

the pioneer

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Aim for Indian space station by 2035, Indian on Moon by 2040

'I WANT TO SHOWCASE THE HYDERABADI ACCENT IN FRONT OF THE WORLD'



Allu Arjun honoured with 'BEST ACTOR AWARD'



QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

Telangana wanted freedom, social justice and equal development, but KCR limited water, funds and appointments (Neellu, Nidulu, Niyamakalu) to his family. As they did not accept my challenge to come to Gun Park, it is clear that KCR depends on money and alcohol to win elections. KCR is trying to cheat and win this election.



- Revanth Reddy, TPCC president

DON'T MISS...

IIITH research reveals ...

Autofill makes our work easier, especially while logging credentials in a newly downloaded app or any website. However, while auto-filling your credentials there are some hidden malicious software which get access to your sensitive information. The researchers of the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIITH) have revealed how login credentials can be inadvertently leaked by the Autofill functionality of mobile Password Managers...

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Extreme caution must...

The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC) on Tuesday asked entertainment channels to exercise "extreme caution" while portraying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in television programmes to avoid hurting the sentiments of the members of the two communities. The channels, while depicting the stories of the members of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, must ensure that the "nuance..."

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Companies not ready to...

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is facing difficulties in the preparation of detailed project reports, as companies concerned are not ready to accept new technology. Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Tuesday. The road transport and highways minister said that the government is encouraging the use of new technologies. Addressing the 'CRISIL India Infrastructure Conclave 2023', he said big players in the steel and cement industry...

-PAGE: 8

Rohit best man to lead India to third...

Australian legend Ricky Ponting believes a "laid-back" Rohit Sharma is the ideal captain to lead India to their third ODI World Cup title, the second on home soil after the 2011 triumph. With three convincing wins under their belt, India have made a perfect start to their World Cup campaign. India defeated Australia by six wickets in their tournament opener, before registering emphatic eight and seven-wicket wins over Afghanistan and Pakistan to sit on top of the points table. "He's very laid back, Rohit..."

-SPORTS



KTR, Harish take reins of BRS war room

NAVEENA GHANATE
HYDERABAD

Contrary to public opinion, it is Ministers KT Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao who are heading the BRS war room. Earlier, it used to be Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

Given the health constraints of the CM, both Harish and KTR have taken up responsibilities. Even if one looks at the Chief Minister's speeches at public meetings they are only around 20 minutes and the biggest one so far was for 30 minutes in Jangaon. Even KCR's constituencies of Gajwel and Kamareddy are divided among Harish and KTR. If KTR and Harish Rao are not on the ground they are at the Pragathi Bhavan strategizing.

Interestingly, the message that both are equal was given by KCR himself through two incidents. He gave B-Forms to both of them at the Pragathi Bhavan before issuing it to MLAs at the Telangana Bhavan. Secondly, on Tuesday he campaigned for both of them on the same day. Both his speeches reflected confidence in the duo.

Sources said that while at the constituency level, individual leaders will take care at the state level Harish and KTR are taking care of BRS activities including inductions.

Sources said that they are not racing against each other but rather working together. On several occasions in the recent past, Harish would invite someone to join the party and the formal induction would be in the pres-

Sources said that they are not racing against each other but rather working together. On several occasions in the recent past, Harish would invite someone to join the party and the formal induction would be in the presence of KTR.

ence of KTR. Before the CM started his campaign the duo completed around 50 public meetings. This combination has pricked the opposition as well with Revanth calling them 'Billa-Ranga'. Interestingly, so far Harish has never commented on the allegation made by Modi that KCR wanted KTR to become the CM.

'Drivers of development'

CM KCR campaigns for son, nephew



Attacking the Congress, KCR said that Congress leaders would be a threat to farmers as they would provide only three hours of power supply to farmers and would scrap the Dharani Portal.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao campaigned for his son KT Rama Rao in Sircilla and his nephew T. Harish Rao in Siddipet. KCR didn't mince words in showering praises on Harish in Siddipet and told the people of Sircilla that they knew KTR better than him. "From the time he became a minister till today, Harish has done an excellent job in bringing every programme to this region. If I was in the place of Harish as an MLA, I don't know if I could have done so much for Siddipet. Whether Siddipet got water or train it is due to Harish. I promise that shortly Siddipet will be made a brilliant diamond," KCR said. Meanwhile, in Sircilla KCR said,

"I congratulate KTR for what he did to change the lives of the weavers of Sircilla." He recalled the miserable condition of the weavers of Sircilla before the formation of Telangana state and said that he had seen messages on walls asking the weavers not to commit suicide. From such a situation Sircilla has changed under the BRS government, he added. KCR said that governments must take responsibility for creating work for weavers and that the BRS launched the Bathukamma sari scheme to help weavers. "But some opposition leaders asked people to burn these saris blaming their quality. That was unfortunate," said KCR. He expressed confidence that the BRS will again form the govern-

ment and continue to work for the weavers. He added that Sircilla will become another Sholapur in the coming days. Speaking about the improved water availability in Sircilla, KCR said that he was happy to see the green fields and continuous flow of water in the region through Upper Maneir. The CM spoke about the education institutes that were set up in Sircilla and said that the BRS government is committed to making Sircilla an educational hub. He highlighted the promises in the BRS manifesto and said that the BRS would increase pension from Rs 2000 to Rs 5000. Similarly, Rythu Bandhu money will also be increased, he said.



PM inaugurates Visakhapatnam Port projects

Boost to regional development and maritime prosperity

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated crucial projects under the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) here on Tuesday, marking a significant milestone in the development of port infrastructure that is expected to stimulate the regional economy and prosperity. The occasion was marked by the launch of these projects as part of the Global Maritime India Summit 2023, organised in Mumbai. The mechanisation of the Visakhapatnam Port area, a critical step towards enhancing its capabilities, is being undertaken through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach. Visakhapatnam Port has taken up the task of mechanizing three key berths, namely EQ7, WQ7, 8, and WQ6.

'KCR banking on money & alcohol, not people'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC president Revanth Reddy accused KCR of relying on money and alcohol to win elections. He asked whether the BRS is ready to show its manifesto and ask for votes. Revanth had challenged Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday to take a vow at the Martyrs Memorial that he would approach the people without distributing alcohol and money. Accordingly, Revanth reached the Martyrs Memorial on Tuesday

at 1 pm. But citing the election code the police blocked Revanth. He was taken to Gandhi Bhavan and was not allowed to go to the Martyrs Memorial. Later, Revanth spoke to the media at the Gandhi Bhavan. He said that KTR and Harish Rao were repeatedly hurling baseless charges at the Congress and added that KCR, KTR and other BRS leaders were spreading the lie that the Congress is receiving crores from neighbouring states. Revanth strongly condemned the allegations that the Congress is try-



ing to win elections by distributing money and alcohol. He said that the BRS spent crores during the Munugode by-election while the BJP also spent the same amount.

Kishan gets call from brass

BJP Central Election Committee meeting today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP president G. Kishan Reddy got a call from New Delhi as the party's Central Election Committee meeting is being held on Wednesday. The top leaders of the BJP are trying hard for Telangana Assembly tickets. The BJP's Telangana President, Union Minister Kishan Reddy, and senior BJP leaders have been invited by the high command to attend the meeting. Kishan will also attend the Union Cabinet meeting being held on Wednesday.



The meeting will discuss the action that the Telangana BJP should take. After that, there is a possibility of a decision on the first list of Telangana BJP candidates.

Rahul, Priyanka to launch Cong Bus Yatra today

K VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

The Congress is getting ready to blow its campaign bugle on Wednesday. Top AICC leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi are going to blow the campaign bugle at Mulugu. Rahul and Priyanka are coming to Telangana on Wednesday for a three-day tour from October 18 to 20. They will launch the Telangana Congress Bus Yatra after conducting special pujas at the Ramappa Rudreshwaralayam Temple keeping the six guarantees of the Congress in front of Lord Shiva.



Speaking about the Bus Yatra, Revanth said that Rahul and Priyanka will have darshan at the Ramappa Temple at 4 pm on Wednesday. They will conduct special pujas keeping the six

guarantees of the Congress in front of Lord Shiva, he said. "I too have faith in Lord Shiva. We will launch the Bus Yatra after having darshan of Lord Shiva. We will speak with women to know their problems on the first day in Mulugu and Bhupalpally. On the second day the Bus Yatra will be in Karimnagar district and on the third day it will be in Nizamabad district," Revanth said. In fact, the Congress will release the Women's Declaration through Rahul during this tour. Rahul will attend the Bus Yatra and padayatra in five Assembly constituencies during his three-day tour.

INDIA bloc represents 60% of nation

PNS ■ AIZAWL/LUNGLEI (MIZORAM)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday claimed that the opposition INDIA alliance represents 60 per cent of the country, more than the BJP does. He also asserted that the Congress will win the upcoming assembly elections in five states - Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana. Gandhi, who was on a two-day visit to Mizoram from Monday to

campaign for party candidates, alleged that both the major parties in the northeastern state the ruling MNF and opposition ZPM are "instruments for the BJP and the RSS to gain a foothold" in the Christian-majority state. He promised an old age pension of Rs 2,000 per month, gas cylinders at Rs 750 and support for entrepreneurs if the Congress comes to power in Mizoram, which is going to assembly polls on November 7.



'I am honoured, humbled' Waheeda Rehman receives Phalke Award

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Screen icon Waheeda Rehman on Tuesday became the eighth woman artiste to receive the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the highest recognition in the field of Indian cinema, an honour she dedicated to

her "dear film industry" and its various departments. President Droupadi Murmu presented the award to Rehman, 85, during the 69th National Film Awards ceremony, held at Vigyan Bhawan here.

Five-judge SC bench refuses to grant legal recognition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to grant legal recognition to same-sex marriages. Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, who was heading the bench pronouncing its verdict on 21 pleas seeking legal validation for same-sex marriages, said the court can't make law but only interpret it and it is for Parliament to change the Special Marriage Act. At the outset, Justice Chandrachud said there are four judgments -- by himself, Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, S Ravindra Bhat and P S Narasimha -- in the matter. Justice Hima Kohli is also a part of the five-judge bench. Directing the Centre, states and Union Territories (UTs) to ensure the queer community is not discriminated against, the CJ, who is heading the constitution bench, said queer is



a natural phenomenon known for ages and is neither urban nor elitist. Justice Kaul said he agrees with the CJ on grant of certain rights to queer couples. "Non-heterosexual and heterosexual unions must be seen as both sides of same coin," he said, adding

that legal recognition of non-heterosexual unions is step towards marriage equality. Justice Bhat, who read out the operative portion of his verdict, said he agrees and differs with views of the CJ on certain points. Delivering his verdict on the crit-

Directing the Centre, States and Union Territories to ensure the queer community is not discriminated against, the CJ, who is heading the Constitution bench, said queer is a natural phenomenon known for ages and is neither urban nor elitist.

court has recorded Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's statement that the Centre will form a committee to decide the rights and entitlements of persons in queer unions. While reading out the operative portion of his verdict, he directed the Centre, states and UTs to take steps to sensitise public about queer rights and ensure that inter-sex children are not allowed sex-change operations at an age they cannot fully comprehend consequence. The CJ directed the police to conduct preliminary enquiry before registering an FIR against queer couple over their relationship. He said homosexuality or queerness is not an urban concept or restricted to the upper class. To imagine queer as existing only in urban spaces would be like erasing them and queerness can be regardless of one's caste or class, Justice Chandrachud said.



Litmus test for BRS in 20 Assembly seats

SNCR ACHARYULU
HYDERABAD

In the upcoming crucial Telangana Assembly elections, about 20 Assembly seats have become a litmus test to the BRS. The reason is that in the previous Assembly elections, BRS won these seats with low margins.

The main opposition Congress also won about four seats with a low margin. Some seats were won by the BRS and the Congress with below 5,000 votes, some seats below 2,000 and some more with below 1,000 votes majority.

Among these seats, Dharmapuri Assembly constituency represented by the Minister Koppala Eswar and Madhira Assembly constituency represented by Congress legislature party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka are there. In

Dharmapuri Assembly seat Minister Koppala Eswar won with just 441 votes majority. In Madhira Assembly seat Congress MLA Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka won with 3,567 votes majority. In the Asifabad Assembly seat Congress won with just 171 votes majority.

In the Ibrahimpatnam Assembly seat BRS MLA Manchireddy Kishan Reddy won with 376 votes majority. In the Ambarpet Assembly seat BRS MLA K Venkatesam won with 1,016 votes majority. In the Yellandu Assembly seat Congress MLA Haripriya won with 2,887 votes majority. In the Sangareddy Assembly seat Congress MLA Turpu Jaya Prakash Reddy, popularly known as Jagareddy, won with 2,588 votes majority.

In the Kodada Assembly seat BRS MLA B Mallayya Yadav won with 756 votes

majority. In the Tandur Assembly seat Congress MLA Pilot Rohith Reddy won with 2,875 votes majority. In the Thungathurthy Assembly seat BRS MLA G Kishore Kumar won with 1,847 votes majority.

In the Kamareddy Assembly seat BRS MLA Ganpati Govardhan won with 4,557 votes majority. In the coming Assembly elections Chief Minister K Chandrababu Naidu is contesting from this seat. In the Vikarabad Assembly seat BRS MLA Methuku Anand won with 3,092 votes majority. In the Manchiryal Assembly seat BRS MLA N Diwakar Rao won with 4,848 votes majority. In the Kalvakurthi Assembly seat BRS MLA G Jaipal Yadav won with 3,447 votes majority. Some of the Congress MLAs who won with small majorities have joined the

BRS and they were given tickets by BRS for the coming Assembly elections.

In the coming Assembly elections the BRS and the Congress are confident over their victory.

In the Assembly seats where there will be a key contest between BRS and Congress, the splitting of a little number of votes will change the fate of candidates. In the Assembly seats where the BRS and the Congress won with low margins, 50% of votes majority the candidates got in the previous Assembly elections will change the result. To retain these seats, the BRS and the Congress candidates have to work hard for the coming Assembly elections. The likely results for these seats in the coming Assembly elections is creating interest in the political circles as well as in the respective parties.

ASADUDDIN TO CONG How much has Amethi developed?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi has been criticising the Congress, particularly former AICC president Rahul Gandhi. On Tuesday, he criticised Rahul, who is coming to Telangana for a three-day tour through Twitter.

"When Rahul visits Telangana his eyes will get opened after seeing the development in Telangana," Asaduddin said.

"How much has Amethi developed as the Congress was in power for 40 years? Telangana has developed much more than Amethi in just nine years.

During Rahul's visit he can see the Kaleshwaram project and canals with water. Development is visible in TS," Asaduddin said.

Revanth promises first job to handicapped Rajini

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC president Revanth Reddy promised a job to a young woman named Rajini. He said that she would be given a job immediately after the Congress takes over.

Rajini, a differently-abled woman from Nampally, met TPCC President Revanth Reddy at the Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday. She told Revanth that she did not get a job even after completing PG in both government service as well as the private sector. Responding to this, Revanth asked the differently-abled woman to come to the Congress CM's swearing-in ceremony which would be held on December 9 at the LB Stadium. He promised to give her a job according to her qualifications when the Congress government takes over.

Revanth himself registered her details in his own handwriting on the card showing the six guarantees of the Congress.

BRS MLA Bapurao meets TPCC chief, to join Cong

The BRS MLA from Boath constituency in Adilabad district, Rathod Bapurao, met TPCC President



Revanth Reddy at his residence on Tuesday. Rathod Bapurao, who has been staying away from the BRS as the party allocated a ticket to Anil Yadav, has decided to join the Congress, it is learnt. Rathod Bapurao is expecting a Congress ticket in the second list from Boath. Meanwhile, the Congress gave a big shock to BRS in the GHMC. The Madhapur corporator, Jagadishwar Goud, who is the BRS floor leader in the GHMC, joined the Congress. On Tuesday, TPCC president Revanth Reddy invited him into the party by

presenting him a shawl. Similarly, several BRS and BJP party leaders from Shadnagar, Kodangal and Kalvakurthy constituencies joined the Congress in the presence of Revanth. Among those who joined the Congress are former MPPs Ram Reddy, Sambayya Goud, Sarpanch Laxman Naik, former ward members and cadres from Kalvakurthy. Sarpanches Pratap, Manjula, Bal Raju, Gopal, Ramulu, Yadaiah, Jahangir, councillors and other leaders of Shad Nagar constituency are among those who joined the Congress. Many leaders from Dudyala mandal of Kodangal constituency also joined the Congress.

Land, smartphone & washing machine

● Promises in BSP manifesto

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BSP released its election manifesto at the Sundarayya Vignana Kendram (SVK) in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The BSP manifesto says that every landless family will be given an acre. Loans of up to Rs 2 lakh will be given without interest and up to Rs 5 lakh at lower rates for farmers. Free fertilizers will be given and loans of up to Rs 2 lakh will be waived.

Working women will get free washing machines and free travel in buses and autorickshaws to go to their workplaces. Homeless families will get 550 sq. yards of land. Every family will get a health-care cover of Rs 15 lakh under

the Aarogyasri scheme. The allocation for the health budget is Rs 25,000 crore.

The TS BSP President, RS Praveen Kumar, took a dig at the BRS and the Congress and said that they haven't mentioned a single word about youth.

He said that free PC tablets would be given to all unemployed women. From every mandal, 100 students would be selected and sent to foreign universities.

A bahujan film city costing Rs 10,000 crore will be established and incentives will be given to those who are making films on culture. The 'Gaddar Freedom University' would be established in Telangana to encourage folklore.

Revanth 'sold' Cong tickets: Vijay, Laxma Reddy aver at Charminar Temple

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a shocking development, Congress ticket hopefuls Ragidi Laxma Reddy (Uppal) and suspended Congress leader former TPCC secretary Kuruva Vijay Kumar (Gadwal) took a pledge in wet clothes in front of the Charminar Bhagyalaxmi Ammavari Temple along with Kaleem Baba (Bahadurpura)

stating that TPCC president Revanth Reddy had sold party tickets.

The three leaders, Laxma Reddy, Vijay Kumar and Kaleem Baba, conducted pujas at the Charminar Bhagyalaxmi Ammavari Temple on Tuesday and took the pledge saying that Revanth had sold party tickets.

Speaking on this occasion,



Kuruva Vijay Kumar said that they brought the issue of Revanth selling party tickets to the notice of the high command with clear evidence and had filed their protest.

500 killed in israel attack on Gaza hospital

PNS ■ KHAN YOUNIS

The Gaza Health Ministry says over 500 people have been killed in what it says was an Israeli airstrike on a Gaza City Hospital.

Hundreds of people were

seeking shelter at the al-Ahli Hospital at the time of the blast.

Photos showed fire engulfing the hospital halls, shattered glass and body parts scattered across the area.

There was no immediate Israeli military comment.



'Drivers of development'

Continued from page 1

Attacking the Congress, KCR said that Congress leaders would be a threat to farmers as they would provide only three hours of power supply to farmers and would scrap the Dharani Portal.

KCR said the Congress governed the country for 60 years but failed to give uninterrupted power. He also said that industries faced problems due to the

power crisis and farmers were dying of snake bites in the fields at night as the electricity supply was irregular.

At Siddipet, KCR turned emotional about his association with the place. "No matter what I do in this life, I will not be able to repay the debt I owe to this land that made me a winner. Telangana is now the country's leader but Siddipet is the leader of Telangana," he said.

"We are trying to provide Dalit Bandhu to 50,000 families or one lakh families every year. I am assuring the Dalits of Telangana that efforts will be made to ensure that every family gets Dalit Bandhu money. Rs 1 lakh is being given to BCs and it continues to reach every home," he said.

After the meeting, while returning to Hyderabad, the Chief Minister stopped at Siddipet and had tea. He also recalled his glory days. MP Damodara Rao, MP Kota Prabhakar Reddy, MLC Madhusudana Chari, MLC Deshapati Srinivas, MLC Yadava Reddy, MLA Raghottam Reddy, former MLC Parukh Hussain, ZP Chairman Roja Radhakrishna Sharma, Oteru Prathapara Reddy and others also attended the programme.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha
Tithi: Chaturthi: Oct 18 01:26 AM to Oct 19 01:12 AM
Panchami: Oct 19 01:12 AM to Oct 20 12:31 AM
Nakshatram: Anuradha: Oct 17 08:31 PM to Oct 18 09:00 PM
Jyeshtha: Oct 18 09:00 PM to Oct 19 09:03 PM
Rahukalam: 12:01 PM to 1:28 PM
Yamagandam: 7:40 AM to 9:07 AM
Varjyam: 02:37 AM to 04:13 AM
Gulika: 10:34 AM to 12:01 PM
Amritakalam: 10:24 AM to 12:02 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil
HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Mostly Sunny
Temp: 33°
Humidity: 53%
Sunrise: 6:10 AM
Sunset: 5:53 PM
Updated: October 17, 2023 5:00 PM

'KCR banking....

Continued from page 1

Here, the BJP used the money given to them by KCR as protection money.

"We have seen instances where people came on to the roads to stage a dharna as they have not received money. The BJP and the BRS competed and gave Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 per vote and spent around Rs 10,000 crore. The liquor shops in Munugode used to sell liquor worth Rs 60 crore every month, but during the Munugode by-election liquor worth Rs 300 crore was sold in 20 days," he said.

He said that the people of Telangana wanted freedom, social justice and

Kishan gets...

Continued from page 1

development but KCR had limited water, funds and appointments (Neellu, Nidulu, Niyamakalu) to his family.

He said that since KCR did not accept the challenge it is clear that KCR believed in money and alcohol to win elections. He asked how a police officer can say that Pravalika, an unemployed young woman who committed suicide did so due to love failure tarnishing her family. He said that Pravalika's death was definitely a murder by the government.

A case will be filed against the DCP who held a press meeting regarding Pravalika's suicide, he said.

INDIA bloc represents....

Continued from page 1

Addressing reporters in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, Gandhi said the opposition INDIA alliance will defend the "idea of India" by protecting its values, constitutional framework and freedom of people irrespective of religion or culture to express themselves and live in harmony.

"It is important to realise we (INDIA bloc) represent 60 per cent of the country, more people than the BJP does," he said, while referring to non-BJP ruled states.

Lashing out at the BJP and its ideological parent RSS, Gandhi said, "Their vision for our nation is different from ours. We believe in decentralisation whereas the BJP believes that all decisions should be taken in Delhi."

PM inaugurates Visakhapatnam...

Continued from page 1

To facilitate these transformative efforts, a substantial sum of 655 crore rupees has been allocated by the port authorities. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for these projects, underscoring their strategic importance. One of the noteworthy highlights of this momentous occasion was the dedication of the expanded Visakha

Container Terminal Phase-2 project to the nation. The expansion project aimed at significantly increasing the terminal's handling capacity. With the addition of new berths and state-of-the-art equipment, the Visakha Container Terminal can now accommodate a larger volume of containers and vessels, promoting trade growth. This project's expansion has been carried out under the Design-Build-Finance-Operate-

Transfer (DBFOT) scheme at an estimated cost of approximately Rs 633 crore, signifying a significant investment in the port's growth and modernization.

Senior officials of the VPA said that the inauguration signifies the government's commitment to bolstering India's maritime infrastructure and fostering economic prosperity, not only in Visakhapatnam but also across the nation.

BJYM leaders demand 10 tickets

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP Yuva Morcha leaders requested the BJP leadership to give them a chance during the allotment of Assembly tickets. The Yuva Morcha leaders demanded that at least 10 tickets should be given to them.

The BJP Yuva Morcha leaders held an emergency meeting with top leaders of the party at the State BJP office here on Tuesday.

Telangana BJP in-charge Sunil Bansal, Telangana BJP president G. Kishan Reddy and Telangana BJP Election Management chairman Eatala Rajender attended the meeting. During the meeting, a discussion was held on the allotment of tickets to BJYM leaders.

The Yuva Morcha leaders said that they have fought many battles for students and the unemployed. They asked Bansal to give a chance to leaders who went to jail for 16 days after protesting against the TSpsc question paper leakage.

Yuva Morcha president Bhanu Prakash is in the run for the Malkajgiri ticket. BJYM State Vice President Samala Pawan Reddy and Chada Anita Reddy are seeking tickets from Medchal and Peddapalli respectively.

OU troubles commuters by closing gates at 10 pm

K VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

TSRTC and Osmania University authorities are troubling the common people by closing the university gates at 10 pm. The bus commuters are reaching their homes one to two hours late due to the closure of gates.

The trouble started for the RTC commuters due to the closure of the Adikmet flyover bridge for the sake of repairs. However, the authorities concerned did not provide an alternative route to the RTC buses.

The traffic police have provided the Osmania University road as an alternative route. However, the university authorities are allowing the RTC buses only till 10 pm and

closing the gates after that. RTC commuters belonging to Kushaiguda, Uppal, Musheerabad, Kachiguda and other depots who pass through RTC Cross Roads, Secunderabad station and Tarnaka to reach Kushaiguda and Uppal are the worst sufferers.

However, the Uppal depot buses (113T/M, 113T/L and 113YI/T) are going back to Amberpet to go to Uppal ignoring the Tarnaka commuters and leaving them at NCC gate though they took a ticket to Tarnaka.

The same is the case of 3K, 3K/N and 3 route buses. They too are taking alternative routes via Secunderabad station or Warasiguda route to reach ECIL and Kushaiguda.

Rama, who caught 113T/M at Secretariat bus stop to go to

Closure of Adikmet flyover adds to their woes



Tarnaka, entered into an argument with the RTC conductor for leaving her at NCC gate. But the RTC conductor blamed the OU authorities

and went back to Amberpet. She walked up to Vidyannagar to catch another bus at 10.30 pm.

According to sources, there

is an agreement between the university authorities and the RTC that the university has to allow the RTC buses through its premises as the RTC is pro-

viding concession passes to the university students. However, the OU authorities have not been allowing the RTC buses into the university for some years.

Due to the closure of the Adikmet flyover route, the university students and common people are facing a lot of trouble as the university gates are closed at 10 pm.

The university authorities are behaving differently after the formation of Telangana, forgetting the fact that the trouble being faced by the people and students too belong to Telangana soil, one of the students told the Pioneer. He said that RTC buses used to go inside the university since its inception but the authorities are now behaving oddly enough.

Ashok Nagar suicide case altered to abetment

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chikkadpally police on Tuesday altered the Pravalika suicide case to abetment to suicide.

It is to be noted that Marri Pravalika (23) was a TSPSC aspirant, residing in a hostel at Ashok Nagar and a native of Warangal. She died by suicide on the night of October 13 over a relationship failure. Initially, the police had registered a case under Section 174 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Following the suicide, it was suspected that Pravalika took the extreme step due to postponement of TSPSC Group II exams. Based on the



investigation, Central Zone Deputy Commissioner of Police M Venkateswarulu said that the suicide note and Whatsapp chats between Pravalika and her paramour Shivaram Rathod led the former to take the extreme step.

The police have altered the case to Section 306 of the IPC and launched a search operation for Rathod.

IIITH research reveals chinks in mobile password armour

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Autofill makes our work easier, especially while logging credentials in a newly downloaded app or any website. However, while auto-filling your credentials there are some hidden malicious software which get access to your sensitive information. The researchers of the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad (IIITH) have revealed how login credentials can be inadvertently leaked by the Autofill functionality of mobile Password Managers (PMs).

IIITH Prof. Ankit Gangwal and his MTEch students Shubham Singh and Abhijeet Srivastava have done a study on "AutoSpill: Credential Leakage from Mobile PMs" that has won the Best Paper Award at the ACM Conference on Data



and Application Security and Privacy (CODASPY) 2023.

With around 92.3 per cent of Internet users accessing the Internet via a mobile device, PMs have become more popular on these small-screen devices due to the convenience of automatically filling in the required data on login forms.

However, PMs on modern mobile operating systems work in a way that is fundamental-

ly different from that on computers. When you are trying to log into an app on an Android Operating System (OS), the OS itself generates an auto-filling request to the PM acting as an intermediary between the apps.

Prof Gangwal said, "Let's say you are trying to log into your favourite music app on your mobile device, and you use the option of 'login via Google or Facebook,'" the music app will

open Google or Facebook login page inside itself via the WebView. When the PM is invoked to autofill the credentials, we found that the autofill operation could accidentally expose the credentials to the base app, which in this case is your music app." The ramifications in a scenario where the base app is a malicious one are humongous. "Even without phishing, any malicious app that asks you to login via another site can automatically get access to sensitive information," emphasises the Professor.

These findings led the team to conclude that both the Android System and the PMs are equally responsible for the credential AutoSpill. "We brought this to the notice of Google as well as the password managers, who then have acknowledged the security breach," notes the professor.

Final list of candidates for HCA polls out

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) elections, Election Officer V Sampath Kumar on Tuesday released the final list of contesting candidates for six posts.

The HCA election is scheduled to be held on Friday, October 20. After withdrawals, the final list of candidates was out with four people standing in the race for the president's post while four others vying for the vice-president's post. As many as 149 clubs and institutions, nine district associations and 15 international players will cast their vote during the process.

Contesting candidates include A Jagan Mohan Rao, Amarnath, Dr K Anil Kumar and PL Srinivasan nominated for the post of president. C Babu Rao, G Srinivasa Rao, P Sridhar and Sardar Daljeet Singh will be contesting for the post of vice-president.

Rs 131 cr seize, inducements cross that of 2018 polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Within eight days of model code of conduct coming into force, the inducements seized crossed the cumulative figure of 2018 polls. Total cumulative seizures from 9-10-23, 9 am to 17-17-23, 9 am are Rs1,30,26,91,531.

This is more than the total in 2018 polls and more than 2014 elections. In 2018, it was Rs111 crore and in 2014 it was Rs 76 crore.

As per ECI, a total of Rs 71.55 crore cash and Rs 40.08 crore in precious metals of the Rs 130 crore has been seized so far.

Model Code of Conduct came into effect from 09-10-2023 in connection with the Assembly elections to Telangana State for 119 Assembly constituencies to be held on 30-11-2023. Ever since Model Code of Conduct came into effect, as per the guidelines of the Election Commission of



India, Chief Electoral Officer, Telangana and Police formed 373 Flying Squads (FS), 374 Static Surveillance Teams (SST), 95 State Internal Border Checkposts besides mobile parties of local police to curb illegal transportation of money (cash, precious metals), liquor and freebies.

All the seizures by Telangana Police including cash, precious metals, liquor etc., crossed Rs 101,18,17,299 for this short period of eight days whereas, during Assembly

elections-2018 a total of about Rs 103 crore was seized for the total period model code of conduct.

Thus, it is revealed that, there is huge flow of cash, precious metals, liquor etc., leading to recovery of Rs. 101,18,17,299 for this short period. Hence, all the members of the political parties are requested to adhere to the model code of conduct issued by the Election Commission of India for smooth conduct of elections.

BATHUKAMMA FEST



Telangana Secretariat Employees Association organising Bathukamma celebrations at Dr BR Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat on Tuesday. This is the first time women have celebrated the festival after the opening of the Secretariat.

Two held, property worth Rs 1.2 lakh confiscated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Shankarpally police have arrested two accused persons in a case of burglary and recovered 190 grams of gold, 130 grams, two smart watches and one motorcycle on Tuesday, which are worth Rs 1.2 lakh.

A case has been filed on October 12 on the basis of a complaint by Panthulu Vamshidhar Reddy in which

he stated that he observed that the lock of his house has been broken including the bolt of the door.

He found all things in the house were in an uneven condition. He stated that Rs 1,20,000 net cash, gold and silver ornaments from there cupboard were found missing.

A case was filed under Sections 454 and 380 under IPC at Shankarpally police

station and Section 379 under IPC filed in Patancheru police station.

While the investigation was in progress to detect case, the finger prints of Lagula Raju Goud alias Jagadeesh Goud were found and he and his associate Shiva Goud were arrested at their residence.

The arrest was made under the supervision of R Jagadeeshwar Reddy, DCP Rajendra Nagar Zone.

People urged to prevent animal sacrifice during Dasara festival

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (GHSP-CA) has urged people to prevent the sacrifice of animals in adoration of Goddess Durga during the 10 days of Dasara festival.

As per Section 3 of Telangana Animals and Birds Sacrifices Prohibition Act 1950, no person shall kill any animal or bird in public places for religious worship or adoration on its precincts or in any congregation or procession connected with any religious worship in a public place while Section 4 states about the prohibition of officiate or offer or perform or assist or participate in any sacrifice in any place of religious worship in a public street.

Section 5 states that no person shall unknowingly allow any sacrifice to be performed at any place that is situated within any place of public or religious worship or adoration or its precincts in his possession or under his control. Violation of these provisions of law would attract punishment of imprisonment for more than five years.

City-wide checks to follow poll code: Election Officer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

District Electoral Officer (DEO) and Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner Ronald Rose has directed the election officials to carry out inspections across the city following the code of conduct for elections. He held a review meeting with bank, RBI, Income Tax, Vigilance, RTI and NCB officials at GHMC headquarters on Tuesday.

The Hyderabad DEO said that as per the directions of the Election Commission, parcel, courier, train checking and surveillance programmes at the borders should be carried out on a large scale to prevent the movement of cash and liquor in the Hyderabad district. CCTV cameras should be installed at all wine shops and monitored through the control room. Special measures should be taken to identify the hot spots in the district by the excise depart-



ment. All godowns should be checked and CC cameras should be installed. He added that checks should be carried out through 18 integrated checkpoints.

He said that the details of large amount of cash transactions in the last six months through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Post Office should be provided. Details of money transfers from one account to multiple accounts through the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) (Google Pay, Phone Pay, Paytm) should be provided. He said checks would be carried out in wholesale mar-

kets through e-waybills and the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) to prevent gold and silver from being smuggled.

The Income Tax Department will take action on cash transactions exceeding Rs 10 lakh. Details of cash transactions exceeding Rs 10 lakh and the sources of cash should be identified and provided by the banks. Surveillance and cameras should be installed on vehicles depositing cash in ATMs, the DEO added.

He said that the Registrar and Transfer Agents (RTA) officials will deploy their staff in 18 checkpoints while the Income Tax officials will perform a full investigation on the suspected cash transactions.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) department will carry out extensive checks on the drugs being transported from the border areas, especially Ghatkesar. Surveillance should be kept in places where cigarettes and ganja are supplied, he added.

Section 144 imposed for TSPSC exams

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Sandeep Shandilya on Tuesday imposed Section 144 of the CRPC ahead of Telangana State Public Service Commission exams.

The restrictions will remain in place from 6 am on October 17 to 6 am on October 21.

As per the Com mission-er's orders, a gathering of four or more persons is prohibited within 100 yards of the five examination centres.

The exams will be held from October 18 to 20 in two shifts, the first shift will be 9 am -12 noon, whereas the second shift will be 2- 5 pm.

Only on duty police officers, military personnel, home guards, flying squads responsible for investigation and bonafide funeral processions are exempted from the curfew.

UNSCRUPULOUS ACTIVITIES

Security tightened at Kapra lake

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner Ronald Rose said swift action will be implemented to prevent unscrupulous activities like the encroachment of lakes, illegal fishing, consumption of liquor, etc by implementing 24-hour security at the Kapra Pond on Tuesday.

The Commissioner visited LB Nagar Zone, Kapra Circle and Capra Lake, along with Directorate of Enforcement Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVD) Director Prakash Reddy. He



GHMC Commissioner Ronald Rose, along with other officials inspecting Kapra Lake on Tuesday

ordered that suitable measures should be taken by the GHMC, Irrigation, Lakes, Town Planning, Urban Biodiversity Wing (UBD) and Sanitation wings for the development and conservation of

ponds. He said that the static canal development programme works are being connected to the lakes. Kapra lake will be divided into four segments and completed quickly. He

said lakes and bunds have been cleaned through sanitation. The construction and demolition material is being completely cleaned and lake protection groups have been appointed.

As part of the beautification of the lakes, walking track fencing and plantation drives have been undertaken through urban biodiversity. CC cameras and police patrolling are being conducted.

Zonal Commissioner Pankaja, DC Mukund, Irrigation EA Narayana, CE Lakes Suresh and Town Planning City Planner Prasad participated in the meeting.

Workshop to sensitise cops on insurance frauds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bajaj Allianz Insurance on Tuesday conducted a workshop on life insurance frauds for Telangana CID officials.

The workshop stressed on the significance of updating investigation skills of the police officers to deal with various insurance frauds. It was inaugurated by Additional Director General of CID, Mahesh M Bhagwat.

The workshop was conducted by Anil PM (Head-Legal, Chief Compliance), Nirmal Paul (Head of Fraud Prevention Unit) and Raghvender Angali. All SsP and other senior officers of the CID attended the workshop.



Four held; 1,000 kg ganja, items worth Rs 3.5 cr seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Anti Narcotics Bureau (TSNAB), in coordination with Bolarum Police, on Tuesday arrested four persons and seized 1000 kg ganja, along with property worth Rs 3.5 crore.

The accused were identified as Sakaram Rathod (35) a native of Karnataka; Ahmed Khan (27); Digambar Ramu Pawar (30) a native of Karnataka and Ajay Ramavtar Chaurasiya (39) a native of Maharashtra.

Sakaram came to Hyderabad and set up a panipuri business in 2010 near Galaxy theatre in Shaikpet. As the business began to fail, Sakaram shifted to his village in Bidar and worked as a contractor for a sugar factory.

After a while he began drug peddling and smuggled ganja from Odisha to Karnataka. Sakaram was previously



booked under five NDPS cases between 2014 and 2022.

A few of his acquaintances transported the drug from Andhra Pradesh and Odisha to Karnataka and decided to pursue the same. Sakaram contacted Ramavtar and supplied ganja to him. Sakaram was also arrested for supplying the drug. Following his release, the accused contacted his cousin Jaidev Chauhan for assistance in transporting the drug from AP and Odisha.

On October 13, the four

accused travelled to Odisha along with the 1000 kg ganja in a DCM van and returned to Autonagar, Rajahmundry where Sakaram joined them. The accused were nabbed by TSNAB and Bolarum Police while travelling in the car. They have been booked under Sections 8(c) r/w 20(b)(ii)(C), 29 of NDPS Act-1985 of Bolarum police station. Apart from the DCM van and four mobile phones from the accused.

Here is why KCR may prefer Naidu's release from jail

The turn of events in the political landscape of Andhra Pradesh will have unintended but significant consequences in Telangana in the November 30th Assembly elections. The arrest of former chief minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu has brought a churn in the politics of AP, besides exerting influence on non-local voters of AP origin settled in TS. When one considers the two Telugu states, nobody can wish away the impression left by Naidu on the administration in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh during his chief ministerial stint that lasted eight and half years. Of particular interest is his indelible mark on initiating the stupendous growth of IT industry in Hyderabad. No wonder, the arrest of Naidu for

his alleged role in the AP skill development scam triggered techies-backed protests not just in the Telugu states but also in at least 20 locations across the world. In fact, the protests in and around Hyderabad by IT professionals were so embarrassing that the Telangana government headed by K. Chandrasekhara Reddy, to issue a warning to management of IT companies that severe action would be taken if those protests continued in TS. Still, the protests continue. What if they are overtly backed by TDP leaders? Whatever it be, the arrest of Naidu has united non-local people in TS, especially those belonging to the politically influential Kamma caste, in pledging their support for Naidu.

KCR may have watered down Naidu's contribution to the IT sector's growth in Hyderabad by crediting former chief minister N Janardhan Reddy with laying its foundation in the early Nineties. But he cannot be blind to the fact that sizeable sections of non-local people are demanding the immediate release of Naidu, who has been remanded by the ACB court

KCR may have watered down Naidu's contribution to the IT sector's growth in Hyderabad by crediting former chief minister N Janardhan Reddy with laying its foundation in the early Nineties. But he cannot be blind to the fact that sizeable sections of non-local people are demanding the immediate release of Naidu, who has been remanded by the ACB court at Vijayawada. Naidu is reportedly spending agonising days in the Central Prison in Rajahmundry without even basic facilities. Protesting IT professionals have questioned the propriety of the TS government in denying permission for rallies at a time when other countries granted the same for people seeking to express their solidarity with Naidu. The TS government cannot wish away the fact that Hyderabad is still the joint capital for both TS and AP. It is a different matter that Naidu, to avoid being embroiled in the 'cash for vote' scam, chose to



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana over the arrest of Naidu. Non-local people can influence the final outcome of the elections by virtue of their commanding presence in more than 40 seats out of 119 constituencies in the TS Legislative Assembly. There being no scope for any party to win these seats with a wide margin, the votes of settlers become crucial for every party, more so for the Bharat Rashtra Samiti. In the 2018 Assembly elections, settlers had rallied behind KCR believing his word that the BRS government would treat locals and non-locals alike. Now, with Naidu behind bars, BRS must ensure its own 'safety'. So, KCR may be compelled to ask his Andhra counterpart YS Jaganmohan Reddy to ensure the early, if not immediate, release of Chandrababu Naidu from jail.

Thanks to the friendship of Telugu states' chief ministers, AP may not insist on TS paying more than Rs. 6,000 crore for electricity supplied by the power utility AP Generation Corporation. Well-furnished buildings of AP, valued at hundreds of crores of rupees on the old Secretariat campus, had been given away to TS government gratis. On his part, KCR had extended help to Jaganmohan Reddy to come to power in 2019 by influencing TDP candidates having business interests in Hyderabad to shift their loyalties to the YSR Congress Party. For instance, Adala Prabhakar Reddy, Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy (MPs from Nellore and Ongole respectively) switched to YSRCP after being declared as TDP candidates. Jagan had the last laugh at the hustings. Now YSRCP social media

groups have urged non-local voters in Telangana to support KCR this time so that Jagan could be assured of the latter's help in the 2024 Assembly polls. They are concentrating on certain communities, Reddys in particular, settled in Hyderabad to mould their thoughts on voting. However, the Reddy community in Telangana, at one time called 'ruling caste' due to their political predominance, are nursing their wounds caused by losing power to a Velama community leader post bifurcation. So, the Reddy community may look towards the Congress party, for which that caste has traditionally been the mainstay. As KCR is desperate to achieve a hat-trick this time at any cost, seeking Naidu's release from jail may not be a big deal in the present situation.

BRS failed to govern: Goyal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday that people have decided to bring a "double engine government" in Telangana and there would be no chance for both the BRS and Congress this time. He has said that BRS is a "failed government" and a "family rule" and corruption has reached its peak. Addressing a party workers meeting held at Yousufguda in Hyderabad here on Tuesday, Piyush Goyal alleged that a single family of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy has been ruling the State resulting in high-level corruption. "See in the last 10 years how Telangana became backward because of one family rule. Each party member should go house to house and explain the corruption and misrule by KCR, his son KT Rama Rao and his daughter and MLC Kavitha. Also, explain to people how the BJP can offer a better government than this. "Tell the people the advantages of having a double-engine government.



Union Minister Piyush Goyal speaking at a BJP workers meeting in Hyderabad on Tuesday

Piyush Goyal said that the Jubilee Hills constituency is under the control of Majlis who are hand in glove with the BRS

Inform them how India became one of the top five economies in the world and the steps taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this direction to make it the top third economy," said Piyush Goyal. He said that there was no step-motherly treatment of any state but it was the Telangana government which delayed in allotting land for the establishment of Sammakka- Sarakka Tribal University. He expressed the opinion that the State did not want the university to be established

and that was why it delayed in allotting the required land. He accused the BRS government of not implementing Fasal Beema Yojana which would benefit farmers. He wondered how a government with about Rs 7.5 crore lakh debt could take up development activities. "The investment in Telangana is 11 times more compared with previous government. A total of Rs. 15,000 crore is being spent on expressways and highways. Farmers want their children to have a better education, jobs and income. This can be possible only by Modi. Rajya Sabha member and OBC Morcha All India president K. Laxman said that people are vexed with KCR family rule as it was confined to four family members. Piyush Goyal said that the Jubilee Hills constituency is under the control of Majlis who are hand in glove with the BRS. He said that the Chief Minister has failed to implement his promises and make new ones. He has also pointed out how the government had reacted to the recent suicide of Pravallika, an unemployed from Warangal.

BRS key leaders switch to Congress

PNS ■ NALGONDA
A good number of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) key leaders from Nalgonda, Kodad and Nagarjuna Sagar constituencies switched to the Congress party. It came as a big shock to the ruling BRS party and party candidates in these constituencies. In Nalgonda, Municipal Vice-chairman Abbagoni Ramesh Goud along with five councillors joined the Congress party under the leadership of Congress Lok Sabha member Komatireddy Venkat Reddy. The BRS leaders switched to the Congress in protest against party renominating the sitting MLA Kancharla Bhupal Reddy. The councillors who joined the Congress party are Quayyum Baig, Jeripothula Aswini Bhaskar Goud, Koppu Saisri Sandeep, Ajijuddin Bhasker and Pradeep Naik. Apart from them, Ramalingudem Mandal Praja Parishad member Muthineni Anusha also joined the Congress party. In Kodad, BRS former MLA Venepally Chandher Rao, BRS Kodad constituency in-charge Kanmanthareddy Sasidhar Reddy, DCCB former chairman Muthavarapu Pandu Ranga Rao

joined the Congress party in the presence of Congress MP N Uttam Kumara Reddy. They switched to the Congress party in opposition to the sitting MLA Bollam Malliah. Uttam Kumar Reddy persuaded them to join the Congress party. As far as Nagarjuna Sagar constituency is concerned, Gurrampode Zilla Parishad Territorial Constituency member Gali Ravi Kumar, 10 sarpanches and 12 former sarpanches joined the Congress party. They quit the BRS in opposition to the sitting MLA Nomula Bhagat.



Nalgonda Municipal Vice-Chairman Abbagoni Ramesh Goud and six councillors joining the Congress in the presence of MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy in Nalgonda on Tuesday

Neredcharla Municipal vice-chairman joins BJP

Neredcharla Municipal vice-chairman Challa Sriathia Reddy from BRS party joined BJP in Suryapet on Tuesday. He joined the party in presence of Telangana BJP Election Management Committee chairman Eatala Rajender, BJP state vice-president Sankineni Venkateshwar Rao, Suryapet district BJP president Bobba Bhagya Reddy and her brother Telangana BJP official spokesperson Poreddy Kishore Reddy at State BJP office, along

with her followers. It is learnt that Sriathia Reddy joined BJP only after the confirmation of Huzurnagar constituency ticket. It is also learnt that she had already made arrangements for the elections. Speaking on this occasion, Sriathia Reddy alleged that the objective of creation of Telangana was not realised under the BRS rule. "The BRS family rule and negligence towards women was painful. We fought for self respect... but even today

there is a situation to fight for self-respect", she said. Sriathia Reddy said that the credit of introducing 33 per cent reservations to women and daring decisions while implementing welfare programmes goes to the Narendra Modi government only. She said, Sankineni Venkateshwar Rao commented that the Congress-BRS parties were not in a position to tell what they did to the state.

Jana hopeful of becoming chief minister

PNS ■ NALGONDA
Former minister K Jana Reddy on Tuesday claimed that the chances of his becoming Chief Minister cannot be ruled out. He, however, refused to specifically say whether he was in the race of the post of the Chief Minister. Speaking to the media at Gurrampode, after addressing the Congress workers' meeting, he said that he never aspired for posts, but positions came to him. It is not a big deal. If the post is offered to him, his son K Jayveer Reddy, who is contesting from Nagarjuna Sagar constituency, would resign and he would contest from there. He was talking to an electronic media person. It may be recalled that Jana Reddy was the Home Minister in Y S Rajasekhara Reddy government. Later, he unsuccessfully contested from Nagarjuna Sagar constituency twice.

Huge crowds expected at KCR's public meeting

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR
Preparations are in full swing for Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao's meeting in Jachcherla on Wednesday. A large number of people will turn out voluntarily at the meeting, according to Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud on Tuesday. The Minister, along with Jachcherla MLA C Laxma Reddy, inspected the venue for the Chief Minister's meeting on Tuesday. A massive dais has been erected for the meeting. As a large number of people are expected to turn out to greet the Chief Minister, Srinivas Goud asked the volunteers to take all precautions. He suggested some changes in arrangements. He inspected the helipad which has been built near the venue for the public meeting. Speaking to the media on the occasion, Srinivas Goud asserted that the people were according a rousing welcome to the Chief Minister because he secured statehood for Telangana and turned it into a vibrant State.



Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud inspecting the venue for Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao's public meeting in Jachcherla on Tuesday

The people welcomed the manifesto released by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). The Chief Minister fulfilled all the promises given to the people. He would stand by his promises. People have the highest trust in KCR because he fulfilled all promises. The promises incorporated in the BRS manifesto would be fulfilled, he said. He said that the people would not trust the Congress and BJP as they would approach people for votes. The Congress and BJP-ruled States were not implementing the schemes which were introduced in Telangana, he said.

Balancing reservoir to be built at Hemasmudram

Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud has said that parched lands in the district will soon be transformed into fertile farms. Apart from the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRILS), a balancing reservoir will be built at the major Hemasmudram tank under Hanwada mandal in the district. He promised to see all the works relating to balancing the reservoir will be completed in 365 days. He was addressing the newly-elected Ibrahimbad Fishermen's Cooperative Society president K Venkat Ramulu, secretary Palamurivenkataiah and others at his camp office here. He assured the fishermen that ID cards would be given to fishermen and provide welfare scheme benefits to all eligible persons. Former MPTC VannadaAnjanna, former president Yadaiah and others were also present on the occasion.

BRS workers told to make CM's Nov 5 meeting a success

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM
Kothagudem MLA Vanama Venkateshwar Rao and MP Vaddhiraju Ravichandra on Tuesday appealed to the Bharat Rashtra Samithi activists to make Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao's public meeting on November 5 a grand success. Speaking at a party workers meeting, Ravichandra said that the Congress party which ruled the combined Andhra Pradesh for 60 did a great injustice to people in Telangana. The people would not trust the six guarantees announced by the Congress party. He said that Jalagam Venkatarao's hope of contesting from the constituency was shattered. The Chief Minister renominated the sitting MLA from Kothagudem. He further said that the Chief Minister was striving to ensure the all-round development of the State. He was



BRS MP Vaddhiraju Ravichandra speaking at a meeting in Kothagudem on Tuesday

making efforts to create wealth and distribute it to the poor. All the water bodies in the State were brimming with water. Zilla Parishad Vice-Chairman Kancharla

Chandrasekhara Rao, Kothagudem Municipality chairperson Kapu Semthalakshmi, vice-chairman Doodhar Purushottam Rao and others were present.

Police personnel asked to be on alert at check-post

PNS ■ WARANGAL
Collector P Pravinya on Tuesday paid a surprise visit to the check-post on Warangal-Narsampet road, inspected the records and issued several instructions to personnel manning the check-post. She asked the personnel there to discharge their duties with dedication. The check-posts have been set up to prevent illegal transportation of liquor and money. Flying squad teams, nine statistical surveillance teams



Warangal Collector P Pravinya issuing instructions to a police officer at a check-post in Warangal on Tuesday

and nine video teams have been constituted across the district. In Narsampeta constituency, three such teams have been constituted.

She asked the police on guard duty near the strong rooms, located at agriculture market yard at Narsampeta, and EVM warehouses to remain on alert. Later, the Collector inspected RDO office and examined the voters' list. She wanted the personnel there to dispose of all applications from people seeking enrolment as voters without keeping them pending. Revenue Divisional Officer Krishnaveni, ACP Tirumal Rao, MRO Visva Prasad and other poll officials took part in the meeting.

Officials asked to help EC ensure free and fair polls

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL
District Collector, who is the District Election Officer, P Uday Kumar, has called upon the presiding officer and assistant presiding officers to follow the Election Commission of India rules and facilitate free and fair elections. He was addressing the presiding and Assistant Presiding officers of Atchampet, Nagarkurnool constituencies at a training programme held for them at PrajaVaani conference hall at the Collectorate here on Tuesday. He wanted the government employees drafted for election duties should have a good grip over the election commission guidelines.

They should be thorough with the working of the M-3 EVM machines being used in current assembly elections. The poll staff should improve their knowledge of the control unit, ballot unit and VVPAT machines. As per the election commission rules, mock polling should be conducted 90 minutes before the actual polling. The webcasting of the election process will take place so that the poll officials at district, state and national levels will be able to monitor the polling process directly from the polling booths. He asked the Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers to give no room to any mistakes in the



Nagarkurnool Collector P Uday Kumar speaking at a meeting with officials in Nagarkurnool on Tuesday

conduct of elections and to conduct the polls rather transparently. None should go into the polling compartments, he said. The polling staff should

undergo the training and conduct the polls efficiently. In all 254 POs and APOs from Nagarkurnool and 270 from Atchampet took part in the training programme.

The webcasting of the election process will take place so that the poll officials at district, state and national levels will be able to monitor the polling process directly from the polling booths

INDIA CORNER

'Dead' for 20 years, ex-employee of Navy arrested for triple murder

A 60-year-old ex-Navy employee who faked his death for 20 years was arrested by Delhi Police Crime Branch for allegedly killing a relative and burning to death two labourers, police said on Tuesday. Balesh Kumar was arrested from a house in Najafgarh where he was staying with his family having changed his name to Aman Singh, police said. Balesh was 40 when he allegedly killed his brother-in-law, Rajesh alias Khushiram, over money in Delhi's Bawana area in 2004. He also allegedly had an illicit relationship with Rajesh's wife. Police in 2004 arrested Balesh's brother Sundar Lal, who was also involved in Rajesh's murder, however, Balesh managed to give them a slip. According to Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ravindra Yadav, Balesh, who was in a transport business then, escaped in a truck to Rajasthan. There he set his truck on fire and burned two of his workers to death.



Naxalite with Rs 6 lakh reward on head arrested in Gadchiroli district

A Naxalite with a reward of Rs 6 lakh on his head was arrested in eastern Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district on Tuesday, police said. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and police launched an operation to nab Messo Kawdo (50), resident of Rekhbatal in Etapalli tehsil of the district, after receiving a tip-off that he had been spotted in Jajawandi-Doddur forest area, said a release here. Personnel of C-60, a special anti-Naxalite commando force of Maharashtra, local police and CRPF took part in the operation, said the release, issued by district superintendent of police Neelotpal. Kawdo allegedly stated during questioning that he was working as a member of the Naxalites' supply team since 2017, and was involved in the supply of explosives in Abujhmad area. He was also allegedly involved in two encounters with Maharashtra police, including one with C-60 teams.



Passport racket: 4 more held, Nepalese connection under scanner

The CBI has arrested four middlemen who were part of a racket involving passport department officials that has allegedly issued more than 60 Indian passports to Nepalese citizens on the basis of forged documents and seized over Rs 46 lakh in cash, officials said on Tuesday. A preliminary investigation has detected a "Nepalese connection" in the racket, they said. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested Sachin Rai, Barun Singh Rathore, Uday Shankar Roy and Subrata Saha in connection with the case. The federal agency had already arrested Goutam Kumar Saha, posted as the senior superintendent at the Passport Laghu Seva Kendra (PLSK), Gangtok, and agent Dipu Chetri from a Siliguri hotel on Saturday while the latter was allegedly paying a bribe of Rs 1.9 lakh for the issuance of a passport. During searches, the CBI seized cash amounting to more than Rs 46 lakh and a cache of forged documents used to get Indian passports, the officials said.



Aim for Indian space station by 2035, Indian on Moon by 2040

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked scientists to aim to send the first Indian to the Moon by 2040 and set up an Indian space station by 2035, according to an official statement. He gave these directions during a meeting to review the preparedness of the Gaganyaan mission and the first demonstration flight of the crew escape system test vehicle scheduled for October 21.



Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence in India's capabilities and affirmed the nation's commitment to scaling new heights in space exploration

"The meeting evaluated the mission's readiness, affirming its launch in 2025," the statement said. During the meeting, the prime minister outlined the future of India's space exploration endeavours and urged scientists to work towards interplanetary missions, including a Venus Orbiter Mission and a Mars Lander. "Building on the success of Indian space initiatives,

including the recent Chandrayaan-3 and Aditya L1 missions, the prime minister directed that India should now aim for new and ambitious goals, including setting up 'Bharatiya Antariksha Station' (Indian space station) by 2035 and sending first Indian to the Moon by 2040," the statement said. To realize this vision, the Department of Space will develop a roadmap for Moon exploration, it said.

"This will encompass a series of Chandrayaan missions, the development of a Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV), construction of a new launch pad, setting up human-centric Laboratories and associated technologies," the statement said. The Department of Space presented a comprehensive overview of the Gaganyaan Mission, including various technologies developed so far

such as human-rated launch vehicles and system qualification. It was noted that around 20 major tests, including three uncrewed missions of the Human Rated Launch Vehicle (HLVM3) are planned. Prime Minister Modi expressed confidence in India's capabilities and affirmed the nation's commitment to scaling new heights in space exploration.

2020 DELHI RIOTS

Court raps cops for 'half-hearted' probe, seeks written reply

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has come down heavily on the city police for conducting "further investigation" in a 2020 communal riots case after filing charge sheet in a "half-hearted manner" and asked the officer concerned to appear before it with a written explanation. Additional Sessions Judge Pulastya Pramachala was hearing the arguments on charges against three accused in the northeast Delhi riots case, where the FIR was registered by the Gokalpuri police station. Noting that initially 25 complaints were clubbed in the case and the court in April last year had directed that only 17 complaints would be "entertained", the court said the Investigating Officer (IO) had filed a new supplementary charge sheet on May 17, 2023, for prosecuting 22 complaints.

Any act of terrorism is unjustifiable: NSA Doval

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Terrorism continues to constitute one of the most serious threats to international peace and regardless of its motivation or cause, the menace is "unjustifiable", NSA Ajit Doval said on Tuesday. In an address at a conclave of NSAs of India and central Asian countries in Kazakhstan, he also offered fully funded capacity building programmes by New Delhi in a wide range of areas to the participating nations. The National Security Advisor also said that India is ready to provide the central Asian nations the technology relating to United Payment Interface (UPI) free of cost for their independent use. He said that setting up of sovereign digital payment systems will greatly enhance commercial linkages between India and Central Asia and benefit people who may have to travel to India for medical treatment, according to sources. The NSA said connectivity

and economic integration with the Central Asian countries is a key priority for India. However, while promoting connectivity, it is important to ensure that connectivity initiatives are consultative, transparent and participatory, he said. Doval said connectivity initiatives should respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and that they should also adhere to environmental parameters, ensure financial viability and not become debt burdens. The remarks came amid increasing criticism of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In this context, the absence of direct land access between Central Asia and India is an anomaly, he observed. This absence of direct connectivity is the result of a conscious policy of denial by a particular country, he said in comments seen as an indirect reference to Pakistan. Doval said this situation is not only self-defeating for this country but it also reduces the collective well-being of the entire region. He also underlined the advantages of including the Chabahar port in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Doval invited Central Asian neighbours to utilize the Chabahar port as well as its Shaheed Bahesti terminal, being operated by an Indian company, for maritime trade. He solicited support for including Chabahar port within the framework of INSTC. Both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan will be joining the INSTC soon. With this, all the five Central Asian countries will be a member of the INSTC.

Winnability, performance criteria for ticket distribution: Ashok Gehlot

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday said legislators who did development work in their areas cannot be denied a party ticket. When asked whether a special priority will be given to 102 MLAs who saved the government during the 2020 political crisis in Rajasthan, Gehlot said the winnability of every candidate will be considered when it comes to nomination. Rajasthan is headed for an assembly election coming November. "Any work related to any area is due to the legislator only. How can he be made to sit (denied a ticket)," Gehlot told reporters at Jaipur airport before leaving for Delhi. The CM was departing for a Congress Screening



Committee meeting scheduled today. He said the party's Election Committee meeting has been proposed to be held on Wednesday. Gehlot accused the BJP and RSS of spreading "rumour" that Congress legislators committed huge corruption. "If democracy has to be saved then Congress has to be brought in Rajasthan. This is what I believe. Only Congress can save democracy in the country," he said. Gehlot also attacked Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, saying he can have the right to ask for votes only if he brings back the Old Pension Scheme, implement an urban-rural development guarantee, social security, and Rs 25 lakh in health insurance at the central level. He praised his government's work in the state saying "Such schemes have probably not come anywhere in India." Gehlot once again targeted the BJP over the political crisis faced by his government in 2020. "Governments fell in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka but could not be toppled here. Party President Mallikarjun Kharge yesterday gave the credit for this to the people. If the public had been against us, half the MLAs would have left at that time," he said.

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The Congress on Tuesday released the party's manifesto for the November 17 assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh as it promised to conduct a caste survey and also announced a bevy of sops, including 27 per cent reservation to the OBCs, farm loan waiver and Rs 25 lakh medical insurance for all the people in the state, if voted to power. Releasing the 106-page manifesto listing 59 promises and 101 main guarantees, state Congress chief Kamal Nath also announced to provide LPG cylinders at Rs 500 and to

form an IPL team of the state if the opposition party forms its government after the polls. In order to bring happiness in the state, the party will start the 'Khushhali Mission', Nath said, adding the party's new slogan is "Congress Aayegi, Khushhali Layegi" (Congress will come and bring happiness). The Congress also promised to give an assistance of Rs 1,500 per month to women, farm loan waiver up to Rs 2 lakh, 100 units of free electricity and 200 units at half rate to consumers, free power for 5 HP motor for irrigation purpose to cultivators, waive pending electricity

dues of farmers and taking back false cases related to electricity and farm agitations. "We will provide health insurance cover of Rs 25 lakh, which also has an accidental cover of Rs 10 lakh, for all the people," Nath said while releasing the manifesto. Nath also promised 27 per cent reservation to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in government jobs and schemes. The former state chief minister also announced purchase of wheat at the minimum rate of Rs 2,600 per quintal and paddy at Rs 2,500 per quintal and ensured that the cultivators will get their input costs.

He also promised to implement the Old Pension Scheme of 2005 and also announced Rs 2,000 pension for 'bahudivyangians' (those with multiple disabilities). The party will also start the 'Padho-Padhao Yojna' under which government school children from classes 1 to 8 will get Rs 500 per month, of classes 9 and 10 will get Rs 1,000 per month and those in classes 11 and 12 will get Rs 1,500 per month. The scheme was recently announced by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the state. Nath said the Congress will

make school education free in the state. The party will also implement the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act in notified tribal areas of the state, he said. Focusing on tribal votes, the Congress also promised to raise the labour charges of Tendu leaf collectors to Rs 4,000 per standard bag. With an aim to consolidate its position among the SC community voters, the party promised to set up the Sant Shiromani Ravidas Kaushal Unnayan (Skill Enhancement) University in Sagar district of the state.

SENA MLAS' DISQUALIFICATION ROW SC grants Speaker final opportunity to set realistic time schedule for deciding pleas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday granted Maharashtra assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar a final opportunity to give it a realistic time-frame for deciding the cross-petitions filed by the rival factions of the Shiv Sena seeking disqualification of each other's MLAs following a split in the party. The court said the disqualification petitions have to be adjudicated expeditiously. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud noted the submission of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that he will personally engage with the speaker during Dussehra vacation and indicate a firm set of modalities. "We are not satisfied with the time schedule. SG has apprised that during Dussehra

breaks he would personally engage with the speaker so as to indicate a firm set of modalities," the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said while posting the matter for hearing on October 30. The apex court had earlier come down hard on the speaker over the delay in deciding the pleas filed by the U d h a v Thackeray faction for disqualification of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and several MLAs loyal to him, saying the speaker cannot defeat the orders of the top court. Similar disqualification petitions have also been filed by the Shinde bloc against lawmakers owing allegiance to Thackeray. On September 18, the top court had directed the speaker to spell out the timeline for adjudication of the petitions.

Assam Ministers to spend 5 days in villages to assess schemes

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

All Assam ministers will spend five days in one village each towards the end of the year to assess the practical implementation of various welfare schemes, a cabinet meeting decided on Tuesday. They will also lay foundation for 400 new school buildings including 100 in the tea garden areas during the stay. For renovation of old schools, Rs 7 crore will be allocated per institution, the cabinet decided. The meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, resolved that all ministers will stay at a particular village for five days and five nights between December 25 and January 10. The villages will be chosen from five different zones, the CM wrote on 'X'. The cabinet also approved settlement of land for 123 indigenous and landless families for homestead purposes in urban areas under Mission Basundhara 2.0.

PNS ■ AIZAWL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was on a two-day visit to poll-bound Mizoram, was seen riding pillion on a two-wheeler taxi in state capital Aizawl on Tuesday and hailed the much-talked-about traffic discipline in the northeastern state, a party leader said. Gandhi met veteran Congress leader and former chief minister Lal Thanhawla at his residence in Zarkawt area. While returning from Lal Thanhawla's residence, he rode pillion on a two-wheeler taxi, state Congress media cell chairman Lalremruata Renthlei told



PTI. Gandhi expressed happiness on witnessing the state's traffic etiquette and said that "there is a lot to learn from this culture of respecting each other", he said. Mizoram's traffic discipline has been lauded by eminent people, including former Indian

president Ram Nath Kovind. This traffic discipline has earned Aizawl the title of the 'Silent City' or 'No Honking City' of India. Cars stick to the left side and two-wheelers to the right side of the left lane. No vehicle overtakes or crosses to the other side of the road reserved for vehicles coming from the opposite direction. Gandhi, who arrived in Aizawl on Monday, took part in a padayatra, during which he was greeted by large crowds. At the end of the march, he addressed a rally, attacking the BJP and Mizoram's ruling Mizo National Front (MNF).

11 persons killed in blasts at two firecracker units in TN

PNS ■ VIRUDHUNAGAR

At least eleven persons were killed and two injured in two separate fire accidents at fireworks units in Rangapalayam and Kichanayakanpatti village in the district on Tuesday, police said. Police, fire and rescue service personnel, and the public put up joint efforts in extinguishing the flames and trying to rescue the victims. "Seven charred bodies were recovered from the sudden blast at the fireworks unit in Rangapalayam, and their identities are yet to be established," a senior police official said. The police suspect that

they could be workers, he said. Three persons who were rescued from the unit succumbed to injuries. Another such incident at a fireworks unit at Kichanayakanpatti village left a man dead. He has been identified as Vembu (35), police said. Two women workers who were rescued have been admitted to the Srivilliputtur Government Hospital for treatment. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin condoled the loss of lives in the accident and announced a solatium of Rs 3 lakh each for the families of the deceased and Rs 1 lakh for the grievously injured.

BCCC ADVISORY TO ENTERTAINMENT CHANNELS

Extreme caution must on portrayal of SCs, STs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC) on Tuesday asked entertainment channels to exercise "extreme caution" while portraying the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in television programmes to avoid hurting the sentiments of the members of the two communities. The channels, while depicting the stories of the members of the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) com-

munities, must ensure that the "nuance and humanness" of the stories are communicated "sensitively" and that the violence displayed does not lead to "re-traumatization" of the communities or victims, the council said in its advisory. While portraying stories which are based solely on social evils such as untouchability and casteism, the entertainment channels should not engage in "victimization" of the people belonging to SC and ST communities, the self regulatory



body of non-news entertainment channels said. It said it understands that many stories possess a moral or ethical dimension requiring portrayal of the "good" and the "evil", including depiction of characters doing "evil deeds". "However, while doing so, the channel must ensure that it doesn't use language that is unlawful and which might hurt the sentiments of a particular community," it added. The BCCC asks channels to be "cautious and balanced"

while depicting scenes pertaining to these communities as even an isolated episode scene taken out of context can cause unrest among these communities, the council said. The channels should "exercise extreme caution in order to avoid hurting the sentiments of people belonging to the SC and ST communities", it added. The BCCC noted that crimes against SCs and STs are "rampant" in Indian society and range from physical to verbal and sexual assault.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Murder without killer

Nithari killing prime suspects win relief, justice for kin families goes abegging

This has become an intermittent habit with our justice delivery system, our judicial system and us as society. From Jessica to Arushi to now at least 19 underprivileged kids in the Nithari are of the NCR, there have been murders most foul discovered, but our learned courts at last tell us that the investigation does not prove that the suspects/accused did it. So they are let off with a rap on the knuckles. The investigators ---- transferred, promoted, retired or dead ---- face no accountability either. That seems to be the bane that has come to revisit us in the form of Allahabad HC's shocking decision on the Nithari murder accused, domestic help Surinder Koli and his master Moninder Singh Pandher. The incident, reported from Noida in 2005-06, took years for the horrifying details to come out. The Nithari murders were especially gruesome as they involved killing innocent children in cold blood; several dead bodies were recovered from a nearby drain. Many bodies had internal organs removed, hinting also at an organised organ racket. But a botched-up investigation along with loopholes in the judicial system made sure that the perpetrators could go scot-free. Though Koli and Pandher were found guilty in 2009, the High Court has recently overturned the guilty verdict ostensibly because of lack of evidence and the testimony of alleged witnesses.



In the annals of Indian criminal history, the Nithari serial killings stand as a chilling testament to the depths of human depravity. The case shocked the nation as young women and children fell victim to unimaginable brutality. The Nithari killings were a series of abductions, sexual assaults and murders. The victims disappeared without a trace, leaving their families in anguish and despair. As investigations progressed, the police unearthed gruesome evidence at the residence of Pandher and Koli. The house was a charnel house, revealing the ghastly remains of several missing persons. The CBI recovered many bodies and body parts from the nearby drain and it was thought that the case was foolproof against the prime suspects. But turns out that the scales of the blindfolded lady do not tilt equally for the influential and the underprivileged. Most victims were migrants from UP and Bihar, living on day's earnings and thus hardly had any say in the system or resources to pursue the case. The Nithari case is emblematic of the slow, convoluted and frustrating Indian justice system. The Nithari case is not just a local tragedy but a national shame. It epitomises the systemic issues that afflict India's criminal justice system, including lack of accountability, shortage of forensic resources and the inordinate delay in adjudication. It calls for immediate and comprehensive reforms within the Indian criminal justice system. Only then we can hope to prevent the travesty of justice from being repeated. This decision to acquit the prime suspects should stir society's collective conscience. If it does not, we are all as good as dead.

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PICTALK



Artisans prepare effigies of demon King Ravana ahead of the Dussehra festival, in Rampur

Development census serves our goals better

A census on the educational and professional profiles of citizens would help the government devise policies to plug in gaps that impede our development

Even though scientifically we are one species of Homo sapiens, human beings continue to show discrimination based on religion, race and caste. It's a shame for our country in particular and humanity as a whole when people kill each other in the name of caste, religion and race in different parts of the country. Most of the so-called developed countries have reached the level that we see today as they were able to do away with this social mischief. Unfortunately, in our country caste is a dominating player in our social set-up. To preserve the dignity of one's caste even parents are killing their children who try to move away from the clutches of caste rules. People make relationships, friendships and even helping hands based on caste factors.



However, the colonial British rule, as part of their policy of divide and rule, reinstated the social divisions. They introduced census operations that classified people into various castes and communities. This had the effect of reinforcing existing social divisions.

The great spiritual philosopher from Kerala Sree Narayana Guru advised people to follow the "one caste, one religion, one god" philosophy for the betterment of humanity. Unfortunately, even in his home state, no one is following this in true spirit. The Christian missionaries who converted native people on the belief that Christianity does not follow a caste system and gives respect to everyone are also bereft of a culture of oneness. Few Christian sects in Kerala are more fanatic than any other community in

the country. It seems that caste is a deeply ingrained aspect of Indian society, its reflection can be seen in every religious group in the country.

Even after 75 years of independence despite efforts to dismantle the formal caste system through legal means, caste-based discrimination and social stratification continue to be significant challenges in contemporary India. It is at this juncture, that the demand by the opposition parties in "INDIA" pushing for a nationwide caste census comes as a retrogressive step. What do our political parties expect from this? Do they want to reinstate the caste sentiments in the mindset of our youngsters? Are they promoting the historical wrongs our predecessors have done and want our youngsters to fight against one another along caste lines? Are they not interested in seeing our country as a developed nation? Politicians should not play petty electoral politics by fooling people. What is the ultimate objective of pushing for a caste census? If it is for the upliftment of a community/ caste by providing reser-

varations, previous experience shows that it has failed miserably as the community that receives reservations remains backwards even today. What is the use of giving reservations to the children of government servants based on caste lines? Government support can be provided for one generation for their upliftment. There is no meaning in providing reservations to the next generation, as these people have been lifted from the marginalized category. Many communities that had been the dominant earlier are becoming marginalized now.

Irrespective of caste, governments should support every citizen who is marginalized based on their financial status. Instead of a caste-based census, our political parties should take steps to conduct a census on the educational profile and professional profiles of citizens. This can help devise policy measures to identify gaps that impede our development.

(The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

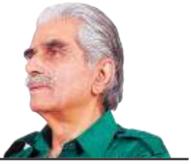
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Hamas's resolve may survive IDF onslaught

Hamas pulled off Pearl Harbour and 9/11 combined, on October 7, which shows its mettle and motivation. Annihilating it will not be easy for Israeli Defence Forces



ASHOK K MEHTA

On this page last week, a colleague expressed misgivings about the Israeli Defence Forces' (IDF) resilience and wondered if the steel was blunted. No one has ever doubted the will, fighting prowess and potential of Israelis given their history of conflict, survival and incredible prosperity. Israel has almost similar experience in its conflicted history as our own: war on creation in 1948, a second bigger round in 1956 and full-fledged regional wars in 1967 and 1973.

IDF, like now, was caught with its pants down when Egyptians executed a cross-Suez offensive that hesitated allowing the counter-Canal riposte led by Ariel Sharon's Centurion Tank division and Squadron and Troop leaders like Chaim Erez and Benny Taran. In the 1973 war on the Syrian front, the hero was Avigdor Kahalani who later became Mayor of Tel Aviv and Minister of National Security. His book Heights of Courage is a prescribed reading for the Israeli military. He was worshipped by Armoured Corps officers who used to take a second oath near Mount Hermon on Golan Heights where a UN Indian Mechanised force is currently located.

And who will not remember Moshe Dayan, the toast of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and Commander of Jerusalem Front? He became a legend: his eyepatch was replaced with the Jaffa orange in an ad proclaiming The Best. I was privileged to know Kahalani, Erez and Taran, all Armoured Corps, the sword in desert terrain. With the last two, we spent year-long training and friendship at Fort Leavenworth, US and Belgravia, UK. I visited Israel before India formally recognized it in January 1992. That travel is etched as the journey that commenced in Cairo where the Yom Kippur War was conceived. The taxi was driven by a retired Artillery Lieutenant Colonel from the Egyptian Army. We crossed the Suez and drove through Sinai still littered with debris from the 1967 and 1973 wars. The drive was punctuated with a vanquished Veteran's narration of victory turned into defeat. In 1991,



Israel had a string of pearls of UN/EU Peacekeeping Forces. Most are still there - Lebanon, Syria and Jerusalem. Before entering Israel on the border with Egypt, we were welcomed by Lt Gen Johannes Van Ginkle, the Dutch Force Commander of the EU PeaceKeepers. He like I was an Erez admirer who we were going to meet after nearly 20 years since Fort Leavenworth. Since then, I have been in Israel more than a dozen times including attending uninterrupted since 2010, the annual International Institute of Counter Terrorism conference in Herzilya till COVID paused it. So, I think I know the IDF pretty well. For anyone doubting its combat strength is a strategic error. Israel has signed peace treaties with Jordan and Egypt and the Oslo Accord in 1993. The most recent is the Abrams Accord which hopes to improve Israel's relations with Arab states. Except with Iran, Syria and Lebanon, there is peace including efforts to mend ties with Saudi Arabia. Since 1973, no Arab country has challenged de facto nuclear Israel. Tel Aviv is fighting internal wars against non-state actors Hezbollah in Lebanon, Islamic Jihad and Hamas which has been mis-governed since 2007 Gaza is the periodic source of Hamas rocketry against Israel.



ISRAEL HAS SIGNED PEACE TREATIES WITH JORDAN AND EGYPT AND THE OSLO ACCORD IN 1993. THE MOST RECENT IS THE ABRAMS ACCORD WHICH HOPES TO IMPROVE ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH ARAB STATES

The West Bank, which was infiltrated by Islamic State last year, has opened a third front for the IDF where more than 300 Palestinians and 50 Israelis have been killed this year. But Hezbollah appears to be only shadowboxing. Iran is external enemy no 1. Both Iran and Israel have vowed to destroy each other and do not recognize the other's right to exist. Iran backs Syria, Lebanon and Gaza. Hamas has a stockpile of 130,000 rockets and missiles. It was only in 2012 that their accuracy improved and Israel devised the Iron Dome whose launch I witnessed. It is an expensive antidote to missiles but can distinguish which missile will hit populated areas. Its discrimination capacity makes it valuable.

The current ground offensive against Hamas will be the fifth large-scale operation with the first launched in 2008 after Hamas took control of Gaza. Similarly, Israel has invaded Lebanon thrice - in 1978, 1982 and 2006. IDF has failed to deter Hamas and diminish Hezbollah. Its punitive strikes only degrade capability till their next rocket attack. This time IDF is tasked to permanently destroy Hamas and rescue the 199 hostages hidden in an underground web of tunnels. This cordon and search operation can take months and become an abattoir. Taran says the

operation is not the reoccupation of Gaza. Israel is known to have exchanged 1,200 Palestinian prisoners for one soldier. Iran says Hamas will release hostages if air attacks cease. Ultimately the safety of hostages will constrain operations with IDF fighting on enemy terrain.

Hamas's daring incursion into Israel is a brilliant strategy but the barbarity and brutality of tactics shaming Chengis Khan. Hamas achieved total surprise and horrendous gains. This time they did 9/11 and Pearl Harbour combined, inflicting on Israel their highest losses since the Yom Kippur war.

It has already become the world's largest man-made humanitarian catastrophe that you and I watch on TV. But no one can stop the mauled Israelis from retaliation and the IDF from wreaking retribution by reducing Gaza to the stone age. Fingers crossed the Gaza Front does not spark Lebanon and the West Bank. IDF may destroy Hamas's capability to fight; but not its will to fight another day.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SWINE FEVER OUTBREAK IN MANIPUR

Sir—The Manipur's Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department has confirmed an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the state, with the Pig Farm of the Central Agriculture University (CAU) in Imphal West District declared as the 'epicenter' of this contagious disease. Measures have been taken to prevent, control, and eradicate the infectious disease, including prohibiting the movement of pigs from the affected areas.

Reports indicate that ASF might have been introduced through pigs or pork from neighboring countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh. The outbreak has already caused significant damage to the region's pork industry, affecting thousands of families and causing financial losses. The northeastern region's annual pork business is substantial, and this outbreak poses a severe threat to the livelihoods of many.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

IN BAD TASTE

Sir—MakeMyTrip's recent advertisement, aimed at Pakistan cricket fans during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, has faced backlash for its lack of sensitivity. The ad begins with an "Open Invitation to Pakistani Fans," encouraging them to put aside rivalries when visiting India.

It goes on to offer discounts based on Pakistan's performance: a 50% discount if they lose by 10 wickets or 200 runs, with the code "BoysPlayedWell"; a 30% discount for a 6-wicket or 100-run loss, using the code "EkShaheenHaar"; and a 10% discount for a 3-wicket or 50-run loss with the code "NoMaukaMauka." India has a historical record of victories over Pakistan in World Cup matches, having won in 1992, 1996, 1999, 2003, 2011, 2015, and 2019. Nevertheless, the ad has faced criticism for its tone and the way it ridicules the Pakistani team.

Manzur Hasan | Howrah

Two distinct eras



The four decades before and after 1990 mark two distinct eras in India, accompanied by differing social and economic philosophies. The 1950s represented a shift from agricultural deficiencies, with the Green Revolution transforming India from a nation living hand-to-mouth to a self-sufficient one. The Nehruite philosophy emphasized technology, economic growth, and progress, leading to the

establishment of the first IIT before the nation's first general elections. The present day reflects a thriving middle-class that emerged from this transformation and ushered in the era of aspirational India. While the 1990s witnessed economic liberalisation, the current leadership is focused on leveraging India's political and economic standing. This progress has, however, led to social strain and disproportionate wealth distribution, exacerbated by jobless growth from disruptive technologies. The next generation of leaders faces the challenge of optimising multiple factors, using technology to promote inclusiveness and bridge socio-political divides. This requires statesmen with vision and foresight, and it's essential to trust in India's ability to produce such leadership through the electoral process.

R Narayanan | Mumbai

CHECK ELECTION SOPS

Sir—Election dates have been announced for five states. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar has pointed out that freebies offered by political parties have a "tadka" of populism, and voters have every right to ask the parties how they intend to fulfill these promises if elected to power. He is correct, and the promises made by these parties are often extravagant, unrealistic, and outright absurd.

However, these promises are still made because there are certain sections of society that are susceptible to such grandiose assurances. As long as there are segments of the population ready to be exploited, there will be political parties willing to offer free rations, direct money transfers to women's accounts, monthly cash incentives for women, free electricity up to a certain unit consumption, specific annual allocations of free

gas cylinders, and the list goes on. It appears that the Election Commission (EC) can do little to curb this practice. So, who else can put an end to this unsavory practice? The courts, of course. Politicians find courts easy to approach and convenient to evade the issue, which would otherwise be their own responsibility. The Supreme Court had, on a previous occasion, criticized the "freebie culture," noting that offering freebies disrupts the level playing field in an election, with the party making such promises standing to gain. The Supreme Court suggested the formation of a committee of experts to address this issue. Indeed the country must decide a policy on freebies that are offered by the political parties so that there is no confusion on the issue.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN SPIRITUAL LITERACY IS A MUST

Our real enemies are not our rivals but suspicion, fear, hatred and violence



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ

It's a proven fact today that disharmony in human relations gives rise to not only wars but to almost all other problems directly or indirectly related to us. The phenomenon of split in families, the rising number of cases of divorces, and even most of the psycho-somatic diseases which are caused by stress or mental tension are due to disharmony in human relations only and nothing else. In the past few days, we all have witnessed how extreme conflict between 2 countries over a border issue resulted in a mass exodus of people from their homeland as well as deaths of innocent people in massive bombings during night time. Hence one cannot deny the fact that the forces that are leading to the disintegration of nations, communities and political parties crop up primarily from disharmony. Most problems of law & order and even the commotions and disturbances in major Legislatures also are due to disharmony in relations between political parties or various linguistic groups, religious communities, etc. It is, thus, very much essential to find a solution to eliminate this problem lest it will eliminate us. But what is the way out? How does one move ahead? Well!!! It is quite clear from some of the examples that have been given of the world-events that these problems are mainly the creations of our minds, our attitudes and our negative thinking. Hence, to create harmony, we need to first of all disarm our minds to dismantle the forces of disharmony. It is estimated that world over approximately two trillion dollars are spent every year by various countries on what is called 'Defence' or 'Security' and yet it's quite surprising that insecurity is increasing rather than decreasing. What's more saddening is that all the diversion of resources to war purposes deprives the poorer sections of society of the help that they need or deserve. In this respect, it is essential to redefine security and to break the link between security and military force. We need to understand that our security lies not in an armed state of readiness for war but in friendliness, love and peace with others.



Our real enemies are not men and women but suspicion, fear, hatred, violence and feeling of revenge and these enemies cannot be eliminated by military means. It has, therefore, rightly been said in the Gita: 'Arjuna, the soul is its own best friend and it is its own worst enemy'. A deep study of the history of human civilization would reveal that presently, there are prevalent certain wrong beliefs that have led us to this kind of a negative culture, negative lifestyle and negative attitudes, one of these wrong beliefs is that there has always been disharmony in the world and there was no time in the history of mankind when there was total harmony. If that were so, then why today do we have a greater number of wars that are more devastating and which result in mass killings? Why are we today inventing more and more deadly weapons? It shows that there was a time in the distant past when there were less and less wars and there was also the earliest era which was free from all kinds of disharmony.

Thus, there must have been a time when the world population was small, the environment was clean and there were no wars and people lived in amity and peace. Such an era was known as the Golden Age. That was the time when there was Universal Harmony. It is that new world which we wish to usher in again. And, we want those attitudes and that thinking which can restore harmony in human relations. So, how can we bring about that change? It's very simple, for that we need to realize that most of our problems arise from our spiritual illiteracy which has to be eradicated. If, therefore, we can get rid of this kind of illiteracy and have a new lease of consciousness beyond war and enmity, then we can open to a new paradise, otherwise, we will end in eternal darkness.

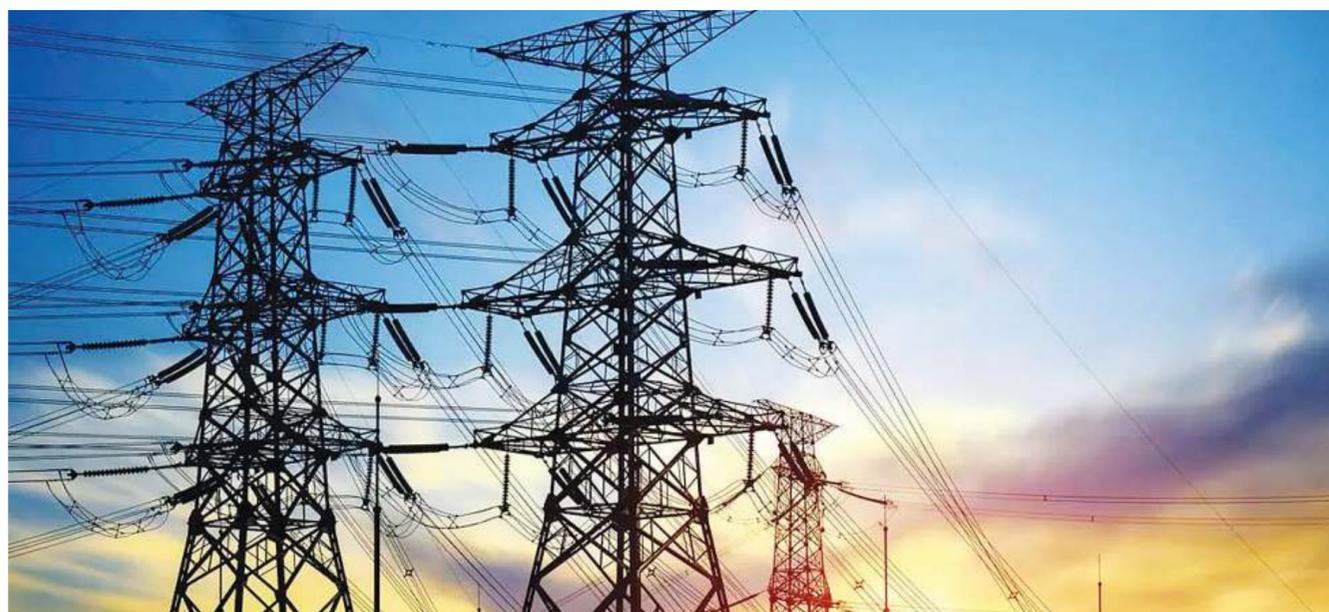
(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

State doles can put discoms at risk



UTTAM GUPTA

Discoms will be profitable only when they are unshackled from state controls and electricity distribution is deregulated



Even as the Central government is making all-out efforts to remove the financial distress of power distribution companies or discoms (situated at the core of the power supply chain, they procure electricity from power generating companies or gencos and distribute it to the consumers) and restore them to robust health, actions of the state governments undermine these efforts. The financial distress of discoms arises fundamentally due to their inability to generate enough revenue to pay for the electricity they buy. For over two decades, they have been incurring losses year after year. They have funded these losses by borrowings from banks and other FIs apart from keeping bills pending. At the end of FY 2021-22, their total debt was Rs 620,000 crore. Discoms' inability to generate required revenue has to do primarily with two factors viz. aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses - a jargon for power theft - and shortfall in the average revenue realisation from the sale of electricity vis-a-vis the average cost of supply (cost of purchase, wheeling and distribution), or the ACS-ARR gap. During 2020-21, AT&C losses were 22.32 percent while the ACS-ARR gap was Rs 0.54 per kWh.

Both maladies arise due to constant meddling in the running of discoms by their owners namely the state governments. Power theft on such a massive scale is unthinkable without the complicity of the political establishment. People living in slum settlements/jhuggi clusters being a big vote bank, the party in power encourages unauthorized connections to enable their access to free power.

As for the second malady, the political brass orders discoms to sell a major slice of electricity to households (HHs) and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of supply or even free (the state electricity regulatory commissions or SERCs which are mandated to fix tariff merely act as rubber stamps). Even as the state government promises to reimburse the differential amount to discoms, most states don't reimburse or do it partially and after considerable delay.



REPORTEDLY, MORE THAN 100,000 METERS HAVE BEEN BIFURCATED OR TRIFURCATED ENABLING EVEN HIGH-END CONSUMERS TO AVAIL OF THE FREE BONANZA

(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)

Given nearly a quarter of the revenue lost due to power theft and a substantial amount in subsidies remaining unpaid, the financial stress of discoms is inevitable. The politics of freebies now deeply entrenched in the system has exacerbated the already grim situation. Let us look at the developments in Punjab. Last year, amongst a host of freebies promised by AAP the most prominent was free electricity to households (HHs) for consumption up to 300 units per month.

Going by sheer common sense, the State should give help only to those HHs who can't afford to pay cost-based tariffs. The way to go is to identify households whose income is below a threshold. AAP hasn't gone by this. Could it be presumed that only low-income HHs have consumption of fewer than 300 units? So, in essence, the assistance reaches only to those who can't afford it. A closer scrutiny would reveal that the approach adopted by the AAP government is mischievous. Its real intent was to give the dole to 'all and sundry'.

If a household consumes less than 300 units a month, it doesn't necessarily follow that it is a family with low income. For instance, there would be unmetten number of well-off/high-income old-age couples living alone who consume less than 300 units a month. Even for others, who consume more than this threshold, we see a dastardly trend of consumers applying for multiple connections within the same HH. For instance, a household consuming 900 units a month, gets three meters installed to keep consumption of each under 300 units thereby ensuring zero bill.

Reportedly, more than 100,000 meters have been bifurcated or trifurcated enabling even high-end consumers to avail of the free bonanza. As a consequence, cur-

rently almost over 95 per cent of power consumers in Punjab avail of subsidies. The swelling number of connections has increased the subsidy by Rs 125 crore per month on average. As a result, the total domestic subsidy for the current FY is now expected to be Rs 8,813 crore - Rs 1,500 crore higher than the initial estimate of Rs 7,313 crore.

In Delhi, where there is no charge for HHs consuming up to 200 units (HHs consuming between 200 and 400 units get a deduction of Rs 800 from their bill), the possibility of the majority of households availing of access to electricity - free of any charge - is not ruled out. The situation in other states won't be different. Given almost the entire population of the State - including the rich, millionaires, billionaires and so on, getting to enjoy the free bonanza, the burden of power subsidy is bound to gallop. Faced with budget constraints, the states will take increasing recourse to underpayment and delayed reimbursement of subsidy dues to discoms.

Meanwhile, the Centre is dealing with discoms under a two-pronged strategy (i) forcing them to make timely payments and (ii) helping them cut AT&C losses and reduce the ACS-ARR gap. Under (i), it implemented late payment surcharge (LPS) and related matters Rules, in 2022. The LPS rules made it mandatory for discoms to clear their legacy dues as existing on June 3, 2022, in a time-bound manner in 12 equal monthly instalments (EMI) with the benefit of non-applicability of the LPS after its implementation date. The same rules are also provided for time-bound clearance of current dues failing, which will attract a power supply cut.

The pressure tactics have worked. The legacy dues of all stakeholders in the electricity supply chain viz.

power generating companies (gencos) and transmission companies (transcos) from discoms decreased from Rs 1,39,747 crore in June 2022 to Rs 69,957 crore in July 2023. Faced with the threat of LPS, the latter could have used loans taken from PFC and REC (out of Rs 130,000 crore sanctioned under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan') to make payments to the former.

As for (ii), under the 'Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution' (RLRBSD) launched in July 2021, the Centre has undertaken a massive investment of Rs 300,000 crore to improve the reliability and quality of the power supply and enhance the efficiency of discoms. It has compulsory pre-paid and smart metering components to be implemented across the power supply chain, including in about 250 million households. The Scheme has yielded results.

The AT&C losses of discoms have gone down from 22.32 per cent during 2020-21 to 13.5 per cent during 2022-23. The ACS-ARR gap has also reduced from Rs 0.54 per kWh during 2020-21 to Rs 0.15 per kWh in 2022-23. A 9 per cent cut in AT&C losses is a stupendous achievement. It seems that pre-paid and smart meters have been installed, and power theft is almost eliminated. The Centre is keen that the ACS-ARR gap should be reduced to 'zero' by March 2025. This will require making power theft 'nil' and timely recovery of all subsidy dues from the States. But, this won't be possible if states continue with business as usual; it could even lead to erosion of the gains made in 2022-23. Modi's efforts would deliver only when (a) discoms are unshackled from state controls; (b) States give subsidies directly to the beneficiaries and (c) electricity distribution is deregulated.

The Israel-Hamas war: Where does India stand?

India's diplomatic stance, which supports a two-state solution, may necessitate a revision in light of the evolving dynamics of the conflict

When the global economy is reeling under the crisis, the current geopolitical crisis in the Middle East has doubly heightened the level of inflation. This crisis emerged following the unexpected offensive launched by the Hamas against Israel, which subsequently led to Israel declaring war. Since Israel is a significant trading partner for India, the effects could be escalating.

With sheer surprise, the weekend's unexpected strike by Hamas on Israel has triggered a huge armed war in the Middle East. More than 2300 people have been killed in the fighting so far, and hundreds more have been held prisoners. Israeli Prime Minister has warned of a harsh response, so the situation is unlikely to



UTTAM CHAKRABORTY

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improve very soon. In this context, India, one of Israel's oldest and greatest allies, has expressed its support for the Jewish state and has pledged to assist in the time of crisis. India's Prime Minister has timely expressed shock and condemnation of the terror incident. Inflation throughout the world is possible if the terror attack and retaliation between Israel and Palestine escalate into a full-scale war. This might be economically comparable to the beginning of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Consequences on India's Trading

At present, Israel is India's third-largest Asian trading partner and India's 10th-largest trade partner globally. Military trade between India

and Israel is valued at approximately Rs 74,000 crore, making it the second largest supplier of military equipment to India after Russia. India's goods exports to Israel constitute 1.8% of India's overall exports, mostly driven by the sale of petroleum products. Israel imports between \$5.5 to 6 billion worth of refined petroleum products from India. During the fiscal year 2023, the aggregate value of India's exports to Israel amounted to \$8.4 billion. Hence, there exists a significant likelihood of rupee devaluation, necessitating intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In such a scenario, the currency range is expected to increase to the '83-84 bracket. In contrast, India engages in the importation of equip-

ment, pearls, diamonds, and other valuable gemstones, including both precious and semi-precious varieties, from Israel.

Israel's primary exports to India are the essential materials and machinery used in India's major industries and factories, such as precious stones and metals, electronic equipment, fertilisers, machines, engines, pumps, medical and technical equipment, organic and inorganic chemicals, salt, sulphur, stone, cement, and plastics. Currently, Israel exports items and equipment to India valued at more than \$3 billion. If bilateral commerce between the two nations is halted due to the terror strikes and the conflict, India might miss out on commodities worth Rs 25,000

crore, resulting in a surge in the prices of several common household items.

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas has caused a sense of unease in financial markets worldwide, leading investors to redirect their investments towards safe-haven assets. Investors maintain a cautious stance and exhibit vigilance in response to global developments, as a risk-averse mentality pervades the market. Investors may tend to exercise caution when considering high-risk ventures.

Indian stock market

Last week, the Indian stock market had a notable decline, along with the performance of other global stock indexes. This decline was influenced by the unexpected multifaceted assault carried out by the ter-

rorist group Hamas, involving land, air, and sea operations, resulting in the loss of more than 1,000 lives in Israel. The aforementioned trend has resulted in an escalation of geopolitical tensions, accompanied by an increase in crude oil prices and heightened volatility in global stock markets.

Only predictions

There are only predictions with conclusions. The right-wing politics in Israel and Palestine exhibit a disinclination towards embracing compromise. This hinders the process of negotiation. India's diplomatic stance, which supports a two-state solution, may necessitate a revision in light of the evolving dynamics of the conflict. Indian citizens stuck in Israel may need to be

evacuated as quickly as possible to avert loss of lives. The Indian diaspora residing in these nations may also experience repercussions in their life.

In the context of the broader Israel-Palestine conflict, India has always advocated for a peaceful resolution that upholds the rights of all involved parties. The persistent war has resulted in heightened geopolitical tensions. The attainment of a peaceful resolution of the issue necessitates the collaborative endeavours of the global community. A balanced approach is of utmost importance, as it not only facilitates the cultivation of positive ties with Arab nations but also ensures a productive and meaningful interaction with them.

MONEY MATTERS

RBI penalises ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank for violation of norms

The Reserve Bank on Tuesday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 12.19 crore on ICICI Bank and Rs 3.95 crore on Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance of certain regulatory norms. The penalty on private sector lender ICICI Bank has been imposed for contravention of norms related to 'Loans and Advances-Statutory and Other restrictions' and 'Frauds classification and reporting by commercial banks and select FIs'. In another statement, the RBI said the penalty on Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited has been imposed for contravention of directions related to 'Managing Risks and Code of Conduct in Outsourcing of Financial Services by banks', 'Recovery Agents engaged by Banks', 'Customer Service in Banks', and 'Loans and Advances - Statutory and Other Restrictions'. In both cases, the RBI said the penalties are based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their customers.



Rolls-Royce cutting up to 2,500 jobs globally

Jet engine maker Rolls-Royce said Tuesday it's cutting up to 2,500 jobs globally as part of a corporate overhaul that its new CEO is carrying out. The aerospace company was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic that decimated demand for air travel. Tufan Erginbilgic, who took over as chief executive in January, said the layoffs are aimed at making Rolls-Royce "more streamlined and efficient". Rolls-Royce, based in Derby, central England, didn't disclose where jobs will be cut, but around half of its 42,000-person workforce is based in the United Kingdom. The cuts will remove duplication and bring cost efficiencies in the latest stage of its "multi-year transformation", the company said. "We are building a Rolls-Royce that is fit for the future," Erginbilgic said. The company slashed 9,000 jobs globally in 2020 as it grappled with the collapse of air travel during the pandemic.



Dabur receives GST demand notice of Rs 320.60 crore

Homegrown FMCG and Ayurvedic products maker Dabur on Tuesday said it has received a Goods and Service Tax (GST) demand notice of Rs 320.60 crore. The company will challenge the same based on strong merits by filing its reply before the relevant authorities. Dabur India said in a regulatory filing. "The Company has received intimation of tax ascertained as being payable under Section 74(5) of CGST Act, 2017, wherein GST short paid / not paid amounting to Rs 320.60 crore has been advised to be paid by the Company along with the amount of applicable interest and penalty... failing which Show Cause Notice will be issued," Dabur informed. However, the company -- which owns power brands like Dabur Chyawanprash, Dabur Honey, Dabur Honitus, Dabur Pudinhara, and Dabur Lal Tail -- said it will have "no impact on the financial, operation or other activities of the company."



India to spend nearly Rs 143L cr on infra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India will spend nearly Rs 143 lakh crore on infrastructure between fiscals 2024 and 2030, more than twice the Rs 67 lakh crore spent in the past seven financial years starting 2017, rating agency Crisil said on Tuesday. Of the total, Rs 36.6 lakh crore will be green investments, marking a five times rise compared with the amount spent during fiscals 2017-2023, it added.



"India's infrastructure spending will double to Rs 143 lakh crore between fiscals 2024 and 2030, compared with 2017-2023," Crisil said in its Infrastructure Yearbook 2023. Crisil Ltd managing director and CEO Amish Mehta said the agency expects India's gross domestic product to grow at an average 6.7 per cent through fiscal 2031 to be the fastest-expanding large economy.

"Per capita income is seen rising from USD 2,500 now to USD 4,500 by fiscal 2031, creating a middle-income country," he said, adding that this growth will be underpinned by massive all-round infrastructure development, with sharp focus on integrating sustainability. While releasing 'CRISIL Infrastructure Yearbook 2023', which includes a unique national index CRISIL

InfraInvx, Mehta said policy interventions and a conducive investment climate have aided the upturn in the CRISIL InfraInvx scores across sectors.

"Four of these -- roads and highways, power transmission, renewable energy and ports -- have an overall score of 7-plus (out of 10), which underscores the pace of reforms and developments of the past few years," he added. The rating agency noted that the next phase of infrastructure development will be marked by growth in the average ticket size of projects and a significant number of megascale projects.

Appropriate and consistent policy and regulatory interventions and focus on timely execution build an attractive case for various stakeholders to accelerate investments

across infrastructure sectors, Crisil said.

The rating agency predicted that prominent sectors such as roads and power are expected to remain major contributors, while relatively nascent ones such as EVs, solar, wind, and hydrogen will pick up pace.

"The share of EVs in India's overall automobile sales is likely to reach 30 per cent by 2030.

"Two-wheeler EV sales are expected to outpace other segments up to 2028, while demand for EV buses will be driven by state transport undertakings," it said.

According to Crisil, favourable total cost of ownership and total cost of acquisition, as well as model availability for two- and three-wheelers will support EV uptake in coming years.

Global action key to tackle crisis in fisheries sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala on Tuesday called for a collaborative global action to address climate crisis in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

Rupala, in his inaugural address at the three-day global conclave held at Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, also urged for inclusive space for all stakeholders based on common responsibilities and common interests.

The conclave on "mainstreaming climate change into international fisheries governance and strengthening of



fisheries management measures in the Indo-Pacific region" was jointly organised by the UN body FAO and the

Union ministry. "He also urged for strategic interconnection for the common opportunities and com-

mon challenges shared by the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and called for the responsibility to face the challenges, threats and resolve the problems together so as to make this region a suitable habitat for all life forms," an official statement said.

The outcome of the conclave will be a great help to the fishermen communities of the Indo-Pacific region to tackle adversities and able to minimize the impact, if any, he said.

Highlighting the central government's measures taken in the last nine years in the fisheries sector, Rupala said, the Union government is setting up a Multipurpose Seaweed

Park (integrated aquapark) worth Rs 127 crore in Tamil Nadu.

"Since 2015, the focus attention has been given to modernisation and creation of 107 projects of fishing harbours and fish landing centres across the coastal states," he added.

The fisheries sector contributes to the country's economy in a big way as seafood exports have more than doubled in the last nine years, with record exports of Rs 63,969 crore in 2022-23.

Fisheries Secretary Abhilaksh Likhli and Joint Secretary Neetu Prasad were also present at the event.

India exported 1.16 MT coal in FY23: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India exported 1.163 million tonnes of coal in 2022-23 to neighbouring countries, including Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan, the coal ministry said on Tuesday.

The coal was mainly exported to Nepal at 0.833 MT, followed by 0.245 MT to Bangladesh, 0.053 MT to Bhutan and 0.032 MT to others, according to the latest Provisional Coal Statistics for FY23. "Although, there was short supply of coal in India compared to its demand and it had to resort to import of coal, India exported some quantity of coal to its neighbouring countries during 2022-23," it said.

Markets rebound after three-day fall

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices bounced back on Tuesday after three days of fall amid recovery in global markets and buying in HDFC Bank post its quarterly earnings.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 261.16 points or 0.39 per cent to settle at 66,428.09. During the day, it jumped 392.89 points or 0.59 per cent to 66,559.82.

The Nifty gained 79.75 points or 0.40 per cent to 19,811.50.

Among the Sensex firms, Power Grid, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, ITC, Bharti Airtel, Nestle, NTPC, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Infosys and



HDFC Bank were the major gainers. HDFC Bank ended nearly 1 per cent up after the company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 16,811 crore for the September quarter, its maiden quarterly earnings announcement after merging parent HDFC with itself.

Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, IndusInd Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, JSW Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards.

"The market's gap-up opening today, offsetting the losses of the past three days, indicates an optimism over the ongoing Q2

earnings despite concerns about the Middle East and subdued start by the IT sector. The upward trend was broad-based with particular upside in banking, oil & gas and FMCG sectors.

"However, some profit-taking was evident as the day concluded. FIs continue to withdraw funds due to rise in the US bond yields. An insight about the future direction of interest rates is expected from the Fed chair's upcoming speech on October 19th. While the market will also closely monitor the developments in the Israel-Hamas conflict, with a consensus emerging that the geopolitical risk will not elevate," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

GLOBAL MARITIME INDIA SUMMIT

Jawaharlal Nehru Port unveils four key projects worth Rs 8,363 crore

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country's premier container port Jawaharlal Nehru Port on Tuesday unveils four key projects worth Rs 8,363 crore during the third edition of the Global Maritime India Summit, which was virtually addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



The four projects are: construction of the fourth container terminal, Phase II at JNPA; upgradation, operation, maintenance, and transfer of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Container Terminal (JNPT); newly constructed additional liquid berth terminal; and port-based multi-product special economic zone (SEZ).

With these projects, the port's container capacity will go up significantly by 35 per cent from 7.7 million TEUs

(twenty-foot equivalent units) to 10.4 million TEUs while the liquid cargo handling capacity is expected to surge by 62.5 per cent, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) said.

Of the four projects, foundation stone was laid for the construction of fourth container terminal-phase II on PPP (public-private partnership) basis by Bharat Mumbai Container Terminals Pvt Ltd.

It is a significant step towards enhancing the port's capacity to handle container traffic efficiently.

NHAI FACING DIFFICULTIES IN PREPARATION OF DPRS

Companies not ready to accept new technology: Nitin Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is facing difficulties in the preparation of detailed project reports, as companies concerned are not ready to accept new technology, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said on Tuesday.

The road transport and highways minister said that the government is encouraging the use of new technologies.

Addressing the 'CRISIL India Infrastructure Conclave 2023', he said big players in the steel and cement industry are indulging in cartelisation to jack-up prices.

"...the steel industry and cement industry... whenever



they get the chance, they make the cartel and increase the rate," he said.

According to Gadkari, rating of companies that make DPRs is a big challenge.

"The preparation of DPRs is a big problem for NHAI... there is no perfect DPR anywhere in any project," Gadkari, who is known for his frank views, said.

"While making DPR, they (companies engaged in DPR making) are not ready to accept new technology, new innovation, new research and even the standard of DPRs are so low that everywhere (there is) additional scope of work," he said. The minister recalled that once upon a time, there were 50 big contractors who used to get contracts for road construction.

"I felt that was not correct. (So) I liberalised the technical and financial norms, by which, today we have 600 big (road) contractors," he said.

According to Gadkari, the problem is that some of them quote prices below 30-40 per cent for highway construction projects.

K'taka forms Strategic Investment Committee to draw investments

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has constituted a Strategic Investments Committee to guide it in attracting investments to the State.

The committee, under the chairmanship of Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil, comprises professionals from various fields such as private equity firms, venture capital firms, startups, philanthropic organisations and experts from various industries.

The members of the SIC include managing directors of several companies, the chairman of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) Karnataka State Council, the additional chief secretary/principal

secretary of the Commerce and Industries Department and the commissioner for Industrial Development.

NHAI upgrades advanced traffic management system

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has upgraded the Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) for enhanced road safety and digital enforcement on national highways and expressways, an official statement said on Tuesday.

The statement said enhancements include replacing previous VIDS cameras with the newly introduced Video Incident Detection and Enforcement System (VIDES) to emphasise the digital enforcement of traffic rules.

VIDES has the capability to identify 14 distinct incidents, including triple riding, helmet and seatbelt violations, wrong lane or direc-

tion driving, presence of animals on the highway, and pedestrian crossings, the statement said. According to the statement, depending on the detected incident, VIDES will alert route patrol vehicles or ambulances, generate e-challans, relay alerts to nearby Variable Messaging Boards, or send notifications through the 'Rajmargyatra' mobile app to nearby travellers.

For comprehensive coverage, the statement said, these cameras are slated for installation every 10 km along national highways, with state-of-the-art command and control centres at every 100 km integrating various camera feeds.

Apart from this, Vehicle Speed Detection System

The Traffic Monitoring Camera System (TMCS) will also be upgraded, the statement said, adding that positioned every 1 km on the national highway, these cameras have been endowed with advanced capabilities like automated detection of accidents and stalled vehicles.



(VSDS) is now integrated into VIDES, optimising the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

cameras, it added. The Traffic Monitoring Camera System (TMCS) will also be upgraded, the state-

ment said, adding that positioned every 1 km on the national highway, these cameras have been endowed

with advanced capabilities like automated detection of accidents and stalled vehicles. Strengthening collaboration with local traffic agencies, the statement said NHAI will allocate dedicated workstations in the command and control centre for traffic police representatives.

Moreover, provisions have been made to share camera feeds over the network to enhance real-time coordination and response.

ATMS deployment may also play an active role in disaster management by providing inputs for effective planning and implementation.

It will also provide online sharing of highway status and other important information that will help both the agencies and the highway users.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA O/o the Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad. FORM - VII (See Sub-Rule (1) of Rule-25 and Section-19 (1) of the Act-30/2013)														
DECLARATION														
Gazette No. GHMC-102 Dated: 07.10.2023 No. B/163/2022 Dated: 07.10.2023														
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana Special Collector, LA & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad that a total of 3099.7 Sq. Yards of land is required for the Fattenagar Village, Balanagar Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri District, for public purpose namely proposed 100' wide road at Sarath Nagar Industrial Estate to Balanagar.														
Therefore, Declaration is made that a piece of land measuring, more or less 3099.7 Sq. Yards standard measurement under acquisition for the above said project in the Fattenagar Village, Balanagar Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri District whose details description is as following:-														
S. No.	Plot No.	Type of Land	Extent in Sq. Yds.	Name of person interested	Boundaries					Trees/Structures				
1	2	3	4	5	North	South	East	West	10	11	12	13	14	15
Left side properties:														
1	121	P-8A	2	Owner: Patta 124.00	1. Yashwan Reddy	Road	Owens	Road	Road	-	-	-	-	GF
2	121	C-25	5	Owner: Patta 157.81	1. Mohd Said Khan	Neig- hcor	Road	Owens	Road	-	-	-	-	G+2
3	121	C-4	4	Owner: Patta 452.82	1. Subramanyam	Road	Neig- hcor	Owens	Road	-	-	-	-	G+2
4	121	C-10	5/6, 1022	Owner: Patta 67.90, 166.43, 92.84	1. A. Jagan Mohan Rao	C-04	Road	Owens	Road	-	-	-	-	G+2
5	122	C-11	3	Owner: Patta 585.12	1. M. Chakraborty	Road	Road	C-10	C-12	-	-	-	-	GF, 2, Open
6	122	C-12	4	Owner: Patta 567.50	1. Mallikarjun Rao	Owens	Road	C-15	C-11	-	-	-	-	G+2
7	122	B-15	5	Owner: Patta 261.80	1. Shashibhushan Agarwal	Owens	Road	C-14	E-13	-	-	-	-	G+2
8	121	B-14	1203	Owner: Patta 162.40, 174.16	1. P.V. Ranveer	Owens	Road	C-15	C-15	-	-	-	-	G+1
9	121	C-13	6	Owner: Patta 486.18	1. Khosama Hussainab	Owens	Road	C-14	C-13	-	-	-	-	G+2
10	120	P-1	2	Owner: Patta 32.11	Chandra Shekar	Owens	Road	NALA	Open Plot	-	-	-	-	G+2
Total 3699.7														
This Declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested and due enquiry as provided U/s -15 of the Act No. 30 of 2013. The number of families likely to be resettled due to Land Acquisition is Nil.														
Mines of coal, iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed.														
A plan of the land may be inspected in the Office of the Special Deputy Collector (LA), GHMC, at 6th floor, GHMC, Tankbund Road, Hyderabad on any working day during the working hours.														
Sd/- Special Collector (LA) & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad.														
Sd/- Special Grade Deputy Collector, LA, GHMC, Hyderabad														
DI/PR No.717/LA/PP-Pub/2023-24														

KANIKKA KAPUR

A powerful director tried to be provocative with me

ACTRESS KANIKKA KAPUR, WHO WAS LAST SEEN IN THE RECENTLY RELEASED FILM *DONO*, GETS CANDID WITH *THE PIONEER* ABOUT BEING A REALISTIC ACTRESS, WORKING WITH AVNISH BARJATYA, HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE CONCEPT, AND MORE.



SHIKHA DUGGAL

With an ounce of freshness, the parallel lead of the recently released movie *Dono*—actress Kanikka Kapur—has just delivered a modern love story about young people dealing with heartbreak and more. Basically, this is her launching pad with the industry kids! But her attitude towards herself is a good one to see. We did! Let's catch up with this journalism graduate turned actress: "There have been plenty of hurdles to becoming somebody successful in this industry—no godfather. I am not a star kid (she laughed). So I didn't know any better, our assurance was taken away. Many powerful people in this industry tried to be a little provocative with me. I was just nineteen years old! I had to shed my innocence to move ahead in this industry. I started reciprocating with the directors! Now, I am a practical and very realistic actress," shared the artist, who started working at the age of thirteen in short films.

Moving ahead, a sophisticated model also described, "I wasn't worried even if Sooraj Barjatya's son was making the film. I saw Avnish Barjatya's detailed work for the film. He would rehearse with us. Knowing that outdoor schedules are hectic! He used to hardly sleep—perhaps five hours of sleep? In spite of playing a parallel lead, he took almost three hours to narrate the script to me. He could have let it go, but he is abstract in his work. He gave all of us the assurance of a hit. And both the father and son do not believe in imaginary conversations. Even if they are busy with something else, they will be talking about films. I noticed his father treating the spot dada with so much love. There is no "important actor" for Avnish's father. All of us are on an equal pedestal. In fact, Avnish is a bit similar too. He's willing to apologise at any moment, even as a director."

The film is all about dealing with some

heartbreak, healing, and then finding closure. On the other hand, what's her personal comment on the same? The beauty pageant winner replied, "I did go through a heartbreak once—as I mentioned earlier, I was naive. The moment he left, my life really shattered at a very young age! It took years for me to heal. And then acting happened. Although I was never interested in it, my devotion was towards the beauty pageants so that I could represent my country on global platforms. I always had a viewpoint! That profession was meaningful."

Sharing her own experience with one of the biggest production houses in our country, Miss Asia revealed, "I was expecting comparisons with Paloma, but I don't mind those. I have always been a competitive model! I can't keep dwelling on these comparisons with other actresses, lead or no lead. Paloma and I are poles apart! It would only be senseless for critics if they still compared both of us. Even though they are star kids, we tend to forget that they are newcomers at the end of the day. There was no air about coming from a family that's been legendary. But I was definitely star-struck when Sunny Deol visited his son on the sets! I remember meeting him at the launch party for his eldest son. I was supposed to play his leading lady, but God had some other plans. Then the production house totally spoiled us. They were pampering me because I was playing the role of a bride in one sequence. I was flattered. Avnish wanted me to feel special, and that touched me. My outfits were designed so lavishly."

In sooth, there was Salman Khan too on the sets of *Dono*, and our interviewee was again star-struck. They were unsure if he'd turn up or not! Now when Salman arrives, the calls on the walkie-talkie will be "SK IS COMING," and that's when Kanikka was ready to get captivated. She

remembers him turning up with almost twenty bodyguards for his security, and the actress was spellbound by his entourage.

It was *Tippu* in Telugu films that Kanikka claims to be her magnificent project. She remembers her mother escorting her everywhere during those times. But it wasn't a piece of cake for her yet! She understood that perhaps Tollywood may not be her comfort zone, and hence she didn't continue her streak. Not that she doesn't mind bagging some roles down south now, especially with magnanimous hits like *Jawan* and more; however, she's choosy.

She has also been very famous on television. We are talking about *Ek Duije Ke Vaaste 2* and the conversations that are going around about being typecast; we were compelled to ask someone from the inside, and Kanikka responded, "My debut television show became very popular. So popular that people don't recognise me for my role in that serial. They scream "Suman" at the airports! So television has an upper hand here in terms of viewers. It is not necessary that you be taken into movies because you are a television actor, I don't think so. Maybe you are not performing well in a film audition. Your audition rounds are everything in the film business; they don't care if you were the highest-rated actress on television."

'I want to showcase the Hyderabad accent in front of the world'

K. RAMYA SREE

Going to the *Bigg Boss* house has been a dream for many. The name and fame the show gives to one, brings in some abundant opportunities in their career, once they are out of the house. If you perform well, you won't be surprised by the number of

offers that knock at your door. For instance, Shehnaaz Gill, who rose to immense fame after her stint in *Bigg Boss*, has so many movie offers in her hand now.

Well, here's our very own Hyderabad man, all set to entertain the world audience as he enters the biggest controversial reality show in India, *Bigg Boss season 17*. If you haven't guessed, we are talking about Arun Srikanth Mashetty, aka Achanak Bhayanak, a YouTuber by profession. The entry of Arun into *Bigg Boss 17* marks a significant milestone for Hyderabad, as he is the first contestant to enter the Hindi *Bigg Boss* show from Hyderabad.

Ahead of entering the show, Arun shared with *The Pioneer* how excited he was to enter the house. The 27-year-old Hyderabad shared, "As you know, *Bigg Boss* is the biggest reality show in

India and the world. I feel lucky, and it's an honour to be here. I want to showcase the Hyderabad accent in front of the world. Just like 'Jadoo' in *Koi Mil Gaya*, I am here to straighten anyone who creates a mess."

Arun is known for his funny videos. Asked about his plans for entertaining other contestants and the audience while in the house, he shared, "The house members are going to love it because I am honest and I'm going to speak the truth. I'm not going to hide, and I'm not going to have two faces or two tongues. And the second thing for the audience is that they're going to love this tadka Hyderabad garam masala biryani. I am saying this from the bottom of my heart: I will not disappoint the audience."

The *Big Boss* house is always full of controversies and conflicts. He is excited that his fans will uncover new things. He explained, "First of all, as you said, my fans are going to uncover new things about me because the camera will be on 24/7 and it will be live; everything is going to be recorded. So, I'm going to be myself, and let's see what happens."

Being from outside the television industry, the YouTuber is sure to rock this time. And is confident of giving his best.

Arun Srikanth Mashetty, aka Achanak Bhayanak, a Hyderabad YouTuber, who has become the first contestant to enter the Hindi *Bigg Boss* show from Hyderabad, gets candid with *The Pioneer* sharing his excitement about entering India's most controversial show.



'PREMATURE HAIR GRAYING INCREASINGLY AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN HYDERABAD'

Premature graying of hair among young individuals in Hyderabad is being attributed to poor diet, stress, and a sedentary lifestyle, according to doctors and experts in Hyderabad.

The condition is increasingly affecting people as young as 12-35 years old, according to Dr. Indra Pavan, MBBS, MD - Dermatology, Venereology, and Leprosy at Omega Clinics, who shares that young professionals in their 20s are experiencing premature hair graying, with silver strands becoming more prominent.

While stress and poor diet are identified as primary causes, there are several other factors that contribute to the condition.

Research indicates that the age at which premature hair graying occurs varies based on factors such as age, race, and environment. Premature hair graying is defined as graying before the age of 20 in whites, 25 in Asians, and 30 in Africans, as per research findings.

Dr. Indra, an expert in the field, explains, "Along with poor nutrition and stress, the sedentary lifestyle that peaked during the COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for early hair graying. Insufficient sleep and smoking, among other factors, also contribute. While graying hair is a natural process associated with aging, it differs among races and ethnicities." Premature graying of hair has been a topic of discussion among trichologists and dermatologists worldwide, with numerous reported cases over the years. She further adds that young individuals often

neglect their physical and mental health, leading to a rise in anxiety, depression, and digestive disorders. Factors such as genetics, hormonal imbalances, vitamin B-12 deficiency, thyroid disorders, autoimmune diseases, and certain medication side effects can contribute to premature graying.

To prevent premature graying, experts recommend consuming antioxidant-rich foods like seasonal fruits and vegetables, olive oil, and fish. While temporary solutions like hair dyes and cosmetic therapies exist, addressing the issue internally is crucial to preventing its recurrence. Graying hair is a natural part of the aging process as melanin pigment diminishes over time. However, premature graying can cause self-consciousness and worry. Stress, poor diet, scalp issues, genetics, and other factors can contribute to this condition.

While there is no specific medicinal treatment for premature graying, consulting with a healthcare provider can help identify underlying health issues that may be causing the condition. Hypertension, thyroid disorders, stress, and vitamin deficiencies are potential contributors. Addressing these factors can help restore the original hair color. If the issue persists, consulting a hair specialist is recommended. A well-balanced diet that includes essential nutrients like vitamin B, iron, copper, iodine, and omega-3 should never be overlooked. Medications and therapies can be explored under expert guidance, as self-medication can result in permanent hair loss.



Uniting the hearts of Anime fans under one roof

PNS] HYDERABAD

Anime, the popular animation niche and style that originates from Japan, has been gaining immense popularity, drawing all the world's attention towards it.

Now, here's a good news for all the anime freaks! Bringing a one-of-a-kind experience for all the anime fans, Zee Cafe India has collaborated with Paytym Insider, bringing a two-day (October 21 and October 22) fest, bringing some fun activities including a live band performance by



Daisuki, scintillating Cosplay, delectable Japanese cuisine, and an anime fan wall promising the anime freaks to give hell of an adventure.

The fest aims to unite all the anime fans by bringing them under one umbrella at the phoenix market city in Kurla, Mumbai. Bringing some more exciting details about the fest to you, *The Pioneer* interacts with the emcee of the fest Mihir Joshi, as he discloses that they have invited the India's 1st cosplay band 'Daisuki' to make the event much more interesting. India's top multi-disciplinary art "Santanu Hazarika" will be also joining the anime freaks to show his passion and love for the anime also going to perform few acts in the fest.

Explaining the reasons behind making the fest absolutely free Mihir explains, "We want to open the doors for everyone. While people are a little apprehensive about buying tickets on

weekends, we see a lot of people walking in and out through the Phoenix Market, and at least if they entered the venue, they would experience the best of their evenings, ZeeCafe did the smartest thing by making it free to grow the community."

He also suggests that with few events being organised free of cost, would be a great initiative to build a stronger community in future.

Embracing different cultures and artforms, Mihir shares, "Anime is not about intending people to spread its culture but its more about spreading entertainment. While an Indian origin performs Barathanatyam in US do it not to spread the Indian culture? It's more about getting joy and want to continue the tradition of dancing, also we see people enjoying the punjabi music irrespective of where it was originated, and its all about being entertained."



In the heartlands of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where history weaves its tales through ancient stones and cultural nuances, Tanishq, unveiled its first-ever, exclusive festive collection for AP & Telangana - 'Kakatiya'.

PARTY



● Pinky Reddy

● Shabnam Gupta

● Ajita Reddy

● Nishtha



Hamstech Group has joined hands with the acclaimed celebrity interior designer, Shabnam Gupta, to introduce two premium interior design brands; Kosha and Peacock life in the city through their exclusive Curtain Raiser event held at Film Nagar

● Sapna

● Sunitha

● Sankeerthana

● Charmitha

Photos by - SV Chary



Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre ushered in the festive spirit by hosting its annual cake-mixing and grape-stomping brunch. This delightful event served as a warm welcome to the forthcoming Christmas and New Year celebrations.



Royalook announced its festive shopping extravaganza at its Hyderabad stores located in Malakpet, A. S. Rao Nagar, Ahemadnagar, and more. The brand known for its exquisite range of furniture and home decor items, they have unveiled a captivating collection of products just in time for the upcoming Navratri & festive season.

LISTINGS

Students' survey

Crimson Education, one of the World's Leading College Admission Consultants, announced that students who trusted Crimson Education with their aspirations for studying abroad, optimise their entire high school experience. Students who start their profile building journey in Grade 9, stand over seven times higher chances of getting accepted at their dream school, as compared to a general applicant. Outside of academics, extracurricular activities become the differentiating factor between a great profile and an extraordinary profile. These successful students, on average, invested 53.3 hours per month

pursuing socio-cultural extracurricular and leadership activities (ECL). This is in addition to their regular institutional curriculum. Academic ECL came in second with students devoting an average of 33 hours per week to research, internships, and education. Students selected in Ivy League colleges also committed 19 hours on average to sports per week. Crimson Education successfully supported over 300 students, during the previous admissions cycle, to gain admissions in the top 10 universities of the USA, including Stanford, MIT, Caltech, Duke, Chicago, Johns Hopkins and Northwestern and the IVY Leagues. The ECL data has been derived from the records of these students. Students from Hyderabad form nearly 20-25% of Crimson Education's students cohort.

CELEBRATE YOUR "MOMENT OF COMMITMENT"

To celebrate a love so rare, Platinum Love Bands has introduced a New Collection. This exquisite collection is meticulously designed, featuring captivating repeating patterns, distinctive textures, graceful lines, and elegant motifs. Platinum Love Bands are hence designed to eloquently capture

and commemorate the defining moments in a relationship. They serve as a meaningful and perfect expression of love, making them an ideal gift that marks a love that is truly one of a kind. As you forge a future together with your special someone and scout for the ideal marker to mark those defining moments that change the course of your relationship, choose from a range of exquisitely crafted Platinum Love Bands from the new Season's Collection.

Better eye health could boost Indian economy by US\$27bn this World Sight Day

Avoidable sight loss would add US\$27 billion (Rs 2.2 trillion) per year to India's economy, according to new research released this World Sight Day. The Love Your Eyes campaign is releasing the figures to highlight how improved eye health boosts productivity, urging business leaders to put eye

health on the workplace wellbeing agenda this World Sight Day. The study, conducted by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and Prof. Kevin Frick from Johns Hopkins, calculated the costs of avoidable sight loss among people over 50. India had the third-highest potential savings of all countries in the study. In India, there are currently 70 million people with visual impairment. Preventing sight loss with early detection and treatment for eye conditions like cataracts and myopia is vital to protect livelihoods and allow businesses to thrive.

Sony BBC ushers in the festive spirit with Diwali line-up

Sony BBC Earth is all set to illuminate Diwali with its property 'Festival of Life'. The channel will take viewers on a grand cinematic voyage with power-packed premieres of 12 shows that promise to entertain, enlighten, and inspire them. From breathtaking wildlife encounters to riveting explorations of the Earth's most remarkable phenomena, the 'Festival of Life' brings forth a host of awe-inspiring shows and documentaries. From a visual deep dive to encounter enigmatic underwater giants with 'Chasing Monsters' to capturing untamed landscapes and wildlife that bring alive the mythical legacies of Odin and Thor with 'Wild Scandinavia', the channel has something in store for nature and culture aficionados of every colour.

ITC Fabelle introduces 'One Earth' Collection

Fabelle Exquisite Chocolates has introduced several industry firsts such as the Fabelle Trinity - Truffles Extraordinaire - World's most expensive chocolate, Fabelle Finesse - World's finest chocolate, setting a benchmark for the global chocolate industry. Continuing the legacy, Fabelle this year is set to entice chocolate lovers with a novel creation. Inspired by the sentiment of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' - The World is One Family, Fabelle introduces its latest innovation - Fabelle One Earth Collection. At an event held at the ITC Sheraton, New Delhi, Fabelle, in a strategic collaboration with Chef Andy Allen, an acclaimed Australian food critic and TV presenter, unveiled this delectable fusion of global flavours and cultures. It comprises of 10 unique truffles, each of which truly represents the essence of the rich and diverse flavours of nations from across the world - Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Netherlands, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

Ushering a new era for inclusive mobility

Japan-headquartered, globally-renowned provider of personal mobility solutions WHILL has marked its entry into the Indian market, in collaboration with eBikeGo, India's leading electric mobility startup. This strategic alliance, cemented through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), was formally announced during an event held at Westin Hyderabad, graced by senior representatives from both eBikeGo and WHILL. The two innovative WHILL products launched in India, now available for pre-booking, include: Model C2: A mobility chair packed with WHILL's technology, the Model C2 is ideal for those looking for off-road performance. It is simple to operate and can make tight turns to get a person wherever they need to go. It comes with a Li-ion battery and allows a drivable range of 18 km on a 5-hour charge. Model C2 is a category-defining product - a personal EV for those who are social and crave adventure. Model F: A lightweight, foldable and maneuverable mobility chair, the Model F allows the user a drivable range 20 km when fully charged, and can be safely driven up or down 10% slopes. Thanks to its foldable design, it can be easily carried on buses, trains, and planes - or can be loaded the trunk of a car or cab. Find more details here



The globally recognized Acer brand, known for its leading-edge technology solutions, will soon enter the India e-scooter market with the Acer MUVI 125 4G with the price at INR 99,999. The introduction of the MUVI 125 4G represents a commitment to sustainable and cutting-edge mobility solutions.



Actress Anupama Parameshwaran, along with the managing director of Chandana Brothers, inaugurated its first-ever shopping mall in Sangareddy. There's also numerous launch offers at the new store, with never before seen offers in the wide range of latest designs and varieties catering to all age groups and preferences

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



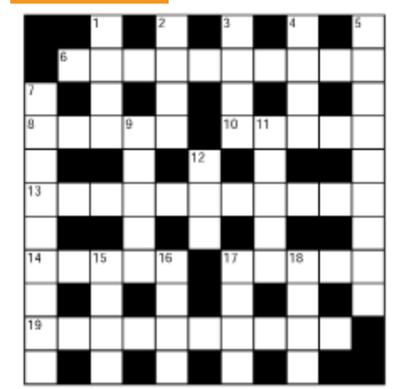
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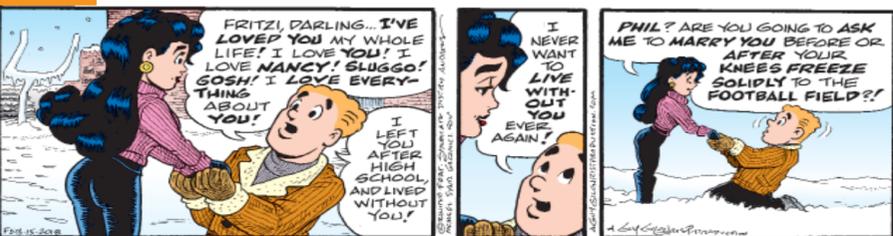
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 6 Transport for someone who cannot walk
- 8 With nothing in it
- 10 The outside ends of something
- 13 Vanished
- 14 Opposite of outer
- 17 The country with Tokyo
- 19 In all places
- 9 Annoy or bother someone for fun
- 11 A play
- 12 Secret agent
- 15 Require
- 16 Sunbeams
- 17 A boy's name
- 18 Meat from a pig

DOWN

- 1 A large boat
- 2 Extremely
- 3 A throbbing pain
- 4 The sound of an explosion
- 5 The leader of the USA
- 7 Large-lettered words above items in a newspaper

SOLUTION



Allu Arjun honoured with 'Best Actor Award'



Icon Star Allu Arjun who is known for his adaptability skills to play a wide variety of roles, won the National Award in the "Best Actor" category for his exceptional performance in *Pushpa-The Rise*. The 69th National Film Awards ceremony was held on Tuesday in New Delhi's Vigyan Bhawan and the awards were presented by President Droupadi Murmu. The winners of the National Awards for the year 2021 were announced in August.

Allu Arjun, who received the Best Actor award for *Pushpa: The Rise*, said on the red carpet that winning the award for a commercial film was a "double achievement" for him. He was accompanied by his wife Sneha Reddy. This marked a momentous achievement for Allu Arjun who became the first Telugu actor to receive the prestigious award in the best actor category. In the film, Allu Arjun played the role of Pushparaj

aka Pushpa and his performance won accolades from critics and audiences alike. Movie buffs across the nation were spellbound by his action-packed show in the movie. Directed by Sukumar, *Pushpa: The Rule* was produced by Mythri Movie Makers with Rashmika Mandanna playing the female lead. Currently, it's part 2 titled *Pushpa: The Rule* is in the production stages.

Mehreen Pirzada is pained to see a 'serious issue like marital rape described as sex'

Mehreen Pirzada of *Krishna Gaadi Veera*, *Prema Gadha* and *F2* fame was recently seen in the Hindi-language web series *Sultan Of Delhi*, streaming on Disney Plus Hotstar. In the series, the actress was seen in a scene depicting marital rape. The same has been described by social media users and a section of the media as a bold, intimate scene. Taking to social media on Tuesday, Mehreen said that she is pained to see that a "serious issue like marital rape has been described by many in the media" as sex. She opined that such inappropriate descriptions only trivialize something that is a "serious issue that many women the world over are currently dealing with." She further wrote, "It disturbs me that a certain section of the media and people on social media have picked up on this. These people should understand that they have sisters and daughters too and I pray to god they never have to go through such trauma in their own lives as just the thought of such brutality and violence against women is repugnant." Mehreen will soon be seen in the pan-India release *Spark*, which is going to hit the cinemas on November 17. The action thriller has Vikranth in the lead and has been made by Telugu talents.



Karthi's much-awaited movie *Japan* to hit theatres this diwali

Actor Karthi high on continuous hits, is now going to be starred in the *Joker* fame Raju Murugan. It is being produced by SR Prakash Babu and SR Prabhu under the banner of Dream Warrior Pictures. The makers had recently shared the glimpse from the film, which had received tremendous responses.



In the release poster, Karthi is seen in a stunning look with a gun in one hand and a globe in the other. The makers will release the teaser soon. Anu Emmanuel is playing the heroine opposite Karthi in this film. Sunil will be seen in a pivotal role in this film, which marks the debut of renowned cinematographer Vijay Milton. GV Prakash Kumar is composing the music for this film. Philomin Raj is the editor, while the production design is done by National Award Winning Production Designer (*Kammara Sambhavam*).

Urvashi Rautela shares location of her lost 24 Carat gold iPhone, says, 'Will offer reward'

Actor Urvashi Rautela almost her iPhone during the India-Pakistan World Cup match in Ahmedabad on October 14, Saturday. She was among the thousands of spectators who turned up at the Narendra Modi Stadium to witness the highly anticipated face-off, which India won. After the match, several people reported their belongings missing.

Urvashi Rautela lost her "24-carat real gold iPhone" during the match. In a post shared on social media, she appealed for help. The actor also shared a copy of the police complaint she filed in connection with the theft. Sharing the post Urvashi wrote, "Lost my 24-carat real gold iPhone at Narendra Modi Stadium! If anyone comes across it, please help. Contact me ASAP!" she wrote, adding: "Tag someone who can help."

The Ahmedabad Police, tagged in Rautela's post, asked her to share further details about her lost iPhone. On everyone claiming that she hadn't lost her phone Urvashi shared the location of her phone on her social media and the phone was last tracked to a mall in Ahmedabad. She also said that she would offer a reward if she got her phone back. "Will give reward and phone's last location is in the mall," she wrote.

Urvashi is continuously updating her phone details on her social media and has sought help from Ahmedabad Police over it as it was a very expensive phone. We just hope that Urvashi can find her lost phone.



Saregama bags the musical rights of *Keedaa Cola*

Talented director Tharun Bhascker is coming up with his next movie, *Keedaa Cola*, a crime comedy. Brahmanandam, Chaitanya Rao, Rag Mayur, Vishnu OI, Raghu Ram, Jeevan Kumar, and Tharun Bhascker played significant roles in this flick.



The movie's theatrical trailer is confirmed to debut tomorrow, and in the meantime, the movie's audio rights have been bagged by the

noted music label Saregama. The makers have officially announced it online. Vivek Sudhanshu, Saikrishna Gadwal, Srinivas Kaushik, Sripad Nandiraj, and Upendra Varma produced this movie under the VG Sainma banner. AJ Aaron is the cameraman, while Upendra Varma is the editor. Vivek Sagar is the composer of this flick, scheduled to release in theaters on November 3, 2023.

'LEO TO RELEASE AS PER ITS SCHEDULE,' CONFIRMS NAGA VAMSI

Thalapathy Vijay's *Leo* is scheduled for a grand release on October 19. The film is having a phenomenal craze in Telugu as well, and the same is getting reflected in the advance bookings. However, there has been a copy of a court order that has been doing rounds on social media since morning. It says that the Telugu version of *Leo* is put on hold till 20 October.

The plaintiff was not okay with the usage of the title *Leo*. Vijay fans were a bit worried about the legal issue. Now, the Telugu distributor of *Leo*, Naga Vamsi, has made it clear that the Telugu version will be released on October 19, as planned. Naga Vamsi said, "There was a miscommunication regarding the title. Someone registered *Leo* title in Telugu, and we are trying to sort out the issue in an amicable way. The plaintiff approached the court directly, and I got to know about the court injunction order today only. There will be no disturbance, and the film will have a smooth release in Telugu on October 19."



D. Imman: What Siva did really just turned my life around, and not for good

Tamil music composer D. Imman said he will never again work with actor Sivakarthykeyan. Imman has been a long time collaborator with the *Doctor* actor and has composed several songs from Sivakarthykeyan's movies such as *Seema Raaja*, *Rajini Murugan* and *Namma Vettu Pillali*. Recently in an interview on a YouTube channel, the composer was asked about any upcoming collaboration with the actor though Imman shot down the question. Being rather cryptic and not really revealing anything substantial, the *Koodamela Koodavechi* hitmaker only said that Sivakarthykeyan had

betrayed him in some way, and he won't ever work with him again. As to what happened between them, the composer refused to elaborate any further. Speaking in Tamil, the composer said: "What Siva did really just turned my life around, and not for the better. He betrayed me and I can't just let it go, so no, I won't work with him again. Perhaps in another life where he is the composer and I the actor, then perhaps. But as of now, I don't see anything happening." The composer said: "Some things affect you greatly, and those things you just can't forget like that. You can't just let them go and what he did in his betrayal for me is something I cannot just push aside. So no, I won't be work-



ing with him in the foreseeable future." Beyond that though, Imman refused to comment any further and didn't even highlight what exactly happened between them. However, when he was being asked this question, the composer was visibly a

bit hesitant to answer even feeling slightly uncomfortable. Most recently, Imman composed music for the political-drama film *Kazhuvethi Moorkkan*. After that he is scheduled to work on films such as *Valli Mayil*, *Malai*, and *Public*.



AP Tourism Minister Roja & Telugu film and serial artists inaugurate Mee Kadupuninda hotel

Roja, who is well-known for her acting in Telugu movies, graced the inauguration of the Mee Kadupuninda hotel. The event was also graced by the senior artist and actor, Shreevani Vikramaditya Sandeep, at Manikonda.

"I extend my best wishes to them, and they've all gathered here in Manikonda, enjoying the delightful offerings at your kitchen. It's a pleasure to know that they appreciate my North Andhra-style dishes, especially the Royyala Iguru and Chepala Pulusu. Although I enjoy cooking, I'm rather discreet about my culinary skills. In this delightful event, they

had the opportunity to savor my vegetarian and non-vegetarian Andhra-style dishes. I hope they had a great time experiencing Telugu cuisine, and I'm looking forward to welcoming them here again for a taste test and some appreciation from the Telugu community," said the minister.



Game Changer's first single to be out on the eve of Dasara

One of the most delayed films that Telugu movie lovers are looking up to is none other than Ram Charan and Shankar Sharmam's *Game Changer* movie. While the makers have recently started to film the movie again in Vikarabad, it looks like they are also getting ready to give a festive treat to movie lovers. The PR team of the film has officially confirmed that the first single from *Game Changer* will be hitting the marquee on the eve of Dasara. Whether they will be releasing just a lyrical video or the video teaser of the song is yet to be known, surely this

news has elated all the Charan fans. In fact, a leaked song earlier turned out to be quite negative as many music lovers felt that SS Thaman hadn't delivered the needed. However, if this first-single impresses music lovers and mega fans, the real buzz for *Game Changer* picks up for sure. Coming to the release date and all, producer Dil Raju is currently aiming for a Summer 2024 release and the final date depends on the way Shankar is likely to wrap the shooting and other post-production formalities.

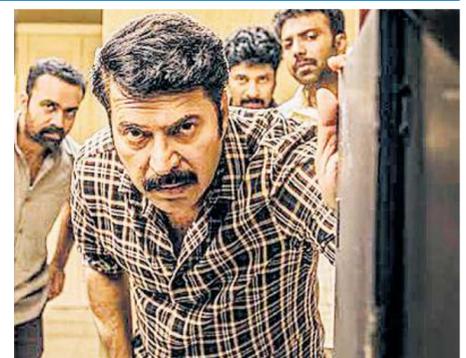
Mrudhu Bhaave Dhruda Kruthye from *Kannur Squad* hits the right chord

Malayalam superstar Mammooty's new crime-thriller film *Kannur Squad* has released the music video for its latest track *Mrudhu Bhaave Dhruda Kruthye*, a very pleasing and soothing track which is just pure joy to listen to.

Mrudhu Bhaave Dhruda Kruthye employs a very soulful aesthetic, with the delightful singing of Sushin Shyam being pleasant and yet having a somewhat somber tone.

The music video in itself does not give away much of what the film is about, except that Mammooty and his crew, all of whom are from Kerala police, are headed off in a police van on a long road trip. This trip leads from Kerala to Mumbai, before they finally reach the city of Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh. Throughout the video, we just see them on a road trip where they later get a call from a Mumbai police constable who says that they have a gift for him.

The gift turns out to be a criminal, who they have beaten black and blue, which sends the superstar into a small fit of laughter. Later they make sev-



eral stops to roadside food tracks, drink some tea, eat some food and then head off once again. All the while the police squad from Kannur is on their road trip, there is a gentle acoustic soundtrack playing behind them with some heavy hitting notes from synthesizers to give a more ethereal feel to the song. The track is a beautifully composed mixture of classical Malayalam music combined with some electronic, pop, small hints of rock, synth-pop and even glimpses of symphonic music. Sushin Shyam, who is also the composer of the song, has gone for a more experimental production. The soundtrack is pleasing and so is the production, nothing is overdone or underdone in the sound design indicating a very careful mix and mastering from the producers. *Kannur Squad* hit the theatres on September 28 and has currently garnered critical acclaim.



NZ AIMS TO KEEP THEIR UNBEATEN RUN INTACT

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Afghanistan's upset win over defending champions England has given the side a new stature and New Zealand would underestimate Hashmatullah Shahidi's side at their own peril when the two sides clash in their World Cup match here on Wednesday. While the Kiwis would look to keep their unbeaten run going in the tournament, Afghanistan, who shocked England by 69 runs, would be keen to create another big upset and put their campaign firmly on track in the showpiece event.

New Zealand are going great guns in the tournament, having won all three matches so far and are currently placed second on the points table, trailing India on net run rate.

On the other hand, Afghanistan had an inauspicious start to their campaign losing to Bangladesh and India before leaving Jos Buttler's England in a tizzy with a victory to be cherished for long in New Delhi on Sunday.

New Zealand will again be led by wicketkeeper-batter Tom Latham after their charismatic skipper Kane Williamson suffered a fracture on his left thumb during the match against Bangladesh and was ruled out for a few games.

Williamson, who had missed the opening two matches — against England and the Netherlands — due to an ACL



injury suffered during IPL 2023, was looking good to strike a century after being out of action for more than five months. But the skipper's innings was cut short at 78 when he was struck on the thumb by a throw from the outfield.

Despite the huge setback, the Kiwis would be banking on their success so far to win their fourth game on the trot against an unpredictable Afghanistan, who played their guts out against England. It would be interesting to see if

pacer Tim Southee finally gets a chance against Afghanistan, having recovered from a thumb injury, though his match fitness has remained an issue.

The Kiwis will rely heavily on their top order comprising Will Young, Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell, while all-rounder Rachin Ravindra, with his impactful performances across departments, will also be the player to watch.

The Kiwi batters would certainly have watched the video footage of Afghanistan spinners Rashid Khan and Mohammed

Nabi many times over to counter the slow-bowling threat, given that the duo accounted for five England wickets.

With the meeting happening at the Chepauk, where the pitch has traditionally assisted spinners, New Zealand will have their hands full when they take on the trio of Rashid, Mujeeb Ur Rehman and Nabi. As for the Afghanistan batting, opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz is the man in form, having scored 50-plus in two matches so far, while the likes of skipper

Shahidi, Azmatullah Omarzai and Ikrum Alikhil could come in handy as well.

While Trent Boult and Matt Henry's searing pace will be feared by the Afghan batters, their main challenge could unexpectedly come from the spin duo of Ravindra and Mitchell Santner, with the latter being the most successful slow bowler in the competition so far.

The two teams have clashed in this format only twice with New Zealand winning on both occasions.



Rohit best man to lead India to third WC title

PTI ■ DUBAI

Australian legend Ricky Ponting believes a "laid-back" Rohit Sharma is the ideal captain to lead India to their third ODI World Cup title, the second on home soil after the 2011 triumph.

With three convincing wins under their belt, India have made a perfect start to their World Cup campaign. India defeated Australia by six wickets in their tournament opener, before registering emphatic eight and seven-wicket wins over Afghanistan and Pakistan to sit on top of the points table.

"He's very laid back, Rohit. Very laid back with everything he does. You can even see that by the way that he plays. He's a pretty laconic sort of batsman as well, and that's the way he is both on and off the field," Ponting told the ICC on Tuesday.

Rohit took the captaincy reins from Virat Kohli in both the white-ball formats in December 2021.

And Ponting believes Rohit's character fits perfectly for the India job, allowing Kohli to focus on his batting.

"Someone like Virat, who is a bit more heart-on-the-sleeve, and probably listens to the fans and plays up with the fans a little bit more, someone with his personality would probably find it a bit harder," the two-time World Cup winning Australia skipper said.

"But I think Rohit will be fine with it. He's a terrific bloke and has been a great player for a long time, and he's done a great job as leader of India."

The Men In Blue last won the World Cup when the tournament was jointly hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in 2011.

So, the extra pressure of performing in front of home fans

would definitely be there, but Ponting feels Rohit is the best man to deal with that.

"We can't sit back and say that the pressure won't get to them (India) at some stage, or it won't affect them, because it will, just with the enormity of the tournament."

"But he'll (Rohit) take it and cope with it as well as probably anyone," he said. Ponting said that with all bases covered, India are the team to beat in the ongoing showpiece. "I said from the start that I think they're going to be the team to beat. They've got a very talented team," he said.

"They've got all bases covered with their fast bowling, their spin and their top-order, middle-order batting. They're going to be extremely hard to beat. But we'll see how they hold up under extreme pressure as well," Ponting concluded. India will next play Bangladesh in Pune on Thursday.

We regret squandering promising: Nissanka

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

A disappointed Pathum Nissanka said anything close to 300 would have been a challenging total but Sri Lanka failed to sustain a promising start against Australia in a World Cup match here.

Nissanka (61) and fellow opener Kushal Perera (78) gave Sri Lanka an ideal start on Monday, stitching a 125-run partnership but the Island nation suffered an unexpected batting collapse, losing all 10 wickets for just 84 runs to put up a below-par 209 on the board.

The Australians grabbed the opportunity with Josh Inglis (58) and Mitchell Marsh (52) scoring half-centuries each to take their side to a five-wicket win in 35.2 overs, their first victory in three matches.

"Despite our promising start, we deeply regret not being able to sustain it, resulting in us being limited to a score of 210



runs," Nissanka said at the post-match press conference. "On a wicket like this, I believe we should aim for a total closer to 300 runs, and this was a contributing factor for our defeat."

Nissanka's 61 off 67 balls was his second successive half-century in the tournament.

"I believe I've given my best for the team. I'm hopeful that I can contribute significantly by scoring substantial number of runs and playing substantial innings in the upcoming matches," he

said. Sri Lanka have lost three games they have played so far and need to win all their remaining six matches for a shot at the semifinals.

They next face the Netherlands here on Saturday.

"Our focus now is to learn from our mistakes and strive for strong performances in the upcoming matches. Our mental level is good. We hope to play well in these matches and win the remaining matches," Nissanka said.

Shami's role is clear still no place in 'Perfect IX'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At times, the greatest of actors don't fit the character of a particular film and in director Rohit Sharma's 70 mm World Cup panorama, Mohammed Shami is that protagonist who is missing out on a meaty role.

Unlike the 2019 World Cup campaign, the Indian team management seems to have absolute clarity on the role of each squad member, leaving a world class operator like Shami on the bench for the first three games of the ODI showpiece.

With the team ticking all the boxes so far, Shami, who is among the best in the business and ended with a five wicket haul against Australia ahead of the World Cup, might just have to keep warming the bench in the coming fixtures.

Mohammed Siraj is Jasprit Bumrah's new ball partner at the moment while all-rounder Hardik Pandya is performing the role of a third pacer effectively.

Shardul Thakur, who has bowled a total of 8 overs in two games, is the fourth fast bowling option on a flat deck and if



it is a spin friendly track like the one in Chennai, R Ashwin comes in to the eleven in place of Thakur to complement Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja.

There seems to be crystal clarity even on the batting front. Unlike the 2019 edition, the lead up of which saw the number four position become a

game of musical chairs, Shreyas Iyer, if he is fit, is the clear choice in that position. Even though he oozes X factor, Suryakumar Yadav has to wait for his return.

Rohit Sharma has led from the front thus far and India look the team to beat in the World Cup. However, there are a few questions that need to be

answered. Can the team rely on Hardik as the third seamer? Should Shami not play in place of Thakur as the latter has not yet been required with the bat at number 8?

Speaking to PTI, former chief selector MSK Prasad lauded the team's horses for courses approach. "They are using horses for

courses and it is working fantastically well for the team. If you see they used Ashwin in Chennai and Shardul for the other two games (in Delhi and Ahmedabad). Last game, Shardul was not required as the others did the job (he bowled only two overs)," said the former India wicketkeeper.

"Shami will come into picture if they want to rotate Siraj. Replacements are very clear right now. Sky will replace Shreyas if there is a need, Ishan will replace Gill at the top and Shardul will play if it is a flat deck. Aswin will come in his place if it is a turning track."

Hardik lends a critical balance to the playing eleven but considering his fitness issues in the past, can he be expected to bowl 10 overs game after game as the third seamer if the need arises?

"With Hardik, you can't expect him to bowl 10 overs in every game. The job that he is doing. Of bowling 5-6 overs per game, that is good enough. Team management seems to have absolute clarity on the role of every individual," added Prasad.

Want to take more wickets: Zampa

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Panned for his poor show in the opening two World Cup matches, Australia's sole front-line spinner at the World Cup Adam Zampa said that expensive figures don't bother him as he bowls to get wickets.

Australia found themselves in a precarious situation after suffering back-to-back losses against India and South Africa before notching up a five-wicket win over Sri Lanka on Monday.

Zampa, who has enjoyed a lot of success between the 2019 World Cup and the start of the ongoing edition, flattered to deceive in the opening two games, going for plenty of runs.

"I'm very good at self-reflection. I look back on the first two games and I'll probably look at the last game as one where I could have made a difference there and made it easy for those other guys," Zampa said after Australia's win.

"But yeah, the Indian game, I mean, we're under the pump defending 200 and I'm always going to be the guy who tries to get wickets. I'm not going to try and let the game peter out and let it go into nothing. So



yeah, figures, whatever." He registered figures of 0/53 and 1/70 against India and South Africa respectively for a combined figure of 1/123 in 18 overs.

"It's more about my attitude and reflecting on that too. Did I bowl the ball where I wanted

it to? Did I make the right decisions? Did I put my game on the line to try and make a difference? And that's how I think about it.

"I don't really care about combined figures. It's just doing what I can to try and help win the game," Zampa added.

Against Sri Lanka too Zampa looked sluggish at the beginning, giving away 22 runs in his first three overs but he roared back to form with a match-winning spell of 4/47.

"It took me a lot longer than I wanted to get into the game today. Bowling to set batters as

well, trying to build some pressure, I just wasn't really able to do that.

"I won't make any excuses. I think I should be good enough to kind of play that role as well." The wrist spinner revealed that he suffered "random back spasm" and had to undergo a fitness test before the game against Sri Lanka.

"I did a gym session a couple of nights ago and I don't know if you've ever had a back spasm, but I was worse for over the last couple of days.

"I had to do a fitness test before the game today. Yeah, I felt like adrenaline was going to get me through and a bit of Panadeine Forte (medicine). It was a tough one to get through today, but as I said, one of those random ones that will wear off in the next day or so."

CUMMINS' SPELL CHANGED THE ENERGY FOR US

With Sri Lanka going strong following a 125-run opening stand between Kusal Perera and Pathum Nissanka, it was skipper Pat Cummins who stepped up, dismissing both openers before producing a direct throw to mark the end of Dunith Wellalage.

"I thought Cummins' spell in particular was a bit of a game changer for us and even his energy in the field, the run-out after the rain break, yeah, it changed the energy for us."

"He kind of led from the front. His spell changed the momentum of the game. And then same as in the field, that run out, those little things can turn scores from 210 to 260, and it's game on. So, he particularly led from the front," Zampa said. Australia flies off to Bengaluru for their next game against Pakistan on Friday.

"After the first two games, there's definitely a flat feeling in the change rooms. We all know that you could probably go from 1 to 11 and say we all could do our roles a little bit better, particularly those first two games."

"But we know, as boss (Cummins) said the other day, we get backed into a corner and guys step up and we get on a roll, then anything can happen. It's a World Cup, so get on a roll." "Obviously, really big game against Pakistan in Bangalore, and if we can put it all together and play a good game there, you go 2 and 2 and the feeling's much better," he added.



Gurbaz reprimanded for breaching ICC's Code of Conduct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Afghanistan batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz has been handed an official reprimand for breaching level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during their epic World Cup match against England.

Gurbaz was found to have breached Article 2.2 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during an International Match."

In addition to this, one demerit point has been added to Gurbaz's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period. The incident occurred in the

19th over of Afghanistan's innings, when after his dismissal, Gurbaz slammed his bat on the boundary rope and a chair. Gurbaz admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Jeff Crowe of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Rod Tucker and Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, third umpire Paul Reiffel and fourth umpire Paul Wilson levelled the charge. Level 1 breaches carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand, a maximum penalty of 50 per cent of a player's match fee, and one or two demerit points. Afghanistan had defeated England by 69 runs to create one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history.