



Women may be deciding factor in next TS Assembly polls

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

Are women going to decide the fate of political parties in the upcoming Telangana Assembly elections? The major political parties are trying to attract women voters. In this context the women's reservation issue may play a crucial role in the next Assembly elections. Women's reservation may become the main issue in the election campaign of major political parties in Telangana.

While at the national level, the BJP and the Congress are trying to get the credit over women's reservation, in Telangana, the BRS is trying to take the credit.

In Telangana, the total number of voters reached 3.13 crore after the special summary revision this year. Of these, over 1.57 crore are male voters and over 1.56 crore are women.



The difference between male and female voters is just one lakh. The voting pattern of women is different from the male voters. Past experience shows that the women's voting pattern was almost the same across the State.

In the latest development, after the BJP-led Central government introduced the 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and assemblies, the major political parties are trying to take credit for it.

While the main opposition at the national level, the Congress says that this bill is theirs, the BJP says the credit for 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and assemblies is theirs as they introduced the bill in Parliament.

Meanwhile, the BRS in Telangana is also trying to take the credit for it because BRS MLC K Kavitha, the daughter of Telangana Chief

Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, is fighting for 33% reservation for women since a long time. Recently, Kavitha held a dharna at Delhi on this issue.

Kavitha demanded that the BJP-led NDA government introduce the 33% reservation for women Bill in the special Parliament session and also wrote to 47 political parties seeking their support on 33% reservation for women. The BRS leaders claim that the Central government has taken steps on women's reservation only after their leader Kavitha took up the agitation on this issue and wrote to 47 political parties seeking their support.

In a political strategy, the BJP-led Central government suddenly took a decision on women's reservation and introduced the Bill in Parliament to see that the Opposition parties do not take any advantage on this issue.

Kavitha to fight for BC women reservation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha, while welcoming the Women's Reservation Bill, said on Wednesday that the Bharat Rashtira Samiti would continue the struggle to secure reservation to BC women. She said it was regrettable that women's reservation will not be implemented from the next election.

Kavitha congratulated all the women of the country for the approval of the Women's Bill in the Lok Sabha, providing 33 percent reservation for women in the legislatures. "It is sad that women have to wait another five years. It is sad that BC women are not given opportunities in women's reservation and this bill has lost its soul. It is like a body without a soul", she said. The MLC asked the BJP government to think how the country could move forward if any section of women was left behind.

Cong is nowhere in poll race in Madhya Pradesh: CM Chouhan

PNS ■ INDORE

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday hit out at the opposition Congress, saying that it was facing public anger in the state and that it was nowhere in the assembly election race.

He also accused the previous Congress government led by Kamal Nath of stopping the welfare schemes launched by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) earlier.

The ruling BJP has rolled out the 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' from September 3 to reach out to voters ahead of the elections, while the Congress launched the 'Jan Akrosh Yatra' on Tuesday, claiming that there was public anger against the present saffron regime.

"Congress is nowhere in the race (for the upcoming assembly elections). It is only facing public anger," Chouhan told PTI while participating in the



BJP's 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' in Indore.

On the Congress's 'Jan Akrosh Yatra', CM Chouhan said, "They (Congress) do many things which we have already done, but their only intention is to garner votes, whereas we serve the public."

People know the real face of the Congress, he said.

The BJP will win with a record number of votes in the upcoming assembly elections on 230 seats, he claimed.

Earlier, while talking to

reporters at the Indore airport, Chouhan alleged that the previous Kamal Nath-led Congress government had stopped the implementation of various public welfare schemes started during the BJP rule.

On DMK leaders' remarks against Sanatan Dharma, Chouhan said that Madhya Pradesh will not tolerate such statements.

When asked about the BJP leaders joining the Congress ahead of the assembly polls, the CM refused to comment on it.

Kamal Nath-led Congress government collapsed in March 2020, after being in power for 15 months, when a section of Congress MLAs, mostly loyal to Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, quit the grand old party and joined the BJP. After that, the saffron party returned to power with Chouhan as the chief minister after losing the assembly polls in 2018.

Bill will give representation only to savarna women: Owaisi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday opposed the women's reservation bill saying it would provide reservation only to "savarna women", and questioned why OBC and Muslim women who have even lesser representation in Parliament are not being given any quota.

"I oppose this legislation.... The justification that is being given for the bill is that more women will get elected to Parliament. If that is the justification, why that justification is not being extended to the OBC and Muslim women whose representation in this august House is minimal," Owaisi said.

"We know Muslim women are seven per cent of the population, but in this Lok Sabha their representation stands at only 0.7 per cent," he said.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced the Constitution amendment bill which seeks to reserve 33 per cent seats in the Lok Sabha



and state Assemblies for women in the Lower House of Parliament on Wednesday.

According to the bill, it will come into effect after the delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies which will be carried out after the completion of the next population census.

Speaking on the bill, Owaisi said, "This Modi government wants to increase representation for savarna women. They don't want representation for OBC women and Muslim women. There have been 690 women MPs elected to Lok Sabha and only 25 of them have come from the Muslim community."

CS: Expedite construction of 5,707 Panchayat buildings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari held a video conference with district collectors and took stock of the progress achieved in crop loan waiver, distribution of fertilisers, implementation of GO 58 and 59, Gruhalaxmi, Aasara pensions, social welfare house sites' distribution, Telangana ku Haritha Haaram, grounding of Gram Panchayat buildings and Oil Palm plantations.

She said 5,707 new Gram Panchayat buildings have been sanctioned across the State and the construction of all these should be completed as soon as possible.

During the video conference, the CS said that the Chief Minister is constantly reviewing the sanction of social pensions and he wants to grant the pension vacancies to the wives of the deceased immediately. The government has allocated Rs 19,446 crore and this loan waiver is continuing



vigorously in a very short time. She asked the officials to ensure that the farmers who got loan waiver are provided fresh loans. She said that a special complaints cell should be set up to resolve the difficulties arising in this matter. Though adequate fertilisers have been made available to the farmers in the State, special measures should be taken to ensure proper distribution of these fertilisers.

The collectors were told that applications received under GO 58 should be enquired within a week and provide the certificates. The target set under Oil Palm cultivation should be achieved,

she added.

Finance Special Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, Revenue Principal Secretary Navin Mittal, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Principal Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultanika, Roads and Buildings Secretary Srinivasa Raju, Agriculture Secretary Raghunandan Rao, SC Development Secretary Rahul Bojja, Transport, Road & Buildings and Housing Special Secretary Viziendirra, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development Commissioner Hanumantha Rao, SERP CEO Gowtham Potru and PCCF (HH) Suvarna participated in the video conference.

Rs1,000cr released towards loan waiver

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Farmers' crop loan waiver process in Telangana has picked up pace. Although many problems are being faced by banks, the state government has been taking steps to solve them one by one so that loan waiver is applied to every eligible farmer. As part of this, the state government waived loans totalling Rs 11,812 crore of 21.35 lakh farmers till Wednesday. The government deposited the amount into the accounts of the respective farmers. Thus, it has completed loan waiver for majority of farmers.

The government released Rs.1,000 crore for loan waiver on Wednesday. This will speed up the loan waiver process. The state government started the second phase of loan waiver on August 3. The government had decided to waive loans totalling 19 thousand crore of 29.61 lakh farmers.

Unbecoming of PM to make comments against TS: BRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtira Samiti MP KR Suresh Reddy has said that the people of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are together as brothers and sisters and Prime Minister Narendra Modi should not talk in such a way as to divide us."

He took objection to Modi's comments on the bifurcation of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Speaking on the success of Chandrayaan-3 in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Suresh Reddy said that hundreds of people had sacrificed their lives for the achievement of Telangana State and hence it was not appropriate for the PM to speak in a way that belittled their sacrifice. He said that it was not correct to repeatedly say that AP and Telangana were not divided scientifically. He demanded the Prime Minister to spell out



the steps taken in the past 9 years to rectify the bifurcation issues and what amendments had been brought. He said that it was unbecoming of a person of the highest position to make such comments. "Has any special provision been made for Telangana?" he asked. He said that there was unity in diversity. The success of Chandrayaan-3 was a matter of pride for the country. "We have shown our technology to the world. BRS appreciates ISRO scientists".

Seat first, ideals can wait

Continued from page 1

Another BRS MLA, speaking on condition of anonymity, observed: "Who wants to give up their seat? Not just in my party, any party leader wants to keep it with them or within their reach. Maybe by the

time delimitation comes up, we might groom women in our household as well. We can only speculate on what can happen. Let's cross the bridge when we come to it. See the goal for any party is winning and who can make the candidate win".

SC to re-examine verdict immunity...

Continued from page 1

The three-judge bench had then said it will revisit its verdict in the sensational Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) bribery case on an appeal filed by Sita Soren, JMM MLA from Jama constituency in Jharkhand.

The top court's five-judge bench had in its 1998 verdict in the PV Narasimha Rao versus CBI case held that parliamentarians had immunity under the Constitution against criminal prosecution for any speech made and vote cast inside the House.

Exercise...

Continued from page 1

India believes the Trudeau government is not addressing its genuine concerns.

The MEA said the Indian high commission and the Consulates General in Canada will continue to be in contact with the Canadian authorities to ensure the safety and well being of the Indian community in Canada. "Given the deteriorating security environment in Canada, Indian students in particular are advised to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant," it said. It said the Indian nationals and students from India in Canada must also register with the High Commission of India in Ottawa or Consulates General of India in Toronto and Vancouver through their respective websites or on http://madad.gov.in.

A move towards...

Continued from page 1

Nearly 29 per cent or 85 BJP MPs, 29 Union ministers, and 365 of its 1,358 MLAs, which is over 27 per cent, are from the OBC category, Shah said. He said over 40 per cent of its MLCs also belong to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The debate also saw rival political parties claim credit for women's reservation, with Gandhi saying that the bill was a dream of her late husband and former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, who made attempts to grant reservation to women in local bodies in 1989 but failed, and BJP members asserting that former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee brought the bill twice only to be met with unruly scenes in the House. The bill was brought in 2008 during the coalition government led by Prime

Minister Manmohan Singh and passed by the Rajya Sabha, where it was introduced, in 2010. However, the bill could not be passed in the Lok Sabha due to political differences. It subsequently lapsed with dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha. AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi was the lone voice of opposition to the bill contending that the measure would provide reservation only to 'savarna women', and exclude OBC and Muslim women who have little representation in Parliament. The AIMIM has two members in Lok Sabha.

On the issue of immediate implementation of the proposed law, Shah said such a move would lead to allegations of partiality and insisted that the matter be best left to the delimitation commission which would carry out the exercise in a transparent manner.

Should be...

Continued from page 1

"Rajiv Gandhi's dream is only half fulfilled. It will be fulfilled with the passage of this bill. Congress supports this bill. We will be happy with the passage of this bill but we also have a concern. I want to ask a question. For the last 13 years, Indian women have been waiting for their political responsibilities, and now they are being asked to wait for a few more years -- two years, four years, six years, eight years," the former Congress chief said. Is such behaviour with Indian women appropriate, she asked. "It is the demand of the Indian National Congress that the bill be immediately implemented... but, along with that, provision should be made for the reservation of SC, ST, OBC women after conducting a caste census," she said.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Shashthi: Sep 20 02:16 PM to Sep 21 02:14 PM

Saptami: Sep 21 02:14 PM to Sep 22 01:35 PM

Nakshatram: Anuradha: Sep 20 02:58 PM to Sep 21 03:35 PM

Jyeshtha: Sep 21 03:35 PM to Sep 22 03:34 PM

Rahukalam: 1:39 PM to 3:09 PM

Yamagandam: 6:08 AM to 7:38 AM

Varjyam: 09:11 PM to 10:47 PM

Gulika: 9:08 AM to 10:39 AM

Amritakalam: None

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:45 AM to 12:33 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thundershower

Temp: 31°

Humidity: 69%

Sunrise: 6:08 AM

Sunset: 6:10 PM

Updated: September 20, 2023 5:00 PM

'AP cannot...

Continued from page 1

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's persistence is the reason for this success. The Center should immediately identify and remove the obstructions of the Palamuru Ranga Reddy lifts". Welcoming the judgement, State Minister Dr. V. Srinivas Goud said the Centre should immediately remove all key obstacles to the Palamuru Ranga Reddy Lift scheme. Minister Dr V Srinivas Goud demanded speeding up of the DPR examination of CWC for the Palamuru project. The Minister said, "Soon we will take up the construction works of canals of the Palamuru Ranga Reddy Lift Scheme.

Warner Brothers...

Continued from page 1

KTR observed that the Hyderabad Capability Center had taken very good shape within four months of its announcement.

"As part of our delegation to the USA, we met with Alex Carter in New York earlier during May this year and were glad to announce the entry of Warner Bros. Discovery's Global Capability Center in Hyderabad," the Minister recalled.

KTR stated that it was a privilege to note that the Hyderabad office for Warner Bros. Discovery was its first greenfield office in Asia, after the merger of Warner Media and Discovery.

He thanked the Warner Bros. Discovery team for choosing Hyderabad and said

this was a decision that they would not regret.

KTR mentioned that when Telangana was formed, its IT employment was over 3,23,000 and today the number had almost risen to a million, despite the impact of Covid.

He added that Telangana's employment and exports had tripled and quadrupled respectively since the formation of the state.

On this occasion, the Minister highlighted that Hyderabad city had contributed to 33% of the net new IT jobs in FY 2022 and 44% of the net new jobs in FY 2023, which was unprecedented. "In the first half of 2023, Hyderabad has overtaken Bengaluru as the top destination for the Global capability centers," KTR said.

HRDC continues to lay link roads: Arvind Kumar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC) of the Telangana government has continued to lay important link roads to reduce travel time as per the statement made by Arvind Kumar, Special Chief Secretary, MA&UD, on Twitter on Wednesday.

Arvind Kumar said that Osman Nagar to Vattinagulupally and the Outer Ring Road (ORR) service road to Lancôme Hills (corridor 39-B) are two such links that aid in reducing travel time and ensuring crucial connectivity for the public.



AGRI MINISTRIES, NGOS FROM 18 NATIONS GATHER

Soil health for climate change, food security discussed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Heartfulness, in association with Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté Alimentaire, Dr Reddy's Foundation; International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics - (ICRISAT), Sammunati, Biospheres and Fondation pour l'agriculture et la ruralité dans le monde (FARM) inaugurated a three-day event '4 per 1000' Asia-Pacific Regional Conference at Kanha Shanti Vanam, on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Wednesday.

The conference is aimed at addressing soil health for climate change and food security. Singireddy Niranjan Reddy, Telangana State Minister for Agriculture was the chief guest. The guests of honour were Sakiasi Ralsevu Ditoka, Minister for Rural, Maritime Development and Disaster Management, Fiji and M



Minister of Agriculture Niranjan Reddy with Kamlesh Patel (Dadaji) and representatives from other countries at the global meet

Raghunandan Rao, Secretary of Agriculture, Telangana government.

Niranjan Reddy said, "Our government under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has done tremendous work on soil and environment. Soil is the unsung hero of our lives. It is a reservoir of water and nutri-

ents that sustains biodiversity and regulates climate. Soil degradation is rampant across the globe the statistics of which are alarming. There is a severe threat to global food security and environmental stability. With collective responsibility we can protect it by crop rotation and cover cropping, regular soil monitoring and test-

ing to determine nutrient levels and reforestation, which can improve soil structure, reduce pollution and sustainable waste management are other aspects. We need to educate policymakers and spread awareness."

Sakiasi Ralsevu Ditoka said, "We have an unwavering commitment to address the impact of climate change and frequency of disaster. Fiji is susceptible to an increase in the frequency of cyclones and soil erosion. Climate change affects agriculture and the availability of drinking water. This is an opportunity for resilience, adaptation and management."

Delegations from 18 countries viz., France, Fiji, Thailand, Germany, USA, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, UK, China, India and the United Nations came together for this conference.

HP WORK RELATIONSHIP INDEX

Indians emerge as world's happiest workforce

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Indian knowledge workers are the happiest at work compared to their global counterparts according to the HP Work Relationship Index, a comprehensive study that explores employees' relationships with work around the world on Wednesday.

The study surveyed over 15,600 respondents including knowledge workers, IT decision-makers, and business leaders in 12 countries, with a sample size of over 1300 respondents from India. The findings reveal that 50 percent of Indian knowledge workers exhibit a sense of workplace contentment against only 27 percent of the global workforce reporting a healthy relationship with work.

Gurpreet Singh Brar, Vice President, the HP India market said, "We're seeing a major change in what matters most to India's workforce. They're seeking job satisfaction through flexibility, mental well-being, effective leadership, and the



right tools. Business leaders can leverage this shift by promoting emotionally intelligent leadership, crafting workplaces that align with these desires, and offering the necessary tools and technology to meet their evolving demands."

The survey pinpointed six key drivers of a thriving work relationship: Fulfillment, Leadership, People-centricity, Skills, Tools, and Workspace. India particularly excels in Fulfillment and Skills aspects.

In India, the landscape of work relationships is changing rapidly. An overwhelming 78 percent of knowledge workers

report increased expectations regarding their relationship with work in the past 2-3 years. The desire for improvement is strong, with a majority moving to a lower-paying job for a better experience at the workplace.

Additionally, in this era of hybrid work, the tools and workplace environment play a pivotal role in enabling and motivating employees. Their voices matter, not only in the selection of technology but also in its usage.

84 percent of knowledge workers in India want technology chosen based on what they need.

Half of dengue cases in TS are from city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad recorded half of the dengue cases reported from Telangana in August 2023. As many as 2,972 cases were recorded in the State out of which 1,562 were reported from the city.

Shedding light on the challenges posed by dengue, Dr KK Durga Prasad, Senior Consultant Paediatrician, said, "Dengue, a vector-borne disease, spreads through the bite of an infected female Aedes mosquito."

"The disease is primarily seen during the monsoon season, with potholes on the roads being filled up with rainwater, which acts as the breeding ground for this variety of mosquito. Untouched stagnant water collected in the buckets, containers, coolers, refrigerators or balconies of our household form yet another spot where the dengue mosquito can breed

with ease."

Addressing the dengue situation in Hyderabad, Dr Prasad said, "The number of dengue-affected people has gone up by an alarming 10 folds in August itself. The cases surged up from a meagre 164 cases to 1,171 within just a month. As per the cases recorded till August, Hyderabad accounted for half of the dengue cases in the State." According to Prasad's research, the late breeding of mosquitoes is also a factor which makes it hard to control the vector. The dengue virus has evolved greatly in the past 50 years. Initially, there were only two strains-DENV1 and DENV3 but after 2012 - DENV2 was the most dominant strain. Of late DENV4 is ruling the roost in South India. "Initially the affected person is affected with high fever of 40 degrees Celsius, severe headache, pain behind the eyes and muscle, joint, or bone pains.

TO BOOST STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

T-Hub inks pact with Corporate Connections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

T-Hub on Wednesday announced partnership with Corporate Connections to strengthen the bridge between established corporations and the vibrant startup ecosystem, facilitating a seamless exchange of knowledge, resources and investment opportunities.

As part of the agreement, T-Hub will host exclusive startup showcases for Corporate Connections members, creating a dedicated platform for innovative solutions. T-Hub startups will gain access to an extensive network of established entrepreneurs and industrialists from various parts of the country.

Additionally, the incubation centre will extend invitations to Corporate Connections members, encouraging participation in programme demo days, offering startups valuable growth insights. As a key part-



T-Hub CEO Mahankali Srinivas Rao with representatives of Corporate Connections

ner, Corporate Connections will nurture the ecosystem by facilitating regular interactions with T-Hub startups, fostering knowledge exchange and active participation in community events. Additionally, Corporate Connections will extend invitations to handpicked startups, offer direct contact information for their members and share profiles of investors actively seeking opportunities.

Mahankali Srinivas Rao, CEO, T-Hub, said, "This collaboration represents a significant

milestone in our mission to empower startups and foster innovation. The partnership opens doors for startups to secure vital investments, access new markets and benefit from expert mentorship."

This collaboration aligns with the shared vision of bringing together 100 visionary thought leaders under one roof in Hyderabad to create opportunities, enrich themselves and foster ecosystem growth.

Ananth Badhe, Executive

Director, Corporate Connections, said "This strategic partnership marks a significant step in our commitment to fostering innovation and collaboration within our extensive global network, spanning 29 countries with over 1,000 members. By joining forces with T-Hub, we aim to provide our members with unparalleled access to cutting-edge startups, mentorship opportunities and the chance to be at the forefront of industry trends."

The agreement signing coincided with the launch of CC Hyderabad 2, the second chapter of Corporate Connection in Hyderabad. The launch event, held on September 16 at the prestigious ITC Kohinoor, saw the active participation of 120 entrepreneurs and industrialists from Hyderabad and other cities, further underscoring the significance of this partnership.

Electric Green Metro Luxury AC buses launched in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) held an inaugural ceremony for the eco-friendly Electric Green Metro Luxury AC buses available to the passengers to prevent pollution in the city at Gachibowli Stadium in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

In the first phase of 50 luxury services, 25 buses were inaugurated by Telangana Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar, along with Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of the company VC Sajjanar. Prior to that, they examined the features of these buses. From September 23, these buses will be available for the city commuters.

Minister Ajay Kumar said that the TSRTC continues to provide better and quality services to the people. He also praised Sajjanar for having brought many changes in the

last two years after taking charge as MD of TSRTC. He said that as the city is expanding in all directions, the transport services are improving in connection with the metro and soon all types of travel can be done with a single card.

Moreover, the Minister said that the electric age is going on all over the world and the use of electric vehicles is still less in our country compared to other countries. In order to provide an pollution-free environment for the next generations, it is necessary to use electric vehicles. He expressed gratitude to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for his decision of merging the TSRTC with the government.

Sajjanar said that there is a good demand for electric AC buses in Hyderabad city and the occupancy ratio (OR) of buses plying on the airport route is 80 per cent. About 6,000 people travel in AC buses every day.

Man kidnapped, murdered over financial dispute

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an incident reported from Santoshnagar, a man was kidnapped and murdered over a financial dispute. The incident occurred on September 11.

The victim was identified as Mohammed Rizwan (31), a resident of Yakhtupura and was employed as a home guard. Following his death, Rizwan's father received a ransom call. The accused asked Rizwan's father to meet them at Bazarghat with Rs 10 lakh, after which his son would be released.

Following the call, the victim's father approached the IS Sadan police station. However, there was not much help on offer. He then paid Rs 2 lakh



to the kidnappers as ransom and got his son released on September 13.

However, after his release, Rizwan vomited blood as he suffered fractures due to a physical assault by the kidnappers during his two days of confinement.

As Rizwan's health deteriorated further, he was shifted to Osmania General Hospital and later to Owaisi Hospital where he succumbed to injuries on

September 18. Raising concerns over repeated murders in the city, the spokesman of the Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT), Amjed Ullah Khan highlighted the incompetence of city police in curbing murders.

He took to Twitter and said, "Day by day Hyd is becoming the Capital of 'Kidnappings, murders, & drug' and even policemen are not safe now-a-days. One ex-HG Mohd Rizwan-32, was kidnapped from Santoshnagar under IS Sadan PS limits on Sep/11 @KTRBRS @mahmoodalibrs@TelanganaDGP@CVAnan dIPS @hydcitypolice" Police have registered a case against the accused and have taken two people into custody in this regard.

Two held for kidnapping infant from Niloufer Hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Zone Task Force, in coordination with Nampally police, on Wednesday arrested two persons involved in kidnapping an infant from Niloufer Hospital.

The accused were identified as Katroth Mamtha (26) and Katroth Srinu (26), both natives of Kamareddy district. The incident occurred on September 14 when Mamtha, her husband Katroth Srinu, along with their infant boy came to Niloufer Hospital. They planned to kidnap another infant in a bid to swap their child.

The accused got acquainted to the victims and had a conversation with an intention to divert her and abduct

the infant. Meanwhile, the complainant fed her baby and fell asleep.

Mamtha put her ill infant boy on the ground at the hospital's waiting hall without informing anyone about her child and left with the complainant's baby.

After kidnapping the newborn boy, the accused lady left the hospital, took an autorickshaw, and reached the JBS bus stop. Both the accused met at the JBS bus stop and boarded the bus to Nizamabad.

The Task Force team, along with Nampally Police, apprehended the accused at Banswada, Kamareddy and brought them to Nampally police station. The infant was handed over to his parents. Further investigation is on.

2BHK housing colonies to be inaugurated today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The inauguration of 2BHK housing colonies will be held on Thursday. The event will be inaugurated at various venues simultaneously by the Ministers allocated at the given locations.

Minister of Municipal Administration and Urban Development KT Rama Rao will inaugurate the programme at Dundigal in Quthbullapur constituency. A total of 2,100 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery at Dundigal.

Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy will inaugurate the event at Mansanpally-I of Maheshwaram constituency, and a total of 800 beneficiaries are invited for lottery, where-

as P Mahender Reddy, Minister for Mines, will inaugurate the event at Hattiguda in Ibrahimpatnam constituency. A total of 432 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery.

Home Minister Mahmood Ali will inaugurate the event at Thattianaram in Ibrahimpatnam constituency and a total of 1,268 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery, while the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Mayor Gadwal Vijaya Lakshmi will inaugurate the programme at Thimmaiguda in Ibrahimpatnam constituency and a total of 600 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery.

T Harish Rao, Minister of Health and Finance will inaugurate the event at Kollur-II in

Patancheru constituency, and a total of 4,800 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery while Chamakura Malla Reddy, Minister for Labour and Employment, will inaugurate the event at Jawaharnagar-III in Medchal constituency and a total of 1,200 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery.

Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Minister for Animal Husbandry, will inaugurate the event at Cherlapally in Uppal constituency, and a total of 1,000 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery, while T Padma Rao Goud, Deputy Speaker, will inaugurate the programme at Pratap Singam in Medchal constituency and a total of 1,100 beneficiaries are invited for the lottery.

IR upgrading Vande Bharat trains for enhanced passenger comfort

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vande Bharat Express is continuously being improved and upgraded taking into account the suggestions given by passengers to make the travel experience more memorable and comfortable.

A host of technological changes are being undertaken to ensure that the high satisfaction levels expressed by the passengers are maintained to make Vande Bharat the preferred mode of transport for the travelling public.

Currently, 25 pairs of Vande Bharat trains are being operated across Indian Railways. In South Central Railway, two pairs i.e., between Secunderabad - Tirupati - Secunderabad and Secunderabad - Visakhapatnam - Secunderabad have been run-



ning successfully with nearly 120 per cent patronage. The Ministry of Railways is planning to introduce additional Vande Bharat Trains across Indian Railways, including the South Central Railway.

In this regard, Railways have been taking feedback from the passengers. Based on the experience as well as the passenger feedback, several improvements have been incorporated into the New Vande Bharat trains to make them more comfortable, safer, aesthetic and energy efficient.

These include the reclination angle of the seats being increased from 17.31 to 19.37

to make it more comfortable for the passengers, optimisation of the hardness of cushion, the seat color in Executive Chair Car (ECC) being changed from red to pleasant blue, improved accessibility of mobile charging point under the seats.

It also improved the lighting in toilets from 1.5 watts to 2.5 watts, the toilet handle given an additional bend for improved grip, provision of water tap aerator for better water flow control, standardisation of colours for toilet panels to provide uniformity, borderless emergency talk back unit (to interact with driver in case of emergency) to match with panel background, hinged transparent door assembly for the fire extinguishers in coaches to have better visibility in case of emergency and many more.

Two drug peddlers held; 1.17 kg ganja seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force on Wednesday arrested two persons involved in drug peddling and seized 1.17 kg ganja from them.

The accused were identified as Imran Khan (29), a butcher and Syed Feroz (25), a driver. They were procuring ganja and selling it to consumers. Based on a tip-off, the police apprehended them near Milan Hotel in Moin Bagh.

The two accused were booked under the NDPS Act.

The police also seized two mobile phones from them. Imran and Feroz were handed over to SHO, Bhawaninagar police station for further investigation.

FOETAL MEDICINE CONFERENCE

3 to 4 abnormal babies out of every 100 babies born: Docs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Doctors on Wednesday said that there are at least three to four abnormal babies out of every 100 babies born. This was highlighted at the conference on foetal medicine 'Optimising Foetal outcomes 2023' conducted by Apollo Cradle and Children's Hospital.

Foetal medicine enables to monitor the development and growth of the baby in the womb. Foetal medicine specialists take care of any abnormalities of development causing structural abnormalities or any genetic abnormalities, by ensuring normal growth and in case of abnormalities try to safeguard the baby.

Some of these may have recurrent or genetic causes that can repeat in future pregnancies. Foetal medicine spe-

cialists besides identifying abnormalities, try to identify causes and help counsel the couple regarding future risks. In our country, every year approximately 1.5 to 1.8 lakh children are born with congenital heart defects and of these 60,000 to 90,000 are critical, requiring early intervention. Majority of these can be detected ante-natally if the pregnancy scans are done properly by qualified foetal medicine specialists.

Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Dr Sangita Reddy said, "It is the combination of skilled neonatal and foetal medicine professional and the outstanding machines we have today that help us identify and give us tremendous insights in this field. It is estimated that 1.5 to 1.8 lakh children are born with congenital deformities."

Man arrested for burglary; mobile phones seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Special Zonal Crime Team, South Zone, Central Crime Station, on Wednesday arrested a man involved in a burglary and seized six mobile phones from him.

The accused identified as Rajan Dass (28), is a footpath dweller and a labourer. The police also seized earphones and a smart watch from the accused.

The incident occurred in the early hours of September 14, when Dass broke into a mobile store near Yadagiri Theatre, IS Sadan.

The accused was booked under Sections 457, 380 of Indian Penal Code and was handed over to IS Sadan police station. Two other accused identified as Raju Gidda and Hanumanthu are absconding.

Anganwadi workers' agitation turns violent in Adilabad

Agitators dragged a woman sub-inspector by her hair and threw her to the ground, leading to the atmosphere turning tense

PNS ■ ADILABAD

The agitation by Anganwadi teachers and helpers on Wednesday turned violent. A group of agitators even dragged a policewoman by her hair and threw her to the ground. The atmosphere turned tense after the mob attacked the woman sub-inspector.

The incident happened when the agitating Anganwadi teachers and helpers laid siege to the District Collectors. A large contingent of police personnel was deployed to avoid any untoward incident.

The presence of the heavy police force seemed to have provoked the Anganwadi teachers and helpers. There ensued jostling and pushing between agitators and police personnel. In the melee, a group of agitators dragged a



Agitating Anganwadi workers jostling with police at the District Collectorate in Adilabad on Wednesday

woman sub-inspector by the hair and threw her to the ground. The sub-inspector, however, quickly recovered and discharged her duties.

The Anganwadi teachers and helpers have been agitating in pursuit of their

demands. The demands include higher wages, filling vacancies and allotment of funds.

The Angwadi teachers and helpers laid siege to the District Collectorate to highlight their demands. The agitation was

supported by all non-BRS parties. The protest at the Collectorate by trade union affiliated to the Left parties.

As the tension built up, the police forcibly bundled the agitators into vans and shifted them to various police stations. The agitators raised slogans against the State government.

Anganwadi teachers and helpers have been boycotting their duties for the last 10 days in pursuit of their demands. They demanded that the government extend financial assistance to the teachers and helpers at the time of their retirement. They demanded that the government increase the salaries of teachers to Rs 26,000 and extend financial benefit of Rs 10 lakh for teachers and Rs 5 lakh for helpers at the time of retirement.

CP presents cheque for Rs 16 lakh to bereaved SI's family



Warangal Police Commissioner A.V.Ranjanath distributing cheques to bereaved family members on Tuesday

PNS ■ WARANGAL

City Police Commissioner A.V.Ranjanath on Tuesday distributed compensation cheque among the bereaved family members of deceased SI from the police security fund.

According to the reports, Janagoan SI Srinivas died on June 6 while on duty.

The CP distributed compensation of Rs 16 lakh among the SI's sons Ravi Teja and Bhargav Teja. He enquired about the family conditions of the SI and asked the police authorities to take steps for settling the benefits of the deceased SI from the department.

None can match KCR's stature, says Home Minister

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Telangana has made rapid progress in development under the leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and emerged as a role model for the nation, according to Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali on Wednesday. "None can match KCR's stature," he observed.

The Home Minister Mahmood Ali and Minister for Education P Sabita Indra Reddy distributed Shaadi Mubarak and Kalyanalaxmi cheques to 313 beneficiaries under the Jalpalli municipality limits. They also provided battery-powered vehicles to 80 physically challenged persons and sewing machines to 180 women.

Addressing a gathering, Sabitha Indra Reddy and Minister Mahmood Ali asserted that the Telangana government under the leadership of the Chief Minister fulfilled all promises it made to the people. He lauded KCR's unwaver-



Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali and Education Minister P Sabita Indra Reddy distributing Shaadi Mubarak and Kalyana Laxmi cheques to beneficiaries at Jalpalli in Rangareddy district on Wednesday

ing commitment to the State's development.

"KCR's determination has led to remarkable progress with significant investments being made in the education sector, resulting in government schools that rival corporate institutions," he said.

Sabitha Indra Reddy, who was also present at the event, assured the people that the government would address public issues and strive for comprehensive development. She urged the people to continue supporting the KCR government which has made

remarkable strides in areas such as housing and infrastructure development.

She highlighted ongoing projects in the Jalpalli Municipality, including initiatives for clean drinking water, drainage systems, and street lighting. She also disclosed plans for the construction of roads and parking facilities in the vicinity of the Dargah. The government allotted Rs 14 crore.

Minority Corporation Chairman Imtiaz Hussain, corporators, councillors, officers, and leaders were present.

Shabbir condemns lathicharge on Anganwadi workers

The Congress leader lodged complain with Telangana State Commission for Women over phone

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Congress senior leader and former minister Mohammad Ali Shabbir has strongly condemned the police lathicharge on the Anganwadi workers when they staged a protest at the Kamareddy Collectorate on Wednesday.

Expressing his solidarity with the Anganwadi workers, Shabbir Ali said that the police had resorted to a brutal lathicharge that injured several women activists. He said that the Anganwadi workers were holding a peaceful protest demanding minimum wages, job security, and accidental insurance, but the police, without any provocation, resorted to the lathicharge to foil their protest.

Shabbir Ali, who had participated in the protest, shift-



Congress leader Shabbir Ali interacting with agitating Anganwadi workers in Kamareddy on Wednesday

ed several Anganwadi workers injured in the police lathicharge to a hospital in his vehicle. He strongly condemned the police attitude and complained over the phone from the location with the Human Rights Commission and the Women's Commission. He said that he would take the victims to file a complaint with the Women's Commission and SHRC on Thursday.

Speaking to media per-

sons, Shabbir Ali described as inhuman to lathicharge Anganwadi workers. He demanded that the government immediately consider their just demands. He said that if the government does not resolve the Anganwadi workers' problems, the Congress party will organize massive protests. He also promised that the Congress party would fulfill their fair demands if the party came to power in the next Assembly elections.

Congress workers exhorted to strive for party's victory

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

TPCC general secretary Sanjeev Mudiraj has called upon the party activists to work hard for the electoral success of the party candidates in the forthcoming elections.

In a programme held at the party office here on Wednesday,

he selected the OBC presidents for various mandal units of the party and distributed appointment orders among them.

Addressing them, he said that the welfare of the weaker sections is feasible only with the Congress. He asked the newly-recruited OBC chiefs to work hard to strengthen the OBC

wing of the party. He asked them to take the six guarantees announced by Sonia Gandhi among the people.

District OBC cell chairman Balachander Goud asked the newly recruited to show initiative for the electoral success of the party candidates.

TPCC OBC vice president

Venugopal, TC Srinivas, district mahila Congress chairperson Vasanta, media cell convener CJ Benher and other leaders were present.

The following have been appointed presidents for OBC cells for various mandals: Addakula-Kotta Seenu, Moosapeta-Kavali Nagesh,

Srinu, Mahabubnagar town-Bandi Malleesh, Mahabubnagar rural-Raju Goud, Hanwada-pasam Satyam, Zacherla-G Gopal, Balanagar-Potlapalli Yadaiah, Rajapur-Sekhar Goud, Nawabpet-Malleesh, Midgil-Kongali Narsimlu and Jadcharkla Town-Krishnaiah.

BRS MLA Gongidi Sunita grabbed 15 acres of land: Ayodya Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC official spokesman Boreddy Ayodhya Reddy stated that the land is being acquired in Turkapally for TSIIIC. In survey number 72, there is 155 acres of land and 108 acres of land has been notified. In this, TS took 93 acres to TSIIIC, he said alleging that Aleru MLA Gongidi Sunita Mahender Reddy has grabbed the remaining 15 acres of land.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Wednesday, Ayodya Reddy demanded that

investigation should be done on the remaining 15 acres of land.

Ayodya Reddy questioned Gongidi Sunita, who had a white ration card before becoming an MLA, to tell how she has got hundreds of crores.

Ayodya Reddy alleged that the cheques given by the government for the land taken from 43 farmers had bounced.

He commented that with 6 guarantees of Congress, tremors started in BRS and hence Health Minister T Harish Rao is talking with fear.

Father-son duo die as car hits motorcycle

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A 38-year-old Maddimadugu Prasad and his 12-year-old son Avinash died on the spot when a car rammed into a motorcycle at Narsallapalli village under Chintapally mandal in the district on Wednesday. One more person, who also died in the accident was identified as Patnapu

Manipal (18).

The accident happened when the driver lost control of the car and rammed into the motorcycle on which the father-son duo was riding.

Three persons travelling in a car were injured. They were identified as Maddimadugu Ramana (35), Puli Pawan (18) and Vanam Mallikharjun (12).



Officials told to quickly verify Gruhalakshmi applications

PNS ■ MEDAK

District Collector Rajarshi Shah has directed officials concerned to ensure that the Gruhalakshmi applications are verified by village Panchayat Secretaries and mandal-level officials and register them online. He laid emphasis on involving the panchayat secretaries in the verification process.

Addressing the officials at a meeting held at his chambers here on Wednesday, he asked the officials to see that the beneficiaries open special bank accounts to enable the administration to credit the financial assistance under the scheme into their accounts. The moment sanction orders are given, the officials should geotag the progress of construction of the houses and sanction bills in different stages.

Asking the officials to make arrangements for the immersion of Ganesh idols in municipalities, village panchayats and mandal headquarters with



the coordination of government officials, he directed electricity, irrigation, police and revenue department officials to take all precautions to rule out any untoward incidents during the immersion process.

In all, 167 acres have been identified in 70 blocks to plant fruit-bearing and timber-bearing plants so that the village panchayat will enhance its revenue, he said.

Estimates have been prepared for planting 51,279 plants in 70 blocks. However, so far 44,494 saplings have been planted, he said asking the officials to complete works

of digging pits, planting saplings, installing gates and erection of fence all around the Wealth forests. He made it clear that there should be no encroachment of land in wealth forests.

In an old-age pensioner dies, pension should be sanctioned immediately.

As part of the exercise under way to amend the voters' list, the details of the dead, as per the form-7, should have been registered with the panchayats or the municipalities concerned to struck down the name from the voters' list. Similarly, the data in the birth register should tally with the information in the birth certificate.

Additional Collector local bodies Ramesh, District Revenue Officer Padmasri, ZPCEO Sailesh Kumar, DRDO Project Director Srinivas, DFO Ravi Prasad, district industries centre GM Krishna Murthy, irrigation EE Yesaiah, panchayat raj executive engineer and others were present.

BSNL to erect 4G cell towers in 32 village Kothagudem district

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

District Collector Priyanka Ala on Wednesday said that the BSNL identified 32 villages without mobile networks and decided to erect 4G cell towers in them.

The Collector was holding a meeting with the BSNL officials and discussed the provision of a stable mobile network in rural areas of Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

The BSNL officials appealed to the Collector to allocate land for the construction of cell towers in the villages. The Collector assured the officials that land would be earmarked in each of the 32 villages to enable the BSNL to erect 4G cell towers.

The land required for cell towers in six villages was under the control of the Agriculture Department and it



Bhadradi Kothagudem Collector Priyanka Ala holding a review meeting with officials in Kothagudem on Wednesday

would be allotted for erecting cell towers, Priyanka Ala said.

At another review meeting, the Collector directed the officials of the Medical and Health Department to organise multi-specialty health camps in tribal areas in the district. She asked the officials to identify the villages in remote areas without road communications.

2BHK houses to be distributed in Zaheerabad on Sept 30

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

District Collector A Sarat has directed government officials to make all arrangements for distribution of 2BHK houses built in Zaheerabad Assembly constituency to the beneficiaries by September 30.

Reviewing the progress of implementation of welfare and development schemes at his camp office here on Wednesday, the Collector also asked Revenue Divisional Officer Venkat Reddy to make arrangements for distribution of house sites to homeless poor and allot lands for construction of community halls.

Further, he asked the Mission Bhagiradha Scheme Superintending Engineer Raghuvver to ensure that drinking water is provided to people in Zaheerabad, Mogudampalli, Nyalkal and Jharasangam under Mission Bhagiradha scheme.

District Minority Welfare Officer Devuja has been asked



Sangareddy District Collector A Sarat holdig a review meeting with officials in Sangareddy on Wednesday

to prepare the cheques for distribution to beneficiaries of the Minority Bandhu scheme.

The Scheduled Castes Corporation Executive Director Ramachary was asked to take steps to declare open 52 community borewells in Bidekanne village of Jharasangam mandal.

Further, he directed the horticulture Deputy Director Venkateswarlu to take steps

for development of horticulture plantation.

Additional Collector Chandrasekhar, DCMS Chairman Siva Kumar, Mission Bhagiradha engineering officials, Zaheerabad Municipal Commissioner Malla Reddy, Sangareddy and Zaheerabad revenue divisional officers, Divisional Engineer Public Health and others were present.

Telangana government launches CMO channel on WhatsApp

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State government is using advanced technology media platforms to provide official information and services to the people from time to time.

In this regard, Telangana Chief Minister's Office (CMO) launched 'WhatsApp Channel' on Wednesday.

The WhatsApp channel will disseminate information from the CMO to the citizens. This channel will felicitate to keep people update about the informa-

tion from CMO.

Interested persons can join CMO channel directly by using below mentioned technical format:

1. Open the WhatsApp application.
2. select "Updates" section on mobile phones. Click the channels tab on desktop
3. Then click on the "+" button and select "find channels"
4. Type 'Telangana CMO' in the text box and select the channel from the list. Make sure there is a green tick mark next to the channel

name. 5. Click "Follow" button and join Telangana CMO channel. See the releases sent by CMO directly on WhatsApp.

Citizens can also join the Telangana CMO WhatsApp channel by scanning the QR Code given above.

The 'Telangana CMO WhatsApp Channel' is managed by the Digital Media Division of the IT Department in coordination with the Office of the Chief Minister's Public Relations Officer (CM PRO).

State govt spent Rs 50,000 cr for electrification in State

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Energy Guntakandla Jagadish Reddy on Wednesday revealed that electrification has been carried out in the State with a cost of Rs 50,000 crore.

"Think socially, broadly, think about practical issues and understand the reasons of the government for denying Green Energy Open Access", Jagadish Reddy told Industrialists at an interactive session organised by FTCCI on Wednesday evening at Federation House in Red Hills. "The government has certain social obligations. And it is not possible practically."

But at the same time, he advised industrialists not to put pressure on green energy open



"Think socially, broadly, think about practical issues and understand the reasons of the government for denying Green Energy Open Access", Jagadish Reddy told Industrialists

access. He clarified that it is impossible to supply electricity at night without the grid. He said that it is practically not possible in view of the social responsibilities of the government.

About 150 industrialists who participated in this session

asked to reveal the State government's position on Green Energy Open access, but Minister Jagdish Reddy politely refused. He said that the State government led by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is ready to supply enough electricity so that there is no pres-

sure in the matter.

He stated that Telangana State has created a record in electricity supply in the entire country after 2014. He was the chief guest at the interactive session of industrialists held under the auspices of FTCCI at Federation House

in Red Hills area of Hyderabad on Wednesday night. The President of FTCCI gave the opening speech to this session in which Sunil Sharma, Special Chief Secretary to the Government of Energy Department, participated. After that, Minister spoke about the future challenges of Telangana State in the energy sector and said that today it is because of the development of transmission and distribution industries with a cost of Rs 50,000 crore. He said that the industrialists are celebrating. He concluded that the vision of the Chief Minister and the efforts of the power companies and the staff contributed to success.

Drifting apart

India and Canada have enjoyed warm ties but now they seem to be at loggerheads



In international diplomacy, misgivings, misunderstandings, upmanship and disputes are the most common pitfalls. Therefore, it is essential to sift through the perceived facts and allegations to arrive at a balanced understanding and perspective. The recent standoff between India and Canada following the killing of Khalistan sympathiser Hardeep Singh Nijjar has raised concerns. While Canada has voiced its opinion about India's alleged and implicit role in the incident, India has brushed aside the allegation. It is, therefore, crucial to examine the situation from all angles before reaching any conclusion. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a vociferous pro-Khalistan supporter, was gunned down on June 18 outside a Sikh cultural centre in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. As he was indeed on India's most wanted list, Canada alleges that Nijjar was targeted and eliminated by Indian security forces. As it goes about demanding an explanation from the Indian Government, India has officially denied any involvement in the killing. For its part, and as history can vouch, India has been the target of numerous terrorist attacks over the years, resulting in the loss of countless innocent lives. Given this context, India has consistently demonstrated its commitment to combating terrorism both within its borders and beyond by legal means. Besides, India has never had a policy of eliminating such wayward elements by sending assassination squads for the person in its crosshairs. It has always firmly and openly believed in following the legitimate judicial process and, in numerous cases, sought extradition of such characters. India has consistently called for united efforts to combat global terrorism and has been a significant contributor to international counterterrorism initiatives. In the case of the alleged murder of Nijjar, India has emphasised the importance of credible intelligence sharing.

Accusations alone are not sufficient ground to indict a country for any perceived wrongdoing. In any legal or diplomatic context, the burden of proof lies with the accuser. Canada's allegations regarding India's involvement in Nijjar's killing must be substantiated with concrete evidence before any punitive measures can be sought or taken. Otherwise, it is a clear case of jumping the gun. It is also worth noting that India has expressed its willingness to cooperate fully with Canada in any investigation into the incident. This willingness to engage in a transparent and open process speaks volumes about India's commitment to resolving this issue through diplomatic means. Both India and Canada have shown their intent to engage in diplomatic dialogue to address the concerns surrounding the Canadian national's killing. Unfortunately, the expulsion of a senior Indian diplomat by Canada, a kneejerk move reciprocated swiftly by India, has only made things worse between the countries. As the diplomatic process unfolds, it is essential for all parties involved to maintain open lines of communication, adhere to international norms and agreements, and prioritise the fight against terrorism.

PICTALK



Women devotees chant 'Athanvashirsha' in front of Utsav Mandap on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Pune PTI

A paradigm shift in the automobile sector

The New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) policy will give a boost to the secondary car market, especially in the luxury car segment

The recent introduction of Bharat NCAP has been welcomed by the automobile industry. The industry players are awaiting its implementation with much anticipation starting from October 1. The overall sector is quite optimistic that the program has the potential to place the Indian automobile industry on a higher pedestal with the ability to compete in the global market.

The policy aimed at elevating and strengthening road safety standards. After taking into account the existing Indian driving conditions and regulations, the Bharat NCAP provides a rating to the vehicle in a range of one to five stars. Evaluating the vehicles on the parameters of adult occupant protection, child occupant protection, and safety technologies in a car, not only promotes safer cars in the country but also empowers customers to make an informed decision while purchasing a car.

The pre-owned luxury car industry is quite hope-



ful of leveraging the assessment program to the fullest. Considering that the NCAP focuses on the safety of the car, pre-owned luxury cars are well-equipped with advanced safety technologies. Coming with innovative features like intelligent alerts, parking assistance, driver assistance features, and many more, luxury cars are adept at providing that extra protection to the occupants of the car.

Moreover, luxury cars come with some standard features such as more than six airbags, electronic stability control, improved emergency braking systems, etc. that further add to the resilience of the vehicle. Where the pre-owned luxury cars are themselves fur-

nished with innovative safety features, the introduction of NCAP is only expected to augur the proposition of the cars in the market. Even though the pre-owned luxury car industry has come a long way, a lot of scepticism still lingers among the masses. They are highly doubtful about the condition and safety of the cars. However, with the pre-owned luxury cars conforming to the ratings of the new assessment program, it can instil faith among the customers.

While the organized players in the segment have been playing an instrumental role in giving a comprehensive structure to the sector, Bharat NCAP can help amplify the penetra-

tion of pre-owned luxury cars deeper into the market. If the LocalCircles survey is to be believed then 72% of buyers have shown keen interest in considering Bharat NCAP as the deciding factor for making purchasing choices.

In addition to this, the online players in the pre-owned luxury car industry relentlessly work towards fostering a transparent buying and selling ecosystem for the customers. They ensure the pre-owned cars undergo thorough safety checks to render authentic and quality vehicles in the inventory. Therefore, looking at the benefits the new assessment program has to offer, the initiative is being highly appreciated by the industry players. They are optimistic about harnessing its benefits to inculcate loyalty among the customers. Focusing on boosting the safety of the passengers and the cars, it is very likely that the NCAP can complement the pre-owned luxury car industry.

(The author is the Co-Founder and CEO of Luxury Ride)



HIMANSHU ARYA

The art of leading from the front

The sacred culture of 'leading from the front' by army officers has survived despite challenges and other institutional concerns

Three recent losses of precious lives i.e., Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Aashish Donchak, and DSP Humayun Bhatt, seem to be a timely reminder of the civilisational and constitutional values in some of us, that guarantee our freedom. Distracted, as the nation was in peddling phoney controversies, fake outrage, meaningless rhetoric, or sheer bombast – these men simply gave their all for the nation. They did not unleash hate or anger amongst us internally, instead, they chose to 'lead from the front' by letting their work (and lives) do the talking, not words. To reiterate, they didn't incite or order from the comfort and safety of distance, but put themselves in harm's way, fully knowing the possible consequences, as only true leaders do.

The saga of the Indian Armed Forces is not necessarily etched by the better-known Generals, Admirals or Air Marshals, in as much, if not more, by the unmatched steel, fire, and ramrod-straight posture of its junior-middle leadership (from Junior Commissioned Officers to Unit Commanding Officers and their equivalents), who hold the fort, literally. Beyond the hagiographies of victory, the Kargil War is a grim reminder of doing the impossible with the hearts, legs, arms, and sharp minds of the junior-middle leadership, and not so much on account of any strategic brilliance by senior leadership, be it Military or Political. Many international Military historians marvel at the surreal conditions of impossibilities (in terms of topography, weather conditions, battlelines et al) that were neither matched, before or after, in modern battle accounts. Yet, the Indian Armed Forces had triumphed, against all odds and disproven all militaristic ratios and assumptions.

However, there was one vital and unique element that differentiated the Indian Armed Forces from all other global Militaries, which made Kargil possible, despite its counterintuitive draw of unfavourable militaristic ratios and assumptions i.e., clichéd as it sounds, 'leading from the front'. Put simply, the Officer-to-Soldier



fatality/wounded ratio of the Indian Army is by far the highest as compared to any other professional Military in the world. In the thick of battle, the reality of leadership matters more than anything else, ever does. Kargil, India is believed to have lost 26 Officers out of a total casualty of 527. Considering that there are approximately 18-20 officers per Infantry battalion of about 800 odd soldiers, the value of 'leading from the front', can never be overstated.

Even in the unforgiving conditions of Galwan Valley, the heroics of Col BS Babu (Commanding Officer, 16 Bihar Regiment) who was killed in action is a testimony. There is never a similar reportage of a leadership-level officer getting killed in action, amongst Militaries of neighbouring China or Pakistan (occasionally in ambush or IED blast, but never in combat). This culture of 'leading from the front' is borne out of an inexplicable admixture of regimentation, normalised expectation and esprit-de-corps that has withstood the test of time, civilian morass, regression, and polarisations.

Some lazily attribute 'leading from the front' to overambition, misplaced bravado or momentary lapse of better sense – it may be some shades

“PUT SIMPLY, THE OFFICER-TO-SOLDIER FATALITY/WOUNDED RATIO OF THE INDIAN ARMY IS BY FAR THE HIGHEST AS COMPARED TO ANY OTHER PROFESSIONAL MILITARY IN THE WORLD”

of all of the above, and the likes of Kargil were only possible thanks to that unique josh that is still fires and cranks up performance. Never forget, those who dare, do so knowing that they are in the line of fire (when they needn't be) but still choose to do so.

The irrepressible and probably the boldest Military General of the Indian Army 'led from the front' and never lost a battle in his life i.e., Lt Gen Sagat Singh. Legend of him liberating Goa, inflicting a bloody nose on the Chinese at Nathu La and Cho La (by 1967 itself), or dashing to Dhaka to liberate Bangladesh by repeatedly overflying enemy territory in a helicopter (which took bullets) to control battle, is a fact not fiction. You may never hear of such leadership conduct in Ukraine, the Middle East, or any other conflict zone, anywhere in the world.

Before Colonel Manpreet, Major Dhonchak and DSP Humayun had answered their calling in life, it was a well-beaten path that had been carved by the likes of Colonel Ashutosh Sharma, Colonel MR Rai, Colonel Santosh Mahadik etc., all Commanding Officers of the various Rashtriya Rifles battalions, like the 19th Rashtriya Rifles, Commanded by the gal-

lant Colonel Manpreet Singh. As 'Commanding Officers' they could have avoided literal 'leading from the front', but still did so – while they and their families paid an irreplaceable price for the same, the Indian Army and the nation at large, remain eternally grateful for their ultimate sacrifices.

This sacred culture of 'leading from the front' by officers, especially by the junior-middle leadership has survived so many other institutional concerns that undeniably stare. The Officer-to-Soldier ratio was 1:18 in the 1965 War, 1:20 in the 1971 War and still, 1:17 in Kargil 1999. While die-hard Infantry folks like to flex 'When it was a victory, the cavalier claimed it outright, the Gunner boasted of his guns, Signalman publicised his worth, but the Infantryman remained silent with victory at his feet'. Beyond the lighthearted intra-services banter, the Indian Armed Forces have thankfully retained traditions, regimentation and culture at the junior-middle level of the forces, and perhaps owing only to the same, it still bashes on regardless.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)



BHOPINDER SINGH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRUST DEFICIT

Sir — Regrettably, it has come to our attention that after approximately four months, an Indian Army Jawan was tragically abducted and killed while on leave in Manipur. Furthermore, in another distressing incident, a mob attempted to storm the Porompat police station in Imphal East on a fateful Saturday night, with the aim of releasing suspects. These incidents serve as glaring examples of the escalating divide between various communities in Manipur, a divide that seems to widen with each passing day. The ramifications of this growing mistrust and division are not confined to Manipur alone; they cast a shadow over the entire nation, particularly in the North-East.

It is imperative to recognize that the armed forces' effectiveness is significantly impacted by the presence of an efficient and cooperative civil and political administration. The disconcerting silence from both the state and Union government has not only unsettled the people but also demoralized the Manipur civil society. Urgent intervention by the Union government is paramount to quell this violence and facilitate a peaceful resolution to the situation in Manipur. Together, we can work towards a more harmonious future for all.

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

STANDOFF WITH CANADA

Sir — Amidst the deteriorating diplomatic relations between India and Canada, New Delhi has taken the decision to expel a senior Canadian diplomat currently stationed in India. The diplomat has been given a five-day notice to depart from India, as conveyed through a summons received by the High Commissioner of Canada to India, Cameron Mackay, on Tuesday, 19 September. The decision to expel the diplomat reflects the growing concerns of the Government of India regarding Canadian diplomats' interference in

Women reservation bill



Congratulations on the forthcoming implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill, set to take effect after the next delimitation exercise in 2026. We hope that the execution of this bill will be well-organized and system-

atic, ensuring that it provides opportunities for women from all walks of life, including the most economically disadvantaged.

The essence of women's rights lies in the idea that no one, regardless of gender, age, or profession, should dominate or harm others. It is crucial that this bill does not inadvertently create divisions or conflicts among women, as unity is vital for its success. The bill, known as the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' (NSVA), proposes a commendable 33% reservation for women in both the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. Let us celebrate this milestone and work together for its effective implementation.

PV Rao Sreelekha | Secunderabad

internal matters and their involvement in anti-India activities.

These developments unfolded in the wake of Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's emergency statement in Parliament on Monday, 18 October. Trudeau accused the Indian government of involvement in the fatal shooting of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar and stated that Canadian security agencies were actively investigating credible allegations of a potential link between Indian government agents and the murder.

India vehemently rejects these allegations, terming them "absurd and motivated." The external affairs ministry issued a statement denying any involvement in acts of violence in Canada. The possibility of India severing ties with Canada looms large, which could have serious implications, particularly for Indian citizens residing in Canada, who may fear being targeted by the Khalistan group supported by the Canadian government.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENT

Sir — Following the successful G-20 Summit, India International Convention

and Expo Center 'Yashobhoomi' has been officially dedicated to the nation. In addition to this milestone, several noteworthy announcements are anticipated during the special session of the House scheduled from 18 to 22 September. It is now crucial to enhance the productivity of our parliamentary sessions.

Both the ruling party and the opposition bear a significant responsibility towards our nation. It is imperative that they recognize the need to move beyond futile debates on 'dharma-adharma' or other extraneous matters and focus on addressing pressing issues. Such issues encompass inflation, unemployment, healthcare, law and order, poverty alleviation, and the economic landscape.

The future of our nation hinges on constructive and substantive debates. As we traverse the Amrit Kaal, the Parliament's working style must adapt to meet the demands of the times. A more informed and engaged Parliament will instill confidence in our government and pave the way for a brighter future.

N Ashraf | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

WHAT IS ‘SUKHA’ AND HOW TO ATTAIN IT?


Seek ‘sukha,’ the real one, while enjoying ‘sukha’ of the mundane type



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

The word sukha has been used extensively in the Bhagavad-Geeta but in different contexts. This word essentially means: what pleases. The English words for sukha are happiness and pleasure. Lord Krishna has spoken about sukha to describe what pleases in three different ways. The first one is what is according to dharma and its only source is God. Let us call this sukha for this article. The second one is: what is according to dharma but brings good and bad results depending upon how it was obtained. This has been called ‘vihara’ in the Geeta. There is just one verse where this word has been used. The third kind is against dharma and brings only misery as a result. The word for this sukha is ‘kama’. I will use this word for this article. There are many verses in the Geeta in this connection.

Beginning with the real sukha, I will refer to some of the verses in their order as described in the Geeta. The first one is: “In a state of having real spiritual intelligence, one transcends the feeling of material suffering.” (2.65) A classical example is that of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who carried on his spiritual activities even with throat cancer. Personally speaking, I have accepted some pains, which are inevitable due to my advanced age. They don’t bother me much and I go on with my life. The next verse clarifies where only real sukha can be obtained: “One must be linked with God, and one must have faith in God.” Then, one will be peaceful, which is essential to be sushi.” (2.66) It is quite logical, isn’t it? Peace can only come from God because we, grown-ups, can feel secure only if we have taken shelter from God. How does a small child go to sleep peacefully in the lap of his mother?




The third verse is about control over kama and anger. “Unless that is accomplished, where is any scope for sukha?” This is only possible to accomplish if we are enjoying the shelter of God. (5.23) We can either be in control of kama or of God. For example, if I am indulging in sexual thoughts, I have effectively taken their shelter. The fourth verse chosen is very encouraging. It states, “God accompanies the conqueror of self, who is blissfully peaceful.” (6.7) This means that such a person has fully surrendered to God, and God obliges by being with him or her. The fifth verse chosen tells us about unlimited bliss experienced through intelligence. (6.21) An advanced devotee realizes that God is responding to him; He is even using him as His ‘nimitta’ (instrument) to get important acts done. His sukha knows no bounds.

Now the second level of sukha is called vihar in the Geeta. Lord Krishna states, “One whose eating and recreation (vihara) are appropriate; one who strives appropriately in activities; one who sleeps and stays awake, as required suffers less.” Because: “Contact between senses and their objects are givers of cold, heat, pleasure (sukha) and misery (duhkha). They, being temporary, come and go; tolerate them.” (2.14) If one acts in goodness, it will be like poison in the beginning but in result will be like nectar, which is the result of spiritual knowledge. (18.37)

Now to the last type of sukha, which has been described as kama. Lord Krishna has given sufficient warnings about indulging in this kind of sukha. In verse # 16.21, the Lord warns sternly, “Kama is a door to hell; causes ruination of soul; should be given up.” How? “Kill this difficult to conquer enemy in the form of kama.” (3.43). So what is sensible to do? Seek sukha, the real one by linking with God earnestly. Meanwhile, sukha of the vihar type can also be enjoyed. But one must remember that it must be yukta (proper) at all times, otherwise, misery will be invited. A classic example is that of cricket fans. Not only do they spend a lot of money and time watching matches in person but suffer great disappointment when their team loses.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views expressed are personal)

Skills gap hinders future employability



DINESH SOOD

It is crucial to bridge the skills gap by providing training in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning



The rapidly changing nature of jobs and skills requirements across the world is creating a skills gap that hinders employment opportunities. Business leaders need to quickly identify this gap and prepare their workforce for the future by providing clear direction to employees on how to build the skills they need to succeed. In the Asia-Pacific region, approximately 86 million workers need to acquire advanced digital skills through upskilling or reskilling to keep up with the fast pace of technological changes.

The UNDP’s Human Development Index ranks India at 132 out of 191 countries. This is a critical concern, as companies face a shortage of skilled workers while millions of educated individuals remain unemployed. To address this problem, India has been working to transform into a skill-based economy over the past decade. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the National Skill Development Corporation have been established to bring skill development to the forefront. The Skill India Mission, which began in July 2015, aims to address the shortage of skilled workers in the country. However, there is still a huge mismatch between the number of candidates trained, certified, and finally placed, with the International Labour Organization predicting a shortage of around 29 million skilled personnel in India by 2030.

Employees across various industries are facing pressure to upskill and reskill, but many find it challenging to take time out for learning due to long work hours. A lack of support systems that prioritize worker well-being can hinder motivation for upskilling and reskilling. Organizations can create new financial incentives through skills-based compensation to encourage employees to self-learn new skills.

A skilled workforce is critical for higher growth, but only 45% of trained

INDIA CURRENTLY LACKS AN EFFECTIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM THAT IS BOTH ASPIRATIONAL AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and a Network Member of India International Skill Centres, (an initiative of GoI)

individuals in India are employable, with only 4.69% of the workforce having vocational training. This indicates a significant skill gap in the country, which can be attributed to a lack of training infrastructure and limited private-sector participation. The lack of a monitoring body for these training institutes is also a contributing factor.

India’s demographic advantage will become a challenge if the young population is not skillfully upskilled, reskilled, and skilled. By 2025, an estimated 70% of India’s population will be of working age, and without proper employment opportunities, unemployment will remain a significant challenge. The National Education Policy (2020) needs to make sincere efforts in skill development from the school level. There is a need to create a sound National Vocational Education and Training System that provides every child with an option to go for vocational education and training after 10 years of schooling. Most developed countries have a well-defined national vocational education and training system that facilitates job readiness among youth and encourages skill-empowered entrepreneurship.

Inadequacies in skills are directly linked to the kind of education that is being imparted right from the school level and the ecosystem we put in place to equip every job seeker with market-driven skills. If someone wishes to be a carpenter, plumber or electrician, he or she needs to have undergone at least a globally certified course for which we need to have a skill training centre in every high school where job seekers should be trained in the fields of their interest during non-school hours. Similarly, education providers must support students with knowledge and skills relevant to the world of work to make them productive and able to be employed. All skill courses at school levels must be synchronised with employment for a wholesome integration between skill providers and industries will be of paramount importance.

Today, education is not confined to what is taught in schools and colleges, but the scope of learning has become wider, owing to the evolving market and technological advancement. To secure a career in the competitive and evolving job market, upskilling and remaining industry-relevant are crucial for youths. Acquiring market-driven skills will offer great placement opportunities to the youths and help them build promising careers.

India currently lacks an effective vocational education and training system that is both aspirational and accessible to all young people. To address this issue and achieve the national goal of making India the skills capital of the world, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship should establish a National Skills University (NSU), as proposed in the National Skills Universities Bill 2015. This university would offer industry-relevant curricula and skill-based certificates, diplomas, and degree programs to enhance employability.


In addition to the NSU, state governments can establish Multi-skills Development Centres (MSDC) in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. These centres can identify skill gaps in major industrial clusters and provide cluster-specific Skill Development Centres to upgrade the skills of existing workers. Advanced Skill Development Centres can also be set up to provide the latest know-how and courses to meet the high-end skill requirements of the industry. The World Bank has approved the \$250 million Skill India Mission Operation (SIMO) to improve the marketability of short-term skill development courses of 3-12 months.

To keep pace with the rapidly evolving technological landscape, it is essential to conduct global skill gap mapping and shift recruitment from “degree-based” to “skill-based”. According to a report by The World Economic Forum, 150 million new technology jobs will be created globally over the next five years, with 77% of all jobs requiring digital skills by 2030. Currently, only 33% of technology jobs worldwide are being filled by skilled workers, which could hinder technological advancements on a global scale.

Therefore, it is crucial to bridge the skills gap by providing training in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), blockchain, robotics, IoT, 3D printing, drones, and data analytics. A skilled workforce capable of understanding, implementing, and driving innovation is essential to the success of these technologies and the industries that rely on them. By focusing on vocational education and the latest skills training, India can create a workforce equipped to meet future demands.

Challenges to attain net zero emissions

A multipronged mitigation strategy is necessary but many techniques such as carbon dioxide removal must be approached with caution



ISHOO RATAN SRIVASTAVA

The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived,” the UN chief recently remarked. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted in its recent report that projections based upon stated policy commitments fall short of containing the global warming levels at 1.5°C or even 2°C. So, when emissions mitigation is not happening at the pace desired and extreme climate events indicate an earlier-than-expected tipping point, carbon capture may offer a pathway to the solution.

technology readiness levels and challenges related to lifestyle adaptations make the net zero road, a difficult terrain to tread on. Food, energy, transport and materials like cement & steel contribute significantly to emissions but are such fundamental necessities that they cannot be wished away overnight from our lives. Take the case of food, the global population has increased nearly eightfold since the early 19th century. Quite obviously, it is the fertiliser-intensive farming without which it is estimated that half of the world’s population cannot be fed. These fertilisers are synthesised using fossil fuels which contribute to emissions.

Regarding electricity, renewable sources come with intrinsic uncertainties and only reliable storage solutions can fully replace fossil fuels. This necessitates mining significant amounts of lithium which has its commercialised mining predominantly concentrated in the South American lithium triangle and notably it has a high water footprint. Additionally, mining cobalt, a key element in Li-ion batteries, is associated with ethical issues concerning child labour. Pumped hydro, an alternative to battery storage, also has environmental concerns.

The Concept of Carbon Dioxide Removal

Carbon dioxide removal involves capturing CO2 at various sources of generation or directly from the atmosphere and securely storing it to prevent escape. Natural systems such as forests, rocks, and oceans act as carbon sinks, absorbing and sequestering carbon. However, a warmer climate diminishes the capacity of these systems to absorb CO2. To augment the capacities of these natural systems, conservation efforts and engineered techniques for enhanced absorption are necessary.

These include afforestation, increased rock weathering which enables rocks to absorb more CO2, and enhanced ocean fertilisation which is a geoengineering technique that may result in higher organic growth in ocean systems thus implying higher carbon absorption and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), which introduces circularity in the emissions balance sheet. Technology-based solutions involve capturing CO2 emissions during production processes or electricity generation using fossil fuels predominantly using chemicals called amines which can absorb and release CO2 upon temperature regulation. The captured CO2 is stored in deep geological formations, preventing its release. The pumping of CO2 in the oil reservoirs for enhanced oil recovery is an established practice in the oil and gas industry. Another technology namely Direct Air Capture, involving CO2 capture from air surrounding us instead of a concentrated point source is also gaining traction however it has cost concerns.

The Pros and Cons

The fact that certain techniques are already practised in the industry, builds a certain amount of confidence towards the feasibility of the proposition. However, there is scepticism over its large-scale adoption, particularly in terms of potential interference with oceans and other natural systems. Additionally, increased afforestation and adoption of BECCS may have adverse impacts on our food supplies as well. The possibilities of CO2 leakage from geological formations too cannot be ignored. Also, it is argued that excessive reliance on carbon removal pathways may lead to complacency in emissions mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The world needs to act swiftly on climate change and undoubtedly, a multipronged mitigation strategy is necessary. However, considering the uncertainties associated with carbon removal, its deployment should be approached with caution and a gradual scaling up as we learn more about it.

MONEY MATTERS

M&M market valuation crosses Rs 2 lakh cr

The market capitalisation of Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd crossed Rs 2 lakh crore mark, helped by a strong order book in the SUV segment and leadership position in tractor segment. M&M shares closed at Rs 1,636.85 on the BSE, giving the firm a market value of Rs 2.03 lakh crore, according to stock exchange data. The automaker's market cap has doubled in less than one-and-a-half years - from Rs 1 lakh crore in April 2022 to over Rs 2 lakh crore this week. M&M market cap hit Rs 2 lakh crore mark on Monday. The incremental m-cap in the last two years is more than the incremental market value the firm had over the last decade. Capital allocation actions have led to an overall better financial performance with several non-accretive divestments completed, analysts said adding net cash is at all-time high levels. Mahindra's auto and farm businesses are industry leaders and it is looking to capitalize on market leadership position.



Sai Silks IPO subscribed 7% on first day of offer

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of ethnic apparel retailer Sai Silks (Kalamandir) was subscribed 7 per cent on the first day of offer on Wednesday. The IPO received bids for 26,16,752 shares against 3,84,86,309 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE. The category for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) was subscribed 12 per cent and that of non-institutional investors received 3 per cent subscription. The public issue has a fresh issue of up to Rs 600 crore and an offer for sale of up to 2.70 crore equity shares. The price range for the offer is Rs 210-222 a share. At the upper end of the price band, the IPO will fetch about Rs 1,201 crore. On Monday, Sai Silks said it has raised over Rs 360 crore from anchor investors. The Hyderabad-based company was founded by Prasad Chalavadi, a techie turned entrepreneur in 2005. It has four store formats -- Kalamandir, VaraMahalakshmi Silks, Mandir, and KLM Fashion Mall.



EPFO records highest net member addition of 18.75 lakh in July

Retirement fund body EPFO has recorded the highest net member addition of 18.75 lakh in July 2023, according to the payroll data released on Wednesday. The labour ministry in a statement said that the addition of 18.75 lakh during the month is the highest since the first publishing of EPFO payroll data from April 2018 covering the period of September 2017 onwards. A growing trend has continued for the last three months with an increase of around 85,932 net members over the previous month of June 2023. The data indicates that around 10.27 lakh new members have enrolled during July 2023 which is the highest since July 2022. The majority of new members joining EPFO are in the age group of 18-25 years constituting roughly 58.45 per cent of total new members additions during the month. This shows an increasing trend in youth enrollment, who are mostly first-time job seekers joining the organized sector workforce of the country, it explained.



Ensure long-term policy, formula for ethanol price: ISMA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sugar industry body ISMA on Wednesday demanded that the government should come out with a long term policy and formula for ethanol pricing in order to encourage mills to expand capacity by around 400 crore litre which will require an estimated investment of Rs 17,500 crore.

Briefing media about the demand-supply scenario of sugar for the 2023-24 marketing year starting next month, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) President Aditya Jhunjhunwala also demanded that the minimum selling price of sugar should be enhanced to Rs 38 per kg from the current Rs 31 per kg

in view of an increase in production cost.

He said the ISMA will come out with a fresh sugar production estimate for the 2023-24 marketing year (October-September) during November after analysing the satellite image of sugarcane area across major producing states and then only would be able to assess whether there is any surplus for exports after meeting the domestic demand of sugar and ethanol.

"At present, the sugar industry has an installed capacity of 700 crore litre for ethanol production and we operate at 80 per cent capacity utilisation. We need to increase our installed capacity to 1,000-1,100 crore litre.

'We are very close' on FTA with India: UK Trade Minister

PNS ■ LONDON

India and the UK are "very close" to achieving a mutually beneficial free trade agreement (FTA) but the aspects left to agree on are the toughest ones, Britain's Business and Trade Secretary in charge of the negotiations has told a parliamentary panel.

Kemi Badenoch was answering questions posed by the cross-party House of Commons Business and Trade Committee, which scrutinises the work of the Department of Business and Trade (DBT), on Tuesday when she was asked about the timeline for signing off on the FTA which has completed 12 rounds of negotiations.

The Cabinet minister was specifically asked about some UK media reports suggesting that cricket fan British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak may be planning a return visit to India next month to sign the deal on the sidelines of the World Cup being hosted across the country.

"We have never set a deadline. I think this is a very optimistic briefing for newspa-



"We are very close. It is possible, but I wouldn't be setting that sort of deadline. We will finish when we finish," she said.

pers," responded Badenoch.

"We are very close. It is possible, but I wouldn't be setting that sort of deadline. We will finish when we finish," she said.

Referencing former British prime minister Boris Johnson setting a Diwali 2022 deadline for an agreement, Badenoch reiterated the Sunak-led government's approach of not setting any end dates.

"We had the same thing last year, where they said we're going to have a deal by Diwali. Once you set a date, you create problems on your own side. We have always been very, very

specific that it's about the deal, not the day. And, we will get there when we have a deal that is mutually beneficial for India and for the UK. We've done quite a lot, so it is close," she said.

"It's the Pareto principle, that the few bits left are always the toughest bits," she added.

The Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 principle, is named after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto and is a phenomenon that states that roughly 80 per cent of outcomes come from 20 per cent of causes.

Badenoch reviewed

progress with her Indian counterpart, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, during a visit to India last month coinciding with Round 12 of the FTA negotiations.

Sunak's visit to New Delhi for the G20 Leaders' Summit earlier this month also concluded with a commitment to an FTA, with the British Indian leader telling reporters that he "won't rush things".

Meanwhile, amid a diplomatic standoff between two of its allies -- India and Canada -- over the contentious issue of pro-Khalistan extremism, Sunak's spokesperson at Downing Street reiterated this week that trade talks with New Delhi remain on track.

"Work on the trade negotiations will continue as before when we have concerns with countries we're negotiating trade deals with, we'll raise them directly," the spokesperson told reporters on Tuesday.

According to official DBT figures, UK-India bilateral trade was worth an estimated GBP 36 billion in 2022 -- a figure expected to be significantly boosted with an FTA.

Centre keen on Recruit-Train-Deploy model

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Inviting training partners and India Inc to collaborate with the government on the Prime Minister's Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0, a top official on Wednesday said the Centre is keen on having a Recruit-Train-Deploy model for its flagship skilling scheme.

Secretary in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Atul Kumar Tiwari also called upon the industry to assist in designing some courses.

"We would also like the training partners and industries to come together and work with us on the Prime Minister's Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 in which we would like to have the RTD

model. We would like industries also to come forward and help us in terms of designing some courses for them and funding some part of that so that they can skill people for their workforce," Tiwari said.

He was addressing the Global Skills Summit organised by Fici.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech this year announced that the fourth phase of the PMKVY 4.0 will be launched in order to skill lakhs of youth within next three years.

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0 officially ended in March 2022 but due to Covid-led delays, training under the scheme carried on for a few months into 2023.



Updater Services' IPO to kick off on Sep 25

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The initial share sale of integrated facilities management company Updater Services Ltd will open for public subscription on September 25.

The three-day Initial Public Offering (IPO) will conclude on September 27 and the bidding for anchor investors will open on September 22, according to the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP).

The IPO will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 400 crore and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of up to 80 lakh equity shares by a promoter and existing shareholders.

Under the OFS, Tangi Facility Solutions Private Ltd, India Business Excellence Fund-II and India Business Excellence Fund-IIA will be selling shares of the company.

Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for payment of debt, funding working capital requirements, pursuing inorganic initiatives and general corporate purposes.

The company offers integrated facilities management services and business support services to its clients. It caters to customer segments across sectors such as FMCG, manufacturing and engineering, BFSI, healthcare, IT/ITES, automobiles, logistics and warehousing, airports, ports, infrastructure and retail.

Sensex tanks 796 pts, Nifty closes below 20K

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Wednesday due to selling in index heavyweights in tandem with weak global trends ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision.

Falling for the second day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 796 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 66,800.84. During the day, it tanked 868.7 points or 1.28 per cent to 66,728.14.

The NSE Nifty declined 231.90 points or 1.15 per cent



to end below the 20,000 mark at 19,901.40.

US bond yields surging to 16-year high levels and fears of

high crude oil prices fueling commodity inflation also hit the investor sentiment, according to analysts.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and caution ahead of a host of interest rate decisions from global central banks also added to the overall bearish trend. Besides the US Fed meeting, the BoE (Bank of England) and the BoJ (Bank of Japan) are also scheduled to meet this week.

Among the Sensex firms, HDFC Bank emerged as the biggest loser, falling 4 per cent. JSW Steel, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement, Maruti, Tata Steel, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel and Larsen & Toubro were the other major laggards.

Goldman pays Rs 26.44 lakh to settle FPI norms violation case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte has settled with capital markets regulator Sebi a case pertaining to certain discrepancies in the monthly ODI (offshore derivative instruments) reporting after paying Rs 26.44 lakh towards the settlement amount.

The order came after Goldman Sachs, a registered Foreign Portfolio Investor (FPI) which deals in off-shore derivative instruments, proposed to settle the alleged violations by "neither admitting nor deny-



ing" under the settlement rules.

"It is hereby ordered that any proceedings that may be initiated for the violations... are settled in respect of the applicant (Goldman Sachs (Singapore) Pte)," the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a settlement order

passed on Monday.

In its order, the regulator observed that certain discrepancies in the monthly ODI reporting for the month of March 2022 were identified by the applicant.

These were related to a mismatch of investment managers for multi-managed clients with respect to four ODI subscribers and updated details of investment managers or beneficial owners information of three ODI subscribers were not provided in the monthly ODI reporting.

Equity investors lose Rs 2.89 lakh cr in two days of market fall

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth fell by Rs 2.89 lakh crore in two days of market fall, with the BSE Sensex tumbling 796 points on Wednesday, amid weak global market trends ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and caution ahead of a host of interest rate decisions from global central banks also added to the overall bearish trend. Besides, the US Fed meeting, the BoE (Bank of England) and the BoJ (Bank of Japan) are also scheduled to meet this week.

Falling for the second day

running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 796 points, or 1.18 per cent, to settle at 66,800.84 points. During the day, it fell by 868.7 points, or 1.28 per cent, to 67,294.16 points.

The BSE benchmark fell 241.79 points, or 0.36 per cent, to settle at 67,596.84 points on Monday.

Equity markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi.

Following the bearish trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies fell by Rs 2,89,121.56 crore to Rs 3,20,51,859.15 crore in two days.

Total to invest US\$ 300 mn in Adani's green energy projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TotalEnergies SE will invest USD 300 million in a new clean energy joint venture with the Adani Group, marking the French energy giant's first public deal since a US short-seller levelled fraud allegations against Gautam Adani's business empire.

Total will hold a 50 per cent stake in the new joint venture firm, with Adani Green Energy Ltd holding the rest, the two firms said in a statement.

The joint venture will hold a portfolio of 1,050 MW, including 300 MW of already opera-



tional capacity, 500 MW under construction and 250 MW under-development assets with a blend of solar and wind power.

The investment is part of Total's drive to expand its portfolio of clean energy projects.

Total already has a 19.7 per cent stake in Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL). It also has

an equal joint venture with AGEL, called AGE23L that holds a portfolio of 2,353 MW.

In a stock exchange filing, AGEL said its board has approved "the execution of a binding term-sheet to be entered into between Adani Green Energy Twenty Three Limited (AGE23L) and TotalEnergies SE (Total) pursuant to which, inter alia, Total will make further investment (either directly or through its affiliates) of USD 300 million to form a new 50:50 joint venture company with the company and modify certain terms of its investment in AGE23L".

Infosys to train 50,000 employees on NVIDIA AI technology

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT company Infosys plans to train and certify 50,000 employees on NVIDIA AI technology to provide expertise to its customers across industries, the company said on Wednesday.

The development follows expansion of collaboration between Infosys and chipset company NVIDIA to provide generative AI-based solutions to enterprises worldwide.

"Infosys plans to set up an

NVIDIA Centre of Excellence, where it will train and certify 50,000 of its employees on NVIDIA AI technology to provide generative AI expertise to its vast network of customers across industries," Infosys and NVIDIA said in a joint statement.

Infosys uses the full-stack NVIDIA generative AI platform, including hardware and enterprise-grade software to help customers create generative AI applications for business operations, sales and marketing.



The broadened alliance will bring the NVIDIA AI

Enterprise ecosystem of models, tools, runtimes and GPU

systems to Infosys Topaz an AI-first set of services, solutions and platforms that accelerate business value using generative AI technologies.

"Infosys Topaz offerings and solutions are complementary to NVIDIA's core stack. By combining our strengths and training 50,000 of our workforce on NVIDIA AI technology, we are creating end-to-end industry-leading AI solutions that will help enterprises on their journey to become AI-first," Infosys, Co-founder and Chairman,

Nandan Nilekani said.

Through the integration, Infosys will create offerings customers can adopt, to integrate generative AI into their businesses.

"The NVIDIA AI Enterprise ecosystem is ramping quickly to provide the platform for generative AI. Together, NVIDIA and Infosys will create an expert workforce to help businesses use this platform to build custom applications and solutions," NVIDIA, Founder and CEO, Jensen Huang said.



Dancing, nurturing & growing Tango dance community in Hyderabad

SHIKHA DUGGAL

While Tango has been around since the 19th century, it's not the most known dance form in our city of Hyderabad—but what's Hyderabad Tango Community is doing to create that buzz is already so phenomenal. The art of tango is something else only!

This community has passed out many beginners as experts in the recent years. So when we speak to the founders of the community by the names of Santak and Ketaki, they say, "Argentine Tango is more than a dance; it's a passionate conversation between two souls. Its intricate footwork and close embrace create an intimate connection, allowing dancers to express their emotions with every step. This art form continues to captivate with its blend of tradition and improvisation, making each tango a unique story told on the dance floor."

It was important for our city to have a distinctive community like this who really helps in the growth of a dance form like this and the scene around it. They continued, "Beyond being a captivating dance form, offers valuable insights and lessons that can be applied to both business world and wellness. In tango, partners must communicate non-verbally, relying on subtle cues to lead and follow. This emphasizes the importance of clear communication in business relationships. Effective communication fosters teamwork, minimizes misunderstandings, and enhances productivity. In terms of mental health, building strong connections and open channels of communication with colleagues and friends can provide vital support during challenging times."

In fact, they underlined, "Learning tango requires mindfulness, as dancers focus on the present moment and the connection with their partner. This can be applied to manage stress and improve mental health. Mindfulness practices can help individuals stay present and reduce anxiety in both work

Bringing the art of Tango, a passionate conversation between two souls, today *The Pioneer* brings to you about the Hyderabad Tango Community, that's building a community of their own.



and personal life. Then incorporating the principles of Tango into business and mental health strategies can lead to improved communication, teamwork, resilience, and well-being, ultimately contributing to more fulfilling personal and professional lives."

So you see in the quintessential Hyderabad way this duo is actually promoting and teaching the dance form in the city. They describe this professional training in the Hyderabad as, "Tango is a passion project for us, and this deep passion for tango drives our growth strategy in Hyderabad. Our strategy for growth in Hyderabad centers on making tango accessible to everyone. Our passion for this dance drives us to offer affordable classes and practice sessions every Sunday, creating a nurturing

environment for enthusiasts.

To introduce more people to the magic of tango, we host monthly Intro to Tango workshops and even invite international instructors to share their expertise." Once a month they also organize a social tango event called Milonga, where those who have learnt tango can come and dance, form social connections and celebrate their love for Tango! So you see the journey and destiny of tango here in Hyderabad? Besides — "The inception of Tango in Hyderabad was inspired by a chance encounter with a visiting German researcher, Thomas Falk, in 2015. He initiated Tango lessons in Hyderabad for the very first time. His love for tango ignited our own passion, and we have been dedicated to cultivating the tango community in Hyderabad ever since. While tango might not be the most widely

embraced dance form, it boasts an incredibly devoted following. Those who fall under its spell become addicted to its unique music and dance etiquette, forming a close-knit and passionate community."

Furthermore the duo confirms that in recent times, they have witnessed a surge of interest in tango, with a growing number of inquiries about their classes and workshops. Their existing students continue to show enthusiasm to learn more, become better dancers and deepen their understanding of this dance form. In fact, "Our future aspirations for Tango in Hyderabad are clear: we want to spread awareness and foster a deep appreciation for this art form. Our vision is to cultivate a strong, inclusive community that can share the love and joy of Tango with even more people in our city."

'I love how Nawaz as an actor absorbs everything that a filmmaker desires of him'

TEJAL SINHA

The Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer *Haddi* has hooked the audience, not only with the concept, and the way he donned himself into a transgender, but also the way the entire film was executed and presented. In the end, the film received the much-deserved appraisal that it was meant to get. The hard-hitting noir revenge drama is directed by debutant Akshat Ajay Sharma, who has been assisting Anurag Kashyap for many years now.

While Akshat has always adored Anurag and his work, but he feels that he is a different filmmaker and they have a huge contrast in their art. However, what he adapted from Anurag was, "While working with him for 3-4 years is the trait of how to be a budget filmmaker, and working in pandemonium so you can say that I learnt everything that a producer usually loves. Sadly, the only Anurag you will see in this is him as an actor, my villain, Pramod Ahlawat. Anurag calls me "A Dark Person" for my ideas. Imagine that! Him calling someone Dark is something. As much as I love his creative advices - he didn't give me any for the film. But he stood by the film - like a rock making sure it sees the light. Anurag wasn't a part of the writing/making of this. *Haddi* is my baby and my team's - I'm proud to say that."

Nawaz plays a transgender and from what we can tell, he has done a phenomenal job. The film is against the backdrop of modern ruins in NCR, Gurgaon, and Noida, and gives

a peek into the life of *Haddi*, a rookie transgender, portrayed by Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who comes from Allahabad to Delhi to join a gang of transgenders and climbs up to the top of the criminal chain to avenge his family who was wronged by a mighty powerful gangster turned politician played by Anurag Kashyap.

So, did you wonder too if it was a task convincing him, or if he was the first choice for the role? Well, the director says, "Without Nawaz, there was no *Haddi*. He is *HADDI*. It wasn't a task to convince him. He inspires greatness and he has an eye for the best scripts. But it was a task to get him to sit down with me for 3 hours. He reads all his scripts, and I prefer doing script reading. Considering his busy schedule, it was a task getting his availability for that meeting. But once he read/listened to the script, he said yes immediately. It was a long journey from that day to this hour. He was my ONLY choice for this role. Why do you think I waited an entire year for him and did not pitch anyone even before he knew about the existence of this script? Regarding his involvement in prep, it was a huge collaboration. The preparation for this role wasn't much about external appearance. We had the best people for that. With Priyanka and Subhash, the 'Appearance' was never a worry. What was a task for us was to dissect the psychology of this character. The sensitivity, the strength, the love of the sisterhood, and the vengeance of someone who had lost everything. It

included hours of discussion till the last day of the shoot. I love how he as an actor absorbs everything that a filmmaker desires of him and then he gives that and more."

Debutant director Akshat Ajay Sharma, who has been winning hearts with his recent project *Haddi*, gets candid with *The Pioneer*, about working with Anurag Kashyap, and Nawazuddin donning the character in the film.



CHANGING THE FACE OF THE INDIAN REALTY SECTOR

India post Independence has experienced a rapid surge in urbanisation. This has been fuelled by the adoption of a mixed economy and the growth of the private sector. The transformation has led to a significant increase in the urban population, as per data from the country's census reports and international organisations.

According to the 1901 census, a mere 11.4% of India's population resided in urban areas. However, this number jumped to 28.53% by the 2001 census, indicating a substantial shift towards urban living. As of 2017, the World Bank reported that the urban population in India had further climbed to 34%, reflecting the ongoing trend of urbanisation. Projections by the United Nations paint a clear picture of the future, with an estimated 40.76% of the country's population expected to live in urban areas by 2030. This forecast highlights the continued momentum of urbanisation in India and the increasing appeal of urban centres for its citizens.

However, in a dynamic shift, the Indian real estate landscape is experiencing a major transformation, with Tier 2 and 3 cities emerging as lucrative hubs for development. These cities have witnessed a surge in the popularity of townships in recent years, offering a fresh perspective on urban living and revolutionising the entire real estate industry. Experts believe that Tier 2 and 3 cities,

typically found in industrial corridors, hold substantial potential for future economic growth and real estate development. As these cities see improvements in infrastructure and the expansion of industries, they become attractive destinations for investment. With the availability of affordable spaces and increasing job opportunities, their growth potential as promising real estate markets in India is further strengthened.

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A pivotal factor driving the rising prominence of townships in Tier 2 and 3 cities is the pressing need for affordable housing. Large metropolitan centres have been tackling escalating housing costs and limited land availability, pushing potential homeowners to explore alternative options. The relatively untapped development areas in these smaller cities have become a beacon for real estate investments. Townships in these regions present a wide array of housing choices, catering to diverse needs and budgets, from economical flats to lavish villas.

TRANSFORMATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The allure of townships in Tier 2 and 3 cities is further enhanced by the well-



planned infrastructure and comprehensive services they offer. Unlike chaotic urban centres, these smaller cities have the advantage of meticulously designed developments. Townships boast well-connected road networks, dependable utilities, and modern amenities such as schools, hospitals, shopping malls, and recreational facilities. This thoughtfully crafted infra-

structure ensures residents have seamless access to all essential services, elevating their living experience.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVING

A notable feature of townships in Tier 2 and 3 cities is their emphasis on sustainable living. Many of these developments have been purposefully designed with

environmental considerations in mind. Green spaces, rainwater harvesting systems, and energy-efficient structures are incorporated to promote a greener and healthier lifestyle for residents. The burgeoning awareness and importance of sustainable living among modern homeowners have further cemented the appeal of these townships.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FUELING GROWTH

The government's commitment to urban development in Tier 2 and 3 cities has played a significant role in propelling the growth of townships. Initiatives such as the Smart Cities Mission and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana have laid the foundation for integrated townships that house residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within self-sustaining communities. With proactive government support and developer incentives, a conducive environment has been created, hastening the development of townships in these cities.

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN REAL ESTATE

As the real estate market in India undergoes a metamorphosis, townships in Tier 2 and 3 cities are poised to be the game-changers. The year 2023 is expected to witness a notable shift in investment focus towards Tier II and Tier III cities in India. With specific cities like

Visakhapatnam, Trivandrum, and Coimbatore showing great promise in different sectors, these regions are set to become major drivers of economic growth and real estate development.

In other regions, cities like Ludhiana, Ambala, Lucknow, Patna, Siliguri, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Jaipur, and more have experienced remarkable growth as manufacturing hubs. As a result, these cities have emerged as promising locations for the establishment of warehousing clusters.

The thriving manufacturing sectors in these areas have made them attractive choices for businesses seeking efficient warehousing and distribution centres.

Offering an attractive blend of affordability, robust infrastructure, contemporary amenities, and sustainable living options, these townships have become the preferred choice for discerning homeowners. The government's continued emphasis on urban growth and investment encouragement in these cities ensures that townships will remain the driving force shaping the future of real estate in India. With more people seeking a balanced and rewarding lifestyle, the rise of townships in Tier 2 and 3 cities is set to define the trajectory of the real estate market in the country.

(The author, Aditya Kushwaha, CEO and Director Axis Ecorp.)





Actress Lavanya Tripathi, along with the Managing director of Wonderla Holidays, and the park head Madhu Sudhan, inaugurated its two new thrilling water rides , Rainbow Looops and Drop Loop.



Entrepreneur Anam Mirza, along with her husband Mohammed Asaduddin, graced the opening of Huny Huny's second store at Kondapur in Hyderabad.

Photos by- SV Chary



Design Democracy 2023 is set to debut from October 13 to October 15, which will take place at N Convention, aiming to offer more than an exhibition. The exhibition will be focusing on both B2B and B2C connections, will play a vital role in one of the nation's fastest-growing markets.

O.P. Jindal Global University and Canada's York University have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for academic collaboration and supporting student mobility between the two countries. The MoU will grow the collaborations that they have in academic programming, research, innovation, entrepreneurship activities, and conferences.



Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi recently participated in a mega blood donation camp organised by Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Society (TSCS) to support thalassemia patients, held at Presidency Degree College, Near Falaknuma Palace.

BJP leader Bollampally Indrasen Reddy, organised a meet event at the Somajiguda Press Club, sharing insights about the Swavalambhi Bharat Abhiyan program brought by the Central Government.

LISTINGS


Looking to revamp your wardrobe with a new collection? Head straight to Inorbit Mall

The new season is around the corner and there can be no better place than Inorbit Mall Hyderabad to spruce up one's wardrobe with a new collection. The mall is currently hosting a Denim World Tour, which commenced on September 1 and will continue till the 25th of the month where numerous reputed brands are showcasing their latest denim collection. This is definitely the place to be for people looking to get their denim game strong! **When:** Denim Fest: Till September 25 By Gone Fashion: Till October 5


TEGC 2023 is back to crown India's new esports champions.

The fun, cool, and futuristic Taiwan Excellence Gaming Cup (TEGC) 2023 is back in India in all its splendour to hunt for new esports champions. This year the event will, for the first time, bring together all former TEGC champions from India on one stage. TEGC has also tied up with leading tech influencers to livestream the event, and the same will be available on the TE YouTube handle. A brand-new website was unveiled during the event, signalling the opening of the TEGC registration for gamers with many interesting prizes up for grabs in the finale. Should you require any further details, please visit the official website: <https://tegamingcup.in/>


ARCHIE



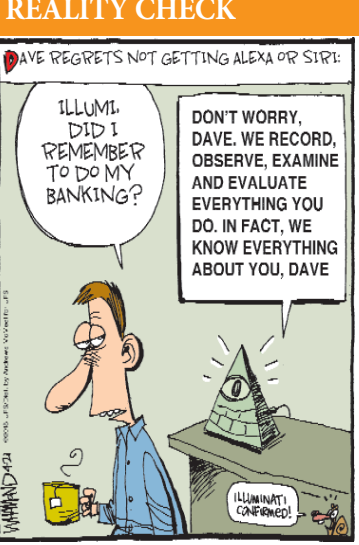
CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD




REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP




NANCY



CROSSWORD

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GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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

ACROSS

1 Beard

7 Movements of the sea caused by the moon's pull on the Earth

8 A sour oily fruit from a tree

9 One of the continents

10 An alcoholic drink

12 Look at something for a long time

14 Me

17 A type of small bird

18 A clothing size

19 A chart of months and days

SOLUTION

N	O	S	T	R	I	L	S	A
I	T	T	U	X				
G	R	O	W	C	O	B	W	E
H	O	H	J	U				
T	A	K	S	H	E	A	D	I
M	A	N	T	S				
R	T	U	C	R				
E	M	B	E	R				
A	N	E						
Y	S	U	D	D	E	N	L	Y

4 Lift up

5 People not known to you

6 Extremely frightened

11 An eye's cover

13 A striped animal

15 Mistake

16 A joint in the leg

venu thottempudi

I DON'T FEEL BAD ABOUT MISSING SOME PROJECTS IN MY CAREER

PNS| HYDERABAD

Actor Venu Thottempudi, who recently made his comeback with the webseries *Athidhi*, speaks about its response, playing his character, working with producer Praveen Sattaru, and more.

Actor Venu Thottempudi, has recently made his comeback, which also marks his OTT debut with *Athidhi*, currently streaming on Disney plus Hotstar. This web series is directed by Bharat Viji and produced under the banner of Random Frames Entertainment, and renowned director Praveen Sattaru acted as the show runner. The web series has received a mixed response. While some call it classy, other say that it lacks mass elements. However, Venu shares for him, it is a complete family entertainer. "It has comedy, suspense, drama and sentiment and less horror elements. That's why the family can watch it comfortably together. I watched a lot of web series during the lockdown time. At that time I also thought it would be good if I did a web series. As I thought, the executive producer of this web series said about *Athidhi*. After that the script was sent to me. I liked the story of *Athidhi*. When Bharat came to me he said it would be good if you do this subject. When a new director came who believed in me, I thought to support his vision. The story is also very impressive. So I agreed to do this web series."

Athidhi not only marks his OTT debut, but also it is for the first time that he had worked in the horror genre. Venu reveals that it was rigorous challenge for him to perform the character of Ravi Varma because, "He knows

everything in this story. But he should behave like, he knows nothing. There should be a balance, not too much or too little. There are no such restrictions for other characters. For me, they tightened it like it was put in a box. When director Bharat brought this story to me, he said you should give settled performance. If my performance is good, credit should be given to Bharat." *Athidhi* has been a web series where you can find limited character. Going ahead, the actor was all praises for Praveen Sattaru, and says, "He takes care of everything. They used to discuss with us. He did not come to the set but knew everything. He has put in a good effort for the *Athidhi*. I thoroughly enjoyed working in the project."

On a concluding note, the Ramachari



'Rudram Kota deserves audiences' support,' says actor Srikanth

Rudram Kota, starring senior artist Jayalalitha in a pivotal role, is produced by Anil Arka Kandavalli. Written and Directed by Ramu Kona. The film is coming from the banner ARK Visuals. Starring Rudhra, Vibhisha and Riya in leading roles. The thriller is going to be released in theatres on September 22nd through Screen Max Pictures.

The film's pre-release event was held in Hyderabad in the presence of chief guest and actor Srikanth. Speaking on the occasion, Hero Srikanth said, "Me, Rashi and Suchitra have done many songs together. We always feel great to meet Ram-Lakshman duo. I acted

in *Panchadara Chilaka* with Jayalalitha. She is a very nice person. She has built *Rudram Kota* with so much care. Any good movie is valuable. The songs of this movie are so good. The trailer is very good. I appreciate the core team, including the actors and the Director. Ramu Kona has a lot of experience with TV serials. All the best to everyone who worked on the film. I want the audience to support this movie when it comes out in theatres on September 22nd."

Senior actress Jayalalitha thanked the audience who were present at the event, and shared, "The film is going to be released on September 22nd. I wish the audi-

ence to watch our film in the theatres and make the movie successful. I would like to thank Master Shiv Shankar garu for doing excellent choreography for two songs."

Meanwhile, producer Anil expressed his gratitude towards the chief guests of the event said, "With their arrival, a small movie has become a big movie. I hope that the audience will also watch this film theatres and make it a big film."

Suchitra said, "I have worked as a dance master on many movies starring Jayalalitha garu. Now, I am very happy to have done the choreography for the film that she has acted and produced."

Urvashi Rautela collaborates with Oscar-Academy award winner choreographer Prem Rakshit for Cult Mama

In the world of entertainment, collaborations can often lead to remarkable outcomes. One such collaboration that has taken the internet by storm features the stunning Urvashi Rautela teaming up with Oscar Academy Award-winning choreographer, Prem Rakshit, for her song *Cult Mama* along side tollywood superstar Rana Duggabati. *Cult Mama* is a dance sensation like no other. It seamlessly blends traditional Indian dance forms with contemporary choreography, creating a visually

captivating and emotionally charged performance. Prem Rakshit, known for his remarkable choreography in the Telugu film industry, left an indelible mark with his work on the song *Naatu Naatu* from the blockbuster movie *RRR*. Urvashi Rautela, sultry sensuous dance moves brings all together a different spark in the song. As soon as *Cult Mama* was released, it took social media by storm. The dance video garnered millions of views within hours, and fans couldn't stop raving about Urvashi Rautela's flawless dance moves and Prem Rakshit's visionary choreography. The chemistry between Urvashi and Rana is unstoppable as we could see in a video Urvashi wearing a sensuous golden deep plunging neckline sleeveless dress which is highly embellished and has tassels attached this body con dress flaunts Urvashi sultry figure.

Urvashi first every collaboration with Prem Rakshit has created waves in the industry and its very evident that the actress has made this song mega hit by making Prem Rakshit choreography vision to life. Urvashi on her collaboration with Oscar winning choreographer Prem Rakshit Says, "Collaborating with the renowned Oscar-winning choreographer, *#NaatuNaatu* Prem Rakshit, was an absolutely surreal and awe-inspiring experience. It's difficult to put into words just how creatively invigorating it was. I felt like I was on cloud nine, constantly pushed to explore new dimensions of my artistry," she wrote on Instagram. *Cult Mama*, is a viral sensation that not only celebrates the talents of its creators but also serves as an inspiration to aspiring artists worldwide, reminding them that with dedication and creativity, anything is possible in the world of entertainment.

A Never before teaser by Upendra for *#UiTheMovie* in the history of filmmaking

Kannada Superstar Upendra celebrated his birthday on the 18th September amongst all his fans and on this special occasion, the master story teller met his fans at Urvashi Theatre in Bengaluru. During this event among Superstar Shiva Rajkumar & Salaga Vijaya kumar unveiled a unique never before teaser in the history of filmmaking for his most awaited upcoming directorial project *#UiTheMovie* bankrolled by Lahari Films, G Manoharan & Venus Entertainers, K P Sreekanth and Co-Produced by Naveen Manoharan. Upendra renowned for his directional versatility and who features in the Top 20 best directors in the world on IMDB once again showcased his creative vision, by releasing a teaser of a film without even a single frame of visual being shown in the video. Leaving fans awestruck and what makes this teaser distinct is

that it has his stamp of him being "Unique" with an unconventional approach that is it relies on immersive spatial audio and Dolby atoms sound experience without a single frame of visual other than just logos. This being a ground breaking move in the history of filmmaking the audio-only teaser immerses the audience with 3D sound effects into a world of suspense and tension, featuring chilling screams and unsettling sounds. As the teaser reaches its climax, a mysterious female voice whispers huskily, "This is not the world of AI...this is the world of UI...Use your imagination to escape!" The teaser concludes with a compelling statement saying: "This teaset is for your imagination."

Leaving audiences wanting for more and awestruck with his creativity. This teaser has further garnered huge craze for this magnum opus film *#UiTheMovie* slated for release this year end making it one of the most awaited movie of this year.

This film also stars Upendra (Lead Actor), Reeshma Nanaiah (Lead Actress), Nidhi Subbaiah, Murali Sharma & P Ravi Shankar in prominent roles and Industry leading Technical crew like the Music is Composed by Ajanesh Loknath (*Kantara* Fame), Art Direction by Shiva Kumar J (*KGF1&2* Fame), Cinematography by HC Venugopal (*A & H2O* Fame), VFX Supervised by Nirmal Kumar (*Vikranth Rona* Fame).

Saiyami Kher associates with the UN to champion disability welfare at the zero conference

Saiyami Kher, known for her impactful roles in cinema, has stepped forward to lend her voice to the movement of inclusion for people with disabilities. Building on the inspiration drawn from her recent film *Ghoomer*, in which she portrayed a cricketer with a physical disability, Kher is set to address a distinguished audience at the upcoming Zero Project India Conference which is affiliated with the United Nations.

The conference, to be held in Delhi, will serve as a dynamic platform bringing together eminent stakeholders, policymakers, influencers, and champions of disability rights from both India and around the globe. Through a series of engaging panel discussions, interactive workshops, and knowledge-sharing sessions, the event is poised to spark innovative ideas, forge strategic alliances, and ignite actionable solutions towards building a more inclusive India.

Following her address in Delhi, Saiyami Kher will extend her advocacy to the international stage by speaking at the United Nations office in Vienna early next year. Her commitment to the cause of disability inclusion resonates deeply with the values and mission of the Zero Project, an initiative dedicated to driving positive change for people with disabilities on a global scale.

Kher's portrayal of a cricketer with a physical disability in *Ghoomer* has not only garnered critical acclaim but has also sparked a profound personal commitment to champion the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Her involvement in this movement is poised to inspire and empower audiences worldwide.

Saiyami shared her thoughts, "*Ghoomer* has been a very transformative film for me in many ways. I spent a lot of time with para athletes and learnt a lot of lessons of resilience and hard-work. The biggest take away for me was they don't need anyone's sympathy but the need of the hour is inclusion in every way. We need to live in a world with zero barriers and I am deeply honored to address the conference in Delhi and later at the UN office in Vienna."

Pushpa 2 sparks curiosity; Is there a patriotic angle to the actioner?

The anticipation for Icon Star Allu Arjun's *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is at its peak among cine-goers. Recently, the makers unveiled a brand new poster for the film and announced the release date of August 15, 2024, for the much-awaited actioner. The intense and intriguing poster piqued the audience's interest and spoke volumes about the grandeur of the craft of this action entertainer, which is poised to set the bar high in every aspect. Besides the curiosity-raising poster, the one thing that draws attention is the surprising release date of August 15, which also marks the Independence Day of the

nation. As the release date of *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is announced, we wonder why the makers chose this date. Are they planning to bring out something different for the masses on a patriotic flavor front, or will *Pushpa 2: The Rule* leave any strong message? Well, the release date is building suspense for the biggie, and everyone is eager to know what uniqueness the makers have in store to offer this time.

Pushpa 2: The Rule is directed by Sukumar and stars Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, and Fahadh Faasil. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers and Muttamsetty Media.

SAMANTHA RUTH PRABHU I LOVE ACTION AND IT'S QUITE A BIG COMING UP WITH CITADEL

"Can we get a little sneak peek at your next project?"

The actress responded to the fans and said, "My next project is actually not one; I do not have a plan. Let's see. I know I want to be most selective about the things that I work on and the things that push me out of my comfort zone, and unlike when I get any roles, I am okay."

While another fan asked, "Maam, can we expect a full-fledged action film from you?"

Talking about her upcoming projects, Samantha said, "One thing I am really excited about is action. I don't know why; I've never been a goody person, but I love action, and I just love it, and I think that it's quite a big deal coming up with Citadel. The action in it was really hard and fun, but I love it, and I love the challenges. I can't wait for you guys to see it and enjoy it, but yes, I think the action is for me".

Meanwhile, on the work front, Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who was last seen in *Kushi*, is gearing up for the global release of her much-awaited show 'Citadel', co-starring Varun Dhawan.

Samantha Ruth Prabhu is the most beautiful and talented actress in Indian cinema. The Pan India actress has continued to mesmerize fans and audiences with her distinct charm, appearance, and exceptional performance. Having proven her mettle on a comprehensive level, the actress has become a household name, and the masses always look forward to watching more of her in the film. While the actress who impressed everyone with her craft in her latest release 'Kushi' opposite Vijay Deverakonda recently conducted an interaction session on her social media, where the audiences asked about her upcoming projects and also asked the actress whether they could see her in an action-packed avatar or not. Samantha Ruth Prabhu took to her social media and interacted with fans and audiences, where netizens asked the actress about her upcoming film. The fans and the audiences who were waiting to see the actress in an action film took their excitement to social media and asked the actress,

ASHWIN VS SUNDAR: STORY BEHIND UNEXPECTED WC TRIAL

PTI ■ MOHALI

A month and half back, Ravichandran Ashwin was eloquently explaining on his Tamil YouTube channel, why a talent like Tilak Varma should be seriously considered for the ODI World Cup.

One of India's greatest match-winners in Test cricket wouldn't possibly have envisaged that in six weeks time he would be summoned for a two-match trial against Washington Sundar — nearly a decade and half junior to him.

Close selection calls are par for course when it comes to World Cup squads.

But just two weeks before the mega event, the Indian team management has called the two off-spinners for the three-match series against Australia to keep a ready back-up option in case Axar Patel's quadriceps tear doesn't heal on time.

It will be a virtual shoot-out and their performances on flat decks of Mohali and Rajkot will be monitored by Ajit Agarkar's selection committee.

"I think Ashwin will be slightly ahead now that a bowler of his stature has been called into the mix. I have always felt that Ashwin should have been in the mix from the time the team got into the ODI World Cup mode," said former chairman of selectors MSK Prasad, who was at helm when the 2019 squad was selected.

So, who will be his pick if Axar can't make it to the World Cup?

"Look, let us hope that Axar is fit for the final ODI in Rajkot. Because if he is fit, however well Ashwin or Washy bowl, it will be Axar who will retain his place. If he has been your pick ahead of these two, then you have to have him if he is good to go," Prasad set the record straight.

"But this is one of the most fascinating World Cup trials



that you will get (to see). Question is: if they are looking at a 50-50 batting-bowling option then it is Washy. But if they are looking at a purely spin bowling option, then Ash holds an edge as far as I am concerned," Prasad said.

Harbhajan Singh, however, has a contrarian viewpoint.

The 'Turbantor' believes that if the team management and selectors took an informed decision to summon Washington in Colombo for the Asia Cup final and even fielded him in the playing XI, then he should be the first-choice replacement.

"Washington bowls well in Powerplays. He is a brilliant fielder and last but not the least is a left-hander in that lower middle order. So, he does come as a package," said Harbhajan.

Another national selector, who refused to be named, had an interesting take on the Washington vs Ashwin debate.

"No offence meant but Axar's supposed hamstring

injury could just be a blessing in disguise. The decision to have a right-arm finger spinner should have been taken long back and now, perhaps, at eleventh hour, they have got that opportunity," the selector, who has seen some pitched battles between previous captains and selection commit-

tees, said. He then decoded the whole issue that the Indian team is facing.

"Not denying that Axar played two crucial knocks in the Asia Cup and one was in a winning cause against Sri Lanka. But just look at his bowling on a track that offered considerable

turn. If Charith Asalanka is picking up four wickets and you (Axar) are not even getting most of your deliveries to turn, it is a problem," added the former selector.

"Mind it, Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) is lethal when there is help off the surface and doubly

so, if Ashwin is operating at the other end. Also, why did they call two off-spinners and not a like-for-like replacement. The next in line are Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma (left-arm spin and left-handed bat). These two are okay for Asian Games level but certainly not for the World Cup," he added.

"Also at the moment, they asked Ashwin to report for his fitness update at NCA (after the Super 4 against Pakistan, if one goes by his Instagram handle), you would know that he is in line and there is a clear dilemma in Rohit (Sharma), Rahul (Dravid) and Ajit (Agarkar)'s mind as to who is the best option. "Is it a bits and pieces cricketer like Washy or someone like Ashwin, who can turn a game or two on Indian tracks? Hence they called both," the selector said.

Prasad agreed to the point.

"I believe some of the tracks will offer help for spinners. In Chennai, think about Ashwin's possible match-up against Steve Smith or a left-hander like David Warner. Yes, his successes came in the red ball (cricket) but just think about the possibilities," the former India stumper added.



Siraj back to No. 1 in ODI rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj has regained his number one spot in the men's ICC ODI bowling rankings after his six-wicket haul in the final of the recently-concluded Asia Cup. Siraj, who first grabbed the top position in January before being displaced by Josh Hazlewood in March, has surged eight spots after his memorable performance that helped dismiss Sri Lanka for just 50 runs and enabled India to complete a 10-wicket victo-

ry in the summit clash.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav has moved down three places to ninth.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah climbed up two places to 27th while Hardik Pandya rose eight spots to 50th.

Among batters, openers Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma have retained their second and 10th spots respectively while star batter Virat Kohli moved up a rung to eighth.

Pandya is the only all-rounder in the top 20, climbing up a spot to the sixth place.

ICC confirms New York, Dallas, Florida as US venues for T20 WC 2024

PTI ■ DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday confirmed New York, Dallas and Florida as the three venues for the USA-leg of the ICC Men's World Cup 2024.

Broward County (Florida), Grand Prairie (Dallas) and Eisenhower Park (New York) will be the three stadiums hosting the matches in the US.

This is the first time the tournament will be played in the USA, and they will co-host it with the West Indies.

The ICC had awarded the event to the USA in 2021. Geoff Allardice, the Chief Executive of the governing body, said, these venues have been zeroed in after an extensive evaluation process.

"We're delighted to announce the three USA venues that will host part of the biggest ICC Men's T20 World Cup ever staged, with 20 teams competing for the trophy.

"We explored a number of potential venue options in the country, and we were hugely encouraged by the enthusiasm



the event generated amongst prospective hosts," said Allardice in an ICC release.

Allardice said the existing

ular stadium solutions.

He said the same technology will be used to build a 34,000-seat modular stadium at Nassau County, New York, and he hoped to acquire the required permit from local officials by next month. "We are very excited about the opportunity to use modular stadium technology. This technology has been used at previous ICC events to increase venue capacity and it's routinely used in other major sports around the world.

"In the USA, it will give us the opportunity to increase the

size of the venues in both Dallas and Florida and create what is going to be a stunning venue in New York," said Allardice.

A number of other venues around the USA, including George Mason University in Washington, the new home of MLC team Washington Freedom, have also been identified as potential venues for pre-event matches and training. The ICC's announcement has also allayed all concerns over USA hosting the T20 WC 2024 because of the doubts surrounding the readiness of the stadiums.

B'desh hungry to gain pre-WC boost in ODI series vs NZ

AP ■ MIRPUR

After failing to reach this month's Asia Cup final, Bangladesh is hungry to gain a much-needed boost ahead of the 50-over World Cup by beating New Zealand in the three-match ODI series that starts on Thursday.

Bangladesh rested a host of key players for the Asia Cup, captain Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Najmul Hossain and Towhid Hridoy among them, in order to keep them fresh and injury-free, although it has still not named its squad for next month's World Cup.

New Zealand has sent only five World Cup-bound players to Bangladesh, stand-in skipper Lockie Ferguson, Trent Boult, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi and Will Young.

Tamim Iqbal, who stepped down as ODI captain last month, is back for Bangladesh after recovering from a back problem. Mahmudullah, axed after the England series



in March following poor form, also returns. Liton Das, who leads the side in Shakib's absence, said: "There are many things to achieve from the series. The first thing is to win, that will be a big achievement ahead of the World Cup.

"We won't play to show just individual brilliance. A five-wicket haul or a century doesn't matter if the team doesn't win."

Ferguson, yet to play on Bangladesh soil, believes conditions will test his New Zealand team to the limit.

"Bangladesh is very good in home conditions and is a huge challenge here," he said. "It's important for us just to focus on what's coming up tomorrow and try to adapt as quickly as possible to the conditions. Some of us haven't played here so we'll have to adapt quicker."

New Zealand hasn't won an ODI match in the country since 2008 and Ferguson said the input of former Bangladesh bowling coach Shane Jurgensen would be invaluable.



Southee to undergo surgery on thumb

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand veteran fast bowler Tim Southee is set to undergo a surgery on his injured right thumb on Thursday and a call on his availability for the World Cup in India will be taken next week. Southee broke and dislocated his right thumb while attempting to take a catch in the fourth ODI against England last week.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead is hopeful the 34-year-old seamer will recover in time for the side's opening game in the mega event on October 5.

"We've got our fingers crossed the surgery goes well for Tim," Stead said.

"He'll have some pins or screws inserted in his right thumb and, providing the procedure is a success, it will be a matter of ensuring Tim can tolerate the pain and manage the actual wound when returning to train and play."

Ahead of their opener against defending champions England, New Zealand are

scheduled to take on Pakistan and South Africa in the World Cup warm up matches on September 29 and October 2.

"Our opening game of the World Cup against England is not until Thursday October 5 in Ahmedabad, so that would be our logical target in terms of his availability.

"Tim's obviously a hugely experienced and important figure in our team and we want to give him every chance to be part of this World Cup campaign."

Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson is also recovering from a ruptured ACL he suffered during the IPL earlier this year and may not be available for New Zealand's opening game.

Teams can make changes to the 15-player World Cup squad until September 28, post which any changes would need approval from the ICC. Five members of the Black Caps' World Cup-bound squad are in Bangladesh for a three-match ODI series, starting Thursday. The others are scheduled to fly out to India on Tuesday.

Ronaldinho to visit Kolkata during Durga Puja

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Retired Brazilian legend Ronaldinho is set to visit Kolkata during the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja next month.

An official privy to the development said that Ronaldinho is likely to visit the city between October 15-19 but the final date will be ascertained following the confirmation date of Barca Legends match at Congo.

According to the official, Ronaldinho, who will be visiting Kolkata for the first time, is expected to feature in a short charity match, besides visiting a football clinic and a Durga Puja pandal. He will also inaugurate a statue of Argentine FIFA World Cup winner Lionel Messi.

A two-time Ballon d'Or winner, Ronaldinho is also expected to attend some sponsor meet and greet events and visit the nearby town of Rishra.

The official involved has played a key role in bringing football legends to the city in the past, including Maradona, Pele and Cafu.

He also played a role in bringing current Argentinian World Cup-winning goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez this July to the city.

Notably, Ronaldinho also has his football academy in the city, the R10 Academy, in Rajarhat.

Sreejesh eyes direct berth to Olympics through Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At 35, PR Sreejesh is standing at the twilight of his career and the Hangzhou Asian Games is most likely his last appearance at the continental showpiece.

But the veteran Indian hockey goalkeeper is determined to win the gold at Hangzhou to give himself a chance to earn a direct entry to the Paris Olympics next year, and do better there winning a yellow-coated medal.

Eight-time champions India had won a historic bronze at the Tokyo Olympics after 41 years beating Germany 5-4 in the

play-off match.

"Obviously, next year's Olympics is my main target and I want to change the colour of my medal there. But having said that, we need to qualify through the Asian Games (to Olympics) so that we get ample time to prepare ourselves," Sreejesh told PTI.

Sreejesh reiterated that age is just a number for a sportsman and gave the example of tennis great Novak Djokovic in this regard.

"I am right now taking one game, one tournament at a time. As (Novak) Djokovic said, 35 is the new 25. So, I'm definite-



ly there," he said.

Having handled the duties under the goal post of the Indian hockey team for more than 17 years, Sreejesh wants to groom the next generation of goalkeepers in India.

"Krishan (Bahadur Pathak) and me have been donning the goalkeeping responsibilities for a long time. We share a good rapport. There are upcoming goalkeepers like Suraj Karkera and Pawan Malik who are good and will only get better with time.

"I just want to ensure that there is enough back-up," he said.

The Indian men's hockey team goalkeepers, including Sreejesh, underwent some sessions under Dutchman Dennis van de Pol in the lead up to the Asian Games, which has been very helpful according to the veteran custodian.

"Dennis van de Pol is a good coach. It has really been beneficial to work with him. His experience and vast knowledge about goalkeeping has been very useful for us.

"He has deep knowledge about his skills and expertise and it has definitely helped us in all aspects of goalkeeping qualities," he signed off.

Antim Panghal shocks reigning world champion Parrish, reaches semis

PTI ■ BELGRADE

Antim Panghal shocked reigning champion Olivia Dominique Parrish en route to the World Championship semifinals, raising hopes of locking a quota for the Paris Olympics even as other Indian contenders bit the dust in their respective categories, here Wednesday.

The two-time U20 champion Panghal slipped to a 0-2 deficit at the start of the bout against the American but edged her rival 3-2 in the women's 53kg opening round.

She later outplayed Poland's Rokasana Marta Zasina

by technical superiority and followed that up with a 9-6 win over Russian Natalia Malyshova, who is competing as a neutral athlete.

However, Manisha (62kg), Priyanka (68kg) and Jyoti Berwal (72kg) have lost their bouts and exited the tournament.

All 10 men's free-style wrestlers have already exited the tournament without winning either an Olympic quota or a medal in non-Olympic categories.

All Indian athletes are competing under the UWW flag because the wrestling federation is suspended.

India face Bangladesh in must-win Asian Games football match

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Battered by hosts China in their opening match after playing without any training session, India will be up against a tricky Bangladesh side in their must-win group match in the Asian Games football competition here on Thursday. A rag-tag Indian team reached here late Monday evening and played its first match without proper rest and sleep and was hammered 1-5 by China on Tuesday.

Igor Stimac's team needs to beat Bangladesh in its second Group A game to remain in the fray for the knock-outs.

A loss on Thursday may not straightway knock India out of

reckoning as the best third-placed teams from the six groups can also advance to the Round of 16, but that will leave the team with a lot of uncertainties in the final game.

Qualifying as one of the best four third-place teams could also set India up against tougher sides in the pre-quarterfinals.

Bangladesh have never been an easy side for India in any level and they will also be desperate for a win after losing their opening match 0-1 to Myanmar.

India will, however, be strengthened after the arrival of defender Konsam Chinglensana Singh, who could not travel with the team before due to a visa delay. The Indian Olympic



Association (IOA) arranged 'express visa' — which could be procured in two-three days — for him and he has arrived here separately.

It will not be easy for the Sunil Chhetri-led side to beat Bangladesh and log its first win of the competition as the team was assembled at the last minute with very few known faces after the Indian Super League clubs refused to release their players.

The Indians played on an even keel in the first 45 minutes but they caved in the second half, exposing the gulf in quality between the two teams.

Stimac himself admitted after the China match that he has brought a third-rung team

with him.

"This is our third or fourth-choice team here. I would love to play against China with my best team. Then it would be totally opposite, but the players that are here are heroes," the Croatian coach said.

"What they went through, with travelling problems, arriving here very late, not having time to recover and handling the first 45 minutes in a brilliant way.

"I was realistic and knew that it wouldn't happen (to get a drawn match). With no-one on the bench, apart from three players which we had, we couldn't make any tactical changes. We couldn't influence the game in the second half."