the rescue teams. The authorities swiftly mobilised a multi-



agency response to evacuate the trapped workers. Specialised teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), local police and experts from abroad have been deployed at the accident site. The rescue operation is going on for nine days now but to no avail. The initial rescue operation was suspended on November 17 when a loud cracking sound was heard from inside the tunnel during the positioning of a new pipe for the workers to walk out bypassing the rubble. The pipes were also being used to supply the workers with food, water and medicines.

Ironically, the use of heavier machinery to move the earth only aggravated the problem and led to more debris falling and clogging the planned way out. Now, in the first place, this incident should not have occurred. Though it is not the time to delve into the larger question of whether such mega projects in a fragile ecosystem should be allowed or whether the safety and security procedures were adequate, it appears certain that the lives of poor workers do not amount for much in our system. This crisis comes barely three months after 20 workers and engineers lost their lives on the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway, a similar mega project, in Thane district. However, the most uplifting and positive development in this incident has been that the innate helpful nature of people came to the fore. As news of the trapped workers spread, the local community rallied together, offering support to the rescuers and workers' families. Local volunteers played a crucial role in assisting on-ground operations and providing food, shelter and moral support to those involved in rescue efforts. But the happy ending is not here yet; there are prayers in bated breath for the hapless trapped workers who are paying the price for someone else's callousness and greed.

PICTALK



Spectators attend the inauguration of the Champs Elysee Avenue for the upcoming Christmas, in Paris

PTI

Cricket World Cup: A spectacle of excellence

The World Cup was a rare display of talent and grit showcasing the best cricket has to offer. It would linger for long in the memory of cricket lovers

With almost 1,30,000 fans in attendance and numerous high-profile personalities from all over the world, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, Sunday, November 19, however, belonged to an indefatigable Australia. In the heart of Ahmedabad, at the magnificent Narendra Modi Stadium, history was etched, as, Australia emerged victorious in the Cricket World Cup. It was India's first defeat of the tournament after they had, in a brilliant display of finesse, won all 10 of their previous matches. Without any exaggeration, it can be said that it was one of the finest tournaments India had ever played under the captaincy of Rohit Sharma. Once again, it was Australia's cricketing legacy that continued to shine brightly in the 2023 World Cup. The leadership of the Australian captain, Pat Cummins, and the team spirit led the team through challenging encounters. Cummins' strategic acumen and strategic captaincy style proved instrumental in setting the tone for Australia's



success. The team's batting lineup, featuring seasoned players like David Warner and Steven Smith, consistently delivered impactful performances, ensuring substantial totals in crucial matches. While the outcome may not have favoured the Indian cricket team, their journey in the 2023 World Cup was marked by moments of brilliance and a never-say-die attitude. Captained by Rohit Sharma and the dynamism of the charismatic Virat Kohli, the Indian team displayed determination and captivating fans around the world. India's batting lineup boasted formidable talents, with Rohit Sharma and K L Rahul providing solid support in most matches. Sharma's elegant stroke play and Rahul's aggressive approach set the stage for the middle order to capitalise on favourable situations. Even Virat Kohli, the linchpin of the Indian batting

order, played several crucial innings, showcasing his class and composure under pressure. Further, several key moments and individual performances defined the narrative of the 2023 World Cup. In a crucial group-stage encounter, India faced Australia in a high-scoring thriller. David Warner's breathtaking century and Mitchell Starc's were other moments of the match. After restricting the South Africans to 212, Australia eked its way to 215-7 to win by three wickets with 16 balls to spare in a tense atmosphere inside Eden Gardens. It was the lowest margin of victory (by wickets) at the World Cup knockout stage. Further, India showcased a batting masterclass led by Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul in their undefeated run into the knockouts, delivering a stunning hammer blow to the Netherlands. The hosts enforced a 160-run defeat, leaving the Dutch team to conclude their World Cup journey on a disappointing note. The foundation for India's commanding total of 410 for 4 was laid by the opening pair of Rohit Sharma

and Shubman Gill, who put together a solid 100-run partnership. One cannot also forget Afghanistan's remarkable journey in the World Cup that unfolded as an enthralling cricketing saga. The team's outstanding performances astounded the global cricketing community, clinching victories against formidable opponents such as Pakistan, England, and Sri Lanka. These successes carved out a historic chapter in Afghanistan's cricketing narrative, highlighting their resilience and skill on the grand stage. Afghanistan concluded their World Cup campaign with an impressive record of four victories in nine matches, marking a historic achievement for a team that had previously secured only one win in World Cup history. The eyes are now set on the 2027 World Cup scheduled to take place in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Till then, the gentleman's game continues to keep us engaged.

(The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views are personal)



RAJDEEP PATHAK

AI technology has been widely used in the current Assembly poll campaign. It includes creating songs featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi in languages such as Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu. These songs have gone viral on the internet. Additionally, AI-powered voice cloning tools have been utilised to send personalised messages to voters and party workers.

Modi's digitally rendered songs in Telugu have gained over 2 million views. In comparison, a Tamil-language song featuring his voice has gone viral with over 2.7 million views. Additionally, a Punjabi song that features Modi's voice has gained over 17 million views. Further, Falu, an Indian-American singer, has received a Grammy nomination for her song "Abundance in Millets", featuring PM Modi. Congress and the BJP have used AI-powered voice cloning tools. Ashok Gehlot, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, is notable for this. Some Television channels have introduced AI TV anchors in Odiya, Kannada and Hindi. Artificial Intelligence has transformed healthcare in India significantly. Advanced diagnosis, treatment, and patient care tools have improved medical services. A recent World Economic Forum report says that India's expenditure on AI is expected to reach \$11.78 billion by 2025. It will contribute to an addition of \$1 trillion to India's economy by 2035. Prime Minister Modi is keen on fostering further AI development in India.

All these bring us to the question of whether AI is gradually gripping the world. At the first AI Safety Summit hosted by the UK at the historic Bletchley Park on November 1, political and industry leaders discussed the risks around artificial intelligence. The focus was also on how to develop the technology safely. About 28 countries participated, including the United Nations and the European Union. US Vice President Kamala Harris represented the US. India, represented by Minister of State Rajeev Chandrasekhar, said, "We want AI and tech to represent good-

ness, safety and trust". Rapid progress in AI is arousing fear as well as excitement. The participants ranged from doom-sayers to hopeful participants who hoped AI would save humanity. They addressed the global nature of the issue. They stressed the need for international cooperation and healthy competition. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said he's worried about humanity losing control to computers. The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in cyberattacks was also discussed. AI can impersonate at a scale and speed never known. These could make the global financial system go haywire and threaten democracy. "We want AI and tech to represent goodness, safety and trust," said Minister of State Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who represented India. The conference was undoubtedly a good start. India is planning to host another meeting in December. As the host nation, the UK was the first to announce the formation of an official AI Safety Institute to examine the safety of emerging forms of AI. At the end of the conference, the declaration said: "The Bletchley Declaration stresses safe, responsible AI development, urges international cooperation to mitigate risks, and promotes global benefits." Google CEO Sunder Pichai

SUPPORTERS CLAIM AI IMPROVES EFFICIENCY BY AUTOMATING TASKS, ANALYSING DATA, MAKING DECISIONS, OPERATING 24/7, REDUCING ERRORS, AND ENSURING SAFETY



admitted, "Knowledge workers, writers, accountants, architects and, ironically, software engineers would face a threat to their jobs. The concern of terrorist groups using generative AI tools and the fear that AI could become uncontrollable by humans are additional worries. AI concerns will include real-time cybersecurity, supply chain efficiency, software development acceleration, and customer service automation in the coming year. AI has disadvantages, such as potential job displacement and ethical concerns, the possibility of losing human qualities like creativity and empathy, high cost and complexity, reliability issues, and dependency on technology. It cannot engage in negative thoughts or understand cause and effect. It also cannot comprehend time. On the other hand, supporters claim AI improves efficiency by automating tasks, analysing data, making decisions, operating 24/7, reducing errors, and ensuring safety. AI can be used for voter registration and verification. Politicians would benefit from using AI for predictive analysis of voter behaviours. AI can analyse social media to gauge sentiment and identify critical issues for political campaigns to tailor their messages.

Moreover, AI is crucial in maintaining election security by detecting and preventing fraud, hacking attempts, and other irregularities. It can use historical data and current events to predict election outcomes. AI-powered chatbots can inform voters about polling locations, candidate profiles, and additional crucial election-related information. This first summit successfully brought these people together on the table and discussed AI, its benefits and dangers. There has yet to be an international regulatory body. Ultimately, we have to find the answer to questions like should we automate away all the jobs, including the fulfilling ones? Should we develop non-human minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart and replace us? Is AI a dangerous or a welcome technology? Still, moving to AI will take time to happen. That is the crux of the AI issue. It is still in the nascent stage. World leaders and industry leaders must apply their minds to a regulatory system. Rogue nations must be controlled. All countries must accept the rules and regulations. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESCUE OPERATION

Sir—On Sunday, district administration officials laid out the red carpet for the Union Minister of Road, Surface Transport, and Highways at Silkyara. However, the plight of the 41 workers trapped in the tunnel since November 12 shows no signs of ending soon. The union minister informed the media that all options were being explored, with horizontal drilling remaining the most viable. If the machines continued to operate smoothly, he hoped the rescue team would 'reach' the stranded workers in the next two or two-and-a-half days. While the minister spoke of using 'robots' to reach the workers, confusion arose about what 'reaching the workers' meant. Did it imply the pipe being drilled reaching them, or did it refer to rescuers or robots reaching the workers? Ambiguity also surrounded the roads built by the Border Roads Organisation, intended for transporting heavy machinery to the accident site. Although these roads are slated to be ready by Monday, details regarding the awaited machinery and its arrival remain unclear. Experts have noted the government's initial approval of a bi-lane tunnel at Silkyara with 'escape lanes,' yet the current plan appears to have abandoned these provisions. It seems the stranded workers are unlikely to see daylight until at least Tuesday. The nation fervently prays for their swift rescue.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WE NEED A STRICT E-PHARMA POLICY

Sir—The e-pharmacy business has flourished with the rise of smartphones. With a simple mobile click, necessary medicines are promptly delivered to homes. E-pharmacy caters to medicines not readily available on the market and serves the elderly and pregnant mothers. Questions are emerging in the pharmacy industry, prompting the Delhi High Court to direct the central government to formulate the pending e-pharmacy policy over the past five years. The deadline for this policy's formulation is set within the next

World Television Day



In 1996, a German delegation boldly declared at the United Nations (UN) that "television is a rich man's medium," opposing the observance of 'World Television Day' on November 21. They remained unimpressed by television's ability to captivate imaginations as effectively as radio. From JJ Thomson's

cathode ray experiments in 1887 to its primitive form in the 1920s, to its present state, television's evolution—from black and white beauty to colored marvel—is both surprising and inspiring. Surpassing radio and newspapers, the pivotal communication mediums, wasn't an easy feat. The vivid narratives of winners and losers, the distressed and saviors, politicians and governments, celebrities, and the ordinary, make television a unique medium. It encapsulates education, news, and entertainment—a compact three-in-one package. Cultural exchange, family bonding, issue resolution, and creative documentaries are its evident benefits. A cynical scholar once remarked, "I find television to be very educational. Every time somebody turns it on, I go to the other room and read a book," a sentiment that may not resonate with avid television lovers. The question they must ask themselves is, "How much is too much?"

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

eight weeks.

While the sale is banned, it's clarified that it is not permitted under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the Pharmacy Act of 1948. However, questions persist about the online sale of medicines. The Union Health Ministry needs to devise a stringent policy to prevent the sale of counterfeit medicines.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

HEARTBREAKING FINAL

Sir—The final for Team India cricket fans was undeniably heart-wrenching. Had at least one of the so-called 'super batsmen,' known for creating miracles and records, recognised it as a 'mega final' and demonstrated the patience not to lose their wickets carelessly, the scorecard would undoubtedly have shown a different story. Cricket is a mind game, and the more patience players exhibit, the greater the

team benefits and resilience. This was evident in the resolve of Australian batsmen, who, despite losing three quick wickets, chose to stay and fight with full of fervor. Unfortunately, for the men in blue, the leader and experienced senior players couldn't lead the team effectively, resulting in a heartbreaking loss in the final, shattering the hearts of millions of Team India cricket lovers. Nevertheless, cricket enthusiasts will always cherish beautiful memories and records of their favourite team and players. At the end of the day it is not about winning or losing but being part of a Cricket carnival, which was magnificent to watch and some of the best memories we will cherish for long time were made during the world cup 2023.

M Pradyu | Kannur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Accept the truth that nothing is permanent and live in the present to overcome grief



RAVI VALLURI

He was a nonagenarian who lived a life peppered by vicissitudes. There had been high noons and some cathartic moments too. But he remained a contented person as his children and grandchildren were 'settled' in their respective fields. However, impermanence is a fact of life and he succumbed to multiple organ failure. Ill health prevented him from meeting his older brother, (a centurion himself), who had departed for his heavenly abode sometime earlier. This had rankled him considerably and he never quite recovered.

Vital prana or the subtle life force which provides human existence and energy was drained away by the mandarins of death. It is said that parents are our first teachers. Parents act as cicerone for their children, encouraging them to take baby steps into the world and to eventually make decisions and face various challenges in life.

What does one do when a dear one ceases to exist?

"Time will take care of it. If someone you love crosses over, grief overtakes you. But see it from a broader angle — we all must go one day; someone has taken an earlier flight and we must take a later flight. When you see the impermanence of everything, you will gain the strength to overcome the grief. Again, and again, you must put your attention on the impermanence of everything," says Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Mindfulness and grief

At the core of Buddhism is the concept of mindfulness, and it is inexplicably connected with impermanence. Impermanence is a Buddhist concept that has brought comfort to several people once they lose close ones. When humans value permanence they focus towards the future rather than dwell on the present. The mind needs to be convinced about impermanence to live in the present moment.



Sages from ancient times – with enormous perspicacity- have developed palliative techniques to overcome cataclysmic situations. These include chanting mantras, listening to religious texts, meditation, pranayama, Vipassana and the rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya. Mindfulness can act as a centrifugal force in life; a state in which one becomes aware of the present; thoughts and feelings, various physical experiences, and the world around us. We need to accept the cardinal truth that nothing is permanent, be it a chutzpah moment or a woe-begone situation. Change is constant.

How do mindfulness and acceptance of impermanence act as a sword to combat a sense of bereavement?

There are two common ways many of us cope with grief – either one is completely subsumed by the thought and feels entrapped like a bird in a cage. Or the mind is channelled by the techniques mentioned to become robust and grapple with ill-disposed thoughts. It is aware of an alternative paradigm to move on with life despite adversity.

A question plagues the mind as to whether humans can conquer the devastation of grief in its entirety. The truth is perhaps that that does not occur. But it does help in altering the trajectory, intensity, shape, and form of the aftermath. Mindfulness and acceptance of impermanence assist in arresting the trend of obfuscation of the mind by demons of gloom. This sets in motion the acceptance of the reality of bereavement. It is said that time is a great healer to overcome grief and bereavement. Perhaps a few notches above that are performing seva (service to the society) and surrendering to the vast universe and the Almighty to combat grief.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

BJP banking heavily on Modi guarantee



KS TOMAR


It is now crystal clear that BJP's high command and RSS have completely relied on Prime Minister, Modi's 'Charisma' to win five state polls



It is quite evident from a personal appeal made by the PM to the voters of Madhya Pradesh and the decision not to project any leader as the chief ministerial face is aimed at focusing on Modi's popularity that the BJP is relying heavily on PM's popularity to win the state elections. Opinions are divided about the impact of victory and losses in these state polls in Nov next month. One school of thought says that if BJP is victorious in these elections then the outcome will have no impact on 2024 polls as voters' preference may not be different when it comes to electing central government. BJP lost assembly polls in the Hindi heartland in 2018 but it swept Lok Sabha polls by winning 61 out of 65 seats which included 24(25) in Rajasthan, 28(29) MP and 9(11) in Chhattisgarh and primarily owing to Modi wave and nationalistic agenda.

Modi's popularity has gone very high at the international level and he commands maximum acceptance in the eyes of electorates in India. Experts say that BJP will be armed with Hindutva which is bound to be strengthened after the inauguration of Ram Temple in January and it will be exploited to the hilt. BJP has got vast resources and RSS will use its' well-oiled machinery to ensure the success of the party candidates in Lok Sabha polls. BJP will try to convince about the spectacular performance of the NDA Government and the strong leadership of Modi which made it possible to abrogate Article 370 and adopt 33 per cent women reservation bill in parliament besides

On the contrary, critics believe that if the BJP loses state polls, then it is bound to



THE BJP HIGH COMMAND SURPRISED ITS MINISTERS LIKE NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR, PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL AND FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE WHO FIGURED IN THE FIRST LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR MP POLLS

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist, views are personal)

give back to saffron in parliamentary polls. They say that there are predominant factors that will upset BJP's calculations. First, there will be no Pulwama and surgical strikes to create nationwide feelings of Nationalism. Second, the popularity of Congress and opposition parties were at its lowest ebb hence voters did not have an alternative to BJP. Third, Modi's 'Charisma' may not be sufficient to neutralise the nine-year Anti-incumbency of the NDA Government. Fourth, common people are facing the worst type of skyrocketing prices of essential commodities which has made their survival difficult. Fifth, youths had voted in large numbers in the country for BJP but now the unemployment problem is at its zenith which has angered this dominant section of society. The sixth, the middle class seems to be affected and responses vary from 2019. Seventh, the BJP's downward journey has been stalled by the Congress in Karnataka and AIADMK's decision to sever ties with the BJP has given a jolt in Tamil Nadu. BJP cannot ride to power without having significant seats from southern states. Finally, the opposition parties have come under the umbrella of I.N.D.I.A. This which can be attributed to their compulsion of alleged misuse of investigating agencies against them and their leaders. The chances of declaring a PM candidate seem extremely difficult but even if they

broadly agree to share seats and decide not to field candidates against each other than arithmetic of votes may make a difference in the outcome in all states in the country in 2024.

To checkmate sitting CM, Shivraj Chouhan, the BJP high command surprised its ministers like Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel and Faggan Singh Kulaste who figured in the first list of candidates for MP polls. As per party calculations, union ministers may have their influence across the state though they have yet to prove their statewide appeal amongst the people.

Experts say that the ministers or MPs hardly do micro-level management of particular constituencies which should worry them in MP. They may not have the state-level stature when compared with Chouhan who may be sulking as he has not been declared as CM candidate despite being at the helm of affairs. BJP high command and the top brass of RSS have taken a big risk by making Prime Minister, Narendra Modi as face of the party and refrained from naming chief ministerial candidates in poll-bound states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.


Based on a different analogy, BJP has experimented with a new strategy of fielding 24 MPs and 4 union ministers in three poll-bound states including MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh

which reflects the saffron party's 'desperate move and resolve' to ensure victory in these states to create a better narrative for 2024 parliamentary polls. 2nd, it may be aimed at neutralising the anguish of the voters who may have to rethink when new faces (MPs and ministers) are fielded from such constituencies.


As per the outcome of Karnataka and Himachal assembly elections, Modi's all-out aggressive campaign and Hindutva did not work hence if BJP fails to oust Congress in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and C.S. Rao's 'Bharat Rashtira Sanithi'(BRS) in Telangana besides losing MP then it may have direct bearing on 2024 parliamentary elections in 2024. But if the results go in favour of the BJP then it may have a double impact to ensure the victory of Modi for a third successive time. Experts say that BJP's think tank might have assessed the possible impact of the Modi government's nine-year performance and welfare measures which may give weightage to the party's nominees in the elections in the state polls. BJP's 'Gujrat Model' of replacing older generation leaders yielded positive results in Uttarakhand, Goa and Tripura but it miserably failed to deliver in Karnataka. Now it will be interesting to see whether a new strategy to push union ministers and MPs into the electoral fray will work to the advantage of the party or it will backfire.

Geopolitical implications of energy transition

The transition of energy is happening at a rapid pace which will cause a paradigm shift in geopolitical power structure



ISHOO RATNA SRIVASTAV



SAIRAM

(Sairam is an international development advisor and a Chevening scholar, & Srivastav is an Indian Railway Service Officer and a Commonwealth scholar; views are personal)

to global power equations including (1) capital losses from fossil fuel reserves being stranded, (2) losses to treasury reaped from the fossil fuel rents and most importantly (3) loss of the geopolitical power advantages due to the shift to more diffused zero-carbon energy sources such as the solar, wind and hydropower.

Also, an aspect that can't be ignored is that an energy transition entails a technological transition. The eternal zeal towards maximising power from fossil-fueled internal combustion-based systems would shift to electrification in novel ways. Take the case of the global automotive industry which has an almost 3.5% share of global GDP; its technological shift towards



EVs is bound to have a deep impact across its value chain. Also, as the R&D in the conventional energy systems slows down, the locked-in investments would starve for upgrades, particularly in countries having a dependency on technology transfer. These large-scale industry-wide shifts would put pressure

on the geopolitical equilibrium. Also, emissions-linked tariffs in global trade regimes, like the one proposed by the EU are already concerning its trade partners.

The theatre of energy-critical materials like lithium, nickel, cobalt, copper and rare earth elements is already abuzz with action as nations scramble

to secure the reserves worldwide. Since the essential resources for energy transition are not necessarily a consequence of inherited natural advantage, new fault lines are emerging, pushing the global giants to reposition their competitive advantages and undermine the geo-political strengths of others to maintain their position of power in the era of Green Industrialisation. The war in Ukraine, resulting in uncertainty in gas supplies has served as a wakeup call for Europe to hasten its renewable energy transition. Japan, another developed and technologically advanced nation, has announced its intention to be a part of the power play by announcing its Hydrogen strategy that targets an annual

supply of 12 million tonnes by 2040. India too, is leading the global solar effort by playing a leadership role in the International Solar Alliance and through its recently unveiled Hydrogen strategy, it aspires to become a global electrolyser production hub.

The issues of energy security, energy poverty and climate change are central to the concept of energy transition and provide an opportunity towards the creation of a more equitable and sustainable world. For a smooth transition to a new geo-political world order the following may be the critical elements:

Equitable & Fair Transition – Mitigation of socio-economic dislocation through compensation for stranded

carbon assets and creating opportunities for job mobility

Revival of Multilateralism – Global institutions need to collaborate more than ever to break the vested interest nexus and create incentives for rapid action

Technological Leapfrogging – Open-source technological breakthroughs can prevent the creation of newer pockets of power based on energy capabilities and create a new world order

Diffusion of power to emerging nations – Considering the future centres of global economic growth and therefore consumption of energy to be anchored in the emerging nations, their voice needs to find a central space in global power equations.

MONEY MATTERS

Blue Dart, India Post ink pact to provide parcel locker service

Express logistics provider Blue Dart on Monday said it has set up digital parcel locker service at post offices under a partnership with India Post. This service allows consignees to retrieve their shipments from digital parcel lockers at post offices, doing away with the need for personal receipts or signing for a package, Blue Dart said in a statement. "Blue Dart and India Post forge strategic partnership for enhanced services. Under the collaboration, Blue Dart has introduced automated digital parcel lockers at selected post offices, offering customers an additional delivery method," the statement said. These parcel lockers keep their contents secure and are easily accessible. When the recipient needs to retrieve a package from the locker, they can simply enter the assigned code and open the locker, the company said. Additionally, the deliveries can be collected at any time, and only authorised personnel can access the packages.



Rupee falls 9 paise to close at all-time low against US dollar

The rupee declined by 9 paise to settle at its all-time low of 83.35 against the US dollar on Monday, tracking a negative trend in domestic equities. Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the local unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.25 and settled at its lifetime low level of 83.35 against the dollar, registering a fall of 9 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee settled at 83.26 against the American currency. Earlier, the rupee closed at its lowest level of 83.33 against the dollar on November 13, this year. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.42 per cent lower at 103.48. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.66 per cent to USD 81.14 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex fell 139.58 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 65,655.15 points. The Nifty declined 37.80 points or 0.19 per cent to 19,694.00 points.



Domestic air passenger traffic touches record high

The domestic air traffic touched a new high on Sunday as airlines carried 4,56,910 passengers, marking two "consecutive days of historic numbers". On Saturday also, the air traffic number reached a new high of 4,56,748 passengers, according to official data. "Post-Covid, India's domestic aviation's turnaround story has not just been overwhelming but inspiring as well. Positive attitude, progressive policies, and deep trust among passengers are taking it to new heights with every flight, every day," the civil aviation ministry said in a post on X on Monday. There were 4,56,910 domestic air passengers and 5,958 flight movements on Sunday (November 19). The count was much higher than the 3,93,391 passengers and 5,506 flight movements recorded on November 19 last year. Sharing the record numbers, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday said there is no stopping the country from becoming the world's largest aviation market.



GDP growth to dip marginally

● Political uncertainty in election year main risk: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's real GDP growth will decline marginally to 6.3 per cent in 2024 from the 6.4 per cent estimated for 2023, an American brokerage firm said on Monday.

The next calendar year will be of two halves, wherein the government spending before the upcoming General Elections will be the key driver for growth, while after the elections, it will be the re-acceleration in investment growth, especially from the private sector, Goldman Sachs said in a report.

From a fiscal year perspective, the brokerage said it expects growth to accelerate to 6.5 per cent for FY25 from the 6.2 per cent it has projected for the ongoing FY24, it added.

"India has the best structural growth prospects in the region. We believe GDP growth is likely to stay robust at 6.3 per cent y-o-y (year-on-year) in 2024," the brokerage said, adding the country is less sensitive to potential external shocks like longer



The election season is already underway with Assembly polls in five states, which will be followed by the General Elections later, it said, adding that outcomes of these elections will be "keenly watched" by investors from the standpoint of economic reforms and/or policy continuity.

rates globally, persistent dollar strength and geopolitical uncertainties.

The brokerage said risks around the growth outlook are evenly balanced but added that "the main domestic risk" is emanating from political uncertainty, with

elections approaching in the April-June quarter of 2024.

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ly watched" by investors from the standpoint of economic reforms and/or policy continuity.

It expects headline consumer price inflation to come at 5.1 per cent for 2024, against 4.7 per cent estimated by the Reserve Bank. This will, however, be lower than the 5.7 per cent expected in 2023, it added.

"We expect the government to intervene through subsidies or other measures to keep a lid on food prices in an election year," it said.

The "somewhat elevated" inflation relative to the target will limit the room for monetary easing, and the RBI will cut rates by only 0.50 per cent to 6 per cent by early 2025, the brokerage said, adding that there will be a cut of 0.25 per cent each in Q4 2024 and Q1 2025.

The current account deficit will widen to 1.9 per cent of GDP in 2024 from the 1.3 per cent expected in 2023, but the rupee is set to appreciate to 82 against the dollar at 2024-end against the 83 level at the end of 2023, it noted.

Investment via P-notes slip to Rs 1.26 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investments in the Indian capital markets through participatory notes (P-notes) dropped to Rs 1.26 lakh crore in October-end after rising for seven consecutive months. The latest data includes the value of participatory note investments in Indian equity, debt, and hybrid securities.

Participatory notes (P-notes) are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process. Before registering a decline in October, investments through P-notes have been increasing continuously since March, following the stable Indian economy against an uncertain global macro backdrop.

According to the latest data from markets regulator Sebi, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets -- equity, debt, and hybrid securities -- stood at Rs 1,26,320 crore at the end of October compared to a six-year high of Rs 1,33,284 crore at September-end.

Confused & surprised at investor interest in F&Os

Long-term view will deliver better results: Sebi chief

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch on Monday said she is "confused and surprised" at investor interest in Futures and Options (F&O) despite 90 per cent of individuals losing money in the segment.

Buch said there is a need for investors to look at the long term and added that chances of making inflation-beating returns are much brighter through this strategy.

Speaking during the launch of the Investor Risk Reduction Access (IRRA) platform at Asia's oldest stock bourse BSE here, Buch pointed to a recent research by the capital markets regulator which pointed out that only 11 per cent of the 45.24 lakh individual traders in the F&O segment made profit.

As per the research, there was an exponential increase in the F&O segment participation during the pandemic, with



the total number of unique individual traders increasing by over 500 per cent from the 7.1 lakh in FY19.

"I must admit, I am always a little confused and surprised as to why people continue to do that (bet in F&O) knowing that the odds are not in their favour at all," Buch said.

"There is a 90 per cent chance that the investor will lose money in the F&O segment, but we also know, and the data shows us, that if you take a long-term view of the market, and if you invest with a long-term perspective, you

will rarely go wrong," she added.

There is a "very good chance" that an investor will create wealth over a sustained period of time that will exceed the inflation rate in the economy, if the investment calls are for the long term, the Sebi chief said.

She "urged" everybody to move and adopt a long-term and sustainable approach to investments, where there is a high probability of wealth creation rather than losing money on a daily basis in the F&O segment.

As per the Sebi research paper, the average loss booked by 89 per cent of people who lost money on F&Os in FY22 stood at Rs 1.1 lakh, while for the minority which was lucky enough to be in the black, the average profit was Rs 1.5 lakh.

More than a third of the investors in the F&O segment were those aged between 20-30, as compared to only 11 per cent in FY19.



ABB forms strategic partnership with Titagarh for metro projects in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electrification and automation major ABB on Monday announced its strategic partnership with Titagarh Rail Systems for the supply of propulsion systems for metro rolling stock projects in India.

The partnership, aligned with the Indian government's 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) initiatives, has already won orders to design and supply equipment for metro coaches for Gujarat, a statement said. Titagarh specializes in the design, manufacture, supply, commissioning, and servicing of various passenger rolling stock and metro coaches for Indian and international markets.

ABB is a world leader in the field of the design, manufacture and servicing of propulsion systems and electrical equipment relating to rolling stock used for railways and metro systems.

The strategic partnership brings the two companies

together to build on their potential and synergy to become an established player in the Indian market and expand its market base to other projects and countries, the statement noted.

The partnership covers an agreement for Titagarh to purchase ABB propulsion systems including traction converters, auxiliary converters, traction motors and TCMS software. It also includes securing the manufacturing rights and production licence for traction motors along with the complete transfer of technology of the GoA 4 (Driverless metro) TCMS software from ABB to Titagarh.

Edgar Keller, President, Traction Business, ABB, said, "This strategic partnership with Titagarh provides the strong foundation to enter and expand our footprint in this key market, while also supporting the efforts to make rail transportation in India sustainable through our energy-efficient technology, fully produced in India."

Religare denies charges of excessive remuneration

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) on Monday refuted the allegations levelled against its Chairman Rashmi Saluja with regard to excessive remuneration, terming those as "completely false and erroneous".

The statement comes within days of proxy advisory firm InGovern Research alleging that Saluja was paid excessive remuneration.

Religare said the performance-linked remuneration was paid to Saluja after approval of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC), Board, and the shareholders of REL.

"The allegation that the executive chairperson draws a remuneration of more than Rs 150 crore per annum is completely false and erroneous. As per the annual report for FY 22-23 of REL, the remuneration for the Executive Chairperson was Rs 8.12 crore. Even after including the perquisites value of the ESOPs, it reached a figure of Rs 42.06 crore," Religare said in a statement.

'Funding winter for Indian startups likely to end by March'

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Investors attending the TIE Global Summit (TGS) exuded confidence that funding winter for Indian startups will end by March but said budding entrepreneurs seeking funds must come up with credible plans to generate returns on investments, as fancy valuations will no longer impress global fund managers.

Funding winter, which refers to the drying up of funds for startups, remained the overarching theme at the recently concluded TGS 2023, the eighth edition of the flagship

event organised by TiE.

The event, held in conjunction with the Singapore Fintech Festival, was attended by over 2,000 participants, including experts, fund managers, thought leaders and startups.

As regards India, We Founder Circle co-founder Gaurav VK Singhvi said, "Things would improve for Indian startups by March next year".

He said that global investors are sitting on funds and once the "uncertainty" with regard to geopolitics, especially the Ukraine war and the Middle



East crisis, gets over, the "funds would start flowing".

A similar opinion was expressed by Thiel Capital managing director Jack R Selby,

have to come up with credible plans to ensure proper returns on investment as "fancy valuations" will not impress fund managers, Selby said, adding that "the whole funding ecosystem is being reset".

Funding winter and the ways to overcome it remained the running and the most important theme at the conference.

The slowdown in funding for Indian startups began around mid-2022. During January-July 2023 fund flow dropped by as much as 77 per cent to about US\$ 4.4 billion against US\$19.5 billion in the year-ago period.

Himachal govt launches Rs 680 cr startup scheme

PNS ■ SHIMLA

Unemployed Himachali youth above the age of 23 years will be given a 50 per cent subsidy on loans to purchase e-taxis and e-buses with no collateral guarantee under a state government scheme to generate employment and promote green initiatives.

In case the cost of the e-taxi is Rs 20-lakh, a subsidy of Rs 10 lakh will be provided, and these e-taxis would be attached to various government departments.

A monthly income of about Rs 40 thousand will be ensured, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Monday.

BHARATMALA PARIYOJANA

Project cost more than doubled: ICRA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The project cost under the Bharatmala Pariyojana (BMP) programme has more than doubled to Rs 10.64 lakh crore owing to the steep rise in input costs and an increase in land acquisition costs, rating agency ICRA said on Monday.

Bharatmala Pariyojana is the largest highway infrastructure programme in India which aims at the development of 34,800 kilometres of national highway corridors at an investment of Rs 5.35 lakh crore.

"Pending the cabinet approval for the revised cost of Bharatmala Phase-I, pro-



ject awarding activity in the recent quarters took a beating, declining by 48 per cent YoY to 2,595 km during 7mFY2024 compared to 5,007 km during 7mFY2023," it said.

The figures are for the first

seven months of this fiscal compared to the year-ago period.

ICRA said it expects the awarding activity to contract over 30 per cent YoY (Year-on-Year) in FY2024.

Giving more insights,

"Pending the cabinet approval for the revised cost of Bharatmala Phase-I, project awarding activity in the recent quarters took a beating, declining by 48 per cent YoY to 2,595 km during 7mFY2024 compared to 5,007 km during 7mFY2023."

ICRA VP & Co-Group Head Ashish Modani said almost 95 per cent of the road awards by the Ministry of Roads and Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in the last five years were awarded

through the hybrid annuity mode (HAM) and the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) route, wherein the entire funding burden lay on the ministry.

"The burden on MoRTH in case of BOT (Toll) projects is much lower, given the substantial cost escalation in the BMP and consequent increase in funding requirement," he said, adding that the MoRTH has thus shifted its focus on to BOT (Toll) projects. ICRA said while the average number of bidders for the EPC and the HAM projects stood at 15 and 8, respectively, in the case of BOT (Toll), it remained below 5.



'Amway generated proceeds of crime of over Rs 4,000 cr through MLM scheme'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amway India, which runs a multi-level marketing (MLM) scheme, generated proceeds of crime worth more than Rs 4,000 crore and a substantial part of it was siphoned off to overseas bank accounts, the Enforcement Directorate alleged on Monday.

The federal agency said this after filing a charge-sheet against Amway India Enterprise Pvt Ltd before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Hyderabad.

The court took cognisance of the prosecution's complaint on Monday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) said in a statement.

The criminal case of money laundering registered by the ED stems from multiple FIRs filed by the Telangana Police against Amway and its directors.

It is alleged that they were promoting an "illegal money circulation scheme under the guise of sale of goods" and "cheating the general public by promising them very high commissions/incentives through simple enrolment of

new members and by claiming that these commissions/incentives would continue in perpetuity."

The company, however, said it was in compliance with the law.

"The prosecution complaint, currently, filed by the Enforcement Directorate pertains to the investigation dating back to 2011, and since then, we have been cooperating with the department, and have shared all the information as sought from time-to-time," an Amway spokesperson said.

Since Amway began its operations in India 25 years ago, it has been "committed to legal and regulatory compliance, and has diligently maintained a culture of compliance and integrity to the present day", the spokesperson said.

"We want to reiterate our continued confidence in the Indian legal and judicial system following the due process of law as we pursue our legal rights," the spokesperson said.

The ED said in its probe, it found that Amway was promoting a pyramid scheme "in the guise of" direct selling,

‘Acceptance of a role is the biggest tick mark for any actor to flourish’

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Gulshan Devaiah is all set to captivate audiences with his stellar performance in the upcoming film, *Little Thomas*! The heartwarming dramedy, also featuring Rasika Duggal in the lead role alongside Gulshan, takes viewers on a journey into the charming and simple life of a Goan family. But before that? Didn't we see him achieve success with season two of his popular web show, *Dauranga*? Yes, we did. Gulshan Devaiah puts in a sincere performance, given the ratcheting absurdity. In an exclusive conversation, *Shaitan* fame shared, "I have no idea about my show being a scene-to-scene copy of a Korean show. I had just watched the trailer, which was halfway through the filming process. As an actor, I don't want to be affected! The original script was my reality. I don't care about the rest; my open-mindedness helped me improvise my character and nothing else." Indeed,

the popular show would have been meticulously planned, but only a seasoned actor can take a more improvisational approach, and that's what *Hate Story* fame did. Talking more along the lines of this kind of filmmaking, he goes on, "I don't get myself involved with any of the marketing strategies. I have other perspectives on my movies or shows that have nothing to do with company policies. Yes, it can work in our favor, though. I felt better doing the second season. Unfortunately, I was suffering from Covid during our first season. I had some terrible moments on set! I was slightly complacent but so happy to be reuniting with the cast." His way of acting has always seen a great deal of trust and collaboration between the actors, director, and crew. And when it works, it has always led to some truly magical moments on screen. The *8 A.M. Metro* actor has always had a sincere approach to his acting, which, he says, probably allows me to be an expert performer. He continues, "To me, it's also

very important to know who the maker is and his or her sensibilities. It's okay if my director doesn't know the technicalities of it; what matters to me is his or her perspective. Am I being bothered by the character given to me personally? If so, I would love to reject it. Acceptance of a role is the biggest tick mark for any actor to flourish on screen." He's just being counter-intuitive, you see. Differently, "I feel no pressure doing back-to-back seasons. Just don't pin a lot of hopes on me for the sole success of a project; that's when it becomes pressure on me. People can't like a show just for me! Being the protagonist, the outcome, or a reviewer has never actually bothered me. On a lighter note, Drashti laughs at all my stupid jokes. Amit Sadh was the new entrant! But he's very intense as a person in real life." So, the director, Rohan Sippy, successfully recreated the first season's charm. The well-drawn characters and numerous plot twists kept viewers engaged throughout, and so did our interviewee's performance.

ACTOR GULSHAN DEVAIAH, WHO IS ALL SET TO ENRAPTURE THE AUDIENCE YET AGAIN WITH HIS UPCOMING FILM LITTLE THOMAS, GETS CANDID WITH THE PIONEER ABOUT DAURANGA, NOT BEING INVOLVED IN ANY MARKETING STRATEGIES, AND MORE.



Making family fitness a priority

PNS| HYDERABAD

A fit and healthy person is capable of living life to the fullest. Physical fitness is not only a way of life; it is also an important habit to instill in children from a young age. Family fitness entails exercising and adopting other healthy living practices as a group. Your family's health and productivity can be improved by sharing fitness activity time and nutritional foods. Family fitness is a lifestyle choice rather than a quick fix. Allow yourself to change your daily fitness routines by implementing them.

Parents who eat sensibly and exercise regularly with their children not only teach them a healthy lifestyle, but they also teach them important life lessons. The benefits of exercising together these fitness habits help provide lots of good things you may already know about. By being physically active and working on developing healthy eating habits, you are shielding your family from diseases, along with stress reduction, improved performance at school and work, and increased longevity. Making family fitness a priority helps create a bond of shared friendly emotions, thus strengthening the parent-child bond. It also helps your children learn accountability for their behavior. Health professionals state that exercising together as a family may be the solution to rising obesity rates and increasing family instability.



Today, we have with us Vikas Jain, MD of Anytime Fitness India, who aims to promote a family-friendly fitness environment that encourages members of all ages to stay active together.

Believing in holistic health and fitness, these gyms aren't designed for any specific body type. They believe in promoting a body appropriate for bodybuilders. Instead, our focus has always been on creating a safe space for people of all age groups and body types. We focus on crowd filtering in our gyms to provide our members with a familial and happy environment. The different areas that we offer for functional training, working out, group classes, and various other physical endeavors AF offers a variety of group classes that families can take to exercise together. Moreover, if they choose to take

a personal training session, then all of them can workout together."

They further address the challenges that families might face when trying to prioritize fitness as a shared activity in their busy lives. How? "By providing a platform for people of different age groups to hang out together and workout as a family, Anytime Fitness addresses the challenges of prioritizing family time and fitness. Moreover, our family-friendly packages, such as the 'couple training packages' offer more than meets the eye and can be extremely useful in tackling the different challenges regarding shared time as a family as well as fitness."

Given that each family member may have varying fitness levels and health conditions, we wondered about how they customize fitness routines to ensure the safety and

well-being of all participants. "Our aim is to tackle two issues at hand: to help families spend shared time together and to help them achieve their individual fitness goals. To do so, we recommend that our members benefit from our personal training sessions. This will ensure that family members can workout together in a common place at the same time, even at different intensities. Along with our trained and certified personal and general trainers, Anytime Fitness offers multiple plans for our members' different needs. Our trainers are understanding and knowledgeable and are equipped with the right tools to provide guidance to both individuals and groups. This offers our members the chance to choose their own time, pace, and interest regarding their workout."



EMPOWERING OPERATIONS WITH ACCURATE DATA

Empowering the workforce in retail store floors, warehouse and distribution centres, manufacturing facilities and other industries to transform business with full data visibility and accuracy, is Newland AIDC. Its existing and upcoming product portfolio comprises of Barcode scanners (corded & cordless, Industrial Scanner and Desktop Scanner), Enterprise Mobile Terminals, RFID solutions, next generation of Wearable devices, Fixed RFID, Vision Camera & Desktop Barcode Label printer and Portable Bluetooth Label printer.

"AIDC Revolution" in India aims at automation in identifying objects, collecting data directly without any human involvement thus ensuring 'Zero Error'. The Indian market for AIDC Technologies has limitless potential and offers massive opportunity to manage inventory, delivery, assets, security and documents in retail, e-commerce, manufacturing, healthcare, transport & logistics, government.

JP Mishra, Country Manager, India shares, "Newland AIDC sees 2023 as a promising and exciting chapter as it is gearing up to start its manufacturing of its new product catalogues with limited local SKUs to test the waters under Govt. 'Make in India' initiative. It is currently in the process of identifying local vendors for few key products to be manufactured in India. Newland AIDC also geared up to more of its service support centres across major metros in India which helped us to deliver quality service to our customer, reducing customer operations downtimes. We were able to meet strict service & delivery TAT."

The growing e-commerce industry, transportation and logistics increasing use of barcodes, QR code scanning and image recognition, and rising adoption of automatic identification and data capture solutions due to their ability to minimize queuing and transaction time and provide greater convenience to users in making small-value payments are the major factors that are anticipated to boost the growth of the automatic identification and data capture market over the period. The rising adoption of automatic identification and data capture solutions owing to their ability to minimize human error is expected to fuel the growth of the automatic identification and data capture market.

Presently, the rising need for supply chain management in numerous industries is catalysing the demand for identification and data capture technologies, such as barcodes, RFID tags, and QR codes to provide real-time tracking and tracing. This, in confluence with rapid digitization and the growing automation across industries, represents one of the key factors positively influencing the market across the globe. Apart from this, the intro-

duction of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), in AIDC solutions to process, manage, store, and share data without human intervention and improve performance to provide more value to customers.

Moreover, the increasing adoption of AIDC systems for data security in financial institutions is creating a favourable market outlook.

In line with this, the burgeoning healthcare industry and the increasing utilization of AIDC for accurate capturing of data and enhanced operational efficiency are fuelling the market growth. Furthermore, government focus on infrastructure projects is stimulating the growth of the market. Technology advancement, innovation in AIDC & its adoption by the enterprise will also play a key factor in creating a disruption in India market.

Meanwhile, sharing about the key AIDC tools and emerging trends expected to shape the industry in 2024, Mishra says, "The technology industry has not just weathered the pandemic-driven disruptions of the past few years; it has flourished. The crisis thrust many organizations into the future,

accelerating digital transformation and changing work models dramatically. But in 2023, the tech industry will likely continue to grapple with issues around supply chains, and innovation—now exacerbated by global uncertainties. Automatic Identification and data Capture and Mobile Computing technology has become a non-negotiable for modern, forward-looking companies operating within the manufacturing, logistics, warehousing, retail and healthcare sectors. Developments and innovations can be swift within this fascinating technology space. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation are two of the biggest technology trends that will continue to transform industries in 2023. AI will enable machines to learn and make decisions like humans, while automation will streamline processes and reduce human error."

The key global participants present in the automatic identification and data capture market are Zebra Technologies, Honeywell, are among the leading AIDC players existed in the market for the past two decades, Newland AIDC, entered India market in 2019 and grown at more than 200% CAGR. Newland AIDC is able to build trust, loyalty among partners and enterprise customers in just few years, as its core strength and belief is delivering value to customers. Any organization is always concerned about their assets that should be maintained and managed properly to enjoy the expanded life cycle. In order to manage them accurately and effectively, you must keep them tracking regularly. Asset tracking is one of the most important tasks in managing an asset, but the concern is, how to keep tracking

them all at the same time flawlessly is a hurdle.

They have a big portfolio of mobility products which along with scanning products helps end customers in a cost-effective way in comparison to competitors, with launching of new innovative technology products for Indian market will also help our customers to enhance their productivity. Companies are now exploring the potential of AIDC products to track the items right from the manufacturing site to customers' hands.



How to navigate dating in 2024

The women-only dating app Bumble recently revealed its yearly dating trends for 2024. The dating app has gathered observations from over 25,000 people worldwide to pinpoint trends that will shape relationships and dating in the upcoming year.

The key themes for Bumble's 2023 trends were setting new limits with our relationships, our careers, and our finances; traveling overseas for love with Wanderlove; and dating outside of your type with Open-casting. In terms of dating and relationships, 2024 is predicted to be the year of the "self," with more people taking an in-depth look at their values and desires.

HERE IS WHAT THEY PREDICTED

1. Val-core dating: Singles today value engagement on social causes and social causes, with 25% of Bumble users valuing active involvement. Indian women are less open to partners with differing political views, with 64% expressing interest in human rights issues. Bumble's research shows that 38% Indian women value a potential partner's passion for the same values as theirs, making them more attractive in the dating world.

2. Betterment burnout: The rise of self-optimization, driven by factors like biohacking and self-help podcasts, has led to a significant increase in singles feeling pressure to constantly improve themselves, with 68% of global women taking active steps to be happier with their current self, and

56% of Indian women dating non-changing partners.

3. Intuitive intimacy: Emotional intimacy is increasingly important for women in dating, with 35% of Indian Bumble survey respondents valuing it more than sex and physical connection. 78% of women believe their partner should understand both aspects.

4. Open-hearted masculinity: The year has been filled with global conversations about masculinity and gender roles in fashion, media, music, and film (ken-ergy, anyone?). When it comes to relationships, 1 in 4 (25%) men globally state that they have actively changed their behaviour, becoming more vulnerable and open with people they are dating than ever before. For a quarter of Indian men (26%), this new-found openness has had a positive impact on their

mental health and for 37% Indian men a lack of vulnerability is now a dating dealbreaker.

5. MVP (most valuable partner): Sports are becoming a significant aspect of dating, with 35% of single Indians identifying as sports enthusiasts. Attending sports together is also important, with 30% of single Indians stating this. Bumble profiles in India show a high sports interest, with cricket and football being the top athletics.

6. Consider-date: Over half of Indian singles are now more open about their mental health, slowing down their dating habits to protect it. 33% are slow-dating and considering quality over quantity, particularly among women. This trend challenges the "job-ification" of love, with 25% deterred by dates being viewed as checklists.



Actress and Bigg Boss fame Himaja, along with Vengala Nikhila, Forever Star India's Mrs India Telangana 2023, and Ms. Lakshmi, She Teams Trainer, inaugurated the new Glam Aesthetics Clinic at Jubilee Hills, Road no: 36. The event was organised by Dr. Pavan, and Dr. Sree.



Umesh Madhyan (organizer), along with Mounika Madhyan, Sudha Jain, and Navid Keshwani, unveiled the posters for the Beautech Cosmetic and Salon Expo at Taj Deccan in Hyderabad. The expo is going to be held on January 23 and January 24, 2024, at Hitex exhibition center.

PARTY

Photos by- SV Chary

SHERATON HOTEL HYDERABAD SPARKLES WITH ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel hosted its annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. The festive spirit arrived early with a dazzling display of lights, music, and merriment at the five - star hotel. The event was attended by a distinguished audience comprising socialites, media personalities, influencers, and corporate guests. The evening

commenced with the enchanting voices of children singing Christmas carols, creating a heart-warming atmosphere that resonated with the holiday spirit. Attendees had the pleasure of interacting with Santa Claus, adding a touch of magic to the festivities. The highlight of the evening was the delectable hors d'oeuvres and wine gathering, providing a delightful culinary experience for all guests. The event showcased the hotel's commitment to creating memorable moments for its patrons.



IT Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, graced the launch of Draper Start-up House's co-living co-working community space in Hyderabad. This monumental endeavour signifies a new era in collaborative living and working for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and digital nomads worldwide.



M. Raghunandan Rao, secretary and APC, Govt. of Telangana, and VC of Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (JTSAU), underlined the importance of a sustainable approach to address plant health challenges and increase crop production through innovation at the inaugural session of the 4-day conference, held at the university campus.



Ankura Hospital organised its maiden two-day Annual National Conclave on Gynaecology themed Journey in Utero to Senescence at its Attapur. premises The conclave was attended by over 200 practicing gynaecologists from all over Telangana.



Dr. Lalitha Devi, DMHO, along with Dr. Samyuktha, a fertility specialist, and Jigna Tamagond, a consultant fertility specialist at Oasis Fertility in Karimnagar, graced the mass baby shower event organised for the mothers who conceived through IVF, at its centre.



Uday Singh Bayas, President of the Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers' Association (IPEMA), announced the beginning of the 15th Knowledge Day Technical Seminar at HICC. He also announced the 15th Poultry India Expo, where over 422 companies, including 47 global and experts will come together for the expo, being held from November 22 to November 24, at Hitex in Hyderabad.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A tank for live fish
- Mix this with yellow to get green
- Stopped doing something
- A pale purple colour
- A crown-wearing woman
- A female relation
- Workers sit at these in offices
- Hot coals left after a fire
- A list of restaurant meals
- People who work in classrooms

DOWN

- An emergency vehicle
- Normal
- A feeling that makes you want to scratch
- Check the length of
- A female sheep
- Large extinct animals
- A person from Sweden
- The largest continent
- Adult males





Some real incidents seeped into **THE TRIAL'S STORY**

PNS | HYDERABAD

The upcoming film *The Trial* starring Spandana Palli, Yug Ram and Vamsi Kotu in lead roles is jointly produced by SS Films and Common Man Productions. Produced by Smriti Sagi and Srinivasa Naidu Killada and co produced by Sudarshan Reddy. The film *The Trial* was helmed by director Ram Ganni as Tollywood's first interrogative film. This movie is going to have a grand release in theaters on 24th of this month. On this occasion, director Ram Ganni interacted with media about the film *The Trial*.

The Vizag native shared that he was interested in movies since his college days. "I wrote the SI exam and got selected as a deputy jailer in the prisons department. I did that job for 10 years. But with a passion on movies, I entered this industry. I came here and worked in the direction department of Sehari movie. That's when I started writing the story of *The Trial*," he said.

In my 10-year career as a Deputy Jailer, he heard many crime incidents and the stories of those who committed those crimes. He took inspiration from them for the story of *The Trial*, but not the whole of one's life story. "This is a fictional story of how some incidents happened in foreign countries can be applied to us," he said, adding, "Why do we call the movie *The Trial* as Tollywood's first interrogative film is because in the movie, the story starts in the interrogation room and ends in the same room."

He spilled the beans that it was initially made for OTT release, however, with suggestions from well-wishers, they are now heading for a theatrical release. "Our film could have been titled *Trial* but *The Trial* seemed apt. Our film will have different locations. In movies like *Save the Cat* and Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, if the husband dies while the wife is together, only the wife should be investigated in that case. Because she was the only witness there at that time. In Akira Kurosawa's movie *Rashomon*, the husband reads the diary while interrogating the wife. Based on the items in that diary, the background scenes change with the answer given when the question is asked. Adivi Sesh's *Evaru* also has the same structured screenplay. We followed the same in our film. But the presentation of the movie is new and impressive," he shared.

Asked about actress Spandana Palli, he said, "The reason why Spandana Palli was cast for SI Roopa's character was because of her height. You should believe the character and we thought she was apt for this character. I have signed an agreement for a web series with Sehari Movie Production House Vargo Pictures. The film works are currently going on. I started this movie because I was free in the meantime. It has realistic incidents but also fantasy. If fantasy is not added, the movie will not be interesting."

On the work front, he was Vargo Pictures' G5's project. After that he plans to do a film with dark humor and a superhero story.



Sound Party offers a laugh riot through an innocent father-son duo: Producers

Bigg Boss Telugu 5 title winner VJ Sunny's upcoming movie titled *Sound Party* is up for theatrical release on November 24. The entertainer stars budding heroine Hritika Srinivas as the heroine. Full Moon Media Productions' Ravi Polishetty, Mahendra Gajendra, and Sri Shyam Gajendra have bankrolled this project.

In this interview, the producers talk about their vision and intent behind bankrolling the laugh riot. Sivannarayana plays a full-fledged role in this quirky comedy with loads of fun. The producers talk about the scale of the movie's release, their thought processes, and more.

Ravi Polishetty shared, "I have been handling creative projects for the past six years. I started out in a small way. Short films, music albums and others have been handled. I have done 10 projects so far. *Vitamin She* was released on Amazon Prime Video during the pandemic. It was a small sci-fi movie whose success boosted my confidence. I handled my previous projects while being in the US. This time, though, I moved to India to be present in person."

Sound Party was finalized after listening to about 25 scripts. In the OTT era, there has been a dominance of thrillers. Healthy comedies have become rare. That's why the producer duo made this comedy entertainer.

Choosing VJ Sunny was the director's choice, said Ravi, adding, "Presenter Jaya Shankar, too, felt he would be apt. The presenter's contribution has been immense to the making. The truth of the matter is that a star hero wouldn't want to work with us because we are newcomers. I liked Sunny in the web series *ATM*. He is a very good performer. The shoot was completed in 26 working days. That's an accomplishment in itself. The budget did go up but that's okay. So many got livelihood opportunities, thanks to this project. That's satisfying."

Usually, only the father or the son is a dimwit in our movies. What happens when both of them are dumb? *Sound Party* explores the idea in generating hilarity. There is an episode surrounding Bitcoins and this is the first time in Telugu that something of this sort has been done. "This is the only episode in which I got involved on the creative level," he shared, who is a writer himself. "I have ten stories in place. My aim is to introduce newcomers as a producer. We will try multiple genres. We also have a plan to make a crossover children's film," he added.

On the other hand, Mahendra Gajendra, the co-producer, "I entered the project as a partner because I have always trusted Ravi. I volunteered to become a producer after watching the rough cut of *Sound Party*. I trust Ravi. When I saw *Sound Party*, my quest for the right project ended. It took me four years to zero in on something like this. We call rich people 'sound party'. The title alludes to the material richness. We don't think this film is a risky one. The content will speak for itself. Once the 'word of mouth' is positive, the film will pick up pace."

Banita Sandhu becomes Adivi Sesh's leading lady in *G2*

Adivi Sesh's upcoming film *G2* has left fans very excited. While the first look of the film raised anticipation, the film's leading lady has also been announced. The makers have shared the news that Banita Sandhu will be seen opposite Sesh in *Goodachari G2*.

G2 is an action spy thriller from the makers of *Major*, *Kashmir Files*, and *Kartikeya 2*. With such talented actors joining the cast, the film is promised to be bigger and better. Banita has been a promising name in Bollywood, having done films like *October*, and *Sardar Udham*. Not just this, she is currently juggling between industries ranging from Hindi, English, to Punjabi. Fans will be excited to see her in this avatar.

Talking about the same Banita says, "This is my first Pan-India film and I'm so excited to collaborate with such an incredible, visionary team. It is a role unlike anything I've ever done before and I can't wait for audiences to see me in a completely fresh avatar. Working on this movie will be a creative delight for me."

Adivi Sesh says, "I warmly welcome Banita to the *G2* world, I look forward to an amazing collaboration."

Furthermore, taking to Instagram, he also shared "Welcoming the talented @banitasandhu on board for the mission of #G2. Shoot begins soon!" The film is Produced by TG Vishwa Prasad, and Abhishek Agarwal, under the banner of People Media Factory, Abhishek Agarwal Arts, and AK Entertainments is directed by Vinay Kumar Sirigincedi.



Ashwin Babu's next with Ganga Entertainment launched

Young actor Ashwin Babu's new movie was launched on Sunday with a formal pooja ceremony. The film is produced by Maheshwar Reddy Mooli as production No. 1 under Ganga Entertainments. Apsar is directing. Prominent producers Sudhakar Reddy, 'Tagore' Madhu, Sirish Reddy, and Errabelli Vijay Kumar Rao participated in the ceremony as guests.

While *Solo Brathuke* So Better director Subbu switched on the camera, *Naandhi* director Vijay Kanakamedala gave the first clap. *Bimbisara* director Vasishtha Mallidi did the honors by directing the first scene. Director-producer Omkar handed over the script.

Speaking on the occasion, producer Maheshwar Reddy said, "I am happy to do a film with Ashwin Babu. Recently, he scored success with the movie *Hidimbha*. We are going to engage the audience with a different story. This is a new-age movie with a novel story and screenplay. We are starting regular shooting from Monday. The first schedule will be held in Hyderabad. We have teamed up with a set of talented actors and technicians. We will reveal more details soon." Digangana Suryavanshi is playing the female lead opposite Ashwin Babu, while 'Hyper' Aadi will play a prominent part.

NCW takes a suo moto on Mansoor's derogatory remarks on Trisha

The controversy surrounding Tamil actor Mansoor Ali Khan's recent sexist remarks about star heroine Trishna Krishnan during a press meet is intensifying each day. Trisha strongly condemned his comments, declaring she would never work with him again.

Numerous celebrities have voiced their support for the actress. In response, Mansoor Ali Khan issued a statement that lacked an apology. The situation has escalated further with the involvement of the National Commission for Women (NCW).

Today, the NCW has taken suo moto cognizance of the issue and directed the Tamil Nadu Director General of Police (DGP) to invoke IPC Section 509 B and other relevant laws against Mansoor Ali Khan for his offensive comments. The public is demanding his arrest, and further developments on this issue are eagerly awaited.

"The National Commission for Women is deeply concerned about the derogatory remarks made by actor Mansoor Ali Khan towards actress Trisha Krishna. We're taking suo motu in this matter directing the DGP to invoke IPC Section 509 B and other relevant laws. Such remarks normalize violence against women and must be condemned," read the statement.



Director Atlee to produce films in multiple languages

Director Atlee, after *Jawan* (Hindi) grossed Rs 1000 Cr recently, has become one of the biggest directors in the country. He has plans to produce a series of movies in three different languages in the coming years. The *Raja Rani* maker will be bankrolling movies in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

His young production house, named A for Apple Studios, will be making a film with a Telugu-only team in the near future. For years now, the *Mersal* director has been trying to cultivate a network in Tollywood. It started with Jr NTR and Allu Arjun wanting to work with him in the past. For a variety of reasons, Atlee hasn't directed a straight Telugu film so far. He will now be making a Tollywood debut as a producer, though. As a producer, Atlee is bringing together Keerthy Suresh for a Hindi movie headlined by Varun Dhawan. This one is an official remake of Thalapaty Vijay's *Theri*, which has also been remade as Pawan Kalyan's *Ustaad Bhagat Singh* in Telugu.



SEERAT KAPOOR'S YET AGAIN INDIRECT HINT ON COLLAB WITH ALLU ARJUN

In the dynamic world of Indian cinema, the internet often becomes the breeding ground for speculation and excitement, especially when it involves two talented and beloved stars. Not sometime back, Seerat Kapoor uploaded a picture with *Pusha* star Allu Arjun, and that picture went immensely viral over social media. Now, in one of the recent interviews, the actress is seen speaking about her close bond with Allu Arjun, and that has once again sparked rumors of the duo collaborating on one of the projects. The social media frenzy began when a picture featuring Seerat Kapoor and Allu Arjun surfaced online. The photograph showcased the duo sharing a candid moment, radiating charm and sparking curiosity among their followers. The chemistry between the two was palpable, leaving fans eager to know more about the context behind the snapshot.

Adding fuel to the fire, Seerat Kapoor recently opened up about her impression of Allu Arjun. Contrary to the stereotypical image of a larger-than-life movie star, Seerat had revealed, "Well, I've known him personally. We have way too many things in common. We've all seen him as this dynamic energy on screen. But few get the opportunity to know him on a personal level. And I think he's one of the most humble people that I've come across despite the stardom. He makes you feel comfortable, he makes you feel like you're good in your own zone. I'm more of a quality person versus a work. If I take to someone emotionally, or if I connect to their qualities, that draws me towards them, and Allu has that spark."

This appreciation of Seerat Kapoor for Allu Arjun has definitely aroused a lot of eyebrows and has added a big question mark to fans: Will Seerat shoot something special with the actor, or are the duo shooting something and going to be seen sharing screen space for the first time ever?

Whether the duo is indeed shooting for something or not, their off-screen camaraderie has already left an indelible mark on the hearts of fans, making them yearn for more glimpses of this enchanting pairing. Only time will tell if this speculation turns into reality, but until then, the anticipation and excitement linger in the air.



Panja Vaishnav Tej shines in a rollicking mass avatar in *Aadikeshava's* trailer



Panja Vaishnav Tej chose a different film like *Uppena* to make his debut, even though he hails from Mega Family.

Now, he is coming up with a complete mass action oriented youthful film, *Aadikeshava*. Srikanth N. Reddy, who made a good impression, as an actor, in recently released blockbuster *MAD*, is debuting with this film as writer-director.

From the trailer, we can say that the Young director and actor seem to have crafted a highly stylish and extremely explosive action entertainer with a good dose of romance, comedy. The visuals, pacing and edit look extremely engaging and give us right expectations to walk into the theatre. Makers promised an action entertainer from the inception and trailer exactly provides the same.

Aadikeshava trailer showcases Vaishnav Tej in a very dynamic character, and the "cigarette smoking shot" takes the cake with its dynamism and enigmatic presentation. His chemistry with the latest sensational actress, Sreeleela, is stunning in the trailer, itself. The young duo seem to be at ease on screen and are all set to deliver a crackling performance.

Already, songs composed by National Award winning composer, GV Prakash Kumar like *Sitharala Sithravathi*, *Leelamma* have become highly popular among mass and youth audiences. *Hey Buji Bangaram* has become a must have entry into romance playlists as well. The buzz for *Aadikeshava* has improved by leaps and bounds with the songs and the composer has delivered great BGM score, too.

The pulsating BGM shifting tones according to the cuts give us an idea about the work done by the composer. Senior actors like Radhika and a dependable comedian like Sudarshan seem to be delivering the required family emotions and comic relief, in right proportions. The major highlight of *Aadikeshava*, is the addition of Malayalam actor Joju George. His screen presence is menacing to say the least.

Aparna Das is also cast in the movie in an important role.

‘NOT EPIC CHOKE, JUST A BAD DAY’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The murmurs around India's inability to land the knockout punch in a global event have grown since the ill-fated Sunday night but did the team, which looked invincibly heading into the World Cup final, actually crack under pressure or was it just a bad day in the office?

Fears of a billion plus came true as Australia stitched together a perfect game to deny a rampant India who had not put a foot wrong during their stormy march to the final. After 10 wins in a row, India's unstoppable run came to a crashing halt in yet another trophy clash. Since winning the Champions Trophy in 2013, India have lost five ICC finals and three semifinals.

Considering India's dominance heading into the final, the dejected look on faces of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli after the six-wicket defeat was understandable.

The two greats of the game perhaps knew deep down that they might not get another shot at the crowning glory. The dust has not yet settled but India's repeated failures on the world stage does warrant the question: did they choke or was it just an off day in an otherwise near perfect campaign? Speaking to PTI, sports psychologist Gayatri Vartak, who works with elite Indian athletes, felt it was not a case of buckling under pressure and Australia were just tactically superior on the day.

"I don't think there was any pure evidence of the team cracking mentally.

I don't think they choked or could not perform under pressure.

"All of them came into the tournament positively and had great build up to the final. As a player your reference point (over your mindset) becomes your last game and not what happened in a final three years ago. The last game was the semifinal which they won," said Vartak.

Diya Jain, a sports psychologist at Fortis Hospital, said the big match pressure can take a toll on elite athletes but India's performance should be celebrated. "Any team can have a bad day, it's important to accept it and learn from it. Australia had a plan and they stuck to it, believed in themselves and were zoned-in. The pressure of big matches can take a toll, and mental preparation is key.

"That said, this is not the time for analysis, it's time to celebrate. Being a World Cup finalist and winning 10 matches on the trot is a remarkable feat," said Jain.

LIFE OF AN INDIAN CRICKETER MAKES WINNING A TAD HARDER: India's larger than life cricketers often talk about shutting the "outside noise" to focus on the job at hand. Having said that, it is only human to get distracted when they are reminded of winning the coveted trophy in their fleeting public appearances at airports, hotels and stadiums, which is something they experienced over the course of the World Cup at home even with the "head phones" plugged at all times.

On the other hand, the feisty bunch of Australian cricketers, who excel at



the art of winning, are not treated as demigods back home. The fans undoubtedly make Indian cricket special and provide unconditional support to the players but their non-stop attention does add to the pressure.

Matthew Hayden, a member of the all-conquering Australian team and someone who is well versed with Indian cricket, spoke about the added pressure created by fans ahead of the World Test Championship final in June, another high-stake contest that India lost.

"It's certainly not a question of skill. So, it has to be a question of just the

opportunity and the mindset going in. I mean, cricket is life here, it is the DNA of sport and has no other competitors.

"In Australia I could walk down the street and largely be unrecognised, here in India it's very insular and there's a lot of pressure," Hayden had told PTI back then.

Vartak too agrees with Hayden that performing amid a constant frenzy does make winning a tad harder.

"For athletes, the Indian fan acts as a big fuel, they come from an emotional space, they can be very critical but they are also very, very supportive.

"I don't think it is specific to India but fan behaviour tells us that typically they tend to worship their athletes (which is not the case with cricketers in Australia).

"With that in mind, the fan following of cricket is so high here and it is a religion for all of us. I would agree that it is harder for an Indian cricketer (to be insulated from pressure)," said Vartak.

NOT FAIR TO COMPARE THIS INDIAN TEAM WITH TEAMS OF THE PAST: The series of knockout defeats over the last 10 years tells a compelling story but Vartak also

believes that it is not fair to compare Indian teams of the past with the current lot.

"I am sure the composition of the Indian team was different over those games in the last 10 years. There is a tendency to talk about mental block when there is a defeat but when the team is winning no one talks about the mindset. It is a little unfair on the cricketers.

"Technically you can also fail at times and that was the case with India yesterday. Australia were the superior team technically and tactically, but it doesn't become a mental issue.

"They did very well under pressure through the tournament and even won a knockout game. It was a just a bad day I would say," she added.

'INDIA WERE JUST UNFORTUNATE': Former chief selector MSK Prasad, whose tenure saw India falling short in the 2017 Champions Trophy and 2019 ODI World Cup semifinal, acknowledged that the team has been losing knockout games consistently but it is not down to crumbling under pressure.

"The result last night was really unfortunate. I know India have not performed in finals consistently (over last decade) but this team was head and shoulders above others in the tournament. It is their sheer hard luck that they could not go all the way.

"Credit must be given to Australia. They played excellent cricket and I feel India were 40-50 runs short. Then the evening dew made it much easier for the Aussie batters," said Prasad.



Cummins boards Sabarmati river cruise boat, poses with WC trophy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A day after winning the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, Australian captain Pat Cummins on Monday posed for photos with the trophy on a Sabarmati river cruise vessel housing a restaurant in Ahmedabad.

Australia defeated hosts India by 6 wickets on Sunday in the final match at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Motera in Ahmedabad to lift the ODI World Cup for the sixth time — the most by any team in the world. Cummins, along with International Cricket Council (ICC) officials, reached the iconic Sabarmati Riverfront in the morning and boarded a floating restaurant named 'Akshar River Cruise' in the river for a photoshoot with the trophy.

"It is a matter of great pride for all of us that the ICC selected the Sabarmati Riverfront, an iconic place, for its official photoshoot. Cummins gave various poses with the trophy on the upper deck of the cruise. He was also served a variety of food items," said Suhag Modi, director of Akshar Travels Pvt Ltd, which operates the cruise restaurant.

In some of the photos clicked by the ICC's official photographer, the 30-year-old fast bowler could be seen standing with the World Cup trophy on the deck with the iconic Atal Bridge in the background. Modi said Cummins also gave an interview on-board the cruise vessel.

World Cup final: Australia's grunt work trumps India's flair

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In a grainy YouTube video, football legend Gerd Muller describes how Germany defeated a great Netherlands side in the 1974 World Cup final. The whole conversation is brutally simple.

"A German team is not easy to bring down. We fought more than ever in that final, our best came on the last day," Muller says in a feeble voice.

Those words are eerily similar to Pat Cummins' "best for the last" comment after Australia plotted a marauding India's downfall in the title clash of the 2023 cricket World Cup.

In fact, the champion sides think alike. Their disciplines might differ, but methods to success remain comparable.

And Australia is an iron-willed champion side, more so in the knockout stages of a global event. A look back to their last two matches in the showpiece will reveal that facet of their game. Both India and South Africa, their opponents in the semifinals, were perceived to be far superior despite the Aussies winning seven matches in a row to reach the knockouts.

The Australian pacers struggled to make an impact of desired levels during the entirety of the league stage but they returned to the best in the first available opportunity. The Kolkata weather and the Eden pitch helped them purchase some swing and bounce, and the triumvirate of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Cummins blew away the Proteas, sharing eight wickets among them.

On a progressively slowing down surface, the Aussies found

batting saviours in Josh Inglis, Starc and Cummins after South Africa's bowlers reduced them to a shaky 137 for five.

However, Australia's grunt work was pushed under the table as the focus was more on South Africa's inclination to choke on these big moments.

But Australia's real challenge was against India in the summit clash. This was not just another Indian team as under Rohit Sharma they had assembled one of the finest ODI outfits in their entire history.

They did not merely beat their opponents but lorded over them imperiously in 10 successive matches, something no other Indian team was able to achieve in the marquee event dating back to 1975.

Strangely, Rohit's band was a mirror image of the dominant Australians at the turn of the century, an era when they went undefeated in 29 matches across three editions in 1999, 2003 and 2007. In a way, Cummins' side had to beat India who was playing the Australian way. Australia were the underdogs, or so thought several of us.

So, what did Australia do? As Muller said in that interview, they found a way to fight even more than ever.

Cummins believed in the big match temperament of his bowlers and elected to bowl against an Indian batting unit that had been firing on all cylinders. There has been this common observation that a certain softness has seeped into the Aussies post the 'Sandpaper Gate'. Perhaps, India's two Test series win Down Under too might have added to that perception.

Cummins' captaincy in World Cup final was brilliant: Paine

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's former Test skipper Tim Paine has praised Pat Cummins for his exemplary leadership and performance with the ball after their triumphant World Cup campaign in India.

Cummins led from the front and finished with impressive figures of 2/34 from his 10 overs, picking up the crucial wickets of Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer to restrict India to a modest 240.

His bold decision to bowl first after winning the toss was hailed by many.

Australia then rode on Travis Head (137) and Marnus



Labuschagne (58 not out)'s 192-run fourth-wicket stand to beat India by six wickets and lift the coveted trophy for a record-extending sixth time.

"When we won the toss I think Pat Cummins shocked everyone

and it is extremely hard to bowl in the second innings, and I think we saw that.

"The concern was, I think, that being an Indian pitch and potentially being a bit drier that it would spin and slow right up and it didn't do that, if anything it actually got slightly better," he said.

Paine said Cummins did not put a foot wrong in the big finale on Sunday.

"I don't think there was a thing last night that Pat Cummins got wrong. He was outstanding and he deserves a lot of credit for that. Andrew McDonald and his coaching staff deserve a lot of credit for that," he said.

Rohit named skipper of ICC's Team of World Cup featuring six Indians

when he recorded his 50th ton in the semifinal.

With more than half of the ICC's Team of the Tournament comprising Indian players, it was yet another indication of the fact that despite not winning the title, the hosts were the best side in the competition having registered a record 10 wins on the trot.

Wicketkeeper-batter and vice-captain KL Rahul, who made 452 runs at 75.33 with one century and two fifties, finished as the eighth-highest run-scorer in the World Cup and was named in the Team of the Tournament.

Despite missing four matches of the league stage initially, Mohammed Shami finished as the best bowler with 24 wickets in only seven matches at 12.20. "Only four players in the history of the men's game have taken



more Cricket World Cup wickets than Shami's 55 - Lasith Malinga (56) Mitchell Starc (65), Muttiah Muralitharan (68) and Glenn McGrath (71) - with Shami's returns coming in ten fewer matches than any of those above him in the list," the ICC said on its website.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who was the fourth

most successful bowler in the World Cup with 20 wickets in 11 matches at 18.65, also features in the ICC XI.

"No bowler to have played more than a single game in the tournament was able to return a better economy rate than Bumrah's 4.06 - an even more remarkable stat considering he was so often in action when the fielding

restrictions were in place," the ICC said.

Ravindra Jadeja featured in the team alongside Australia veteran Glenn Maxwell for his all-round exploits in the competition.

"India's spin-bowling all-rounder played a crucial role for his team, taking key wickets throughout the middle overs and consistently turning the screw," the ICC said.

South Africa's wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock, who is now retired from the ODI format given the World Cup is over, was named as one of the two openers in the competition having scored four centuries for the Proteas during their excellent run in the league stage.

The coveted No 4 slot went to New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell, who was the only batter to have

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The deafening silence at the Narendra Modi Stadium, packed with over 90,000 fans, when Pat Cummins snuffed out the peerless Virat Kohli in the World Cup final was perhaps the "sweetest moment" the Australian skipper had ever experienced on a cricket field.

After becoming the fifth Australian captain to secure his country's sixth ODI World Cup here on Sunday, Cummins admitted that he has "fallen in love with 50-over format all over again".

He got Kohli, who was well-set on 54, with a delivery that had an extra bounce and the premier India batter played on trying to jab it towards the covers. "Yeah, I think so," Cummins nodded in affirmative when asked if the silence was his sweetest experience on a cricket field.

In fact, going against their custom, the Aussies had a second huddle to just acknowledge how big the moment in the game it was.

"We did take a second in the huddle just to acknowledge the silence that was going around

Silence in stadium when Virat got out was most satisfying: Cummins

the crowd. It just felt like it was one of those days where it was all made for him to score another hundred like he normally does and that was satisfying," Cummins said.

He believes that ODI World Cup is here to stay as it has got its own legacy and also players have their stories to tell and perhaps, it is the bilateral series that become a problem.

"I must say, maybe because we won, I did fall in love with ODI again this World Cup. I think the scenario where every game really matters, it does mean a bit different to just a bilateral," he acknowledged.

"I mean, the World Cup's got such rich history, I'm sure it's going to be around for a long time. Yeah, there's so many wonderful games, so many wonderful stories within this last couple of months. So, I think there's definitely a place." He lost his mother in March,



during a tour of India, which he had to curtail.

He returned, leading the country to the World Test Championship title, secured the coveted Ashes, and now clinched what he termed the "pinnacle of this sport".

Australia's 'Captain Marvel' has accomplished it all.

"Yeah, I mean at this moment just incredibly proud really of the year we've had. I have obviously had a really big year," he said.

He spoke about the sacrifices made by everyone in the team and their families.

"I know my family at home is watching, just got a message from dad saying he's had a lot of 4am wake ups, not going to bed until 4am, so he's as pumped as anything. So yeah, you sacrifice a lot to play for Australia."

But this was also about going through all of that in search of this day.

"Everyone in the team has and

we've spent a lot of this year away but we do it for these moments and my wife and two girls are probably asleep, but they're all pumped, they do the journey with us.

"So, everyone's got their own story, but there's a lot of proud people out there in our team," Cummins said.

From his hotel room, he saw Indian supporters, all clad in blue, walk towards the stadium. He felt a sense of nervous energy, pacing up and down in his hotel room.

"I always like to say I'm pretty relaxed but I was a little bit nervous this morning," he admitted.

"Just pacing around, waiting for it to start, seeing the sea of blue in the hotel getting closer to the ground. Observing the sea of blue, cars parked with selfie cameras out, you knew you were walking into something pretty special," Cummins described his experience before the game.

Pakistan call up 3 uncapped players for Australia tour

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan on Monday called up uncapped players Saim Ayub, Aamir Jamal and Khurrum Shehzad for the three-Test series in Australia, starting in December after fast bowler Naseem Shah couldn't recover from a shoulder surgery for the tour.

Shan Masood will be leading the 18-member squad against Australia with new chief selector, Wahab Riaz also recalling left-arm pacer, Mir Hamza for the tour for which nine players from the World Cup squad have also been retained.

Pakistan plays three Tests before moving on to New Zealand for five T20 internationals but Wahab only named the Test squad on Monday.

While swashbuckling opener, Saim Ayub has played 8 T20 internationals and Aamir Jamal four T20 matches, pacer bowler Khurrum Shehzad has been



called up for the first time by Pakistani selectors due to his impressive performances in domestic cricket.

Wahab said that Naseem, who was injured during the Asia Cup and later had a shoulder surgery in the UK, would begin bowling in at 50-60 percent capacity in three weeks time so he was not available for the tour.

Mir Hamza last played a Test against New Zealand in Karachi last January but was then dropped for the Sri Lankan tour.

Former captain, Babar Azam, Muhammad Rizwan, Saud

Shakeel, Agha Salman, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Hasan Ali, Imam ul Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Muhammad Wasim junior have been retained from the WC squad.

The selectors have overlooked opener Fakhar Zaman, fast bowler Harris Rauf, leg spinner Usama Mir, allrounders Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed for the Test tour from the WC squad.

Former captain and keeper, Sarfaraz Ahmed, spinner, Abrar Ahmed, spinner Noman Ali all played in the Test series in Sri Lanka in June-July while all-rounder Faheem Ashraf's last Test appearance was in December 2022 against England.

Wahab added that they had spoken to fast bowler Harris Rauf about the tour and he had initially given his consent to play Tests two days back but last night he called up and made himself unavailable for the tour.

"He has concerns over workload and fitness issues," he said.

