

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.



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

tion of wasteful expenditure, doing away with the outdated Acts, pursuing the competitive federation policy among states, fiscal disciplinary measures to prevent states from borrowing excessively, unprecedented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.

CP commends cops' quick response in dousing Vizag fishing harbour fire

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a commendable display of quick response and effective coordination, Police Commissioner, A. Ravi Shankar, applauded the vigilance and swift actions of police personnel who averted a potential disaster at the Fishing Harbor earlier this morning.

Head constables G. Nagendra Kumar and VGGB Rama Krishna, patrolling near One Town Police Station, spotted smoke at the Fishing Harbor during a routine patrol. They promptly reported a boat on fire to the control room. Sub-Inspector I RA Konda and PC CH Gangadhar, in the control room, quickly alerted five fire engines and informed the Navy, CISF, NDRF, Coromandel, and Port Authority. Collective efforts minimized property damage, showcasing the efficacy of the emergency response system.

Following a thorough examination of the incident site, Commissioner Ravi Shankar formed a committee comprising officials from Revenue, Fire Services, Fisheries, Forensic, and Police Departments to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the fire accident. Special teams, including crime, task force, and CCS, will be constituted to apprehend suspects



and facilitate a thorough inquiry.

A case has been registered, categorizing the incident as an

accidental fire. ACP Harbor has been appointed as the investigating officer to ensure a meticulous examination of

the circumstances surrounding the fire.

Police Commissioner Ravi Shankar expressed his gratitude by personally congratulating and rewarding the exemplary efforts of G. Nagendra Kumar, VGGB Rama Krishna, SI RA Konda, and PC CH Gangadhar. Certificates of appreciation were handed over to the four staff members for their outstanding service in preventing further property damage.

Seediri promises compensation and accountability

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the wake of the tragic incident at Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour, Minister Seediri Appalaraju expressed profound regret and pledged 80% compensation for the affected boats. The Minister, accompanied by former Minister Avanti, District Collector Mallikarjun, and Police Commissioner Fisheries officials, inspected the accident site, revealing the extent of the damage with 36 boats completely destroyed and 9 partially damaged.

Blaming the incident on the actions of a few irresponsible individuals, Minister Appalaraju did not mince words, referring to them as "brats" whose actions have caused significant distress to the families of fishermen. He assured the public that accountability measures are already in motion against those responsible.

Acknowledging the ongoing protests by fish-

ermen, Minister Appalaraju addressed their concerns, citing unfulfilled promises from the previous government. He reassured the community, stating that the current administration is dedicated to addressing their grievances and ensuring justice.

The Minister conveyed Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's assurance that every boat owner and fisherman will receive full justice, even in cases of damage. Additionally, he outlined plans to establish fire safety measures and outposts in the harbor to prevent future incidents.

As investigations continue and compensation efforts are underway, the fishing community eagerly awaits swift actions to rectify their concerns and secure the safety of their livelihoods. The government's commitment to accountability and safety measures provides a ray of hope for the affected families during this challenging time.

Fishermen's organisations are calling for immediate relief in the aftermath of the incident, citing heavy damage to boats and a significant loss of livelihood for both boat owners and crew members who depend on voyages for their survival.

The fishing harbor, under the administrative control of VPA, is a critical economic centre for the region, and the impact of this incident is expected to have far-reaching consequences.

accident or, during celebratory activities, a fire might have ignited the fuel tank and other inflammable materials on one of the vessels.

Expressing shock over the fire accident, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has ordered an inquiry into the mishap and directed Fisheries Minister S. Appala Raju to visit the accident site and instruct-

ed officials to provide financial support to the fishermen who lost their boats in the tragedy.

Vizag South MLA Vasupalli Ganesh visited the site of the accident, inspected the burnt fishing boats, and extended full support to all boat owners. He directed police officials to conduct a thorough investigation to determine the cause of the accident.

Jagan to lay stone for...

Continued from Page 1

The government has also enhanced the ex gratia amount from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh for the families of fishermen who lost their lives during fishing, ensuring a transparent process for eligibility.

In a significant step toward encouraging exports and imports of marine produce, the Jagananna Government is constructing Ramayapatnam, Mulapet, Machilipatnam, and Kakinada Gateway Ports at a cost of Rs 11,000 crore within 4-and-a-half years of governance.

The Jagan Mohan Reddy government has rejuvenated the shrunken sea mouth of Pulicat Lake at a cost of

Rs 94.75 Crores, benefiting 20,000 fishermen families and restoring the lake to its former glory.

A stark comparison with the previous government reveals a substantial increase in relief measures under the current administration. The relief during the Marine Fishing Ban has been raised to Rs 10,000, and the diesel subsidy has been increased to Rs 9 per liter, covering 20,514 boats.

As part of its commitment to the welfare of fishermen, the Jagan government has facilitated the release of 23 fishermen caught by Pakistani security forces. Financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh has been provided to each fisher-

man after their release.

Furthermore, the government has taken measures to increase domestic consumption of aqua products, offering electricity at a subsidized rate of Rs 1.50 to aqua farmers from the first day of governance.

A total of Rs 3,250 crore, including pending arrears of Rs 451.77 crore left by the previous government, has been spent on power subsidies.

The Jagan government's efforts include the establishment of 26 Aqua Hubs and 2,184 retail shops under the "Fish Andhra" brand, aiming to provide better rates to aqua farmers and fishermen while ensuring quality fish and shrimp for domestic consumers.

22 spl trains to Sabarimala from Telugu states

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To clear the extra rush of Sabarimala pilgrims, the South Central Railways will run 22 Sabarimala special trains from the Telugu states between various destinations. The SCR has announced the dates, timings, and other details of the special trains. The trains are Secunderabad - Kollam - Secunderabad Specials, Narsapur - Kottayam - Narsapur Specials, Kacheguda - Kollam - Kacheguda Specials, Kakinada Town - Kottayam - Kakinada Town Specials and Secunderabad - Kollam - Secunderabad Specials. These special trains consist of First AC, 2AC, 3AC, Sleeper Class, and General Second Class Coaches.

The details of the special trains are:

Train No 07129 / 07130 Secunderabad - Kollam - Secunderabad Specials: Enroute, 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, Thirur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chengannur, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Mavelikara stations in both the directions. **Train No. 07119 / 07120 Narsapur - Kottayam - Narsapur Specials:** These special trains will stop at Palakollu, Bhimavaram, Bhimavaram Town, Akividu, Kaikaluru, Gudivada, Vijayawada, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, Renigunta, Tirupati, Chittoor, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thirur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chengannur, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Mavelikara stations in both the directions. **Train No. 07125 / 07126**

Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thirur, Aluva and Ernakulam Town stations in both the directions. **Train No. 07127 / 07128 Secunderabad - Kollam - Secunderabad Specials:** Enroute, these special trains will stop at Kacheguda, Umdanagar, Shadnagar, Jachcherla, Mahubnagar, Wanaparthy Rd, sriramnagar, Gadwal, Kurnool City, Dhone, Gooty, Tadipatri, Yerraguntla, Kadapa, Razampet, Renigunta, Tirupati, Chittoor, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thirur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chengannur, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Mavelikara stations in both the directions.

Kakinada Town - Kottayam - Kakinada Town Specials: 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, Thirur, Aluva and Ernakulam Town stations in both the directions. **Train No. 07127 / 07128 Secunderabad - Kollam - Secunderabad Specials:** Enroute, these special trains will stop at Kacheguda, Umdanagar, Shadnagar, Jachcherla, Mahubnagar, Wanaparthy Rd, sriramnagar, Gadwal, Kurnool City, Dhone, Gooty, Tadipatri, Yerraguntla, Kadapa, Razampet, Renigunta, Tirupati, Chittoor, Katpadi, Jolarpettai, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Coimbatore, Palakkad, Thirur, Alwaye, Ernakulam Town, Kottayam, Chengannur, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Mavelikara stations in both the directions.

HC grants...

Continued from Page 1

Senior lawyer Siddarth Luthra had represented Naidu while the Andhra Pradesh Crime 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.

Bail does not exonerate Naidu...

Continued from Page 1

Highlighting the gravity of the allegations, Sajjala claimed that, under Naidu's direction, public funds amounting to Rs 241 crore was misappropriated. Notices have been issued to individuals such as Kilaru Rajesh and Pendyala Srinivas, revealing the intricate web of connections involved in the scam. Sajjala refuted claims by Naidu's advocates that focused solely on arrest procedures,

emphasising the evidence supporting the occurrence of the Skill Scam.

Sajjala asserted that Chandrababu Naidu's involvement in the scam is not determined by his legal status (in custody or on bail) and stressed the importance of Naidu being accountable for his actions during his tenure as CM from 2014 to 2019. Sajjala expressed confidence that Naidu would be convicted in the Skill Scam case based on

the clear evidence presented.

Moreover, Sajjala accused the previous government, under Naidu's guidance, of being involved in various other scams. He urged Naidu to disclose his actions during the specified period.

Sajjala accused Naidu of attempting to influence the outcome in favour of the Congress party in the Telangana elections. He cited Naidu's IT meetings and other programmes as evidence of these attempts and called for transparency in Naidu's political activities.

Onus on Centre to fulfil all...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Minister YS Jagan said, "The bifurcation of the State caused severe damage to the divided Andhra Pradesh. Ten years after partition, the provisions of the Act remain the same, and it is the Central government's responsibility to fulfill the promises. Over 58 percent of the debt is allocated to Andhra Pradesh and 42 percent to Telangana. But in terms of revenue, 58 percent went to Telangana and 42 percent to AP."

"How will the revenue of the state increase if the Special Status Guarantee, Polavaram dues, and electricity dues from the Telangana government are pending? The scheduled meeting should also focus on Polavaram and special status issues," said the Chief Minister.

"With Hyderabad and its infrastructure in terms of industrial, road transport, and educational institutions going to Telangana, we have lost a lot in the form of revenue to the state. Adjusting this, the Partition Act promised to provide infrastruc-

ture in many sectors. If these are fulfilled then business and commercial activities will be boosted, which increase the revenue gradually," said the Chief Minister.

"As part of decentralization and comprehensive development, three capitals have been announced. Balanced and integrated development between these areas is our responsibility. Further, a transport system needs to be developed connecting three areas and several road construction projects are already underway. The programs require comprehensive support and assistance from the Central Government," the Chief Minister added.

The center has promised a new Central Agriculture University, construction of Dugarajapatnam port, a steel plant in Kadapa, and allotment of mines from NMDC, and for all these, pressure should be increased on the Center to fulfill it, the Chief Minister tells the officials.

"There is a need for a high-speed rail corridor from

Visakhapatnam to Rayalaseema region. Push for superfast trains to Kadapa via Visakhapatnam - Kurnool. Further Vizag, Vijayawada, and Tirupati airports will be converted into international airports. Navy operations in Visakhapatnam were causing severe disruption to civil aviation, and it necessitated the relocation and construction of Bhogapuram

Airport," he said.

"Special attention should be paid to the issue of the road connecting Visakhapatnam and Bhogapuram Airport in the ongoing meeting with the Centre. The state government had to acquire land for the Bhogapuram airport like in Vijayawada. Regarding Visakha Metro Rail, as the private developer is bearing 60 percent, Centre has to bear the remaining 40 percent including land acquisition," CM told the officials.

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

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Showers

Temp: 29°

Humidity: 78%

Sunrise: 6:14 AM

Sunset: 5:32 PM

Updated: November 20, 2023 5:00 PM

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Malladi performs 'Bhoomi Puja' for Rs 9-cr road works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Planning Board Vice Chairman and Central MLA Malladi Vishnu said that the Vijayawada Central constituency is making a lot of progress under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

On Monday, the MLA conducted 'Bhumi Puja' along with Deputy Mayor ShriSailaja Reddy and local corporator Y Thirupathamma, for the construction of BT Road works on the Inner Ring Road with a cost of Rs 9 crores from the funds of the 15th Finance Commission at 64th Division Kandrika Junction.

On the occasion, Malladi Vishnu revealed that after the YSR Congress government took the reins, state government funds, 14th Finance Commission, 15th Finance Commission, and VMC



General Funds are allocating large amounts to meet the needs of the people to develop infrastructure.

As part of this Rs 5 crores will be spent for laying a BT road of 5.3 km from Pipes

road junction to Jakkampudi junction and with Rs 4 crores 4.2 km BT road will be laid from Kandrika Junction to Mustabad Junction and expressed delight for begin the works.

The MLA said that the Vijayawada - Nuzvid road, which has already been taken up with funds of Rs 2.50 crore, will resolve traffic curbs in the constituency.

On the other hand, the 3 km road works from Kandrika to Patapadu with the state government funds of Rs3.50 crore is going on at a swift pace.

He criticized Telugu Desam for failing to build at least one small road in this region during the last five years of rule.

After this government came to power, Rs 12 crore development work has been undertaken in the division. Focusing mainly on the roads, he stated that the roads are being modernized from time to time.

He informed that a white paper will be released soon on the progress made in four and a half years regarding the construction of roads.

YouTuber Nani among 3 held for fishing harbour fire

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Three persons, including YouTuber Nani were apprehended in connection with the fire that erupted at the fishing harbour in Visakhapatnam in the wee hours of Sunday. One of Nani's boats had purportedly been rented to an individual named Balaji, who had paid an advance for its use.

The incident, unfolding on the day of the India-Australia ICC World Cup Final, garnered widespread attention after Nani recorded the chaotic scene.

The video, now viral and extensively shared on social media, depicts a devastating blaze consuming the boats moored at the fishing harbour. Nani, a prominent member of the fisherman community and a popular YouTuber, recounted the incident, emphasising the pandemonium that unfolded during the celebration on Monday night.

FIRST MONDAY OF KARTIKA

Devotees throng Siva temples

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the auspicious occasion of the first Monday of Kartika Masam, a large number of devotees thronged the Shiva temples in Vijayawada and performed special pujas. Before having darshan, the devotees took a holy dip in River Krishna at the Pavitra Durga Ghat which is opposite Indrakeeladri.

For the first Monday, the temples were all decked up and reverberated with 'Om Namah Shivaya' and 'Hara Hara Mahadev Shambho Shankar' chants. Priests performed special pujas like Sahasra Lingarchana and Rudra Homam and other rituals.

The celebrations kicked off at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri, Old Sivalayam at One Town, and Kasi Visweswara Swamy Temple at Governorpet at dawn itself. The devotees observed fast, performed special pujas like Kumkumarchana and Rudrabhishekam and lit lamps.



Devotees perform 'puja' on the auspicious first 'Karthika Somavaram' (Monday) in Vijayawada. Pic by **Ch. VIJAYA BHASKAR**

With the support of the Water Resources Department, the Durga temple authorities have made all arrangements for the devotees to take a holy dip at the Durga Ghat. Barricades are placed in River Krishna at deep portions and warning boards are arranged for the devotees not to venture into the river at the Durga Ghat.

Meanwhile, Durga temple

Sthanacharya Vishnubhotla Sivaprasad Sharma performed special pujas. To take the holy dip and visit Shiva temples, the devotees started reaching Durga Ghat right from the wee hours. Women observed fast.

Vedic Committee members Maruthi Yagna Narayana, Executive Engineer Lingam Rama Devi and others were present.

AP govt to move SC against Naidu bail

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to move the Supreme Court in the matter of granting bail to Chandrababu Naidu on Monday by the AP High Court in the multi-crore Skill Development Corporation scam case.

The government felt that the order passed by the High Court in granting regular bail is far more than the jurisdiction of bail parameters as repeatedly held by the Supreme Court.

The approach of the high court is flawed because it seeks to go into questions that are not argued by the petitioners and did not fall for consideration.

The high court acted beyond its jurisdiction in making observations about the material, its relevance, its evidence-worthiness, and the gaps in investigation, when it

was an ongoing investigation and the TDP party officials stonewalled the investigation taking advantage of the hearing of the bail application. They did not furnish the information sought by the investigating agency CID.

It is alarming that the high court stepped into the trial court's powers in pronouncing on the merits of the matter while professing not to go into the merits of the case which is a gross overstepping of the jurisdiction at the bail stage.

The petitioners did not argue their turn when the bail petition was taken up for argument. The CID made such an objection to the court and is recorded.

The high court's approach toward a bail petition is unprecedented and has the trappings of a full-fledged trial on the merits of the allegations in an ongoing investigation.

Rs 12,061 crore benefit to Kadapa people under welfare schemes

PNS ■ MYDUKURU

The Samajika Sadhikara Yatra held in Mydukuru, YSR Kadapa district, on Monday, achieved resounding success as thousands of people from across the constituency wholeheartedly participated in the bus yatra. The event included a bike rally along the KC Canal, culminating in a massive public meeting on Proddatur Road. The public meeting was led by local MLA Settippally Raghurami Reddy, where prominent party leaders, including MP Avinash Reddy, Deputy CMs Amjad Basha and K Narayana Swamy, Health Minister Vidadala Rajani, and MLC Ramesh Yadav, alongside representatives from various corporations, marked their attendance.

Deputy Chief Minister K Narayana Swamy, hailing from the ST community, passionately spoke about his journey from being an illiterate and poor child to becoming the Deputy CM under CM Jagan's tenure. In an emotional address, he stated, 'Isn't it laudable that a person like me, belonging to the Scheduled Tribes caste, who was illiterate and poor, has today become the Deputy Chief Minister of the state. This is the kind of transformational change our Chief Minister, CM Jagan, has made.'

Thereafter, Deputy Chief Minister Amjad Basha spoke at length about the social justice brought by CM Jagan. Calling CM Jagan a revolutionary leader who eradicated histor-



ical injustice, he remarked, 'In the last 75 years since the country's independence, nobody has been able to do what CM Jagan did after gaining power. Under CM Jagan's regime, social empowerment evolved from a mere slogan to a policy.' Basha further highlighted the unity of SC, ST, BC, and minority leaders under Chief Minister Jagan's regime, which is a stark contrast to Chandrababu's government. He ended his speech by stating that it is the responsibility of the public to support CM Jagan and re-vote him to power in 2024 as he has done monumental governance, especially contributing specifically to the upliftment of the minority community.

Adding to it, Health Minister Vidadala Rajani

underscored the development brought by CM Jagan's government and its impact on the growth of Kadapa. She went on to cite the establishment of 17 new medical colleges and revolutionary changes in the medical field through Nadu-Nedu. 'Under CM Jagan AP brought about the revolutionary Family doctor concept, screened and treated crores of people under Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha, built 17 new medical colleges, and brought about significant changes in the healthcare infrastructure through Nadu-Nedu,' she said. She further outlined the extensive reach of welfare schemes, including ArogyaSri, Amma Vodi, Vidya Deevana, YSR Rythu Bharosa, Free Crop Insurance, Pension Kanuka, YSR Cheyutha, YSR

Asara, etc. Minister

Besides, MLA Raghurami Reddy urged people to reflect on the positive changes brought about in the past four and a half years under CM Jagan's leadership. He compared the current Chief Minister's inclusive approach to TDP supreme Chandrababu's neglect of SC, ST, BC, and minorities in his cabinet. Raghurami Reddy highlighted that 70 percent of ministerial posts were allocated to the backward communities. He further said that in the last 53 months, Rs 12,061 crore have been disbursed to people in the Kadapa district through welfare schemes, out of which Rs. 7,984.48 crore have been provided to BC, SC, ST, and minority communities directly through DBT.

'YSRCP has struck the right balance between welfare & development'

PNS ■ ELAMANCHILI

As part of the 'Samajika Sadhikara Yatra', YSRCP leaders took to the streets of Elamanchili in Anakapalli today highlighting the unparalleled developments witnessed in the state during the four-and-a-half years of CM Jagan's governance. The yatra covered three significant locations —Elamanchili in the Anakapalli district, Narasaraopet in the Palnadu district, and Mydukuru in the Kadapa district. During the bus yatra in Elamanchili, prominent YSRCP leaders, including Deputy Chief Minister Budi Mutyala Naidu, Revenue Minister Dharmana Prasad, IT Minister Gudivada Amaranth, Anakapalli MP Beesetty Venkata Satyavati, Anakapalli District President Boddada Prasad MLA Karanam Dharmasri, and Elamanchili MLA Kannababu Raju were present.

Anakapalli MP Beesetty Venkata Satyavati emphasised that the state has excelled in various sectors, showcasing comprehensive development.

She stated, "Why is the talk of the town all about 'Why AP Needs Jagan'? The Opposition says YSRCP only gives welfare, but the irony is that they are also saying that they would do the same after coming into power. But, here are the facts that go undisputed. Today, AP stands No 1 in ease of doing business while giving welfare to the poor simultaneously. During TDP's regime, the state's GDP was at the 18th position, but it has spiked up to the 7th position in our Jagananna's rule. Why has the purchasing power increased for women today? About Rs 1 lakh to 3 lakh is given through DBT without any caste, religion, or political divide. This is how we walk the talk and show what development is."

Revenue Minister Dharmana Prasada Rao commended CM Jagan for his unwavering commitment to serve the people of Andhra Pradesh. He also questioned, "Can Chandrababu dare to say that he has improvised the quality of life of the people, but Jagan can say with full conviction."



DC's warning over paddy procurement

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

"If anybody commits irregularities or corruption during the paddy procurement, criminal cases will be registered against them. So, the officials should procure the paddy grains from the farmers properly through Dr YSR Rythu Bharosa Kendras," warned Krishna District Collector P Raja Babu.

Along with Raja Babu, Joint Collector Dr Aparajitha Singh and District Revenue Officer (DRO) Peddi Roja convened a teleconference with all field-level officials to discuss paddy procurement, welfare hostel inspec-

tion and repairs, from the collectorate in Machilipatnam on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that as paddy procurement has begun across the district, the officials should make necessary arrangements to overcome difficulties. During the purchase of paddy, no farmer should face problems from the part of the government, he instructed.

He stressed that strict action would be taken if anyone

showed negligence in paddy grain procurement. Agriculture Department Assistant Directors should inspect the RBKs and review the procurement process. Similarly, Mandal Agriculture Officers should be present at the RBKs, he added.

Meanwhile, the Collector ordered the Engineering Department officers to submit the full details and proposals regarding repairs to the welfare

hostel buildings in the district. All district-level officers, who are assigned various mandals, should visit the welfare hostels and inspect them properly, he added.

Later, he asked the election officers to keep all records regarding the voters' list and booths, as the district's voters' list observer and Pollution Control Board Member Secretary B Sridhar would visit the district on Wednesday.

All Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs), Tahsildars, MPDOs, and Municipal Commissioners attended the teleconference.

COWE India award for Geeta Yarlagadda

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

In a momentous ceremony organised by the Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs India (COWE India), Geeta Yarlagadda was bestowed with the distinguished Woman Entrepreneur and Social Activist Award. The accolade was presented by Potluri Bhaskar Rao, the President of the Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation.

Potluri Bhaskar Rao, in his address, commended Geeta Yarlagadda for her exemplary



work in driving positive change through her entrepreneurial ventures and impactful social initiatives. He emphasized the need to recognize and celebrate women who are not only

excelling in the business world but are also actively contributing to societal development.

Geeta Yarlagadda, visibly moved by the honour, expressed her gratitude to

COWE India for acknowledging the efforts of women entrepreneurs and social activists. She highlighted the importance of empowering women to take on leadership roles in business and community service.

COWE national president Lalitha praised Yarlagadda's commitment to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship among women and her dedication to addressing social issues. Lalitha emphasised the role of women in shaping a progressive society and encouraged more women to step into leadership roles.

YSRCP launches an offensive against Naidu

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The YSRCP's Samajika Sadhikara bus yatra unfolded in the Narasaraopet constituency, Palnadu district on Monday, marking a significant moment in the realisation of a long-standing dream. YSRCP's top leadership, during this event, launched a robust offensive against TDP Chief Chandrababu Naidu.

The focus of the bus yatra on social and political empowerment was reiterated by YSRCP leaders, who emphasised the uplift of marginalised communities. Eminent figures from BC, SC, ST, and Minority communities, including Merugu Nagarjuna, Adimulapu Suresh, Karumuri Nageswara Rao, MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayulu, MLAs Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy, Hafeez Khan, and other senior leaders actively participated in the bus yatra.

Addressing a substantial gathering, Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarjuna emphatically stated that CM Jagan is unwavering in his dedication to the welfare of BC, SC, ST, and minority communities. He highlighted the remarkable strides made in benefiting the poor Dalits, enabling BCs to lead dignified lives, and fostering contentment among minorities. The minister asserted that CM Jagan allocated a substantial 80% of the 2.75 lakh jobs to



BC, SC, ST, and minority communities.

The Minister cautioned against succumbing to what he termed as hypocritical narratives, particularly the opposition TDP-JSP alliance suggesting a union of thieves in the upcoming 2024 elections. He urged the public to throw their support behind CM Jagan in the next election, emphasizing the importance of securing his victory.

Minister Adimulapu Suresh, highlighting CM Jagan's impactful leadership, emphasized the resolution of challenges faced by drum artists Padmashalis and other community members. Suresh, hailing from the Dalit community, underscored his ministerial appointment and the elevation of others to Deputy Chief Ministers, attributing it

to CM Jagan. He praised CM Jagan as the key catalyst for achieving political, economic, and social empowerment of backward communities in the state.

MP Krishna Devarayulu electrifyingly declared that he stands before the people today after successfully fulfilling every promise made during the 2019 elections. The MP highlighted that the YSRCP government has successfully implemented the Navaratna welfare schemes to all eligible beneficiaries, including the Varikapudishala Lift Irrigation Scheme, construction of roads amounting to Rs 3,000 crores, and the establishment of a medical college along with three central schools in the district.

Expressing gratitude to CM Jagan for establishing

Narasaraopet district, MLA Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy highlighted the realization of the 65-year-old Narasaraopeta district dream and attributed it to CM Jagan. He also revealed that the YSRCP government, over the last 4.5 years, disbursed Rs 560 crores through DBT for welfare schemes and another Rs 280 crores for non-DBT to beneficiaries in the constituency.

The MLA further announced the approval for Kendriya Vidyalaya in Rompicherla, along with permissions for the construction of bypass roads at Chilakaluripet and Narasaraopet. These initiatives collectively signify a comprehensive array of development programs aimed at uplifting the region and improving the lives of its residents.

‘Ensure eligible people get benefits of Central schemes’

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Central Higher Education Deputy Secretary Priyank Chaturvedi has directed the officials to ensure that all eligible would receive the welfare schemes being implemented by the Central government.

A meeting was held here on Monday as part of the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' programme and Priyank Chaturvedi attended as chief guest. Panchayat officer gave a PowerPoint presentation on various issues.

Speaking on the occasion, Central Higher Education Deputy Secretary Priyank Chaturvedi said that every officer should work to ensure that the last beneficiary of the remote areas of the district receives the Central government welfare scheme benefits.

He directed the officials to submit details of beneficiaries



of central government schemes and the feedback, and grievances received from them. "The participation of women and students in the mobile van yatra programme is very important. Extensive campaigns should be conducted in towns and villages on central government schemes. The officials should sensitize people on Central government welfare

schemes", he told the officials. Priyank Chaturvedi said that the main objective is to provide basic amenities like sanitation facilities, essential financial services, access to LPG connections, and housing for the poor, food security, proper nutrition, health, clean drinking water, and quality education to the eligible poor. District Collector Prashanthi

said that orders have already been issued to the concerned authorities to conduct extensive campaigns in towns and villages on the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra central government schemes.

She said that the yatra would be held in the panchayats of the district from November 26th to January 26th. There are 20 mandals under the 3 divisions of the district. 5 municipalities, one city panchayat, and 409 village panchayats have taken steps to undertake the yatra, she stated. The Collector also explained the implementation of central-sponsored welfare schemes in the district.

RDOs K Srinivasulu Raju, K Chennaiah, M Achyut Ambarish, ZP office GVK Mallikharjun Rao, DMHO Dr.D Maheshwar Rao, and district lead bank manager Prasad were among those who were present.

Yesubabu promoted to Grade 1 Commissioner

PNS ■ KAKINADA



Municipal Corporation Secretary M Yesubabu has been promoted as Grade 1 Commissioner. Municipal Administration principal secretary Srilakshmi issued orders in this regard on Monday. Yesubabu is working as a Grade 2 Commissioner now. He was promoted to Grade 1 Commissioner and ordered to continue here.

Municipal Commissioner CH Naga Narasimha Rao, deputy Commissioner Kona Srinivas, SE P Satyakumar, MHO doctor Prudvicharan, DCP Haridas, and ACP Naga Sastrulu congratulated Yesubabu for being promoted to Grade 1 Commissioner.



Social justice is possible only with YSRCP: Bharat

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Local MP Margani Bharat Ram has said that the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-headed government is committed to the welfare of BCs, SCs, STs, and Minorities and social justice is possible with the YSRCP only.

Talking to the media here on Monday, the MP alleged that the Opposition TDP had used the BCs, SCs, STs, and

minorities as a vote bank and did not do anything for their welfare.

Keeping in view the ensuing election, the TDP has raised the 'Jayah BC' slogans and organising programmes, he criticised.

Margani Bharat Ram dared the TDP for an open debate on the issue.

He recalled that 67% of cabinet berths were given to BC, SC, ST, and minority leaders by

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

"Four deputy CM posts were also given to them. Out of the 13 ZP chairman posts, 9 were given to the BC, SC, ST and minorities. This is real social justice," MP Bharat Ram asserted.

He asked the TDP whether it can allocate the Rajahmundry MP seat, and Rajahmundry urban and rural Assembly seats to the BCs.



Collector Shukla hands over job appointment letters

PNS ■ KAKINADA

District Collector Krithika Shukla here on Monday handed over job appointment letters to those who were appointed under compensation grounds.

As part of the JKC programme held at the Collectorate on Monday, the Collector handed over letters appointing in various jobs under compensatory grounds. The Collector handed over letters to four kin of the deceased employees. Three were appointed as junior assistants and another as office subordinates in the combined East Godavari district.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Krithika Shukla asked the newly appointed employees to work with commitment and dedication. She said that posting orders have been given to the candidates according to the number of vacancies, roster, and seniority regarding the combined East Godavari district.

Regular bail to Naidu hailed

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY



Telugu Desam Party (TDP) State executive secretary Sista Lohith has welcomed the granting of regular bail by the High Court to TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu.

Addressing a meeting here on Monday, Lohith said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is trying to harass Chandrababu Naidu by managing systems.

"Unable to face Chandrababu Naidu politically, Jagan Mohan Reddy is instructing the officials to implicate Naidu in false cases and it is unfortunate. The TDP respects the judiciary and we have full faith in it," Sista Lohith said.



10th class girl falls from 2nd floor of school

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

A 10th-grade girl student fell from the second floor of the school building in Chilakaluripet on Monday.

Police said that the victim Inkollu Umamaheshwari was studying 10th class at ZP High School. She accidentally fell from the second floor of the school building and suffered bleeding injuries. She was admitted to a private hospital.

Blacklist contractors who fail to start works: Eluru DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh directed the officials to blacklist the contractors who have not started the works. The Collector held a meeting with the officials of R&B and engineers to review the progress of the construction of houses in Jagananna layouts.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the tenders for the construction of 5 roads in the National Highways Department have been completed by the Department of Roads and Buildings and the contractors have to give the agreement within 7 days of giving the LO.

The Collector expressed his anger that the contractors have not completed the road works even though 45 days have been completed after giving the LO. The R and B officials have been directed to issue



notices to the contractors immediately and keep the contractors who do not respond to the notices on the black list. He also directed the officials to take steps to expedite the works of priority roads.

The Collector ordered the officials to immediately complete the construction works of PHC buildings undertaken in K o y y a l a g u d e m , Ramanakkapet, Agiripalli, and Borrampalem. The Collector

directed the officials to complete the construction of priority buildings immediately and to bring the completed buildings into use immediately.

Stating that those who work hard will be encouraged, he warned of taking stringent action against those who are indifferent to their work.

Collector Prasanna Venkatesh also warned that departmental action would be taken against the workers who were negligent in the construction of Jagananna houses. The government is giving priority to the construction of houses in the Jagananna colonies and the officials should lay special focus on completing the construction of houses in the colonies, he told the officials. Housing construction PO Vijaya Raju and DWMA PD Ramu were among those who attended the meeting.

Siddhartha College earns accolades at national level

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

City-based P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts & Science has bagged six accolades at the national level in Eduskills Connect-2023, next Gen skill conclave, jointly hosted by Eduskills Foundation and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) from November 17-19 in Goa," said Dr. M. Ramesh, Principal of the college.

In a press release, the Principal said that their college secured awards in the categories of Best Performing Institute in South Zone, Best Performing Institute in Fortinet internships, rank 45 in AICTE - Eduskills Internship ranking for the year 2023, and Asia Book of Records certificate for being part of record number of internships offered by AICTE and Eduskills.

College TPO Sridhar Kavuri got recognised with Best



Centre of Excellence Coordinator and Best Outreach and Brand Promotion awards for his contributions in the field of internships and placements by enabling students to upskill in the cutting-edge technologies of renowned IT majors AWS, Google, Celonis, Palo Alto, Fortinet, Alteryx, Blue Prism, Juniper Networks, UiPath and Microchip.

College director V. Babu Rao said that their faculty and

students were benefitting through AICTE-Eduskills industry centre of excellence launched on their campus in 2022 to bridge the skill gap between industry and institution.

College Dean Prof. Rajesh Jampala shared that the accolades were presented during a ceremony held in Goa on November 19, attended by Dr. Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa, Prof. T.G. Sitaram, Chairman of AICTE, Dr. Rajive Kumar, Member Secretary of AICTE, Subhagit Jagdev, founder of Eduskills, and bigwigs of leading corporations. On behalf of Siddhartha Academy management, Dr. Ch. Nageswara Rao, president, P. Lakshmana Rao, secretary, S. Venkateswara Rao, treasurer, and other governing body members congratulated the efforts of Sridhar Kavuri and other faculty educators for the achievements.



Help boat owners, Pawan urges govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Describing the fire accident in the fishing harbour in Visakhapatnam as unfortunate, Jana Sena chief K Pawan Kalyan appealed to the government to extend the boat owners needed help.

In a release here on Monday, Pawan Kalyan said that 40 fishing boats were destroyed in the fire accident which took place on the night of Sunday.

"The government should help the boat owners. An inquiry should also be conducted to ascertain the reasons which led to the fire accident. Security aspects of the fish harbors should also be reviewed," he said.



Declaring that the BRS is running the most corrupt government in the country, the Home Minister said that there was massive corruption while executing the Kaleshwaram project, Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya.

BJP is people's party

- Congress, BRS and AIMIM are family-controlled parties
- Telangana will celebrate second Diwali on Dec 3rd: Shah

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the people of Telangana would celebrate two more Diwails.

He said that the people of Telangana have already celebrated their first Diwali and they are going to celebrate their second Diwali on December 3 when the BJP comes to power in Telangana.

He said that the people of Telangana would celebrate their third Diwali in January after the inauguration of Rama Mandir in Ayodhya.

Addressing the Jangaon public meeting on Monday, Amit said that the BJP will allow the people of Telangana to visit the Ayodhya Rama Mandir freely if they ensure the victory of the BJP in the state.

He said that BJP is the only people's party while the Congress, the BRS and the AIMIM are family-controlled parties. He said that while the

BRS was in power in the state its steering was under the control of AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi.

"All these are 2G, 3G and 4G parties. The BRS is a two-generation party with KCR and KTR, the AIMIM is a three-generation party with grandfather, father and son and the Congress is a four-generation party of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi. These parties will care only about their families but not the common man," said Amit while addressing the Sakala Janula Vijaya Sankalpa Sabha meetings held at Korutla and Jangaon on Tuesday.

"Telangana was liberated from the clutches of Nizam by Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is not celebrating Liberation Day to appease the AIMIM. 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 corruption 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. The Union Home Minister also participated in a roadshow in Uppal on Monday evening.

Lovers end life by jumping before train

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Young lovers allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a running train between Gudur-Kondagunta stations on the Tirupati line on Monday.

The railway staff found the bodies of the boy and girl on the track and informed the police.

Police said that the deceased Dande Rakesh (23) and Annangi Pavani allegedly committed suicide by jumping before a running train. It is suspected that the elders of the deceased refused their marriage and the disgruntled lovers ended life, police said.

The deceased girl Pavani belonged to Sri Rukminipuram village in Machavaram mandal in Palnadu district and Rakesh belonged to West Godavari district. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem.



15 red sanders logs seized, 31 smugglers arrested

PNS ■ KURNOOL

The Task Force police team seized 15 red sanders logs and arrested 31 smugglers at Santhanuthalapadu in Prakasam district.

Task Force SP K Charavathi told the media on Monday that the task force conducted a checking of vehicles on Ongole-Cheemakurthi road at

Santhanuthalapadu police station.

The team found a lorry with red sander logs. They also found a Bolero vehicle following as pilot. The police seized 15 red sander logs worth Rs 25 lakh. The police also seized 15 axes, 20 mobile phones, a Bolero vehicle, a lorry, and Rs 24,000 cash from them.

One of the arrested persons

Guddeti Ramanath Reddy was involved in 60 cases under various police station limits and four NBW were pending against him. CIG Srinivasulu registered a case and is investigating.

The SP said that he recommended rewards to the police personnel who arrested the red sander smugglers and seized logs.

GVCF opposes theme park at Mudasarlova

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a resolute stand against the proposed transformation of Mudasarlova Water Reservoir into a theme park by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, the city-based Greater Visakhapatnam Citizens Forum (GVCF) has voiced strong opposition, citing concerns over heritage preservation, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of Visakhapatnam's citizens.

Mudasarlova Water Reservoir, a historical landmark constructed in 1902, is a symbol of the city's rich heritage. Secretary of GVCF Captain N. Viswanathan emphasised the collective responsibility to preserve and



protect this reservoir for the benefit of future generations. He expressed deep concern over the potential disruption to the fragile ecosystem surrounding the Simhachalam and Dabbanda hills, crucial catchment areas protected from urbanisation.

"The proposed development of a theme park at Mudasarlova poses a significant threat to our heritage and environment. It is imperative that we safeguard this reservoir, which has stood

as a testament to our history for over a century," remarked Captain Viswanathan.

Over the past century, Mudasarlova Water Reservoir has ingrained itself in the collective identity of Visakhapatnam's citizens. Captain Viswanathan highlighted the deep emotional attachment citizens have to the reservoir, having frequented it for family and school picnics since childhood. Any compromise to its integrity, he warned, would face staunch resistance from the community.

Vice-president of GVCF Sohan Hatangadi said: "Mudasarlova is not just a reservoir; it's a part of our identity. The memories created here are irreplaceable, and any

development that threatens these memories will be met with strong opposition from the citizens."

Acknowledging the challenges of a growing population, GVCF stressed the importance of water conservation. Diverting the land for a theme park, they argued, would not only reduce water availability but also pose a risk of polluting existing water sources, adversely affecting the well-being of residents.

"In a city facing water scarcity, we must recognise the value of every drop. Developing a theme park at Mudasarlova risks compromising our water resources and putting the well-being of our citizens at stake," added Sohan Hatangadi.

Expressing deep concern

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 had 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 as 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.



He said introduction of section "75 Creative Minds of Tomorrow" at IFFI will be entering the third edition this year. "(At this section) Budding talents get to attend master classes of world's best directors and also an opportunity to network with them," Thakur stated.

The minister said this time, 600 youths had submitted applications for the section of which 75 were selected.

IFFI is an annual event organized by the National Film Development Corporation of India Ltd (NFDC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in collaboration with the Goa government through Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) and the Indian film industry.

Murmu urges writers to create awareness among tribals

PNS ■ BARIKADA (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.

"Authors are vigilant watchdogs of the society. They make society aware and guide it through their works. Many literateurs showed the path to our national movement during the freedom struggle ... Building a strong and vigilant society is possible only through continuous awareness," the president said. Murmu, who spoke in Santali during the entire programme, said language and literature are subtle threads that bind the nation together. Literature is enriched by extensive exchange between different languages which is possible through translations.

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.

Bogus news meant to generate euphoria

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress took a swipe at the ruling BJP on Monday for claiming that India's GDP had 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

■ Congress on claims of GDP crossing USD 4 trillion

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 drumbeaters 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."

"Congratulations to my fellow Indians as our nation crosses the \$ 4 trillion GDP milestone! More power to you, more respect to you Hon PM Narendra Modi ji," he said.

'Nanoplastics promote conditions for Parkinson's, dementia'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nanoplastics interact with a particular protein that is naturally found in the brain, creating changes linked to Parkinson's disease and some types of dementia, a study has found.

The research, published in the journal Science Advances, paves the way for a new area of investigation, fuelled by the timely impact of environmental factors on human biology.

"Parkinson's disease has been called the fastest growing

neurological disorder in the world," said principal investigator, Andrew West, a professor at Duke University School of Medicine, US.

"Numerous lines of data suggest environmental factors might play a prominent role in Parkinson's disease, but such factors have for the most part not been identified," West said.

Improperly disposed plastics have been shown to break into very small pieces and accumulate in water and food supplies, and were found in the blood of



most adults in a recent study. "Our study suggests that the

emergence of micro and nanoplastics in the environment might represent a new toxin challenge with respect to Parkinson's disease risk and progression," West said.

"This is especially concerning given the predicted increase in concentrations of these contaminants in our water and food supplies," the researcher added.

The team found that nanoparticles of the plastic polystyrene -- typically found in single use items such as disposable drinking cups and cutlery -- attract the accumulation

of the protein known as alpha-synuclein.

The study's most surprising findings are the tight bonds formed between the plastic and the protein within the area of the neuron where these accumulations are congregating, the lysosome.

Researchers said the plastic-protein accumulations happened across three different models performed in the study - in test tubes, cultured neurons, and mouse models of Parkinson's disease.

West said questions remain about how such interactions might be happening within humans and whether the type of plastic might play a role.

"While microplastic and nanoplastic contaminants are being closely evaluated for their potential impact in cancer and autoimmune diseases, the striking nature of the interactions we could observe in our models suggest a need for evaluating increasing nanoplastic contaminants on Parkinson's disease and dementia risk and progression," West added.

Those who invoke religion, caste can't ask for votes: Priyanka Gandhi

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Hitting out at the BJP, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Monday that those who invoke religion or caste during elections are never in a position to ask for votes on the basis of their work.

Addressing a rally at Ajmer's Kekri in poll-bound Rajasthan, the Congress general secretary asked the voters to exercise their franchise after evaluating the work done by different political parties.

She asserted that the Congress is united in Rajasthan and claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is completely fragmented in the desert state. "If someone asks for votes in the name of religion or caste, it means he cannot seek votes on the basis of work," Gandhi said.

"In Rajasthan, all Congress leaders and workers have entered the electoral battlefield unitedly, whereas the BJP is completely fragmented," she added.

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

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)

Is artificial intelligence taking over the control?

Artificial intelligence has found scope for its intervention in almost all walks of life. Are we losing control and handing over our destiny to computers?

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.



KALYANI SHANKAR

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. This summit successfully brought these world leaders together on a platform. 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 cricketers. 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, Prahlaad 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)

The order of power in the world has been driven by the shifts in the Energy equations, history has shown. The Steam Engine Industrialisation enabled Britain to emerge as a global superpower drawing upon its readily available supply of coal. Subsequently, Fordism peaked in World War II and brought the US to the centre of global power, shifting the focus on Oil as the energy of the future of Carbon Capitalism for decades to come. Thereon the unequal distribution of fossil fuels has been central to geopolitical power equations. The sudden, escalating and preposterous scale of Climate Change induced disruptions, have posed existential threats

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

ble 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.

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 "keen-

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."



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.

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.



‘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.

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.

"Bowling first was the first call. Then when we were bowling, you could see the homework that went into it. The fields we had early to Rohit Sharma, that deep point, slip and Glenn Maxwell at like a fly slip," the former wicket-keeper batter said.

"Then to change that around as soon as they saw the wicket was a bit slower and the ball got older to Virat Kohli and KL Rahul, at times we went with four guys on the off side and no cover. I haven't seen that in one-day cricket."

Paine said Cummins had one of his "great game" as skipper in the title clash.

"When the Indian batsmen were trying to consolidate, Pat read that beautifully and brought Travis Head on and Mitch Marsh on to bank some overs when they weren't really looking to take us on.

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rohit Sharma was Monday named the captain of the ICC's Team of the Tournament after the conclusion of the World Cup, with a total of six Indians including the Player of the Tournament, Virat Kohli, featuring among the XI.

India lost the summit clash to Australia who clinched their sixth win in World Cup with a six-wicket victory in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

Rohit led the team from the front as his fearless batting won him praise from all corners, with the Indian skipper finishing as the second highest scorer in the tournament with 597 runs in 11 matches at 54.27 with one century and three fifties.

Kohli, who became the first batter ever to score more than 700 runs in a single World Cup edition, finished with a total of 765 runs with three centuries and two fifties.

In the course of the tournament, Kohli also surpassed batting legend Sachin Tendulkar to have scored most ODI centuries

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

dominated the Indian bowlers when they were on song during their two meetings - one at the league stage and the other at the semifinals.

With 552 runs in 10 matches, Mitchell finished as the fifth highest run-getter with two tons and as many fifties.

Sri Lanka's young Dilshan Madushanka's was a standout performance in an otherwise forgettable World Cup campaign. His 21 wickets in nine matches saw him finish as the third highest wicket-taker.

Winners Australia's sole specialist spinner Adam Zampa, who finished as the second-best bowler with 23 wickets in 11 matches, featured at the last spot while South Africa's Gerald Coetzee was named the 12th man.

ICC's Team of the Tournament: Rohit Sharma (c), Quinton de Kock, Virat Kohli, Daryl Mitchell, KL Rahul (wk), Glenn Maxwell, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Adam Zampa, Dilshan Madushanka. 12th man: Gerald Coetzee.

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.



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 *Rashoman*, 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



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 Krishna 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



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.