







# Modi to set direction of TS politics: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP President Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on October 1 and 3 to TS is going to set the direction of state politics.

Modi's visit will be followed by visits by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president JP Nadda, Kishan said revealing that the party will launch its election campaign from October 1.

Kishan inspected arrangements for Prime Minister Modi's visit at the city's Giriraj College grounds on Tuesday. Speaking to the media later,



Kishan said, "Prime Minister Modi is visiting TS on October 3. The 800 MW power project will be started virtually.

We are holding a meeting with one lakh people. The party is now stronger in Khammam.

Modi's visit is going to set the direction of state politics.

Modi's visit will be followed by the visits of Amit Shah and Nadda.

We will launch our campaign from October 1. We do not need to answer KTR on assurances. KTR is the shadow CM.

Is Telangana KTR's jagir? Is it not a shame to issue a job notification 17 times and finally not give jobs? We will not fall into the agenda of BRS leaders.

The Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan's decision on MLCs is correct. It is a shame to give posts to unfit people."

He said that the BJP will discuss the issue of setting up the turmeric board and arrive at a decision.

# HC imposes Rs 10k fine on BRS MLA Sunitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court gave a shock to Alair BRS MLA Gongidi Sunitha on Tuesday. The court imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on Gongidi Sunitha for not filing counters in the High Court in a case of submission of false documents to the Election Commission during the 2018 elections by her.

TPCC official spokesperson Boreddy Ayodya Reddy had pleaded himself in the case.

The court posted the case to October 3 and directed Sunitha to submit her counters before that date.

One Saini Sathish Kumar had filed a petition in the High Court alleging that Gongidi Sunitha had submitted false



information in her election affidavit during the 2018 elections. The petitioner appealed to the court to disqualify Gongidi Sunitha for submitting false information regarding her assets.

Dealing with the case, the High Court directed Sunitha to submit a counter affidavit. However, Sunitha did not submit her counter affidavit.

# KCR down with viral fever, cough

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao is down with viral fever.

His son KT Rama Rao posted on Twitter, "CM KCR Garu has been suffering from viral fever and cough since last week.

He is being treated at home by his medical team and is being monitored closely. Doctors said he should be able to get back to normal life within a few days."

However, the CMO issued press releases in which the CM recalled Chakali Ailamma on her birth anniversary on Tuesday and Konda Lakshman Babuji's Jayanthi on Wednesday.

# BRS Govt busy collecting commissions: NVSS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Generally, a state government will work hard to fulfil its promises made to the people before elections, but the KCR government and its ministers are in a hurry to collect commissions with Assembly elections approaching, the Telangana state BJP Vice President, NVSS Prabhakar, said.

Speaking to the media at the state party office here on Tuesday, he said the KCR government is known for deceiving people with hollow promises and now the government is busy looting the treasury by launching unproductive programmes.

Municipal Administration Minister KTR laid the foundation for bridges on the Musi

River costing Rs 540 crore and invited tenders for it.

This programme cannot be considered a development project as it is meant to collect commissions, the BJP leader said. The BRS government is unable to pay salaries to government employees and contractors in the GHMC area and in rural areas are protesting demanding payments for completed works.

Free medicines are not being given in wellness centres as the KCR government has failed to sanction funds, NVSS said. Referring to the renewal of liquor shop licenses, the BJP leader said that there will be a time period for every tender.

However, this government has invited tenders even before the expiry of earlier tenders for additional revenue.

# Lokesh meets Prez, says arrest of TDP chief illegal

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh, along with TDP MPs Ram Mohan Naidu, Kanakamedala Raveendra Kumar, Galla Jayadev, and Kesineni Srinivas, on Tuesday met President of India Droupadi Murmu, to take the situation in Andhra Pradesh to her notice.

After the meeting with the President, Lokesh spoke to the media and said the President responded positively to their appeal. He informed the President about the illegal arrest of Chandrababu Naidu and explained that Naidu had been unjustly detained despite not making any mistakes in the skill development project.

Nara Lokesh said that in his representation to the President, he wrote that Chandrababu is a globally recognised, honest, and visionary leader who has dedicated 45 years of his life to the tireless development of Andhra Pradesh and the nation. Naidu's transformation of former Andhra Pradesh into an IT hub, particularly the establishment of Cyberabad, represents a pivotal moment in our country's IT revolution history. Lokesh stated that Naidu's illegal arrest is the culmination of vindictive politics and the misuse of power observed right from the time YSRCP came to power.

Lokesh revealed that the government added his name as Accused 14 in the Inner Ring Road case as soon as he



## Lokesh criticises KTR's reaction to protests

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Responding to Industries Minister KTR's comments on protests in Hyderabad, Nara Lokesh said that Telugus all over India and abroad are coming on to the roads expressing solidarity with Chandrababu Naidu.

"Why are they getting anxious when people are protesting peacefully? People are protesting in Europe, Australia and the US. We haven't created a law and order situation anywhere but we protested peacefully. Even when he went to jail, Chandrababu told us not to destroy public property," he said.

announced the resumption of his padayatra. The TDP leader stated that he will give a return gift to Jagan and his party leaders after the elections scheduled to be held in 6 months.

# Why can't we conduct peaceful rallies in TS: TDP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Taking serious exception to Telangana IT Minister KT Rama Rao's statement not to organise rallies in Telangana expressing solidarity with TDP Chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, senior Telangana TDP leader and the TDP's official spokesperson Jyotsna asked KTR to explain why can't someone organise peaceful rallies? "Chandrababu is a visionary who developed Hyderabad. Why can't we organise rallies for a leader like Chandrababu? You (BRS leaders) can stage dharnas in New Delhi and Maharashtra. Is Telangana not in India? Are we not Indians? Don't we have the right to conduct peaceful rallies in Telangana?" Jyotsna said.

# It's time for BJP to launch 'Operation Suraksha' in TS

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

It is time for the BJP to launch 'Operation Suraksha' in Telangana to prevent its leaders from quitting the party after keeping 'Operation Akash' aside for the time being.

One Telangana BJP leader made the above statement while speaking to 'The Pioneer' as leaders who joined from other political parties are waiting to quit the BJP and join the Congress. It is learnt that they are waiting for an appropriate time and an appropriate reason to quit the BJP.

It is learnt that the leaders

who have decided to quit the BJP are leaving as they have concluded that their objective of defeating the BRS may not be possible if they continue in the BJP. They are now waiting for the right time to quit and join the Congress.

It is learnt that the Congress too is waiting for those leaders to finalise its candidates. The Congress high command, which is in touch with the BJP leaders is also pressuring these leaders to join the Congress if they want Assembly tickets.

However, the BJP leaders, who want Assembly tickets are doing a serious exercise to quit the party within a week or two. It is learnt that the Congress

high command may put the constituencies wanted by those BJP leaders aside and may announce candidates for those constituencies in the second list.

Many leaders had decided to quit the BJP immediately after the Karnataka results but at that time they could not cite a strong reason to quit. However, they gave hints to their followers and the Congress.

TPCC president Revanth Reddy issued a statement after the Karnataka elections saying that Congress leaders who joined the BJP must come back to defeat the BRS. He also said that it is not possible for the BJP to defeat the BRS.

# 'Protest in AP for Naidu not in...

Continued from page 1

"If any individual of our party has taken a stand it is theirs and not our party. As the BRS working president I am saying it is a political battle between two parties," KTR clarified.

"Everyone is united in Hyderabad and the people of Andhra Pradesh are happy here. Why instigate them," KTR said.

Meanwhile, he avoided questions on Group-1 prelims.

When asked about Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan rejecting the government's proposal to nominate BRS leaders Dasoju Sravan Kumar and K. Satyanarayana to the Legislative Council in the Governor's Quota, KTR said that the Government has the right to nominate people of its choice as MLCs and the Governor has to approve it.

"Modi is undemocratic and so are his agents," said KTR. He also said that the Governor was the Tamil Nadu BJP President

when she was nominated as the Governor of Telangana.

He said that Prof. Sravan Dasoju had taken part in various movements and was an intellectual and K. Satyanarayana was a national trade union leader. We did not expect her to reject their nominations, he added.

"She used the word unfit. But who is unfit? You or your Modi?" asked KTR. He condemned the Governor's attitude and said she was more a BJP leader than a Governor.

KTR also mentioned the names of BJP and Congress leaders who were nominated as MLCs in the Governor's Quota in various states. He also said that both national parties work in coordination when it comes to nominating their leaders but they have a problem with the nomination of leaders who fought for Telangana's statehood.

When asked to respond to Union Minister Kishan Reddy's statements on the same issue, KTR said that Kishan is the

most unfit Union Minister as he could not complete the construction of a flyover in his own constituency.

"He is someone who ran away without resigning during the Telangana movement. It is a waste of time to talk about him," he added.

When asked about the Congress hoping to win Telangana elections, KTR said that Rahul Gandhi himself said that the Congress will 'probably' win Telangana as he himself is not sure.

Ahead of Modi's visit, KTR asked him to declare the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation project as a national project.

He said Modi is coming to hunt for votes in Telangana. "Clean your sins and at least now after 9.5 years give the national project tag to the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation project," he said.

He said the BJP won't get its deposit in 110 seats and that the BJP will lose in 2023 just like it did in 2014 and 2018.

He said that Modi had made similar statements inside Parliament and on various other occasions unnecessarily which has hurt the sentiments of Telangana. He said that the Prime Minister and the BJP have only hatred towards Telangana.

He also said that Modi should apologise to the people of Telangana for continuously insulting them.

KTR said that the Modi government did not honour the promises made in the AP Reorganisation Act 2014. "Whenever they come to Telangana, they come with empty hands and they should be prepared to go back with no votes," he said.

The Prime Minister has no right to step into Palamuru considering the injustices he did to the people of that region, KTR said.

He recalled how KCR, within a month of forming the government in 2014 reached out to the Prime Minister requesting the national project tag for

either the Kaleshwaram Project or the Palamuru Lift Irrigation Scheme (PLIS).

"They gave the national project tag to Upper Bhadra in Karnataka and Polavaram in Andhra Pradesh but ignored the Palamuru Project," said KTR.

He said that the discussion on 'One Nation-One Election' was a poll gimmick by the Prime Minister to divert public attention from core issues.

The PM promised a 5 trillion economy, a house for everyone with clean drinking water, bullet trains and whatnot. But none was fulfilled, said KTR. "He is the most incompetent PM independent India has seen," KTR said.

KTR also responded on the delimitation of Lok Sabha seats and the distribution of Central funds to states based on population and said it was a matter of concern for south Indian states. "If you think you can suppress our voice in Parliament you will see an uproar in the south," said KTR.

# HC Bench to...

Continued from page 1

Responding to these arguments, the High Court asked the government to submit details of the biometric parameters used in other exams.

Earlier in the morning, the High Court expressed anger at the TSPSC saying that the unemployed were committing suicide as they were not getting jobs. The court commented that the TSPSC is a constitutional body, however, it has been failing in its duty to conduct examinations in a fair manner. The court posted the next hearing to post-lunch asking the TSPSC to give reasons for not using biometric parameters in its examination. It may be recalled that the TSPSC appealed to the Division Bench as the High Court Single Bench had abolished the Group-1 prelims examination saying that the TSPSC failed to conduct the examination as per guidelines mentioned in the TSPSC notification.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Trayodashi: Sep 27 01:45 AM to Sep 27 10:19 PM

Chaturdashi: Sep 27 10:19 PM to Sep 28 06:49 PM

Nakshatram: Shatabhisha: Sep 27 07:10 AM to Sep 28 04:29 AM

Purva Bhadrapada: Sep 28 04:29 AM to Sep 29 01:48 AM

Rahukalam: 12:07 PM to 1:36 PM

Yamagandam: 7:38 AM to 9:08 AM

Varjyam: 10:10 AM to 11:35 AM

Gulika: 10:37 AM to 12:07 PM

Amritakalam: 10:05 PM to 11:30 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: NIL

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms

Temp: 31°

Humidity: 76%

Sunrise: 6:09 AM

Sunset: 6:05 PM

Updated: September 26, 2023 5:00 PM

## Next...

Continued from page 1

As per the Reorganisation Act, in Telangana, the number of Assembly seats will be increased to 153 from the current 119 seats. At the same time in Andhra Pradesh, the number of Assembly seats will be increased to 225 from the current 175 seats.

After increasing the number of Assembly seats in Telangana the number of seats reserved for women will increase to around 50 seats.

The reserved seats for women will be identified based on the population of women in Assembly constituencies.

# Cyber Towers...

Continued from page 1

A top official in the Industries Department said, "Cybertowers won't be demolished and there is no such proposal. The TSIC has a share in it even though the majority stake is with Ace Infocity. The incubator is operating at full capacity and in a prime location."

When asked about the ageing of the building, the official said, "It is just 24 years old and some buildings stay for 130 years." The icon of new Hyderabad, Cyber Towers, which is synonymous with Hitec city, has fragments of its orange tiles removed. Just

around two decades after construction, grey patches are now visible to those who go to Hitec City.

Cyber Towers had emerged as the icon of Hyderabad and has found a place next to historical sites like Charminar. The tower was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998. However, now it is apparently being seen as a symbol of Chandrababu Naidu by Telangana folks.

The cylindrical 10-floor structure is one of the first fully enabled IT facilities in Hyderabad with 0.6 million square feet.

# SC asks ED not to summon...

Continued from page 1

Justice Kaul informed the lawyers that Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud has constituted a special bench comprising him and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Bela M Trivedi to hear review petitions challenging a July 27, 2022 verdict that had upheld the constitutional validity of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the ED's power of arrest under the anti-money laundering law.

He said the special bench will sit on October 18 and issue procedural directions with regard to the pleading.

"The only question which needs to be adjudicated is whether the grounds raised in the review petitions are covered by the 2022 verdict or not and if they are not covered, then the matter will be referred to a larger bench," Justice Kaul said. On September 15, the ED had told the apex court that the summons issued to Kavitha for her appearance before the agency will be extended by 10 days.

The ED had issued the summons dated September 4 to Kavitha, the daughter of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, seeking her appearance at the agency's

Delhi office on September 15.

She has approached the apex court with an application seeking directions to restrain the ED from calling her by way of a notice or summons under section 50 of the PMLA during the pendency of her petition. In her plea, the Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) leader has sought protection from coercive action by the anti-money laundering agency on the ground that there are relaxations for women in various criminal laws, including the PMLA.

Section 50 of the PMLA deals with the powers of

authorities regarding summons, production of documents, to give evidence etc.

The application has also sought a stay on the operation of the September 4 summons or any other summons and "all coercive measures relating thereto".

In a significant verdict on July 27, 2022, the top court upheld the ED's powers relating to arrest, attachment of property involved in money laundering, search and seizure under the PMLA that were challenged by multiple petitioners, including Congress leader Karti Chidambaram.



# TSRTC to operate 535 buses during Ganesh nimajjanam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) on Tuesday announced that 535 buses will be operated during Ganesh immersion on September 28.

TSRTC Managing Director VC Sajjanar took to Twitter and said, “#TSRTC will run 535 special buses for the convenience of devotees on the occasion of Ganesh immersion and Shobhayatra on September 28 in Hyderabad. The TSRTC has arranged 15 to 20 buses from each depot. The organisation is taking all measures to ensure that there is no difficulty in the movement of devotees participating in Lord Ganesha’s immersion. For information about special buses contact 9959226154 at Retifile Bus Station and 9959226160 at Kothi Bus Station.”

Among major areas, 20 buses are scheduled to move from Basheerbagh to Kacheguda and Ramnagar;



while 15 buses will move from Old MLA Quarters to Dilsukhnagar (Kothapet) and 20 buses will operate between Old MLA Quarters and LB Nagar.

Similarly, 20 buses will move from Lakdikapul to BHEL via Mehdiptnam and as many buses will move from Khairatabad to Manikonda and Rajendranagar. In all, 20 buses each will move from Indira Park towards Secunderabd station and Uppal.

## CP inspects routes for procession

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police CV Anand on Tuesday announced traffic restrictions ahead of Ganesh immersion and inspected the areas to be covered during the procession. The inspection was carried out on the 19 kilometer route from Balapur to Hussain Sagar and the key locations covered are Chandrayanagutta, Charminar, Nayapool, MJ Market, Telugu Talli Flyover, Secretariat and People’s Plaza. All Zonal Deputy Commissioners were asked to be vigilant in areas such as the Moazzam Jahi Market where the processions converge. The responsibility of overseeing the movement of the procession at critical junctions and providing essential guidance to subordinates was entrusted to senior officers. While inspecting the primary procession lanes near Charminar and Telugu Talli

Flyover, he stressed on the importance of clear signage to direct the vehicles carrying the idols according to their height specifications. Anand stressed the significance of a scientific evaluation of the route, including verifying height restrictions, identifying and addressing low-lying wires and pinpointing potential obstacles that could impede the procession. The comprehensive inspection concluded at People’s Plaza, where senior echelons meticulously reviewed logistics and deployment plans for managing heavy crowds around Hussain Sagar. The city police staff will be assisted by additional staff from other districts and allied branches will also be deployed bringing the deployment of the force to that of around 25,694 personnel and 125 platoons. Shift system of duties for even officers has

been newly planned at 18 important junctions like MJ market, Afzalgunj, Ambedkar statue and NTR Marg. Three RAF Coys and other paramilitary forces have reported. Five drone teams are being deployed. The main routes and tributary areas are fully covered by CCTVs and the repairs have been carried out. Various roads in the city which are covered by the procession will either remain closed for regular traffic or will see traffic diversions. Multiple Quick Response Teams, dog squads, anti-chain snatching teams and SHE teams will also be deployed. The joint command control centre having senior officers from all departments like GHMC, HMDA, Transco, water works, RTA, Medical and Health will be fully operational from early hours of September 28.

# TS a model for story writing by children: Minister Sabitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Five lakh students belonging to 33 districts took part in the Mana Uru Mana Chettu initiative on the same day it was launched. At the Telangana Ambedkar Secretariat, Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy unveiled 33 books published by the Telangana Sahitya Akademi on the topic ‘Mana Ooru Mana Chettu’ in her office on Tuesday. Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy said that the stories written by children’s hands have started a new history. It is a matter of pride for Telangana that it is the first time in the history of the country that five lakh students wrote stories on the topic ‘Mana Ooru

’ Mana Chettu” on the same day and at the same time.

She said that Telangana Sahitya Akademi published the stories written by students in thirty-three books and presented them to the student world and appreciated the work of Telangana Sahitya Akademi, which brought a new trend in children’s literature by helping lakhs of children to write stories.

She appreciated the efforts made by Telangana Sahitya Akademi to ignite new creativity among the students. Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy pointed out that this story writing experiment will help a lot to show as the children’s literature is flowing through different platforms

and organisations in Telangana. She congratulated Upadhyaya Lokan and all the students who participated in promoting such a big Sahitya Maha Yajna.

The Minister said that greenness has been turned into stories. This story-writing experiment will help the students become great poets, writers, socially conscious warriors and environmental activists who will promote greenery in their villages in the future. Chairman of Telangana Sahitya Akademi Juluru Gauri Shankar expressed gratitude to the Minister for making the idea of Sahitya Akademi a reality so that all the schools in the State could participate in Bala Sahitya Katha Yajna.



Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy, along with Telangana Sahitya Akademi Chairman Juluru Gauri Shankar, launched the story books written by students

## GHMC Commissioner inspects Attapur lakes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Ronald Rose inspected five lakes and sanitation works in Attapur, Rajendra Nagar (South Zone) here on Tuesday.

The Commissioner visited the Pedda Thalla Kunta near the regional training institute of the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), where the officials of the institute informed him that under Swachh Bharath, they want to adopt the Pedda Thalla Kunta and take up beautification and maintenance of the lake. They requested the Commissioner to give permission. Ronald Rose asked the customs officials to give a letter in this regard and GHMC will take action accordingly.

Further, the Customs officials also want to take up other developmental activities like, water aeration, silt cleaning and developing greenery. At the request of the local residents, the Commissioner instructed the GHMC officials to provide



lighting, fencing, CC cameras and open gym material. He interacted with the local residents about door-to-door garbage collection from their houses. Later, he visited the area near the laboratory and inspected the garbage-vulnerable points.

He also inspected Chintha Kunta Park and the morning walkers in the park complained about the foul smell caused due to sewerage water flowing inside the park. The Commissioner instructed the EE concerned to look into the matter, rectify the defect, and provide other required facilities.

Later, he visited the Janapriya Apartments in Hyderguda area and instructed the engineering officials to lay footpaths to avoid encroachments on both sides of the road.

## Prisons dept plants 5,000 saplings in Vikarabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Prisons Department has planted 5,000 saplings in Vikarabad prisoners’ farm as part of the Telangana Haritha Haram on Tuesday.

Principal Secretary for Home and DG Prisons Jitender has initiated the programme in the jail. He said that one should protect nature and give it to the future generations. The prisoners department would continue this programme, he added. Jitender appreciated DIG Srinivas and Parigi jail Superintendent Raj Kumar for conducting the event successfully.

Inspector Generals Rajesh and Murali babu, DIGs Srinivas and Sampath, District SP Koti Reddy and other Hyderabad range prisoners department officials attended the event.

## Heartfulness Institute signs MoU with Biodiversity on soil health

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Heartfulness Institute signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bioversity, (which is a part of the Alliance of Bioversity International and International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT)) on behalf of the Executive Secretariat of the ‘4 Per 1000’ initiative on Tuesday.

The objective of the MoU is to identify areas of mutual interest with a view to promote healthy soils as a solution for climate and food security, knowing they are key to meet the attainment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), convince three Rio Conventions of the need to work on that important topic and work together to raise the awareness of the public about healthy soils. It also demonstrates that soils are the basis of life and work together to inform and sensitise policymakers about the necessity to protect soils.



Rev. Daaji, founder of Heartfulness Institute, Dr Paul Luu – Executive Secretary of the ‘4 per 1000’ initiative, and other officials showing their MoU on soil health

Rev. Daaji, Guide of Heartfulness, President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission and Padma Bhushan awardee, said, “The world has come to understand the relevance of soil health if our future generations must be secure.

The recent ‘4 per 1000’ Asia-Pacific Regional Conference that was held at Kanha had some important deliberations and I was very happy to see that 18 countries came together for one common goal. The responsibility must begin right from every home if the cause has to be furthered as it is a

matter of urgency.”

Dr Paul Luu, Executive Secretary of the ‘4 per 1000’ initiative said, “The ‘4 per 1000’ Initiative is providing a robust ground for policy-making and the framework for soil health with 741 current partners and 41 signatory countries.

We adopted its 2020-2050 strategic plan in June 2020, which consists of 24 objectives and are aiming to implement these objectives. Together we hope to raise public awareness and sensitise policymakers about healthy soils.”

## Hyd’s largest mall to open today in Kukatpally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

LuLu Group, a renowned Indian-UAE conglomerate is all set to open its mall in Hyderabad on Wednesday. Minister for Industries KT Rama Rao will inaugurate it. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed when the Minister went to the World Economic Forum, Davos.

Shibu Philips, Director of Shopping Malls, LuLu Group India, on Tuesday said that Hyderabad’s LuLu mall is the largest one in the city. “We are anticipating that daily 25,000 footfalls will be seen here,” he added.

With an investment of Rs 300 crore, LuLu mall is spread across five lakh square feet, with two lakh square feet of Hypermarket, which gives infinite choices of retail, food and entertainment. It includes multiplex theatre, food court, fun games and latest fashion and lifestyles. Hypermarket is the highlight in the mall which will offer an extensive range of fresh groceries and



separate sections for fashion, home appliances, electronics, mobiles and lifestyle products.

Funtura, the entertainment zone of 20,000 square feet, will have 75 unique rides that will cater to adults and children. The mall has five screens with a 1400-seater theatre.

The food court will host 15 multi-cuisine outlets in addition to six restaurants. More than 1,000 national and international brands will be available here. The mall will generate more than 2,000 personnel. Hyderabad is the sixth city after Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Bengaluru, Lucknow and Coimbatore to have the mall. The mall is near to JNTU campus, Kukatpally.

## Hyd airport wins National Energy Leader award again

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) has got National Energy Leader and Excellent Energy Efficiency Unit awards at the 24th National Award Ceremony for Excellence in Energy Management organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The airport has been recognised with the laurels for 5th and 7th year in a row, respectively. On the occasion of this achievement, Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GMRIAL, said, “Hyderabad airport has been at the forefront in adopting energy-efficient and sustainable initiatives.

As an organisation, we are very conscious about the need to protect our ecosystem and constantly work towards optimising operational efficiencies to curtail carbon emissions.

## Lake Front Park opened on PV Marg

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Another fun tourist centre has been opened opposite Tank Bund. Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav inaugurated the magnificently designed Lake Front Park under the auspices of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) at a cost of Rs 26.65 crore on Tuesday night.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav said that with the efficiency of the Chief Minister and, Municipal Affairs Minister KT Rama Rao, the city of Hyderabad will develop wonderfully along with the state.

MAUD Special Chief Secretary and HMDA Metropolitan Commissioner Arvind Kumar said that Mumbai architect Kishore Pradhan has designed the lake front park.

The major components includes four elevated walkways, each 110m length with Cantilever jetty (15m) for



viewpoint into the lake, 2m wide Curvilinear (wave) walkway of 240 m length, and 2mtr wide walkway of 690 m length connecting all components in the park.

The architectural elements include pavilions, promenade area abutting the shore area of Hussain Sagar Lake), Panchatatra walkway, Central pathway and under passes.

The park is developed with deck over the water body upto 15m length as cantilever, pergolas with seating illuminated light sculptures at focal point which adds aesthetic view and grabs public attraction.

The electrical components include illumination with bollards, decorative LED lighting, high mast lighting, navi column lighting, neo flex lighting all along the boardwalk and theme post tops are erected.

## Nizampet civic officials careless in tackling bad roads: Activist

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Despite filing a complaint on bad road conditions to the Nizampet Municipal Corporation, the officials are inert in tackling them, says Sai Teja, a Hyderabad activist.

For two months, the residents of Pragathi Nagar have been facing numerous problems due to bad condition of roads, such as potholes, bumpy roads, pebbles and faulty streetlights. These conditions cause great inconvenience to commuters, especially bike riders and sometimes turn accident prone due to bad weather, such as heavy rainfall.

Additionally, one can find loads of construction and demolition waste and garbage piled up on the sides of roads making it hazardous to the residents.

Not only the road conditions but also the public parks



at Nizampet are in the worst condition due to lack of maintenance, he added. The activist stated that the trees in the park have grown and became like a forest due to lack of maintenance, especially pruning of tree branches. The park has become a habitat for snakes, which is another major convenience for people.

Teja said, “Since March 2023, I have been complaining about these conditions multiple times to the officials, but they are not taking it seriously and are not giving any response.”

## Wine shops to remain closed tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Police Commissioner DS Chauhan on Tuesday announced that wine shops under the commissionerate will remain closed on September 28 in view of Ganesh immersion.

The restrictions will remain in place from 6 am on September 28 to 6 pm on September 29. Releasing an official order, Chauhan said, “I am enclosing herewith a Notification dated September 25 issued by me under Section 20 of the Telangana State Excise Act 1968, regarding closure of wine shops and bars, including the bars attached to restaurants (excluding bars in Star hotels and registered clubs) in the limits of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate.”

Chauhan said, “All the SHOS are hereby authorised to take appropriate legal action against those who violate this notification.”

## Madhapur drug case accused surrender after HC orders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three prime accused in the Madhapur drugs case on Tuesday surrendered following the order of the Telangana High Court. The order came after the accused had filed for an anticipatory bail.

The accused were identified as Kalahar Reddy, Hitachi Sai and C Suryanath, the owner of Snort Pub. Eight persons involved in the case have been arrested so far. The Telangana Anti Narcotics Bureau has also served notices to a few

customers.

The investigation so far has revealed that the film industry is involved in the supply of drugs; code words such as “script”, “writer” and “shall v meet” were used in order to pass on the drugs. It is to be noted that on September 23, Tollywood actor Navdeep appeared before the TSNAB.

Navdeep, known for his roles in Telugu cinema received a 41A notice from TSNAB officers on September 21, instructing him to appear for an investigation.

## New module to cover AI in tribal schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, has collaborated with Amazon to launch the Amazon Future Engineer programme in 54 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) across the states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana on Tuesday.

The partnership is being expanded from the computer science fundamentals module to include Advanced Block Programming and Artificial Intelligence. The module will now be taught to students of Classes VI to IX across the schools.

The revised module will introduce a customised coding and artificial intelligence (AI) curriculum that is aligned with CBSE skill education. This will be in addition to the current courses in coding, logical sequencing, learning loops and block programming.

The 20-hour module is constructed taking into account the current exposure of tribal



students to computer science and coding. Class IV students will be taught the fundamentals of computer science while Class VII will be introduced to the advanced concepts of visual programming. Grade VIII will get introductory exposure sessions to AI, Grade IX will learn the fundamentals of AI and for Grade X, the AI

module aligned with the CBSE skills curriculum will be introduced in the academic year 2024-25.

The programme has been designed in collaboration with the Learning Links Foundation (LLF) and focuses on enhancing access for underprivileged students to explore computer science education and careers. Under this programme, coding courses, scholarships and internships are offered while collaborating with several organisations and ministries, including the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

## Telangana property show to be held from October 6 to 8

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Naredco announced that “13 NAREDCO Telangana Property Show” will be held between October 6 and 8 at HITEX Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad. It will showcase properties including residential, commercial and retail commercial to meet the requirements of varied customers.

The property show organised by NAREDCO consists of builders, developers and promoters. It is a one-step destination for buyers and sellers to interact and explore options of a wide

range of properties.

NAREDCO Telangana is a 27-year-old association formed to represent and coordinate the efforts of real estate developers. It interacts with the government on behalf of the industry to coordinate with the policy-making authorities to evolve real estate-friendly policies to stimulate development.

NAREDCO Telangana president B Sunil Chandra Reddy said that unlike some other major cities that saw single digit growth, Hyderabad has often achieved double digit growth.



# KCR needs support from TDP, YSRCP for settlers' votes

**B**harat Rashtra Samiti Chief and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, a staunch critic of his political guru and former chief minister of combined Andhra Pradesh N. Chandrababu Naidu, has been intriguingly silent over the arrest of the latter in connection with the Rs. 371 crore skill development scheme scam that allegedly took place during the Telugu Desam Party regime. KCR's stoic silence for three weeks, with Naidu's judicial remand entering the third week, has raised eyebrows. For, KCR has criticised Naidu on several contentious issues, including the moving spirit behind the development of Hyderabad city and specifically the setting up of Cyberabad as the hub of IT industries in the capital city. KCR has disdainfully brushed aside the view in many quarters that Naidu was instrumen-



tal in initially bringing several IT behemoths to Hyderabad. KCR has gone to the extent of describing Naidu as an 'outsider' in Telangana. KCR's cryptic silence now is attributed to the BRS' eyes on the sizeable vote bank of TDP, including those of settlers across TS. Besides, the arrest of Naidu has drawn widespread condemnation from people across the globe with protests being reported from at least two dozen countries. Considering Naidu's arrest, apparently at the behest of AP Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the TS Chief Minister was expected to extend at least moral support to Naidu. But KCR played it cool. He did not want the fallout of Naidu's arrest in Telangana, considering the upcoming Assembly elections in the state. Since the political equation has changed

**As for settlers spread across Telangana State, they are going to play a crucial role in the forthcoming T-elections. Given the sympathy factor expected to work in favour of Naidu over the manner of his arrest, it is now believed the Andhra people are one in TS, particularly in the case of the politically influential Kamma community.**

in the wake of Naidu's arrest, KCR is watching the situation closely without making derogatory remarks against Naidu or condemning his incarceration. It was during the Congress regime in the combined Andhra Pradesh that then president of YSR Congress Party YS Jaganmohan Reddy was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation in connection with the disproportionate assets (DA) cases and he was in jail for 16 months before getting bail a decade back. Jagan surprising-

ly will be completing his full term of five years as Chief Minister while being out on bail. The irony is that the person in the hot seat of administration is out on bail, while another person striving to return to the same seat is exploring options to obtain bail. As for settlers spread across Telangana State, they are going to play a crucial role in the forthcoming T-elections. Given the sympathy factor expected to work in favour of Naidu over the manner of his arrest, it is now believed the Andhra peo-



ple are one in TS, particularly in the case of the politically influential Kamma community. There are no stakes for TDP in TS; so, the BRS leadership is believed to have come to an understanding with the TDP leadership for shifting the vote bank to the ruling party. During the 2018 elections, the settlers chose to back BRS (then TRS) in their own inter-

ests. That trend continued in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation polls - the biggest local body in the two Telugu states -- captured by TRS. BRS emerged victorious in the GHMC polls because of the support extended by non-local people living in Hyderabad. The TDP got good results in the 2014 general election via seat sharing with the Bharatiya Janata Party, which got a lion's share of the seats. With his strategic silence, KCR is now trying to impress TDP cadre for his possible hat-trick win in TS. No wonder, TS Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivasa Reddy has condemned the arrest of Naidu as an undemocratic act on the part of the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government. BRS leader and five-time MLA Motkupalli Narasimulu also condemned the arrest of Naidu. He questioned whether Naidu, who had spent Rs. 8

lakh crore for the people during his 14-year-old regime, would have indulged in the scam. These leaders of BRS would not have spoken positively about Naidu without reading the mind of KCR. It is a different matter that Narasimulu is unhappy with the attitude of KCR towards him. The TS Speaker's home turf i.e. the combined district of Nizamabad is crucial when it comes to settlers' vote bank. That is why the ball rolled from there. The powerful Reddy community in TS is influenced by settlers from the Rayalaseema region of present Andhra state. They comprised a solid vote bank for the Congress in the erstwhile undivided AP. During the 1999 elections, voters from the Rayalaseema settled in Hyderabad had rallied behind Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, then APCC president. So, they voted against even then Congress Legislature

Party (CLP) leader P. Janardhan Reddy in the Khairatabad constituency. If the community shows such unity again, both Congress and BRS might vie for their support. In such eventuality, Jaganmohan Reddy might extend support to KCR by influencing the Reddy community of Rayalaseema origin settled in TS. If his sister and YSRTP president YS Sharmila merges her party with the Congress in time, she will have to garner support from the same group for the Congress! That is a different story. If KCR manages to achieve a hat-trick, it would clearly only with the support of settlers' vote bank. Voters in Telangana State may respond to political parties in a mixed way because of their perception about the BRS' rule. But the settlers' response is predictable. That is why KCR badly needs the support of settlers.

## 'Do not fall prey to attractive promises by Cong, BJP'

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Minister for Finance T Harish Rao on Tuesday cautioned the people against falling prey to 'attractive promises' being made by the Congress and BJP as the elections are approaching. He appealed to people to bless the Bharat Rashtra Samithi which has been working to benefit all sections of society. Speaking at a meeting, shortly after distributing Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF), Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques, the Minister told the gathering that the Congress and BJP leaders would approach the people and make attractive promises. He asked whether the successive Congress government in the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh offered Rs 10,000 to a newly-married couple.



Minister for Finance T Harish Rao distributing CMRF and Kalyana Lakshmi cheques to beneficiaries in Siddipet on Tuesday

The Minister distributed CMRF cheques to 153 beneficiaries, and Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques to 49 persons. He also laid the foundation stone for development works. Speaking on the occasion,

Harish Rao said that the government had so far extended financial assistance to 12 lakh beneficiaries under Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes. The government has also been extending financial assistance to people liberally

under CMRF. The schemes like Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak are implemented only in Telangana State. The credit for introducing Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak went to Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, he pointed out. The Minister said the poor families used to borrow money at very high-interest rates for their daughters' marriages before the formation of Telangana State. Now in the State government of Telangana, the KCR government introduced schemes like Kalyanalakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak which are aimed at mitigating the difficulties that poor families face in bearing the expenditure of their daughters' marriages. People's representatives and officials were present.

## SP pays tributes to Chakali Ailamma

PNS ■ BHADRADRI KOTHAGUDEM

District Superintendent of Police G Vineeth said that Chakali Ailamma's struggle is a symbol of courage. On the occasion of the 128th birth anniversary of Chakali Ailamma, the SP offered floral tributes to Ailamma's portrait. Speaking on the occasion, Vineeth said that Chakali Ailamma stood as a symbol of women's consciousness. Ailamma fought on behalf of the poor. District Additional Superintendent of Police AR Vijayababu, DCRB DSP Malliah Swamy, Cybercrime DSP Krishnaiah, AO Jayaraju, SB Inspector Nagaraju RajuVarma and others were present.



## Officials told to decide the menu for CM Breakfast Scheme

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy has directed the officials to complete the arrangements for the 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' which aims to provide free breakfast to students in government schools. A review was conducted with the officials of the Education Department in the office of the Secretariat. CMO Secretary Smita Sabharwal, Education Secretary Vakati Karuna, School Education Director Devasena, Education Department officials and representatives of Akshaya Patra participated in the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the 'Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme' will be started from Dussehra festival for the students studying in government schools from Class I to Class X across the State. The officials were ordered



Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy holding a review meeting at Secretariat in Hyderabad on Tuesday

to decide the menu quickly and make arrangements for it. She said that Telangana will be the second State in the country to provide breakfast in schools. The authorities have been instructed to ensure that no errors arise in the scheme undertaken to increase concentration towards studies along with providing nutritious food to the students from poor families. It is stated that the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the scheme will be entrusted to the Collector at the district level. Government departments should work in

coordination for the success of this scheme implemented by the government to provide quality education along with good nutrition. About 23 lakh students in 27,147 schools will be benefited by the implementation of the scheme. She said that Telangana is the only State which is already distributing thin rice and eggs to the students in mid-day meal scheme. The Minister explained that despite the heavy burden on the State government's exchequer, mid-day meal is being provided to the ninth and tenth class students.

## Singareni workers to get 32% share of profits

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has decided to pay a 32 per cent share of the company's profits for the financial year 2022-23 and government issued orders to this effect. Singareni has made a record profit of Rs 2,222 crore in the financial year 2022-23. KCR announced two months ago that the profits of over Rs 700 crore will be paid to the workers in advance during Dussehra. A 32 per cent share of Rs 711 crore was announced so that the workers would get a share of profits of more than Rs 700 crore, which was more than 30 per cent in the past. Recently, the government has paid nearly Rs 1,450 crore dues of 23 months to the workers related to the 11th wage agreement. As Dasara falls on October 23, the Chief Minister has issued orders to pay the share of profits early.

## Minister vows to develop Wanaparthy as model dist

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjana Reddy on Tuesday said that an integrated vegetarian and non-vegetarian market has been built here at a cost of Rs 20 crore. Tracing the developmental activities at a meeting of the important functionaries of the party, the Minister said that the most modern market built here set an example for the entire state. Further, the town hall was named after Wanaparthy first MLA Suravaram Pratapa Reddy. He was literateur. Beneficiaries of the 2BHK houses conducted housewarming ceremonies, he said, adding that now Gruhalakshmi scheme would be implemented to help the poor to build



Minister for Agriculture S Niranjana Reddy speaking at a meeting in Wanaparthy on Tuesday

their own houses. The Minister said that an IT Tower would be built here taking it as a matter of great prestige and would be ready for inauguration in one year. He inaugurated several developmental works and laid foundation foundations for works to be executed at a cost of Rs 425 crore.

## Guv scores a self-goal: Jagadish Reddy

PNS ■ SURYAPETA

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has scored a self-goal by rejecting the Cabinet recommendation to nominate Dasoju Sravan and Kurra Satyanarayan to the Legislative Council, said Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy on Tuesday. Speaking to the media here, the Minister quoted a Telugu proverb to drive his point home that "some persons are blind to their own faults." He found fault with the Governor for saying that she had rejected the Cabinet recommendation because the summary of two candidates sent to her indicated their active participation in politics. Jagadish Reddy pointed out that the Government herself has a direct political link. He recalled that Tamilisai Soundararajan was made the Telangana Governor directly from her position as the Tamil Nadu BJP State unit president.

## REJECTION OF MLC NOMINATIONS

She quit her post as Tamil Nadu BJP State unit president only after she was appointed as Telangana Governor. "If the political alignment is an issue, Tamilisai Soundararajan is not eligible for Governor's post," he asserted. He expressed the hope that the people occupying the high offices would maintain ethical standards.



Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy speaking to the media in Suryapet on Tuesday

## Minister all praise for KCR and KTR at job mela

Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy has lauded Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for achieving statehood for Telangana and Information Technology Minister KT Rama Rao for giving a wide publicity to greatness of Telangana at home and abroad. Speaking after taking part as chief guest in the Job Mela held under the aegis of TASK here on Tuesday, the Minister said he was happy to note that the

promises made during the movement for Telangana and also during the 2018 poll campaign of the BRS were fulfilled. The vision of the Chief Minister would serve as a role model for the country, he said, adding that KTR was capable of influencing the world nations and described him as a capable administrator. People of other countries would feel KTR as the IT minister for the whole nation. Telangana

pushed Karnataka to the background in IT because of the administrative capability of KTR. The long cherished dream of youth of Suryapet would get fulfilled with the inauguration of IT Hub on October 2. Gauging the response to the Job mela held on Tuesday, another mela would be held soon, he said. The IT sector in Suryapeta would be expanded to offer over 5,000 jobs in five years.

## 10,000 medical shops inspected by Hyd DCA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Approximately around 10,000 medical stores and hospitals were inspected by the Drug Control Administration of Hyderabad district. Approximately 40 cases were registered like unsafe, misbrand, etc. This is as per the RTI data filed by activist Kareem Ansari. He said, "In the RTI reply, PIO provides an approximate number. In this digital era, the department didn't maintain a digital record of their day-to-day activities. This kind of attitude will raise questions about the function of

bureaucracy in our State. The government should take serious note of this issue." RTI Activist Karim said, "DCA has to do more work on the grass-root level. The department has to come up with a plan to break the monopoly of medicine if the doctor prescribes any medicine, that is available at a particular medical store that is nearest to the hospital/clinic. Promote awareness about generic medicines in public and break the myths. The health department should monitor BP and diabetic medicine must be available in every primary health centre."

## Rahul shedding crocodile tears for BCs: Laxman

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

BJP OBC Morcha president K Laxman has said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was protecting the interests of the people of the country. Addressing the media here on Tuesday, he alleged that the Congress government has duped the Backward Classes and the Congress was now shedding crocodile tears for the BCs as elections are around the corner. Passing of the Women's Reservation Bill in Parliament proved once again that Modi was an outstanding leader. Rahul Gandhi is shedding crocodile tears and demand that the government conduct caste census. As BJP is in power, 27% quota for BCs is being implemented. However, the Congress gave priority to only some BCs,



BJP OBC Morcha president K Laxman speaking at a meeting in Mahabubnagar on Tuesday

who constitute 50% of the country's population. Rahul Gandhi who never cared for the BCs is now surprisingly backing them feigning love for them to derive political mileage, he alleged. In all, 27,000 BCs are getting seats in Medical Colleges with the implementation of 27% quota for the BCs, which was 14-15% earlier, he compared. A public meeting of Narendra Modi is scheduled to be held on October 1 at

Amistapur, near here. He is scheduled to launch many development programmes, he said appealing to the BJP rank and file to work hard to make the PM's public meeting a grand success. BJP national vice president DK Aruna, BJP leader Jitender Reddy, state BJP treasurer Santi Kumar, District BJP president Veera Brahmachary and several functionaries of the saffron party were present.

## Rich tributes paid to Chakali Ailamma

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rich tributes were paid to Chakali Ailamma who revolted against zamindars during the erstwhile regime of the Nizams in Telangana. AT a programme held at Medak Collectorate in connection with 128th birth anniversary of Chakali Ailamma, MLA Padma Devender Reddy, along with Additional Collector Venkateswarlu, lighted a lamp marking the celebrations of the birth anniversary of Ailamma. The MLA described her as a great fighter and exhorted the people to emulate her ideals. She said that Ailamma played a significant role in the Telangana armed revolution. The posterity should inherit from her fighting spirit characteristic to Telangana and the spirit of sacrifice that Ailamma had displayed.

The State government celebrated her birth anniversary annually. She expressed happiness over unveiling of Chakali Ailamma's statue in Sangapur village. Washermen's Association building in Medak would be named after Ailamma and Rs 50 lakh was earmarked for construction of the association building. In a similar programme held at Sangareddy Collectorate under the aegis of the BC welfare department, Additional Collector Chandrasekhar and Telangana State handlooms Development Corporation chairman Chinta Prabhakar garlanded the portrait of Ailamma and paid rich tributes to the great freedom fighter. Municipal chairperson Vijayalakshmi CDC chairman Kasala Buchi Reddy and others took part in the event.

## CCMB's Open Day gets 7,000 visitors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) organised its annual Open Day on Tuesday to mark its parent body, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)'s 82nd Foundation Day celebrations. A ritual that CCMB has done since its inception, has attracted thousands of visitors to the research institute every year. This year, CCMB had more than 7,000 visitors on the day, especially from school and college students and educators. The CCMB research groups had put up fun and engaging exhibits explaining their scientific work. There were interactive exhibits and an art corner to understand genetic and infectious diseases better. In addition, there were live experiments for the visitors to cover some of the basic molecular biology techniques. This was designed for college students whose curricula prescribe these experiments, and yet most colleges are unable to conduct these in their setups. "It makes us immensely proud to see the interest that the city shows in our work. Year after year, we see a continued interest, in the education community especially, to come for CCMB's Open Day. This year, following our One Week, One Lab celebrations, the Open Day comes in less than two months where the campus was open to visitors for almost a week. The sustained numbers only remind us there needs to be more such avenues for discussing science in the city," said Dr Vinay K Nandicoori, Director, CCMB.



INDIA CORNER

### ED makes first arrest of a politician in Karuvannur Co-operative Bank fraud

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested PR Arivandakshan, a CPM Municipal Councillor from Kerala's Wadakkanchery, in connection with the Karuvannur co-operative bank fraud case, officials said Tuesday. The agency has also arrested a former employee of the bank, CK Jills, who allegedly siphoned off Rs 5 crore bank funds, they said. Arivandakshan's arrest is the first of a political person in the alleged scam in which several political functionaries of the CPM are under scanner, they said. The probe in the alleged fraud, beginning in 2010, in the Thrissur-based bank stems from 16 FIRs registered by the Kerala Police (crime branch) in Thrissur. The ED has said its probe found that "on the instructions of certain persons, who were district-level leaders and committee members of certain political party and governed the bank, loans were disbursed by the bank manager through the agent in cash to non-member benamis by mortgaging properties of poor members."



### SP among 6 policemen booked on charge of torturing advocate

A superintendent of police and five other policemen have been booked for subjecting a lawyer in their custody to torture that included forcing him into sex with a co-accused, according to an FIR registered in Punjab's Muktsar district. Lawyers affiliated with the Bar Association of Punjab and Haryana High Court abstained from work Tuesday, demanding the policemen's dismissal and arrest. The advocate and another man were arrested September 14 following a complaint by the Crime Investigation Agency's In-Charge Raman Kumar Kamboj in which he alleged that the lawyers had assaulted a police team, tearing the officers' uniforms. In custody, the two men were allegedly forced to perform sexual acts. The case was registered against Muktsar SP (Investigation) Ramandeep Singh Bhullar, Inspector Raman Kumar Kamboj, constables Harbans Singh and Bhupinder Singh, Gurpreet Singh, and home guard Dara Singh.



### Army major, wife arrested in Assam for torturing' domestic help

An Army major and his wife have been arrested in Assam's Dima Hasao district for allegedly torturing their domestic help, a top police officer said on Tuesday. Dima Hasao SP Mayank Kumar said they received information on Sunday that the minor girl, who had accompanied the couple to Palampur in Himachal Pradesh, was "tortured brutally". Kumar said a case has been registered at the Haflong Police Station under different sections of the Indian Penal Code, the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. "During investigation, prima facie evidence was found against the Army major and his wife, and they were arrested in connection with the case and forwarded to judicial custody," the SP said. He added that necessary assistance is being provided to the girl, including medical treatment.



# G-20: India seen as solution provider, says Jaishankar

PNS ■ NEW YORK

During its G20 presidency this year, India was able to bridge the North-South divide and East-West polarisation and encourage the most powerful nations in the world to confront and commit to addressing challenges facing humanity today, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

The minister, currently in New York to attend the 78th UN General Assembly session, during his video address at the University Connect Programme at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi -- the venue of this year's G20 Leaders' Summit -- said India's G20 presidency walked the talk on difficult issues and pushed for collective action.

"When we say, One World, One Family, One Future, the world believes us. Today, India is seen as a solution provider, one that bridges divides," the minister said while talking about the outcomes of the successful



G20 Leaders' Summit held on September 9-10. "We were able to bridge the North-South divide and East-West polarisation and encourage the most powerful nations in the world to confront and commit to addressing challenges facing humanity today. This is captured in the forward-looking New Delhi Declaration. To say that India's G20 presidency walked the talk on difficult issues and pushed for collective

action would not be an exaggeration," Jaishankar said.

The New Delhi Leaders Declaration, a significant victory for India's G20 presidency, came amid increasing tensions and divergent views among the G20 member nations over the Ukraine conflict.

The G20 University Connect is an initiative with the aim of building an understanding of India's G20 Presidency among India's youth and enhancing their participation in the different G20 events.

Jaishankar said that one of the important factors in the success of the G20 presidency was the enthusiasm and ownership that everyone, especially the youth showed in this national celebration.

"We were able to make the African Union a permanent member of G20, come up with a green development pact, an action plan on sustainable development goals, high-level principles on anti-corruption, and garner support for digital

public infrastructure and reform on multilateral development pacts," he said.

Jaishankar said: "The world recognises India's convening power and acceptance of its ideas is a key takeaway."

"Our endeavours to make India a developed nation by the centenary of our independence stems from the collective desire to build a more prosperous nation for the future generations. The attainment of this goal is only possible with your full contributions. It is your abilities, your efforts and your achievements that will play a big role in defining the India of 2047," Jaishankar told the audience.

"Our G20 presidency is special and different. We succeeded in taking the G20 out of the capital city and its convention centres and made it a mass movement. It was truly a people's G20 and Jan bhagidari was the central feature of our presidency," the minister added.

### Waheeda Rehman's journey in Indian cinema has left an indelible mark: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday lauded actor Waheeda Rehman as a beacon of talent, dedication and grace who "embodies the best of our cinematic heritage", expressing delight at the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award bestowed on her.

"Delighted that Waheeda Rehman Ji has been honored with the Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award. Her journey in Indian cinema has left an indelible mark. A beacon of talent, dedication and grace, she embodies the best of our cinematic heritage. Congratulations to her," he said on X. Rehman, who made her debut 68 years ago and went on to act in cult classics such as 'Pyaasa' and 'Guide', was on Tuesday named recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the government's highest recognition in the field of cinema. "I'm doubly happy because it is Dev Anand's birthday.

# SC raises issue of pendency of 70 Collegium riders with Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With 70 collegium recommendations still stuck with the government, the Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed its dismay over the "delay" in the appointment of judges and asked the attorney general to use his office to resolve the issue.

After a bench of justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sudhanshu Dhulia raised the matter, Attorney General R Venkataramani sought a week's time to come back with instructions on the pending recommendations for judges' appointment to the high court.

"Today, I am quiet because the attorney general has sought a very short time, next time I will not be quiet. Use your good office to see these issues are resolved," Justice Kaul told Venkataramani during the hearing.

The bench said, "There were 80 recommendations pending until last week when 10 names were cleared. Now, the figure is 70, of which 26 recommendations are of transfer of judges, seven are reiterations, nine are



pending without being returned to the collegium and one case is of appointment of the Chief Justice to a sensitive high court."

All these recommendations are pending since November last year, it said.

Justice Kaul said there is a seven-month hiatus since something substantial was done on the recommendations which are pending and these needed basic processing only.

"We have endeavoured to push things and monitor closely. I have told the attorney general that every 10-12 days this matter will be taken up, so that before I demit office (December 25), substantial

work is done," said Justice Kaul, who is part of the apex court collegium which looks after the appointment of judges in the top court and the high courts.

The appointment of judges through the collegium system has in the past become a major flashpoint between the Supreme Court and the Centre with the mechanism drawing criticism from different quarters.

The top court was hearing a petition filed by Advocates Association of Bengaluru seeking contempt action against the Union Ministry of Law and Justice for not allegedly adhering to the timeline set by the court in a 2021 judgement.

During the hearing, advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for another petitioner NGO Common Cause, submitted a chart related to pending recommendations with the government. He said what is more worrisome is that even after a batch of names is recommended by the collegium at one time, the government segregates it and makes selective appointments.

## CAUVERY-RELATED PROTESTS IN K'TAKA

# SC verdict should be binding, says TN

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Amid mounting pressure on the Karnataka government against releasing Cauvery river water to Tamil Nadu, the latter on Tuesday said the Supreme Court's verdict should be binding, notwithstanding such agitations. Despite protests in Karnataka capital Bengaluru, the state government was releasing water to its neighbour, TN Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan said. On the protests in the neighbouring state, the Minister said the Supreme Court's verdict should be binding. "Legislature, executive and judiciary are part of cooperative federalism. It is said the executive and legislature should follow the judiciary. The politically enlightened people should ponder what will happen to the special powers and authority of the judiciary, if everyone starts protesting against the Supreme Court verdict," Duraimurugan told reporters here. At the same time, the judiciary should decide on addressing such opposition, he added.



Karnataka and as of today, the state has received 7,000 cusecs (cubic ft per second), he said.

Initially, Karnataka provided 2,500 cusecs of water per day and the quantum was increased to 3,000 cusecs per day.

"We are steadily receiving water from Cauvery and hope to realise the full quantum," he said.

As per the Supreme Court order, Tamil Nadu is yet to receive 11,000 cusecs of water, which he said is likely to be provided by Wednesday.

As per the direction of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee that was upheld by the Supreme Court, Karnataka should release 5,000 cusecs of water per day to Tamil Nadu for 15 days from September 13, the minister said.

"This means the 15-day period ends tomorrow. Despite protests in Bengaluru, the Karnataka government is releasing water," he added.

A set of farmers and Kannada organisations had called for Bengaluru bandh on Tuesday protesting against the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu while a state-wide shutdown is scheduled on Friday.

## TOOLKIT CASE

# Delhi HC dismisses Disha Ravi's plea to modify bail condition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea by climate activist Disha Ravi, who is facing prosecution for her alleged involvement in sharing a toolkit backing the farmers' protest in 2021, seeking modification the bail condition where she needs prior permission of the trial court before travelling abroad.

Justice Swarnan Kanta Sharma said there is no ground for interference with the trial court's order.

Ravi's counsel had urged the high court to modify the condition to the extent that she shall intimate the trial court before going abroad.

The detailed order will be made available later.

The high court had on August 21 reserved its order on the plea.

Ravi was arrested by the Delhi Police on February 13, 2021, for allegedly being involved in sharing on social media a toolkit related to the farmers' protest, which was then going on against the Centre's three farm laws, and was granted bail by a trial court here on February 23, 2021. The trial court had imposed various conditions on her, including that she shall not leave the country without prior permission of the court.

# Row will not impact ties: Canadian Army Vice-Chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing diplomatic row between India and Canada is not going to adversely impact the bilateral defence ties, Canada's Deputy Army Chief Major General Peter Scott said on Tuesday as the two-way relations plunged to an all-time low following Ottawa's allegations against New Delhi over the killing of a Khalistani separatist.

Scott, currently on a visit to India primarily to attend the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conference (IPACC), told PTI that the matter should be

resolved at the political level and it should not have a bearing on India-Canada military cooperation.

"That (the row) is not going to have an impact on us. We leave the matter at hand to the political level to try and resolve it. We are happy to be here and we do not see the issue clouding matters (military ties) at this point at all," he said.

The Canadian Army commander also complimented India for its role towards the common vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

The ties between India and

Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia in June.

Last week, India rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

India also announced temporarily suspending issuance of visas to Canadian citizens and



asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country.

Scott's trip to New Delhi is the first high-level visit from Canada to India after the diplomatic row broke out more

than a week back following Trudeau's explosive remarks at the House of Commons.

"This is an issue between both our countries at a political level. And certainly our prime minister ... he rose at the House of Commons and made a statement requesting India's cooperation in the independent investigation that is currently ongoing at this time," the Canadian Vice Army Chief said.

"Between both of our armies, this is not affecting us. I spoke to your commander of the Army (Army Chief General Manoj Pande) last night.

# Learn local language to serve better, Sitharaman says at Rozgar Mela

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Candidates getting selected for jobs and deployed in other states as per the job profile should learn the local language to be able to provide better services, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here on Tuesday.

Sitharaman, after handing over orders to successful candidates at the Rozgar Mela, encouraged more candidates to apply for jobs in public sector undertakings located in Tamil Nadu. Referring to the Centre's Rozgar Mela, Sitharaman said the government has been hold-



ing it since October 2022 and about 10 lakh people have received job offers so far.

"Today 51,000 appointment orders are being given across the country by Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) virtually. I was told 553 people are getting job offers from Tamil Nadu," she said. Speaking of improv-

ing the delivery of services to be rendered by the candidates post their selection at a public sector undertaking or bank, Sitharaman said, "If a job offer is given to a candidate who will be serving in a bank and would be in direct contact with the customers daily, he or she should learn the local language.

"For example, if a candidate has got placed in Karnataka he should learn Kannada. If he is posted in Tamil Nadu, then he should learn Tamil. Due to lack of (knowledge of) local language by candidates, there is a laxity in the service rendered," she said.

## EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO HOUSES IN JOSHIMATH

# Lack of building permit among reasons for destruction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The absence of a building permit system is cited as one of the primary reasons for the extensive damage to houses in the subsidence-hit area of Joshimath in Uttarakhand, according to a post-disaster needs assessment conducted by government agencies.

Starting January 2, a number of houses and civil structures in an area located near Joshimath-Auli road began to display major cracks due to land subsidence, prompting the relocation of 355 families.

According to local residents,

land subsidence had been noticed over several years but became increasingly severe from January 2 to January 8.

A 35-member team consisting of professionals from the National Disaster Management Authority, UN agencies, Central Building Research Institute, National Institute of Disaster Management, and other agencies conducted a "Post Disaster Needs Assessment" from April 22 to April 25 to assess the damage caused and to identify the assistance required for the long-term recovery and reconstruction of the affected sectors.



The report highlights that although building bylaws exist, they are not mandatory for residential buildings.

"People obtain permits only

when they need a loan or for other government requirements. One of the primary reasons for Joshimath's current situation is the absence of a

building permit system. Had there been risk-based building bylaws in place and existing buildings were in compliance with them, the extent of damage would have been less, and retrofitting would have been less expensive," the report said.

Another issue of concern identified in the report is the "lack of town planning and absence of risk-informed land use maps". "The roads are too narrow, and there are hardly any open spaces in the neighborhoods. This makes the town highly unsafe since access in emergency situations is almost impossible," it said, emphasising

the urgent need for a comprehensive development plan.

The agencies emphasised the immediate need for the development of a prospective plan with the objective of creating a safe and resilient Joshimath for the next 10-15 years.

"The existing building bylaws need thorough examination to ensure that all multi-hazard issues, especially landslides and earthquakes, are addressed. There is a strong need for a simple pictorial version of the building bylaws and building regulations for the people and the masons.

# Demand for women's quota bill in 2024 polls motivated: Anurag

PNS ■ SHIMAL

The demand for implementing women's reservation bill in 2024 Lok Sabha polls by the Congress and some other parties is "politically motivated" and an attempt to defeat its purpose, said Union minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday.

"These parties are aware that neither census nor delimitation has been done and any person can go to the court and get the process stalled," he told reporters here.

Replying to a question whether the NDA is becoming weak with allies like AIADMK quitting the alliance, the infor-

mation and broadcasting minister said JD(S) and some other parties are joining the ruling alliance which is strong and will win the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Thakur said that the women's reservation bill brought during the Congress-led UPA rule was opposed by its constituents like Samajwadi Party and RJD.

"These parties are not in favour of reservation for women but cannot oppose the bill openly and are trying to raise frivolous demands like implementing it from 2024 and giving reservation to Other Backward Classes (OBCs)," he said.



## Chak De! India

Women cricket team's maiden gold in the Asian Games final is a fine achievement

India has won its first gold medal at the ongoing Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, thanks to India's women cricket team. In a display of unwavering determination, unrelenting spirit and unmatched skill, the women's cricket team secured a historic victory in the Asian Games cricket final. The nation watched in awe as our talented cricketers etched their names in the annals of sports history with an exemplary performance. Indian women's cricket team won their maiden gold medal in the Asian Games 2023 by defeating Sri Lanka by 19 runs after successfully defending their 116 runs on the board. It was a low-scoring match. On a difficult pitch, Titas Sadhu was undoubtedly the star as she bowled a devastating first spell, taking three wickets for six runs, and played a major role in restricting Sri Lanka to 97 for eight in 20 overs. It is not all. There was more good news for India from Hangzhou as India's 10m air rifle team shattered world record to win gold medal.



Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won an individual bronze after teaming up with Rudranksh Patil and Divyansh Singh Panwar for the gold medal. India's 25m rapid fire pistol team also won bronze. This is nothing short of a dream run for Indian squad. But it was the women's cricket team that stole hearts. It has been overshadowed by men's cricket for decades now, getting a fraction of the allowances and perks that their male counterparts get. But that should soon change and sponsors are likely to make a beeline to sponsor their events after their emphatic and historic win. The Asian Games victory marks a significant milestone for women's

cricket in India. It not only highlights the incredible talent of our sportspersons but also serves as an inspiration for the generations to come.

The Indian women's cricket team has been steadily rising in stature, captivating the hearts of cricket fans across the country. Their victory in the Asian Games final is a testament to the hard work and dedication that these remarkable athletes put into their craft. From fierce batting to exceptional bowling, every aspect of their game has shone brightly on the international stage. The emergence of women's cricket leagues, greater media coverage and increased investment in infrastructure are all signs of a brighter future for the sport in India. The Indian women's team's triumph in the Asian Games cricket final is a cause for nationwide celebration. These incredible sportspersons have not only showcased their cricketering prowess but have also laid the foundation for a brighter future for women's cricket in India. As we celebrate this historic win, let us remember that it is not just a victory on the cricket field but a triumph of 'nari shakti.' The Indian squad has shown what can be achieved with talent and unwavering determination. Let these wins be a harbinger of more success for sportspersons—a true Amritkal for sports.

### PICTALK



Saints Of Swaminarayan Gurukul pray to Lord Swaminarayan on the 'Jal Jilani Ekadashi, in Surat

## Hypertension is a global health challenge

Hypertension affects individuals from all backgrounds and its consequences can be dire

In a significant revelation during the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the World Health Organization (WHO) presented its inaugural report on the worldwide impact of high blood pressure, delivering a poignant message – nearly 80% of individuals suffering from hypertension are not receiving adequate treatment. This revelation, however, comes with a ray of hope. If countries can expand their healthcare coverage, an estimated 76 million lives could be saved between 2023 and 2050. In India alone, taking proactive measures to control blood pressure among half of its hypertensive population could prevent at least 4.6 million deaths by 2040. It is bewildering that preventable deaths persist due to untreated hypertension despite advancements in healthcare and infrastructure. The number of people living with hypertension has doubled from 650 million in 1990 to 1.3 billion in 2019 globally.

In India, a staggering 188.3 million people, constituting 31% of the population, grapple with this condition.



Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, is marked by elevated blood pressure in the arteries, typically diagnosed when readings consistently reach or exceed 140/90 mm Hg. A misconception persists, particularly in socioeconomically disadvantaged societies, that hypertension is an ailment reserved for the affluent. However, WHO's report dispels this myth, revealing that over three-quarters of adults with hypertension live in low and middle-income countries.

Paradoxically, diagnosis and treatment rates are abysmally low in these regions, leading to a high mortality rate. While age is an uncontrollable risk factor, various modifiable factors, such as a high-salt diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and

excessive alcohol consumption contribute to hypertension. Tobacco usage triggers 28% of cases in India, while physical inactivity accounts for 34%. Efforts to combat this pressing issue have been made, but much more needs to be done. The India Hypertension Control Initiative (IHCI) launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare aims to tackle this growing problem. WHO acknowledges that IHCI made significant strides in ensuring healthcare facilities had adequate protocol medicines and minimal stock-outs by 2020. WHO underscores the importance of prevention, early detection and effective management of hypertension as the most cost-effective healthcare interventions.

Lifestyle adjustments like physical activity, proper sleep and reduced exposure to pollution can aid in prevention. Regular check-ups are crucial for early detection and the report emphasizes five components for effective hypertension care: protocols, medication and equipment supply, patient-centered services, team-based care and informa-

tion systems. WHO Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, points out that "Hypertension can be controlled effectively with simple, low-cost medication regimens and yet only about one in five people with hypertension have controlled it."

This state of affairs must change for a safer and healthier future. The revelation that hypertension, a highly manageable condition, continues to claim millions of lives worldwide in an era of medical advancements and improved healthcare access is astonishing and disheartening.

WHO's report serves as a clarion call to governments, healthcare providers and individuals alike. One of the key takeaways from the report is the need for greater awareness. Public health campaigns and educational programs must be intensified to reach every stratum of society. People must understand that hypertension affects individuals from all backgrounds and its consequences can be dire.

(The writer is a researcher. The views expressed are personal)



BISHAL KUMAR SAHA

ronmental monitoring. The launch of commercial satellites by India of friendly foreign countries is sure to boost India's clout, not only as a regional player in Asia but also globally. This collaborative effort of the private and public sectors is bound to give dividends economically and also usher in prosperity amongst humanity in general.

Can the space program help humanity? Is it the bird's eye view we have been talking about for almost all the humanitarian challenges that exist? Let's face it, humanity faces challenges of resources, and among them, energy is one of the most critical. So can space exploration in the long run help humanity to solve the crisis of a resource crunch, including that of energy? The possibility for the same is huge, and so is the possibility of Indian Industry making it big in the decades to come. It is estimated that thousands of satellites would be required to be sent into space if the requirement of humanity is to be met. Over 100 satellites have been launched solely for monitoring the Earth's atmosphere.

Helium-3 is one moon resource that could potentially be cheaper to mine from the moon. Helium-3 is a very attractive fuel for future

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The backlog is exacerbated by the fact that one-third of the judge positions in the country remain vacant. This shortage of judges, along with inadequate staff and resources, contributes to delays, especially in criminal cases. Uttar Pradesh, for instance, has nearly 98 lakh pending criminal cases. Maharashtra follows with 51 lakh pending cases.

Interestingly, the central government allocated over 54 crore rupees in the fiscal year 2022-2023 to handle these cases. Paradoxically, there are 61 lakh 57 thousand cases in court due to a lack of lawyers. Moreover, in many cases, plaintiffs and defendants fail to appear, accounting for 8 lakh 82 thousand such instances. Reducing the backlog of cases demands serious attention and action from the government. It is essential to ensure that the people receive timely justice.

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Since it takes two to tango, the travellers have a huge task of keeping the attractions noise free and hygienic. Preventing the centres from deteriorating to mere structures, maintaining the liveliness of the places and ensuring no tourist is harassed are critical to preserve the name and fame of a place.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

ESCALATING COURT CASES

Sir — Delivering justice to the common people is a fundamental pillar of a democratic system. It is a right that citizens must have access to. However, we currently face a concerning situation in our country. The number of pending court cases has doubled in the last five years, with more than five crore cases awaiting resolution. This means that, on average, one case is pending for every three and a half people. Uttar Pradesh alone has over one crore pending cases.

The backlog is exacerbated by the fact that one-third of the judge positions in the country remain vacant. This shortage of judges, along with inadequate staff and resources, contributes to delays, especially in criminal cases. Uttar Pradesh, for instance, has nearly 98 lakh pending criminal cases. Maharashtra follows with 51 lakh pending cases.

Interestingly, the central government allocated over 54 crore rupees in the fiscal year 2022-2023 to handle these cases. Paradoxically, there are 61 lakh 57 thousand cases in court due to a lack of lawyers. Moreover, in many cases, plaintiffs and defendants fail to appear, accounting for 8 lakh 82 thousand such instances. Reducing the backlog of cases demands serious attention and action from the government. It is essential to ensure that the people receive timely justice.

Shantaram Wagh | Pune

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Vande Bharat: A game changer

olutionized train travel. Many of us cherish the prospect of securing window seats to relish the scenic views. This project, a testament to our domestic capabilities, is an accomplishment for Indian Railways, which boasts a legacy spanning 170 years. It is indeed an engineering marvel.

The acceleration is exceptional, living up to its acclaim, with a nearly silent ride, except for the coaches with traction motors, which produce some noise. The team of officers at ICF, Chennai, has made the most of this opportunity, creating history. It stands as the largest coach manufacturing facility. Art plays a role in cleansing the soul, and this is exemplified by the presence of an art gallery within the factory. The leadership and passion of all involved have transformed our dreams into reality.

Akhilesh Krishnan | Mumbai

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WINNING IS A HABIT

Sir — The game of cricket is a team sport where performance is the key. The Indian women's cricket team secured a victory over Sri Lanka women by a margin of 19 runs, clinching the gold medal at the 2023 Asian Games. This marks India's second gold in Hangzhou. Rajeshwari Gayakwad bowled the final over, conceding only five runs while taking a crucial wicket. The Asian Games 2023 has proven to be a successful platform for the Indian cricket team. This victory represents India's second gold medal at the 2023 Asian Games. Harmanpreet Kaur, as the toss-winning captain, chose to bat first in the final. Opener Shefali Verma was the first to depart, with Sougandika Kumari claiming her wicket. Subsequently, Smriti Mandhana and Jemimah Rodrigues built a vital 73-run partnership to steer India back into contention. Winning is indeed a habit, and the women's team executed it splendidly. Congratulations to Team India.

Jayanthi CK Maniam | Chennai

WORLD TOURISM DAY

Sir — Tourism is known to provide a massive boost to a nation's economy. Responsibility on the part of travellers is key to sustaining tourism because travellers aware of their obligations towards maintaining the purity of a destination are godsenders for tourism. Sustainable tourism, movie tourism, medical and religious, and ecotourism—form the crux of tourism. In India, nearly six per cent of the GDP is accrued from tourism. It is also a large avenue for employment with as much as 25 million workers earning their livelihood from this sector.

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FIRST COLUMN

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RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

India has a sizable youth population and if they do not affect social change, who will?

# A simplified tax regime can prevent tax evasion



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

An archaic and complicated tax system, with too many amendments, not only confuses the taxpayers but also leads to leakages and corruption

A complicated tax system in India with a six-decades-old Income Tax Act 1961 with too many amendments in the form of a lot of confusing patchwork is in force. Likewise, ever since the reformative step of introducing the Goods & Service Tax (GST) Act was introduced on 1st July 2017, there has been a regular practice of changing tax structure in an ever-confusing GST regime with too many confusing and complicated provisions incorporated in the system.

An altogether new tax regime should be introduced without patches of useless and largely misused exemptions. Implementation of Raja Chelliah Committee recommendations to fix the highest tax slab at 30 per cent to be in tune with most countries in the world, had largely abolished the practice of converting black money into white money. Gradually increasing this highest slab also through imposing cess and surcharges has undone the good achieved.

The highest tax slab of 30 per cent should be restored so that people may find it advantageous to bring complete income to books. Rather a permanent Voluntary Disclosure Scheme should be introduced whereby provision may be there in tax-return to declare at the highest suggested tax rate of 30 per cent, any income without disclosing the source of income. This will make cash transactions, especially in property deals accounted for if registration fees on the property are also reduced to say just three per cent. Names of all those disclosing incomes under the suggested highest 30-percent slab should be on the website according to income disclosed so that status-conscious persons may race to disclose more incomes.

Basic tax exemption should be fixed at rupees five lakhs abolishing most tax-exemptions including on charity, donation, contribution to political parties and even agricultural income which are largely misused. An ordinary farmer does not earn more than rupees five lakhs per annum, and the provision is grossly misused by ultra-rich persons including known celebrities to declare their unaccounted income as agricultural income through some village-land purchased only for the purpose without practically having any agricultural produce.

Income Tax slabs can then be 10 and 20 per cent for incomes between 5-10 lakhs and 10-15 lakhs respectively and thereafter 30 per cent for the rest. LK Jha committee recommendations to make the calendar year a financial year should be implemented to be in line with most countries of the world, thus abolishing another British legacy of following April-March presently as a Fiscal Year. It is ridiculous to have different depreciation rules for Tax and Corporate audits. There should be a single and unified Tax and Corporate Audit.

Rather than concentrating more on small cash transactions, all sale-purchases above rupees 10000 must be compulsorily through bank transactions. For this, transaction charges on credit cards should be slashed down to just half per cent (GST-exempted) which too to be borne by the central government with all incentives on purchases made through credit cards abolished. Present high two-percent transaction charges on credit cards make traders charge it separately from customers especially where trade margins are low. Such a system will fetch much higher tax revenue for the government, than through half-per



THE HIGHEST TAX SLAB OF 30 PER CENT SHOULD BE RESTORED SO THAT PEOPLE MAY FIND IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO BRING COMPLETE INCOME TO BOOKS

(The writer is an RTI consultant; views expressed are personal)

cent transaction-charges to be borne by the government.

Banks issuing credit cards will get much more earnings even with a half-per-cent transaction charge because of the manifold use of credit cards. Two sets of credit card machines should be compulsory for every GST-registered dealer dealing in cash to avoid payment receipt through credit cards with the usual excuse that the swapping machine is out of order. Strict action must be there against those refusing payment through credit/debit cards.

The input-tax-credit system in the GST-regime in manufacturing is the biggest corrupt practice of tax evasion where left-out GST invoices by ordinary customers are sold by traders to consuming manufacturers or producers to avail false Input-Tax-Credit where cash is paid back by traders to those purchasing left-out GST-invoices of actual consumers bringing more currency in circulation, this being the reason of basic motive of currency-demonetisation being failed where currency in circulation rapidly increased rather than projected decrease. An annual forensic audit may be made compulsory on claims made for Input-Tax-Credit by manufacturers/producers to avoid false claims of excessive input tax credit in these sectors. Rather study should be made if, with the abolition of an excessively high 18-percent GST slab, Input-Tax-Credit can be altogether abolished from manufacturing/producing sectors, retaining it only on tradable commodities.

But such reform in the Input-Tax-Credit system can be practically possible with drastic reform in the GST tax structure wherein initially only three tax slabs of 6, 12 and

30 per cent may be there abolishing all presently existing GST rates. India is the only country that has so many GST rates. Gradually even slabs of 6 and 12 percent may also be replaced by a new 10-percent tax structure. Zero-percent GST may only be retained on totally unbranded raw materials that cannot be consumed without giving a finishing touch like agricultural products, fish, meat, cotton yarn etc.

All items of long-term use like cars, air-conditioners, TV sets, refrigerators etc. may attract 30 per cent GST while their parts may uniformly attract 12 per cent GST. Unmindful policy framers brought clutch-plate and clutch-bearing under different GST slabs of 18 and 28 per cent. Likewise, similar items sold by confectioners like sweets, biscuits, napkins etc. attract different GST slabs with luxury sweets causing diabetes attracting just 5 per cent GST.

Invoices for items like gold jewellery can be drawn in two parts, one for metal and embodied items and the other for making charges so that the suggested 12-cent GST may be payable only on making charges. Cess on extra-luxurious items should be replaced by additional GST slabs in multiples of 60 per cent, also bringing petroleum products under the GST regime to ensure uniform pricing of petrol and diesel in all states. Abolishing an 18-percent GST slab will be more than compensated by clubbing lower slabs of 3 and 5 percent into a single 6-percent GST slab. The input-tax-credit (ITC) system should not apply to non-tradable commodities and services like has been done, and rightly too, in the case of car expenses for non-commercial use.

With the GST slab of 18 per cent abolished and the service sector attracting just 12 per cent GST, those with income of rupees ten lakhs or more (instead of the present rupees 20 lakhs) can be brought under the GST regime like was the system before the GST-regime. It is illogical to keep lawyers out of the purview of the GST regime. The useless system of Tax-Deducted-At-Source for GST, which is hardly used in practice, should be altogether abolished. Otherwise, any such deducted tax should be auto-reflected in the GST accounts of affected ones, abolishing the cumbersome practice of filing a new monthly return to get credit for deducted GST.

All government payments can be considered to be exempted from GST to avoid unnecessary government accounting by putting tax from one government pocket to another. It is illogical that some premium postal services like Speed Post may attract GST while other postal services do not attract GST. Even illogical postal rates (both inland and foreign) need simplification for the equal rise of postal tariff for the equal rise in slab-weight in multiples of 50 gms. of inland postal-article with all postal tariffs being in multiples of rupees ten except for registered newspapers and post-cards which may cost rupee one with the abolition of outdated Inland-Letter-Cards. Presently a postal-article weighing 200 gms sent locally by reliable and fast Speed Post costs just rupees 30 but if sent by unreliable ordinary post, it will cost rupees 50. Likewise, foreign-mail tariffs can be fixed for 20 gms or part slab-weight independently for air and sea-surface-mail.



But, have the potentialities of the youth been utilised for the work of national reconstruction so far? Have they been given the opportunities and guidance to fulfil their dreams of taking the world into a new era of peace and prosperity? Well! If we take into view the Indian situation, we can say, in general terms, that the youth are restless and disappointed because their abilities have not been provided with enough channels for self-expression and fulfilment. Today most of them have a complaint against society in general and against those who are in the seats of authority in particular.

They say that their energies- both mental and physical - are not being used in wider spheres of national development because the older generation denies them adequate participation, thinking that the youth are inexperienced and immature. Against this thinking, the youth argue that what the elders call "experience" and "maturity" is, in fact, a hindrance in breaking new grounds and what is required at present is new initiatives, new ideas adventures and innovativeness which is a characteristic that's mainly present in youth.

All would agree that to bridge the ever-widening gap of emotional estrangement between the older and the younger generations and to stop further erosion in values, whosoever may have been responsible for it until now, is to have such formal and informal educational centres and institutions which can inspire the youth to some higher principles and ideals and can fire their imagination with a new paradigm of society where there will be no violence and where all would live peacefully as loving members of the family of mankind. These institutions should have persons of ennobling character, pleasing manners, and loving demeanour who can awaken the potentialities of the youth for social reconstruction and can also bring change in the older generation and enable them to play a useful role in the work of nation-building.

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

# Medical treatment facilities must be available in the campus

The provision of medical facilities within the university premises is an urgent requirement to address the health concerns faced by students from different states

It is indeed a pressing concern that students from different states face difficulties in accessing medical treatment facilities at the university. The lack of proper healthcare services can hurt their health, leading to various diseases. Students often have to rely on private hospitals, which may not be affordable for everyone. Additionally, the language barrier further exacerbates the problem, as students can be taken advantage of due to their lack of knowledge.

In light of these challenges, the university must prioritise the provision of adequate medical facilities within the campus itself. By establishing medical services on-site, students would have easier access to healthcare, promoting



SHIVANI SHARMA



NIMRAT KAUR

(The writers worked as Assistant Professors at SSD Girls' College, Bathinda; views expressed are personal)

ing their overall well-being. Having healthcare facilities within the university premises would not only benefit the students' physical health but also contribute to their peace of mind and academic performance.

Moreover, by addressing this issue, the university demonstrates its commitment to the students' welfare and creates an inclusive and supportive environment. It is essential to ensure that students' health needs are met, enabling them to focus on their studies and personal growth without the added burden of seeking medical care outside the campus.

By investing in proper medical facilities within the university, students will have convenient and affordable



access to healthcare. This step acknowledges the diverse needs of the student population and emphasises the value of their well-being. It is a significant initiative that promotes a healthy, thriving university community.

Students on university campuses, often encounter a slew of health-related chal-

lenges. One pressing issue is the accessibility of medical facilities on campus. It's no secret that university campuses can be vast and bustling, making it essential for students to have easy access to healthcare services.

One common challenge students face is the lack of convenient healthcare options.

Many campuses have limited medical facilities, or they may be located far away from student residences or academic buildings. This can pose difficulties, especially in emergencies or when students require immediate attention for illness or injuries.

Additionally, the availability of specialised healthcare services can be a concern. University students, coming from diverse backgrounds with unique healthcare needs. Campuses need to offer a range of medical services to meet these diverse needs, including mental health support, reproductive health services, and specialised care for chronic conditions.

Another aspect to consider is the cost of healthcare. University students often face

financial strains, and the burden of medical expenses can further add to their challenges. Accessible medical facilities should take this into account by providing affordable or subsidised healthcare options, such as low-cost consultations, medication, and tests.

To bridge the healthcare gap, universities can take proactive steps. They can establish on-campus medical clinics or health centres with extended hours of operation to accommodate students' busy schedules. Moreover, partnerships with local hospitals or healthcare providers can enhance accessibility by providing specialised services or urgent care facilities.

Prioritising accessible medical facilities on university campuses is crucial to

ensure the well-being of students. By addressing the challenges and offering comprehensive, affordable, and conveniently located healthcare services, universities can support students in maintaining good health and thriving academically.

In conclusion, the provision of medical facilities within the university premises is an urgent requirement to address the health concerns faced by students from different states. This step will not only enhance their physical well-being but also contribute to their overall success and happiness during their time at university. Let us strive for a healthier and more inclusive academic environment where students' health is given the attention it rightfully deserves.



MONEY MATTERS

India's cut, polished diamond exports to dip by 22%

India's exports of cut and polished diamonds (CPDs) is likely to decline by 22 per cent to USD 17.2 billion in 2023-24, amid weak underlying demand conditions in key destinations including the US and Europe, a report said on Tuesday. CPD exports have been on a declining trend since the second half of FY23 and during the first five months of this financial year shipments witnessed a sharp year-on-year decline of 31 per cent, Icara said in a report. The decline in CPD exports was led by a fall in both export volumes and polished diamond prices, it added. While some sequential improvement in volume is expected in the coming months, driven by the onset of the festive season, overall exports are still expected to contract by 22 per cent this fiscal, it stated. The rating agency has thus revised the sector outlook to 'Negative' from 'Stable'. "The export contraction is primarily being driven by weak underlying demand conditions in key consuming nations like the US and Europe due to the inflationary pressures, leading to a shift in spending away from diamonds.



India one of most competitive markets: Pieter Elbers

India is an incredible and one of the most competitive aviation markets in the world, IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said on Tuesday and asserted that the airline is seeking to become bigger and more global. The chief of the country's largest airline said it is building its own international network, adding new overseas routes from existing cities and enhancing partnerships with other carriers. Besides, the carrier is taking various mitigating measures to deal with issues related to Pratt & Whitney (P&W) engines that power its A320 fleet. It has grounded many aircraft due to the engine woes. IndiGo, which started flying more than 17 years ago, operates nearly 1,900 flights daily with more than 320 planes and has a domestic market share of over 63 per cent. In recent months, the carrier has commenced flights to various overseas destinations, including Nairobi and Almaty.



Tea Board to revert to old English auction system pan India

The Tea Board India has written to registered auction organisers across the country, producers associations and buyers associations that it has been decided to revert to the old English auction system for which it has issued necessary timelines. The letter issued on Monday said that it has been decided to introduce the practices of the erstwhile English auction system under the ambit of the Bharat auction model. Earlier, the Bharat auction system was introduced in North India in April 2023, while the same was already in force in South India earlier. The letter said that the Tea Board had already held consultations with NSEIT Limited regarding the re-introduction of the features of the English auction system in the newly configured software. While the Tea Board had earlier suggested dropping of sale numbers 39 and 40 in all the auction centres across India, the statutory body revoked the decision after producers' bodies said the tea companies would suffer financially if these two sales were dropped.



# ‘Pharma industry needs to focus on innovative products’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday asked domestic pharmaceutical industry to focus on the research and development of innovative products to move up the value chain and achieve global leadership. Mandaviya, who also holds the Chemical and Fertilisers portfolio, asked medical technology companies to produce critical equipment in India for the global markets. While formally unveiling the National Policy on Research & Development and Innovation in the Pharma-Med Tech Sector here, Mandaviya said the domestic pharmaceutical companies invest less on research and development when compared to multinational companies. "International MNCs spend 20-25 per cent of their profits in research and innovation while for Indian companies the average is around 10 per cent...Till the time we do not come out with research-led

**"International MNCs spend 20-25 per cent of their profits in research and innovation while for Indian companies the average is around 10 per cent...Till the time we do not come out with research-led innovative products, we cannot lead the segment globally," he noted.**



innovative products, we cannot lead the segment globally," he noted. He said the government wants to make the pharma industry self-reliant by 2047. "Today is a historic day, an inflection point in the journey of 'Atmanirbharta' in the pharma & medical devices sector. We need to transform Indian Pharma & MedTech sectors from a cost-based to a value-based & innovation-based industry," the minister said. Mandaviya asked the pharma industry to focus on developing quality products and

not just focus on the quantity. "India can only achieve self-reliance in pharmaceuticals and medical devices by strengthening its research and development infrastructure that would drive the expansion of access to life-saving medicines and drugs and help India become a global pharmaceuticals and medical exports hub," he added. He said the government has been working closely with the industry and academia to bring about the changes in the domestic pharma industry in order to lead it to leadership

position. The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) notified the National Policy on Research & Development and Innovation in the Pharma-Med Tech Sector in India in August this year. The policy aims to encourage R&D in pharmaceuticals, including traditional medicines, phytopharmaceuticals and medical devices. It acknowledges the need for greater emphasis on encouraging R&D through indigenously developed products and technologies across the value chain so as to sustain global competitiveness. The Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers also formally unveiled the Scheme for Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector (PRIP), which intends to transform the domestic pharma and medical technology sector from cost-based to innovation-based growth by strengthening the research infrastructure in the country.

## Infosys collaborates with Microsoft for generative AI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

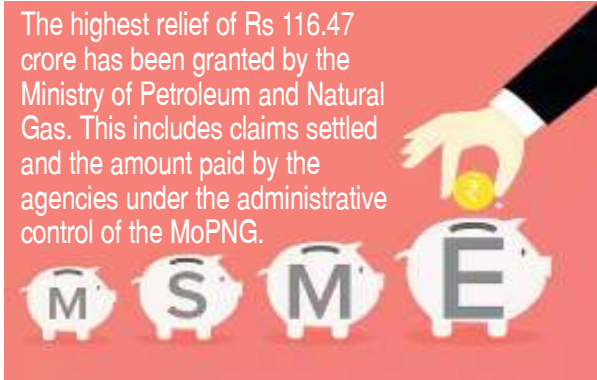
IT major Infosys is partnering with Microsoft to enhance enterprise functions with AI-enabled solutions across multiple industries, according to a release. Both organisations will bring together their respective artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities -- Infosys Topaz, Azure OpenAI Service and Azure Cognitive Services -- for transitioning to AI from digital, thus driving efficiency and productivity among businesses, the domestic IT firm said. Infosys Executive Vice President and Global Head AI and Automation, Application Development & Maintenance - Balakrishna DR said, "Through our strategic collaboration with Microsoft, we will continue to lead the generative AI revolution, helping businesses amplify human potential and navigate their next towards becoming AI-first enterprises".

## Govt accepts 10k MSME claims worth Rs 256 cr for refunds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has accepted more than 10,000 claims of MSMEs involving refunds worth Rs 256 crore under a dispute resolution scheme Vivad se Vishwas-I. Under the scheme, MSMEs could claim a refund of 95 per cent of performance or bid security and liquidated damages forfeited by government departments and public sector entities during the COVID-19 period. The scheme, announced in 2023-24 Budget, opened on April 17 and the last date for submission of claims for relief on the GeM portal was July 31. "In a major relief to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India have accepted more than 10,000 claims of MSMEs under Vivad se Vishwas -I scheme aimed at providing relief to MSMEs for the COVID-19 Pandemic period. This has led to grant of more than Rs 256 crore to MSMEs and increased flow of

VIVAD SE VISHWAS



bank credit through freeing up of guarantees," a finance ministry statement said. The highest relief of Rs 116.47 crore has been granted by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. This includes claims settled and the amount paid by the agencies under the administrative control of the MoPNG. The settlement in the case of agencies under the Railways and Defence ministries would be a total of Rs 79.16 crore and 23.45 crore, respectively. The ministries of steel and Power would settle MSME refund claims worth Rs 14.48 and 6.69 crore, respectively. The scope of the scheme also include works procurement and earning contracts. Relief was also provided to MSMEs debarred for default in execution of contracts. "The relief provided under this scheme was in continuation to the efforts of the Government in promoting and sustaining the MSME sector severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic," the ministry added.

## Cipla introduces drone-powered critical medicine delivery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug major Cipla on Tuesday said it has introduced drone-powered deliveries of critical medicines for hospitals and pharmacies in Himachal Pradesh in partnership with Skye Air Mobility. The Mumbai-based firm aims to deliver medicines for cardiac, respiratory and other essential chronic therapies as part of the initiative. The use of drones will support on-time deliveries of the company's medicines to chemists and clinics in remote areas while minimising risks such as delays, temperature excursions affecting cold chain products, and roadside accidents, Cipla said in a statement. "As we accelerate our digital agenda across all functions, implementing drone-powered distribution enhances our supply chain resilience, strengthens connects with channel partners, helps us stay future ready and maintain reliable, prompt delivery of our trusted high-quality drugs to stockists and patients in the region," Cipla Global Supply Chain Head Swapn Malpani said.

## Over-regulation of internet services may have discriminatory consequences

### Prominent startup founders write to TRAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Founders and top leaders of many prominent startups, including Zerodha's Nithin Kamath and Paytm's Vijay Shekhar Sharma, have written a joint letter to regulator TRAI in support of net neutrality, and cautioned that any move towards "over regulation" of internet services categorised as OTT services could have "discriminatory consequences".



The letter, signed by representatives of 129 startups, calls

all content, application, and services equally, without discrimination. This includes not putting a service at a competitive disadvantage, either by imposing additional network fees or other regulatory obligations such as licensing under a telecommunications framework, according to the letter addressed to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Chairman PD Vaghela.

## Digital payment via UPI spikes on person-to-merchant transaction growth: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Digital payment through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has seen a multi-fold jump with transactions crossing a landmark figure of 10 billion in August primarily driven by Person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions, a report said. The number of UPI transactions in January 2018 was 151 million, and it reached 9.3 billion in June 2023, primarily driven by the growth in P2M transactions, the report by Worldline said. In January 2022, P2M trans-



actions accounted for 40.3 per cent of all UPI transactions compared to 57.5 per cent in June 2023 and this percentage

is likely to grow further, it said. Another indicator that prognosticates the future of UPI growth and particularly UPI

P2M transactions is the average ticket size (ATS), it said, adding, ATS for UPI P2M transactions which was Rs 885 in January 2022 has reduced to Rs 653 in June 2023. This indicates that UPI is now being increasingly used for micro transactions, indicating a further entrenchment of UPI. With regard to Electronic Toll Collection (ETC), the report said, it has really changed how "we pay for tolls on the country's roads and now increasingly at parking plazas among other use cases."

## RBI cancels licence of Nashik Zilla Girna Sahakari Bank

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank on Tuesday cancelled the banking licence of Nashik Zilla Girna Sahakari Bank Limited as the Nashik-based lender does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, the bank is prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking', which includes accep-

tance of deposits and repayment of deposits, with immediate effect, Reserve Bank of India said in a statement. It also said the Commissioner and Registrar of Cooperative, Maharashtra has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive a deposit

insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to Rs 5 lakh from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). "As per the data submitted by the bank, 99.92 per cent of the depositors are entitled to receive the full amount of their deposits from DICGC," the RBI said. DICGC has already paid Rs 16.27 crore of the total insured deposits

based on the willingness received from the concerned depositors of the bank. RBI said the cooperative bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects, and it has failed to comply with the requirements of provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. The continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors, it added.



## Ambani's children will get only fee for board meetings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's three children as directors of Reliance Industries Ltd will be paid only a fee for attending board and committee meetings, the company said in a resolution seeking shareholder nod for their appointment on its board. While Ambani, 66, drew nil salary from the company since the 2020-21 fiscal year, other executive directors including his cousins Nikhil and Hital are paid a salary, perquisites, allowances and commission. His three children - twins Akash and Isha (both 31) and Anant (28 years) - will get only a sitting fee and a commission on the profit earned by the

firm. The terms of the appointment of the three are the same as the ones on which Ambani's wife Nita was appointed to the company board in 2014. She earned a sitting fee of Rs 6 lakh and a commission of Rs 2 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal year (April 2022 to March 2023), according to the company's latest annual report. Ambani, 66, had at the company's annual shareholders meeting last month announced that his three children Akash, Isha and Anant would be inducted into Reliance's board of directors (BoD). He also stated that he would continue to be the chairman and CEO of the company for five more years, with a focus on grooming and empowering its



'next-gen' leaders. Reliance has now sent out a postal ballot to shareholders seeking a nod for their appointment as board of directors of the company. "They shall be paid remuneration

by way of fee for attending meetings of the Board or Committees thereof or for any other meetings as may be decided by the Board, reimbursement of expenses for participating in the Board and

other meetings and profit-related commission," the notice said. Reliance has five broad verticals - the oil-to-chemical (O2C) business that houses the world's largest single-location refining complex and petrochemical plants, telecom and digital business, retail (both physical and online), new energy, and recently launched financial services. Ambani first talked of a succession plan at the oil-to-telecom conglomerate in 2022, where he announced that each of his three children would head various divisions of the company (Akash to head telecom, Isha to head retail, and Anant to head new energy). He did not divulge the succession plan for Reliance's

mainstay oil-to-chemicals or O2C business division. Reliance shareholders at the annual general meeting (AGM) last month gave a nod to Ambani getting another five-year term till 2029 as the head of India's most valuable company. And just like the past three years, he has opted to draw nil salary during this period. As part of the succession planning, Nita resigned as a director of Reliance but she has been made a permanent invitee to all board meetings - a status which none on the board enjoy. Mukesh Ambani and other directors need shareholders' nod for any extension beyond their current approved terms but she will continue on the board in perpetuity.



## 'SAVDHAAN INDIA IS A FEATHER IN MY CAP, IT FEELS GOOD BECOMING AN IDENTITY OF THE SHOW'

Much to the excitement of its viewers, actor Sushant Singh is back to his podium hosting the new season of *Savdhaan India: Criminal Decoded*. Bringing a season with much more intensity this time, he gets candid with *The Pioneer* about making a comeback, challenges as a host of the crime show, and more.

TEJAL SINHA

Just like the stellar actor that he is, Sushant Singh has been a commendable host as well. So much so that he has been associated with the crime show *Savdhaan India* for more than 8 years now. Making the much-awaited comeback, he is seen donning a much different salt-and-pepper look in the brand-new season of the show, which aired on Star Bharat from Tuesday (September 26).

Renowned for its gripping real-life crime stories, *Savdhaan India* has acted as an informative platform, shedding light on the dark world of crime and its consequences. All excited to be back he says it feels like a 'home-coming'.

Looking at the positive outlook of the show, he begins, "*Savdhaan India* is a crime show telecasted in a general channel. But we sort of surpass that line of just being a part of an entertainment channel but an educative programme. Over the year, people appreciate the awareness that this programme has brought in consciously that it has become a part of their life. There are few programmes that have had that privilege. Every time that I go to any corner of India, wherever there's Indian diaspora, they've all heard about this programme, they've seen this programme. I don't even know what to call these phenomena. Any programme which creates awareness are all important."

After several versions including India Fights Back, Darr Kar Nahii Datt

Kar, and Special Crime Series, to name a few, the show is all set with the theme of 'Criminal Decoded', which has everyone talking already. "This season is going to be much more intense, now that we are coming back after sort of a head back," shares the *Ram Gopal Varma ki Aag* actor. "We are upgrading everything, including aesthetic production values. The novelty of this season is that we are calling it criminal decoded. We've had many seasons of *Savdhaan India* which has always been about India Fights Back, the victim's pov, the journey of how you could have prevented and fight back. It's the first time that we are going to look into the criminal mind because that is also one major aspect of any crime. The person who is committing the crime, what and how does that person think? That is what we are going to see in this new season. Research-wise, we have spoken to psychologists, and criminologists. Maybe this might help people in recognising and understanding the criminal mind."

With over seven seasons and a remarkable 3,162 episodes under its belt, the show brings some really nerve-wracking crime stories. And after continuously hosting crime stories for a long time, he shares there's a danger of an individual mind becoming desensitised towards the intensity of the crime. Going ahead and sharing more insights on it, he gushes, "I have

done more than a thousand episodes so there's a chance of it. The viewers who are watching it, that's not the case with them or the victim who has experienced it. Every person who is or has faced that, it's their first encounter. I have to make sure that I don't lose that empathy. Secondly, the way society sees crime, may not always be right. For example, it's a very common thing to say when we talk about a rape, Izzat luttt gayi, uske aatmasaman ke saath khilwad hua. Those are very very miss murmurs, shifting the grave. What I've been trying to say through *Savdhaan India* since a long time and still consciously do is if anybody is losing their respect in such a scenario, even the criminal, it cannot be the way it is. They stay away from such phrases. When we say Ek Tarfa Pyaar. Ek Tarfa pyaar kuch nahi hota, when somebody commits a crime of obsession, you cannot call it a Ek Tarfa Pyaar or Manchala. Those are again Miss Murmurs. You cannot just make anyone else suffer. I very consciously avoid such phrases and even if they are there, remove them and present crime as a crime and not as a stigma towards the victim."

The show has gained widespread recognition, becoming a household name, even within the ranks of the police force.

Recently, the law enforcement community has acknowledged Sushant's significant contributions and holds him in high regard, viewing his dedicated efforts as a testament to his unwavering commitment to enhancing the safety of our society. To them, Sushant has earned an honorary position among their courageous ranks, serving as a symbol of unity in the ongoing fight against crime and disorder. The *Rana*

*Naidu* was extremely grateful and to him, it was no less than a 'positive acknowledgment'.

The new season not only brings a new theme but as we already mentioned, a new look of him. This distinguished look exudes a certain maturity and sophistication that perfectly complements the show's serious and thought-provoking themes. Commenting on his new look, he shares, "I'm trying to keep it natural since I'm also shooting for some other projects. So, when the new season was offered, we tried to work around it and my attempt has been to look the way I am, age with dignity and hopefully that would bring more gravity to the programme. It definitely feels good that people have now known me for the show. It makes me feel that I've made a positive impact on the show and the show has of course made an immense contribution to my life, besides the popularity, love, and fame. It feels good to become the identity of a show and show becomes your identity. I feel like it's a feather in my cap."

The *Baby* actor gracefully juggles between the role of an actor and an anchor at the same time. However, one cannot forget the fact that both require entirely different skill sets. So, what's something he looks for when taking up a project? Let's hear what he's got to tell us: "My first question when the makers approached me was back in 2012, 'If you're looking for an anchor who presents it in a very situational way', which is usually the case. But the makers were very clear that 'NO' we want empathy and we want to convey a good message so that what attracted me to *Savdhaan India*. However, for other projects, apart from the message, first and foremost is the story because at the end of the day be it a film or an OTT project, the main thing is the story. If the story excites me as a listener, then I'm attracted towards it, and then comes the role that should attract me. If I'm excited then my work would excite the audience."

Ending the conversation on a brighter note, he reveals coming up with a web series in the first week of October, and the second season of *Rana Naidu* by the end of the year, or January.

## LAKSHYA KOCHHAR

### Bambai Meri Jaan was my first big project

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The trending actor Lakshya Kochhar doubled down so well for a periodic piece — *Bambai Meri Jaan* is all over the news, and the artist doesn't forget to show as many shades as he can. His fans are finding a lot of enjoyment watching him on screen.

In fact, as per the reviews, it's a well-tread story! So in an exclusive interview with one of the leads, he gives the game away, "This was one of those scripts that do not come so often in an actor's life. I was held in great respect to even be considered to play a part in this show. But working on the sets was very difficult: we shot over a period of three and a half years.

On and off! We had the pandemic, a cyclone, and so many closures. What I am really grateful for is I made some solid relationships on this set! I have grown on this set as an actor, literally."

A take on the crime genre, his show at its very heart and core mastered the intricate storytelling. He explains, "I auditioned for it like any newcomer would. I am not in a position to choose right now. I was chosen to play this role. I had so much of prep time — I read the script for almost nine months during the lockdown without any intrusion. We were jamming on Zoom calls! I lost a few kilos also. We can rave about our performances because we had a lot of time to prepare in all true sense. I don't think anyone would have in the history of filmmaking must have got so much time to prepare!"

Showing the ruthlessness of both the good and bad guys, his character is fully fleshed out with very simple motivations. Well, he says, "I have previously worked with my director as an assistant director on *Rock On 2*, and I know his functioning. So it was an advantage for me! I was the youngest in the crew, so they protected me and taught me the technicalities. This was my first big

project. I was stuck in some places, so the ADs helped me get out of it. This cast was my backbone, for a change!"

He continued, "The director made the show look so international. We had zero compromises on the sets! We have even done one scene a day. It can give Hollywood shows a run for their money as well. Writing is superlative! There were almost eight writers working on the show and that's how it should be done. The mic operator had to come to me and tell that sir your heartbeat is going so fast, we had to cut that separate track. My mouth was watering, and my legs were shaking. So nervous but so at it!"

Amalgamation of many crime stories, the execution of it floored our interviewee. He blabs a little on the lines of morality scale also, "Morally there were complexities involved. For characters like us, we are not socially accepted! So I was trying to pierce into human emotions. I didn't judge my character! My director asked me to function out of love, period. Yes on the papers it's morally incorrect but I was playing someone grey. Four years ago I was twenty-six years old when I signed this show. There are a lot of action sequences going on so we had our taxing days also."

Making his fans enjoy the shades that he brings on screen, actor Lakshya Kochhar has once again made waves with his stint in the recently released *Bambai Meri Jaan*. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, he discusses working in the series, getting on board, and more.

## Revolutionising the energy storage industry with its presence

PNS| HYDERABAD

Providing a comprehensive range of modern maintenance-free two-wheeler, automotive, UPS, and inverter batteries known for their reliability and quality is Tesla Power India Private Limited.

Something that makes them unique is their advanced battery management systems which ensure your battery's longevity, helping you save on costly repairs.

Kavinder Khurana, Managing Director at Tesla Power USA in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer* says, "Our decision to expand in Southern India was led by our mission to provide customized solutions to the region, making it the largest service network in all of South India. Our R&D investments allow us to create innovative customized solutions for our clientele. This community engagement builds the foundation for robust partnerships and alliances, raising the benchmark for the Indian battery market through our advanced automotive technologies."

With an aim to create an effecting working environment for its employees, they conduct rigorous training programs for the entirety of their team. With routine audits, we ensure the safety of their equipment, administering regular Reporting and Incident Analysis for streamlined operations. And with its continuous improvement efforts pave way for us to deliver the absolute best to all our customers, keeping their satisfaction paramount.

"We are proud of our proactive service team, ensuring quick resolution for our customers. Our dedicated service centers ensure to go the extra mile to address your concerns, providing solid services to maintain longevity in your battery life. With remote support and warranty coverage, Tesla Power boasts of strong cus-



tomers-centric operations, prioritizing their feedback to continue innovating solutions," shares Kavinder.

As a brand of themselves, they have a strong presence in India and is impressive, with a wide distribution network and various types of dealers. Taking us through how the company tailors its offerings to cater to the specific needs and demands of the Indian market, he says, "With continuous efforts towards product adaptation based on routine customer feedback and R&D efforts, Tesla Power has proudly established a strong presence in the Indian market for all our verticals, providing full charging infrastructure to allow for a seamless experience for all our customers. However, no operation comes without challenges and Tesla Power ensures constant management of these limitations. Price sensitivity, infrastructure gaps, supply chain hurdles are a few pain

points that our regular research and development initiatives work towards cultivating a stronger and more robust network."







Namrata Shirodkar, along with MLA Danam Nagender, and chief advisor to Telangana CM Somesh Kumar, and Telangana minister of Animal Husbandry, inaugurated the new N Hance furniture showroom, at Jubilee Hills Road no 45.

PARTY



White Noise Academy presented a spectacular musical recital event that showcased the extraordinary talents of its students and left the audience in awe at the Brahma Kumaris World Peace Auditorium. This captivating evening of musical brilliance featured a diverse range of performances, captivating the hearts of music enthusiasts from all walks of life.



Pranavam (Pravasi Malayala Brahmana Kshema Sabha) is going to organise and perform the primordial cosmic Yajnam 'Nava Durga Yagam' from October 13 to October 15 at the Ratnalayam Sri Venkateswara Swami temple at Aliyabad X Roads, Shameerpet.

LG Electronics announced the launch of its latest masterpiece, the OLED3X, available exclusively at select Reliance Digital stores in Hyderabad. Residents of AS Rao Nagar, Nagole, Vanasthalipuram, and Kondapur will now have access to LG's state-of-the-art OLED technology and innovative features.



Silver Oaks International School hosted a unique charitable pop-up event - Silver Oaks Street Store, to provide succour to the underprivileged at Silver Oaks International Schools in Bachupally and Beeramguda in Hyderabad.

Aptronix launched the new iPhone 15 series, Apple Watch Series 9, and Apple Watch Ultra 2 at their stores across India. Aptronix has expanded its reach from 14 to 20 cities across India this year, and are rapidly expanding their retail presence across cities and towns in the country.

LISTINGS

### Prashanth Hospitals triumphs in complex critical care HIV case

Prashanth Hospitals has achieved a medical milestone by successfully treating a 33-year-old HIV male patient from Nellore. The patient had faced severe respiratory issues and a multitude of life-threatening complications, ultimately recovering under the expert medical team, highlighting the significant strength of modern critical care that the hospital offers. The 33-year-old male who initially sought medical attention in May at a local clinic in Nellore for respiratory issues, was later admitted to a hospital in the region due to worsening of the symptoms. With his condition unexpectedly deteriorating he was referred to Prashanth Hospitals in June, which marked the beginning of a challenging medical journey characterized by progressive respiratory distress. Dr. Ajith Kumar, Critical Care Specialist at Prashanth Hospitals, highlighted the uniqueness and complexity of such cases, stating, "Cases of this nature are exceptionally rare and we had to employ a multi-disciplinary approach involving drug treatments, ECMO, high-end antibiotics, and several other treatments to address the patient's condition. Managing complications such as polyneuropathy required meticulous planning and continuous monitoring to balance compromised immunity with robust antibiotic regimens. It was the collaborated efforts put together by our skilled team to ensure this breakthrough achievement unfolded successfully at every stage of the treatment."

### Synchrony's remarkable initiative

Synchrony (NYSE: SYF), a premier consumer financial services company, joined hands with the Sainik Welfare Department, Telangana, to organise a special health checkup drive for ex-servicemen. The initiative, conducted at 7 centers of Vijaya Diagnostic across the state from August 16 to August 31, 2023, provided much-needed health assessments for 555 veterans and their spouses. The drive was inaugurated by Colonel P Ramesh Kumar (Retd.), Director, Department of Sainik Welfare, Government of Telangana. Synchrony's Veterans Network, in collaboration with its NGO partner ASSIST and the Sainik Welfare Department, sponsored the health checkups in various locations, including Shadnagar, Mancherla, Sangareddy, Warangal, Hanamkonda, Budvel, and Kismatpur centers of Vijaya Diagnostic in Telangana. The goal was to raise awareness about the health and wellness of ex-servicemen and their families.

### Polycab India unveils a new brand identity

Polycab India unveiled its renewed brand identity and philosophy that reflects its future business roadmap. Polycab is undergoing a remarkable transformation under Project LEAP. While being renowned for its excellence in manufacturing wires and cables, Polycab continues to expand its horizons to offer a comprehensive suite of electrical solutions for modern living making it safe, convenient and sustainable. The rebranding is not just a shift in Visual Identity or Brand Architecture, it is a guiding philosophy that underscores Polycab's commitment to Innovation, Technology, Safety and Sustainability leading to its Brand Purpose of 'Connecting all to a brighter future.' This renewed brand ideology is going to be a significant step towards Polycab's vision of becoming the foremost brand of choice for customers in the electrical solutions market.

### Haier launches 'The Future of Entertainment'

Haier Appliances India (Haier India), the global leader in home appliances launched K800GT Google TV Series, delivering an unparalleled entertainment experience with next-gen technologies like 4K UHD resolution, Google Assistant, and Dolby Audio. Elevating the viewing experience further, the K800GT LED series is an addition to the existing Haier Google TV series with cutting-edge Motion estimation and Motion compensation Technology (MEMC) technology, which ingeniously inserts extra frames between the original frames, resulting in astonishingly smooth content and vibrant transitions. The K800GT Google TV series is available in a range of screen sizes including 65, 55, 50, 43UHD, and 43FHD/32 inches. Price and availability Haier K800GT Google TV, available pan India at a starting price: Rs 16990 Available on Haier e-commerce store and other retail outlets

### Global audio-video brand EPOS partners with Orisenc Technologies for a new experience centre in Hyd

EPOS a global audio and video brand announces the grand inauguration of the Hyderabad EPOS Experience Centre, a collaborative effort with Orisenc Technologies. The high-tech facility of the brand promises how it will empower businesses around the world to communicate and collaborate better. EPOS is eager to present its innovative products and technologies within this experience center, offering live demonstrations and Q&A sessions with their team of experts. The Hyderabad EPOS Experience Centre stands as a demonstration of an unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence. It offers a unique opportunity for businesses in the region to explore the latest advancements in Audio and Video solutions to witness firsthand how it can revolutionize their operations. Following the successful event, EPOS has rolled out its new product range to select partners and customers with wide availability plans and commitments.

### Celebrate World Heart Day with a handful of almonds

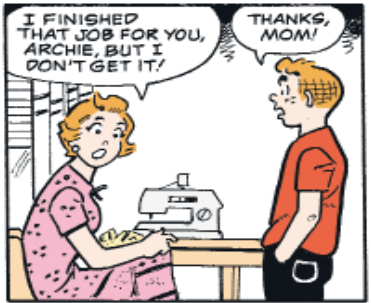
Every year, World Heart Day is observed on September 29 across the world to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease (CVD) and its impact. A review article published recently says that India has a higher age-standardized death rate for CVD (282 deaths/100,000 (264-293)) than the rest of the world (233 deaths/100,000 (229-236)). The age-standardized DALY (disability-adjusted life year) rate associated with CVD has also been reported to be 1.3 times the global average. CVDs strike Indians a decade earlier than the western population. This year, as a reminder to everyone around the world to take care of their hearts the theme of World Heart Day is 'Use Heart Know Heart', the heart used in the form of an emoji. The campaign focuses on the essential step of knowing our hearts first. Speaking about the importance of leading a heart-healthy lifestyle, Popular Bollywood actress, Soha Ali Khan, said, "I believe firmly that lifestyle changes play a very crucial role in one's heart health. Keeping this in mind, I always make sure I consume a balanced, nutritious diet and limit ultra-processed foods. Eating heart-healthy foods is also something that is a priority for me. I consume a handful of almonds everyday as a pre/post workout snack, almonds with me when I am on the move as they are portable and provide essential nutrients like vitamin E, magnesium, protein, riboflavin, zinc, and more. I also incorporate moderate to intense physical activity daily for at least 30 min. I've noticed that my daughter Inaaya also shows interest when I workout at home and she tags along to do the exercises!"




Naredco Telangana announced the 13th edition of its upcoming 'Naredco Telangana Property Show' which will begin from October 6, and continue till October 8 at HITEC Exhibition Centre, Hyderabad.

FUN


#### ARCHIE




#### GARFIELD




#### NANCY




#### GINGER MEGGS




#### ARCHIE



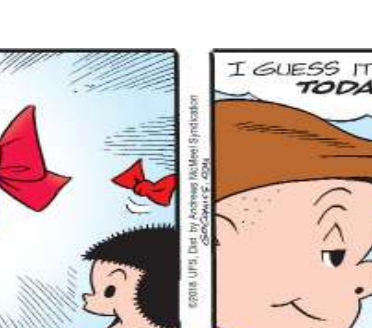
#### GARFIELD




#### NANCY



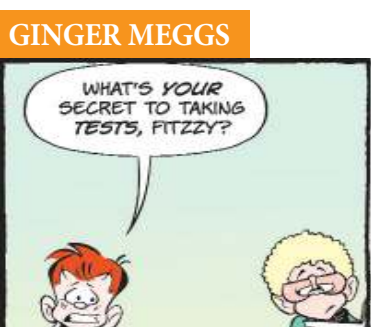
#### GINGER MEGGS



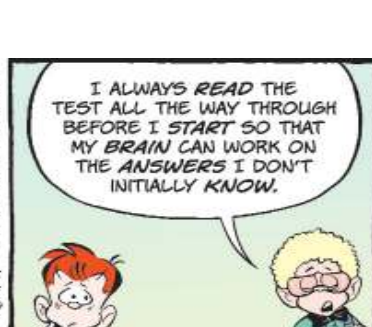
#### ARCHIE



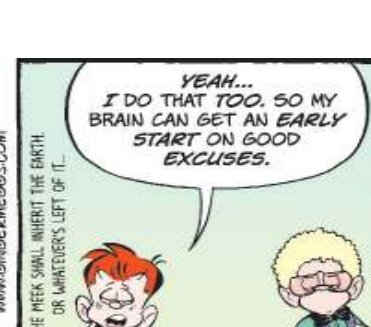
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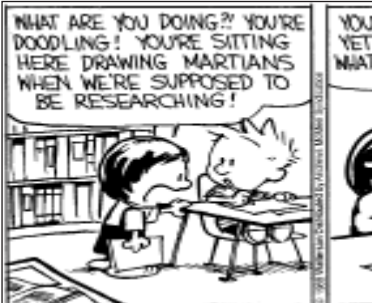
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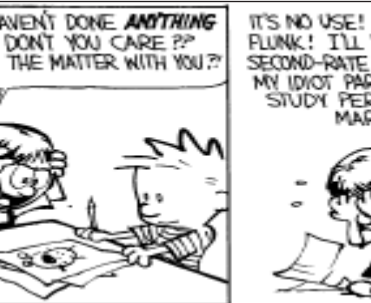
#### GINGER MEGGS




#### CALVIN AND HOBBS




#### REALITY CHECK




#### SPEED BUMP




#### REALITY CHECK




#### SPEED BUMP




#### REALITY CHECK



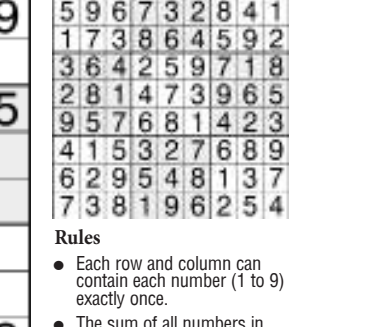
#### SPEED BUMP



#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	
5				6
7			8	
9			10	
			11	
12	13		14	15
		16		
17			18	
19				

##### ACROSS

1 The first teenage year

7 A neck warmer

8 This makes bread rise

9 Having a meal

10 Expensive

12 A heat injury

14 An artist's workshop

17 Precise

18 Shave with this

19 A sheep minder

6 A ship's right-hand side

11 Be ill or die from lack of food

13 Get to

15 Stunned and not able to think properly

16 Halt

##### DOWN

1 Easily burnt breakfast food

2 Young child

3 Things to play with

4 Rub out

5 Puts together from separate parts

##### SOLUTION

B	A	S	E	L
A	O	R	E	M
T	A	C	K	M
R	E	A	S	E
R	V	E	N	H
I	N	N	E	R
E	R	A	T	O
S	A	F	E	S
T	S	O	L	E
R	T	O	M	A



## Mangalavaaram locks its release date to Nov 19

Ajay Bhupathi, a protégé of Ram Gopal Varma, had a stellar directorial debut in the form of the surprise hit *RX 100*, and later went onto direct the lavishly mounted action drama *Maha Samudram* featuring a bevy of stars. He's back in the reckoning with a mystical thriller *Mangalavaaram*, where he reunites with his *RX100* co-star Payal Rajput. The film is gearing up for a release this November. While the team confirmed a November release, a few weeks ago, the release date was formally announced today. "Excited to show y'all a story that'll twist your heart like never before. #Mangalavaaram #Mangalavaaram #Chevvaikizhamai #Chovvazhcha. Releasing Worldwide in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada on November 17th. An @AJA-NEESHMB Musical," the director wrote.

With October already packed with a flurry of releases, the mid-November slot

looks apt for *Mangalavaaram* to make a mark among audiences. Nandita Swetha, Shritej, Chaitanya Krishna, Ajay Ghosh and Laxman play other key roles in the film that'll release in five languages on the whole. The film is bankrolled by Swathi Reddy Gunupati and Suresh Varma under Mudra Media Works.

The filmmaker, while discussing the project, called *Mangalavaaram* a rustic action thriller in a rural setting with intriguing characters where the lines between good and evil are blurred. The character-driven film is packed with questions and the answers aren't so easily found, he asserts and opines it's a perfect big-screen experience. Payal Rajput's character will have many surprises to offer, he adds. The producers assure a paisa-vasool experience in the- atres, hail it's a never-seen-

before attempt with technical finesse. *Mangalavaaram* was shot for 99 days, over 50 of them being night shoots. Ajaneesh B Loknath, best known for *Kantara* and *Virupaksha*, is the composer. Award-winning sound designer MR Raja Krishnan is also part of the crew. The trailer will be launched shortly.



## Shobu Yarlagadda irked over Prabhas' wax statue

A museum in Mysore, Karnataka, recently put out the wax statues of many historic personalities as well as a few fictional characters. Mahendra Baahubali's statue from *Baahubali* was one of them. A picture of the wax statue has gone viral on the Internet in the last few days. The same has come to the notice of *Baahubali* producer Shobu Yarlagadda.

The producer has stated that prior permission of the makers of SS Rajamouli's film was not sought by the owners of the museum. Efforts are therefore on to get the wax statue removed. "This is not an officially licensed work and was done without our permission or knowledge. We will be taking immediate steps to get this removed," Yarlagadda tweeted. The statue has received flak for its poor artistic merit. Prabhas hardly looks like Prabhas; rather, he is looking like a mixture

of cricketer David Warner and actor Ram Charan. Prabhas' fans would actually like the statue to be removed at the earliest. They are thanking Yarlagadda for his decision.



## RAKUL PREET SINGH EXPRESSES STARRING OPPOSITE KAMAL HAASAN SAYS, 'IT'S SURREAL'

Rakul Preet Singh is truly in the best phase of her career, doing some of the best projects not just in Bollywood but also South Indian film industry. Having proved her mettle as a versatile actor in different genre films including *Chhatriwali* and *Doctor G* this year, Rakul is elated to be a part of a huge successful franchise *Indian 2* alongside the legendary actor Kamal Haasan. With her impressive acting skills and ability to take on diverse roles, Rakul has become a sought-after name in the world of cinema. One of her upcoming projects that has fans buzzing with excitement is *Indian 2*, where she shares the screen space with none other than the legendary Kamal Haasan. Rakul couldn't contain her enthusiasm when talking about this remarkable opportunity. In a recent interview, she shared her feelings, saying, "It's surreal. *Chachi 420*, for example, was my favorite film. Working alongside individuals you've admired—people

who've been in the profession for so long and had so much experience and have yet remained grounded—I think it's a very refreshing experience."

Rakul's journey in the Indian film industry has been nothing short of remarkable. She has not only proved her versatility but has also earned a dedicated fan base with her exceptional performances. Whether it's her role in *Chhatriwali* or *Doctor G*, Rakul has showcased her ability to excel in different genres. Her inclusion in the iconic 'Indian' franchise alongside Kamal Haasan is a testament to her talent and ever growing popularity in the South as well.



Bobby Deol's look as ferocious antagonist in *Animal* revealed

The makers of the upcoming film *Animal* have shared another poster and this time featuring a "bloodied" look of actor Bobby Deol.

Bobby portrays the antagonist, the enemy to *Animal*. He embodies a character who is both fire and calm, a juxtaposition that adds depth to his portrayal. His fierce personality radiates through the new poster making him a formidable adversary for the film's protagonist. *Animal*

is an action thriller film directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga and produced by T-Series and Cine1 Studios. The film stars Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Bobby Deol, Rashmika Mandanna and Tripti Dimri. The film was earlier scheduled to be released on August 11 but was pushed to December 1 due to pending post-production work. The film revolves around a troubled father-son relationship, which is set in the backdrop of extreme bloodshed of the underworld.

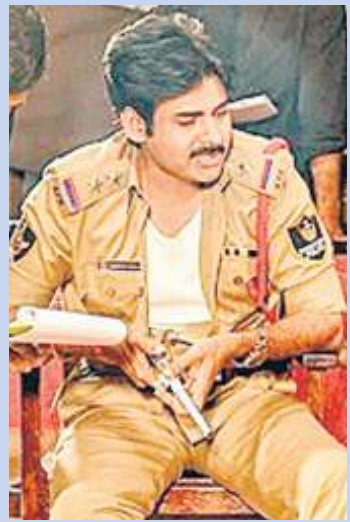
Bobby is returning to the big screen after 2019. He was last seen on the silver screen in *Housefull 4*. The plot of the film dealt with reincarnation. Three brothers are set to marry three sisters. However, a peek into the distant past reveals to one of the brothers that their brides have been mixed up in their current reincarnation.

## Ustaad Bhagat Singh's new schedule kickstarts in Hyd

Power Star Pawan Kalyan is currently balancing his roles in both movies and politics.

He's actively involved in two upcoming films: *They Call Him OG* and *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*. According to a latest update, a mini shooting schedule is commencing today in Hyderabad. Pawan Kalyan will be joining the film's production, specifically for scenes related to the pre-interval sequence. This schedule is expected to run for a week.

In *Ustaad Bhagat Singh*, happening actress Sreeleela takes on the leading role, and the film is being produced on a grand scale by Mythri Movie Makers. The music for the movie is composed by Devi Sri Prasad.



## Hebah Patel-starrer mystery thriller *The Great Indian Murders* on October 6

Aha is all set to send chills down your spine with its upcoming mystery thriller, *The Great Indian Murders*, on October 6 featuring Ram Karthik and the versatile Hebah Patel in the lead roles. Under the visionary direction and production of Viplove Koneti and the compelling music of SriCharan Pakala, this movie promises to be a mind-bending rollercoaster ride, leaving you in suspense from start to finish. *The Great Indian Murders* also features a stellar ensemble cast, including Naresh VK, Pavitra Lokesh, Jaya Prakash, and many more, all delivering captivating performances.

In this unprecedented story, a family teeters on the brink of committing an unthinkable act – suicide. Their motive? To resurrect a loved one from the clutches of death. But as the tale unfolds, you'll be ensnared in a web of suspense, drama, and romance, unlike anything you've ever witnessed.

The spine-tingling intrigue of *The Great Indian Murders* draws inspiration from a real-life event in Madanapalle town, Andhra Pradesh. With its blend of heart-pounding thrills, emotional drama, and unexpected romance, this film promises to be a one-of-a-kind cinematic experience.

Hebah Patel recently delivered a remarkable performance in aha's crime-thriller *Odela Railway Station*, which takes centre stage once again in *The Great Indian Murders*. Naresh VK and Pavitra

Lokesh's venture, *Malli Pelli*, is also available on the aha platform for viewers to enjoy.

Prepare to embark on an enigmatic journey that will keep you guessing until the end. *The Great Indian Murders* is coming soon aha, and it's poised to redefine the thriller genre.



## RAM POTHINENI: FAMILY EMOTIONS ARE THE BIGGEST MERIT OF *SKANDA*

*Skanda*, to be released in theatres on September 28, stars Ram Pothineni in the lead. Directed by Boyapati Srinu, it is produced by Srinivasaa Silver Screen. Recently, a public event named Cult Jaathara was hosted by the makers in Karimnagar. A massy, electrifying release trailer was unveiled on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Ram thanked his fans for being there

to cheer him and his movie. "Boyapati garu's films are synonymous with action sequences. But that's not what his mainstay is. His mainstay are the emotions behind those fights. Family emotions are the biggest merit of *Skanda*. Boyapati garu's movies are known for a social element built into the story. *Skanda*, too, has got one. And that element will be the soul of this film," the *RED* and *Nenu Sailaja* actor said.

Boyapati said that he is tense only while making a film. "I sweat out. I pour my blood into the film. Once I am done, I don't stress out. I am confident that I have made a very good product. *Skanda* will surely be blessed by the audience," he added. The film's release trailer has since received a thumping response from netizens. Srikanth and a host of artists seem to have got strongly-written roles in the movie. SS Thaman has composed the music.



# INDIA AIM TO WHITEWASH OZ

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Skipper Rohit Sharma would fancy a perfect culmination to Indian team's World Cup preparations as hosts eye a rare clean sweep of Australia in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday.

Never before in the history have India whitewashed Australia in the ODI format. In fact, neither of them have achieved such a result, home or away, irrespective of the number of matches played in a series. Given how perfectly everything has panned out for the World Cup hosts in the lead up to the mega tournament, it would only be fitting that India finish with a deserving 3-0 score-line.

Dominant Indian team, despite the absence of its front-line players and still tinkering with playing combinations to make sure every member has had game-time under their belt, are in pole position to record a fourth consecutive ODI win before the quadrennial event begins.

## Gill, Axar, Shami, Shardul & Hardik to miss 3rd ODI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Axar Patel, Shubman Gill and Shardul Thakur have not travelled to Rajkot for the third and final ODI against Australia on Wednesday.

Axar, who has been out with a left quadriceps strain since the Asia Cup and was in the squad only for the final ODI subject to fitness, is understood to be recovering well, and the team management expects him to be fit in time for the World Cup. He is currently recovering at the BCCI's National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. Rohit Sharma, the captain, and Virat Kohli, who both sat out the first two games of the series, are back in the line-up, but Mohammed Shami, who played the first two games, and Hardik Pandya, who skipped the initial games as well, are not with the squad.

ESPNcricinfo understands that with just 13 players around - Mukesh Kumar was called up ahead of the second ODI which Jasprit Bumrah missed - India might be forced to use local first-class players, who are part of the Saurashtra team, to chip in in the field if needed.



If they manage to clinch a 3-0 win, India would also have taken a massive upper-hand over the five-time world champions Australia before the two teams meet again in Chennai on October 8 for their World Cup opener.

It will be no exaggeration in saying India have battered Australia in the first two ODIs despite both the rivals making plenty of changes to keep their top guns fresh, while also putting

miles in the legs of those who would not usually feature in first-choice XIs. There could, however, be some respite for the Australian bowlers as India have rested their young gun Shubman Gill for the final ODI after his 74 and 104 in the first two games, alongwith Shardul Thakur.

In the 50-overs World Cup year, Gill is the only batter in the format with a thousand runs and counting - 1,230 runs to be precise at a staggering average of

72.35 - and his absence from the final game would certainly be felt. But India's batting mainstays Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli are expected to return and so are the in-form Kuldeep Yadav and Hardik Pandya from a brief resting period during which KL Rahul has led admirably.

Facing some tough questions over squad composition, players' form, fitness and availability, India have turned the tide and how.

That India would end up with a problem of plenty was something not envisaged when the team embarked on the Asia Cup campaign just a few weeks ago. But the likes of Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav, Mohammed Shami and even Mohammed Siraj have transformed this Indian outfit into as formidable a unit can get.

He took some time to get going and again struggled with his back-related troubles, but

Shreyas Iyer utilised perfect batting conditions in Indore to record a century, which will also consolidate his position in the middle-order.

Much to the delight of the Indian camp, Rahul has delivered the goods with the bat and behind the stumps at the most appropriate time. Like Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah too has proven his fitness and form in a few matches after a long injury lay-off. After resting from the second ODI, India's premier bowler is available for selection.

Even though the team management appears tilted in favour of injured Axar Patel, oldest member of the Indian squad Ravichandran Ashwin would like to make this opportunity count before the contingent is finalised for the World Cup.

For Australia, it is not often that they flop both with the bat and the ball in India with the white ball as miserably as they have in the first two ODIs. The visitors need to gather themselves as the wheels seem to be coming off rapidly following five consecutive defeats in ODIs.

A few months ago, the same side beat India 2-1 with Mitchell Starc haunting the Indian right-handers with his perfect inswingers.

With one last game left before the World Cup begins, Australia would be tempted to play their preferred bowling attack with Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc coming in, even though the batting lacks the firepower of Travis Head at the top and Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne not enjoying a successful year of cricket in India across formats.



## Smith's form not a concern: Starc

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Steve Smith might be taking a wee bit more time to adjust to sub-continental tracks but his poor returns in the first two ODIs against India is least of concern for the Australian team management, senior speedster Mitchell Starc said on Tuesday.

Usually a prolific scorer against India, Smith has scores of 0 and 41 in the first two ODIs on batting-friendly tracks, having flopped earlier in the Test series in February-March when he could only manage 145 runs across four Tests.

Starc, who himself is coming back from groin niggle, was speaking ahead of the third and final ODI scheduled on Wednesday.

"No. His (Smith) numbers speak for himself," Starc replied to a query on Smith's current form.

"He (Smith) has been a high class player and has been a massive part of all formats for Australia, so no concern there. It is the adjustment factor, coming back to India after a series in South Africa, some guys are coming off a break," Starc told reporters here ahead of Australia's training session at the Saurashtra Cricket Stadium.

Starc, who might make a comeback in the third game then underlined the reasons for Australia's back-to-back defeats in Mohali and Indore.

"I think we have seen the wickets change throughout both the games, depending on who batted first and in different places. Spin was a massive factor in the second innings the other night (in Indore). We played pretty well under lights in Mohali," Starc said.

The left-arm pacer said conditions are still proving challenging for Australian touring party, which comprises of a few fresh faces such as left-arm bowler Spencer

Johnson.

"We have got a lot of guys with IPL experience, we know that the wickets are going to be very different through the night and day, depending on which part of India we play as well — not too many grounds we have played back to back games so, conditions are going to play a part," he said.

Starc conceded that Rohit Sharma's India are favourites to win the World Cup while adding that adaptability will be key for Australia to find their form.

"We have used quite a wide squad of players, whether that be managing players or players coming back from injury, trying different combinations and what not," he said. The pacer admitted that Australia's current form isn't ideal in the run-up to a marquee event.

"Obviously, leading into the World Cup, it is not a position we want to be in but plenty to play for tomorrow - what the make-up of our team looks like, what we want to take into our World Cup campaign."

Starc said like him, Glenn Maxwell too has his sights set on the World Cup.

"He (Maxwell) is on track as well. I am not sure about his particular timeline but no doubt he will be looking to make an impact as soon as he gets his chance," Starc said.

"He has got a wealth of experience over here through IPL, through multiple tours. He is certainly an x-factor no matter whichever team he plays for. This is his third one-day World Cup, he is an x-factor for us who can take the game on.

"His ability with the ball, particularly in these conditions adds to another option in the bowling department as well. He seems in good spirits, (but) his return I am not sure what that looks like for this week but certainly on track for the World Cup," Starc added.

## We have done our research: Babar

conference here.

"It is quite an honour for me to travel as the captain this time around. I hope we come back with a trophy this time," he added.

Azam, one of the leading batters in the game, will be expected to score a bagful for runs for his team in the ICC showpiece. He is especially looking forward to the big game against India in Ahmedabad on October 14.

"I am excited to play in Ahmedabad as it will be jam-packed. I will try my best to perform up to my potential. I am not worried about my individual accolades. I want to make sure whatever I do helps the result for the team ...

"Whenever there is a tour coming up, I spend some time planning for it. I prepare accordingly to [the teams I have to face



and make goals for myself. I try to set targets for myself and then I give my 100% in the ground.

"It is a chance to become a hero as every World Cup performance gives you a different kind of confidence. Everyone is at their best during the World Cup,

so whenever you perform there, it is an altogether different feeling," he said.

Babar said the team will be missing the services of injured pacer Naseem Shah. He also asserted that there is no bad blood in the dressing room fol-

lowing the Asia Cup disappointment.

"There is no ill will in the dressing room. There are discussions after every loss but they get twisted into something else entirely. The entire team is like a family and there is love and respect there."

Hasan Ali has been named Shah's replacement and Babar said he was picked because of his rich experience.

"Of course we will miss Naseem Shah as Shaheen [Afridi] and Naseem bowling together gave us a different edge. It was not easy to pick his replacement, but we all sat together and got input from [chief selector] Inzamam ul Haq.

"We went with Hasan Ali because he has experience. He has played the World Cup before. I cannot comment who will bowl the new ball or the old ball, as we cannot reveal our strategies right now.

## Williamson targets World Cup return

AP ■ WELLINGTON

Less than six months after knee surgery threatened to rule him out of next month's ODI World Cup, the goal of captaining New Zealand in India has been the key driver in getting Kane Williamson through his recovery.

The 33-year-old tore the cruciate ligament in his right knee playing for Indian Premier League side Gujarat Titans in April, which looked to have scuppered his chances of making the showpiece tournament.

However, intense rehab work has meant a speedy recovery.

Williamson hopes to be ready for the Black Caps opening game against defending champions England on October 5, a repeat of the 2019 final his side narrowly lost.

"It would be great. Naturally, you want to be back playing when you are fit and ready, sooner rather than later," he said.

"You hope that ends up being around that World Cup time, but I'm still being very focused on the rehab day-to-day and not wanting those targets to stretch it to a point where you take a backward step."

Williamson is already batting in the nets again, which the injured knee can handle.

"For running, it's not quite 100 percent, but making good progress," he added.

Black Caps coach Gary Stead said there was no fixed date for when Williamson will play again.

But his return will be a big boost. He was player of the 2019 tournament with centuries against South Africa and the West Indies in leading New Zealand to the cusp of lifting the trophy.

Williamson, who has chalked up over 6,500 runs in ODI cricket, is desperate to appear in a fourth World Cup, admitting the prospect 'keeps



you in the gym every day and working hard".

"It's been really pleasing to see the progress and keep taking those little steps forward," he added.

While New Zealand have warmed-up for the World Cup with tours of England and Bangladesh, Williamson's injury has limited his preparations.

But he is not overly concerned.

"Naturally, it isn't ideal, but I didn't get too much of a say in it. It's the only option I have in front of me and the prospect of playing another World Cup is really, really exciting," he said.

"It's something you always want to be a part of but I didn't want that to dictate my rehab. At the same time, having a carrot at the back of your mind is helpful."

Despite a burning desire to play, the New Zealand skipper said he would have no problem withdrawing from the squad if the injury flared up.

"I only want to be there if I can add some value and I'm fit and ready to go," he said.

Williamson already knows about spending time on the sidelines after returning last year from a lengthy spell out with an elbow injury.

"Working through injuries are part of the job, so being ready for whatever's next is the goal," he said.

## Boult looking for 'one more run' at WC title

AP ■ WELLINGTON

After 12 months out of one-day international cricket, New Zealand seamer Trent Boult is relishing a third crack at the 50-overs World Cup after bitter defeats in the last two finals.

Boult is back in the frame for October's ODI World Cup after signing a casual-playing agreement with New Zealand cricket chiefs.

"I fully appreciated the fact that in giving my contract back, you open the door for other players," he said. "The decision was solely made around just being away from home a lot."

"Selection for the World Cup was never guaranteed. I had to work for it, so I am very happy to be here."

"I've been very fortunate to play in a couple of World Cup finals and been on the wrong side of all of them," he said with a

wry smile.

"It's a cliché, but you learn more when you fail than when you succeed. I feel like I'm a better cricketer for that experience."

There is no changing past finals, of course, so Boult has his eyes fixed on the future in the hope it will be third time lucky. "I'm looking forward to hopefully get one more run and lifting the trophy in a couple of weeks time," he said. "That's the big focus for a lot of us."

## Miller holds record he would prefer not to have

AP ■ CENTURION

David Miller holds an international cricket record he would prefer not to have.

No one has played more international cricket without playing in a Test match than Miller.

The hard-hitting left-hander has played in 274 white-ball internationals. The nearest contender for the non-Test record is retired West Indian Keiron Pollard on 224.

"I would have loved to play a Test, but it is what it is," says Miller, 34.

"I've achieved quite a lot in my white-ball stuff and I'm grateful to have played so many games."

Miller has built a solid first-class record, averaging 36.32 in 63 matches, with six centuries, which he backed up with electrifying fielding.

But it was a time of plenty in a South African Test batting line-up which included Jacques Kallis, Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers and Faf du Plessis, while white-ball cricket was becoming ever more prevalent — and lucrative.

In 2018, nearing his 30th birthday, he retired from first-class cricket.

"I wasn't being picked, even for the South Africa A side. There were guys ahead of me so I decided to concentrate on the white-ball stuff."

He is in demand from franchises around the world — playing for 22 different representative teams — and a crowd favourite in South Africa where supporters wave banners proclaiming 'Killer Miller' and 'It's Miller Time'.

He is one of only four players who has scored more than 3,000 runs in ODIs with an aver-



age above 40 and a strike rate above 100. The others are De Villiers and England's Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow.

Batting at number six in a side without established all-rounders, Miller will likely be in situations at the World Cup where he will have to take responsibility for rebuilding an innings.

"It's about summing up the situation. Sometimes you are batting with the lower order and you have to decide with your partner at the time how you are going to go about it."

"It's like a chess game at times. You are thinking about moves and what's important and what's not. It's about making clear decisions. It helps your execution when you are fully committed."

Both sides of Miller were on display when South Africa had to win the last three matches of a recent home series against Australia after losing the first two.

In the fourth match he thrashed an unbeaten 82 off 45 balls as he and an inspired Heinrich Klaasen added a scarcely believable 222 off 94 balls for the fifth wicket.

In the deciding match, in trickier conditions, he made a more measured 63 off 65 balls to enable South Africa to get to a defensible total after a difficult start.

"The World Cup is very open," he says. "We're a pretty experienced team. We're capable of doing it, so it's a matter of getting the basics right for longer periods of time."