



BJP committees want Sanjay back as TS chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP's Telangana booth committee members have made it clear to the party that they want Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar back as the Telangana BJP unit president.

The booth committee members demanded that the party should remove current TS party president G. Kishan Reddy immediately and appoint Sanjay as the president of the Telangana BJP unit.

The booth committee members said that the party has



become clumsy after appointing Kishan as the president of the Telangana BJP.

They advised the party brass to bring the issue to the notice of the high command. They also made it clear that

the party will get back its form if Sanjay is reappointed as the president of the Telangana BJP.

They also made it clear that the party was losing ground due to Kishan.

The State BJP office received phone calls from booth committee members making the above demand when the State BJP office made phone calls to the leaders of booth committees across the state to pay tributes to Deen Dayal and plant saplings on September 25 marking Deen Dayal's birth anniversary.

BJP to announce its first list in a week

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana BJP's election in-charge, Prakash Javadekar, said that the party will announce its first list of candidates in a week and that the party will launch continuous programmes in Telangana from October 1 onwards.

He said that Prime Minister Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda will extensively participate in the election campaign in Telangana.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, Javadekar said that the party has perfected many strategies to face the Assembly



elections. He said that the party had handed over responsibilities to Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay at the national level and that the Congress has been campaigning that there is an understanding between the BRS and the BJP.

He said that the BRS and the Congress are working together as per an internal understanding.

Cong high command keeping tabs on PEC, Screening Committee meetings

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress high command is analysing on its own Pradesh Election Committee (PEC) and Screening Committee meetings regarding the selection of candidates for the Telangana Assembly elections. The high command has been keenly observing the filtering process of these committees, it is learnt.

It is learnt that the high command has been observing the selection of candidates and comparing its own field-level survey reports, the survey reports of Sunil Kanugolu, the recommendations of the 29-member PEC and the debates in the Screening Committee.

The high command is also keeping an eye on Screening Committee meetings to know the pulse of Telangana Congress leaders and their working style through the arguments of Screening Committee members to ensure



that there are no blunders in selecting candidates, it is learnt. It is learnt that the high command is serious about the tampering of the names of some hopefuls. The high command is also serious about changing the priority list of candidates given by PEC members.

Coming to know about such moves in finalising names in the list of candidates, the leaders who are likely to be denied tickets are getting ready to quit the Congress, it is learnt. These unexpected developments have

been taking place in Khanapur, Medak, Mahbubnagar and some other constituencies.

It is learnt that the high command is keenly observing these developments and that the addition or deletion of names will take place after the Screening Committee's list comes to the Central Election Committee (CEC).

It is learnt that the Screening Committee has finalised 72 names unanimously. However, the Screening Committee has not yet submitted the list to the CEC.

Elections will not be held based on surveys: Madhu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC Election Campaign Committee Chairman and Screening Committee member Madhu Yashki Goud said that elections will not be held based on surveys. Parties have to allot seats based on population, he said.

He demanded that the Congress should allot 34 seats to BCs as assured by the TPCC. Madhu said that the party has to stick to the word that was given during the meetings of the TPCC Political Affairs Committee (PAC) and the TPCC Pradesh Election

Committee (PEC).

Speaking to the media after the Telangana Congress OBC leaders meeting at the Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday, Madhu recalled that former AICC president Rahul Gandhi had demanded that OBC, SC and ST reservations would be implemented in the reservations for women during the debate on the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha. He said that bahujans have a major role in strengthening the party and that it is not possible for the Congress to form a government without bahujans.

Mothkupally may join Congress by Sept-end

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Some senior BRS leaders and former Minister Mothkupally Narsimhulu would join the Congress before this month-end, it is learnt.

Discussions are going on between the Congress and Mothkupally. Sources said Mothkupally would join the Congress after getting an assurance regarding his MLA ticket or any other assurance from the Congress high command.

Cong deploys...

Continued from page 1

The Congress Social Media wing on Sunday asked the ChatGPT, "Hey ChatGPT why can't KTR fix our roads, can you explain why our city's potholes have become a local attraction? #PotholPuzzle?"

The ChatGPT answered, "I know the potholes remind us of moon craters, but what else can we expect from a minister who is busy chatting with celebrities and is more concerned about his Twitter DPI I guess it is high time to choose an alternative."

Then the Congress asked the ChatGPT, "What do you mean by an alternative?" and the ChatGPT answered, "Based on my expertise, I recommend the Congress for Telangana."

The Congress used ChatGPT while countering BRS' social media warrior Santhosh Rao Menneni, who used the bard.google.com (Bard is a conversational generative artificial intelligence chatbot developed by Google, based initially on the LaMDA family of large language models and later the PaLM LLM).

Santhosh Rao Menneni asked bard.google.com to answer the question, "Why Rahul Gandhi is called Pappu?"

Then bard.google.com replied, "Rahul Gandhi is often called 'Pappu' by his opponents in a derogatory manner. The term 'Pappu' is a Hindi word that means 'Child' or 'Immature Person'. It is used to mock Rahul's perceived lack of intelligence and experience."

Gauging mood...

Continued from page 1

Some candidates are engaging the survey agencies till polling and asking them to give monthly survey reports.

The BRS has selected the candidates on the basis of survey reports. Now the Congress is also selecting the candidates on the basis of survey reports. When both BRS and the Congress select the candidates on the basis of survey reports which candidate is going to win is creating interest. For the BRS, it's candidate will win and for Congress it's candidate will win. But, in fact between these two candidates only one candidate will win the elections. So, some candidates are conducting surveys to know their future. Some candidates are asking the survey agencies to tell in which aspects they have to improve for their victory. Conducting the surveys has become a new trend in the recent days. The survey agencies are also making money during the elections.

AP settlers...

Continued from page 1

While responding to the growth of the Congress party in State, Mothkupally said that the Congress gained strength only because of Revanth Reddy, he said and added Revanth is like his brother. He also made it clear that he has no enmity with Revanth.

While targeting CM KCR, Mothkupally said that he was deceived by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao. He said that KCR had inducted him in the BRS party by himself inviting him but had kept him away since then.

"KCR insulted me by not giving me appointments for the last six months. I used to meet Chief Ministers NTR and Chandrababu Naidu easily. But KCR was not giving me time. KCR is a man who cleans his house with cow urine if a Dalit enters his house," Mothkupally said.

Naidu's remand extended till Oct 5

Hearing on bail plea today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

THE ACB Court in Vijayawada on Sunday extended TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu's judicial remand in the Skill Development Corporation Scam case till October 5, following the expiry of judicial remand and police custody.

The order came after a team of Andhra Pradesh Police CID officials on Sunday concluded its two-day interrogation of Naidu in the Skill Development Corporation scam case at Rajamahendravaram Central Prison.

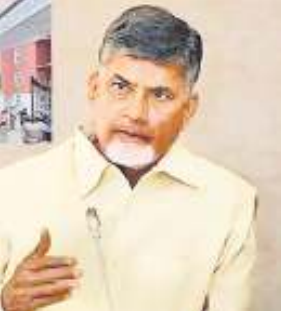
Special Public Prosecutor Y N Vivekananda, representing the CID, said that the Vijayawada ACB Court has

extended Naidu's judicial remand till October 5, in the wake of the two-day police custody ending at 5 p.m. on Sunday.

He noted that the CID is likely to file a separate petition seeking Naidu's custody on Monday.

Further, the former chief minister's bail application and two more CID prisoner transit (PT) warrant petitions in the AP FiberNet and Amaravati Inner Ring Road cases are expected to come up for hearing on Monday. Meanwhile, Naidu has already moved the Supreme Court in connection with the Skill Development Corporation Scam case.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau Court had on Friday



granted the CID two days' custody of the 73-year-old TDP chief for interrogation in the case, which expired on Sunday.

In compliance with the court's orders, Naidu's questioning by CID officials was allowed from 9:30 AM to 5 PM on both days (September 23 and 24) with regular five-minute breaks given to him to consult his lawyer.

India seal series...

Continued from page 1

While Gill extended his sensational run with a fifth ODI hundred in 2023, runs were more than welcome for Iyer who missed the majority of Asia Cup with a back spasm soon after returning from a long injury lay-off.

Iyer, who was fighting for a spot in the middle-order with Ishan Kishan, might have settled the debate for now. However, Surya has emerged as another contender for that one spot with an explosive knock.

The Holkar Stadium tends to produce high-scoring games and Sunday's game proved no exception.

Gill's peerless form is an ominous reminder to rivals ahead of next month's World Cup. It was a second consecutive ODI hundred for the 24-year-old at this venue, having hammered 112 off 78 balls against New Zealand earlier this year when India ended

with a match-winning 395.

Unlike Iyer, Gill began slowly on Sunday, collecting nine off his first 19 balls before going after the Aussie bowlers with disdain.

He was unstoppable after his first strike which was a straight six off pacer Abbott in the ninth over.

Cameron Green tried a short one against Gill who was happy to pull him away for a six over fine leg. But the rain caused a 40-minute delay, putting a temporary halt to the entertainment. Both Gill and Iyer, who struggled with cramps towards the end of his innings, continued to find boundaries after resumption.

The highlight of Gill's knock was how frequently he danced down the track against the fast bowlers while Iyer's aggressive intent from ball one stood out in a scenario where he was desperately searching for runs.

Both Iyer and Gill got their half-centuries with straight



sixes, off debutant Spencer Johnson and Green respectively. Conditions were ideal for the batters but the Australian attack, missing the likes of Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins, looked short on ideas. Lead spinner Adam Zampa too could not stem the flow of runs.

Iyer was the first to complete a century, his third in ODIs, while Gill got to the milestone, his sixth in the format, 19 balls later. When both the batters departed, Rahul and Kishan (31 off 18) played some bold strokes to up the scoring rate.

Suryakumar, who had to change his game in the previous match to adapt to the

needs of ODI cricket, came out to bat in the 41st over.

In the T20 context, it was an ideal time for him to come and explore his 360 range from ball one. He did just that to power India to a formidable total.

His innings included four sixes in a row off Green in the 44th over. The towering pacer conceded 103 runs in his 10 overs, so symbolic of their wretched outing with the ball on the day. Australia were never in the run chase after losing their first two wickets off successive deliveries from pacer Prasidh Krishna in the second over. Both Matthew Short and Steve Smith fell chasing wide deliveries.

Telangana BJP state chief Kishan Reddy attacks BRS over ties with 'anti-women' AIMIM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President G Kishan Reddy on Sunday attacked Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao asking how the BRS can maintain a friendship with the AIMIM which voted against the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament.

Though the issue of women's reservation has been a part of public discourse in the country for many decades, no party or leader has been able to take the issue to its logical end, he told reporters.

"Modi is the leader who took revolutionary decisions on pending issues, including taxation, Article 370, Ram Janmabhoomi and construction of toilets for poor in the last nine years," he said. The bill -- which allocates

one-third of the seats in Lok Sabha, State legislative assemblies and the Delhi assembly for women -- was passed in the new Parliament building as per the Centre's decision, he said.

Unfortunately, Hyderabad-based AIMIM was the only party to vote against the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament, he pointed out. Describing AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi as the "guru" of CM KCR, he said KCR should answer to the people "how he (BRS) is functioning as a friendly party of the party (AIMIM) which is against women".

Pointing out that three Congress MPs from Telangana too did not participate in voting on the bill, he said it is a matter of shame for Telangana that the AIMIM and the three Congress MPs are from the state.

HMDA to build five four-lane bridges over Musi, Esa rivers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The government of Telangana has initiated proposals for the construction of bridges across the Musi River from Narsingi to Gowdally to ease the traffic congestion in the core city of Hyderabad in a stretch of about 55 km.

Accordingly, a study has been conducted for the requirement of additional bridges on Musi River taking into consideration the traffic projections and new developments.

The Hyderabad Metro Development Authority (HMDA) proposes to construct five bridges with four lanes across the Musi River. The administrative sanction has been accorded by the Government for an amount of



Rs 168.00 crore and the details of the bridges being proposed to be taken up by the HMDA are: 1. Bridge-I at Budvel IT Park (on Esa), 2. Bridge-II at Budvel IT Park (on Esa), 3. Bridge at Manchirevula (on Musi), 4. Bridge at HMDA layout Uppal Bhagayath (on Musi) and 5. Bridge at Pratap Singaram (on Musi).

Tenders have been invited for the five bridges in a single package on EPC mode for IBM value of Rs 139.00 crore and the works are to be taken up soon. The period of completion for the construction of the bridges is 15 months. KT Rama Rao, Minister for MA & UD, is expected to lay the foundation stone for all the five bridges at a single location at Uppal Bhagayath on September 25.



PM Modi flags off Vande Bharat Express trains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the Kacheguda - Yesvantpur (Hyderabad - Bengaluru) and Vijayawada - Chennai Central Vande Bharat Express trains on Sunday through virtual mode. The Prime Minister has flagged off nine Vande Bharat trains across the nation, including two services in the SCR jurisdiction.

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, and other dignitaries also participated in the programme through virtual mode.

Narendra Modi stated that flagging off nine Vande Bharat trains is an unprecedented occasion of modern connectivity in the country. The Vande Bharat trains are a symbol of a new enthusiasm of new India. He expressed happiness about the growing popularity of Vande Bharat in India as he informed that more than one crore eleven lakh passengers have travelled in Vande Bharat trains so far.

Further, the Prime Minister informed that 25 Vande Bharat trains are already serving people in different states and union territories and today nine more are being added.

A comfortable journey

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There will be no sounds of Choo...Choo...chuk...chuk...and jerks while the train begins. You will miss the nostalgic ride while travelling on the Vande Bharat Express. Taking part in the inaugural run of the Vande Bharat Express from Kacheguda railway station to Mahabubnagar has given me a new experience with its infrastructure and facilities.

As soon as you board the Vande Bharat train, you will feel like you are sitting in a flight. The coaches of the train give you a striking modern infrastructure. The seats are comfortable but are not too comfortable if you want to take a nap!!

There are no beds in the train.

In between the coaches you will find doors operated by sensors just like metro trains. These doors are also used at the entrance of each boggy.

While the train is moving, you will also not experience any kind of shaky movements and the sounds when

the train crossed over some bridges etc.

The length of Vande Bharat Express is short when compared to normal trains. Moreover, other than its infrastructure and services, the speciality of the train lies in its speed. Within an hour it covers over 100 kms. The train began its journey from Kacheguda railway station at 1 pm and reached Mahabubnagar by 2:15 pm.

Additionally, other than passengers, approx 20 schools and a few colleges took part in the inaugural run. Even Youtubers and social media influencers have taken part in this fun ride.

Amisha, a student from Kendriya Vidyalaya, said that it is a nice and comfortable ride. She will prefer to go by Vande Bharat rather than the normal trains due to its good facilities and services.

Shankar, a faculty from Railway College, said that the quality of services is excellent and they are better than normal trains where cleanliness and proper sanitation are lacking.

'Govt schemes should reach farmers, not land owners'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former CBI Joint Director VV Laxminarayana said that farmers should enjoy the government schemes but not those who have own land. The position of the farmers should be high in the perspective of the students as well as people, he added.

He was speaking at a felicitation function of 25 farmers for their innovative techniques used in the farm sector at Haritha Plaza on Sunday, which was organised by Youth for Anti-Corruption (YAC). He said, "During the Covid time also every sector had been back-dropped but not agriculture sector. Innovation and organic farming has resulted in an increase in farm yield and made agriculture a lucra-



tive profession attracting young and educated youth towards it."

One of the awardees Ujwal, Australia-returned, said that he has been into the farming sector for over half a decade. He has over 300 cows and supplies 500 litres of milk. He grows millets, ginger, tomatoes and onions in his farm. He provides

employment for 35 individuals at his farm. Former RTI Commissioner Varre Venkateshwarlu, Retired VC Prof Jayashankar, Agriculture University, Praveen Rao, retired Agriculture Officer and Ashok Kumar, Aries Agro Limited, southern Telangana region head attended the felicitation programme.



Durgam Cheruvu STP to be opened by KTR today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development KT Rama Rao (KTR) is going to inaugurate Durgam Cheruvu sewage treatment plant (STP) on Monday.

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewage Board (HMWS&SB) has completed the construction of the STP, with a capacity of seven million litres (MLT) efficiency, which has completed a trial run. It's among the total 31 STPs sanctioned across Hyderabad. These STPs have been initiated for cleaning of 100 per cent of the city's sewage water.

The Government is spending Rs 3,866.41 crore for these 31 STP plants and the efficiency of these STPs is 1,259.50 million litres. These 31 STPs are built in three packages and five circles. The STPs will have modern sequencing batch reactor technology. Hyderabad is the first city to be 100 per cent sewage

cleaning city in South Asia after completing these 31 STPs.

Hyderabad urban agglomeration daily produces 1,950 MLTs of sewage water. As of now, 46 per cent of the sewage water is being cleaned by 25 STPs. These 31 STPs will clean sewage water till 2036. The HMWS&SB has planted flower gardens which have 22 types of flowers and landscaping works near the STPs which are near to the residential localities.

Package details:

Package-I: Rs 1230.2 crore is spent on 8 STPs in the circles of Alwal, Malkajgiri, Kapra and Uppal. These STPs capacity is 402.50 MLTs.

Package-II: Rs 1,355.13 crore is spent on 6 STPs in the circles of Nagar and LB Nagar. These STPs capacity is 480.50 MLTs.

Package-III: Rs 1,280.87 crore is spent on 17 STPs in the circles of Kukatpally, Quthbullapur and Serilingampally circles. These STPs efficiency is 376.50 MLTs.

City girl appreciated by PM Modi in Mann ki Baat



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated the efforts of Akarshana Satish, a seventh grade student from Hyderabad Public School, Begumpet, in the Mann ki Baat programme on Sunday.

Akarshana has established seven libraries on her own by gathering

books from neighbours, classmates and members of her families. She was able to collect 5,800 old books which she has utilised to establish seven libraries in Hyderabad.

Praising the unique initiative by Akarshana, PM Modi said that her work to shape children's future is an inspiration for many.

IITH students get exposure at Japan Career Fair-2023

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and IIT Hyderabad (IITH) co-hosted "Japan Career Fair 2023", the sixth edition of "Japan Day" on Sunday. In all, 20 distinguished Japanese companies attended the career fair, which is the largest number of participants since the event started in 2018. The companies, comprising startups, SMEs and large corporates, participated in promoting their businesses/cutting-edge technologies to attract students from IITH.

Toshihiro Mizutani, Director General, JETRO Bengaluru, said, "Interest in India's engineering and scientific talent is growing among Japanese companies. As a result, we are welcoming double the number of Japanese companies as compared to last



year's Japan Day. Since there is a critical lack of IT engineers in Japan, several businesses are eager to employ motivated Indian expertise. The participating Japanese companies anticipate that IITH students will play key roles in emerging technological innovation and global strategies.

Prof. BS Murty, Director of IIT Hyderabad, said, "Japan Day, which has been organised annually since 2018 at IITH, is a unique and important event that greatly helps our students to

develop an understanding and confidence about the job, work culture, life and a career path in Japan. Many Japanese companies will also get exposure to the excellence and potential of IITH students through an active interaction with them. We are indebted to Jetro, for its amazing support in connecting IITH with prominent Japanese firms. We have cherished our bond with Japan this year by observing the first edition of Japan Week. I wish to see this participation increase multi-fold in years to come."

Buddhavanam SO visits Sri Lanka Spot where Tripitaka was scribbled

PNS ■ ANURADHAPURA (SRI LANKA)/HYDERABAD

Buddhavanam team consisting of Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Special Officer and Dr E Sivanagireddy, Buddhist Expert Consultant, visited the 3rd century BCE Buddhist rock-cut caves at Mathale located on Colombo-Kandy route in Sri Lanka on Sunday where the teachings of Lord Buddha were scribbled for the first time on palm leaves.

Laxmaiah said, "The Buddha's teachings called Tripitaka viz., Sutra, Vinaya and Abhidhamma pitakas, which were transmitted orally until that time, were written on palm leaves under the auspices of Sri Lankan King Devanampiya Tissa, contemporary of Asoka the great and after that event only we got the Buddhist literature in India." He added that Acharya



Buddhaghosha, the famous Theravada Buddhist philosopher, lived in these caves for some time and wrote Visuddhimagga. He appreciated the Mathale Buddha Vihara for running a school in the name of Acharya Buddhaghosha even today as a token of respect to his scholarship. Dr E Sivanagireddy, Buddhist Expert Consultant

Buddhavanam Project an Archaeologist and CEO, Pleach India Foundation, thoroughly studies the rock-cut caves, the monastery and antiquities recovered from the surroundings, datable to the period between 3rd century BCE and 5th century CE and the Buddhist connection between the two Telugu States and Sri Lanka.



Cyberabad Police Commissioner Stephen M Ravendra addresses the SCSC AGM

Focus on cyber and health safety

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) on Sunday held its annual general meeting which focused on cyber and health safety.

Addressing the gathering, Cyberabad Police

Commissioner and the honorary Chairman of the SCSC, Stephen M Ravendra said, "The Launch of Centre of Excellence - Telangana State Police Centre of excellence for cyber safety was set up in record speed of less than six months and shared the ground breaking work done by COE in all these months and appreciated the contribution by the IT industry for setting up of the same."

Listing the priorities for the next year, SCSC Secretary General, Ramesh Kaza said, "The aim is to intensify the cyber safety awareness programmes to reach a much larger audience. Another priority would be to create a lot of awareness on health safety for the IT workforce, as the only way to do this is prevention, as a majority of the IT workforce is leading a sedentary lifestyle."

Dr Chinna Babu, head of Oncology of Yashoda Hospital Hi-Tech city and Dr Rajiv, Head of Cardiology for AIG hospitals would be working as a team to create these health awareness programmes for the benefit of IT and ITes workforce.

Boy steals laddu from Ganesh pandal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A school student on September 23 allegedly stole a laddu from a Ganesh pandal at Ghansi Bazar.

The incident was captured on CCTV camera near the pandal. In the video, a group of boys could be seen entering a Ganesh pandal located at Ghansi Bazaar and running away with one of them carrying the laddu

in a bag.

The pandal organisers who noticed the laddu missing from the pandal checked the CCTV footage and after viewing the footage, informed the Charminar police. The police launched an investigation into the theft. The laddu weighs about 21 kilograms.

Earlier, a 11-kilogram laddu was stolen from a pandal at Miyapur.

Repealing GO 111 in violation of SC order, says expert

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A report by Hyderabad-based People's Scientific Committee revealed that the attempts to remove Government Order 111 which protects Osman Sagar and Himayat Sagar is in contempt of the Supreme Court order.

It is to be noted that the Supreme Court had upheld the protection of lakes in 2000. Addressing the issue, committee representative Sagar Dhara said, "The Telangana government could see to it that all activities in the protected area

comply with the Supreme Court order. A committee should be set up to oversee the activities in the GO111 area. Activities violating the Supreme Court order must be acted upon."

Dhara further said, "Removal of the restrictions will allow all sorts of industries to come within the 10 km radius of the Himayat Sagar and Osman Sagar. This will result in contamination of lakes and emergence of health hazards for senior citizens."

He further said, "There is no law in India which focuses on



the ecosystem services which water provides us. It is concerning to know that water bodies are viewed similar to land. Basically, it is treated as land containing water. People have

not understood what nature is, which is a fundamental problem. Globally, such an issue is termed as ecocide (similar to genocide)."

"Once the GO 111 is

repealed, there will be heat stress leading to death of large number of people above 60 years. The attempt to repeal the order is not new. Previous governments had also attempted to

do away with the GO. In fact, the previous governments attempted to fill up the Hussain Sagar lake and sell the land. The plan is to discard the two lakes, develop the land around it and create something similar to the Delhi farmhouse area in order to make it exclusive for the rich," Dhara explained.

In the times ahead water will become scarce and lead to conflicts, which is already evident from the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu conflict regarding Kaveri river and Karnataka-Goa conflict regarding the Mahadayi river," he stressed.

Monday Mirchi

ALL EYES ON A HEADY POSITION THAT IS HEADLESS!

Filling a coveted position is a taxing job, more so if there is a commercial angle to it! An interesting question was posed to Yours Truly by those eager to find out who is the Commercial Taxes Commissioner. Well, the department has been headless for quite some time. In sarkari style of course, the websites of the Telangana government, except one, still list Neetu Kumari Prasad as the Commissioner of Commercial Taxes. For newbies, Neetu Kumari Prasad has been posted as Joint Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Government Of India with effect from 26 July 2023. While orders relieving Neetu Kumari Prasad of the post were issued, S Krishna Aditya was posted as Member Secretary, TS Pollution Control Board. Although many babus have since been angling for the post vacated by Neetu, there has been no word till date about who is going to helm the Commercial Taxes Department. That such a 'fetching' post is headless has become a hot topic of discussion among unabashedly ambitious babus.

ROOM WITH A VANTAGE VIEW, BUT...

The BRKR Bhavan, despite the hustle and bustle around it, has islands of soothing calm and serenity. One example is the office of the Chief Electoral Officer Vikas Raj. Ahead of the shift of the ad-hoc Secretariat to the new buildings, BRKR bhavan's 9th floor was renovated for the Chief Secretary. Vikas Raj is presently using a cabin that is situated at a vantage point, offering a panoramic view of the Tank Bund, Martyrs' Memorial, and the new Secretariat. The larger question is: Why was the Chief Secretary not using this prized cabin with a view? Nonetheless, the 9th floor of BRKR Bhavan obviously did not work out for former CS Somesh Kumar. Luckily Santhi Kumari moved out to the new Secretariat. Hopefully, at least the CEO will get his due and space to conduct the upcoming elections smoothly without the hassles that visited his predecessor Rajat Kumar, who used to sit in the D block of the old Secretariat in 2018.

HAS JANARDHAN REDDY HAD ENOUGH?

TSPSC chairman B Janardhan Reddy seems to be done and dusted with his post, beset as he is by trouble after trouble and wheels within wheels. A little bird told us that when he is hard-pressed by the ramifications of the leaks of TSPSC examination papers amid perceived shortage of staff, opposition parties are demanding his scalp. Janardhan Reddy seems to be upset about the latest

twist to the paper leak case. After paper leak, came Group-2 exams issues and now TSPSC Group1 exam has been cancelled again. He reportedly shared with his aides on whether he needs this headache now, and that too at a time when he stays overnight in office. There is a very serious discussion going on about his impending resignation. He is reportedly weighing various options as resignation now could send a wrong signal.

SILENT, BUT ACCOUNTABLE

There are people in the world who choose to adorn a castle with the stones you throw at them. Ronald Rose, as shrewd Commissioner of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, knows how to do the balancing act without hurting his political bosses. The Commissioner is invisibly active on social media, acting on complaints and grouches quietly. Municipal administration per se is a thankless job and this IAS officer getting trolled if garbage is not lifted is nothing if one considers what all Minister KT Rama Rao faces from irate members of the public. A little bird told us that Ronald has taken a conscious decision not to reply to trolls, while remaining accountable in the background. In fact, a top official working under him remarked: "Working with this Commissioner is different and better".

BABUS UNDER PRESSURE FOR POLL-RELATED TARGETS

Come elections, politicians fall back on their implemented promises and babus on the time and resources available for their implementation. It is expected that the Election Commission may announce the schedule of the Telangana Assembly elections in the first week of October. So, right now bureaucrats are facing the double whammy of meeting targets that reflect community benefits as well as benefits at the individual level well before the Model Code of conduct sets in.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has directed officials to complete the pending works by the end of this month. The Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues, during their visits to districts, give assurances to people. If those assurances are not implemented pronto, it will have a devastating effect on the ruling party in the elections. The babus must often make a difficult choice between individual benefits and community benefits. For, they don't know which way the wind blows when their political masters are involved in election campaigns.

-- Yours truly

TS agriculture sector's success story to be showcased in US

Minister KT Rama Rao has been invited to the Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue in the USA to speak on TS's farm sector

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Information Technology and Industries KT Rama Rao received an invitation to share his views as a speaker on Telangana's exceptional success story in the agriculture sector at the "2023 Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue" which will be held from October 24 to 26 in Des Moines, Iowa, USA.

More than 1,200 in-person guests and thousands of virtual participants from around the world will take part in the dialogue to elevate food and agricultural solutions that can increase the quality, quantity, and availability of food for all.

In the invitation, Ambassador Terry E. Branstad, president of the World Food Prize Foundation said, "Your perspective and voice will add unmatched value to the Borlaug Dialogue. It would be an honour to feature you at the



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dialogue as we gather dynamic paradigm shifters who improve global food systems and alleviate global food insecurity?"

KTR expressed his happiness on receiving the invitation. He stated that this would be a great platform for showcasing the exceptional success story of the Telangana agriculture sector under the able leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao.

Along with Minister KTR, Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy was also invited to speak at the event.

Following the 2022 emphasis on feeding a fragile world amidst food systems shocks, the stage is set for a future-focused convening centred around nourishment, regeneration, innovation, resilience, empowerment, and mobilisa-

tion. The 2023 theme, Harnessing Change, is both an acknowledgement of previous success and a call to action inspired by the legacy of Dr Norman Borlaug. The World Food Prize Foundation has honoured those who harness change and positively shape the future of global food and agriculture, including World Food Prize Laureates, Borlaug Field Award recipients, and more.

Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue, also known as the "Borlaug Dialogue," brings together individuals from more than 65 countries to address cutting-edge issues related to global food security and nutrition. Global leaders, experts, educators, and more will join the 2023 Borlaug Dialogue to discuss transformative solutions to achieve a sustainable, equitable, and nourishing food system.

KTR to open IT hub on Oct 2

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Municipal Administration KT Rama will inaugurate IT hub in Nalgonda on October 2.

Nalgonda MLA Kancherla Bhupal Reddy and District Collector RV Karnan, accompanied by officials, inspected the IT hub to ensure that the works on it are completed speedily.

The IT hub was built at a cost with an investment of Rs 100 crore. Six companies have already set up their units and even completed recruit of skilled workforce.

The Minister also inaugurated the Integrated Vegetable and Meat Market and Mahatma Gandhi Engineering College building.

KTR would lay foundation stones for development works to be taken up with an investment of Rs 750 crore.

'Do not give credence to Congress party's guarantees'

PNS ■ NAGARKARNOL

Local BRS MLA Marri Janardhan Reddy has appealed to people not to give credence to the promises made by the Congress. The grand old party has made unrealistic promises and it failed to deliver on promises in Karnataka. He wondered how the Congress, if voted to power, can implement the guarantees given by it to the people.

The MLA visited Charlaltikyala and Tummala Sugur villages in Taduru mandal as part of his Praja Prasthanam padayatra on Sunday.

DCCB director Jakka Raghunandan Reddy, BRS secretary B Srinivas Yadav and

others accompanied the MLA.

Turning tables on the Congress, the MLA accused it of not bothering to take care of the welfare of the families of the migrant workers.

In the past, there was no irrigation facility. The government did not procure the agricultural produce. No input subsidy was given to the farmers and also no insurance cover for the families of the farmers in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Also, the supply of seeds and fertilisers was not timely. In the past, successive governments laid the foundation stone for irrigation projects, but they all remained incomplete.

In the new State of Telangana, Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao intro-



BRS MLA Marri Janardhan Reddy interacting with people during a tour in the constituency on Sunday

duced several welfare programmes for the poor. The BRS government turned agriculture into a profitable profession. It extended the input subsidy to the farmers under Rytu Bandhu and insurance

coverage under Rythu Bhima. The farmers were provided free power 24x7, irrigation facility, seeds and fertilisers on time. Moreover, the government procures the produce at a minimum support price, he

said.

"Today, I brought the medical college to Nagarkurnool. I will get engineering college too to Nagarkurnool," he promised.

A check-dam on Dumdubhi stream in Taduru mandal would be built, he said. He promised to develop BT roads from Charla Itikyala to Tummala Sugur and took steps to develop CC roads and drainages in Tummala Sugur village. He claimed that the constituency witnessed unprecedented development in nine years that could not have taken place in six decades. He said that two of his rivals came together to defeat him in elections. He expressed confidence that the people would elect him once again.

Dissidence erupts in BRS in Kodad constituency

PNS ■ SURYAPETA

A group of BRS leaders who are disenchanted with Kodad MLA Bollam Mallaiah Yadav held an Atmeeya Sammelan on Sunday and appealed to the party leadership not to renominate the sitting MLA. They threatened not to cooperate if the BRS leadership renominated Mallaiah Yadav.

Former MLA Venepalli Chander Rao said that the party leaders ensured the victory of Mallaiah Yadav in the 2018 elections after Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao directed the party leaders and activists to work for the



BRS dissidents holding an Atmeeya Sammelanam in Kodad on Sunday

success of the candidate.

Kodad Assembly constituency BRS former in-charge Sasidhar Reddy threatened to contest as a BRS rebel candidate if the leadership failed to change the candidature of Mallaiah Yadav.

He wondered how the MLA

get re-elected if the party leaders and people were to go against him.

The party leaders sought a BRS ticket to Sasidhar Reddy. When Mallaiah Yadav contested the elections as an independent candidate, he polled only 11,000 votes.

BJP accuses BRS councillor of grabbing land

PNS ■ BHADRADI KOTHAGUDEM

The BRS local councillor has encroached on 2,000 yards of land allotted to the poor in old Kothagudem under Kothagudem municipality, according to KV Ranga Kiran, a member of the State executive committee of the BJP here on Sunday.

He visited the area where the councillor allegedly grabbed the land. He alleged that 30 acres of land, worth crores of rupees, was grabbed by influential people and grew grass on the land.

Ranga Kiran said that he had met the Mandal Revenue

Officer and lodged a complaint with him regarding the grabbing of the land. He demanded that the government take action immediately and do justice to the poor. He also urged the government to invoke the Preventive Detention Act and Land Grabbing Act against the land grabbers.

He regretted that the officials failed to act despite his complaint to the MRO. The BJP demanded that the land be given to the poor. Chunchupalli mandal party unit president Rayudu Nageswara Rao, SC Morcha state representative Srinivas and others were present.



BJP leader KV Ranga Kiran speaking to the media in Kothagudem on Sunday

'Contraception is not just women's responsibility'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Birth control plays an important role in avoiding unwanted pregnancies and improving spacing between pregnancies to have a healthy mother and baby. As per statistics, 40 per cent of women have not been using contraceptive methods in our country. September 26 has been pronounced as 'World Contraception Day' to increase awareness on different contraceptive methods.

Apollo Cradle & Children's hospital, Consultant Obstetrician Harika said that contraception emphasises the importance of increasing the awareness among both men and women.

Contraception is not just women's responsibility, she added.

She said that there are different types of contraceptive methods available which can be roughly divided into temporary methods, permanent methods and emergency contraception.

Temporary methods can be used as long as birth control is needed, which includes by knowing cycle length, noting change in body temperature, use of male and female condoms and diaphragm. But the failure rate is very high.

Permanent methods include tubectomy in women and vasectomy in men.

Mueller dotkonnnect promises to impart training to youth

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Mueller dotkonnnect, which provides end-to-end setup, maintenance and management of the entire Finance and Account function, has chosen to impart training to youth at IT Park in Mahabubnagar.

Minister for Prohibition and Excise V Srinivas Goud on Sunday expressed his happiness over the Mueller dotkonnnect deciding to train the youth in professional accounting skills. Mahabubnagar witnessed rapid transformation after the formation of Telangana State. Now, the Mueller dotkonnnect came to impart training to youth in Mahabubnagar district, he said.

Mueller dotkonnnect president Phani Ilapakurthy said that 1,500 youth would be imparted training by next year. After completing the training for the first batch of students, the company would take up further action, he said.



Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud speaking at a meeting

American companies have been investing in Telangana because of the availability skilled workforce. There is also a talent pool in the State and also in Mahbubnagar, he said.

Srinivas Goud said that the Mueller dotkonnnect has decided to set up its unit in the IT Park on recognition of the talent pool. The IT park has been constructed on a sprawling 4 acres at a cost of Rs 40 crore. He assured the company management that

the government would extend all support to it. Parents worked hard to provide the best possible education to their children. The children have the responsibility of fulfilling their parents' dreams, the Minister said. The Minister handed over the certificates to 140 students who underwent training Mueller dotkonnnect.

Mueller dotkonnnect management officials Bhanu Prakash, Shushant, Sandeep, Sarat and others were present.



ACB Deputy Superintendent of Police Ramanamurthy showing the "tainted money" recovered after trapping Tahsildar and Revenue Inspector at Mavala in Adilabad district on Sunday

Tahsildar, Revenue Inspector land in ACB trap

PNS ■ ADILABAD

The Anti-Corruption officials on Sunday claimed to have caught a Tahsildar at Mavala in Adilabad district while accepting a bribe from a farmer.

The ACC Deputy Superintendent of Police Ramanamurthy told the media that the officials laid a trap and caught Tahsildar Arif Sultana red-handed while accepting a Rs 2 lakh bribe from a farmer. The ACB officials raided the

Tahsildar office based on the complaint by farmer Yetendranath Yadav. The Tahsildar and Revenue Inspector demanded a Rs 2 lakh bribe to issue a passbook pertaining to his 14 acre agricultural land.

The ACB officials said that they had caught the Revenue Inspector when the farmer was handing over the bribe to the former. Both the officials were taken into custody and they would be produced before the ACB court on Monday.

Heritage Run held in Warangal city

PNS ■ WARANGAL

A heritage walk was organised on Sunday from Chintal Grounds to Khilla Warangal to create awareness among the people and students on the right to vote and in connection with World Tourism Day and the Swachhata Hee Seva programme.

Earlier, Collector P Pravinna and Greater Warangal Municipal

Commissioner Rizwan flagged off the walk. The rally culminated at Khilla Warangal. It explained the significance of Tourism Day, the right to vote in forthcoming elections. The participants carried placards containing slogans on the objective of the heritage walk.

Addressing the participants at the Khilla Warangal, the Collector said that the Warangal



Warangal Collector P Pravinna taking part in Heritage Run in Warangal on Sunday

district has a rich historical and cultural heritage.

Shaik Rizwan Basha exhorted the people to celebrate World Tourism Day with the participation of all stakeholders on Sep 27, which coincided with the celebration of NSS Day.

On the occasion of World Tourism Day on September 27, a boating unit will be

inaugurated at Bhadrakali Bund.

Corporators Uma Damodar Yadav and Bhogi Suvarna Suresh, Chamber of Commerce President Ravinder Reddy, Tahsildar Nageswara Rao, NSS co-ordinator K Srinivas Rao, guide Ravi Yadav and others took part.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Make believe?

India must put the lid on US' Canada envoy's allegation on Nijjar's killing

The killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a pro-Khalistan Canadian of Indian descent, by alleged Indian agents has taken the India-Canada relations to their lowest ebb. As the situation unravelled, Canada expelled a senior Indian diplomat and India reciprocated. The visa services to Canada in New Delhi have been suspended. Though Nijjar's killing is the trigger for the current spat, the relationship between India and Canada has remained strained for quite some time now. Canada has a sizeable Indian population from Punjab and many of them are vocal Khalistan supporters. India has repeatedly asked Canada to rein in such rogue elements but the demand has fallen on deaf ears. This is an unfortunate situation as both countries have historically enjoyed friendly ties. Now, yet another episode has exacerbated the situation. The allegations made by the US Ambassador to Canada regarding India's involvement in Nijjar's killing have indeed harmed India's image. While these allegations have not been substantiated, they



have cast a shadow over India's international standing and strained its relations with Canada. Allegedly, the said report prompted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to make in the Canadian Parliament his controversial accusation of a "potential" connection between the Indian Government and Nijjar's murder on June 18. India has vehemently rejected Trudeau's claims, labelling them "absurd" and "motivated".

However, recent allegations by US' Canada Ambassador David Cohen, quoting the Five Eyes network, have put India in a precarious position. The Five Eyes intelligence network, comprising the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, has been a cornerstone of global intelligence sharing. But David Cohen's comment marks the first acknowledgement by a US Administration official of intelligence sharing with Canada within the Five Eyes alliance. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has expressed deep concern over Prime Minister Trudeau's allegations against India and emphasised that the US is closely coordinating with Canada on the matter, aiming for accountability through a thorough investigation. It is indeed a serious situation for India. Our Government must counter it most vigorously as the onus now lies on India to prove its innocence. It must let the world know that though Nijjar --- officially designated as a terrorist by India in 2020 --- was a proclaimed offender who celebrated Beant Singh's assassination and openly advocated armed struggle against India, our nation does not support extrajudicial killing and had asked the Canadian Government on several occasions to check anti-India activities on its soil but with no luck. While Trudeau desperately tries to resurrect his falling ratings by playing in the hands of Khalistan supporters in Canada who wield certain influence and power there, he must realise that it would be counterproductive in the long run as history is replete with examples where extremists have bitten the very hand that fed them.



Tribal youth perform a cultural programme on the eve of Karma, a harvest festival, in Ranchi

PTI

New school education for emerging new India

New India faces new challenges, especially in the field of education and skill development, which must be addressed

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, the education sector is experiencing a profound transformation. This transformation is especially critical for a country like India, where education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of its burgeoning population. Burlington English, in collaboration with ScooNews, recently released a groundbreaking report titled 'Unlocking Success: Turning Policy and Frameworks into Real-World Action.' The report presents a compelling roadmap for the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework in India. By drawing insights from educators across the nation and offering practical toolkits, it has the potential to transform the school education landscape in India, making it more inclusive, innovative, and future-ready.

This report sheds light on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) implementation roadmap, drawing insights from the experiences and perspectives of over 1000 school teachers across six states in India. The key findings of this report discuss how it has the potential to revolutionise school education in India. One of the report's most compelling insights is its emphasis on embracing the 'Scope for Failure' as a crucial element of the learning journey. This perspective encourages a shift in the way educators and students perceive failure, turning it into an opportunity. This mindset shift is fundamental in preparing students for the challenges of the future. Besides, it acknowledges the importance of English and treats it as a skill that helps employability in India and abroad. The report suggests a two-language set up to take load off the students. One of the strengths of the report lies in the extensive research conducted. The insights gathered from over 1000 teachers, spanning the K-12 domain,



provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the Indian education system. This diverse sample size ensures that the report's recommendations are grounded in the realities faced by educators at all levels. The report addresses several key themes that are crucial to shaping the future of education in India: The concept of 'Future Schools' explores the need for educational institutions to adapt to the rapidly changing technological landscape. It emphasises the importance of incorporating innovative teaching methods and cutting-edge technologies to prepare students for a world that is vastly different from what it was a decade ago. Recognising that teachers are the backbone of any educational system, the report delves into the importance of providing teachers with the necessary resources, training, and professional development opportunities. Empowering teachers is key to improving the quality of education. To translate these key themes into actionable steps, the report provides

eight essential action points and three project toolkits designed for classroom implementation. These practical tools equip educators with the resources and strategies needed to transform their classrooms into dynamic learning environments. This hands-on approach bridges the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that the NCF is implemented effectively.

The report is particularly well-suited for the educational landscape of 'New India,' which is characterized by its aspiration for innovation, inclusivity, and excellence. The report aligns with NCF as the report directly addresses the NCF, aligning its recommendations with the national education policy framework. This ensures that its insights can be seamlessly integrated into the existing educational structure. The emphasis on adaptive assessments and teacher empowerment promotes inclusivity in education, catering to the diverse needs of students in a country as diverse as India.

(The writer is CEO of Burlington Group, India & Asia-Pacific; views are personal)



RATNESH JHA

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China's Afghan plan against India, US

In case China succeeds in cultivating relations with the Taliban regime, it will be easier to exert its authority in these troubled areas

China is at it again. Nothing can deter it from indulging in Anti India and Anti US grandiloquence besides projecting itself as a certain replacement of America as 'Super Power' hence making relentless efforts to enhance its relevance and area of influence in Asia as well as other countries in the world.

Against this backdrop, undaunted by the image of the Taliban infamous for its medieval mindset, anti-women dictate, tendency to harbour terrorists etc. China is poised to adopt a new strategy and long-term plan to create trouble for India and the United States which is evident from its recent decision to open a new mission in Kabul with immediate effect.

China has recently announced the appointment of Zhao Zhaohui as full-time ambassador to Afghanistan which makes it the first country in the world to establish a direct relationship. Several nations including India had embassies in Kabul but the volatile situation changed after the Taliban took over this troubled country.

China is eyeing mineral wealth

Experts say that China has ignored world opinion to have any official diplomatic relations with the Taliban but posting of a full-time ambassador amounts to indirect recognition and such a step could not be taken even by neighbouring Pakistan which used to claim the 'Savior' of the Kabul regime. China has been adopting a Soft policy towards the Taliban which was aimed at alluring the new regime in its debt trap to exploit immense mineral wealth. China's company Gochin expressed its willingness on April 13, 2023, to invest 10 billion USD in Afghanistan's Lithium deposits which had been confirmed by the Taliban's Ministry of Mines and petroleum.

The Chinese company has assured the Taliban regime that it will create 10 lakhs indirect and 120,000 direct jobs in this country. Similarly, Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Co (CAPEIC) signed a \$540 million deal to extract oil from northern



Afghanistan's Amu Darya basin In January 2023 which is under the plan to go for a bigger kill of vast mineral wealth valuing about one trillion. As per calculations of a joint team from the Pentagon, US Geological Service and USAID, Afghanistan's mineral deposits are worth at least \$900bn. As per data, vast mineral wealth in Afghanistan is untapped so far which includes Gold, Copper, Iron, Graphite.

China targets the US

China is keen to send the message to the world that it can spread its influence in other nations like the United States which is under its ambition to become a superpower. It intends to expand its China-Pakistan-Economic-Corridor through Afghanistan which may create security concerns for several neighbors. China may soon start oil exploration.

Analysts opine that it will not be easy to succeed in Afghanistan which is known as the "graveyard of empires" and witnessed defeats of several nations including the United States. The Soviet Union was defeated in the 20th century though China's entry was based on its policy to exploit minerals hence it is trying to create an impression of subsequent benefiting the people of Afghanistan in the job sector besides earning huge revenues.



CHINESE MUSLIMS ARE FLEEING OWING TO PERSECUTION IN THEIR HOME PROVINCE XINJIANG TO SEEK SANCTUARY IN AFGHANISTAN

China has abandoned Pakistan and is directly trapping the Taliban regime which has already fallen to its prey. Taliban's desperate effort to survive is also a contributory factor in developing close ties with China which has pounced upon this rare opportunity. China will target Afghanistan to expand its Belt and Road initiative which involves an investment of billions of USD and the Taliban may accept it as a possible methodology for generating employment and a path of development that may prove to be a Mirage.

Given a wishful thinking of Pakistan, efforts were made to sell to the world that it would dictate the Taliban regime hence it manipulated to keep India out of the Doha dialogue which prepared a roadmap of US troops withdrawal from Afghanistan. But turmoil and strained ties between Pakistan and the Taliban have changed the entire scenario. Pakistan has been at the forefront since 2021 when the Taliban assumed the reign of power in Kabul but its 'joy-ride' to needle India proved to be 'short-lived' as the former has accused the latter of promoting and supporting the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) which killed 179 people in Pakistan in 2022. Piqued over the grand

success of G20 in New Delhi, China may like to capture the Taliban who desperately need dome protector following their failure to get international recognition though two years have elapsed since they took over the reign of power in Kabul on August 15, 2021. Xi's absence at the G20 did not make much difference and India produced the Delhi declaration which was unanimously thereby enhancing its stature in the world diplomatic arena. Due to a huge investment of about Rs 22,350 crore in various projects, education and social sectors, India faces the unimaginable challenge of dealing with the Taliban if they walk into the trap laid by China. Second, India's north-south corridor may be affected after the active involvement of China in Afghanistan. Taliban have appreciated India's investment in Afghanistan in the past but nothing is certain about future investment. Chinese Muslims are fleeing owing to persecution in their home province Xinjiang to seek sanctuary in Afghanistan. In case, China succeeds in cultivating relations with the Taliban regime then it will make it easier for China to exert its authority in these troubled areas.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ARE SENIOR CITIZENS A BURDEN?

Sir — Senior citizens possess the potential to influence government policies and should, therefore, be respected for their wealth of life experience. To support seniors, numerous schemes should be implemented. While the government allocates substantial funds for welfare programs, senior citizens face dwindling incomes due to declining bank interest rates. Some may receive meager pensions, which are still subject to income tax. Hence, senior citizens deserve certain privileges, including concessions in train and air travel, as well as essential medical assistance. It's disheartening that Indian senior citizens are ineligible for medical insurance after the age of 75, denied loans on EMI terms, and even refused driving licenses. They have faithfully paid taxes and insurance premiums throughout their working years, and it is unjust that they have now become a burden on society.

Jayanthi CK Maniam | Chennai

UNPARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOR

Sir — In response to the obscene communal statements made by BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri, a prominent political figure issued a statement, expressing remorse "if" the Opposition felt hurt by the member's remarks. The use of the word "if" distinctly implies that the BJP/NDA feels no regret for Bidhuri's offensive comments, suggesting they find nothing objectionable about them. This stance is framed as an act of magnanimity and liberalism on the part of the party and government, conditional upon the Opposition's feelings. It reflects the divisive philosophy of "Hindi Hindu Hindustan" that has firmly rooted itself in national politics.

This attitude indicates that, within Parliament, the ruling party MP's offensive words should concern only the Opposition, along with the targeted religious community outside Parliament. It appears that there is no expectation of shame or concern from the MPs of the ruling party, the NDA government, the BJP, or even Hindus and Indians as a whole,

Row with Canada



The world is currently experiencing severe tension due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict and China's contentious policies. This has instilled fear of an impending economic recession. In this delicate situation, the Trudeau government of Canada has exacerbated

ed tensions by levying unjustified accusations against the Indian government. Canada, known for being a hub of Khalistani activities, not only supports these organizations for political gain but also justifies their reprehensible actions as a form of freedom of expression. In light of these developments, it is advisable for India to reconsider its political and commercial ties with Canada. Just two months ago, Khalistani supporters demonstrated their autocratic tendencies by displaying the assassination of former PM Indira Gandhi in Canada, an act that was shockingly labeled as an expression of freedom. Consequently, India should adopt a firm stance in its dealings with Canada.

Jahangir Shaikh | Mumbai

in response to the worst possible comments made within the legislative body. The onus of protest is unfairly placed solely on the Opposition and Muslims. This demonstrates a moral failing on the part of the heavyweight politician and his party/government.

Kajal Chatterje | Kolkata

OBC'S STRUGGLE FOR FAIR DEAL

Sir — As we analyse the available data, it becomes evident that there is a significant underrepresentation of individuals from Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the leadership positions of our country's central universities. To illustrate, out of all the Vice-Chancellors in these universities, merely five belong to the OBC category. Similarly, when we examine the position of registrars, only three are from backward communities. Shockingly, a mere 4.5 percent of the reserved professorial positions in central universities have been occupied by individuals from OBCs. This trend is not unique to professors but extends to associate and assistant professors as well.

Furthermore, the situation is exacerbated by the misuse of the "creamy layer" concept, which has led to the unjust deprivation

of caste certificates for OBC individuals. This arbitrary restriction of rights with a nominal income limit of Rs 6 or 8 lakhs severely hampers the prospects of future generations. Curiously, no such creamy layer or similar restrictions apply to other reserved categories, allowing the children of senior officers from these categories to enjoy reservation benefits for generations.

It is imperative to emphasise that we cannot progress as a nation by leaving behind a significant portion of our society. To illustrate the magnitude of the issue, if we tally the vacant teaching positions in central government institutions, we find that a staggering forty to sixty percent of OBC posts remain unfilled. The loss of 16,000 medical seats allocated for OBCs is nothing short of a grave injustice. The responsibility for finding a solution to this issue lies squarely with the government. We must not neglect the well-being and empowerment of a substantial part of our population, especially when the facts clearly indicate disparities.


Satyavan Saurabh | Bhiwani

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

ZEN BUDDHISM: LAW OF ATTRACTION

A robust mind can develop the qualities to manifest the ‘Law of Attraction’



RAVI VALLURI

Aeons ago a strapping youngster gained admission into an estimable Temple of Knowledge. He was fortunate to be imparted precious pearls of wisdom of Zen Buddhism by sagacious and knowledgeable masters. Over some time, he attained a reasonable degree of compassion and insight into the human mind. During his tutelage what struck him most was the simplicity, humility and truthfulness of his teachers who practiced Zen Buddhism.


What is Zen Buddhism?

As per Norman Fischer Zen Buddhism is:
‘A special transmission outside the scriptures.
No dependency on words and letters.
Pointing directly to the human mind.
Seeing into one’s nature and attaining Buddhahood.’

The cornerstone of the practice is that over some time, through unflinching practice of the appropriate techniques, a postulant becomes aware and awakened. The mind of such a person becomes pristine and gains clarity in the thought process. However, it is well-nigh impossible to effectuate such a state without the grace of a Guru, who can be thought of as the doorway to the ambrosia of divinity. The young monk was directed by the Masters of the monastery to spread the knowledge of Zen Buddhism. Significantly, the now more spiritually aware monk uttered only the truth and never denounced anyone.

Powers of the Human Mind

Exhausted and weary after relentless travel, one day he sat under a majestic blossoming tree. The monk was feeling ravenous and wished that his hunger would be satiated. Quite unexpectedly a maiden walking that way offered him a bowl filled with food, and no sooner did the monk express his desire. He was taken aback at the turn of events and expressed his gratitude to the damsel.



After the hearty meal, the monk felt extremely thirsty. He pined for a glass of water and sure enough, a stripling youngster offered him juices to quench his thirst. The monk was extremely beholden and appreciative of this serendipitous act of kindness. The mind of the monk was now suffused with joy as his twin desires of food and liquid were satiated with remarkable ease. He now wished to sleep. Suddenly it darkened and there was a cloud cover across the sky. The weather which was arid and hot turned salubrious. After sleeping for hours together he felt reinvigorated. The monk, when hungry was satiated with food, when thirsty was provided with drinks and was comforted by angels when he felt worn out.

The Law of Attraction

His thoughts and words were resonating in the universe and the mind became a unique springboard wherein whatever he wished for, eventuated. Once trained, the mind develops a few qualities. It becomes luminous and radiant, light as a feather and not weighed down by the baggage of negative thoughts. The monk was hungry, thirsty and deprived of rest. He meant it; there was no dubiety or incertitude in his mind. The mind was not wavering and his desires did not oscillate between “hope to be fed” or “if provided will partake of food.” A robust and radiant mind that can authentically develop the qualities of the Law of Attraction knows the art of letting go, dropping all affectation. The unique mantra of this success is when an individual genuinely believes in the production of dreams and corrals thoughts to be efficacious ones. Pre-eminently for an individual blessed with these attributes, the Law of Attraction operates and resounds quite amazingly. “All that we are is a result of what we have thought,” said Gautama Buddha the Enlightened One.

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

Simultaneous polls are the way forward



UTTAM GUPTA

Frequent elections impose enormous social and economic costs on the nation, which leads to corruption and disruption

The Union Government has set up a committee under the chairmanship of the former President of India, Ram Nath Kovind to examine holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha (LS), state assemblies, panchayats and other local bodies. Even as the committee has kicked off the deliberations (its first meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2023) the idea is being staunchly opposed by many political parties. The opposition isn’t new as in 2019 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi convened a meeting on June 19 that year to discuss ‘One Nation, One Election’ (ONOE), it was boycotted by about 50 per cent of the parties who were invited.

What are the grounds for opposition?

A major ground for their opposition is that this will be an onslaught on the federal polity, hence, unconstitutional. The parties argue that in a scenario of simultaneous poll to both the LS and all the state assemblies, the national issues will dominate over the state-specific subjects. This may yield fortuitous benefits to the dominant national party as the voter won’t be able to clearly articulate his/her choice while casting a vote for electing members of the assembly.

The national party getting a clear majority in the LS who does not enjoy the confidence of the state subjects on local issues will thus get to rule the states as well. Most opposition parties fear that BJP which enjoys a clear edge at the national level will be able to install its governments across the country. This will violate the federal character of the constitution which envisages running the affairs of the state in sync with local needs and aspirations.

The above line of argument is completely flawed. It presumes that while voting at the same time for the Parliament and the Assembly, the choice of the voter will get obliterated to favour the dominant national party (read: BJP). How could a mere act of asking her to press the button for choosing candidates for two entirely different elections - one for the LS and the other for the state Assembly - around the same time lead to obliteration? It grossly underestimates the ability of the voter to make ‘educated’ and ‘informed’ choices on national and local issues. That this isn’t the case; that the voter is intelligent enough to make the right choice is amply corroborated by the results of LS polls in 2019 when elections to some State Assemblies, viz Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, were held co-terminus.

Despite an overriding national narrative favouring Prime Minister Modi, voters in these States showed clear preference for regional parties, namely the YSR Congress and the Biju Janata Dal, who got an absolute majority in the assembly. Just because the voters exercised franchise at the same time for both the LS and the State did not deter them from giving overriding importance to local issues. The fallacy of the opposition’s argument may be seen from another angle.

In the above example, apart from securing a clear majority in the state Assembly, the YSR Congress and the Biju Janata Dal also cornered a major chunk of seats from the state in the LS. Now, if one were to believe opposition that voters’ choice gets distorted (courtesy, the same timing) then are we to say ‘local issues are dominating over the national issues’?

The crux of the matter is: that the voter is intelligent enough to make a distinction. While voting for a candidate in the LS election, she is guided by national issues whereas, in the Assembly election local issues dominate her mind. She won’t mix up things just because she has to press the relevant buttons around the same time. There is nothing unconstitutional in holding simultaneous elections.

The founding fathers of the Indian constitution had contemplated simultaneous elections only. Indeed, things were on the right track till the mid-60s, when the then ruling dispensation disturbed the apple-cart by the ‘premature’ dissolution of some state assemblies (1968/1969) and LS (1970). Over time, the mismatch got aggravated with the dissolution of many more assemblies. If, during the initial phase (from 1952 to 1967) when elections to both the LS and state assemblies were held concurrently, everything was hunky dory, how come now, restoration of that very dispensation be construed as an assault on federalism.

The existing system wherein a State Assembly goes to polls almost every other year imposes unprecedented social and economic costs on the nation. It is not just the official expense of conducting elections (in a big state like Maharashtra, it can go up to Rs 1,000 crores) but also several thousand crores being spent by political parties. In turn, this gives a boost to corruption and other unethical practices even as parties seek to raise funds to support the mammoth expenditure.

Then, there is a continuous distraction from issues of governance even as the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) - each time an election exercise is taken up - leads to the stoppage of all major policy decisions that impede development work. The delay in project implementation and resulting cost escalation (a case in point, the delay in completion of the dedicated freight corridor project) imposes an unsustainable fiscal burden.

A third indeed the most devastating impact has to do with almost every political party promising more and more sops to win elections. After the five guarantees promised by the grand old party in Karnataka did the trick, it is giving guarantees in almost all state elections due this year. Others such as AAP are following suit. Such sops have the potential of denuding the state exchequer.

Finally, given the political parties in election mode year after year, no incumbent Government at the Centre has the gumption to implement hard reforms, particularly considering that the party at the helm has stakes in the states as well. A case in point is fertilizer subsidy which the then finance minister Arun Jaitley promised to prune drastically; yet fertiliser subsidy not only continues but has increased by leaps and bounds (during 2022-23, it was Rs 255,000 crore). To end these maladies, the subsisting system has to go and the ONOE restored in sync with the intent of the authors of the Indian Constitution. This will enable both the Centre and States to focus on governance for a full five years without any distraction. This will help save thousands of crores in election expenses, ensure continuity of policy decisions enabling unhindered project execution and development work, drastically curtail election-oriented populist sops and give a boost to the implementation of hard reforms. Opposition parties have pointed towards uncertainties that could arise if the ruling party loses the vote of confidence before its mandated term. But they need to recognise that this can at best be a rare situation and not a matter of routine (the public gives a mandate to a government to run its full-term and all stakeholders should ensure that this is honoured). Still, such a scenario (albeit rare) can be addressed by either electing a new leader (who enjoys the confidence of the House) or holding a fresh election for the “residual” term.

Apart from required constitutional amendments, the switchover to ONOE will entail some increase in expenses on procuring extra EVM and VVPAT. But that is a very small price for achieving monumental socio-economic gains.

“


THE MOST DEVASTATING IMPACT HAS TO DO WITH ALMOST EVERY POLITICAL PARTY PROMISING MORE AND MORE SOPS TO WIN ELECTIONS

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(The writer is a policy analyst)

Tap water for parched villages: An incredible turnaround

Clean drinking water through taps has brought about a radical change in the lives of the residents of Bundelkhand, but challenges remain



MANEESHA SHUKLA

(The writer is a social activist, based in Uttar Pradesh; views are personal)

Bundelkhand has been traditionally a drought-prone area with frequent droughts; the people had to work hard, and travel several kilometres in some cases to get clean drinking water. The Bundelkhand region of India grapples with several issues, including heavy reliance on rainfall, inadequate irrigation, and susceptibility to climate change and droughts. This area, encompassing thirteen economically disadvantaged and less-developed districts, heavily depends on agriculture for both employment and economic progress. While agriculture is pivotal for the region’s economic advancement, it frequently faces disruptions due to recurring droughts. In this situation, clean drinking water is nothing short of a luxury.

Access to clean drinking water is a fundamental right that has long eluded many rural households in India. Recognising this dire need, the ‘Jal Jeevan Mission’ scheme was launched with a singular goal: to provide clean drinking water to every rural family through taps. In Uttar Pradesh, the ‘Har Ghar Jal Yojana’, a part of the ‘Jal Jeevan Mission’, has witnessed remarkable success in the Bundelkhand region, fundamentally changing the lives of its residents. The Jal Jeevan Mission has transformed the Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions, which have suffered from water scarcity for decades. It has turned the dream of having pure drinking water in every household into a reality. The mission has saved these regions from major drinking water crises, providing clean water to thousands of villages.

The mission has involved laying pipelines, constructing water tanks, establishing water treatment plants, increasing water sources, and providing tap water connections at an impressive pace. This initiative has prioritized drought-affected areas, villages with water quality issues, aspirational districts, and those affected by diseases like Japanese Encephalitis and Encephalitis Syndrome.

The Jal Jeevan Mission aimed to provide ‘domestic tap connections’ to 2,62,29,815 families by 2024 in Uttar Pradesh. Under the ‘Har Ghar Jal Yojana’, a daily supply of 55 litres of water per villager was promised. As of September 14, 2023, this mission has already made significant strides, with tap water facilities reaching 1,60,20,616 families and benefiting approximately 9,61,23,696 people.

The Jal Jeevan Mission is not just about providing clean drinking water but also about creating employment opportunities. Training programs have been initiated, with 13 youths being trained under each Gram Panchayat. These efforts have empowered rural youth by providing training in various trades, including plumbing, electrical work, motor mechanics, fitting, masonry, and pump operation. “We wish to ensure people’s participation so that they become aware and stakeholders. After ten years it is the people who would be managing and operating these facilities” says Anurag Srivastava, the principal secretary of Uttar Pradesh.

In addition to employment opportunities, the mission focuses on making rural women self-reliant by training five women from each village in water testing for clean drinking water. These women use field test kits to check the water quality in their villages, assessing 11 different parameters in sources such as taps, wells, hand pumps, and tube wells. So far, more than 4,87,955 women have been trained in water testing, ensuring the quality of water supplied. The provision of clean drinking water has had a profound impact on public health. It has reduced the prevalence of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, typhoid, and malaria. “There has been a marked fall in diseases in our village after the water plant started operating six months back,” says Hasmukh Parihar, Gram Pradhan.

The Bundelkhand region has seen remarkable progress under the Har Ghar Jal Yojana. As of now, 1,280,292 functional household tap connections (FHTCs) have been provided out of a total of 1,419,730 FHTCs in the region. This means that 7,681,752 villagers in Bundelkhand have access to clean drinking water through taps.

The Bundelkhand Piped Drinking Water Project is a significant part of the Jal Jeevan Mission. Work on this project is underway in seven cities: Jhansi, Lalitpur, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Banda, Chitrakoot, and Mahoba. There are a total of 71 schemes operating under 35 projects in the Bundelkhand region. These projects include intake wells, water treatment plants, clear water reservoirs, and overhead tanks, all aimed at ensuring a steady supply of clean drinking water. Indeed, Har Ghar Jal Yojana is changing lives but there is a long way to go till total coverage is secured. Besides, issues of the quality of water and its perennial supply must be ensured. While the project is providing the drinking water it has yet to seep into the psyche of the people as a lot of it is still wasted and often people do not use it at all for different reasons. Thus creating awareness must be an integral part of the project and be given priority.

MONEY MATTERS

Luxury carmakers expect bumper sales in festive period

Luxury carmakers Mercedes-Benz, Lexus and Audi expect sales momentum to continue in the ongoing festive season with demand remaining robust for high-end cars. With off-take remaining strong, the festive season push could even see the luxury car segment posting its highest ever volumes in a year in 2023. In an interaction with PTI, Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Santosh Iyer noted that the festive season looks very promising as compared with last year. "This year the festive season is spread across four months and we are optimistic as we started on a very positive note, from Onam onwards," he stated. With a strong demand primarily driven by recent launches and buoyant customer sentiment, Mercedes-Benz expects the growth momentum to continue, Iyer said. Lexus India President Naveen Soni said the luxury car market continues to grow in the country. "This year, the demand for high-end cars has brought cheer to the industry."



Deadline to add nominees for mutual fund investors to end soon

All individual demat account holders and mutual fund investors have time till September 30, to nominate a beneficiary or opt out of it by submitting a declaration form, failing which their demat accounts and folios will be frozen, and they will not be able to redeem their investments. This mandate applies to both new as well as existing investors, according to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). The move is aimed at helping investors to secure their assets and pass them on to their legal heirs. "This will ensure smooth and hassle-free transfer of securities to the legal heirs of the investors in case of any unfortunate event," Tejas Khoday, co-founder and CEO at FYERS, said. Under Sebi's rule, new investors must either nominate their securities or formally opt out of nomination through a declaration form when opening trading and demat accounts.



Edtech startup selected for Finland's 'Talent Boost' project

Kerala-based educational technology startup has been selected for Finland's 'Talent Boost' project, which aims to attract skilled talent and investors across diverse sectors. Interval, an innovative edtech startup, says it is the sole Indian startup to receive this invitation. The startup, based out of Areekode in Kerala's Malappuram District, caters to more than 25,000 students across 30 countries. It delivers a one-to-one live tutoring model in which educators directly deliver classes to students, ensuring personalised attention for each learner, the company said. The 'Talent Boost' project was initiated by the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Finland. The selection took place at the global tech gathering 'Experience Tampere', which was held from September 12 to 16 in Finland's city of Tampere, which is known for the 'finest startup ecosystem in all of Europe', the company said in a release. Interval's founder Ramees Ali said the support received by the company is exceptional.



RBI likely to keep interest rate unchanged amid high inflation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank is likely to maintain status quo on policy rates for the fourth time in a row at its bi-monthly monetary policy review meeting early next month, as retail inflation continues to remain high and the US Federal Reserve has decided to keep a hawkish stance for some more time, according to experts.

The Reserve Bank had raised the benchmark repo rate to 6.5 per cent on February 8, 2023 and since then it has retained the rates at the same level in view of the stubbornly high retail inflation and certain global factors including elevated crude oil prices in the international market.

The Reserve Bank Governor-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting is scheduled for October 4-6, 2023. The last meeting of the MPC, the highest rating-setting panel, was in August.

"We do expect the RBI to hold on to a status quo position this time as inflation is still high and liquidity tight. In fact, going by RBI forecast on inflation, it



would be above 5 per cent in Q3 too, which will ensure that the status quo prevails for the calendar year for sure and probably Q4 too," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda.

Sabnavis further said there are uncertainties relating to Kharif crop, especially on pulses, which can increase prices.

"The comfort is that there is less concern on growth which is on target," he added.

Although the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation eased a bit to 6.83 per cent in August from 7.44 per cent in the

preceding month in July, it remained above the Reserve Bank's comfort level of 6 per cent. It may be mentioned that the government has mandated the RBI to keep inflation at 4 per cent with 2 per cent margin on either side.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA Limited said the headline CPI inflation is expected to ease to 5.3-5.5 per cent in September 2023 from 6.8 per cent in August 2023, benefitting from the halving of the average price of tomatoes as well as a favourable base.

"... We expect the CPI infla-

tion to ease to 5.6 per cent in Q3 FY2024 and further to 5.1 per cent in Q4 FY2024, amid upside risks to food inflation on account of the impact of uneven and sub-par monsoons and low reservoir levels on Kharif yields and Rabi sowing, respectively," she said.

Nayar said ICRA expects the MPC to remain on hold in October 2023 policy, while continuing to demonstrate caution amid a cloudy outlook for food inflation and elevated crude oil prices.

The Reserve Bank has projected CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023-24, with Q2 at 6.2 per cent, Q3 at 5.7 per cent and Q4 at 5.2 per cent, with risks evenly balanced. CPI inflation for Q1, 2024-25 is projected at 5.2 per cent.

On his expectations from the next bi-monthly monetary policy, Sanjay Bhutani, Director, Medical Technology Association of India (MTAI) said the RBI has gone along with the market sentiment of retaining the benchmark interest rate at 6.5 per cent for quite some time now.

Real estate fractional ownership mkt touches Rs 4K cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fractional ownership of real estate is gradually gaining acceptance among investors as assets under management have touched Rs 4,000 crore, according to a report.

TruBoard Partners, a tech-enabled real asset management company, has come out with a report on fractional ownership.

Many private companies have set up fractional ownership platforms that allow investors to own a fraction of real estate assets.

"Fractional ownership typically involves the ownership of an underlying real estate asset among multiple investors."

This lowers capital requirements and facilitates participation of a larger set of players in real estate asset ownership," the report said.

Investors infuse their fund in securities issued by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), established by the fractional ownership platform.

G20 DECLARATION

Govt must give big push to MSMEs: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The declaration of G20 nations under India's presidency should spur the government to give a big push to the MSME sector by simplifying the regulatory process and enhancing their access to affordable capital, say experts.

The commitments made in the G20's New Delhi declaration with regard to the MSMEs ought to be followed by the member nations as the sector has the potential to generate employment and promote sustained growth.

The New Delhi Declaration adopted early this month said the G20 recognise that startups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are natural engines of growth. They are key to socio-economic transformation by driving innovation and creating employment.

"We welcome the establishment of the Start-up 20 Engagement Group during India's G20 Presidency and its continuation," it said.

Chairman of CII Delhi State



Council and MD and CEO of Samtel Avionics Limited Puneet Kaura said the MSME is considered important the world over and the G20 declaration has once again underlined the need for extending financial and non-financial support by the governments to this sector.

"It was heartening for the MSME to have received the due recognition by the G20 under India's presidency. These promises, however, should not remain on paper but must result in action on the ground as the sector has immense potential to generate quality employment across the country

and contribute to the country's exports which have been suffering on account of global problems," he said.

Baghyashree Bhansali, CEO of The Disposal Company (TDC), said that to further promote startups/MSMEs, the government should simplify regulatory processes, enhance access to affordable capital, foster industry-academia collaborations for innovation, and provide targeted skill development programmes. Creating robust incubation and mentorship ecosystems will also nurture entrepreneurship and innovation in India.

Markets to focus on global trends, trading activity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Global trends, trading activity of foreign investors and movement of oil benchmark Brent crude would dictate terms in the domestic markets this week, analysts said.

Equity markets, which fell nearly 3 per cent last week, may face volatile trends amid the monthly derivatives expiry on Thursday.

"This week marks the September month Futures and Options (F&O) expiry, which is expected to bring about volatility in the market," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd.

Concerns like rising crude oil prices, firm US dollar index and treasury yields coupled with continuous FII selling have been denting the sentiment in the markets, Amol Athawale, Vice President - Technical Research, Kotak Securities Ltd, said.

"Global and domestic macroeconomic data, trend in global stock markets, crude oil prices, movement of rupee against the dollar, investment by FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors) and DIIs (Domestic Institutional Investors) will be in focus. "Market will take further cues from some key events



such as the US GDP data, UK GDP and Eurozone inflation," Arvinder Singh Nanda, Senior Vice President, Master Capital Services Ltd, said.

In the past week, the BSE benchmark fell 1,829.48 points or 2.69 per cent, and

the Nifty declined 518.1 points or 2.56 per cent.

Equity benchmark indices stayed on the back foot for the fourth straight session on Friday.

"Last week has seen significant profit-booking in the

market, primarily driven by a steep decline in HDFC Bank, weak global cues, and substantial selling by foreign institutional investors. The global markets are facing challenges, particularly after the ultra-hawkish FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) policy," Meena said.

After reaching record high levels, equity benchmark indices fell last week amid a weak trend in global markets. "While the FOMC kept key interest rates unchanged in their recent meeting, the markets reacted negatively to the US Fed's hawkish stance on interest rates.

As many as 412 infra projects show cost overruns of Rs 4.77 L cr



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 412 infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of Rs 150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of more than Rs 4.77 lakh crore in August this year, an official report said.

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which monitors infrastructure projects worth Rs 150 crore and above, out of 1,762 projects, 412 reported cost overruns and as many as 830 projects were delayed.

"The total original cost of implementation of the 1,762 projects was Rs 25,01,400.62 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be Rs 29,78,681.31 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of Rs 4,77,280.69 crore (19.08 per cent of original cost)," the min-

istry's latest report for August 2023 said.

According to the report, the expenditure incurred on these projects till August 2023, is Rs 15,57,188.10 crore, which is 52.28 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

However, it stated that the number of delayed projects decreased to 624, if delay is calculated on the basis of the latest schedule of completion. Further, it stated that for 339 projects, neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

Out of the 830 delayed projects, 194 have overall delays in the range of 1-12 months, 190 have been delayed for 13-24 months, 323 projects for 25-60 months and 123 projects have been delayed for more than 60 months.

Apple to scale up production over 5 times in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

iPhone maker Apple has plans to scale up production in India by over five-fold to around USD 40 billion (about 3.32 lakh crore) in the next 4-5 years, according to government sources.

According to the official, who did not wish to be named, the company has crossed the USD 7 billion production mark in the last financial year.

"Apple has plans to increase production in India to over USD 40 billion in the next 4-5 years. It has crossed USD 7 billion in the last fiscal," the official said. An email query sent to Apple did not elicit any reply.

Apple manufacturers iPhones in India and has plans to start manufacturing AirPods from next year.

The officer said that Apple has no immediate plans to make iPads or its laptops in India.

"They don't have any plans to participate in IT hardware PLI. They may come at a later stage but as of now their focus is to scale up existing production levels," the officer said.

ONGC signs up HPCL for sale of oil from Mumbai offshore fields

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has signed an agreement to sell crude oil it produces from Mumbai offshore fields to HPCL - the second such agreement in as many months, as India's top oil and gas producer prefers term contracts over auctions where refiners hammer deep discounts.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, ONGC said it has inked "term agreement with HPCL for sale of crude oil from Mumbai offshore."

While it did not give details, sources aware of the matter said the pact for sale of about 4.5 million tonnes per annum of crude oil to Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (HPCL) Mumbai refinery.

"This is the second term

agreement sealed for sale of Mumbai Offshore crude oil post marketing freedom," ONGC said.

Last month, ONGC had signed a similar pact to sell 4 million tonnes per annum plus an optional 0.5 million tonnes of crude oil to Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), which too has a refinery to convert the crude oil into fuels like petrol and diesel at Mumbai.

ONGC produces 13-14 million tonnes per annum of crude oil from its fields in the Arabian Sea, off the Mumbai coast.

In June last year, the government abolished a rule that said oil from blocks awarded prior to 1999 must be sold to government-nominated customers, mostly state refiners.

FPIs' outflow in equities crosses Rs 10,000 cr mark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have pulled out over Rs 10,000 crore from Indian equities in the first three weeks of September, primarily due to rising US interest rates, recessionary fears, and overvalued domestic stocks.

Before the outflow, FPIs were incessantly buying Indian equities in the last six months from March to August and brought in Rs 1.74 lakh



crore during the period.

Mayank Mehra, smallcase, manager and principal partner at Craving Alpha, believes that strong economic growth prospects, attractive valua-

tions, and government reforms could support foreign investment flows in the next month.

"Since valuations remain high even after the recent pullback and US bond yields are attractive (the US 10-year bond yield is around 4.49 per cent) FPIs are likely to press sales so long as this trend persists," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Percentage of Indians appearing for TOEFL rising

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The percentage of Indians appearing in TOEFL to pursue secondary education and certifications abroad has seen a gradual increase over the years while those taking the test for immigration purpose has declined, according to Educational Testing Service (ETS).

The Princeton-based ETS, which conducts the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Examination (GRE), said the trend reflects the shifting aspirations of the younger demographic.

According to data exclusive-



ly accessed by PTI, the percentage of Indian test takers for licensure, certification or to attend secondary school abroad, has gone up from 5.83 per cent of the total aspirants in 2021 to 7.77 per cent in 2022. During the same period, the percentage of Indian test takers

appearing in TOEFL for employment or immigration has declined from 8.19 per cent to 7.22 per cent.

Top officials at ETS have confirmed that the trend is being observed since 2018.

The data showed that the percentage of Indians appear-

ing in TOEFL to attend a graduate or postgraduate business programme/a graduate or postgraduate programme, other than a business programme, has increased from 70.84 per cent in 2021 to 71.87 per cent in 2022.

"From our data, we observed a growing trend of secondary education students opting for the TOEFL test. This trend is testimony to the shifting aspirations of the younger demographic, especially in their pursuit of international education," Sachin Jain, the Country Manager of ETS India and South Asia, told PTI.

There was a 53 per cent growth in Indian TOEFL test

takers in 2021 compared to the previous year. In 2022, the number of test takers saw a 59 per cent rise over 2021.

"There are so many industry reports that talk about the

number of Indian students heading abroad hitting 2.5 million in the next three to five years. So that, I think, is a very strong macro push that is happening," Jain said.

Telangana State Co-operative Marketing Federation Ltd.
5-3-68, 3RD FLOOR, MAHATMA GANDHI MARKET BAKHAR, JAMSHED, HYDERABAD-500005
Email: anagapmarket@gmail.com, Ph: 040-2498 7186, Mob: 7288879808, www.tsmarfed.com
Reg. No. 1214/TSMARFED/ENGG/Lease of vacant godowns
TENDER NOTICE
Online tenders are invited through e-tender platform <https://tender.telanganastate.gov.in/> for taking TSMARFED godowns at different locations of the state on as is where is basis.
➤ Online Bid Submission Start date: 25.09.2023 from 03:00 PM to 03:00 PM
➤ Online Bid Submission end date: up to 03.10.2023 upto 03:00 PM
➤ Opening of Technical Bid on date: 04.10.2023 at 01:00 PM
➤ Opening of Financial Bid on date: 04.10.2023 at 03:00 PM
For further details please contact Ph: 7288879808
Note: Managing Director, TSMARFED reserve the right to amend (or) cancel the tender without assigning any reasons
DPR R.D. No.: 716-PPCL/AGENCY/NDVT/1/2023-24
Managing Director

I HAD NO FEAR OF GETTING EARMARKED

“ We hardly have women gangsters as criminal bosses. There is only drama shown, not a savage gangster who is a woman. Enough of love interests! Or else the show is driven on the basis of a moral compass, but here I was—a fully involved hoodlum part of the main gang.





RAM POTHINENI WANTS TO TAP UNCONVENTIONAL MATTERS

PNS| HYDERABAD

Skanda marks Ram Pothineni's first film with director Boyapati Srinu, as well as his first pan-Indian release. He conducted a couple of interviews with YouTubers to promote the film. Here are some of the interesting points he mentioned! "Skanda is a typical

Telugu film, not a multi-lingual pan-Indian production. We shot it in Telugu only. However, this one is designed for a theatrical experience. So, Hindi audiences who have previously enjoyed my films on their mobile phones and television sets should watch it in Hindi because it provides the best experience in the theaters."

Ram remembers something distinct how director Atlee and his wife Priya are his friends. So Atlee introduced him to Shah Rukh Khan. SRK valued Ram Pothineni and treated him with respect and love. He inquired about his film and asked that Ram send the trailer. "He has such a kind heart," says Ram. In fact, "I have done a lot of action films in my career, but

working with Boyapati is a completely different experience. He envisions grandiose action sequences and ensures that they are realized without compromise. We spent 24 days filming Skanda's climax sequence. You can imagine how much time and effort we put in."

The Devadasu fame's grandfather served in the military. His mother was raised in Kashmir and Assam. As a result, Hindi is also spoken at home. Since his childhood, he has been listening to Hindi songs at home. His favorite song as a child was *Tujhe Dekha To Ye Jana Sanam* from *Dil Wale Dulhania Le Jayenge*. So he's looking beyond diaspora!



‘Many suggested me to not take risk making movie with newcomer’

The pre-release event of Srikanth Addala's latest film *Peddha Kapu-1* with debutant Virat Karanna was held in the presence of the team and a few special guests. A huge crowd attended the function.

Anasuya Bharadwaj revealed her character name as Akkanna and thanked director Srikanth Addala for giving her such a powerful role in the movie. "You'll see a new Srikanth Addala as a director and as an actor. Virat Karanna is the star in the making."

Chota K Naidu appreciated direc-

tor Srikanth Addala and the team. "Everything about Srikanth Addala is exceptional. His dialogues and acting are too good. In my entire film career, the most surprising film is *Peddha Kapu-1*. This story happens in the 80's. Ravinder Reddy believed in the story and spent a high budget."

Producer Miryala Ravinder Reddy stated that no actor would get such a script or a director for their debut movie and Virat is lucky.

Srikanth Addala said that he never treated Virat as a newcomer. "Many including my close friends

suggested me to not take the risk of making movie with a newcomer. This story will reach many people, only if it is made with a newcomer. This movie is the signature of a common man. There is a Part 2 and this movie is the life of *Peddha Kapu*."

Hero Virat Karanna thanked his director for believing that he could pull off the character of a common man. "First movie is very special for any actor. I have many memories with this movie." The movie *Peddha Kapu-1* is gracing the cinemas on September 29.



Varun Tej's Gandeevadhari Arjuna makes its OTT debut

Mega Prince Varun Tej recently starred in *Gandeevadhari Arjuna*, an action drama directed by Praveen Sattaru. Regrettably, the movie didn't perform well at the box office. Sakshi Vaidya played the leading role.

As previously announced, the film has made its OTT debut on Netflix today. Interestingly, it's not limited to Telugu; it's also available in other major Indian languages – Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada.

The film features a cast including Vinay Rai, Narain, Roshini Prakash, Manish Chaudhari, Abhinav Gomatam, Ravi Varma, Kalpalatha, and Baby Vedain in significant roles. Produced by Sri Venkateswara Cine Chitra, the movie boasts the musical brilliance of Mickey J Meyer. Stay tuned for more OTT updates.



‘Jyothika has always been a mother figure to me,’ says Karthi

According to rumours making the rounds in Kollywood, star Suriya and his wife Jyothika have relocated to Mumbai. Some even speculate that the family is no longer intact. Suriya, however, said that they just moved to Mumbai in order to have children. Karthi, meanwhile, spoke up about the subject and said he saw Jyothika as his mother.

Regarding Jyothika, Karthi brought up the fact that, despite countless comments against Suriya's family being shared online, no one from their family has spoken up until this point. There have been a lot of comments on social media about how Jyothika's involvement is seen as the main reason for the family's split.

However, Karthi expressed his discontent with these remarks and responded, "I've never regarded Jyothika solely as an actress; she has always been a mother figure to me. Likewise, she saw us as her children. Currently, with my mom residing in Mumbai, our home feels empty. It's not our doing that she is apart from us in this house. We cherish our moments with her (Jyothika) and find immense happiness in her presence."

On the work front, Karthi is working on an exciting film titled *Japan*.

‘Animal will show what real violence is,’ hints Sandeep Vanga

Animal, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, delves into a complex father-son relationship amidst a backdrop of extreme bloodshed in the underworld. At its core, it's a bizarre love story between a son who is deeply devoted to his father.

However, the father's frequent absences due to work prevent him from grasping the extent of his son's affection. Paradoxically, this ardent love becomes a source of conflict between them. Ranbir Kapoor, who stars in the movie, has described it as a departure from his usual roles, calling it a crime drama with shades of gray. He admitted that the role challenged him and forced him to elevate his acting skills, pushing him beyond his comfort zone. Sandeep Reddy Vanga has always maintained that it is going to be one of the most violent films to be ever made in India. When people questioned him why he showed so much violence in Arjun



Reddy/Kabir Singh, he answered that he would show what real violence is with his film *Animal*.

The story sounds very interesting, and it would be pretty exciting to see how Vanga will execute it. It is pretty clear that he is a



crazy director, but no one knows how his thinking process works beyond the Arjun Reddy universe, which makes *Animal* a film to watch out for! With *Animal* set for release on December 1, the filmmakers are actively building

Akhil to star next in Lingusamy's directorial

Tollywood actor Akhil was last seen in *Agent*, a movie that faced a lacklustre response at the box office. Since then, there hasn't been any official confirmation regarding his next project, leading to a surge of speculation on social media.

According to the latest buzz, Akhil Akkineni has been considered for the lead role in a film directed by Lingusamy, whose previous work, *The Warrior*, didn't fare well commercially. However, credible sources have



VIJAY DEVERAKONDA CREATES A SENSATIONAL RECORD ON WHATSAPP

Recently, the most popular messaging app, WhatsApp, introduced a new feature called Channels, which quickly gained global popularity.

Renowned Tollywood actor Vijay Deverakonda was among the early adopters of this feature and has now achieved a remarkable milestone on the platform. He is the first Telugu actor to

amass over 1 million followers on his official WhatsApp channel, a testament to his significant online popularity.

On the professional front, Vijay Deverakonda, who recently appeared in *Kushi*, is gearing up for his next project, a cop drama directed by Gautam Tinnanuri. Anirudh Ravichander is composing the music for this movie.

Iyer, Gill, Sky fire India to 399/5

PTI ■ INDORE

Shubman Gill continued his sensational run with a fifth ODI hundred of the year while Shreyas Iyer hit a timely ton under pressure to fire India to a record 399 for five against Australia in the second game here on Sunday.

Gill (104 off 97 balls) and Iyer (105 off 90 balls) shared a stroke-filled 200-run stand off 164 balls after Ruturaj Gaikwad (8) missed out on a batting beauty.

Suryakumar Yadav (72 not out off 37 balls) and skipper K L Rahul (52 off 38 balls) plundered a pedestrian-looking Australian attack in the death overs to provide the final flourish for India.

The last 10 overs yielded 103 runs as India racked up their highest-ever total against Australia in ODIs.

The Holkar Stadium tends to produce high-scoring games and Sunday's game proved no exception.

Gill's peerless form is an ominous reminder to rivals

ahead of next month's World Cup.

It was a second consecutive ODI hundred for the 24-year-old at this venue, having hammered 112 off 78 balls against New Zealand earlier this year when India ended with a match-winning 395.

Unlike Iyer, Gill began slowly on Sunday, collecting nine off his first 19 balls before going after the Aussie bowlers with disdain.

He was unstoppable after his first strike which was a straight six off pacer Sean Abbott in the ninth over.

Cameron Green tried a short one against Gill who was happy to pull him away for a six over fine leg. But the rain caused a 40-minute delay, putting a temporary halt to the entertainment.

Both Gill and Iyer, who struggled with cramps towards the end of his innings, continued to find boundaries after resumption.

The highlight of Gill's knock was how frequently he danced down the track against



SHREYAS IYER WAS THE FIRST TO COMPLETE THE CENTURY, WHICH IS ALSO HIS THIRD IN ODIs, WHILE SHUBMAN GILL GOT TO THE MILESTONE, HIS SIXTH IN THE FORMAT, 19 BALLS LATER.

the fast bowlers while Iyer's aggressive intent from ball one stood out in a scenario where he was desperately searching for runs.

Both Iyer and Gill got their half-centuries with straight sixes, off debutant Spencer Johnson and Green respectively.

Conditions were ideal for the batters but Australian

attack, missing the likes of Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins, looked short on ideas. Lead spinner Adam Zampa too could not stem the flow of runs.

Iyer was the first to complete the century, his third in ODIs, while Gill got to the milestone, his sixth in the format, 19 balls later.

When both the batters departed, Rahul and Kishan (31 off 18) played some bold strokes to up the scoring rate.

Suryakumar, who had to change his game in the previous match to adapt to the needs of ODI cricket, came out to bat in the 41st over.

In the T20 context, it was an ideal time for him to come and explore his 360 range from ball one. He did just that to power India to a formidable total.

His innings included four sixes in a row off Green in the 44th over. The towering pacer conceded 103 runs in his 10 overs, so symbolic of their wretched outing with the ball on the day.

Iyer settles middle-order debate with timely hundred

PTI ■ INDORE

India might be treating the ongoing ODIs against Australia as a warm-up exercise before the World Cup but Shreyas Iyer had all to play for going into the three-match series.

The 28-year-old has had to deal with his share of injuries since making his international debut back in 2017.

The Asia Cup that India won marked his comeback from a back surgery after six months but a back spasm in the middle of the tournament meant he only got to bat once over the course of two weeks.

Considering what he has gone through the year, especially the range of emotions in the last one month, a third ODI hundred could not have come at a better time for him.

Iyer was India's designated number four before the injury pegged him back and a virtual no show in the Asia Cup meant his place in the playing eleven was far from secure.

In the meantime, Ishan Kishan also made a strong claim for a middle-order spot with a few good knocks.

Iyer had a lot to prove in the Australia series and a run-out in the first ODI showed that luck too was not on his side. However, he made his own luck at the high-scoring Holkar Stadium on Sunday.

When he walked out to bat at number three, he had Gill at the other end like he had on Friday when got run out attempting a single.

The mix up might have played on his mind but in a high-pressure scenario, Iyer oozed confidence from the start and showed the same faith in Gill while taking a quick single to get off the mark.

Iyer is known for his belligerent play against the spinners but he was equally effective against the pacers.

He began with a lofted hit off debutant Spencer Johnson before producing a couple of crisp cover drives off Josh Hazlewood. As Gill took his time to get going in the powerplay, Iyer found the gaps with ease.

An odd short ball was directed at Iyer deliberately but he was



quick to put it away.

An aerial strike over cover off Sean Abbott pretty much confirmed that Iyer was in his elements. The 45-minute rain delay did not disturb his rhythm and he returned to do what he does best: take the attack to the spinners.

After slapping left-arm pacer Johnson for a straight six to bring up his fifty, Iyer punished leg-spinner Adam Zampa for bowling a half-tracker and his third six came in the following over from offie Matthew Short, a massive hit over wide long-on.

Strike rotation was also a key part of his innings comprising 39 singles.

Iyer completed a memorable hundred with a single off Zampa in the 30th over. The roar from him after reaching the milestone was understandable considering the series of events over the past six months.

The much needed runs from his bat might have come on a better of a track and against an ordinary looking Australian attack.

But it might just be enough to settle the middle-order debate going into the World Cup at home.

Indian women to face SL for gold

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Pooja Vastrakar bowled a sharp and incisive spell to take the Indian women's cricket team to its maiden Asian Games final, crushing Bangladesh by eight wickets in a lop-sided semi-final here on Sunday.

Right arm seamer Vastrakar, who replaced Anjali Sarvani in the squad just before leaving India, had career-best figures of 4/17 in four overs as Bangladesh were bowled out for 51 in 17.5 overs -- their lowest ever T20 score against the neighbours.

India will face Sri Lanka in the final on Monday. Lankans defeated defending champions Pakistan, who had won the gold at Incheon Games



2014, by six wickets in the semifinals.

Against Bangladesh, Vastrakar and her young new-ball partner Titas Sadhu (1/10 in 4 overs) extracted all

the juice available from the deck as they bowled quick, with the bounce on offer also helping.

Only skipper Nigar Sultana (12) was able to reach double figures for Bangladesh.

The chase of 52 was a cakewalk as it was achieved in only 8.2 overs. Kanika Ahuja (1 not out) and Jemimah Rodrigues (20 not out) took India home despite losing skipper Smriti Mandhana (7) and Shafali (17) cheaply.

It was also sweet revenge for the women's team, who were forced to play the second game on the trot without their regular skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, who is serving a two-match suspension.



India enter round of 16 in men's football

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Riding on a Sunil Chhetri strike, the Indian men's football team held Myanmar to a 1-1 draw and progressed to the round of 16 in the Asian Games here on Sunday.

They will play Saudi Arabia in the pre-quarters.

Chhetri scored from the spot in the 23rd minute but it was Rahim Ali who earned the penalty when he was brought down inside the box by Hein Zeyar Lin.

While Lin was shown a yellow card for his sliding tackle, the peerless Chhetri made no mistake in finding the back of the net, in what was a repeat of the act he performed against Bangladesh in the second group game two days ago.

Coming off the bench, Kyaw Htwe found the equaliser for Myanmar when he headed the ball past Dheeraj Singh in the 74th minute at

the Xiaoshan Sports Center Stadium.

However, despite the two teams having same points, India progressed as the runner-up from Group A, as the Chhetri-led side has scored more goals than Myanmar in the tournament.

All in all, it was a creditable performance from the Indians who were thrashed 5-0 by hosts China in their opener, before getting their act together to eke out a scrappy 1-0 win over Bangladesh. China topped the pool.

India showed intent from the beginning but seemed to struggle in the final third. However, they still managed to take the lead in the game thanks to Chhetri's goal.

However, they could not end the group stage on a winning note.

The last time the two teams met, earlier this year in Imphal, India beat Myanmar 1-0.

Indian men lose to South Korea 0-3 in TT quarterfinals; women bow out

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The Indian men's team missed out on an Asian Games bronze medal in table tennis after a second-string South Korea blanked them 3-0 in the quarterfinals here on Sunday.

Harmeet Desai lost the first match 0-3 to An Jaehyun. G Sathiyar tried to put up a fight, but it was not enough to get past Park Ganghyeon as India trailed 0-2 after the first two ties.

The onus was on Achantha Sharath Kamal to bring India back into the contest.

However, things did not quite unfold in the manner the Indians would have liked as the veteran from Chennai went down 2-3 to Oh Junsung.

The defeat would have been even more hurting for the Indians as South Korea's top three players did not even play in the match.



Earlier in the day, Sharath raised his game just in time to help India escape unscathed against Kazakhstan.

But the women's table tennis team imploded against a resilient Thailand to bow out of the Games.

Star Indian paddler Manika Batra failed in both her singles matches as the

women's team lost 2-3 to a resilient Thailand.

The match against Kazakhstan was locked 2-2 when Sharath Kamal produced a face-saving win in the decisive fifth rubber.

Sharath had lost the opening singles tamente 1-3 (11-8, 9-11, 11-6, 11-8) to Krill Gerasimenko, the top-ranked player from Kazakhstan.

The world No. 78 started briskly and ended in the same vein, despite Sharath winning the second game.

Sathiyar accounted for Aidos Kenzhigulov 14-12 11-8 11-5 to level the scores before Harmeet put India ahead. The world No. 69 Indian beat Alan Kurumangaliyev 11-7, 12-10, 11-5.

However, Sathiyar faced stiff resistance from Krill in their reverse singles, but the world No. 107 struggled, eventually losing 5-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-5, 5-11.

Nikhat begins Asiad campaign with dominant win

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

In a rematch of World Championship final, top Indian boxer Nikhat Zareen outclassed Vietnam's Thi Tam Nguyen 5-0 to move to the women's 50kg pre-quarterfinals while Preeti Pawar (54kg) sealed a place in the quarterfinals of the Asian Games here on Sunday.

Two-time world champion Zareen defeated the two-time Asian Champion Nguyen by unanimous

decision.

One of only four boxers to not get a first round bye in the 50kg event despite being the reigning world champion, Zareen controlled the proceedings from the word go.

"I had not expected it (to be a one-sided bout) but my plan was to make it one because it's happening in another country and I didn't want to give any chance to her. My plan was to win the first two rounds unanimously and then relax in the third,"



Zareen said after the win.

In the opening two rounds Zareen landed accurate punches, rattling her opponent.

Such was her power that the referee was forced to give Nguyen the eight count twice in 30 seconds in the opening round.

Nguyen tried to attack in the second round but Zareen retaliated with strong combination punches, forcing a third eight count upon the Vietnamese boxer.

After rejections, Arvind sings redemption song

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian rower Arvind Singh was a worried man after four failed attempts at cracking the army entrance exam. The son of a farmer didn't wish to follow in his father's footsteps.

But then, having taken in his strides the rejections, he cleared the test in his fifth attempt and joined the Indian Army. Then rowing happened, and things changed for the better.

On Sunday, Singh opened the country's account at the Asian Games with a silver medal in men's lightweight doubles sculls event along with Arjun Lal Jat.

"For a farmer's son, joining Army was the only option I had... Otherwise I would have been forced

to do farming to make ends meet," Singh remembered his days of struggle while talking to PTI from the Hangzhou Games Village.

With a sturdy six-foot, one-inch frame, the young athlete also tried his hands in his 'favourite' sports, cricket and athletics, but couldn't make much progress there.

"So, this medal is dedicated to my father, (Vijay Singh) who faced so many hardships but ensured that I keep on trying to get into Indian Army. Despite our financial constraints, there was little pressure on me, and I didn't give up.

"Whatever I'm today is because of my dad, he has made so many sacrifices. I'm sure they would be so happy today."

Singh managed to get into the Indian Army in his fifth attempt,



in 2013, and was picked for the rowing team because of his "tall" 184-centimetre frame, in 2016.

"Forget about knowing the sport, till then, I didn't even hear the word rowing but I learnt the sport and made rapid progress," he said giving credit to his Indian coach Ismail Bag.

The best thing that happened to him was in 2018 when he got his partner Arjun Jat, also a son of a farmer and the duo showed a fine chemistry to make a formidable lightweight Indian double sculls pair.

In the next year, the duo won a silver at the Asian Rowing Championship in South Korea, and they also competed together in the Tokyo Olympics where they finished 11th.

Last year, the duo won the National Games gold in Gujarat and also the Asian Championship.

"But this medal is on top of everything. When I go back home I will get a new cabinet just for this," he said.

At the Fuyang Water Sports Centre on Sunday, the duo had a timing of 6:28.18s to finish behind China's Junjie Fan and Man Sun, who won gold with 6:23.16s.

The Uzbekistan pair of Shakhzod Nurmatov and Sobirjon Safaraliyev bagged the bronze clocking 6:33.42s.

"It was a tough race and we could have won a gold, but missed it. But we are not disappointed, it's a learning curve and we hope to turn this into a gold in the next edition in 2026," he said.

